The Internet has changed the scenario of communication and business like never before. Today, it is much easier to communicate and do business online. Most of us are dependent solely on the Internet for work.

The Internet also plays an important role in the economy of a nation; from a big firm to a small vendor, everyone is doing transactions online, selling and buying stuff online, etc. India is a growing economy and the Digital India programme of the central government is an example of how Internet can help in building a much stronger economy.

But if presence of the Internet can help in making an economy big, its absence can surely have a bigger impact on the economy. Internet shutdowns (not to be confused with slowed down Internet) are on the rise in India. Internet shutdowns are disruptions of the Internet or flow of information on the Internet.

Increasing instances of Internet shutdowns in India are intensifying the difficulties on the pathways to the digital India concept. However, the impact of Internet shutdowns is less explored in India.

The Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER), New Delhi has studied the impact of Internet shutdowns on the economy of India and recently released a report *The Anatomy of an Internet Blackout: Measuring the Economic Impact of Internet Shutdowns in India* on 25 April 2018 at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. The report launch event was attended by many policymakers, economists, business reporters, researchers and scholars from India as well as other countries.

Welcoming the participants and invitees, Dr. Rajat Kathuria, Director and Chief Executive, ICRIER stressed upon the increasing Internet shutdowns in India since the past few years and their impact on the economy. He started the talk with a quote by US president John F. Kennedy: “American roads are not good because America is rich, but America is rich because American roads are good,” and used this analogy to look at the digital impact of Internet shutdowns on the GDP of India.

In his presentation, Dr. Kathuria emphasised on how Internet shutdowns doubled in the year 2017 from the year 2016 with total hours of shutdown increased by 20%. For the year 2018, India has experienced a total of 40 shutdowns till date. Northern and north-eastern states of India faced more Internet shutdowns as compared to the southern states. He also discussed how some states are more affected than the others.

In this study of economic impact, the researchers have covered many affected states including the North East as well, between the year 2012 and 2017. To study the economic impact of Internet shutdowns in India, they used both qualitative and quantitative analyses.

In quantitative measurement, they measured the estimated traffic affected by shutdowns and the estimated economic cost of traffic affected. For qualitative analyses, they interacted with concerned stakeholders (Government, Business and Society) in 7 out of 18 affected states during the study period i.e. 2012 to 2017.

During field investigations, investigators Kaushambi Bagchi, Richa Sekhani and others found that the Internet shutdowns affected tourism business and small business
In India, the highest number of Internet shutdowns was reported in the year 2017. Most of the shutdowns were the result of rumour mongering on social media, provocative videos and photos being shared on social media...