Role of Digital India in Rural Development: a critical analysis

Mr.Raja Sahu Research Scholar
Dept.of Economics L.N.M.University Darbhanga

ABSTRACT

The Digital India programme is a flagship programme of the Government of India with a vision to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy and "Digital India" is an initiative of the Central Government of India to transform India into a global digitized hub by improving digital connectivity and skill enhancement and various other incentives to make the country digitally empowered in the field of technology. It is the outcome of many innovations and technological advancements to bring digital revolution. The drive behind the concept is to build participative, transparent and responsive system. It is a dream project of the Indian Government to remodel India into a knowledgeable economy and digitally empowered society , to ensure that government services are made available to citizens electronically by improving online infrastructure and by increasing Internet connectivity. There are many problems in the way of its successful implementation like digital illiteracy
,poor infrastructure, low internet speed, lack of coordination among various departments, issue pertaining to taxation etc . The programme have one mission and one target that is to take nation forward digitally and economically. The initiative will enable people to get engaged in the innovation process which is needed by the economy to move forward. But to implement this is a great challenge. There are many roadblocks in the way of its successful implementation like digital illiteracy ,poor infrastructure, low internet speed, lack of coordination among various departments, issue pertaining to taxation etc . These challenges need to be addressed in order to realize the full potential of this programme. It requires a lot of efforts and dedication from all departments of government as well as private sector. If implemented properly, it will open various new opportunities for the citizens of the country.

INTRODUCTION

Digital India was launched by the Prime Minister of India on 2nd July 2015 with welldefined objective of connecting rural areas with high-speed Internet networks and improving digital literacy. Digital Technologies, which include Cloud Computing and Mobile Applications, have emerged as catalysts for quick economic growth and citizen empowerment across the globe. Digital technologies are being increasingly used by us in everyday lives, from retail stores to government offices. The vision of this programme is to transform India into a digitally

empowered society and knowledge economy. It is one of the biggest step by government of India to motivate the citizen of the country and connect Indian economy to knowledge savvy world. Honourable Prime Minister envisions transforming our nation and creating opportunities for all citizens by harnessing digital technologies. His vision is to empower every citizen with access to digital services, knowledge and information. Digital India is the next big thing that India is witnessing. It aims at profoundly touching the lives of everyone with the transformation travelling the paths of both rural and urban India. It is anticipated that the project will accelerate the development process in rural India by linking remote villages by high speed internet services. Once the villages get connected with Internet, the rural folks can improve their skill and knowledge level, thus will get benefitted with ample job opportunities. It is an ambitious project which will benefit everyone, especially the villagers who hurt paperwork to cover long distances in a variety of reasons and time and money is wasted.

OBJECTIVE

1. To know how the e-governance process takes the help of technologies and connectivity to improve the quality of life.

2. To find out how the government services can work effectively with practical solution projects and innovative ideas to translate the vision of a digital India.

3. To find out how the benefits of exercise of digital India and its impact in economy.

4. To draw out some necessary suggestion to make Digital India fruitful.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of research papers and articles provide a detailed insight about the role of digital India and the implications of this project in India. Moni (2016) concluded that the digital India project provides a huge opportunity to use the latest technology to redefine India the paradigms of service industry. It also pointed out that many projects may require some transformational process, reengineering, refinements to achieve the desired service level objectives. Kanchan (2016) concluded that digital India is a great plan to develop India for knowledge future but its improper implementation due to inaccessibility and inflexibility to requisite can lead to its failure. Though digital India programme is facing number of challenges yet if properly implemented it can make the best future of every citizen. So we Indians should work together to shape the knowledge economy. Ashok (2015) studied the impact of digital India

project on India's rural sector. The study found that many schemes have been launched in digital India to boost agriculture sector and entrepreneurship development in rural areas. Digital India

programme has also set the stage for empowerment of rural Indian women. Rajiv (2004) found that is general and the internet usage is measured by the difference between rich and poor countries and the global digital divide was also measured in rich and poor countries. The problem was found in India which are the under developed countries that how can the uneducated people got advantage from the internet with lacking of the computers knowledge and internet connectivity. This problem can be solving with the help of intermediaries who can transfer the knowledge available on the technology to the illiterate person.By using this idea in India it is found that at least 30% people can take benefit from this idea.

Digital India- What it means

According to the Wikipedia website "Digital India is an plan by the Government of India to ensure that Government services are made available to citizens electronically by improving online infrastructure and by increasing Internet connectivity". The scheme was started on 1 July 2015 by the great effort of our honorable Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi. Digital India is a programme to prepare India for a knowledge future. The main aim of this plan is to connect the rural areas with high-speed of network.

Digital India is an motivated programme of the Indian Government whose cost is worth Rs 1,13,000 crores. Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DEITY) play a crucial role in implementation of digital India. This will impact on the ministry of Communication & IT, rural development, HR department & health department. The main focus of this project is to transformative the helps which prove the popular equation i.e. "IT+IT= IT, which means India Today + Information

Technology = India Tomorrow".

Digital India is basically a joint effort of the Government of India to connect rural area with the help of internet & provide them access to basic online services. The aim of this programme is to change India into a digitally powerful society and knowledgeable country by influencing IT as a growth engine of new India.The main benefit of this programme is to save valuable time because people don't need to stand in a Queue. There are three most important components of digital India which are following

1.The formation of digital

infrastructure 2.Delivering the

services digitally 3.Digital literacy

DIGITAL INDIA CAN CHANGE OUR LIFE

No more submitting documents: -

As the part of the programme, the government has announced a Digital Locker service. The aim of this is that people able to store all the government issued documents in this digital locker & share these documents with government departments whenever required. No need for standing in queue to submit driving license application: -

This mean that no longer have to go to the RTO office to submit your driving license application. A person can submit the application online. This application will be signed with your signature digitally & the payment of fee will be through government e-pay service.

Internet in Panchayats: -

As a part of Digital India programme, government is setting up Bharat Net, a high speed network for internet connectivity all over the country. Internet would use optical fiber cables & will enable Panchayat across the country to have high-speed web connectivity.

Modern Post-offices: -

Post-offices will work function as cyber cafes, which help those people also who don't have the internet connection. With Digital India programme, the government wants to transform post offices into multi service kiosks. People can deliver e-mails through internet connected computers.

Hotspots Everyone: -

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. Help in Wi-Fi hotspots in all over India, so that people with laptops and smartphones can connect with Wi-Fi & access web service. BSNL has hotspots at 53 locations. At the end of 2015 BSNL wanted to cover 250 locations with at least 2500 hotspots in the country.

Doctor Appointment Online: -

As a part of Digital India programme, all the government hospital is connected with e-services. This
programme is known as "The Online Registration System".

A Monthly Double-Blind Peer Reviewed Refereed Open Access International e-Journal - Included in the International Serial Directories
Indexed & Listed at: Ulrich's Periodicals Directory ©, U.S.A., Open J-Gage, India as well as in Cabell's Directories of Publishing Opportunities, U.S.A.
International Journal of Research in Social Sciences
http://www.ijmra.us

938

THE NINE PILLARS OF DIGITAL INDIA

The dream project of Mr. Narendra Modi is expected to be supported by nine beams namely:

1. Broad Band Connectivity

2. Universal Mobile connectivity

3. Public Internet Access Programme.

4. E-Governance

5. e-Kranti

6. Information for All

7. Electronic Manufacturing

   8.I T for Jobs

   9. Early Harvest Programmes

Under Digital India programme ,9 key initiatives are in progress ,which are as

follows 1.Broadband Highways

The aim is to cover 250000 village Panchayats under National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) by December 2016. Nationwide internet infrastructure (NII) would integrate the network and cloud infrastructure in the country to provide high speed connectivity and cloud platform to various government departments up to the panchayat level.

2. Universal Access to Mobile Connectivity

The aim is to increase network penetration and to provide mobile connectivity to 44000 villages by 2018 with investment of RS 16000.

3.Public Internet Access Programme

One Common Service Centre(CSC) would be provided to each gram panchayat and 150,000 Post Offices are proposed to be converted into multi service centers.

4.e Governance

 IT would be used to make the delivery of government services more effectively. There would be integration of services and platform-UIDAI ,Payment Gateway, Mobile Seva platform, Public redressal etc., through IT. All information would be available in electronic form.

5. eKranti

The aim is electronic delivery of services to people be it education, health, financial inclusion or justice. 6.Information for AllMyGov.

it is a website launched by the government to facilitate a 2-way communication between citizens and the government. It is a medium to exchange ideas or suggestion with government. The citizen would have open access to information through open data platform.

7. Electronics Manufacturing

The government is focusing on zero imports of electronics by2020 through local manufacturing of items such as smart energy meters, micro ATMs, mobile, consumer and medical electronics. Government is also taking several steps to promote manufacturing and investment in electronics sector by providing clarity on taxation, incentives skill development etc.

8. IT for Jobs

The aim is to train 10 million people in towns and villages for IT sector jobs in five years. It also aims to provide training to three lakh service delivery agents as part of skill development to run viable businesses delivering IT services. It also focuses on training of five lakh Rural Workforce on Telecom and Telecom related services and setting up of BPOs in each North-eastern state.

9. Early Harvesting Programmes

Government plans to installed Wi-Fi facilities in all universities across the country. All books will be converted into e books. Email will be made the primary mode of communication within government .

A Monthly Double-Blind Peer Reviewed Refereed Open Access International e-Journal - Included in the International Serial Directories
Indexed & Listed at: Ulrich's Periodicals Directory ©, U.S.A., Open J-Gage, India as well as in Cabell's Directories of Publishing Opportunities, U.S.A.
International Journal of Research in Social Sciences
http://www.ijmra.us

940

Biometric Attendance System will be installed in all central government offices where recording of attendance will be made online.

.BENEFITS OF DIGITAL INDIA PROGRAME

 Digital India programme is the beginning of digital revolution. It is a big initiative to empower people of the country. Main benefits of this programme are

1.The digital India mission would make all the government services available to people of country through common service delivery outlets. This would lead to inclusive growth by enabling access to education , healthcare and government services to all the citizens of the country. People can get better advise on health services. Those who can't afford school/ colleges can get chance to online education. 2.There would be more transparency as all the data would be made online and would be accessible to citizens of the country.

3.EGovernance will help in reducing corruption and getting things done quickly.

4.Digital locker facility will help citizen to digitally store their important documents like Pan card ,passport, mark sheets etc.

 5. It will help in getting things done easily. For example when we need to open an account, we will give official details of our digital locker, where they can verify our documents. By this we can save time and the pain of standing in long queues for getting our documents would be reduced.

6. It will help in decreasing documentation and reducing paper

work. 7.Digital India mission is away for cashless transactions.

8.It can help small businesses. People can use online tools to expand their business.

9. It can play a key role in GDP growth . According to analyst the digital India could boost GDP up to $1 trillion by 2025. According to World Bank report a 10% increase in mobile and broadband penetration increases per capita GDP by 0.81% and 1.31% respectively in developing countries.

IMPACT ON ECONOMY

India's economy has witnessed a significant economic growth in the recent past by growing 7.3 per cent in 2015 as against 6.9 per cent in 2014 and third quarter of 2017. The steps taken by the

government in recent times have shown positive results as India's gross domestic product (GDP) at factor cost at constant. This clearly shows that the Digital India initiative introduced by Indian government has contributed a lot to boost the economy of the country. The Digital India project itself will create employment opportunities for 17 million people directly or indirectly which will help in fighting against unemployment problems in India. The estimated impact of Digital India by 2019 would be cross cutting, ranging from broadband connectivity in all Panchayats, Wi-Fi in schools and universities and Public Wi- Fihotspots. The programme will generate huge number of IT, Telecom and Electronics jobs, both directly and indirectly. Success of this programme will make India Digitally empowered and the leader in usage of IT in delivery of services related to various domains such as health, education, agriculture, banking, etc The digital India mission would make all the government services available to people of country through common service delivery outlets. This is helping in inclusive growth by enabling access to education, healthcare and government services to all the citizens of the country. People are getting better advice on agriculture and health care services. Transparency in respect of LPG, Panchayat, NRC (Assam), banking, filling of data are being made online and easy accessible to citizens of the country. Governance will help in reducing corruption and getting things done quickly. Digital locker facility is become a great help for citizen to store digitally their important documents like Pan card ,passport, mark sheets etc.

DIGITAL INDIA: MAJOR CHALLENGES

Many people in rural areas have no Internet connection, and also the content in regional languages is not sufficient to keep the readers engaged. Only 15% of the households can access the Internet, and few people can access mobile broadband.

This scenario is despite the increasing affordability of ICT environment in the country. According to World Economic Forum (WEF) 2016 report, nearly 33% of Indian population is functionally illiterate, one-third of youth do not attend secondary education. There are vast differences in urban centers such as metropolitan cities and remote rural areas, where an even basic service for example electricity is unavailable to run the Digital India program.

 India's growing economy and digital push have caught the attention of hackers and an increasing wave of cyber attacks could soon badly impact the country. India and other South Asian countries are now on the radar of cyber attackers. The government and corporate world need to procure state-of-the-art, New Age security solutions to thwart their plans. It is not only a technological question but also deals with the question of privacy and security.

The biggest challenge faced by 'Digital India' is the slow and delayed infrastructure

development. Spectrum availability in Indian metros is about a tenth of the same in cities in developed countries. Challenges are in every area right from policy making, changing the work flow up to changing the mentality of the government officers. It is technological change within the most diversified nation. Within the government there are various departments which should be integrated.

There is an active involvement of various departments such as telecommunication, justice, finance and planning, health department etc.Without a smooth teamwork between them, this mission would never be implemented to its full strength. For digital technology to be accessible to every citizen, significant efforts are needed to customise apps and services to cater to local needs. Finding vendors who can provide such applications has become a challenge. Though there are resources with India but there is a huge capital cost which is to be invested and the fruits of the investment will be received after few years. Net neutrality is must and it is important to understand that digital India without net neutrality would be a great blow to entrepreneurs and citizens of India. India is a diversified country, in terms of language, culture, laws which vary from states to states. Complete integration, that is integration of technology and language, is one of the main challenges.

.High level of digital illiteracy is the biggest challenge in the success of digital India programme. Low digital literacy is key hindrance in adaptation of technologies . According to ASSOCHAM-Deloitte report on Digital India,November,2016, around 950million Indians are still not on internet[5]. 2.Making Digital India scheme known and creating an awareness among common masses about its benefits is also a great challenge.

There is a wide digital divide between urban and rural India. Till now funds have not been deployed effectively to meet the cost of infrastructure creation in rural areas.

.Making Digital India scheme known and creating an awareness among common masses about its benefits is also a great challenge.

.Many request proposals issued by government are not picked up by competent private sector organizations since they are not commercially viable. Currently Over 55000 villages remain deprived of mobile connectivity because providing mobile connectivity in such locations is not commercially viable for service providers ,ASSOCHAMDeloitte report pointed out.

It is a mammoth task to have connectivity with each and every village , town and city. Connecting 250000 Gram Panchayats through National Optical Fibre is not an easy task. The biggest challenge is ensuring that each panchayat point of broad band is fixed up and

functional. It is found that 67% of NOFN points are non functional even at the pilot stage.

According to ASSOCHOM- Deloitte report , the issue pertaining to taxation and regulatory guidelines have proved to road block in realizing the vision of Digital India. Some of the common policy hurdles include lack of clarity in FDI policies have impacted the growth of ecommerce.

A key component under this vision is high speed of internet as a core utility to facilitate online delivery of various services . India has low internet speed. According to third quarter 2016 Akamai report on internet speed ,India is at the105th position in the world in average internet speed. This rank is the lowest in entire Asia Pacific region .

SUGGESTIONS

Digital India campaign can't be successful on its own. Policy changes are needed to make digital India a
reality. Few of the suggestions are –

1. Digital literacy is first step in empowering citizens. People should know how to secure their online data.

2. To make this programme successful, a massive awareness programme has to be conducted. There is pressing need to educate and inform the citizens, especially in rural and remote areas, about the benefits of internet services to increase the growth of internet usage.

3. Digital divide needs to be addressed.

4. Manufacturing content is not government's strength. This mission needs content and service partnerships with telecom companies and other firms.

5. PPP models must be explored for sustainable development of digital infrastructure.

6. Private sector should be encouraged for development of last mile infrastructure in rural and remote areas. To encourage private sector, there must be favorable taxation policies ,quicker clearance of projects.

7. The success of digital India project depends upon maximum connectivity with minimum cyber security risks. For this we need a strong anti cyber crime team which maintains the database and protects it round the clock.

A Monthly Double-Blind Peer Reviewed Refereed Open Access International e-Journal - Included in the International Serial Directories
Indexed & Listed at: Ulrich's Periodicals Directory ©, U.S.A., Open J-Gage, India as well as in Cabell's Directories of Publishing Opportunities, U.S.A.
International Journal of Research in Social Sciences
http://www.ijmra.us

944

8. To improve skill in cyber security , we need to introduce cyber security course at graduate level and encourage international certification bodies to introduce various skill based cyber security courses.

9. There is need for effective participation of various departments and demanding commitment and efforts. Various policies in different areas should support this goal.

10. For successful implementation , there must be amendments in various legislations that have for long hindered the growth of technology in India.

CONCLUSION

A digitally connected India can help in improving social and economic condition of people through development of non-agricultural economic activities apart from providing access to education, health and financial services. However, it is important to note that ICT (Information and Communications Technology) alone cannot directly lead to overall development of the nation. The overall growth and development can be realized through supporting and enhancing elements such as literacy, basic infrastructure, overall business environment, regulatory environment, etc. The Digital India program is just the beginning of a digital revolution, once implemented properly it will open various new opportunities for the citizens. It is a huge step towards building a truly empowered nation. If successful , it transform citizen access to multimedia information ,content and services. However the goal is still far away since most of the nine pillars of digital India mission are facing serious challenges in implementation . It is imperative that focused persistent attention must be given to each and every pillar so that this programme does not end up in failure. In fact we all should be mentally prepared for the change and be ready to face the challenges in implementing this policy , only then it would be possible to make this vision a reality. There are number of schemes which government has started for poor and rural people. Out of them some schemes had failed due to the lack of monitoring and proper data collection. Recently, Government has started MNREGA that provide the right to the registered households to demand and receive employment up to 100 days in a year. MNREGA has been listed as one of the flagship programmes of the government for review and it is being reviewed at the highest level in the Government. It is quite clear that the nine pillars of Digital India Programme will not only elevate the standard of living of rural folks but will also have an impact on poverty alleviation.Use of ICT for various programmes expected to increase the reach, minimize the processing cost and reduce the corruption.

REFERENCES

1. Rani Suman(2016) .Digital India: Unleashing Prosperity . Indian Journal of Applied Research, volume-6, Issue 4, pp187-189 Retrieved from https://www.worldwidejournals.com/indian-journal-of-applied

2. Midha Rahul (2016). Digital India: Barriers and Remedies . International Conference on Recent Innovations in Sciences, Management , Education and Technology. Retrieved from http:// data. Conference world .in/ICISMET/P256-261. Pdf.

3. Gupta Neeru and Arora Kirandeep (2015). Digital India: A Roadmap for the development of Rural India. International Journal of Business Management ,vol(2)2, pp1333-1342. Retrieved from www. ijbm. Co .in

4. Digital India Programme : Importance and Impact .Retrieved from http://iasscore.in/national- issues/digital-indiaprogramme-importance-and-impact

5. Digital India. Unlocking the trillion Dollar Opportunity: ASSOCHAM –Deloitte report, November 2016.Retrieved from www.assocham.org.

6. .www.akamai.com

7..Kadam Avinash (2015). Why cyber security is important for digital India. Retrieved from http://www.firstpost.com/business/why-cyber-security-is-important-for-digital-india-2424380.html

8. Digital India Retrieved from http://www.indiacelebrating.com/government/digital-india/ 9.www.digitalindia.gov.in

10. http://www.nextgenias.com/2s015/09/essay-on-digital-india-programme-for-upsc-ias-preparation-

11. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_India.

12. https://www.scholarships.gov.in/about.do