

E-GOVERNANCE IN INDIA: CERTAIN CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

E-governance is governance in electronic environment. It is both governance of that environment and governance within the environment. E-governance stands for "electronic governance". In simple terms, e-governance is the application of information and communication technology to provide transparent, effective, efficient and accountable governance to the society. In the wake of technological revolution, the countries like India are trying to keep pace with the other technologically advanced countries. But the financial crunch and other problems pose greater challenges in the implementation of e-governance in India. The problems like poor infrastructure, poverty, lack of enthusiasm, higher level of illiteracy, etc. become the roadblocks for the success of e-governance. For the successful implementation of e-governance, the government should try to remove such hurdles first. In this article, the author has tried to focus on such challenges.

Keywords: *E-governance, Transparent, Effective, Efficient, Accountable).*

Introduction

A person, sitting in his house, can debit or credit money through online transactions, can pay insurance premium, can file income tax return, can get the reservation of railway, airway or bus, can shop online anything he wishes. All these things have become easier and successful thanks to the revolution in information and communication technology. Due to this revolution, the whole world is connected through internet and everything has come at the doorstep. And still this revolution is taking fast pace. All such aspects of information and communication technology can be linked to the governance of the society. It is known as e-governance. The term "governance" originally came from the ancient Greek word "Kubernon". It means to control, steer or to influence from the position of authority. Therefore, in current scenario, governance means exercising power in order to steer the society into the right direction. Now, e-governance stands for "electronic governance". In simple terms, e-governance is the application of information and communication technology to provide transparent, effective, efficient and accountable governance to the society.

Meaning of E-Governance

"E-governance is the application of information and communication technologies to transform the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability of informational and transactional exchange within government, between government and government and government agencies, government and businesses and government and citizens". Thus, e-governance is governance in electronic environment. It is both governance of that environment and governance within the environment¹.

Models of E-Governance

The services of e-governance can be shared among citizens, governments, employees and businessmen. On the basis of that, following models of e-governance can be recognized:

- Government to Citizens (G2C)
- Government to Government (G2G)
- Government to Employees (G2E)
- Government to Business (G2B)

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¹ Zussman, D., 2002, "Public Policy Forum Commonwealth Centre for Electronic Governance Integrating Government with New Technologies: How is Technology Changing the Public Sector?" Ottawa

Government to Citizens (G2C)

Under this model, government services are shared with the citizens. In this model, the citizens visit the link of the services that they want. This model is for strengthening the bond between the government and the citizens. Under this model, following services are provided.

- Payment of online bills such as electricity, water, telephone bills etc.
- Online registration of applications.
- Copies of land-record.
- Online filling of complaints.
- Availability of any kind of online information.

Government to Government (G2G)

This model refers to the services shared between governments. There are lot of information and services that are to be shared between the government agencies, departments and organizations. Such services and information fall under this model. Following are the categories of services shared under this model:

- Sharing of information between police department of various state.
- Government document exchange which includes preparation, approval, distribution, and storage of all governmental documents is also done through e-governance.
- Most of the finance and budget work are also done through e-governance.

Government to Business (G2B)

Under this model, the government services and information are shared with the private sector businesses. This model strengthens the bondage between the government and the private sector. Under this model, following services can be categorized:

- Collection of taxes.
- Rejection and approval of patent is also done by this model.
- Payment of all kind of bills and penalty.
- Sharing of all kind of information, rules and data.
- Complaints or any kind of dissatisfaction can be shown by this.

Government to Employees (G2E)

This model shares the information and services between government and employees. The employees can keep check on the government functioning. Under this model, following categories are included:

- All kind of data submission(attendance record, employee record etc) from various government offices is done by this model
- Employee can file all kinds of complaints and dissatisfaction by this model.
- All kind of rule- regulation and information for employees can be shared by this.
- Employees can check their payment and working record.
- Employees can register all kind of working forms online.

E-Governance: Where Can be Applied?

As of now it is very clear that e-governance is the governance by electronic and communication technology. Now, let's understand the areas in which the e-governance can be applied.

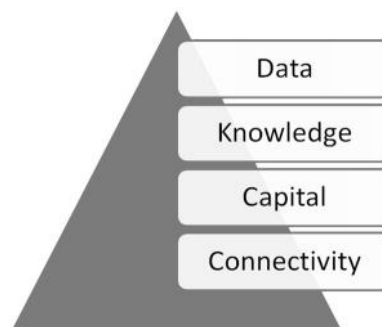
- **Transportation:** In the transportation services, e-governance can be used for the following functions:
 - Issuing time table of busses and trains
 - Providing booking facility for the national and international transportation
 - Improvement program in the transportation
 - Regional transportation plans
 - Management of traffic congestion
 - Demand supply management in transport

- **Online Payment:** In the field of online financial transaction, e-governance can be applied in the following categories:
 - Online transactions
 - Payment of bill
 - Payment of taxes
 - Payment of EMIs
- **Information and Public Relation:** In the field of information and public relation, following functions can be undertaken through e-governance:
 - Conducting online survey
 - Dissemination of information
 - Conducting online feedback
 - Filling in online forms for various government services
- **Municipal Services:** In the field of municipal services, following activities can be undertaken in the field of e-governance:
 - House tax assessment, billing and collection of taxes
 - Record maintenance of land and various properties
 - Issue of birth certificate
 - Issue of death certificate
 - Registration of properties
 - Review and approval of site plans
- **Roads and Traffic Management:** In the field of road and traffic management, following functions can be undertaken through e-governance:
 - Creating road network and network of bridges
 - Construction and maintenance of roads and bridges and canals
 - Traffic management
 - Road safety, accident control and pollution control
- **Agriculture:** In the field of agriculture sector, following activities can be performed by e-governance:
 - Crop insurance
 - Allotment and distribution of fertilizers
 - Land assessment
 - Allotment of government grants and subsidies
- **Local Information:** Information regarding following can be disseminated through e-governance:
 - Prices of seeds
 - Prices of fertilizers
 - Availability of loans
 - Interest rates
- **Disaster Management:** In the field of disaster management, following functions can be undertaken by e-governance:
 - Prediction or forecasting of disaster
 - Dissemination of public information regarding disaster
 - Controlling disaster
- **Land Record:** In this area, following activities can be managed through e-governance:
 - Maintaining records of land
 - Computerization of land records
 - Upgradation of land records
- **Panchayat Services:** Following panchayat services can be undertaken by e-governance:
 - Issue of birth/death certificates
 - Upgradation of voter list
 - Conducting various welfare scheme

- Preparing district wise planning
- Providing wage employment
- Rural water supply and sanitation
- **Health Services:**
 - Information of health camps
 - Availability of medicines
 - Facilities at Anganwadi centers
- **Education:** In the education field, following activities can be undertaken through e-governance:
 - Providing computer education
 - Online education services

Four Pillars of E-Governance

Following four are the important pillars for the success of e-governance:



If these four pillars work effectively, the E-Governance can be implemented successfully.

E-Governance Means SMART Governance

- E – Governance means SMART Governance. The acronym SMART stands for the following:
- S – Simple
 - M – Moral
 - A – Accountable
 - R – Responsive
 - T – Transparent

Needs for E-Governance

In order to implement the E-Governance, following needs are to be fulfilled:

- It requires complete restructuring of age-old procedures and dysfunctional system.
- It requires the removal of regulations and procedural bottlenecks.
- Replacement of bureaucratic system is highly required for the implementation of e-governance.
- It requires rapid change in the management and administrative procedures.
- Fast and better disposal of grievances of citizens.
- Online grievance redressal procedures.
- Performance based public services.

Challenges to e-governance in India

In the wake of technological revolution, the countries like India are trying to keep pace with the other technologically advanced countries. India is also trying to apply e-governance through the information and communication technology. But the financial crunch and other problems pose greater challenges in the implementation of e-governance in India. In this article, we have tried to focus on such challenges.

- **Poverty**

One of the most important challenges for the e-governance in India is Poverty. Due to the poverty, the people cannot afford the internet access. The internet access is too expensive for the poor people. The internet access costs around Rs. 30-40 per hour, which a poor person cannot afford.

- **Technical Illiteracy**

Due to the low level of education, there is lack of technical literacy also. Because of the low level of technical literacy, the people are not able to operate the information and communication devices. Because of that, the wider use of e-governance is not possible.

- **Language Barrier**

If a person wants to use internet for the e-governance, he must be well versed with English language. Due to low level of literacy, the people are not able to understand English language. As a result, they try to avoid the use of such system.

- **Lack of Awareness**

There is general lack of awareness about the benefits of e-governance. Besides that, the people are not aware of various e-governance portals such as G2P, G2G and G2B. That is why the implementation of e-governance becomes difficult.

- **Lack of Participative Spirit**

Effective designing and successful implementation of any application requires active participation of government, society and private sector. For that, there should be close interaction between all these parties. In India, this interaction is quite lacking and because of that the e-governance cannot be applied effectively.

- **Lack of Infrastructure**

In the developing countries like India, there are lots of problem of infrastructural facilities. Electricity, internet connection, mobile phone network etc. are available, but they are in very poor condition.

- **Operational Disinclination**

In the Indian bureaucratic system, there has been always seen the reluctant attitude of government servants. They are always disinclined to implement any new system or to bring the changes in the current system. Because of such reluctant behavior, the success of any system is a big question.

Conclusion

As said above, the Indian government is enthusiastic in keeping pace with the modern and technologically advanced countries but due to several problems, the efforts of government are not bringing the desired fruits. The problems like poor infrastructure, poverty, lack of enthusiasm, higher level of illiteracy, etc. become the roadblocks for the success of e-governance. For the successful implementation of e-governance, the government should try to remove such hurdles first.

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