Digital India Program: It’s Implementation

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Abstract: Digital technologies which include cloud computing and mobile application has emerged as catalysts for rapid economic growth and citizen empowerment across the globe. These are being increasingly used by us in everyday lives from retail stores to government offices. These help us to connect with each other and also to share information on issues and concern faced by us. This paper provides a comprehensive review of the flagship programs launched and monitored under digital India program, identifies the progress to date, implementation gaps and challenges faced. This paper also shows the impact of this program in facilitating e-governance. The paper reveals that to enhance digital connectivity, government has created many wi-fi hotspots in railway stations, tourists places in cities like Delhi and Mumbai. There is also increase in digital literacy in rural and urban India. This paper also include the steps taken by government of India to boost high-speed broadband connectivity in budget 2017-18.

Key Words: Digital India Initiative, E-Governance, Optical fiber Network

1. “Introduction”

Digital India is a campaign launched by government of India to ensure that government services are made available to citizens electronically by improving online infrastructure and by increasing internet connectivity or by making the country digitally empowered in the field of technology. The initiative include plans to connect rural areas with high-speed internet networks. Digital India consist of three components. These include: 1) the creation of Digital infrastructure, 2) delivery of services digitally and 3) digital literacy. The vision of digital India program is inclusive growth in areas of electronics services, products manufacturing and job opportunities. The government of India entity Bharat Broadband Network limited which executes the national optical fiber network project is the custodian of digital India projects.

The government of India hopes to achieve growth on multiple fronts with the digital India program. Specifically, the government aims to target nine “pillars of digital India” that they identify as being: universal access to internet, public internet access program, e-governance –reforming government through technology, e-kranti- electronic delivery of services, information for all, electronic manufacturing and IT for all.

2. Initiative taken under digital India program are:

Digital locker

It facilitates in helping citizen to digitally store their important documents like PAN card, passport, marksheets and degree certificates. It aimed at eliminating the use of physical documents and enables sharing of verified electronics documents across government agencies. There is no need to carry hard copy of documents as one can access all the digitalized documents anywhere.

Attendance.Gov.in

It is a website launched to keep a record of the Attendance of government employees on real time basis. This initiative started with implementation of a common Biometric Attendance System (BAS) in the central government offices located in Delhi. This will going to increase transparency and working of all government departments.

E-sign framework

It allows citizens to digitally sign a document online using Aadhaar authentication.

E- hospital

This application provides important services such as online registration, payment of fees and appointments online diagnostic reports, enquiring availability of blood online etc. There is no requirement of standing in long queues. One can also make consultation online as well.

National Scholarship Portal

It is a one step solution for end to end scholarship process right from submission of student application, verification, sanction and disbursement to end. It help in transferring the benefit to the beneficiary in transparent manner.
### My.gov.in

This portal works on online platform to engage citizen in governance through a “discuss, do and disseminate” approach. Through this portal, one can get all the information about the policies, programs and schemes launched by the government of India and can also give suggestions on various issues.

### Bharat Net

Under this Initiative, a high speed digital highway will connect all 250000 gram panchayat of the country. This is the world’s largest rural largest broadband project using optical fibre network. This initiative is launched for better connectivity.

### Wi-fi Hotspots

Development of high speed BSNL wi-fi hotspots throughout the country is yet another initiative to improve digital connectivity in the country. Other initiative includes e-choupal, e-court, e-police and e-jail.

The National Portal of India provides an ideal front – end for these initiative as it is a single window access to information and services being provided by the various government entities.

E-Governance is the application of information and communication technology for delivering government services, exchange of information, communication transaction, integration of various stand alone systems and services between government to customer (G2C), government to business(G2B), customer to customer (C2C), business to business (B2B). E-governance policy initiative under digital Initiative is a compendium of several policy initiative in the e-governance domain namely e-kranti framework, open source software, open APIs, E-mail policy, use of IT resources, collaborative application development and Re-engineering for cloud ready application that have taken by the department of electronics and Information technology (DeitY) in the recent times.

E-commerce is an ability to follow businesses to communicate and to perform transaction anytime and anyplace. The power of e-commerce vanishes the geophysical barrier, making all consumer and businesses as potential customers and suppliers. E-bay and Amazon E-commerce companies are the good example of e-commerce businesses which are able to post their items and sell them around the globe. According to AMI-Partners’ Global Forecast Model, 15% of India’s internet connected Small and Medium Businesses(SMBs) have already launched a website with e-commerce capabilities. With more and more businesses embracing e-commerce and many of the roadblocks such as connectivity and logistics being sorted out, AMI forecasts that by 2019, close to three in ten internet SMBs will offer online purchase facilities via their websites. Digital India program will expand the reach of the e-commerce market into India’s tier 4 towns and rural areas.

### 3. Literature Review

A. Anooja (2015) states that through Digital India rural citizens will enter in E-commerce world. There they will get global market and companies will get a lot of consumer and vendors. Two project under digital India – mobile project helps in ticket booking services and E-education helps to increase digitally literate consumers as well as vendors.

### 4. Objective

The objective is to understand the Digital India program, its challenges or concern that need to be taken in mind and how this program is implemented by the government of India.

### 5. Research Methodology

Data is taken from secondary sources from web and journals.

### 6. Concern of Digital India Program

- Many people in rural areas have no internet connection and also the content in regional language is not sufficient to keep the reader engaged. Only 15% of the households can access the internet, and few people can access mobile broadband, which has as little as 5.5 subscription for every 100 people. This is despite the increasing affordability of information and communication technology environment in the country. In relation with its population, only 19% Indians use the internet.
- According to World Economic Forum 2016 report, nearly 33% of Indians population is functionally illiterate, one third of youth do not attend secondary education. There is a vast difference in urban centers such as metropolitan cities and remote rural areas, where even basic services such as electricity is not available to run digital India program.
- Internet Penetration has remained close to 15%.
India is ranked 20th in mobile data speeds with an average speed of 0.099 mbps which remains very low.

In 2016 India’s ranked 91 in Network Readiness Index (NRI) issued by World Economic Forum (WEF). WEF has attributed such performance to poor infrastructure and poor technology skills. The poor skills are the restriction to widespread acceptance of information and communication technology.

Above all, effective execution of the digital India program is a major challenge. E-Governance initiative in India have traditionally being confronted with the dual challenges of automating government department and taking online services to the common man.

7. Implementation of Digital India Program

Digital India program is implemented through the initiative whose performance is given below:

- **Public Internet Access Program**
  
  Common service centers (CSCs) providing government services in rural areas. More than 140000 Common Service Centers operational. More than 200000 candidates certified under National Digital literacy Mission

- **Universal Mobile Connectivity**
  
  55649 uncovered villages covered to mobile connectivity

- **E – district**
  
  Mission mode project providing high volume citizen centric services, operation in more than 450 district in 22 states. Average number of E-transactions are 3.7 million per month.

- **E - Bhasha**
  
  Under this initiative, Digital India website is available in 12 languages and work is in progress to cover all 22 constitutionally recognized language.

- **Optical Fiber Network**
  
  Under this initiative, till January 2017, 100000 villages has been connected to optic fiber network. As on July 9, 2016 optical fiber connection has been laid to 54023 gram panchayat with a total length of 125642 kilometer. Out of these 7312 gram panchayat have been tested with broadband connectivity.

- **Wi-Fi Hotspots**
  
  Free public wi-fi has been made available at several location in major cities. Railway and metro station in cities such as Mumbai and Delhi have similar free wi-fi facilities as well.

- **E-Hospital**
  
  Six hospitals are on board. The website- org.gov.in – is fully functional and has received over 48000 registration so far. The website , updated regularly, also features a dashboard which allows real – time tracking of data and registration.

- **Digi-locker**
  
  The digilocker scheme has nearly 940000 users who have uploaded nearly 700000 documents as of august, 2015.

8. Key statistics for digital , Social and Mobile Media in 2016 are:

- 3.42 billion internet users, equally 46% global penetration. It is up by 10% as compared to 2015.
- 2.31 billion social media users, delivering 31% global penetration. It is also up by 10% as compared to 2015.
- 3.79 billion mobile social media users, representing 51% global penetration. It is increased by 4% as compared to 2015.
- 1.97 billion mobile social media users, equating to 27% global penetration.

9. Digital India Initiative Taken In Budget 2017-18

The finance minister said that by the end of 2017-18, high speed broadband connectivity on optic fibers will be available in more than 150000 gram panchayat. Initiative taken are:

- No more service charges on e-tickets from IRCTC
- The New Centralized Defense Travel System is introduced to help soldiers and defense personnel to make their travel needs easy. Now they can book tickets online through the booking system.
- Senior citizens will soon get an Aadhaar based smartcard. The smart card will be designed to monitor their health.
Aadhaar pay scheme to be launched soon for those without e-wallet, phones and debit cards.

10. Conclusion

E-Governance is about transforming the way government work and reinventing people’s participation in the democratic process. It is about empowering both the government and citizens. Along with the public sector, private sector is also playing significant role in fulfilling the vision of digital India by providing last mile access, location specific wi-fi access and development of application that provide cloud based services on demand to citizens like branchless banking, remote health, remote education, skill-development and e-justice. Google wants to make web accessible in Indian languages and provide low cost chrome book to Indian schools and also invest in core infrastructure and affordable smart phones with Android one.

Smart cities and Make in India program entails considerable investment in developing manpower, upgrading technology, digital literacy and a legal framework. However, the need of the hour is to adopt a grass root approach from the state level with key enablers being awareness building and imbibing the benefits of e-services especially for the underserved parts of the country. Digital India program is in work in progress to achieve last mile connectivity.

Reference

[2] www.digitalindia.gov.in