

Facts and abstracts of E-Governance in India

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Abstract

Now-a-days every country is using e-governance to manage their governments. In today's time the development of any country depends on the uses of e-governance and also their penetration. E-governance has the potential to benefit India's citizens exponentially and maximize the return on the government's investment in it.

E-governance is basically associated with carrying out the functions and achieving the results of governance through the utilization of ICT (Information & Communication Technology). In this article we will read about the background of e-governance, history of e-governance in India, comparison of India with other developing and developed nations, benefits and loopholes of e-governance in India, recommendations and concluding remarks.

Keywords: E-governance, ICT, India

1. Introduction

The "e" in e-governance stands for "electronic". Thus, electronic governance is basically associated with carrying out the functions and achieving the results of governance through the utilization of ICT. E-governance is the process of reform in the way governments work, share information, engage citizens and deliver services to external and internal clients for the benefit of both government and the clients that they serve.

The aim is to re-define governance in the ICT age is to provide Smart Governance. Dr. APJ Abdul kalam, former president of India, has envisaged e-governance in the Indian framework as "A transparent smart e-governance with seamless access, secure and authentic flow of information crossing the interdepartmental barrier and providing a fair and unbiased service to the citizen." So, the technology used in e-governance project provides a roadmap for efficient delivery of services at doorstep.

2. Background of E-Governance

E-governance is generally understood as the use of information and communication technology (ICT) at all the level of the government in order to provide services to the citizens, interaction with business enterprise and communication and exchange of information between different agencies of the government in a speedy, convenient, efficient and transparent manner.

It facilitates interaction between different stakeholders in government. These can be described as follows:

- G2G (Government to Government)

- G2C (Government to citizens)
- G2B (Government to business)
- G2E (Government to employees)

3. History of E-Governance in India

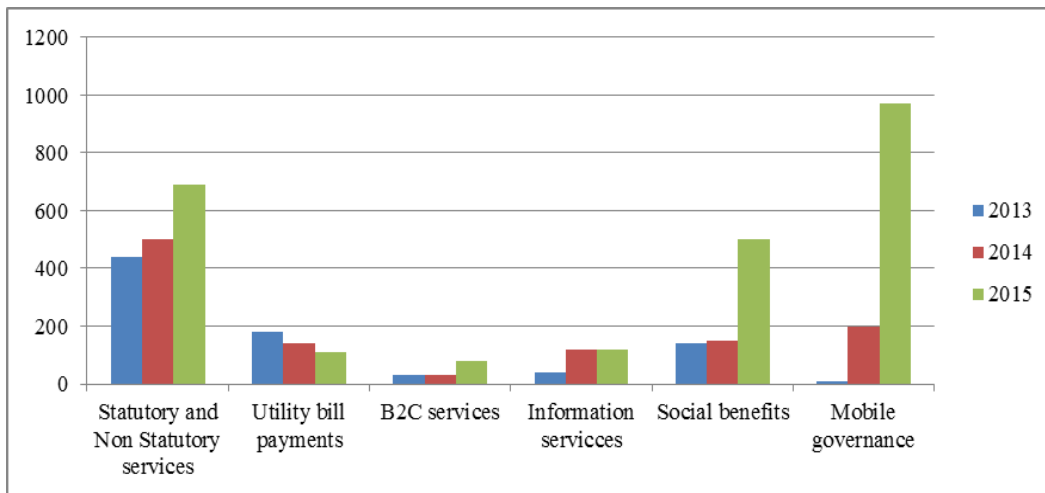
Among developing countries, India has been an early adopter of e-governance. The notion of e-governance evolved in India during the seventies with a focus on development of in-house government applications in the areas of defence, economic monitoring, planning and deployment of information technology to manage data intensive functions related to elections, census and tax administration.

The GOI established the department of electronics in 1970. The subsequent establishment of the National Informatics Centre (NIC) in 1977 was the first major step towards e-governance in India.

E-governance was started in India by AKSHAYA in Kerala. This project involves setting up around 5000 multi-purpose community technology centers called AKSHAYA e-Kendra's across Kerala.

4. E-Governance in India

India is seeing a dramatic growth in the number of online transactions involving citizens and the government. The number of such e-transactions has grown by more than 200% in 2 years: from 840 million in 2013 to 2580 million in 2015. The number of transactions per service category is shown in the figure below.

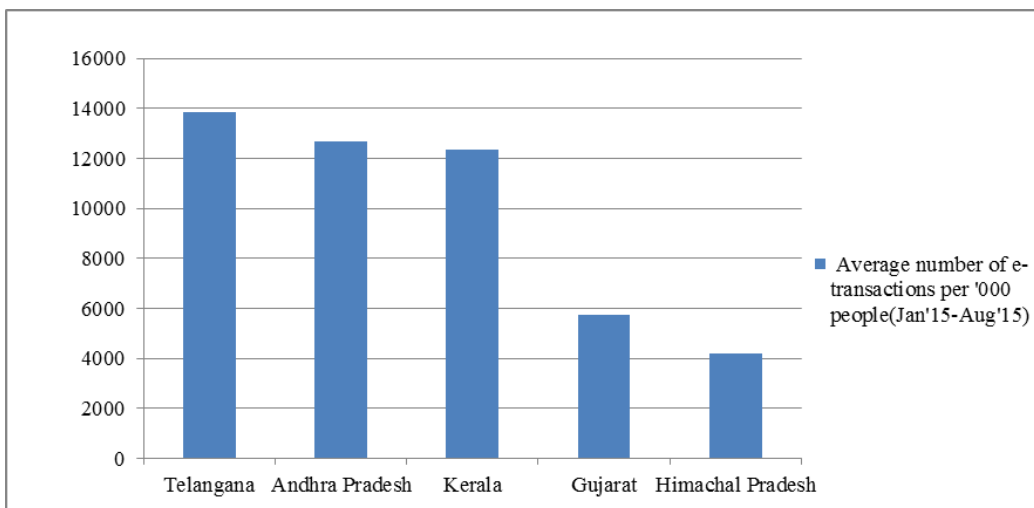


Source: etaal.gov.in

Fig 1: Number of e-transactions in India (in millions)

The number of e-transactions is seen to vary greatly across states. Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala lead the rest of the nation by a long way in carrying out transactions with the government online.

The list of top 5 states based on the number of e-transactions carried out between Jan 1, 2015 and August 1, 2015 is given below:-



Source: etaal.gov.in

Fig 2: Average number of e-transactions per '000 people (Jan'15-Aug'15)

While some states have been quick in implementing digitization of services, a large number of states fall well short of the numbers achieved by Telangana or Andhra Pradesh. Maharashtra, considered among the most literate and prosperous states of India, falls well short of these numbers, with less than 340 e-transactions per 1,000 people over the 8-month period.

Punjab, another prosperous state, is even lower, at just over 130 e-transactions per 1,000 people. The national average is 2,329 e-transactions per 1,000 people over the given period. Only 6 states, however, are above the national average.

5. E-Governance Lesson From Around the World

E-governance capabilities of a nation are measured the world over by the UN e-government survey rankings. As of 2014, India’s global rank was 118, out of 182, in these rankings. The top 10 nations in the UN global e-government survey are as below:

Table

Rank	Country	EGDI Index
1	Republic of Korea	0.9462
2	Australia	0.9103
3	Singapore	0.9076
4	France	0.8938
5	Netherlands	0.8897
6	Japan	0.8874
7	United states of America	0.8748
8	United kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	0.8695
9	New Zealand	0.8644
10	Finland	0.8449
-	-	-
-	-	-
118	India	0.3834

Source: UN e-governance survey 2014

According to a research report, in the United States of America, 90% of the citizens use websites as the primary method of interacting with the government and 75% prefer to complete government transactions online. E-governance is also seen as a mark of trust and transparency –67% people are more likely to trust the government when they are able to interact with it on the internet. Research also suggests that digitizing and changing government service delivery mechanisms to a digital form could help governments across the world save U.S. \$ 1 trillion annually (cumulative).

In INDIA, we have been witnessing initiatives like digital India and 4G services and free wifi corridors, but a lot has to be done. India doesn't rank in the top 25 list of Asia, which has even Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain in the top 25. While China is a world Economic Giant, it falls at the bottom two among top 25 in E-governance list of Asia. Indian average of 0.3834 however is around the world average.

National E-governance Plan (NGeP) launched in 2006 however has been struggling to get work done out of paper. Mission Mode Projects in Banking, Insurance, Telecom, Taxation and other sectors have been given a push. Portals like E-Biz & E-Nivesh have made investment easier. Recent Karnataka initiative of Mobile One bringing more than 600 government service online is a step in the right direction.

6. Benefits of E-Governance in India

In a developing country like India, e-governance seems to be very beneficial. It provides several benefits to government as well as citizens. These are –

a) Transparency

E-governance brings transparency, because all the information of the government would be made available on internet. The citizens can see the information regarding government whenever they want to see. But only those information will be available, which have been uploaded by the government for the public.

b) Speed

Use of technology brings speed in the government process. As we all know, INTERNET, PHONES have reduced the time consumption in normal communication. In the same way, E-governance also speeds up the process of providing information by the government.

c) Cost reduction

Most of the government expenditure is appropriated towards the cost of stationary. Paper-based communication needs lots of stationary, printers, computers etc. which calls for continuous heavy expenditure. Internet and phone makes communication cheaper and it saves valuable money of government.

d) Accountability

In e-governance, the governing process is made transparent and that makes government automatically accountable. Accountability is answerability of the government to the people. It is the answerability for the deeds of the government. An accountable government is a responsible government.

e) Efficiency

E-governance also brings efficiency in the government

process. Government works more efficiently knowing the fact that any mistake can be caught by public very easily and it will besmirch the reputation of government.

f) Reduced corruption

Dissemination of information through ICT reduces corruption. It reduces the discretionary powers of government officials and curtails corruption.

7. Barriers to E-Governance

There are a large number of obstacles in implementation of e-governance in India. Here are some of barriers of e-governance-

a) Technical illiteracy

People in India are not so much technology-friendly like other developed nations, and that hampers the process of e-governance in India. So, we can say that IT illiteracy is a major impediment in implementation of e-governance in India

b) Cyber crimes

Advancement of science and technology increases the rate of cyber-crimes. It is a threat to the transactions accomplished between the government and its citizens within the e-governance methodology.

c) Recognition of applications

Recognition of the e-governance facilities by the citizens is another huge challenge. There is general lack of awareness regarding benefits of e-governance as well as the process involved in implementing successful G2C, G2G, G2B projects.

d) Limited financial resources

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is one of the measures of national income and a country's economy. GDP of a country is the measure of its financial strength. India has limited financial resources so as to implement and maintain the e-governance projects properly.

e) Infrastructure

Lack of necessary infrastructure like electricity, internet, technology and ways of communication will affect the speed which delays the implementation.

8. Recommendations

Requirements for implementing successful e-governance across the nation are:-

- E-governance framework across the nation with enough bandwidth to service a population of 1 billion.
- Connecting framework for making the services to reach rural areas of the country or development of alternative means of services such as e-governance kiosks in regional language.
- National citizen database which is the primary unit of data for all governance vertical and horizontal applications across the state and central governments.
- E-governance and interoperability standards for the exchange of secure information with non-repudiation, across the state and central departments seamlessly.
- A secure delivery framework by means of virtual private network connecting across the state and central government departments.

- Datacenters in centre and states to handle the departmental work-flow automation, collaboration, interaction, exchange of information with authentication.

9. Concluding Remarks

In today's time, a developing country like India needs a platform like e-governance. E-governance helps in sharing the information related to government to the public through electronic media. It has gained huge popularity in convoluted business world.

As we all know, every coin has two sides-positive & negative. There are certain loopholes in e-governance also, but the benefits provided by e-governance overshadow all these loopholes. So, e-governance proves out to be a good network to connect government and public. In my opinion, we should keep a positive outlook for e-governance, and must keep the door open for its enhancement.

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