

Digital Impact on Indian Society

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doi:10.56397/JLCS.2024.03.01

Abstract

The Digital India Mission, launched in 2015, is a visionary initiative by the Government of India to transform the country into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. This ambitious Digital India Program aims to bridge the digital divide, connect rural and urban populations, and enable access to essential government services, education, healthcare, and financial inclusion through the power of technology. The Digital India Mission is a flagship initiative to harness the power of digital technology to transform the country into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. In an era marked by rapid technological advancements and the widespread integration of digital platforms into various aspects of our lives, the term “Digital India” resonates as more than just a catchphrase. It embodies a vision of transformative change, where technology acts as a catalyst for growth, inclusivity, and progress on an unprecedented scale. Hence, an attempt has been made in this paper to understand Digital India — as a campaign where technologies and connectivity will come together to make an impact on all aspects of governance and improve the quality of life of citizens.

Keywords: digital India, digital locker, digital technology, e-Kranti and e-Governance

1. Introduction

Digital India is an ambitious programme of the Government of India with a vision to transform India into a digitally empowered society. The focus areas are: creation of a countrywide digital infrastructure as a utility for every citizen, ensuring governance and services on demand and digital empowerment of citizens. The Digital India Programme is a mission to prepare India for a knowledge future by making technology central to enabling change. The Digital India Programme is a mission to prepare India for a knowledge future by making technology central to enabling change. The Digital India programme rests on nine pillars:

Broadband Highways, Universal Access to Mobile Connectivity, Public Internet Access Programme, e-Governance — Reforming Government through Technology, e-Kranti — Electronic Delivery of Services, Information for All, Electronics Manufacturing, IT for Jobs and Early Harvest Programmes. From enabling storage of legacy documents in digital format to providing a unified platform for all scholarships provided by the Government of India, from facilitating online registration and obtaining appointments in hospitals to propagating widespread use of digital signatures, from setting up of a National Centre for Flexible Electronics to creating an Electronic Development Fund as a Fund of Funds, from

creating the fiber optics backbone infrastructure across the country to moving ahead with the Next-Generation Network that heralds the convergence of voice, data and multi-media services... Digital India is the most comprehensive programme under implementation, de-Signed to harness the immense potential of Digital to propel India forward.

1.1 The Main Objectives of the Present Research Paper

- To understand the concept of Digital India
- To understand the pillars and initiatives of Digital India
- To understand the pillars and initiatives of Digital India
- To discuss about the visions of Digital India
- To study the impact of Digital India on the Indian society

1.2 Research Methodology

The secondary data has been collected. For this purpose, various magazines and journals have been used as it is a conceptual paper. Thus, the focus is to know more about the concept, its application and the impact on economy. Therefore qualitative data have been used.

Digital India for New India: Digital India for New India is a vision to create a new India where all citizens have access to the benefits of digital technology. This includes access to education, healthcare, financial services, and government services. It also includes the ability to participate in the digital economy and to create new opportunities for oneself. Digital India for New India is being driven by many initiatives, including: Bharat Net, Digital Literacy Mission, e-Governance, Startups and Innovation etc.

Pillars of Digital India Initiative: The Digital India Initiative is built upon 9 key pillars, each focusing on a specific aspect of transforming India into a digitally empowered nation. Here we discussed the 9 Pillars of Digital India Initiative in detail.

Broadband Highways: This pillar aims to provide high-speed internet connectivity to all parts of the country, including remote and rural areas, through the expansion of broadband infrastructure and the National Optical Fiber

Network (NOFN).

Universal Access to Mobile Connectivity: The goal is to ensure that every citizen has access to mobile connectivity, promoting widespread mobile phone usage and enabling digital services delivery.

Public Internet Access Program: This pillar focuses on establishing digital centres to provide internet access and digital services in rural and remote areas, enhancing digital literacy and accessibility.

e-Governance and eServices: Digital India aims to make government services available to citizens electronically, improving the efficiency, transparency, and accessibility of public administration.

E-Kranti: This Kranti will fully focus on digital knowledge program where education, health, farming, rights, financial and many more services will be delivered on a very high bandwidth. Physical boundaries no longer are a limitation when almost everyone and everything is a digital handshake away.

Information for All: This pillar emphasizes the digitization of government documents and records to make information easily accessible to citizens, ensuring transparency and reducing paperwork.

Electronics Manufacturing: Encouraging domestic manufacturing of electronics and hardware, which supports economic growth, and job creation, and reduces import dependence.

IT for Jobs: The initiative focuses on providing training and skill development to the youth, enhancing their employability in the IT and digital sectors.

Early Harvest Programs: These programs include specific projects that address immediate digital needs, such as online access to school certificates, digital attendance, and Wi-Fi in public spaces.

2. Digital India Initiative

Under the Digital India Initiative, the Indian government has undertaken a range of initiatives and projects to digitally transform the nation and improve governance, services, and connectivity. Some of the key initiatives under Digital India programme include:

2.1 Broadband Backbone Across India Bharat Net

Bharat Net serves as the infrastructure backbone

of Digital India, taking Internet and telecommunication services to every nook and corner of the country. It is speedily working towards the massive goal of connecting all the villages across India through broadband. Bharat Net is the world's largest rural broadband connectivity project using optical fibre, connecting 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats, with a minimum of 100 Mbps bandwidth for each. This network will be supported by a High Capacity Network Management System and Network Operation Centre. It will facilitate the rollout of e-Governance, e-Health, e-Education, e-Banking, Internet and various other services to rural India.

Voice, data and multi-media on one landline BSNL NGN Next Generation Network. The Next Generation Network (NGN) is a packet-based network to provide telecommunication services to make use of multiple types of traffic such as voice, data and multimedia. It is a convergence of service provider networks that includes voice telephony, data networks (Internet) and wireless networks. BSNL has chalked out a massive plan to use the cutting edge technology of NGN for its NGN C-5 project. The objective is to migrate existing voice and data customers to NGN platform to provide basic telephone and supplementary services using internet protocol (IP). It has planned to offer a whole package of services: voice (VOIP), data, closed user group, multimedia video conferencing and fixed mobile convergence (FMC) where users can switch between landline and mobile telephony alternatively without breaking the call. The NGN equipment planned under this project will be integrated with different BSNL voice exchanges, broadband network and existing computerised billing platforms.

Wi-Fi hotspots, affordable connectivity on the go BSNL Wi-Fi Services. Under the mission of Digital India, it has been planned to roll out Wi-Fi in 2,500 cities and towns to provide affordable seamless connectivity. Towards this goal, BSNL has commenced large-scale deployment of Wi-Fi hotspots throughout the country. Such hotspots will enable people to access anywhere-anytime, high-speed broadband services.

2.2 Digital Locker to Store Documents and Certificates Digital Locker

Digital Locker aims at eliminating the use of

physical documents and at enabling sharing of verified government issued or self-uploaded electronic documents across agencies. Digital Locker provides a dedicated personal storage space in the cloud to citizens, linked to citizens' Aadhaar numbers. It will enable various organizations registered on Digital Locker to push certificates of citizens directly in their Digital Locker in electronic format. Citizens can also upload and securely store the scanned copies of legacy documents in Digital Locker. These legacy documents can be electronically signed using e-Sign facility. A citizen can share these electronic certificates online with various departments and agencies registered on Digital Locker while applying for the services provided by them. Thus, Digital Locker brings the citizens, issuers and requestors on one platform.

2.3 All Government Scholarships on a Single Website National Scholarship Portal

The National Scholarships Portal is a one-stop solution for students, directly into the beneficiaries' accounts, implementing the entire scholarship process — applying for different scholarships, application receipt, processing, sanction and disbursement by different central ministries, state governments and other agencies. The portal is an end-to end solution, right from registration of application by the student to the transfer of money to the bank accounts of this initiative aims at providing a Simplified, Mission oriented, Accountable, Responsive and Transparent (SMART) System for faster and effective applications, quick disposal of scholarships, and the delivery of funds.

2.4 Online Appointment with Doctors at Specialized Government Hospitals e- Hospitals/ORS

For a common man, seeking diagnosis and treatment means waiting for hours in long queues and a lot of running around. e-Hospital/ORS is a unique initiative that addresses this problem. The patient can fix an appointment with the concerned doctor from his home, can get to know about the availability of critical requirements such as blood, and can check his/her report online.

Online electronic signature, saves time and trouble e-Sign is an online electronic signature service to facilitate an Aadhaar holder to digitally sign a document. It can be integrated with service delivery applications. The facility of online electronic signature is enabled through the Aadhaar e-KYC service.

2.5 Help Digitize India, and Earn Digitize India Platform (DIP)

Digitize India is a programme of the Government of India to digitize physical records and reduce piles of papers in record rooms and offices. It enables organizations to free their warehousing real estate and to keep their records for a longer time and in safer environment. A special Digitize India Platform has been developed for this. It leverages an innovative algorithm and technology to enable digitization of any kind of record at a reasonable price. The platform uses crowd sourcing. It provides income opportunities by facilitating people to work from home or any other location. The algorithm requires every word/phrase to be sent to two disconnected persons randomly selected. Each one digitizes the word and submits. If the digitization by both persons matches, they get rewarded as per the number of characters digitized. If the digitization does not match, neither gets rewarded. Based on words successfully digitized, users keep accumulating rewards and whenever they wish, the amount can be credited to their bank accounts directly. Anyone can participate in the Digitize India programme, be it housewives or students or part-time workers or the retired.

2.6 Submitting Records for Digitization

Any organization can submit their records for digitization to CSC SPV. The records should preferably be in a scanned image format. Organizations can submit physical records as well, but will have to pay for their scanning. The CSC SPV creates the template of the pages being digitized. This template is sent for the approval of the organization submitting the records for digitization. The data/records are thereafter processed for digitization.

3. Connecting to the Digital India Programme

3.1 Digital India and Mobile App

Digital India Portal is the dedicated portal for Digital India programme. The portal has been created to provide informational services to various stakeholders on the various aspects of the Digital India programme. The portal provides knowledge on the programme management structure and approach and methodology for implementation of Digital India programme. A unique system available on the portal is Digital India. Monitoring System, which facilitates all nodal departments at the level of the Centre as well all States/UTs to share

the progress status of Digital India projects pertaining to their domain and geography. This plays an important role and helps in monitoring the progress of Digital India at both the national and state levels. The centralised portal of Digital India is a responsive and multi-lingual system and connects all stakeholders and citizens. It will provide updated details on Digital India Programme including its vision, areas of operation and progress of various projects. The portal will contain details of programme management, media gallery, discussions forum, quiz, social media and such other information. Digital India Portal has been integrated with NIC SMS gateway, to communicate to registered users through services like SMS.

3.2 Digital India Book

A commemorative book released on the occasion of the launch of the Digital India Programme, the 'Digital India Book' captures the purpose and perspective behind making India a digitally empowered knowledge economy and takes readers through the Nine Pillars of the Digital India Programme that form this massive initiative.

3.3 An Instrument for a Clean India Swachh Bharat Mission App

The 'Swachh Bharat' Campaign has charged the people with a new zeal to clean up their neighborhood, their city, town and village. Initiated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, it has been one of the most successful drives in the recent times. Swachh Bharat Mobile App has been developed to generate greater awareness about the campaign among the people and connect them with various cleanliness programmes. The App has inbuilt features that take the mobile-user into various activities such as 'Swachhata Pledge', video clips and images taken during different cleanliness programmes, and inspiring messages on cleanliness. The Mobile App facilitates citizens to post photos of unclean spots in their locality and mark it on a map, organise a cleanliness drive and invite friends and neighbours to join in. It allows one to share stories and photos with friends. The Swachh Bharat Mobile App will not only popularize Swachh Bharat Campaign, but also result in greater outreach with more citizens participating while on the move. With the Mobile App, the Swachh Bharat Campaign will get both broad-based and localised, and reach

out to people across India. The application will empower citizens, recognizing them as important and vigilant stakeholders in developing a Clean India.

3.4 Getting the Cutting Edge Through Research National Centre for Flexible Electronics

Flexible electronics is an emerging area of electronics which is based on the monolithic integration of electronic components on amorphous and often flexible substrates, typically resulting in products that are large in size with length scales ranging from a few centimeters as in sensors, to a few decimeters as in displays and lighting, to several meters as in organic solar cell-based panels.

4. Vision of Digital India Mission

The Digital India Mission envisions a comprehensive transformation of India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. This ambitious program, launched by the Indian government, seeks to leverage the power of technology to bridge the gap between urban and rural communities, enhance government services, and drive economic growth.

4.1 Digital Infrastructure

One of the primary visions of the Digital India initiative is to establish a robust and inclusive digital infrastructure. This includes the expansion of high-speed internet connectivity to every corner of the country, ensuring that even remote areas have access to the digital world. By bridging the digital divide, the initiative aims to promote equitable access to information, education, and opportunities, leveling the playing field for all citizens.

4.2 Governance and Services

Governance and Services on Demand is another pivotal vision of Digital India. By digitizing government processes and services, the initiative intends to streamline administrative procedures, reduce paperwork, and promote transparency. Citizens will have the convenience of accessing various government services online, eliminating the need for lengthy bureaucratic procedures. This transformation not only enhances the citizen experience but also contributes to efficient and accountable governance.

4.3 Digital Empowerment

Digital empowerment of citizens is a cornerstone vision of the initiative. Through

digital literacy programs and skill development initiatives, citizens are empowered to effectively use digital tools and technologies. This empowerment goes beyond mere access to technology; it enables individuals to participate in the digital economy, access educational resources, and engage in various socio-economic activities. This vision aligns with India's aspirations to create a digitally savvy population that can harness the opportunities offered by the digital age.

4.4 Digital Literacy

Universal digital literacy is closely linked to the initiative's vision. By providing digital literacy training to every citizen, regardless of age or background, Digital India aims to equip individuals with the skills needed to navigate the digital world confidently. This becomes particularly significant in a country as diverse as India, where digital literacy can bridge gaps and foster social inclusion.

4.5 Digital Financial Inclusion

Digital financial inclusion is another critical vision of Digital India. By promoting digital payment systems and enhancing access to financial services, the initiative seeks to bring the unbanked and under banked population into the formal financial sector. This not only empowers individuals economically but also contributes to the growth of a cashless economy and reduces the dependence on physical currency.

4.6 Innovation and Startups

Furthermore, Digital India envisions nurturing innovation and startups in the digital domain. By fostering a conducive environment for startups, the initiative aims to tap into the potential of young entrepreneurs, driving technological advancements and job creation. The focus on electronics manufacturing supports this vision, promoting local production and reducing import dependence.

In the pursuit of these visions, Digital India places a strong emphasis on cybersecurity. As digital systems become more prevalent, protecting sensitive data and digital infrastructure becomes paramount. The initiative aims to bolster the cyber security ecosystem, ensuring a secure digital environment for both citizens and businesses.

5. Impact of Digital India Mission

The Digital India Mission has had a profound

impact on various sectors of the Indian economy and society. Here are some of the notable impacts of the Digital India Mission:

Economic Impact: India is increasing its strategy by focusing on digitalization connectivity cashless / paper-less economy, and start-up innovative ecosystem. The way of Focusing in digitalization can make our country grow tremendously. Digital India initiative can improve our GDP by around \$ 1 trillion by 2025, says a report of economic analysts. It can also be harmful to play a key role in macro-economic factors like employment generation, labor productivity, business development, and revenue generation. At present India is the 2nd largest telecom and 3rd largest internet market with almost 259 million broadband users. This shows that there is a tremendous economic opportunity in India because the tele – density in rural India is merely 45% while more than 65% of the population lives in the villages, mentioned in the world Bank report. It says that the 10% growth in mobile and broadband penetration upsurges the per capital GDP by 0.81% to 1.38% in developing countries.

Social Impact: Social sectors such as education, healthcare, and banking are unable to reach out to the citizens due to obstructions and limitations such as middleman, illiteracy, ignorance, poverty, lack of funds, information and investments. These challenges have led to an imbalanced growth in the rural and urban areas with marked differences in the economic and social status of the people in these areas.

Modern Information and Communications Technology (ICT) makes it easier for people to obtain access to services and resources. The penetration of mobile devices may be highly useful as a complementary channel to public service delivery apart from creation of entirely new services which may have an enormous impact on the quality of life of the users and lead to social modernization. The poor literacy rate in India is due to unavailability of physical infrastructure in rural and remote areas. This is where m-Education services can play an important role by reaching remote masses. According to estimates, the digital literacy in India is just 6.5% and the internet penetration is 20.83 out of 100 populations. The digital India project will be helpful in providing real-time education and partly address the challenge of lack of teachers in education system through smart and virtual classrooms. Education to

farmers, fisher men can be provided through mobile devices. The high speed network can provide the adequate infrastructure for online education platforms like Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

Mobile and internet banking can improve the financial inclusion in the country and can create win-win situation for all parties in the value-chain by creating an interoperable ecosystem and revenue sharing business models. Telecom operators get additional revenue streams while the banks can reach new customer groups incurring lowest possible costs.

Factors such as a burgeoning population, poor doctor patient ratio (1:870), high infant mortality rate, increasing life expectancy, fewer quality physicians and a majority of the population living in remote villages, support and justify the need for tele medicine in the country. M-health can promote innovation and enhance the reach of healthcare services.

Digital platforms can help farmers in know-how (crop choice, seed variety), context (weather, plant protection, cultivation best practices) and market information (market prices, market demand, logistics).

Environmental Impact: The major changes in the technology space will not only brought changes to the economic system but will also contribute to the environmental changes. The next generation technologies will help in lowering the carbon footprint by reducing fuel consumption, waste management, greener workplaces and thus leading to a greener ecosystem. The ICT (Information and Communications Technology) sector helps in efficient management and usage of scarce and non-renewable resources. Cloud computing technology minimizes carbon emissions by improving mobility and flexibility. The energy consumption can be decreased from 201.8 terawatt hour (TWH) in 2010 to 139.8 TWH in 2020 by higher adoption of cloud data centers causing a 28% reduction in carbon footprint from 2010 levels.

Access to Services: Digital India has significantly improved access to government services, reducing bureaucratic hurdles and making services more transparent and efficient. Citizens can now access a wide range of services online, such as applying for passports, licenses, and certificates.

Financial Inclusion: Initiatives like the BHIM

UPI have revolutionized digital payments, enabling even those without bank accounts to engage in seamless financial transactions. This has promoted financial inclusion and reduced the dependency on cash.

E-Governance: Digital India has transformed governance through the implementation of e-governance systems. Online platforms have streamlined processes, reduced corruption, and improved service delivery, ensuring better accountability and transparency.

Education and Skill Development: Digital platforms like SWAYAM and e-learning initiatives have expanded access to quality education and skill development opportunities. It has enabled remote learning, making education more inclusive and accessible to all.

Healthcare Services: The e-Hospital initiative has improved healthcare services by digitizing patient records, appointment systems, and medical history. Telemedicine and digital health platforms have connected patients to healthcare professionals, especially in remote areas.

Agriculture and Rural Development: Digital platforms such as e-NAM have empowered farmers by providing them with an online marketplace to sell their produce directly to buyers. Additionally, Bharat Net has extended high-speed internet connectivity to rural areas, enabling digital services and information access.

Startups and Innovation: Startup India has nurtured a vibrant startup ecosystem by offering incentives, funding, and mentorship. This has fostered innovation, technological advancement, and job creation in emerging sectors.

Economic Growth: Digital transformation has contributed to economic growth by enhancing efficiency and productivity across sectors. It has also attracted foreign investment, bolstering India's reputation as a tech-savvy nation.

Infrastructure Development: Initiatives like Bharat Net have strengthened digital infrastructure across the country, connecting even the remotest regions to the digital world. This has paved the way for further technological advancements.

Empowerment of Citizens: Digital India has empowered citizens by providing them with access to information, enabling participation in governance through platforms like MyGov, and facilitating direct communication with authorities through social media.

Environmental Impact: Digitization has led to reduced paper usage, contributing to environmental conservation. Online services have minimized the need for physical documents and paperwork, thus promoting sustainability.

Global Recognition: The Digital India initiative has garnered international attention and recognition, positioning India as a frontrunner in digital transformation and technological innovation.

6. Advantages of Digital India Initiative

The Digital India Initiative has brought forth a multitude of advantages that have positively impacted various aspects of Indian society and economy. Some key advantages of Digital India Mission include:

6.1 Empowering Rural Communities

One of the significant advantages of the Digital India initiative is its impact on rural communities. With the availability of digital tools and internet connectivity in remote areas, farmers can access real-time information about weather conditions, market prices, and agricultural techniques. For instance, the Kisan Suvidha app provides farmers with valuable insights, enabling them to make informed decisions regarding crop planning and pricing. This digital empowerment enhances agricultural productivity and improves the livelihoods of rural populations.

6.2 Financial Inclusion

Digital India has played a pivotal role in advancing financial inclusion across the country. The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) aimed to provide banking services to the unbanked population. This initiative has successfully brought millions of people into the formal banking system. For instance, Jan Dhan accounts offer access to debit cards, insurance, and overdraft facilities. This inclusion in the formal financial sector not only facilitates secure transactions but also fosters economic growth and poverty reduction.

6.3 E-Governance and Transparency

The digital transformation of government services through e-governance platforms has minimized corruption and enhanced transparency. Initiatives like the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme ensure that subsidies and benefits reach the intended beneficiaries directly, eliminating intermediaries. This has

significantly reduced leakage and improved the effectiveness of social welfare programs. For instance, the PDS system digitization in states like Chhattisgarh has reduced corruption and improved the distribution of essential commodities to the needy.

6.4 Educational Revolution

Digital India has revolutionized education by democratizing access to quality learning resources. The SWAYAM platform offers free online courses from top institutions, enabling individuals to pursue higher education and upskilling irrespective of their geographical location. Additionally, initiatives like Diksha provide digital content for teachers and students, making education interactive and engaging. This educational revolution has the potential to bridge the urban-rural education gap and create a skilled workforce for the future.

6.5 Healthcare Accessibility

The National Digital Health Mission (NDHM) is transforming healthcare accessibility by creating digital health records for citizens. This initiative enables seamless sharing of medical information across healthcare providers, ensuring accurate diagnosis and treatment. Telemedicine platforms like e Sanjeevani have facilitated remote consultations, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. These digital healthcare solutions bridge the gap between urban and rural healthcare services, ensuring quality medical assistance to all.

6.6 Efficiency in Governance

The adoption of digital platforms has streamlined government processes and improved the efficiency of public services. Initiatives like Digital Locker provide citizens with a secure digital space to store essential documents. This eliminates the need for physical copies and reduces bureaucratic delays. Similarly, the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) has simplified tax administration, benefiting both businesses and the government through enhanced revenue collection.

6.7 Entrepreneurial Opportunities

Digital India has fostered a conducive environment for entrepreneurship and innovation. Startups in sectors like fintech, e-commerce, and edtech have flourished, creating job opportunities and contributing to economic growth. For example, the success of

platforms like Paytm, Flipkart etc. demonstrates how digital entrepreneurship can disrupt traditional business models and create novel solutions to societal challenges.

7. Conclusion

Digital India can help us in making our country's condition socially and economically strong. But the most important part of this initiative is realizing the value of digitalization and instead of depending only on ICT alone. One should be focused on the enhancement of following elements, such as literacy, basic infrastructure, overall business environment, regulatory environment etc.

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