

Chapter 20

Dream and the Reality: The Adoption of “Digital Concept” in an Emerging Country

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ABSTRACT

The present study seeks to find out the present scenario of listed companies practices with digital Bangladesh concept: Are the companies compatible with the digital Bangladesh concept and is the digital Bangladesh concept dream (or) reality check? This may link between the organizational behavior in terms of technology adoption, disclosure, and the digital concept. The Digital Bangladesh means the effective and useful use of technology in education, health, jobs, markets, et cetera, to ensure the greater accountability and transparency. The stance of this study is to explore the adoption of digital concept in an emerging country's experience where the adoption policy and the individual organization or company of the country's experience will be examined through institutional theoretical framework which will later determine the dream or reality of the digital concept. The study finds that despite some legal provisions, only 48.14% of the listed companies had websites. The study reveals that literacy rate, infrastructure, and the cultural issues to establish real digital Bangladesh are still a dream rather than a reality. Therefore, to connect the link between the dream and reality of digital concept, in particular Digital Bangladesh, the organizational motivation and predetermined concept and cultural value should be shaped by rules and regulations. The findings are helpful for both policymakers and academics to have an overview of the challenges of establishing digital economy in emerging country with reference to Bangladesh.

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INTRODUCTION

The idea of the ‘Global Village’ from Marshall Mc Luhanⁱ has become ‘dream comes true’ because of the availability of the internet and the advancement of information technology. It is not only limited to western developed countries, but is also available to emerging countries. The concept of the ‘Digital Bangladesh’ⁱⁱ is used as election manifesto by the Awami League led government in an effort to improve the access and adoption of digital technology for all of its citizens. Prior research suggest that the internet has played a significant role on underpinning processes and activities in almost all the aspects of human life. For example, communication, media, and education have benefited from the use of the internet, which provides new ways of communicating, informing, and educating that cease ‘time’ and vanish ‘space’. It has become a universal source of information, more so with globalization and the mobilization of the international financial markets. Figure 1 shows the sharp growth of internet users between 1995 -2010.

The commitment to establish a ‘Digital Bangladesh’ is however challenged. The concept itself is not explained very well by the government. Both the ruling parties in Bangladesh, Awami League and opposition parties, Bangladesh Nationalist Party have stressed the importance of ICT development as a core issue to make e-state across the whole range of social, economic and governance development issues. Despite having no disagreement on this issue among the parties, after 2008 election both parties are focusing on different issues ignoring the political manifesto on Digital Bangladesh issues. Therefore, the question still remains in 2011, what is digital Bangladesh? “Though it is very easy to speak about such a dream, making a country digital, but at the same time it is very difficult to implement it. For implementation, it is basically the government who will take initiatives while the other political parties

also need to play important role” (The Financial Express, 2009). In the present study, Digital Bangladesh means the effective and useful use of technology in education, health, job placement, poverty reduction, governance, markets and involving all classes of people in terms of decision making and ensuring the greater accountability and transparency in modern democratic country. To digitize Bangladesh it needs a series of reforms in almost every sector. This is difficult for a country that is affected by climate change and high poverty levels. So, the study seeks to understand the gap between the dream and reality of establishing digital Bangladesh. To explore the digital concept, the next section follows the overview of the digital economy and its characteristics.

With the inclusion of the introduction, the study has been organized in eight sections. The second section provides an overview of digital economy concept and literature review is in third. The fourth section discusses theoretical framework and research methodology in the fifth section. The sixth section discusses the findings of the result following the future research direction in seven and conclusion and the limitations in the final section.

BACKGROUND OF DIGITAL ECONOMY

The 21st century, so far, has seen a global revolution in technology development. Use of technology has changed the way people live, think, and behave. The major contributors of this revolution are the Internet and WWW technologies that have been developed in early 90’s. However, only recently hardware enabling users to use the internet has become more affordable to the ordinary, non technical users in both developed and emerging countries. Use of digital technology, hardware and software, are transforming businesses, governments and society as a whole and has huge

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