The data centre segment in India is still in the nascent stage of a sustained growth journey.

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How is the data centre segment evolving in the country?

In India, the data centre segment has witnessed great progress with double-digit growth. This is owing to multiple factors including attractive investments from local as well as global players, progressive government policies and an overall increasing need for data processing required to meet the massive digitization adopted by the economy. According to a February 2022 report, NASSCOM estimates investments in data centres to touch $4.6 billion per annum by 2025. The country's exponential growth of data creation, as well as consumption, is fuelling this growth.

The evolution of the data centre segment is primarily driven by hyper-scale data centre service providers offering cloud space to enterprises and the edge data centres closer to the user for last-mile computing. We can see a transition with businesses maintaining captive data centres to co-location facilities (rental DC space) driven by better security and cost efficiencies. The growth of edge data centres is expected to pick up with the commercialisation of 5G services in the country.

This is eventually resulting in the development of hyperscale data centres in Tier-I cities and edge data centres in Tier-II cities. Moreover, this was further accelerated due to the heavy reliance of large-scale businesses on web infrastructure given the work from home/hybrid work format, online education, and digital adoption in health infrastructure, as the pandemic after-effects.

What are the major demand drivers of data centre market in India?

As per a survey, the global co-location market is predicted to grow to over $62 billion by 2022. This growth can be attributed to several factors, including how difficult and expensive it's becoming to manage in-house data centres, the growing popularity of cloud-based services, edge computing and IoT adoption, and of course the desire for Big Data.

Of late, the data center market in India is majorly driven by the high-scale adoption of artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), and the internet of things (IoT), resulting in a data explosion - a substantial increase in data volumes. Hence, there arises a need for a robust backend digital infrastructure in the form of data centres by enterprises, over-the-top (OTT) players, cloud service providers, and global offshore centres which can effectively cater to the demand of the users.

Additionally, the demand for data centres is also accelerated by the growing digital consumption needs of social media, online gaming, streaming, ecommerce, and online education sites by businesses and end-users both.

According to a Statista report from 2020 on the number of internet users in India, there had over 749 million internet users across the country, which was projected to grow to over 1.5 billion users by 2040. This indicates the growing demand and expected usage amongst users which is sure to drive demand in the country.

What kind of technologies and solutions do you provide for data centre facilities?

Having been at the forefront of industrial power and automation for over a century, ABB supplies a wide range of offerings to automate data centres and make them more powerful, agile, and efficient.

Our wide range of industrial-grade products, integrated solutions, and expertise, ensure

data centres operate with optimum reliability and benefit from savings in installation, energy, space, and maintenance. In addition to being space-saving, timesaving, energy-saving, cost-saving and infinitely scalable, ABB's data centre power solutions are suited to every business and keep operations running 24/7.

The intelligent data centre solutions we offer include, grid connection, power distribution, power protection, smart automation, life cycle management & services, as well as prefabricated and integrated data centre solutions.

ABB has developed a variety of solutions and strategies to help co-location data centre customers get their new infrastructure up and running quicker, by saving time during the build phase and getting impressive revenues generated sooner.

What kind of opportunities do you visualise for global players and technologies in the Indian data centre market?

Global players already see a huge potential in the Indian data centre market, given the investments this market has witnessed over the last couple of years. Leading global service providers are reinforcing their commitment to the Indian market as Indian operators are increasing their capacities by building data centre parks, research & development facilities and campuses.

Our government's Digital India mission further encourages multinational companies in the technology and telecom sectors for strategic advantages in expanding their markets and growing their presence in a rapidly developing economy. A study by Savills India pegs a combination of 5G, IoT, AI and Cloud to generate a demand of 15-18 million square feet for data centres.

The country's digital ecosystem, availability of high bandwidth speed and low power tariffs, are also factors that contribute towards the sustenance of India's growth as a data centre hub.

How do you look at the future of data centre market in India? What are your plans for this sector in India?

Data centres are experiencing a swift growth, given the large internet user base, rise in data and the government's Digital India mission. What is fascinating about this segment is that it is still in the nascent stage of a sustained growth journey.

We are focusing on certain specific deliverables in the data centre industry, which include, digitalisation, modular & prefabricated solutions, and complete end-to-end solutions, including supply, installation and service support.

Digitalisation is associated the most with improving visibility and conditions of data centres. It also speeds up deployment and profitability. One way to boost speed to deployment is going digital with equipment such as switchgear. Because it requires less wiring, digital switchgear takes less time to assemble than traditional switchgear.

Prefabrication is also the answer to improving the reliability and speed of data centre service strategy, while reducing total cost of ownership. Because these solutions are all pretested and debugged to begin with, site engineers simply need to plug and play, meaning site connection, functional testing and commissioning all happening much faster.

Providing swift and continuous service support to strengthen uptime of data centres is extremely essential and this needs to be achieved with widespread of service network having ready service experts. **CT**

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