

# Digital Governance in Rural Administration – Issues and Challenges

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**Abstract-** In India Rural Democracy is entrusted with the system of Local-self-government through Panchayat Raj Institutions. The Directive Principles of States Policy elaborates about the significance of organizing Village Panchayat. It is created to establish Democratic decentralization at grass root level. The dream of organizing village panchayat from the commencement of the constitution is achieved through the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992. The introduction of digital governance and citizen participation in governance is a recent initiative by the government. The role of Information and Technology in rural administration is brand- new and experiences several issues and challenges in governance. The government is implementing several modern measures to rectify some initial problems of introducing digital governance throughout the country. It is the primary duty of the government to balance the bridge between the rural democracy and e- democracy. The e- governance played a significant role during the COVID 19 Pandemic. The steps taken by the government to promote democracy and citizens participation through the information technology is more convincing and brought transparency in administration. The rural areas are affected with connectivity issues. The idea behind knowing how to use the information and communication technology is not imparted in rural education throughout the country. The syllabus of the school education is to be updated with the current digital awareness among teachers as well as students. The network connection between the urban and rural should be similar to interpret the programmes released by the government.

**Keywords:** Administration, Amendment, Communication, Democracy, Government, Panchayat, Participation, Transparency

## INTRODUCTION

India being a largest democratic country in the world commenced its journey since 1950. The makers of the constitution undergone serious research to impart different provisions of the constitution to make the

country best in all forms. The objective of modern democracy is establishing a welfare state and promoting Citizen's participation in governance. The Right to Information Act of 2005 brought a clear vision on citizens role in governance. It gave the people to enhance their right to know about the administration of the government. Digital India is a innovative programme of the government of India since 2015. It plays a significant role in bringing awareness among the people from Good governance to E- governance.

## EVOLUTION OF DIGITAL INDIA

Digital India is a recent initiative service provider company which offers e- governance services throughout the country. It provides services for telecommunications operators, utility operators within the area. Digital India is flag ship programme of the government of India. It was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2005. The e-governance is originated in India in 1970's with an objective to promote applications in the field of defence and economy. The adoption of information and communication technology brought transparency and appropriateness in managing data related to elections, census, tax administration, etc.

The establishment of Department of Electronics in 1970 has brought information and communication technology to focus. It gained impetus when National Informatics Centre was established in 1977. This programme computerized all districts in the country. Later in 1987, the National Satellite based Computer Network NICNET was launched in India. The concept of Good Governance and citizen participation is moulded through Directive Principles of States Policy. This brought transparency in administration. The government is accountable to its people for all its actions and thus democracy sustains.

#### *PILLARS OF E- GOVERNANCE*

1. People
2. Process
3. Technology
4. Resource

#### *OBJECTIVES OF E-GOVERNANCE*

1. To provide a better service to the people
2. To entrust transparency and accountability
3. To empower the people through the application of information and communication technology
4. To improve efficiency between the Centre and the States.
5. To establish interface with business and industry

#### *TYPES OF INTERACTION IN E-GOVERNANCE*

1. G2G(Government to Government)
2. G2C(Government to citizen)
3. G2B(Government to Business)
4. G2 E(Government to Employees)

#### DIGITAL GOVERNANCE AND RURAL ADMINISTRATION

The geographical area which is located outside the cities are generally termed as rural areas. The economic conditions of the rural areas are mainly depending on agriculture and forestry. The people in urban areas are generally migrants from the villages. The government administers the rural areas through direct democracy. The democratic decentralization embodies the rule of local self-government. The 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional Amendment Act provides a base for the government to govern the rural areas from the grass-root level.

The main objective of introducing digital India is to transform the country to empowered society and impart knowledge –based economy through entrusting digital access, digital empowerment and aid the digital divide. In rural administration the government provide an opportunity for the investors and expand India's digital economy. Its mission is to improve the standard of living in rural areas.

#### CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRES IN RURAL AREAS

The digital governance in rural areas has reduced distance between the government and the citizens. It has brought government administration under one umbrella. In order to bring transparency and to

enhance people's participation in governance, the government policies are implemented through digital mode. The government has established many Common Service Centres (CSCs) in rural areas. There are 400 digital services offered by common service centres. Over 5.31 Lakh CSCs are functional including both rural and urban areas across the country. Approximately there are around 4.20 Lakh CSCs functioning at Gram Panchayat level.

#### *UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New-Age Governance)*

The Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance (UMANG) is a mobile application that provides government services to citizen through mobile. It provides over 1,570 government services and around 22,000 bill payment services are made through this mobile application.

#### *MMP(Mission Mode Project)*

The Mission Mode Project is implemented through National e-Governance Plan benefitting all citizens by providing e-Services such as Certificates (Birth, Death, Caste, Income, etc), Tax Services, Pension, Electoral, Labour, etc. At present there are 4,671e-services have been implemented in 709 districts across the country.

#### *Digilocker:*

This facilitates maintenance of paperless records of public accounts. This ensures safe availability of documents and ensures privacy of the members. There are more than 532 crore documents maintained by this system.

#### *Unified Payment Interface (UPI)*

This is the prime digital platform integrating with around 330 banks. It facilitates easy transactions of funds throughout the country. The financial transaction between the people progressed rapidly with the induction of UPI

#### *MyGov*

It is a platform for all the citizens to participate in governance. There are more than 2.48 crore users actively participating in governance. The idea behind in introducing this application is to promote citizens participation in governance.

### *Diksha*

This application signifies the national level educational platform for both the students and the teachers. It helps to participate and contribute to achieve learning goals throughout the country. In the year 2022, there are more than 7600 courses available and more than 15 crore enrolments have been recorded including both rural and urban areas.

### DIGITAL INITIATIVES FOR FARMERS

#### *Bhoomi Project*

The government of Karnataka has introduced this project, dealing with the online delivery of land records. This project aims at delivering 20 million land records by benefitting 6.7 million farmers of Karnataka

#### *National Agricultural Market (e- NAM)*

This scheme aims at providing online transparent buying system to aid the farmers with fair remunerative prices for their produce. According to the government, there are nearly 1.73 crore farmers utilizing this project. Over 2,26 lakh traders are registered with this online scheme and involve in trading business. Approximately 1000 mandis from 18 States and 3 UTs have been registered with this e-NAM.

#### *M-KISAN.*

This portal is created to assist the farmers on various advisories in crop related matters through SMS. Nearly more than 2,462 crore farmers are benefitted by registering these applications. It sends an advisory message to the farmers to help them in their farming activities.

#### *One Stop Window-Farmers Portal*

It gives information related to agriculture activities. This include variety of seeds, storage godown, Pests and various plant diseases, best agricultural practices, watershed management, mandi details, etc.

#### *Soil Health Card*

It facilitates the farmers in farming activities by providing soil related information. It gives valuable information about the nutrients presence and to improve the conditions of soil fertility, suitable crop rotations, etc. Around 22 crore soil health cards have been issued to farmers

### *Mobile based Advisory System for Agriculture & Horticulture*

It is a mobile based advisory application used for agriculture and horticulture. This scheme is implemented in the North-East States (Tripura, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Manipur, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh).

### DIGITAL GOVERNANCE & CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The citizens participation in digital governance is evident during the pandemic COVID 19. The introduction of mobile application COWIN played a vital role during this emergency period. It helped in registering for vaccination and facilitated the government to trace the records on affected, vaccinated, etc. This maintained a proper connectivity between the citizens and government. The educational system has undergone a drastic change from class room learning to e- learning. There are several mobile applications created for this purpose. The rural areas experienced better educational system due to digital learning. It enhanced the progress in learning and innovation in teaching.

The people take part in policy making by posting their suggestions in the government portal. The introduction of e-Courts by the Department of Law and Justice provides speedy justice. The Mission Mode Project aims at application of technology in providing improved judicial services to the citizens.

The government has initiated PMGDISHA (Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Sakshatra Abhiyaan) which aims at making six crore people in rural India digitally literate. SWAYAM is an online course (MOOCs) for uplifting e-education. It facilitates all courses that is taught in classrooms from class 9 till post-graduation. It can be accessed by anyone at anytime and anywhere.

### ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN RURAL ADMINISTRATION

1. The government initiative in digital governance has brought the masses under one umbrella, reducing cost, time and enhances efficiency.
2. But at the same time there is difficulty in implementing in all parts of the country.
3. Digital governance is accessible to digital literates without any issues.

4. The government should focus on many digital illiterates and there should be monitoring mechanism for bridging the digital divide.
5. The rural areas are experiences poor connectivity network and the government should update the masses with current versions in the digital network.
6. In India the population are still illiterates and digitally many are illiterates.
7. The government should focus these two and take measures to improve them.
8. The cyber security is another threat to the digital marketing. There are many fraudulent especially to deceive the unknown masses.
9. The mobile based emergency services or not provided to the citizens on a real time basis.
10. The financial inclusion may be strengthened with effective maintenance of common service centres.
11. The lack of infrastructural facilities including electricity, internet, connectivity, etc are threats to digital governance.
12. The gap between the users and non- users of e-government services leads to digital divide among the masses.
13. The economic conditions of the people deviates the masses from utilizing the digital governance.

#### SUGGESTIVE MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT DIGITAL GOVERNANCE

1. The e-governance initiatives in rural areas should be implemented at grass root level.
2. There should be feedback mechanism on day to day basis of learning among the public.
3. The government should take necessary steps to establish a powerful network in rural areas.
4. The government should focus on feasibility in digital governance and effective capacity building for bureaucrats, rural people, elected representatives ,etc.
5. E-governance through regional language will facilitate the masses in overcoming linguistic barriers.

#### CONCLUSION

Digital governance is gaining momentum in India, but the public awareness in rural areas and the digital divide plays a significant role and it should be addressed to solve the issue. The success of the digital

governance involves with high speed internet connectivity especially in rural areas.

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