Digital India Initiative: Overview of Opportunities and Challenges

Rajesh Kumar*

Assistant Professor, Shivaji College, University of Delhi

Abstract – This piece of writing succinctly outlines the highlights of the Digital India initiative taken by the Government of India in 2015.PM Narender MODI at the helm of the India spearheaded the task of launching series of initiatives like Make in India, Digital India and various others that not only empower the government but also its citizen. The underlying intent of this programme is to rebuild, redesign and reinvent India with an aid of information and technology and building a perception of "Go Digital or Making India Digital" across India. The rationale behind the programme is to cater the benefits given by the government directly to the citizen and eliminating the role of intermediaries who are engaged in the service of serving the benefits to its citizen. This paper presents the opportunities and challenges in the making India digital savvy. The views expressed are founded on the basis of facts and figure available on paper and digital literature.

Keywords – Digital India, Opportunity, Challenges, Information Technology

- x -

INTRODUCTION OF DIGITAL INDIA:

The motto of Digital India programme itself reflects its ideology i.e. "Power to Empower". The philosophy of this organization expressly focuses on the enlisted aspect:

a. That how the government can engage dialogues with its citizen and serve the benefits directly to the citizen in large number. Empowering every citizen to have an internet identity and connectivity with the government, public and private institutions/organizations.

b. To establish an improved connectivity with the citizen located in 2.5 lakh villages, towns and rural areas in India. Empowering every citizen to have an internet identity and connectivity with the government, public and private institutions/organizations.

c. to develop a seamless flow of information throughout the country be within government or outside the government.

With the advent of emerging technologies, the traditional way of doing business has been tremendously diminishing. Now-a-days, the classical approach of doing business is 'doing the business on digital platforms' popularly known as E-commerce like Flipkart, Amazon etc. The objective of this programme is to give the comprehensive view to the government of the business practice followed digitally. It is the duty of the government to regulate the business activities executed digitally and protect its citizen from any fraud.

This initiative functions on the 9 pillars of Digital India initiative which are as follows:

a. Public internet access

b. Universal access to mobile connectivity

c. E-kranti

d. IT Jobs

e. Information for all

f. Robust manufacturing

g. Harvest Programme

h. Broadband highways

i. E-governance

Government of India has projected the cost of executing the Digital India programme around Rs 1,13,000 crore. The stage of development in this programme is headed by the Cabinet secretary and reviewed by the office of the Prime Minister.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

(i) To study the vision of Digital India Programme

(ii) To explore the various projected opportunities of Digital India programme.

(iii) To study the present limitations and projected challenges in the successful implementation of this programme.

(iv) To make suggestions to achieve desired objective this programme.

METHODOLOGY:

An analysis have been made to the available secondary sources of information such as newspaper, books, magazines and other available online and offline literatures.

Vision of Digital India:

3 Key aspects kept in mind in envisioning the Digital India:

01. Requirement of Digital Infrastructure: The requirement of digital infrastructure is essential to deliver the high speed internet facility, banking and access to the help sewa kendra and shareable public cloud space for storing the data digitally.

02. Digital India provides a base to render the real time assistance and seamless flow of information across various departments of the government located in various parts of the country. This platform helps the government in improvising the governance. This platform provides a robust mechanism to support the digital transaction on real time basis and give a push towards the digitization.

03. This initiative immensely focuses on the citizen literacy regarding the digital India programme particularly rural area. Dissemination of this initiative is relevant in two proportion one it emboldens the country's citizen to move towards the digital path and secondly, it enhances the reliability and mode of communication for obtaining information.

Project under Digital India programme:

In this programme, the Government of India has selected 7 projects. These projects are enlisted below:

a. Digital Locker: This is another robust mechanism that support the storage of the crucial documents like Aadhar card, pan card, passport, Degree and several others. This is process that minimize the use of the storage of physical documents at multiple places and avoid any theft or loss of any document.

b. This initiative is more oriented on the dialogues among citizen and government. This provides a platform to the citizen to engage in governance by accessing the website www.mygov.in which showcase the progress and development.

c. Swacch Bharat mission Mobile App is one of the key projects in the Digital India initiatives. This helps the citizens to join and participate through this app and assist in achieving the goal of Swaach bharat mission.

d. E-sign framework is another facet of this programme which permits the citizens to digitally sign the documents using Aadhar verification.

e. e-Hospital is also an important step to provide e-facilities for medical help seekers. It is available through a mobile application. People can make payment in online mode, they can have online diagnostic reports, laboratory reports, medical procedures, and other medical information through this app.

f. To cut short the process of scholarship and introducing the national scholarship portal.

g. BSNL has introduced Next generation Network that replaces the redundant exchanges operational 30 years ago. This NEXT generation network helps to handle all types of internet based services like voice, data, multimedia, pictures, videos etc.

h. Government has initiated Bharat-Net project to connect 2.5 lakh villages of India through world's largest rural high speed broadband of optical fiber

Concept of Digital India:

(i) *Broadband Highways*:

• For Rural Areas: Spreading an optical fiber net to cover 2.5lakh gram-panchayats up to December 2016.

• For Urban Areas: Virtual network operator for service delivery and mandate better communication infrastructure in urban area.

• SWAN, NKN and NOPN are the national level programme that outline the national information structure.

(ii) *Universal Access to mobile Connectivity[1]:* Connectivity of every citizen with phone:

Rajesh Kumar*

Govt. plans to access of phone by every citizen up to December 2018.

(iii) ***Public internet access programme***[1]: Under this programme, the post offices are to be make facility centers for internet based services.

(iv) **Establishment of *E-governance***[1]: This aspect aims making e-government business process, re-engineering using IT to advance transaction and electronic database in which all govt. procedure and transactions are to be stored in electronic database.

(v) ***E-kranti***[1]: it aims converting education model, health services model, farmers development model, Social security and Defense model, Law and order Model, Justice Model and Financial transactions model in to IT based technology model.

(vi) ***Information for all***[1] : Establishment of Govt.-Public direct access: The objective of this e-access is to make direct and fast two- way communication/connectivity between government and public through technology based medium i.e. Phone Apps, Website, Social Media, online messaging services, SMS, online forum etc.

(vii) ***Electronic manufacturing***[1]: Target net zero import: Main focus of this aspect to promote electronic manufacturing to attain NET ZERO import target up to 2020. Some other focused areas are FABS, Fab-less design, Digital set top boxes, Smart Energy meters, smart electronics devices, Electronic skill developments, Electronic government procurements, Electronic Convenience cards etc.

(viii) **Information technology for jobs**: This includes rendering the training the people at village level and make them ready for the job in IT sector or in telecom sector to train work force to cater to their own need.

(ix) ***Early harvest programme***[1]: IT platform for message, government greeting to be e-greeting and biometric attendance.

Opportunities of Digital India Programme:

Despite its several challenges in its implementation, this programme has few brighter sides which are listed as follows:

01. This system provides a platform to fix the accountability of the government service through electronic mode.

02. Digital India is programme to counterblast the corrupt practices in any government or private organizations if transactions are done in electronic mode. It will become a major reform in financial development of India.

03. When the function and habit of dealing with government is changing in to electronics mode then it helps the country in saving the papers consequently helps in saving trees and environment.

04. This programme gives benefits to the public at large either located in village or rural area through more revenue generation in govt. treasury.

05. On the successful implementation infrastructure development will take a boost with the control of corruption and money flow.

06. This empowers every citizen to open his bank account and to track financial transaction electronically.

07. Literacy rate of India will rise with reach of education in every small village at a very low cost.

08. Employment rate will increase with the easy electronic connectivity between the job giver and job seeker.

09. Human Resource of India will be more productive with availability of electronic information of every sector of the world.

10. Law and order management will be more effective with the availability of electronic data base of every citizen.

Challenge of Digital India programme:

This programme has innumerable challenges few of them are listed below:

a. Linguistic Difference: A barrier to establish connectivity

India is densely populated country ranked 2nd in the world. There are various culture and religious practice are followed based on the locality and geography. Digital India programme act as catalyst to enjoin the people of the country from north to south, east to west through this programme. However, the feasibility of this programme is not an easy task, considering the reluctance of the people to join the programme digitally over the platform.

b. Owing to the complication of this programme it is difficult to establish a good connectivity it is essential to have good network

Rajesh Kumar*

infrastructure, otherwise there would be continuous interruption of network or technical hiccups that stops the network to establish an internet connectivity.

c. Low literacy rate: Due to low literacy rate, people do not accept technological changes. They do not feel comfortable to change their behavior from the traditional to modern approach of working.

d. Poverty: Poverty is also an big obstacle to connect people digitally. As to make a citizen of India digitally empowered they will have to bring themselves in any form of electronic connectivity, which generate cost to them. Due to poverty they do not divert their very small earning in to any other form beyond their basic needs.

e. Cyber Crime, Digital fraud : Due to less govt. control over the internet traffic, cyber-crime is a big obstacle to achieve success in Digital India Programme. As many cases of financial and data frauds have been taken place, people keeps themselves away from the doing financial transactions or sharing important information on internet.

f. Infrastructural and Financial Limitations : India is big and also geographically diversified country. Installation of fiber line in every area of India is very much costly and technologically very much hard process.

g. Political obstacles: India is a democratic country. Every govt. proceeding have its democratic code of conducts. Sometime non-cooperation between centre and state govt. creates obstacles in the development process.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS:

Every task is taken to get some productive results; same is with Digital India Program. Digital India program is launched to make India digitally empowered by making its citizens digitally literate. World is changing very fast due to change in technology. India has no option to deny these changes. So, Digital India program is very much necessary step in the development of India. Although there are some challenge which can be managed as suggested below:

•   Internet facility cost should be reduced as every citizen can afford it.

•   Digital Literacy program, training, workshop, seminars must be arranged in every part of the country, especially in low educated areas.

•   Digital awareness campaign must be in continues unless and until a major part of the population become self-reliant in digital awareness.

•   A separate budget allocation must be made for this program.

•   National and regional committee of digital expert, engineers, govt. officials, public representative should be formed to regulate, control and manage the activities related to digital India programme.

•   Websites and web-pages must be designed in simple and user friendly manner.

•   Public-Private-Partnership model may be adopted to overcome financial boundaries.

•   Digital literacy program must be initiated in every educational institute all over India

•   Center and state govt. must come together for digital developments.

•   Every government and private organizations must be digitized

•   Cyber security system must be made more powerful.

•   Follow the recommendation of the council on Digital Government strategies suggested in the OECD 2013 Ministerial Council Meeting.

REFERENCES:

1. http://www.cmai.asia/digitalindia/pillar-7.php

2. https://www.digitalindia.gov.in/

3. Digital India Power to Empower at http://www.nextgenias.com/2015/09/eassy-digital-india-programme-upsc-ias

4. Usha Rani Das, Challenges of Digital India, Business insider India.

5. HR Khan, Digital India: Emerging Challenges and Opportunities for the banking sector (2014).

Corresponding Author

Rajesh Kumar*

Assistant Professor, Shivaji College, University of Delhi