Digital Transformation in Gram Panchayats

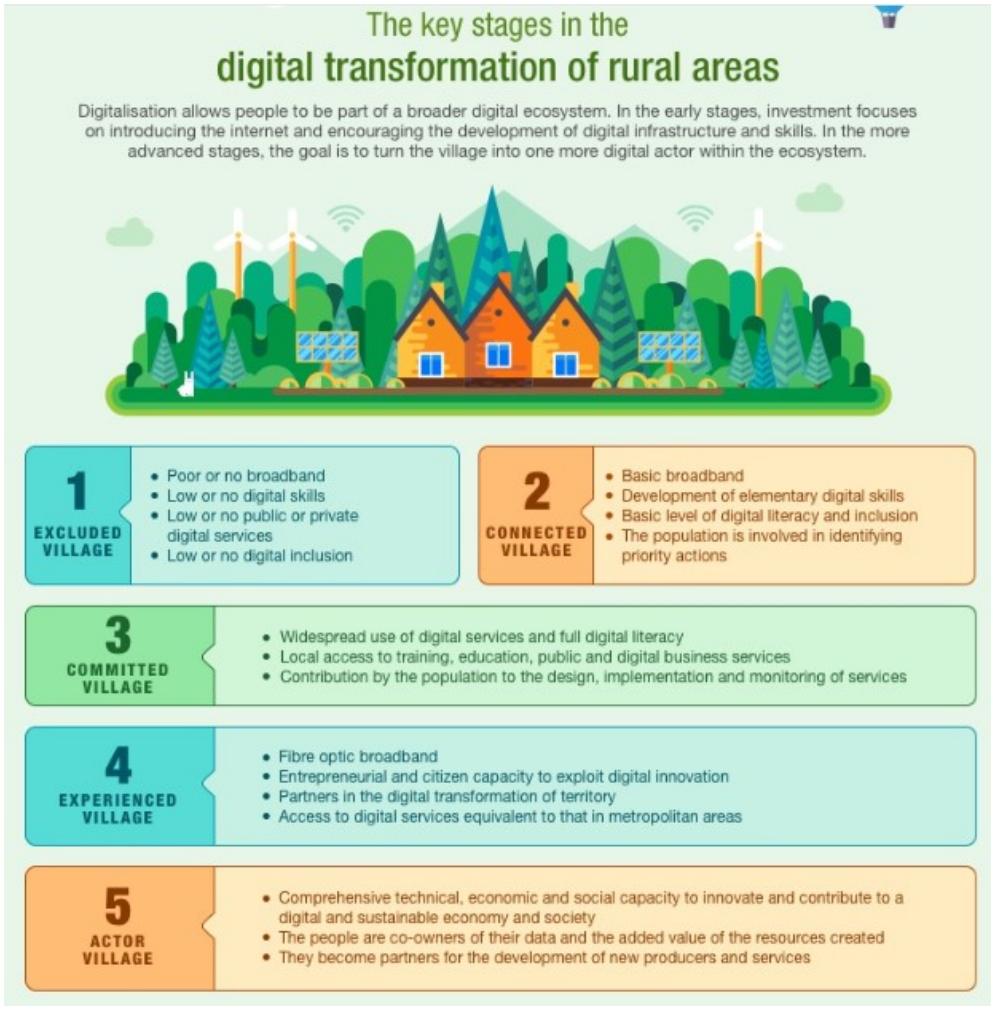
Mains: ***GS II - E-governance- applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential***

Why in News?

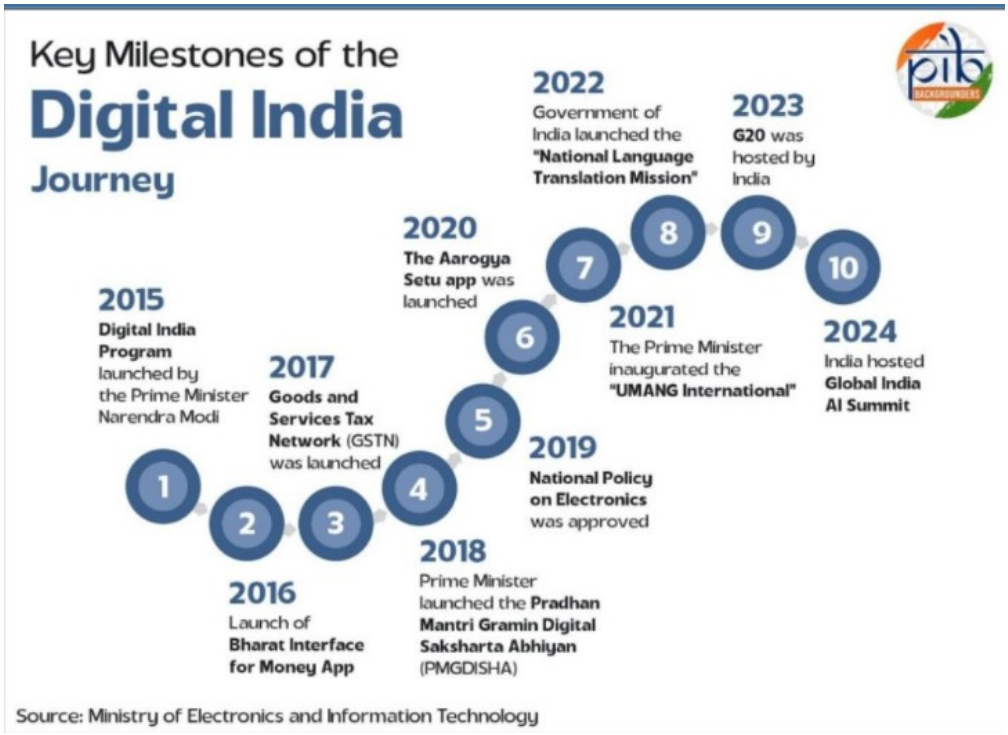
In recent times, The Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) has launched a series of digital reforms to strengthen Gram Panchayats.

What is digital transformation?

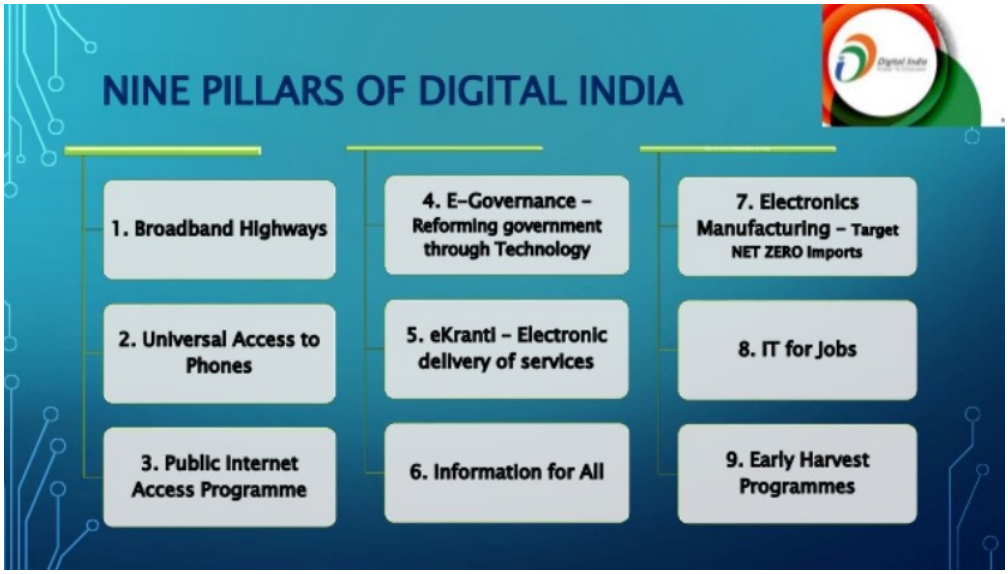
- **Digital transformation** – It is the integration of digital technology into all areas of a business and governance, fundamentally changing how an organization operates and delivers value to its customers.
- It's not just about new technology, but also about a cultural shift involving people, processes, and data to meet evolving market and customer demands.
- **Key stages**



- **India's Journey**



- **Key pillars**



What are the key initiatives in digital governance?

- **SabhaSaar** – The Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) launched SabhaSaar in August 2025.
- It is an Artificial Intelligence (AI) tool that creates structured minutes of meetings from the audio or video of Gram Sabha and other Panchayat gatherings.
- It is linked with *Bhashini*, the National Language Translation Mission, which allows it to work in 14 Indian languages.
- This makes it accessible to communities across diverse regions.
- With the help of SabhaSaar, Gram Panchayat officials can now focus more on governance and service delivery.
- The tool handles the documentation work, thus ensuring real-time, unbiased records and greater transparency.
- **SVAMITVA** – The SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improvised Technology in Village Areas) Scheme was launched on 24 April 2020, on National Panchayati Raj Day.
- The scheme gives rural households legal ownership papers for the homes and land they occupy.
- Using drones and advanced mapping tools, it clearly marks property boundaries.
- With these documents, families can obtain bank loans, resolve disputes and make better use of their assets.
- Gram Panchayats gain by improving property tax collection and enabling better resource planning.
- The scheme is implemented by Ministry of Panchayati Raj with support from the Survey of India, with the National Informatics Centre Services Inc. (NICSI) as the technology partner.
- The programme is an excellent model of *Global Model of Citizen-Centric Governance.*
- **BharatNet** – The Government of India launched BharatNet in October 2011, to bridge the digital divide.
- The project aims to deliver affordable, high-speed internet to every Gram Panchayat.
- BharatNet is being implemented in phases to cover all Gram Panchayats.
- The project provides broadband through Wi-Fi hotspots, Fibre to the Home (FTTH) connections and other services.

- So far, more than 13 lakh Fibre to the Home (FTTH) connections have been commissioned under BharatNet.
- These connections support online services such as e-education, e-health, e-governance and e-commerce.
- Farmers are also using the network to expand their knowledge of agriculture and stay updated on the latest practices and technologies.
- With BharatNet connectivity in Gram Panchayats, apps such as Gram Samvaad, Meri Panchayat, National Pest Surveillance System (NPSS) and PM Kisan bring governance, welfare and farm services directly to villager's phones.
- **eGramSwaraj** – The ministry launched eGramSwaraj under the e-Panchayat MMP on *24 April 2020*, a user-friendly web-based portal.
- This is a work-based, comprehensive application that brings together all core functions of Panchayats on a single digital platform.
- It covers decentralised planning, budgeting, accounting, monitoring, progress reporting, asset management, and also enables online payments.
- **Meri Panchayat App** – It serves as an integrated mobile governance platform, designed and developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- It empowers rural communities by promoting transparency, accountability and citizen participation in Panchayat affairs.
- The app is powered by eGramSwaraj and linked with other portals of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj and the Government of India.
- The app empowers over 25 lakh elected representatives and nearly 95 crore rural residents across 2.65 lakh Gram Panchayats.
- Through Meri Panchayat App, citizens can effortlessly access, on their mobile devices:
    - Real-timePanchayat budgets, receipts, payments and development plans.
    - Details of elected representatives and local functionaries.
    - Information on public infrastructure and civic services within the Panchayat.
    - Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs) with project tracking.
    - Weather forecasts at the Panchayat level.
    - Social audit tools, fund use data and grievance redressal with geo-tagged and geo-fenced features.
    - Multilingual interface with support for over 12 Indian languages for inclusiveness.
- **Panchayat NIRNAY** – The Panchayat NIRNAY portal is a real-time monitoring system for Gram Sabha meetings.
- It is one of the key pillars of local self-governance in rural India.
- The portal helps schedule meetings, notify citizens of agendas in advance and encourage wider participation.
- It records decisions of Gram Sabhas and makes them available for ready reference.
- The system replaces paper-based processes with a fully automated workflow.
- It allows Panchayats to share best practices across the country and manage meetings more effectively.
- **Gram Manchitra** – The Ministry of Panchayati Raj launched the Gram Manchitra Geographic Information System (GIS) application.
- It is a Platform to help Gram Panchayats prepare plans using geo-spatial technology.
- It offers a unified digital map where officials can visualise developmental works across different sectors and align them with the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP).

- Gram Manchitra provides a range of planning tools.
- These include identifying suitable sites for new projects, tracking local assets, estimating project costs and assessing likely impacts.
- By using GIS, Panchayats are able to design practical and achievable development plans, supported by clear data and evidence.

What lies ahead?

- These reforms aim to make governance faster, more transparent and more inclusive.
- This shift also reflects the Government's broader vision under *Digital India* and *Atmanirbhar Bharat*.

Reference

PIB| Digital Transformation of Rural India

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