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12. Atmanirbhar Bharath Abhiyan – Digital India

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Abstract:

"When India speaks of becoming self-reliant, it doesn't advocate a self-centered system. In India's self-reliance; there is a concern for the whole world's happiness, cooperation and peace."

- Hon'ble PM, Shri Narendra Modi

The Digital India mission scheme has been launched by the Government of India for offering high-speed internet connections in rural areas. The Digital India Mission was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in July 01, 2015. Digital India was created with a vision of making inclusive growth in areas of products, manufacturing, electronic services, and job opportunities. It encourages the minds to set up their business.

The motive of this scheme is to cover up losses due to COVID pandemic. Initially when the mission launched in India, it was not reached and most of the people keep themselves away from using digital mode for the money transaction. But, after the pandemic, it really reaping its fruits to Indians. This project mainly intends to cull out the reason behind the launch of this scheme, its implementation, advantages and its limitations. The aim of the scheme is to improve the online infrastructure and enhancing connectivity. This thesis will elaborately discuss that whether this mission reached its vision, i.e., its motto "POWER TO EMPOWER".

Keywords: *Digital, Atmanirbhar, Empower, Pandemic.*

12.1 Introduction:

Atmanirbhar – Digital India is beneficiary schemes for already existing schemes like Make in India, Bharatmala, Sagarmala, Start-up India, and Stand-up India. Its aims to Develop India into a global supply chain hub, Build the government's trust in the private sector capabilities and prospects and to Establish 'good force multipliers' for Indian manufacturers.

The main objective of the Digital India Mission is 'Power to Empower. The three core components of Digital India Initiatives are digital delivery of services, digital infrastructure creation, and digital literacy. Read here about the objectives in detail:

- Offering high-speed internet in all gram panchayats
- Easy accessing to Common Service Centre in all the locality

The digital India initiative is the combination of ideas and thoughts into a single, comprehensive vision so that each of them is seen as part of a larger goal. We can impose trade barriers to protect and develop domestic industries. As mentioned by government,12 sectors including auto components, textiles, industrial machinery and furniture, food processing, organic farming, iron, aluminums and copper, agro-chemicals, electronics, leather and shoes. Masks, sanitizers and ventilators have been identified to give more focus to become a global supplier. It has been; seen that these products have comparative advantage as they can be produced domestically at low cost. India has huge potential in Agro-chemicals, Pharma &API's (active pharma ingredients) too. Foreign Secretary Shringala said that "The idea behind self-reliance or Atmanirbhar is not to become isolated country it is to ensure that India can emerge as the global nerve centre of the complex modern multinational supply chains. Pandemic situation gave India a new opportunity to become demonstrated and leading country in front of the world by localizing their product and by improving supply chains.

Objectives:

- To find out the achievement of this mission post COVID pandemic since 2015.

- To find out the problems on the way to complete reach of this scheme
- To suggest remedies for existing loopholes.

Research Methodology:

The present study is based on secondary data collected from different journals, magazines, various books and websites which are clearly mentioned in the bibliography.

Scope to Digital India:

- To prepare India for a knowledge future.
- To making Technology central to enabling change
- To being an Umbrella program – covering many departments.
- To find active application in businesses processes.
- To make e-learning strengthen digital education in India.

Limitations:

The self-reliant India mission of the Central Government consists of lot of schemes, programs and various scopes yet to reach. This study will only confine itself to discuss all about the Digital India mission in the new technology world.

It will further speak about the real time implementation of schemes begins from small petty shops to international transactions.

12.2 History and Background of the Mission:

Digital India was conceptualized as an umbrella, consolidating disparate efforts around connectivity, skilling and digital governance. Precursors like the National e-Governance Plan (2006), the National Optical Fibre Network (2011) and UID (2009) were revamped and relabeled. An initial sum of Rs 2510 crore was allocated to the Digital India Program and allied efforts as part of the 2015-16 budget. It also created a "brand", mirroring the Prime Minister's own Jan Jan Modi, Ghar Ghar Modi, of aspiration and inclusive transformation, reflected in the PM's Independence Day 2014 speech:

"Our dream is of a "Digital India"… for the poor and not just the elites. We aspire to provide each child, even in the most remote villages of the country, a sound education. We aim for every citizen to be able to use their phones to operate a bank account, to engage with the government, meet their day to day needs, and conduct business on the go. And for this, we must embark on the journey toward Digital India."

Launch Trials of the Mission:

Initiatives under Digital India have been frequently beset with implementation issues, sometimes due to the lack of backing legislation and policy, often due to poor planning and foresight. With the Personal Data Protection Bill mired in controversy, and no coherent national encryption policy, nor any robust cybersecurity measures, the Aadhaar database has been hit by multiple breaches. Unsecured public buckets and endpoints—one related to Indane, and another to BHIM—further damage citizens' trust and call into question the security and integrity of Digital India projects. Bharat Net, formerly the National Optical Fiber Network, was set up in 2011 with the aim of connecting 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats (GPs). The project missed the optimistic if impractical deadline of 2013, was rebranded in 2014, with a new three-phase implementation timeline. Bharat Net continues to face delays, with phase 1 infrastructure already falling apart. A 2020 report by the Standing Committee on IT bemoans the absence of measures to actually deliver internet services to end users. This is chalked up partly to the "glaring omission" of a last mile connectivity strategy, up until 2017. The report also notes bureaucratic delays in granting tenders, and in right of way permissions between the implementing bodies on the one hand and public sector bodies like the National Highways Authority of India that control connecting infrastructure like roads and cable ducts on the other. There are also severe disparities between states, with the Northeast faring the worst, partly because of challenging terrain, rain and floods, all of which should have been part of contingency planning, given that the terrain and the climate in the region are not classified information. The country's USD 200 billion digital economy is also a big part of its outreach to the world, and the permutations and combinations of new regional and international partnerships it is now a part of. As India tries to emerge once again out of the grips of a deadly pandemic, its digital growth story, with all its ups and downs, will continue to be part of its role on the world stage.

12.3 Supporting Schemes:

Make in India: The "Make in India" initiative is based on four pillars, which have been identified to give boost to entrepreneurship in India, not only in manufacturing but also other sectors.

Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyaan (Pmgdisha):

PMGDISHA is a scheme to make six crore persons in rural areas, across States/UTs, digitally literate, reaching to around 40% of rural households by covering one member from every eligible household by 31st March, 2019.

It aims to bridge the digital divide, specifically targeting the rural population including the marginalized sections of society like Scheduled Castes (SC) / Scheduled Tribes (ST), Minorities, Below Poverty Line (BPL), women and differently-abled persons and minorities.

Targeted Public Distribution System (Tpds):

The Government of India launched the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) with focus on the poor. Under the TPDS, the States were required to formulate and implement foolproof arrangements for identification of the poor for delivery of food grains and for its distribution in a transparent and accountable manner at the FPS level.

The scheme, when introduced, was intended to benefit about 6 crore poor families for whom a quantity of about 72 lakh tonnes of food grains was earmarked annually.

Accessible India Campaign and Mobile App:

Sugamya Bharat Abhiyaan or Accessible India Campaign is a nation-wide flagship campaign for achieving universal accessibility that enables people with disabilities to gain access for equal opportunity, live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life in an inclusive society. The campaign targets at enhancing the accessibility of built environment, transport system and Information and communication ecosystem.

Agrimarket App:

The mobile application has been developed with an aim to keep farmers abreast with the crop prices and discourage them to carry-out distress sale. Farmers can get information related to prices of crops in markets within 50km of their own device location using the AgriMarket Mobile App.

Reach of Mission After Covid-19:

The coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak is indirectly helping the Centre's vision of Digital India, as many service providers, including banks and telecom operators, have significantly reduced their offline operations (some have even closed) and are asking their customers to embrace the digital form for any assistance. This trend could possibly help in speeding up digital transformation in the long term. But, the challenge is that not many customers are prepared for this drastic change.

The proactive implementation of digital platforms such as Arogya Setu and e-office has not just tracked, traced and taken care of corona virus patients but at the time of restrictions has helped in business connectivity. Former President of India Ramnath Govind, in a meeting stated that, 'technology will be a key enabler in that journey in coming days'. He further observed that while the pandemic has changed the world in terms of social relations, healthcare, education and many other aspects, the proactive digital interventions have allowed operational continuity.

12.4 Benefits:

- The Digital India Scheme made it possible to link 12000 post offices of rural areas electronically.
- This scheme increases the electronic transactions concerned with e-governance.
- In almost 1.15 Lakh Gram Panchayats, an optical fiber network of Rs 2, 74,246 Km has been connected under Bharat Net Program.
- A Common Service Center has been operative under the National e-governance project of the Indian government that provides access to information and communication technology. Through computer and Internet access, the CSCs are creating multimedia content on various

matters like e-governance, health, education, entertainment, telemedicine, and other government and private services.

- The digital village area was created with well-equipped facilities like solar lighting, LED assembly unit, sanitary napkin production unit, and Wi-Fi couple.
- Internet data is a major tool for making the delivery of services and the urban internet penetration. It has reached 64% almost.
- Presently, the number of daily active internet users has crossed 300 million from 10-15 million daily users.

Achievements of Digital India:

a. **MyGov Platform –** This unique platform for citizen engagement in governance has been implemented as a medium for citizens to exchange ideas/ suggestions with the Government. Through this platform, the Government of India gets feedback, inputs, advice and ideas from citizens for policy decisions, new initiatives like Digital India, Swachch Bharat, Clean Ganga, Make in India, Skill Development, etc. MyGov has also played a key role in reaching out to citizens for the Smart Cities Mission and has facilitated consultations up to the Gram Panchayat and Municipalities levels for the design of the New Education Policy.

b. **Jeevan Pramaan –** Pensioners can now conveniently submit their life certificates online through this portal. The certificates are stored in the Life Certificate Repository for making it available anytime & anywhere for pensioners and the Pension Disbursing Agencies. Over eight (8) lakh pensioners are already registered on this portal.

c. **E-Greetings Portal –** is being used to send e-Greetings by Government departments on various occasions like Gandhi Jayanti, Diwali, Teacher day, Independence day, etc. Over 10 lakh e-Greetings have been sent through this portal. Over 42 greeting categories and 450 cards are available on the portal to send greetings in electronic form. **E-Books Platform (eBasta) –** is an electronic platform of e-Books for schools. Currently, 501 e-Contents and 15 E-Basta (collection of books) are available on this platform.

d. **Digital Locker System –** ensures that citizens are not asked to provide documents/certificates, which are already available with some department/institution of the government. Currently, over ten (10) lakh digital lockers have been opened where citizens have self-

uploaded over 11.8 lakh documents and 52.09 lakh documents have been issued. Government Departments are being assisted to onboard/integrate them with the Digital Locker.

e. **E-Sign –** would facilitate digitally signing a document through online authentication mechanism. So far, 1.75 lakh e-Signatures have been issued. e-Mudhra and CDAC are empaneled to offer e-Sign services.

f. **e-Hospital –** aims to reduce the anxiety of patients and their attendees by making available various online services such as appointment, accessing diagnostic reports, payment of fees and enquiring blood availability, etc. e-Hospital is currently functional in four (4) Central Government hospitals namely AIIMS, Dr. RML Hospital, Safdarjung & NIMHANS hospitals, and being implemented in 11 major Central Government hospitals.

g. **National Scholarships Portal –** provides a centralized platform for application, approval and disbursement of scholarships to students under any scholarship scheme. Over 67 lakh applications have been submitted on this portal for 19 registered scholarship schemes of 7 Ministries / Departments. The goal is to bring all scholarship schemes under this portal.

h. **Digitize India Platform –** allows government organizations in the country to digitize its records and documents through contributions of ordinary citizens. So far, through over 14,088 contributors; 2.6 lakhs documents & 24.1 Lakh snippets have been utilized for digitization.

i. **Approval of new Mission Mode Projects –** Thirteen new Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) have been approved to offer citizens a wider range of electronic services. These MMPs include Financial Inclusion, Rural Development, Social Benefits, e-Sansad, e-Vidhaan, Agriculture 2.0, Roads & Highways Information System (RAHI), Central Armed Para Military Forces (CAPF), Women & Child Development, and National Mission on Education through ICT (NMEICT), National GIS (NGIS), e-Bhasha and Urban Governance.

j. **Policies/Schemes announced –** Several policies related to Software development, electronic services and promotion of Electronic Manufacturing have been announced that include –

- Policy & Framework on adoption of Open-Source Software for GoI

- Policy on Open APIs for GoI
- Policy on collaborative application development by opening source code of Govt. applications
- Application development and re-engineering guidelines for cloud-ready applications
- **Electronics Development Fund –** It has been created and is being housed with M/s Canbank Venture Capital Fund Ltd to support venture capital funds which will in turn fund startups.
- **Visvesvaraya PhD Scheme** for Electronics and IT
- **Electronics Development Fund –** It has been created and is being housed with M/s Canbank Venture Capital Fund Ltd to support venture capital funds which will in turn fund startups.
- **Electronic Manufacturing Cluster Scheme –** To support creation of world-class infrastructure, in-principle approval to 18 clusters and final approvals to 5 clusters have been accorded.
- **Visvesvaraya PhD Scheme** for Electronics and IT – So far, 1436 PhDs in addition to 11 Young Faculty Research Fellowships have been supported, with the motive of promoting R&D and innovation in Electronics and IT.

k. **Rural BPO Scheme –** To facilitate ICT enabled employment generation throughout the country, BPOs would be set up in the north-eastern states under North East BPO Promotion Scheme (around 5000 seats) and in Tier II and Tier III cities of the country under the India BPO Promotion Scheme (over 48,000 seats). The India BPO Promotion Scheme will create an employment opportunity for about 1, 45,000 persons. In the Expression of Interest issued, 78 companies have shown interest for 1, 25,000 seats in 190 locations of the country.

l. **Common Service Centres –** In the last 18 months, CSCs operating as front end service delivery outlet in rural areas has increased from 1.34 lacs to 1.44 lacs. The total transacting CSCs increased from 63433 to 94455 providing e-gov services to the citizens. CSCs acting as Banking Correspondents increased from 11244 to 27652, which are making around 1.36 crores transactions in a month, through which, in the last 6 months, CSCs have earned a commission of Rs 23 crores. CSCs are also working with 15 Insurance companies, doing a premium collection of Rs 70 lakhs per day.

m. **National Digital Literacy Mission –** aims to provide IT training to enable the citizens to use IT and related applications for their livelihood earning and employability has been approved. The Scheme was launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister at Ranchi, Jharkhand on 21st August, 2014.
n. **DISHA (Digital Saksharta Abhiyan) –** has objective to make additional 42.5 lakh persons digitally literate in a period of four years. Under the Disha and National Digital Literacy Mission, 12.25 lakh persons have been trained and 4.75 lakh candidates have been certified (by NIELIT).
o. **Upsurge in Make-in-India in Electronics –** So far, under the Modified Special Incentive Package Scheme (M-SIPS), DeitY has received 156 proposals with investment of over Rs. 1 lakh 13 thousand crores. Many major well-known brands have submitted their applications under this scheme, to avail the benefits. This policy has been made more investor friendly and extended for five years up to July 2020.
p. **Revamping of Existing Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) –** Some of the existing MMPs were developed many years ago. Their software applications are being assessed and revamped by leveraging new technology platforms, such as Cloud, Mobile, GIS, etc., to facilitate delivery of integrated services involving multiple departments, and enhance the quality of services that can efficiently cater to the needs of citizens.

Disadvantages:

- **Lack of infrastructure:** Connecting every village with high-speed internet requires vital amount of investment and infrastructure. The slow and delayed infrastructure in the country's and the availability of low spectrum makes it difficult.
- **Digital illiteracy:** Most of the citizen of India especially of rural areas still does not have enough knowledge about internet and its uses. Fully fledged digitization is a team work and requires administration changes and awareness campaigns backed by government especially in rural areas.
- **Administrative roadblocks:** After so many efforts by the government red tapeism is still prevalent in the country, specific clearance issue is still faced by many companies, hence in order to

remove regulatory road block across all the state at reasonable price becomes important.

- **Cyber Crime:** Cyber Crime is the major threat to the people of India since there are less or no internet privacy laws, people usually get exposed to cybercrimes.
- **Net neutrality:** Net neutrality making internet accessible to each and every citizen of India, however the issue is still on the table.

12.5 Conclusion:

From the discussions of the foregoing chapters, it is evident that as the coins have two sides, though there are few difficulties and increasing rate of crimes are there, it is proved that the digital mission made work easy and time saving in the hasty world. Digital technologies can also create significant value in areas such as government services and the job market. Moving government subsidy transfers, procurement, and other transactions online can enhance public-sector efficiency and productivity, while creating online labor marketplaces could considerably improve the efficiency of India's fragmented and largely informal job market.

Digitization plays most important role in four sectors viz. agriculture, healthcare, retail, and logistics. While analyzing the discussions in Chapter 3 above, it is further evident that since 2015, when the scheme was launches, it reached its height only during the COVID -19 pandemic. In these ways the mission launched by the Central Government proved its need.

Suggestions:

In the developing technological world, it is necessary that each and every citizen of India must adopt themselves to the digital world. At the same time, while using the online mode, one must protect themselves from cybercrimes also. Digital Literacy is essentially the ability to understand and make use of digital technologies. In the modern world, this is increasingly important, as the Internet and digital technology is slowly becoming an essential component of many people's lives. Digital literacy is a skill that is important for everyday use, job performance, and personal endeavors.

Many digital literacy skills used to be considered noteworthy or impressive, and are now seen as necessary or standard skills. If you don't want to fall behind, you need to be proactive in your learning of digital technologies. My suggestion is that awareness of availability of technologies and procedure to use the same must be created among the general public. Even now most of the rural people, does not know to use ATM cards. Once the process to attain the fruits of technology reaches the common man, it will be concluded that the mission reached its mission.

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