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**EPRA International Journal of
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**DIGITAL INDIA: THE ROAD TO SMART
GOVERNANCE**

Dr.K.Vanaja

Professor and Head,
Department of B.Com (PA),
Dr.N.G.P.Arts and Science College
(Autonomous),
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu,
India

Mrs.P.Dhanya

Assistant Professor,
Department of B.Com (PA),
Dr.N.G.P.Arts and Science College,
(Autonomous),
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu,
India

ABSTRACT

India today is at the helm of digital transformation. Be it SMEs, enterprises, start-ups or the government, everyone has undergone or is thinking of digital transformation. Today, every business, irrespective of scale, size or industry, is adopting digital technologies to improve business efficiency, become competitive and provide a better experience to the tech-savvy end-consumer. The present government has also given significant impetus to businesses to invest in new technologies and harness the benefits of digital. "Digital India" is an initiative of the Central Government of India "designed to transform India into a global digitized hub" by reviving a rundown digital sector of India with the help of improving digital connectivity and skill enhancement and various other incentives to make the country digitally empowered in the field of technology. This paper also highlights the opportunities that would pave the way for achieving the program's aim of making India the preferred choice for digital activities by both global and domestic investors and also how far the "Digital India" model can prove to be an attraction for the investors to invest in the sectors which are yet to achieve their full potential in India. Further the paper helps to understand the global as well as domestic challenges that might hinder the successful implementation of the program and suggest some feasible remedies to deal with the same.

KEYWORDS: *Digital India, Digital transformation, Global digitized hub, Digital sector, Digital connectivity.*

VISION OF DIGITAL INDIA



❖ Digital Infrastructure as a Utility to Every Citizen:

This initiative brings together to deliver high speed communication technologies and digital services that will reach to the remotest villages, round the clock. Public services like land records, certificates and many more will be made available online or public cloud.

❖ Governance and Services on Demand:

This vision will provide single window access to every individual. Every government services or information is available online and on mobile platforms with a single touch.

❖ Digital Empowerment of Citizens:

Under this vision, every citizen will empower through digital literacy and universal access to digital resources. All documents and certificates are to be available on cloud and in Indian languages.

PILLARS OF DIGITAL INDIA

1. Broadband Highways:

The first step is to provide high speed broadband highways through fiber optics that connect all the remote areas, government departments, universities, R&D etc. Web based portals and Mobile apps will be developed to access online information while on the move.

2. Universal Mobile Access:

In the coming years, network technologies like 3G, 4G and upcoming 5G will storm the speed. Government is specially preparing to connect unconnected areas and speedy use of these technologies. General public will access the online government services with the help of handheld

devices. Nation is ready to be well-connected, efficient, and more productive in every aspect.

3. Public Internet Access:

Virtuous technologies that support cost containment, collaboration, security, services-on-the-go, social-connect, and in-built intelligence that deliver remote access to any information or service available across the domain. This change will open new doors of e-services to every citizen.

4. E-Governance:

This governance will transform every manual work into fully automation system. It will revolutionize the system in the following ways: Online access to applications i.e. availability of all databases and information in electronic format.

- Effortlessly tracking of assignments.
- Interface between departments for superior production of work.
- Quickly respond, analyze and resolve persistent problems and many more.

5. E-K Ranti:

This kranti will fully focus on digital knowledge program where education, health, farming, rights, financial and many more services will be delivered on a very high bandwidth. Physical boundaries no longer are a limitation when almost everyone and everything is a digital handshake away.

6. Information for All:

Websites and mobile apps will convey data and realistic participation and through social media. Everything is connected through virtual networks. Swift work flow and no delays due to wait in queues.

7. Electronics Manufacturing:

This milestone will create a huge base for electronics manufacturing in India with the aid of digital technologies and skills. The empowerment of manufacturing through the Internet of Things will enable intelligent workshops that demonstrate data driven operational excellence and decentralized production control systems within and beyond the physical factory walls.



8. IT for Jobs:

The objectives of this pillar is to train people in smaller towns and villages for IT sector jobs, setting

up of BPO in each of the North-East State in order to foster ICT enabled growth, train service delivery agents to run viable businesses delivering IT services,

and to train rural workforce to cater to their own needs and hence create a telecom ready workforce. These initiatives would be implemented mainly through DoT (Department of Telecommunications) and DeitY (Department of Electronics & Information Technology).

9. Early Harvest Programmes:

Some of the immediate measures which can be realised soon are covered in this pillar of 'early harvest programmes'. These would be the measures such as creating IT platform targeted to elected representatives along with all the Government employees covering 1.36 Crore mobiles and 22 lakhs emails through development of a mass messaging application. Other measures would primarily include technological improvements such as Government greetings would now be e-Greetings, implementation of biometric attendance in all government offices, Wi-Fi in all universities, secured emails within government, standardized government email design, public Wi-Fi hotspots, school Books to be eBooks, SMS based weather information, SMS based disaster alerts and a national portal for lost-&-found children.

KEY POLICY IMPERATIVES

The digitization index and analysis will be an invaluable tool for countries to understand their current level of digitization and how to build on it. In recent years, both developing and developed countries have invested significantly in broadband infrastructure, ensuring that their citizens have high-speed access to the Internet and communications services. But this investment is not enough. It is observed that the countries that have made rapid advances through the four stages of digitization to see what measures and policies contributed to their progress and found that policymakers can play a pivotal role by focusing on five key imperatives. These imperatives are critical for all countries both the mature economies that have reached the advanced stage of digitization, and the developing economies that fall primarily into the constrained, emerging, and transitional stages of digitization. They are:

- ❖ Elevate digitization on the national agenda: Ensure that national policy and senior government stewardship provide the platform for progress; create a plan for digitization that is tracked and monitored, with accountability residing at senior levels of government.
- ❖ Evolve sector governance: Segregate regulatory and policy roles; clarify both ownership and accountability for ICT and digitization.

- ❖ Adopt an ecosystem philosophy: Address the convergence of telecommunications, media, and information technology; develop a strategy that addresses all stages of the value chain in a holistic way; and consider the local ecosystem as well as export opportunities.

- ❖ Enable sustainable competition: Develop a competitive ICT model that stimulates both innovation and adoption, while ensuring sector sustainability and investments.

SOCIAL IMPACT

Assessing the impact of digitization on societies is complicated because there are no universal metrics that act as a barometer of societal advancement. Studies often tend to look at the level of inequality in a society but in emerging economies that are in the process of elevating millions from poverty, a complex relationship between economic growth and inequality remains. Therefore we analyzed societal impact on two levels: the level of quality of life in a society and the equality of access to basic services that a society requires. However, the analysis reveals that in countries with lower levels of economic development, the impact of digitization is not as pronounced. The difference appears to be that in less developed economies, factors beyond digitization are more critical to quality of life: of primary importance are food; then housing, clothing, water, and energy; followed by health; and finally transportation and communication. As a result, it would appear that, as expected, digitization has an impact on quality of life only when the population has satisfied its basic needs.

GOVERNANCE IMPACT

The final area in which we analyzed the impact of digitization was government effectiveness. As for the analysis reviewed above, we relied on three metrics: the transparency of governmental activities, the delivery of e-government services, and the provisioning of public education a key government service. Our co-relational analysis demonstrates that greater digitization enables a society to be more transparent, increasing public participation and the government's ability to disseminate information in an accessible manner. Digital technology gives the population more insight into government policies and function an insight that might, in turn, lead to more active political participation and support the development of human rights. Additionally, as expected, e-government services are more effective in a digitized environment.



Current research indicates that causality in this case acts both ways. Higher digitization contributes to more efficient delivery of e-government services, while better e-government services stimulate an increase in digitization. Finally, digitization supports better delivery of basic government services, such as public education. Overall, our analysis indicates that digitization clearly has a positive impact on economic advancement, societal well-being, and government effectiveness, although this impact varies according to a country's level of digitization. Digitization has an increasing impact on the economy and quality of life as countries advance through the stages of digitization, and more impact on access to basic services and education in countries that are just beginning their journey.

CHALLENGES

The first challenge is to establish standard performance indicators to measure the extent to which ICT is being assimilated in societies. During most of the sector's development, ICT stakeholders focused primarily on access, building the networks that today connect much of the planet; they devised metrics accordingly. In a world of near ubiquity in terms of access, policymakers need a new way to look at the ICT sector. The second challenge concerns the lack of tools to determine the impact that the mass adoption of connected digital technologies and applications is having on societies and economies. With practical, reliable tools to measure the benefits of digitization, governments could potentially be more ambitious in developing and investing in the ICT sector. The third challenge is for policymakers to adopt new policy tools to accelerate digitization and reap its accompanying benefits. Over the past two decades, policymakers established rules to enhance access to communication services. In this paper we laid emphasis on the need to gain a similar understanding of the ways in which they can encourage adoption and boost the usage of digital applications by consumers, businesses, and public institutions.

CONCLUSION

Digital India is a dream project of the India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi to remodel India into a knowledgeable economy and digitally empowered society, along with good governance for

citizens. With the imminent of "Digital India" campaign, India will have a heavy and powerful digital infrastructure. More employment prospects will open for the youth that will boost the nation's economy. And some of the aforementioned projects are under various stages of implementation which may require some transformational process reengineering, refinements and adjustment for successful implementation to achieve the desired objectives. The success of this dream project lies not only in the hands of government but it requires all round support from the all citizens and other stake holders of the nation. Although, digital India programme is facing some barriers, yet it has a great impact on India to make the best future of every citizen. We Indians and others should work together to shape the knowledge economy. Let us all look forward and join hands for the successful implementation of this project for the brighter and prosperous India.

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