

DIGITAL INDIA: CONCEPTS AND IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract: Long waited 'Digital India' mission initiated by Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi. Earlier it was launched as National E-governance Plan (NeGP). The objective of the mission is to build participative, transparent and responsive governance to reach out the citizens in support of service of electronically and promote digital literacy in India with the help of digital technologies which includes the concept of cloud computing and mobile applications have emerged as the catalysts for express economic growth and citizen empowerment. Thus, the paper aims to find out the concept of digital India, initiatives of government of India, its impact, and find out some suitable solutions. The historical and observation method has been applied in this study. The data used in this study are secondary. Scholarly views, debates, writings in various magazines and journals have been used to conceptual description. The primary focus is to clear the concept of digital India, its application and the impact on Indian economy. Key words: Digital India, Concepts, Implications and Challenges.

Introduction

'Digital India' is a programme initiated by Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi. The motive behind the Digital India mission is to build participative, transparent and responsive governance to reach out the citizens. It aims to provide all services electronically and promote digital literacy in India with the help of digital technologies which includes the concept of cloud computing and mobile applications have emerged as the catalysts for express economic growth and citizen empowerment. In this perspective, companies all over the world desire to invest in digital India mission. Remarkably, global investors like Sundar Pichai, Satya Nadella, Elon Musk have supported Modi's Digital India initiative. It is a modest step to promote e-governance or m-governance.

Objective

1. To know how the e-governance process takes the help of technologies and connectivity to improve the quality of life.
2. To find out how the government services can work effectively with practical solution projects and innovative ideas to translate the vision of a digital India.
3. To find out how the benefits of exercise of digital India and its impact in economy.
4. To draw out some necessary suggestion to make Digital India fruitful.

Review of Literature

Gupta and Arora (2015) studied the impact of digital India project on India's rural sector. The study found that many schemes have been launched in digital India to boost agriculture sector and entrepreneurship development in rural areas. Digital India programme has also set the stage for empowerment of rural Indian women.

Rani Suman (2016) concluded that the digital India project provides a huge opportunity to use the latest technology to redefine India the paradigms of service industry. It also pointed out that many projects may

require some transformational process, reengineering, refinements to achieve the desired service level objectives.

Midha Rahul (2016) concluded that digital India is a great plan to develop India for knowledge future but its improper implementation due to inaccessibility and inflexibility to requisite can lead to its failure. Though digital India programme is facing number of challenges yet if properly implemented it can make the best future of every citizen. So we Indians should work together to shape the knowledge economy.

Method and Data

Historical and observation method has been applied in this study. The data used in this study are secondary. Scholarly views, debates, writings in various magazines and journals have been used to conceptual description. The primary focus is to clear the concept of digital India, its application and the impact on Indian economy.

Discussion/Analysis

Today every citizen of the world admits the power, utility and accessibility of technology which connects people with the people sitting in the different place of the world. It is hoped that India's villages will be educated and aware to the opportunity of internet and access to information from across the world and for it government will make accessible to broad band services to all terrain. 'Digital India' is not just an initiative but a need for this country, where majority of population still does not have access to the world of internet. The Digital India initiative seeks to lay emphasis on e-governance and transform India into a digitally empowered society. It is to ensure that government services are available to citizens electronically. It aims to transform ease of doing business in the country. Government of India estimates Rs 1,13,000 crore for the project to prepare the country for knowledge-based transformation.

India is well prepared for Digital India. Immediately with the introduction of this campaign, many organizations came forward to lend their hands for achieving India a digitally equipped country. Organizations like BSNL, Reliance Ltd. are coming forward to spread digitalization among rural areas. Govt. says that over 42000 villages all over India will be having seamless mobile connectivity by 2018. The *Internet Saathi* initiative aims to cover 4,500 villages over the next 18 months, starting with Gujarat, Rajasthan and Jharkhand. India is aiming to achieve universal digital literacy across the country. The prime importance is to make sure every individual can be able to leverage the potential of Digital India. The focus is at least one person in a household should transform into an e-literate. This can be achieved by BBNL which is planning to connect 2,50,000 panchayats under the scheme. This will ensure the digitization and connectivity of local institutions like panchayats offices, schools, other government offices and libraries etc.

It is a mission to translate India into a global digital power house. It comprises of various initiatives under the single programme each targeted to prepare India for becoming a knowledge economy and for bringing good governance to citizens through synchronized and co-ordinated engagement of the entire government. To make Digital India in ground reality India is complying with 'Navaratnas' (Nine Pillars) of Digital India which is found getting done in rapidly. These are as follows:

1. Highway broadband connectivity and service: Government of India aims to provide nationwide information infrastructure with the help of optical fibre network in all 2.5 lakh gram panchayats by

December 2016 to make the mission successful. It will help for rural and urban connectivity. This way people will get information through internet any time anywhere.

2. Easy access to mobile connectivity: For transformation of Digital India mission, India needs wireless information connectivity that can be provided by mobiles. Government of India promises for mobile connectivity coverage to all the villages of India before 2018. As per government record there is still need to cover optical fibre network 44,000 villages.

3. IT training for jobs: Information without technology and technology experts becomes baseless. So, India waves for Skill India mission and seeks to train 10 million people in towns and villages in IT sector within a span of five years. It also aims to train 0.3 million agents to run viable businesses delivering IT services. The project also involves in training of 0.5 million rural IT workforce in five years and setting up of BPOs in each North-eastern state.

4. Manufacturing of electronics: P.M. Modi pitched for zero effect zero defects in Make in India mission. Thus it tries to earn faith and trust from global community on Indian products. This will lead to focusing on zero imports of electronics from outside. In view of it, government is echoing Digital India and aims to put up smart energy meters, micro ATMs, mobile, consumer and medical electronics.

5. Provide public access to internet: Dream of digital India aims to provide internet services to 2.5 lakh villages which comprises of one in every panchayat by March 2017 and 1.5 lakh post offices in the next two years. These post offices will become Multi-Service Centres for the people so that people can get the benefit of digital *kranti*.

6. E-Governance: Biomatrix thump impression in transaction and Adhaar linkages with bank accounts is going to made mandatory in Eyeing the drawbacks and hindrances of digital payments and digital transaction. Government of India aims to improve processes and delivery of services through e-governance with UIDAI, payment gateway, EDI and mobile platforms. To provide hassle free service online, digital mission aims to provide school certificates, voter ID cards online.

7. E-Revolution: *Digital karanti* is a wave to aware the people about the benefit and ways of e-governance. This service aims to deliver electronic services to people which deals with health, education, farmers, justice, security, financial inclusion and other services.

8. Global Information: Digital Indian mission aims to host data online and engaging social media platforms for governance is the aim of the government. It also aims to build cloud management for data security so that citizens can easily access and can keep data safe.

9. Early harvest programs: Government plans to set up Wi-Fi facilities in all cities, railways, colleges and universities across the country. GPS system in cars and caps are introducing in cities and metros. biometric attendance system is being deployed in all government institutions of state and central government offices where recording of attendance will be made online.

Challenges

More than a year has been passed since Digital India mission has been announced but it is facing multiple challenges in successful implementation. Few of the challenges are –

1. High level of digital illiteracy is the biggest challenge in the success of digital India programme. Low digital literacy is key hindrance in adaptation of technologies. According to ASSOCHAM-Deloitte report on Digital India (November, 2016) around 950 million Indians are still not on internet. So, there is still to do more to connect people in digital India.
2. Making Digital India is a scheme known and creating awareness among common masses about its benefits is also a great challenge. Participation to digital *kranti* needs peoples wish, capacity to have mobiles and needs money for continuity.
3. It is not easy to ensure each panchayat of India to connect with functional broad band with optical fibre network. It is a mammoth task to have connectivity with each and every village, town and city. There are 2.5 lakhs Gram Panchayats in India and connecting all is not an easy task. The recurring repairing process is also a great challenge.
4. The issue pertaining to taxation and regulatory guidelines have proved to road block in realizing the vision of Digital India. Some of the common policy hurdles include lack of clarity in FDI policies have impacted the growth of e-commerce (ASSOCHOM).
5. The biggest challenge faced by Digital India programme is slow and delayed infrastructure development. India's digital infrastructure is comprehensively inadequate to tackle growing increase in digital transactions. India needs over 80 lakh hotspots as against the availability of about 31000 hotspot at present to reach global level (ASSOCHOM).
6. The private participation in government projects in India is poor because of long and complex regulatory processes.
7. Many request proposals issued by government are not picked up by competent private sector organizations since they are not commercially viable.
8. There is a wide digital divide between urban and rural India. Till now funds have not been deployed effectively to meet the cost of infrastructure creation in rural areas.

Impact on Economy

India's economy has witnessed a significant economic growth in the recent past by growing 7.3 per cent in 2015 as against 6.9 per cent in 2014 and third quarter of 2017. The steps taken by the government in recent times have shown positive results as India's gross domestic product (GDP) at factor cost at constant. This clearly shows that the Digital India initiative introduced by Indian government has contributed a lot to boost the economy of the country. The Digital India project itself will create employment opportunities for 17 million people directly or indirectly which will help in fighting against unemployment problems in India.

The estimated impact of Digital India by 2019 would be cross cutting, ranging from broadband connectivity in all Panchayats, Wi-Fi in schools and universities and Public Wi-Fi hotspots. The programme will generate huge number of IT, Telecom and Electronics jobs, both directly and indirectly. Success of this programme

will make India Digitally empowered and the leader in usage of IT in delivery of services related to various domains such as health, education, agriculture, banking, etc

The digital India mission would make all the government services available to people of country through common service delivery outlets. This is helping in inclusive growth by enabling access to education, healthcare and government services to all the citizens of the country. People are getting better advice on agriculture and health care services. Transparency in respect of LPG, Panchayat, NRC (Assam), banking, filling of data are being made online and easy accessible to citizens of the country. Governance will help in reducing corruption and getting things done quickly. Digital locker facility is become a great help for citizen to store digitally their important documents like Pan card ,passport, mark sheets etc. It will help in getting things done easily. It saves times and no need to stand in long queues for getting our documents would be reduced and helping in decreasing documentation and reducing paper work. Digital India mission is away for cashless transactions and country is already in move towards less cash economy. According to analyst the digital India could boost GDP up to \$1 trillion by 2025. According to World Bank report a 10% increase in mobile and broadband penetration increases per capita GDP by 0.81% and 1.31% respectively in developing countries.

Suggestion

Digital India campaign can't be successful on its own. Policy changes are needed to make digital India a reality. Few of the suggestions are –

1. Digital literacy is first step in empowering citizens. People should know how to secure their online data.
2. To make this programme successful, a massive awareness programme has to be conducted. There is pressing need to educate and inform the citizens, especially in rural and remote areas, about the benefits of internet services to increase the growth of internet usage.
3. Digital divide needs to be addressed.
4. Manufacturing content is not government's strength. This mission needs content and service partnerships with telecom companies and other firms.
5. PPP models must be explored for sustainable development of digital infrastructure.
6. Private sector should be encouraged for development of last mile infrastructure in rural and remote areas. To encourage private sector, there must be favorable taxation policies, quicker clearance of projects.
7. The success of digital India project depends upon maximum connectivity with minimum cyber security risks. For this we need a strong anti cyber crime team which maintains the database and protects it round the clock.
8. To improve skill in cyber security, we need to introduce cyber security course at graduate level and encourage international certification bodies to introduce various skill based cyber security courses.
9. There is need for effective participation of various departments and demanding commitment and efforts. Various policies in different areas should support this goal.
10. For successful implementation, there must be amendments in various legislations that have for long hindered the growth of technology in India.

Conclusion

The vision of digital India is grand. It is a huge step towards building a truly empowered nation. If successful, it transforms citizen access to multimedia information, content and services. However the goal is

still far away since most of the nine pillars of digital India mission are facing serious challenges in implementation. India has started towards cashless economy, transparency of governance through e-governance, m-governance. The need is about to empower citizen through universal digital literacy and universal accessible digital resource. There is also need for translation of literature in Indian different languages in order to make available in the website.

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