

# Digital India: An Overview Of Major Initiatives And Benefits

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## 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. Digital India is a dream to ensure that government services are made available for all citizens electronically by improving online infrastructure and by increasing the effectiveness of Internet connectivity with one mission and one target that is to take nation forward digitally and economically. This initiative was taken to ensure that the citizens are getting engaged in the innovation process which is necessary for the economic growth and sustainable development of the country. In order to realize the full potential of this programme, it is necessary to address certain challenges 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. If implemented properly, it will open various new opportunities for the citizens of the country and therefore it requires a lot of efforts and dedication from all departments of government as well as private sector considering the current status of the programme.*

**Key Words-** Digital, Major Initiatives, Benefits

## INTRODUCTION

Digital India was launched by the Prime Minister of India on 2nd July 2015 with well-defined objective of connecting rural areas with high-speed Internet networks and improving digital literacy. The vision of Digital India is inclusive growth in many areas such as electronic services, products, manufacturing and job opportunities etc. Digital India aims to provide the much needed focus on the nine pillars of growth areas, namely Broadband Highways, Universal Access to Mobile Connectivity, Public Internet Access Programme, e-Governance: Reforming Government through Technology, e-Kranti - Electronic Delivery of Services, Information for All, Electronics Manufacturing, IT for Jobs and Early Harvest Programmes. Each of these areas is a complex program in itself and cuts across multiple Ministries and Departments. Digital India is to be implemented by the entire Government with overall coordination being done by the Department of Electronics and Information Technology.

## Literature Review

'Digital India' initiative has been an area of interest of numerous researches from various discipline because of its great significance and influence on the economy as a whole and particularly the technological sector.

Sunder Pichai, Satya Nadella, Elon Musk – researched about Digital India and its preparedness to creat jobs opportunities in the information sector. He concluded that creating new jobs should be continued with shifting more workers into high productivity jobs in order to provide long term push to the technological sector in india.

Microsoft CEO, Satya Nadella intends to become India's partner in Digital India program. He said that his company will set up low cost broadband technology services to link villages across

the country.

**Prof. Singh** began with the basic overview of what Digital India entails and led a discussion of conceptual structure of the program and examined the impact of initiative on the technological sector of India. He concluded that this initiative has to be supplemented with amendments in labor laws of India to make it a successful campaign.

**Arvind Gupta** intends to say that Digital India movement will play an important role in effective delivery of services, monitoring performance, managing projects and improving governance. An Integrated Office of Innovation & Technology to achieve the same, for problem solving, sharing applications and knowledge management will be the key to rapid results, given that most departments work on their own silos. Tracking and managing the projects assumes significance because India has been busy spending money in buying technology that we have not used effectively or in some cases not even reached implementation stage. Sharing departments needs to be driven by this Office of Technology.

**Gupta and Arora (2015)** studied the impact of digital India Project. 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.

**Rani (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.

**Midha (2016)** concluded that digital India is a great plan to develop India for knowledge future but its improper implementation due to inaccessibility and flexibility to requisite can lead to its failure. Through 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.

### Research Objectives

1. To understand the concept of 'Digital India'.
2. To examine the major initiatives of 'Digital India'.
3. To evaluate the benefits with special reference to 'Digital India'.
4. To find out practical solutions and innovative ideas to achieve the objectives of 'Digital India'.

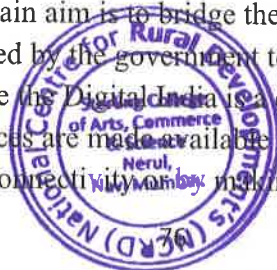
### Research Methodology

Being an explanatory research is based on secondary data of National & International Journals, Articles, government reports, books, newspapers and magazines covering wide collection of academic literature on 'Digital India'. Considering the research objectives, descriptive research design is adopted to have more accuracy and rigorous analysis of research study. Available secondary data was extensively used for the study.

### Important initiatives launched by Narendra Modi under Digital India

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, July 1, 2015 launched the Digital India program, which essentially comprises of various initiatives aimed at digital empowerment, improving digital infrastructure and offering on-demand governance and services. From building broadband highways, easing mobile connectivity and mainly promoting e-governance, the Digital India mission's main aim is to bridge the connectivity gap between the rural and urban areas. Here are the top 10 services launched by the government today. Digital India is a campaign launched by the Government of India in order to ensure the Government's services are made available to citizens electronically by improved online infrastructure and by increasing Internet connectivity, making the country digitally empowered in the field

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of technology. The initiative includes plans to connect rural areas with high-speed internet networks. Digital India consists of three core components: the development of secure and stable digital infrastructure, delivering government services digitally, and universal digital literacy. It was launched on 1 July 2015 by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it is both enabler and beneficiary of other key Government of India schemes, such as BharatNet, Make in India, Startup India and Standup India, industrial corridors, Bharatmala, Sagarmala, dedicated freight corridors, UDAN-RCS and E-Kranti.

- 1. DIGILocker** – This initiative looks to minimize the usage of physical documents. It is a dedicated personal storage space for e-documents as well as Uniform Resource Identifier (URI) of e-documents issued by government departments. Individual locker will be linked to the resident's Aadhaar number, and enable sharing of e-documents across agencies whenever required. The sharing of these e-documents will be done through registered repositories thereby ensuring the authenticity of the documents online, and also minimize the loss and damage of important documents like birth certificate etc.
- 2. Bharat Net** – This initiative will work towards building high-speed digital highways to connect all 2.5 lakh *Gram Panchayats* of country by next year. This would be the world's largest rural broadband connectivity project using optical fiber.
- 3. MyGov app** – The PM also launched the mobile version of the MyGov.in website. This platform encourages citizen engagement in governance, and the app will do the same on mobile.
- 4. eSign** – An initiative to eradicate forgery and fraudulent signature, the eSign framework would allow citizens to digitally sign a document online using Aadhaar authentication.
- 5. National Scholarships Portal** – This new service is said to be 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.
- 6. Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) app** – To further the *Swachh Bharat* mission, the government has launched this app and would be used by people and Government organizations.
- 7. E-education** – The program looks to provide high-tech education using technology like smartphones, apps and Internet services. It can also be used to provide education in far-flung areas where it may not be possible for teachers to be present in person. The education can be imparted through virtual means as part of the program.
- 8. E-health** – This initiative aims at providing timely, effective and economical healthcare services to all, especially to the ones that have little access to healthcare services. This service too will be linked to Aadhaar numbers, and will make getting lab reports and OPD appointments easier. The Online Registration System (ORS) under the eHospital application has also been introduced.

This application provides important services such as online registration, payment of fees and appointment, online diagnostic reports, inquiring availability of blood online etc, the government claims. With this initiative, one can skip the hassles of registration and other formalities at hospitals by merely identifying self through the Aadhaar Number, select hospital and department, select date of appointment and get the same through SMS.

**9. Next Generation Network (NGN)** – This is a BSNL initiative which looks to replace 30 year old exchanges, with this new IP-based technology to manage all types of services like voice, data, multimedia/ video and other types of communication services.

**10. Wi-Fi hotspots** – BSNL has undertaken large scale deployment of Wi-Fi hotspots throughout the country for Internet access on smartphones while on-the-go. The initiative has already kicked off with the government

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offering free Wi-Fi at tourist places like Taj Mahal, and spots at Shimla too. The government even launched the official website for the Digital India program.

## Benefits of Digital India

### 1. Removal of Black Economy

All the online transaction can be monitored easily and every payment made by any customer to any merchant will be recorded, this way there won't be any illegal transactions and it'll be impossible for people to hide their money. By restricting the cash-based transactions and using only digital payments, the government can efficiently expel the black economy.

### 2. Increase in Revenues

Another big advantage of digital India is that as the transactions get digitized, monitoring the sales and taxes becomes much more convenient, as the transactions are recorded, customers will now get a bill for every purchase that they make and merchants can now no longer escape from paying tax to the government, this results in increases of revenue of the government – thus resulting in growth of the overall financial status of the country.

### 3. Empowerment to the people

One of the biggest advantages of Digital India is that it gives an empowerment to the citizens. When the payments move digital, each and every individual is bound to have a bank account, a mobile phone, etc. This way, the government can easily transfer the subsidies directly to Aadhaar-linked bank accounts of people. In short, people no longer have to wait to receive the incentives and subsidies that they are bound to receive from the government. This feature is already in place in most cities. One example of this feature is LPG subsidy that government gives to the common people. This subsidy payment is now done via bank transfers these days.

### 4. Paves the way to e-governance

E-governance is a huge plus point for all the citizens, it is quicker, faster and safer when compared to traditional governance, with the help of e-governance, you can now get anything from birth certificate to death certificate immediately, this is convenient for people to access the information they need on the go.

### 5. Creation of new jobs

With the initiative of Digital India, there have been numerous ways to enhance job opportunities in new markets as well as increasing employment opportunities in existing markets, new markets have started hiring people, thus increasing the employment rate.



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### Other Advantages Include

- Creation of Digital Infrastructure and Electronic Manufacturing in Native India.
- Digital Empowerment of Native Indian People.
- Delivery of all Government Services electronically (E-Governance).
- A Digital Identification which will verify the end user.
- A Mobile for worldwide access to all services.
- A Bank account for Immediate Benefit Transfers of subsidies and payments.
- The program also aims to eliminate all electronics imports from foreign countries by 2020 and make India electronics manufacturing super power.

### CONCLUSION

Despite a few remarkable achievements, many more initiatives need to be undertaken. The WEF Report is a reminder to the government in this regard, and underlines the need to realize the positive impact of Digital India and other related programs. Public-private partnership models must be explored for sustainable development of digital infrastructure, as has been the case for civic infrastructure projects like roads and metro. The government should try to make additional spectrum available to telecom service providers for deployment of high-speed data networks. Moreover, startups need to be incentivised for the development of the last mile infrastructure and localised services and applications.

The existing government infrastructure assets like post offices and other buildings should be further leveraged for the provision of digital services. In rural and remote areas, private sector players should be incentivised to provide last mile connectivity. The overall growth and development can be realized through supporting and enhancing elements such as literacy, basic infrastructure, overall business environment, regulatory environment, etc. India is becoming digital due to faster adoption of technology, burgeoning youth population and emphasis on cashless transactions. The 'Digitalisn In infant stage, so there is enormous unfinished agenda for India and it is an area of serious concern to address it effectively and expeditiously.

Technology is changing fast. What is good today may become obsolete later. It is true that private telecom players in India are doing great but they cannot be fully depended to fulfil social commitment especially in areas where revenue potential is low. The need of the day is to build an exclusive fully firewalled India Internet Cloud that can provide secure internet network and connectivity for the various needs of the country. Government should have exclusive own communication network for disaster/crisis management, administration, and security purposes. There is urgent need to ensure that Telecom systems, Networks, Phones, Products and Services are available, accessible and affordable to common man. All citizens should be mentally prepared for the changes and challenges in implementing the policy, only then it would be possible to achieve the objectives of Digital India programme.

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