

# Digital India Programme: Importance and Impact

Varun Keshari\*

Dr. P.K Jain\*\*

\*Assistant Professor, Pioneer Institute of Professional Studies, Indore

\*\*Principal, Pioneer Institute of Professional studies, Indore

## Abstract

*Since independence we hear India is developing country. When are we going to hear India is emerged country? The phase is slowly moving forward to compete with digital world. In order to compete with digital world, we need to transform our country into a digitally empowered knowledge economy. As result of high and forward thinking of our prime minister, a pan India Programme called “Digital India” has been proposed in the Budget 2014. India would become a very powerful digitally connected world. This would lead to a good architecture for electronic delivery of service. The Digital India project provides a huge opportunity to use the latest technology to redefine the paradigms of service delivery. A digitally connected India can help in improving social and economic condition of people living in rural areas 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 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. Further, Security should be the most important area at all level of operation for the digitally empowered knowledge economy of the country.*

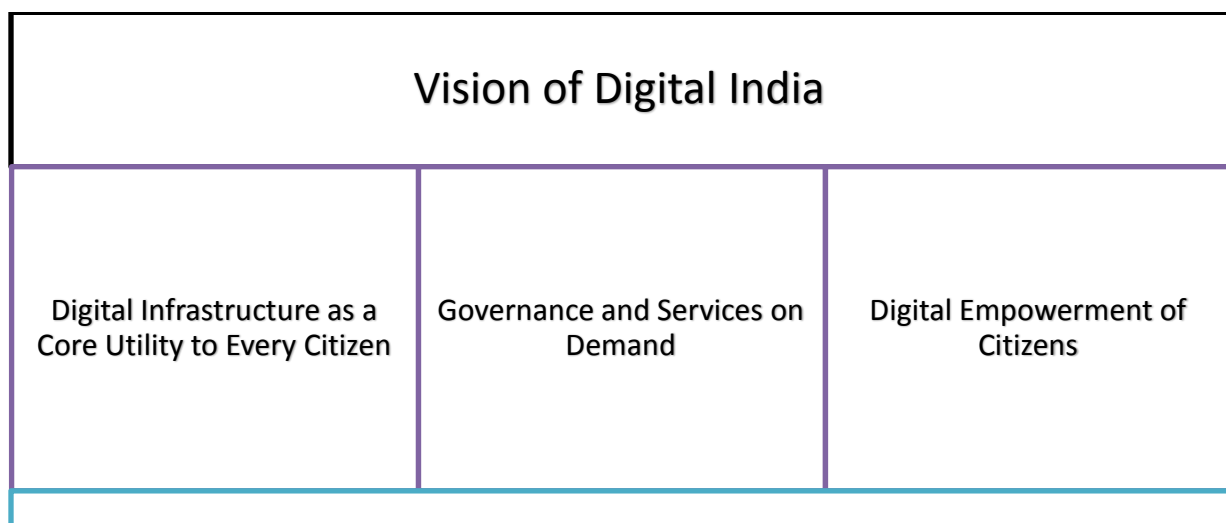
**Key Words:** Digital, Economy, Social, and Environment

## Introduction:

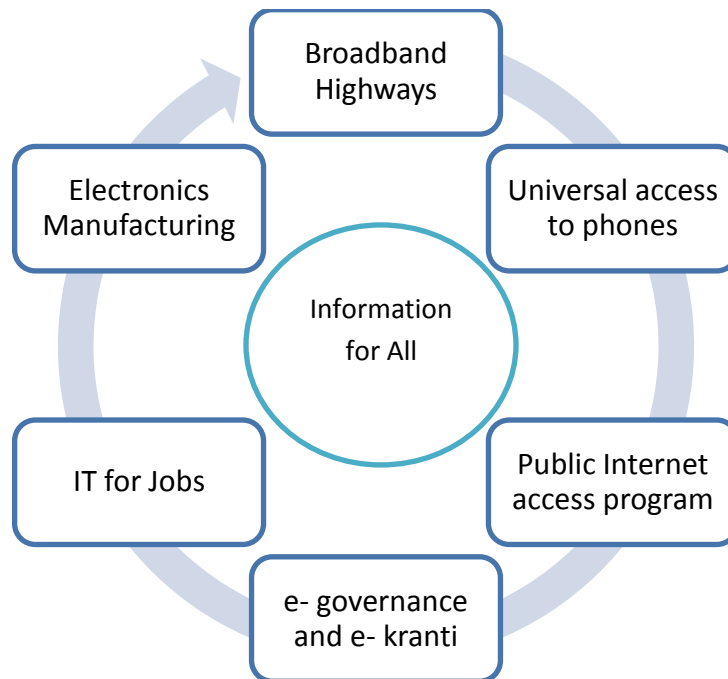
The Digital India programme has been launched with an aim of transforming the country into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. The Digital India would ensure that Government services are available to citizens electronically. It would also bring in public accountability through mandated delivery of government’s services electronically; a Unique ID

and e-Pramaan based on authentic and standard based interoperable and integrated government applications and data basis. Digital India is an initiative 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. It was launched on 1 July 2015 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The initiative includes plans to connect rural areas with high-speed internet networks.

Digital India Programme Includes various schemes worth over Rs 1 lakh crore like Digital Locker, e-education, e-health, e-sign and national scholarship portal. The programme includes projects that aim to ensure that government services are available to citizens electronically and people get benefit of the latest information and communication technology. The Ministry of Communications and IT is the nodal agency to implement the programme.



## Pillars of Digital India



### Background of Digital India Programme:

Even though India is known as a powerhouse of software, the availability of electronic government services to citizens is still comparatively low. Digital channels for delivery of sales and service are the new normal. While a billion Indians are still discovering the power of Internet and convenience of Digital Services, there are 200 million Indians for whom online is the only way to transact. The National e-Governance Plan approved in 2006 has made a steady progress through Mission Mode Projects and Core ICT Infrastructure, but greater thrust is required to ensure effective progress in electronics manufacturing and e-Governance in the country. The Digital India vision provides the intensified impetus for further momentum and progress for this initiative and this would promote inclusive growth that covers electronic services, products, devices, manufacturing and job opportunities. India in the 21st Century must strive to meet the aspirations of its citizens where government and its services reach the doorsteps of citizens and contribute towards a long-lasting positive impact. The Digital India Programme aims to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy by leveraging IT as a growth engine of new India.

## **Key Projects of Digital India programme:**

**1. Digital Locker System** aims to minimize the usage of physical documents and enable sharing of e-documents across agencies. The sharing of the e-documents will be done through registered repositories thereby ensuring the authenticity of the documents online.

**2. MyGov.in** has been implemented as a platform for citizen engagement in governance, through a “Discuss”, “Do” and “Disseminate” approach. The mobile App for MyGov would bring these features to users on a mobile phone.

**3. Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) Mobile app** would be used by people and Government organizations for achieving the goals of Swachh Bharat Mission.

**4. eSign framework** would allow citizens to digitally sign a document online using Aadhaar authentication.

**5. The Online Registration System (ORS)** under the eHospital application has been introduced. This application provides important services such as online registration, payment of fees and appointment, online diagnostic reports, enquiring availability of blood online etc.

**6. National Scholarships Portal** is a one stop solution for end to end scholarship process right from submission of student application, verification, sanction and disbursal to end beneficiary for all the scholarships provided by the Government of India.

**7. DeitY** has undertaken an initiative namely **Digitize India Platform (DIP)** for large scale digitization of records in the country that would facilitate efficient delivery of services to the citizens.

**8. The Government of India** has undertaken an initiative namely **Bharat Net**, a high speed digital highway to connect all 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats of country. This would be the world’s largest rural broadband connectivity project using optical fibre.

**9. BSNL** has introduced **Next Generation Network (NGN)**, to replace 30 year old exchanges, which is an IP based technology to manage all types of services like voice, data, multimedia/ video and other types of packet switched communication services.

**10.** BSNL has undertaken large scale deployment of Wi-Fi hotspots throughout the country. The user can latch on the BSNL Wi-Fi network through their mobile devices.

**11.** To deliver citizen services electronically and improve the way citizens and authorities transact with each other, it is imperative to have ubiquitous connectivity. The government also realises this need as reflected by including ‘**broadband highways**’ as one of the pillars of Digital India. While connectivity is one criterion, enabling and providing technologies to facilitate delivery of services to citizens forms the other.

### **Highlights of the progress in Digital India:**

- More than 12,000 rural post office branches have been linked digitally and soon payment banking would also become a reality for them.
- The government also plans to make ‘digital village’ across the country, by linking all schemes with technology. The ‘digital village’ would be powered by LED lighting, solar energy, skill development centres and e-services like e-education and e-health.
- Electronic transactions related to e-governance projects in the country have almost doubled in 2015, owing to the Digital India Programme. According to government website electronic transaction aggregation and analysis layer (eTaal), 3.53 billion transactions took place in 2014, which almost doubled in 2015 to 6.95 billion.
- The progressive policies and aggressive focus on ‘Make in India’ have played a significant role in the resurgence of the electronics manufacturing sector.

### **Proposed Impact of Digital India:**

#### **A. Economic impact:**

According to analysts, the Digital India plan could boost GDP up to \$1 trillion by 2025. It can play a key role in macro-economic factors such as GDP growth, employment generation, labor productivity, growth in number of businesses and revenue leakages for the Government.

As per the World Bank report, a 10% increase in mobile and broadband penetration increases the per capita GDP by 0.81% and 1.38% respectively in the developing countries. India is the 2nd largest telecom market in the world with 915 million wireless subscribers and world's 3rd largest Internet market with almost 259 million broadband users. There is still a huge economic opportunity in India as the tele-density in rural India is only 45% where more than 65% of the population lives. Future growth of telecommunication industry in terms of number of subscribers is expected to come from rural areas as urban areas are saturated with a tele-density of more than 160%.

### **B. 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 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 population. 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).

### **C. 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 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.

### **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 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.

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