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Digital Transformation and Changing Environment of Trust in Administration: A Study of Selected Public Sectors

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Abstract: ***India's Digital Public Infrastructure, comprising prominent tools such as Aadhaar, Unified Payments Interface (UPI), Digital Payments, and Digilocker, is collectively referred to as "Stack India". Digital India aims to provide much-needed impetus to the nine pillars of growth sectors, i.e., Broadband Highway, Universal Access to Mobile Connectivity, Public Internet Access Scheme, and electronic administration: Government Reform through Technology, e-Kranti - Providing Electronic Services, Information for All, Electronic Manufacturing, IT for Jobs, and Early Harvest Programs. The term "digital transformation" has become popular to refer to the shift from digitalisation initiatives to a comprehensive overhaul of rules, procedures, and services aimed at simplifying user experiences for residents and frontline employees [1]. The paper's main objectives are to determine the relationship between bureaucratic corruption and digital transformation, and to identify factors that IT experts must adequately address to encourage the use of Digital means. The study shows that digitally connecting and offering services online has been the biggest accomplishment of Digital India. Nowadays, many internet services related to financial inclusion, education, health, and agriculture are accessible nationwide. Initiatives such as eNAM (National Agriculture Market), eSanjivini, DIKSHA (digital infrastructure for knowledge sharing), and Common Service Centres (CSCs) have given India a genuine sense of empowerment. Corruption and a bureaucratic mindset persist as obstacles to digital transformation. It has been observed that corrupt practices persist even after public services were digitised, and that digital services are insufficiently effective in addressing them [2]. It remains challenging to institutionalise new information systems, technologies, norms, practices, and other innovations that enhance planning, governance, operational effectiveness, and service delivery in the public sector. Participation of people in online services, having Knowledge and skills to use online services, significant use of ICT Technologies, IT laws, online Services, infrastructure for online services, and efficiency and transparency in online services increase trust in the Indian Administration. Analysis shows that corruption is prevalent in the public sector. Efficiency and transparency in online services have increased due to digital transformation. People participate less in online services due to network problems, illiteracy, lack of IT skills, and infrastructure challenges. An online survey was conducted using Google Forms to gather data from the education, health, and MSME sectors. The purposive sampling method was used to collect data. Three hundred ninety replies representing the broader population's viewpoint are gathered.***

Keywords: ***Digital Public Infrastructure, Bureaucratic Corruption, Digital Transformation, Financial Inclusion, eNAM, eSanjivini, DIKSHA, Common Service Centres, Online Services, IT Laws, Infrastructure, Efficiency, Transparency, Trust in Administration***

Nomenclature:
AFRS: Automated Facial Recognition System
NSAI: National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence
CSCs: Common Service Centres
AI: Artificial Intelligence
UPI: Unified Payments Interface

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2018, the Indian Government launched both its National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence (NSAI) and its primary initiative, Digital India. The aim behind these initiatives was to revolutionise the realm of digital technology by fostering closer integration with businesses. The world-changing effects of COVID-19 prompted India to accelerate its efforts towards becoming digitally transformed. Subsequent lockdowns have unintentionally facilitated this goal as there was ample time to enhance and modernize India. In the private sector, the impact of innovation is currently at an all-time high. Future internet-enabled service accessibility is expected to increase as a result. Increased internet penetration and speed will open the door for digital technology to be utilised in a wide range of industries. Governance, energy, healthcare, education, and other areas will be among them. In the 2018–19 Budget, the Indian government prioritised developing technological skills and launched a nationwide initiative to focus government resources on artificial intelligence.

The National AI Portal was established by MeitY, with industry participation, to promote artificial intelligence (AI) to the younger generation. It serves as a one-stop shop for all things AI in India, including articles and data on AI-related businesses and educational institutions in the country, such as the Automated Facial Recognition System (AFRS), E-Pathshala, Farmer Portal, and the Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance sector. There is a need to adopt new technologies to redesign and redefine relationships with their customers, employees, and partners, which includes modernizing applications and creating new business models, products, and services" [3]. Five years ago, the idea of Digital India emerged as a means of accelerating the nation's digital transformation while simultaneously

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empowering its people. The government's focus on building infrastructure to enable universally available, reasonably priced internet connections, as well as creating digital identities for all Indians, has served as the cornerstone of these initiatives.

A. Business Drivers for Digital Government

i. Digital leaders who can embrace holistic strategies, deploy strong digital platforms, create a thriving digital ecosystem, and convey a shared vision are essential for effective digital development. They must comprehend how digital government can rectify the shortcomings of the public sector.
ii. Legal Digital identity for the users of online services and for beneficiaries of the welfare services is needed to check corruption at different levels.
iii. Participation of the citizens in online services is essential for digitalization and to prevent corruption in public sectors.
iv. The adoption of inclusive digital government is hampered by low levels of digital literacy, especially in marginalized and vulnerable areas. In today's hybrid digital age, every person needs to possess some degree of digital literacy. Data is viewed as a fundamental, autonomous asset by data-centric organizations.
v. A strong digital infrastructure is a key requirement for the digitalization and to prevent corruption in the public sectors.

B. Digital Government Development at the Global Level

Asia's strong performance, particularly that of Bangladesh and India, which are located above the global average EGDI value, is the leading cause of this enhanced ratio. Additionally, the Americas have steadily improved, with a greater percentage of nations in the extremely high EGDI group. Although they have made considerable strides, Africa and Oceania are still behind the global average. The Indian government has been providing better online services than other countries in the same income group, according to a report on World Development Indicators.

C. Very High Online Service Index

The United Nations e-government survey indicates a need to develop digital infrastructure and enhance digital literacy among citizens.

The digital divide has significantly improved. In 2022, 45.0% of the population in the 193 Member States was lagging; in 2024, that number dropped to 23.7%. Asia's strong performance, particularly that of Bangladesh and India, which positions them above the worldwide EGDI average, is the leading cause of this improved ratio.

D. Addressing Digital Disparities Within Countries

India is a prime example of these issues, yet it has actively worked to resolve them. However, the disparities in development among India's states provide challenges for the country's digital transition. Cities like Hyderabad, Mumbai, and Bengaluru are leaders in digital innovation due to their robust digital governance frameworks, high levels of digital literacy, and substantial investments in IT infrastructure. However, in rural and remote areas of India, digital literacy needs to be provided, awareness among people increased, and digital equipment made available to enhance the use of online services. The Indian government is attempting to close these gaps.

E. Use of AI in the Public Sector in Other Countries

Several examples demonstrate how governments have leveraged AI to enhance productivity across various industries. For instance, the Singaporean government's "moments of life" program provides government services for elder care and birth registration. The value chain for over 7,000 chilli producers has improved as a result of the Indian government's integration of AI technologies into the agricultural industry.

Table I: E-Government Development Index of India for 2024

Country	Region	Sub-Region	City	EDGI Group	Rating Class	EGDI Rank	LOSI Rank	EGDI 2024	OSI	LOSI	TII	HCI	EPI	"Level of Income"
India	Asia	Southern Asia	Mumbai	High EGDI	H3	97	70	0.668	0.818	0.563	0.57	0.615	0.658	LMC

Source: Web Version _E-Government Survey 2024 11102024.pdf

Through workflow automation, real-time information visibility, teamwork with strategic partners, and enhanced data utilisation, digital transformation aims to reimagine how businesses operate entirely. At its core, it's about leveraging technology, services, and apps to boost productivity, expand revenue, streamline processes, and improve customer satisfaction.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The term "digital transformation" has become popular to refer to the shift from digitalisation initiatives to a comprehensive overhaul of rules, procedures, and services aimed at simplifying user experiences for residents and frontline employees. To meet evolving user needs, digital transformation aims to completely rebuild and reengineer government services. Users—both internal and external—to digital services who are part of digital transformation initiatives are the focus of these activities. Thus, four facets of digital transformation are presented in this panel: dynamic capacities as a prerequisite for digital transformation; co-designing digital services with users; co-producing and co-creating digital content to lend digital services greater legitimacy; and co-creating with open data to enhance digital service delivery [1]. Politics and power relationships are crucial to the institutionalization of information systems that support the digital transformation of the public sector. This study utilised empirical data from a case study of the digital transformation journey of the South African government, as well as data gathered through a thorough examination of the literature [2]. To prevent corruption and earn profit, there is a need to update laws and technologies. This requires the use of advanced IT skills and laws, developing infrastructure, and

encouraging the use of online services to remove barriers to growth [4]. For public organisations seeking to maximise the benefits of their digital transformation projects, these insights may prove invaluable. Research and practical application have demonstrated the significance of digital transformation programs for modern enterprises. Less is known, though, about the opinions and reactions of stakeholders to similar projects in the public sector [5]. Governments face a significant challenge in the digital age because, unlike revolutionary technology, which advances rapidly, governments typically move slowly. Finding new approaches to "being government" is necessary to expedite the process of responding to new issues with effective policies. The most significant risk of falling behind is a loss of confidence in decision-makers, as well as the potential for radical policy responses that can stifle innovation. If governments want to avoid becoming increasingly irrelevant, they need to change [6].

The digital transformation in the public sector is a key process that has emerged as a result of digital breakthroughs. The use of the internet and electronic processes has changed the working environment of public administration, leading to the creation of e-services. The use of blockchain and artificial intelligence technology is improving the speed of government operations [7]. They contend that the interconnected processes of datafication and platformization, which are exclusive to the digital economy, should be used as a lens through which to examine how new digital technologies are affecting the operational norms and organizational framework of public administration. Stakeholder demands and expectations are shifting due to the continuous changes in the external environment surrounding supreme audit institutions [8]. Public service digitisation is being deemed imperative by many governments worldwide, as it increases engagement among a broader audience and promotes economic development [9]. There is a possible relationship between the effectiveness of digital government and the calibre of knowledge management practices within firms. The government should modify the existing regulations and initiatives to facilitate digital transformation in small service enterprises [10].

Digitally connecting and offering services online has been the biggest accomplishment of Digital India. Nowadays, a wide range of internet services related to financial inclusion, education, health, and agriculture are accessible nationwide. Initiatives such as eNAM, eSanjivini, DIKSHA, and Common Service Centres (CSCs) have given India a genuine sense of empowerment. Corruption and a bureaucratic mindset persist as obstacles to digital transformation. It has been observed that corrupt practices have continued even after public services were digitised, and that digital services are insufficiently effective in addressing them. The study's primary objective is to investigate the relationship between bureaucratic corruption and digital transformation.

A. The Problem

Digitally connecting and offering services online has been the biggest accomplishment of Digital India. Nowadays, a wide range of internet services related to financial inclusion, education, health, and agriculture are accessible nationwide. Initiatives such as eNAM, eSanjivini, DIKSHA, and Common Service Centres (CSCs) have given India a genuine sense of empowerment. Corruption and a bureaucratic mindset persist as obstacles to digital transformation. It has been observed that corrupt practices have continued even after public services were digitised, and that digital services are insufficiently effective in addressing them. The study's primary objective is to investigate the relationship between bureaucratic corruption and digital transformation.

B. Hypothesis

H0 There is no relation between digital transformation and decreasing corruption cases in India

H1 There is a close relationship between digital transformation and a decrease in corruption cases in India.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

An online survey was conducted using Google Forms to gather data from the education, health, and MSME sectors. The purposive sampling method was used to collect data. Three hundred ninety replies representing the broader population's viewpoint are gathered. Semantic differential scale types and a seven-point Likert scale are used to measure each item. The stakeholder theory is used to conduct an empirical analysis of how different stakeholders' perspectives and reactions influence public sector online services and digital infrastructure.

A. Theories of Corruption and Digital Transformation

There are many theories of corruption, like principal-agent theory, game theory, institutional theory, and collective action theory. These theories explain the propagation of corruption in the public sector. However, the main reason behind corruption or misuse of authority is the lack of proper rules. Whenever a public servant finds an occasion for decision-making and any defined rule is absent due to unforeseen circumstances, the irrational decision taken by the public servant can lead to corruption. Ordinary people cannot report this type of case to a higher level or competent authority due to a lack of administrative support and knowledge about the complaint procedures. At the same time, ordinary people cannot write complaints in the official language to higher authorities.

Digital transformation theories are configuration, resource-based, and dynamic capability theories. In the administrative context, public officials often have a strong bond to corruption, and it is challenging to register complaints against corrupt behaviour, actions, and decisions. It is challenging for an ordinary person to combat bureaucratic corruption due to their limited knowledge of official procedures, the language used in official documents, and the time and resources required for such efforts.

Collective and coordinated strategies, such as reform coalitions or proactive alliances among like-minded organisations, are necessary to combat corruption in these situations. Corruption impacts the nature, structure, and openness of the political system and its institutions. However, it also recognizes the complexity of the relationships among political systems, institutions, gender, culture, and corruption. Although it can occur

individually, corruption can also be institutional when institutions are structured in a way that causes them to deviate from their intended function.

There is a need to formulate a new theory to create an environment of trust in the administration. Most of the time, rules and regulations are very complex. There is a long list of rules and regulations, and customers try to skip proper reading of these rules before signing. The lack of official regulations and procedures for accessing public sector services is a significant factor in the increase of corruption within the public sector. Public officials do not interfere in areas where customers are more alert and educated. When people cannot perform their jobs, have no time for work, and are unwilling to wait for service, they often resort to corrupt practices. The installation of CCTV cameras has helped control corruption. Still, ordinary people and public servants must change their behavior and mindset to control corruption completely.

With external and internal factors, a proper, corruption-free environment and the creation of awareness about human beings' ultimate aim in life are needed.

External factors include IT laws, rules, service apps, digital equipment, and digitalisation. Internal factors include a change in mindset to utilise these digital apps for the proper implementation of regulations and effective service delivery. The effective use of digital service apps and online procedures depends on the conduct of both public servants and citizens. A culture of proper punishment for corrupt practices is essential for fostering trust in the administration. Private sector players who are unaware of others' behaviour are often involved in corruption within the public procurement sector. Therefore, moral businesses are driven to participate in procurement corruption because of a concern of being outperformed by rivals that operate unethically or unlawfully. It should be noted that, even in cases where someone has the best intentions, various situational and psychological factors may contribute to the development of unethical behaviour, such as monitoring public contracts in real-time and guaranteeing openness in public spending. Citizens must also have access to public sector data and information to monitor and report questionable activity. Access to government data, including spending on social programs, public contracts, and budgets, must be prioritised. The platform should track government spending in real-time, allowing individuals and civil society groups to monitor public initiatives and uncover potential malfeasance. Process automation in industry and government lessens the need for human intervention, which is frequently a cause of corruption. Digital identification verification and automated tax systems, for instance, reduce the possibility of fraud or bribery. Real-time auditing is made possible by digital technology, enabling enterprises and governments to identify abnormalities promptly. AI-powered systems can analyze large datasets to identify odd trends of corrupt activity. The potential of cyber fraud has increased dramatically as financial services, internet marketplaces, and government transactions become more digitally integrated. Strengthening digital anti-fraud measures is essential since hackers target public and commercial institutions to exploit system flaws. Due to digital transformation, Organisations can now utilise AI and machine learning to identify and prevent cybercrime. These technologies can process large volumes of data, which can also instantly identify suspect activity, such as odd purchasing patterns or login habits. The digital revolution reduces traditional corruption, but it also introduces new threats.

Cybercriminals employ complex techniques to exploit holes in digital systems, making anti-corruption initiatives more difficult. Governments and companies must adopt comprehensive digital transformation strategies with strong anti-corruption and anti-cyber fraud measures. Due to the significant advancements in transparency, accountability, and fraud detection enabled by digital technologies, it is now more challenging for corrupt activities and cyber fraud to remain undetected. Online service delivery limits the frequency of interactions between citizens and bureaucrats, hence reducing corruption on both sides. Therefore, more services must be digitalized to decrease the interaction between citizens and bureaucrats. The Right to Service Act, along with a timely response to public grievances and solutions to public complaints, can help reduce corruption. There is a need for increased awareness among people through various media, as well as proper support from political and technical experts for legal and IT laws, and transparency in the functions of government and bureaucracy. Additionally, adequate information about online services should be transmitted to the people to reduce corruption in the administration.

Table II: Data Analysis

S.N.	Descriptive Analysis	Mean	Std. Deviation	Kurtosis	Skewness
1	Prevalence of corruption in the Public Sector	34.007	8.249	-0.568	-0.721
2	Participation of people in online services	54.890	0.245	-0.749	-0.337
3	Having Knowledge and skills to use online services	65.456	0.184	-0.148	-0.675
4	Significant use of ICT Technologies	58.455	0.781	-0.188	0.385
5	IT laws	67.344	0.908	-0.665	0.115
6	Online Service	67.488	0.247	-0.854	-0.265
7	Infrastructure for online services	67.788	0.226	-1.066	0.181
8	Efficiency and transparency in online services	62.455	0.832	-0.45	0.292

Source: Data collected by the author

The results of the descriptive statistics are presented in the above table. The minimum mean value for the prevalence of corruption in the Public Sector is 34.007. The highest mean value for infrastructure supporting online services is 67.788. The value of skewness and kurtosis measures shows that the data are typically distributed.

Table III: Correlation Analysis

	Prevalence of Corruption in the Public Sector	Participation of People in Online Services	Having Knowledge and Skills to use Online Services	Significant use of ICT Technologies	IT laws	Online Service	Infrastructure for Online Services
Participation of people in online services	-0.835						
Having Knowledge and skills to use online services	-0.647	-0.735					
Significant use of ICT Technologies	-0.596	-0.473	0.329				
IT laws	-0.783	-0.713	-0.676	0.825			
Online Service	-0.658	-0.964	-0.739	0.515	0.746		
Infrastructure for online services	-0.766	-0.756	-0.856	0.487	0.769	0.787	
Efficiency and transparency in online services	-0.682	-0.583	0.514	0.935	-0.914	-0.634	-0.644

Source: Data collected by the author

The research model's hypotheses are evaluated using Smart PLS.

IV. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Findings show that with an increase in participation in online services, an increase in knowledge and skills to use online services, the use of ICT Technologies, the implementation of IT laws, and the development of online services infrastructure, there is a decrease in corruption in the public sector. IT laws, online services, and infrastructure for online services are essential for reducing or controlling corruption in the public sector and facilitating the widespread adoption of ICT technologies by citizens. The degree of e-participation and government efficiency in government agencies is increased by digital transformation. Digital records aid in the regulation of fraudulent or irregular activities. Employees and citizens can complete transactions more conveniently with the help of digital services. Governments and their inhabitants can become more successful and efficient by utilizing IT to deliver the services that citizens require. A strong IT infrastructure is also necessary for online services. ICT-related laws can also expand a nation's internet services. Before adopting any technology, education is needed. Laws about ICT and telecom infrastructure increase national e-participation. Digital transformations have significantly reduced bureaucratic corruption—but only for services where it is possible to prevent direct contact between customers and low-level bureaucrats. The corruption can be considerably reduced by digital transformation. Additionally, the empirical study shows that socio-political and socio-technical aspects significantly assist technology elements in eliminating corruption.

V. SUGGESTIONS BASED ON THE FINDINGS

i. There is a need to formulate IT laws in an easily understandable form, and IT laws need to be implemented with a strict timeline in all sectors for all citizens.

ii. There is a need to increase awareness about IT laws, online apps and procedures to use online apps so that the use of these online services by users can be increased

iii. There is a need to implement cybersecurity laws to protect the privacy and personal information of users and to prevent financial fraud.

iv. It has been seen that bureaucracy in India is more committed and welfare-oriented. Civil servants have consistently endeavoured to deliver effective services to the people at all levels of governance. However, illiteracy, poverty, and lack of awareness among the population in remote and disadvantaged areas have posed a significant challenge to civil servants in combating corruption.

v. Protective internet and wifi services need to be provided by the government in all the geographical areas in the country, and there is a need to set up more citizen-centric service delivery centres at the local level in villages to save the transport/ travel cost of the citizens.

vi. There is a need to conduct workshops and demonstrations related to the use of different apps for the local people by the district administration to encourage the use of online services and to prevent corruption.

vii. The study shows that ignorance and unawareness about IT laws, procedures, online services and apps increase cases of corruption in the public sector. There is a need to develop user-friendly service apps.

viii. Transparency and accountability in the administration, e-participation of citizens, e-literacy and digital infrastructure need to be improved to prevent corruption.

VI. CONCLUSION

The National AI Portal was established by MeitY, with industry participation, to promote artificial intelligence (AI) to the younger generation. It serves as a one-stop shop for all things AI in India, including articles and data on AI-related businesses and educational institutions in the country, such as the Automated Facial Recognition System (AFRS), E-Pathshala, and Farmer. Portal, and the Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance sector. There is a

need to adopt new technologies to redesign and redefine relationships with customers, employees, and partners, which includes modernising applications and creating new business models, products, and services. The digital divide has significantly improved. In 2022, 45.0% of the population in the 193 Member States was lagging; in 2024, that number dropped to 23.7%. The disparities in development among India's states provide challenges for the country's digital transition. Cities like Hyderabad, Mumbai, and Bengaluru are leaders in digital innovation due to their robust digital governance frameworks, high levels of digital literacy, and substantial investments in IT infrastructure. There is a shift from digitalisation initiatives to a comprehensive overhaul of rules, procedures, and services, aimed at simplifying user experiences for residents and frontline employees. To meet evolving user needs, digital transformation aims to completely rebuild and reengineer government services. Users—both internal and external—to digital services who are part of digital transformation initiatives are the focus of these activities. Initiatives such as eNAM, eSanjivini, DIKSHA, and Common Service Centres (CSCs) have given India a genuine sense of empowerment. Corruption and a bureaucratic mindset persist as obstacles to digital transformation. With an increase in the participation of people in online services, a rise in knowledge and skills to use online services, the use of ICT Technologies, the implementation of IT laws, and the development of online services infrastructure, as well as an increase in efficiency and transparency in online services, corruption in the Public Sector decreases. IT laws, online services, and infrastructure for online services are necessary to reduce or control corruption in the public sector and to encourage citizens to make significant use of ICT technologies. The degree of e-participation and government efficiency in government agencies is increased by digital transformation. The Right to Service Act, along with a timely response to public grievances and solutions to public complaints, can help reduce corruption. There is a need for increased awareness among people through various media, as well as proper support from political and technical experts for legal and IT laws, and transparency in the functions of government and bureaucracy. Additionally, adequate information about online services should be transmitted to the people to reduce corruption in the administration.

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I must verify the accuracy of the following information as the article's author.

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