



## GOOD GOVERNANCE: INITIATIVES AND CHALLENGES

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### **Abstract**

Governance is defined as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development. Good governance means competent management of a country's resources and affairs in a manner that is open, transparent, accountable, equitable and responsive to people's needs. The "e" in e-governance stands for 'electronic'. Thus, e-governance is basically associated with carrying out the functions and achieving the results of governance through the utilization of ICT (Information and Communications Technology). E-governance aims to convert the all manual work in to automation system. The following areas are included into the scope of e-governance such as online access to application and many governmental services like the school certificate, voter card, ration card, online payment etc. With the help of the e-governance all these tasks can be easily perform. If all these services will be available online then the people of the remote areas will be attractive towards the digital India

### **Growth of E-Governance**

In India, the main thrust for e-governance was provided by the launching of NICNET in 1987 – the national satellite-based computer network. This was followed by the launch of the District Information System of the National Informatics Centre (DISNIC) program to computerize all district offices in the country for which free hardware and software was offered to the State Governments. NICNET was extended via the State capitals to all district headquarters by 1990. In the ensuing years, with ongoing computerization, tele-connectivity and internet connectivity established a large number of e-Governance initiatives, both at the Union and State levels.

### **National Electronics Governance Plan**

The National E-Governance Plan (NEGP) has been formulated by the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DEITY) and Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) in 2006. The NEGP aims at improving delivery of Government services to citizens and businesses with the following vision: "Make all Government services accessible to the common man in his locality, through common service delivery outlets and ensure efficiency, transparency & reliability of such services at affordable costs to realize the basic needs of the common man."

### **Pillars of Government to Interaction with E-Governance**

- Digital Infrastructure as a Utility to Every Citizen
- Governance & Services on Demand
- Digital Empowerment of Citizens

### **Digital Infrastructure as a Utility to Every Citizen**

- High speed internet
- Unique digital identity, lifelong, online, and authenticable
- Mobile phone & Bank account enabling participation in digital & financial space
- Easy access to a Common Service Centre
- Shareable private space on a public cloud



- Safe and secure Cyber-space

#### **Governance & Services on Demand**

- Seamlessly integrated across departments or jurisdictions
- Services available in real time from online & mobile platform
- All citizen entitlements to be available on the cloud
- Services digitally transformed for improving Ease of doing Business
- Making financial transactions electronic & cashless
- Leveraging GIS for decision Support systems & development

#### **Digital Empowerment of Citizens**

- Universal Digital Literacy
- Universally accessible digital resources
- All documents/ certificates to be available on cloud
- Availability of digital resources/services in Indian languages
- Collaborative digital platforms for participative governance
- Portability of all entitlements through cloud

### **Projects and Schemes of E-Governance**

#### **Central Government initiatives as a Mission Mode Projects (MMP)**

##### **E-Office**

The Government of India has recognized the need to modernize the Central Government offices through the introduction of Information and Communications Technology. E-office is aimed at increasing the usage of work flow and rule based file routing, quick search and retrieval of files and office orders, digital signatures for authentication, forms and reporting components.

##### **Immigration, Visa and Foreigner's Registration & Tracking (IVFRT)**

India has emerged as a key tourist destination, besides being a major business and service hub. Immigration Check Post is the first point of contact that generates public and popular perception about the country, thus necessitating a state of the art system for prompt and user-friendly services.

##### **UID (Unique Identification)**

The unique identification project was conceived as an initiative that would provide identification for each resident across the country and would be used primarily as the basis for efficient delivery of welfare services. It would also act as a tool for effective monitoring of various programs and schemes of the government.

##### **Pensions**

MMP is primarily aimed at making the pension/ retirement related information, services and grievances handling mechanism accessible online to the needy pensioners, through a combination of interactive and non-interactive components, and thus help-bridge the gap between the pensioners and the government.

##### **Banking**

'Banking Mission Mode Project' is yet another step towards improving operational efficiency and reducing the



delays and efforts involved in handling and settling transactions. The MMP which is being implemented by the banking industry aims at streamlining various e-services initiatives undertaken by individual banks. Implementation is being done by the banks concerned, with the banking Department providing a broad framework and guidance.

#### **Postal Service**

Modernization of Postal Services has been undertaken by the Department of Posts through computerization and networking of all post offices using a central server-based system, and setting up of computerized registration centers (CRCs).

#### **State Mission Mode Projects (SMMP)**

##### **E-Governance in Municipalities**

It is a unique initiative of the Government of India conceptualized under the umbrella of the overall National E-Governance Plan (NEGP) and the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) aimed at improving operational efficiencies within Urban Local Bodies (ULBs).

##### **Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems**

Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS) MMP aims at creating a comprehensive and integrated system for enhancing the efficiency and effective policing at all levels and especially at the Police Station level through adoption of principles of e-governance and creation of a nationwide networked infrastructure for evolution of IT-enabled state-of-the-art tracking-system.

##### **Public Distribution System**

Computerization of the PDS is envisaged as an end-to-end project covering key functional areas such as supply chain management including allocation and utilization reporting, storage and movement of food grains, grievance redresses and transparency portal, digitization of beneficiary database, Fair Price Shop automation, etc.

##### **Health**

ICT for program management has been undertaken by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare in the Mother and Child Tracking System (MCTS) program and the Ministry envisages a more comprehensive use of ICT including for Hospital Information Systems, supply chain management for drugs and vaccines, providing ICT tools to ASHA and ANM workers, program management of National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), etc. through this MMP.

##### **E-Panchayat**

The Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) are saddled with the problems of inadequate physical and financial resources, technical capabilities and extremely limited computerization. As a result, the potential of PRIs as the preferred delivery channel for the schemes of State and Centre as well as for citizen services has not been fully realized. While some computerization efforts for PRIs have been made by NIC over the years, the e-governance revolution sweeping the country has not touched the PRIs yet in significant measure. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India has therefore decided to take up the computerization of PRIs on a mission mode basis.

##### **E-District**

E-District is one of the 31 Mission Mode Projects under National Electronic Governance Plan (NEGP) with the DIT, GOI (Govt. of India) being the nodal ministry. This project aims at providing support to the basic



administrative unit i.e. District Administration by undertaking backend computerization to enable electronic delivery of high volume citizen centric government services which would optimally leverage and utilize the three infrastructure pillars of State Wide Area Networks (SWAN), State Data Centers (SDC) and Common Service Centers (CSCs) to deliver services to the citizen at his doorsteps.

### **National Land Records Modernization Program (NLRMP)**

A Project for Computerization of Land Records (CLR) was launched in 1988-89 with the intention to remove the inherent flaws in the manual system of maintenance and updating of Land Records. In 1997-98, the scheme was extended to tehsils to start distribution of Records of Rights to landowners on demand. The focus of the entire operation has always been to employ state of the art information technology (IT) to galvanize and transform the existing land records system of the country.

### **Integrated Mission Mode Projects (MMP)**

#### **E-Procurement**

Ministry of Commerce & Industry (Department of Commerce) has been nominated as the Nodal Ministry for implementation of E-Government Procurement (EGP) Mission Mode Projects (MMP). The vision of the e-Procurement MMP is “To create a national initiative to implement procurement reforms, through the use of electronic Government procurement, so as to make public procurement in all sectors more transparent and efficient”.

#### **E-Courts**

The e-court Mission Mode Project (MMP) was conceptualized with a vision to transform the Indian judiciary by making use of technology. The project had been developed, following the report submitted by the e-Committee under Supreme Court on national policy & action plan on implementation of information communication tools in Indian judiciary.

#### **E-Biz**

The e-biz Mission Mode Project, being executed by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, was conceptualized with the vision. Its vision is “To transform the business environment in the country by providing efficient, convenient, transparent and integrated electronic services to investors, industries and business throughout the business life cycle”.

### **Common Services Centers**

The CSCs would provide high quality and cost-effective video, voice and data content and services, in the areas of e-governance, education, health, telemedicine, entertainment as well as other private services. A highlight of the CSCs is that it will offer web-enabled e-governance services in rural areas, including application forms, certificates, and utility payments such as electricity, telephone and water bills.

### **Recent Initiatives**

#### **Direct Cash Transfer**



To facilitate disbursements of Government entitlements like National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), Social Security pension, Handicapped Old Age Pension etc. of any Central or State Government bodies, using Aadhaar and authentication thereof as supported by UIDAI.

#### **Aadhar Enabled Payment System (AEPS):**

AEPS is a bank led model which allows online interoperable financial inclusion transaction through the Business correspondent of any bank using the Aadhaar authentication. This has helped in financial inclusion. The four Aadhaar enabled basic types of banking transactions are as follows:-

1. Balance Enquiry
2. Cash Withdrawal
3. Cash Deposit
4. Aadhar to Aadhar Funds Transfer

#### **Digital India Program**

This program has been envisaged by Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DEITY). The vision of Digital India aims to transform the country into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. The program will be implemented in phases from the current year till 2018. The Digital India is transformational in nature and would ensure that Government services are available to citizens electronically. It would also bring in public accountability through mandated delivery of government's services electronically; a Unique ID and e-pramaan based on authentic and standard based interoperable and integrated government applications and data basis. The program aims at providing digital infrastructure as a utility to every citizen as well as high-speed internet as a core utility in all gram panchayats. The overall scope of this program is "to prepare India for a knowledge future", "to make technology central to enabling change" and "to become an umbrella program covering many departments"

#### **Mygov. Citizen Portal**

Prime Minister launched an online platform mygov.nic.in to engage citizens in the task of "good governance" ( Surajya ) as he completed 60 days in office on Saturday. 'MyGov.' is a technology driven platform that would provide people with the opportunity to contribute towards good governance.

#### **E-Kranti Scheme**

This project is linking the internet with remote villages in the country. This scheme will broaden the reach of internet services to the rural areas in the country. The fundamental features of this scheme will be making the records handy to the government with ease. It also includes Expansion of internet and commencement of IT-based jobs in rural areas. It will also boost the use of mobile phones and computers in rural areas. It will also expand the use of IT in agriculture and retail trade too.

#### **Digital Cloud**

Certificates issued by the government-education, residential, medical records, birth certificates, etc. are to be stored in individual 'digital lockers' and a communication protocol established for government departments to access them without physically having to see the hard copy. The purpose of government is that copies of certificates issued by the government itself not to be carried around by people to government offices for various services.



### **M-Governance**

M-Governance is not a replacement for e-governance; rather it complements e-governance. M-Governance is the use of mobile or wireless to improve governance service and information “anytime, anywhere”. Mobile applications also rely on good back office ICT infrastructure and work processes. It has potential of using mobile phones as input devices in certain areas where last mile connectivity becomes issues for simple data inputs of critical importance for decision making in government departments. M-Governance is not a new concept. The private sector has been greatly leveraging these of mobile phones for delivery of value added services for the following which however are mostly SMS based: Banking, Media, Airlines, Telecom, Entertainment, News, Sports, Astrology, and Movie Tickets Etc. M-governance has increased the productivity of public service personnel, improving the delivery of government information and services, increasing channels for public interactions and Lower costs leading to higher participation of people.

Recent thrust to m-governance is being provided through Unstructured Supplementary Services Data (USSD). USSD is a session based service unlike SMS which is store and forward service. It can be used by the user to send command to an application in text format. USSD acts as a trigger for the application.

### **Government Initiatives for M-Governance**

#### **Mobile Seva**

It aims to provide government services to the people through mobile phones and tablets. It has been developed as the core infrastructure for enabling the availability of public services through mobile device. Mobile Seva enables the integration of the mobile platform with the common e-Governance infrastructure consisting of State Data Centers (SDCs), State Wide Area Networks (SWANs), State and National Service Delivery Gateways (SSDGs/NSDG). It enables a government department to integrate both web and mobile based services seamlessly and enhances the access to electronic services tremendously leveraging the very high penetration of mobile phones, especially in rural areas

#### **Mobile Applications Store**

M-App Store has also been developed by DEITY as part of Mobile Seva. The Mobile Governance Portal and the m-app store can be accessed at <http://mgov.gov.in/>. The m-appstore currently hosts over 240 live mobile applications. The live applications can be downloaded and installed free of cost on a mobile phone by any person.

The project, “Mobile Seva” has won the second prize at the prestigious United Nations’ Public Services Awards in the category “Promoting whole of government approaches in the information age” for Asia Pacific.

- A few years ago, Kerala launched ‘Dr. SMS,’ an m-health information system, for providing information on medical facilities available in the locality of the resident.
- Goa followed, with a mobile governance initiative for issuing alerts for receipt of government applications and complaints and status tracking.
- Next came in Maharashtra. It adopted a similar traffic management system through mobile alerts.
- A laudable initiative launched by the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation in September tries to use technology in a mobile phone-based Intelligent Garbage Monitoring System enables sanitary





supervisors to report the status of cleaning of garbage bins through their GPS-enabled mobile phones. Centralized reports as well as those of individual bins can be generated with the system.

### **Benefits of E-Governance**

- **Speed**

Technology makes communication speedier, Internet, Phones; Cell Phones have reduced the time taken in normal communication.

- **Cost reduction**

Most of the government expenditure is appropriated towards the cost of stationary. Paper-based communication needs lots of stationary, printers, computers, etc. which calls for continuous heavy expenditure. Internet and Phones makes communication cheaper saving valuable money for the Government.

- **Transparency**

Use of ICT makes governing process transparent. All the information of the government would be made available on the internet. The citizens can see the information whenever they want to see. But this is only possible when every piece of information of the government is uploaded on the internet and is available for the public to peruse. Current governing process leaves many ways to conceal the information from all the people. ICT helps make the information available online eliminating all the possibilities of concealing of information.

- **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.

- **Convenience**

E-Government brings public services to citizens on their schedule and their venue.

- **Improved Customer Service**

E-Government allows redeploying resources from back-end processing to the front line of customer service.

- **Increased access to information**

E-Government improves the accessibility of government information to citizens allowing it become an important resource in the making the decisions that affect daily life and so it helps in empowerment of citizens

### **Challenges of E-Governance**

- **Different Language**

India is a country where people with different cultures and different religions live. People belonging to different states speak different languages. The diversity of people in context of language is a huge challenge for implementing e-governance projects as e-governance applications are written in English language. And also, English may not be understandable by most of the people. Therefore, it becomes a challenge for the



government to write e-governance applications which are to be implemented for the whole nation in more than one language so that these may be acceptable to the users of a particular language.

- **Low Literacy**

Literacy can be defined as the ability to read and write with understanding in any language. A person who can merely read but cannot write cannot be considered as literate. Any formal education or minimum educational standard is not necessary to be considered literate. Literacy level in India is very low, which is main obstacle in implementation of e-governance projects. Illiterate people are not able to access the e-governance applications; hence the projects do not get much success. Much of the Indian people are not literate and those who are literate, they do not have much knowledge about Information Technology (IT). Most of the people in India are not aware about the usage of Information Technology. So, in India, having such low level of IT literacy, how can e-governance projects be implemented successfully? We can say that IT illiteracy is a major obstacle in implementation of e-governance in India. So, first of all Indian people must be made aware about the usage of Information Technology.

- **User friendliness of government websites**

Users of e-governance applications are often non-expert users who may not be able to use the applications in a right manner. Such users need guidance to find the right way to perform their transactions. Therefore, government websites must be user friendly so that more and more people can use them easily. Hence, these websites can be more effective. If government websites will be designed in an easier format only then these will be more usable for the users who are not expert users of IT.

- **Services are not accessible easily**

The concept of e-governance is claiming for increased efficiency and effectiveness of the government, but these goals will be achieved only if the service will be available to the 100% of the citizens. So, every service should be accessible by anybody from anywhere and anytime. Even if the users of Internet are growing but still there is a major part of Indian population which is not able to access e-governance activities for variety of reasons, e.g. some people may have limited access to Information and Communication Technologies and devices. Therefore, government has to provide internet access through public terminals as a part of their universal access efforts.

- **Population**

Population of India is probably the biggest challenge in implementing e-governance projects. As population is considered to be an asset to the country but it also offers some other challenges e.g. establishing person identities. There is no unique identity of individuals in India although Indian government is making efforts for providing unique identity to its citizens. Apart from this, measuring the population, keeping the database of all Indian nationals and keeping this database updated and then providing the e-governance services to the whole population are major challenges.

- **Lack of integrated services**

Most of the e-governance services which are offered by the state or central government are not integrated. Lack of communication between different departments of government may be its major cause. Therefore, the information that resides within one department has no or very little meaning to some other department of the government.

- **Lack of awareness in people**





Most of the Indian people are not aware of the benefits of e-governance services. Even the government does not pay much attention to make the people aware about e-governance activities. Unawareness is a major challenge in the implementation of e-governance projects.

- **Cost**

In developing countries like India, cost is one of the most important obstacles in the path of implementation of e-governance where major part of the population is living below poverty line. Even the politicians do not have interest in implementing e-governance. A huge amount of money is involved in implementation, operational and evolutionary maintenance tasks. These costs must be low enough so that to guarantee a good cost/benefit ratio.

- **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. Maintenance is a key factor for long living systems in a rapidly changing technical environment.

- **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.

- **Tried and tested technologies**

Technology tends to get out of date very fast. Our government may not be in position to buy new servers every year. So, it is better and safer to use technologies and products which are tried and tested for longer periods of times than using the latest ones.

- **Geographical problems**

Corporate networks reside on reliable and controlled networks. Government networks have to go into all areas which are even unfriendly to live. It is, however, costly to wire up all the villages in the country. So, e-governance systems must have to use the wireless networks like existing cellular networks to reach the applications into remote areas irrespective of the geographical issues.

- **Local language**

The acceptance of English language in India is very low. The e-governance applications are written in English. That is why e-governance projects do not get success. Hence, the e-governance applications must be written in local language of the people so that they may be able to use and take advantage of these applications.

As the usage of Information Technology is growing very fast, Indian government is making many efforts to provide services to its citizens through e-governance. Although Indian government is spending a lot of money on e-governance projects but still these projects are not successful in all parts of India. Unawareness in people, local language of the people of a particular area, privacy for the personal data of the people etc. are main challenges which are responsible for the unsuccessful implementation of e-governance in India. Government must take some actions to make the people aware about the e-governance activities so that people may take full advantage of these activities and e-governance projects can be implemented successfully. The participation of



people can play a vital role in implementation of e-governance in India and in real meaning e-governance can be master key in good governance.

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