

## E-GOVERNANCE PROSPECTS AND PROBLEMS

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### Abstract

India is growing technically at a rapid phase and the government of India and local governments as well are having an ambitious objective of transforming the Citizen-Government interaction at all levels in electronic form by 2020 for better governance and transparency. ICT can be used as channel to transmit information and data seamlessly between the government and the individual which in turn can widen individual's choices for economic and social empowerment. Political, socio-economic developmental, cultural, & behavioural decisions today rest on the ability to access, gather, analyse and utilize information and knowledge. This paper discusses various issues relating to effective implementation e-Governance in India and the future ahead.

**Keywords:** E-governance, India, ICT, IT, Citizens, Government

### Introduction

E-Governance refers to the use of Information Technologies by government agencies (such as DMZ's, Wide Area Networks, the Internet and mobile computing) that can improve the relations with businesses, citizens, and various arms of government for a better delivery of government services. Citizen empowerment can be achieved if the citizens have a fair access to information about governance which may result in more efficient government management. 'Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsive and Transparent' (SMART) governance can be achieved through E-Governance which is the application of Information and communications technology to government functioning. E-Governance have lot of benefits and some of them are cost reductions, increased transparency, revenue growth, greater convenience, and less corruption (World Bank).

E-Governance can be even explained as the use of the electronic medium which can be used to exercise of authority in the management of a country's affairs in accordance to citizens' interests for a greater transparency and efficiency. According to Council of Europe, E-Governance can are use electronic technologies in three areas of public action, viz:

- The provision of public services (electronic public services)
- Relations between the public authorities and civil society
- Functioning of the public authorities at all stages of the democratic process (electronic democracy)

So according to above mentioned point, the focus should be on making use of electronic technologies to encourage better interaction between government and citizens, providing public services and promoting democracy.

### E-Governance and Its Benefits

E-Governance offers several potential benefits to citizens. The accessibility to government services can be increased despite government's mammoth infrastructure as there are always a limited number of personnel interacting directly with the citizens and waiting times can be reduced. E-Governance can also result in huge cost savings to governments and citizens alike, increase transparency and reduce corruption, increase public accountability, weaken authoritarian tendencies and strengthen civil society and democracy. It gives citizens more control on how and when they interact with the government. As mentioned above, the top policy-makers in India are also inclined towards the adoption and expansion of e-governance as it costs less, promotes transparency, generates possibilities to resolve rural poverty and inequality, reduces waste, eliminates corruption, and guarantees a better future for citizens.

The electronic delivery of government services, especially the availability of different forms and the option of electronically submitting them, provides a considerable saving of time and money for individuals and to the government. Digitalising the workflow will speed up the tedious processes involved in the work related to government and make work done by the

government and its employees' complaint. E-Governance can get all the government sectors to come under one umbrella to deliver single point of truth to the citizens.

Government can increase the satisfaction of the citizens and can encourage them to use the web portals and other software's because of the advancement in technology. Technology has become so flexible and prudent that – it is now possible to personalise a website to a point where delivery of services could be tailored to meet the specific needs of an individual which in turn makes the individual trust the government and its procedures. The online delivery of government services could, therefore, tremendously increase accessibility and bring significant time and cost savings to citizens. It also helps in increasing the reach of government both geographically and demographically. Therefore, E-Governance could virtually revolutionise the provision of government services especially in developing countries.

### Challenges of E-Governance

- Some of the main challenges of E-Governance are as follows: Social and Cultural Problems: Approximately 70% of populace live in rural areas and most of them are uneducated or even educated might not be good with English language and that can be a major challenge because of the overwhelming dominance of English over computers and internet. Secondly, administrative culture is not conducive for such measures as illiteracy is about 30% of the population (Census: 2011) and even it is higher in case of rural area and less developed states such as Bihar, Orissa and UP among others.
- Infrastructural and Technical Constraints: According to ITU (2011) there are about 120 million Internet users in a country of 1.2 billion inhabitants — this is merely 10% of the population while it is 27% for Asia region. Further, Rural tele density is merely 33% (ITU: 2011) in comparison of 80% for urban, notwithstanding, nearly 70% population live in rural areas. Internet diffusion is still very low in India. The telecommunications infrastructure is still inaccessible to all parts of India. The government has tried to invest in infrastructure to support e-government and ICT. There are still a lot of problems regarding infrastructure such as obsolete equipment, infrastructure in few better developed metros and big cities.
- Economic Constraints: Ordinary citizens find it very difficult to access the internet in an environment where broadband development is very low and the facilities for its installation very expensive. Towns and cities make more than two thirds of the Indian GDP, even though less than a third of the population live in them. According to World Bank (2010) nearly 68.8% people in India live on merely \$2 a day. The cost of subscribing to a telephone line, PC and so on is on the neck of an average citizen.
- Privacy and security concerns: Security and privacy of information is another serious technical challenge and is a well-documented issue for e-governance implementation all around the world. People are usually afraid that e-services websites are not secure enough to protect their private information from being misused or distorted by hackers. Most of the people feel that using websites to transfer their personal information (such as name, picture, and date of birth, ID number, and credit card details), sharing information with public agencies online or electronically is not safe.

### Conclusion

In India, issues of weak governance, poverty, and bureaucratic corruption among others could be arrested with successful application of e-governance. E-governance heralds unparalleled reforms in the processes and structures of governance. The electronically propelled reforms, therefore, are capable of engendering greater citizens' involvement in policy formulation, responsive governance and administration, besides, ushering global best practices that cultural and contextual compatible. E-Governance offers scores of benefits to the government and its citizens and various other stakeholders. Public services delivery can be made seamless through E-Governance and it can be used as a channel through which the government interacts with its citizens and builds external interactions.

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