
UNIT 11 E-GOVERNANCE

Structure

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11.1 INTRODUCTION

This is perhaps one of the most interesting times when we are undergoing such significant changes in the way we live and operate as a society. We have witnessed phenomenal changes in societies around the world in a very short period, and the source of agents of some of these changes is new technologies and the Internet. In the past decade and a half we have seen every aspect of the lives of individuals and organizations go through many transformation evolutions. Large, medium and small corporations alike have discovered the need to adapt to the new technologies, or sink in the emerging global knowledge economy. There is no facet of life in the industrialized and developing world that has not undergone some form of alteration. The resultant new information economy has brought with it different approaches to work. There has been a surge in tele-workers, entrepreneurs and home-run businesses. Corporations have downsized, and knowledge workers migrate from company to company, open to the highest bidder and the organization with the best deal. The highly proficient, intelligent and innovative knowledge worker is in demand. Knowledge itself seems to have become a commodity in the marketplace of ideas. We now live in an intensely information driven society.

Nowhere has this been more evident than with government, who constantly have to cope with the persistently emerging new technologies and new demands from citizens. In today's wired world, the interactive citizen is one of the fundamental cornerstones of change. Governments can no longer simply be dispensers of information. New technologies are being used not only to deliver services to the public but also to enhance government administration and facilitate businesses. Information sharing is of particular relevance to developing countries. The application of IT to government processes, E-governance in short, can have a profound impact – on the efficiency, responsiveness and accountability of government; thereby, on the quality of life and productivity of citizens, especially the poor and ultimately, on the economic output and growth of the country as a whole.

11.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the concept of E-governance, and its various components;
- know the rationale for E-governance;
- list the benefits of E-governance;
- describe E-governance initiatives in India and its objectives;
- know the legal framework for E-governance in India; and
- describe what are the challenges in implementation of E-governance.

11.3 CONCEPT OF E-GOVERNANCE

E-governance is the short form of 'electronic governance'. Governance includes those processes and systems by which an organization or a society operates. Within the context of any institution or society, governance describes the mechanism through which decisions are made and implemented in order to conduct the affairs of that organization or society. Governance may be defined as the way society works and is organized.

If governance is done through the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) it is said to be E-governance. Thus in general E-governance denotes use of ICT in any organization i.e. governing through electronic mode. But the term is now used with a particular meaning and in a particular context. Increasingly E-governance is used to refer performance of governmental function through the application of ICT, the most well known part of which is 'internet'. The term E-governance refers to governance processes in which Information and Communications Technology (ICT) play a significant role. The role played by ICT could be wide-ranging: from delivery of governance services, to how people access such services, and the participation of people in the sphere of governance. E-governance uses ICT to induce changes in the delivery and standards of governance services and more importantly, in the way citizens interact and participate in governance. The meaning and use of the term E-governance is with reference to the functions which are being performed by the Government of any country. In common parlance there are two terms which are quite often used interchangeably: E-government and E-governance.

However the scope of the later term is broader than that of the former. E-government is the use of ICT to provide access to and delivery of government services to benefit the general public. E-government thus provides citizens the ability to obtain government services through electronic means, enabling access to government information and completion of government transactions on an anywhere, anytime basis. The idea is simply to create the capability for providing the citizens access to government departments through electronic networks. In fact through E-government the following objectives are achieved:

- i) Achieving visibility i.e. the general public comes to know about that organ of Government. Most of the sites maintained by State provide certain basic information and profile of that state.
- ii) On-line access to information in public domain. Knowledge of laws, rules and regulation reports of various commissions etc. are being provided by Government on-line now.
- iii) Completing transaction on-line like filing of tax returns, driving-licences, passport etc.

Thus through E-government, the broader objective of paper-free and hassle-free government offices is achieved.

With the implementation of E-governance, though many of the citizen's worries can be solved, the ultimate goal is to achieve 'good-governance'; a government in which people have active participation, a government which is transparent, responsive, effective and result-oriented. It is the ICT internet in particular, with its capacity to break the barriers of time and distance and to bring together a wealth of information from a virtually unlimited number of sources, that has the potential to transform traditional governance and to achieve good-governance. Thus comes the concept of E-governance, i.e. use of ICT to ensure the citizen's participation in governance and allowing him/her to communicate with the government. The E-governance will truly allow citizens to participate in the government at decision and policy-making process, reflect their true needs and welfare by utilising E-government as a tool. In simple words, E-governance is the use of ICT by Government to deliver information and services, to encourage citizen's participation, to redress public grievances and to make its machinery more responsive, accountable and effective. In fact, through E-governance, the aim of SMART governance is to be achieved:

Simple – Because there are no elaborate procedures, no paper work and no need for frequenting government offices.

Moral – The system is cleaned up of corruption and other unethical practices.

Accountable – Since all the information is in public domain, government's accountability enhances.

Responsiveness – Through the use of ICT; Government can be in regular touch with the masses and get their feedback.

Transparency – The information which was shrouded in secrecy within dark file chambers will become available to all on the click of a mouse.

Please answer the following Self Assessment Question.

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| Self Assessment Question 1 | <i>Spend 3 Min.</i> |
| 'E-governance is the application of ICT to governmental processes'. Do you agree? | |
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11.4 COMPONENTS OF E-GOVERNANCE

In order to make E-governance effectual ICT is to be applied not only between government and citizens and within various levels of government, but also between different interest groups like business, NGOs etc and the Government. Following are the main components of E-governance:-

1) **Government-Citizen Interface**

This is the primacy component of E-governance since the citizens are mostly a harassed lot in their dealings with the Government. One of the most promising aspects of the E-governance is its ability to bring citizens closer to their governments: both as voters and stakeholders or as customers who consume public services.

As voters and stakeholders in a democratic country like ours, citizens can be given access to the information relating to government policies, programmes etc. run for their welfare. The citizens can give their feedback on-line and they can also suggest measures to enhance effectiveness of government policies and programmes.

Citizens are also consumers of a number of Government services. E-governance initiatives can attempt to make transactions such as renewing licences and certifications, paying taxes etc. less time consuming and easier to carry out.

2) **Government – Government Interface**

Government itself is a very complex structure and it is divided into various ministries and departments. In addition to central government there are also state governments and local governments. There communication gaps and lack of proper coordination can result in ineffective administration, delays etc. Government to government interface via internet will ensure speedier flow of information, instructions, and compliance reports hence ensuring smooth functioning at all levels of government.

3) **Government – Business Interface**

The use of ICT will cause business and government to come closer. In a country like India where there is a mixed economy, the role of Government is to give directions for economic development. It sets policy guidelines and targets (in terms of GDP etc.) which both the public and private sectors strive to achieve. With the smooth flow of

information and instructions to and for there would be better understanding and coordination between business and government.

4) **Government – Employee Interface**

This is yet another important aspect of governance because employees working in government departments form the backbone of the whole system of Governance. Be it a military personnel or a clerk in a government department, each has got its own role to play and hence there is the need for communication between the Government and its employees.

5) **Government – Society Interface**

In any society there are various interest groups such as trade unions, political parties and now more importantly NGOs. NGOs have, over a period built for themselves a special role in our democratic setup. They are now entrusted with a range of tasks in the welfare of society right from poverty alleviation to health care, environment protection etc. With the use of ICT, Government can maintain regular communication with society.

11.5 RATIONALE FOR E-GOVERNANCE

ICT is an effective tool for bringing revolutionary changes in governance. E-governance ensures that citizens can avail of governmental services easily and can participate in governmental policy making processes. The citizens are no longer merely passive recipients of government services. They have a say about the types and standards of government services they want and the governance structures which can best deliver them. The modern state is a welfare state and the emphasis is on good-governance. The rationale of E-governance is its capacity to provide good-governance. The Government has to be responsive, transparent, allowing participation of citizens, consensus oriented, effective, efficient and accountable. Now the question is how the same can be ensured? How can government become more responsive and accessible? How can it improve services, health care and education? These questions can be adequately answered through the adoption of E-governance. E-governance has been widely accepted as a methodology to improve transparency, administrative efficiency, and public services, to provide citizens new governmental services and bring new sections of society under the governance sphere, like the differently abled. Let us examine in some detail the role of E-governance in the promotion of democracy & citizen's participation.

E-governance & Democracy

The first important role which E-governance can play in promoting democracy is that of building government accountability and transparency in decision making so that there is increased citizen's trust in government. E-governance makes governance more representative, more individual based and pro-active. It does not require an individual to come to the government for services. It leads to closer contact of individuals with decision-makers and hence greater access and control over governance thus leading to more transparent, accountable and efficient governance. To effectively involve various stakeholders like political parties, interest groups, NGOs, business, and interested citizens in the governmental process, is another big challenge which can be met through E-governance. For this purpose, online consultation portals can be developed. The Governments of United Kingdom, Canada, and New Zealand have special portals to promote open consultations across their governments.

E-governance and Information Sharing

Information Sharing is a democratic tool. It has been said that access to information is power. Those who have access to information can use it selectively to create hierarchical structures in the society resulting in unequal distribution of power. Limiting access to information to a few will open up possibilities for manipulation of information for private gains. Hence it is necessary that there is equitable distribution of information and information sharing is an essential activity for governments in E-governance. Information sharing will become an essential part of the democratic process as governments become more open and accountable. ICT has created new expectations and citizens are now beginning to demand accountability and better access to government information. Sharing information with public will bring more accountability as well as other benefits to the public.

E-governance and Greater Citizen Participation

Governments can ensure increased citizen participation through E-governance. This can be done by making more information available online, seeking input from people on government programmes & issues online and encouraging online discussion groups on important national issues, providing grants to organizations seeking online democratic activities etc. While doing this, care is to be taken of the special needs and local community requirements. Thus developing easy-to-use websites to facilitate seamless access by citizens is necessary in villages. Effort should be made to develop information policies embracing all levels of society.

From the above discussion it is clear that E-governance can go a long way in promoting greater citizen participation and in strengthening democracy. This provides the rationale for investing in E-governance.

11.6 BENEFITS OF E-GOVERNANCE

In this part we attempt to examine the reforms which can be made in the administrative process through E-governance. This will spell out the benefits of E-governance. The reforms in the administrative process have focused on restructuring the systems and processes to enhance service delivery capacity. ICT can be used to give further impetus to this process. ICT can help in the following manner:-

- 1) **Automation of Administrative Processes:** Till now the administrative process has been largely manual and involves a large bureaucratic structure. ICT can be used to make this system automatic. There are various tasks in government offices which are repetitive in nature for instance, filing of forms, periodic information reporting etc. These tasks can be automated to save time and effort.
- 2) **Workforce Reduction:** The present governmental structure is a behemoth. The government employs a large work force for its various functions. Truly e-governed system would require minimal work force and would be system driven. The resultant spare work force can be engaged in more productive tasks.
- 3) **Better Service Delivery:** E-governance would integrate various departments to provide a single point of delivery of services to citizens. Service delivery at the click of a button is possible. Also there would be quality control because the delivery of services will be open to public scrutiny and criticism. This type of constant monitoring may enhance the quality of services. ICT reduces the costs involved in the production and delivery of services making them cheaper.

- 4) **Technical & Supportive Role:** ICT can be used to create a paper free or a least paper office. It is possible to store the entire information of the whole office in the hard disc of a computer. This support to the office work will be of immense importance since now there is no need to physically carry the files or to search for them. E-mails can be used for communication between different locations almost instantaneously and record of which is also available.
- 5) **Transparency:** E-governance aims at providing information to all without discrimination. ICT makes it possible to quickly disseminate information through the use of websites and portals. This makes the systems transparent too, which subsequently enhances accountability and ensures a corruption free government.
- 6) **Economic Development:** E-governance can bring economic development to the remote areas of the country. For example, most of the rural areas suffer on account of lack of right information regarding the markets, products, agriculture, health, education, weather, etc. and if all this could be accessed through connectivity and IT, this would bring in more opportunities and thereby prosperity to these areas.
- 7) **Social Development:** E-governance brings all-round changes not only in the governance but also in society. As a result of economic growth, there is improvement in the living standard of people. Better access to information empowers the citizens. As the government becomes more citizen oriented and there is also greater participation the concerns of society are voiced, which can be accommodated in programme formulation, implementation, monitoring and finally service delivery.
- 8) **Innovative Role:** E-governance can be used to initiate new governance services or new mechanisms for improved service delivery. For instance, online checking of the status of an application (from remote and beyond office hours); providing instant access to the same information to all individuals through e-mails and website etc.
- 9) **Change in the Administrative Culture:** E-governance will change the administrative culture by making it more open, transparent, accountable and responsive and citizen oriented. With E-governance, actions of public functionaries come under public scrutiny and this would certainly induce accountability and change in the administrative culture.

Given below is a brief comparison of the two models:

Conventional Governance vs E-governance

| Basis | Conventional Governance | E-governance |
|-----------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Nature | Secretive | Transparent |
| Power Structure | Hierarchical | Horizontal/Networked |
| Response | Passive and Slow | Pro-active and Quick |
| Communication | One Way | Direct / Immediate |
| Emphasis | Compliance | Achieving Targets |

The above table gives us an idea of the advantages of E-governance over the traditional system. Now we can say that E-governance is a far better system than the present system. Due to this reason the governments world over are switching to E-governance. We shall now examine the position of E-governance in India.

Please answer the following Self Assessment Question.

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| Self Assessment Question 2 | <i>Spend 3 Min.</i> |
| Do you think that E-governance is better than the conventional system? | |
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11.7 E-GOVERNANCE INITIATIVES IN INDIA

The E-governance initiatives in India are of recent origin. ICT's application to the governments' functioning aims to bring about the system of governance that works better costs less and is capable of fulfilling the citizen's needs effectively. For India, ICT provides an opportunity to overcome obstacles of vast size, population and resource crunch to become a developed nation. The E-governance initiatives in India aim at achieving the following objectives:

- 1) Efficient delivery of government services to citizens and business;
- 2) Better dissemination of government information;
- 3) Improved revenue collection and budgetary controls;
- 4) Providing access to government services through a single window;
- 5) Speeding up transactions;
- 6) Transparent functioning and zero corruption;
- 7) Reduction in the procedural and postal delays involved in the system.

11.7.1 National E-governance Action Plan

In order to implement E-governance Government of India has approved a policy framework in the form of the National E-governance Action Plan. The plan seeks to provide policy guidelines to create the mechanisms for E-governance. A number of projects has been envisaged under the plan in order to create citizen friendly governance. States are to be encouraged to adopt E-governance. Under the plan common service centers has been envisaged for the delivery of services. Emphasis has been laid on quality and speed of implementation of the plan and connectivity is to be extended up to block level. The plan seeks to cover major areas of governance like taxes, passport,

land records, agriculture markets and the like. The plan envisages creation of right environments to implement G2G, G2B, G2E and G2C services.

11.7.2 E-governance Initiatives at National Level

In the recent past Government of India has taken a number of initiatives to implement E-governance. The Government has set up National Informatics Centre (NIC) under the Department of Information Technology as the specialized body to provide the network backbone and E-governance support to Central Government, State Governments, UT Administrations, Districts and other Government bodies. Almost all the Government departments now maintain web presence. Following is the list of certain projects undertaken at central level:

- 1) India Image (Government of India Portal)
- 2) Agricultural Marketing Information Network (AGMARKNET)
- 3) Central Passport System
- 4) Community Information Centres (CICs)
- 5) Computerised Rural Information Systems Project (CRISP)
- 6) Court Information System (COURTIS)
- 7) Department of Agriculture Network (DACNET)
- 8) Examination Results Portal
- 9) Land Records Information System (LRIS)
- 10) National Hazardous Waste Information System (NHWIS)
- 11) Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (PGRAMS)

11.7.3 E-courts: ICT in Judiciary

The administration of justice is another field where ICT can be of much help in solving many problems. Most of the bottlenecks related to delays, arrears and backlog can be partly overcome if ICT is used for case & docket management. First National Judicial Pay Commission (popularly known as Shetty Commission) has recommended the following areas where IT will be useful:

- a) Legal information databases
- b) On line query system for precedents, citations, codes, statutes etc.
- c) Generation of cause list and online statistical reports
- d) Online caveat matching
- e) Online updating of data, monitoring and “flagging” of events
- f) Pooling of orders and judgments
- g) Daily list generation with historical data of each case
- h) Word processing with standard templates including generation of notices/processes
- i) Access to international databases

j) Feed back reports for use at various levels.

With the help of the National Informatics Division much of the above mentioned information is available now on the net.

11.7.4 E-governance Initiatives at the State Level

The state governments have also realised the importance of E-governance in improving the performance of the system. Various initiatives have been taken by them. These initiatives aim at improving the quality of life in the backward areas of the country, better dispensation of services, and collection of inputs from the public for taking policy decisions. A list of some of these initiatives have been given in **Appendix-A**. The services which have been made available range from online revenue record, payments of bills, applications to departments, online information concerning rural and urban population etc. The state of Kerala has from the very beginning taken steps in this regard. The FRIENDS project of Kerala allows people to make a number of transactions online. The GYANDOOT project of Madhya Pradesh caters to the needs of rural population. However a survey of these initiatives reveals that most of them are clustered in few states. Especially the states in the south have taken more such steps as compared to others. This trend may create regional disparities of a new kind and may widen the overall developmental gap between the states.

Please answer the following Self Assessment Question.

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| Self Assessment Question 3 | <i>Spend 4 Min.</i> |
| What are the E-governance initiatives at the national level? | |
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11.8 LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR E-GOVERNANCE

The Information Technology Act, 2000 provides the necessary legal framework for E-governance. Though the Act deals with a variety of issues related to cyber world, one of its objectives is to promote E-governance by providing legal recognition to transactions with the government online. With the coming in to force of IT Act 2000 where any law provides for submission of information in writing or in the typewritten or printed form, from now onwards it will be sufficient compliance of law, if the same is sent in an electronic form. Further, if any law provides for signature on any document, the same can be done by means of digital signature.

Similarly, the filing of any form, application or any other document with the Government Authorities and issue or grant of any licence, permit, sanction and any receipt acknowledging payment can be done by the Government offices by means of electronic form. Now it is possible to maintain records in Govt. offices in the form of electronic records.

Chapter III of the Act deals with E-governance (Sec. 4 to 10). Sec 4 provides for legal recognition of electronic records of any matter or information which is by law required to be in written, typewritten or printed form. Sec 5 removes the major hindrance of authentication of any document by authorizing the use of digital signatures for such purposes. Now, wherever it is required by law that a person shall affix his/her signature to any document, such requirement is satisfied by affixing digital signature in the prescribed manner in the case of electronic records.

Sec 6 of the Act provides for the use of electronic records and digital signatures in Government and its agencies. Now the filing of any form, application or any other document with any Government authority or office can be effected by means of electronic form. Further the issue of any license permit, sanction or approval can also be done through electronic means. Even the receipt or payment of money can also be made on line as per Sec 6.

Hence it is now possible to file tax-returns applications for grant of licence, permit etc. online instead of going to the offices and queuing up. Further it is no more necessary to maintain loads of files and office records because Sec 7 of the Act provides for retention of electronic records and if any law provides that documents, records or information be retained then that can be retained in the electronic form.

Sec 8 takes a decisive step towards E-governance in the country by allowing publication of rules, regulations, order, bye-laws etc. in electronic gazette. Now it is no more necessary to go to the Collectorate for a copy of the gazette as the same can be accessed online in any internet kiosk.

Please answer the following Self Assessment Question.

Self Assessment Question 4

Spend 3 Min.

Which section of the IT Act provides for use of digital signatures in government and its agencies?

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11.9 OBSTACLES IN IMPLEMENTING E-GOVERNANCE

E-governance is of immense benefit to citizens. But there are many obstacles to be overcome before the benefits can actually reach the people. There is the problem of infrastructure, capital, trained manpower etc. Certain obstacles are noted here:

- i) **Lack of Resources:** The major obstacle in implementation of E-governance is the resource crunch. ICT is capital intensive since most of the hardware has to be imported and software needs to be developed. The cost involved in running the system is also there. Most of the installation is delicate and there is the need for trained personnel to handle it.
- ii) **Lack of Infrastructure:** E-governance is based on the telecommunication and electricity services. Infrastructure of these services is first necessary in order to provide the end-user the E-governance services effectively. India has a relatively low tele-density of 3 per cent for landlines and the target for 2008 is to get the number 20 per thousand. However there has been substantial increase in cellular phone subscribers. Still the available infrastructure is quite inadequate for the purpose of fully affecting E-governance.
- iii) **Digital Divide:** According to an AzimPremji Foundation study, the number of personal computers, installed in the country is 7.5 million of which the four metros viz. Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Kolkata accounted for 53 per cent. At present there are approximately 10 million users of the Internet facility in the country of more than 1000 million. But more than 75 per cent of these users are in urban India and rural and poor people are deprived of ICT.
- iv) **Lack of Relevant Information in Local Languages:** The information available on the net is mostly of academic nature or entertainment purposes. It is difficult to find information which is useful. The content of the information should be such that it should be purposive and useful to the people. For this purpose the local conditions as well as the needs of a particular community have to be taken in to account. Here it is also worth mentioning that currently the language used for E-governance is English and the databases are also in English. In order to provide the benefits of E-governance to maximum people it is necessary to develop interface and database in local languages.
- v) **Building E-governance Capacity :** For the effectiveness and success of E-governance services it is necessary that there is a well equipped and efficient ICT organization manned by trained manpower to handle the system. But there is a lack of trained manpower in comparison to the requirement for implementing E-governance. There is a need to open many more technical institutes to educate people to build a pool of human resource.
- vi) **Security Issues in Cyberspace:** The major issue in digitization of the database and completion of transactions through internet is the security of the transactions. Data protection and data reliability are the major issues concerning all internet transactions and E-governance. Cyberspace is owned by none and it is virtually uncontrollable. It spreads across all nations without any sovereign control. This makes the challenge of monitoring cyberspace even more difficult. The government needs to enact appropriate laws. Information & Technology Act, 2000 is a step in this direction.
- vii) **Restructuring Bureaucracy:** The most important step in implementing E-governance is to restructure the existing bureaucratic structure since it is very slow to adopt any new features. This system is hierarchical involving multi level clearance, too much documentation and the procedures followed are colonial. E-governance requires a realisation on the part of the bureaucracy that it is basically the service provider and not the ruling class. ICT can help only when the service provider is

willing to adopt it. The bureaucracy has to be more open, responsive and willing to change. ICT has enabled people to involve themselves in the democratic process in new and unique ways. Governments at all levels and international organizations accordingly will increasingly be impacted by these changes. Thus, there is also a need for awareness-building within governments and international organizations of the changes that are occurring. This can be accomplished through educational and training programmes.

Let us now summarize the points covered in this unit.

11.10 SUMMARY

- E-governance primarily refers to use of ICT in the discharge of governmental functions. However it is not only limited to delivery of the governmental services. The aim of E-governance is to ensure greater citizen participation in governance.
- The components of E-governance are:
 - Government–Citizen Interface
 - Government – Government Interface
 - Government – Business Interface
 - Government – Employee Interface
 - Government – Society Interface
- The rationale for E-governance is its capacity to provide a government which is efficient, responsive, and corruption-free. It strengthens democracy by increasing the citizen’s role in policy making and information sharing.
- The benefits of E-governance are:
 - Automation of Administrative Processes
 - Workforce Reduction
 - Better Service Delivery
 - Technical and Supportive Role
 - Transparency
 - Economic and Social Development
 - Change in the Administrative Culture
- The ICT has been accepted by the Indian Government as a catalyst to bring rapid institutional reforms in the governmental structure and as an effective tool to reach out to hitherto deprived masses. The central government has framed National E-governance Action Plan for the proper implementation of E-governance. Various states have also started programmes related to E-governance.
- The challenges faced in implementing E-governance are:
 - Lack of Resources
 - Lack of Infrastructure

- Digital Divide
- Lack of Relevant Information in Local Languages
- Building E-governance Capacity
- Security Issues in Cyberspace
- Reluctant Bureaucracy

11.11 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1) Explain the concept of E-governance. How it is different from E-government?
- 2) Is E-governance concerned only with citizens? What are the various components of E-governance?
- 3) How will you justify E-governance for a developing country keeping in mind the heavy cost involved in it?
- 4) What are the legal provisions related to E-governance?
- 5) What steps would you suggest to remedy the problems in the implementation of E-governance?

11.12 ANSWERS AND HINTS

Self Assessment Questions

- 1) E-governance is the application of ICT to the governmental process. This statement is partially true since E-governance is not limited to the computerisation of the governmental process. Its true scope encompasses citizen's participation in the policy making and the governance of the country.
- 2) E-governance has got certain merits which makes it better than the conventional system. It provides a government which is responsive, quick and allows increased access to information. The other benefits of E-governance are automation, work force reduction, facilities to citizens etc.
- 3) At the national level, central government has taken a number of initiatives for implementing E-governance. India Image is the government portal which gives a lot of information. National Informatics Centre is the agency entrusted with the task of creating and maintaining web portals.
- 4) Sec 6 of the Act provides for the use of electronic records and digital signatures in Government and its agencies.

Terminal Questions

- 1) Refer to section 11.3 of the unit.
- 2) Refer to section 11.4 of the unit.
- 3) Refer to section 11.5 & 11.6 of the unit.
- 4) Refer to section 11.8 of the unit.
- 5) Refer to section 11.9 of the unit.

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E-GOVERNANCE INITIATIVES AT STATE LEVEL

Bhoomi

The Department of Revenue in Karnataka State has computerised 20 million records of land ownership of 6.7 million farmers in the State. Record of Rights, Tenancy and Crops (RTC) for a fee of Rs. 15, a printed copy of the RTC can be obtained online at computerised land record kiosks (Bhoomi centers) in 177 taluk offices.

e-Seva (electronic Seva)

Electronic Seva (e-Seva) is the improved version of the TWINS project launched in 1999, in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad in Andhra Pradesh. e-Seva centres offer 118 different services like payment of utility bills/taxes, registration of births/deaths, registration of applications for passports, issue of births/deaths certificates, filing of Sales Tax returns, Trade licences of MCH, B2C services.

CARD

The Computer-aided Administration of Registration Department – CARD in Andhra Pradesh. CARD was initiated to meet objectives to demystify the registration process, bring speed, efficiency, consistency and reliability, and substantially improve the citizen interface. CARD project has great benefit for the rural farming community.

FRIENDS

Fast, Reliable, Instant, Efficient Network for the Disbursement of Services is part of the Kerala State IT Mission, FRIENDS counters handle 1,000 types of payment bills originating out of various PSUs. The payments that citizens can make include utility payments for electricity and water, revenue taxes, licence fees, motor vehicle taxes, university fees, etc.

Gyandoot

The Gyandoot project was initiated in January 2000 in the Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh. Gyandoot is a low cost, self-sustainable, and community-owned rural Intranet system (Soochnalaya) that caters to the specific needs of village communities in the district. Thirty-five such (centres) have been established since January 2000 and are managed by rural youth selected and trained from amongst the unemployed educated youth of the village. They run the Soochanalayas (organized as Kiosks) as entrepreneurs (Soochaks); user charges are levied for a wide range of services that include agricultural information, market information, health, education, women's issues, and applications for services delivered by the district administration related to land ownership, affirmative action, and poverty alleviation.

Vidya Vahini

This portal provides the opportunity for schools, teachers and students all across the nation, to express and share their creative and academic potential via the internet. The portal aims at creating such an environment by providing facilities for Content Development, Content Deployment and collaboration.

Lok Mitra (Integrated Citizen Service Centre / e-Kiosks ICSC)

Lok Mitra is the first of its own kind of Electronic service in the state of Rajasthan. It aims to deploy Information Technology for the benefit of the masses.

It is an e-governance project in which the computer server is linked to different Departmental servers through Dedicated Leased Line & Dial-up Network with multiple e-counters, which can handle all services. It has facility of making payments through Internet using Credit Card.

SETU- A bridge for facilitation between Citizen & Government

The facility aims at providing following services

- Single window clearance of 83 important certificates (includes renewal of leases, permits & licences)
- Quick redressal of public grievances
- Common registry of letters, petitions for all sections of the office
- On line pendency monitoring of all above
- To provide services after office hours & on holidays also in order to save Time, Money & Energy of the public.

Jan Mitra

Jan Mitra is an Integrated e-platform through which rural population of Rajasthan can get desired information and avail services related to various government departments at kiosks near their doorsteps.

It offers following services:

- Public Grievance Redressal System, Online Submission of Application forms and Land & Revenue Records.
- Public Distribution System, BPL List, Electricity Priority Connection List, Drinking Water Resources, Village Schemes, Citizen Charters and Immovable Property rates.
- Health Information, Agriculture Information, Education Information and Animal Husbandry Information.
- Agriculture Mandi rates daily Mandi rates and Weekly / Monthly Mandi rates.

Drishtee-Connecting India Village by Village

Drishtee is an organization platform for developing IT enabled services to rural and semi-urban populations through the usage of state-of-the-art software. Using a tiered franchise and partnership model, Drishtee is capable of enabling the creation of approximately 50,000 Information Kiosks all over India within a span of six years. These kiosks would potentially serve a market of 500 million people, with aggregate discretionary purchasing power of Rs. 100 billion (Rs. 10,000 crores). In less than two years, Drishtee has successfully demonstrated its concept in over 90 kiosks across five Indian states.

States where Implemented: Haryana, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Orissa.

Aarakshi

Aarakshi is an Intranet based system that has been developed and implemented for Jaipur City Police. This innovative system enables the city police officers to carry out on-line sharing of crime & criminal data bases, carry out communication and perform monitoring activities.

FAST – Transport Department Automated

The ‘Fully Automated Services of Transport’ is another e-governance project implemented in the cities of Andhra Pradesh. The objective of FAST is to make the transport department citizen friendly in its functioning and provide SMART services to the public. Covering all gamut of services of Transport Department like Issue of Driving Licences, Registration of Motor Vehicles, Issue Permits, Collection of Motor Vehicle Taxes, etc.

VOICE (Vijayawada Online Information Centre)

The project to delivers municipal services such as building approvals, and birth and death certificates, to the people of Vijayawada. It also handles the collection of property, water and sewerage taxes.

MUDRA (Municipal Corporation towards Digital Revenue Administration)

The system will be useful for the Holding owners, Tax collectors, officials at headquarter levels and Circles levels. They will have total picture of tax collection that will help the decision makers to take suitable decision for further improvement. It is designed to computerise the over all functions of tax collection system of Patna Municipals Corporation.

KHAJANE (Online Treasury System)

The online treasury project, KHAJANE, implemented in computerises all the 216 treasury offices in Karnataka and is connected to a central server at the state Secretariat through VSAT (Very Small Aperture Terminal). KHAJANE aims to bring about a more transparent and accountable system of financial transactions and also discipline in operations and management, resulting in efficiency and cost savings for the government.

e-Cops (e-Computerised Operations in Andhra Pradesh for Police Services)

Launched on the 17th of July 2002, as part of the VISION 2020, the state’s focus on modernisation of police administration takes the shape of eCOPS. It will help police stations reduce paperwork and automate the maintenance of registers, report generation, data analysis, planning and co-ordination, enable the speedy detection of crime and monitor prosecutions. For citizens, the project will lead to online interaction with the police department over the Internet.

TARahaat – Achieving Connectivity for the Poor Case Study

This project, named “TARahaat” after the all-purpose haat (meaning a village bazaar), comprises a commercially viable model for bringing relevant information, products and services via the Internet to the unserved rural market of India from which an estimated 50% of the national income is derived.

Lok Mitra

The Lok Mitra project was formally dedicated to the people of Hamirpur in Himachal Pradesh as a pilot phase on the 8th of May 2001. The services offered include information about vacancies, tenders, market rates, matrimonial services, village e-mail. An interesting feature is that citizens can use the IT enabled system as a grievance redress system.

Mahiti Shakti

Launched in 2001, in Gujarat the portal <http://www.mahitishakti.net/> operates like a single window through which the citizens can access information related to all aspects of the government's functioning, various benefit schemes and services ranging from obtaining ration cards to getting sanction for old age pension.

Warana Wired Villages

The key objective of the project has been to utilize IT to increase the efficiency and productivity of the existing sugar cane cooperative enterprises by setting up of a state-of-the-art computer communications network. This provides agricultural, medical, and educational information in the local language to villages around Warana Nagar in the Kolhapur and Sangli Districts of Maharashtra.

Community Information Centre

On 22 August 2002, the Prime Minister dedicated to the people of the eight North-Eastern states a new structure of localized governance called Community Information Centres. Basic services to be provided by CICs include Internet access and e-mail, printing, data entry and word processing and training for the local populace. Most CICs charge nominal amounts from users for services, which helps them to meet day-to-day running expenses.

Community Learning Centre Project

Set up between March and July 2001, the Community Learning Centre (CLC) is a joint initiative between the Azim Premji Foundation (APF) and the State government of Karnataka. Each CLC is housed in a separate room in the school and is equipped with five to eight computers. The CLCs are used to enhance classroom learning during school hours.

Dairy Information Services Kiosk

The project consists of two basic components — an application running at the rural milk collection society that could be provided Internet connectivity and a portal at the district level serving transactional and information needs of all members. DISK has helped in the automation of the milk buying process at 2,500 rural milk collection societies.

State where Implemented: Gujarat

GramSampark

'Gramsampark' is a flagship ICT product of the state of Madhya Pradesh. A complete database of available resources, basic amenities, beneficiaries of government programmes and public grievances in all the 51,000 villages of Madhya Pradesh can be obtained by accessing the website, Gramsampark has three sections- Gram Paridrashya (village scenario), Samasya Nivaran (grievance redress) and Gram Prahari (village sentinel).

Akshaya

As part of Kerala's ambitious e-literacy campaign, Akshaya e-Centers are being set up throughout Kerala. These centers will initially provide e-literacy to one member from every household and act as ICT dissemination nodes and ITeS delivery points in every village.

Headstart

Headstart provides computer-enabled education and basic computer skills for all students in 6000 Jan Shiksha Kendras of Madhya Pradesh. Madhya Pradesh has 6500 Jan Shiksha Kendras (cluster resource centres) located in Middle School premises in 48 districts. Headstart will equip every Jan Shiksha Kendra in the state with computer hardware and multimedia software.

E-chaupal

Started by ITC's international Business Division as a cost-effective alternative supply chain system to deal directly with the farmer to buy products for exports is getting transformed into a meta market for rural India. The tobacco giant has already set up over 700 choupals covering 3,800 villages in four states — which include Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh — dealing with products ranging from soya bean, coffee, aquaculture and wheat.