Dematerializing Academic Records in Digital India: An E-Governance Initiative of CDSL

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Abstract

National Academic Depository (NAD) is a newly launched e-Government initiative – conceived and facilitated by India’s Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) – that is aimed at the digitization of all the past, present and future academic records of the students in the country. As part of the Government’s broader goals of inclusive digital empowerment, this novel initiative aspires to provide an online platform to all the educational institutions in the country for the safe storage and retrieval of the degree certificates and academic transcripts in digital form. The initiative is also an attempt at eliminating the existing inefficiencies inherent in manual issuing, storing, and maintaining of the academic records, on the part of the educational institutions. A successful implementation would ensure faster, accurate, and transparent online sharing, validation and usage of students’ academic records by all the stakeholders involved. This case focuses on key challenges associated with the conceptualization, implementation and oversight of such a massive e-Governance initiative of pan-India scale. Apart from the challenges of designing adequate incentive structures and robust technological platforms that can prove to be affordable, accessible and eventually sustainable, the aim of the case is also to apprise the readers of the dynamics of ensuring stakeholder adoption through institutional and governmental means. The case, therefore, has potent theoretical implications related to the e-Governance and education policy alignment of the initiative, reengineering of legacy processes, role of ICT infrastructure, behavioral changes expected of the stakeholders, choice of an appropriate revenue model in multi-sided platforms (MSPs), and the challenges related to ensuring equity and sustainability.

Keywords

- Business Process Reengineering (BPR);
- Central Depository Services Ltd. (CDSL);
- Digital Depository for academic records;
- E-Governance;
- ICT for Development (ICT4D);
- Internet Economy; Internet Technology and E-Commerce;
- National Academic Depository (NAD);
- Management Information Systems (MIS), Multi-sided Platform (MSP).