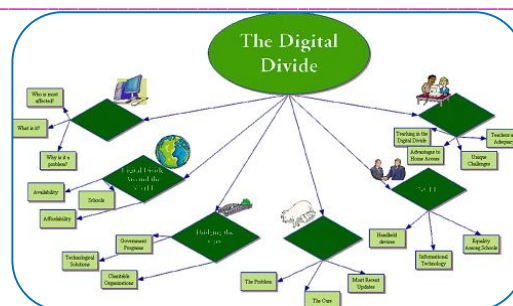




## DIGITAL DIVIDE: INITIATIVES FOR BRIDGING DIGITAL DIVIDE IN INDIA

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### ABSTRACT:

*With the adoption of new technologies, the entire world has turned into a global village. In the globalised world, technology is one of the key factor and useful tool of social change and progress. Technology performs a vital role in creating new ideas and reducing the barriers among the people of nation. In the recent decade, the term “Digital Divide” has been variously used as well as researched and became an attractive area among the people. The term Digital Divide basically refers the gap between the people who have access the ICTs along with digital services and who do not have access the same. This initiates the exclusion and affects the economic growth of the country. The various initiatives which have been taken by the Government of India for bridging the digital divide are also discussed in this article.*

**KEYWORDS:** environment Analytical , researcher find , cost system.

### INTRODUCTION

The term Digital Divide has been known in the mid of 1990s. Digital divide refers to a notable uniformity between two or more population in the distribution and effective use of information and communication resources. The World has transformed rapidly with the growth of various technologies and its use. And for these transformations, people of the nation have to confront more and more new challenges. Thus capability to generate knowledge and access of information plays an important role in our lives. The ICTs has helped in turning the entire world into a Global village. The technology has meet various problem of digital divide among the people of the nation; between the literate and illiterate, developed and underdeveloped countries, rural and urban areas and so on. The term digital divide refers to the gap between who have access the information and communication resources with the help of computer or other digital device and who does not have to access the same. As a result of it a vast differences has created in the society which affected among the people, education and also the economy. The factors which are affecting the digital divide have varied from region to region, people to people. The term has introduced as a result of inadequate funding, a lack of necessary equipments such as computer as well as internet, poverty, rate of literacy etc.

### NEED AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

The need and purpose of the study is to know about the Digital divide and use of Technology in our day to day life. This study also assesses the initiatives taken by the Government for bridging up Digital divide. This study will be further helpful for the Librarians, Research Scholars and students and also the people who directly or indirectly use the Technology.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The major objectives of the study are:

- i. To know about digital divide.
- ii. To point out the barriers of bridging digital divide.
- iii. To know the causes of digital divide.
- iv. To point out the initiatives for bridging up digital divide.
- v. To encourage the library professionals to take some initiatives towards the research of this field.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Research Methodology is an important factor for any research investigation. A research result cannot be obtained without a proper and systematic method. There are various methods and techniques for carrying out a study. The present study is conducted through case study method. The data of the study is collected from the literature reviewed from various research articles, paper and also from journal.

### Statement of the Research Problem:

A definite statement of problem is necessary to obtain the objectives of the study. The problem selected for present study is "Digital Divide: Initiatives for bridging Digital Divide in India". The problem has been selected to understand the concept of Digital Divide and to find out the initiatives for bridging in digital divide.

### Scope and Limitations of the Study:

This study is an attempt to study about digital divide and various barriers of digital divide. This study is limited to the initiatives which are taken by the Government of India to overcome the digital divide.

### Barriers in bridging digital divide:

Barriers contribute in digital divide are listed below:

**Infrastructural barrier:** Infrastructure is essential for using any technology. Without infrastructure we cannot do anything. But it is not possible to provide all infrastructures in everywhere.

**Lack of Electricity:** Electricity is most essential for the use of technology. Lack of electricity the people could not use any digital technology so they do not understand the benefit of it. Electricity crisis is a major barrier for bridging the gap between the rural and urban area of India. In libraries also repeat load shading is the major cause for digital divide.

**Literacy and skill barriers:** The knowledge of information technology is most important in today's world. But many people could not know about the use of IT or any computer skill. It is a very big issue for bridging digital divide.

**Economic barrier:** All human being are not financially equal. So the issue of finance always arises in the society. And due to lack of financial support by government as well as other organization many of us do not have discretionary money to spend on internet connectivity or internet café to access digital information.

**Language barriers:** Language is the main medium of communication globally. The mostly used language worldwide is English language. Its plays a major key role in access the information. It is the common language around the world, but many people do not understand this language and that's why it creates a major problem around the world.

**Content barrier:** It is most related factor; sometime a group of people do not shows the interest to use the internet because of irrelevant content. A number of people of our society could not find their relevant things on internet.

Despite all these some other barriers are also present, which are—

- i. Lack of productivity

- ii. Gender inequality
- iii. Physical disability
- iv. Cultural factor
- v. Age factor
- vi. Lack of motivation

### Impact in India

India is the one of the most populous nation among the Asian region. The country has been obtained impressive progress in the various fields such as science and technology as well as other educational and economical sides. Use of information and communication technology has created the digital divide among the people of the nation which further adversely impact upon the India. Digital divide has brought the makeable changes in the development of Indian society through the information dissemination. The use of the digital devices not only improved the people's daily lives but also created the discrimination among the world into information rich and information poor, literate and illiterate. The unequal access of information and technological resources has led the more digital divide. Somewhere India has remained as underdeveloped in the field of technology in some of the remote areas. Though Government has introduced different IT programs, they have to face some of socio economic factors, geographic factors, and educational factors in the digital area. Although communities in India are gaining access to computers and the Internet, their benefits are limited because of different factors such as political instability, infrastructural barriers, literacy and skill barriers, economic barriers, content barriers, linguistic diversity. The digital divide can create a line of differentiation between the digitally connected and non-digital people. Some of the adverse impacts of digital divide in India are as follows:

- Economic development of the country at various levels which lead to some of region more developed and some of underdeveloped.
- Income disparity among the people. Expert of digital area has engaged some services from where they can earn more income.
- Access to knowledge also impact on the people because sometimes some language of web content cannot be able to understand.
- There are negative impacts on the literacy rate among the people.
- It adversely affected in the job security of the people who digitally compliant.
- It impact on the personal development of the people because sometimes people who don't have access the digital resources faces some of humiliation.

### INITIATIVES TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT

The different states of our country have been working to bridge the digital divide. The Government of India also has taken active part to overcome the digital divide introducing some IT oriented programs. Some of the initiatives or projects are as follows:

**The Bhoomi Project:** The Bhoomi project was first introduced in Karnataka state of India. This project covers 6.7 million of farmers and holds millions of records of land ownership. The project has obtained the goodwill of many people. It has also impressed the international funding agencies. This project has decreases the delays involved in interacting with the bureaucratic hierarchy of the state revenue department. Bhoomi centers are located all over the state. Any land record can be searched through a touch screen at these kiosks; the project can also be used as a databank for various projects of public and private sector organizations. The project has won the 2002 Commonwealth Association of Public Administration and Management award for creating "self content governance and opening up new frontiers." With the success of Bhoomi project in Karnataka, other states like Tamil nadu, Maharastra also introduced the same project.

Source: ([www.bhoomi.karnataka.gov.in](http://www.bhoomi.karnataka.gov.in))

**CARD Project:** The Government of Andhra Pradesh has initiated the Computer Aided Administration of Registration Department (CARD) project to improve citizen- government interface with the use of IT. The land registration offices throughout Andhra Pradesh are now provided with computerized counters under this project. Citizens can now complete registration formalities with the computer.

**The Gyandoot Project:** The most outstanding implementation of digital services by government initiative has found in Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh. Gyandoot ('Messenger of Knowledge') is a government project to create an intranet in the Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh by setting up rural public cyber cafes and providing the district people with data connectivity. The project was launched on November 29, 1999 and it was officially commissioned on January 1, 2000. The entire Gyandoot project was executed in the short span of 51 days for a cost of INR. 2,500,000 (approx. \$57,000 USD). The Gyandoot was originally designed to connect 21 rural cyber cafes called Soochanalayas. Each Soochanalaya provides services to about 10–15 Gram Panchayats, 20–30 villages, a population ranging from 20,000 to 30,000. The intranet covers 5 out of 13 Blocks of the district and 3 out of 7 Tehsils. The Soochanalayas are conveniently located at Block headquarters, village markets (haat) and bus depots. The intranet serves a population of over half a million. A reliable intranet connects villages throughout the district.

Source: ([www.mapit.gov.in](http://www.mapit.gov.in))

**E-Chaupals Project:** The Project has launched in the year 2000 has become popular in rural areas of India. E-Choupal provides the Internet to empower small and marginal farmers who constitute a majority of the 75% of the population below the poverty line. The e-chaupals helps rural people to access information in their local languages on crops and market prices. Today four million farmers use e-Choupal to advantage-bargaining as virtual buyers' co-operatives, matching up to food safety norms. Being linked to futures markets is helping small farmers to better manage risk.

**FRIENDS Project:** The Fast, Reliable, Instant, Efficient Network for Disbursement of Services (FRIENDS) Project has been launched by the Kerala State. FRIENDS Centre is an integrated citizen service centre of the Government of Kerala. The centre functions as a single counter to remit utility bill payments, submit applications, seek information on government programmes and schemes, and provide access to other specialty services. This project has expanded to serve 13 million people in 12 districts of Kerala. The main motto of FRIENDS is to treat citizens as valued customers.

**TDIL Project:** The depth of information technology introduced the TDIL with the aim of developing information processing tools and techniques to facilitate human machine interaction without resources and integrating them to develop modern user services.

Source: [www.iitg.ernet.in](http://www.iitg.ernet.in)

## CONCLUSION

With the introduction of ICT applications the world has turned into small village. And it helps to develop the society very fast. But due to some barriers (viz. lack of electricity, high cost, lack of infrastructure lack of relevant content etc.) it could not attract a number of people. And the result is a gap between the people who use technology and who don't always arise. In today's world it is a serious issue, a nation never been developed for this issue. India has taken various initiatives to fill the gap of the people who used the technology and who do not. Some private sectors and libraries also take some initiatives to reduce digital divide in India.

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