

E- GOVERNANCE AND ITS RELEVANCE IN INDIAN ECONOMY



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ABSTRACT

Electronic governance or e-governance is the application of information and communication technology for delivering government services, exchange of information communication transactions, integration of various standalone systems and services between government to customers (G2C), Government to business (G2B), Government to government (G2G) as well as back office processes and interaction within the entire government structure. E-governance is used to make government services easily accessible to citizen. E-governance in India has steadily evolved from computerisation of government departments to

initiatives that encapsulate the finer points of the governance as citizen centricity, service orientation and transparency. Lessons from previous e-governance initiatives have played an important role in shaping the progressive e-governance strategy of the country. Due cognizance has been taken of the notion that to speed up e-governance various arms of government at national, state and local levels, a programme approach needs to be adopted, guided by common vision and strategy. Two terms e-governance and e-government are used commonly, both terms are treated to be the same, however, there is some difference between the two. "E-government" is the use of the ICTs in public administration - combined with organizational change and new skills - to improve public services and democratic processes and to strengthen support to public. The problem in this definition to be congruence definition of e-governance is that there is no provision for governance of ICTs. As a matter of fact, the governance of ICTs requires most probably a substantial increase in regulation and policy-making capabilities, with all the expertise and opinion-shaping processes along the various social stakeholders of these concerns. So, the perspective of the e-governance is "the use of the technologies that both help governing and have to be governed". The Public-Private Partnership (PPP) based e-governance projects are hugely successful in India. United Telecoms Limited known as UTL is a major player in India on PPP based e-governance projects. Each project had mammoth statewide area networks in these states. Paper mainly highlights the relevance of e-governance with special reference to Indian economy.

KEYWORDS : Public Administration, Computerisation, ICTs.

INTRODUCTION :

The concept of E-governance is of recent origin in information technology. The emerging concept has brought about a paradigm shift in IT usage and application for good governance. The word governance is often used, but it is a term that is not always defined, although several international organisations have tried to define governance and what it covers. Generally governance refers to the system of directing and controlling the actions, affairs, policies and functions of a political unit, organisation. E-Governance or electronic governance, it is an attempt of government to harness information technology to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the executive function of government including the delivery of public services. In India the push for public reforms has brought in its wake the pervasive harnessing of information communication technologies (ICT) to achieve declared administrative and social goals. The implementation of e-governance began with national informatics centre's efforts to connect all the district headquarters through computers in the 1980s. This has typically included connectivity, networking and technology upgradation, selective delivery systems for information and services and an array of software solutions. It is expected that the use of information and services will also bring into the public domain the issues that have been so far shrouded in secrecy, mitigating corruption in public life. It can also help in improving the systematic deficiencies that allowed the wanton elements both within the government and outside, to selfishly use them for narrow objectives. Civil society, NGOs and professional associations to mobilise opinion and influence decision making processes that affect them are also using ICT for electronic publication of draft legislation and statements of direction for public feedback. According to NASSCOM an apex industry association of software and service companies in India, the E-governance market in India is witnessing year and year growth and is estimated to be Rs. 1400 crore in size in 2001-2002 and Rs. 2200 crore in 2002-03. The e-governance market grew by 18 percent last year (2002-03) and is the highest growing vertical in the domestic IT markets.

OBJECTIVES OF E-GOVERNANCE IN INDIAN CONTEXT

1. Deliver essential services to citizens.
2. Impart a citizen friendly image of government.
3. Ensure transparency and right to information in governmental activities.
4. Create healthy relationship between government and citizens, and encourage their participation in governance.
5. Enhance citizen empowerment and democratisation.
6. Enhance productivity and efficiency of administrative functions.
7. Eliminating poverty.
8. Encourage for direct participation of citizens in government policy making process and development efforts.
9. Creating a business friendly environment. E-governance eliminates unnecessary restrictions and undesirable practices such as delays, harassment and unnecessary documents.
10. Improving the overall quality of the life of the common man.
11. Providing prompt delivery of services at the doorsteps.

BENEFITS OF E-GOVERNANCE

E- Governance has emerged because of the increasing interest of government and citizens around the world to experiment with and learn to exploit new media and the latest technologies. It involves new styles of leadership, new ways of debating and deciding policy and investment, accessing

education, listening to citizens and organising and delivering information and services (Natarajan 2003). If E-governance is implemented successfully, it can provide following benefits for development.

1. It improves the accessibility of individual citizens to information and services that allows them to influence government operations.
2. Opportunities to trade and banking.
3. Opportunity to earn a living by learning new skills in the knowledge based economy.
4. Reduction in time and paper work.
5. Producing same output at lower cost.
6. Supports effective decartelised decision making by providing an efficient information flow.
7. Various government departments find it very easy to perform their functions like collection of tax, water charges, professional taxes etc. under E-Governance.
8. Enhance access to information and communication across large distance.
9. Deliver essential services to citizens.
10. Improving agriculture productivity.
11. Improves resource management.

E-GOVERNANCE IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES IN INDIA

There are three key challenges in stepping up E-governance in India; investments in and access to ICTs, capacity building to utilize e-governance services, and promoting people's participation in e-democracy. It is hoped that improved access to information and services will provide economic and social development opportunities, facilitate participation and communication in policy and decision making processes, and promote the empowerment of the marginalized groups. The united nations conference on trade and development (UNCTAD) has credited india with a projected economic growth of 8.1 percent, the fastest rate of expansion after china. Nevertheless, it is also a country of stark contrasts. India is home to the largest rural urban disparities in the world. It is a painful reality that almost 260 million people live below the poverty line. The 2010 united nations human development report ranked india's development index at 119 out of 169 countries. India is beleaguered by a host of crisis; the failure to improve productivity in agriculture; over a quarter million suicides among farmers from 1995 to 2010; high maternal and infant mortality rates; low status of women; gross violation of rights of children, with largest number of child labourers in the world; spiralling corruption and scams of every hue and kind; an era of jobless economic growth; the shadow of hunger that is increasingly stalks people across the country, resulting in substantial poverty and starvation deaths; and the neglect of the disadvantaged and marginalised masses. There are fundamental questions of utilising development funds on a priority basis for education and basic needs which have a direct effect on people's lives, rather than incurring huge spending on ICTs for e-governance that will trickle benefits down to them.

CONSTRAINTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF E-GOVERNANCE IN INDIA

As per NASSCOM, "now this is the time to accept that IT in isolation cannot bring the projected changes in governance unless certain constraints are removed". There are three types of constraint in India.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSTRAINTS

1. Disparities in E-governance initiatives
2. Rigidity of bureaucracy

3. Lack of adequate infrastructure
4. Top down model of indian bureaucracy

SOCIAL CONSTRAINTS

1. Digital divide
 2. Gender divide
- Political Constraints
1. Lack of political will

CONCLUDING REMARKS

by concluding whole study it is obvious that e-governance can make governance better. By removing administrative, Social as well as political constraints implementation of e-governance will be useful. People must get sufficient education to reap the benefits of E-Governance. Computer literacy can trickle down the benefits of E-Governance at grassroot level.

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