4TH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMAITON AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION.

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COUNTRY PAPER: BANGLADESH

Introduction: The government of Bangladesh has taken several initiatives to establish digital transformation in the whole of the government. 'Digital Bangladesh' initiative was declared by Hon'ble Prime Minister which was articulated in "Perspective Plan of Bangladesh (2010-2021): Making Vision 2021 a Reality". It was a strategic articulation of the development vision, mission, and goals of the Government in achieving a prosperous Bangladesh focusing on the digitalization of all sectors of the country to achieve the status of middle income county by 2021. The Perspective Plan provides the road map for accelerated growth and lays down broad approaches for eradication of poverty, inequality, and human deprivation. After implementing the strategies and action plans of Vision 2021, the county has fulfilled all the criteria for LDC graduation.

The 'Vision 2041' (Making Vision a Reality; Perspective Plan of Bangladesh 2021-2041) has been adopted in line of 'Vision 2021' aiming to end absolute poverty to become a developed nation by 2041. In order to explore the opportunities of emerging technologies and harness the benefit of 4IR, the 'Vision 2041' has been formulated.

1. Digital transformation landscape

The 'Digital Bangladesh' initiatives was implemented under 4 pillars such as e-Governance, Connectivity, Human Resource Development and ICT industry promotion. Some of the key activities and initiatives:

- ➢ **MyGov platform**: The largest integrated platform for all services consists of 1.7K digitized services, 3.5 + Million registered users to reach the public services at the door step of the citizen.
- ➢ **e-Nothi:** To ensure the accountability and transparency in public services, the e-Nothi system has been established in 11.4 K govt offices with 115K officials. This system contribute significantly to keep the office up and running during COVID -19 and the use of e-nothi doubled during the pandemic. The migration of e-nothi to D-nothi (Digital Nothi) is underway which will ensure the making of paperless office.
- ➢ **Digital Centre:** The government has established 4292 Union Digital Centres in the lower tier of local government to provide the digital service delivery at the doorsteps of the citizen. Moreover, Digital centre has been

extended to micro level such as municipal corporation and words which stand at over 8000 digital centers. 352 services are being provided at these centres to 780 M+ users.

- **BD Portal:** One-stop web-based platform for all government information under one umbrella is developed where 52K+ govt offices, with 10M contents and information and data of central and field administration.
- **Shikkok Batayon** (Teacher Platform) over .5 million teachers were connected and able to exchange the contents and learning resources. Moreover an online learning platform called 'Muktopath" has been developed where more than 1 million user has registered for on-line learning lessons and training.

2. Connectivity: To ensure **connectivity** to the grass-root level, 3800 unions has been connected with broad-band internet using 28000 km fibre optic cables. 18500 govt offices has been interlinked with a dedicated network. The use of internet has increased significantly. The telephone user of the country in 17.78 Cr (177 Million) and tele-density is 105% where internet connection is 12.37 crore (134 Million) and internet density is 73%. A project titled, "Establishing Digital Connectivity" is being implemented by ICT Division to connect the citizen of rural and remote areas of the country to provide access to information to all.

3. **Use of Digital technology during COVID**
   A. Health Services:
   - Corona.gov.bd platform was launched to provide support to the citizen.
   - National Tele-health Services: 4000 private health institutions and 1100 public health institutions were connected.
   - Corona helpline 333 and Doctor's Pool App was launched.
   - Established BSMMU-A2i specialized tele-health centre to provide medical advice.
   - Tele-medicine network with 27 tele-medicine service providers.
   - Plasma Donation Platform: DG Health Services, Innovation Lab and e-generation launched the platform called 'Shohojudha'.

B. E-learning Services
  - ✓ Online courses was introduced on the e-learning platform called 'Mukthopat'
  - ✓ Digital Classroom: In collaboration with A2i and Min of Education, created digital content for the student of primary and secondary education which was administered through Sangsad TV.

C. Vaccine Management System (**Surakhya) :**

A vaccine management system called 'Shurakhya' (means protection) has been developed by ICT Division, which was an instrumental to administer the vaccine management during COVID. The vaccination record is keeping in this system. So far 70 million people has been registered in this app. The user can generate the vaccination certificate from the system for using immigration and other purposes. This innovation has been awarded the 'Banghabandu Public Administration Award 2022' for outstanding contribution to public services.

4. Connecting with Information Superhighway

a) SEA-ME-WE 4 : Bangladesh joined SMW-4 consortium in 2005 along with 14 countries from Asia, Africa and Europe. Bangladesh got 600gbps band-with from this consortium.

b) SEA-ME-WE 5 : Bangladesh connected with the SMW 5 consortium on 10th Sept 2017. There are 17 countries are member of this consortium with 19 telecom companies. Bangladesh will get 2300gbps band-with gradually through this connections.

It can be mentioned that the government (Bangladesh Sub-marine cable company ltd) has taken necessary initiative to set up 3rd sub-marine cable in Bangladesh. In this regard an MoU has been signed SMW 6 consortium. By joining this consortium, the sub-marine cable capacity of Bangladesh will be enhanced another 600 gbps. Expected to connect with this consortium in 2024.

Bangladesh is committed to provide support and cooperation to implement the action plan for Information Superhighway Initiative 2022-2026.

5. Fourth industrial revolution technologies

The government of Bangladesh has declared 'Vision 2041' (Perspective Plan of Bangladesh 2021-2041) with two principal visions such as:

a) **Bangladesh will be a developed country by 2041 and**

b) **Poverty will become a thing of the past in Sonar Bangla.**

Key components of the Vision 2041 is :Creating an Innovation Economy

- ➢ **Digital Opportunities and Innovation:**

  i. Developing human resources ready for the 21st century;

  ii. Connecting citizens in ways most meaningful to them;

  iii. Taking services to citizens doorsteps and

  iv. Making the private sector and market more productive and competitive through the use of digital technology.

- ➢ **Leveraging the Fourth industrial revolution:**

  I. Constantly jobs are being eaten up by advanced automation;

  II. RMG sector are vulnerable to automation;

  III. The focus should be on integrating big data, data analytics, AI, and automation in creating more jobs than likely to be lost on the factory floor;

  IV. The entire education ecosystem may have to be redesigned.

ICT Division has initiated a project to harness the benefit of 4IR titled " Enhancing Digital Government and Economy (EDGE)". To materialize the digital transformation in every sector of the country by using the innovation of Information and Communication Technology, the government (ICT Division) has initiated the 'Smart Bangladesh' initiative. The "ICT master Plan for Smart Bangladesh" is being formulated by consulting all the stakeholders and ministries. The key elements of the Smart Bangladesh Approach are Smart Citizen, Smart Society, Smart Economy and Smart Government.

- **Smart Citizen:** Universal Digital ID, Citizen Upskilling, Digital Collaboration Platform.
- **Smart Government:** Covering healthcare, land management, tax, judiciary, public service etc.
- **Smart Society**: Inclusive society, digital tolerance
- **Smart Economy:** 4IR Accelerators, ICT industry acceleration, Start-ups, Infrastructure backbone.

6. Information and Communication Technology capacity-building

- ✓ **ICT Policy**: The govt has taken steps to update ICT Policy 2018 to address the emerging technologies to harness the benefit of 4IR.
- ✓ **Post Covid19 ICT Roadmap for Bangladesh**; Overcoming the challenges and leveraging new opportunities for ICT Industry: The ICT roadmap is an action document with a 'whole of the government' and 'whole of the society' approach. The roadmap presents 16 key action agenda, which will create domino effects within a sector and across the economy and society.
- ✓ AI Strategy
- ✓ Blockchain Strategy
- ✓ Digital Security Strategy
- ✓ Data Protection Act 2022 (Draft)
- ✓ ICT Master Plan for Smart Bangladesh 2041 (Draft)