

Digital India: Challenges And Opportunities

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Abstract

Digital India is a campaign of Government of India which was launched on 1 July 2015 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in order to transform India into a knowledgeable economy and digitally empowered society, along with good governance for citizens with a main motive of providing transparent and responsive government. The main objective of this program is to make society digitally empowered in technology. This program also ensures that government services are easily accessible by the citizens electronically by improving internet connectivity. Digital India is a program to convert India into Digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. Information technology is used to implement this program. Digital India infrastructure also ensures high speed internet connection and services on demand. Digital India program is helpful in creating millions of jobs in IT, Electronics and Communication sector. In the present paper an attempt has been made to study the challenges faced in successful implementation of digital India campaign and to find out various opportunities for the citizens of India.

Keywords: Digital, Infrastructure, e-governance, Government Schemes, Internet, Technology.

Introduction

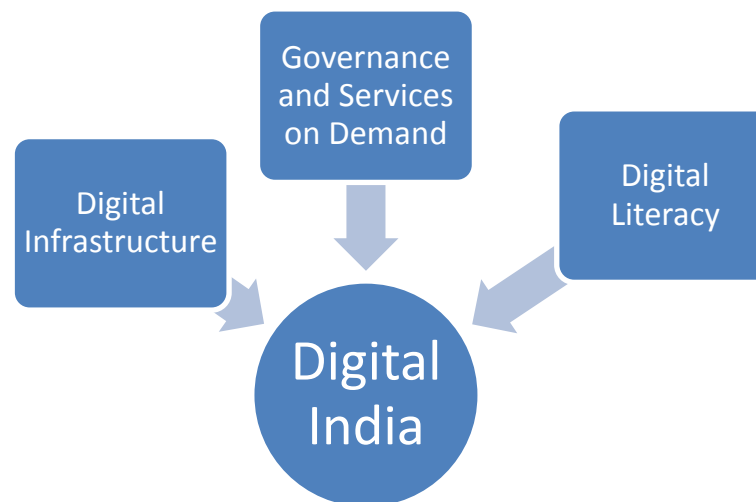
The digital India program is a dream project of the government of India with a vision to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. It has been noticed that digital India is inclusive growth in many areas such as electronic services, products, manufacturing and job opportunities etc. Digital India focuses on the nine pillars of growth areas viz. Broadband Highways, Universal Access to Mobile Connectivity, Public Internet Access Program, e-Governance: Reforming Government through Technology, e-kranti - Electronic Delivery of Services, Information for All, Electronics Manufacturing, IT for Jobs and Early Harvest Programs. Each of these areas is a complex task in itself. Digital India program is to be implemented by the entire Government with overall coordination being done by the Department

of Electronics and Information Technology. The main aim of digital India is to convert India digitally into a knowledgeable economy.

Today world has transformed from knowledge centric to techno centric. All information is available in just one click. A good governing body also requires a good communication platform to communicate with the stakeholders efficiently. The efficient way to communicate with the citizens of the world's largest democracy with a population of 1.2 billion is only possible by communicating with everyone through a digital platform.

Digital India

Digital India is a campaign launched by the Government of India. The aim of digital India is to provide Government's services to citizens electronically by improved online infrastructure and by increasing Internet connectivity or making the country digitally empowered in the field of technology. This initiative provides high-speed internet networks in rural areas. Digital India is a combination of three core components: the development of secure and stable digital infrastructure, delivering government services digitally and universal digital literacy.



Objectives

- To study the opportunities of digital India program.
- To study the challenges for digital India campaign.

Research Methodology

The present study is descriptive in nature. The study is based on secondary data which was collected from case studies, books, journals, newspapers, online databases and government websites.

Challenges

Followings are the challenges for digital India program:-

- Digital illiteracy is one of the biggest challenges in the success of digital India program. According to ASSOCHAM-Deloitte report on Digital India, it has been found that around 950 million Indians are still not on internet. Reliance Jio has contributed a lot in this field.
- Low income level of people creates another challenge for digital India program. While penetration of the internet is rapidly increasing in India, access to affordable broadband, smart devices and monthly data packages is required to spread digital literacy. Even with the internet data plans in India being among the cheapest in the world and the average retail price of smart phones steadily declining, connectivity is still out of the reach of Indians.
- Language diversity is another challenge in the success of digital India program. There are around 1,600 languages and various dialects. This diversity has resulted in language barriers. In areas where people only use local languages, integration of local language and technology is required to drive digital literacy.
- To create awareness with regard to Digital India scheme among masses of India is also a great challenge.
- It is a difficult task to have connectivity with each and every village, town and city. Connecting 250000 Gram Panchayats through National Optical Fibre is not an easy task.
- India has very low internet speed. India is ranked 67th for fixed broadband and 109th for mobile internet speeds, according to internet speed testing analysis firm Ookla. Therefore, this lowest internet speed cannot facilitate online delivery of various services.
- India's digital infrastructure is comprehensively inadequate to tackle growing increase in digital transactions. Slow and delayed infrastructure development is another challenge for digital India Campaign.
- The private participation in government projects in India is poor due to long and complex regulatory processes.

- ASSOCHAM Deloitte Report revealed that currently Over 50000 villages remain deprived of mobile connectivity. This is because of providing mobile connectivity in such locations is not commercially feasible for service providers.
- Near about 75% population of India lives in villages. In order to develop infrastructure in rural areas more funds are required. Division of fund among the rural and urban is not easy.
- India has 1600 languages and dialects. Non availability of digital services in local languages is a great barrier in digital literacy.
- Fear of cybercrime and breach of privacy has been a deterrent in adoption of digital technologies in India. In order to encourage people to switch to digital means, it is important to provide awareness and education on cyber security, risks and safeguarding of information on the internet.
- Most of the technology including cyber security tools is imported. There is no sufficient skill to inspect for hidden malwares. India needs 1million trained cyber security professionals by 2025. The current estimated number is 62000.

Benefits of Digital India Program

Digital India program is the beginning of digital revolution. It is a big initiative to empower people of the country. Main benefits of digital India program are as under:-

- The digital India mission would make all the government services available to all the citizens of the country through common service delivery outlets. Ultimately, it leads to inclusive growth by enabling access to education, healthcare and government services to all the citizens of the country.
- This program would provide more transparency as all the data would be made available online and would be accessible to citizens of the country.
- E-Governance will help in reducing corruption and getting things done quickly.
- Digital locker facility will help citizen to digitally store their important documents like Pancard, passport, mark sheets etc.

- It will help in doing things easily. For example when we need to open an account, we will give official details of our digital locker, where they can verify our documents. By this we can save time and the pain of standing in long queues for getting our documents would be reduced.
- Digitization goes hand in hand with data management, data is knowledge, and knowledge leads to better decisions.
- The presence on the Internet, through tools such as online stores, social networks, blogs, corporate pages, etc., multiplies the visibility of the company and sales channels.
- It will reduce documentation and paper work.
- Digital India mission is away from cashless transactions.
- Some of the services which will be provided such as Digital Locker, e-education, e-health, e-sign and nationwide scholarship portal.
- The digital presence not only opens up sales channels, but also new ways of communicating with customers. Email, apps, social networks... nowadays, the clients of any business with a digital presence have multiple ways to contact the company.
- It can help small businesses. People can use online tools to expand their business.
- It can play a key role in GDP growth. According to analyst the digital India could boost GDP up to \$1 trillion by 2025.
- The program would generate large number of jobs in IT, electronics and telecommunication sector directly or indirectly.

Projects and Products of Digital India

Followings are the some projects of digital India program:-

- Digital locker system to minimise usage of physical documents and enable their e-sharing via registered repositories.
- MyGov.in as an online platform to engage citizens in governance through a "Discuss, Do and Disseminate" approach.
- Swachh Bharat Mission Mobile app to achieve the goals set by this mission.
- e-Sign framework to allow citizens to digitally sign documents online using Aadhaar.
- e-Hospital system for important healthcare services such as online registration, fee

payment, fixing doctors' appointments, online diagnostics and checking blood availability online.

- National Scholarship Portal for beneficiaries from submission of application to verification, sanction and disbursal.
- Digitise India Platform for large-scale digitisation of records in the country to facilitate efficient delivery of services to the citizens.
- Bharat Net programme as a high-speed digital highway to connect all 250,000 gram panchayats of country -- the world's largest rural broadband project using optical fibre.
- BSNL's Next Generation Network to replace 30-year old telephone exchanges to manage all types of services like voice, data, multimedia and other types of communication services.

Conclusion

The concluding point of the study is that digital India is facing many challenges. Persistent attention must be given in order to implement this program successfully. It has been found that Digital India is to provide Wi-Fi to people, creating job, universal phone connection, high speed internet, Digital Inclusion, e- Services, e Governance, Digitally motivated people, National Scholarships Portal, Digital Lockers System, e-education and e-health making India to be pioneer in IT use solution. More employment prospects will open for the youth that will boost the nation's economy. The success of this dream project lies not only in the hands of government but it requires all round support from the all citizens and other stake holders of the nation. Although, digital India program is facing some challenges, yet it has a great impact on India to make the best future of every citizen.

Suggestions

The following steps should be taken into consideration to fulfill the vision of Digital India:-

- Digital literacy should provide knowledge to secure their online data.
- Massive awareness is to be created particularly in rural areas.
- This mission needs content and service partnerships with telecom companies and other firms to develop and maintain infrastructure.
- The success of digital India project depends upon internet connectivity with minimum cyber security risks. For this there should be a strong anti cyber crime team.

- To improve skill in cyber security, cyber security courses should be introduced with academics.
- There is need for effective participation of various departments and demanding commitment and efforts from these departments.

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