

DIGITAL INDIA: AN EMERGING CONCEPT

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A country is said to be developed country or a developing country depending upon the growth of its economy and trade process. Our country is a country with mixed tastes, diversified by culture and tradition. The question that arises here is about improving our country, as to how to change its position from being a developing country to a developed country, this thinking and controlling is in the hands of the Prime Minister. The government feels that by providing open access across the country increases trade transactions and benefit the sellers and buyers.⁵⁵⁰ This program of digital India is a huge umbrella under which several big projects will run and new initiatives will be taken.

When we look at this digital India concept in an economic perspective we come to know that this idea was bought in with various aims towards the prosperity of our country. Now we all know that a nation develops with the developing mentality of the people. So this basically emphasizes on e governance and making the country electronically empowered, that is when we want to be a developed nation our thinking and lifestyle should also change in that manner so we have to get in the new updated technologies to our country. For instance when we visit and shop or to purchase anything we still have the concept of billing and paper work so what happens here is we still are in the practice of writing down bills and maintaining records, this can be done in the way of storing it in the software and by sending people the invoice through mail. And the main aim of the digital India initiative is that people are provided with all the information and services electronically. Hence what happens is that this makes people to access the relevant information as well as service directly through online transaction. This facility plans to ensure faster internet and better connectivity. Only one citizen or few citizens of a country growing is not important but the whole country should become empowered and enhance itself so this initiative will see to that internet is available at a good speed even in the rural India as much as it is available in the urban India. This particular program will have a high level and impact on the ministry of communication and IT, it might that the gaining of revenue or in bringing up new and better services and options for people to choose from.

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⁵⁵⁰ Romit Guha & Anandita Singh Mankotia, PM Modi's Digital India project: Government to ensure that every Indian has smartphone by 2019 also available on http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2014-08-25/news/53205445_1_digital-india-india-today-financial-services, Accessed on 31st October 2015.

Apart from this, this initiative mainly aims at smooth functioning of the business. There are several transactions which happen in the manual manner where people themselves carry cash everywhere and files for business process. For example the bharath sanchar nigam limited (BSNL) in their office if u need any kind of change in the service option, you need to go through a long process i.e. submit a signed letter with address proof and wait for its processing and then finally come up with the change. In this modern era, is such a long process required? When there is so much advancement, there can be a change in each sector and progress in each business department. The major idea is to create ease of business not only in urban area but also in the rural side, like for instance here in towns and cities we have the door step delivery of the smallest of small things so here what happens is the retailer is at our door and provides all the required service, but in villages the irony is that the required medicines itself is not available door step delivery is still unimaginable. So this scheme will look into the concept of upgrading the system and helping to give providers and suppliers through internet.

Digital India is an evolving concept came into existence after the coming of the new government Bharatiya Janta Party in power. But earlier the Rajiv Gandhi government had already initiated the plan of digital India by establishing National Informatics Centre in Delhi for computerizing all the government systems. Narendra Modi launched this program on 1st July 2015 in the Indira Gandhi Indoor stadium, New Delhi in the presence of eminent industrialists like Cyrus Mistry, Azim Premji etc. The Prime Minister has been emphasizing on digitizing India from the date of entering the office. It is the need of the hour to make Indians technologically advanced. The objective of this program is to integrate the government agencies and the citizens digitally. This program has been implemented keeping in mind the concept of globalization. In many developed countries, citizens have the direct access to the government offices. They can directly ask for information from the Home Ministry in regards to any relevant subject. This is a type of digital revolution to connect both the rural and urban areas with the government. Digital India will lead to huge conversion in the lifestyle of the rural people i.e. from illiteracy to technology oriented. The aim is to complete the program by the year 2019. It is a business which will profit both the consumer and the service provider.

India is a developing country. Its literacy rate is still not up to the mark that the common people will understand the importance of digitization in the governance of a country. But we cannot wait for a long time to implement the programs. So the Government has taken steps to promote the e-education, e-health etc. in India. This will slowly lead to smooth functioning of the government. Another aim of the program is to reduce the time that was earlier wasted in all the paper works in the government services. The world should look at India as the big destination of investment, innovation and development.

The most essential requirement of the Digital India program is high speed internet. Now the government is trying to connect each and every village with high speed broadband. The whole program is under the direct governance of the Prime Minister. The rural people will get benefitted from this program as earlier they had to travel long distances, waste lot of time for getting various services. It will improve their productivity, efficiency and will promote the innovation skills in them. Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL) has implemented a plan to provide internet to 2,50,000 villages and residential areas of the country. It will be a public private investment to increase the efficiency of the program.

Digital India will help the government to strengthen the digital infrastructure of the country. One of the examples can be the digitally authenticated signature which will help the Indians to handle their bank accounts, secure access to the cyber space. The services will be provided in the real time manner. There will be up to date information related to any subject. Cashless transaction will be promoted. It will give the people access to any educational institutions whether it is foreign or national. Earlier they had to take all the documents to the universities in order to get enrolled but now the scenario will change. They will have to only scan the documents and send it across. The program will increase the number of IT jobs in India. The brain drain that is going on in India from the year 2000 will be reduced to a large extent. We can get information in Indian languages from the cloud. Digital India promotes participative governance which will let every individual to have online forum for the discussion. Digital Locker facilitates the sharing of e-documents.

The “Make in India” concept is also to be promoted through this program. It will imply design in India. The technologies were imported from the foreign countries in order to provide services. The Indians are going outside India and making software for different Multinational Companies in different nations. But with the technological advancement of the nation, Indians will be able to develop and design their software in India only. The invention of optical fiber has been a great achievement in the field of transmission of information. Digital India program is going to use the same in digitizing India. It will reduce the imports net electronics to a negligible level which will directly diminish the fiscal deficits of the country.

The north eastern states always face the problem of communication because of the uneven hilly terrains. The Digital India program will be trying to reach the remote places of those states and try to establish the connectivity. It will take the help of private enterprises for the smooth completion of this project.

Awareness and capital can be the issues in this program. Cyber security can be a issue in this program. People, who are using internet, know to misuse the internet than to use it in an efficient manner. The youngsters are still exchanging their private information in spite of knowing that it is risky. Many teenagers are facing cyber bullying.

They do not know whom to address the problem. Therefore now the most important step is to include cyber security measures in the digital education program.

The privacy of some of the important government documents has to be in place. India has a huge population. Their demands will be enumerable. They may try to access secret information regarding fields like defence etc. Data privacy has to be the foundation of the program. Considering a case where information during the AADHAR enrolment by the UIDAI going into the hands of a person who wants to steal money from his bank accounts, it will lead to a very disastrous situation. The people have to be taught about the information which cannot be accessed and which cannot be. Therefore there is a need of strong detection system for catching the culprits in the above field. The Information Technology Act, 2000 does not really address the problem. There is an urgent need of strong legal framework before implementing the Digital India program.

The number of internet users in India is very large but the non-users are not something less in number. The needs of each and every citizen of India cannot be fulfilled in 5 years. But the Government is endeavoring to achieve the same. We should not critically give our opinions in such premature stage. We should give time to the government to properly implement the program.

The launching of the program seems to be a big product launch by a MNC. Every eminent industrialist was invited. But the needy people i.e. rural people were not invited to the launching program. The National Optical Fiber Network (NOFN) was started by the government. But not a single telecom company has consented to become a partner of that Network. The program is more oriented towards the rural India. There is no doubt that more than one half population lives in rural areas but the urban people are also equally the part of the nation. The Digital India Week that was held from July 1st to July 7th 2015 was not enough to justify the pros and cons of the program. It will take decade to fully implement the program. The people will show enthusiasm like changing the Facebook profile photos to tricolor will only promote the program but not initiate the same. We have to imbibe the objectives of digital India. We need to keep the pace and should not lose the momentum in the implementation of the program. There are nine pillars of Digital India Program. To show results at the ground level, the program will need at least one year. One of the drawbacks of the program is that it has not specifically stated the implementation process. How to access the results of the remote villages? The Prime Minister will monitor the program and who will be accountable for the any dereliction of duty to implement the program. The Broadband Highway program is the basis for the functioning of all other pillars of the Digital India program. Most of the existing broadband connections that were laid down in the earlier five year plans are not effectively working. Over that laying down optical fiber will invite a lot of capital. The existing points of broadband should be developed first and then only the optical fiber dream can be possible. The operation of BSNL hotspots should be

started from one state properly. BSNL is working in the field of telecommunication from a long time. It has the ability to reach the tribal populated areas and other backward areas.

The Digital India program should not be oriented only towards consumption of services by the consumers. But it has to be administered in such a manner that the people should take the information, work on it and come up with something new.

The telecom companies are becoming very careful before investing in any area for their mobile networks. They are not willing to work in the rural areas where they will have to invest capital in large amount at the beginning but they will not get immediate profit. They are more inclined towards the urban areas where they can lay down high call rates and urban people, not having any other alternative, will always go for it. Secondly the problem of net neutrality has not yet been solved. Net Neutrality will economize the expenses involved in the digitizing India. If net neutrality is not implemented, then the telecom companies will start charging different prices for accessing different information.

The aim of the government is to reduce the role of middlemen in the implementation of the government services. But the rural people are never of the e-services. There has to be proper advertisement of the programs. The rural people are mostly used to the help of the middlemen for availing the services. So this is big challenge for the government to remove those middlemen. The government can spread the information in as many local languages as possible. The Digital India program should not divide the people on the basis of technology.

The main focus and vision of this digital India innovation is:

1. Development and improvement of infrastructure

It mainly aims at provide speed internet facility at Gram Panchayat level and bank accounts of the member will be given preference at individual level. The citizens are going to be assured with safe and secure cyber space.

2. Services by the government

Even at the very grass root level farmers are being trained regarding the harvesting of crops and what kind of fertilizers should be made use of and how should they go with the cultivation process, this program was started by the government in order to provide a better crop result. Similarly the government now thinks of bringing the citizens closer to it so as to handle the work well therefore it aims at providing speedier transactions and better services.

3. Digital empowerment of citizens

This basically talks about providing universal digital literacy and make digital sources easily accessible throughout the country and also to enable access to people around the country by providing access in all languages.

The major projects under this innovation are:

1. production and manufacturing of Gadgets (electronic)

Our government aims at achieving zero policy on import of electronics. So to achieve this the government plans to put up smart energy meters, medical electronic etc.

2. Public access to internet

The main aim is to provide broadband services to 2.5 lakh villages and 1.5 lakh post offices in the next two years. So these post offices will perform and function as Multi service centers for the people.

3. Broadband services on highways

Government aims to lay national optical fiber network in 2.5 lakh gram panchayats. And broadband facility for the rural area will begin from December 2016 and broadband facility will become a compulsion on communication and infrastructure in urban developments. Hence by 2017, we will have a nationwide information infrastructure.

4. Better access to mobile network and connectivity

We know it very well that when it comes to mobile connectivity, it's for sure that once we cross the urban borders we will not have strong network so therefore we again loose communication. So here, the government has planned to install the respective network provider tower everywhere.

5. E governance

The government has recently developed the e governance concept as it is providing various kinds of services with UIDAI, EDI and mobile platforms.

6. IT training for jobs

It's very common in the urban areas for students to take training or any kind of coaching and guidance through online and this is not available for the rural people, they depend on manual coaching and have to wait to write

entrance exams for those coaching centers or sometimes its not at an affordable budget so online training program for various courses shall come up.

7. Global information :

MyGov.in is a website launched by the government for a 2-way communication between citizens and the government. People can send in their suggestions and comment on various issues raised by the government, like net neutrality.

8. Early harvest programs

Wifi facilities in all universities across the countries, recording of attendance in government offices will be online.

Thus we need to give time to the government to prove their point. We should not be prejudiced of the ability of the government. Let's all hope for the best!!!

