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Digital India Programme



The Indian Government launched the Digital India campaign to make government services available to citizens electronically by online infrastructure improvement and also by enhancing internet connectivity. It aims to empower the country digitally in the domain of technology. Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the campaign on 1st July 2015.

What is Digital India?

Digital India was an initiative taken by the Government of India for providing high-speed internet networks to rural areas. Digital India Mission was launched by PM Narendra Modi as a beneficiary to other government schemes such as Make in India, Bharatmala, Sagarmala, Startup India, BharatNet, and Standup India.

Digital India Mission is mainly focused on three areas:

1. Providing digital infrastructure as a source of utility to every citizen.
2. Governance and services on demand.
3. To look after the digital empowerment of every citizen.

Digital India was established with a vision of inclusive growth in areas of electronic services, products, manufacturing, and job opportunities. Digital India aims to provide the much-needed thrust to the nine pillars of growth areas. Each of these areas is a complex programme in itself and cuts across multiple Ministries and Departments.

The nine pillars of Digital India is given below:

- **Broadband Highways** - This covers three sub components, namely Broadband for All – Rural, Broadband for All – Urban and National Information Infrastructure (NII).
- **Universal Access to Mobile Connectivity** - This initiative focuses on network penetration and filling the gaps in connectivity in the country.
- **Public Internet Access Programme** - The two sub components of Public Internet Access Programme are Common Services Centres (CSCs) and Post Offices as multi-service centres.
- **e-Governance** - Reforming Government through Technology- Government Process Re-engineering using IT to simplify and make the government processes more efficient is critical for transformation to make the delivery of government services more effective across various government domains and therefore needs to be implemented by all Ministries/ Departments.
- **e-Kranti** - Electronic Delivery of Services- To improve the delivery of public services and simplify the process of accessing them. In this regard, several e-governance initiatives have been undertaken by various State Governments and Central Ministries to usher in an era of e-Government. e-Governance in India has steadily evolved from the computerization of Government Departments to initiatives that encapsulate the finer points of Governance, such as citizen centricity, service orientation and transparency.
- **Information for All** - This pillar aims to ensure transparency and availability of reliable data generated by the line ministries for use, reuse and redistribution for the people of India.
- **Electronics Manufacturing** - This pillar focuses on promoting electronics manufacturing in the country.

- **IT for Jobs** - This pillar focuses on providing training to the youth in the skills required for availing employment opportunities in the IT/ITES sector.
- **Early Harvest Programmes** - This pillar consists of a group of different short-term projects which have immediate effect on the Indian digital ecosystem like IT platform for mass messaging, crowd sourcing of eGreetings, biometric attendance in the government offices, WI-FI in all universities etc.

Objectives 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.

The major objectives of this initiative are listed below:

1. To provide high-speed internet in all grampanchayats.
2. To provide easy access to Common Service Centre (CSC) in the entire locality.
3. Digital India is an initiative that combines a large number of ideas and thoughts into a single, comprehensive vision so that each of them is seen as part of a larger goal.
4. The Digital India Programme also focuses on restructuring many existing schemes that can be implemented in a synchronized manner.

Advantages of Digital India Mission

Digital India Mission is an initiative that encompasses plans to connect the rural areas of the country with high-speed internet networks. Public Internet Access Programme is one among the nine pillars of digital India. On the platform of digital adoption, India ranks amongst the top 2 countries globally and the digital economy of India is likely to cross \$1 trillion by the year 2022.

Some of the advantages of Digital India are:

1. There is an increase in electronic transactions related to e-governance.
2. BharatNet project is implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to all the Gram Panchayats (GPs) in the country through an optimal mix of media (OFC/ Radio/ Satellite). As on 28.02.2022, total 5,67,941 km Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) has been laid. Total 1,72,361 GPs (1,68,010 GPs on OFC and 4,351 GPs on satellite) have been made Service Ready in the country. As on 31.12.2021, total Rs. 27,582.7 Crore has been disbursed/utilised under BharatNet Project. The scope of BharatNet has been recently extended up to all inhabited villages beyond GPs in the country.

3. A Common Service Center (CSC) is created under the National e-Governance Project of the Indian government which provides access for information and communication technology (ICT). Through computer and Internet access, the CSCs provide multimedia content related to e-governance, education, health, telemedicine, entertainment, and other government and private services.
4. Establishment of digital villages along with well-equipped facilities such as solar lighting, LED assembly unit, sanitary napkin production unit, and Wi-Fi choupal.
5. Internet data is used as a major tool for the delivery of the services and the urban internet penetration has reached 64%.

Challenges of Digital India

The government of India has taken an initiative through the Digital India Mission to connect the rural areas of the country with high-speed internet networks. Apart from the various initiatives taken by Digital India, there are several challenges faced by it.

Some of the challenges and drawbacks of Digital Mission are mentioned below:

1. The daily internet speed, and the Wi-Fi hotspots are slow as compared to other developed nations.
2. Most of the small and medium scale industry has to struggle a lot for adapting to the new modern technology.
3. Limited capability of entry-level Smartphone's for smooth internet access.
4. Lack of skilled manpower in the field of digital technology.
5. To look for about one million cyber security experts to check and monitor the growing menace of digital crime.
6. Lack of user education.

Digital India Initiatives

The Government has taken up many initiatives under the Digital India campaign. Discussed below are few such important initiatives:

1. **DigiLockers** – This flagship initiative aims at 'Digital Empowerment' of the citizen by providing access to authentic digital documents to citizen's digital document wallet
2. **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

3. **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
4. **BHIM** – Bharat Interface for Money is an app that makes payment transactions simple, easy and quick using Unified Payments Interface (UPI)

Impact of Digital India Campaign

Since its launch in 2015, the Digital India campaign has left its impact in various fields:

- All post office branches in the rural areas will be linked electronically. The FM while presenting the Union Budget 2022, said that this Budget focuses on financial inclusion."All 1.5 lakh post-offices in India will be brought under the core banking system. This will enable financial inclusion and access to accounts through net banking, mobile banking, ATMs, and also provide online transfer of funds between post office accounts and bank accounts. This will be helpful especially for farmers and senior citizens in rural areas, enabling interoperability, and financial inclusion," 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

A digitally growing economy – Union Budget 2022

The Union Budget 2022 has been primarily focused on creating a digitally growing economy. The government has started prioritizing its expenditure on building a faster and more efficient environment for its consumers of Digital India. The purpose of introducing virtual assets is to boost the digital economy. The introduction of legal regulations has now led the government to create a secure platform for these transactions to flow through effectively.

Below mentioned are some the details that lead the road of Digital India:

5G Rollout

The Union Government will be introducing the 5G telecom services that will enhance Internet connectivity across the country. This will help the country's pace to move faster and help to develop the Internet economy at an upward rate. The government decision includes affordable broadband and mobile services by facilitating PLI schemes for 5G equipment and laying optical fibre cables through the PPP model.

Technology in Farming

The government has stressed the importance of drones in the farming sector to effectively help the numerous start-ups in our country. Kisan Drones will be entrusted with deploying drone technology in the sector. The idea behind facilitating the purchase of drones is to reduce manpower, increase the efficiency of crop production, reduce the wastage of water and human exposure to pesticides.

Digital University

The pandemic had affected the academic structure enormously; hence the new budget has proposed a new model that promotes a digital university. This helps the students to acquire excellent educational assistance through a virtual set-up irrespective of their location across the country. Although this provides a wider network of connectivity, it also exposes the students and institutes to multiple risks associated with Identity verification and insecure fee payment sources. This enforces the government to facilitate a trustworthy platform that focuses on mitigating the risks associated with identifying fraudulent activity in the digital university.

Digital Currency

The government has introduced the virtual currency called CBDC that will be mirrored with the prevailing physical currency in a digital form. The RBI will issue the digital rupee with the aim to have a legalized fungible currency. Since the digital world is always exposed to risks that can have implications on the security and stability of any financial transactions. The government should also introduce verification processes that can monitor any transaction that could impair the financial structure of our country.

(Reference: Internet Resources)

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