

Digital India Program – Initiatives & Progress

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Abstract:

Digitalization has been one of the most important trends in India over the past few years. It has emerged as the second-fastest digital adopter among seventeen major digital economies. Since the launch of the “Digital India” program in 2015 to date, there have been many significant improvements observed in the field of digitalization. Thus, this paper focusses on the concept of Digital India, its programme, recent developments in digital India and future of digital India.

Key Words: Digitalization, Digital India, Initiatives

Introduction:

Digitalization has been one of the most important trends in India over the past few years. It has emerged as the second-fastest digital adopter among seventeen major digital economies. This rapid growth helps propel India to the forefront of digital and technological innovation, particularly leveraging the energies of the country’s young population. Since the launch of the “Digital India” program in 2015 to date, there have been many significant improvements in digital infrastructure, in the digital delivery of public services and financial succor to citizens, and in enhancing digital consciousness and literacy.

Objectives of the study:

1. To study the digital India program launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi
2. To have an overview on various initiatives taken by the digital India program
3. To analyze the progress of Digital India program – it’s success
4. To forecast the future of digital India program.

Methodology

The study is primarily dependent on secondary data. The data is collected from various secondary databases like etc. The collected data is modified in the different form as to enable the readers to enhance their knowledge in the topic.

Digital India Program

Digital India is a campaign launched by the Government of India in order to ensure the Government’s services are made available to citizens electronically by improved online infrastructure and by increasing Internet connectivity or making the country digitally empowered in the field of technology.

In simple words, it is the Government of India initiative aiming at improving the online infrastructure and enhancing internet connectivity.

Vision Areas of Digital India

- a) Digital Infrastructure as a core utility to Every Citizen.
- b) Governance & Services on Demand.
- c) Digital Empowerment of Citizens.

Mission of Digital India:

The motto of the Digital India Mission is ‘Power to Empower’. There are three core components to the Digital India initiative. They are digital infrastructure creation, digital delivery of services, and digital literacy.

History of Digital India:

In July 2015, the Indian government launched the ‘Digital India’ initiative to improve online infrastructure and increase internet accessibility among citizens (for example, linking rural areas to high-speed internet networks); thereby, empowering the country to become more digitally advanced.

Objective of Digital India Program:

The Digital India program with its focus on three key vision areas—infrastructure as a utility to every citizen, governance, and services on demand and digital empowerment of citizens—has the potential to provide an incremental 20-30% increase in India’s GDP by 2025.

Now, amid the Covid-19 pandemic, it shows us how important our digital infrastructure is, which has brought the Internet and our entire digital infrastructure to the forefront. Overnight we became dependent on connected devices especially PCs as learning and working moved online with many more applications moving to cloud infrastructure than ever before. India has already made a big leap in digital adoption, as the collective number of internet users in India exceeds the number of internet users in some of the developed countries. Also, digital solutions have not only altered the way we live but also re-engineered our economies and societies. The internet is growing and providing more value propositions to customers and businesses and governments. Having said that the pace of digital infrastructure growth needs to be accelerated to provide connectivity to every single household.

The area in which the Digital India Mission is successful is listed below:

1. In its endeavor towards a Digital Nation, NIC has established a nationwide state-of-the-art ICT infrastructure and services for the Government at all levels, making last-mile delivery of the Government services to the citizens, a reality.
2. Giving stimulus to the Government’s flagship Digital India program for ensuring better digital compliance & check GST evasion, an integrated eWayBill system was launched for movement of consignments across the Country.

3. Under the ambit of Digital India and as the technology partner of the Government, NIC has been at the forefront in empowering India's e-Governance through its technology-driven solutions, and ensures tech-enabled services that reach the unreached.
4. eCounselling is a flagship programme of NIC for end-to-end solution, based on joint seat allocation mechanism, for admission in technical institutes & universities of India, making the process seamless, efficient & transparent.
5. NIC's e-Hospital, an initiative under Digital India is a cloud-based Hospital Management Information System that acts as a one-stop solution to bring hospitals, patients & doctors onto a single platform.
6. eTransport is a Mission Mode Project driven by Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Government of India & executed by NIC. With the launch of over 100 citizen-centric services, it is contributing greatly towards the country's e-Governance initiative under the Digital India Programme.

Digital India Initiatives

Digital India aims to provide the much needed thrust to the nine pillars of growth areas, namely Broadband Highways, Universal Access to Mobile Connectivity, Public Internet Access Programme, e-Governance: Reforming Government through Technology, e-Kranti - Electronic Delivery of Services, Information for All, Electronics Manufacturing, IT for Jobs and Early Harvest Programmes. Each of these areas is a complex programme in itself and cuts across multiple Ministries and Departments. The Government has taken up many initiatives under the Digital India campaign. Discussed below are few such important initiatives:

DigiLockers – This flagship initiative aims at 'Digital Empowerment' of the citizen by providing access to authentic digital documents to citizen's digital document wallet

e-Hospitals – It is a Hospital Management Information System (HMIS) which is a one-stop solution in connecting patients, hospitals and doctors through a single digital platform. Till February 2021, as many as 420 e-Hospitals had been established under the Digital India campaign

e-Pathshala – Developed by NCERT, e-Pathshala showcases and disseminates all educational e-resources including textbooks, audio, video, periodicals and a variety of other print and non-print materials through the website and mobile app

BHIM – Bharat Interface for Money is an app that makes payment transactions simple, easy and quick using Unified Payments Interface (UPI)

Aadhaar - Aadhaar identity platform is one of the key pillars of 'Digital India', wherein every resident of the country is provided with a unique identity or Aadhaar number. The largest biometrics based identification system in the world, Aadhaar is a strategic policy tool for social and financial inclusion, public sector delivery reforms, managing fiscal budgets, increase convenience and promote hassle-free people-centric governance. It is unique and robust enough to eliminate duplicate or fake identities and may be used as a basis/primary identifier to roll out several Government welfare schemes and programmes for effective service delivery thereby promoting transparency and good governance.

Bharat Broadband Network (BBNL) Bharat Broadband Network Limited is a special purpose vehicle set-up under Companies Act by the Government of India with an authorized capital of Rs. 1000 cr. It has been mandated to create the National Optical Fiber Network (NOFN) in India. A total of around 2,50,000 Gram Panchayats spread over 6,600 Blocks and 641 Districts are to be covered by laying incremental fiber.

Centre For Excellence For Internet Of Things (COE-IT) The Centre of Excellence for IoT was announced as a part of the Digital India Initiative to jump start the IOT ecosystem taking advantage of India's IT strengths and help the country attain a leadership role in the convergent area of hardware and software. The main objective of the center is to create innovative applications and domain capability. Additionally, the center will help build industry capable talent, start-up community and an entrepreneurial ecosystem for IOT.

Common Service Centres (CSCS): CSC scheme is one of the mission mode projects under the Digital India Programme. CSCs are the access points for delivery of essential public utility services, social welfare schemes, healthcare, financial, education and agriculture services, apart from host of B2C services to citizens in rural and remote areas of the country. It is a pan-India network catering to regional, geographic, linguistic and cultural diversity of the country, thus enabling the Government's mandate of a socially, financially and digitally inclusive society.

Cyber Swachhta Kendra: Cyber Swachhta Kendra (Botnet Cleaning and Malware Analysis Centre) is a part of the Government of India's Digital India initiative to create a secure cyber space by detecting botnet infections in India and to notify, enable cleaning and securing systems of end users so as to prevent further infections. It is set up in accordance with the objectives of the 'National Cyber Security Policy', which envisages creating a secure cyber eco system in the country. This centre operates in close coordination and collaboration with Internet Service Providers and Product/Antivirus companies.

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana: One of the flagship programmes of the Power Ministry (MoP), Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) is designed to provide continuous power supply to the entire rural India. With this scheme, the government had decided to electrify 18,452 unelectrified villages within 1000 days, by May 1, 2018. The DDUGJY can benefit rural households significantly as electricity is extremely vital for growth and development of the country.

Digital Saksharta Abhiyaan (DISHA): The Digital Saksharta Abhiyan or National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM) Scheme has been formulated to impart IT training to 52.5 lakh persons, including Anganwadi, ASHA workers and authorised ration dealers in all the States/UTs across the country. The initiative aims at training non-IT literate citizens to become IT literate to enable their active and effective participation in the democratic, developmental process, and enhance their livelihood too.

Digisevak- Volunteer Management System (VMS): DigiSevak is an online volunteering platform for interested citizens who want to contribute to the success of Digital India program. Various government department and agencies can create volunteering tasks and volunteers can choose tasks based on their skills and interest areas. The platform provides means for end-to-end

execution of a volunteering task, right from registration of volunteers to creation of tasks, evaluation of tasks and rewards & recognition of contribution by volunteers.

Future of Digital India:

Stepping up investment in digital infrastructure appears to be imperative. It is estimated that India will need US\$35 billion of upfront investment annually to be among the top five global digital economies, with such large spending on digital infrastructure that will also yield faster growth and long-term benefits for the economy. To make this happen, we will require an active financial and strong execution model. Investing in digital infrastructure could imitate the model of the road and bridge infrastructure projects in India which has significantly contributed to the GDP.

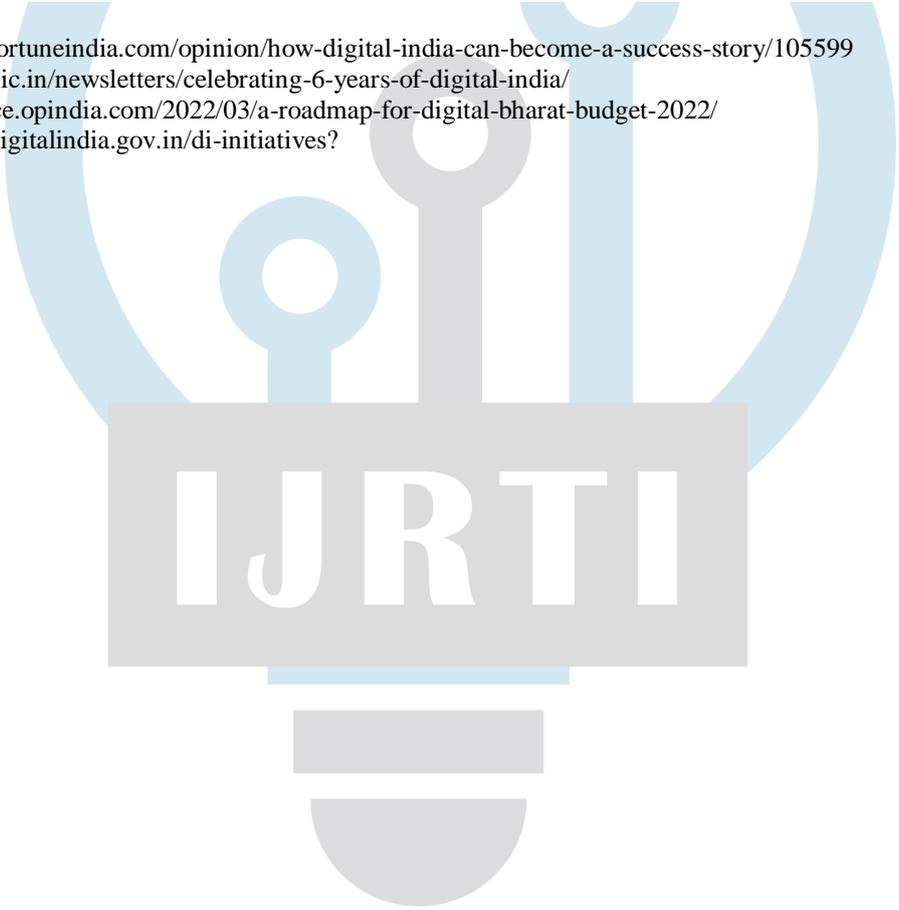
But there is a lot of work to be done to make the internet an essential service and accessible for over a billion people in India with the right devices and supporting an entirely new generation of entrepreneurs. The Industrial Revolution was a marathon runner, the digital revolution is turning out to be a race. The internet backbone is the new roads and bridge infrastructure for the digital economy and the future pace of growth depends on how well and how quick we build digital infrastructure. India's 21st century depends on how the government along with private companies can join hands to expand this critical infrastructure.

Conclusion:

Digital India is an umbrella programme that covers multiple Government Ministries and Departments. It weaves together a large number of ideas and thoughts into a single, comprehensive vision so that each of them can be implemented as part of a larger goal. Since its launch in 2015, the Digital India campaign has left its impact in various fields: Around 12000 post office branches in the rural areas have been linked electronically. The Make in India initiative has improved the electronic manufacturing sector in India. Digital India plan could boost GDP up to \$1 trillion by 2025. Healthcare and education sector has also seen a boost. Improvement in online infrastructure will enhance the economy of the country. Digital India is further to be implemented by the entire Government with overall coordination being done by the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DeitY).

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