Digital India: A Pathway Towards Digital Country

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Abstract

The Digital India is a leading programme of the Government of India with a vision to remodel India into a digitally empowered society and knowledgeable economy. It ensures that government services are made available for all citizens by improving online infrastructure and by increasing Internet connectivity to take nation forward digitally by building more participative, transparent and responsive system. It strives to create a good governance for citizens by ensuring an effective co-ordination among public authority and common people, by digitally connecting and delivering the government programs and services in every part of nation. This programme attempts to deliver equal benefit to both the user and service provider. Therefore, an attempt has been made in this paper to understand Digital India – as a pathway towards digital revolution where technologies and connectivity will come together to create an impact on every aspect of governance to improve the quality of life of people. It is also focuses on various challenges like digital illiteracy, poor infrastructure, low internet speed, lack of coordination among various departments for ensuring its proper implementation.

Keywords:

Development, Digital India, E-governance, Digital Infrastructure, Digitally empowered Society, Challenges.

Introduction

Digital India Program was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on July1, 2015 with his dream of transforming India digitally. It is a step by which government tries to make Indian Economy not only a knowledge based but also techno savvy economy. The program aims to make Government services accessible to people digitally so that people can enjoy the benefit of the latest information and technological inventions easily. It brings out many schemes like E-Health, Digital Locker, E-Sign, etc. and nationwide scholarship portal. It will help people in saving their time, money and energy from long government proceedings. Through digital media, government aims at connecting rural and urban area and which could help in bridging gap between different parts of country. Digital Technologies such as Cloud Computing and Mobile Applications have arisen as catalysts for rapid economic growth and development of citizen. The main goal is to join more than 2.5 lakh villages across India through broadband highways, public internet access, universal access to mobile connectivity, e-governance, e-kranti, information for all, a vigorous electronic manufacturing regime, early harvest programmes, and IT for jobs—known as the nine pillars of Digital India. The overall estimated cost of this project is at Rs 1,13,000crore. Digital India attracted more than 4lakh crore investment and generated more than eighteen lakh job opportunities at its launch which shows us long run benefit of the programme for the nation.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

'Digital India' has created curiosity among many researches from various disciplines because of its great importance and impact on the economy and mainly the technological sector.

Microsoft CEO, Satya Nadella has intended to become India's partner in Digital India program. He said that his company will set up low cost broadband technology services to 5lakhs villages across the country.

Gupta and Arora (2015) studied the effect of digital India project on India's rural sector. They found that many schemes have been initiated in digital India to boost agriculture sector and entrepreneurship development in rural areas. Digital India programme has created a way for empowerment of rural Indian women.

Rani (2016) has concluded that the digital India project delivers a huge opportunity to use the newest technology to transforms service industry. It also pointed out that various projects may require some transformational process, reengineering, refinements to achieve the desired service level objectives.

Midha (2016) concluded that digital India is a great plan to develop India for knowledge-based 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.

Sarin (2016) explained Digital India program, which aims at setting up e- infrastructure in the nation will enable faster establishment of the IoT industry.

(Joshi, 2016) Joshi analyze the parameters (i.e. understanding and knowledge, legal aspect of mobile wallet) for the use of mobile wallet, Banks providing this service.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

 1) To understand the concept of 'Digital India'.
 2) To discuss about the vision of Digital India.
3) To understand the pillars of Digital India.
4) To study the impact of Digital India in long run.
5) To examine the opportunities and challenges of Digital India.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

It is based on secondary data. For this purpose, various Journals, articles, government reports, books, newspapers and magazines have been used.

Vision of Digital India:

1) Digital Infrastructure as a core utility to every citizen: The Digital India initiative has a vision to create a high-speed internet services to its citizens all over nation. Bank accounts will be given importance at individual level. People will be provided with safe and secure cyber space in the country.

 2)Governance and services on demand: Government services will be available online where people can easily use them. Transactions will be made more convenient by changing economy into a cashless economy.

  3)Digital empowerment of citizens: The major initiative taken under digital India program is universal digital literacy and make digital sources readily and easily available for people. The services are also given in Indian languages for ensuring an active participation.

Scope of Digital India:

1)To develop India for a knowledgeable future through technology by covers many departments under one Umbrella Programme.

2) It is important to realize that IT (Indian Talent) + IT (Information Technology) = IT (India Tomorrow). The programme promotes various thoughts and ideas into a single, broad vision, and making the mission successful

3) It will combine many new schemes which would be recreated, restructured and implemented in a systematic manner for better impact.

Digital India Initiative: Nine Pillars of Digital India:

Digital India programme comprises with many initiatives under the single programme each targeted to prepare India as a knowledge economy and for ensuring a better governance for its citizens through coordinated effort of entire Government. Nine projects have been initiated to ensure the success of digital India Program.

1. Broadband highway
2. Universal Access to Mobile connectivity
3. Public Internet Access Programme
4. E-Governance, reforming Government through Technology
5. E-Kranti, electronic delivery of services
6. Information for All
7. Electronics Manufacturing
8. IT for Jobs
9. Early Harvest Programmes

1)Broadband Highway: The first step is to generate a high-speed broadband highway to connect all the remote areas, government departments, universities, research and development etc. Online portals and Mobile apps will be introduced to access information anywhere

2) Universal Access to mobile connectivity: The government is trying to ensure that by 2018 all villages should be covered through mobile connectivity.

3) IT Training for Jobs: The government is providing training and teaching skills to the youth for employment opportunities in the IT sector.

4) Electronics manufacturing: Electronics manufacturing in India with the help of digital technologies and skills is great initiative to support digital India program which can ensure reducing the import of electronics manufactured goods such as set-top boxes, mobiles, consumers and medical electronics, smart energy meters, smart cards, micro –ATM etc.

5)Provide public access to internet: This is major initiative which will open new doors of e-services to every citizen. The government intends 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 centers for the people.

6)E-Governance: It will change every manual work into fully technological system. By making online access to applications i.e. availability of all databases and information in electronic format, smoothly tracing of assignments, creating easy interface between various departments and connecting the people with government to ensure a better implementation of program.

7) E-Kranti: It concentrates on digital knowledge program where education, health, banking, insurance, financial, communication and many more services will be made easily available. Digital platform will easily evade the barrier of physical boundaries as everything can be easily connected.

8)Information to all: Government has taken an initiative of launching website MyGov.in for creating a two-way communication between citizens and the government. People can send in their grievances, suggestions and views on various issues easily on this to ensure a better governance.

9) Early harvest programs: This programme will create a way where every manual service will be changed by E-services like: Implementation of Wi-Fi in all the universities, public places etc., Educational books to e-books, E-services for News, weather information, entertainment etc., Biometric attendance for employees.

Digital India programmes also provide various facilities such as:

Digital Locker facility which helps people to digitally store documents such as PAN card, passport, election card, Aadhar Card etc. It provides a better means to secured government issued documents.

E-Sign framework which helps people to digitally sign their document using Aadhar card.

E-Hospital provides a means for online registration, online reports, getting information about availability of blood, payment of fees and appointments etc.

National Scholarship Portal is an initiative for making scholarship process more easy right from submission of application form, verification, sanction to students for all scholarships given by government.

Swachh Bharat mission has been introduced through mobile app SBM for ensuring a success of Swachh Bharat Mission.

Digital Attendance has been started on 1st July 2015 to keep a record of employees on time basis and ensure better transparency and accountability in working atmosphere.

Challenges of Digital India:

The program of Digital India has been emerged as dream project for government, but it has its own problems in the part of implementation in the country.

1)According to World Economic Forum (WEF) 2016 report, nearly 33% of Indian population is functionally illiterate, one-third of youth do not attend secondary education. India being a developing country still facing the problems of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment which is main hinderance in creating public internet access.

2)India is secular country with its diversified culture as each state has its own language, traditions, custom and laws. Digital India programs aims at complete integration of country through a common means which is challenge with varied system of India.

3)Cybercrime is growing problem worldwide. By making everything digitally available for people it is also a great challenge for the government to ensure the safety and security of privacy of people.

4)National Optical fiber network ensures broadband reaches in every part of the country. But to reach broadband connection in every interior part of the country is not that easy.

Opportunities of Digital India Programme:

Though Digital India programme has faced various challenges in its implementation but it has helped the country to achieve many prospects future growth

1)It will ensure public accountability through compulsory delivery of Government services electronically

2) Digital India programme will help in putting an end to corruption system which is main problem in development of country.

3)Digital India programme focus to transform economy digitally which will reduce paper work and will help in protecting the environment by saving trees.

4)It benefits people as now they can easily operate their day to day life through digital means

5) Each person will be having bank account which will improve in banking system of country.

Conclusion:

The Digital India program is new beginning of a digital revolution in India to transform its present for better future. A digitally connected India can help in changing the social, economic and political situation of country. It is important to understand that Information and Communication Technology alone cannot help to accomplish this objective. The success of this programme also lies on the shoulder of the people of nation who can work for ensuring the success of it to make India a digitally developed country. Once it is implemented properly it will help to open various new opportunities for the people.

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