E-GOVERNANCE IN INDIA: ISSUES & CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

With the advancement of Information and communication technology resulted to a shift from traditional government system to a citizen-centric governance system. This advancement in Information and Communication Technology sector also brings the concept of e-governance into the limelight. Many countries of the world already have adopted e-governance system in their administrative system and it is implemented in various countries through various initiatives. A developing country like India, it is also thought that e-governance brings desired changes in the administrative system by making the whole administrative system convenient, efficient, effective and fully accountable and consensus oriented. But in a diverse country like India which has confronted many problems from time to time hinders the way of effective implementation of e-governance. This paper highlights a brief understanding of e-governance and also aims to give its focus on various issues and challenges faced during e-governance implementation in India.

Keywords: e-Governance, Issues & Challenges.


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1. INTRODUCTION

With the growing awareness among the people about their rights resulted the increase of expectations of the people from the government to perform a better service delivery and also faster response and transparent in its dealings to be expected. This led the foundation of using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) imperatives in any agenda that leads towards achieving good governance. It was also believed that the use of modern technology such as ICT also should be used in making good relationship between the government and citizens, government and employees and government and businesses. It is in this scenario, the term e-governance has come into existence with an aim to achieve objectives of good governance by using ICT. Good governance is defined by World Bank as “the manner in which
power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development.’ Thus, here good governance implies the use of power and authority for development of a country by managing that country’s economic and social resources. The term governance is different from that of government. Simply, governance is the activity of the government. E-governance also ensures citizens’, institutions’, civil society groups’ and the private sectors’ deeper involvement and wider participation in the governance’s decision making process.

The term e-governance is of recent origin that develops after the advancement of ICT. At present, the term e-governance attracts the eyes of mankind from all around the world. E-governance is considered as a milestone of good governance and e-governance is also referred to as one of the pillar among the nine pillars of good governance. The prefix ‘e’ in e-governance refers to the term electronic. E-governance brings SMART (Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsive, Transparent) governance. Simply, the term e-governance implies the delivery of government services at the door steps of citizens through the application of ICT. UNESCO defines e-governance as “it is the use of ICT by different actors of the society with the aim to improve their access to information and to build their capacities.” Thus, e-governance implies the use of ICT to provide quality and speedy service to its people and it uses ICT to support government administration, democratic processes and relationship among citizens, civil society, private sector and the state. Dr, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam explained e-governance as “A transparent smart e-governance with seamless access, secure and ethnic flow of information crossing inter-departmental barrier and providing a fair and unbiased service to the citizen.” As stated, now-a-days many countries of the world including developed countries like U.S.A., U.K. also promote e-governance. In U.S.A. under e-governance initiatives various projects have been implemented. Such as EZ tax filling for filling and refunding of taxes online, Federal Assets Sales for developing pilot business integration and re-host federal sales, E-payroll/ HR to complete and submit business case to PMC, E-Authentication to provide initial authentication gateway prototype. In U.K. also there are various e-government projects have been implemented, includes Cornwall Electronic Health Record Pilot to provide common information architecture, 24 hour emergency record to connect all general practitioners to NHS net; Go-between projects; Plymouth Bus project, etc. Like U.S.A. and U.K., India has also adopted various e-governance initiatives to achieve a smarter, accountable, responsive government and to deliver government services to citizen in a speedy manner. The establishment of National Informatics Center (NIC) paved the way for the beginning of e-governance in India. The main thrust of NIC was to connect all district headquarters through computers in the 1980s. It was believed that the use of ICT in governance may help in achieving the aims and objectives of good governance. Through the launching of National Satellite based Computer Networks (NICNET) provided the thrust for e-governance, but recently more emphasis is to given to e-governance under Digital India program launched by P.M. Modi. Though the Indian Government takes various initiatives to promote and implement e-governance, but there still exist certain obstacles which hinders in the way of effective implementation of e-governance. Without removing all these constraints India cannot achieve the desired result for which the concept of e-governance has been taken into limelight of administrative process. This article aims at highlighting and analyzing some of these obstacles in Indian context.

As we can see the rise of popularity about the implementation of e-governance in various countries’ administrative processes and India’s desire to achieve its goal of good governance through e-governance also going high which also rise the importance of knowing e-governance along with its hindrances. Therefore it is in this context, it is very much needed a study on e-governance’s obstacles which have blocked the path of e-governance succession in India. The identification of the obstacles through this paper may be helpful to policymakers and policy.
analysts in making their policies which are formed to remove the obstacles of e-governance implementation. The e-governance gets highest level of attention, but the government should have to correct many things which will lead its effective functioning. There are many obstacles exist in the way of effective Implementation of e-governance in India. The challenges which led to the failure of effective implementation of e-governance include the following:

2. HUGE POPULATION
India is a vast populated country. Here exist people of different cultures and languages. Thus, generating unique identity of every individual, keeping updated records and databases time to time are the major challenges in front of the government. Again the linguistic differences among the people also create problems. Along with this the internet provides information only in English. But most of the Indians cannot understand and speak in English. Therefore, it is not an easy task before the government of India and its administrative bodies to provide information to the various linguistic people in their respective languages.

3. LOW LITERACY RATE
Lack of education among people also blocked the path of successful implementation of e-governance initiatives. The term literacy refers to the ability to read and write in any language along with proper understanding. In case of e-governance application most of its related information and applications are written in English language. But without understanding the English language no person can access and take advantage of e-governance. Though the government has provided the required infrastructure to its citizens but because of their lacking knowledge about English language make them reliable on some IT people to access e-governance services. This cannot fulfill completely the purpose of e-governance to deliver its services to the door steps of citizens.

4. INTERNET REACH AND AWARENESS
By name e-governance implies the importance of internet for its effective use. E-governance application has indeed proper infrastructure facility and availability of computer in the hands of the people. But in a developing country like India there is a lack of availability of computer and also lack of computer knowledge among the people. Only the facility of internet accessibility cannot make the e-governance service successful if the people do not aware of the services provided to them under e-governance initiatives.

5. SECURITY
Security does not only imply infrastructure but also deals with the information and data which are shared in various systems. Citizen should have to share their personal details to do any transaction with the government agencies that can be misused easily by various anti-social groups or individual and private sectors. People have the fear of misusing their information by the hackers. Therefore, trust and security are two major factors that challenged e-governance.

6. INADEQUATE POWER SUPPLY
Power or electricity is one of the important elements because without power we cannot run computers. But in various areas mainly in rural areas of India the people face the problems of inadequate supply of electricity or frequent power cut which also disturb the process of e-governance.

7. LACK OF INTEGRATION WITHIN A DEPARTMENT
For the smooth running of the system of e-governance and for smooth running of services within a department there must be an integration and collaboration and attitude of co-operation
among the employees of the respective department. Lack of integration create chaos and also create delays in providing services to the people.

8. LACK OF INTEGRATION ACROSS GOVERNMENTAL DEPARTMENTS

Any service that provides to citizens involves various governmental departments. A citizen can render any service after getting approval from respective officials from various departments. If these departments are less integrated then it creates delay and other problems which makes e-governance services uneasy to access by the people and also consumes time.

9. LIMITED KNOWLEDGE OF USING COMPUTERS AMONG THE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Not only among common citizens but also among the officials, most of the employees of government do not have adequate knowledge of computer application and also not aware of using Information Technology. Lack of knowledge and skill to operate computers also blocked the way of successful implementation of e-governance initiatives.

10. ATTITUDE OF THE BUREAUCRATS

The unresponsive attitudes of some bureaucrats towards common peoples’ problems and their nature to maintain distance from the common people also make the e-governance services complex and untransparent. Though it is believed that after implementing e-governance, the administrative offices are going to be corruption free but there still exist corruption environment in the offices.

11. INSUFFICIENCY OF FUNDS

To implement e-governance policies adequate funds are needed. But the government does not provide sufficient funds though it talks about e-governance application. Again adequate internet access is necessary for e-governance which is again costly and requires lots of money. In a developing country like India doesn’t have sufficient funds to provide money for fulfilling only a single purpose. Government of India should also take the other sectors into its consideration too.

12. CONCLUSION

Thus, e-governance indicates the maximum use of electronic means in governmental affairs in order to gather and for distribution of data and information pertaining to the day-to-day administration to the citizens. It uses ICT for providing government services. It is to be believed that e-governance can provide platform for easy access of government services to the people in their door steps. The application of e-governance provides necessary pre-requisites for good governance by making government simple, moral, accountable, responsive and transparent. This system makes the whole administrative process accountable, convenient and efficient. Though under e-governance project various schemes are going on in India but its success rate is not so high because of various reasons. There are various problems coming out in the effective implementation of e-governance application which must be tackled with. The government must provide better infrastructure for easy access of internet facilities, encourage the use of government services and under e-governance scheme provide training facilities to the government employees about the use of technology and make strict policies against corruption and also strict action should be made in order to change the neglecting attitudes of the bureaucrats towards common people and sufficient fund should be provided for the betterment of e-governance services.
REFERENCES


