

The Role of Digitization in Inclusive Growth : India 2022



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Abstract

The Prime Minister of India Sri Narendra Modi launched “Digital India” programme with a commitment to transform India to a connected economy two years back. The programme aims to connect the 2.5 lakh villagers across India.

Broadband highways, Public Internet access, universal access to mobile connectivity, e- kranti, e- governance, a robust electronic manufacturing regime, information for all, I T for jobs, and early harvest programmes are nine main pillars of Digital India. The cost of the programme is estimated at Rs. 1.13 Lakh crores.

Currently India is categorized as “Constrained Digital Economies”, according to world economic forum. But efforts are on to convert India into a digital giant by 2022. The aim of Digital India is to connect all Indians digitally. The aim of the programme is to give digital edge to critical focus areas like:

E-Governance, Health Care, Digital Farming, IT for Jobs, Electronic Manufacturing, Financial Inclusion, Education (SWAYAM Scheme), Administrative Transparency, Smartcities, Roads and Services, Digital for Police Modernisation, Digi Lockers, Digital Empowerment etc.

Digital India also aims about reducing carbon foot prints, reduce fuel consumption and waste, fostering environment friendly work place leading to a greener eco system. It also aims at placing department specific processes online and bring about a major change in government function.

Keywords: E-Governance, Common Service Centres (CSC), Digital Literacy, Kisoks, DISHA, Wi-Fi Hotspots, Digital Empowerment Etc.

Introduction

One of the greatest marvels of our times, undoubtedly, is the digital revolution. It has pushed through human limitations to unleash an 'e'- era of cutting edge 'innovations be it a student taking an online course, a healthcare worker using medical software to get a holistic view of a patient's health, a housewife paying bills online, or someone like us with relentless urge to “google it up”, the technology has had profound impact on our daily lives. At the same time it also offers boundless possibilities. Digital India is not only transforming India but also helping to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030. Government's priority in 2017 onwards is three pronged. The first priority is to provide digital infrastructure as an utility to every citizen. The second priority stands over industry innovation and infrastructure and the third priority is to bring in partnership. Those societies and individuals who can operate computer based tools and related software is able to develop skill to adapt to the emerging challenges and is able to enter the higher economic growth bracket.

Implementing Digital India

1. Technological Enablers

- i. Cloud
- ii. Block Chain
- iii. Artificial Intelligence

2. By Attacking Digital Divide

- i. Promoting Common Service Centres Scheme (CSC), Designed to deliver a range of social sector services to residents and businessmen in rural areas at affordable cost through delivery outlets in each gram panchayat.
- ii. Conversion of huge postal network (1.5 Lakh Post Offices, of which over 1.39 lakh are in rural areas) into multi services centres.

- iii. Service through 14 million retail outlets, fair price shops and telecom towers to deliver financial services.
- iv. Service through railway network one of the largest in the world by using their infrastructure and facilities.

Despite of various efforts by the government to make India Digital, yet it has to dedicate large resources and efforts in the direction to facilitate an atmosphere where both urban and rural population become beneficiary of this digital movement. The websites will have to be developed in regional languages also to help rural India to know online systems and adopt digital culture.

Objectives of Study

1. To highlight the various benefits of Digitization and key digital initiatives taken by the Indian Government for the various sectors of Indian Economy.
2. To assess the impact of Digitization on Indian Economy as a whole and explore the various Roadblocks in the way of Digital India and also give suggestions to Central and State Government for successful implementation of Digital India Programme.

Significance of Study

The digital India programme has been launched with an aim of Transforming the country into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. The Digital India would ensure that Government services are available to citizens electronically. It would also bring in public accountability through mandated delivery of government's services electronically.

The Digital India Programme is centered on three key vision areas.

1. Digital Infrastructures as a utility to every citizen.
2. Governance & Services on Demand.
3. Digital Empowerment of Citizens.

The digital revolution is sweeping the world and there was already explosion of information at an unprecedented scale.

The greatest challenge is the analysis and processing of data for possible, economic and social gains. Those who are not able to co-op with the digital tools and remain digitally illiterate are being pushed down the economic growth ladder.

Research Methodology

The present paper is a descriptive study in nature. It has been carried out based on collection of relevant secondary data from articles published in various journal, news papers, websites, books and articles. However an attempt is made to provide latest data in support of above topic.

Key Digital India Initiatives

Digital India is a revolutionary initiative that has transformed our country into an empowered economy. It has improved the quality of life of Indian citizens by providing them access to services on mobile device and digital identity, with digital India, people can apply for licenses online and receive updates on the status of their applications. Moreover Citizens can apply online for appointments at premier government hospitals. Digital enables them to book

their railway tickets or air tickets through mobile phones thereby saving their time on the time spent in queues of ticket counters. Some of the initiatives of Digital India are discussed below.

Digital Payments in India

According to NITI Aayog the volume of digital transactions in 2016-17 touched 10.9 billion INR, registering a growth of about 55% over 2015-16 the corresponding growth rate in 2015-16 was 49.4%. In value total digital payments touched 21,41,071 billion INR, registering a growth of 24.2% in 2016-17. The immediate payment services (IMPS) segment has exhibited robust growth of 153.5% in 2016-17 in value terms. All modes of transfer like real time gross settlement (RTGS), National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT); debit cards, digital wallets and unified payments interface (UPI) have shown positive growth from Oct 2016 to April 2017.¹

RBI has granted eleven payment bank licences, 10 small finance bank license in 2015 and licenses to 71 scheduled Commercial banks (SCBs). Payment banks are meant to provide basic banking benefits to the financially excluded citizens of India.

AADHAR and DBT

Aadhar enabled Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) is a major government reform initiative to bring greater transparency and accountability in public service delivery. Aadhar has emerged as a financial address by allowing for transfer of cash benefits directly to beneficiary's bank account without requiring their bank account numbers and IFS Code. It has also paved the way for Aadhar Enable Payment System (AEPS) that seek to provide doorstep cash in/ cash-out services and electronic transfer using individual Aadhar numbers.

The number of schemes monitored under DBT was initially 27, which has increased upto 140 in March 2017. Till March 2017, 1, 82,671.36 crores INR has been disbursed to 35.7 crore beneficiaries. The savings due to DBT over last three years has touched 50,000 crore INR as on 31 Dec 2016.²

E-Education (Swayam)

SWAYAM in unique scheme consists of massive open online courses (MOOCs) in a controlled environment. Free of cost courses are available for all students from 9th standard to PhD. It has been conceptualized as a comprehensive multi pronged, transformational project.

E-Health

The following are some of ICT initiative in the health care domain.

Electronic health records (EHRs), Personal health record, Telemedicine, Chronic disease management systems, clinical decision support, electronic transfer of prescription, Radio frequency identification (RFID) and bar-coding, Business intelligence (BI) in detecting disease patterns.

Smart Cities

Government of India launched the Smart Cities Mission (SCM) on 25 June 2015. The SCM was formalized to digitally transform the gamut of public services offered to citizens from utilities like an LPG connection to surveillance and traffic control.

Digital Democracy with MyGov

MyGov. In an innovative platform to foster citizen and government partnership for driving inclusive growth of India. It leverages various engagement methodologies for soliciting citizens' opinion and deliberation on policy matters. Current registered members on MyGov. are 4836.35K

Digital Farming

ISRO launched VRC Programmes to provide space based services to rural areas in association with Central/ State agencies and NGOs. The VRCs address areas such as weather updates, live stock development, fisheries development, water resources, and agriculture and horticulture development. E-krishi is a crop advisory app for android. KISSAN Kerala is a citizen centric e-governance project for intergrated mutli-modal delivery of information to farming community in Kerala,

Digital for Police Modernisation

For the safety of Women, Delhi Police launched the Himmat mobile app. The app allows Women to connect with the police control room and relatives for response during crisis or an emergency situation. Delhi police through Shanti Sewa Nyaya opened a new chapter in digital policing.

Roadblocks in Implementing Digital India

1. Infrastructure Development in Rural Area
2. Data Security and Data Hacking
3. Public Private Partnership Reluctance Factor
4. Digital Literacy, Non awareness regarding Digital India Programme.
5. Digital Payments in India lack of facilities and cost of payment.
6. Aadhar and DBT- Privacy and enrollment issues.
7. E-education- Problem of Promotion of interest.
8. Smart Cities Mission-Paucity of Funds and time constraints
9. E-health- Private Sector Monopoly

Enables of Digital India**Technology Enablers.**

1. Cloud (Storage of Data)
2. Block Chain (Distributed Ledger can record transaction between Multiple Parties)
3. Artificial Intelligence.

Public Internet Access Programmes

1. The common service centre scheme originally designed to deliver a range of G2C, B2C and social sector services to resident and business in rural areas at affordable costs through 1 Lakh front and delivery outlets is being revamped through the launch of CSC 2.0 with the target of a CSC in each gram panchayat.
2. Post Offices: A total of 1.5lakh post offices are proposed to be converted to multi service centre under Digital India Programme.
3. Services through 14 million retail outlets fair price shops and telecom towers cater to the people in their vicinity.

Recommendations

With significant strides already made in the Digital India Programme, it is now time for the government to transform its approach and aspire to

become fully digital. The success of digital India will be a major factor in enhancing the country's economic growth by improving social and economic inclusiveness. Some of the key recommendations for Central and State Government in terms of policy implementation and technology are listed below.

1. Think Digital
2. Digital Infrastructure Development Specially in rural areas
3. Rendering services through not just mobile but other channels such as bank branches, websites, CSCS and Post Offices.
4. State and Central IT Projects should become low capital investment projects.
5. Data Security and protection from Cyber attacks.
6. Machine learning and big data analysis could be adopted in areas such as health, education, fraud analysis, financial leakages cyber crimes and other domains to identify citizens.
7. Location based services should be made available for example providing traffic updates, or helping someone who has newly migrated to a city.
8. Robust Policies and laws for data Protection and privacy.
9. Provide a policy framework and incentive for private sector to have a viable business model to make then part of application of ecosystem of the government.
10. Reduce e-governance projects delay.
11. Skill building is a critical factor for Digital India to succeed and it needs to be included within the curricular of all schools, colleges and universities subject to time to time monitoring.

Conclusion

Definitely there is a change in the mindset of Indian Citizens. Now citizens are interested doing things through digital mode. The fast removal of above stated impediments and implementation of suggestions will definitely yield Digital India. Digitalization shall lead to greener eco system, reduce fuel consumption, placing department specific processes online and bring out major changes in government functions. It will help in eliminating black money larger revenues to the government, coffers through online payment of taxes ultimately reducing corruption in the government and society resulting into inclusive growth of India.

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Footnotes

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