Evolution of E-governance in India: Past, Present and Future Prospects

DR. ANITA DESHPANDE[1], RAGHURAJ KHULLAR[2]

[1] *Professor, Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Institute for Excellence in Higher Education, Bhopal*

[2] *Research Scholar, Barkatullah University, Bhopal*

Abstract— E-governance is defined as "the application of ICT to transform the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability of exchange of information and transaction between government and employees, between government agencies, between government and citizens, between government and business." E-governance in India has steadily evolved from computerization of Government Departments to initiatives that encapsulate the finer points of Governance, such as citizen centricity, service orientation and transparency. Lessons from previous e-Governance initiatives have played an important role in shaping the progressive e-Governance strategy of the country. Due cognizance has been taken of the notion that to speed up e-Governance implementation across the various arms of Government at National, State, and Local levels, a programme approach needs to be adopted, guided by common vision and strategy. This approach has the potential of enabling huge savings in costs through sharing of core and support infrastructure, enabling interoperability through standards, and of presenting a seamless view of Government to citizens. The future of e-governance is bright for India. There is a need that the governments at various levels-central, state and local should implement e-governance in their administration to the maximum capacity in order to provide the citizens efficient, effective and transparent access to public services that the citizens deserve.

Index Terms— E-Governance, Technology, Online, Digital, Computerization

I. INTRODUCTION

E-governance is defined as "the application of ICT to transform the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability of exchange of information and transaction between government and employees, between government agencies, between government and citizens, between government and business." Through e-governance, government services will be made available to citizens in a convenient, efficient and transparent manner. E-governance is becoming a buzzword. Across the world, we have been hearing about e-governance as every government has started to extend its administration for mitigating the various kinds of socio-economic problems with immense use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

In fact both developed and developing economies are extensively using all types of electronic devices to make government administration faster, transparent and accountable. In the context of India, being one of the largest countries democratically, demographically and geographically, there are still problems prevailing in the country like unemployment, poverty, lack of education, and health care, etc. As a result, Government of India has been launching various initiatives in order to overcome these problems with minimum govt. and maximum governance by enormous use of electronic devices.

II. E-GOVERNANCE IN INDIA

The history of e-Governance in India goes back to the 1970s, when the Government of India established the Department of Electronics, followed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) in 1977. Till 1980's, a number of government officials used computers, but their applications were restricted to word processing. Gradually computerization process focused on the development of in- house government applications in the areas of defence, economic monitoring, planning and the deployment of Information and technology to manage data intensive functions related to elections, census, tax administration etc. The first department to make wide use of e-Governance was the tax

department at state and union levels in order to make their internal working more efficient.

With the formation of The National Satellite Based Computer Network (NICNET) in 1987, e-Governance agenda in India gained momentum. District Information System of the National Informatics Centre (DISNIC) was launched and state governments offered free hardware and software to computerize all district offices.

From the early nineties, e-governance has seen the use of IT for wider sectoral applications with policy emphasis on reaching out to rural areas and taking in greater inputs from NGOs and private sector as well. While the emphasis was initially on automation and computerization, later on forays began to be made into connectivity, networking, setting up systems for processing information and delivering services. At a micro level, this ranged from IT automation in individual departments, electronic file handling, access to entitlements, public grievance systems, service delivery for high volume routine transactions such as payment of bills, tax dues to meeting poverty alleviation goals through the promotion of entrepreneurial models and provision of market information. The thrust has varied across initiatives, with some focusing on enabling the citizen-state interface for various government services, and others focusing on bettering livelihoods.

A National Task Force on Information Technology and Software Development was constituted in May 1998. In 1999, the Union Ministry of Information Technology was created. In the year of 2000, IT Act was passed and e-Governance got its legal reorganization. After implementation of RTI Act, 2005 Government information such as various Cabinet Decisions, forms, procedures, programs, projects, schemes, tenders, quotation calls, notices etc. started being displayed in the State Portal for reference and use by the public.

The state governments also developed their e-Governance projects. Some important projects are given below:

Haryana
The scheme of 'Computerization of Land Records' was started in the year 1990-91 in Haryana. It helps the rural masses in getting their computerized land ownership certificates, in tracking any documents of land of circle office, updating of details, etc.

Madhya Pradesh
'Gyandoot',an internet based mechanism of Dhar district administration of Madhya Pradesh started on 1st January 2000 which provides the rural people various information e.g. Income certificate, Public grievance redressal, BPL(Below Poverty Level) family list, Domicile certificate, daily agricultural commodity rates (mandi bhav), Rural Hindi email, Rural Hindi newspaper, etc.

Kerala
The 'Akshaya project' of Kerala was started in 2002. It involves setting up around 5000 multipurpose community technology centers called Akshaya e-Kendras across Kerala. Run by private entrepreneurs, each e-Kendra was set up within 2-3 kilometers of every household to cater to the requirements of around 1000-3000 families to make available the power of networking and connectivity to the common man. Akshaya is a social and economic catalyst focusing on the various facets of e-learning, e-transaction, e-governance, information and communication. In Kerala, the project 'FRIENDS' (Fast, Reliable, Instant, Efficient Network for the Disbursement of Services) acted as a multiple agency bill collection system or in other words provides citizens the means to pay taxes and other financial dues to the State Government. The project was launched in Thiruvananthapuram in June 2000 and now it is operated in all the 14 districts of Kerala.

Karnataka
The 'Bhoomi Project' of Karnataka started in 2002. It is an online service delivery mechanism which also manages the land records. Under the BHOOMI project 20 million records of land ownership of 6.7 million farmers in the state have been computerized.

Andhra Pradesh
Since 2004 'E-Seva' project of Andhra Pradesh is designed to provide online services to the citizens/customers by connecting them to the

respective government departments and providing required information.

Uttar Pradesh

'Lokvani'. a public-private partnership project at Sitapur District in Uttar Pradesh was initiated in November, 2004. It helps the people to interact with the government without physical visit to any government office with regard to handling of grievances, land record maintenance and providing a mixture of essential services.

Rajasthan

The 'E-Mitra' Project was started in the Jaipur city of Rajasthan in October 2005 .It facilitates the urban and rural public by providing them the various government departmental services through Lokmitra-Janmitra Centers/Kiosks.

Types of Government Interaction in E-Governance

1) G2G: Government to Government
2) G2C: Government to Citizen
3) G2B: Government to Business
4) G2E: Government to Employee

National e-Governance Plan

The above mentioned e-Governance initiatives have created the base for the smooth running of e-Governance in India. But a united programme was not developed yet to assist the e-Governance nationwide. To deal with this aspect central government has taken the major initiatives. The 11th report of the Second Administrative Reform Commission (2005) titled- "Promoting e-Governance-The Smart Way Forward" has initiated the process of setting base of e-Governance nationwide. To achieve the goal set by this commission, the "National e-Governance Plan" (NeGP) was formulated by the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DEITY) and the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances. In the initial stage, The Union Government approved the NeGP, comprising of 27 Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) and 10 components on May 18, 2006.

The National e-Governance Plan (NeGP), takes a holistic view of e-Governance initiatives across the country, integrating them into a collective vision, a shared cause. Around this idea, a massive countrywide infrastructure reaching down to the remotest of villages is evolving, and large-scale digitization of records is taking place to enable easy, reliable access over the internet. The ultimate objective is to bring public services closer home to citizens, as articulated in the Vision Statement of NeGP, "Make all Government services accessible to the common man in his locality, through common service delivery outlets, and ensure efficiency, transparency, and reliability of such services at affordable costs to realise the basic needs of the common man."

The Mission Mode Project (MMP)s are individual projects within the NeGP that emphasize on a particular aspect of e-governance. Presently, NeGP includes 31 MMPs, which are divided as central, state and integrated projects. In 2011, four projects namely -Health, Education, Public Distribution System (PDS) and Posts were included to make the list of 27 to 31 MMP's. A number of other initiatives and policies has been taken by Government of India to develop the infrastructures in this direction, e.g State Data Centres (SDCs), State Wide Area Network (S.W.A.N),Common Service Centres (CSC), National E-Governance Service Delivery Gateway(NSDG), State e-Governance Service Delivery Gateway(SSDG),Mobile e-Governance Service Delivery Gateway(MSDG) etc.

In Accordance with provisions of NeGP, State governments have taken up various innovative steps to promote e-Governance services. It is mentionable that every State has the flexibility of identifying upto five additional State-specific Mission Mode Projects (relevant for economic development within the State). Moreover with these efforts, since 2006, Common Service Centres (CSC's) have been created throughout the country. These are information & communication technology based access points that provide much needed information and services (e.g. agriculture services, Education & training services, Health services, Rural banking and insurance, entertainment services, commercial service, etc.) to the people of rural areas. The CSC scheme under National e-Governance Plan aims to cover 100,000 villages in the ratio of one CSC per six villages. The CSC project funding and implementation is done through Public Private Partnership (PPP).

To strengthen the process of developing of e-Governance nationwide, National e-governance conferences are convened every year in different parts of India since 1998. These conferences provide a forum for discussion on e-governance related issues among experts from administration, industry and academic leading to the formulation of regional as well as national e- governance strategies. Participating in the 18th National e-Governance Conference, the Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi tweeted that e-Governance was an essential part of his ambitious 'Digital India' project and underlined that the scale and speed of India's development journey requires maximum and smart utilization of latest technology.

Digital India Campaign

Digital India is a campaign launched by the Government of India in 2015 to make its services available to citizens electronically via improved online infrastructure and by increasing Internet connectivity. It is a program to transform India into a digitally empowered society and prepare India for a knowledge future The initiative includes plans to connect rural areas with high-speed internet networks. It consists of three core components: the development of secure and stable digital infrastructure, delivering government services digitally, and universal digital literacy.

CONCLUSION

E-Governance is not just "electronic" government. It is "enabled" government, the government that delivers different and better programs and services. E-Governance is not just about Information Technology, it is also about people: new skill sets, mindsets and leadership approaches. It will transform how public servants work, relate to each other, do business, and engage with citizens and others. E-governance is a process that requires a sustained commitment of political will, resources and engagement among the government, private sector and civil society.

E-governance in India has steadily evolved from computerization of Government Departments to initiatives that encapsulate the finer points of Governance, such as citizen centricity, service orientation and transparency. Lessons from previous e-Governance initiatives have played an important role in shaping the progressive e-Governance strategy of the country. Due cognizance has been taken of the notion that to speed up e-Governance implementation across the various arms of Government at National, State, and Local levels, a programme approach needs to be adopted, guided by common vision and strategy. This approach has the potential of enabling huge savings in costs through sharing of core and support infrastructure, enabling interoperability through standards, and of presenting a seamless view of Government to citizens.

The Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017) lays down the vision and objectives of the future of e-governance in India :-

- To deliver all Government services in electronic mode so as to make the Government process transparent, citizen centric, efficient and easily accessible.
- To break information silos and create shareable resources for all Government entities.
- To deliver both informational and transactional government services over mobiles and promote innovation in mobile governance.
- To build Shared Service Platforms to accelerate the adoption of E-Governance and reduce the completion time of E-Governance projects.
- To strengthen and improve sustainability of the existing projects through innovative business models and through continuous infusion of advanced technology.
- To promote ethical use of technology and data and to create a safe and secure E-Governance cyber world.
- To create an ecosystem that promotes innovation in ICT for Governance and for applications that can benefit the citizens.
- To better target the delivery of welfare schemes of the Central and State Governments.
- To reduce asymmetry in information availability, accessibility and ability to utilize the information.
- To increase the all-round awareness and create mechanisms that promote and encourage citizen engagement.
- To make available as much data as possible in the public domain for productive use by the citizens.

To make E-Governance more efficient and powerful, two technologies can be boon to it. These technologies are Open-Source Software and Cloud Computing. The government should develop a framework to incorporate these in the e-governance system in the country.

The future of e-governance is bright for India. There is a need that the governments at various levels- central, state and local should implement e-governance in their administration to the maximum capacity in order to provide the citizens efficient, effective and transparent access to public services that the citizens deserve.

REFERENCES

[1] Malik Poonam, Dhillon Priyanka, Verma Poonam (2014), *Challenges and Future Prospects for E-Governance in India*, International Journal of Science, Engineering and Technology Research (IJSETR), Volume 3, Issue 7.

[2] https://www.meity.gov.in/divisions/national-e-governance-plan

[3] Nagaraja K. (2016), *E-Governance in India: Issues and Challenges,* IOSR Journal of Economics and Finance, Volume 7, Issue 5.

[4] Yadav, Sushma (2016), E-*Governance and its future prospects in India,* International Journal of Applied Research, 2(11).

[5] Kalsi N.S., Kiran Ravi, Vaidya S.C. (2009), *Effective E-Governance for Good Governance in India,* International Review of Business Research Papers, Vol. 5, No.1.

[6] Musassir Moinuddin Mohd., Safiuddin Khaja Sayed (2018), *Past, Present and Future of E-Governance in India,* International Journal of Research in Management & Social Science, Vol. 6, Issue 1.

[7] Dash Chinmaya, Behera C Prakash, Mohapatra Somanjoli (2019), *E-Governance in India and Comparative Study of its Various Policies,* International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews, Vol. 6, Issue 1.

[8] Batra Khushboo, Kapoor Kaur Jasmeet (2012), *International Journal of Computing & Business Research,* Proceedings of 'I-Society 2012' at GKU, Talwandi Sabo Bathinda (Punjab).

[9] https://www.digitalindia.gov.in/introduction/

[10] Nazir Mohsin, Wani Asnain Sani, Arif Tasleem (2014), *Current Scenario of the e-Governance Related Initiatives in India*, National Conference on Recent Innovations & Advancements in Information Technology, Department of Information Technology, BGSB University, Rajouri (J&K).