

A Study on the Impact of Digital India on the Social, Economic and Environmental Spheres

Sandeep Reddy N.

M.Phil. Research Scholar

The Department of Public Administration

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad-33.

Abstract:

The Indian government's "Digital India" initiative, aimed at providing high-speed Internet to remote regions, began on July 1, 2015. The term "Digital India" is a project aimed at enhancing the country's economy, labour, and communications infrastructure via digitization. The main goal of this commercial has always been to boost the demand for technical talent in India and promote a more transparent, responsible, and forward-thinking government. The project is primarily managed by the Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL).

The campaign has yielded remarkable results since its introduction, demonstrating its value. However, there are still other obstacles and concerns that remain. The general citizens need more awareness about technology and the Internet. Several barriers and hindrances must be addressed to ensure this endeavour's success. Nevertheless, the program has impacted all sectors despite its problems. The paper aims to analyze the implications of Digital India in economic, social, and environmental sectors. It also discusses the significant issues faced by this initiative.

Keywords: Impacts, Digitalization, Digital-India, Digitized Society, Citizens.

Introduction:

The global move from old-fashioned governance to electronic and internet-based government is troubling. As technology advances in the 21st century, wealthy and developing governments may strengthen and enhance their systems. A nation that doesn't employ modern technology to rule its people is rare. Since 1970, developing countries, including India (the second most populous country after China), have tried to modernize their governments but failed.

This initiative uses Indian talent and IT to create a digital India. The Indian government has succeeded in creating a knowledge-based economy and digital culture. The government's flagship effort, "Digital India", is branded. This effort began on July 1, 2015, to improve infrastructure, services, and digital literacy. Electronic strengthening reduces administrative burden. It has been a successful turnaround method for allocating resources and saving time on paperwork. The dynamic prime minister's equipment significantly contributed to this push. Improving e-services eases E-governance transition. By providing villages with high-speed Internet, they can complete productive tasks without travelling to urban offices, making the

once-mythical idea of connecting rural or isolated areas with urban innovation a reality.^[1]

Digital India changed several businesses' attitudes. It transformed its sector. Technology has been employed by every company in the country, regardless of size. Automation has globalized the relevant business's products and services. A faraway individual may easily communicate with a global client. Smartphones make business administration easy with a touch. Despite spending, compensation has changed. Technology has also made supply and demand more transparent.^[2]

Advanced economies have improved innovation and experiential learning in essential areas via government R&D. Big and little, public and private, rich and poor—they're all in this. India wants to double its GDP to \$5 trillion in five years.^[3] Digital India Undertaking strives to maintain digital sanctuary and trust, and the nation has made considerable efforts in this area. Digital confidence is essential for society, commerce, and digital content users. Compared to energy, sanitation, and transportation, digital infrastructure is more critical. The COVID-19 pandemic has hampered the globalist goal but boosted Internet and other digital infrastructure development. Many economies are

modernizing and strengthening their data-use resources, including computerized equipment, methods, techniques, and procedures. A robust digital infrastructure cannot maintain social order and living standards. To combat the epidemic, countries have mobilized their digital infrastructures. The strength of a nation's digital infrastructure may determine its capacity to recover from calamities like COVID-19. India, one of the world's major economies, is strategically located and has excellent potential to lead the globe.

About 500 million net handlers in India are expected to encourage the development of novel digital services, infrastructure, programs, information, and skills. New technologies like AI, Blockchain, and drones customized to India's needs might boost GDP by a factor of five by 2025, making it a top target for global investors. The COVID-19 pandemic and broad use of AI, blockchain, and IOT have put the world's digital infrastructure under duress. Smart Cities and Smart Health are government goals, and India must develop its digital infrastructure to benefit economically from cutting-edge technology.

Server farms may increase as more people use smartphones, spend more online, and produce more data. Thus, a solid digital infrastructure is needed to enable the widespread use of cutting-edge technologies like 5G, the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, machine learning, drones, robotics, additive manufacturing, photonics, nano-based devices, and so on in fields like defensive strategy, food production, wellbeing, information assurance, intelligent^[4]

Centralized systems have traditionally been linked to economic and social success, but digital infrastructure has become more critical. The Economic Survey 2022–23, published in the federal legislature by the Union Ministry for Finance and Corporate Affairs, predicted that the affordability and growth of digitalization will improve the economy in the future.^[5] Thus, India may have a trillion-dollar digital economy by 2025 due to its tremendous internet growth. Indian digital workplaces are spreading worldwide.^[6]

III. Vital Creativities of Digital India

The government has taken broad, sweeping steps to reach new areas and populations. Government schemes like the Production Linked Incentive for telecom and networking items will help build national mobile networks. As the Bharat Net Project spreads, pricing, availability, and connection equality will increase nationwide. As we advance toward India's 'Techade,' this will help the digital India project empower every Indian.

IV. Growing Adoption of Digital Media

Before 2014, the consensus was that the Internet and its perks would only be available to residents of large cities. But in 2015, a comprehensive initiative named "Digital India" was launched to build a digital infrastructure on which all citizens could depend. Over the previous three years (2019–2021), more persons in rural areas than in urban areas (95.76 million against 92.81 million) have enrolled in internet service. It is the consequence of committed digital measures implemented in landlocked regions through targeted government plans, the Telecom Development Plan, the Aspirational District Scheme, the Northeastern Region's initiatives regarding the Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan (CTDP), and initiatives to reach Left Wing Extremist (LWE)-affected areas.^[7]

V. Accessing Remote Ranges

The Economic Survey states that the approval of an initiative to provide 4G mobile service to every unreached hamlet in the nation is one of the several steps being taken to enhance the customer experience and enable the development of digital connections at the local level. The government is also implementing a Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan, focusing on the states in the Northeastern Region. (CTDP). The administration's attempt to connect our islands to the city was also fulfilled via the Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for Islands.

The Economic Survey claims that the rollout of 5G networks in India significantly improved the nation's telecom sector. Adopting new telecom legislation and setting clear goals resulted in record-breaking bids for the 2022 spectrum auction. A major change that would expedite and

simplify the building of telegraph infrastructures will enable faster deployment of 5G: the Indian Telegraph Right of Way (Amendment) Rules, 2022. To encourage innovation, manufacturing, and commerce, authorities have modified the Wireless Registration procedure, delicensing some frequency bands, among other things. Gamut handlers can suggest systems that adhere to the National Frequency Allocation Plan 2022 (NFAP) 's incidence and standards.^[8]

VI. A One Nation, A One Ration Card

NFSA users, mainly migrant customers, may now obtain their food item allotment at any Reasonable Charge. Stop using their ration cards and biometric/Aadhaar verification.

Customers may use their ration card or Aadhaar number to buy from FPS dealers. The family may obtain identification and distribution advantages once the ration card contains an Aadhaar number. You may also benefit from showing the distributor the distributor your ration card or Aadhaar number. Their owners may validate Aadhaar cards or iris scans with fingerprints.

As of June, 35 states and union territories have embraced the plan, benefiting 80 crore people. NFSA users, mainly migratory beneficiaries, may now obtain their entire or partial food grain allotment from any Fair Price Stop nationwide using their ration cards and biometric/Aadhaar verification. Customers may use their ration card or Aadhaar number to buy from FPS dealers. The whole family may get ID and rationing advantages after adding an Aadhaar number to the ration card. You may also benefit from showing your ration card or Aadhaar number to the ration dealer. Their owners may validate Aadhaar cards or iris scans with fingerprints. As of June, 35 states and union territories have embraced the plan, benefiting 80 crore people.^[9]

VII. Digital India and its effects on different sectors

Modern technology may help the Digital India initiative drastically alter established service delivery paradigms. India's extensive Internet penetration helps improve rural residents' social and economic circumstances by promoting the expansion of non-agricultural economic activities and increasing access to essential social services

like banking, healthcare, and education. Nonetheless, it is important to emphasize that ICT alone cannot advance the country. The business environment, the legal framework, basic infrastructure, literacy, and so on are just a few of the auxiliary factors that promote development and growth.^[10]

VIII. Impact on Society

The people cannot be influenced by sectors of society like banking, healthcare, and education because of obstacles, including intermediaries, ignorance, illiteracy, poverty, and a lack of resources.

These obstacles have resulted in a significant development gap between rural and urban regions—the wealth and social status of the community.

Information and communication technology of today make it easier for people to get essential resources. Apart from facilitating the creation of entirely new facilities, the extensive accessibility of mobile phones may significantly enhance the standard of living for its users and expedite the advancement of social modernization. The absence of resources in India's rural and remote areas is the primary cause of the country's low literacy rate. This is an important area of emphasis since m-Education services are widely accessible. India's internet penetration rate is estimated to be as low as 20.83 users per 100 people, while the country's percentage of digital literacy is as low as 6.5%. Digital India's creativity will assist in providing timely education and addressing the teacher shortage issue by using online and smart learning settings. Growers and fishers may benefit from mobile phone education. The sophisticated system may support MOOCs and other distant learning formats. (MOOCs). Mobile and online banking may increase financial inclusion in the nation and benefit all parties involved in the value chain by creating an interconnected environment and establishing shared income business models.

Financial firms may increase their customer base, while telecom businesses can increase revenue while minimizing expenses.

Numerous factors, such as the nation's rapidly growing population, low doctor-patient ratio (1:870), high toddler death rate, rising life

expectancy, lack of qualified medical professionals, and the majority of people living in outlying settlements, support and justify the need for telemedicine in the country. Mobile technology may be used to enhance and extend healthcare services. Digital platforms may help growers with information (crop selection, seed variety), context (weather, plant protection, growing best practices), and market data. (Price, demand, and logistics in the market).^[11]

IX. Impact on the Environment

The rapid advancement of technology is having an impact on both environmental and economic developments. Reduced energy usage, better trash disposal, and environmentally friendly workplaces are just a few ways that the technological advancements in the following decades will make it simpler for us to reduce our environmental effects. The information and communications technology sector plays a significant role in managing and optimum use of limited resources. By establishing a virtual setting for in-person meetings at home and at business, telepresence also lessens the need for travel.

Similar to this, flexible work environments that permit work from home and bring your device (BYOD) can significantly reduce an organization's operational costs and carbon footprint by eliminating the need for large, fixed office space for businesses as well as automating the disposal of computers, desktops, and other electronic equipment. A program in the UK suggests that a worker may lower their yearly carbon footprint by 364.5 kg by reducing the kilometres they commute (1,175 kilometres).^[12]

X. India's economy and digitalization

Encouraging digitization has been a government priority for centuries to ensure simple and transparent transactions. Every inhabitant should have access to all utilities digitally or via their websites. The natural consequences of digitalization are showing because of government efforts, which should speed up these advances. Usher in a new transformation era (as computerization did in the public and commercial sectors over two decades ago). Paper pieces and similar objects will eventually become outdated.

Despite new laws and initiatives, the country's economy is steadily becoming more digital. Numerous factors compel us to embrace digitalization in our day-to-day activities. A few essential elements are needed in the present world for digitization to become a reality daily.

Corruption is the biggest problem developing economies are now experiencing. We have been concerned about corruption for a very long time. It is stated that another economy flourishes in addition to our main one. This economy is run by people who do not pay taxes to the government. One of the primary drivers of the parallel economy is reliance on businesses with a cash-based economy. The individuals running the parallel economy don't feel like maintaining bank accounts or other business documentation, so they aren't filing taxes with the government. Through efforts like Demonetization and internet-based tax payments, which are intended to boost the Indian economy, the government is trying to eliminate corruption from our system. A valid bank account and necessary paperwork are required for digital transactions. Banks are an essential component of our daily existence. Online payments, transfers, and ATM transactions are all included in banking. Banks have improved their procedures and reduced expenses due to digitizing their operations. Benefits like ATMs and cashless credit and debit card transactions are available to customers. For instance, in the past, the enormous risk involved and the paperwork needed to prove it made it difficult for anybody to get an unsecured company loan.

The federal government is now pushing initiatives like Mudra, which lets new businesses get startup loans without having to provide any collateral. Due to digitalization, banks in India can directly only deliver the advantages of these programs to entrepreneurs. This has helped initiatives like Mudra and Startup India, among others. Etc. Today's financial institutions, including the newest technology, go above and beyond to enhance client service. Another fantastic example of digitalization is mobile banking, which makes it possible to conduct banking on mobile devices. Because of this feature, you can use your bank account from your phone. Since 2015, the use of cashless transactions

by banks has reduced the amount of counterfeit money, saving time and eliminating human error. Digitalization has contributed to the growth of the country's economy. The nation's growing young job opportunities are the most noteworthy example. In addition to the previously stated, the "Make in India" campaign has been effective for the nation since it has inspired young people to start new companies and develop creative ideas to help with the computerization and digitalization of the sector. The most notable example is the expanding youthful employment market in the country. Apart from those above, the "Make in India" campaign has greatly motivated young people to launch new businesses and develop innovative ideas to aid the digital revolution.^[13]

The Digital India initiative is expected to boost India's GDP by around \$1 trillion by 2025. While this might benefit the economy regarding job creation, worker productivity, company expansion, and tax revenue, it could also have adverse effects. According to research by the World Bank, developing countries' GDP per capita would rise by 0.81 to 1.38 per cent for every ten per cent growth in mobile and broadband adoption. With around 259 million broadband users, India ranks third globally and is the world's second-largest telecom and Internet market. Although over 65 per cent of India's population lives in rural regions, just 45 per cent of those places have internet connections. This suggests that the nation has enormous profit potential.^[14]

XI. Digital India: The Essential Outcomes

The country of India launched the Digital India initiative to provide universal internet connection and narrow the digital divide to build an economy based on knowledge and an environment where everyone can use current information technology. The initiative's primary focuses include on-demand governance and commodities, digital infrastructure as an essential utility for all citizens, and digital citizen engagement. The main goal is to increase foreign direct investment, create new employment, and improve India's digital infrastructure to expand the nation's digital economy. Digital efforts have significantly reduced the distance between Indian governments and their citizens. Additionally, it has made it easier to provide the recipient with

essential services in an open, corruption-free way. As a result, India has emerged as a global leader in using technology to raise its people's standard of living.^[15]

Under the Digital India program, the authorities introduced the India BPO Promotion Scheme (IBPS) and the North East BPO Promotion Scheme (NEBPS). These schemes aimed to create job opportunities and promote the Information Technology and Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) industry in small cities and towns by facilitating the establishment of Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) and ITES operations and offering financial support of up to ₹ 1 lakh per seat in the form of viability gap funding towards capital and operational expenditures. As a result of IBPS and NEBPS, 246 BPO/ITES firms have started operations across 27 States/UTs, directly employing over 51,584 individuals.^[16]

The region's slow development is primarily due to public-private partnerships (PPP). Digitization has led to technological advancements, collaboration and connection tools, and management practices. These developments have had a significant impact on people's daily lives. However, one major obstacle to the growth of digital technology in rural areas is the need for a consistent and ubiquitous electricity supply. The Smart Cities movement will help the construction, steel, concrete, property development, and infrastructure industries. The nation's recent "Make in India" and "Digital India" efforts helped the IT sector. As foreign firms invest in India, many factories are being created to produce items for local and international markets. While the consequences of digitalization have affected every aspect of society, several businesses have been negatively impacted by unclear legal regulations. Digital age companies like Amazon and Uber have had many run-ins with local governments due to the political climate.^[17]

II. Digital India, The Upcoming Precursor

It's hard to argue against the overwhelming attention "Digital India" has garnered. The Internet drives modern life, and as more and more aspects of our social, professional, and cultural lives are accessed online, digitalization is the next natural step. Consequently, the idea of a market bolstered by digital networking and communication infrastructures that serve as the foundation for for-

profit and nonprofit endeavours has gained momentum. Nevertheless, India's history has certain distinctive features. Despite substantial advancements in digital technology, issues like the digital divide and uneven technology adoption inside businesses still exist.^[18] If India is to have a flourishing digital economic future, it is critical to comprehend the current state of affairs. According to McKinsey, India has 560 million internet users and is one of the world's fastest-growing marketplaces for digital customers. 2018 only, following China. Over 10 million businesses have been connected to a widely used digital service, and over 1.2 billion Indians have registered in the government's biometric digital identification program, Aadhaar. Tax applied on goods and services purchases. The number of internet users and data use has increased dramatically in the last few years; it doubled in 2017 and quadrupled in 2018. But these advances seem at variance when contrasted with the actual situation in India. Despite the seemingly impressive totals, only 40% of people have internet access. Even while more people in low-income and rural areas have access to the Internet, they still need more infrastructure to utilize it as a medium for massive, meaningful trade. We need to support the development of digital ecosystems throughout the country for sectors like retail, healthcare, and agriculture.

Moreover, the McKinsey research emphasizes that only some industries have embraced digital technology similarly. Businesses in the upper quartile of digital adoption are two to three times more likely to use web optimization, CRM, and ERP software, and they are nearly fifteen times more likely to consolidate digital governance than businesses in the lowest quartile. An essential component of every nation's economy, the banking sector also faces challenges related to the degree and dependability of digitization. Resolving security threats at scale has been, and will continue to be, one of the most significant obstacles for digital banking transformation programs, according to BW Business World. Cybersecurity is front and centre, given the enormous number of channels, transactions, and clients from diverse demographics who are investing in the digital economy. Given these realities, the nation wants to

witness a digital revolution that a comprehensive action plan will revitalize. India offers many digital opportunities, but they will only materialize if all parties collaborate. Government organizations must invest significantly in digital infrastructure and strong cybersecurity measures to protect everyone's privacy and security. The public and private sectors must collaborate to create resilient digital ecosystems that can withstand unavoidable upheavals and seize the opportunities they bring. People also need to become more knowledgeable about the digital economy and how these changes may affect them directly in their capacities as consumers and workers. The gap between urban and rural areas regarding access to technology and digital literacy may be closed by academic and policy action and recertification in schools and colleges. According to estimates from McKinsey and other credible pollsters, the digital economy will have opened up the possibility of 60–65 million new employment by 2025, many of which would need a rudimentary understanding of digital literacy. The success of this alluring possibility, which might impact 40–45 million people whose jobs are at risk from automation or technological change, depends on reskilling and realignment services. Therefore, government agencies and responsible businesses must encourage power parity and reskilling across all industries to address these seemingly insurmountable issues. They can do this by reviving academic pursuits, infrastructural facilities, and explanatory efforts, as well as by engaging in a rigorous and thorough planning and prediction process based on the collection and processing of data. India's experimentation with digitalization and its extraordinarily rapid spread and efficacy—as evidenced by its responses to the COVID-19 superbug—offer hope for the future. It is possible to achieve objectives including closing the digital gap, conducting more surveys, and boosting public awareness of problems. We may have a prosperous future if we take advantage of the proper possibilities, and the digital economy will arrive soon.^[19]

XIII. Digital India Challenges

Several issues, including taxation concerns, a broken relationship between government agencies,

antiquated or non-existent infrastructure, poor internet connections, and technological inexperience, hamper the possibility of its broad adoption. A few challenges must be solved for this initiative's full potential.

Despite having achieved its aim of offering primary education to every kid by 2015, a significant proportion of India's adult population remains illiterate or mentally handicapped. In rural places, this is especially true. It could be challenging to introduce the advantages of Digital India to those who have never used a computer. Even the most ignorant individual may grasp the system with the help of a graphical user interface (GUI).

The problem described before worsens because almost all software, applications, and internet content are written in English. Providing all e-facilities in the 22 national languages people speak in India would be challenging. Usually, this is achieved by translating already-written English-language content. But most of the time, this mechanical translation is done so poorly that the result is uninteresting and unintelligible to the majority. Need confirmation that the material offered in Indian languages is sufficient and that the services promised by Challenges to Digital India are genuinely fulfilled.^[20]

Too few individuals, especially those residing in rural regions, know the fundamentals of digital technology. It will be challenging, even with the administration's "Digital Literacy Mission", to solve this problem.

Automation technology leads to enhanced efficiency, speed, and transparency, one of the main benefits of digitizing activities. However, the organization was used to operating in a particular manner and is now working in the unexplored territory of digital India. They must respond to complaints and reprimands and post information online. Public employees not used to working in this way might find it challenging to get used to it. Certain institutions may likely attempt to undermine such attempts since implementing DBT in MGREGA in Andhra Pradesh may decrease the likelihood of corruption. They have changed their unlikely point of view. First, list all the benefits government administration will experience from becoming online.

The increasing use of e-services and digitalization may increase the stakes for identity thieves and cybercrime. Because of this, it's critical to act now to strengthen customer confidence in e-services by taking preventive actions. More information on cyber threats and how to guard against them has to be spread.

Even while digital processes and e-services are becoming more and more common, India still needs a complete legal framework for e-governance. Parliament should have enacted a revised version of the Electronic Services Delivery Bill 2011; thus, we must quickly draft new legislation with different shortcomings. Although Aadhaar now has safeguards in place, concerns about data privacy still exist.

Digital India cannot be achieved by the Indian government alone. As a result, support and cooperation from the business community would be needed everywhere. Thus, providing clear guidelines and standards for PPPs in this field is essential. Furthermore, corporate sector projects in remote areas may not be financially viable; this needs further thought.

Realizing Digital India requires the cooperation of all government departments and the commercial IT industry across India and its territories. Coordination of too many government departments and commercial enterprises will be complex, but success will be necessary for the program's accomplishment.

Internet protocols differ across nations depending on the specific hardware and software used. This might give rise to portability issues. Standardization of software protocols is necessary because of this. Furthermore, the software needs to be built on an open-source rather than a proprietary approach because implementing tailored solutions nationally is becoming more expensive and challenging.

It is necessary to adapt technology offerings to the needs of the Indian market. To do this, innovation and the development of accessible technology are required. It is essential to nurture and support net neutrality as it encourages invention on the Internet.

One of the main questions is whether or not technology developments can address the root causes of societal crises. Is it possible to eradicate

exploitation, bias, and oppression via the use of technology and fibre optic cables?^[21]

IV. Concluding Remarks

We aim to increase the earnings and living conditions of the people living in India by making the country more digitally connected. This might become a reality with the economy's growth outside agriculture, providing better financial stability, healthcare, and education opportunities. Expanding the information and communication technology industry can be one of many causes of a country's overall progress. Even the most basic infrastructure projects stimulate economic development. This may apply to programs aimed at raising literacy and controlling the economy. This tactic might bring in a significant sum of money by relieving governmental personnel of administrative paperwork. It saves government employees time and money, which is fantastic for them when they have large-scale tasks.

Every day, the government of India's ambitious dream effort, digital India, is bringing us fantastic news about encouraging advances. Nonetheless, the projected outcomes could be much better owing in part to challenges in putting it into practice entirely, such as problems with ignorance, digital literacy, and security-related concerns. Even if there are a lot of other issues with the implementation, it is admirable that it has had such a significant influence, especially in the fields of administration, healthcare, and the economy. Additional steps that might be implemented to solve the problems include increasing public awareness, expanding internet accessibility, fortifying data security, and changing the legislation. Although we were founded in 2015 and are ready to go, it is always challenging to translate concepts written on paper into reality. Therefore, we, responsible Indian citizens, must work together to define a knowledge-based society. Let's ensure the program is effective for our bright and exciting future.

It is clear from examining the results of the Digital India project that Indians may benefit much from just being digitally linked. However, it cannot be denied that the show's initial success hinged on overcoming challenges, including poor educational attainment, a lack of basic infrastructure, and the

development of a supportive regulatory and economic environment. The government is committed to taking all reasonable steps to support this vital endeavour and increase its accomplishments. During the last several years, it has set the foundation for the successful running of this program.

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