

“Digital India”- Connecting India

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Abstract

The dream of ‘Digital India’ is launched by our honorable Prime Minister N. K. Modi on 1st July 2015. This is a program intended to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. The overall scope of this program is to prepare India to have the requisite knowledge equipped for the future and make technology the center that enables change. It envisions becoming the umbrella program across sectors. The vision of the program is based on the three key areas. The first is Digital Infrastructure as a Utility to Every Citizen to make various utilities available to the citizens through cutting edge digital infrastructure. It will enable delivery of services like banking and access to service centres at the doorstep of citizens with the assistance of high speed internet. The second and the third areas include Governance and Services on Demand and Digital Empowerment of Citizens respectively.

1. Introduction

Digital India aims to integrate the government and the people of India by ensuring the availability of government services for the citizens. This programme will follow three approaches: the creation of digital infrastructure, providing digital services and promoting digital literacy. The digital India vision provides the strengthened impetus for further momentum and progress for e- Governance and would promote inclusive growth that covers electronic services, devices, manufacturing and job opportunities. Digital infrastructure will focus on providing high speed secure internet. Governance and services on demand will stress on integrating services across departments and jurisdictions and making services available in real time for both online and mobile platform. Digital empowerment of citizens will lay emphasis on universal digital literacy and digital resources in Indian languages. The nine

basic pillars which lead the foundation of digital India is shown in Figure 1.

1.1 Broad Band Highways

This involves setting up the National Optical Fiber Network in all 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats in the country. It comprises of broadband for rural, urban and national information infrastructure.

1.2 Universal Access to Phones

There are around 44000 villages in our country without access to mobile connectivity. The government hopes to bring all these villages onto the mobile grid by the end of 2018.

1.3 Public Internet Access Programme

This involves the formation of Common Service Centres in each and every Gram Panchayat. It also looks at establishing the long term role of Post

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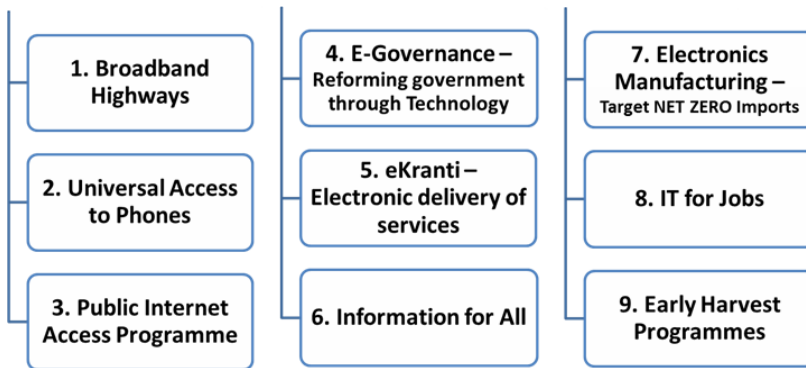


Figure 1. Nine Pillars of Digital India.

Offices as a Multi Service Centres. It is planned to cover around 1,50,000 Post Offices.

1.4 e-Governance

To improve the service delivery of government services, business process re-engineering will be done. All database to be converted into electronic form and event the public grievance system to be automated.

1.5 e-Kranti

This seeks to achieve electronic delivery of services like health, education, justice, agriculture and financial inclusion. In the education sector, the focus would be on the digital literacy program and improving digital infrastructure by providing free Wi-Fi about 2,50,00 schools. In healthcare, the government would strive to provide service like online consultation, medical records, medical supply and pan India patient records exchange. For farmers, the government will provide real time price information and online cash, loan and relief payments with mobile banking. E- Kranti comprises of eight subtechnology as shown in Figure 2.

1.6 Information for All

The focus will be on online hosting of data and proactive engagement through social media and web based platforms like MyGov.

1.7 Electronic Manufacturing

The aim is to manufacture set top boxes, VSAT, mobile, smart energy meters, smart cards and micro ATMs. This would require government coordination on various fronts like taxation, maintaining economies of scale and providing tax advantages to local manufacturers.

1.8 IT for Jobs

The government is planning to train one crore students from small towns and village for IT sector. They plan to train 300,000 service delivery agents in 2 years to run viable business that deliver IT services and Telecom service providers to train rural workforce to cater to their own needs.

1.9 Early Harvest Programmes

The government is planing to deploy Aadhaar Enabled Biometric Attendance System in all central

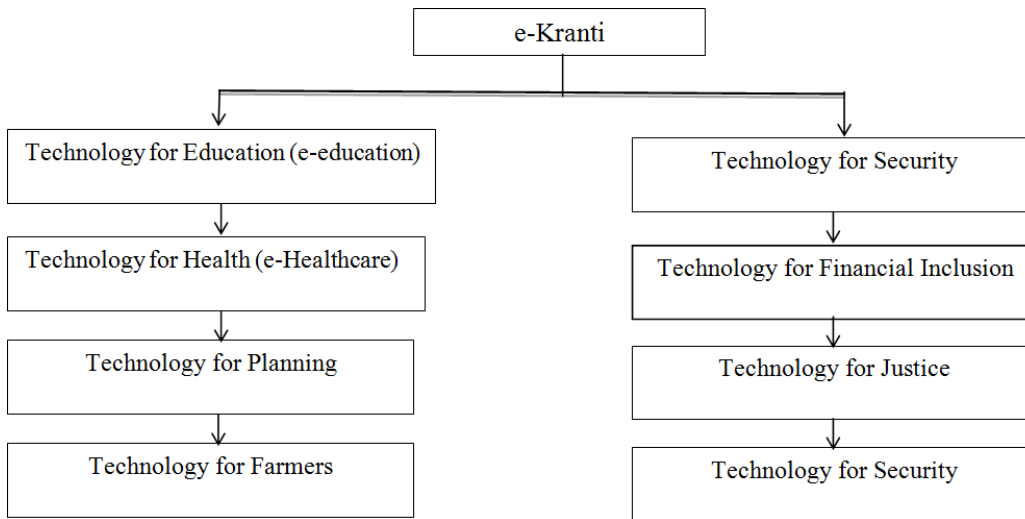


Figure 2. Electronic Delivery of Services.

government offices located at Delhi. A web based application software system will enable online recording of attendance and its viewing by the concerned stakeholders. A system of secured email is being established, to increase its usage within government system for 50 lakh employees by march , 2015. They will also set up public Wi-Fi hotspots in tourist centres in all cities with population of over one million. The national portal for missing children is accessed by various stakeholders such as MWCD, MHA, police, child care institutions, child welfare committee etc. The existing portal is being upgraded to include mobile application for reporting a missing child or serching a missing child, with a provision for email and SMS alerts and registration of volunteers and NGOs in helping the authrities in tracking the missing chidren. Under early harvest programmes government greetings to be e-greetings, on 15th August 2014 first e-greeting from PM has been issued. There are around ten programmes under early harvest programmes such as:

- IT platform for messages

- Government Greetings to be e-Greetings
- Biometric attendance
- Wi-Fi in All Universities
- Secure email within government
- Standardize government email design
- Public Wi-Fi hotspots
- School Books to be e-Books
- SMS based weather information, disaster alerts
- National Portal for Lost & Found children

2. Composition of Monitoring Committee on Digital India and Estimated Costs and Impacts

The Digital India committee is headed by Prime Minister of India as Chairman. Finance Minister, Minister of Communications and IT, Minister of RD, Minister of HRD and Minister of Health are other committee members. There are some special invitees: Principal Secretary to PM, Cabinet

Secretary, Secretaries of Expenditure, Planning, DOT (Department of Telecommunication) and Posts, Secretary, DeitY (Department of Electronics and Information Technology) – Convener.

Overall Costs of digital India has been estimated around Rs 100,000 Cr in ongoing schemes (only DeitY, DOT & not include those in other line Ministries) and ~ Rs 13,000 Cr for new schemes & activities.

The major Impact of digital India by 2019 can be listed as follows:

- Broadband in 2.5 lakh villages, universal phone connectivity.
- Net Zero Imports by 2020.
- 400,000 Public Internet Access Points.
- Wi-fi in 2.5 lakh schools, all universities; Public wi-fi hotspots for citizens.
- Digital Inclusion: 1.7 Cr trained for IT, Telecom and Electronics Jobs.
- Job creation: Direct 1.7 Cr. and Indirect at least 8.5 Cr.
- e-Governance & e-Services: Across government
- India to be leader in IT use in services – health, education, banking
- Digitally empowered citizens – public cloud, internet access.

3. Challenges and Changes Needed to Achieve Digital India Goal

Digital India is all set to transform the interface of the country's socio-economic dynamics. It is deemed to bring systems and Infrastructure up to speed and leverage the country's workforce, establishing a firm foundation towards sustainable practices and eventually progress. There are always certain huddles and need of changes to make the programme a success.

There are Human resource issues like NIC is not equipped for a fraction of this task (obsolesce) and needs revamping & restructuring. Similarly, DeitY needs program managers and at least 4 more officers at senior levels also Ministries need a Chief Information Officer / Chief Technology Officer (CIO/CTO) so that it could begin with CIOs 10 major Ministries and it can be anyone from within or outside government.

Financial resource issues are mostly structured around ongoing programs but better focus need some restructuring. Some others are process improvements or better utilisation of resources is also point an important point of concern. A few new programs may be needed particularly in electronics manufacturing and skill development.

Coordination issues also play an imminent role for the program to be a success because it covers many other departments, need commitment and effort and leadership and support. Program on this scale never conceived and each pillar as discussed above has its own challenges

4. Conclusion

The e- Governance coming into power, the private sectors sees a lot of opportunity in this space. This will magnify the efficiency of the government and induce more transparency into the system. Digital payment companies stand to benefit with this move as it will increase the number of people accessing internet in India. This program not only brings socio-economic development but will also play a substantial role in putting India in the league of developed nations. The transformation of the country into a knowledge economy will ensure the industry gets rock solid support and a fertile ground to flourish in the time to come. Additionally, the huge investment will generate

trust among major investors across the globe making it the new hub for emerging technologies.

India is expected to become the world leader in IT interface with e - Governance and e - services getting maximum exposure. Driven by such digital engagement, Indian firms are expected to leave the best in the world companies behind, with their IT expertise permeating into services like health, education and banking. Digital India is a grand vision for the creation of a new nation bound together by technology. This vision can be brought to life successfully in spite of a few legal and structural hassles. Here's hoping that come 2019, India is well

and truly transformed into Digital India.

5. References

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