



EMPOWERING PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION THROUGH E-GOVERNANCE

Khyati Pal

Department of Political Science, Delhi University, Delhi, India.

ABSTRACT

The last decade of 20th century saw emergence and strengthening of positive governance through various measures among which e-governance is one. E-governance is the communication of government with the citizens through ICT. This paper discusses e-governance in India and the initiatives taken by government for it. E-governance has its new issues with new era, which needs to be analysed and its impact to be known for reforms and better governance in India.

KEY WORDS: e-governance, ICT, citizen.

INTRODUCTION:

E-governance is generally understood as the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) at the level of government in order to provide services to citizens, interaction with business enterprises and communication and exchange of information between different agencies of the government in as speedy, convenient, efficient and transparent manner. (1)

Reinventing the process of governance has been a dominant theme since 1990 where in all governments of the world are making an attempt to improve the public service delivery system, to make democracy substantive and an attempt towards inclusive growth and social equity. This effort led to the emergence of e-governance. Simply put e-governance is the application of ICT to the process of government functioning in order to bring in S.M.A.R.T. Governance. (S.M.A.R.T. - Simple, moral, accountable, responsive and transparent)

EVOLUTION OF E GOVERNANCE IN INDIA:

E-governance emerged in the world as the tool for New Public Management (NPM). NPM is a model of governance which came along with liberalization and anti bureaucratisation. It is against top down model. It brings new nomenclature like clients and customers for citizens and views citizens as an active participant in the governance.

E-governance has its origin in India in the 1970s within the focus on development and deployment of IT to manage data functions related to election, census, tax etc. In the 1980s National Informatics Centre (NIC) connected all the district headquarters through LAN and SWAN ICT networks. In the year 2000 Information Technology Act legalized electronic exchange of information which was a key milestone. The National E-governance Plan was conceived in 2006, which aimed at speed reliability accessibility and transparency in various public services to intensive citizens and businesses and enabled citizen centric governance.

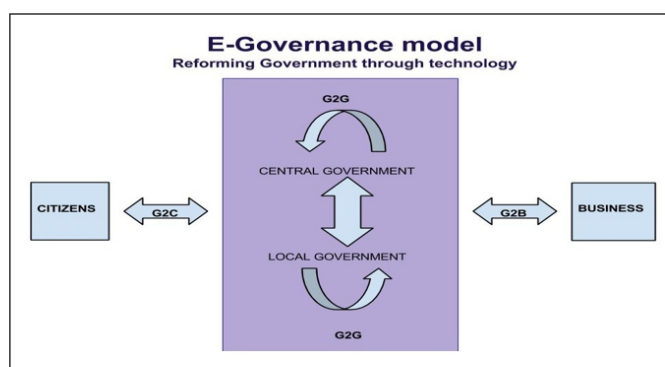
MODELS OF E-GOVERNANCE:

E-governance enables good governance through the emergence of networks where state, private sector, NGO's, civil societies, and citizens form a 'networked community' through Information and Communication Technology (ICT) so that the state can deliver services and citizens can organize themselves to influence policy making. E-governance is classified under variety of models depending upon the nature of its interaction with these stakeholders in the state. Different types of models are:

G2C-government to citizens: This is the communication process of government with ordinary citizens. It includes those activities by which government provide services to citizens.

G2G-government to government: This is the non-commercial interaction and transactions between Government organizations. G2G initiatives help in making the inside government procedures more efficient and linking central government to state governments.

G2B-government to business: This is the interaction between government and the commercial business sector to get the businesses information and services online.



STATUS OF E-GOVERNANCE IN INDIA:

India, being the one of the largest countries democratically, demographically and geographically, still has gap of using govt. services to its large population. In addition to it, there are still problems related to socio-economic prevailing in the country like unemployment, poverty, education, health, banking and business, etc. As a result, govt. of India has been launching the various initiatives in order to overcome these problems with minimum govt. and maximum governance by enormous use of electronic devices.

E-Governance applications have helped government to reach the unreached population in a country. In 1975, the Government of India had started using computers in the government services and computerized decision support system in the departments to facilitate planning. National Informatics Centre (NIC) was established in 1976. Andhra Pradesh was the first state in the country to take up E-governance in a systematic manner. The government made the best possible use of technology to communicate and provide information in terms of national websites, various initiatives, plans and projects. As a result the daily lives of citizens have been made a lot easy for eg. These days electricity, water, phone and all kinds of bills can be paid over the internet.

An estimated US\$3 trillion was spent during the first decade of the 21st century on government information systems. Yet recent studies suggest between 60 to 80% of e-government projects do not succeed enough in some way leading to "a massive wastage of financial, human and political resources, and an inability to deliver the potential benefits of e-government to its beneficiaries". It is difficult to implement e-governance in developing countries like India due to different challenges! Yet a considerable amount of success can be claimed by the government owing to its initiatives. A major e-Governance initiative on national scale has been National E-Governance Plan (NeGP). It is the lead nodal agency for implementing e-governance in India.

NATIONAL E-GOVERNANCE PLAN:

National e-governance plan has been a major role player in e-governance. It has been formulated by the Department of Electronics and Information Technology AND Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances in 2006. It seeks to implement Mission Mode Projects (MMP) at the centre, state and grass-roots level to enable citizen centric governance. The centre and states initiative as the MMP's are:

- 1) office- government offices are modernised using ICT for efficient working such as quick search, retrieval of files and digital signatures

- 2) Immigration, visa and foreigner's registration and tracking system (IVFFRT)
- 3) Unique Identification (UID) project was conceived for efficient delivery of welfare services
- 4) Online pension's portal
- 5) Online banking services
- 6) Central server based postal system
- 7) E governance in municipalities linked to Jawahar Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission.
- 8) Crime and criminal tracking system for better policing.
- 9) Computerization of PDS system for allocation and utilization reporting, storage and movement of food, grievance redressal, and transparency portal.
- 10) Ministry of health and family welfare has made a mother and child trafficking system, more comprehensive system for hospital information
- 11) Computerization of panchayats
- 12) E procurement by ministry of commerce and industry.
- 13) Direct cash transfer of entitlements like NREGA, pension etc.
- 14) MCA21 by ministry of corporate affairs aims to provide access to all registry related services
- 15) DIGITAL INDIA PROGRAM- launched in 2015, It aims to transform the country into a digitally empowered society. It will ensure that government services are available electronically. The overall program is to "prepare India a knowledge future" and to become an "umbrella program" covering many departments. In last 4 years under the digital India scheme 2,74,246 km of optic fibre has connected 1.15 lakh gram panchayats under BharatNet. 2.91 lakh common service centres have been opened in rural areas. This has led to the faster connectivity with the rural India.

E-GOVERNANCE INITIATIVES BY INDIAN STATES:

There have been continuous efforts from government in India to provide citizen services in a better manner utilizing e-governance. Some of the successful initiatives undertaken in various states of India are:

- 1) Computerization of land records with collaboration with NIC by geo spatial satellite.
- 2) Bhoomi project by Karnataka govt which keeps 20 million land records of farmers.
- 3) Gyaandoot by Madhya Pradesh govt which acts as an interface between district and government.
- 4) Lokvani project of UP is a grievance redressal and land record maintenance portal.
- 5) FRIENDS project in Kerala is a single window facility to pay taxes.
- 6) E-mitra in Rajasthan which facilitates urban and rural masses maximum possible services through lok mitra and jan mitra Kendra.
- 7) E-seva in Andhra Pradesh is a government services project.
- 8) E-procurement project in Andhra Pradesh is to reduce cost and time of vendors
- 9) Smart government Andhra Pradesh has been developed to streamline operations in Andhra Pradesh secretariat.
- 10) Khajane project in Karnataka is an online treasury computerization program of govt of Karnataka.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING E-GOVERNANCE:

There are various issues in the way of application and implementation of e-governance. Few of them are-

- 1) Cost: It is one of the economic issues, implementation of e-governance operations and maintenance of services fetch huge cost to govt.
- 2) Infrastructure: The infrastructure issues which are important like rural

telecommunications network, power problems in various states and ways of communications affect the speed which delays the implementation. Unless these areas are improved an effective e-Governance programme cannot be implemented.

- 3) Accessibility: In the era of technology, most number of people are using internet via computers and mobile phones. In the context of India, there is still gap arising between users and nonusers; it is because of language barrier, inadequate infrastructure in rural areas, etc.
- 4) Awareness about e-governance: Number of people in the country have not been aware of it, on account of illiteracy, non-accessibility of internet in rural areas, lack of will using internet services, etc. Therefore, educated citizens, concerned institution and dept. should come forward to get rural people benefited by e-services.
- 5) Cybercrime is used to undermine the effectiveness of a nation government. Governmental systems have been targeted for disturbance due to a variety of reasons, which includes the desire of hackers to demonstrate their skills against some of the most tightly guarded computer systems.
- 6) Lack of integrated services: Most of the e-governance services which are offered by the government are not integrated. Lack of interaction between different departments of government may be its major cause.
- 7) Different Languages: India is a country where people belonging to different states speak different languages. The diversity of people in speaking different languages is a challenge for implementing e-Governance projects. Through lot of efforts are put by centre and state governments on multilingual system such as Bharat Operating System Solutions (BOSS) which is present in almost all the Indian Languages, still it becomes a challenge for the government to write e-Governance applications which are to be implemented for the whole nation in more than one language

NEW ASPECTS IN E-GOVERNANCE:

To overcome the challenges and provide better services some new aspects should be included in e-governance. The government needs to have its own project management tools through which it can track down a particular programme and its outcome. There should be complete transparency and all the stakeholders should be made aware of project deliverables and timelines. The cost, schedule and the skill management should be made the part of project achievement.

There are currently many successful running e-programs but most of them are single sided interaction based. The new programs should be interactive. Interactive service system will open possibilities for more people participation. In order to reach out to the left out citizens of rural areas mobile services should be tried giving a new way to mobile governance. Most important of all an eco system should be created in the country that promotes innovation in ICT and motivates people participation in it.

IMPACT OF E-GOVERNANCE:

E-governance programme calls for basic restructuring of age old archaic and colonial procedure and eliminates existing dysfunctional system. All the countries worldwide are using it to reinvent themselves to pace up with the globalization and increasing needs of their citizens.

E-governance directly brings rationality by offering efficiency, time boundedness, transparency and demolition of discretion and red tapism, above all redressal of citizen grievances. The traditional state has found itself challenged by hierarchy, authority and centralization whereas the modern state is marked by decentralization, delegation, and participative vision.

E-governance has helped by not only facilitating government services but serving the needs of "multicultural society" by steering multi stakeholder participation in policymaking. Speeding up the process of government functions has helped reduce poverty, and attended to the small problems of the common man as all kind of information is available on a single click. Various fields like education have been restructured for increasing benefits to students and teachers.

Corruption, black-marketing and other malpractices have been curbed to a great extent. The redundant public sector has risen up for the welfare of people with the era of e-governance. Although, many milestones have been achieved but many goals are yet to be conquered. We still have to overcome many challenges related to funds and lack of infrastructure and focus on building more "socially relevant technologies", and also impart training and skill for e-governance to reach its maximum success.

CONCLUSION:

E-governance is developing India to the extent that citizens are not just passive recipients but they have a choice in policy making, participating and exiting it. With the contemporary time as internet is taking over peoples day to day life and making it more easier e-governance is required more promptly. E governance

has revolutionized India in a way that common people are viewed as equal partners by the governments thus empowering every citizen of India.

REFERENCES:

1. www.nceg.gov.in
2. M. Bhattacharya (2008) 'E-Governance': New Jawahar Publishers pg. 511-513.
3. A. Singh and G. Prakash (2008) 'A new public management perspective in Indian e-governance initiatives' in 'Critical Thinking in E-governance', Delhi: International Conference on E-governance.
4. Bitut Chakrabarty and Prakash Chand (2012) 'Public Administration in a Globalizing World': Sage Publications India.
5. Nagaraja K. (2016) 'E-Governance in India: Issues and Challenges': IOSR Journal of Economics and Finance (IOSR-JEF).
6. A. Dutta and MS Devi (2015) 'E-Governance Status in India': International Journal of Computer Sciences and Engineering
7. P Malik, P Dhillon, P Verma (2014) 'Challenges and Future Prospects for E-Governance in India': International Journal of Science, Engineering and Technology Research (IJSETR).
8. Geetika and Neeraj Pandey, "National E-governance Plan Revisited: achievements and road ahead": Computer Society of India.
9. J C Bertot, P T Jaeger and C R McClure (2008) 'Citizen Centred E- government Services: benefits cost and research needs': International Digital Government Research Conference, Canada.