

A Political Economic View of the Digital India Campaign

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Abstract

This paper discusses the proliferation of digital media in developing countries like India whilst dissecting the phenomenon with the tools under political economy. To unravel the various layers of this dense issue, it first explores the discourse on political economy of the digital space and what is now known as new media. Next, it looks at the importance given to the role of digital media to both compete and announce one's competence on a platform which is globalization biased. In order to understand the discourse around the digital wave in India, the role played by the State in terms of policy making, ownership and launching State initiated campaigns is studied. A thematic analysis of the inauguration speech given by the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi on the launch of Digital India shows the persuasive strategies used to influence the attitude of the audience towards the campaign and throws light on the political economy of Digital Communication and Digital Capitalism in the 21st century India.

Keywords: *Political Economy, New Media, Digital India*

Introduction

The digital space is no longer out there, somewhere in an intangible future. It is our present, at times in the guise of the internet being the new public sphere for communal causes or at times as the ugly commercial zone for advertisers working at the expense of commodification of the consumers. The truth we can no longer hide from lies in the fact empirically evident of how the structural design of technology will always favour a certain kind of social change (Castells, 2001). Digital India is a State initiated campaign to digitally empower

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the nation by wiring the entire population and making everyone internet-able. Digital India speaks of giving voice to the voiceless and allowing the marginalised community to have the ease of access when it comes to the internet to help them overcome their “information poverty” through digital empowerment (Digital Empowerment Foundation, 2016). This paper recognises how with the State announcing a new title of “digital India” upon its nation state, it becomes extremely important to understand what the implications of adopting such a digitisation wave are. Recognising the stakeholders of a programme that claims to have digital empowerment as its major goal becomes important to tease out the economic and political forces behind it. Along with that, another important aspect would be to understand whether it is digital empowerment the country needs. Before this paper can lay out the arguments specific to the political economy analysis of the Digital India Campaign, it becomes necessary to visit the foundations of political economy of Internet and the politics of the new media while debating if it indeed redefines the public sphere.

Internet and the digital space have been subjected to an irregular, sporadic and erratic form of mass popularity as witnessed in the recent past. If the digital space of the internet were to be conceived as a marketplace, (Quah & Coyle, 2002) it is important to note how the entry barriers have increased for the novice, as the well-established investors of the kingdom keep expanding in the hope of acquiring a monopolistic grip of the digital economy (Javary & Mansell, 2002). Drawing from the arguments made by Peter Golding and Graham Murdoch, it is clear to see what is required of the scholarly work that

exists in the present context is to form a more grounded argument of the political economy fervour to address the issues that can be seen emerging in the horizon of media and communication in conjecture to new media. Further insight needs to be extracted from the “social processes” which act in tandem to the context of the internet as a platform for both producing and consuming content to add to the political economic approach to understand the digital space better. Lack of an egalitarian digital space makes for more than a good reason to take up the cause (Golding & Murdock, 1978).

A need has also been recognised to add a “critical internet theory” enterprise to the political economy inadequately applied so far can aid in throwing some light on how the relationship between Internet and society is shaped by various spurious elements. The combined forces of the two can help tease out the fine intricacies of how the Internet is perceived in the context of viewing the antagonisms of a capitalistic society it is borne of. Critical internet theory solidifies the political economy approach not only through ontological and epistemic grounding but also by bringing into the forefront a “standpoint theory” of the internet by bringing in the various complexities of intersectionality of class-based, gender-based, race-based oppressions (Fuchs, 2009) . In order to take up the task of unravelling the political economy of the digital space there are two primary functions that need to be indefinitely carried out. First, is to understand what a political economy lens has to offer. Second, how studying the persuasive strategies employed in political speeches can yield a critical understanding of the launch of such a campaign.

Review of Literature

New media as the new public sphere

“Emergence of digital” in the 20th century is known to be applied to constitute the term ‘new media’ (Reese & Shoemaker, 2016). As an overarching jargon, new media is used as an umbrella term to include digital, networked, interactive, information and communication technologies. Electronic and digitised in nature, used mainly for networking new media encompasses within its terrain the social media platforms used widely and the whole of internet (Abdel-Aziz, Abdel-Salem, & El-Sayed, 2016; Festoon Media, 2010). One of the key features of new media and the digitized networked society it has spawned out is the fact that synchronization is now possible in real time (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010). A body of literature exists to understand co-presence as a mode of being with others and as a sense of being with others in an electronic proximity (Zhao, 2003) given the vast array of platforms and a plethora of diverse devices (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010). Digital evolution has taken the world up by a storm with figures showing how 81% of American population are active users of new media technologies (Duggan, Ellison, Lampe, Lenhart, & Madden, 2015).

To mull over the dynamics of both failure and success of information and communication technologies in the procurement of development, studies conducted in the Indian ethos with Internet development on the vanguard take up the discourse of modernization. A bias of such an extent is because more often than not, scholarly work works in tandem with the discourse on development adopted by the State (Zhang & Chib, 2014). The present digital landscape of India

paints a picture of an immensely fast growing economy embroidered with the increasing number of middle class population and a deeper penetration of digital technology and consumerism. Statistics of June, 2014 itself reflected the status of Indian internet using population as the third largest following China and USA. Estimations claim India can secure the second position in the Internet usage race by 2018 (Kant, Mairaj, & Kamna, 2015).

One of the critical key components of a modern society is deemed to be the presence of a participatory and democratic public sphere. Public sphere is characterised by the presence of a space for the citizens to enter into a dialogue about societal developments and form a collective voice for the community (Habermas, 1989). Scholars of the likes of Benjamin Barber (1984, 1996), Peter Dahlgren (1991) attach great importance of the idea of participation which would involve inclusion of civic citizens in the public sphere (Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards, & Rucht, 2002). Existing alternative public spheres where citizens can enter upon a discussion as a whole bear within them the capacity for challenging the hegemonic social conditions surrounding them (Habermas, 1989). However, horizontal communication between citizens has been increasingly substituted by “vertical communication between mass media, greatly influenced by both the state and capital, and consumers”. This leads to restricted forms of participatory and inclusive communication in the public sphere (Downey & Fenton, 2003).

New media has been credited however to have the capacity to house participatory and democratised form of communication but offering an egalitarian environment and equal opportunities to all

(Anderson, 2001; Gil de Zúñiga & Diehl, 2017; Trenz, 2009). Although what new media offers as a space for unbound dialogue may seem like it can redefine and reshape the public sphere (Trenz, 2009), whether the public space created by new media technologies suited for politically oriented conversation can transcend to a public sphere is not entirely and merely depended on just the technology (Abdel-Aziz et al., 2016). There are various existing aspects and features that pose a threat to the basic potential the digital media carries for harbouring a public sphere. The politics of big data and how the data is extracted from the public, stored by companies or the State, and later on used has been a huge problem in imagining the internet as all encompassing public sphere (Klinger & Svensson, 2015). Next, come the debates related to access and affordances when even treads on the murky pathways of digital literacy and digital labour (Fuchs, 2014, 2019b, 2019a). With new media it might be possible to have conversations with others without being restricted by space and time boundaries, but these technologies are also known to “fragmentize political discourse” (Shah et al., 2017). Lastly the greatest concern has to do with how new media is bound to take on the characteristics of the current political culture given the molding of global capitalism (Papacharissi, 2002). Proliferation of digital media beckons for a revisiting of the debates on technologies, discourse and power related to media studies (Chakravarty, 2017). What is required is to develop a political economic analysis of how the positions of power are “contested, established and used” throughout the ubiquitously present new media in the present time (Thorhauge & Helles, 2013).

Political economy of new media

Much like any other field, there is a plurality in the form of the political economy deployed to study the media and communication systems. Being an approach to social analysis, political economy was not formed in a vacuum. Starting from the pivotal realization that “social change is ubiquitous”, three intricate strands are leafed out for a political economy analyses: “commodification”, “spatialization” and “structuration”. Traditional political economy focused on “social change” and “historical transformation”. Owing to its Marxian roots, a special sort of attention was paid to the concept of praxis in the traditional approach. Having traversed through the pathways of classical and neoclassical economics, a branch of political economy departed from the traditional form to undertake the task of scrutinizing the media like media texts, cultural implications of media consumption, production of media, commodification of both content and consumers and so on (Bruns & Highfield, 2015; Couldry, 2000; Dahlberg, 2015; Fuchs, 2014; Kellner, 2005; Moslow, 1996).

Political economy of communication is embellished with early works on “the power processes within society”. Focusing on production, allocation and quality it became easier to study the role of capital, control and segregation of the media industries by political economists. Production was not the primary focus, in spite of the criticism faced by political economy and consumption patterns were given equal significance (Smythe, 1960). Patterns and structures determining both production and consumption of media, both old and new, were brought under the purview of political economy keeping in mind notions of the emergent social structures and the hierarchical

patterns of power. Extending such traditions of the likes of these, political economy of new media concerns itself with meaning, content, symbolic form along with power structures that determine the allocation of scarce resources based on unequal power distribution. Two major concerns within political economy of new media is commodification of both content and end-users, and the scarcity of resources which is reinforced by the politics behind the policies on copyright (Garnham, 1990, 2000). Scarcity of resources deeply embedded in the context of new media, in terms of information and knowledge society when it comes to tracking consumption and production of new media content is a strategic ploy to reinforce the hegemonic power structures and the repressive unequal nature of distribution (Javary & Mansell, 2002; Mansell, 1999, 2004). Ownership is another crucial aspect of speculation as studies show how concentrated is the web of retailers, media conglomerates, software providers, and communication and telecommunication suppliers. With the limited number of players on the production side who is in charge of molding the consumption patterns of the widely-reached audience, political economy helps in pointing out the rise of new the new power structures within the system (Couldry, 2003; Couldry & Yu, 2018). Privatisation in social media platforms like Facebook and issues of surveillance, amassing of big data and so on are an aftermath of the vicious new media power structure (Chakravarty, 2017). Facebook is merely meant for socialising and the world becomes a better place due to the act of “sharing” on Facebook and an increased sense of connectivity are merely a part of the facade of the commercial interests of the company. Facebook is just a harmless and innocent social media

platform is a part of a myth only to conceal the politics behind the policy of privacy settings of Facebook and the economic strategy of how to commodify the leisure time of consumers whilst turning them into producers of content only to render them into a free labour force for Mark Zuckerberg. Had it not been so, Facebook as a platform would have not been of the non-commercial kind and nor would it have had used targeted advertising (Fuchs, 2002). Withstanding ownership and consumptions politics, the new media forms a questionable social tool to most political economics. To this concoction, the addition of Digital India, a digitally empowering campaign in a developing nation creates a more frightening apparition.

Digital India

Political economy of media at some point of time took a sharp turn to tread on the path of information from cultural consumption. This ensured a shift in perspective as well. Information economy and information society has crept into the discourse of political economy shifted its focus on issues of policy, information distribution, access to and consumption of information (Garnham, 2011). Travelling all through time and space, we can now have an important glance to chance upon the politically charged digital terrain of India, dubbed as a “developing nation”.

In 1991 India witnessed the liberalisation of its economy which resulted in the amalgamation of the private and the public sector (Nayyar, 2017). India’s ethos opened up to an array of options in terms of job opportunities (Sridharan, 2008), new media applications and trade prospects (Das, 2015). Digital space soon became an Indian reality and e-governance was not far behind. Expanding on this, the Modi

Government of India launched a “Digital India” campaign in 2014, which is scheduled to be completed by 2019 to digitally empower its people. The vision and mission of the campaign talk of transcending the presently digitally constraint economy to a digitally empowered one with better opportunities of civic engagement by the people and a functional e-governance system (“Digital India,” 2019; “Digital India: Power to empower,” 2019; Kumar & Khurana, 2018a). Being digitally abled has been empirically proven to be beneficiary for a nation having a developing status as that of India (Veer & Shukla, 2018; Yadav & Pushkar, 2018). With their policies in place along with meticulous execution of integrated efforts of all the related departments (Kumar & Khurana, 2018b), the campaign offers a landscape wherein there will be “education for all, information for all, healthcare for all, broadband for all” (WIPRO, Deloitte, 2015) with broaden civic engagement opportunities for the people (Kumar & Khurana, 2018a). However, this raises the issue of a digital divide that exist in many countries like India. Such a digital divide comes into being created when wealth is generated due to the intervention of new centers created for information technology. This leads to integration of some sectors with the global economy leaving the rest of the population further marginalised and depriving them of basic needs (Gorman, 2006).

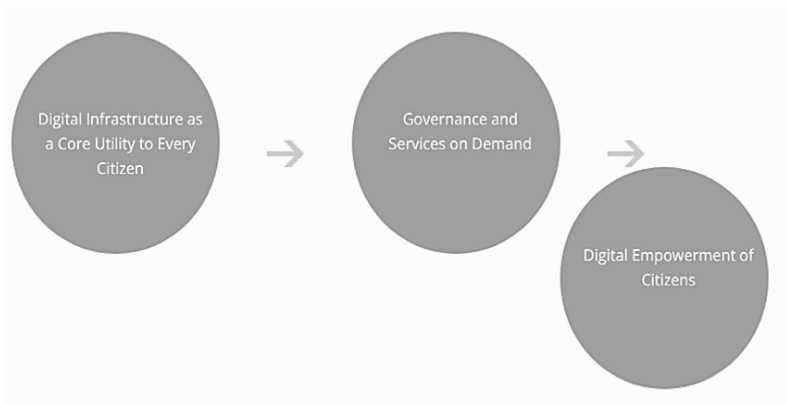
Under the campaign of Digital India, the State has outlined three key goals: Digital Infrastructure as a utility to every citizen, Governance and services on demand, digital empowerment of Citizens. The three areas are to integrate ease of access on the cyberspace of every individual to avail utilitarian services like online banking, online authentication with governance based aid and services for financial

and development support. The most promising agenda of the campaign rests on the giant pillar of digital empowerment through digital literacy (“Digital India,” 2019; “Digital India: Power to empower,” 2019) (See Figure 1). While all of the goals of the campaign sound immensely grand, the execution is bound to face the challenge of low speed internet and hindrances in terms of penetration when it comes to connect 2,50,000 villages (Patel, Thakkar, & Parmar, 2016; TOI Tech, 2015).

Depending on the digital skills, the population of India is divided into three baskets: the digital natives, digital immigrants and the digital illiterates. In spite of the differences of these groups all lay affected by the 21st century State initiated digital innovation. However, if the gap between these groups is not bridged at the same pace as the growth of the digital wave, it is bound to fail in its attempt to secure empowerment to the mass (Mazzarella, 2010). A rigorous digital push adopted by the State articulates its myopic vision. Without developing the much needed areas of socio-economic and political conditions, the government has jumped its guns for a digitisation process. Digitally enabled society is not a problematic goal to keep, but taking a huge leap without realising who the stakeholders of such an initiative might be proves to be a pressing issue. Politics of ownership resurfaces in the argument when you look through the lens of political economy to realise a digital India campaign could be a business move to not only tap the vast rural market that lies out there but to cast a spell of monopoly over the market. Technological innovation formed in a vacuum without any socio-cultural negotiations is bound to cry havoc on the face of the nation. Though digital empowerment been promised

by the State speaks in the language of civic participation, if policies are not made transparent and a digital wave is imposed for the sake of development, it would only end up encroaching upon the livelihood of the marginalized group the campaign promises to flourish.

Figure 1: Vision Statement of Digital India as per the State Website³



Digital Infrastructure as a Utility to Every Citizen	Governance & Services on Demand	Digital Empowerment of Citizens
<p>Availability of high speed internet as a core utility for delivery of services to citizens</p> <p>Cradle to grave digital identity that is unique, lifelong, online and authenticable to every citizen</p> <p>Mobile phone & bank account enabling citizen participation in digital & financial space</p> <p>Easy access to a Common Service Centre</p> <p>Shareable private space on a public cloud</p> <p>Safe and secure cyber-space</p>	<p>Seamlessly integrated services across departments or jurisdictions</p> <p>Availability of services in real time from online & mobile platforms</p> <p>All citizen entitlements to be portable and available on the cloud</p> <p>Digitally transformed services for improving ease of doing business</p> <p>Making financial transactions electronic & cashless</p> <p>Leveraging Geospatial Information Systems (GIS) for decision support systems & development</p>	<p>Universal digital literacy</p> <p>Universally accessible digital resources</p> <p>Availability of digital resources / services in Indian languages</p> <p>Collaborative digital platforms for participative governance</p> <p>Citizens not required to physically submit Govt. documents / certificates</p>

3 (Source: <https://digitalindia.gov.in/content/vision-and-vision-areas#>)

Theoretical Framework

Persuasive strategies in political speeches

“Persuasion is a symbolic process in which communicators try to convince other people to change their attitudes or behaviour regarding an issue through the transmission of a message, in an atmosphere of free choice” (Perloff, 2003). A theory of persuasion of as to how a message is perceived by the audience is explained by the social judgment theory. According to the theory there two internal processes at work attitude and ego involvement with respect to which the newly received information is compared to the set of beliefs the audience already holds before a decision to accept or reject the message is reached upon. These two elements combined help in shaping the audience’s affiliation towards the speaker for persuasive oration to work effectively (Rapp, 2010; Sherif & Hovland, n.d.; Walqui, Koelsch, & Schmida, 2012). Persuasive rhetoric of political campaigns can be unravelled intricately under the framework of social judgement theory (O’Keefe, 1990). It is important to first of all understand, the major persuasion at work during the propagation of any campaign is not just to talk about the issues the campaign stands for or against but it is to persuade the audience/voters in two ways (Jowett, & O’Donnell, 2018; Partington & Taylor, 2010). First, it is to persuade the audience to vote for the candidate and second it is to let the audience know that the speaker shares the same view as the audience when it comes to a particular issue and thus it will helps breed familiarity between the political candidate and the voters (Jowett, & O’Donnell, 2018; O’Keefe, 1990).

However, in order to understand persuasion it is important to realise the critical importance added to the rhetoric used in persuasive messages which are influential due their communicative tactics (Walqui et al., 2012). Rhetoric which works as the counterpart of dialect (Aristotle, 2010) is a form of art to persuade the audience using a fine balance of emotions and rationality (Triadafilopoulos, 1999). In rhetoric three elements are crucial in terms of adding to the persuasive efficacy of the orator: the moral character of speaker (ethos), emotions of the audience's (pathos), and the rationale provided by the speakers in the form of arguments (logos). On the basis of intention, rhetoric may be (1) deliberative or political speeches wherein the speaker urges the audience towards or against a particular action, (2) forensic or judgement oriented, wherein the speaker speaks in defence or attacks someone and (3) epideictic or ceremonial speech (Aristotle, 2010). Aristotle's rhetoric held that "political speech should engage both the rational and non-rational elements of the listener's soul." (Triadafilopoulos, 1999).

Other than the simultaneous appeal to ethos, pathos, and logos followed by the classical rhetoric there are three other vital elements (Rapp, 2010). First is 'disposito' which involves the speaker knowing their audience in order to decide the arguments to make and the order in which the arguments should be made. Second, 'elocutio' is concerned with the linguistic tools applied to aggravate the persuasive efficacy. Third, 'imitation' is informed of the past history of both the issue and the audience (Corbett, 1963; Corbett & Connors, 1999). Political speech is always about the future and includes inciting the audience towards a particular course of action for or against an issue.

Though, plagued by controversy, political rhetoric is considered nobler than forensic as it concerns the general public at large (Aristotle, 2010). Persuasion in political speech is not a new affair (Partington & Taylor, 2010) and it should be of the citizen's primary concern (Aristotle, 2010). However how these politicians use their rhetoric is important to study to analyse their speeches better (Partington & Taylor, 2010). . In order to lay bare the political economic aspects of the Digital India Campaign, this paper aims to analyse the inauguration speech given by the Prime Minister of the country, Narendra Modi on the launch of the campaign under the theories of persuasion.

Methodology

On its launch on 1 July 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave a speech at the inauguration highlighting the three core components of Digital India campaign: creation of digital infrastructure, delivering services digitally and digital literacy ("Digital India: 15 salient things to know about PM Narendra Modi's project," 2015; Jha, 2015). In this paper, thematic analysis has been used on the 27 minutes speech given by Narendra Modi to study the persuasive strategies employed by him in order to understand the political economy of the political campaign. The analysis goes out to show how the aim of the speech is premised on the idea of how to persuade the listeners into believing how indeed the idea of India turning digital would lead a path to better and efficient governance and place the nation on a global platform.

Qualitative research methodologies are extensively used in conducting social science research and is prevalent amongst non-positivist scholarship (Divan et al., 2017), however, it still needs impeccable guidance for it lacks a generalised one-size-fits-all texture

that quantitative analysis provides (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Qualitative data analysis is heavily dependent on interpretation. Being a form of qualitative analysis, thematic Analysis is used to analyse categorisation and evolving patterns that can be related to the data in place. It delves into great details of the data in great detail and allows flexibility in term interpretations (Alhojailan, 2012). Thematic analysis is a qualitative research methodology which includes “the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data.” (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 3353). In other words, thematic analysis serves as a comprehensive procedure requiring researchers to able to identify copious linkages between the corpus of the data and the study’s own themes. As a method, thematic analysis provides flexibility for the researcher to approach the analysis of the data either inductively and deductively (Alhojailan, 2012; Blacker, 2009). One clear advantage of thematic analysis is how it marks its point of departure from most other qualitative methodologies in having specific epistemological standpoint, thus granting thematic analysis a certain flexibility which allows a wide array of research topic to able to adopt this method of analysis. This article follows the 6-step framework for conducting thematic analysis proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006). This framework has been known to offer a clear scientific approach to the method and has been adopted in numerous social science studies (Divan et al., 2017). The main aim of thematic analysis is to cull out pattern within the data corpus and identify themes. The said themes must be crucial in terms of the research objective and should be instrumental in addressing the research questions. It is important to note how the process of identifying themes must transcend simplistic summarisation

of the data and must involve interpretation juxtaposed with critical engagement with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

Since, the digital India campaign is yet to be executed at a large scale data available to study the campaign is in the form of articles written in praise of the campaigns and speeches of rhetoric significance delivered. In order to conduct an analysis of the campaign through the lens of political economy to conceptualise the reified idea of a digital India in the contextual relevance of a politically driven campaign, the paper chose the inaugural speech laying out the mission-vision statements declared under the campaign along with its main proponents to garner a fair understanding of the politics behind the digital initiative by the way Modi articulates about the campaign.

The Braun & Clarke's (2006) six-step guide (see Table 1) offers a rather useful framework for conducting effective thematic analysis. Braun & Clarke (2006, 2013) begin by distinguishing between two levels of themes: semantic and latent. Semantic themes can be thought of the patterns that lie "...within the explicit or surface meanings of the data and the analyst is not looking for anything beyond what a participant has said or what has been written" (p. 84). The latent level, on the other hand, looks beyond what exists explicitly within the data and "...starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations - and ideologies - that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data" (p. 84). In this article, the two levels have been juxtaposed to identify the patterns identified in the Prime Minister's inaugural speech to cull out pertinent nuances. Another crucial feature highlighted by Braun & Clarke (2006) is how

they distinguish between a top-down or theoretical thematic analysis, that is driven by the specific research question(s) and/or the analyst's focus, and a bottom-up or inductive one that is more driven by the data itself. Although the analysis used in this article was more driven by the research question and theoretical framework, it does follow what is known as "abductive" thematic analysis (Blacker, 2009) which lies neatly in between the polarised inductive and deductive approaches.

Table 1: Braun & Clarke's (2006) Six-Step Framework of doing Thematic Analysis

1. Become familiar with the data	2. Generate Initial Codes
3. Search for themes	4. Review themes
5. Define themes	6. Write Up

An analysis of Narendra Modi's speech on the Digital India Week launch

Using ethos, pathos and logos Modi's speech⁴ begins with a congratulatory note for the team of Digital India and then he goes on to talk of the journey the team has had to embark upon in order to build a promising future for the nation. By openly mentioning absolute figures in terms of money invested and the return of investment in terms of job opportunities for the citizens, he makes his speech appear transparent and objective, striking a chord of trust among his audience. The way the audience perceives him comes not only from past experiences of him winning the elections to have had become the prime minister but also from his stand on the prosperity and growth of the nation shaped

⁴ Video link for the speech given by Narendra Modi:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00vW6hUFKRO>

by discourse on development and empowerment. Credibility of the source here in this context is clearly visible as the speaker is a public figure for whom a considerable size of the country's population had already expressed trust in the form of their votes, which comes from the deemed success of the Gujarat's Development Model based.

Speeches based on examples coupled with enthymemes are known to be extremely persuasive and Modi's rhetoric seems to be well informed of this quality. Using the analogy of water and land as useful resources of a healthy civilization, Modi talks of the need of optical fibre in the 21st century. Modi brings into light more statistics of the demographic details of the nation along with figures that state the presence of a digital gap and as he brings in data, he provides evidence to what he is saying in his speech. Throughout his speech, Modi brings in an element of coalition building referring to the State and the citizens as 'we' and how it is 'our' responsibility to work together to fill the digital gap. Also, he continuously talks of the repercussions of being a digital laggard.

Modi then talks of a development oriented governance where the people are made active partners and stakeholders in the development journey and outlines a model where there is "minimum Government and maximum Governance". Here he clearly mentions how he is leveraging the underprivileged population who are a victim of the digital divide in the country. In his whole speech he constantly talks of how important it is as a nation to realize how much potential and talent is not being fully utilised in the country without the support of a digital framework. He promotes the idea of 'design in India' saying that Digital India as a campaign will make sure that the nation does not

only produce IT professionals to be sent overseas but also to have innovations and entrepreneurship ventures carried out successfully in their own country. By instigating feelings of nationhood, collectiveness and patriotism Modi uses techniques not just to grab the attention of his audience members but build trust in them. His words are full of hope and optimism of a future wherein the country prospers because of digital connectivity and he and his party are there to oversee.

In the entire speech three themes can be drawn. The first theme is an appeal for a hope in the form of a digitally advanced nation by talking of digital natives and the power of digital technology which can place India at par with the other developed nations of the world. Second, he generates a theme of trust by providing examples and objective figures. Third theme is that of the discourse of development. This becomes evident as Modi concludes by saying “I dream of a Digital India...” and reading out the underlying principles of the campaign. He efficiently persuades the audience to connect ideas of development, growth and prosperity with the Digital India Campaign.

Conclusion: Is India ready to transcend its identity to Digital India?

Narendra Modi’s rhetoric reflects immense persuasive efficacy and he manages to make a nation of people how being digital is the answer to the issues of development, hindrances of participatory governance and the upliftment of marginalisation. However, what lies concealed within the arts of persuasion employed to influence the opinion of an entire nation is the politics of such a campaign. A subtle agenda of a persuasion of such a speech is not merely to launch the campaign and help people see the merits in the programme but to also reinforce the position of the prime minister and seek to gain further support from

the country. Without knowing the nuanced terms and conditions of having a digital evolution fed to the people in the name of digital uplifting and digital literacy what lays further hidden are the economic interests of the State of using a digital rhetoric. In a time when politics of big data and digital commodification are issues that surround mankind, it would be unwise to not try and tease out the underlying motives of such a step by the State both political and economical in nature.

Fathoming the digital space in the digital generation is not an easy task. The digital generation is made up of digital natives, digital immigrants and digital illiterates envisioned both as the ones that form a digital culture collectively and as the targets of digital marketing (Anderson, 2001; Dahlberg, 2015; Montgomery, 2007; Thomas, 2012). A campaign like Digital India initiated in a developing nation by the State which stands embellished by a digitisation process will have a tendency to blur the boundaries distinguishing entities like government, civil society and marketplace. With a transformed society, a new form of participatory governance would then have to be conceived to rise up to the expectations of the campaign (Thomas, 2012).

New media provides a horizontal platform of interaction in the networked society as opposed to the dogmatic vertical one. This however, does not get rid of the power structures but instead gives rise to new ones (Castells, 1996). With an entrepreneurial governance taking the forefront with claims to grant digital empowerment, it is time to ask the political-economically correct question as to for whom is the digital empowerment intended? Stakeholders of a digital India need to be recognised and the aim should be to set the priorities of the

State right and not let the State's vision is blurred by the digital seduction. In this regard, a political economy lens is sure to provide enough insight to tease out the politics and revenue generating implications behind the madness for digitising India.

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