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Digital Empowerment through 'Maximum Governance, Minimum Government'

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India today is at the cusp of a digital revolution. According to the Report of the Ministry of Electronics & IT, Government of India, 'India's Trillion Dollar Digital Opportunity', India has witnessed the second fastest growth rate of digital adoption out of 17 countries of the world over the period of 2014-17. The story of India's digital transformation is one of an ICT - led development by use of technology that is affordable, inclusive and transformative. By ensuring digital access, digital inclusion and digital empowerment, the Digital India Programme has harnessed digital technologies to bring about a positive change towards good governance that is easy, economical, transparent

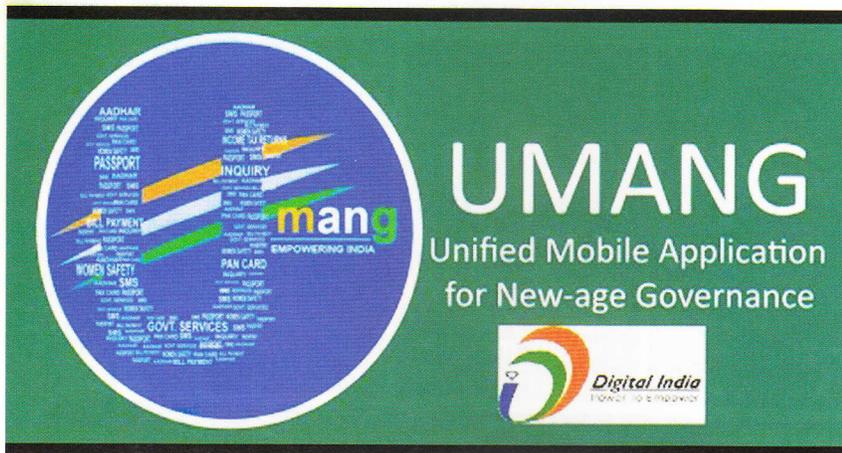
and efficient governance. In fact, it would be correct to say that digital delivery of services to citizens forms the driving force to the next generation growth trajectory towards a robust and knowledge-based economy. India is now poised for the next phase of growth – creation of tremendous economic value and empowerment of citizens as new digital applications permeate sector after sector.

Digital Empowerment through 'Maximum Governance, Minimum Government' is not a mere slogan. Instead, it is a conscious strategy towards ushering reforms in governance and transforming India by making governance simple, fast, flexible and effective by application of innovations and technology. This also leads to

participative governance, a key element of a responsible democracy. The aim is not just to reduce the human interface in delivering services to the people but also to enhance the experience of the citizens, while also providing them with enormous opportunities.

To achieve this, the Digital India Programme of the Government is playing an important role in empowering citizens. Through the application of digital technologies, the Government is undertaking specific initiatives to improve the delivery systems to ensure that the benefits of the welfare schemes of the government reach directly to the targeted beneficiaries, including the poorest of the poor in a convenient manner without any pilferage. The combination of Jandhan bank accounts,

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mobile phones and digital identity through Aadhaar i.e. **JAM trinity** is helping the poor to get benefits directly into their bank account. A total of Rs. 7.34 lakh crore have been disbursed through Aadhaar based Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) to beneficiaries of 439 Government schemes which, have led to saving of over Rs. 1.41 lakh crore cumulatively by March 2019, by removing fictitious claimants. DBT brings in efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability in the Government system.

Common Services Centres (CSCs), as Digital kiosks, are providing more than 350 types of services to citizens in rural areas. CSCs are a unique PPP model where micro-entrepreneurs are creating sustainable livelihoods and bringing about a digital revolution in the villages of India. A vast network of over 3.45 lakh CSCs, providing online government and non-government services, have created entrepreneurial opportunities for nearly one million village-level entrepreneurs, including over 60,000 women entrepreneurs.

The world's largest digital literacy programme, **Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA)**, is bridging the digital divide and helping people to access benefits of the digital world. So far, 2.2 crore persons have been imparted digital literacy under the programme.

MyGov is an example of the Government's commitment towards participative governance, bringing citizens and Government closer to one

another by democratizing the decision-making. Today, MyGov has over 80 lakh users and over 2 lakh submissions have been made in 815 tasks.

The **BPO** movement for smaller towns with 219 BPO units functioning across 97 small cities and 27 States and UTs is facilitating a balanced regional growth, and creating job opportunities in small towns.

In Digital India, aspirations meet opportunities to create an equitable and sustainable growth model as the country is poised today to transit from a service economy to an innovative economy. One of the ways to meet the aspirations and needs of more than 1.3 billion citizens in a transparent, efficient and cost effective manner is through the use of innovation and technology. Digital India Programme has resulted in rolling out of **public digital platforms** and use of public data for open innovation models to create new opportunities for businesses and a fresh approach to problem-solving. India is leveraging public digital platforms to serve the needs of citizens and businesses to derive more economic value and usher in greater transparency in governance, creating a large demand for skilled jobs for the youth and foster economic and social inclusion.

Even though a late entrant, India is set to leapfrog in Digital Payments bypassing the era of Cards and NetBanking. The experience of **UPI** has transformed the digital payment ecosystem in a span of two years,

various private players are on-board on unique payment platform that is not only eliminating friction of cash from economy but also creating a new ecosystem for new business models, such as flow-based lending, credit scoring, insurance writing etc., providing sustainable solutions to serve the needs of the citizens. Transactions on the BHIM/UPI platform have increased in volume from 70 lakh to 7996 lakh per month over last two years.

Another prominent Digital Platform is Government e-Marketplace. (**GeM**) is attempting to increase the efficiency in public procurement by increasing transparency through an online platform for sourcing. This platform is acting as a single localised national market under one roof, where all buyers and sellers can interact and carry out their business across the country regardless of their geography, making GeM a truly digital tool of empowerment and entrepreneurship. This is boosting the growth of MSMEs, small manufacturers and other sellers. As Digital India aims to bring in maximum transparency by minimising Government's human transactional interface, GeM has streamlined the public procurement system. At present, GeM has 36,068 Buyer Organisations, 238,183 Sellers and Service Providers, 993,908 Products, and 10,749 Services.

India has moved ahead from the era of dongles/keys required for digital signatures with the advent of Aadhaar based eSign, that is an easy, efficient and secure way to sign and authenticate documents digitally. This eKYC based authentication enhances service delivery experience of citizens and can be used anywhere, anytime. Another platform that provides a paperless, secure eco system for storing original certificates/documents online is Digilocker. The cloud based platform provides secure access to billions of documents/certificates online issued by various authorities, thereby eliminating the need for physical documents. To facilitate ease of access to government services and fast track mobile governance in the country, a

unified platform has been developed, Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance (UMANG) that offers over 360 services of 73 Departments and 18 States to the citizens through their mobile phones.

The digital transformation resulting from digitisation is all-encompassing, with the consequence that sector-specific strategies developed within silos are not applicable anymore. Therefore, the Government needs to build public digital platforms to foster collaboration amongst sectors and to devise and jointly implement policies/programmes. Emerging Technologies, such as **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**, **Internet of things (IoT)**s and big data analytics are expected to bring in mass disruption. The Government has to prepare to leverage the opportunities so unleashed. Business as usual will not suffice with new emerging technologies having a phenomenal sweep in all sectors with 'winner takes all' characteristics. Digital India is embracing change and fostering innovation. To accelerate the disruption, the Government is working closely in all sectors to leverage the opportunities of transformative technology. To leverage Artificial Intelligence and related emerging technologies in the interest of citizens and businesses, a **National Programme on 'Artificial Intelligence'** has been envisaged, to be catalysed by the establishment of **National Centre on Artificial Intelligence** as a hub along with **Centres of Excellence**.

In addition, the Government has to increasingly move beyond conventional aspects while formulating public policies, expanding beyond traditional domains to include new areas, such as, privacy protection, disrupting software product development, IP creation and fostering quick adoption of digital technologies, leading to trust and enhanced customer experience. Under Digital India programme, the Government is working on privacy protection through enabling Personal Data Protection Framework. The advent of technologies and its fast adoption has generated huge and



personalised data that can be used to alleviate societal problems relating to areas, such as, health, food security, transport and urban planning. In order to ensure growth of the digital economy while keeping personal data of citizens secure and protected, the Government is working towards formulation of **Personal Data Protection Framework**. The **National Policy on Software Products** has also been formulated that envisages creation of a robust Indian Software Product development ecosystem, thereby enabling IP driven holistic growth of the IT industry. The policy aims to develop India as the global software product hub, driven by innovation, improved commercialisation, sustainable Intellectual Property (IP), promoting technology start-ups and specialized skill sets. It also aims at alignment with other Government initiatives, such as, Start-up India, Make in India and Digital India, Skill India etc so as to create Indian Software products Industry of USD ~70-80 billion with direct and indirect employment of ~3.5 million by 2025.

While India is leveraging its strength in IT Services and aiming to become a software product nation, the momentum in electronics manufacturing has been maintained. 268 manufacturing units of mobile phones and accessories creating almost 6.7 lakh direct and indirect jobs. The **National Policy on Electronics, 2019** aims to further promote domestic manufacturing and export to achieve a turnover of approx Rs. 26 lakh crore by 2025.

The outreach of digital services has ushered in greater connect, inclusion, convenience, choice and savings to the citizens from all walks of life. In the next phase of growth based on digitisation, public, societal platforms will play a critical role in triggering and enabling solutions to the problems of the common citizens from start-ups and digital innovators. These platforms will not only act as a tool of enhanced empowerment for the citizens but will also act as catalysts to accelerate capturing the value of the digital economy. Towards this end Central and State Governments, private sector and social sector organizations can come together to build strategic public-private-social partnerships. Digital transformation can, thus, be government-led and business-enabled in some domains and government-enabled and business-led in others.

Digital India, utilising the power of digital platforms, has, thus, demonstrated a successful case study, where developing economies, through embracing technologies, will be able to leapfrog towards sustainable and inclusive growth. Having built a strong foundation of digital infrastructure and vastly expanded digital access and outreach, India is now poised for a robust growth of digital technologies in all sectors of the economy that will lead to creation of up to \$1 trillion of economic value from the digital economy in 2025. □

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