

DIGITAL INDIA EVALUATING THE SUCCESS AND CHALLENGES OF E-GOVERNANCE INITIATIVES

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Abstract:

The objective of the Digital India program, which was initiated by the Government of India in 2015, is to convert the nation into a society that is economically and socially empowered by digital technology. One of the most important aspects of this project is the development of e-governance, which aims to improve the overall delivery of public services, increase the openness of the government, and develop a digital infrastructure that is more inclusive. By analyzing the effects that e-governance efforts have had on public involvement, administrative efficiency, and transparency, this study provides an evaluation of the effectiveness of the programs that fall under the Digital India umbrella. Among the initiatives that are investigated are the Digital Locker, the e-District, and the Bharat Net project. The execution and results of these programs are also investigated. Although these initiatives have resulted in considerable advances in service delivery, there are still difficulties that need to be addressed, such as gaps in digital literacy, concerns around cybersecurity, and infrastructural limitations. In addition, the digital gap that exists between urban and rural communities continues to be a significant obstacle. The purpose of this paper is to identify these problems, provide insights into ongoing attempts to overcome them, and make recommendations for the implementation of e-governance in India that would ensure its sustained success. Despite the fact that the findings indicate the necessity of ongoing efforts to eliminate current hurdles, they demonstrate the potential of Digital India to drive socio-economic development.

Keywords: Digital India, Success, Challenges, E-Governance

Introduction:

The use of digital technology in the 21st century has brought about a change in the manner in which governments engage with their constituents, therefore converting governance into a system that is more accessible, transparent, and efficient. With such a large and diversified population, India has acknowledged the need to modernize its public administration and improve its service delivery systems in order to fulfill the ever-increasing needs of its residents. The objective of the Digital India program, which was initiated in 2015, is to empower individuals via the use of digital methods, with a particular emphasis on enhancing the effectiveness and accessibility of existing government services. E-governance, which seeks to use digital platforms and technology to simplify governmental procedures, decrease corruption, and bridge the gap between the government and residents, particularly in rural and underserved regions, is at the core of this vision. E-governance is a major component of this vision. The effort of e-governance in India encompasses a wide range of services, including the digitization of records and the introduction of online public service delivery systems, as well as the installation of countrywide broadband

networks and digital literacy programs. In order to improve accessibility, accountability, and transparency, important initiatives like Digital Locker and e-District, as well as the ambitious BharatNet program, are being developed. On the other hand, despite the significant progress that has been made, there are still obstacles to overcome in order to guarantee that the advantages of these efforts are available to everyone. Within the context of the Digital India project, this paper presents an overview of India's e-governance activities, analyzes the performance of those efforts in enhancing governance, and investigates the problems that were encountered in the process of implementing those efforts. In order to contribute to the achievement of a digitally inclusive India, the purpose of this report is to provide insights into the overall success of these programs and offer solutions for overcoming current hurdles.

Overview of Digital India and E-Governance Initiatives:

With its three primary pillars—Digital Infrastructure as a Utility, Governance and Services on Demand, and Digital Empowerment of Citizens—the Digital India program offers a complete framework for the transformation of India's public sector through the utilization of technology. Focusing on e-governance, which aims to guarantee that citizens may access government services in a way that is smooth, transparent, and efficient, is one of the most important aspects of this shift.

Some of the most important e-governance projects that have been implemented as part of the Digital India program have been instrumental in altering the delivery of public services. The goal of programs such as Digital Locker is to offer individuals with safe access to digital papers, therefore lowering the amount of physical documentation that is required and simplifying the procedures that are followed by the government. The goal of the e-District project is to provide a citizen-centric approach to the delivery of public services at the district level. This will make it possible for services such as income certificates, caste certificates, and pension benefits to be accessible online.

BharatNet is one of the most ambitious initiatives that is being undertaken as part of Digital India. Its objective is to bring high-speed internet access to rural regions, with the end goal of facilitating e-governance and spreading digital literacy across the country. BharatNet has the ability to bridge the digital gap and enable residents to access services online, therefore making governance more inclusive. This would be accomplished by linking places that are currently inaccessible.

Successes of E-Governance Initiatives:

There have been a number of noteworthy achievements brought about by the e-governance projects spearheaded by Digital India. It has been noticed that there has been a major improvement in the accessibility of certain government services. For instance, residents may now access services such as filing their income tax returns, applying for passports, and availing themselves of subsidies on the internet, which reduces the amount of time and money required for these activities. Additionally, the rising utilization of mobile platforms and government applications has contributed to the enhancement of service delivery, making it simpler for individuals to interact with the services provided by the government.

Further, the implementation of these programs has resulted in increased openness and a decrease in instances of corruption within the public administration. Through the digitization of records and the subsequent internet accessibility of those documents, the possibility of procedures being manipulated or delayed has been reduced. An illustration of how digital technologies have contributed to increased

openness in financial governance is the Public Financial Management System (PFMS), which monitors the flow of money and guarantees that recipients receive their subsidies in a timely manner.

The increase of digital literacy is yet another big success that has been achieved. A greater number of individuals, particularly those living in rural regions, have been able to interact with government services as a result of the numerous initiatives that are designed to teach residents digital skills. Millions of residents have been brought online as a result of the push for digital literacy, which has contributed to a populace that is both better informed and more powerful.

Challenges in E-Governance Implementation:

In spite of these achievements, there are still a number of obstacles that prevent India from fully realizing the potential with which e-governance may be utilized. One of the most significant difficulties is the digital divide, which applies in particular to the gap that exists between urban and rural people. Although metropolitan regions have experienced a comparatively greater prevalence of internet access, rural areas frequently lack the essential infrastructure, particularly high-speed internet connectivity, to fully benefit from e-governance services. This is a significant disadvantage for rural communities.

Additionally, a big hurdle will continue to be the lack of digital literacy. A sizeable segment of the population, particularly those living in rural regions, does not possess the level of expertise necessary to efficiently traverse digital platforms. Although programs such as the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) have the intention of enhancing digital literacy, the rate at which training and skill-building activities are being carried out has to quicken in order to satisfy the ever-increasing demand for interactive digital experiences.

A rising number of government services are being relocated online, which raises further concerns over cybersecurity. The protection of sensitive data from cyber attacks is very necessary in order to guarantee the success of e-governance efforts and to maintain their legitimacy. There are frequent news of cyberattacks and data breaches, which highlight the weaknesses in the system and create distrust among individuals. This is despite the fact that efforts have been made to safeguard digital infrastructure against these threats.

The bureaucratic opposition to digital transformation is another obstacle that must be overcome. Many government agencies and personnel are still acclimated to conventional paper-based methods, and there is reluctance to embracing new technology. This is the case despite all of the legislative measures that have been implemented. In order to overcome this inertia, fundamental reforms in the culture of governance are required, as well as ongoing attempts to align the administrative machinery with the goal of Digital India.

Objective

The purpose of this subject matter is to conduct an analysis of the Digital India effort and shed light on its goal, as well as the successes that have been accomplished up to 2013-14 and the obstacles that lie ahead for the realization of the Digital India vision.

Methodology:-

Secondary sources of information have been utilized in order to conduct an analysis of the "Digital India" program as well as other national initiatives for e-governance in India. Due to the fact that the subject matter is centered on the study of the digital India program, the information that was gathered for the analysis of the various E-governance programs that are run by the government of India came from the websites of the National Informatics Center and the Department of Information and Technology. In addition to this, further components of the data include the examination of newspaper articles and genuine data obtained from the internet.

Digital India: Aims and Vision:-

The objective of the Digital India initiative is to make India into a new nation that is more self-sufficient. Under the auspices of the Digital India project, a multitude of programs have been initiated with the goal of transforming India into a society that is digitally enabled and a knowledge economy.

The goal of Digital India is to reduce the amount of paper that is used and to make it possible for papers to be made available in electronic format.

Just to put it another way, the digital India Aims:-

1. In order to give every citizen with access to digital infrastructure;
2. Second, it intends to make available, on demand, the services of the government;
3. Thirdly, the empowering of citizens through cyberspace.

A significant number of the programs that are now being implemented as part of the E-governance initiative have not only provided a blueprint for the digitalization of the new India, but they have also given fresh lessons. Across a wide range of socioeconomic domains, the National Informatics Center has been playing a significant role in the development of applications for electronic governance. NIC's obligations have been multiplied by a substantial amount as a result of Digital India. The Digital India program is supported by E-Kranti, which is one of its primary pillars. With regard to the E-Kranti project, some of the systems that have already been finished are the national citizen database, visa and immigration, and posts. The approach and key components have been changed in 2015 with the vision of altering e-governance for the purpose of transforming governance. This is because the program is intended to make government services available electronically and to assist individuals in gaining benefits from technology. This was done in order to fulfill the need for e-Governance, mobile Governance, and Good Governance in the nation. Within the framework of the E-governance agenda, Digital India has established and restructured programs that were already in operation. Some of the most important initiatives that the National Insurance Corporation (NIC) has undertaken during the 2014-2015 fiscal year include digital lockers, the MyGov mobile app, the eSigh National Scholarship Portal and the ehospital application (for online registration, payment of fee, appointments, and online diagnostic reports), the Aadar-enabled biometric attendance system, Jeevan Pramaan, E-greetings, e-Sampark, eSameeksha, eGreetings, the national portal for lost and found children, tourist visas upon arrival, secure email within the Government Mobile Fertilizer Monitoring System (FMS), ePanchyats, and the Cooperative Core Banking Solution (CCBS), among other initiatives. Bharat Net is an additional initiative that aims to offer a high-speed digital highway for the purpose of building a broadband connection project through the utilization of optical fiber. There are villages in India where the majority of the people lives. A total of 2.5 lakh Gramme Panchyats may be found around the country. Under these circumstances, the connectivity of 2.5 lakh

Gramme Panchyats will be the most extensive rural broadband connectivity in the whole globe. The Digital India program's objective is to make high-speed Internet available at prices that are reasonable.

Preconditions and Requirements for Digital India.

Digital Infrastructure

- High Speed Internet
- Authentic Identity
- Mobile phone and Bank accounts
- Common Service Centre
- Safe and secure Cyber-space

Digital Empowerment of Citizens

Universal Accessibility

Strengthening digital Panchyats

Findings of the study:-

The provision of core infrastructure is a crucial prerequisite for the program that aims to realize the vision of digital India. In terms of the establishment of essential infrastructure for the realization of the vision of digital India, which are mentioned in the following paragraphs, success has been accomplished:

- **Authentic Identities:** For the purpose of achieving the goal of digital India, it is necessary for individuals to have identities that are one-of-a-kind, online, and authentic throughout their whole lives inside the country. Adhar cards, which serve as a foundation for legitimate identities, have been distributed by the government inside India. According to the Unique Identification Authority of India, the government of India has issued 98,74,80,453 Adhar cards. Of these, 76.01% are people who are older than 18 years old, followed by 21.94% of persons who are between the ages of 5 and 18 years old, and then 2.05% of children who are younger than 5 years old.
- **Bank Accounts:** The mobile phones and bank accounts of citizens are another requirement that must be met before individuals may be allowed to participate in the digital and financial realm on an individual level. The Jan Dhan Yojana was initiated with the purpose of providing individuals with direct benefits in order to promote financial inclusion. The achievements that were accomplished under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) were acknowledged by Guinness World Records. As of the 10th of February in 2016, more than 20 crore, which is equivalent to 200 million bank accounts, had been opened, and 232.78 billion people have deposited money under the initiative.
- **National Knowledge Network:** As stated in the report that was published by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) in 2014-2015, the National Knowledge Network 1360 connection of institutions has been commissioned and made operational as part of a national mission mode program.
- **Web hosting and Cloud Computing:** NIC 2014-2015 reports that this service is responsible for the operation of more than four thousand national websites and portals of the government. To add

insult to injury, around three thousand state websites are presently in the process of migrating to the National Cloud.

- **Common Service Centres:** Considering that Common Service Centers (CSCs) serve as the program's strategic foundation, the digital India. They serve as the entry points for the delivery of a variety of electronic services to parts of India that are geographically distant. CSCs make it possible for rural citizens in India to participate in community activities and have access to financial services. Despite the fact that India is a powerhouse in terms of software, technology, and new ideas, the ease and accessibility of electronic government services are not up to the standard in places that are located in remote areas.
- **Safe and Secure Cyber Space:** The National Information Center (NIC) reports that in addition to 446 new antivirus signatures, 84000 firewall rules have been implemented to ensure the safety of websites. There have been improvements made to the Secure Alerting and Reporting System (SARS).

Challenges:-

1. **Lack of Digital literacy in India:** As stated by the Census of India in 2011, India has unquestionably attained a literacy rate of 76.64 percent, which is a significant improvement over the previous decade's record of only 65.38%. On the other hand, when it comes to digital literacy, individuals do not possess the capabilities to use digital instruments. When it comes to the effective utilization of digital services, language is one of the most significant obstacles.
2. **Lack of Awareness:** Most of the schemes, programs, and other initiatives that have been introduced as part of the Digital India program remain unknown to the people of India. The vast majority of those who have the greatest need for the services are unaware of their existence.
3. **Safe and Secure Cyber Space:** Secure and risk-free Among the issues that require significant consideration at the central level is cyberspace, which is one of the challenges. Through the implementation of digital India initiative, the transitions to e-Governance practices have occurred. Interactions between the government and its citizens have become more frequent. Besides these dangers and malicious software Additionally, illegal, insecure, and fraudulent content is being posted, which is generating indirect detrimental effects on society.
4. **Untrained or Semi trained Human Resource:** Staff members working in grassroots and remote locations may lack adequate training or have just a basic level of training. Despite its progress, India continues to struggle with a variety of other problems, including health, education, poverty, income, work, employment, and vulnerability. In the Human Development Index (HDI), India is placed 130th, according to the United Nations Development Program (2015). This places it behind 129 countries throughout the world.
5. **Common Service Centres:** It is not possible for Common Service Centers to meet the requirements of the people, particularly those living in more rural places. Connectivity is not very strong there.

Conclusion

It may be concluded that the e-governance efforts that have been implemented as part of the Digital India program have resulted in considerable advances in terms of service delivery, transparency, and public involvement. In spite of this, there are a number of obstacles that need to be overcome before these projects may realize their full potential. In order to ensure the success of e-governance, it is essential to take

initiatives such as bridging the digital gap, increasing cybersecurity, expanding digital literacy, and cultivating a culture of digital adoption among government personnel. It is suggested that the government prioritize the improvement of infrastructure in rural regions, notably through the extension of broadband networks through initiatives such as BharatNet, in order to hasten the pace of progress. Simultaneously, there should be a greater focus put on continual digital skills training. This will ensure that both residents and government personnel are appropriately trained to handle the ever-changing digital terrain. In conclusion, it is imperative that efforts be prioritized to strengthen cybersecurity and data protection policies in order to establish confidence and ensure the safety of the digital environment. Digital India has the ability to alter government and the delivery of public services, therefore establishing India as a leader in the digital economy of the world while simultaneously ensuring equitable growth for all of its residents. This transformation might be achieved via persistent efforts to solve these difficulties.

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