



## Common Service Centres: Catalysts of Rural Digital Inclusion

**For Prelims:** [Common Service Centres](#), [Digital India](#), [Direct Benefits Transfer](#), [UPI \(Unified Payments Interface\)](#), [JAM \(Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile\) system](#), [UMANG](#), [DigiLocker](#), [National e-Governance Plan \(NeGP\)](#), [Aadhaar](#), [PAN](#), [DigiLocker](#)

**For Mains:** Significance of CSC Under Digital India Mission, Key Achievement of India's Digital Ecosystem.

[Source: PIB](#)

### Why in News?

The **Common Services Centres (CSCs)**, a flagship initiative under the [Digital India Mission](#), have emerged as vital hubs for **grassroots governance, digital access, and inclusive rural empowerment**.

### What are Common Services Centres (CSC)?

- **About:** CSCs are a key initiative under the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**, completed 16 years of service on 16th July 2025, approved in 2006 as part of the [National e-Governance Plan \(NeGP\)](#).
  - **CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd.**, an **Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)**, established on 16th July 2009 by **MeitY**, under the **Companies Act, 1956**.
  - It oversees the CSC scheme to deliver **digital services, especially in rural areas**.
  - CSCs promote [inclusive, transparent governance](#) and have expanded from **83,000 in 2014 to over 6.5 lakh in 2025**—a 680% growth in a decade.
- **Objectives:** To provide **high-quality, cost-effective** services in **e-governance, education, health, agriculture, financial services, and digital literacy**.
  - To create a **self-sustainable delivery mechanism** using **ICT-based infrastructure** for both **G2C (Government to Citizen)** and **B2C (Business to Citizen)** services.
  - To empower [Village Level Entrepreneurs \(VLEs\)](#) and promote **local entrepreneurship** in rural areas.
- **Structure Model of CSCs:** The CSC scheme operates on a **Public-Private Partnership (PPP)** model with a **3-tier structure**:
  - **Village Level Entrepreneur (VLE):** Local individual managing service delivery at the village level.
  - **Service Centre Agency (SCA):** Manages a cluster of 500–1000 CSCs within a region.
  - **State Designated Agency (SDA):** Nominated by State Governments to supervise implementation across the state.
- **CSC 2.0:** CSC 2.0 was **launched in 2015** with the aim to establish **at least one CSC in each of the 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats**.
  - The CSC framework utilizes existing digital infrastructure like **State Wide Area Network**

(SWAN), State Data Centres (SDC), National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN)/BharatNet, e-District Portals and SSDG (State Service Delivery Gateway), promoting entrepreneurship-driven service delivery, digital literacy, and financial inclusion.

- In 2022, CSC partnered with [NABARD](#) and the Ministry of Cooperation to enable [Primary Agricultural Credit Societies \(PACS\)](#) and LAMPS (Large Area Multi-Purpose Societies) to operate as CSCs, enhancing outreach in deep rural areas.

## What is the Significance of CSCs of Rural India?

- **Realising Digital India Goals:** CSCs advance the **three core pillars of Digital India** by ensuring **digital infrastructure at the grassroots**, facilitating **on-demand governance and services** like [Aadhaar](#), [PAN](#), [DigiLocker](#), and **utility payments**, and fostering **digital empowerment through literacy programs** like PMGDISHA, skill training, and access to over 300 digital services.
- **Ensuring Inclusive Growth:** With over **74,000 women Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs)**, CSCs serve as engines of **rural entrepreneurship**, especially among women, youth, and marginalized communities.
  - They help bridge the **rural-urban digital divide**, ensuring **last-mile service delivery**.
- **Boosting Rural Economy:** By integrating with **Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS)** and offering services like **banking, insurance, pension schemes**, and **PM-KISAN registration**, CSCs enhance **rural credit delivery**, financial empowerment, and **direct benefit transfer (DBT) efficiency**.
- **Strengthening PPP Model:** Operating on a successful **PPP model**, CSCs act as the **digital interface** between the government and citizens.
  - With services like **IRCTC ticket booking**, integration with **state IT platforms**, and platforms like **CSC Grameen eStore**, they facilitate **e-governance, rural commerce**, and **scalable digital outreach**.

## What is the Digital India Mission?

- **About: Digital India Mission** is a flagship programme launched by the **Government of India on 1st July 2015** with the vision to **transform India** into a **digitally empowered society** and **knowledge-based economy**.
  - It aims to ensure that **government services are made available to citizens electronically** by **improving online infrastructure** and **increasing Internet connectivity**, especially in **rural and remote areas**.
- **Key Initiatives:** [Aadhaar](#), [BharatNet](#), [Digital Locker](#), [BHIM UPI](#), [eSign framework](#), [MyGov](#) etc.
- **Key Achievements:**
  - **Digital Infrastructure:** From **2014 to 2025**, telephone connections rose to **120 crore** (up from 93.3 crore), **tele-density** improved to **84.49%**, while **internet users** grew by **285%** and **broadband connections** by **1,452%**.
  - **Digital Finance:** **UPI** facilitated **1,867.7 crore transactions** (Apr 2025) worth **Rs 24.77 lakh crore**, contributing **49% of global real-time payments** and expanding to **7+ countries**.
  - **AI & Semiconductors (2024-2025):** The [IndiaAI Mission](#) deployed **34,000+ GPUs** to boost **AI innovation, startups**, and **ethical AI**, supported by institutions like **IndiaAI Innovation Centre**, **AIKosh**, and **FutureSkills**.
  - **Citizen Empowerment & Governance:** [Karmayogi Bharat](#) and [iGOT](#) trained **1.21 crore officials**, issuing **3.24 crore certificates**.
  - **DigiLocker** (53.92 crore users) and [UMANG App](#) (2,300+ services in 23 languages; 8.34 crore users) boosted digital access.
    - [BHASHINI](#) promotes **linguistic inclusivity** with support for **35+ Indian languages**, **1,600 AI models**, and integration with **IRCTC** and [NPCI](#).

## Conclusion

**Common Service Centres (CSCs)** are key pillars of the **Digital India** initiative, enabling **last-mile delivery**, **digital inclusion**, and **rural empowerment**. By bridging the **digital divide** and promoting **citizen-centric governance**, CSCs are transforming service access. Strengthening **digital infrastructure** and **Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs)** will be critical for sustained impact.

### **Drishti Mains Question:**

Discuss the role of Common Service Centres (CSCs) under the Digital India Mission in promoting last-mile service delivery, rural empowerment, and inclusive governance. What measures should be taken to bridge the digital divide in India?

## UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### **Prelims**

**Q. Consider the following: (2022)**

1. Aarogya Setu
2. CoWIN
3. DigiLocker
4. DIKSHA

**Which of the above are built on top of open-source digital platforms?**

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 1, 3 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

**Ans: (d)**

**Q. Which of the following is/are the aim/aims of “Digital India” Plan of the Government of India? (2018)**

1. Formation of India’s own Internet companies like China did.
2. Establish a policy framework to encourage overseas multinational corporations that collect Big Data to build their large data centres within our national geographical boundaries.
3. Connect many of our villages to the Internet and bring Wi-Fi to many of our schools, public places and major tourist centres.

**Select the correct answer using the code given below:**

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: (b)**

**Q. Regarding ‘DigiLocker’, sometimes seen in the news, which of the following statements**

**is/are correct? (2016)**

1. It is a digital locker system offered by the Government under Digital India Programme.
2. It allows you to access your e-documents irrespective of your physical location.

**Select the correct answer using the code given below:**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Ans: (c)**

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**Mains**

**Q.** “The emergence of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Digital Revolution) has initiated e-Governance as an integral part of government”. Discuss. (2020)

**Q.** How can the ‘Digital India’ programme help farmers to improve farm productivity and income? What steps has the Government taken in this regard? (2015).

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