From openness to inclusion
Framing policy questions in the age of platform power

A project proposal of IT for Change
Presentation to MeitY
December 2016

Rationale

- Internet and mobile platforms are restructuring all domains of social life, as online openness transforms opportunity structures.

- New platform sociologies – interactive computational services offered on Internet and mobiles – hold promise and risk, for a more egalitarian society.

- This project attempts to explore key issues/challenges for inclusion posed by 'platformisation', in 3 key domains: **economy, knowledge and governance**.

Economy – Concerns for Inclusion

- E-commerce - Low cost of entry into global markets, greater competition
- Casualisation of micro-work
- New age brokerages like Airbnb
- New mobile platforms – digital payments

- How to regulate so that local and small players can benefit?
- How can we safeguard worker and consumer rights?

Knowledge – Concerns for Inclusion

- Data – a highly valued resource
- User controlled rather than corporate controlled possibilities important
- Crowd-sourcing and knowledge repositories – interactive web platforms used to track maternal health, OERs

- How to promote participation of the marginalised?
- What rules will help local knowledge platforms?

Governance – Concerns for inlcusion

- Innovations in governance for citizen participation
  - Open Data,
  - E-consultations,
  - Crowd sourced governance solutions

- How to include the unconnected?
- How to address data protection?

Global Developments

- European Commission – Digital Agenda for Europe
  - Regulatory measures for online intermediaries, cloud computing
  - European Charter of Digital Fundamental Rights
  - French Senate report calling for regulation

- For developing countries, an additional policy concern - How to address domination of Northern platforms and come up with home-grown solutions?

Research objectives

- Understand the structural-institutional conditions under which digital platforms can enable meaningful access to the benefits of the network society for marginalised individuals and groups.

- Examine digital platforms in domains of economy, knowledge and governance to garner insights about key policy implications on critical areas of governance:

  - access to knowledge,

  - access to data,

  - free competition, economic opportunity, and innovation,

  - social progress.

The 'inclusion' angle – Some illustrative research areas

- **Economy**

  - e-commerce rules to cap total sales originating from one company at 25% (new FDI rules April 2016)

  - consumer redress portal set up by NLSIU for e-commerce disputes (Dec 2016)

  - Uber and collaborative consumption (state govt actions)

  How can we build a policy environment that encourages a level playing field and allows local control?

The 'inclusion' angle – Some illustrative research areas

- **Knowledge**

  - Open Access policy being framed by DBT and DST for repositories of research created with public funding

  - Recent proposal by TRAI on incentivizing free data that is TSP agnostic/ net neutral - 100 MB Free Data, Third Party Aggregator an Indian Company

  - Smart Cities and Management of Data

  How can we promote a participatory, digital knowledge commons?

The 'inclusion' angle – Some illustrative research areas

Governance

- How can Aadhaar-enabled payment bridge be used for promoting inclusive governance?

- How can IndiaStack, as an Open API policy promote inclusion?

What policy directions can help us create a Digital India where no one is left behind?

Methodology

State of Play analysis and case studies

Comparative Analysis of cases, policies and laws in other countries

Scope of this investigation: Mapping big picture on platforms, power, exclusion in a domain-specific manner

(a) Economic domain: Competition and antitrust laws, Labour laws, E-commerce laws, Data protection laws, Consumer rights laws.

(b) Knowledge domain: Copyright regimes, Affirmative action policies on local data and local knowledge, Net neutrality policy, Media ownership regulation, Community media and public service media legislation, Data protection laws

(c) Governance domain: Civil rights on Internet, freedom of information and open data legislation, e-service delivery frameworks

(d) A new Digital Fundamental Rights Framework

Thank you!