



DATE - 3 July 2021

Digital India Programme

Context:

Recently, the Prime Minister of India addressed a virtual event to mark the completion of six years of Digital India Program.

About:

Important Points of Address:

- India's **Techade**: The data and demographic dividend combined with India's proven tech prowess presents massive opportunity for the country, and this decade will be 'India's techade'.

Highlighted Various Schemes of Digital India programme:

- **Diksha**: It stands for Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing. It serves as National Digital Infrastructure for Teachers. All teachers across the nation will be equipped with advanced digital technology.
- **eNAM**: It was launched on 14th April 2016 as a pan-India electronic trade portal linking Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMCs) across the States.
- **eSANJEEVANI**: It is a telemedicine service platform of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

- DigiBunai: DigiBunai aids the weavers to create digital artwork and translate the saree design to be loaded to the looms. DigiBunai is a first of its kind Open Source software for Jacquard and dobby weaving.
- PM SVANidhi scheme: The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has launched Pradhan Mantri Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi), for providing affordable loans to street vendors. It incentivizes digital transactions by the street vendors.
- Digital solutions during Covid-19 :Contact tracing app, Arogya Setu app

Digital India Programme:

- It was launched in 2015. The programme has been enabled for several important Government schemes, such as BharatNet, Make in India, Startup India and Standup India, industrial corridors, etc.
- Vision Areas:
 - Digital infrastructure as Utility to Every Citizen.
 - Governance and services on demand.
 - Digital empowerment of citizens.
- Objectives:
 - To prepare India for a knowledge future.
 - For being transformative that is to realize IT (Indian Talent) + IT (Information Technology) = IT (India Tomorrow).
 - Making technology central to enabling change.
 - On being an Umbrella Programme – covering many departments.

Significant Achievements:

- Digital Payments: The introduction of UPI, which introduced the benefits of digital payments in every part of the country.
 - From flourishing businesses to modest street vendors, UPI is helping everyone with payments and transactions.
 - This also encourages a number of private players to provide alternatives for digital payments which completely transformed the Indian economy.
- Easing the Operations of Businesses: The Electronic Customer identification System (e-KYC) , the Electronic Document Storage System (DigiLocker)and the Electronic Signature System (eSign) were introduced to help businesses streamline their operations.

- Beyond the JAM Trinity: What started as a simple step to kick off the JAM trinity (Jan Dhan, Aadhar and Mobile) to weed out leakages in the system, today empowered the entire vaccination drive for Covid, making India only the second nation to USA that administered 20 crore vaccines.

Way Forward

- There are many road blocks in the way of its successful implementation like digital illiteracy, poor infrastructure, low internet speed, lack of coordination among various departments, issues pertaining to taxation etc. These challenges need to be addressed in order to realize the full potential of this programme.
- As we celebrate the six years of completion of Digital India, here are the six concrete steps that can aid the digital transformation of the nation in the new normal for Digital 4.0 contributing to India's success story and fulfilling the five trillion-dollar economy dream.
- Inculcation of scientific temper, where perception doesn't drive policy.
- Access to data and lower costs of devices especially smartphones.
- Tech solutions empowered by Digital India that has built the infrastructure for years together today serve as a basis for other emerging interventions in the fields of start-ups, digital education, seamless banking and payment solutions, agrotech, health tech, smart cities, e-governance and retail management.

LEAF Coalition

Context:

LEAF (Lowering Emissions by Accelerating Forest Finance) Coalition was announced at the Leaders Summit on climate, 2021

LEAF coalition will be one of the largest ever public-private efforts to protect tropic forests and intend to mobilize at least USD 1 billion in financing to countries committed to protecting their tropical forests.

About:

LEAF Coalition:

- It is a collective of the governments of the USA, United Kingdom and Norway.
- As it is a public-private effort, thus also supported by transnational corporations (TNCs) like Unilever plc, Amazon.com, Nestle, Airbnb etc.
- A country willing to participate would need to fulfil certain predetermined conditions laid down by the Coalition.

Financial Support:

- The results-based financing model will be used in LEAF.
- The model weighs on work by the Environmental Defense Fund over two decades, in collaboration with Indigenous communities, forest peoples, Brazilian and US NGOs, and other partners, to protect the Amazon and tropical forests globally.
- Performance will be measured against the TREES Standard (The REDD+ Environmental Excellence Standard)

Significance:

- Platform for Private Leadership: The goal of net zero emissions cannot be reached without bold leadership from the private sector and commitment to leverage its scale, investment capacity and political power to build a more sustainable, resilient and equitable future.
- Increases Carbon Sink: Tropical forests are massive carbon sinks and by investing in their protection, public and private players are likely to stock up on their carbon credits.
- It will help in achieving Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement.
- Achieve REDD+ Objectives: It is a step towards concretizing the aims and objectives of the Reducing Emissions From Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+)
- Solve Development versus Ecological Commitment: Such a financial impetus is crucial as it incentivizes developing countries to capture extensive deforestation and provide livelihood opportunities to forest-dependent populations.

- Complements Other Global Goals: Ending tropical and subtropical forest loss by 2030 is vital to achieving global climate, biodiversity and sustainable development goals as well as sustaining the well-being and cultures of Indigenous peoples and other forest communities.

Scenario in India:

- India's total forests is 24.56% of the geographical area of the country.
- Observations made by the Global Forest Watch:
 - India lost nearly 38.5 thousand hectares (Kha) of tropical forest between 2019 and 2020 making up nearly 14% loss of its tree cover.
 - Meanwhile, the total tropical forest area in India fell by 0.38%.
 - Also, a 0.67% decrease in tree cover has also been recorded across the country in the same period.
 - Mizoram has witnessed the biggest decline in forest area with a loss of 47.2 Kha , followed by Manipur, Assam, Meghalaya and Nagaland.

Conservation Steps Taken:

- Indian Forest Policy, 1952: It became conscious about the need to increase the forest cover to one-third of the total land area.
- National Forest Policy, 1988: The ultimate objective of the National Forest policy was to maintain environmental stability and ecological balance through conservation of forests as a natural heritage.
- The National Forest Policy in 1988 made a very significant and categorical shift from commercial concerns to focus on the ecological role of the forests and participatory management.
- CAMPA Fund: For every time forest land is diverted for non-forest purposes such as mining or industry, the user agency pays for planting forests over an equal area of non-forest land, or when such land is not available, twice the area of degraded forest land.

Yojna IAS