

“e-Governance: A Changing Dimension & Its Socio-economic Impact”

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ABSTRACT

A system that promotes efficiency, enforces accountability, transparency in government working & reduces the time delay is e-Governance system. The system is the government effort to the digital revolution, expansion and ICT. Developing country like India where the major challenges for using ICT in government services are poverty, lack of e-literacy, language dominated society & unawareness towards the benefit of this transformation a number of problems arises during the implementation of these programs. The needs of more responsive government, lower barrier & costs for access are the major factors for the accomplishment of e-Governance in India. The main objective of this study is to understand the applied concept of e-Governance in India at various areas with central, state & integrated services. After the study of different areas where e-services are available the research catalogues the social & economic impact which is benefiting the society as a whole. There are many projects recorded as failure projects have not been documented in this study. More precisely, the strategies required for the effective execution will be defined.

Key words : e-Governance, India, literacy, transparency, corruption.

INTRODUCTION:

Implementation & delivery of government services using information & communication technology is known as e-Governance. ICT helps in keeping the public system transparent, effective, responsive & accountable to the society. It is a more convenient way to access the information & services provides by the government through internet. The connectivity of government to the citizen, business & government agencies via ICT, delivers the services faster & effectively. But developing country like India where most of the population lives below poverty line & very low literacy level it becomes very difficult for the government providing information & services with the means of internet. As per the World Economic Forum e-Readiness rank of India is 91st in the year of 2016 out of 139 countries. e- Readiness Index or Network Readiness Index basically helps to measure the acceptability & impact of ICT for the growth & development of any country. Amongst the BRICS countries Russia ranked highest in term of acceptability of ICT & India ranked the lowest. India's rank has come down for the fourth uninterrupted years in row: 2015-89th position, 2014-83rd position, 2013-68th position. Factors like privacy & security related issues of users information, low IT literacy, difficult access of internet in remote areas, low per capital income & hindi as a common mode of

communication are major reasons for this decline in e-readiness rank in India. This study will help to understand the various working projects under the e-Governance plan of India state wise & social & economic impact of these projects which in turns contributes for the overall development of Indian economy.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The present study is based upon the conceptual approach to identify the strategies for making e-governance more effective. Specifically the objectives of the study are:

1. To understand the e-governance structure of India.
2. To identify the social & economic impact of e-governance services.
3. To identify strategy for the effective application of e-governance services.

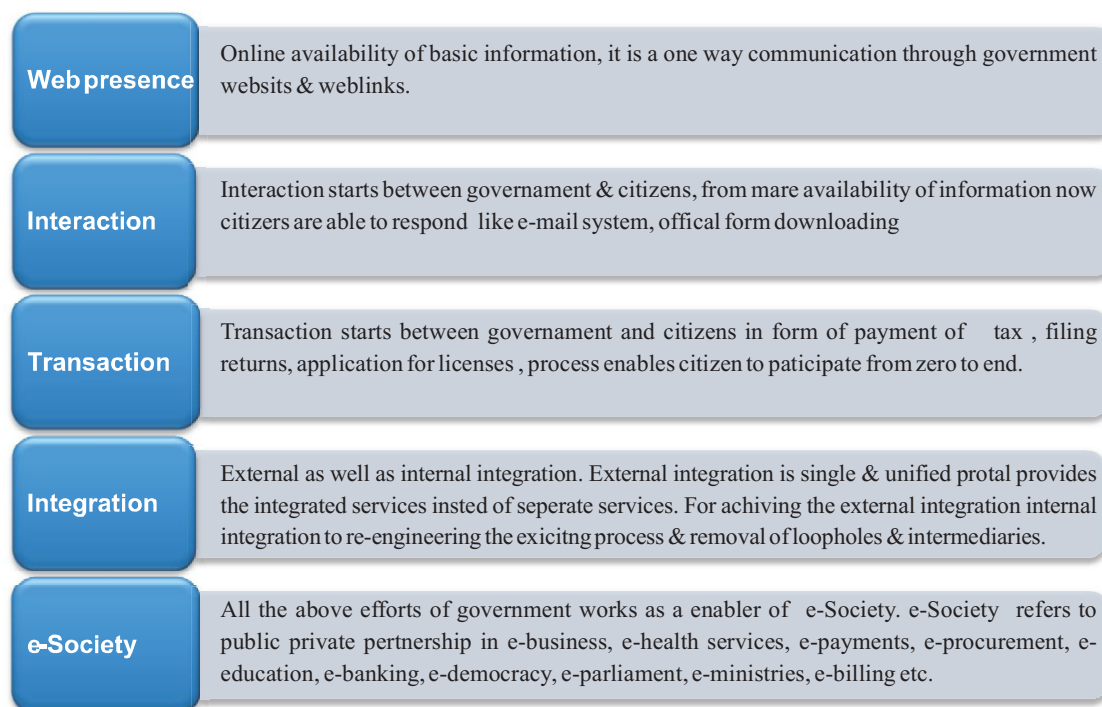
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study is based upon secondary data obtained from various literature reviews & e-governance portals. The study is done to understand the e-governance structure of India, its effectiveness and present status. The significant data from various resources has been composed and the updated report is compiled.

e-Governance & INDIA

National Informatics Center's is the key pillar for the initiate of e-Governance with the objective of connect all district headquarters though computers in 1980s. In 2002 further proposal was to setting up an India portal for citizen access to information on a variety of aspects like agriculture, development & social welfare. Price waterhouse Coopers i.e. PwC conducted survey in five states of India Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharastra, Rajasthan & Jharkhand keeping the objective in mind "What Citizens Want". They have covered people from different income group, education level, castes, age & gender. The results of the survey were categorized into highest priority, high priority & medium priority areas & further classification is service, information & grievances. The National e-Governance plans initiated in 2006 attempts to make the availability of all the government services to the citizens of the country in his location through Common Service Centers being setup across India.

e-Government applications normally evolve through a five-stage process. The first stage includes the publication of information on a website for citizens seek information about process governing the delivery of public utility services. The second stage involves interaction between government & it's public. Clients can download applications for receiving services. The third stage involves electronic transactions for individual as well as businesses. The fourth stage is the integration both external & internal for the working of single window communication and removal of loopholes during citizen & government interaction. The fifth stage involves unified and custom-made services to every citizen according to their preferences conversion of society into e-society.

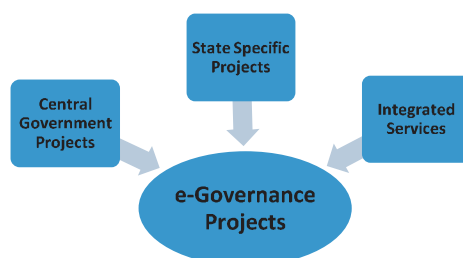


The success of above process mainly depends upon three factors:

- Infrastructure as a utility to every citizen**
 High speed availability of internet to rural & urban areas, easy access to common service centers (information kiosk) and safe & secure cyber space in the country.
- Governance & services on demand**
 Single window access to all the citizens, availability of government services online & on mobile platform & making financial transaction at websites & portals.
- Digital empowerment of citizens**
 Vocational training program will help to increase digital literacy, all the documentation is available on cloud & universally accessible all digital resources for availing the services.

e-Governance Core Projects in India

Within the framework of National e-Governance Plan 31 mission mode projects implies. Projects focus on one aspect i.e. electronic governance in various platforms. These projects have defined objectives, scopes, timelines, milestones & measurable outcomes. 31 MMP's further classified into three categories which are as follows:



S.No	Mission Mode Projects	Working Department
Central Government Projects		
1	Income Tax	Ministry of Finance/Central Board of Direct Tax
2	Passport	Ministry of External Affairs
3	MCA 21	Ministry of Company Affairs
4	Visa, Immigration & Foreigners Registration & tracking	Ministry of Home Affairs
5	Insurance	Dept. Of Banking
6	National Citizen Database	Ministry of Home Affairs/Registrar General of India (RGI)
7	Central Excise & Customs	Department of Revenue/Central Board of Excise & Custom
8	Pensions	Dept. Of Pensions & Pensioners welfare & Dept. Of Expenditure
9	Banking	Dept. of Banking
10	UID	Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology
11	e-Office	Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances
State Specific Projects		
1	Land Records	Ministry of Rural Development
2	Road Transport	Ministry of Road Transport & Highway
3	Property Registration	Department of Land Resources, Government of India
4	Agriculture	Department of Agriculture & Cooperation
5	Treasuries	Ministry of Finance
6	Municipalities	Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation
7	Gram Panchayats	Ministry of Rural Development
8	Commercial Taxes	Ministry of Finance
9	Police (UTs initially)	Ministry of Home affairs
10	Employment Exchange	Ministry of Labour and Employment
11	Education	Ministry of Human Resource and Development
12	Health	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
13	e-District	Coordinated by dept. of IT, Government of India
Integrated Services		
1	EDI (E-Commerce) Formatted transaction of business documents (invoice, Purchase and) electronically.	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
2	e-Biz Single window Government to business portal offering services for the complete lifecycle of business	Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion/Department of Information Technology
3	Common Service Centre's	Department of Information Technology
4	India Portal Single window web based delivery of information and Government services at the national level	Department of Information Technology/ Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances
5	EG Gateway	Department of Information Technology
6	e-Courts	Ministry of Home Affairs
7	e-Procurement	Ministry of Commerce & Industry

Core infrastructure is the basic need for apposite execution of the above initiatives. Another important aspect is readiness and eagerness of ministry/department for implementing the projects from a financial, administrative & political standpoint within a rational time frame. General IT skills n competencies, special training programs for the employees is a necessity for execution of e-initiatives which in turns will help in overcoming the obstacles during the execution.

Economic & Social impact of e-Governance:

A conceptual study has been done to understand the economic & social impact of e-governance applications. Study will summarize the major economic impact & their benefits in order to appreciate the increased investments in the application of e-governance. This is a fundamental investment for any developing country in order to connect its citizens & businesses. e-Governance not only achieving the economic benefit but its impact on society cannot be avoided such as one of the major improvement is transparent system of government working. This will have a positive bang on reduction of corruption, poverty alleviation & citizen empowerment.

- **Economic Impact :**

1. **Streamlining administrative process**

The efficiency of employees increased by automating the tedious work. Use of ICT in government services reduced the imprecision cause by duplicate & redundant database. Internal integration has increased the ability of workforce.

2. **Reducing Administrative Burdens for businesses**

One stop access to information easy & less time consuming contact to government reduced the administrative burden of organizations. Single window access for license application, duties & tax payments & grant of permits reduced the excess cost of workers & drive to the government office by one mouse click from your own place.

3. **Increasing Revenue**

Modernize tax filing system through online portal has reduced the time & cost both. Government is able to enhance the transparency & reduced corruption which might lead to a trust in citizens. The payment of tax become a easy process & audit improvements to identify the defaulters.

4. **Cost Reduction and Budget Savings**

At the time of implementation of e-governance services cost will rise on account of investment in the technology to organize the electronic delivery. But the electronic usage of e-governance services reduces the delivery cost & government expenditure in terms of lesser workforce & electronic control over the process.

- **Social Impact :**

1. **Increased Transparency and Reduced Corruption**

Government in connecting with a wide audience through electronic delivery which increases the transparency in the system. Procedures are online that makes the monitoring easy. Automated procedures reduce the gate keeping role of government employees & also eliminated the need of intermediaries. That is directly reducing the cost of incurring public utility services & corruption as citizens themselves can avail the services at online portals & information kiosk without taking the help from agents & intermediaries.

2. **Improving Service Delivery**

Many e-governance projects have recorded impressive growth in terms of reducing the number of steps, reducing the timeframe & reducing the consultant. These projects have been designed to

improve effectiveness & efficiency so the access of citizens to the government improves better treatment areas to the public, lesser corruption & 24*7 connectivity.

3. **Empowerment of Rural Communities**

Many of the pilot projects in rural areas run through internet kiosk. Rural communities can directly communicate with government through these tele-centers. These kiosks are an initiative to connect the rural population with government without the hold of any intermediary however it is not completely a successful idea because of low literacy level, no charm of using internet in the villagers & need of intermediary for understanding the information obtain from internet.

Suggested Strategies for impeccable execution of e-Governance services in India:

1. **To build technical infrastructure**

Building technical infrastructure with faster connectivity is the core need of implementation of e-governance. Faster broadband & wireless networks are the newer ways of connectivity. The infrastructure will work as a hook up between government, private sector & individuals as well. This connectivity will promote the use internet & information kiosk that will also generate the employment opportunities.

2. **To build institutional capacity**

Once the infrastructural need is accomplished the next step is to train the government employees for the better utilization of intellectual resources. Along with training proper equipped departments with hi-technology with regular monitoring & control is the necessity for accurate implementation on e-governance.

3. **To build legal infrastructure**

Technology is changing & growing rapidly. It is essential to frame the laws for existing as well as emerging technology. These laws need to be flexible enough to fit in the rapid change. However currently India has only one law which deals in e-Commerce legislation i.e. IT act 2000. Now where all the information of citizens regarding their identity is used to access the network of e-governance, it would raise the matter of confidentiality. Amended acts should provide a good enforceability mechanism, efficient laws to deal with various issues of security for the effective & trustworthy implementation. It should reach out to the object & the purpose for which e-governance come into existence.

4. **To make all information available online**

The efforts on building new technological infrastructure will be failed if the system is not updated with day to day information. Content management will be one of the challenges. The citizens are entitled to know all the updated information because the government is of the people, by the people & for the people.

5. **To popularize E-governance**

Literacy rate in India is alarming. The whole world is touching e-governance, but India still far behind in the literacy level. Suitable e-literacy campaigns to be organized for getting people understand the technology. Citizen will only adopt e-services when they feel comfortable with technology. This can be achieved by educating them about the benefits of e-governance over physical structure.

6. To set standards

Quality performance, security standards, technical standards can be achieved by setting up project wise strategies. Projects should be time bounded with public private partnership that will bring finishing in the accomplished task. Central-state, inter-state & inter-department coordination is necessary for the smooth functioning. The states can cooperate with the centre to create a National Citizen Database.

Conclusion

e-Governance is about restructuring in governance, facilitated by the inventive use of ICT. It is applied at all levels of the government services to connect & interact with the citizens & business enterprise for speedy exchange of information & availability of services through internet. After the birth of e-governance the administration has become more responsible, structured, responsive & transparent which has generated the trust amongst the citizens of the country. The end result would be simplified functioning, quick response, effective services & enhanced decision making abilities. All the factors are contributing for an accountable government that will work for the benefit of the citizens. In spite of poor infrastructure, low literacy rate, poverty & known as a language dominating country India has won numerous awards for many mission mode projects.

e-Governance is the key to good governance for reducing corruption, reducing poverty, easy access of government with its citizens & effective governance system for developing nation like India. Indian government is making many efforts to upgrade the citizens on day to day information with the help of ICT. Local languages, unawareness of rural citizens, privacy for personal data, low e-literacy rate & internet connectivity are the major challenges for the implementation of e-governance projects. The critical success factors of these projects are clear vision & outstanding leadership. Effective measures should be taken by government to lighten up the importance & benefits of e-society. High scale of public participation along with excellent telecommunication services at affordable cost makes it a real success.

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