

Digital India: Opportunities & Challenges

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ABSTRACT

Digital India is an initiative of the Central Government of India “designed to transform India into a global digitized hub” by reviving a rundown digital sector of India with the help of improving digital connectivity and skill enhancement and various other incentives to make the country digitally empowered in the field of technology. This paper helps understand the global as well as domestic challenges that might hinder the successful implementation of the program and suggest some feasible remedies to deal with the same. Further the paper also highlights the opportunities that would pave the way for achieving the program’s aim of making India the preferred choice for digital activities by both global and domestic investors and also how far the “Digital India” model can prove to be an attraction for the investors to invest in the sectors which are yet to achieve their full potential in India.

KEYWORDS: Digital India, Digital Empowerment, Job Creation, Skill Enhancement

INTRODUCTION

The digital world that we live in today is that where every civilian has a bright prospect to transform the lives in many ways that were hard to envision just a couple of years ago. It is the outcome of several innovations and technology advances. Today, every nation wants to be fully digitalized that will empower society in a better manner. The 'Digital India' programme, an initiative of honourable Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi, will emerge new progressions in

every sector and generates innovative endeavours for geNext. The motive behind the concept is to build participative, transparent and responsive system. All educational institutions and government services will soon be able to provide I-ways round the clock. Digital India will provide all services electronically and promote digital literacy. Digital Technologies which includes the concept of cloud computing and mobile applications have emerged as the catalysts for express economic growth and citizen empowerment. Companies all over the world desire to invest in Digital India- the 21st century India, as a growth opportunity. Hence, an attempt has been made in this paper to understand Digital India – as a campaign where technologies and connectivity will come together to make an impact on all aspects of governance and improve the quality of life of citizens. Global investors like Sundar Pichai, Satya Nadella, Elon Musk have supported Modi's Digital India initiative.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital India” initiative has been an intriguing subject matter of numerous researches from various disciplines because of its great significance and influence on the economy as a whole and particularly the technological sector. Being a recent move, there have been various researches on different aspects of the initiative ranging from the economical to social and ethical dimensions. Some of these researches retrieved through internet searches have been reviewed here.

Prof. Singh began with the basic overview of what Digital India entails and led a discussion of conceptual structure of the program and examined the impact of “Digital India” initiative on the technological sector of India. He concluded that this initiative has to be supplemented with amendments in labor laws of India to make it a successful campaign.

Sundar Pichai, Satya Nadella, Elon Musk researched about Digital India and its preparedness to create jobs opportunities in the information sector. He concluded that creating new jobs should be continued with shifting more workers into high productivity jobs in order to provide long term push to the technological sector in India.

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

Arvind Gupta intends to say that Digital India movement will play an important role in effective delivery of services, monitoring performance managing projects, and improving governance. An Integrated Office of Innovation & Technology to achieve the same ,and for problem solving, sharing applications and knowledge management will be the key to rapid results, given that most departments work on their own silos. Tracking and managing the projects assume significance because India has been busy spending money in buying technology that we have not used effectively or in some cases not even reached its implementation stage. Sharing learning's need to be best practices across departments Tracking and managing the projects assumes significance because India has been busy spending money in buying technology that we have not used effectively or in some cases not even reached implementation stage. Sharing learning's and best practices across departments needs to be driven by this Office of Technology.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The specific types of information and / or data needed to conduct a secondary analysis will depend on the focus of study. For this research purpose, secondary data analysis is usually conducted to gain in-depth understanding of the “Digital India” initiative. Secondary data review and analysis involves collecting information, statistics, and other relevant data at various levels of aggregation in order to conduct a requirement analysis of the rural area and mostly the paper is based on the information retrieved from the internet via journals, research papers and expert opinions on the same subject matter.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER

It is worth noticing that India over a period of time has become a direct service economy from being an agrarian economy but it also implies that not much focus has been given to technological sector. The Objective of the Digital India Group is to come out with innovative ideas and practical solutions to realize Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a digital India. Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi envisions transforming our nation and creating opportunities for all citizens by harnessing digital technologies. His vision is to empower every citizen with access to digital services, knowledge and information. This Group will come up with policies and best practices from around the world to make this vision of a digital India a reality.

The Digital India initiative has to pass through various hindrances and challenges to be fully potent and successful. This paper thus elucidates various challenges faced by both domestic and from global investors and then recommend suggestions to pave way for the successful implementation of an ambitious campaign launched with high hopes.

CHALLENGES, RECOMMENDATIONS & SUGGESTIONS

The Digital India campaign can't be a successful campaign merely by implementation or by incentivizing industry. For a hugely rewarding success, the campaign should move forward taking along other policies, amending redundant laws, focusing on necessary infrastructure building etc. One such hindrance in the way of Digital India is the first is the digital infrastructure, which requires to be put in place. For this the telecom infrastructure will form the base. On top of this layer we need the IT infrastructure in the form of apps, software etc. The second set is content that needs to be relevant to the citizens and address their real-time requirements. The third layer is capacity. Unless we have the all these three sets (i.e. telecom infrastructure, content, capacity) we won't be able to meet the supply commence rate of the demand. If this point is not taken proper care of then there would be clashes between the people in the rural areas and the government which will result in delay in commencing the project which will ultimately defeat the Digital India campaign's spirit of quick and hassle free ease of doing business. If this government takes the agenda forward and does not leave any of the constituent parts gasping for funds, the opportunities are huge for the country in general and for willing participants in the IT sector as well! There is much to be done, from the creation of smart cities to the comprehensive availability of broadband, from connectivity in education, healthcare, agriculture, and manufacturing to a National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM) that Nasscom Foundation has already taken up with the Department of Electronics & IT (DeitY). What is important to understand is that like any elephant, Digital India has many parts and each has to be addressed to make the big vision a reality. Another recommendation as to digital connectivity is to reduce the judicial clearances and stability in ruling which can act as a major impetus to the technological sector as it will attract high investor confidence with the judicial rulings being fair and pro-business. Going by the present practices, the imposition of certain

amendments with retrospective effect has garnered much noise in the past and should immediately be taken notice of. The more stable, quick and fair the judgment in basically cases relating to the business and taxation sectors, the better the chances of attracting more business leaders to invest more. The Judicial clearances and stability in ruling can act as a major impetus to the technological sector as it will attract high investor confidence with the judicial rulings being fair and pro-business. Going by the present practices the imposition of certain amendments with retrospective effect has garnered much noise in the past and should immediately be taken notice of. The more stable, quick and fair judgments in these cases relating to the business and taxation sectors, the better the chances of attracting more business leaders to invest more. As another recommendation, Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi in his inimitable style touched all the right chords in his speech, which included in its ambit the opportunities for access to better healthcare, education, and information for better livelihood that is at the core of the digital opportunity. A lot will be expected from the national broadband mission to lay the digital infrastructure on which many of these national applications can be mounted. In the last couple of years, Nasscom Foundation with its 'Follow the Fiber' approach and the active partnership of technology majors Intel, Google, and Microsoft has shown that village wide digital literacy is possible with successful outcomes in three villages in different parts of the country and more on the way. Hence, But providing a better transparent legislation with not only comprehensive availability of broadband, from connectivity in education, healthcare, agriculture, and manufacturing but also ensuring the implementation of the same would be a step forward in making India a preferred destination with regard to connectivity. Lastly improving the relations between the government and the corporate with regard to favourable taxation policies, quicker clearances of projects, minimal interference and removal of inaccessibility problems is the need of the hour for Digital India to bear fruits.

CONCLUSIONS

Digital India' initiative is a refreshing move and quite the need of the hour for the weakened technological sector. The Government of India hopes to achieve growth on multiple fronts with

the Digital India Programme. Specifically, the government aims to target nine 'Pillars of the Digital India' that they identify as being

- Broadband Highways
- Universal Access to Mobile Connectivity
- Public Internet Access Programme
- e-Governance – Reforming Government through Technology
- eKranti - Electronic delivery of services
- Information for All
- Electronics Manufacturing
- Digital or IT for Jobs
- Early Harvest Programmes.

However, it requires to be rightly substantiated with amendments to various legislations that have for long hindered the growth of Indian technology. India should focus more on developing domestically led connectivity, promoting research and innovation-led development to establish itself strongly on the international stage as an economic superpower and particularly a thriving technological hub.

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