DIGITAL INDIA -EMPOWERMENT OF CITIZEN

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ABSTRACT

Digital India is a campaign launched by the Government of India to ensure that Government services are made available to citizens electronically by improved online infrastructure and by increasing Internet connectivity or by making the country digitally empowered in the field of technology. The initiative includes plans to connect rural areas with high-speed internet networks. Digital India consists of three core components. These include:

- The creation of digital infrastructure
- Delivery of services digitally
- Digital literacy

Digital India, a much ambitious Programme, was launched on 1st of July (Wednesday) in 2015 at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, Delhi. It was launched in the presence of various top industrialists (Tata Group chairman Cyrus Mistry, RIL Chairman and Managing Director MukeshAmbani, Wipro Chairman AzimPremji, etc.). In the meeting, they shared their ideas of bringing digital revolution to mass people of India from cities to villages. Various events have been held in the presence of Information Technology companies to cover 600 districts in the country. Digital India programme is a big step taken by the government of India to make this country a digitally empowered country. Various schemes regarding this plan have been unveiled (worth more than Rs 1 lakh crore) such as Digital Locker, e-health, e-eduction, national scholarship portal, e-sign, etc.

INTRODUCTON:

Digital India was launched by the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi on 1 July 2015 - with an objective of connecting rural areas with high-speed Internet networks and improving digital literacy.] The vision of Digital India Programme is inclusive growth in areas of electronic services, products, manufacturing and job opportunities etc. and it is centered on three key areas – Digital Infrastructure as a Utility to Every Citizen, Governance & Services on Demand and Digital Empowerment of Citizens.

The Government of India entity Bharat Broadband Network Limited(BBNL) which executes the National Optical Fiber Network project will be the custodian of Digital India (DI) project. BBNL had ordered United Telecoms Limited to connect 250,000 villages through GPON to ensure FTTH based broadband. This will provide the first basic setup to achieve towards Digital India and is expected to be completed by 2017.

The government is planning to create 28,000 seats of BPOs in various states and set up at least one Common Service Centre in each of the gram panchayats in the state.

The 2016 Union budget of India announced 11 technology initiatives including the use data analytics to nab tax evaders, creating a substantial opportunity for IT companies to build out the systems that will be required. Digital Literacy mission will cover six crore rural households. It is planned to connect 550 farmer markets in the country through the use of technology.

Out of 10% English speaking Indians, only 2% reside in rural areas. Rest everyone depends on their vernacular language for all living their lives. However, as of now, email addresses can only be created in English language. To connect

rural India with the Digital India, the Government of India impelled email services provider giants including Gmail, office and rediff to provide email address in regional Languages. However, the email provider companies has shown positive sign and is working in the same process. An Indian based company, Data Xgen Technologies Pvt Ltd, has launched world's first free linguistic email address under the name 'DATAMAIL' which allows to create email ids in 8 Indian languages, English; and 3 foreign languages – Arabic, Russian and Chinese. Over the period of time the email service in 22 languages will be offered by Data XGen Technologies.

AIMS:

The Government of India hopes to achieve growth on multiple fronts with the Digital India Programmes. Specifically, the government aims to target nine 'Pillars of the Digital India' that they identify as being:

❖   Universal access to Internet
❖   Public Internet Access Programmes
❖   e-Governance   –   Reforming Government through Technology
❖   e-Kranti - Electronic delivery of services
❖   Information for All
❖   Electronics Manufacturing
❖   IT for Jobs

FACILITIES:

Some of the facilities which will be provided through this initiative are Digital Locker, e-education, e-health, e-sign and national scholarship portal. As the part of Digital India, Indian government planned to launch Botnet cleaning centers:

➢   DigiLocker:

Digital Locker facility will help citizens to digitally store their important documents like PAN card, passport, mark sheets and degree certificates. Digital Locker will provide secure access to Government issued documents. It uses authenticity services provided by Aadhaar. It is aimed at eliminating the use of physical documents and enables sharing of verified electronic documents across government

agencies. Three key stakeholders of DigiLocker are Citizen, Issuer and requester

➢   Attendance.gov.in:

Attendance.gov.in is a website, launched by PM Narendra Modi on 1 July 2015to keep a record of the attendance of Government employees on a real-time basis. This initiative started with implementation of a common Biometric Attendance System (BAS) in the central government offices located in Delhi.

➢   MyGov.in

MyGov.in is a platform to share inputs and ideas on matters of policy and governance. It is a platform for citizen engagement in governance, through a "Discuss", "Do" and "Disseminate" approach.

➢   SBM Mobile app

Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) Mobile app is being used by people and Government organisations for achieving the goals of Swachh Bharat Mission.

➢   eSign framework:

eSign framework allows citizens to digitally sign a document online using Aadhaar authentication.

➢   e-Hospital

The e -Hospital application provides important services such as online registration, payment of fees and appointment, online diagnostic reports, enquiring availability of blood online etc.

➢   National Scholarship Portal

National Scholarship Portal is a one-step 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

DIGITAL INDIA WEEK:

At the launch ceremony of Digital India Week by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi on 1 July 2015, top CEOs from India and abroad committed to invest ₹224.5 lakh crore (US$3.3 trillion) towards this initiative. The CEOs said the investments would be utilized towards

making smartphones and internet devices at an affordable price in India which would help generate jobs in India as well as reduce the cost of importing them from abroad. Leaders from Silicon Valley, San Jose, California expressed their support for Digital India during PM NarendraModi's visit in September 2015. Facebook's CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, changed his profile picture in support of Digital India and started a chain on Facebook and promised to work on WiFi Hotspots in rural area of India.Google committed to provide broadband connectivity on 500 railway stations in India. Microsoft agreed to provide broadband connectivity to five hundred thousand villages in India and make India its cloud hub through Indian data centers. Qualcomm announced an investment of US$150 million in Indian startups.Oracle plans to invest in 20 states and will work on payments and Smart city initiatives. However back home in India, cyber experts expressed their concern over internet.org and viewed the Prime Minister's bonhomie with Zuckerberg as the government's indirect approval of the controversial initiative. The Statesman reported, "Prime Minister NarendraModi's chemistry with Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg at the social media giant's headquarters in California may have been greeted enthusiastically in Silicon Valley but back home several social media enthusiasts and cyber activists are disappointed." Later the Prime Minister office clarified that net neutrality will be maintained at all costs and vetoed the Basic Internet plans.

PERFORMANCE:

On 28 December 2015, the Panchkula district of Haryana was awarded for being the best as well as top performing district in the state under the Digital India campaign.[32]

GOVERNMENT SCHEMENCE IN INDIA:

✦ Antyodaya Anna YojanaAtal
✦ Pension YojanaBetiBachao, BetiPadhaoYojana
✦ Housing for All ICDS Income declaration scheme, 2016 JAM Yojana KVPY
✦ Midday Meal Scheme PradhanMantriGaribKalyanYojana

✦ PradhanMantriJeevanJyotiBimaYojana
✦ PradhanMantriKaushalVikasYojana
✦ PradhanMantriSurakshaBimaYojana
✦ PradhanMantriUjjwalaYojana
✦ RashtriyaKrishiVikasYojana
✦ Soil Health Card Scheme

MISSION:

AMRUT Mission Indradhanush NICRA National Mission for Manuscripts NRHM ASHA National Translation Mission Providing Urban Amenities to Rural Areas RashtriyaMadhyamikShikshaAbhiyanRashtriya UchchatarShikshaAbhiyanSarvaShikshaAbhiya n Smart Cities Mission TB-Mission 2020

PROJECTS:

Bharatmala Indian Rivers Inter-link Sagar Mala project SetuBharatam

CAMPAIGN:

Accessible India Campaign Digital India Make in India Skill India Startup India Swachh Bharat AbhiyanUnnat Bharat Abhiyan

IDs:

Aadhaar Business identification number Indian passport Permanent account number Ration card (India) Unorganised Workers' Identification Number Voter ID (India)

STATE:

BhamashahYojanaBijuKrushakKalyanYojana Invest Madhya Pradesh JyotigramYojana Make in Maharashtra Rajiv Gandhi JeevandayeeArogyaYojana Vibrant Gujarat

Bharat Nirman CGHS IGMSY Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme IRDP JawaharRozgarYojana JSY JnNURM Kasturba Gandhi BalikaVidyalaya MPLADS National Rural Employment Programme NLM NPS NRLM Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan Pooled Finance Development Fund Scheme PMAGY RNTCP RSBY Rural Landless Employment Guarantee

ProgrammeSampoornaGrameenRozgarYojana Swabhimaan (campaign) Swavalamban Voluntary Disclosure of Income Scheme

Right from the day of assuming power, Digital India and Make in India have been two big USPs of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The first steps were taken with the launch of MyGov.in portal. Only a couple of weeks ago, Narendra Modi launched his mobile app to connect further with the netizens. Over the last one year, several initiatives have been taken for introduction of Information Technology to empower people in areas relating to health, education, labour and employment, commerce etc. Digital India Week has been launched with an aim to impart knowledge to people and to empower themselves through the Digital India Programme of Government of India.

THE PROGRAM STRUCTURE:

Digital India comprises of various initiatives under the single programme each targeted to prepare India for becoming a knowledge economy and for bringing good governance to citizens through synchronized and co-ordinated engagement of the entire Government.

This programme has been envisaged and coordinated by the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DeitY) in collaboration with various Central Ministries/Departments and State Governments. The Prime Minister as the Chairman of Monitoring Committee on Digital India, activities under the Digital India initiative is being carefully monitored. All the existing and ongoing e-Governance initiatives have been revamped to align them with the principles of Digital India.

VISION OF DIGITAL INDIA:

Digital India vision the vision of Digital India programme aims at inclusive growth in areas of electronic services, products, manufacturing and job opportunities etc. It is centered on three key areas -

1. Digital Infrastructure as a Utility to Every Citizen
2. Governance & Services on Demand and
3. Digital Empowerment of Citizens

With the above vision, the Digital India programme aims to provide Broadband Highways, Universal Access to Mobile Connectivity, Public Internet Access Programme, E-Governance: Reforming Government through Technology, eKranti - Electronic Delivery of Services, Information for All, Electronics Manufacturing: Target Net Zero Imports, IT for Jobs and Early Harvest Programmes.

POLICY INITIATIVE:

Policy initiatives have also been undertaken (by DeitY) in the e- Governance domain like e-Kranti Framework, Policy on Adoption of Open Source Software for Government of India, Framework for Adoption of Open Source Software in e-Governance Systems, Policy on Open Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) for Government of India, E-mail Policy of Government of India, Policy on Use of IT Resources of Government of India, Policy on Collaborative Application Development by Opening the Source Code of Government Applications, Application Development & Re-Engineering Guidelines for Cloud Ready Applications

BPO Policy has been approved to create BPO centres in different North Eastern states and also in smaller / mofussil towns of other states.

Electronics Development Fund (EDF) Policy aims to promote Innovation, R&D, and Product Development and to create a resource pool of IP within the country to create a self-sustaining eco-system of Venture Funds.

National Centre for Flexible Electronics (NCFlexE) is an initiative of Government of India to promote research and innovation in the emerging area of Flexible Electronics.

Centre of Excellence on Internet on Things (IoT) is a joint initiative of Department of Electronics & Information Technology (DeitY), ERNET and NASSCOM.

IMPACT:

The estimated impact of Digital India by 2019 would be cross cutting, ranging from broadband connectivity in all Panchayats, Wi-fi in schools

and universities and Public Wi-Fihotspots. The programme will generate huge number of IT, Telecom and Electronics jobs, both directly and indirectly. Success of this programme will make India Digitally empowered and the leader in usage of IT in delivery of services related to various domains such as health, education, agriculture, banking, etc.

BENEFITS OF DIGITAL INDIA CAMPAIGN:

➢   It makes possible the implementation of digital locker system which in turn reduces paper work by minimizing the usage of physical documents as well as enabling e-sharing through registered repositories.

➢   It is an effective online platform which may engage people in governance through various approaches like "Discuss, Do and Disseminate".

➢   It ensures the achievement of various online goals set by the government.

➢   It makes possible for people to submit their documents and certificates online anywhere which reduces physical work.

➢   Through e-Sign framework citizens may digitally sign their documents online.

➢   It may ease the important health care services through e-Hospital system such as online registration, taking doctor appointments, fee payment, online diagnostic tests, blood check-up, etc.

➢   It provides benefits to the beneficiaries through National Scholarship Portal by allowing submission of application, verification process, sanction and then disbursal.

➢   It is a big platform which facilitates an efficient delivery of government or private services all over the country to its citizens.

➢   Bharat Net programe (a high-speed digital highway) will connect almost 250,000 gram panchayats of country.

➢   There is a plan of outsourcing policy also to help in the digital India initiative.

➢   For better management of online services on mobile such as voice, data, multimedia, etc, BSNL's Next Generation Network will replace 30-year old telephone exchange.

➢   National Centre for Flexible Electronics will help in the promotion of flexible electronics.

➢   Large scale deployment of Wi-Fi hotspots has been planned by the BSNL all across the country.

➢   There is a Broadband Highways in order to handle all the connectivity related issues.

➢   Open access of broadband highways in all the cities, towns and villages will make possible the availability of world-class services on the click of mouse.

KEY VISION:

1.   Digital infrastructure all through the country is like a utility to the Indian people as it will make available high speed internet delivering all the government services with ease and fast. It will provide lifelong, unique, online and authenticable digital identity to the citizens. It will make easy access to any online services like handling bank account, financial management, safe and secure cyber-space, education, distance learning, etc.

2.   High demand of good governance and online services will make available all the services in real time through digitization. Digitally transformed services will also promote people for doing online business by making financial transactions easy, electronic and cashless.

3.   Digital empowerment of Indian people will really make possible of digital literacy through universally accessible digital resources. It will enable people to submit required documents or certificates online and not physically in the schools, colleges, offices or any organization

CONCLUSION:

Despite its lively democracy, strong tradition of press freedom and political debates, India is in many ways struggling to find the right balance between freedom of expression online and other concerns such as security. While civil society is becoming increasingly vocal in attempting to push this balance towards freedom of expression, the government seems unwilling or unable to reform the law at the speed required to keep pace with new technologies, in particular the explosion in social media use. The report has found the main problems that need to be tackled are online censorship through take down

requests, filtering and blocking and the criminalization of online speech.

Politically motivated take down requests and network disruptions are significant violations of the right to freedom of expression. The government continues its regime of internet filtering and the authorities have stepped up surveillance online and put pressure on internet service providers to collude in the filtering and blocking of content which may be perfectly legitimate.

Despite numerous calls for change, the government has refused to reform the controversial IT Act. However, public outrage and protests against abuses of the law have multiplied since 2012. Civil society and political initiatives against this legislation have increased and demands for new transparent and participatory processes for making internet policy have gained popular support.

Technical means designed to curb freedom of expression, arguably to achieve political gain, have no place in a functioning democratic society. While government efforts to expand digital access across the country are promising, these efforts should not be undermined by disproportionate and politically motivated network shutdowns.

While it is to be welcomed that India is taking a more vocal part in the global internet governance debate in favor of the multi stakeholder approach, it is essential it ensures its own laws are proportionate and protect freedom of expression in order for the country to have the most impact in this debate.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To end internet censorship and provide a safe space for digital freedom, Indian authorities must:

• Stop prosecuting citizens who express legitimate opinions in online debates, posts and discussions;

• Revise take down procedures, so that demands for online content to be removed do not apply to legitimate expression of opinions or content in the public interest, so not to undermine freedom of expression;

• Reform IT Act provisions 66A and 79 and take down procedures so that content authors are notified and offered the opportunity to appeal take down requests before censorship occurs;

• Stop issuing take down requests without court orders, an increasingly common procedure;

• Lift restrictions on access to and functioning of cyber cafes;

• Take better account of the right to privacy and end unwarranted digital intrusions and interference with citizens' online communications;

• Maintain their support for a multi stakeholder approach to global internet governance.

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