Transforming Healthcare through Digitalization

Why in News?

Recently, a World Economic Forum (WEF) article highlighted India's potential to become a global leader in digital health by building a resilient digital health ecosystem.

What are the features of India's digital health initiatives?

- Digital health solutions are playing a crucial role in enhancing accessibility, affordability, and efficiency of health services.
- **Interoperability and standardization** - Ensuring seamless data exchange between stakeholders.
- **Public-Private collaboration** - Encouraging partnerships for innovation and expansion.
- **Focus on affordability and accessibility** - Leveraging digital tools to make healthcare inclusive.
- **Global influence** - India's digital health models could serve as templates for other developing nations.

What are India's digital healthcare infrastructures?

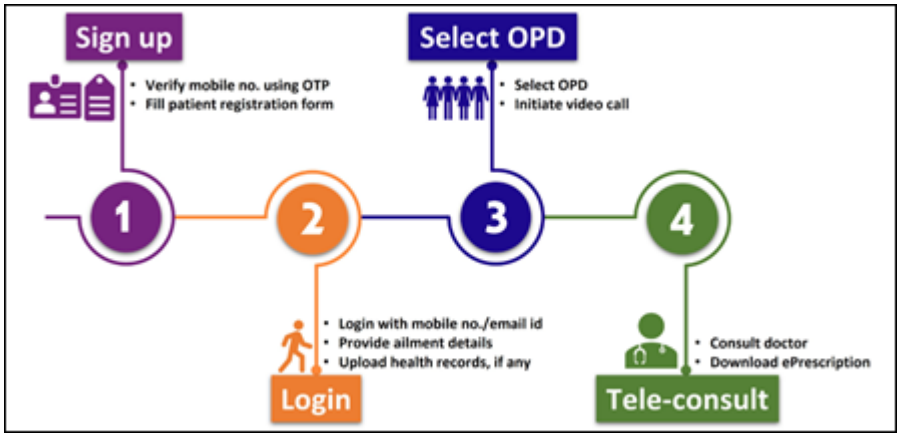
- **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)** – It aims to create a nationwide digital health ecosystem by integrating healthcare service providers and patients through unique health IDs.
- The mission fills critical gaps in health infrastructure, surveillance and health research through,
    - **Health ID** – ABHA number a unique identifier for individuals to store and share medical records.
    - **Healthcare Professionals Registry (HPR)** - A comprehensive database of registered healthcare professionals.
    - **Health Facility Registry (HFR)** - A digital repository of healthcare facilities across India.
    - **Unified Health Interface (UHI)** - An open network facilitating digital health service

As on January 20, 2025, more than 73 crore Ayushman Bharat Health Accounts (ABHA) have been created successfully and there are more than 5 lakh health professionals registered.

Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat are the top

5 states with Ayushman Bharat account holders.

- **Arogya Mandirs** - Over two lakh Ayushman Arogya Mandirs have been established across the country to facilitate early diagnosis and treatment.
- **Digital Health Incentive Scheme (DHIS)** – It encourages healthcare providers to adopt digital health solutions by offering financial incentives for integrating digital health records and services.
- **Telemedicine and e-Sanjeevani** – It enables remote consultations, reducing the burden on physical healthcare facilities.
- The platform consists of two modules.
    - **e-Sanjeevani OPD** - Facilitating doctor-to-patient consultations remotely.
    - **e-Sanjeevani AB-HWC** - Connecting Health and Wellness Centers (HWCs) with specialist doctors for better healthcare accessibility in remote areas.



- **U-WIN Portal** – It was launched in October 2024 for the complete digitization of vaccination services, and maintaining vaccination records for pregnant women and children from birth to 17 years under the Universal Immunization Programme.
- **Aarogya setu** – It has been transformed into a National Health App, bringing a whole plethora of digital health services powered by the ABDM.
- **e-Hospital** - It is a Hospital Management Information System (HMIS) for internal workflows and processes of hospitals.
- This one-stop solution helps in connecting patients, hospitals and doctors on a single digital platform.
- It is made available to Central Government/ State Government/ Autonomous/ Cooperative hospitals on the cloud through the SaaS (Software as a Service) model.
- **e-BloodBank** – It facilitates the implementation of a complete blood bank management system.
- **Online Registration System (ORS)** - It provides online access to hospital services for patients, integrated with the Ayushman Bharat Health Account.
- **Tele MANAS** – It is a National Tele Mental Health Programme to improve access to quality mental health counselling and care services in the country.

What are the key policies shaping digital healthcare in India?

- **National Health Policy (NHP) 2017** - It emphasizes the use of digital technology to enhance healthcare delivery.

- It advocates for electronic health records, health information systems, and telemedicine to improve accessibility and efficiency.
- **National Health Mission (NHM)** – It provides support for improvement in health infrastructure, availability of adequate human resources in health facilities.
- **Health Data Management Policy** – It is the critical component of ABDM, this policy outlines data privacy, security, and governance standards for digital health records.
- **National Digital Health Mission (NDHM)** – It aims to make India Atma Nirbhar in providing universal health coverage to all the citizens in the country.



- **National Digital Health Blueprint (NDHB)** – It serves as a strategic roadmap for achieving universal health coverage through digital health integration.
- **PM-ABHIM** - Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission focuses on strengthening primary, secondary, and tertiary healthcare infrastructure, integrating digital health technologies to improve service delivery.
- It is the largest Pan-India scheme for public health infrastructure since 2005.

What lies ahead?

- India's digital healthcare transformation holds immense potential to enhance healthcare accessibility and efficiency.
- With continued policy support, infrastructure development, and public-private collaborations, the country is poised to emerge as a global leader in digital health.
- Future focus areas include AI-driven diagnostics, blockchain-based health records, and enhanced cybersecurity frameworks.

Reference

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