Digital India: Challenges & prospects

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Abstract-

Digitization was need of the hour in order to make everything accessible digitally or electronically. Hence, the long awaited scheme of the Government of India was launched in 2015 by the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi. As a result of which digital literacy of India was improved. The digital India program is likely to benefit citizens by generating employment opportunities, creating new chances in regard to start-ups, quality of service delivery. The main objective of the program was to push digitization and connectivity as a vehicle for boosted economic growth. This paper tries to give a brief understanding of the digital India program, the visions, pillars, initiatives under the program, challenges faced in the implementation of the program and possible suggestions to achieve the desired goals.

Introduction-

Digital India is a flagship programme of the Government of India with a vision to transform Indian society into a digitally empowered society

and knowledge economy and knowledge economy. The primary objective of Digital India campaign is to make the Government services accessible to citizen electronically. The Digital India campaign was launched on 1st July, 2015 by the honourable Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi aiming of connecting rural areas with high speed internet networks. The term Digital India means providing information and communication digitally and contributing to improve employment, economy and productivity. The components of The Digital India are-

1. The development of secure and stable digital infrastructure.
2. Delivering government services digitally
3. Universal digital literacy

The main motive behind this campaign was to build participative, transparent and responsive governance promoting digital literacy in India. The Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL) is the custodian of the Digital India programme. The emphasis was on digital technologies – cloud computing and various other mobile applications. This is the prime example of inclusive growth.

According to Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, " E- Governance is an essential part of our dream of Digital India, the more technology we infuse in Governance, the better it is for India."

Again according to Hon'ble Minister of Communications & IT, Government of India, Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, "Digital India is more for the poor and underprivileged. It aims to bridge the gap between the digital haves and have-nots by using technology for citizen."

Hence, Digital India is the dream scheme of the Government of India by coordinating with common people. It also ensures that the government services availed by each and every Indian citizens so that achieved a long durable development in the country. The campaign emphasizes on a complete digital transformation of the society. The programme has been structured into the three vision areas and pillars.

- ➢ Digital infrastructure as a utility to every citizen
- ➢ Governance and services on demand
- ➢ Digital empowerment of citizens

Pillars are

1. Early harvest programmes
2. IT for jobs
3. Electronics manufacturing
4. Information for all
5. E- kranti- electronic delivery of services
6. E-governance reforming
7. Public interest access programme
8. Universal access to mobile connectivity
9. Broadband highways

Methodology-
 The paper is based on descriptive - qualitative research. The required information are collected from various secondary sources, such as - books, newspapers, article, journals, archives etc.

Objectives of the paper-
1. To understand the origin of the scheme
2. To know about the objectives behind the implementation of the program.
3. To know about various initiatives under the program.
4. To know the challenges to make the citizens digitally aware.

Initiatives under Digital India Campaign-

Digital connectivity is an emerging concept to connect with people across demographic and socio-economic crisis. Digital India assures to renovate India into a digitally empowered country by emphasizing on digital literacy. The initiatives taken under Digital India campaign are-

1. **Digital payments in India**- India has witnessed a massive revolution in regard to digital payments. The shift from a cash based economy to a card based and mobile transaction economy has become dramatic. All mode transfers like Real Time Gross Settlement(RTGS), National Electronic Funds Transfer(NEFT), debit cards, digital wallets and Unified Payments Interests(UPI) has shown positive growth.

2. **BharatNet-** BharatNet is the world's largest rural broadband project to provide broadband connectivity to all the 2.5 lakhs Gram Panchayats across India connected using optical fibre. Prior to 2014, only 5

dozen panchayats are connected with optical fibre network. By March, 2015 , 5000 gram panchayats had been connected under BharatNet programme.

3. **E - health, transformation in health industry-** The delivery of health services has become an efficient service due to the role played by technology. The health care sector is undergoing fundamental changes in storing, sharing and accessing the data and how the service is delivered. The followings are ICT initiatives in the health sector-

A. Electronic health records

B. Personal health record

C. Telemedicine

D. Chronic disease management systems

E. Clinical decision support

F. Electronic transfer of prescriptions

G. Radio frequency identification and barcoding

H. Business intelligence in detecting disease patterns

4. **Digital health with e- hospital-** E hospital is an initiative taken under the digital India programme of the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology. The e -Hospital application is the hospital Management Information Systems (HMIS) for internal workflows and processes of hospitals. The main objectives of the e Hospital initiatives are-

a. To provide the e- Hospital, e-BloodBank and ORS applications to government hospitals.

b. To provide online patient portal for delivery of citzen centric services like online appointment booking, access to lab reports, blood availability etc.

c. To provide application related technical support to the hospitals through dedicated call centre and helpdesk.

5. **Smart cities** -The government of India launched the Smart Cities Mission on 25th June, 2015 with the objective to improve the quality of life and accelerate growth in the urban sector. It is an innovative and new initiative by the government of India to drive economic growth and improve the quality of life of the people by enabling local development and harnessing technology as a means to create smart outcomes for citizen. It lays emphasis on creation of 109 smart cities by 2022. The Smart cities mission strategy includes-

A. Pan -city initiative in which at least one Smart Solution is applied city wide.

B. Develop areas step-by-step- three models of area based developments.

C. Retrofitting

D. Redevelopment

E. Greenfield

6. **Digital democracy with MyGov**- Citizen's participation in the governance and in the decision making process is very crucial for smooth functioning of the democracy. But there was no medium for them to contribute in the decision making process. But, MyGov is an unique citizen engagement and crowdsourcing platform to involve people in policy formulation and programme implementation and to foster citizen- government partnership for driving inclusive growth of India. MyGov enables ministries and departments to harness the knowledge and talent of citizens to not just refine policy documents but also seek creative inputs such as logos, mascots etc.

7. **Digital farming**- Agriculture is the primary source of livelihood for the majority of the populations of India. ICT has brought a new revolution in the sector of agriculture. Such as KISSAN Kerela is a citizen centric e governance project for integrated and multi- modal delivery of information to the farming community of kerela.

8. **Common Services Centers (CSC)-** The CSC is a strategic cornerstone of the National E governance Plan(NeGP) approved by the government in May 2006 as a part of its commitment in the National Common Minimum Programme to introduce e governance on a massive scale. CSCs are the centers through which e governance is made available to the villagers as a way of village level Entrepreneur model being followed to empower locals. The main focus of CSCs are -

A. Agriculture service

B. Education and training service

C. Health services

D. Rural banking and insurance services

E. Entertainment services

F. Utility services

G. Commercial services.

9. **Digitization of post offices**- digitization of post offices including setting up centralized data centers, networking of all post offices and enabling digital payments.

10. **Universal Access to mobile-** The universal access to mobile aims to provide mobile access to more than 55600 villages that do not have mobile coverage.

11. **Public wi-fi hotspots-** The public wi-fi hotsports are created in order to enable citizens to access content without depending on mobile data.

12. **India stack-** It is set of open APIs that enables development of payment - enabled applications using AADHAAR as the base of authentication.

13. **National Cyber Coordination Center (NCCC)-** The ministries of electronics and IT has planned to set up a center to safeguard India's cyberspace against potential threats.

Challanges Faced in the implementation of the programme-

The digital India programmes face a number challenges in implementation .These includes-

1. Regulatory roadblock- some of the common policy hurdles includes lack of clarity. The issues pertaining to taxation has proved to be roadblocks in advancing with the programme.

2. Idle government RFPs- Many Request for Proposals (RFPs) issued by the government are not being taken by competent private sector organizations due to lack of commercial viability.

3. Digital divide- The digital India ended up creating a digital divide between those who are digitally equipped and those who are not.

4. Poor connectivity - India needs over 80 lakhs hotspots compare to 31000 presently available.

5. Proper policy making - lack of proper policy making all over the world also acts as an challenges against the implementation of the programme.

6. Making digital India scheme known and creating awareness regarding digital literacy is itself a big challenge.

7. Slow and delayed infrastructure development- India's digital infrastructure is comprehensively inadequate to tackle growing increase in digital transactions in India.

8. India is a country of varieties of languages. Non availability of the digital services in all local languages is also a major problem regarding the implementation of the digital India programme.

9. Fear of cyber crime and breach of privacy.

Conclusion-

The prime idea behind this digital India programme is vast and wide ranging. The programme started with the objective of improving technical consciousness of the people in India and make people digitally literate. There are a lot of issues that the programme has experienced in execution, but the contribution it has made towards economy, health, governance sector making everything transparent and close to people is praiseworthy. The problems also can be resolved by creating awareness among the people, maximizing internet connectivity, improving skills in cyber security, participation of various departments and amendments in various legislations can be of great help.

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