

## E-Governance in India – Issues and Opportunities

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**Abstract** – E-Governance refers to the use of information and communication technologies to enable citizens to access government services online. Governments across the world use electronic communication, or e-governance, to control both public and private activities. The efficient, quick and transparent transmission of information to the public and other agencies for the fulfilment of government administration tasks is made possible by information and communication technologies (ICT), which is used by government agencies as well as educational and research organisations. People do not even realise the advantages of e-governance initiatives, and they do not make extensive use of information and communication technologies, especially in developing nations like India, where the literacy rate is low and a large chunk of the population lives below the poverty line. Many obstacles stand in the way of implementing e-governance initiatives. The Indian government is having a difficult time putting e-governance into practice in several parts of the country. Globally, people have started to realise the significance of e-governance. Several components of effective governance, including social integration, accountability, openness, and improvement of public financial management, are highlighted by e-governance. The Indian government has started a number of initiatives to promote e-governance, including e-seva, smart govt, digital India, e-kranthi, and others. It appears that the public is gaining more from each of these projects. Despite this, there are still certain difficulties with e-governance deployment. Put differently, these difficulties appear to be roadblocks to the development of e-governance. This paper examines the elements that lead to good governance, e-governance activities throughout Indian states, and some of the current issues faced by the project managers of e-governance programs in India.

**Keywords:** E-governance, information, technology, initiatives, challenges

### **Introduction**

The term “government services” instantly draws up the images of mountains of paperwork, lengthy lines, and inattentive government employees. It is true that India joined the e-governance ecosystem relatively recently in comparison to other nations, however, one must keep in mind that India is a sizeable nation, with over a billion people to serve, as well as other entities involving several agencies and stakeholder entities that speak more than 150 dialects and 35 languages. Thus, there is a bigger barrier in executing e-governance projects in our country, but we are making progress. The use of computer technology to implement interactive and inter-organisational procedure is known as e-governance. Although, it has spread its presence to may large cities, rural communities continue to receive less benefits than urban ones. India wants to offer SMART governance by redefining governance in the age of information and communication technology. Numerous state and central initiatives have been launched in order to achieve this goal. At the central level, the government has developed a minimal agenda for e-governance and encouraged the use of information technology to manage operations. Additionally, departments are allowed to set aside two or three percent of their yearly budget for IT-related expenses.

E-governance, also referred to as e-Gov, digital governance, online governance, or, in some cases, transformational governance, is the use of information technology by the government to exchange data and services with businesses, citizens, and other branches of the government. It can be implemented by the legislature, the judiciary, or the administration to enhance the functioning of the systems. The meaning of the term “e-governance” varies.

E-administration is the utilisation of information and technology to modernize government, computerize records, and MIS data warehouses. The focus of e-services is to increase citizen-state proximity. Providing internet services is one example. Together, e-administration and e-services make up what is commonly referred to as e-government.

E-government refers to the utilisation of information and communication technology to enhance the government’s capacity to meet societal demands. It involves disseminating information about policies and programs in order to conduct business with the public. It encompasses more than just offering online services and also includes using IT for government objectives of development and planning.

E-democracy can be defined as the application of IT to enable participation of all segments of society in the state governance.

#### **Objectives:**

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1. To explore India's e-governance development.
2. To highlight current e-governance efforts.
3. To highlight the problems and obstacles in e-governance.

#### **E-government framework in India**

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The launch of NICENET and the DISNIC programs, which attempted to computerize district offices, in 1987 marked the beginning of India's transition to e-governance. Initiated in 2006, the National E-Governance Plan (NeGP) sought to make government services affordable, transparent, efficient, and available to all residents. Digital India, Digi-Locker, Mobile Seva, myGov.in, and other programs have been introduced under NeGP to encourage e-governance throughout the nation.

**Digital India Mission:** Established in 2015 with the goal of digitally empowering the country, is one of the many e-Government initiatives made possible by the NeGP. Its primary components are the development of a digital infrastructure that is robust and safe, the digital delivery of public services, and the attainment of universal digital library.

**Digi-Locker:** Helps individuals save digital copies of critical papers, including marksheets, PAN numbers, and degree certificates. This lessens the demand for physical documents and facilitates document sharing.

**Mobile Seva:** Seeks to offer mobile phones and tablets with government services. The m-App store offers over 200 live applications that can be used to access various government services.

**UMANG;** A single mobile application that provides users with access to several central and state government services, including, PAN, Aadhar, Digital Locker, and Employee Provident Fund services.

**MyGov:** This platform for citizen engagement was created to support participatory governance. There are about 2.48 crore active users of MyGov.

**MeriPehchaan:** On July 2022, the National Single Sign-on platform MeriPehchaan was introduced to make it easier for citizens to access government portals.

**Direct Benefit Transfers:** Citizens can get direct benefit transfers enabled by Aadhar through schemes spread across 53 Ministries. Via the DBT platform, payments totalling Rs 24.3 lakh crore have been made so far.

**Diksha:** It is an educational platform operating at the national level that facilitates collaboration, participation, and utilisation of a shared platform to meet national learning objectives.

**Common Services Centres (CSCs):** Through Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs), CSCs provide digital business and government services in rural areas. These CSCs provide more than 400 digital services. Currently, 4.20 lakh CSCs operate at the Gram Panchayat level, out of the 5.31 lakh CSCs that are operational nationwide (both in rural and urban areas).

#### **Literature Review**

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Ajay Kumar Bharti and Sanjay Kumar Dwivedi (2010), have addressed the challenges that governments and public sector organisations worldwide have in carrying out their administrative tasks in an efficient and economical manner. In order to give citizens, the service they need, they are also thinking about how to effectively employ information and communication technology (ICT) for e-governance. According to their research, e-governance is the most effective approach to make the governing process affordable, sensitive to quality, and all-encompassing. As a result, they have identified e-governance as a high priority agenda in India.

Sammer Sachdeva (2022) suggested in his paper that the government should develop both short and long-term plans for e-governance implementation. In order to enable effective execution, they must prioritise creating the right format for the Standards, Infrastructure, Law and Strategies. This calls for the creation of several entities within the Ministry of Information Technology.

Shalini Singh (2010) focuses on the right to information system. The Right to Information (RTI) was considered one of the most revolutionary pieces of legislation in the recent Indian history and has the potential to elevate India to the status of a highly developed democracy. It allowed citizens to access records kept in both the central and the state governments.

The paper by N S Kalsi, Ravi Kiran and S C Vaidya (2009) addresses the need for a revolution in the governance from traditional to e-government. It also looks for effective governance methods. They have also concentrated on how much citizens have benefitted from the usage of e-governance. As a result, cooperation among the key actors in society is necessary for the government of developing countries.

Anand Agrawal, Pragma Shah and Varun Wadhwa (2008) conducted research on the level of quality associated with online governance services. Within the findings section, they have put up a thorough approach for assessing the e-governance's quality. To create the model, they have suggested a two-stage approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative research techniques.

### **Benefits of E-governance**

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1. **Data-driven Governance** – Communication is facilitated by technology. High volumes of data can now be transmitted instantly thanks to the internet and mobile phones, which support effective governance.
2. **Savings** – The expense of purchasing stationary for official use accounts for a large portion of the government spendings. A large amount of stationary is used for letters and written records. On the other hand, swapping them out with smartphones and the internet can result in annual savings in crores.
3. **Transparency** – E-governance contributes to the transparency of all business operations. You can upload all official documents to the internet. In particular, the public have access to any information at any time at their convenience.
4. **Accountability** – Accountability and transparency are closely related. The public has better access to government functions and information, which makes the government more responsible for its actions.
5. **Effective land monitoring** – In India, a large developing nation with a complex land structure, online record maintenance is a crucial component of e-governance in addition to physical transactions, to guarantee that the transactions pertaining to property is not fraudulent.

### **Issues in E-governance**

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A multitude of problems, both old and new, have emerged in applications related to e-governance. People in nations like India live in poverty and their infrastructure is sub-par. It becomes challenging to provide the public with government services in such a situation. There are few obstacles in the way of implementation, such as security concerns, unequal citizen access to computer technology, expensive setup costs for e-government systems, and resistance to change.

Some typical issues are:

1. Lack of adequately qualified individuals to manage ICT.
2. Lack of necessary and efficient infrastructure to carry out e-government projects.
3. Lack of proper internet services and coverage.
4. Lack of proper government regulations regarding the implementation of e-governance services.
5. Most people are unable to convince others of the benefits of e-governance applications.
6. A vast majority of people are reluctant to use new technology as they are unable to grasp the terminology employed in interactive software.
7. Lack of sufficient funds to carry out government projects.

### **Suggestions for Better E-governance**

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1. Improved literacy rate so that the citizens are aware of the processes and benefits of the various initiatives launched by the government.
2. Removing barriers of cost, languages, and accessibility to provide equitable access to all and minimise digital divide.
3. Utilising cloud-computing so that services are at par with the global standards.
4. Business Process Re-engineering to restructure the processes and procedures in order to achieve significant improvement in e-governance performance.
5. Establishing more CSCs to provide villages with better access to the facilities offered.

### **Conclusion**

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Over the past few years, a paradigm shift in how governments operate and use ICT and the Web to provide better services to their constituents has emerged. The new strategy called “Open Government” calls for a re-evaluation of how governments should be run and how their policies should be modified to better serve the needs of their constituents. The growth of e-governance is still being impeded by the expenses of the human capital and telecommunication infrastructure. Even in the least developed nations sensible policies and legal frameworks can make a big difference in compensation. It is imperative that ICT training be incorporated into the community education from the very beginning, especially in India, so that people are familiar with the technology as they develop. Even though the IT Act of 2000 was passed several years ago, its implementation is still in infancy.

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