
UNIT 14 E-GOVERNANCE POLICY AND FRAMEWORK

Structure

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14.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit is concerned with acquainting the learners with some of the pertinent concepts related to e-governance, how it works, and the broad areas under which it functions. The challenges of e-governance considering the different political arrangements and technological borders will be assessed, and the learners can deliver ideas of its functionality. It will also lead to an understanding of Information Technology and Information System Management.

Again, to get a proper overview of the subject matter, we need to understand the different models of e-governance and their theoretical perspectives. Learners will be able to distinguish between projects and public-private partnerships and gain knowledge on the digital divide and the challenges in a changing world.

14.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this unit, you should be able to

- Identify the concepts and objectives of studying e-governance;

- Discuss the subject matter, nature and scope of Information technology and E-governance;
- Describe the theoretical concepts of E-governance;
- Discuss the factors and challenges of the digital divide; and
- Connect the challenges and opportunities of e-governance.

14.2 INTRODUCTION TO INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The mechanism and software used to generate, accumulate, transfer, manipulate, and exhibit data and information are collectively called information technology, or IT. In a literal sense, IT is vital to the Information Age and relates to all aspects of communications and computing.

History and evolution of information technology

The last ten years of the 20th century were the best and the worst for public service education. The abacus in Babylonia in the fourth century BC is usually discussed when discussing the history of those devices intended to count objects and generate data. However, the Atanasoff-Berry Computer (ABC), the first electrical digital computer in history, 1942 marked the beginning of computing and IT in the United States. Computers did not replace conventional accounting and record-keeping practices until after World War II, despite ABC's reintroduction and the Electronic Numerical Integrator Analyzer and Computer (ENIAC) deployment to help with firing table preparation.

Soon after the transistors replaced vacuum tubes in the 1950s, computer reliability rose, the hardware and software evolved, and their evolutionary paths were slightly different in the past. Electrical engineers created the hardware, and every new generation of computing technology was adapted and used in industry and government. The creation of software applications has a history that parallels various noteworthy management changes in the public sector and marks the beginning of the growth of management reporting. The technology combined began to advance the public sector beyond data processing in the 1960s, initiating a different e-government era.

14.3 PRINCIPLES OF INFORMATION SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

The gradual evolution from Information Technology to Information System Management led to a massive shift in the structure and function of E-Governance. Information System Management refers to any framework of software that facilitates the collection, storage, organisation, and distribution of information. Information management encompasses a series of organisational activities related to acquiring, storing, and distributing information to stakeholders.

14.4 INTRODUCTION TO E-GOVERNANCE AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Administrative machinery is conducted through information technology or digital intervention called e-governance. The term governance originates from an ancient Greek word, “Kebernon,” meaning steering. Governing in current use means directing, regulating, and manipulating from a position of authority. In 2002, The UN addressed e-Governance and signified five categories for measuring progress towards e-Governance.

1. Emerging online presence: Sites providing reliable information
2. Enhanced Online Presence: Increasing quantity of webpages providing dynamic content
3. Interactive Web presence: Electronic exchanges between users and governments
4. Transactional Web presence: Services like payments (taxes) and purchases (licences)
5. A fully integrated online presence that combines services, information, and exchanges

14.5 HISTORY OF E-GOVERNANCE IN INDIA

The Indian government founded the Department of Electronics in the 1970s, and the National Informatics Centre (NIC) was established in 1977, marking the beginning of the country's transition to electronic governance. Government offices had computers by the 1980s; however, they were just used for drafting. Eventually, this expanded to include internal government applications in various administrative fields, system monitoring, growth, and information and technology to manage data-intensive tasks like tax administration, elections, and censuses. E-Governance can be of different types depending on the type of governmental structure as well as the

a. **Government to Customer (G2C):**

E-Governance is to provide ICT organisation consistently and effectively to inhabitants. This establishes a link between the government and people utilising the technology.

b. **Government To Employees (G2E)**

E-Governance to Employee partnership (G2E) is the online association between online instruments, sources, information, and products that support communication between the government and its companies.

c. **Government To Government (G2G)**

Government-to-government (G2G) is the access to common information and data framework between administration offices, divisions, or associations. It improves access sharing and information retention.

d. **Government To Business (G2B)**

This is primarily determined by how professionally the work with state

bodies of various levels is organised and how well the government bodies build the processes. The government-to-business (G2B) model implies that it is designed to support and develop businesses from the government’s side.

14.6 BENEFITS OF GOVERNANCE

E-Governance has several benefits as it has its hindsight. In a country like India, e-governance can have several benefits. Primary among them are automation issues. To put it together, some of the leading points are:

Automation: It leads to the improvisation of clerical functions, which are also error-free to a considerable extent.

Informatisation: E-governance leads to clarity in steady information-flow processes. For example, it can store, access, and archive most information.

Prompt decision-making: Because of the automation of processes and the application of accurate facts, there is fast delivery because of prompt decision-making, communication, and implementation.

Cost efficient: The Governance that emanates from the ICT-moderated process tends to be cheaper, producing the same outputs at a lower total cost.

Quality gains: Governance works better by producing the same outputs at the exact total cost but to a higher quality standard.

Check Your Progress: 1

Note: 1) Use the space provided below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. Write about the history of e-Governance in India.

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2. What are the benefits of e-Governance? Substantiate with examples.

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14.7 MODELS OF E-GOVERNANCE WEIDNER’S DISSEMINATION MODE, CRITICAL FLOW MODEL

a. Weidner’s Dissemination model

E-Governance functions differently, considering the outcome's expected nature and the beneficiaries involved. One such model is Weidner's

Dissemination model. This model establishes the conditions of prior preference, particularly in the case of legal or judicial decision-making, and this is primarily used to influence decisions by setting up precedence. Most commonly, this e-governance model assesses the performance of a particular public servant, ministry, or government. By promoting background know-how, this model provides rationality for the future course of action. This model also provides a precursor for future courses of action, picking up from the e-government guiding principles and procedures in the past. ICT unlocks access to local knowledge and global products at a meagre cost. This model provides information on predecessor governments' or electoral candidates' performance by sharing their work records in their constituencies. This model offers room for strong arguments emanating from the analysis.

b. Critical flow model of e-governance

The critical flow model is based on disseminating crucial information to the targeted people through convergent media or ICT. This emphasises the data's relevance and the necessity of using it. This remains functional in both private and public domains. The key idea of this model is to promote transparency to implement good governance. It tries to diminish the element of time and distance and minimise the abuse of power by the government. The model can work in areas like availing policies commissioned by the government to the people, acquiring research studies, and processing inquiry reports. There could be other advantages, such as obtaining records of human rights violations and criminal impeachment against government officials to concerned citizens and non-governmental organisations and facilitating information on the corruption of government officials or ministries to the electoral bodies or any relevant governing council. The model may not work properly in instances where the government bodies do not encourage public contributions and criticise all information of a critical nature or maintain tight control over all information and remain available to only a few top levels of the government.

c. Comparative Analysis model

The Comparative Knowledge Model, becoming increasingly popular, is one of the most used yet fundamental models for emerging nations. By comparing instances of poor governance with those of good administration and then examining the various facets of bad governance and its effects on the populace, the model can be utilised to empower individuals. The concept is predicated on using ICT for information exploration and comparison with existing information sets, whether in the public or private domain. The result is discussions and strategic learning. For example, if a certain sum of money can be used to create "5" schools in village "A," why can the same amount of money only be used to establish "2" schools in village "B"?

d. Interactive Service model

The governance-to-citizen Government model is another name for the interactive-service system of governance. This paradigm, which allows

for direct public participation in the digital governing process, is an amalgam of several e-government models. This concept uses ICT to integrate everyone into a knowledge network, providing interactive communication media. G2C2G entirely takes advantage of ICT's potential to use it for increased efficiency and transparency, participation in government operations, and cost and time savings in the decision-making process. Through this concept, citizens can access all government services since it establishes a channel for tasks like filing tax returns, communicating concerns, and government procurement, to name a few.

e. Mobilisation and lobbying model

It is the most popular e-governance paradigm and has consistently aided civil society organisations in influencing international decision-making processes, particularly in poor nations.

The mobilisation model's foundation is the strategic, focused flow of information intended to fortify action and forge powerful allies. It takes a proactive stance in creating online communities that encourage active information exchange and sharing common ideals. The strength of this model and the resources and ideas brought together through virtual networks is the diversity of these virtual communities. The lobbying strategy can successfully surmount institutional, regional, and administrative obstacles to compel strict action.

14.8 E-GOVERNANCE PROJECTS AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Public-private partnerships are collaborations between the public and private sectors to create, organise, fund, build, and/or manage projects customarily considered to be under the purview of the government sector. As the PPP model becomes more widely accepted, it quickly spreads to every aspect of public life, including ICT.

Public-private partnerships in E-governance can

- a. We enhance communication between public entities, intergovernmental organisations, private businesses, and international relationships.
- b. Ensured high-quality services are expected.
- c. Enhancing government services necessitates the use of improved processes or systems.
- d. Improve governance and transparency.
- e. Giving government employees more authority at the implementation and administrative levels

Check Your Progress: 2

Note: 1) Use the space provided below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. Write about the Weidner's Dissemination model. How is it relevant for government functioning?

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2. Discuss the significance of the critical flow model. What are the advantages of this model?

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14.9 DIGITAL DIVIDE: MEANING, DEFINITION, PARAMETERS, CAUSES

The Digital Divide refers to the division of technological privileges between the haves and the have-nots. While this divide works on technology, it also has other core elements in modern times.

Material access: The core element of the digital divide is based on physical access to personal computers and the Internet among demographic categories that are obvious in this respect: income, education, age, sex, and ethnicity.

Usability access: Regarding digital technology, the core difference is between the 'have-nots' and the element of usability. Despite the concept of usability, it is rather significant to understand that most communities do not understand the applicability of digital technology despite access to it. Some studies have found that the refusal to use computers and get connected to the Internet was:

- no need or significant usage opportunities;
- no time or liking;
- rejection of the medium (the Internet and computer games as 'dangerous' media);
- lack of money;

Skills access

After acquiring the motivation to use computers and some kind of physical access to them, one has to learn to manage the hardware and software. According to the model in Fig. 1, the problem of a lack of skills might appear here. This problem is framed with terms such as 'computer, information or multimedia literacy' and 'computer skills' or 'information capital.'

Usage access

Actual usage of digital media is the final stage and ultimate goal of the total appropriation process of technology, which is called access in this article.

Having sufficient motivation, physical access, and skills to apply digital media are necessary but not sufficient conditions for actual use. Usage has its grounds or determinants. As a dependent factor, it can be measured in at least four ways:

1. usage time;
2. usage applications and diversity;
3. broadband or narrowband use;
4. more or less active or creative use.

Bridging Digital Divide

Over one billion people live in India, and 70% do so in villages. According to the report published by the National Survey of India, the literacy rate of India is 77.7 per cent, with males being 84.70 % and women being 70.30%. Even though the information and communication technology (ICT) sector is robust and expanding quickly, access to ICTs is still quite limited, especially in rural areas. Some requirements must be met for every revolution to occur. India has not yet created the supportive atmosphere needed for the digital revolution. The infrastructure is the primary bottleneck. Infrastructure factors like energy and IT restrict access to technologies. As of 2023, while the infrastructure has developed considerably, there are still jarring gaps in the skills available to utilise the resources and in some significant pockets, there are psychological barriers that limit the application of the apps. The major areas which need to be addressed are.

- a. Infrastructural knowledge
- b. Breaking the psychological qualms over applying IT
- c. Creating a fertile ground for skill development

14.10 OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGE OF E-GOVERNANCE IN INDIA

Building Infrastructures: Significant efforts would need to be made to gather the resources required for this difficult task. Governments could organise computer leasing agreements as a means of addressing the issue. This would lower the initial large capital expenditures.

Improved Connectivity: Creating total connectivity across all ministries and departments will enable the efficient speed of the Internet to be used for transferring files and paperwork instead of manual labour. Databases from different departments must be interoperable for this to be truly successful. For citizens to benefit from IT daily, interoperability of e-governance projects is crucial.

Information flow: Information flow is smooth when provided to the public in a language they can comprehend and feel at ease with, typically the native tongue. Since technology exists, translating text from English into other languages is possible. As a result, the issue is controllable as long as there is sufficient drive to complete this difficult task.

Breaking the stereotypes: Getting government workers accustomed to working exclusively manually to adopt a new perspective. This is a significant task that requires careful planning and perseverance. It is necessary to arrange training sessions, workshops, and seminars to raise awareness among staff members at all levels.

Creating Cyber awareness: Disseminating cyber laws to the public as soon as feasible to grant IT systems information documents the same legal standing as papers currently kept on paper and

Encouraging power infrastructures: Encouraging electricity infrastructures and all-weather surface transportation systems to close the digital divide in India between rural and urban areas.

Check Your Progress: 3

Note: 1) Use the space provided below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. Elaborate on the digital divide and its different types.

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2. What are the essential Opportunities and Challenges of E-Governance in India?

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14.11 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have discussed the key features of E-governance and its characteristics. We have analysed the different types of e-government, the history and evolution of its course, and the areas maintained by e-government. The unit has defined the concepts of Digital Divide and the different challenges and opportunities that arise from it. It has also discussed the areas of public-private collaboration in terms of e-government and the various dimensions of e-government.

14.12 KEYWORDS

E-filing: Electronic filing is the way to submit assessment forms over the web utilising tax preparation software that has been pre-approved by a significant expense authority, for example, the IRS or the Canada Revenue agency.

E-voting: Electronic voting utilises electronic voting to deal with throwing and tallying votes.

‘SMART Governance: The future of public services, increased efficiency,

group engagement, interactive work, and ongoing improvement through creativity are all referred to as "smart governance."

E-participation: E-participation is "the process of involving citizens in policy and decision-making through ICTs to make public administration inclusive, collaborative, deliberative, and participatory for intrinsic and instrumental ends."

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14.13 FURTHER READING

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14.14 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress: 1

1. In the 1970s, the government of India established the Department of Electronics, followed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) in 1977, thereby initiating the process of e-governance in India. By the 1980s, government offices were equipped with computers but were limited to

drafting. Eventually, this spread out to in-house government applications in diverse administration areas, system monitoring, expansion and the application of information and technology to administer data-intensive functions related to elections, census, tax administration, etc.

2. E-Governance has several benefits as it has its hindsight. In a country like India, e-governance can have several benefits. Primary among them are automation issues. To put it together, some of the leading points are:

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studies, and processing inquiry reports. There could be other advantages, such as obtaining records of human rights violations and criminal impeachment against government officials to concerned citizens and non-governmental organisations. Facilitating information on the corruption of government officials or ministries to the electoral bodies or any relevant governing council

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