



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor: 5.2
IJAR 2016; 2(11): 447-451
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 04-09-2016
Accepted: 05-10-2016

Dr. Sushama Yadav
Assistant Professor,
Department of Commerce,
School of Commerce and
Management Dr. Hari Singh
Gour University, Sagar,
Madhya Pradesh, India

E-Governance and its future prospects in India

Dr. Sushama Yadav

Abstract

Information and Communication Technologies can enhance the transformation of work culture by serving a variety of ends, better delivery of government services to citizens, improved government interactions with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information and participation for decision-making and more efficient government management. E-Governance is not meant only for introducing or using technological tools, it fundamentally strives to bring about a change in mindset and work culture to integrate government processes and functions to serve the citizens better. Governance relates to safeguarding the legal rights of all citizens, an equally important aspect is concerned with ensuring equitable access to public services and the benefits of economic growth to all. The present article is describing various aspects and future prospective of E-Governance in Indian scenario.

Keywords: E-Governance, communication technologies, work culture

1. Introduction

Since Internet Technology has evolved rapidly in the last few years, there is a need to think strategically about where we want to be in the future. Information and Communication Technologies can enhance the transformation of work culture by serving a variety of ends, better delivery of government services to citizens, improved government interactions with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information and participation for decision-making and more efficient government management ^[1]. The use of IT to improve the ability of government to address the needs of society. It includes the publishing of policy and programme related information to transact with citizens. It extends beyond provision of on-line services and covers the use of IT for strategic planning and reaching development goals of the government ^[2].

Governments and public sector organizations around the world are facing to reform their public administration organizations and deliver more efficient and cost effective services, as well as better information and knowledge to their stakeholders ^[3]. E-Governance is a process of reform in the way Governments work, share information, engage citizens and deliver services to external and internal clients for the benefit of both government and the clients that they serve. E-Governance is required for improve delivery of services to citizens, businesses and employees. E-Governance makes the working of the government more efficient and effective. E-Governance enhanced transparency, convenience and empowerment; less corruption; revenue growth; and cost reduction ^[4]. Elements of E-Governance has been shown in Figure-1.

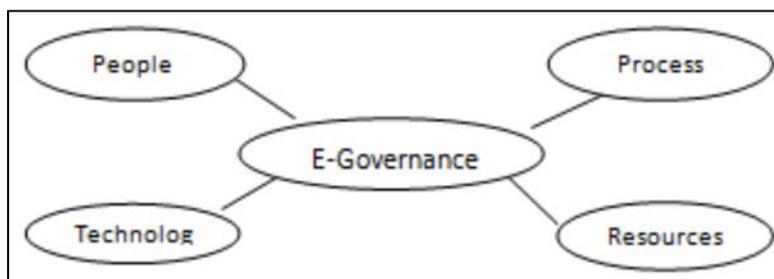


Fig 1: Elements of E-Governance

Correspondence
Dr. Sushama Yadav
Assistant Professor,
Department of Commerce,
School of Commerce and
Management Dr. Hari Singh
Gour University, Sagar,
Madhya Pradesh, India

E-Governance is defined as “E-Governance is the application of information & communication technologies to transform the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability of informational & transactional exchanges with in government, between govt. & govt. agencies of National, State, Municipal & Local levels, citizen & businesses, and to empower citizens through access & use of information”. In other words 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 [3].

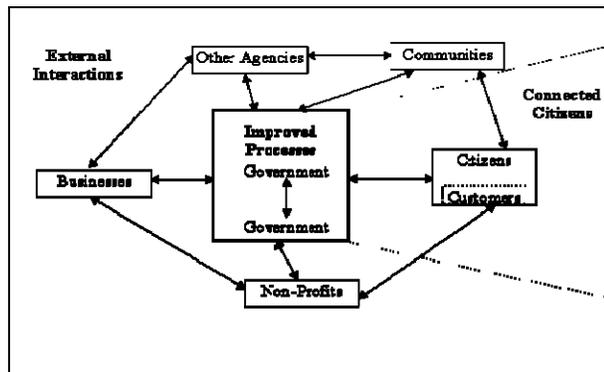


Fig 2: Process of E-Governance

Richard Heeks, Understanding E-Governance for Development, Article 3, Volume 11, No. 3, December 2001,
(<http://www.iimahd.ernet.in/egov/ifip/dec2001/article3.htm>)

"Government's foremost job is to focus society on achieving the public interest. Governance is a way of describing the links between government and its broader environment - political, social, and administrative." Thomas B Riley
E-Governance will allow citizens to communicate with government, participate in the governments' policy-making and citizens to communicate each other. The E-Governance will truly allow citizens to participate in the government decision-making process, reflect their true needs and welfare by utilizing e-government as a tool. Governments are specialized institutions that contribute to governance. Representative governments seek and receive citizen support, but they also need the active cooperation of their public servants. Governance is the outcome of politics, policies, and programs.

2. Need for E-Governance

Implementing E-Governance without clouds is an old technique and is not too much efficient. There are number of reason which make cloud computing hottest buzzword not in IT area but also in e-governance implementation [5].

- 1) **Data Integrity:** To deal with large data over the years for E-Governance applications, data should be integrals and scalable at higher level.
- 2) **Security Auditing:** As corruption is increasing in government sector also some mechanism is needed to keep track on E-Governance worker so that no changes in personal data of individual which is on.

- 3) **Data recovery:** clouds provides an excellent way of data restoring facility which might be lost due to floods, earthquake or from any other disaster.
- 4) **Performance and Efficiency:** An efficient E-Governance is that in which lakhs of access can be done easily without decreasing the performance.
- 5) **Systems Integration and Legacy Software:** Not only are the applications that are already providing services to be moved to the cloud, but also integrate with applications deployed in the cloud. Cloud is built on SOA principles and can offer excellent solutions for integration of various applications.
- 6) **Migration to New Technologies:** Technology migration is the biggest challenge. Moving to different versions of software, applying application and security patches is the key to maintaining a secure data center for E-Governance. Cloud architecture efficiently enables these kinds of requirements, by co-existing and co-locating different versions and releases of the software at the same time.
- 7) **Environment Protection:** Air conditioner, power usage, heat generated by powerful machines and electronic wastage by different data centered up to the pollution. This pollution can be minimized to much extend by having centralized database inspire of distributed. This is all what cloud computing do in going green.

3. E-Governance and Development

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:

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

4. Development of E-Governance in India

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. In the early 1980s, use of computers was confined to very few organizations. The advent of personal computers brought the storage, retrieval and processing capacities of computers to Government offices. By the late 1980s, a large number of government officers had computers but they were mostly used for 'word processing'. Gradually, with the introduction of better softwares, computers were put to other uses like managing databases and processing information. Advances

in communications technology further improved the versatility and reach of computers, and many Government departments started using ICT for a number of applications like tracking movement of papers and files, monitoring of development programmes, processing of employees’ pay rolls, generation of reports etc [6].

5. Types of Government Interaction in E-Governance

- 1) G2G: Government to Government
- 2) G2C: Government to Citizen
- 3) G2B: Government to Business
- 4) G2E: Government to Employee

6. Benefits of E-Governance

- 1) **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
- 2) **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 computerization can now be completed within an hour without any official harassment or bribes.
- 3) **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 contribution implementation of initiatives.

7. Major Challenges 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:

- 1) **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.
- 2) **Technical Illiteracy:** There is general lack of technical literacy as well as literacy in countries like India.
- 3) **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.
- 4) **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.
- 5) **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.
- 6) **Infrastructure:** Lack of necessary infrastructure like electricity, internet, technology and ways of communications will affect the speed which delays the implementation.
- 7) **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.

8. E-Governance Projects in India

IT revolution, a world-wide phenomenon today has stirred societies and governments to embark upon IT-based social, educational and administrative processes. India, as one of the pioneering countries in I.T revolution has made a great stride in E-Governance. There are some of the project state wise / union-territory wise [7]:

Table 1: E-Governance Projects in India

State/Union Territory	Initiatives covering departmental automation, user charge collection, delivery of policy/programme information and delivery of entitlements
Andhra Pradesh	e-Seva, CARD, VOICE, MPHS, FAST, e-Cops, AP online—Onestop-shop on the Internet, Saukaryam, Online Transaction processing
Bihar	Sales Tax Administration Management Information
Chhattisgarh	Chhattisgarh Infotech Promotion Society, Treasury office, e-linking project
Delhi	Automatic Vehicle Tracking System, Computerisation of website of RCS office, Electronic Clearance System, Management Information System for Education etc
Goa	Dharani Project
Gujarat	Mahiti Shakti, request for Government documents online, Form book online, G R book online, census online, tender notice.
Haryana	Nai Disha
Himachal Pradesh	Lok Mitra
Karnataka	Bhoomi, Khajane, Kaveri, Mahiti, Smart Card System
Kerala	e-Srinkhala, RDNet, Fast, Reliable, Instant, Efficient Network for the Disbursement of Services (FRIENDS)
Madhya Pradesh	Gyandoot, Gram Sampark, Smart Card in Transport Department, Computerization MP State Agricultural Marketing Board (Mandi Board) etc

Maharashtra	SETU, Online Complaint Management System—Mumbai
Rajasthan	Jan Mitra, RajSWIFT, Lokmitra, RajNIDHI
Tamil Nadu	Rasi Maiyams–Kanchipuram; Application forms related to public utility, tender notices and display
North-Eastern States	
Arunachal Pradesh	Community Information Center. Forms available on
Manipur	Meghalaya, the Meghalaya website under schemes related to
Mizoram & Nagaland	social welfare, food civil supplies and consumer affairs, housing transport etc.

9. Targets of the Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-17) with Respect to E-Governance

- 1) A National Institute for E-Governance (NIG) would be setup as an autonomous State of the Art National Institute. NIG will also train at least 50 employees from Central Government per year on Project Management Certification.
- 2) An E-Governance Innovation and R&D Fund will be created to give adequate impetus to innovation in E-Governance and M-Governance
- 3) Electronic Delivery of Services (EDS) Bill will be implemented. Assistance will be given to every Central Government Department in delivering at least one Service in electronic mode and every State Government in delivering at least three Services in electronic mode apart from the services which are already identified in the MMPs under NeGP.
- 4) Shared Services Platforms for e-Payment, GIS, call centre, etc. will be created.
- 5) An apps store will be created to promote development of large scale E-Governance and M-Governance applications
- 6) M-Governance platforms and frameworks will be created to enable delivery of public services through mobile devices
- 7) At least one person per family in 50% of the families will be targeted to provide basic IT training in the XII Plan period.
- 8) Cyber Security will be a major focus area during the Twelfth Five Year Plan Period.
- 9) Existing SWAN, SDC, NSDG/SSDG, India Portal, CSC Schemes will be rolled out and maintained in all States/UTs. These schemes would be further augmented and technologically upgraded.
- 10) The e-District MMP will be implemented in all districts.
- 11) Training on Basic IT Skills will be introduced systematically for the existing and all new entrants into Government service.

10. Future Prospects of E-Governance in India in Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-17)

- a) To deliver all Government services in electronic mode so as to make the Government process transparent, citizen centric, efficient and easily accessible.
- b) To break information silos and create shareable resources for all Government entities
- c) To deliver both informational and transactional government services over mobiles and promote innovation in mobile governance
- d) To build Shared Service Platforms to accelerate the adoption of E-Governance and reduce the cycle time of E-Governance project implementation
- e) To strengthen and improve sustainability of the existing projects through innovative business models and through continuous infusion of advanced technology

- f) To promote ethical use of technology and data and to create a safe and secure E-Governance cyber world
- g) To create an ecosystem that promotes innovation in ICT for Governance and for applications that can benefit the citizens
- h) To better target the delivery of welfare schemes of the Central and State Governments
- i) To reduce asymmetry in information availability, accessibility and ability to utilize the information
- j) To increase the all round awareness and create mechanisms that promotes and encourages citizen engagement.
- k) To make available as much data as possible in the public domain for productive use by the citizens.

11. Conclusion

There are various challenges such as low literacy, lack of awareness, low broadband penetration, lack of system integration within a department, and all other reasons for the implementation of e-government in Indian scenario. Therefore, a perfect and expertise vision is required to implement the e-government in India. Since Internet Technology has evolved rapidly in the last few years. E-Governance has to be citizen-friendly and delivery of services to citizens is considered a primary function of the government. It enhances the relationships between G2G, G2C, G2B, and G2E using ICT. Therefore, E-Governance not only provides information about various activities of a Government but also involves citizens to participate in government's decision making process but also allows for government transparency, successful implementation Standards, Infrastructure, Legislations, Strategy all needs to be in place.

Much of the evidence linking E-Governance with reduction in corruption is anecdotal. Only in a couple of cases has the impact on corruption of E-Governance applications been audited independently. Most developing countries are not fully ready to embrace a comprehensive program of e-government. Rather than wait for total readiness, an approach of learning by trial and consolidating small gains is recommended.

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