



DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DIGITAL INDIA PROGRAMME

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Abstract

Digital India is one of most cherish initiatives of our Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Long run vision of the Digital India Programme is to focus on creating digital infrastructure, digital empowerment and governance. It was a dream project of the Indian Government on the grounds of knowledge economy with strong digital empowerment. It aimed at bringing coordinating with public agency on the digital platform and providing Government programme through digital mode to the citizens. The major hindrance for the successful implementation was characterized by poor infrastructure, digital illiteracy, low bandwidth, lack of co-operation etc. These hindering factors have be addressed through proper training and by creating awareness among all the public agency to fulfill the potential objectives of the programme.

Key words: *Digital Infrastructure, Knowledge Economy, Technology, Challenges, Awareness, Implementation.*

Introduction

Digital India was launched by Our Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 1st July 2015 as a dream project to connect rural areas with Internet connectivity and to improve digital literacy. The vision is to connect and empower 125 crore (2015) of population with digital revolution. The project aimed at creating transparency, accountability in governance and leveraging digital technology for quality education, healthcare, financial inclusion to its citizens.

Review of Literature

1. Gupta and Arora (2015) studied on Digital India and rural sector where they found digital India programme was launched with the objectives of empowered Rural India and provide platform for rural women to develop entrepreneurial skills.
2. Singh (2015) studied on Overview of Digital India, the study examined the initiative has to be supplemented with an amendments in labor law for successful implementation.
3. Midha (2016) examined the improper implementation of digital India due to inaccessibility and rigidity. The study provided suggestion of co-ordination for effective implementation of the programme.
4. Nadella (2016) study on Digital India and the preparedness to creates jobs opportunity. They examined high productive jobs will provide long run push to the technological sector in India.

Research Methodology

The Paper is based on the information received through secondary sources. It is conceptual paper where qualitative data are used from the reliable sources.

Objectives

- To study Digital India Programme
- To find the pillar initiatives of Digital India Programme
- To examine the challenges faced and few suggestion for the implementation

Objectives One: To Study Digital India Programme

The Digital India Programme was one the ambitious programme of the Central Government with a high vision to transform India into a digitally empower society. The tag line of Digital India is “Power to empower”. The Main objectives of the programme are to provide all services electronically to its citizens and enhance digital literacy



among the citizens. The Digital India initiatives wanted to convert India into a digitally knowledge economy providing all services on digital mode. It was an umbrella programme covering all the department under public domain. The three vision of Digital India programs includes a) Digital Infrastructure to every citizen b) Governance and service on Demand c) Digital empowerment of the citizens. When the programme was introduced it was highly criticized by experts. It was told that the country is not ready and it is not possible because more than 68% of population from rural areas with less digital infrastructure, 26% of populations are illiterate, 72% transaction was in cash and 65% of population does not access to internet facilities.

Objective Two: To find the pillar of initiatives

Digital India programme provide thrush on nine main pillars of growth areas:

- Broad band Highway covering rural areas, gram panchayat through department of communication. The focus was also on urban area covering through National Information Infrastructure.
- Universal Access to mobile connectivity through department of telecommunication.
- Public interest access programme through national rural internet missions and post offices
- E-Governance through online application and tracking, use of online repositories for school certificate, voter ID, platform like UIDAI payment gateway etc.,
- E Kranti- Electronic Delivery of services: this initiative foster digital knowledge where education, health, farming, financial and other services will be delivered through internet services.

Objective Three: To Examine the challenges faced and few suggestions for effective implementation

IAMAI report of 2013 points out that 69% respondent states that lack of awareness of the internet and nearly one billion offline users out of which 27% are urban population, 46% are young and 57% are literate. Digital India initiatives were implemented to create empowerment among its citizens. The Government will shift from e-governance to m-governance which requires huge investment to create a participative, transparent and responsible government. Services like Digi locker(to safeguard crucial documents like voter ID, Pan car, BPL card, DL, educational certificate etc.), My.gov.in(share inputs on matters and government) through discuss, do and disseminate approach, e-sign framework, Swaach Baharat Mission, National Scholarship Portal, e-hospital, bharat net, next generation network, electronics development fund, Centre of excellence on internet of things partnership with NASSCOM, Deity and Ernet mainly to encourage new strategy to adopt IOT technology.

Challenges in Implementing Digital India Programme

Challenges are the part of all the sector from its policy to implementation. When Digital India policy was introduced, many experts criticized d by saying country is not ready for the same. The main challenges for smooth implementation of Digital India Programme include:

- Connectivity to remote areas
- Digital illiteracy
- Cyber related crimes and issues
- Lack of co-ordination among department
- Lack of information among the beneficiaries
- Rigid mindset of the people

Suggestion for Effective Implementation

According Debjan Ghosh. Managing Director of Intel Corporation of South Asia, “The need for digital literacy in a country as populous and diverse as India is critical, with a constant tug of war between resources and requirements, technology is the only way to scale up solutions and bridge the gap between them”. There were number of programme initiated by Central Government to expand the reach of Digital India which includes: Common services center at Gram Panchayat, Aadhar Card enrolment etc., to make the effective implementation is to educate and inform the citizen about the benefits of digital services. Few suggestions includes:



- Application of PPP model for sustainable use of digital Infrastructure
- Encourage Private Services providing agency in areas of encourage incentives
- Educating rural people relating to digital connectivity
- Awareness about cyber securities
- Effective participation of various Government department through policy initiatives
- Framing policy for effective and compulsory practices among the citizens

Demonetization and Covid Pandemic has given a new outlook to Indian Digital Infrastructure.

Demonetization in November 2016 of high value denomination of notes of Rs.500 and Rs.1000 were withdrawn which resulted in 86% of the total currency value in circulation. Demonetization also pushed the use of digital transaction like debit card, mobile transaction through phonepee, google pay etc.

COVID-19 pandemic that has been compared to the Second World War, the Great Depression, and the 1918 Spanish Flu in terms of the impact on human behavior and as per Covid Appropriate Behavior physical distancing and quarantine measures were made compulsory. In an effort to meet this instruction various types of human behavior (e.g., shopping, learning, working, meeting, and entertaining) shifted from offline to online, resulting in an accelerated diffusion of emerging digital technologies among ordinary people.

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