

## INDIA'S E-GOVERNANCE: OVERCOMING CHALLENGES AND EXPLORING FUTURE PROSPECTS

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### ABSTRACT

Information technology has given the government's services more momentum in the current environment. This essay focuses on the function and promise of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in assisting developing nations' initiatives for "good governance." ICTs have a major role to play in assisting in the accomplishment of good governance objectives. The country's citizens gain from this "e-governance," which also improves the effectiveness and efficiency of government. We shall summarize e-governance's three primary contributions: enhancing governmental procedures; fostering citizen connections; and fostering external exchanges. The two main issues facing developing nations are as follows. The first strategic task in e-readiness is to prepare the six preconditions for e-governance that have been established. The second tactical difficulty is bridging the design-reality gap, which requires e-governance projects to embrace best practices in order to succeed and prevent failure. This essay addresses the elements that lead to effective governance, e-government initiatives across Indian states, and some of the present difficulties in overseeing e-government programs in the country. The current state of e-governance in India (as measured by the accomplishments of the Eleventh Five Year Plan) and its prospects for the future are also covered in this paper, along with the main recommendations and aims of the Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012–17) and its vision and objectives.

**Keywords:** E-Governance, Exploring Future Prospects, information technology, information and communication technologies

### 1. Emerging Trends in E-Government in India

Through the intensive and strategic use of information and communication technologies in the internal management of the public sector (intra and intergovernmental relations) as well as in its daily relations with citizens and users of public services, e-government organizes public management to increase efficiency, transparency, accessibility, and responsiveness to citizens. An ICT-enabled instrument for achieving effective governance is e-governance. Since it combines people, procedures, information, and technology to achieve the goal of excellent governance, we may refer to it as integrated governance. IT has been used by the Indian government for over 40 years. So what has e-governance changed? The transition from IT to ICTs and from IT to IS is novel [7]. ICTs as a New Government-People Connection The

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previous approach processed data using information technology (IT) to automate government internal operations. Through data processing and transmission, the new system makes use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to support and modify the external workings of governance. All ICTs fall under the umbrella of e-government, but computer networks—from intranets to the Internet—are the major advancement that have allowed for the creation of new digital connections:

- Links within the government, which facilitate "consensus based decision-making."
- Links between the government and citizens/NGOs that uphold democracy.
- Links between the public and private sectors, enhancing the provision of services.
- Links between and within NGOs: a forum for coordinated action.
- Links between and within communities, which open doors to economic and social advancement.

Because of this, the emphasis now is on connecting the government with the broader community through e-citizens, e-services, and e-society, rather than just automating the government. Current trends in wholism: IS For the most part, information technology has been the main tool used in changes. The latest developments aim to center change around information systems (IS).

This actually signifies two things:

An important role for ICTs: ICTs are becoming a necessary component of an increasing number of governance projects as governance is acknowledged to be an increasingly information-intensive process. ICTs are seen as a crucial change-inducing lever. ICTs' all-encompassing role: Using ICTs to further good governance is known as e-governance. ICTs now function only as a component of a larger systemic "package," no longer considered as an end in and of themselves.

### **2. Development and E-Government.**

In developing countries, the public service delivery system is excessively expensive, provides insufficient services, and lacks enough responsiveness and accountability. This delivery system is to be redesigned through good governance changes. With its innovative approaches, e-Government fosters citizen connections, enhances government operations, and fosters communication with and among civil society members. With the power of ICTs, e-governance offers three fundamental opportunities for transformation in good governance for development:

- Automation: This refers to the replacement of operations involving the acceptance, storing, processing, output, and transmission of information by human labor. Supporting information processes carried out by humans is known as "informatization." such as assisting with the present decision-making, communication, and implementation processes.
- Transformation: It produces new information processes that are carried out by ICTs or that assist newly carried out information processes by humans. The following is a summary of the primary advantages of ICT governance for development: With the possibility of real-time processing, e-governance becomes more viable and flexible,

enabling policies to function better and to a higher level. ICT Initiative Failure in Developing Nations

While poor countries have been working hard to create new and creative ways to use IT for software development, the majority of these efforts have been proven to be unsuccessful. Basic elements that could contribute to a failure include going over budget, having a less flexible and interactive user interface, and having a delay in product delivery. The primary reason for the inability of ICT projects in developing nations to yield economic benefits is that the financial reasoning behind automation based on ICT is usually derived from cost-benefit analyses conducted in the West, where the advantages of labor cost savings outweigh the costs of new technology. However, since labor costs might be up to ten times cheaper and technology costs typically two-three times higher than in developed countries, we can be rather sure that such estimates do not apply in developing countries [2].

The government of a developing country faces a real and practical problem when an information systems project fails. This is due to the opportunity cost of the investment, which includes the use of limited capital and skilled labor. Additionally, when IFIs support an information systems project as part of a public sector reform program, the project's failure or partial failure negatively impacts the government's reputation.

Technical efficiency in terms of inputs (accepted protocols), processes (connection speed), or internal outputs (websites, access points) is a key component of a successful e-government information system. The actual domains of public value—the external outputs of e-government (public access to government information, for example) and the wider effects of e-government on society—are not given nearly the attention they deserve. An information systems project is considered successful if it is completed on schedule, under budget, and fully satisfies user expectations [6].

### **3. E-Government: Significant Obstacles in India**

In nations like India, the two biggest problems are poor people and inadequate infrastructure. A significant obstacle to fully benefiting from service provision under e-governance is this. The following is a list of the different obstacles:

1. **Poverty:** For the impoverished who fight for a living in developing nations like India, using the Internet is an expensive endeavor. In most developing nations, it is also prohibitively expensive to build the telephone lines needed for internet or email connectivity, which is essential infrastructure.
2. **Technical illiteracy:** In nations like India, there is a general deficiency in both literacy and technical literacy.
3. **Language Dominance:** The majority of people who do not speak English are unable to access the internet due to English's dominance. Ninety-five percent of people in India do not speak English. Because of how overwhelming The internet, computers, and English's hegemony over these communication channels are all quite useless in Indian communities.

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4. Lack of knowledge: The advantages of e-government and the steps necessary to carry out effective G-C, G-G, and G-B projects are not well known.
5. Inequality: disparities in how different groups of people can receive public sector services, particularly between urban and rural areas, educated and illiterate populations, and the rich and the poor.
6. Infrastructure: The absence of essential infrastructure, such as internet, technology, energy, and communication channels, will slow down implementation.
7. Obstacles to the Re-Engineering Process: E-Government project implementation necessitates extensive administrative process restructuring, including redefining administrative procedures and formats. This encounters resistance from nearly all departments across all levels.

### **4. The Reasons behind the Success or Failure of Indian E-Government Initiatives**

Government information systems accounted for an estimated US\$3 trillion in spending in the first ten years of the twenty-first century. However, current research indicates that between 60 and 80 percent of e-government initiatives fall short in some way, resulting in "a massive wastage of financial, human, and political resources, and an inability to deliver the potential benefits of e-government to its beneficiaries." Failures of systems are seen to arise not from the breakdown of a single component (human or technological), but rather from the intricate interplay of technical and human variables within a social context [5]. It is not unexpected that the majority of e-government projects are labeled as failures if we adopt the stance that an initiative has failed if it fails to meet any of the implied standards of success found in such a reasonable definition. However, in order to comprehend failure, we must look at the rationale behind academic writers' decisions to offer descriptive and diagnostic details about the projects under consideration. These authors typically use an informational approach to evaluation. These diagnostic techniques can be divided into three primary groups: interpretive investigations, systems approaches, and factorial analyses. Heeks (2002) conducted an investigation of the notable proportion of e-government project failures using a factor-based methodology. He identified seven dimensions that are both essential and sufficient to measure the difference between the "current reality" and the "design concept" of the intended application after reviewing pertinent case studies in the literature. According to him, the project has a higher chance of failing the larger the disparity is on each of these dimensions. The term ITPOSMO encapsulates the seven dimensions of potential design-reality gaps that should be investigated on an e-government project. These dimensions are as follows:

- I. Information: the official data stored by the digital system and the unofficial data utilized by those interacting with it.
- II. Technology: this area mostly addresses digital IT, but it can also include other technologies used to handle information, including paper documents or analogue phones.
- III. operations: the actions made by pertinent parties on their behalf, for which the e-government system manages both information-related and more general business operations.

IV. Goals and values: Frequently the most crucial aspect because the goals component addresses organizational politics, self-interest, and even formal organizational strategy; the values component addresses culture, or what stakeholders believe to be appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

V. Staffing and skills: this section discusses the quantity of employees using the e-government system as well as their and other users' competencies.

VI. Management systems and structures: they include the official and informal organizational structures of stakeholder agencies and organizations as well as the overall management systems needed to coordinate the operation and use of the e-government system.

VII. Additional resources: the cash and time needed to set up and run the e-government system. It is well known that most e-Government initiatives have not produced the potential gains that could otherwise result from the use of ICT in the public sector. Numerous studies on e-government initiatives have been conducted, and the general consensus is that many of them fall short of the goals or benefits that were originally planned. Developing nations have a high failure rate.

There is growing pressure on governments to 'showcase' their accomplishments! The overwhelming majority of e-Government initiatives in developing nations, including India, have failed, which raises significant and grave concerns about the programs' justification for the large financial and human resource commitments.

<b>Project Definition</b>	- Lack of a failure proof project plan, With Undefined objectives and goals
<b>Scope</b>	- Inadequate planning and poor containment of the project scope - Meeting end user expectations / business benefits - No Change Control System
<b>Cost</b>	- Poor project estimations and overruns of schedule and cost
<b>Time</b>	- Unrealistic timeframes and tasks and lack of prioritization - Lack of management commitment
<b>Communication</b>	-Infrequent communication between project units and other stakeholders
<b>Quality</b>	- Lack of skills, inadequate testing processes and not meeting expectations
<b>Risk</b>	- No authority to project warning signs - Poor control of outsourcing
<b>Procurement</b>	- Vagueness in specifying requirements leading to undesirable procurement
<b>Human Resource</b>	- Poor management of expectations, roles and responsibilities, - Ineffective resource management - Lack of organizational support - Lack of User Involvement - Stakeholder conflict

Table2 (Source: [www.nisg.org/docs/539\\_Report.pdf](http://www.nisg.org/docs/539_Report.pdf))

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### **5.Problems and Difficulties with E-Government Project Management in India**

The ability of e-government to promote good governance, lower government operating costs, and improve citizens' and businesses' access to public services at a reasonable cost is acknowledged on a global scale. It is a difficult undertaking to implement the e-Government initiative successfully.

Several present difficulties in overseeing e-government initiatives in India

- a. Absence of efficient tools and techniques for project management.
- b. When there is inadequate preparation, the project team takes on a variety of ad hoc jobs, which causes them to lose focus on important duties.
- c. The government personnel on the e-Government Project team have very little understanding of project management concepts.
- d. There are no set project management implementation frameworks for e-government initiatives.
- e. Because of a lack of staff, resources are overworked. Tasks are occasionally not allocated to the team in a proper manner.
- f. Lack of central IT agency control while the project is being carried out. Since money originates from various line ministries and departments, these entities are often in charge of making decisions.
- g. In big e-Government initiatives, there is no providing of a project management dashboard for cooperative project monitoring by all stakeholders.
- h. Insufficient monitoring of the project's execution, with tasks leading to delays.
- i. There is no cost and schedule monitoring at project checkpoints.
- j. When a project is first started, baseline data that is helpful for activity benchmarking is not collected.

Some Advice / Remedies for the aforementioned Problems

- a) The government must possess its own project management instruments.
- b) Rather than creating status reports that are limited to lengthy text paragraphs, project tracking tools should be connected with the tasks and activities of the project and monitored accordingly.
- c) The PM tools should include complete transparency, a breakdown of the task, and information on the problems preventing the project from moving forward. Projects should be monitored using a milestone-based methodology, with evaluations carried out at several important checkpoints.
- d) The project deliverables should contain information on the budget, timeline, and quality milestones and checkpoints.
- e) To provide adequate project monitoring, a proper baseline research needs to be carried out.
- f) The usage of outcome-based, automated dashboards is recommended.
- g) The project deliverables, deadlines, and other details must be communicated to all stakeholders.

## **6.State-level e-governance initiatives in India**

The Indian government has been working nonstop to use e-governance to deliver citizen services more effectively. Among the effective projects implemented in different Indian states are:

- 1.Andhra Pradesh: Saukaryam, online transaction processing, e-Seva, CARD, VOICE, MPHS, FAST, e-Cops, AP online—one-stop shop on the Internet
- 2.Bihar: - Information about Sales Tax Administration and Management
- 3.Chhattisgarh: - Treasury office, e-linking project, Chhattisgarh Infotech Promotion Society
- 4.Delhi: Electronic clearance system, computerized RCS office website, automated vehicle tracking system, management information system for education, etc.
- 5.Goa: - Project Dharani
- 6.Gujarat: Online government document requests, Form books, G R books, census, online Mahiti Shakti, online tender notices.
- 7.Haryana: - Disha Nai
- 8.Uttarakhand: - Lok Mitra
- 9.Karnataka: - Kaveri, Bhoomi, Khajane
- 10.Kerala: Fast, Reliable, Instantaneous, Efficient Network for the Distribution of Services (FRIENDS) e-Srinkhala RDNet
- 11.Madhya Pradesh: MP State Agricultural Marketing Board (Mandi Board), Gyandoot, Gram Sampark, Smart Card in Transport Department, Computerization, etc.
- 12.Mumbai's SETU, or online complaint management system
- 13.Rajasthan: - RajNIDHI, Jan Mitra, Lokmitra, and RajSWIFT
- 14.Tamil Nadu: Rasi Maiyams-Kanchipuram; public utility application forms, tender announcements, and displays

## **7.Present E-Government Situation in India (Achievements of the Eleventh Five Year Plan) Plan for National E-Government (NeGP)**

The National E-Governance Plan (NeGP) was developed by the government with the following vision in mind: Make all government services available to the average citizen in his community through common service delivery outlets and guarantee the effectiveness, transparency, and dependability of such services at reasonable costs to realize the average citizen's basic needs. Initiatives for e-governance in India under NeGP The implementation of NeGP's core and support components has advanced significantly. The following highlights notable accomplishments:

### **State-wide Wide Area Networks**

The plan to build State Wide Area Networks (SWANs) across the nation has received approval from the government. The States and UTs are receiving financial and technical support under this scheme to establish SWANs. to use district or sub-divisional headquarters to link all State/UT headquarters up to the block level. The SWANs in 27 States were operating as of July 31, 2011. By March 2012, it is anticipated that every State SWAN would be operating. The Department has ordered the States and Unions to designate Third Party Auditor (TPA) agencies in order to track SWAN performance.

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### State-operated Data Centers

Implementing State Data Centers (SDC) across the nation will give government applications access to a shared IT infrastructure. As part of NeGP, SDC is one of the three infrastructural pillars that provide web-enabled Anytime, Anywhere access. The goal of SDC's conception is to give States and UTs a shared enabling architecture that allows them to combine services, applications, and technology to efficiently deliver G2G, G2C, and G2B services electronically. The SDC project has made significant headway. Thirteen State Data Centers have been deemed operational as of July 31, 2011.

### Centers for Common Services (CSCs)

Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mechanism is being used to implement the CSC Scheme, which was approved by the Indian government in September 2006 and calls for the establishment of more than 100,000 (one lakh) internet-enabled centers in rural regions under the National E-Governance plan (NeGP). It is suggested that the Common Services Centers (CSC) serve as the doorstep delivery points for public, private, and social sector services to India's rural residents. Government orders and notifications have been sent to department heads, district level authorities, stakeholders, and other relevant parties by state governments in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal, allowing the use of CSC for the delivery of various G2C services. Agricultural services, RTI services, NREGA MIS data entry service, postal products, land records, birth and death certificate issuance, utility services, electoral services, transport services, grievances, e-district services, and so on are among the several G2C services provided. Utilizing the State Portal and State Service Delivery Gateway (SSDG) for electronic form application The concept involves using shared infrastructure (SWAN, SDC, etc.) to deliver services through Common Service Centers (CSCs). In addition, the project is to construct the infrastructure and applications needed to implement the State Portal and State Service Delivery Gateway (SSDG) for the State. This would allow citizens to use electronic forms hosted on the State Portal (SP) and routed through a common services gateway (SSDG/NSDG) to download and submit their applications online.

### Building Capacity

The National E-Government Plan can only be implemented successfully if the Government, from decision makers to Panchayat levels, has sufficient capacity built up. This is the goal of the Capacity Building Scheme.

### E-District

By implementing backend computerization to enable electronic delivery of high volume citizen-centric government services, this project seeks to support the District Administration, the fundamental administrative unit. This would optimally leverage and utilize the three infrastructure pillars of SWAN, SDC, and CSCs to deliver services to the citizen at his doorstep. As the demand for more e-enabled services rises, more services can be added after a certain number of high volume citizen-centric services are initially embraced. All e-District Projects are implementing a set of five service categories under this initiative. These consist of: (1) issuing certificates of birth, death, residence, and other events; (2) social welfare schemes, such as social



welfare pensions; (3) providing services pertaining to the Revenue Court; (4) providing services linked to ration cards; and (5) providing RTI (right to information) services, such as readdressing grievances.

### Participation of Citizens

In order to sustain citizen centricity in all projects, there is a growing need for broader and deeper participation and engagement from all stakeholders, particularly the general public, as more and more projects are implemented under NeGP. A framework for citizen engagement in e-governance projects has been developed by ministries and departments to enable and support this goal. It provides a voice and space for citizen participation in e-governance, particularly for the most marginalized and weakest segments of society, which is the target audience for e-governance initiatives.

### 8. Conclusion

Through the use of ICT, e-government improves links between G2G, G2C, G2B, C2G, and B2G. As a result, e-government involves citizens in the decision-making process of their government in addition to disseminating information about the various operations of their government. The Indian state governments have launched numerous projects in the past few years to use IT as a tool to improve public services by enhancing government operations. We have attempted to provide a complete overview of the important areas that need to be prioritized in order for a nation to be seen as genuinely progressing toward e-government in this article. This is a shift, a shift that is irreversible because it is a component of a worldwide movement. A smoother transition will be facilitated by personnel and government officials working together. India is likely to become a leader in e-governance soon given the current high level of political commitment and generally adequate funding sources. Despite its lack of adequate infrastructure, poverty, illiteracy, language dominance, and other issues, India has a number of e-governance projects that have won awards. There is enormous potential for the development of e-governance in a variety of industries since the Indian government's effective marketing schemes will also be a driving force behind the provision of high-quality services to its inhabitants. 81% of citizens report less corruption, 95% think e-governance is economical, and 78% prefer quick service delivery, according to Skoch Consulting New Delhi. Consequently, we can state that e-Government is essential to the Good governance helps emerging nations like India reduce corruption and offer their residents high-quality, cost-effective services.

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