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A Study of Digital Literacy in India

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Abstract

India is a developing country. Digital Literacy is a dream which is created by the Government of India so that every citizen can use government services electronically, even in remote and rural areas, by increasing Internet connectivity. Government focus more on educating each and every child of India, similar importance was required to raise level of educated and uneducated Indians by providing them knowledge. The initiative will enable people to get engaged in the innovation process which is very much needed to move forward. New technologies and machines that were being used in the world was something very much required for the Indian growth, But to implement this is a great challenge. There are many barriers in the way of successful implementation of digital illiteracy like poor infrastructure, low internet speed, lack of coordination among various departments etc.. These challenges need to be addressed to achieve the full potential of this program. It requires a lot of efforts and dedication. If these initiatives are implemented properly, it will open various new opportunities for the citizens of the country. Children slowly were made aware with the latest gadgets and techniques by introducing various related subjects in their curriculum. But in most of the offices, where thousands of educated managers were employed, they found themselves struggling with the equipment's of latest technologies and software. Many people who never went to the offices also required these trainings.

Key Words: Digital Literacy, Government Initiatives, Infrastructure, Opportunities.

Introduction

Every country today requires a global platform for its growth. To get connected globally and upgrade itself with latest technologies is required for all. Countries are in competition with each other and face challenges when it comes to prove their position globally. Digital India was a flagship programme 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 this programme is to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. It is one of the biggest step by government of India to motivate the citizen of India and connect Indian economy to knowledge savvy world.

Literature Review

A number of research papers gives a detailed insight about the role of digital India and the implications of this project in India. Rani (2016) concluded that the digital India project provides a huge opportunity to use the latest technology to redefine India the paradigms of service industry. It also pointed out that many projects may require some transformational process, refinements to achieve the desired service level objectives. Midha(2016) concluded that digital India is a great plan to develop India for knowledge future but its improper implementation due to inaccessibility and inflexibility to requisite can lead to its failure. Though digital India programme is facing number of challenges yet if properly implemented it can make the best future of every citizen. So we Indians should work together to shape the knowledge economy.

Defining Digital World And Digital Literacy

According to Paul Gilster in 1997 - Digital Literacy is about ' ability to understand and use information in multiple formats from a wide range of sources when it is presented via computers'. As Henry Jenkin describes, 'Traditionally we would not consider people literate if they could read but not write. And today we should not consider people literate if they can consume but not produce media.' And as Seattle Goodwill defines, that Digital Literacy involves the knowledge, skills and attitudes to effectively navigate, critically evaluate create or adapt information using a range of digital technologies. These definitions define digital literacy as reading and writing in various media forms. These forms involve knowledge of media and digital world. This knowledge keeps evolving out of information related to the world of Media.

Digital Literacy therefore is an ongoing process. One learns by getting information about new technologies and then by achieving various skills in executing that knowledge.

Research Methodology

The paper is based on the secondary data and the information is retrieved from the internet via journals, research papers and expert opinions on the same subject matter.



Objective Of The Paper

1. To understand the concept of digital India programme.
2. To figure out the need and importance of this programme.
3. To find out the challenges faced in implementation.
4. To find out practical solutions and ideas to fulfill the vision of a digital India a reality.

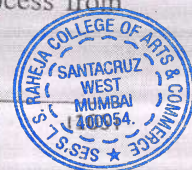
Pillars Of Digital India Programme

Under Digital India programme , following key initiatives are in progress .

1. Broadband Highways
2. Universal Access to Mobile Connectivity
3. Public Internet Access Programme
4. e Governance
5. e Kranti
6. Information for AllMyGov.
7. Electronics Manufacturing
8. IT for Jobs
9. Early Harvesting Programmes

Schemes run by Government and Aid provided by NGOs and other agencies

1. Make in India September 25, 2014
 2. Digital India July 1st, 2015
 3. Skill India July 15th, 2015
 4. Smart Cities April 29th, 2015
 5. Digi Locker, to help citizens to digitally store documents like PAN Cards, Passport, Mark sheet, degree etc.
- **Attendance.gov.in** : Website launched by PM Narendra Modi to keep record of attendance of Government employees.
 - **My Gov.in** : It is a platform to share inputs and ideas on matters of policy and governance.
 - **Swachh Bharat Mission Mobile App** : App used by Government and people to achieve cleanliness goals.
 - **e sign Framework** : Allows citizens to sign a document online.
 - **e- Hospital** : Online payment of fees in hospital, diagnostics reports online.
 - **National Scholarship Portal** : One step solution for end to end scholarship process from submission of form to disbursement of scholarship.



Benefits Of Digital India Programme

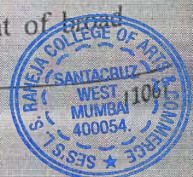
Digital India programme is the beginning of digital revolution. It is a big initiative to empower people of the country. Main benefits of this programme are-

1. The digital India mission would make all the government services available to people of country through common service delivery outlets. This would lead to inclusive growth by enabling access to education , healthcare and government services to all the citizens of the country. People can get better advise on health services. Those who can't afford school/ colleges can get chance to online education.
2. There would be more transparency as all the data would be made online and would be accessible to citizens of the country.
3. E-Governance will help in reducing corruption and getting things done quickly.
4. Digital locker facility will help citizen to digitally store their important documents like Pan card ,passport, mark sheets etc.
5. It will help in getting things done easily. For example when we need to open an account, we will give official details of our digital locker, where they can verify our documents. By this we can save time and the pain of standing in long queues for getting our documents would be reduced.
6. It will help in decreasing documentation and reducing paper work.
7. Digital India mission is away for cashless transactions.
8. It can help small businesses. People can use online tools to expand their business.

Challenges

More than a year has been passed since Digital India mission has been announced but it is facing multiple challenges in successful implementation. Few of the challenges are-

1. High level of digital illiteracy is the biggest challenge in the success of digital India programme. Low digital literacy is key hindrance in adaptation of technologies . According to ASSOCHAM-Deloitte report on Digital India, November, 2016, around 950million Indians are still not on internet.
2. Making Digital India scheme known and creating an awareness among common masses about its benefits is also a great challenge.
3. It is a mammoth task to have connectivity with each and every village , town and city. Connecting 250000 Gram Panchayats through National Optical Fibre is not an easy task. The biggest challenge is ensuring that each panchayat point of broad



band is fixed up and functional. It is found that 67% of NOFN points are non functional even at the pilot stage.

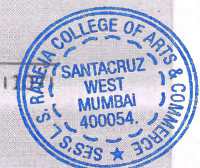
4. A key component under this vision is high speed of internet as a core utility to facilitate online delivery of various services. India has low internet speed. According to third quarter 2016 Akamai report on internet speed, India is at the 105th position in the world in average internet speed. This rank is the lowest in entire Asia Pacific region.
5. According to ASSOCHOM- Deloitte report, the issue pertaining to taxation and regulatory guidelines have proved to road block in realizing the vision of Digital India. Some of the common policy hurdles include lack of clarity in FDI policies have impacted the growth of ecommerce.
6. The biggest challenge faced by Digital India programme is slow and delayed infrastructure development. India's digital infrastructure is comprehensively inadequate to tackle growing increase in digital transactions. India needs over 80 lakh hotspots as against the availability of about 31000 hotspot at present to reach global level, according to ASSOCHOM-Deloitte report.
7. The private participation in government projects in India is poor because of long and complex regulatory processes.

Suggestions

Digital India campaign can't be successful on its own. Policy changes are needed to make digital India a reality.

Few of the suggestions are-

1. Digital literacy is first step in empowering citizens. People should know how to secure their online data.
2. To make this programme successful, a massive awareness programme has to be conducted. There is pressing need to educate and inform the citizens, especially in rural and remote areas, about the benefits of internet services to increase the growth of internet usage.
3. Digital divide needs to be addressed.
4. Manufacturing content is not government's strength. This mission needs content and service partnerships with telecom companies and other firms.
5. PPP models must be explored for sustainable development of digital infrastructure.



Conclusions

The vision of digital India is grand. It is a huge step towards building a truly empowered nation. If successful, it transform citizen access to multimedia information ,content and services. However the goal is still far away since most of the nine pillars of digital India mission are facing serious challenges in implementation . It is imperative that focused persistent attention must be given to each and every pillar so that this programme does not end up in failure. In fact we all should be mentally prepared for the change and be ready to face the challenges in

implementing this policy , only then it would be possible to make this vision a reality.

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