E-Governance and Digital India : Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract

"United Nation E- Government Survey 2018, India has jumped 22 places to break into the Top 100 of the United Nation's E-Government Index 2018. India, Which was ranked 118 in 2014, Jumped 11 places to be ranked 96 in2018" Now a days, one of the popular terms in today's Public Administration is e-Governance. In simple terms we can define E-Governance as the application of information technology in administration. We live in an information age and the progress in Information and communication technology (ICT) has enabled the growth of e-governance in administration. ICT has led to various developments in our society, business and other spheres of life and has introduced news terms such as E -governance, E -banking, e-commerce etc. According to Digital India website, the government plans to extend coverage of the information infrastructure nationally from 2014-2017. The cost of the entire project is estimated at about Rs. 1-13 lakh crores. The programme aims at infrastructural reforms such as high speed internet and al gram panchayats, life long digital identification for citizen, mobile banking for all, easy access to common service centres, shareable private spaces on an easily accessible public cloud and cyber security.

Keywords: E-Governance, ICT, Digital India, e-commerce, E- Banking.

Introduction

In E-Governance there are two terms e+Governance. "e" means electronic and governzxance is the way by which government manage the state affairs related to public. Professor Donald F. Ketti in his book, 'The transformation of Governance' define it as an institutional superstructure that society uses to translate politics into policies and legislation. Ketti describes governance as the outcome of the interaction of government, public service and citizens throughout the political prosess, policy development, program design and service Delivery[1]. We can say "e" is prefixed with governance the government becomes modernized in its functioning and in the ways of carrying the business of government. It works as a platform where people get connected directly to the government and reach of government to the grass root level. Also becomes meaningful as two ways communication is possible.

Methodology

The paper is based on the secondary data and the information is retrieved from the internet via Journals, research paper and expert opinions on the same subject matter.

Objective of the Paper

1. To study meaning and definition of e-governance.
2. To findout the characteristics of e-governance.
3. To findout the implementation areas of various sector of Economy.
4. To Analysis e-governance and digital India in Indian Perspective.

Definitions of e-Governance

According to Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, "a transparent smart e-Governance with seamless access, secure and authentic flow of information crossing the interdepartmental barriers and providing a fair and unbiased service to citizen". International Institute for Communication and Development, focusing on processes, defines e Governance as the application of electronic means in : (a) The interaction between government and citizens and the government and businesses, as well as (b) In internal government operations to simplify and improve democratic, government and business aspects of electronic technologies in three areas of public action: (i) relations between the public authorities and civil society, (ii) functioning of the public authorities at all stages of the democratic process and (iii) The provision of public services [2].

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Broadly we can define E-Governance with the help pf abbreviation 'SMART'. Here, each alphabet defines the broader meaning of E-Governance.

S- Simple

M- Moral

A- Accountability

R- Responsibiluty

T-Transparency

According to World Bank definition (AOEMA report): "E- Governance refers to the use by government agencies of information technologies (such as Wide Area Networks, the Internet and mobile computing) at have the ability to transform relation with citizens, businesses and other arms of government. These technologies can serve a variety of different ends: better delivery of government services to citizens, improved interactions with business industry, citizen government management. The resulting benefits can be less corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth and cost reductions."

According to United Nations definition (AOEMA report): "E-government defined as utilizing the Internet and the world-wide-web for delivering government information and services to citizens."

E-government is in the early stages of development. Most governments have already taken or are taking initiative offering government services online. However, for the true potential of E-government to be realized, government needs to restructure and transform its long entrenched business processes. According to Gaunter, e-government involves the use of ICTs to support government operations and provide government services. However, E-government goes even further and aims to fundamentally transform the production processes in which public services and generated and delivered, there by transforming the entire range of relationships of public bodies with citizens, businesses and other governments. In the last few years, there has been much talk of mobile government or m-government. M-government refers to the use of wireless technologies like cellular/mobile phones, laptops and PDA (Personal Digital Assistants) for offering and delivering government services. M-government is not a substitute for e-government, rather it complementary to each other.

Characteristics of E-Governance are given below-

Simple and efficient

As E-Governance depends on ICT, Advancements in the Information and communication technology enables E- Governance with more and more facilities.

Two ways communication

E- Governance enable two way Communications, as people can avail various types of services through common services delivery centre as well as to give their feed back to the services delivered by government to common people.

Cost Reduction

Most of the Government expenditure is Appropriated towards the cost of stationery. Paper-based communication needs lots of stationery, printers, computers, etc. which calls for continous heavy expenditure. Internet and phones makes communication cheaper saving valuable money for the government [3].

Transparency

The Vailibility of the documents online, online processing of documents and other online services has made this mode of government transparent where not only one can check the status of of the work done but also can avail maximum services without being physically present in the office.

Accountability

Transparency results in accountability. Accountability is the answerability of the government. In a welfare state like India, government has to be accountable for his deeds. This show the responsibleness of government.

Implementation of E-governance[4]

E- Governance has broad field where it could be applied. According to UNESCO's report it can be implemented to following areas :-

E-admininistratio

E-admininistratio refers to improving of government processes and of the internal workings of the public sector with new ICT-executed processes.

E-services

E-services referes to improved delivery of public services to citizens. Some examples of interactive services are: requests for public documents, requests for legal documents and services, issuing permits and licenses.

E-democracy

Implies greater and more active citizen participation and involvement enable by ICT's in the decision making process.

E-Governance in Indian perspective

India is a large country with 70% rural population. Most of the developmental programs are made by government, keeping in view the problems and necessity of he rural masses. These rural masses needs acme type of services such as making BPL card, ADHAR card, birth certificates, caste certificates etc to avail the advantages of government programs but our traditional set up or machinery due to red tape makes the process so comples that services are not delivered to citizens on time. In this situation the success of these plans and projects made by government becomes challenging. Here, E-governance can really help. The World Bank has laid great stress on the state of Governance since there is a link between growth and good governance. In many developing countries including India, resources pumped in for development and growth have failed to governance. According to Kofi A. Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations,"Good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development"[5].

The Development of ICT which invented new tool for governance and service delivery commonly known as e governance, started b the launch 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) programme to computerize all District

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offices in the country for which free hardware and sotware was offered to state Governments[6]. A few plans of computer literacy and for E Governance were made by state as well as central government but there was no clear vision for development of E Governance. In the Year 2006, the National E- Governance Plan (NeGP), initiated by the Government of India really brought the scattered elements within one umbrells. The picture which was blurred became little clear. It started with a motto 'public services closer home' and a vision to "make all public services accessible to common man in his locality, through common reliability of such services at affordable costs to realize the basic need of the common man".[7] NeGP initiated in UPA regime started with 27 Mission Mode Project and 10 components. Mission Mode Projects has been categorized under Central Government Category, State Government category and Integrated Services category. The projects under Central Government category are Income Tax, Passport visa and Immigration, Insurance, National Citizen Database, Central Excise, pensions, banking and e-office. Projects under state Government category are land Record, Road Transport, Property Registration, Agriculture, Treasuries, Municipalities, Gram Panchayats, Commercial Taxes, Police, Employment Exchanges and E-District. Projects under Integrated Services Category are EDI (E- Commerce), E-Biz, Common services centers, India Portal, EG Gateway, E Courts and E-procurements (8). These all provide services under categories: Government to citizen (G2C), Government to Business (G2B), Government to Government (G2G). NeGP presents a holistic approach towards e Governance. This plan is a major plan to implement e Governance in all arms of the governance i.e. central level, to state level, district level to block level. It has resulted in great success in some areas. Through DBT scheme (Direct Benefit Transfer) the beneficiaries are getting benefits of different schemes and there is no place for any middle man. Nowadays, 'Digital India' a concept by Modi's government is being emphasized and it has also been approved by the union cabinet. Applications of Digital India were launched on 1st July 2015 by our Hon'ble Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi. And Under 'Digital India Week' programs will be organized in 600 districts throughout the country (9).

The Digital India programme is a transformed version with latest updates of the already running National e Governance Plan. The project aims to provide thrust to nine pillars include- Brodband Highways, everywhere mobile connectivity, Public Intern Access Programme, E Governance, e Kranti (which aims to give electronic delivery of services), information for all, electronics manufacturing, IT for jobs and early harvest programmes (10). Digital India vision universal digital literacy and universal accessibility of all digital resources for citizens. This will be ensured by making the resources and services accessible in regional languages and providing digital platforms for participatory governance. To ensure convenience, all government documents and certificates will be available on the cloud and will be portable. The umbrella programme i.e. Digital India aims at testructuring and synchronizing various existing schemes as well as new onews into a single integrated transformative programme, it will make technology central to enabling change (11).

Conclusion

We has crossed a long way from the starting of E-Governance in India till the age of Digital India. There are many challenges: from infrastructure, speed, broadband connection to security issues and e literacy. Other key initiatives are National optical Fiver Network and National Digital Literacy Mission (12). We need to work on the failures which many E-Governance project had undergone and to replicate the successful projects. Target is huge. We will have to understand that we are still in transition stage where some offices have already been computerized whereas others, which are waiting for Governance but we have to work on the fields of service delivery, e democracy, e literacy, a participation of the people etc. Our current programs such National e Governance Plan and Digital India will only get success when where Digital Inclusion. We will have to fill the gap of digital divide and along with government; people will also have to become technology friendly. The society should also accept the changes and be ready for transformation-

Endnotes

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