Electronic-Governance in India: Applications & Issues

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Abstract

E-governance is more than just a government website on the Internet. But what is it exactly? What are the benefits of e-governance? What can governments do to make it work? Solutions to development issues often require changes to government processes, e.g. by decentralization. Objectives are generally to improve efficiency and effectiveness and to save costs. The driving force can also be public demand for online services and information that increase democratic participation, accountability, transparency, and the quality and speed of services. The implementation and use of ICT solutions can support governance reforms. Imagine a situation in which all interaction with the government can be done through one counter 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, without waiting in lines at government offices. In the near future this is possible if governments are willing to decentralize responsibilities and processes and they start to use electronic means such as the Internet. Each citizen can then make contact with the government through a website where all forms, legislation, news and other information will be available 24/7. Development of any country can be judge by the scope of E-Governance in that country. Moreover, today's government has also full faith in E-Governance and its widespread network across the world proves it. In the present scenario, Information technology has added the impetus to the services provided by the government. This paper highlights the role and potential of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in supporting the ─ good governance programs in developing countries. ICTs can make a significant contribution to the achievement of good governance goals. This 'e-governance' makes the governance more efficient and more effective, and also brings benefits to the citizens of the country. We will be outlining the three main contributions of e-governance: firstly improving government processes; secondly connecting citizens and thirdly building external interactions.
Keywords: ICT & E-governance.

1. Introduction

Today's is the world of change and revolution. Things which are not dynamic are considered as mortal. The rise of egovernment has been one of the most striking developments of the web Global shifts towards increased deployment of IT by governments emerged in the nineties, with the advent of the World Wide Web. The technology as well as egovernance initiatives have come a long way since then. Recognizing the increasing importance of electronics, the Government of India established the Department of Electronics in 1970. The subsequent establishment of the National Informatics Centre (NIC) in 1977 was the first major step towards e-Governance in India as it brought 'information' and its communication in focus. The term 'e-Governance' is often used to describe the networking paradigm and its decentralizing and communicatory implications. The impact of globalization, introduction of new information and communication technologies, and changing demographic and political requirements are redefining the role of governments and public sector organizations. In order to better serve the citizens that they represent, governments and the public sector in general, are looking for more efficient and effective ways to respond to these new challenges. E-governance offers an opportunity to successfully meet some of these challenges.

ICT is "Information and Communication Technologies." ICT refers to technologies that make available right to use to information throughout telecommunications. It is parallel to Information Technology (IT), but focuses primarily on communication technologies. ICT having number of

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communication channels like wireless networks, cell phones, Internet and other. The rapid development and implementation of the Information and Communication Technology is transforming every aspect of human life.

E-Governance was started in India by AHSHAYA in Kerala. This project involves setting up around 5000 multipurpose community technology centers called Akshaya e- Kendra's across Kerala. Run by private entrepreneurs, each e-Kendra set up within 2-3 kilometers of every household, will cater to the requirements of around 1000-3000 families to make available the power of networking and connectivity to common man. Akshaya is a social and economic catalyst focusing on the various facets of e-learning, e-transaction, egovernance, information and communication.

2. Four Pillars of E-Governance

(i) CONNECTIVITY: - Connectivity is required to connect the people to the services of the government. There should be a strong connectivity for an effective e-governance.

(ii) KNOWLEDGE: - Here knowledge refers to IT knowledge. Government should employ skill full engineers who can handle the e-governance in an efficient way. These engineers also handle all kind of fault that may occur during the working of egovernance.

(iii) DATA CONTENT: - To share any kind of knowledge or information over the internet, there should be its database. This database should have the data content which is related to government services.

(iv) CAPITAL: - Capital can be on public or private partnership. It refers to money used by government to provide their services or to that sector of the economy based on its operation.

3. Development in E-Governance

The public service delivery system in the developing nation's costs too much, delivers too little, and is not sufficiently responsive or accountable. Good governance reforms aim to revamp this delivery system. E-Governance offers new solutions, helping improve government processes, connect citizens, and build interactions with and within civil society. E-governance has the power of ICTs, which provide three basic change potentials for good governance for development:

- **Automation**: It means replacing the human-executed processes which involve accepting, storing, processing, outputting or transmitting information..
- **Informatisation**: It means supporting human-executed information processes. Like, supporting current processes of decision making, communication, and decision implementation.
- **Transformation**: It creates new ICT-executed information processes or supporting new human-executed information processes.

4. Applications of E-Governance

These days, over 1000 e-governance services can be accessed athwart the length and breadth of the country through NeGP. Since Jan 2013, over 237 crore e- transactions have been delivered. The basic aims of e-governance are to improve the ability of all people to participate in democracy and to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of all kinds of government services. E-Governance offers many reimbursement and recompense across the country for the government, corporate sector and society. E-Governance facilitates better delivery of government services to citizens, improved interactions with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information, or more efficient government management. It simplifies internal operations and improves performance of government departments while helping all sections of society to avail government services at lower cost with maximum ease of use.
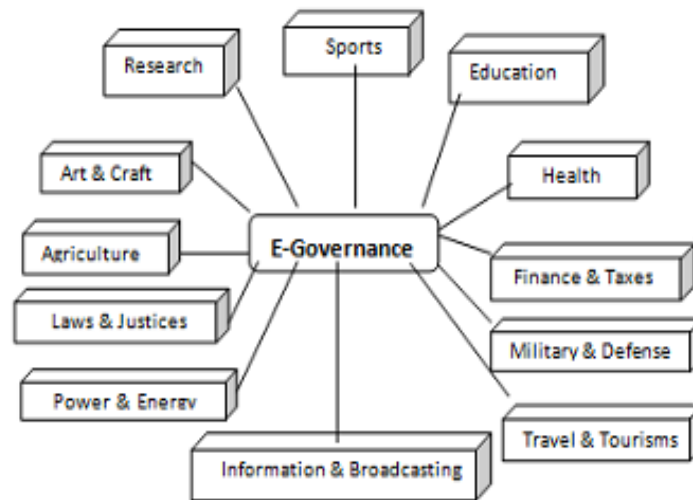
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Figure 1: Applications of E-governance

5. Major Challenges in E-Commerce in India

Poor people and poor infrastructure are major challenges in countries like India. It poses a major challenge in reaping the full benefits of service provision under e-governance. The various barriers can be enumerated as follows:

- **Poverty:** Accessing Internet is a costly affair for the poor who struggle for their livelihood in developing countries like India. Required infrastructure in the form of installing the necessary telephone lines needed for internet or email access is equally unaffordable in most poor countries.

- **Technical illiteracy:** There is general lack of technical literacy as well as literacy in countries like India.

- **Language Dominance:** The dominance of English on the internet constrains the access of non-English-speaking population. In the case of India, 95 percent of the population does not speak English. Due to such overwhelming dominance of English over these communication channels, computers and the internet are quite useless in Indian villages.

- **Unawareness:** There is general lack of awareness regarding benefits of E-Governance as well as the process involved in implementing successful G-C, G-G and G-B projects.

- **Inequality:** Inequality in gaining access to public sector services between various sections of citizens, especially between urban and rural communities, between the educated and illiterate, and between the rich and poor.

- **Infrastructure:** Lack of necessary infrastructure like electricity, internet, technology and ways of communications will affect the speed which delays the implementation.

- **Impediments for the Re-Engineering process:** Implementation of E-Governance projects requires lots of restructuring in administrative processes, redefining of administrative procedures and formats which finds the resistance in almost all the departments at all the levels.

6. Conclusion

"E-Governance, has to be citizen-friendly. Delivery of services to citizens is considered a primary function of the government. In a democratic nation of over one billion people like India, e-Governance should enable seamless access to information and seamless flow of information across the state and central government in the federal set up. No country has so far implemented an e-Governance system for one billion People. It is a big challenge before us."

E-Governance enhances the relationships between G2G, G2C, G2B, C2G and B2G using ICT. Thus, E-Governance not only provides information about various activities of a Government but also involves citizens to participate in government's decision making process. During the last few years, many initiatives have been taken by different state governments in India for using IT as a tool in the functioning of Government so as to provide better services to citizens.

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