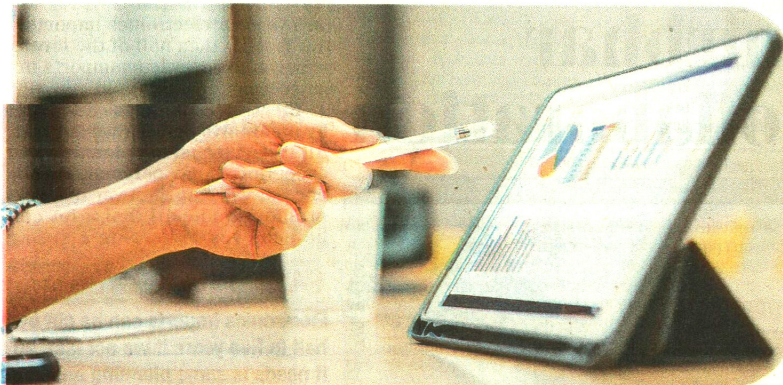


Self-Reliant India

CONSUMER CONNECT INITIATIVE



part of the global value chain. This realignment and integration can be achieved by adoption of the latest digital solutions.

Digital Saksham, a joint initiative of CII and Mastercard's Centre for Inclusive Growth and National Institute for MSMEs (ni-msme), aims to help micro and small enterprises integrate themselves into the digital economy, thereby expanding their access to markets, diversifying their customer base and solidifying their

supply chain. The programme aims to reach 3,00,000 MSMEs in 25 cities across seven states. Digital Saksham or being



THIS PANDEMIC, WHILE DISRUPTING GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS, HAS ALSO PRESENTED A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO BUSINESSES WORLDWIDE TO REORIENT THEMSELVES AND STRIVE TO BECOME PART OF THE GLOBAL VALUE CHAIN

digitally enabled is a step towards attaining *atmavishwas* (self-confidence) which will eventually lead to an

atmanirbhar (self-reliant) MSME sector.

The project is planned to be rolled out in the states of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar

Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Delhi-National Capital Region, Haryana, and Karnataka. The cities currently being selected are based on two important criteria: (i) nearby MSME clusters producing common products or products made of common materials, e.g., coir, glass, paper, wood and timber, ceramics, textile etc. (ii) key value chain anchors and the supply chain of existing large-scale members, e.g., for footwear large company, the MSME suppliers would be in nearby cities. Programmatic interventions for digital transformation of micro

and small enterprises will be implemented across these cities. Some of the cities currently selected include Nagpur, Kolhapur, Rajkot, Surat, Agra, Firozabad, Varanasi, Madurai, and Trichy.

The project is committed to deploy powerful and innovative solutions focussed on strengthening MSMEs in India.

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Integration of MSMEs into digital economy is crucial

It is very important for Indian Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to equip themselves with the latest digital solutions to mark their footprint in the global supply chain and increase their competitiveness

Chandrajit Banerjee

In one of the reports of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) titled 'Digital Infrastructure, Backbone of a Digital Economy', India was ranked as one of the fastest-growing markets with a digital consumer base comprising 119.52 crore telecom subscribers and 68.76 crore internet subscribers, as of September 2019.

The increased internet penetration and growing smartphone adoption are the factors driving the growth of Digital India. The spending on cloud technologies is on the rise as businesses (both large and small) are looking to accelerate their digital business initiatives. Today, it has become a necessity to be

lenges to the MSMEs in the country. The Indian government has supported them so that they rebuild and rebound to achieve business continuity. This pandemic, while disrupting global supply chains, has also presented a unique opportunity to businesses worldwide to reorient themselves and strive to become

STRATEGICALLY PLANNED

Digital Saksham will be implemented over a period of three years in three phases:

(i) Building awareness:

This will include imparting financial and digital literacy with a targeted outreach of three lakh entrepreneurs pan-India. Here, the aim is to help MSMEs attain the knowledge and access to personal finance strategies and digital financial instruments through digital tools.

(ii) Trainings:

Online/offline training will be extended to up to 75,000 entrepreneurs. Such training will equip MSMEs with the skills and knowledge necessary to improve their financial situation and ability to withstand unforeseen events.

(iii) Adoption:

Facilitate 50,000 entrepreneurs from the trained 75,000 to adopt digital tools for market access, credit solutions, and overall business growth.

digitally enabled to sustain business.

Amidst this paradigm shift, the role of digital tools has moved from being an enabler of productivity and processes, to a more strategic role of a key influencer of competitive advantage. Today, SMEs across the globe are focussing on adopting innovative digital solutions to build their path to competitiveness and it is important for Indian MSMEs to equip themselves with the latest digital solutions to mark their footprint in the global supply chain and increase their competitiveness.

The Covid-19 pandemic has presented serious chal-