

E-Governance : An overview in Indian context

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Abstract: India is a developing country of third world. It needs to full fill the socio-economic objectives with effective governance. In the age of ICT, all most all states have adopted ICT based tools in their administration to provide essential goods and services to the masses. In the context of Indian economy, every sector is being impacted by E-Governance. Consequently, Govt. of India has launched the initiatives of e-governance; providing all services electronically as much as possible. Since then, we have had different initiatives in terms of E-Governance. Meantime, Govt. of India as well as some state Govt. launched several projects in support of E-Governance, like E-Seva, Smart Govt, Digital India, E-Kranti and etc. Each of these projects seems to be benefiting the citizens to a greater extent. In spite of this process, there are some challenges regarding implementation of E-Governance. This article describes regarding the evolution, initiatives, issues-challenges and future prospects of E-Governance in India.

Key words: E-governance, Smart Governance, E-Seva, Digital India.

1.1 Introduction:

In recent time every government's foremost aims is to focus the existing society on achieving the public demands. Governance is a concept of describing the linkages between government and its broader sphere. The emergence of e-governance has been one of the most striking development of the web Global shifts towards increased development of IT by government emerged in the 90s, with the event of the world wide web. Today, citizens are more conscious regarding their rights to get the required services at their doorstep. In this connection state and central governments recognize the need to provide faster and efficient services to the citizens through e-governance which is an effective instrument of administration. Basically the concept of E-Governance is based on Information and Communication Technology or ICT. The Government of India has established the Department of Electronics in 1970.

1.2 Concept and Origin of E-Governance:

Generally E-Governance can be defined as "electronic governance". The "E" in E-Governance stands for 'electronic'. It is based on the application of information and communication technology or (ICT) for providing government services, exchange of information, transactions, integration of

previously existing services and information portals. It extends beyond provision of online services and covers the use of ICT for strategic planning and reaching development goals of the government.

E-Governance is the application of ICT for delivering government services, exchange of information, communication transactions, integration of various stand alone systems. Governance ensure good governance. In Other words, e-governance increase citizen's participation in decision making process and make government more accountable, transparent and efficient. In our daily life electricity, water, phone and all kinds of bills can be paid through the internet. All are dependent on internet and when citizens depends on government internet services all that come is E-Governance. So in essence, e governance is the application of ICT in government functioning to bring in SMART governance implying: simple, moral, accountable, responsive and transparent governance.

Origin:

E-Governance originated in India during the 1970 with a focus on in house government applications in the areas of defence, economic monitoring, planning and deployment of ICT to manage data intensive functions related to electronics, sensors, tax administration etc.. The National Information Centre (NIC) was established in 1977 as subsequent initiative for introducing e-governance. It was the first major step towards e- governance in India as it brought 'information' and its communication to focus.

E-Governance in India has reached the transnational stage and provides various services to the citizens and business and government organizations and is dispensed by central government agencies and different state government departments. The government of India has initiated national e-governance plan in 2006 attempts to make all government services accessible to the common man in his locality, Common Service Center(CSC)s being set up across India.

Objectives of E-Governance: E-Governance has several specific objectives which are as follows:

Providing Better Services: E-governance aims to make it easier for citizens to access government services online reducing the need for physical visits to government offices. It also helpfull to reducing infrastructure and manpower costs through digitization.

Increased Transparency: The concept of E-Governance promotes transparency in government activities by providing public access to information and allowing citizens to monitor and participate in decision-making processes.

Enhanced Accountability: Objective of E-Governance is to enhance accountability in governance by enabling tracking and monitoring of government activities, reducing corruption, and increasing public trust in the government.

Empowerment of Citizen: E-Governance tries to empower citizens and encourage participation in decision-making processes of governmental activities. This concept promotes participatory democracy also etc.

Pillars of E-Governance:

In modern society there are four cornerstones of E-Governance. These cornerstones are as follows:

1.Connectivity: Connectivity is required to connect the people to the services of the government. In this view in any society specially a developing country there should be a strong connectivity for an effective e-governance.

2.Knowledge/Consciousness: Knowledge or Consciousness refers to IT knowledge among the concern staffs. In this regard Government should appoints some skill full engineers who can handle the E-Governance in an efficient way. These engineers also will be efficient to handle all kind of fault that may occur during the working of E-Governance.

3.Data content: To share any Kind of knowledge or information over the internet, there should be it's database. This database should have the data content which is related to government services.

4.Capital: Capital is an another important pillars of e-governance. Capital Can be on public or private partnership. Generally capital refers to money used by government to provide their services or to that sector of the economy based on its operation.

1.Four Stages of E-Governance:

Different stages of E-Governance are identified on certain set of criteria. These stages are as follows:-

1.Simple information dissemination (one way community) is considered as the most basic form, as it is used for merely disseminating information;

2.Two way communication (request and response) is characterized with E-mail system and information and data transfer technologies in the form of website;

3.Service and financial transaction is online service and financial transactions leading to web based self services;

4.Integration (both vertical and horizontal) in this stage the government would attempt inter and intra-governmental integration and

5.Political participation this stage means online voting, online public forums and opinion surveys for more direct and wider interaction with the government.

1.5 Initiative taken for E-Governance in India:

In the era of ICT based administration govt. of India as well as State governments have taken various initiatives for E-Governance. Some of them are as follows :

1. E-Seva Andhra Pradesh: The scheme of E-Seva was introduced in Andhra Pradesh in 1999. It is a part of E-Governance which is designed to provide government to Citizen and e business is to citizen services in Andhra Pradesh. But this project was renamed as "Mee Seva" since 2011.

- All the services are delivered online to consumers or citizens by connecting them to the respective government departments and providing online information at the point of service delivery.

2. Bhoomi Project: Bhoomi Project was introduced by government of Karnataka in 2000. Through this project government tries to provide to citizens online delivery of land records. Bhoomi is a self sustainable e-governance project for the computerized delivery of 20 million rural and records to 6.7 million farmers of Karnataka.

3. AKSHAYA: AKSHAYA is a project which was introduced in Kerala firstly in 2002. This project involves setting up around 5000 multipurpose community technology centres called Akshaya e-Kendra's across Kerala.

4. E-Court: The E-Courts project in India was first implemented in 2007 by the Department of Justice, Ministry of law and Justice. In this regard, the Chief Justice of India has launched E-Court National Portal in 2013.

- The Mission Mode Project (MMP) aims to provide designated services to litigants, lawyers and the judiciary by universal computerisation of district and subordinate courts in the country and enhancement of ICT enablement of the justice system.

5. E -Office: E-Office is a project of E-Governance in India launched by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances in 2008.

- The MMP aims to improve government functioning through more efficient, effective, transparent, and accountable inter-government and intra-government transactions and processes, and to reduce paper usage.

6. Smart Card: Smart Card is an initiative of E-Governance of West Bengal introduced in 2014. The West Bengal Transport Departments has developed a Smart Card for daily commuters of governments of buses which functions similar to the ones used in Metro Railways.

Various initiatives has taken under Digital India initiatives:

- **Mobile Seva:** Mobile Seva is a kind of initiative of E-Governance in India. This project was officially launched in 2013 by the Department of Electronics and Information Technology. It provides government services to the people through mobile phones and tablets.

▪ **Digi Locker:** Digi Locker is part of E-Governance in India which was introduced in 2015. It favours as a platform to enable citizens to securely store and share their documents with service providers who can directly access them electronically.

• **E-Hospital:** E-Hospital is a novel project of the govt. of India which was introduced in 2015. This project tries to digitize and streamline healthcare services to enhance accessibility, efficiency, and patient-centric care in government hospitals. It also focuses on online appointment booking, access to lab reports, and information on blood availability, and improving hospital operations through digital management of various modules. Nowadays already 420 hospitals have established under Digital India Initiative.

• **E-Mandi:** E-Mandi is a project under E-National Agriculture Market scheme. This project was introduced in 2016. This project focuses on integrating agricultural markets nationwide, streamlining marketing and transaction procedures, enhancing farmers' access to wider markets and better prices, promoting quality-based bidding through assaying, and ensuring stable pricing and availability of quality produce for consumers.

▪ **DARPAN:** "Digital Advancement of Rural Post Office for A New India" namely "DARPAN" is a project of E-Governance in India. This scheme was launched in 2017. The main objectives of this project are to modernize the rural postal system across India and achieve financial inclusion through IT enablement for un-banked rural population.

• **My Scheme:** My Scheme is a project of Digital India Initiative which was launched in 2022. This project aims to deliver government schemes in a seamless, convenient, cashless, paperless, faceless, time-bound, and transparent manner across Government silos. Under this Scheme more than 1000 schemes across categories such as Social Welfare & Empowerment, Agriculture, Rural & Environment, Business & Entrepreneurship, etc.

1.6 Models of E-Governance:

The services of E-Governance can be shared between citizens, businessman, government and employees of the country. These four models of e-governance are as follows :

1. Government to Citizens (G2C):

This model of e-governance refers to the government services which are shared by citizens. Here citizens of the country visit to the link of services that they want to get or use. This model's strong bond between government and its citizen. Type of services which are provided by this model includes—

- Payment of any online bills such as water, electricity etc.
- Online registration of applications.
- Copies of land record.
- Online filling of complaints.

2. Government to Government (G2G) :

This model refers to the services which are shared between the government. There is lots of information that need to be shared between various government agencies, departments, and organization. According to this model these type of information or services are as follows—

- Sharing of any kind of information between police departments of various states.
- Government document exchange which includes preparation, approval, distribution and storage of all governmental documents is also done through E-Governance.

3. Government to Businessmen (G2B):

Through this model bonding between private sector and government increase and businessman use to communicate. They share information through this model like—

- Collection of taxes from business holders.
- Rejection and approval of patent is also done by this model.
- Payment of all kinds of bills and penalty.
- Sharing of all kinds of information, rules and data.

4. Government to employees (G2E):

This model increases the transparency between government and its employees. Through this model of E-Governance employee can keeps a check list on the functioning and working of government and government can keeps on its employees. All type of Information's which are related to employees that can be shared by this model .

- All kind of data submission like attendance record of the employee, employees record etc. from various government offices is done by this model.
- Employee can file all kinds of complaints and dissatisfaction by this model.
- All kind of rule-regulations and information's for employees can be shared by this model.
- Employees can register all kind of working forms online.
- Employees can check their payments and working record.

1.7 Challenges of E-Governance in India:

In Indian context the various issues faced by E-Governance. These issues are considered as challenges of E-Governance. Some of the key challenges are as follows—

1. Lack of Awareness:

There is a lack of awareness about the various e-governance initiatives of the government. Many people of India still don't know that they can

avail most of the government services today online, whether it is payment of property tax, water tax, applying for passport, birth and death certificate, etc. The initiatives taken by the government to create awareness about the E-Governance activities are far from adequate.

2. Lack of Trained Governmental Official about ICT:

The governmental staffs lack adequate training and upgradation of skills in the domain of e-governance. In E-Governance projects, there is a huge lack of technical or trained persons. Expertise is not easily available in different departments of government for immediate repair of hardware/networking, therefore an obvious delay exists in the system.

3. Lack of Multi Language Support:

E-Governance has an impact only when the services to citizens are made available in their respective language. But India is a country where people with different cultures and different religions live. The diversity of people is a huge challenge for implementing E-Governance projects. The E-Governance applications are mostly written in the English language which many people cannot follow. This reality needs to be reflected in the implementation strategy.

4.Lack of infrastructure for sustaining e-governance projects on national level:

Infrastructure to support E-Governance initiatives does not exist within governmental departments. They agony is that governmental departments are not equipped to be in a position to project clear requirements nor are there any guidelines for involving the private sector. Notwithstanding the creation of infrastructure is not properly guided by uniform national policy.

5.Privacy Issue:

In the era of ICT there is the issue of data security and privacy. Many citizens feel that sharing their personal information online with public agencies is not safe. They fear it may be misused. There is also the concern of fraudulent transactions where transfer of money is involved.

6.Illiteracy:

Most of the people in India are not aware about the usage of Information Technology. Basically IT illiteracy is a major obstacle in implementation of e-Governance in India. So, first of all Indian people must be made aware about the usage of Information Technology.

7. High Cost:

Implementing E-Governance operations and maintaining services is very costly in India.

1.8 Significance of E-Governance:

ICT based E-Governance plays an important role in effectively delivering services to the citizens. The significance of E-Governance are as follows:

1.Paperwork Reduction : An immediate impact of automation would be on the paperwork. Paper work is reduced to a greater extent with communication being enabled via electronic route and storage and retrieval of information in the electronic form. All this has led to emergence of less paper office. In the words of Dubey, less paper office is the implementation of effective electronic communication processes that enable elimination of re-productive works and unnecessary papers.

2.Quality of Services: ICT helps governments to deliver services to the citizens with greater accountability, responsiveness and sensitivity. Quality of services improves as now people are able to get services efficiently and instantaneously.

3.Elimination of Hierarchy: ICT has reduced procedural delays caused by hierarchical processes in the organization. Through internet, it has become possible to send an information and data across various levels in the organization at the same time. In this regard ICT based e-governance increased efficiency and have led to the involvement of all levels in decision making process.

4.Effective Service Delivery: ICTs play an important role in effectively delivered in services to the people. ICTs ensure effective service delivery and increase the accountability of the governmental activities.

5.Transparency: The use of E-Governance helps make all functions of the business transparent. All governmental information can be uploaded onto the internet. The citizens access specially access whichever information they want. However for this to work the government has to ensure that all data as to be made public and uploaded to the government information forums on the internet.

6.Economic Development: The development of ICTs reduces the transaction costs which makes services cheaper. For example, rural areas suffer on account of lack of information regarding markets, products, agriculture, health, education etc.

7.Social Development: The access to information empowers the citizens. Informed citizen can participate and voice their concerns which can be accommodated in the program or project formulation, implementation, monitoring and service delivery. Web enabled participation will counter the discriminatory factors affecting our social behaviour.

1.9 Conclusion:

From the above discussion we conclude that, the concept of E-Governance is being gradually popular in India as well as also worldwide. To make working of government more efficient, responsive and transparent many states of India already have taken various useful steps for the expansion.

sion of e-governance. The speed and transparency associated with governance has the potential to make public administration responsive and effective. The success of E-Governance measures largely depends on the availability of high speed internet and the nation wide rollout of 5G technology in the near future.

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