

Digital Skills Development for Waqf Professionals in India: A Capacity Building Framework Leveraging WAMSI (Waqf Asset Management System of India) Software

Anam Rakhsan^{1*}

Department of Law, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India¹

Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh 202001, India

Corresponding Author: Khan.anam4@gmail.com¹

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Publication information

Research article

HOW TO CITE

Rakhsan, A. (2025). Digital skills development for waqf professionals in India: A capacity building framework leveraging WAMSI (Waqf Asset Management System of India) software. *Journal of International Conference Proceedings*, 7(3), 734-742.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.32535/jicp.v7i3.3536>

Copyright @ 2024 owned by Author(s).
Published by JICP



This is an open-access article.

License: Attribution-Noncommercial-
Share Alike (CC BY-NC-SA)

Received: 5 September 2024

Accepted: 9 December 2024

Published: 11 January 2025

ABSTRACT

India's Waqf sector, managing over 500,000 endowments, faces significant challenges in embracing digital technologies due to limited digital literacy among professionals, impacting governance and social impact. This study proposes a comprehensive framework to enhance digital competencies, leveraging the Waqf Assets Management System of India (WAMSI). The framework includes foundational digital literacy, WAMSI-specific skills for digital asset management and donor engagement, advanced competencies like data analytics and cybersecurity, and leadership training to drive digital transformation.

Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research combines surveys, interviews, and focus groups to assess digital skills gaps, identify best practices in capacity building, and evaluate the readiness of Waqf institutions for digital transformation. The study outlines a phased implementation and evaluation strategy, aiming to optimize WAMSI adoption, improve operational efficiency, and amplify social impact through effective digital engagement. This research contributes to the development of India's Waqf sector by providing a tailored roadmap for digital transformation, fostering sustainability, and enhancing the sector's governance and social contributions.

Keywords: Digital Skills; Digital Technology; Employment; Management; WAMSI; Waqf

INTRODUCTION

India's environment has changed significantly in the 21st century, moving from antiquated practices to adopting a digital revolution. This research paper attempts to explore the significance of Digital India, including its activities, evolution, and significant effects on the country. The world we live in today has been greatly influenced by the unrelenting growth of technology. Every stage of the history of the internet, from its inception to the arrival of computers, has profoundly impacted society. The revolution brought about by technology has changed how we connect, communicate, and do business, in addition to speeding up progress.

The ambitious Digital India program was started by the Indian government in 2015 to empower people via technology. Taking on this Digital India project was a paradigm shift that thrust the country into the tech-savvy era. The amalgamation of bytes, which comprise data, information, and technology, has enabled innovation and revolutionized many facets of Indian life. The program covers a number of important topics, such as e-governance, digital literacy, and digital infrastructure. Building a society empowered by technology and closing the gap between the digitally privileged and the underprivileged are among the main goals of Digital India.

The diverse benefits of Digital India, from strengthening the economy to empowering people, offer many potential advantages that go well beyond screens and servers.

The rise of this trend has also penetrated activities that have religious value, one of which is the waqf system, a unique aspect of Islamic jurisprudence. Waqf, one of the religious institutions with benefits and economic roles, should be created and administered in line with modern times, particularly the digital age, to enable it to contribute more to the community's economic welfare and empowerment.

It is estimated that India's population will reach 1.45 billion by 2025, with a growing workforce and a significant youth population. However, India faces a significant challenge in terms of the digital skills gap, with a shortage of skilled professionals to meet the demands of a rapidly digitizing economy. India needs a large number of digitally skilled people to (1) drive economic growth and innovation, (2) support the government's Digital India initiative, (3) meet the demands of emerging technologies like AI, IoT (Internet of Things), and data analytics, (4) enhance productivity and efficiency in various sectors, and (5) improve digital literacy and online safety.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Waqf, a charitable trust in Islamic law, has been a cornerstone of Muslim philanthropy and social welfare for centuries. As a vital institution, Waqf has played a significant role in promoting education, healthcare, poverty alleviation, and community development (Jamal et al., 2022). Despite its importance, Waqf studies have received limited attention in academic circles, particularly in the context of modernization, digitalization, and governance.

This literature review aims to bridge the knowledge gap by examining the existing body of research on Waqf, its historical evolution, legal frameworks, management practices, and socio-economic impact. Several studies have explored the historical evolution and socio-economic impact of Waqf institutions in Islamic societies (Ameer Ali, 1880; Rashid, 1978). These studies have highlighted the various functions of Waqf endowments, their history, origin, and importance in Islamic jurisprudence, while also emphasizing their role in encouraging community growth and advancing social welfare.

Furthermore, recent studies have begun to examine how digital technologies might transform charitable activities, such as Waqf administration. For instance, Ahmad and Siddiqui conducted a study titled “Waqf Properties Management and Encroachment Detection – An Initiative towards E-Governance,” illustrating the implementation of computerization in India and its use in detecting encroachments through GIS and remote sensing technologies. Similarly, Ahmad authored a research paper titled “A Comparative Study of Waqf Properties Management Before and After the Computerization,” which provides an overview of the management of Waqf properties prior to computerization, marked by incomplete studies and documentation. A significant number of Waqf properties were either unidentified or unregistered, making them difficult to manage. However, after computerization, every aspect of Waqf property management saw marked improvements in efficiency and transparency.

In their work, Ali and Oseni (2021) authored “Waqf Development and Innovation: Socio-Economic and Legal Perspectives,” which offers recommendations for nations interested in exploring this socio-economic institution. The study highlights innovative funding platforms to support fiscal policies in developing countries, allowing readers and policymakers to replicate successful experiments and learn from failed ones. This volume addresses relevant laws and regulations concerning Waqf and trust laws, examines novel applications of Waqf in contemporary economic systems and social development, and critically analyzes cross-national case studies and experiences.

Another significant contribution is Sait (2006), in his paper “Waqf and Socio-Economic Development: Impact on Poverty Alleviation with Special Reference to the Muslim World”. This study investigates the role of Waqf institutions in alleviating poverty and advancing socio-economic development in the Muslim world. It explores the potential of Waqf assets in generating sustainable income streams and promoting community welfare.

Rohim et al. (2022) in their work “Transformation of Waqf Management in The Digital Era: A Meta Synthesis Study,” explore the digitization of waqf management by various waqf nazhir. The study highlights the efforts of the Indonesian Waqf Board (BWI) to develop a digital waqf ecosystem nationwide. Their phased approach includes the digitization of nazhir waqf, integration of waqf data, and internal digitization initiatives within BWI, demonstrating progressive steps toward modernizing waqf administration.

Similarly, Ali and Rakshan (2021) examine the WAMSI software in their study titled “A Study of Waqf Asset Management System of India (WAMSI) Software: Governance, Utility, and Socio-Economic Impact”. This study provides an analysis of the management of waqf properties using Remote Sensing, GIS, and GPS techniques. It also reviews the role of WAMSI, an integrated online workflow-based information system developed in 2009 by the Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India, to manage Waqf properties under the jurisdiction of various State and Union Territory Waqf Boards.

These studies offer diverse perspectives on the functioning of Waqf institutions and their socio-economic impact while emphasizing the transformative potential of digital technology in improving Waqf administration and charitable activities. The integration of findings from these investigations enriches the understanding of the broader framework of digital Waqf administration, providing a foundation for further research and discourse on the topic.

However, despite these advancements, there remains a notable gap in the literature concerning a comprehensive analysis of digital Waqf management. Existing studies

often focus on isolated aspects of Waqf or digital charity, leaving the broader implications of digital transformation on Waqf institutions insufficiently addressed. To tackle the multifaceted opportunities and challenges posed by the intersection of digital technology and Waqf administration, this study seeks to build on prior research by offering an in-depth exploration of digital Waqf management, its best practices, obstacles, and outcomes.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods to explore Waqf management and digitalization and digital skill development. The research involves a comprehensive review of existing literature and documents related to Waqf administration, including annual reports, policy documents, and academic studies. This is followed by a quantitative analysis of secondary data, including financial records and performance metrics of Waqf institutions. The quantitative data is analysed using statistical software to identify trends and patterns. The study integrates the quantitative and qualitative findings to provide a comprehensive understanding of Waqf management and digitalization, and digital skill development ensuring validity and reliability through triangulation and data verification. This approach enables a nuanced exploration of the research questions, leveraging the strengths of both methodologies to provide a rich and detailed understanding of the phenomenon.

Data Collection

Primary Data

Stakeholders in Waqf management, such as Waqf administrators, donors, beneficiaries, and regulatory bodies, will be the subject of semi-structured interviews. Their perspectives, difficulties, and experiences with digital Waqf management will be examined during the interviews. To collect quantifiable data on the use of digital technology in Waqf management, satisfaction levels, and perceived benefits, surveys will be sent to a sample of Waqf institutions and donors.

Secondary Data

Existing literature, including academic articles, reports, and policy documents, will be reviewed to provide a comprehensive understanding of digital Waqf management practices, trends, and challenges.

RESULTS

This study explores the dynamics of digital Waqf management and digital skill development, offering a comprehensive analysis of stakeholders' perspectives, the application of digital technologies, and the associated benefits. It also examines satisfaction levels and compares qualitative and quantitative data through a mixed-methods approach. The findings underscore the importance of addressing India's significant digital skill gap, particularly in high-demand areas such as data science and analytics, artificial intelligence and machine learning, cloud computing, cybersecurity, digital marketing, e-commerce, web development, and infrastructure management.

India's government has launched several initiatives, including the Skill India Mission, Digital India Program, National Digital Literacy Mission, and Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA), along with industry-led training programs. These initiatives aim to upskill and reskill the workforce to meet the growing demand for digital expertise, driving the nation's digital transformation and economic growth.

Among India's population of approximately 200 million Muslims—around 14% of the total population—there exists a pronounced digital skills gap. This gap poses barriers to social mobility, economic advancement, and access to opportunities. Bridging this divide is essential for enhancing employability, supporting entrepreneurship, improving education and healthcare access, promoting digital literacy and online safety, preserving cultural heritage, and addressing socio-economic challenges like poverty and inequality.

Within the Muslim community, key sectors requiring digitally skilled professionals include Islamic finance and banking, the halal industry and e-commerce, Islamic education and research, Muslim social entrepreneurship, digital da'wah and outreach, and community development. Meeting this demand involves targeted initiatives such as Muslim-led digital literacy programs, industry partnerships, job training initiatives, online education platforms, entrepreneurship support centers, and community-based training and mentorship.

By fostering digital skills within the Muslim population, the community can unlock new career opportunities, enhance entrepreneurial ventures, and access better educational and healthcare resources. This empowerment would not only contribute to addressing long-standing socio-economic challenges but also enable the Muslim community to play a more significant role in India's broader economic development and digital transformation.

DISCUSSION

Waqf System in India

The Waqf system, known as Awqaf in plural form, is a fundamental aspect of Islamic philanthropy. It involves the creation of a permanent endowment by a Muslim for charitable purposes such as education, healthcare, and poverty alleviation. Serving both spiritual and societal needs, Waqf aims to contribute to community welfare while offering spiritual rewards to the benefactor. In India, Waqf properties are managed through a structured framework involving multiple administrative levels. The Central Waqf Council (CWC) serves as the statutory body responsible for overseeing Waqf administration across the country. At the state level, State Waqf Boards (SWBs) handle the management of Waqf properties, while local Waqf Committees oversee individual estates.

Despite this organizational framework, the Waqf management system in India faces several challenges. These include a lack of transparency and accountability, unauthorized encroachments on Waqf lands, inefficient property management and maintenance, limited financial resources, and outdated record-keeping. Such issues undermine the potential of Waqf as a tool for socio-economic development, emphasizing the urgent need for reform.

Reforms and Initiatives

To address these challenges, several reforms and initiatives have been introduced to improve Waqf management. Digitalization of Waqf records and the implementation of Waqf Property Management Systems (WPMS) have been significant steps forward. Capacity-building programs for Waqf administrators have been launched to enhance their managerial skills, while the State Waqf Boards and Waqf Committees are being strengthened to improve their effectiveness. Additionally, public-private partnerships are being encouraged to facilitate the development of Waqf properties.

In response to recommendations from the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on Waqf, a Computerization Scheme was launched in December 2009 with an estimated

budget of ₹25 crores. This initiative aims to modernize Waqf administration by incorporating several components. Key aspects include GIS mapping of Waqf properties, computerization of state and union territory Waqf Boards' records, digitization of ownership documents, and the facilitation of property mutation processes. The scheme also emphasizes strengthening the manpower of Waqf Boards by hiring specialized assistants to ensure real-time data updates on the WAMSI Portal, which provides a comprehensive database for Waqf properties.

Key Features and Outcomes

The GIS mapping component of the scheme is particularly noteworthy, involving a detailed survey of all original Waqf properties under each Waqf estate. This includes uploading GPS coordinates, photographic evidence, and related data onto the WAMSI Portal. The process is essential for validating the accuracy of property data against records from state revenue departments and original Waqf documents. The initiative also focuses on capacity building by providing training and resources to Mutawallis (Waqf caretakers) and management committees to ensure adherence to the Waqf Properties Lease Rules, 2014.

Strengthening Manpower Support to State/UT Waqf Boards

Strengthening manpower support is another critical element of the scheme. The provision of specialized roles, such as Litigation Tracking Support Assistants and Leasing Support Assistants, ensures that the administrative workload is managed efficiently. These roles enable State/UT Waqf Boards to maintain real-time data on property transactions, ensuring transparency and accountability. The initiative also recognizes excellence in Waqf management by awarding Mutawallis and management committees for their contributions to efficient estate management.

By addressing systemic inefficiencies and modernizing administrative processes, these reforms aim to unlock the full potential of Waqf properties in India. Improved management practices and digitized systems can enhance the socio-economic impact of Waqf, ensuring it continues to serve as a vital tool for community development and philanthropy in Islam.

Training to Workforce

State and Union Territory Waqf Boards in India are tasked with critical activities such as removing encroachments, addressing unauthorized occupation of Waqf properties, and securing these properties through fencing where necessary. These actions require a specialized approach, with personnel trained in legal procedures and operational guidelines. To meet this need, the Central Waqf Council (CWC) is responsible for preparing an annual training plan, which is then coordinated with the respective State/UT Waqf Boards. The training programs are designed to enhance the skills of all personnel, including Mutawallis and Management Committees, ensuring alignment with legal requirements and administrative efficiency. The program's expenditure is capped at ₹1 lakh per annum for each State/UT Waqf Board.

Infrastructure Support at State/UT Waqf Boards

Infrastructure enhancements are a key component of strengthening Waqf Boards. Centralized Computing Facilities (CCF) are being established, including the provision of up to six new desktop computers for boards managing more than 6,000 Waqf properties as of March 2021. E-Office Solution Software is provided to improve administrative management, enabling digital integration across all Waqf Boards. Additionally, a video conferencing facility is being set up with a one-time grant of ₹4 lakh per board, alongside a maintenance grant for existing facilities.

To support these digital and administrative initiatives, each Waqf Board will have an Assistant Programmer with a bachelor's degree in relevant fields and at least one year of experience. The Assistant Programmer's responsibilities include managing ICT infrastructure, overseeing the WAMSI Portal Registration Module, and training other staff on portal functionalities such as property registration, annual returns, leasing, and litigation. To assist in these efforts, Data Entry Operators (DEOs) are also deployed, ensuring the continuous update of WAMSI Portal records. Both roles have specific qualifications and are compensated appropriately, with annual pay increments to acknowledge expertise gained through experience.

Training and Capacity Building

To ensure effective governance, each Waqf Board is expected to establish robust financial, legal, and administrative divisions. Orientation and training sessions are conducted to keep board members updated on the latest developments, particularly concerning the Waqf Act of 1995 and the Waqf Properties Lease Rules of 2014. Regular regional seminars are held to share best practices and implementation strategies among Waqf Boards. The Central Waqf Council organizes at least six regional conferences annually, fostering collaboration among local representatives, stakeholders, and ministry officials. The culmination of these efforts is a National Conference held in the final quarter, where selected teams from regional conferences share their experiences with national stakeholders and public representatives.

By integrating comprehensive training programs and capacity-building initiatives with technological and infrastructural support, Waqf Boards in India are poised to enhance their governance capabilities, ensuring effective management and utilization of Waqf properties for the benefit of the community.

CONCLUSION

In 2005, the Indian government established the Sachar Committee, led by Justice Rajinder Sachar, to assess the social, economic, and educational conditions of Muslims in India. The committee's 2006 report provided a comprehensive overview of the challenges faced by the Muslim community, revealing several significant findings. Muslims comprise 13.4% of India's population, with a growth rate exceeding the national average. However, their educational participation lags behind, as school enrolment rates are lower and dropout rates higher compared to the national average. Access to higher education remains limited, perpetuating disparities in educational attainment.

In employment, Muslims are underrepresented in government jobs and public sector undertakings, including key institutions like Indian Railways, banks, and insurance companies. Many are self-employed, but often in low-paying, informal sectors. Economically, Muslims face hurdles such as lower per capita income, limited access to credit and banking facilities, and restricted opportunities for entrepreneurship due to resource constraints. Healthcare access is another critical area of concern, with Muslims experiencing higher infant mortality rates and inadequate sanitation and hygiene facilities in their communities. Housing and infrastructure disparities further exacerbate these challenges, as Muslims often reside in segregated, underdeveloped areas with limited access to basic amenities like water, electricity, and sanitation. Politically, the community is underrepresented in Parliament, state legislatures, and local governance, which limits their influence on policy and decision-making.

The Sachar Committee report underscored the need for affirmative action policies, enhanced educational and employment funding, improved healthcare and infrastructure access, and increased political representation to address these disparities. It also

highlighted the importance of combating alienation and discrimination among Muslims. While the report's recommendations aimed at fostering inclusive development, progress on implementation has been slow, leaving many of the identified concerns unresolved.

In the context of waqf property management, developing digital skills is a pivotal step toward better administration and growth of this sector. Several government programs and initiatives focused on skill development and digital literacy provide opportunities to enhance these capabilities. For instance, the National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM) and Digital India Training Program offer resources and training for foundational digital skills. Government-backed platforms like SWAYAM, NPTEL, and Skill India provide accessible online courses, while capacity-building programs organized by agencies like the Ministry of Minority Affairs and Waqf Boards aim to strengthen expertise. Collaborative efforts between industry and academia, coupled with customized training workshops, mentorship opportunities, and certification programs, further bolster skill development in this area.

Prominent initiatives such as the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH), and National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) play a critical role in equipping individuals with industry-relevant skills. These programs, supported by public-private partnerships, focus on enhancing vocational training and empowering youth to access better employment opportunities. Additionally, the National Skill Development Program under MPASS Foundation provides training and certification aligned with PMKVY objectives, while the Digital India program aims to transform India into a digitally empowered society.

By leveraging these initiatives, Waqf boards can develop the necessary digital competencies to manage waqf properties effectively. This would not only enhance administrative efficiency but also contribute to the sector's growth and its broader socio-economic impact.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

N/A

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest.

REFERENCES

- Ahmed, N. (2016). A comparative study of waqf properties' management before and after the computerization. *International Journal of Computer Science and Technology*, 7, 1–12.
- Ahmed, N. (2016). Impact of computerization of waqf properties on poverty alleviation. *International Journal of Science Technology and Management*, 5(7), 155-162.
- Ahmed, N., & Siddiqui, J. (n.d.). *Waqf Properties' Management and Encroachment detection: An initiative towards e-governance*. Ijates. https://www.ijates.com/images/short_pdf/1473504590_524-ijates.pdf
- Ali, M. W., & Rakshan, A. (2022). A study of waqf asset management system of India (WAMSI) software: Governance, utility, and socio-economic impact. *Journal of Asian and African Social Science and Humanities*, 7(4), 29–40. <https://doi.org/10.55327/jaash.v7i4.253>
- Almomani, M. A. A., AbuAlhoul, M. A., Alqudah, M. T. S., & Al-Khalidi, I. K. S. (2024). Exploring digital waqf management: Opportunities and challenges. *International Journal of Religion*, 5(12), 20-30.

- Jamal, M., Shulthoni, M., Wulandari, Y., & Wibowo, H. S. (2022). Waqf land management: Case study on waqf of rice field Gontor. *Journal of International Conference Proceedings*, 5(1), 78-84. <https://doi.org/10.32535/ijcp.v5i1.1446>
- Kader, S. A. (2008). *The Law of Wakfs*.
- Khan, A. (2000). *Commentary on the law of Wakf in India: The Wakf Act, 1995*.
- Mulla, D. F. (2022). *Principles of Mahomedan Law*. Legare Street Press.
- NIC, A. (2016). *Waqf Management System of India (WAMSI) Project*. WAMSI. <https://wamsi.nic.in/wamsi/BaseAboutUs.jsp>
- NIC, A. (n.d.) CCF set up progress. WAMSI. https://wamsi.nic.in/wamsi/progress/WAMSI_MPR_MAY2012.pdf
- Oseni, U. A., & S. Nazim Ali. (2019). *Fintech in Islamic Finance: Theory and Practice*. Routledge.
- Rashid, K. (1978). *Wakf Administration in India*. Advent Books Division Incorporated.
- Rohim, A. N., Priyatno, P. D., & Sari, L. P. (2022). Transformation of waqf management in the digital era: A meta synthesis study. *Al-Falah*, 7(2), 209–209. <https://doi.org/10.29240/alfalah.v7i2.5421>
- The United Indian. (2024). *Empowering the Nation: Strategies for Enhancing Digital Literacy in India*. The United Indian. <https://theunitedindian.com/news/blog?Digital-literacy-in-India&b=193&c=3>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR(S)

1st Author

Anam Rakhsan is a distinguished lecturer and researcher at the Department of Law at Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), one of India's premier institutions. With a robust academic background and a passion for legal studies. As a teacher, Anam fosters critical thinking and encourages students to engage deeply with contemporary legal challenges. Her courses are designed to help students develop a nuanced understanding of legal principles while preparing them to navigate the complexities of the legal profession. Beyond the classroom, Anam is involved in a variety of academic and professional activities, including organizing seminars, conferences, and workshops that explore critical issues in law and society. She has also been an active participant in legal outreach programs, aiming to raise awareness of legal rights and promote legal literacy