

PM  
**GatiShakti**

# ***A NEW PARADIGM IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT***



Development of a country depends very much on the availability of its infrastructural facilities. Without having a sound infrastructural base, a country cannot develop its economy. India's ambition of sustaining its relatively high growth, depends on how we create an enabling infrastructure that is capable of meeting the needs of its growing economy and population. Infrastructure spends equalling to 1% of GDP will result in GDP growth of at least 2% as infrastructure has a "multiplier effect" on economic growth.

In the maritime trade, development of a multimodal infrastructure connectivity can result in equitable distribution of movement of cargo, creating sustainability and efficiency in the transportation sector with a significant impact of reduced logistics costs. This means an integrated approach has to be adopted involving usage of different modes of transport optimally to achieve efficiency and cost reduction.

Currently if you see, India has the world's largest road network exceeding 58 lakh kms and the running track length of Indian Railways is nearly 1.3 lakh kms. We are also bestowed with a long coastline of nearly 7500 kms with 12 major ports and nearly 200 non major ports. We are also having an inland navigable waterway length of nearly 20000 kms. However up to 93% of movement of our freight traffic is only through road and rail and resultant inefficiencies has resulted in our logistic cost being around 14% of our GDP.

Hence infrastructure development has a significant impact for the common man not only in terms of employment and commercial opportunities but also in the improvement of quality of living. Development in ports, road, rail networks, power plants and communication infrastructure, require a multitude of project management activities and critical paths to complete such projects in a time bound manner within the budgeted costs.

However, what happens in reality? Why are the infrastructure projects delayed exorbitantly with huge cost overruns? While there are many legitimate reasons like issues concerning land acquisition, population resettlement, environmental



concerns etc, a lot of time delay is attributed to delay in decision making. Why is it so? The reason is a complex infrastructure project is linked to many centres of decision making lacking effective coordination

With a vision of redressing this anomaly, the honourable Prime Minister of India announced in his Independence Day speech that a special initiative called “Gati Shakti” will be launched where specific projects will be identified as being part of a National Master Plan (NMP). The overall objective of developing such a comprehensive plan is to take an integrated approach to all the existing and proposed infrastructure initiatives by way of a planned approach. A plan of making zones of economic activity in the country as a fulcrum of economic development, interconnected with a network of multimodal connectivity to the last mile will be transformative. The plan also has to ensure that the initiatives being undertaken by various ministries develop a synergy and to not operate in silos and planned through a technologically integrated approach.

Gati Shakti is thus all about identifying critical projects, which enable multimodal connectivity and create logistic efficiencies and manage these projects through an integrated approach, which means decision making is done through collective engagement of all relevant stakeholders. This can be easily made possible by leveraging technology and by employing spatial planning tools.


The next question is: How can technology be used in project management? This techno-enabled approach to infrastructure development can be achieved where data on project geography, with multiple layers of project information of all infrastructure projects be integrated into a single database.

If we have such a database and analytical tools and review it collectively with all decision makers, then it will ultimately break the silos of information management and enable faster decision making, thus creating a targeted pace of development. Hence, the name Gati Shakti, which also means providing impetus.

A digitally-enabled and effective project management is the fundamental principle of Gati Shakti and to augment the same, it is envisaged to develop a project management portal where all infrastructure ministries will enter the geographical and special data layer of its infrastructure assets with existing and planned infrastructure facilities.

To take an example, a port connectivity project is linked to multiple agencies. If all information on land contours, dimensions, areas of environmental and human settlements are all known in a singular information base, right at the DPR stage, then all possible conflicts of interest can be identified and rectified. In the project implementation stage also when bottlenecks create delay, the cause can be immediately and collectively identified and rectified. The analytical tools of system can also help in coming up to an optimal decision.

Such techno-enabled project management approach to specifically identified projects managed by an integrated body of decision makers and experts is what makes Gati Shakti a unique initiative for faster project implementation.

Gati Shakti as the name implies is about speed and purposeful direction and since its launch in 2021, significant strides have been made in creating an enabling framework and much other affiliated initiatives are on the anvil. As the honourable Prime Minister mentioned during the launch of the program ‘Gati Shakti is an extension of holistic governance’ and since it is linked to multimodal projects, there is a cause for maritime community to be jubilant. 

### About Author :

Rajesh Menon is a maritime expert and AVP in Invest India, the investment promotion division of Government of India and handles Invest India's shipping desk at Ministry of Ports Shipping and Waterways where he manages project management team for Sagarmala and Gati Shakti.

