
DIGITAL INDIA CAMPAIGN: CHALLENGES IN RURAL INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Digital India is the outcome of many innovations and technological advancements. These transform the lives of people in many ways and will empower the society in a better manner. The motive behind the concept is to build participative, transparent and responsive system. The Digital India drive is a dream project of the Indian Government to remodel India into a knowledgeable economy and digitally empowered society, with good governance for citizens by bringing synchronization and co-ordination in public accountability, digitally connecting and delivering the government programs and services to mobilize the capability of information technology across government departments. Digitization in India will not only increase the efficiency of the government and public sector but also bring about huge democratization of the economy. With technology taking over almost all of manual labour, and the evident lack of skilled labour in India, it is imperative to have the country's labour force skilled in Information Technology. With this in mind, India's Digital India Campaign aims to make technology central to enable change. The vision of this programme encompasses three areas: universal access to digital infrastructure, government services, and citizen empowerment. This vision is further developed to include electronics manufacturing and job creation as well. With the passage of time every nation wants to be digitalized. Digitalization provides equal benefits to the users and service providers. In this paper an attempt has been made to analyse the challenges before the digital India especially in rural areas of the country.

Keywords: Digital India, Technological Advancement, Challenges, Rural India,

INTRODUCTION

Digital Technologies which include Cloud Computing and Mobile Applications have emerged as catalysts for rapid economic growth and citizen empowerment across the globe. Digital technologies are being increasingly used by us in everyday lives from retail stores to government offices. They help us to connect with each other and also to share information on issues and concerns faced by us. In some cases they also enable resolution of those issues in near real time. 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. We have fully entered in arena of technologies and digital world. This is a world where the best possible use is made of digital technologies. The 'Digital India' programme, targets to make government services available to people digitally and enjoy the benefit of the newest information and technological innovations. With the help of digital India the people can seek information easily at their doorstep. It is a programme to prepare India for a knowledge future. The motive of the concept Digital India is to connect rural areas of the country with high speed internet network and improving digital literacy. The Digital India programme faces the serious problems in its implementation. In the era of technology and digitalisation we cannot compare with the developed nations easily. We cannot imagine our life without connecting with the technology. In this fast growing new era one of the most important technologies is digitization. This is the system, which allows individuals to communicate globally. It is the initiative to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy.



WORLD WIDE INTERNET USERS

The internet users in developed world are more than twice in developing world. Only 47 percent people use internet in developing world and 81 percent people use internet in developed world as in 2016 The detail of worldwide internet users is in the table below:

Table 1 Detail of World Wide Internet Users

Year	World Population	Percentage of Internet Users	Percentage of Users in Developing World	Percentage of Users in Developed World
2005	6.5 billion	16	8	51
2010	6.9 billion	30	21	67
2016	7.3 billion	47	48	81

Source: Compiled from International Telecommunication Union

The data in the table number 1 reveals that it is very difficult to implement digital India campaign in the developing world as compare to developed world, because less number of people of the developing world are using internet.

REGION WISE INTERNET USERS

Region wise detail of the internet users is given in the table number 2 below:

Table 2 Region wise Percentage of Internet Users in the World

Year	Africa	America	Arab States	Asia & Pacific	Commonwealth of Independent States	Europe
2005	2	36	8	9	10	46
2010	10	49	26	23	34	67
2016	25	65	42	42	67	79

Source: Compiled from International Telecommunication Union

From the above table it is clear that the Africa region is the lowest internet user region having only 25 percent internet users. Europe is the highest internet users having 79 percent users.

RANK WISE MOBILE PHONE USER COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD

Here we have studied top ten ranked mobile phone users' countries of the world. Among the top ten ranked countries India is on second Rank. The detail of the rank wise mobile phone users is in the table number 3 below:

Table 3 Rank wise Mobile Internet Users 2013-14

Rank	Country	Internet Users	Percentage of Internet Users	Rank
1	China	692,152,618	50.30	90
2	India	340,873,137	26.00	127
3	United States	239,882,242	74.55	40
4	Brazil	122,796,320	59.08	71
5	Japan	118,131,030	93.33	9
6	Russia	105,311,724	73.41	43
7	Nigeria	86,436,611	47.44	96
8	Mexico	72,945,992	57.43	74
9	Germany	70,675,097	87.59	21
10	United Kingdom	59,538,545	92.00	13

Source: Compiled from International Telecommunication Union

STATE WISE CLASSIFICATION OF POPULATION IN INDIA

In India only 31.16 percent of the total population lives urban areas and 68.84 percent of the population lives in rural areas. Majority of the people of India live in rural areas. So it becomes difficult to implement the programmes and different schemes easily. Because in rural areas the geographical condition, communication system, transportation and other basic facilities are not enough. Due to lack of such basic facilities the rural areas are not well developed.

Table 4 Rural and Urban Classification of population in India Census 2011

States/UTs	Total Population	Rural Population (%age)	Urban Population (%age)
Jammu & Kashmir	12548926	9134820 (72.79)	4414106 (27.21)
Himachal Pradesh	6856509	6167805 (89.96)	688704 (10.04)
Punjab	27704236	17316800 (62.51)	10387436 (37.49)
Chandigarh	1054686	29004 (2.75)	1025682 (97.25)
Uttra Khand	10116752	7025583 (69.45)	3091169 (30.55)
Haryana	25353081	16531493 (65.21)	8821588 (34.79)
NCT Delhi	16753235	419319 (2.50)	16333916 (97.50)
Rajasthan	68621012	51540236 (75.11)	17080776 (24.89)
Uttar Pradesh	199581477	155111022 (77.72)	44470455 (22.28)
Bihar	103804637	92075028 (88.70)	11729609 (11.30)
Sikkim	607688	4 55962 (75.03)	151726 (24.97)
Arunachal Pradesh	1382611	1069165 (77.33)	313446 (22.67)
Nagaland	1980602	1406861 (71.03)	573741 (28.97)
Manipur	2721756	1899624 (69.79)	822132 (30.21)
Mizoram	1091014	529037 (48.49)	561977 (51.51)
Tripura	3671032	2710051 (73.82)	960981 (26.18)
Meghalaya	2964007	2368971 (79.92)	595036 (20.08)
Assam	31169272	26780516 (85.92)	4388756 (14.08)
West Bengal	91347736	62213676 (68.11)	29134060 (31.89)
Jharkhand	32966238	25036946 (75.95)	7929292 (24.05)
Odisha	41947358	34951234 (83.32)	6996124 (16.68)
Chhattisgarh	25540196	19603658 (76.76)	9936538 (23.24)
Madhya Pradesh	725597565	52537899 (72.37)	20059666 (27.63)
Gujrat	60383628	34670817 (57.42)	25712811 (42.58)
Daman & Diu	242911	60331 (24.84)	182580 (75.16)
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	342853	183024 (53.38)	159829 (46.62)
Maharashtra	112372972	61545441 (54.77)	50827531 (45.23)
Andhra Pradesh	84665533	56311788 (66.51)	28353745 (33.49)
Karnataka	61130704	37552529 (61.43)	23578175 (38.57)
Goa	1457723	551414 (37.83)	906309 (62.17)
Lakshadweep	64429	14121 (21.92)	50308 (78.08)
Kerala	33387677	17455506 (52.28)	15932171 (47.72)
Tamil Nadu	72138958	37189229 (51.55)	34949721 (48.45)
Puducherry	1244464	394341 (31.69)	850123 (68.31)
Andaman & Nicobar Island	379944	244411 (64.33)	135533 (35.67)
India	1210193422	833087662 (68.84)	377105760 (31.16)

Source: Census 2011, registrar general Government of India

OBJECTIVES OF DIGITAL INDIA PROGRAMME

The Digital India programme is focused on three key vision areas. These important areas are:

- Digital infrastructure as utility to every citizen includes high speed internet as a core utility shall be made available in all Gram Panchayats. Cradle to give identity, unique lifelong, online and authenticable. Mobile phone and bank account would enable participation in digital india and financial space at individual level. Easy access to common service centre within their locality. Shareable private space on a public cloud.
- Governance and services on demand which will be available in real time for online and mobile platforms, seamlessly integrated across departments and jurisdictions. All citizen documents to be made available on the cloud platform; as a result, citizens will not be asked to produce such documents for availing services. In addition, the provision of cashless electronic transactions will help generate business.

- Empower citizens, especially rural citizens, by making them digitally literate. This will be done through collaborative digital platforms and by making available the digital resources in their native language with a view to making their participation a reality. It will help tap into the data that will be freely available on cloud.

GROWTH OF RURAL-URBAN INTERNET USAGE

The number of mobile internet users in India is estimated to reach around 420 million by June 2017 with the rural India growing at a much higher rate than urban India says a published by Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) & market research firm IMRB. According to a report titled Mobile Internet in India 2016, there were 389 million mobile internet users in India as on December 2016. "Urban India, with 51 percent penetration is fast reaching saturation point while rural India with 16% is the future market of growth," said the report. It added that number of Internet users has registered a jump of 15 percent year on year between October 2015 to October 2016.

CHALLENGES BEFORE DIGITAL INDIA

There are many challenges regarding Digital India in rural India. Some of the challenges in are:

PROBLEM OF LITERACY

Literacy in India is a key for socio-economic progress of a country. The total literacy rate of India is 74.0 percent among which the urban literacy rate is 85 percent and the rural literacy rate is 68.9 percent; resulting in an absolute difference of nearly 16 percentage points. There are 12 states in India having less literacy rate than the country. Without improving literacy rate we cannot expect the smooth implication of Digital India campaign.

LACK OF TECHNOLOGICAL LITERACY

Technological literacy is the ability of an individual, working independently and with others, to responsibly, appropriately and effectively use technology tools to access, manage, integrate, evaluate, create and communicate information. Skills required for technology literacy. Many of the people in our country are not technically literate. They don't know that how to operate the instruments being used in Digital India. India has only 23.2 percent technological literacy rate as per India-Social Consumption-Education Survey 2014, NSS 71st round. With less than one fourth technological literacy of the total population it is no very easy to run the Digital India campaign in rural India.

LARGE POPULATION

This is probably the biggest challenge apart from the being and asset to the country it offers some unique issues, an important one being establishing person identities. There is no unique identity of a person in India. India is second populous country in the world with the population of 1.324 billion populations in 2016 as China is first in the world with the population of 1.379 billion.

POVERTY

Poverty is the scarcity or the lack of a certain amount of material possessions or money. Poverty is a multifaceted concept, which may include social, economic, and political elements. Absolute poverty, extreme poverty, or *destitution* refers to the complete lack of the means necessary to meet basic personal needs such as food, clothing and shelter. In 2012, the Indian government stated 22% of its population is below its official poverty limit. The World Bank, in 2011 based on 2005's PPPs International Comparison Program, estimated 23.6% of Indian population, or about 276 million people, and lived below \$1.25 per day on purchasing power parity. The data shows that poverty in rural India do not allow the rural people to connect with the technological advancement like Digital India as the basic need of these people is food, clothes and shelter.



DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

Difference in languages is a big challenge due to the diversity of the country. It enforces needs to do governance, in local language. Ensuring the data in local language is a big task to achieve. It makes the Digital India campaign more expensive.

BAD GEOGRAPHICAL CONDITIONS

In India the geographical conditions are not as good as compare to other developing countries. So it is also a very big challenge to achieve the goal of Digital India in the opposite geographical conditions. The population in rural India is scattered. It is not possible for the government to reach rural areas with Digital India campaign easily.

LESS NETWORK COVERAGE

Most of the Indian population lives in rural areas of the country. There is less coverage of network in these areas. Without spread in fast network in rural areas it is very difficult to cover the rural India under Digital India campaign in the country.

ACCESSIBILITY

The success of E- Governance depends upon number of the people who connect themselves with the internet for sharing information's. But available data reveals that most of the countries, even in the United States of America, the proportion of people with an internet connection at home is still under 15% in the most of Europe it is less than half of that. It is worth remembering that half the world has not even a telephone connection.

LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE

It has been estimated that about 240 million Indians have no electricity and living in dark. Only 17 percent of the Indians own smartphones. Clearly, it is still significantly more difficult to deploy broadband in rural areas. In fact, the latest data show that only 55 percent of people living in rural areas have access to the speeds that currently qualify as broadband, while 94 percent of the urban population does. Urban India with an estimated population of 444 million already has 269 million (60%) using the Internet. Rural India, with an estimated population of 906 million as per 2011 census, has only 163 million (17%) Internet users. Thus, there are potential approximately 750 million users still in rural India who are yet to become Internet users; if only they can be reached out properly.

ACCOUNTABILITY

It is believed that IT will expose the functioning of the government making officials more responsible and citizens more empowered. It exposes the secrecy of the government and leaked the important planning and programs. Nobody will be take the responsibility for the leakage of the secrecy.

CYBER CRIMES

The Government of India has notified the Information Technology Act, 2000 on October 17th this year. But many provisions of this act are vehemently criticized by the Cyber experts. They opine that it has completely left out a whole gamut of cybercrimes like stalking, harassment, theft and defamation. Besides many trader aspects of e-governance, protection of intellectual property and copyrights viz-a-viz data based are placed beyond its scope.

PRIVACY AND SECURITY

The employees working in public organizations are intimidated by the internet accessibility. They fear that either their employers or somebody else can read their personal messages, and it can lead to invasion of their privacy and individuality in spite of legal protection. "The unwanted intrusion into an individual's personal affairs violates the respect and dignity to which an individual is entitled.



CONCLUSION

India is one of the developing countries currently launched a major digital India campaign aiming to improve government processes, connect government to citizens and build interactions within civil society. Digital India campaign is a flagship programme of the government of India to shape by connectivity and technological opportunity. It is an attempt to transform India into a digitally empowered society. It is a good effort to develop India. Although, digital India campaign is facing some challenges especially in rural areas of the country. The government of India has launched this campaign already and now the responsibility of the government is to meet the challenges. These challenges are not the challenges before only the digital India but also for the government itself. Because infrastructure (especially electricity, network coverage, computers, smartphones etc.) are much needed requirement for the success of digital India campaign. With the help of this campaign more employment opportunities will open for the young generations that will boost the nation's economy. Digital India campaign is a welcome step in shaping India of the 21st century powered the citizens and to remain the citizens connect with the day to day activities of the government.

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