

ISSUE -7
YEAR - 4

ISSN - 2321-7073
FEBRUARY - 2017



NATIONAL SEMINAR

ON

DIGITAL INDIA: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT

In Collaboration With

RESEARCH MATRIX

An International Refereed Multidisciplinary Journal of Applied Research



MANAGED BY: PATEL KELAVANI MANDAL - JUNAGADH

SHRI PATEL KELAVANI MANDAL COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY & B. Ed.

OPP. HAVELI WADI, NEAR S.T. COLONY, COLLEGE ROAD, JUNAGADH. PHONE: 0285-2670644



DIGITAL APPROACH TO EMPOWER INDIA

DR. JIMMYKUMAR P. PRAJAPATI

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, BJVM COMMERCE COLLEGE, VALLABH VIDYANAGAR - 388120

SUBJECT:

ABSTRACT

There is confirmation to suggest that societies and individuals who acquire skills in digital technologies and are enabled to investigate the data generated in digital environment get into higher and senior economic echelons. On the other side, those who remain digitally illiterate are being pushed down the ladder. To walk hand-in-hand with a vibrant and hope society, the political coordination has to adjust itself and proceed in tandem with the active mode. Succeeding Governments in India have confident technological advancements and its alteration including in the field of computer systems and related technologies even through an era of very tight technology denials by the developed countries. With the liberalization of economy since 1991, the public sector and the private sector together have placed India in an enviable position of extracting useful products of value with the application of computers. Resultantly, this has provided employment to 2.5 million and fetched export earnings to the tune of US\$87 billion. Riding on this firm base, the UPA-led government foresaw e-governance and a digitally linked India. Furthering this vision, the Modi government has widened the scope and launched the Digital India Programme in 2014, which is scheduled to be completed by 2019. The Project will be monitored by the Prime Minister. The vision and scope of this programme is all-inclusive and moves away from the silo-approach of e-governance towards a synchronized approach that all government services are delivered to the citizens through a "one stop shop". In its scope and vision it seeks to take the country from the present state of digitally constrained economy to that of an advanced digital economy. This would result in quantum leap in GDP, thereby expanding employment opportunities. The resultant "digital India" would throw up many challenges for the political establishments as they will have to engage themselves with renewed vitality and modernism with a well-informed citizenry and businesses that would adjudge their performance in comparison with other similarly placed nations. Even during the process of realization there would be hiccups not related to technology and its submission, but for completely different factors such as cultural and societal, sharpened by the swing back action of those who see their role and authority withdrawing as the procedure of digitization gets beneath way

INTRODUCTION:

E-governance initiatives in India took a broader dimension in the mid 1990s for wider sectoral applications with emphasis on citizen-centric services. The major ICT initiatives of the Government included, inter alia, some major projects such as railway computerization, land record computerization, etc. which focused mainly on the development of information systems. Later on, many states started ambitious individual e-governance projects aimed at providing electronic services to citizens.

Though these e-governance projects were citizen-centric, they could make less than the desired impact due to their limited features. The isolated and less interactive systems

VOLUME- 14 / YEAR - 4 / ISSUE - 7 / FEBRUARY-2017
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revealed major gaps that were thwarting the successful adoption of e-governance along the entire spectrum of governance. They clearly pointed towards the need for a more comprehensive planning and implementation for the infrastructure required to be put in place, interoperability issues to be addressed, etc. to establish a more connected government.

The national level e-Governance programme called National e-Governance Plan was initiated in 2006. There were 31 Mission Mode Projects under National e-Governance Plan covering a wide range of domains, viz. agriculture, land records, health, education, passports, police, courts, municipalities, commercial taxes, treasuries etc. 24 Mission Mode Projects have been implemented and started delivering either full or partial range of envisaged services. The national level e-Governance programme called National e-Governance Plan was initiated in 2006. There were 31 Mission Mode Projects under National e-Governance Plan covering a wide range of domains, viz. agriculture, land records, health, education, passports, police, courts, municipalities, commercial taxes, treasuries etc. 24 Mission Mode Projects have been implemented and started delivering either full or partial range of envisaged services.

Considering the shortcomings in National e-Governance Plan that included lack of integration amongst Government applications and databases, low degree of government process reengineering, scope for leveraging emerging technologies like mobile, cloud...etc, Government of India has approved the E-Kranti programme recently with the vision of "Transforming e-Governance for Transforming Governance".

All new and on-going e-Governance projects as well as the existing projects, which are being revamped, should now follow the key principles of E-Kranti namely 'Transformation and not Translation', 'Integrated Services and not Individual Services', 'Government Process Reengineering (GPR) to be mandatory in every MMP', 'ICT Infrastructure on Demand', 'Cloud by Default', 'Mobile First', 'Fast Tracking Approvals', 'Mandating Standards and Protocols', 'Language Localization', 'National GIS (Geo-Spatial Information System)', 'Security and Electronic Data Preservation'.

The portfolio of Mission Mode Projects has increased from 31 to 44 MMPs. Many new social sector projects namely Women and Child Development, Social Benefits, Financial Inclusion, Urban Governance, E-Bhasha...etc have been added as new MMPs under E - Kranti.

VISION OF DIGITAL INDIA

The vision of Digital India programme is to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy.

Approach and Methodology for Digital India Programme are:

- > Ministries / Departments / States would fully leverage the Common and Support ICT Infrastructure established by Govt. of India. It would also evolve/ lay down standards and policy guidelines, provide technical and handholding support, undertake capacity building, R&D, etc.
- > The existing/ ongoing E-Governance initiatives would be suitably revamped to align them with the principles of Digital India. Scope enhancement, Process Reengineering, use of integrated & interoperable systems and deployment of emerging technologies like cloud & mobile would be undertaken to enhance the delivery of Government services to citizens.
- > States would be given flexibility to identify for inclusion additional state-specific projects, which are relevant for their socio-economic needs.

- E-Governance would be promoted through a centralized initiative to the extent necessary, to ensure citizen centric service orientation, interoperability of various e-Governance applications and optimal utilization of ICT infrastructure/ resources, while adopting a decentralized implementation model.
- Successes would be identified and their replication promoted proactively with the required productization and customization wherever needed.
- Public Private Partnerships would be preferred wherever feasible to implement e-Governance projects with adequate management and strategic control.
- Adoption of Unique ID would be promoted to facilitate identification, authentication and delivery of benefits.
- Restructuring of NIC would be undertaken to strengthen the IT support to all government departments at Centre and State levels.
- The positions of Chief Information Officers (CIO) would be created in at least 10 key Ministries so that various e-Governance projects could be designed, developed and implemented faster. CIO positions will be at Additional Secretary/Joint Secretary level with over-riding powers on IT in the respective Ministry.

THE PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE FOR THE DIGITAL INDIA PROGRAMME AS ENDORSED BY THE UNION CABINET IS AS FOLLOW:

1. For effective management of the Digital India programme, the programme management structure would consist of a Monitoring Committee on Digital India headed by the Prime Minister, a Digital India Advisory Group chaired by the Minister of Communications and IT and an Apex Committee chaired by the Cabinet Secretary. The structure has the needed secretarial/ monitoring/ technical support and appropriate decentralization of power and responsibility to ensure effective execution of the various projects/ components by the implementing departments/ teams.

a. Key components of the Programme Management structure would be as follows:

Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) for programme level policy decisions.

b. A Monitoring Committee on Digital India under the Chairpersonship of Prime Minister which will be constituted with representation drawn from relevant Ministries/ Departments to provide leadership, prescribe deliverables and milestones, and monitor periodically the implementation of the Digital India Programme.

c. A Digital India Advisory Group headed by the Minister of Communications and IT to solicit views of external stakeholders and to provide inputs to the Monitoring Committee on Digital India, advise the Government on policy issues and strategic interventions necessary for accelerating the implementation of the Digital India Programme across Central and State Government Ministries/Departments. The composition of the Advisory Group would include representation from the Planning Commission and 8 to 9 representatives from States/UTs and other Line Ministries/Departments on a rotational basis.

d. An Apex Committee headed by the Cabinet Secretary would be overseeing the programme and providing policy and strategic directions for its implementation and resolving inter-ministerial issues. In addition it would harmonize and integrate diverse initiatives and aspects related to integration of services, end to end process re-engineering and service levels of MMPs and other initiatives under the Digital India Programme, wherever required.

e. Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC)/Committee on Non Plan Expenditure (CNE) to financially appraise/ approve projects as per existing delegation of

financial powers. The EFC/ CNE headed by Secretary Expenditure would also be recommending to the CCEA the manner in which MMPs/ E-Governance initiatives are to be implemented, as well as the financial terms of participation for States. A representative of the Planning Commission would also be included in both the EFC and CNE.

f. A Council of Mission Leaders on Digital India headed by Secretary, DeitY would be established as a platform to share the best practices in various existing and new E-Gov initiatives under Digital India and also to sensitize various government departments about ICT projects of DeitY. While the inter-departmental, integration and interoperable issues of integrated projects / eGovernance initiatives would be resolved by the Apex Committee on Digital India headed by Cabinet Secretary, the technical issues of integrated projects would be resolved by the Council of Mission Leaders.

g. Further, considering the scope of the Digital India Programme and the need to look at issues such as overall technology architecture, framework, standards, security policy, funding strategy, service delivery mechanism, sharing of common infrastructure etc. at a programme level, it is proposed that the technical appraisal of all Digital India projects be done by DeitY, prior to a project being placed before the EFC/ CNE. This appraisal would cover issues relating to inclusion of adoption of Standards, utilization of Cloud and mobile platforms, consideration of security aspects, etc. The Secretary, DeitY or his representative may also be included as a standing special invitee to all EFC/CNE meetings, which are appraising/approving MMPs. It may be mentioned that the DeitY has already set up a Programme Management Unit, namely National E-Governance Division (NeGD) to provide support to departments in conceptualizing, developing, appraising, implementing and monitoring respective MMPs / E-Governance Initiatives.

h. Institutional mechanism of Digital India at State level would be headed by State Committee on Digital India by the Chief Minister. State/UT Apex Committees on Digital India headed by Chief Secretaries would be constituted at State/UT level to allocate required resources, set priority amongst projects and resolve inter-departmental issues at State level.

➤ For effective monitoring of Digital India, usage of Project Management Information System would be mandatory in each new and existing Mission Mode Projects to capture the real or near real time details about the progress of the project. This tool should be proficient enough to capture the parameters for each stage of project namely, conceptualization and development, implementation and post implementation. The parameters could be decided in consultation with various line Ministries / Departments and DeitY.

➤ Since the "E-Kranti: National E-Governance Plan 2.0" is already integrated with Digital India Programme, the existing programme management structure established for National E-Governance Plan at both national and state level has also been decided to be integrated appropriately with the programme management structure being envisaged for Digital India Programme at national and State/UT level.

INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM AT NATIONAL LEVEL



CURRENT STATUS

The Apex Committee on the Digital India programme headed by the Cabinet Secretary and the Digital India Advisory Group chaired by the Minister of Communications and Information Technology has been constituted.

The first meeting of the Apex Committee on the Digital India programme was held on 26.11.2014. The second meeting of the Apex Committee on the Digital India programme was held on 09.02.2015. The actions on decisions made by the Apex Committee are being worked out.

CHALLENGES

Digital India initiation also face some challenges like: Privacy Protection, Data Protection, Cyber Law, Telegraph, E-Governance and E-Commerce Etc. Recently, ninth India Digital Summit was been hosted by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) in New Delhi on Jan.2015 to discuss the plans of Digital India Initiative. There the increment in mobile wallets in India for payment and e-commerce infrastructure was been discussed by a panel, as over 60% of Indian citizens still deal in cash and don't have bank accounts, so in order to establish digital transaction mobile wallets are very essential. Rajan Anandan, Managing Director at Google India, said: "Enabling content consumption in local Indian languages can greatly push the Internet consumption up." Bipin Preet Singh, Founder and CEO at MobiKwik, said "Consumers can overcome the trust factor in online payments," Alope Bajpai, Co-founder and CEO of meta search site ixigo.com, said: "While the growth in desktop is almost zero, it's terrific on mobile," "It is not only mobile first anymore but mobile only soon. Will have to see whether to work any further on evolving our desktop experience." Dhruv Shringi, CEO of Yatra.com, said: "The next thing to aim for travel companies is personalization of travel purchases such as hotels and holiday packages as also using predictive computing to understand and predict consumer behavior and reacting to it."

CONCLUSION

The Digital India program is just the beginning of a digital revolution, once implemented properly it will open various new opportunities for the citizens. It is one of the highly ambitious programs of Indian government, and is directly monitored by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India. The program is a multi-ministry program, with the involvement of central cabinet ministers, state governments etc. Various grand companies like Microsoft, Google and Fujitsu will also agreed be partner and help the success of Digital India initiative. While there are many obstacles in the path of Digital India program, one major of which is electricity. But this problem will soon be solved as there will be pressure on local leaders to get electricity in their village when Digital India program will be running in the nearby villages. Also, it will open gates for employment as Telecom Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said while addressing students at Shri Ram College of Commerce: "IT gives employment to about 30 lakh people. Once Digital India becomes reality, we can give jobs to five crore plus people."

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