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OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF FINTECH IN POST-COVID SCENARIO IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Financial technology, or Fintech, is a budding concept which has gained pace during post-covid times. It uses various technologies such as blockchain, artificial intelligence, cloud computing & big data. As FinTech provides digitalized transactions with easiness it has been proving more user friendly with passing of time. Both emerged and emerging nations have been witnessing the fast growth in the fintech segment, with India consistently ranking amid the first three technology integrated financial start-ups universally. This qualitative paper mainly contains the opportunities and challenges faced by the firms that are using technology to deliver the financial services in India.

KEYWORDS

fintech, technology.

JEL CODES

G23, O33.

INTRODUCTION

echnology has evolved and shaped our workplaces in many ways, through the adoption of tools like the internet & email for communications, word processing, spreadsheets and presentation for office productivity, e-databases for record keeping and robots and AI for automation. It has boomed beyond belief within the past 10 years and has taken over various industries. One such major impact has been on finance industry. The use of technology in finance to provide services to its customers is called financial technology or FinTech. It is an amalgamation of finance and technology. The financial services are provided by technology start-ups, e-commerce companies or large tech companies. The industry has been growing and is now being recognised globally. One of the main aims of FinTech is to provide financial services in virtual form with the help of technology and making things more user-friendly. The four key areas of FinTech comprises of Artificial Intelligence, Block Chain, Cloud computing and big data.

India is one of the fastest growing & adopting market of FinTech in the whole world. India ranked the highest globally in the FinTech adoption rate with China. There have been numerous start-ups in the past few years which provide financial services to its clients. Using Smartphones for mobile banking, investing or borrowing serves are examples of technologies whose main aim is to give access to financial services in an easy and user-friendly manner.

Post Demonetisation the need of financial technology has been on a rise. Online transactions gained more popularity as compared to old techniques of money transfer and other banking services. More demand for financial technology in India was seen during COVID-19 times. Many FinTechs began to work hard in respond to the pandemic. Many had been shoring up their capital and funding from investors and lenders. Other firms applied cost-effective measures including employee layoff. The companies were trying to lower their fixed cost and laid down the strategy that whatever expenses occur should be variable one's. FinTech industry has also been encouraged by schemes launched by the government such as Jan Dhan Yojana. The government of India has launched many successful fintech innovative products like Immediate Payment Services (IMPS), Unified Payment Interface (UPI), Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM) and Aadhaar-enabled Payment System (AePS).

Currently, there are more than 6500 start-ups of fintech in India. The market size of fintech is \$50 Bn in 2021 and is estimated at ~\$ 150 Bn by 2025. As of June 2022, India has 23 FinTech companies which have gained 'Unicorn Status' with a valuation of over \$1 Bn.

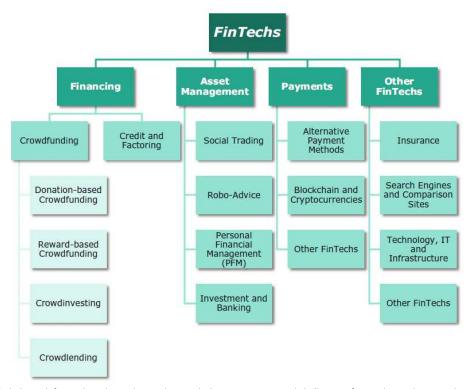
LITERATURE REVIEW

Guild (2017) analysed the effect of technology on the firms providing financial services and also how the recent innovations and developments shape technological concoctions in FinTech. Examples of FinTech innovations include the digital transfer of cash from one country to another, etc. The centre of attention of his paper was that finance has been approached by FinTech by millions of people in developing economies like India. He examined that the capacity of technological innovation can revolutionize the global financial sector by making FinTech more comprehensive, regionalize and impartial. He wrapped up his discussion by proposing that if there is forceful implementation made to transform the market by means of policymaking & regulatory interference, it might lead to unintended consequences, which would also not guarantee the accomplishment of policy goals.

Badruddin (2017) in her research paper introduced an exploration paper proposing that the fintech advancement has decreased expenses and promoted the entry of microfinance model. She wound up her paper by stating that, despite the difficulties the finance industry has, it is clear at this point that the present scenario is conducive for Fintech.

Dorfleitner et al. (2017) in their research paper categorised companies in the FinTech industry into four major segments based on their distinctive business models. These are Financing, Asset Management, Payments and other finTechs. Fig 1 illustrates this categorization.

FIG 1: SEGMENTS OF FINTECH INDUSTRY



Vijai (2019) in his scholarly work focused on the evolution along with the opportunities and challenges of FinTech in India. According to him, FinTech makes a transaction speedy and secure for the user. The Indian government is encouraging innovative ideas related to FinTech Industry. It is beneficial for economy of India because of its unique features like safety, speed, easiness to use and cost effectiveness.

Krishna & Anusha (2019) in their research paper explored that the act of accepting and using the FinTech in India was shockingly quite high. The Indian users have started using recent innovations & appreciate the use of mobile phones for transactions in their day-to-day life such as Unified Payment Interface (UPI), etc.

Sudhir (2020) in his research paper concluded that India is the world's leader in embracing the fintech and is one of the markets for being considered as one of the markets for fintech innovation of digital payment that is expanding the fastest. Likewise, almost all of the users of India who are digitally active are conscious of various fintech services available for making fund transfers and digital payments.

Vijay et al (2020) analysed about financial technology and stated that it is concerned with any novel development that embraces monetary exchanges of individual or commercial nature. Since the introduction of the ATM and credit card in the 1950's, FinTech had been upsetting our world.

Isha (2020) in her research paper investigated about FinTech to be an innovation which is currently being recognized by the whole world in the field of finance. At a lower cost the banks and financial institutions have a target-based market to offer their customers better financial products. It is implied that the customer prefers lower cost even before better quality. India is now a Data rich country from its previous position of being a data poor country.

Ashwini (2020) in his paper contemplated that India is home to the second-largest global fintech cluster, with 2565 active start-ups as opposed to 737 in 2014. India gets its bulkiest share from start-ups via payments followed by loaning, wealth tech, personal finance, insurtech, regtech, etc.

Sumeet and Adarsh (2021) in his research paper analysed about fintech that it looks modern but in reality, it has a quite important background.

Rajeshwari and Vijai (2021) analysed on how fintech has been changing the conventional financial establishments and is forming the financial area on a regular ground. Fintech provides the customers with faster financial management. The advancement of fintech industry is indispensable for both domestic and international financial markets.

Shree et al (2021) analyzed factors that influence the payment behaviour of people such as "perception", "trust in digital payments" and "experience with online frauds". Though there are different variables like age, gender, etc. that are dependable components which influence a person's decision of using these services frequently. A person's knowledge of FinTech and his faith on the progressive innovation plays an important role.

Saniya & Dr. Lakshmi (2022) in their research paper "Fintech in India- Demographics affecting the Fintech services" interpreted the relation between the general demographics of people and their adaptation of new fintech developments & innovations. It was discovered that the age and sex of people are likely to have a significant impact on the adaptation of technology enabled financial services.

NEED OF THE STUDY

India witnessed the demonetization of notes in 2016. After demonetization, the government of India appealed to its citizens to make a shift from the cash system to cashless digital payment platforms to keep a check on fraud and corruption. Additionally, with the help of prime regulatory bodies like RBI and SEBI our government is leaving no stone unturned in order to make its long-held desire of becoming a cashless economy come true. Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, setting up of National Centre of Financial Education, India Stack, E-RUPI etc. are a few worth mentioning steps of government that are having a hand in making India a digital economy and sparking the fintech revolution in India. Considering this background, it is the need of the hour to study the challenges and opportunities faced by the firms that are integrating technology to deliver financial services.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To explore the opportunities and challenges of fintech firms in India.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A comprehensive review of the literature on fintech and its development was undertaken to define the scope of the study and ensure its objectivity. The selection criteria were based on top-cited research papers on google scholar website. Some key data and trends were taken from websites of leading market research organizations.

DISCUSSION

OPPORTUNITIES

The digitalization of financial services and money has created many opportunities for the FinTech firms. It is to build more wide-ranging and well-organized financial services and encourage economic development.

- 1. **Digital Payment Services** Digitalization has revolutionised the financial sector. There has been technological and fundamental transformation on a huge level and it is becoming the new normal. There has been elimination of paper work in various sectors of the economy. Nobody wants to stand in a queue to pay their electricity bills or deposit money in their bank account. People now conveniently perform digital transactions with one click. This is the benefit of digitalization.
- 2. **Blockchain Technology** Blockchain technology has been revamping the fintech industry in myriad ways. To avoid redundancy of data and have more transparency the use of blockchain is advantageous and due to this more and more banks, insurers and other financial institutions are motivated to invest in research into potential applications of this technology.
- 3. **Acceptance by people** The educated gentry of India are accepting & using FinTech on a daily basis such as Zomato, Paytm, Google pay, Phone pay. Majority of mobile phones in India have these applications or FinTech apps.
- 4. Government Support Government is also supporting new start-ups by reducing compliances along with monetary support. The Tamil Nadu government in its fintech policy 2021 has announced an incentive scheme for firms who have invested more than ₹50 crore and provided employment to 300 people or more in less than 3 years, on a case-to-case basis.
- 5. Skilled Employees Tier-I prestigious institutions like IIMs, IITs are producing lots of skilled employees who have knowledge of FinTech.
- 6. **Introduction to 5G technology** Government has been testing 5G technology in various parts of India and is about to introduce it in the coming months. 5G will have more bandwidth, lower latency and high device density which will make it faster than 4G. This is an opportunity for the potential firms to invest into Fintech industry.
- 7. **Entry of new firms** The increased traffic on websites & applications has urged the potential businessmen to invest in the fintech market. There has been entry of new firms post-demonetization. As per one research paper, after demonetization the digital transactions has raised approx. 22% in India.

CHALLENGES

Every coin has two sides. Despite having abundance of prospects Fintech has many challenges to face in India. Some of the challenges which FinTech industry are facing or will face in future, with reference to Indian context, are as under:

- 1. **Data privacy and application security challenges** Cyber-attacks continue to be a matter of utmost concern for fintech firms. These attacks lead to high cost on system repair. The loss of public trust, which is typically irrecoverable, is one of the primary consequences of a cyberattack. Therefore, the fintech companies face a challenge of maintaining high security to avoid data leakage.
- 2. **Regulatory and compliance laws** –The commencement of business for a fintech start up involves a lot of stages such as registering for GST, getting legal contracts and agreements, obtaining intellectual property, registering domain, etc. The Reserve Bank of India came up with a scheme namely 'Differentiated banking license' for granting 'on-tap' licenses to businesses that are interested in providing financial or banking services (Sahoo, 2018).
- 3. Lack of expertise The fintech app development services require expertise. The customer only understands the website or application when it has good User Interface. Developing of website and applications require expert persons for which the firms will have to pay higher remuneration. New firms therefore face a problem of getting the services of experts.
- 4. **Human Touch** The use of more and more technology has wiped away the human component. The loss of human interaction has made people realise that they are communicating with the machines. The fintech companies need to persuade people, especially the aged one, to abandon conventional methods and redirect themselves to fintech services.
- 5. **Poor Infrastructure** Technological infrastructure is still not developed when it comes to India. Poor connectivity is one of such examples. Still a huge amount of population does not have bank accounts which is required for online transactions. Low literacy level is also a hindrance. So, people prefer to go for cash transaction rather than online transaction. Lack of Financial Literacy is one of the major issues for those who have bank accounts & internet connectivity.
- 6. **Lack of capital** Like other industries, gaining confidence of investors is a difficult task. The developing nature of fintech industry imposes a challenge for companies to raise the seed capital and other investments on time.
- 7. **Non acceptance by some category** In rural areas, there are still people who are not ready to accept technology. People still want to resort to old techniques. For instance, people feel comfortable to withdraw money through cheque or bank draft instead of ATMs where chances of fraud are high.

CONCLUSION

FinTechs have been developing in India on a large scale. By the pace of its emergence, the entrepreneurial potential of the Indians cannot be denied. The fintech industry market size is \$50 Bn and is estimated at ~150 Bn by 2025. The Fintech firms needs to be mentored well both technologically and monetarily. We can see a number of successful start-ups in some sectors and it is expected the same with other sectors as well. The Fintech industry has been encouraged by the government & regulatory bodies by providing different initiatives. RBI is continuously making efforts to promote fintech.

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