

RESEARCH PAPER

Safeguarding Citizen Security and Fostering Economic Prosperity in Bangladesh through Digitization

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, Bangladesh has witnessed a transformative shift towards digitization as a key driver for enhancing citizen security and fostering economic prosperity. This abstract explores the multifaceted impact of digitization on the socio-economic landscape of Bangladesh and how it contributes to safeguarding citizen security while catalyzing economic growth. The study used first-hand information. Face-to-face interviews with members of the general public at different levels were used to gather primary data on the ground. In order to identify the driving forces behind citizen security, the gathered data were edited, coded, and evaluated. Descriptive statistical methods and tools were used in the study to conduct the analysis on the data sets and generate the results. According to an analysis of the survey's field level data, 92 percent of respondents believe that security is important for creating a digital Bangladesh that protects its citizens. The majority of locals (85%) are unaware of digital security. 85% of residents are unaware about digital security. The majority of rural communities lack adequate knowledge of digital schooling. The building of a digital Bangladesh will be extremely simple and the protection of all deserving residents of the nation will be guaranteed if the development of digital education is feasible. The digitization initiatives in Bangladesh encompass various sectors, including governance, finance, healthcare, and education. The implementation of digital governance has streamlined administrative processes, reducing bureaucratic bottlenecks and enhancing the efficiency of public services. This not only ensures a more transparent and accountable government but also strengthens the security of citizens' personal data. The financial sector has witnessed a paradigm shift with the widespread adoption of digital payment systems and mobile banking. This has not only provided financial inclusion to previously underserved populations but has also mitigated the risks associated with traditional cash transactions. The increased accessibility to financial services has empowered citizens and contributed to economic prosperity by fostering entrepreneurship and facilitating smoother business transactions. Furthermore, the digitization of healthcare services has improved accessibility and quality of medical care, especially in remote areas. Telemedicine and digital health records have played a pivotal role in connecting patients with healthcare professionals, ensuring timely and efficient healthcare delivery. This has not only safeguarded the health of citizens but has also contributed to overall economic productivity by reducing absenteeism due to health-related issues. In conclusion, the ongoing digitization initiatives in Bangladesh have emerged as a powerful catalyst for safeguarding citizen security and fostering economic prosperity. As the nation continues to embrace digital transformation, a strategic and inclusive approach is crucial to harness the full potential of digitization and create a resilient, secure, and prosperous future for its citizens.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Digitization can facilitate the implementation of advanced security measures such as biometric identification, surveillance systems, and digital databases. These technologies can improve law enforcement efforts, border security, and counter-terrorism measures, thereby enhancing citizen safety and security.
- As Bangladesh transitions to a more digital economy, cybersecurity becomes increasingly

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important. Efforts to safeguard citizen security must include robust cybersecurity measures to protect against cyber threats, data breaches, and online fraud. This may involve the development of cybersecurity frameworks, capacity building, and public awareness campaigns.

- ① Digitization can foster economic prosperity by promoting financial inclusion. Digital payment systems, mobile banking, and fintech solutions can provide access to financial services for underserved populations, empowering individuals and businesses to participate more fully in the economy.
- ② The digitization of government services can streamline administrative processes, reduce corruption, and improve service delivery to citizens. Online portals and mobile applications can provide convenient access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and social welfare programs.
- ③ By embracing digitization, Bangladesh can stimulate economic growth and innovation. Digital technologies enable businesses to operate more efficiently, access new markets, and innovate products and services. This can create job opportunities, attract investment, and drive overall economic development.
- ④ A key component of digitization efforts is the development of digital infrastructure, including broadband internet access, mobile networks, and digital literacy programs. Investments in infrastructure are essential to ensure widespread adoption of digital technologies and maximize their impact on citizen security and economic prosperity.
- ⑤ Collaboration between the government, private sector, and civil society is crucial for the successful implementation of digitization initiatives. Public-private partnerships can leverage the strengths of each sector to overcome challenges, mobilize resources, and achieve shared goals related to citizen security and economic development.

Keywords: Safeguarding, Citizen Security, Fostering, Economic Prosperity, Bangladesh, Digitization

The government's Vision 2021, which aims to achieve a prosperous and just middle-income Bangladesh by the time of its golden jubilee (50 years of independence), includes digital Bangladesh as a key component. The Bangladeshi government has started many digital technology-related projects, some of which are already in progress. The National ICT Policy-2009 was created with the goal of being middle-income by 2021 and developed by 2041. The world, which is centered on information technology, is evolving quickly. Bangladesh will inevitably advance with this momentum; everyone involved in field-level administration is feeling the benefits of this timeless insight. A comprehensive plan to create a digital Bangladesh was initiated fifty years ago while keeping the demands of time in mind Inqilab (2020). With the results of that plan, the administration and civil society are now more informed. The administration is making unrelenting efforts to bring digital system services to the doorsteps of the people. Also, the general public has responded by utilizing the privilege to take full advantage of services.

The majority of office holders no longer need to wait physically for permission before approaching the office executive with files of paperwork that is taped together. All files are maintained in the office executive's online account as scanned copies with the use of an information portal and e-information

services. Even at the busiest times of the day, a person can learn about government services while driving or elsewhere, make decisions, express opinions, or provide instructions by sending messages to the appropriate people. The office is always aware of the number of files that the authorities fail to process in a timely manner. Digital Bangladesh is a modern Bangladesh that was created with the aid of ICT. The objective of Digital Bangladesh is to use a variety of technologies to carry out the nation's commitment to employment, health care, education, and the reduction of poverty. In a nutshell, Digital Bangladesh is about utilizing technology to its fullest extent in order to guarantee democracy, human rights, transparency, accountability, and fairness for the country's citizens and to raise standards of living for all socioeconomic groups. To this end, Bangladesh is quickly advancing toward digitization in order to keep up with the information technology globe. Examples of creating a digital Bangladesh include setting up a high-speed undersea cable internet connection and launching a personal satellite into orbit. The security of Bangladesh's digital infrastructure has been greatly enhanced by the Bangladesh Police. To stop the harassment of the average person, the digital procedure is being used in place of the manual approach. The Bangladesh Police has now chosen to file digital FIRs, GDs, and other complaints. Nowadays, police

enforcement agencies use Internet-based services to offer protection. Ordinary people can now easily use digital services that guarantee their safety and security. By falling behind in global technological growth, sustainable socio-economic development is never feasible. Bangladesh is now keeping up with the pace at which digital communication is advancing in the twenty-first century. The Bangladesh police force is working firmly convinced that all citizens should have access to secure digital services while also creating a safe and secure digital Bangladesh (*The Daily Star*, 2015). As part of this work, ensuring the safety of all citizens, upholding the rule of law, maintaining social harmony based on collaborative community efforts, identifying and preventing crime, holding offenders accountable, preserving peace and order, and offering protection, aid, and services to the populace are all required. Bangladesh Police intends to effortlessly adopt digital services by being kind, courteous, and patient, learning from mistakes and discovering ways to do things better, and working with many groups. The police force is working hard to ensure that all forms of digital security for common residents are ensured by filling all the holes through an e-policing digital system, despite the existing shortage of security professionals. The police force is working hard to ensure that all forms of digital security for common residents are ensured by filling all the holes through an e-policing digital system, despite the existing shortage of security professional (Achievements of Bangladesh, 2018). Visible are the satisfaction of public expectations, the victories in space, information, and technology. These are the early indicators of Bangladesh becoming a digital nation. The research results will be crucial in developing Digital Bangladesh and future policies and plans for the creation of a complex policing system (MoF, 2014).

Digitization

Digitization is the translation of analog data into digital format. With the development of the PC and the Internet in the late 20th century, digitization became more widespread (Online link, 2023). With the use of these technologies, numerous sorts of information can be translated into digital form. As an illustration, it has enabled the conversion of photos, text, audio, and video into digital format.

METHODS

The study used quantitative approaches to conduct a survey and collect data. Also, the study used both primary and secondary data. Face-to-face interviews with members of the general public at different levels were used to gather primary data on the ground. In this study, information was gathered from the populace via a questionnaire survey. Secondary data was collected from a variety of published sources, including books, journals, papers, reports, blogs, the internet, and other sources that were readily available. 220 general citizens were questioned for the study.

After investigating the data, we looked at how socioeconomic and demographic characteristics affected the survey locations to pinpoint the study subjects and determine their socioeconomic status. According to the needs of the investigation, the analyses employ univariate descriptive statistical techniques and procedures.

Research Questions

- (i) How does digitization impact economic prosperity in Bangladesh, including factors such as GDP growth, employment opportunities, and income distribution?
- (ii) What are the main challenges and opportunities for integrating digital technologies into the existing security infrastructure of Bangladesh?
- (iii) Who are the digital security services' beneficiaries?
- (iv) Can residents live a happy, safe life with the digital security services offered?
- (v) What are the potential risks associated with digitization initiatives in Bangladesh, such as cybersecurity threats and digital divide exacerbation, and how can they be mitigated?

Objectives of the Study

- (i) Implementing measures to protect citizens' personal data, financial transactions, and critical infrastructure from cyber threats, thereby ensuring their safety and security in the digital realm.
- (ii) To explore the digitization of businesses, encouraging entrepreneurship, and fostering

innovation in key sectors to drive economic prosperity for citizens.

- (iii) to create future strategies that use digitization to ensure citizen security.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Distributions of Fundamental Parameters

In many ways, age distribution is a significant factor in demographic studies. The implementation of a nation’s potential accurate population policy may benefit from proper study of its. The age distribution of the respondents is shown in Table 1 and Fig. 1. The standard deviation of general citizens’ ages is 12.191 years, with a mean age of 35.80 years. According to the results of the current study, only 34.50% of General Citizens are in the same age group. Table 1 and Fig. 1 show that the majority of respondents are in the 30 to 39 age range.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by Fundamental Parameters

Basic Characteristics	Numbers (N = 220)
Age group	
15-24	32 (14.50)
25-34	76 (34.50)
35-44	66 (30.0)
45-54	24 (10.9 0)
55-64	14 (5.40)
65+	8 (3.60)
Mean age (SD)	35.80 (12.191)
Sex	
Male	214 (97.30)
Female	6 (2.70)
Marital status	
Married	173 (78.60)
Unmarried	47 (21.40)
Education Level	
Illiterate	3 (1.40)
Primary	74 (33.60)
Secondary	97 (44.10)
Higher Education	46 (20.90)

Note: Figure in parenthesis indicates percentage.

Table 1 and Fig. 2 show that the general citizen group is more male-dominated than female-dominated. Married people made up roughly 79 percent of those who took part in the interview. Only 21% of the general population had higher

education, which was the greater percentage of responders. Table 1 has further information.

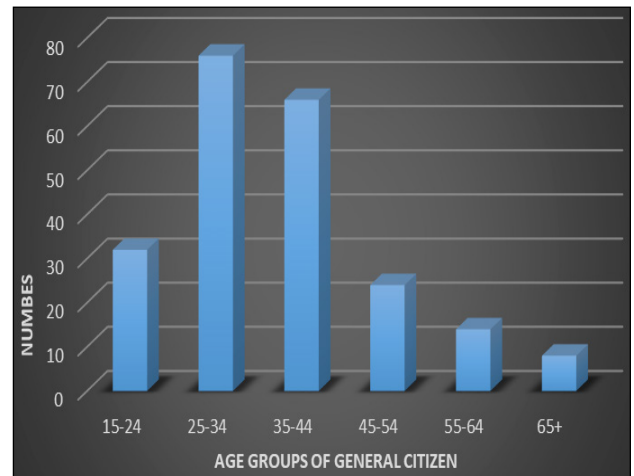


Fig. 1: Age Structure by different population

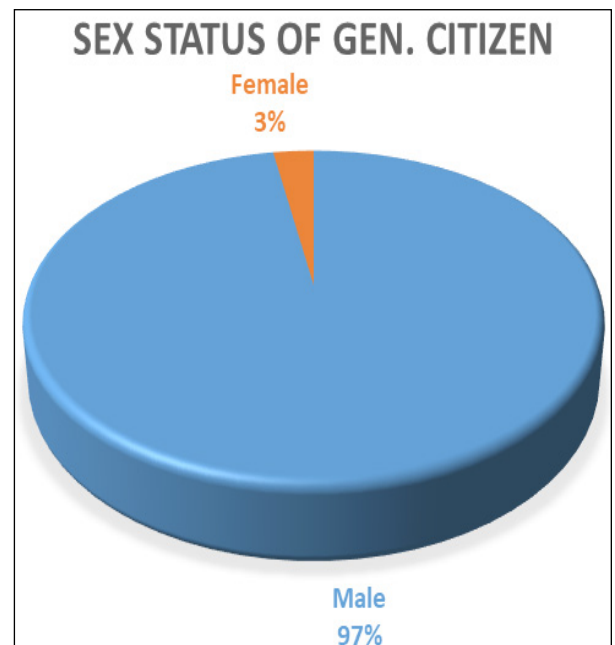


Fig. 2: Responses' gender identities

Present state of digital security services in Bangladeshi police stations: Evidence from survey data

This current study uses 220 general citizen samples from a questionnaire survey. Based on their opinions and expectations on the digital security at Bangladesh police station, they responded to a number of questions. What they believe is described here.

The details of the data from Table 2 are supplied by assessing the various data at the field level, in

the opinion of the general citizen of Bangladesh, by reviewing the current situation of digital security services in the Bangladesh police station. The majority of individuals believe that 59 percent of police stations have their own websites, while 41% of police stations don't. Only 24% of police stations write general diaries online in digital mode, and the remaining 76% of police stations write GDs analogically. Almost 62 percent of police stations in Bangladesh's digital age still do not delegate authority to cops via social media. The majority of the 84.10 percent of police stations in the study area offer their officers with diverse confidential information via social media. In the majority of police stations (74.50%), CCTV/CCTV cameras record the activity of police officers, while in 25.50% of police stations, no recordings are made. Table 2 revealed that just 20% of police stations

were employing e-filing systems during the period of development of digital Bangladesh, with the majority of police stations (80%) without such a system. Table 2 further revealed that just 32.70 percent of Bangladeshi police stations are monitored via online fingerprint pass issue, compared to 67.30 percent of police stations that are not. Online police clearance certificates are issued by 63% of police stations, a digital method designed for the convenience of Bangladesh's average population and to reduce corruption. Around 37% of police stations do not offer online police clearance certificates. According to statistics collected at the field level, 38% of police stations in Bangladesh still do not offer online payment of salaries and benefits. Table 2's analysis of the factors relating to digital security services in Bangladesh police stations revealed that approximately 38 percent do not

Table 2: Availability of Digital Security Service in the Police Station of Bangladesh

Basic Characteristics	General Citizens (N = 220)	
	Numbers (Percent)	
	No	Yes
Police station's own website	101 (45.90)	119 (54.10)
Write digital methods Online Diary (GD)	156 (70.90)	64 (29.10)
Delivery of responsibilities to police members through social media	78 (35.50)	142 (64.50)
Providing various information to the police members through social media	35 (15.90)	185 (84.10)
Surveillance of police personnel by CCTV / CCTV cameras	56 (25.50)	164 (74.50)
Security surveillance of the entire urban population by CCTV / CCTV cameras	50 (22.70)	170 (77.30)
Surveillance of all police stations / units by CCTV / CCTV cameras	58 (26.40)	162 (73.60)
E-filing system	176 (80.00)	44 (20.00)
Observed by fingerprint pass Issue online	148 (67.30)	72 (32.70)
Police clearance certificate	81 (36.80)	139 (63.20)
Rrangements for payment of salary allowances on an online basis	84 (38.20)	136 (61.80)
Police own Facebook	84 (38.20)	136 (61.80)
Cyber Crime Cell	177(80.50)	43 (19.50)
Counter Terrorism Unite	161 (73.20)	59 (26.80)
Money laundering cell	173 (78.60)	47 (21.40)
Do you control access doors with security nets for citizens or police personnel?	147 (66.80)	73 (33.20)
Is there a digital alarm system?	123 (55.90)	97 (44.10)
Does the police station coordinate with different groups through unit based social communication?	24 (10.90)	196 (89.10)
WhatsApp group	31 (14.10)	189 (85.90)
Imo group	49 (22.30)	171 (77.70)
Viber group	57 (25.90)	163 (74.10)
CDMS (Criminal Data Management System)	91 (41.40)	129 (58.60)
CDR Analysis	130 (59.10)	90 (40.90)
Your police station have an online self-service portal based system	149 (67.70)	71 (32.30)

Note: Figure in parenthesis indicates percentage.

have a police Facebook, approximately 81 percent do not have a cyber crime unit, approximately 73 percent do not have a counter terrorism unit, approximately 79 percent do not have a money laundering cell, approximately 67 percent control access doors with security nets for citizens or police personnel, approximately 56 percent do not have a digital alarm system, and approximately 11 percent do not have such a system. Table 2 also revealed that social media, including 14 percent of WhatsApp groups, 22 percent of Imo groups, about 26 percent of Viber groups, 41 percent of Criminal Data Management Systems, about 59 percent of CDR analyzation systems, and about 68 percent of online self-service portal based systems, still do not use safety management.

Public perception of police stations’ delivery of digital security services

According to Table 3, 70% of police stations within the policing system have swiftly finished the investigation task by making mobile calls to regular citizen cops. A well-liked police service for the general public is 999. Table 3 also revealed that 97% of police stations handled 999 mobile calls from citizens to resolve their issues. Security is a multifaceted issue. While the government will make every effort to protect every citizen’s safety, individuals should also be conscious of their own safety-related behaviors. The safety of the average person has increased as a result of all police officers actively participating in the present policing system. Table 3 shows that 99 percent of police personnel actively cooperated with the public, and 98 percent of police responses were successful. 56 percent of the time, there was no coordination with police construction or service delivery. Table 3 has further information.

Table 3: Dissemination of digital security services provided by police stations to the general public

Received Digital Security	Numbers (N = 220)
<i>Call or inquiry promptly answers</i>	
Yes	154 (70.00)
No	66 (30.00)
<i>Answers 999 calls</i>	
Yes	214 (97.30)
No	6 (2.70)

<i>The police officer assisted</i>	
Yes	218 (99.10)
No	2(0.90)
<i>The police response was effective</i>	
Yes	215 (97.70)
No	5 (2.30)
<i>There was non-cooperation for police building or service delivery</i>	
Yes	123 (55.90)
No	97 (44.10)

Note: Figure in parenthesis indicates percentage.

The Role of Digitization in ensuring Security to the citizen

If Bangladesh is to maintain stable law and order and civic security, digitization will play a huge role. In order to accomplish this, law enforcement must always be present and working. The assigned tasks must be completed honestly and devotedly. Citizen security of law and order is ensured by proper application of digital security. All around the nation, normalcy is returning following the Covid-19 catastrophe. Offices, courts, schools, factories, transportation, and tourism, among other sectors, have all gotten underway. At this point, it is crucial and important to guarantee good law, order, and public safety. Maintaining tranquility, comfort, and security in civic life has no replacement. Protecting civil life from being overwhelmed by fear, mistrust, and hopelessness is necessary. Life is the most valuable thing there is. The safety of that life must be guaranteed. In this sense, digitalisation plays a crucial role in ensuring Bangladeshi citizen security. According to Table 4, 86 percent of people feel that the police are a good source of safety. Just 1% of the populace lacks confidence. Do you feel safe where you live? is a question posed to locals. We firmly concur with this question based on around 94 percent of the responses. In general, 77 percent of local residents are happy with the police service that is being provided.

Table 4: The Role of Digitalization in ensuring Security to the citizen

Role of Digitalization in ensuring Security to the citizen	No.s (N = 220)
<i>How much confidence do you have in the police regarding security?</i>	
There is a lot of confidence	189 (85.90)

There is not much confidence	3 (1.40)
Have moderate confidence	27 (12.3)
Absolutely no confidence	1 (0.5)
<hr/>	
<i>You live safely in your area" - with you</i>	
Strongly agree	206 (93.60)
Somewhat agree	12 (5.50)
Somewhat different	2 (0.90)
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<i>Overall, how satisfied are you with the police services provided by the police in your area?</i>	
Very satisfied	169 (76.80)
Satisfied	48 (21.80)
Dissatisfied	2 (0.90)
Very dissatisfied	1 (0.50)
<hr/>	
<i>How confident are you that the service is provided by the police in your area so that your area is a safe place?</i>	
Very confident	195 (88.60)
Somewhat confident	20 (9.10)
Not very confident	5 (2.30)
<hr/>	
<i>Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of police service in your area?</i>	
Satisfied	215 (97.70)
Dissatisfied	3 (1.40)
I don't know	2 (0.90)
<hr/>	
<i>In the last 3 years, the quality of police service in your area has improved, similar or worse?</i>	
Advanced	209 (95.00)
The same	11 (5.00)
<hr/>	
<i>Did you or anyone in your family contact the police for any statement?</i>	
Yes	216 (98.20)
No	4 (1.80)

Note: Figure in parenthesis indicates percentage.

Digital security and Economic Prosperity of Bangladesh

Economic Activity and Digitalization:

As Bangladesh increasingly embraces digital technologies and digitizes its economy, digital security becomes crucial (Zohir, S. 2023). The more economic activities move online, the more important it becomes to secure digital infrastructure, transactions, and data. This is particularly relevant in sectors such as e-commerce, online banking, and digital services.

Investment and Confidence: A robust digital security framework enhances investor confidence, both domestic and foreign. When businesses feel secure in conducting online transactions and storing

sensitive data, they are more likely to invest in expanding their digital presence. This, in turn, can stimulate economic growth by fostering innovation, job creation, and productivity gains.

Protection of Intellectual Property: Digital security measures help protect intellectual property rights, which are essential for fostering innovation and creativity. By safeguarding patents, copyrights, and trade secrets, Bangladesh can encourage local innovation and attract foreign investment from technology companies looking for secure environments to operate in.

Cybercrime and Economic Losses: Poor digital security can lead to significant economic losses due to cybercrime (Armin, J. *et al.* 2015). Incidents such as data breaches, ransom ware attacks, and online fraud not only directly impact businesses but also erode consumer trust and confidence in digital services. This can impede the growth of e-commerce and other online industries.

Government Initiatives: The Bangladeshi government plays a crucial role in promoting digital security through policies, regulations, and investments in cybersecurity infrastructure (Sarker, K. *et al.* 2019). By prioritizing cybersecurity, the government can create a safer digital environment that supports economic growth and development.

International Competitiveness: In an increasingly globalized economy, Bangladesh's competitiveness on the international stage is influenced by its digital security posture. Countries with strong cybersecurity measures are better positioned to participate in global trade, attract foreign investment, and engage in cross-border collaboration.

Digital Inclusion and Equity: Ensuring digital security is also essential for promoting digital inclusion and equity within Bangladesh. By providing secure digital platforms and services, all segments of society can participate in the digital economy, leading to more inclusive economic growth.

Digital security and economic prosperity in Bangladesh is symbiotic. Strong digital security measures are essential for fostering trust, promoting innovation, attracting investment, and mitigating economic losses associated with cyber threats. As Bangladesh continues to digitize its economy, prioritizing cybersecurity will be crucial for

unlocking the full potential of digital technologies to drive economic growth and development.

CONCLUSION

The digitization efforts in Bangladesh aimed at safeguarding citizen security and fostering economic prosperity hold significant promise for the nation's future development. Through the integration of digital technologies into various sectors such as governance, finance, healthcare, and education, Bangladesh has the opportunity to address longstanding challenges and unlock new opportunities. Digitization enhances citizen security by improving the efficiency and transparency of government services, thus reducing corruption and bureaucratic hurdles. Digital platforms can streamline processes such as public service delivery, law enforcement, and disaster response, ensuring quicker and more effective assistance to citizens in need. Moreover, digitization plays a crucial role in fostering economic prosperity by catalyzing innovation, entrepreneurship, and inclusive growth. By digitizing financial services, for example, Bangladesh can expand access to banking and credit facilities, especially for underserved populations in rural areas. E-commerce platforms can provide small businesses with greater market reach, while digital skills training programs can empower the workforce to participate in the digital economy. According to Table 4, 86 percent of people feel that the police are a good source of safety. Just 1% of the populace lacks confidence. Do you feel safe where you live? is a question posed to locals. We firmly concur with this question based on around 94 percent of the responses. In general, 77 percent of local residents are happy with the police service that is being provided. In order to avoid citizen security, proper policy implications on these issues should be established in order to take advantage of the level of digital security expertise among Bangladeshis. The majority of locals (85%) are unaware of digital security. To safeguard the safety of regular citizens, digital security services should be expanded in every police station. If achieved, digital security will shield every citizen of Bangladesh. In conclusion, the digitization journey in Bangladesh represents a transformative opportunity to enhance citizen security, promote economic prosperity, and achieve sustainable development. By leveraging digital

technologies effectively while addressing associated challenges, Bangladesh can emerge as a dynamic and resilient economy in the digital age.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ Enhance cybersecurity frameworks and regulations to protect against cyber threats and ensure the integrity of digital systems.
- ◆ Invest in training programs to develop a skilled workforce capable of managing and responding to cyber incidents effectively.
- ◆ Implement nationwide digital literacy programs to educate citizens on safe digital practices and empower them to utilize digital services effectively.
- ◆ Encourage the participation of marginalized groups, including women and persons with disabilities, in the digital economy through targeted initiatives and support programs.
- ◆ Develop user-friendly digital platforms for accessing essential services such as healthcare, education, and public utilities.
- ◆ Encourage the development of locally relevant digital solutions that address the unique needs and challenges of the Bangladeshi market, including those related to agriculture, healthcare, and finance.
- ◆ Expand access to digital financial services, including mobile banking and e-wallets, to promote financial inclusion and reduce reliance on cash transactions.
- ◆ Upgrade and expand digital infrastructure, including broadband networks, data centers, and cloud computing capabilities, to support the growing demand for digital services and applications.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

It was not possible to gather data at the field level among all of Bangladesh's police stations due to a lack of time and the financial crisis. Information gathering was really difficult. Due of the pandemic Covid-19 issue, the data was specifically obtained while keeping social distance. Several respondents in many fields declined to participate in direct interviews. In that instance, social media and mobile devices were used to gather their information.

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