

## India cannot lag behind in the era of digital currency - PM Modi



The dream of 'Digital India' has been cradled by the Government to its best and voicing it, PM Modi too asserted that India cannot lag behind in the era of digital currency, mocking the ones who were criticising his government for digital push during the latest Mann ki Baat session.

While it is true that it is the era of digitalisation across the globe and there are uncountable benefits of digital currency and financial transactions, the doubt here is, whether India is ready for hard-on digitalisation yet? Before looking into it, let's sing in with the idea of digitalisation first. The basic and most prominent freebie with cashless transactions is that they will help the country in getting rid of the perennial problem of black money. Cashless transactions are possible only with white money, paying taxes becomes inevitable and they always have transaction trails for future references.

Another major benefit of cashless transaction - real estate prices will go down, because black money makes a huge share in the out-bursting price of property. Since black money will be uprooted, we can kiss property inflation - a goodbye. Other issues like prostitution, drug trafficking, terror funding, money laundering, fake currency and many such illegal issues can be dropped down to almost null - because with cashless transactions, hiding illegal businesses will become impossible. There are other factors like the cut down in printing cost of currency, political funding and illegal cash flows can be minimised? the democracy would be finally at work.

But.

A huge mass of underprivileged poor people doesn't own bank accounts. Yes, Jan Dhan was introduced and millions of people had registered to get into banking system, but the process is still not complete and majority of accounts are non-functional. The first task should be getting the entire poor and marginalized sector into banking system. But before that, they must have money to put into bank accounts. As per the stats of 2017, still 21.9% people lives under poverty line and over 17.5% people live under the income of Rs 50-60 per day. Of 1000 children born, 38 die before their first birthdays? because of hunger, malnutrition or unavailability of medical aid. Oh and what about the people who are not that educated and don't know how to use all the digital systems? They cannot be ignored.

Then comes the next-most vulnerable group of people? small retailers of India, who still completely rely on cash and are not able to invest in setting up a digital infrastructure. Also, the amount of taxes, surcharges and fees levied in cashless transactions must be made liberal. Not forgetting the yet-vulnerable to cyber-attacks and cyber threats? which are still grave dangers and are our systems so reliable yet? May be it is too early for us, or maybe we need a subtler approach.