Initiatives, Opportunities, Challenges and Barriers: Pros and Cons of Digital India Programme

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Abstract

The digital India programme is an ambitious programme of Government of India which aims to ensure that all the services are available electronically and the citizens gets the advantage of latest developments in Information, communication and technology (ICT). This will help to transform the lives of people in many ways and will empower the society in a better manner. The stake holders can use any device as per his/her choice to acquire the knowledge and take benefits of various initiatives led down by the government. Thus, digital India is campaign where technology and connectivity will come together to make an impact on all aspects of governance and improve the quality of life of citizens. In a nut shell, this initiatives will take India into a knowledgeable economy and digitally empowered society though there are some pros and cons for the digitization.

The objectives of the present study is to focus on certain initiatives, opportunities, challenges and barriers to digital India programme. This article is based on published data from various search engines. Digital India progremme is facing some challenges, having some pros and cons still it has great impact on the citizens of India to digitally empowered and knowledge economy. Moreover, interaction, dedication and awareness should be priority among all the users. This will help to take sound leap for India to progress in digitization, which will try to improve the quality life of people in a major scale.

KEYWORDS: Digital India, ICT, initiatives, opportunities, challenges and barriers.

Introduction:

The impact of Information and communication technologies (ICTs) is tremendous and creating great change in the life of human being. The use of digital technologies in the developed and to some extent developing countries, has improved people's day–to–day life. Even India has achieved imposing progress in the field of science and technology and is progressing towards strongest economies in the developing world. ICTs have brought significant changes in the development of the Indian society through information dissemination. The Digital India initiative was launched by the Government of India on 1st of July, 2015 as part of the Government's vision to take India in the digital global economy. The Digital India is a programme to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. These are pros and on the contrary there are some cons also.

The title of the paper focuses on digital India initiatives where the steps has been taken by government of India by various projects and policies. Which is to information and knowledge pertaining to latest technology which will percolate to the citizens for the betterment and prosperity in digital way. The leap in the IT sector

and its contribution is amazing. The rapid advancement in the IT industry and its influence on community has brought some noticeable changes especially in social and cultural arena. However, there are some challenges also.

The government vision is very broad in this project, which has given a great value to create ICT infrastructure like high speed internet at gram panchayat level, availability of government services when required like health and education etc, and digital freedom and power to take the benefits, for their livelihood with the help of digital literacy.

The digital India campaign mostly based on nine pillars which include broad band high ways, mobile connectivity, Internet access to public, e-Governance, e-Krati (its objectives is to provide electronic delivery of services, information for all, electronic manufacturing, IT for jobs and early harvest programms. This covers all the major areas pertaining to digital India. But though the initiatives has been taken with ambitious project and policies but the problem remains here about the infrastructure and the implementation procedure.

1. Initiatives, Opportunities and Prospects

Digital India project promises to make governance in India accountable, transparent, and efficient by cutting down the paperwork, and assuring data privacy and security. Moreover, use of ICT and its application which will be befitted to the people. Here are some of the major initiatives taken by government of India with respect to digitization. 1. Digilocker facilitate to store most important documents in the cloud 2. MyGov.in where people can use information vide through e- governance 3 eSign enable stake holders to sign various documents digitally with Adhar card number. 4 Swach Bharat mobile App where citizens can get information about cleanliness and act upon it 5. National Scholarship Portal . This will help the students online scholarship procedure 6. eHospital enables patients to have necessary information and take the advantage of all the online services of hospital 7. Digitize India Platform will be related to digitized the data and record it.8. Bharat Net will connect all grampanchayat, through high-speed digital highway using optical fibre. 9.wi-fi hotspot 10. Next generation Network manage all type of communication services 11. Electronic Development funds to support manufacturing of electronic products. 12. Centre of Excellence on internet of things (IoT) will enable rapid adoption of technology and to promote growth. (Pareek S. 2015). Taking into consideration of all the major project, it seems that Government of India wanted the citizens to be benefited digitally. This will promote innovation, research and product development to generate resources in the field of agriculture, education, health and other essential commodities that are required for growth.

Even Swachh Bharat mission mobile App enables organizations and citizens to access information regarding the cleanliness drive and achieve the goals of Swachh Bharat mission. Even the e banking initiatives and BHIM app help the citizens to have various options to do digital payments and cashless payments. United payments interface (UPI) allows money transfer between any two banks accounts by using smart phone. E education to the students for various admission and examination are the hallmark. (Dawn of the digital India 2016),Malarvizhi J, et al (2017), Arora, S.L. (2017) The digital India initiatives will develop India into knowledge based society which will bring technology in a one roof in the form of three IT i.e. Indian Talent+ Information

technology= India Tomorrow. This will pave the various ideas and thoughts making this mission transformative in toto.   Thus, there are so many opportunities and prospects to the citizens of India to grow and prosper digitally.

2. CHALLENGESOFDIGITAL INDIA:

India is completely differ from other developing and developed countries because of cohesiveness and unity in diversity. However, while considering the digitization, there are some   challenges which are multifaceted. This is reflected in policy of implementation, beliefs, culture and language problem. Protocol for internet also differ from state to state. There should be   proper guide lines for the development of software and hardware for implementation purpose. The core and important part of digital India project focuses on knowledge community. This seems to be difficult task. There should be coordination , cooperation among various administrator who are on top position for policy implementation. Ethical practices should be followed honestly. Poverty and illiteracy added to that. Now a days some new challenges are coming up which are more concern like privacy protection, data protection, cyber crime and issues related to e commerce and e-governance.Pathik(2015), Malarvizhi J, et al (2017), Arora, S.L. (2017). Admin (2018), Shukla Venktesh (2018). People of India has to support this ambitious campaign of government of India. Moreover, there should be awareness and training programmes to be conducted. This will help the citizens to have more knowledge about the pros and cons of the initiative. Though there some problems it can be overcome with this parameters to have this mission more meaningful.

4.Role of government programmes for e–governance

The prime concern of Government of India is to ensure the accessibility and availability of information and public services without much hassle. State governments in the country have been actively involved with several IT–oriented projects.

The prime concern should be infrastructural facilities to the stake holder and minimum cost so that every individual can be benefited. Paying attention to access the information through internet is need of the hour. Though some effort are being taken in the line but it is scanty and have   some lacunae. There are some barriers that are coming in between to access of information. Following are the barriers and has to be discuss critically.

a) Infrastructural barriers

The growth of the Internet since the early 1990's, has increased, however, India still lacks a robust telecommunication infrastructure with sufficient reliable bandwidth for Internet connection. The cost of upgrading the required hardware and software is too much, thus though the spread of internet is rapid, still the gap is more, as   the technological standard grows even higher.

Infrastructural development is in the snail pace which is among the most important barrier. The network connectivity is very meager in quantity and quality wise Thus, the villages have not proper connectivity hence they are deprived of access to various online facilities provided by the government. Digital divide may be the root cause. In

addition to that, unequal distribution of funds to the states, updated library facilities, poverty, education are the hallmarks. (Singh 2007), Bansode and Patil (2011).

Literacy and skill barriers

Education and information literacy will play an important role in keeping society from fragmenting into information haves and have–nots.

 In the light of digital divide, IT literacy is very important to allow access to digital information. In   India   nearly 50 percent of people do not have reading and writing skills for functioning in everyday life, thus IT literacy is   far away, this case has been worsen in remote areas of the country.   The lack of skill in using computer and communication technology has hindrance the   people from accessing digital information. Hinrichsen, J. et al . (2014), Hobbs, R. et al (2015*)*

c)Economic barriers

Economic factor is very important. Buying computers and connecting to the internet costs money. The lower income group does not have   sufficient money to get internet connectivity on their own to access digital information. In businesses and other organizations, they required many computers as well as a faster network. Broadband access to the internet will be needed large network which will be again more expensive. Some of the big companies can afford, but in small companies they may face economic problem.(Foroohar, Rana. 2014   , McKendrick, Joe. 2016)

d)Content barriers

The internet has great power to allow ideas and   information to be shared from individual to individual nationally and internationally. Though the number of Government and other NGO' are involved in the content that has been displayed in various disciplines. (Kevin T. 2019). However, the steps should be taken to ensure that all citizens are able to receive diverse content relevant to their lives as well as to produce their own content for the welfare of society

e)Language barriers

Indian multilingualism involved many languages and even the script is used to write many languages.The multiculture and multilinguistic scenario in the country has some hindrances to access the valuable information.**(**Mallikarjun, B. 2004). The availabilty of digital services in local language and dialect should be priority.

5) Conclusion

This is the era of ICT and India has given prime importance with various policies and programmes. The vision of digital India is to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. This programme will ensure that all govt information and services are available to the citizens of India. This is one step ahead for digital revolution. However, if it is implemented properly it will offer new opportunities and employment prospects to the youth. Though Digital India progremme is facing some challenges, having some pros and cons still it has great

impact on the citizens of India to digitally empowered and knowledge economy. There should be strong determination among people, policy makers and political will and support to digital India programme. Moreover, there is necessity to have collaboration and coordination among mental, moral and social science disciplines; ICT and other scientist all together. This will help to take India forward digitally.

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