



TechSutra: Software as India's Softpower

The growth in computing power, the speed with which information is disseminated around the globe, and the spread of the smartphone has transformed the way information is shared. The subsequent democratisation of access to information has created a more informed – and increasingly activist – global public. The combined effects of rapid technological advances on global events have been demonstrated in the Arab Spring, the rise of WikiLeaks, citizen-journalism, and even the Panama Papers. The rapid movement of information across borders, and the proliferation of platforms to share that information, has made individuals more powerful than they have been at any point in history.

Developing and delivering effective foreign policy is growing in complexity. Precipitated by the shift in power from states to networks, exacerbated by the rapid change in technology and compounded by fiscal constraints, governments and their diplomats must adapt if they wish to succeed in this challenging environment.

Those countries with the ability to form and mobilise networks will be the ones driving change and shaping major global events in the future. If collaborative networks are now the engines of global change, then soft power is the fuel that drives them. Only through soft power can India hope to marshal trans-national networks towards cooperation. At the same time, the ability to generate and leverage that soft power increasingly rests on India's capacity to engage through digital platforms.

Digital Platforms

The ability to achieve objectives through attraction and persuasion is critical to the effective conduct of foreign policy, by leveraging the Digital World. Today technology is prevalent in everything we do. It touches human lives in more ways than one, starting from the way we consume information to the way we order our food and also impacts the manner in which our opinions get shaped. Digital world would therefore comprise of various software products driving today's online and increasingly 'cashless economy' and also of course the various new platforms and mediums of human expression

India is going through a metamorphosis in Software from being the back office of the world to the creation of new breed of people and companies that are focusing on Software 2.0 that is product focused.

At the same time, the Govt. is building Digital public goods and, infrastructures like Aadhaar – the only government Initiative world over which has over a Billion Biometrics and has done so in less than 6 years. Other Digital Infrastructures like UPI which enable anyone to send or receive any funds from their smartphones is redefining how payments are being done in India and will set the trend for the world to follow leaving behind the legacy payment systems of Mastercard and Visa. All these Digital Public Goods under India Stack are leapfrogging India ahead of the world and we must capitalise on this not only in the less developed countries but also in the developed nation's through this Governance Stack.

This transformation is happening in [Fintech, HealthTech and Edutech](#)



The rise of fintech has forever changed the way companies do business. The traditional model of a new business turning directly to its local high street bank and/or a conventional investor is no longer the only game in town. From crowdsourcing to mobile payments, there has never been as much choice to entrepreneurs as there is presently. It's never been cheaper to not only set-up your business, but also to expand it. Transferring money across borders, a bane of entrepreneur's lives since time immemorial, is another area that is being reworked and reframed by innovators. Fintech has made it easier to do business and lower costs. Fintech firms can pass on huge savings as they are far more agile than traditional banks, not having the same overheads and commitment banks are blessed (and burdened) with. Their relative lack of size also allows them to innovate and adapt in a way bigger corporations can only dream of.

As per Healthcare statistics, 7500+ healthcare startups are developing globally, 298 of which are India based. India Brand Equity estimates that Indian health tech market is poised to reach \$280 billion by year 2020 and will cross \$160 billion milestone in the year 2017. The Indian healthcare sector is vastly unorganized and unevenly distributed. Documentation and medical history are still largely non-existent. Higher patient to doctor ratio, treatment cost variations, lack of medical awareness, need for faster diagnosis and treatment have all contributed to building the pressure on the system. This gap has led to a surge in consumer-driven healthcare startups, and it seems to be an obvious solution to the complex healthcare problem in India.

At the same time, several tech startups in India are quietly changing the dynamics of the education landscape of our country. With our government's resilient push by increasing the digital reach to drive progress and economic growth our education sector is now ripe and ready. Educational technology, often referred to as "EdTech," is the study and practice of designing effective instruction using technology, media, and learning theory.

The Annual global IP Traffic will surpass 1.10 zettabytes in the year 2016, that's equivalent to 152 million years of high-definition video. The amount data which is being generated therefore is mindboggling and therefore the need to protect the Privacy concerns is paramount. India has a huge role to play in how Privacy standards are set.

India SaaS Companies by creating a new and different market in the West has enabled them to be amongst the Top 2-3 in the World and coupled with that Indian Technological Companies that are focusing on Rural India aka Bharat Startups to solve the needs of over 1.25 Billion people in Healthcare, Education and Finance have well positioned us in the world order.

All these are adding to our Soft power to shun the traditional foreign policy tools of carrot and stick, seeking instead to achieve influence by building networks, communicating compelling narratives, establishing international rules, and drawing on the resources that make India naturally attractive to the world.