

Manipur Rural Development in the Digital Scenario

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Abstract: This paper explores the digital transformation in Manipur Rural areas. From top to bottom, all the stakeholders are much more accessible in disseminating information than paper work that becomes more efficient in its working in the present digital scenario. Everyone grasp the opportunity of skilling ourselves to be a smart and active citizen that the rapid expansion of information enables us to access any updated information using mobiles through internet. As the world is viewed as a single community linked by telecommunications, connected via social media or email, technology is the backbone of modern globalization. The study explores the working of Panchayati Raj through digital platform under the Digital India Programme launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It also explores how far the people in rural areas are enabled to access information in the Digital platform. The Digital India Programme enhances citizen of India, digitally empowered to maintain relevance and competitiveness in the Digital world. It has improved the e-governance processes promoting transparency and accountability through mandated delivery of government's services by bridging the rural and urban divide.

Keywords: Rural Development, Digital Transformation, Digital India

Introduction:

From top to bottom all stakeholders are much more accessible in disseminating information than paper work that becomes more efficient in its working in the digital scenario. Today, everyone grasps the opportunity of skilling ourself to be a smart and active citizen that the rapid expansion of information enables us to access any updated information using mobiles through Internet. As the world is viewed as a single community linked by telecommunications, connected via social media or email, technology is the backbone of modern globalization. The study explores the working of Panchayati Raj through digital platform under the Digital India Programme launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

It also explores how far the people in the rural areas are enabled to access information in the digital platform. The digital India Programme enhances citizen of India, digitally empowered to maintain relevance and competitiveness in the digital world. It has improved the e-governance processes promoting transparency

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and accountability through mandated delivery of government's services by bridging the rural and urban India divide.

The pandemic covid-19 has accelerated the digitalization process in education, health, industries, business and enterprises, government offices and employees using many applications. Role of digitalization in rural development helps in improving living standard of people in rural areas. It also fosters the rural connectivity, improving economic development, healthcare accessibility and educational opportunities. For the convenient of administration, the local stakeholders including individuals, local communities should be trained, equipped for the successful democratic participation at the grass root level. The women and children welfare schemes and benefits are also digitized to ensure transparency in the 'Digital Era. Digital literacy rates have been increased bridging the gender gap through digital platform. Digitalization in Manipur rural areas have multi-dimensions, but in this paper, it covers the working of local government such as MNREGS and impacts of digitalization in the rural areas for the development. It has many benefits and provides opportunities to the people in the rural areas.

Many reforms have made in the administration and empowering the local government for the successful democracy in the democratic approach world. Digital transformation in Rural Development tends to bring participative, transparent and responsive system. Its role is very important in our daily life which makes tasks faster and more accurate. In rural areas, internet penetration enables the people changing attitudes, awareness and lifestyle. In the present scenario, digital awareness and knowledge of information between the rural and urban youths rapidly narrowed and the gap is closed.

Rural Transformation Through Technology:

Integration of digitalization into business process improves its efficiency and consistency. It saves the time to work efficiently for the specific task and free from contradiction. It makes firm and fix everything secure. Digitalization reduces paper usage, saves resources and promotes a clean environment. Keeping records in the digital form becomes more efficient in the works of multiple stakeholders which is quick and easy.

To alleviate poverty, the government has taken up many programmes and initiatives. In the present e-governance, problems and challenges of delay in public services, unemployment, housing, sanitation, education, crime against women and children, domestic violence etc can be addressed through extensive use of ICT. Making faster and transparent in government service delivery with accountability and responsibility, people could participate in the decision making and government processes. Bridging the gap



of digitalization, every citizen is ensured to reach the government services impacting the Rural Development in the rural areas.

The 'Digital India' programme launched in 2015 transforms India into a digitally empowered. Every citizen utilizes it enabling them to access information with mobile phone and broadband connectivity. Through skill development programmes, citizen is grasping opportunity empowering themselves with knowledge of digital economy. At the central, state and local government level, shaping the progressive e-governance strategy implementation of ICT speed up to promote e-governance on a massive scale. Under Digital India programme, it requires the basic infrastructure for successful implementation of e-governance service delivery from government offices up to Panchayats.

Working Of Panchayati Raj Institution in the Digital Scenario:

As 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act (1992) institutionalized PRIs as 3rd tier government, powers are devolved entrusting local self-government with decentralized planning, delivery of public services and local development. To strengthen PRIs an innovative project has been taken up through geo-spatial data. Space based Information Support for decentralizes planning at empowers communities at panchayat level.

65% of Indian population live in the rural areas that the rural development is the cornerstone of of India's growth strategy. In various field like agriculture, water management, disaster preparedness, healthcare, education and infrastructure, many initiatives have been taken up by ISRO to address its challenges. To enhance the efficiency and sustainability of Rural Development, it has launched satellite data and geospatial tools. It has contributed Agricultural and Food Security, aquaculture, horticulture, Digital Agriculture Mission, water resource management, disaster management and preparedness, rural connectivity and infrastructure, land and property management, Bhuvan panchayat portal etc to the Rural Development.

To transform Indian Agriculture, the Department of Agriculture and Pharmaceuticals has *Launched Krishi Decision Support System (KRISHI- DSS)* on 16th August 2024. It empowers stakeholder that integrate geospatial and non-geospatial. It brings a revolutionary change in agriculture ensuring self-resilience and sustainability. As it is beneficial to humanity, it promotes rural livelihood and sustainable agriculture by mitigating various challenges droughts and flood. Drought Early Warning Systems in Agriculture Support minimize crop and yield loss, reduce food shortage and insecurities, sustain National and States GDP from agriculture, minimize soil degradation and desertification processes, maintain ecosystem functions, provide irrigation and preserve surface and groundwater resources, avoid famine and livelihood insecurities.



For the fishing community also, ISRO has developed mobile apps which integrate satellite technology for their safety navigation and communication like Map My India NAVIC Message Receive App, Nabh Mitra Network and App for sub-20-meter Boats and Sagarmitra SAR Emergency Messaging App)

Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) launched in 2014 promotes holistic development that covers production, post-harvest management, and marketing. To promote holistic growth in horticulture, The Clean Plant Programme (CPP) was launched in 2014-2015. It ensures high productivity, sustainability and improve farmer incomes strengthening India's horticultural sector.

As a part of the *Atma Nirbhar Bharat*, the *National Beekeeping and Honey Mission* (NBHM) was launched with the objectives of the "Sweet Revolution". It promotes scientific beekeeping practices and high-quality honey. Madhu Gandhi Portal (2021) digitize the registration of beekeepers and colonies ensuring honey traceability.

Transforming Rural lives, Gram Panchayat is empowered with flagship initiatives. Geo MGNREGA monitors MGNREGA assets integrating RS and GIS for geotagging. Geoportal like Bhuvan Panchayat Geoportal visualize, analyse, monitors tools for land use, water resources and infrastructure providing geospatial data and satellite imagery for planning and governance. It is a web-based platform operating seamlessly across platforms bringing transparency and accountability.

Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP) digitize the land record that coordinates for accuracy and reduce fraud ensuring authenticity. Transforming rural governance and resource management in India, it ensures efficient planning, transparency and sustainable development aligning with the goals of Digital India and inclusive growth.

Space Technology plays an important role in Rural Development that GSAT satellites connects remote areas through high-speed internet through digital inclusion. Many applications enable the rural areas such as Telemedicine provides for healthcare in rural regions connecting villages to specialized urban hospitals, R- learning platforms for education creating virtual classroom and e-governance digitizes service delivery. Satellite technology enables the All-India Radio (AIR) to broadcast programs promoting awareness on rural issues like health, agriculture and disaster preparedness. It not only transforms rural India; it also bridges developmental gaps and empower the rural people making an equitable and resilient India.

Article 243G and the 11th schedule assign 29 functional areas to PRIs for planning and implementing schemes for economic development and social justice have various democratic efficiency, convergence



equity. Article 280(3) (bb) and (c) provides Finance Commission recommendations on panchayat finances state Panchayat Acts: customized for state specific needs enabling decentralized planning. Digital Transformation in The Working of Panchayati Raj with Reference to MGNREGA and Women and Children Welfare Scheme, Manipur Rural Development:

In the context of Manipur, the working of Panchayati Raj Institution under 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act which was introduced on 24th April, 1993 is crucial for institution for rural self-governance. “The Panchayats “entitled in Part 9 of the Constitution allows the devolution of powers and responsibilities to Panchayats, which is essential for local governance. 29 subjects enlisted in 11th schedule empower PRIs to manage local importance such as Agriculture, Drinking Water, Rural Housing, Education etc. at the grass root level.

Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan launched on 21st April, 2018 introduced training support for Elected Representatives (ERs) and functionaries which focused on aspirational districts and Panchayat Resource Centres (PRCs). It increased Capacity Enhancement Component Growth more than 10,6%. It strengthened local governance capacity. It also improved Panchayat performance through better training, resources and support. Cabinet approves continuation of Revamped Centrally sponsored scheme of Rastriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA). The total financial outlay of the scheme is Rs. 5911 crores. It will help 2.78 lakh Rural Local Bodies to achieve Sustainable Goals. From 2022-2025, 23.14 lakh elected women have been trained which focused on decision making, financial literacy, legal awareness and leadership.

In the decade of Institutional Empowerment (2014-2024), Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDs) introduced in 2015-2016 for holistic planning at the grassroots converged 29 subjects from 11th schedule with schemes like MGNREGS, NRLM. Under such Central sponsored schemes in Manipur also it strengthens local self-governance and accurate land data empowers PRIs to formulate evidence-based policy. In the context of Manipur, it enables transparent implementation of schemes like MGNREGA, PMAYG and Jal Jeevan Mission. The Panchayat Devolution Index (PDI) developed by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj with the support of reputed research institutes, as a crucial tool assess the extent of devolution to Panchayats and identify areas for empowerment.

According to the most recent PDI report compiled by the India Institute of Public administration (IIPA) for the year 2021-2022, overall trends of devolution has been increased from 39.9% to 43.9% between 2013-2014 and 2022-2023 indicating a positive trend towards decentralization. The Capacity Enhancement surged from 44% to 54,6%. Functionaries from 39,6% to 50.9% reflecting significant investments in infrastructure and recruitment of officials. Financial devolution also increased from a national average of



32-05% to 37.04%, suggesting a better flow of funds to Panchayats. It measures overall health of local governance and helps in policy making where reforms are necessary and where are excelling. The PDI provides actionable insights for further strengthening Panchayats and empowering local governance. It also provides transparency into how Panchayats function, helping citizens hold their local government accountable. It is used as a roadmap to strengthen the Panchayats system and ensure effective service delivery at the grassroots level. The PDI as a pivotal tool in evaluating the progress of decentralization and local governance in India it ensures better service delivery to the rural population promoting a more inclusive and democratic local governance system.

MNREGA enhances the livelihood of rural households providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wages to every rural household whose adult members are registered. In the past, those adult members are entries through demand form manually in Matri Roll (that is attendance sheet). However, all these works are digitized monitoring through portal. In the worksite, one photo session is taken before the work start in the morning, one during the work and one at the end of the work. Its working hour is 8 hours per day. Presently the worksites are geotagged that can be accessed using NMMS (National Mobile Monitoring System). While in the inspection, gender mismatched can be identified however individual person can't be identified easily. So, eye biometric based technology will be upcoming to overcome this barrier according to the interview of one of the Panchayat Secretary. And the payment of the job card holder is also totally digitalized through ABPS (Aadhaar Based Payment System). It brings transparency monetarizing more than 2/3 lakhs in Manipur.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Grameen (PMAYG), a housing scheme is also digitized in all the process from selection up to payment. The spots are surveyed by taking photo with geotagged location and registrations are digitized through portal for beneficiary. However the location of construction cannot be beyond 10m, so it is surveyed with geotagged of its location before providing benefits and the location variation is not allowed. Its payment is also done through ABPS. It is done by surveying level by level through inspection on spot.

The State Finance and 15 Finance (changing central sponsored scheme from time to time) is financing for PRIs to finance developmental work in the ratio 90:10. Beneficiary Secretary is responsible for the honorarium of the stakeholders of PRIs. It is also digitized with digital signature with no leakages. Rural Development Department act as a nodal in bringing transparency and taking all initiatives monitoring in different parameters. Thus, PRIs play a vast important role in examining basic facilities through Digitalization.



Welfare for women and children:

The women and children's friendly panchayats work for the welfare of women and children. A dramatic change has been witnessed in the rural areas. The communication can be easily accessed that has fundamentally altered the reach, efficacy and effectiveness of ASHAs, Anganwadi workers and ANMs (Auxiliary Nurses and Midwifery). Nowadays ASHA workers as well as Anganwadi workers and Supervisor have created WhatsApp group and communicate for the activities they have to perform spreading awareness about the new government schemes, the date of regular check for the pregnant women and for neo-natal care and well as information about immunization drives.

POSHAN Abhiyan launched in March 2018 aims at improving nutritional outcomes for children, pregnant women and lactating mothers. It focused on the first 1000 days of a child's life by providing health and nutritional services in an intensive manner.

In Manipur, there are 43 ICDS projects (Integrated Child Development Service Projects). Under Child Development Project Officer, workers and helpers works through Supervisors of Social Welfare Department. *Poshan Tracker* is a mobile based app to monitor their works that digitize their activities. Workers and helpers use this app daily reporting their daily activities. Pregnant women are registered by them in the *Poshan Tracker* all their details and reports about vaccination timely. For the first-born child, pregnant women are given rs 5000 by PMMVY (*Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana*) benefit and home visit is performed by workers for their timely report of their health conditions. They submit reports of the child birth also and distribution of nutrition's are also reported in the *Poshan Tracker*. Celebration of *Poshan Maah* and *Poashan Pakawada* giving awareness of sanitization, health care, clean environment activities, adolescent girls etc are also reported through digitalization. Enrolment of children from 0 to 6 years are also digitized through *Poshan Tracker* monitoring the caring of children healthcare with nutritious food.

Conclusion:

All reports are digitized from various line departments in hierarchical form from Block line department to Nodal officer and to the Panchayat Secretary and then to the BDO- District Nodal Office and again at the State level Nodal officer for verification and finally reported to Central Ministry. All these responsibilities and accountabilities are liable to bring more advancement and accuracy. The last decade has redefined PRIs not just as administrative bodies, but as vanguards of local democracy, participatory development and social inclusion. With increased digitalization, gender empowerment, fiscal devolution and alignment with



national missions, PRIs are strengthening in determining the success of India's grassroots – driven development model.

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