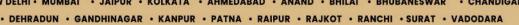# e-Governance

Kurukshetra Dec 2022

e-Governance

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1. Bridging the digital divide

Introduction:

India has made immense stride in the expansion of digital infrastructure across the country. Yet the digital inequality has been a significant concern in contemporary society. Globally, three billion people lack Internet connectivity. This lack of internet connectivity is more detrimental for marginal group of society like women, old aged, minorities etc.

Building Infrastructure to Overcome the Digital Divide:

- Access to internet knowledge is essential for learning and human development.
- By lowering prices, boosting efficiency, and raising labour productivity, the internet may help the economy.
- To convince potential internet users of the value of the technology, local language materials, and culturally appropriate services are needed.

Achieving an Affordable, Inclusive internet for All

- Construction of internet infrastructure was the area of focus from last 10 years.
- The Internet Society's survey in 2016 showed that only 70% of world's population has access to mobile internet.
- The following parameters are significant in the way of achieving an affordable, inclusive internet for all.

Importance of Infrastructure:

- Access of digital tools requires the presence of digital infrastructure first.
- There must be collaboration of government and private sector to stimulate competition and boost network investment.
- Access to public broadband is just the beginning of building a digitally developed country that closes technical divides between citizens and attracts new businesses and development prospects.

Pricing:

- An affordable pricing of internet services is crucial for internet access.
- Some stakeholders advocated 'zero internet price', which is rejected by TRAI.

Digital Inclusion and Building Human Capacity:

- Widespread use of English and lack of local language in web content discourages use of internet.
- Hence local language content development is going to be the backbone for the future of digital inclusion.

Measuring Access:

- Measuring the impact of policy intervention gives the feedback for further correction.
- UN's e-Government Development Index at global level gives the picture of digital inclusion of nations.

Government of India's schemes:

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India, launched the 'Digital India' programme with the vision to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge-based economy by ensuring digital access, digital inclusion, and empowerment, bridging the digital divide.
- e-Kranti Electronic delivery of services envisages the provisioning of various e-Governance services in the country.
- Digital India is an umbrella program covering multiple projects of Central Ministries/Departments and States/UTs. Some of the significant initiatives related to public service delivery are as follows:
    - **Common Services Centers** -Through Village Level Entrepreneurs, CSCs provide digital government and commercial services to rural communities (VLEs).
    - **Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance (UMANG)-**for giving citizens access to government services via mobile.
    - **e-District Mission Mode Project (MMP)-** e-District project has been implemented at district and sub-district levels of all States/ UTs, benefitting all citizens by delivering various e-Services.
    - **Digi locker –** It is facilitating the paperless availability of government documents.
    - **UPI-** It is leading digital payment platform, which is an integration of 330 banks.
    - **CO-WIN -** It is an open platform for the management of registration, appointment scheduling & managing vaccination certificates for Covid-19.
    - **MyGov -** It is a citizen engagement platform that is developed to facilitate participatory governance.
    - **Meri Pehchaan**- National single sign-on platform called Meri Pehchaan has been launched in July 2022 to facilitate/provide citizens ease of access to government portals.
    - **My scheme** -This platform has been launched in July 2022 to facilitate citizens to avail of eligibility-based services.

- **Direct Benefit Transfers** - 315 Schemes across 53 Ministries are offering Aadhaar-enabled direct benefit transfers to citizens.
- **Diksha** - Diksha is a national-level educational platform that helps students and teachers to participate.
- **Open Government Data** -A platform for open government data has been created in order to facilitate data exchange and encourage innovation with regard to non-personal data.
- **API Setu**- A platform called API Setu has been created to make data interchange across systems easier.

Conclusion: The digital inclusion is necessary not for individual's development but for development of society. It propels a nation to achieve the SDG goals and other Human Development criteria.

2. Technology Integration for Quality Education

Introduction:

- The 21st century is witnessing the Digital Revolution, where the digitization of every sector is becoming new norm. The education sector is also experiencing the touch of digital revolution. The COVID-19 lockdown has shown that the world needs neither total offline mode or a total online mode but a hybrid of the two.
- In the school education sector of India, technology has been used both in governance processes to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of schooling system and also for enhancing quality of education.

Various governance related technological interventions have been initiated and undertaken by the Government which are given below:

1. UDISE+:

- Ministry of Education (MoE) had started Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) in 2012-13, integrating DISE for elementary and Secondary education.
- UDISE+ (Upgraded version of UDISE in 2018-19) collects s information through an online Data Collection Form (DCF) on parameters ranging from students, schools, teachers, infrastructure, enrolments, examination results etc.

- Ever since its introduction, UDISE+ has acquired the status of the official database of the MOE and is now operational in all the districts of the country.

2. Performance Grading Index (PGI):

- The PGI is a tool to provide insights on the status of school education and to catalyse transformational change in the States/UTs on the basis of key indicators that drive their performance and critical areas for improvement.

3. Online survey platform for National Curriculum Framework (NCF):

- The survey platform would take feedback from public and stakeholders in designing and upgradation of NCF.

4. NDEAR (National Digital Education Architecture) and Vidya Samiksha Kendra:

- NDEAR has been launched with a larger vision to create a unifying national digital infrastructure to energise and catalyse the education ecosystem.
- VSK will include Student, Teacher and School registry which will bring synergy to the work being done in the ecosystem by integrating data from different datasets and empowers students, teachers, and parents to bridge the gap.

5. PRABANDH:

- Department of School Education and Literacy had launched PRABANDH - Project Appraisal, Budgeting Achievements and Data Handling System in 2020.

Government's initiative to impart digital education:

1. PM e-Vidya:

- PM e-vidya launched during the time of pandemic is one such comprehensive initiative which ensures coherent access to digital education through multimodal approach.
- It includes DIKSHA platform, which provides digital contents like books, audio-visual contents etc.
- PM e-Vidya DTH channel provides 24*7 access to learners of grades 9th to 12th.

2. Capacity Building of Teachers through NISHTHA online:

- It is an integrated training programme, covering all the recommended areas and aims to holistic development of teachers.

Keeping in view of imparting digital learnings and also to make up the loss of learning during COVID-19 lockdown times to the children, this year's budget has promised following efforts-

- 200 channels for PM e-Vidya DTH channels.

- 750 virtual labs in science and mathematics, and 75 skilling e-labs for the simulated learning environment, will be set up in 2022-23.
- High-Quality e-content in all spoken languages will be developed for delivery via internet, mobile phones, TV, and radio through Digital Teachers.
- A Competitive Mechanism For E-Content

Conclusion: NEP 2020 has advocated an integration of technology in imparting education in India. The digital learning is way forward. The collaboration effort of all the stakeholders must ensure the equity in education and no one left behind.

3. Mobile Governance

Introduction:

- In the simplest term, Mobile Governance (m-Governance) is e-governance delivered through the mobile devices, especially through the smartphones.
- Due to unavailability of PCs and inaccessibility of broadband internet at larger scale, the m-governance is becoming the preferred mode for service delivery by the governments.

Infrastructure at Service

- As of August 2022, India has 1.17 billion telecom connections of which 98% were mobile phone connections and an estimated 65% of these were smart phones.
- Country has a tele-density of more than 85% and more than 82.5 crore of internet subscribers.
- India has 13.5 Mbps median speed of internet on mobile devices.

Shining examples of success:

- There are four major M-Governance models, namely:
    1. G2C (Government to citizens): The government interacts with citizens and vice versa
    2. G2E (Government to Employees): The government provides information and services to the employees
    3. G2G (Government to Government): Electronic sharing of data among various constituents of the government
    4. G2B (Government to Business): Making government systems more transparent and accessible to businesses
- Example: Arogya setu App, Digi Locker App, e-pathshala App, GST Rate Finder App, Indian Police at Your Call App, mAadhaar App, MADAD App, m-parivahan App, m-passport Seva App, MyGOv App, PMO India App

'Mobile First' and Digital India:

- Primary objective of M-Governance is to help deliver personalized and localized information and services anywhere, anytime, using different kinds of wireless and mobile technologies.
- Mobile devices have an important role in the government's vision for Digital India.
- The key principles of e-Kranti include Mobile First, meaning all applications are designed/ redesigned to enable delivery of services through mobile.

Fintech Revolution and M-Governance:

- The launch of UPI platform has led to resurgence of fintech revolution in India.
- Private players also launched customized fintech apps for digital transaction. For example, PhonePe, PayTM, Razor pays, Google Pay etc.
- Recently RBI has come up with 'UPI for featured phones' to help feature phone owners and slow internet problem facing users to do digital transactions.

The Framework and the Master Application:

- The master application would involve all the services delivered on single platform from various sectors.
- For example, MeitY had launched 'Mobile seva' as a master application.
- The UMANG app is latest in this addition.
  - It is conceptualized to bring governance on the fingertips of individuals through 'mobile first' strategy.
  - It is operated by National e-Governance Division (NeGD) of MeitY.
  - It aspires to provide a single app solution to various government services to users.

Challenges to address:

- Large number of apps, which makes handling and managing large number of apps cumbersome.
- Limited awareness and readiness and lack of digital skills.
- Access to good smartphones to poor.
- Lack of local language enabled contents.

4. Citizen Participation and Rural Well-being

Introduction: The building block of good governance is people participation. Nearly 50% of economic growth and 70% of workforce come from rural area. Hence any thought of good governance cannot be imagined without ensuring citizen participation from rural area.

E-governance and rural economy:

- E-governance is a process in which services are delivered at one's doorstep using ICT.
- Government of India implemented National e-Governance Plan in 2006 especially for rural area to provide doorstep services like birth certificate, land records etc.
- Some of the popular initiatives include e-Panchayat, e-Gram, and Priasoft; furthermore, an initiative like e-District added significant value to the governance process.
- The innovative interactive platform of 'MyGov' is started for citizen participation in governance.

Dimensions of rural e-governance:

- The various dimensions of e-governance in the rural sector are: ICT infrastructure, access to e-government services, mobile first, e-literacy, usage behavior, localizes content, employment and productivity, participatory governance, grievance redressal, and inclusion.

E-governance and citizen participation:

- Factors that affect customized e-governance are: the needs and expectations of people, socio-economic dynamics, contextual reality, ease and simplified design and structure of the policy, feedback mechanism, outcome analysis, etc.

Citizen participation and governance:

- **Citizen as a customer:** Citizen is considered as a valued customer as public services are meant for public use and consumption.
- **Citizen as an owner:** In a democratic set-up, citizens are the real owners of public services and even they are considered as investors in public services as they contribute through taxes, etc.
- **Citizen as a co-producer:** Citizens are often asked to play the role of co-producer in providing public services.
- **Citizen as a quality evaluator:** Being the co-producer and consumer, the citizen can become the evaluator of the public services quality and their delivery effectiveness.

Citizen participation and framework:

- Citizen participation also requires taking feedback from citizens.
- Besides, citizen participation can be viewed from three different perspectives; firstly, at what stages there is a need for participation; secondly, at what levels and thirdly, what are the tools through which participation can become more meaningful and effective.

Benefits of citizen participation:

- Smooth formulation and implementation of public policy.
- Maintaining transparency.
- Make citizen more accountable and responsible

- Enhance project's efficiency and efficacy
- Enhance a sense of belongingness and ownership
- Reduces conflict and confusion among stakeholders.
- Bring more inclusiveness
- Help marginalized and vulnerable group and empowers people.

Conclusion: The spirit of 'We, the people of India' embedded in our preamble cannot be translated on ground without people's participation in governance. The e-governance is enabler in that transformation. This requires collaborative effort from all the stakeholders.

5. E-governance in Health Services Delivery

Introduction: Government launched various health related online services like National Health Portal, e-Hospital Management System, *Mera Aspatal* initiative to capture patient feedback for delivered healthcare services etc.

- Numerous platforms like Nikshay Platform for tracking TB patient, Arogya Bharat-Health and Wellness Center portal for overseeing delivery of comprehensive primary health care services.
- National Health Policy 2017 envisaged a digital ecosystem in delivery of health services.
- In 2018, NITI Aayog released a proposal on National Health Stack with the objective of providing a framework for country's futuristic digital health system.
- National Digital Health Mission aims to create a management mechanism to process digital health data and facilitate its seamless exchange.
- There are fragmentations of health data of Indians.
- Operationalizing a single health ID and profile for every citizen, as envisaged under the NDHM, is an important reform for optimizing health information systems.
- From policy making perspective, access to digital data would help in making informed policy decisions.
- The digital data of patients would help health service providers to deliver efficient health services.
- A plethora of data would also provide ample of scope for research.
- World Bank estimated that India would require 2 million doctors by 2030.
- The AI enable chat-based bots would help India to overcome these limitations.
- Technology can help to improve operational efficiency by strengthening medical supply chain.
- The COVID-19 lockdown made telemedicine solution popular in India.
- E-Sanjeevani and e-Sanjeevani OPD have leveraged ICT to enable diagnostic, treatment and management of diseases.

- SWASTH is a private sector owned telemedicine app to deliver equitable and affordable healthcare in India.
- Telemedicine would help in providing health services to semi-urban and remote areas.
- Prior to COVID-19 pandemic, telemedicine field was focused on developing wearable gadgets, diagnostic and medicine delivery solution, but post pandemic medical consultancy and delivering healthcare services become center of attraction.

6. New Age Technology

Introduction: The digital India programme, which is supposed to be the backbone of India's journey towards good governance hinges on inclusion new technologies into e-governance.

Good governance to e-governance:

- The 4 pillars on which the edifice of good governance rests, in essence are: a) Ethos (of service to the citizen), b) Ethics (honesty integrity and transparency), c) Equity (treating all citizens alike with empathy for the weaker sections), and d) Efficiency (speedy and effective delivery of service without harassment).
- Citizens are at the center of any model of good governance.
- The World Bank emphasizes on the centrality of use of ICT, which is a component of e-governance to achieve the objective of good governance.

Scope of e-governance:

Government-to-government (G2G):

- A major scope of corruption in government-to-government transaction was lack of transparency and check and balances.
- The inclusion of e-governance solution like e-file has a tendency to check those malpractices and to improve efficiency.

Government-to-Citizens (G2C):

- It is most used e-governance modern.
- Government provides various services using ICT. For e.g., JAM Trinity, DBT etc.

Government-to-Employees (G2E):

- Use of ICT to make the interaction with employees more hassle-free.

Government-to-Business (G2B):

- Government is using ICT to reduce hurdles in 'Ease of doing businesses.'

Government initiatives and Roadmap for e-Governance:

- Government approved the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP), comprising of 27 Mission Mode Projects and 8 components, on May 18, 2006.
- Government of India approved e-Kranti programme in 2015 with the vision of 'Transforming e-Governance for Transforming Governance'.

Fields	Education	Health	Farmers	Security	Financial Inclusion	Justice	Planning	Cyber Security
Government programme	e-education Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs)	e-healthcare	Real time price info., online weather	Mobile based emergency system	Mobile banking, micro-ATM	interoperable Criminal Justice System, e-court, e-prison etc.	National GIS Mission Mode Project	National Cyber Security Co-ordination Centre

New Age Analytics, AI and Machine Learning in E-Governance:

- Many smart dashboards are created to analyze the feedback from stakeholders in real time basis. E.g., Dashboard to track the key development indicators of 112 Aspirational Districts by NITI Aayog.
- AI based dashboard is now increasingly being used in agriculture, education, telecommunication and skill development.
- The block chain technology is another technology, which is used to digitize land records in various states.

Conclusion: The 4th IR emphasized that new disruptive technologies are going to be basis for the growth of all sectors of life. These new technologies have potential to change life of millions in India through e-governance in various sectors.

7. E-governance in Tourism

Introduction:

- E-governance is digitizing each and every sector of life; the tourism sector cannot remain untouched from this transformation.

- Research conducted by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) has revealed the travel and tourism sector's contribution to the Indian economy could surpass pre-pandemic levels, by the end of 2022.
- The impact of e-governance on tourism sector can be studied by analyzing following points:

Attraction:

- The attraction of destination is crucial for tourism. At the destination, if the livability improves, it will benefit the tourism sector.
- Government of India through various schemes like Smart Cities scheme and Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and urban Transformation (AM RUT) is improving the infrastructure at the tourism destinations.

Accessibility:

- The accessibility of the destination on tourism map, through various modes of transportation, availability of direct flights from international sources etc. is crucial for development of tourism.

Supportive Infrastructure:

- It includes the availability of road and other supportive infrastructures like clean drinking water, sewerage connection, waste disposal etc. to the tourism destination.

Travel intermediation:

- Fundamental role of intermediaries is to bring buyers (tourists/travelers) and sellers (principal service providers like airline companies, hotels, railways etc.) together.
- In India this role is performed by IRCTC (a PSU) and other platforms like MakemyTrip, Yatra.com etc.

Travel Documentation:

- It includes easy availability of tourist Visas, easy access to foreign currency exchanges and less hassle in documentation and immigration process.

Conclusion: The tourism sector can generate easy jobs in India. The e-governance in tourism sector can not only improve governance in this sector but also can fetch more foreign exchanges to India.

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