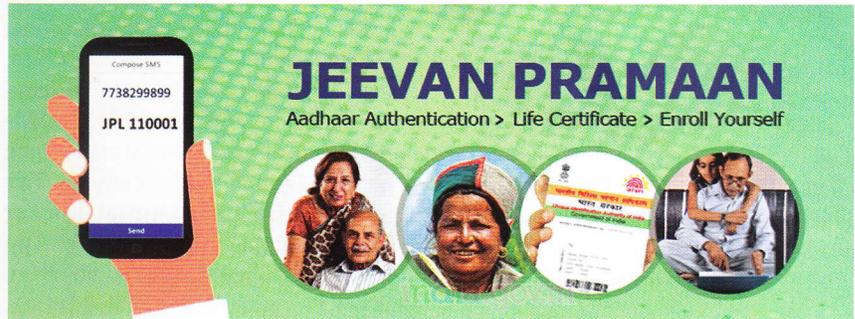


Empowering Citizens Through e-Services

Ravi Shankar Prasad

The Digital India programme, launched in 2015, takes forward the pioneering vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, for ensuring digital access, digital inclusion, bridging the digital divide and digital empowerment, leading to India's transformation into a knowledge based economy and digitally empowered society. The programme has ensured the digital inclusion of all through providing access of robust digital infrastructure created under it, facilitating connect with rest of the world. It has ensured citizen participation and empowerment with the technology that is **transformative, affordable and sustainable**. The Government is committed to provide governance and services to our citizens in an affordable and efficient manner within the shortest span of time. India sitting on the robust foundation of digital infrastructure and expanded digital access, 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.

India is among the top countries that have experienced the fastest digital adoption momentum. This has been achieved through a combination of government action, business innovation and investment, and new digital applications that are transforming and permeating a multitude of activities and types of work, the impact of which is being felt in all aspects of life for citizens. Digital technologies are vital for the inclusive growth of a country like India, which is at the



peak of its demographic dividend. Our Government is committed to provide governance and services to our citizens in an affordable and efficient manner within the shortest span of time. The only way in which this can be accomplished is through the efficient use of innovation and technology.

Presently, digital transformation of India is on an exponential growth path and aiming towards a trillion dollar digital economy by 2025. Government is taking strategic steps to realize the Trillion Dollar Digital Economy potential. One of the aspects of the Digital India programme is to make technology central to enable change through deployment of emerging technologies.

Digital India in the last five years was implemented with a dedicated focus on making use of digital tools and techniques for the delivery of **Paperless, Presence-less and Cash-less governance** in the country. **Aadhaar** has provided

a cradle to grave digital identity that is unique, lifelong, online and authenticable. Aadhaar enabled DigiLocker is enabling paperless governance by providing public documents to citizens digitally and facilitating consent-based data sharing for availing services. Aadhaar enabled eSign provides ease of authentication for digital transactions and thereby, eliminates the need for physical presence. Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AEPS) facilitates banking services and digital payment. Aadhaar is the largest de-duplication mechanism for government schemes in the country. Its impact on **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)** scheme alone has led to the integration of 440 schemes and saving of INR 1,41,677 crore. The de-duplication and removal of ghost beneficiaries have been remarkable in all schemes integrated with DBT. The benefits of DBT in citizen centric services, such as LPG Distribution, Public Distribution System (PDS), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment

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Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Fertilizer Subsidy and National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) stood out in public savings.

The coverage of Aadhaar (123 crore), Jan Dhan Yojana (36 crore) and mobile connections (118 crore) has moulded the digital profile of India. Each of the individual component of the JAM Trinity stands out as an excellent enabler of the portfolio of citizen centric services collectively as well as in individual capacity. **Jan Dhan Yojana** has provided financial inclusion to unbanked people and thereby, it has enabled banking, pension (PMSBY and PMJJBY) and insurance (Atal Pension Yojana) services to common citizens. **Mobile** has also accelerated the accessibility of government services in rural hinterland and has helped tremendously in bridging the digital divide.

Digital delivery of services has been strengthened with the help of 3.47 lakh **Common Services Centres (CSCs)**, spread across 2.3 lakh Gram Panchayats in the country that provides digital access to over 350 services especially in rural areas at an affordable cost. These centres have also led to empowerment of marginalized sections of the society by creating jobs for over 12 lakh people and by promoting rural entrepreneurs including women VLEs. CSCs have also undertaken Stree Swabhiman initiative to create awareness about menstrual health and have set up over 204 sanitary pad units.

Digital India has taken the definition of e-governance to higher trajectory, wherein, differentiated strategy was adopted technically and a remarkable shift from **project-based approach to platform-based approach** resulted in development of **public digital platform**-based ecosystem, delivering a plethora of common services for citizens. Various new citizen centric, transformational digital platforms have been developed, such as Bharat Interface for Money-Unified Payment Interface (**BHIM-UPI**), Government e-Marketplace (**GeM**), Goods and Services Tax Network (**GSTN**), Digital Locker (**DigiLocker**), Unified Mobile App for New-Age Governance (**UMANG**), Jeevan Pramaan, e-Hospital, MyGov, e-National Agriculture Market (**e-NAM**), Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (**SWAYAM**) and National Scholarship Portal (**NSP**) etc.

Some of the important citizen centric initiatives of Digital India programme are explained in brief below:

Direct Benefit Transfer

- Enables transfer of government benefits directly to the bank account of beneficiaries
- Led to the integration of 440 schemes and the disbursal of INR 7,33,981 crore, resulting in savings of INR 1,41,677 crore
- The number of transactions for financial year 2019-20 alone, stands at 21 crore

DigiLocker

- Enables paperless governance by providing private space on public cloud to citizens for storing their public and private documents
- 352+ crore documents are available at DigiLocker
- 200+ Types of documents are available
- 2.3 crore users are making use of DigiLocker
- 124 Issuers and 34 Requestor organizations are active

UMANG

- Provides one mobile app for availing government services through backend integration with several government applications and databases
- 362 Services are made available from 73 Departments and 18 States
- It has 1.1+ crore downloads and 4.5+ rating (max. 5)

e-Hospital

- Facilitates automation in hospitals through 20+ modules of Hospital Management Information System, namely patient registration, IPD, Pharmacy, Blood bank etc
- 322 hospitals are integrated with e-Hospital
- 9.8 crore patients have been registered

e-NAM

- Integrated 585 Agricultural Mandis across 16 States and 2 Union Territories
- 1.64 crore farmers and 1.2 lakh merchants are onboarded
- Digital payment service is also enabled and orders worth INR 70,000 crore have been transacted

SWAYAM

- A massive online open courses (MOOCs) platform, it offers more than 2000+ programme categories
- Allows credits to students on the completion of course. The credit is recognised by Universities

National Scholarship Portal

- Provides facility of multiple scholarship schemes through a single online portal and includes application submission from students, verification by School Administration, approval by Authorities and disbursal through DBT
- 20 Scholarship schemes stand integrated
- 1.08 crore students have been benefited in 2018-19

PMGDISHA

- Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan has been started with an aim to make at least one person per family digitally literate
- Target is to train 6 crore persons in rural areas
- 2.2 crore persons have been trained and 1.3 crore trained persons have taken certification

India BPO Scheme

A unique initiative to incentivise BPO employment in smaller towns (Tier 2/3 towns) that covers 108 cities and approved 276 units

- 51,279 seats allocated and 26,331 seats became operational
- Created around 30,000 direct employment

GeM

- An ecommerce platform for public procurement of common use goods and services
- 9.5 lakh products are placed for sale on the platform
- 2.3 lakh sellers and service providers are active on the platform
- For the first time, many sellers from small towns are participating in public procurement due to end-to-end automation

Digital Payment

- Many innovative digital payment tools, namely BHIM-UPI, BHIM-Aadhaar, BHARAT QR Code, National Electronic Toll Collections etc., have been implemented
- Digital payments transactions on UPI including BHIM-UPI has grown 8,000 times from October 2016 to March 2019

Jeevan Pramaan

- Facilitates pensioners to submit their life certificate digitally from anywhere, anytime basis
- 2.58 crore pensioners have submitted their life certificate using Jeevan Pramaan

eCourts Mission Mode Project

- Promotes automation in Courts including Supreme Court, High Courts, District Courts and District Court Complexes
- Several services like case status, cause list, court order, caveat search etc
- National Judicial Data Grid is also implemented, which analyses the data gathered from all integrated courts and shows all India figures through dashboard

MyGov

- Facilitates participatory governance in the country by providing a common digital platform, where citizens can share their views on government programmes and schemes
- 80 lakh active users are contributing through MyGov
- 39 lakh comments are received in 800 discussion threads



small towns such as Jammu, Srinagar, Sopore, Baddi, Raipur, Sagar, Mohali, Jaipur, Unnao, Siliguri, Kohima, Shillong, Auroville, Hosur, Madurai, Mayiladuthurai. As of now, 222 BPO units are functioning across 97 small cities and 27 States and UTs. It has the potential to create employment opportunities to around 1.5 lakh persons across the country.

Under the Digital India programme, India has witnessed a steep growth in **mobile manufacturing** units. From just 2 units of mobile phones manufacturing in 2014, 268 manufacturing units of mobile phones and accessories are now operational in India, resulting in employment for about 6.7 lakh persons (direct and indirect). The production of Mobile Handsets, LCD/ LED TVs and Light Emitting Diode (LED) Products in the country has gone up significantly. This has not only given impetus to manufacturing but also empowered citizens with enhanced employment opportunities.

To realise the credo of the Government in terms of digital inclusion of all, digital growth for all and digital trust among all, Digital India is getting restructured and revamped to raise its bar and in this direction, several new and innovative schemes, projects and services have been planned. Some of the major planned initiatives are India Enterprise Architecture (IndEA),

As per the data from Electronic Transaction Aggregation and Analysis Layer (eTAAL), the portfolio of electronic services has grown to 3,702 and an average number of electronic transactions on a daily basis (till April 2019) is around 9.5 crore, which can be attributed to both i.e. growing number of transactions as well as increase in consumption of e-Services. This also signifies that the benefits of Digital India have percolated down to a large section of the society.

The **BPO movement** for smaller towns is facilitating balanced regional growth and creating job opportunities. It is changing the digital profile of the nation as the BPO industry which used to be metro centric earlier but has now dispersed and is permeating into



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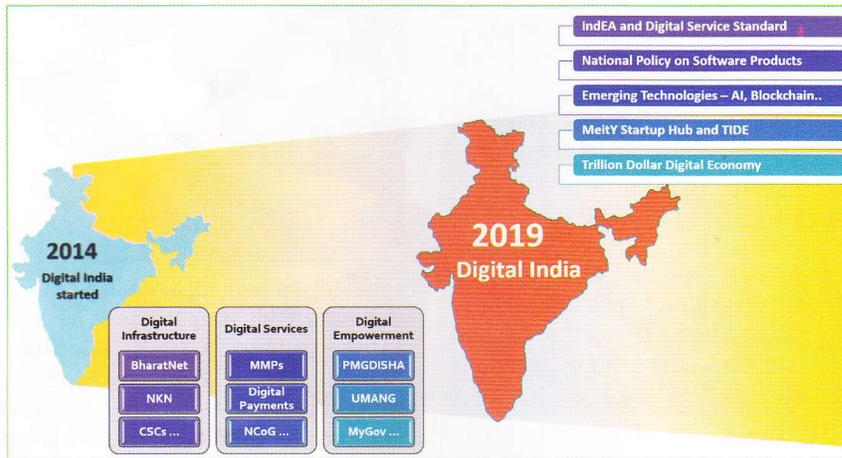


Figure: Raising the bar of Digital India

National Programme on Artificial Intelligence, open API platform, on-click consent driven address change in all public databases, MeitY Startup Hub and GIS based decision support system for Districts, etc.

IndEA aims to offer One Government experience to citizens and businesses by establishing the best-in-class architectural governance, processes and practices with optimal utilisation of ICT infrastructure and applications. Digital Service Standard (DSS) has been notified, which lays down the desirable quality of digital services for an enhanced citizen experience that needs to be achieved by all government entities. A National Software Products Mission is planned

to implement **National Policy on Software Products – 2019** that inter-alia includes nurturing 10,000 technology startups in software product industry and upskilling of 1,000,000 IT professionals. Artificial Intelligence along with other emerging technologies is envisaged to provide solutions for the benefit of citizens in all social sectors / domains. **National Programme on AI** has been designed with priority mission areas, namely Healthcare, Agriculture, Education, Smart Cities, Transportation, Cyber Security, Energy, Finance and Indian Languages. This programme will be implemented in a hub and spoke model, wherein the proposed National Centre on Artificial Intelligence

will act as the hub and Centres of Excellence (CoEs) along with Startups will act as spokes. CoEs will facilitate startups / industry to work on the development and deployment of AI based solutions and will also aid Research and Academic Institutions in the applied research.

MeitY Startup Hub (MSH) has been set-up under the aegis of Ministry of Electronics and IT to promote technology innovation, startups and creation of Intellectual Properties. MSH will become a one-stop solution for all technology startups in the country. It will also facilitate Technology Incubation and Development of Entrepreneurs (*TIDE 2.0*) that includes coverage of 51 incubators and 2000 tech startups.

MeitY has recently released **“India’s Trillion Dollar Digital Opportunity”** report to boost the scale, scope and digital innovation of citizen centric services, which can result in a quantum jump in digital contribution to the Indian economy upto USD 1 Trillion by 2025. Nine specific areas have been identified for government interventions.

The challenges of India are matched by the infinite opportunities that such technologies unleash to transform and disrupt the existing order, to provide a leveller to bridge the Divide and move towards a more equitable and inclusive society. The story of India’s digital transformation is one of an ICT-led development by use of technology that is affordable, inclusive and empowering, thus, ensuring a sustainable development.

India’s resonance towards digital technologies has now moved from the corridors of the empowered society and providing substantive benefits to the common masses, thus demonstrating the power of technology. Government is embracing changing landscape of technology and is committed to ensure the state-of-the-art technology enabled citizen centric services for the benefit of citizens, welfare of society and for the socio-economic development of the country. □

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Figure: Nine Key Areas Identified under India’s Trillion Dollar Digital Opportunity