Study of Library Digital India Programme: Issue and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

Government of India launched National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) in 2006. In order to transform the entire ecosystem of public services through the use of information technology, the Government of India has launched the Digital India programme ,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. Almost all Indian support digital India but to make it reality here are list of issues and challenges in the implementation of digital India programme.

KEYWORDS: National e-Governance, Digital Infrastructure, Digitally empowered, Digital India.

INTRODUCTION

Digital India is an umbrella programme that covers multiple Government Ministries and Departments. It weaves together a large number of ideas and thoughts into a single, comprehensive vision so that each of them can be implemented as part of a larger goal. Each individual element stands on its own, but is also part of the larger picture. Digital India is to be implemented by the entire Government with overall coordination being done by the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DeitY)[1]. Digital India aims to provide the much needed thrust to 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 programme in itself and cuts across multiple Ministries and Departments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vision Areas of Digital India

The Digital India programme is centred on three key vision areas:

- Digital Infrastructure as a Core Utility to Every Citizen
- Governance and Services on Demand
- Digital Empowerment of Citizens

Vision Area – 1

Digital infrastructure as a utility to every citizen -

A well connected nation is a prerequisite to a well served nation. Once the remotest of the Indian villagers are digitally connected through broadband and high speed internet, then delivery of electronic government services to every citizen, targeted social benefits, and financial inclusion can be achieved in reality. One of the key areas on which the vision of Digital India is centred is "digital infrastructure as a utility to every citizen".

How Digital India initiative will impact

- Government of India would provide a digital private space, i.e. Digital Locker, to every citizen.
- The 'Digital Locker' would enable citizens to securely store all their important documents and credential.
- The electronic documents can be shared with public agencies or others without the need to physically submit them.
- Such a 'digital locker' will greatly improve citizen convenience and usher in paperless transactions across the entire ecosystem of public services.
- In a situation of disaster, e.g. flood, storm, fire, etc, when citizens may loose paper documents, documents in the digital repository would be accessible for them anytime, anywhere to avail government or private services.

Vision Area -2

Governance and services on demand -

Over the years, a large number of initiatives have been undertaken by various State Governments and Central Ministries to usher in an era of e-governance. Sustained efforts have been made at multiple levels to improve the delivery of public services and simplify the process of accessing them. E-governance in India has steadily evolved from computerization of Government Departments to initiatives that encapsulate the finer points of Governance, such as citizen centricity, service orientation and transparency.

Services available in real time from online & mobile platforms -

The focus today is on designing e-Governance applications in such a way that the related information, services and grievance-handling mechanism are accessible online on a real time basis and across all types of access devices such as desktop computers, laptops, tablets, mobiles, etc.

Changing the Life of Citizens through Internet & Mobile connectivity

Current scenario:

- Difficulty in availing government services due to lack of internet connectivity.

Changed scenario:

- Use of mobile phone or laptop would help in checking the status of entitlements, bank account details, etc.
- Access to internet and focus on digital literacy will also help citizens aspire for better jobs and improved quality of life.
- Text books will be available in the form of e-books which can be downloaded on laptops.

Citizens may avail government and private services from home by accessing the software applications through internet.

Making financial transactions electronic & cashless

Electronic payments and fund transfers have the advantage of targeted and direct delivery to the intended beneficiaries without the involvement of middlemen who may otherwise subvert the system. Similarly, online mechanisms for payment of fees for certain public services offer a transparent, friendly and expeditious channel to citizens for payments. All financial transactions above a threshold shall be made electronic & cashless.

Leveraging Geospatial Information System (GIS) for decision support systems & development

Various government services can be offered in a better way by proper use of GIS technology in the e-governance applications. National Geospatial Information System (NGIS) is being implemented to integrate geo-spatial data available with a number of organizations such as Survey of India, National Informatics Centre (NIC), NRSA and Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) to develop a GIS platform for e-Governance applications.[6]

Vision Area - 3

Digital empowerment of citizens

Digital connectivity is a great leveller. Cutting across demographic and socio-economic segments, Indians are increasingly connecting and communicating with each other through mobile phones and computers riding on digital networks. The Digital India programme itself promises to transform India into a digitally empowered society by focusing on digital literacy, digital resources, and collaborative digital platforms. This also places emphasis on universal digital literacy and availability of digital resources/services in Indian languages.

Universal Digital Literacy

Digital literacy assumes paramount importance at an individual level for truly and fully leveraging the potential the Digital India programme. It provides the citizens the ability to fully exploit the digital technologies to empower themselves. It helps them seek better livelihood opportunities and become economically secure.

Universally accessible digital resources

Digital resources are truly universally accessible when they are easily available and navigable everywhere and by everyone. Open resources have the advantage of being widely and inexpensively available and also being widely usable and customizable. Digital resources created or implemented along these lines can be accessed everywhere compared to resources developed from proprietary systems. Owner departments and agencies have the responsibility of ensuring that their digital resources are of high quality so that access and customization are not problematic.

Universally Accessible Digital Resources: Making government documents accessible to citizens anytime, anywhere!

Current scenario:

- Government documents are not easily accessible.

Changed scenario:

- Citizen related documents would be available electronically.

- Government departments may access the documents issued by collateral government agencies.
- Documents issued to the citizens would be available to them anywhere anytime, in a standard format which can be shared with an authorized entity.
- The documents may be available in local language as well.
- Documents would be accessible to citizens through web portals and mobile applications.

Under the Digital India programme, the government is also committed to providing access to digital resources for citizens with special needs, such as those with visual or hearing impairments (which may be partial or complete), learning or cognitive disabilities, physical disabilities which hinder operation of ubiquitous access devices such as phones, tablets and computers.

All documents/certificates to be available on cloud

Citizens should not be asked to provide government documents or certificates, which are already available with some department/institution of the government, in physical form. Portability of all electronic documents should also be ensured. As an example, educational institutions should ensure that all their degrees and certificates are digitized and kept in online repositories with appropriate access protocols. The citizen, while filling some application form, should not be asked to submit the certified copies of his/her educational certificates but should provide details of these certificates available in an online repository which can be seen by the agency concerned using the pointer provided by the citizen. All these repositories of all government issued documents /certificates should be hosted on a cloud platform to provide a single source of truth for these documents/ certificates. The data may include categories such as digitally signed educational certificates, land records, driving licenses, permits, etc. Requesting departments or users may be provided authenticated access to the digital repository available over the cloud.

Programme Management Structure for Digital India Programme

The programme management structure for Digital India consists of a Monitoring Committee on Digital India headed by the Prime Minister, a Digital India Advisory Group chaired by the Minister of Communications & IT and an Apex Committee chaired by the Cabinet Secretary[7]
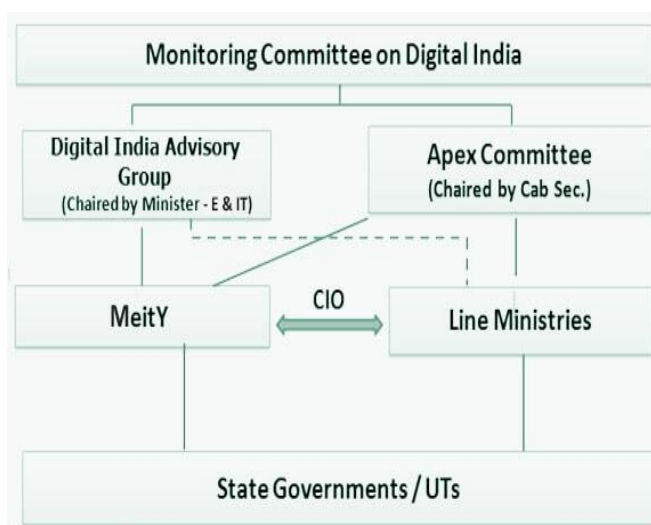

Fig :- Institutional Mechanism at National Level

The central ministries/departments and state governments concerned would have the overall responsibility for implementation of various Mission Mode and other projects under the Digital India Programme.

CHALLENGES

Challenges are in every sector right from policy making, changing the work flow up to changing the mentality of the government officers. It is technological change within the most diversified nation. Few of them have been listed below [3][8]:

High level of digital illiteracy: Digital illiteracy is prevalent in most of the towns and villages in India. Cities have adopted digitalization but limited to certain extent. Full fledged digitalization is cashless transaction on daily basis, use of internet services to get government certificates. This requires administration changes, Taxation changes and change in public mentality. So it's a team work which includes citizen's responsibility and support to the new system

Connectivity to remote areas: It is a mammoth task to have connectivity with each and every village, town and city. The problem of connectivity is a complex issue because every state has different laws pertaining to its execution. Also it is challenging for the central authorities to make a database where such a huge information can be stored.

Compatibility with center state databases: Every state has different internet protocols because every state is diversified. Diversified not only in the sense of religion but also in language. Hence software compatibility with the center is a crucial issue. Information shall be saved carefully.

Cyber Crime: There is cyber threat all over the globe and digital India will not be any exception. Hence we need a strong anti cyber crime team which maintains the database and protects it round the clock

Inter Departmental Co ordination: Within the government there are various departments which should be integrated. Integration has technical as well as corporate issue. Corporate in the sense self ego of the officers and staff of our government services are hurdle in the change. Also the middle man policy will be eliminated completely because of digital India; hence there will be imminent resistance from the working staff.

Finance: Though there are resources with India but there is a huge capital cost which is to be invested and the fruits of the investment will be received after few years.

Net neutrality: The issue is still on the table and we are blindly following the digital India. Net neutrality is must and we should make sure that digital India without net neutrality would be a great blow to entrepreneurs and citizens of India.

Changing the mindset: This point will come into picture when you have allocated the required resources and material but when it comes to implementing them, most of them will be hesitant to change. People are accustomed with years of same of practice that they are not ready to change.

Exchange of information: The information stored should also be used by other government offices. For example police, surveillance and other security issues can be easily resolved with digital India but its co ordination is a mammoth task. It is not only a technological question but also deals with the question of privacy and security.

SUGGESTIONS

Digital India campaign can't be successful on its own. Policy changes are needed to make digital India a reality. Few of the suggestions are [4][5]–

1. Digital literacy is first step in empowering citizens. People should know how to secure their online data.

2. To make this programme successful, a massive awareness programme has to be conducted. There is pressing need to educate and inform the citizens, especially in rural and remote areas, about the benefits of internet services to increase the growth of internet usage.

3. Digital divide needs to be addressed.

4. Manufacturing content is not government's strength. This mission needs content and service partnerships with telecom companies and other firms.

5. PPP models must be explored for sustainable development of digital infrastructure.

6. Private sector should be encouraged for development of last mile infrastructure in rural and remote areas. To encourage private sector, there must be favorable taxation policies, quicker clearance of projects.

7. The success of digital India project depends upon maximum connectivity with minimum cyber security risks. For this we need a strong anti cyber crime team which maintains the database and protects it round the clock.

8. To improve skill in cyber security, we need to introduce cyber security course at graduate level and encourage international certification bodies to introduce various skill based cyber security courses.

9. There is need for effective participation of various departments and demanding commitment and efforts. Various policies in different areas should support this goal.

10. For successful implementation, there must be amendments in various legislations that have for long hindered the growth of technology in India.

CONCLUSION

The vision of digital India is grand. It is a huge step towards building a truly empowered nation. If successful, it transform citizen access to multimedia information, content and services. [9]However the goal is still far away since most of the nine pillars of digital India mission are facing serious challenges in implementation. It is imperative that focused persistent attention must be given to each and every pillar so that this programme does not end up in failure. In fact we all should be mentally prepared for the change and be ready to face the challenges in implementing this policy, only then it would be possible to make this vision a reality.

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