

## **E-Governance-Emerging Dimension in India**

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**ABSTRACT:** One effect of new and expanding information and communication technology (ICT) and the digital revolution is the reality and potential of ICT to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of government. Another is demands on governments to be more receptive to the needs of citizens. Governments must become more participatory, lower barriers and costs for access, and become more responsive. One way to do this is e-government – the use of information and communications technologies to transform government, to make it more efficient, effective, transparent and accountable. For developing countries like India and the development efforts they are pursuing, e-government will be particularly important, in development and in establishing good governance. E-governance promotes the efficiency, enforces accountability, brings transparency in the working of the government system and reduces time delays. E-government involves many benefits that strengthen the function of government, but also involves issues that call for new ways of governing. For developing countries, the potentials are particularly significant, but so are the issues. An additional concern developing country governments must face is reconciling e-government and the digital divide.

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

E-Governance is the implementation and delivery of government services through the information communication technology to provide Transparent, Effective, Efficient, Responsive and Accountable governance to the society. Good governance has eight major characteristics i.e. *Participation, Transparency, Effectiveness and efficiency, Responsiveness, Accountability, Equity and inclusiveness, Rule of Law, as in for the effective and efficient governance*. It is basically the application of Information and communications Technology (ICT) to the processes of Government functioning and to provide a SMART Government. The Acronym SMAART refers to Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsive, Responsible and Transparent Government.

**S** The use of ICT brings simplicity in governance through electronic documentation, online submission, online service delivery, etc.

**M** It brings Morality to governance as immoralities like bribing, red-tapism, etc. are eliminated.

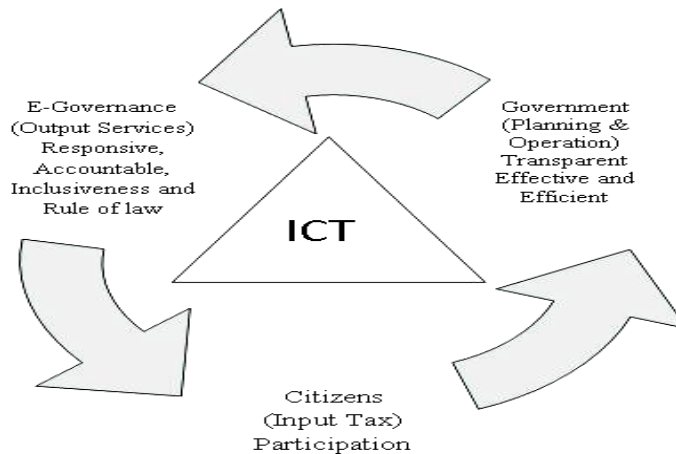
**A** It makes the Government accountable as all the data and information of Government is available online for consideration of every citizen, the NGOs and the media.

**R** Due to reduced paperwork and increased communication speeds and decreased communication time, the Government agencies become responsive.

**R** Technology can help convert an irresponsible Government Responsible. Increased access to information makes more informed citizens. And these empowered citizens make a responsible Government.

**T** With increased morality, online availability of information and reduced red-tapism the process of governance becomes transparent leaving no room for the Government to conceal any information from the citizens.

This would generally involve the use of ICTs by government agencies for exchange of information with citizens, businesses or other government departments, Speedier and more efficient delivery of public services, Reducing costs, Re-structuring of administrative processes and Improving quality of services E-governance also aims to empower people through giving them access to information. These objects of e-Governance are achievable with the use of ICT and therefore the concept is very alluring and desirable.



**Methodology:**

The study is based on secondary data obtained through scanning of available literature on the subject from various libraries and institutes. Various magazines, newspapers, journals etc. were consulted. The relevant data from various sources has been collected and the updated report has been compiled.

**II. E-GOVERNANCE IN INDIA**

In India the concept ‘e-governance’ began with National Informatics Center’s efforts to connect all district headquarters through computers in 1980s. In 2002 it further proposed the setting up an Indian portal for public access to information on various aspects of government functioning Agriculture sector, rural development and promoting social welfare. In order to understand the needs of citizens from the government, a limited unstructured survey was conducted by PwC in 5 States of Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and Jharkhand covering people from different Income groups, Education levels, Castes, Age, and Gender. Based on the information collected during the survey "What Citizens Wants" the e-Governance areas have been categorized as Highest Priority, High Priority and Medium Priority areas. This is further categorized into Services, Information and Grievances. The results when analyzed gave a clear mandate that the citizen wants e-Governance to focus on

- (a) Social Security Areas which enhances incomes of citizen,
- (b) Health & Education

The National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) formulated by the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DeitY), Government of India, the Common Service Centers (CSCs) are ICT enabled front end service delivery points at the village level for delivery of Government, Financial, Social and Private Sector services in the areas of agriculture, health, education, entertainment, FMCG products, banking, insurance, pension, utility payments, etc. National e-Governance Plan (NeGP), initiated in 2006, attempts to make all Government services accessible to the common man in his locality, through Common Service Centers (CSC) being set up across India. As on August 31, 2013, about 1,27,002 (CSC Newsletter) CSCs was operational with different brand names and started delivering services to people. A large number of initiatives have been undertaken by various State Governments and Central Ministries to usher in an era of e-Government. Sustained efforts have been made at multiple levels to improve the delivery of public services and simplify the process of accessing them. Following are few successful stories of e-governance in India:

**Bhoomi** – Automation of Land Records (State Government of Karnataka) It provides computerized Record of Rights Tenancy & Crops (RTC) - needed by farmer to obtain bank loans, settle land disputes etc. It also ensured transparency and reliability, significant reduction in corruption, exploitation and oppression of farmers. This project has benefited 20 million rural land records covering 6.7 million farmers. E-Governance support in Easy & Fast access of land records, High efficiency of record, Bhoomi provides high reliability of records, regional language dominance which will allow citizens to participate and access information with a very nominal cost.

**CARD**- Registration Project (State Government of Andhra Pradesh) Computer-Aided Administration of Registration Department (CARD) impacting 10 million citizens over a period of 3 years. The system ensures transparency in valuation of property and efficient document management system. Similar initiatives in other states like SARITA (State Government of Maharashtra) STAR (State Government of Tamil Nadu), etc. have further built upon this initiative. CARD was one of the ten finalists in the International Innovation awards program instituted by the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management.

**eProcurement-** ([www.eprocurement.gov.in](http://www.eprocurement.gov.in)) Online tendering for goods and services by government departments and agencies in Andhra Pradesh. More than 32,000 tenders were processed through the eProcurement platform in 2008–09, with an average of three bids received per tender.

**Warana-**The primary objective of the recently launched Wired Village project is to demonstrate the effective use of IT infrastructure in the accelerated socio-economic development of 70 villages around Warana Nagar in the Kolhapur and Sangli districts of the state of Maharashtra. The existing cooperative structure has been used in concert with high speed VSATs to allow Internet access to existing cooperative societies. The project aims to provide agricultural, medical, and education information to villagers by establishing networked facilitation booths' in the villages.

**Gyandoot-**Intranet in Tribal District of Dhar (State Government of Madhya Pradesh) This project offers e-governance services including online registration of applications, rural e-mail facility, village auction site etc. It also provides services such as Information on Mandi (farm products market) rates, On-line public grievance redressal, caste & income certificates and Rural Market (Gaon ka Bazaar). It was winner of Stockholm challenge IT Award 2000. Farmers will be facilitated by the Gyandoot by providing the appropriate price for their crop which minimizes the role of mediators, fast and easy access of various types of forms, land records etc. Villagers can participate in the decision making of various functioning bodies for their welfare by effective grievance.

**E- Sewa-** is the first major initiative in the country to employ information technology as a tool to improve services for citizens, launched by the Andhra Pradesh government. The e-sewa center is a one-stop shop for more than 30 government-to-consumer (G2C) and business-to-consumer (B2C) services. From payment of electricity, water and telephone bills to the issue of birth and death certificates, permits and licenses, reservation of bus tickets and receipt of passport applications, the e-sewa centers offer a wide range of services under one roof.

**SETU-** the Citizen Facilitation Centre has been set up by government of Maharashtra in the city of Aurangabad (population 1 million approx) as a one-stop service centre for citizens who have to visit government offices for certificates, permits, authentication, affidavit and other service.

**SPARK-** is a web based Personnel Administration and Accounts Software for Government of Kerala covering more than 3.25 lakhs employees. The centralized integrated computerized personnel and payroll information system has helped the government to get details of any employee immediately, achieve highest level of transparency in dealing with the employees, more consistent application of rules, etc. On the payroll side, accurate and automatic payroll processing is facilitated. It also ensures that the rules and regulations are uniformly applied to all employees there by avoiding complaints and achieve better employee relations.

#### **State No. of e-transactions**

Gujarat 49,69,19,851  
Andhra Pradesh 46,45,34,665  
Madhya Pradesh 40,67,11,442  
Maharashtra 20,96,99,678  
Haryana 17,31,54,780  
Central govt projects 70,21,11,302

(Source - [etaal.gov.in](http://etaal.gov.in) and for the period from Jan 1, 2013 to Feb 24, 2014)

*Haryana's e-Governance project entitled, "Dynamic Integration of Property Registration, Land Records and Cadastral Maps" has received National Award on e-Governance 2013-14 under the category "Incremental Innovation in Existing Project"*

Thus, from the above it can be concluded that with the introduction of e-government applications, there is a revolution in the quality of service delivered to its citizens.

#### **Benefits of E-Services**

The dissemination of services using ICT offers significant benefits in terms of costs, governance and effectiveness. While ICT leads to a transformation in work processes and service delivery, it also lowers transaction costs by enabling transparency and accountability. Some of the benefits of e-Services are:

### **Fast, Convenient and Cost Effective Service Delivery**

With the advent of e-Service delivery, the government can provide information and services at lesser costs, in reduced time and with greater convenience. For instance, after the computerisation of land records in Karnataka, farmers can obtain a copy of their Records of Rights, Tenancy and Crops (RTC) within 30 minutes, as against 30 days that it used to take earlier. Moreover, a printed copy of the RTC at kiosks costs 15 only, as against heavy bribes that one had to pay earlier. The provision of multiple services at a central outlet further increases the speed of delivery of services, which in turn saves effort, money and time of the consumers. For example, as of November 2011, the government had set up around 97,4391 CSCs (Common Service Centres) across the country providing a broad range of services such as grievance redressal, ration card registration, birth and death certificates, electoral registration and NREGA digitisation work under a single roof, thereby increasing convenience for the people.

### **Transparency, Accountability and Reduced Corruption**

Dissemination of information through ICT increases transparency, ensures accountability and prevents corruption. An increased use of computers and web based services improves the awareness levels of citizens about their rights and powers. This helps to reduce the discretionary powers of government officials and curtail corruption. For instance, land registration requirements in Andhra Pradesh after computerisation can now be completed within an hour without any official harassment or bribes. Use of ICT would make civil servants responsive and accountable with free flow of information regarding administration and policy. Moreover, it would reduce manipulative capacity and misuse of resources thus enhancing the trust of people in the government processes.

### **Increased Participation by People**

With easy access to the government services, the faith of the citizens in the government increases and they come forward to share their views and feedback. Increased accessibility to information has empowered the citizens and has enhanced their participation by giving them the opportunity to share information and contribute in implementation of initiatives. For example, under 'Gyandoot2' in Madhya Pradesh, a citizen can file a complaint to the district administration through e-mail with an assured reply within seven days.

### **Balanced Development**

With the spread of ICT awareness, the government has started offering services through electronic means that were typically difficult for the government to provide and for the people to utilise. This elimination of digital divide has increased the availability of services at the doorstep of the poor and has led to strengthening of people in backward areas. Initially, the rollout of government services through ICT was believed to benefit only the people who had access to computers and were acquainted with their usage. However, after the execution of projects such as Gyandoot and Bhoomi<sup>3</sup>, the perception has been proven wrong. People who use these services can visit kiosks for assistance and rest of the work is done by the officials in lieu of a nominal fee. With this, e-Service delivery has become an effective mode of encouraging balanced regional development in the country.

### **Priorities and Objectives**

For e-governance to succeed in India 'e-readiness' must be built. This means strengthening infrastructural inadequacies, reducing the barriers to e-governance, and strengthening the drivers to E-Governance. The priority for is therefore to build e-readiness.

## **III. STRATEGIES FOR E-GOVERNANCE IN INDIA**

### **-To build technical infrastructure**

Complete implementation of E-governance in India will include building technical Hardware and Software infrastructure. It will also include better and faster connectivity options. Newer connectivity options will include faster Broadband connections and faster wireless networks such as 3G and 4G. The infrastructure must be built by Government, Private Sector as well as individuals. Infrastructure will also include promotion of Internet Cafes, Information and Interactive Kiosks. However while building technical infrastructure, disabled persons must also be considered. The technology implemented, shall incorporate the disabled persons.

### **-To build institutional capacity**

Apart from building technical infrastructure, the Government needs to build its institutional capacity. This will include training of Government employees, appointment of experts. Alongwith the Government has also to create an Expert database for better utilisation of intellectual resources with it. Apart from this, the Government has to equip the departments with hi-technology and has also to setup special investigating agency.

**-To build legal infrastructure**

For better implementation of e-governance, the Government will need to frame laws which will fully incorporate the established as well as emerging technology. Changing technology has changed many pre-established notions; similarly the technology is growing and changing rapidly. It is important, that the Government makes laws which incorporate the current technology and has enough space to incorporate the changing future technology. These IT laws need to be flexible to adjust with the rapidly changing technology. Currently India has only the IT Act, 2000 which is mainly an E-Commerce legislation. India has also modified many laws to include electronic technology, however it is not sufficient to cover e-governance completely.

**-To build judicial infrastructure**

Overall technological awareness in current Judges is very low. The judiciary as a whole needs to be trained in new technology, its benefits and drawbacks and the various usages. The judiciary may alternatively appoint new judges with new judges and setup special Courts to deal with the matters relating to ICT. The Government can also setup special tribunals to deal with matters relating with ICT.

**-To make all information available online**

The Government has to publish all the information online through websites. This can be facilitated through centralised storage of information, localisation of content and content management. The information of government is public information, therefore the citizens are entitled to know every piece of information of the Government, because the Government is of the People, by the People and for the People.

**-To popularise E-governance**

Literacy percentage in India is alarming. The whole world is moving towards e-governance, but India still lacks in the literacy department. The people need to be educated and made e-literate for e-governance to flourish. There are very few e-literate people in India is very low. The Government needs to campaign for e-governance, increase people's awareness towards e-governance. Government can only encourage people to go online if it can make people feel comfortable with e-governance. This can be done through educating the people about the advantages of e-governance over physical governance. This can also be done through raising awareness of the leaders who can motivate the people to go online.

**-Centre-State Partnership**

Indian setup is quasi-federal. Therefore Centre-State and inter-state cooperation is necessary for smooth functioning of the democratic process. This cooperation is also necessary for successful implementation of e-governance. This cooperation shall extend to Centre-state, inter-state and inter-department relationships. For the same the Government can setup a Central Hub like the current Government of India portal, for accessing the information of all the organs of the central government and also all the state government. The states can cooperate with the Centre to create a National Citizen Database.

**-To set standards**

Finally it is important to set various standards to bring e-governance to the quality and performance level of private corporate sector. The Government of India is currently working on standards management and has various drafts prepared for the same. These standards include following: Inter-operability standards, Security standards, Technical standards, Quality standards. Government websites in India currently have no uniform standard. Many Government of Maharashtra websites differ in standards within even two of its webpages. There is no set standard as to quality of the information, document, the formats, etc. It is very important for the Government to set uniform national standards to be followed by all the Governments and agencies.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

In the end, e-Governance is about reform in governance, facilitated by the creative use of Information and communications Technology. It is used at all levels of the Government in order to provide services to the citizens, interaction with business enterprises and communication and exchange of information between different agencies of the Government in a speedy, convenient efficient and transparent manner. It has changed the way of working of the Government in India. After the introduction of e-governance the Administration becomes more responsible and transparent to the citizen. Simplification in structures and changes in statutes and regulations, The end result would be simplification of the functioning of government, enhanced decision making abilities and increased efficiency across government – all contributing to an overall environment of a more accountable government machinery. This, in turn, would result in enhanced productivity and efficiency in all sector. In spite of poor infrastructure, poverty, illiteracy, language dominance and all the other reasons India has number of award winning e-governance projects. Effective promotion schemes by the Indian government will also be a boosting factor to provide quality services to

their citizens . According to Skoch consultancy New Delhi , 81% citizens report reduction in corruption, 95% find cost of e-governance affordable and 78% favors fast of delivery of services. Therefore we can say that e-Governance is the key to the “*Good Governance*” for the developing countries like India to minimize corruption, provides efficient and effective or quality services to their citizens.

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