

Role of Government in Promoting Digitalization in India: A Study of Initiatives Taken By Government of India and Government of Himachal Pradesh

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Abstract

Digital environment have become an essential system to facilitate good governance, transparency, accountability and inclusive development in India. This research focuses on explore how the Government of India and the Government of Himachal Pradesh are using digital initiatives including policies, programmes, legal frameworks and e-governance to promote digital transformation. The main focus of this research paper is about major digital/IT initiatives, specifically Digital India, IT Rules 2021, DPDP Act 2023; Deepfake Law; the Himachal Pradesh IT Policy (2019); HIMSWAN; e-District Services; and the Himachal Pradesh Digital Media Policy (2024). In the case of Himachal Pradesh a mountain state, digital infrastructure through e-governance has led to better connection between citizens and the administration. The study also discusses major challenges associated with digital transformation, including cyber security threats, data privacy concerns, misinformation, digital inequality, and the digital divide. The paper concludes that effective rollout of digital policies; robust cyber security systems, digital literacy and equitable access to technology are essential for achieving sustainable, inclusive and secure digital governance in India.

Keywords: *Digital India, E-Governance, Cyber Security, Data Protection Act, HIMSWAN, ICT for Development.*

Objectives of the study

1. **To study** the major digital governance policies and initiatives in India and Himachal Pradesh.
2. **To examine** the impact of digital governance on public service delivery, transparency, and access to services.
3. **To identify** the key challenges of digital transformation and suggest possible solutions.

Introduction

Modern governance and public administration increasingly rely on digital systems for efficient service delivery. The use of network technology now become a key tool for improving transparency, accountability, and efficiency in administration functioning, and also providing smooth access of services to common public. In India, the use of digitalization has become a key driver to promote inclusive development and improve the quality of governance. The Government of India has undertaken several reforms to strengthen digital governance within its jurisdiction. Launched in 2015, the Digital India programme aims to build a

digitally empowered society by expanding digital infrastructure and online service delivery. By expanding digital infrastructure, improving internet connectivity, and facilitating access to online public service delivery. Several other reforms are underway to promote and improve digital governance in India, including the DPDP Act 2023, the IT Rules Amendment, 2026, deepfake regulation; and the Information Technology Rules, 2021 to provide a robust framework to accelerate the development of digital infrastructure required to create digitally inclusive organizations at all levels of government across India? The rollout of digitalization has increased access to services such as digital payments, online banking, e-learning, telemedicine/telehealth services, and online grievance redressal; reduced the amount of paper used to complete government work; increased transparency; And access to government services has improved, especially for those living in rural/remote areas. This study is about digital policies initiated by the Government of India and the Government of Himachal Pradesh with purpose of reforms through digitalization. It also highlights major challenges related to cyber security, data privacy, misinformation and the digital divide.

The National level key reforms taken by Government of India:

The Government of India has enforced significant public programs and enterprise to ameliorate digital systems across the country. These enterprises primarily aim to increase internet connectivity, streamline government services, and make sure indifferent benefits for resides of civic and pastoral areas.

1) Digital India

To build a digitally strong nation and a knowledge-based economy, the Government of India launched the Digital India scheme in 2015 under the leadership of **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**. This program's objectives is to create an improved digital infrastructure increase the availability of the internet, give individuals access to the electronic delivery of government services and make government operations more accessible, transparent, and efficient for citizens. Digital services like Aadhaar and UPI have made it easier for people to access government services and provide better access to services. These digital platforms have also reduced the paperwork and time required to access government services. The Digital India Program has improved connections between citizens and government departments through the widespread availability of digital tools and services, especially in rural and remote places. The Digital India program aims to increase digital literacy and public participation in digital service delivery, as well as promote economic growth through innovative and increased use of digital tools (Government of India, 2015, pp. 6–14).

Key Vision Areas of the Digital India Programme

Digital India has three main objectives, which focus on strengthening digital governance and improving the delivery of public services. The first objective is Digital Infrastructure as a Basic Service in which citizens are provided with essential digital facilities like internet connectivity, mobile network and Aadhaar based digital identity. It also includes secure digital systems such as DigiLocker through which official documents can be stored securely. The second objective is Demand-driven Services and Governance, under which government services are made available online as per the needs of the citizens. This reduces paperwork, saves time and reduces the need to visit government offices. The third objective is Digital Engagement of the Public, which provides citizens with opportunities to participate in governance through digital platforms. Citizens can share their suggestions, feedback and opinions, thereby increasing transparency, accountability and trust (Chowdhury & Srivastava, 2022).

Digital India in Everyday Life: Practical Applications

The impact of Digital India is visible in everyday life, making routine tasks fast and simpler.

- People can send or accept money directly from using platforms like Unified Payments Interface (UPI). In fact, small merchants and shops now accept digital payments result in reducing the need for cash.
- Important documents like Aadhar Card, Driving License and Educational documents can be stored securely with the help of Dig Locker and can be accessed whenever needed, without the hassle of carrying physical duplicates.
- Students can fill exam forms, apply for scholarships and get admission related information through digital outlets like National Scholarship Portal and save time and money on travelling.
- Agriculture apps and digital platforms like Kisan Suvidha provide farmers with up-to-date information on rainfall forecasts, crop advisories, and current market prices for their produce.
- Citizens can now access a variety of government services online (e.g. requesting document copies, applying for licenses, resolving complaints) through online platforms like District. By providing online services, the government eliminates the need for citizens to personally interact with government agencies. This improves access to services; increases efficiency; and saves time by providing better, faster, and more personalized service to our users. Internet access also promotes transparency and accountability, as it allows users to track their applications and responses through online platforms.
- Telemedicine and online healthcare services allow people, especially in rural areas, to consult doctors remotely, improving access to healthcare.
- Due to better internet connectivity under enterprise like Bharat Net, indeed remote town lets are now connected, making education, banking and communication services accessible. These examples demonstrated how digital technology has become part of daily life through simplifying tasks, wider reach to information and access to essential services.

Digital India Pillars

Digital India launched in 2015 to create a technological enable society through supporting an infrastructure of nine pillars. These pillars related to aspects of technology including access to the internet and digital government services that support faster delivery of public services through improved connectivity and education. Digital India is designed to increase access to the internet as well as to provide skills necessary to allow people access to and use digital services in a timely manner. In addition, Digital India fosters innovation in schools, health care systems, and work environments. The goal of Digital India is to provide a modern world in which everyone has the ability to take part in digital services and benefit from them. The Digital India consists of nine main components to provide a platform for digital transformation. **Broadband Highways** refers to reforms that promote high-speed broadband availability throughout India, but especially

in rural areas, through organizations such as BharatNet (Department of Telecommunications, 2015).

Universal Access to Mobile Connectivity aims to help provide mobile and internet service to every village and family; Public Internet Access Programme includes establishing Common Service Centres (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, 2015) where government services can be accessed at a local level; **E-Governance** enhances the transparency and efficiency of government services by providing a mechanism for online delivery; **e-Kranti** is to support the delivery of digital services in various sectors, including health, education, agriculture and welfare. **Information for All** promotes government data transparency and provides the public with access to government information.



Electronics Manufacturing encourages the production of electronic goods in India, in order to provide jobs for Indians and reduce the number of imports; **IT for Jobs** promotes the development of digital skills that increase the employability of young people and **Early Harvest Programmes** commence some quick-impact reforms, such as Wi-Fi and biometric attendance for all members of society, to show the immediate benefits of digitalization (Government of India, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, 2015, p. 50-77). The Nine Pillars work as a unified framework to transform India into a society where digital technologies empower all citizens. Digital India aims to create connectivity, create availability, create skills, and increase transparency; therefore it is a technology-action. Digital India is also an opportunity for India to incorporate digital outcomes into every area of governmental functioning and life of a citizen.

2) Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules,**2021**

The Indian Government published the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 on February 25, 2021, under the Information Technology Act, 2000. The primary goal of these Rules is to provide oversight on digital activities within the increasingly complicated digital landscape in India and to enhance accountability, transparency, and user safety. The Rules will apply to online intermediaries, such as social media platforms (e.g., WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube) that allow users to upload and share content. These Rules' main objective is to ensure that online intermediaries take all reasonable measures to ensure that their platforms are due diligence compliant and responsible for the content uploaded by their users. A core aspect of the Rules is the establishment of a mandatory grievance redressal system. All online intermediaries must name a grievance officer to manage user complaints, acknowledge user complaints within twenty-four hours of receipt, and address the user complaints within a maximum of fifteen (15) days of receipt. The grievance redressal system enables users to report misinformation, unsuitable content, or unlawful content to an intermediary in a structured and timely fashion. The Rules impose additional obligations on large social media intermediaries to restrict unethical activities.

According to the rules, one of the requirements is that intermediaries appoint a Chief Compliance Officer, a Nodal Contact Person for coordination with Law Enforcement, and a Resident Grievance Officer. All of these officers must be based in India. Intermediaries must provide once a month an updated compliance report to users that will contain the total number of complaints received by the intermediary during the month and the nature of the corresponding response by the intermediary. Another major requirement is due diligence which requires intermediaries to publish their privacy policies; terms of service; and community guidelines in a conspicuous place on their website/homepage. Furthermore, whenever intermediaries receive a legitimate request from a legal authority requiring them to remove/block access to illegal content, they must act promptly. In particular, they must act promptly to remove/block access to illegal content where the request is related to issues affecting public order, national security, or safety (Government of India, 2021). Traceability has generated much debate as it allows authorities to trace-back to the source of specific messages sent through social media and/or the internet after certain legal requirements are met and if the messages are involved in serious criminal activity. Thus, Traceability enhances the ability of authorities to curtail the abuse of digital platforms; however, it has raised issues surrounding the balance between privacy protection and end to end encryption. In addition, the rules create a three-tiered regulatory framework for digital news publishers and OTT providers (self-regulatory by providers; independent third-party oversight; and, ultimately, government regulation) to create responsible governance of the content that is made publically available through the digital news media and/or OTT platforms. Intermediaries are also required to provide users with monthly compliance reports outlining the total number of complaints received and the responses of the intermediary. They must also clearly display their terms of use, privacy policies, and

community guidelines so that users are aware of the rules they are agreeing to. Another important requirement is the need to remove or block access to illegal content upon the orders of the appropriate authority or a court, especially in cases involving national security, public order, or safety. A key and much-discussed provision is traceability, which allows law enforcement agencies, under certain circumstances, to identify the original source of certain messages in serious criminal investigations. This helps prevent misuse of digital platforms, it has also raised concerns about user privacy and encryption (Government of India, 2021).

3) Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023

The DPDP Act, 2023 is a piece of legislation in India protect citizens personal data online and provide many services that allow people to engage online in different activities including banking, shopping, education, health care, and so many. All of these types of online services include a great deal of personal information such as names, contact details/addresses, and even banking/financial details, which are being shared by the users when they use these online services. Because of this high volume of information that is transferred as the result of individuals using these services, there is a higher risk for people that their privacy will be violated; that their identity will be stolen; and that sensitive information will be misused. With this in mind, the Act creates a structured legal framework for how an organization can collect, store, and process an individual's personal information, thereby ensuring that the data of individuals is secured and utilized in an appropriate manner. The law establishes rules for how data should be collected, reused, stored, and shared by both government bodies and private associations. It fluently states that particular data belongs to individualities, and associations must use it in a legal and responsible manner. This helps produce a safer and further secure digital terrain. One of the most important features of the Act is concurrence. Organizations must gain authorization from individualities before collecting or using their particular data. This concurrence must be free, informed, specific, and presented in clear and simple language so that everyone can understand it. The individualities must be made alive of why their data is being collected and how it will be used. This builds trust between stoners and associations. The Act also grants several important rights to individualities, who are appertained to as data principals. These rights give people lower control over their particular data. The individualities have the right to;

- People can know what data is collected.
- Why it is needed.
- People can see their personal data whenever they ask.
- People can correct wrong or incomplete information.
- People can ask to delete their data when it is not needed.
- People can take back their permission at any time, and then their data will not be used further.

These rights restrict Organization's fiduciary roles must adhere strictly to data protection requirements set forth by the law. These organizations are tasked with ensuring that all personally identifiable information is stored securely and safeguarded against cyber-attacks, data leaks or any form of unauthorized access

through the use of adequate security protocols developed by their business. In addition to this requirement, organizations must also comply with regulations prohibiting them from utilizing PII for purposes other than those for which the data was initially collected from individuals. If an organization suffers a data breach, it must notify both the individuals impacted by the breach and the appropriate government authorities as soon as possible. By alerting the appropriate parties, the organization can facilitate a timely response and mitigate the potential effects of the breach on the individuals involved in the incident. The Act also states that organizations must routinely assess and enhance their data protection processes to make sure that all PII is protected against unauthorized access on an ongoing basis. To ensure compliance, the Act includes strict penalties. Organizations that fail to follow the rules or abuse particular data may face heavy fines, which can go up to ₹ 250 crore depending on the seriousness of the violation. These penalties act as a strong hindrance and encourage responsible data handling. In addition, the Act promotes digital responsibility and raises awareness among stoners about their data rights. It also helps India align with global morals of data protection and insulation, making the country's digital ecosystem more reliable and secure (Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023: 1-21).

4) Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025

The Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025 play an important part in guarding particular data in India's digital terrain by furnishing clear guidelines on how data should be handled. In moment's world, people calculate heavily on the internet for banking, shopping, education, healthcare, and communication. As a result, a large quantum of particular information is participated online, making it essential to insure that similar data is kept safe and secure. These Rules companion companies, websites, and mobile operations on how to collect, use, store, and partake particular data in a legal and responsible manner. They've been framed under the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, which lays down the abecedarian principles of data protection. While the Act provides the overall frame, the Rules explain how these principles should be enforced in practical situations. One of the crucial features of the Rules is the preface of Consent directors. These are systems or platforms that help druggies manage their data warrants fluently. Through Consent directors, individualities can see which associations are penetrating their data and for what purpose. They also have the option to give or withdraw concurrence at any time. This makes the system more transparent and stoner-friendly, and it strengthens individual control over particular data.

The Rules also give special attention to the protection of children's data. They place strict restrictions on companies, precluding them from tracking children online or showing them targeted announcements. This is an important step toward securing the sequestration and safety of minors in the digital space. In addition, the Rules bar associations to borrow strong data security measures. Companies must cover particular information from hacking, abuse, data breaches, and unauthorized access. They're also needed to maintain proper records of concurrence and insure that data is used only for the purpose for which it was collected. Another important aspect of the Rules is the emphasis on grievance redressal. Organizations must give a simple and effective system for druggies to raise complaints regarding abuse or mishandling of their data.

This ensures responsibility and gives druggies a clear way to seek resolution. In case of a data breach, associations are needed to instantly inform both the affected individualities and the applicable authorities. This allows timely action to reduce detriment and help farther pitfalls. Quick reporting of breaches helps in maintaining translucency and strengthens trust in the digital ecosystem (Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023: 4-14).

5) IT Rules Amendment, 2026 (The Deep fake Law)

The IT Rules Amendment, 2026 is an important update to the being Information Technology (Central Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, which were firstly framed under the Information Technology Act, 2000. This correction has been introduced to address new and arising challenges in the digital terrain, particularly the rapid-fire growth of artificial intelligence (AI) and its abuse in creating deep fake content. Deep fakes relate to digitally manipulated prints, videos, or audio created using AI technology, which can falsely show a person saying or doing commodity they no way actually did. With the adding vacuity of AI tools, deep fakes have come easier to produce and spread, posing serious pitfalls similar as misinformation, vilification, identity abuse, and pitfalls to public trust. In sensitive situations, similar content can indeed affect choices, public order, and public security. To attack this issue, the correction introduces a strict 3- hour takedown rule. Under this provision, digital platforms similar as YouTube and Insta-gram are needed to remove or disable access to dangerous deep fake content within 3 hours of entering a valid order from the government or competent authority. This significantly reduces the time in which similar deceiving content can spread and beget damage, icing hastily response and control. Another important provision is the AI- generated content labeling demand. According to this rule, any content created or modified using artificial intelligence must be easily labeled as “Made with AI” or an original exposure. This labeling helps druggies to distinguish between real and instinctively generated content, thereby adding translucency and reducing the chances of deception. In addition to these, the corrections also strengthens the responsibility of interposers by taking them to borrow better content monitoring systems, ameliorate reporting mechanisms, and cooperate with authorities in relating and controlling dangerous digital content. Platforms are anticipated to act further proactively in detecting fake or manipulated media, rather than staying for complaints. Reflected in the amendment to the IT Rules 2026 are the challenges faced by the Indian government in regulating new technologies with respect to AI and public safety. This new legislation addresses not only the issues of the dangers associated with deep fakes and fake news, but also raises concerns about free speech and the overuse of takedown authority, as well as the necessity of clear rules around violence to prevent a recurrence of these forms of conduct in the future. Through the introduction of the IT Rules Amendment of 2026, appropriate emphasis will be placed upon the impact AI-generated content will have on the growing digital economy of India and the need for a consistent set of regulatory frameworks to ensure that content created with these technologies will contribute to a safe and secure digital ecosystem. (Government of India, 2026:2-17).

II. Himachal Pradesh Government Level

Himachal Pradesh is a mountain state where geographical conditions make difficulties for people to visit government offices for day to day work. In such environment, digital governance and information technology programs play an important part in service delivery. The state government has thus introduced several programmes to strengthen digital structure for fast and easy services to citizens.

1. Himachal Pradesh Information Technology Policy, 2019

The Himachal Pradesh Information Technology Policy, 2019 is an important plan by the Government of Himachal Pradesh to boost the information technology sector in the state. Its main end is to make Himachal Pradesh a preferred destination for information technology and information technology-enabled services by attracting investment, encouraging invention, and creating a probative business terrain in the hilly areas. The policy focuses on bringing private companies to set up services, information technology units, and data centers in crucial metropolises like Shimla, Dharamshala, and Solan. To make this easier, the government offers benefits similar as cheaper land, lower electricity charges, and fiscal support. These impulses help reduce costs for companies and make investing in the state more seductive.

A crucial thing of the policy is to induce employment openings and develop chops among original youth. By encouraging information technology companies to operate within the state, educated youthful people can find jobs locally, reducing the need to resettle to larger metropolitan metropolises similar as Chandigarh, Delhi, or Bengaluru. This approach supports balanced indigenous development, strengthens the original frugality, and ensures that the benefits of digital growth reach people living in remote and hilly areas. The policy also promotes entrepreneurship and startups in the information technology sector. It provides a probative terrain for new businesses and encourages cooperation between the government, assiduity, and educational institutions. The policy recognizes the significance of ultramodern digital structure, including dependable high- speed internet, advanced communication systems, and digital installations, which are essential for the growth of information technology services in remote areas. Also, the policy emphasizes invention by supporting exploration and development, digital skill development programs, and incubation centers for startups. It aims to produce a dynamic information technology ecosystem that attracts investment, nurtures homegrown gift, and encourages technology-grounded results. Through these measures, the Himachal Pradesh Information Technology Policy, 2019 plays a significant part in transubstantiating the state into a digitally empowered frugality, promoting inclusive growth, and integrating ultramodern technology into the development of the region (Government of Himachal Pradesh, 2019: 1-11).

2 HIM SWAN (HP State Wide Area Network) 5 February 2008

HIMSWAN is a major digital structure design developed by the Government of Himachal Pradesh. The state was among the first in the country to introduce this kind of network to meliorate communication and collaboration between government services and bring services closer to the people. The main end of this action is to produce a strong and reliable connection between the government and citizens, so that public

services can be delivered more efficiently, indeed in remote and hilly areas. The main function of HIMSWAN is to link government services from the state headquarters in Shimla to quarter, block, and village (Panchayat) situations through a reliable and secure communication system. This network ensures that indeed services located in remote and hilly areas are digitally connected to the central system. By creating this unified network, the government is suitable to maintain smooth and fast communication between departments. This connectivity plays a vital part in perfecting governance and service delivery. For illustration, a farmer living in a remote village no longer needs to travel long distances to pierce services. Through HIMSWAN, officers can snappily pierce land records, corroborate documents, and give necessary information because all government services are connected through a common digital system. This reduces detainments, increases effectiveness, and makes public services more accessible to citizens. HIMSWAN also enhances translucence and collaboration within government departments. Since information can be shared in real time across different services, it minimizes paperwork, reduces crimes, and ensures better decision-timber. The network acts as a backbone for colorful- governance services in the state, helping the government deliver hastily and further reliable services to the people of Himachal Pradesh (Government of Himachal Pradesh, 2024: 2-6).

3 Himachal Online Seva (e-District)

Himachal Online Seva (e-District) is an e-governance reform of the Government of Himachal Pradesh that aims to provide government services in a simple and faster way. It allows citizens to access many services online without visiting government offices, making it more convenient and efficient. Earlier, people had to visit offices multiple times for documents like income certificates, domicile certificates, and land records, which was time-consuming, especially for those living in remote or hilly areas. Now, through the e-District system, these services can be accessed using mobile phones, computers, or Lok Mitra Kendras, making the process quicker and easier. A key advantage of this system is transparency. Applicants can track the status of their applications online and see how their request is being processed, which reduces delays and builds trust in the system. It also reduces paperwork by storing records digitally, making service delivery more accurate and efficient. Along with this, the 1100 Helpline supports citizens in reporting local issues such as road damage, water supply problems, and other public concerns. Complaints are recorded in a digital system and monitored by officials. A strong feature of this service is accountability, as officers are required to resolve issues within a set timeframe, and follow-up action can be taken if problems are not addressed properly.

4 Himachal Pradesh Digital Media Policy, 2024

The Himachal Pradesh Digital Media Policy 2024, which was released by the Department of Information and Public Relations (DI&PR) on January 17, 2024, regulates the use of digital media for government communication. The main objective of this policy is to improve the reach of government schemes, programmes and information through news websites, online channels and social media influencers. It also

ensures that official information is shared in a clear, transparent, and responsible manner. To be eligible under this policy, digital media platforms must meet certain requirements. News web channels must be registered companies, have a minimum turnover of ₹5 lakh, operate in Himachal Pradesh for at least two years, and have a required number of verified followers on platforms like Facebook and YouTube. News websites must be run by qualified editors or experienced journalists, have at least two years of operational experience, and have a minimum number of monthly users. Social media influencers must also be active for at least a year and meet the follower requirements based on their category. All applications are scrutinized by the Empanelment and Rate Advisory Committee (ERAC), and are approved through a proper process. Platforms must adhere to the IT Rules 2021, refrain from spreading fake news, hate speech, or harmful content, and adhere to ethical standards. If they do not follow these rules, their approval may be suspended or cancelled. Government advertisements can be displayed in approved digital formats such as banners and videos on verified platforms. Rates are determined by the state government, and payment is made only for actual advertisements. Empanelment is valid for two years and can be extended for one year if conditions are met. Overall, the policy ensures a transparent and structured system for government communication through digital media (Government of Himachal Pradesh, 2024, pp.1-12).

5 ICAST-25 (CyberSecurity2025–26)

The ICAST- 25 Cyber Security Reform is an important action taken by the Government of Himachal Pradesh to promote cyber security in government departments. As further government services are shifting to online platforms, a large quantum of citizen data is now stored digitally. This includes sensitive information similar as identity details, health records, and data related to weal schemes. With this shift, the threat of cyber pitfalls like hacking, data theft, and unauthorized access has also increased, making it necessary to reinforce security systems. To address these challenges, the programme focuses on training and mindfulness. Government officers and police labor force are given practical training to understand different types of cyber pitfalls and how to deal with them. They learn how to identify suspicious conditioning, help cyber-attacks, and respond snappily in case of any security breach. This not only improves their specialized chops but also helps different departments work together more effectively when handling cyber-related issues. Another crucial focus of ICAST- 25 is to ensure the safety of citizen data. Government departments handle large quantum of nonpublic information, and any abuse or leakage of this data can produce serious problems. The programme works towards perfecting data protection practices and reinforcing digital systems so that similar information remains secure. It also encourages the use of safe digital styles, similar as secure watch words, regular system checks, and careful running of sanctioned data.

The ICAST- 25 Cyber Security Initiative plays an important part in making digital systems safer and more effective. It helps reduce the chances of cyber pitfalls similar as hacking, data breaches, and unauthorized access, while icing that government services continue to run easily without dislocation. The programme also reinforces the capability of officers to respond snappily and effectively to any security issues. At the same

time, it helps make trust among citizens in digital governance, as people feel more confident that their particular information is being handled precisely and kept secure (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, 2025: 1-2)

Reward and Recognition:

Himachal Pradesh has received several awards, including the m-Governance Initiative of the Year Award 2024, for its School Safety Mobile App at the national digital transformation, recognizing the National Informatics centre Himachal Pradesh's development of the app for the State disaster management authority to help schools create disaster management plan.

People First Integration Award: Conferred by the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) for integrating 51 HIMSeva services with DigiLocker and linking them with HIM Pariwaar, the state's unique family identifier initiative. Gems of Digital India Award: Received for Grievance Appellate Committee MIS and School Safety MIS. SKOCH 'e-Governance' Award: Won first prize in finance and revenue categories for implementing the HP-VAT-IT Project and online services. national Panchayat Awards: Three awards won in 2024 for rural development initiatives, including Socially Secured Village Theme and Water Sufficient Panchayat - Himachal Gaurav Award: Given for exceptional work in various fields, including sports, arts, and social work. Civil Service Award: Conferred on government employees for outstanding service. - Parshuram Award: Highest sports award given by the state government. Hence, these initiatives demonstrate the government's commitment to digitalization and improving the quality of life for its citizens.

Conclusion

Digitization has become a core pillar of modern governance in India. Thanks to key initiatives like Digital India, the IT Rules of 2021 and the Digital Personal Data Protection Act of 2023, the government has driven a profound transformation in public service delivery, which are now faster, transparent and accessible to citizens. At the state level, Himachal Pradesh has also achieved significant progress through HIMSWAN, the District Electronic Services and the IT Policy of 2019, which have reduced geographical barriers and improved access to government services in remote areas. The study also demonstrates that digitization has strengthened governance, increasing accountability, reducing opportunities for corruption and fostering citizen participation. Digital platforms have facilitated better communication between government and citizens, making service delivery more systematic and effective. India has moved considerably towards a digitally empowered governance system, but the path still continues as, while digitalization brings with it benefits, it also poses challenges that cannot be ignored, such as cyber security threats, data privacy issues, misinformation and access to digital infrastructure, which still affect the effectiveness of digital governance. The success of digitalisation will depend on a country's ability to strengthen its infrastructure, the effectiveness of its data security systems, increasing digital literacy and ensuring equal access. A balance between security and innovation will be essential to achieving truly effective and inclusive digitalization in India.

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