

AIR Spotlight - Digital India Anniversary

AIR Spotlight is an insightful programme featured daily on the All India Radio Newsonair. In this program, many eminent panelists discuss issues of importance which can be quite helpful in [IAS exam](#) preparation. In this article, the topic of discussion is the sixth anniversary of the Digital India Programme.

Participants:

- Ajay Prakash Sahni, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- Sonu Sood, AIR correspondent.

Digital India program

Digital India is a flagship program of the Government of India with a vision to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. Six years after it was launched, it has been hailed as one of the biggest achievements of the government. The Prime Minister has hailed it as the sadhana of Atmanirbhar Bharat and slogans for a stronger India in the 21st century.

Read more on the [Digital India](#) programme in the link.

Achievements of Digital India

- Digital footprints have spread all around the country.
- 129 crore people have Aadhar cards.
- There are 115 crore subscribers to mobile phones.
- There are 160 crore bank accounts.
- There are 80 crore internet subscribers.
- The number of transactions across various digital India programs is 20 crore per day according to e-Taal.
- Other platforms such as [government e-marketplace](#), Digi lockers, UPI, JAM, GSTN all have made a huge impact.

Key programs under Digital India

- Common service centers (CSC). There were 84000 CSCs in 2014. Now the number is 3.75 lakh.
- **PMGDISHA:** Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) is a scheme for enhancing digital literacy. 4 crore people have been trained and 3 crores of them certified.
- Grameen e-Stores: Grameen e-Store is a new e-commerce initiative to promote online order & delivery in rural areas.
- Work from home facilities.
- Establishment of rural BPOs to ensure participation of rural people in Business Process Outsourcing (BPO).
- **National Digital Health Mission (NDHM):** The [National Digital Health Mission \(NDHM\)](#) aims to develop the backbone necessary to support the integrated digital health infrastructure of the country.

Challenges of Digital India:

- **Digital Connectivity:** 1.7 lakh gram panchayats have been connected through fibre networks (for internet connectivity) under the [BHARTNET](#) program. 80,000 more gram panchayats need to be connected. Once the fibre network reaches gram panchayats, taking these to villages is the next big step. There are 6 lakh villages in India. Now the challenge is to provide everyone with good internet connectivity.
- **Digital literacy and empowerment:** Out of 15 crore rural families, 4 crores have been covered under the digital literacy program.
- **Popularisation of the nationwide platform:** Awareness should be there of various platforms such as [e-sanjeevani](#) or Diksha platforms in education. There is a natural hesitancy among people to use digital platforms. However, this is changing. The extensive use of the COWIN platform is a testimony to this.

Use of smartphone boom to enhance service delivery:

- There are some flagship programs to enhance service delivery. For example, UMANG has brought a number of services. Almost 20,000 services can be accessed through the UMANG portal/mobile app.
- **Digilocker:** Pan cards, driving licenses, and other documents can be stored in Digilocker and can be accessed from anywhere. Digilocker can also store health records under the NDHM. It is already acting as the national academic repository. More than 800 universities store academic records in digilockers.
- **Unified Payments Interface (UPI):** UPI has made a huge impact. Mobile applications running on UPI make it easy for mobile users to do digital transactions.
- **2-factor authentication:** India is a leader in 2-factor authentication. 2-factor authentication makes it easy to do digital transactions.

Concern over cybersecurity and privacy:

- To ensure cybersecurity, many measures have been taken to secure data and data centres.
- The government has taken measures to create awareness of cybersecurity and train people in cybersecurity measures.
- CERT-In has collaborated with many countries to strengthen cybersecurity. Joint projects have been taken up with many countries. Many Indian startups have been trained with foreign startups to enhance cybersecurity.
- On data privacy, the government has tabled draft legislation on data protection and privacy in the Parliament. It is under consideration of the joint parliamentary committee of parliament. Once it is passed, it will strengthen the right to privacy.

Conclusion:

- The success story of the 21st century hinges largely on the digital India program. As Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has rightly said, 2021-30 is India's decade. He has termed the decade as the decade of technology. India is growing in every digital sector at a very fast pace.
- People are participating enthusiastically in various digital India initiatives and with the kind of human and technological resources that India has, it will soon become a significant digital power.

