



# E-Governance – A way towards Good Governance : A critical analysis

*Dr. Subedar Yadav\**

\* Assistant Professor , Dept. of Psychology, Nehru P.G. College, Lalitpur (U.P.)

## **ABSTRACT**

In the era of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) internet has provided means for faster and better communication, retrieval of data and utilization of the information to its users. E-Governance is just basically the application of ICT to provide government services to the citizens via internet. In developing countries like India, where literacy level is extremely low and large number of people is living below poverty line, people are not even aware about the benefits of E-Governance activities. E-Governance assumes greater importance in the context of management of today's governmental structures to achieve rapid economic growth and improved quality of life. The technology and the methods used in E-Governance project provide a roadmap for efficient delivery of services at the door step.

This paper highlights the growth of E- governance in India, the obstacles it is facing, and the assistance it had provided to the government and citizenry. This paper also talks about the various kinds of e-governance services provided by the government of India to its citizens, their benefits and the challenges faced to implement these services in every part of this country. The introduction of this concept in India has curbed many problems and assisted India to walk towards a transparent and accountable system. It had actually reduced the physical distance between the government and citizens, and aided the government in implementing the policies in smooth and expeditious way.

## Historical Evolution of E- Governance in India

E-Governance is defined as the use of web-based Internet applications and other information technologies by the Government, combined with processes that implement these technologies, to enhance the access to and delivery of Government information and services to the public, other agencies, and other Government entities or bring about improvements in Government operations that may include effectiveness, efficiency, service quality, or transformation.

The e-Gov efforts by the European Union are based on the definition:

“E-Governance is the use of Information and Communication Technologies in public administrations combined with organisational change and new skills in order to improve public services and democratic processes”

### The facets of e- governance are –

1. More efficient government
2. Better services to citizens
3. Improved democratic processes.

Heeks (2001) described the three major benefits of e-governance: e-administration improved government operations, e-citizens and e-services connected citizens, and developing external interactions (e-society). The strategic challenge of readiness, which comprises the availability of six types of infrastructure - data systems, legal, institutional, human, technological, and leadership & strategic thinking - is the first cause of most e-governance initiatives failing. Second, the failure of e-governance projects to implement best practises in order to avoid failure and succeed and to close design-reality gaps.

E-Governance originated in India during the 1970s 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 elections, census, tax administration etc. The first department to make wide use of E-Governance was the tax department at state and union levels in order to make their internal working more efficient.

- The establishment of the **Department of Electronics in 1970** was the first major step towards e-governance in India as it brought ‘information’ and its communication to focus.
- **National Informatics Centre (NIC) established in 1977**, launched the **District Information System** program to computerize all district offices in the country
- The main thrust for e-governance was provided by the launching of the national satellite-based computer network **NICNET in 1987**.

With the formation of the National Satellite Based Computer Network (NICNET) in 1987, e-Governance agenda in India gained momentum. In later period **District Information Systems of the National Informatics Centre (DISNIC)** was launched and state governments offered free hardware and software to computerize all district offices. In later period along with the centre, state governments also developed their e-Governance projects.

## Some Important Initial Projects are as Follows -

The scheme of '**Computerization of Land Records**' was started in the year of 1990-91 in Haryana. It helps the rural masses in getting their computerized land ownership certificates, in tracking any documents of land of circle office , updating etc.

'**Gyandoot**', an internet based 32 mechanism of Dhar district Administration of Madhya Pradesh started in year 2000 which provides the rural people various information e.g Income certificate, Public grievance redressal, BPL (Below Poverty Level) family list, Domicile certificate, daily agricultural commodity rates, Rural hindi email, Rural hindi newspaper etc.

The '**Akshaya project**' of Kerala was started in 2002. It involves setting up around 5000 multipurpose community technology centers called Akshaya e- Kendra's across Kerala. Akshaya is a social and economic catalyst focusing on the various facets of e-learning, e-transaction, e-governance, information and communication. In Kerala, the project '**FRIENDS**' (**Fast, Reliable, Instant, Efficient Network for the Disbursement of Services**) acted as a multiple agency **bill collection system** or in other words provides citizens the means to pay taxes and other financial dues to the State Government.

The '**BHOOMI Project**' of Karnataka started in 2002. It was an online service delivery mechanism which also managed the land records. Under the BHOOMI project there has computerized 20 million records of land ownership of 6.7 million farmers in the state. Since 2004, '**E-Seva**' project of Andhra Pradesh is designed to provide online services to the citizens/customers regarding by connecting them to the respective government departments and providing required information.

The '**Lokvani**' a public-private partnership project at Sitapur District in Uttar Pradesh which was initiated in November, 2004. It helps the people to interact with the government without physical visit to any government office in regards of handling of grievances, land record maintenance and providing a mixture of essential services. Uttar Pradesh government developed the 'Bhu-Lekh project' to computerize the land records.

The E-Governance initiatives have created the base for the lubricant running of E-Governance in India. But a consolidated program had not developed yet to help the e- Governance nationwide. To tackle this problem central government has taken the major initiatives. The 11th report of administrative reform commission titled "**Promoting e- Governance-The Smart Way Forward**" has initiated the process of setting base of e-Governance nationwide. The final report was submitted in December 2008. To carry out the task set by this commission, the "**National e-Governance Plan**" was designed by the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DEITY) and the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances.

The Government of India has assigned the subject of 'e- Governance' to the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances under the second schedule to **Government of India Allocation of Business Rules 1961**. The department has been endowed the role to promote e-Governance activities in harmony with the overall national objectives and priorities. This Task mainly involves conceptualization and overall co-ordination for governance related issues in collaboration with Department of Electronics and information Technology (DEITY) for technical expertise.

## National E-Governance Conferences to Boost E-Governance

To nourish the process of developing of E-Governance nationwide, National E-governance conferences were convened every year in different parts of India since 1998. These conferences provided a forum for discussion on e-government related issues among experts from administration, industry and academic leading

to the formulation of regional as well as national e-governance strategies. Participating in the 18th National e-Governance Conference, 2014 the Prime Minister of India tweeted that e-Governance was an essential part of his ambitious 'Digital India' project and underlined that the scale and speed of India's development journey requires maximum and smart utilization of latest technology.

The Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG) and Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India, in association with the State Government of Jammu & Kashmir has organised the 25th National Conference on e-Governance (NCeG) in November, 2022 in Jammu & Kashmir. The theme of the Conference was "Bringing Citizens, Industry and Government closer". This year's NCeG was centred around topics that will shape digital governance in the future. It will focus on technologies that will enhance government services and make India a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy.

During the plenary sessions, the conference concentrated on ten sub-themes. These sub-themes include digital governance across the entire government, the role of the digital economy in boosting jobs and strengthening the startup ecosystem, laws to support national growth and protect citizens' rights, a real-time, transparent grievance system, 21st-century digital infrastructure for next-generation services, scaling emerging technologies, e-governance's in bridging the digital divide, and digital governance to improve ease of doing business, digital transformation in Jammu and Kashmir and e-governance initiative in J&K.

In spite of these efforts, it is quite unfortunate that India stood in bottom position (i.e 105th out of total 193 nations) in the UN E-Government Survey 2022. There is an urgent need that it should make the e-Governance projects in order to provide her citizens coherent, spontaneous and transparent access to public services that the citizens deserve.

## Challenges for implementation of E-Governance

### Environmental and Social Challenges

1. **Diversified Language:** India is a nation where people of all cultures and religions coexist. People from various states speak various languages. Since e-Government apps are written in English, the diversity of people's linguistic backgrounds presents a significant difficulty for the implementation of e-Government programs. Additionally, the majority of individuals might not be able to understand English.
2. **Low IT Literacy:** The majority of Indians are illiterate, and those who are, have little grasp of information technology (IT). The majority of Indians are unaware of how to use information technology. With such a low degree of IT literacy in India, it will be difficult for the government to implement e-governance model.

### Economical Challenges

1. **Affordability:** Cost is one of the biggest barriers to e-Government implementation in developing nations like India, where a sizable portion of the population lives below the poverty line. Even the governments are not inclining its policies in putting e-Government into practice. Implementation, operational, and evolutionary maintenance cost a lot of money.
2. **Maintenance of electronic devices:** As the Information Technology changes very fast and it is very difficult for us to update our existing systems very fast. Regulations of different devices and their different characteristics may vary and the system in use must be capable to handle all the emerging needs.

## Technical Challenges

1. **Interoperability:** Interoperability is the ability of systems and organizations of different qualities to work together. The e-Governance applications must have this characteristic so that the newly developed and existing applications can be implemented together.
2. **Privacy and Security:** A critical obstacle in implementing e-Governance is the privacy and security of an individual's personal data that he/she provides to obtain government services. With the implementation of e-government projects, some effective measures must be taken to protect the sensitive personal information of the people. Lack of security standards can limit the development of e-Government projects that contain personal information such as income, medical history etc.

## ADVANTAGES OF E- GOVERNANCE IMPLEMENTATION

1. **Easy implementation:** Paperwork has been simplified and minimized owing to e-governance. It makes it easier for various departments and government departments to share information and ideas in order to create a single, massive data store. Since e-governance allows every person access to information, communicating government decisions and policies to the population is also simple.
2. **Speedy process:** Technology makes communication easier and speedier. Internet, phones, cell phones have reduced the time taken in normal communication. Through e-governance decision-making process of government will also fasten
3. **Transparency:** The use of information and communication technology (ICT) increases the transparency of the legislative process. The government would make all of its information available online. The information is available for public viewing at any time. However, this is only feasible after the public has access to all of the government's data, which has been published to the internet. There are numerous ways to hide facts from the general public under the current political system. ICT aids in making information accessible online and removes any opportunities for information concealment.
4. **Accountability:** Once the governing process is made transparent the government is automatically made accountable. Accountability is answerability of the government to the people. It is the answerability for the deeds of the government. An accountable government is a responsible government.

## Community Capacity Building and Its Role in E-Governance

Community Capacity-building is an approach based on a concept to development that focuses on understanding the obstacles that hinder people, governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations from realizing their goals for the success while increasing the abilities that will empower them to achieve significant and sustainable results. It is also known as Community capacity building (CCB), and capacity development.

The centre and state governments' proposed e-governance projects have drastically increased the aspiration level. The implementation of these projects will encounter formidable managerial and technological hurdles as a result of these efforts. For cost control and integration, the entire program must be managed at the state level in a consistent and cohesive manner. To support a capacity building plan, governments must offer a coherent policy, direction, regulation and consistency across resources and projects. The government acknowledged the value of potential human capacities in terms of the knowledge and skills required to conceptualise, launch, implement, and sustain e- Governance programs in its **e-governance competency framework** (eGCF) (eGCF, 2014).

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs authorised a capacity building scheme for all the States and UTs to support the National e-Government Plan with funding of 313 crores (CCEA, 2008). This plan seeks to build specific e-governance skills and offer technical and professional support to State level policy and decision-making organisations.

## Various Initiatives Under Digital India Initiatives

1. **MyGov:** It aims to establish a link between Government and Citizens towards meeting the goal of good governance. It encourages citizens as well as people abroad to participate in various activities.
2. **Digi-Locker:** It serves as a platform to enable citizens to securely store and share their documents with service providers who can directly access them electronically.
3. **e-Hospital-Online Registration Framework (ORF):** It is an initiative to facilitate the patients to take online OPD appointments with government hospitals. This framework also covers patient care, laboratory services and medical record management.
4. **National Scholarships Portal (NSP):** It provides a centralized platform for application and disbursement of scholarship to students under any scholarship scheme.
5. **DARPAN:** It is an online tool that can be used to monitor and analyze the implementation of critical and high priority projects of the State. It facilitates presentation of real time data on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of selected schemes/projects to the senior functionaries of the State Government as well as district administration.

## Conclusion

Internet access is unavailable to a sizable portion of the population. This finding is in line with those of research done by Singh (2008), Yadav and Tiwari (2014), and Singh and Sahu (2008). As a result, the ICT infrastructure built by government does not produce the expected outcomes. Governments must expand the use of Internet infrastructure if they want to communicate with the average person. The IT infrastructure could be improved in a variety of ways. Another interesting discovery is that although if a huge population has easy access to communication tools, people still rely more on relatives and friends to inform them of government social assistance programs.

Since management is growing more complex and major efforts are not being made to expand the understanding of those involved in the governance process, there is a need to place more emphasis on capacity building. Consequently, when new reform initiatives like decentralisation or private sector involvement are launched, these frequently meet due to the functionaries lack of readiness to undertake new and increased responsibilities, with very limited success.

Another intriguing result is that although individuals are aware of the many e-services provided by the state and federal administrations, they are hesitant to use them (Prasad, 2012; Sapru & Sapru, 2014). Therefore, it becomes crucial to guarantee that citizens effectively use e-services in order for e-governance efforts to be implemented.

The Indian government should take the important steps of capacity building to boost local government effectiveness. It is suggested that the necessary infrastructure be put in place that it collaborates with various national and international organisations to obtain funding and technical know-how, that it begins workshops after consulting with the populace and after taking into account regional governance issues (Kalra and Misha, 2014).

## Reference

1. Heeks, R. (2001). Understanding e-Governance for development <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/NISPAcee/UNPAN015484.pdf>
2. Naim Keruwala (2013, 4th Demember) "History of e-Governance in India and Maharashtra, retrieved from -<http://www.netpehchaan.in/internet-inclusion/>.
3. Nikita Yadav & V.B.Singh, (2012. September), e-Governance-Past, Present and Future in India, International Journal Of Computer Science Applications (0975—8887),Volume 53,No-7,
4. Krishnan B Nair (2008) .Janasevana Kendram, "FRIENDS" retrieved <http://www.egovreach.in/FRIENDS.pdf>
5. "Land Records on Web", retrieved from - <http://www.bhoomi Karnataka.gov/Home.aspx>,
6. *National e-Governance plan*, retrieved from -[www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/national\\_e-Governanceplan](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/national_e-Governanceplan)
7. *Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances*,Govt of India, About e-Governance,retrieved from - [www.nceg.gov.in/](http://www.nceg.gov.in/)
8. *E-governance* (2015), Time of India –online article, retrieved from<http://www.articles.economicstime.indiatimes.com>home>collection>e-governance>, article posted on 30th jan 2015,
9. Srihari Subudhi (2014) *Learner's submission: UN e-Government Survey 2014- Where India Stands* ,New Delhi India, retrived from[http:// www.unpanelearning.com](http://www.unpanelearning.com)
10. Yadav, K., & Tiwari, S. (2014). E-Governance in India: Opportunities and challenges advance in electronic and electric engineering. *Research India Publications*, 4 (6), 675-680.
11. Singh, A. K., & Sahu, R. (2008). Integrating Internet, telephones, and call centres for delivering better quality egovernance to all citizens. *Government Information Quarterly*, 25(3) 477-490. doi:10.1016/j.giq.2007.01.001
12. Sapru, R. K., & Sapru, Y. (2014). Good governance through e-governance with special reference to India. *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, 60 (2), 313-331.
13. Kalra, B. S., & Mishra, A. K. (2014). Integrating social and business case approaches to implement watershed development projects in India. *Prabandhan: Indian Journal of Management*, 7(5), 47-52. DOI: 10.17010/pijom/2014/v7i5/59322
14. Neena Jindal Anil Sehrawat Y. Medury: An Analysis of India's Need of Capacity Building for E-Governance, 2016