ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY FOR IMPROVING GOVERNANCE

Bindu T
Assistant Professor; Sreekrishnapuram V T Bhattathirippad College, Mannampatta, India
Email: binduradhakrishnan92@gmail.com

Anooja C. V.
Guest Lecturer, Sreekrishnapuram V T Bhattathirippad College, Mannampatta, India
Email: anoojacv@gmail.com

ABSTRACT
The emergence of technology has provided means for faster and better communication, efficient storage, retrieval and processing of data and exchange and utilization of information to its users. With growing computerization and increasing internet connectivity, this process has presently reached a stage where more and more users are motivated to modifying their ways of doing things in order to get the advantages provided by technologies. It has been seen that while private companies are able to reap the advantages of technology for improving their business, the government is lagging behind in terms of offering services to the people. Across the world, the government has started utilizing the potential of technology as a remarkable solution for transmitting online information and services as it facilitates people to access public services sitting their homes or offices. In order to take the advantages of E-governance, the role of technology in governance practices must be examined. Hence, this paper has attempted to examine the role of technology for improving governance.

Keywords: Technology; Online Information; E-Governance; Internet; Governance; Communication

INTRODUCTION
Information and communication technology offers numerous possibilities to improve information management in organizations and therewith make better use of employees’ knowledge. With the increasing awareness among citizens about their rights and the resultant increase in expectations from the government to perform and deliver, the whole paradigm of governance has changed. Government, today, is expected to be transparent in its dealings, accountable for its activities and faster in its responses. The tools of modern technology such as information and communication technology should be used to transform the relationship of the government with its constituents, citizens and businesses and also between its own agencies.

Governance refers to the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country’s affairs, including citizen’s articulations of their interests and exercise of their legal rights and obligations. E – Governance is generally means as the use of information and communication technology at all levels of the government in order to provide services to the public, interaction with business firms and communication and transmission of information and other services between different agencies of the government in a speedy, convenient, efficient and transparent manner.
Reasons for Use of Technology by Government Agencies

- Exchange of information and services with citizens, or other government departments.
- Speedy and efficient delivery of public services.
- Better improvement in internal efficiency
- Increasing the revenue or reducing the cost of departments.
- Re-structuring administrative process of different departments.
- Improving the quality of services offered by departments.

E-Governance - Definition

According to the World Bank, “e-Government refers to the use by government agencies of information technologies (such as Wide Area Networks, the Internet, and Mobile computing) that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government. These technologies can serve a variety of different ends: better delivery of government services to citizens, improved interactions with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information, or more efficient government management. The resulting benefits can be less corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth, and/or cost reductions.”

OBJECTIVES OF E-GOVERNANCE

- To ensure transparency in the working of the government.
- To ensure greater efficiency, objectivity, accountability, and speed in providing information and services to public.
- To provide cost effective and quality services.
- To provide single window for all government services at district level.
- To provide responsibility in administration practices.
- To provide a friendly, speedier and efficient interface between government and public.
- To eliminate the middlemen.

Stages in E-Governance

Computerisation: Computer is the basic infrastructure for setting up e-governance. In order to implement e-governance every government departments should be equipped with computers.

Networking: In this stage, units of government organisations got connected through a hub leading to exchange of information and flow of data between different government organisations.

On-line presence: With increasing the connectivity of internet, a need was felt for maintaining a presence on the web. This resulted in maintenance of websites by government departments and other entities.

On-line interactivity: A natural consequence of on-line presence was opening up of communication channels between government entities and the citizens, civil society organisations and etc. The main aim at this stage was to minimise the scope of personal interface with government entities by providing downloadable forms, Acts, Rules etc.

Services to Be Covered Under E-Governance

- Basic citizen services: it includes Birth and death registration and health programs.
- Revenue earning services: This includes property tax and licences
Development services: this covers services like water supply and other utilities, building plan approval etc.

Efficiency improvement services: procurement and monitoring of projects and other related works.

Back office improvements: it includes improvements in accounting and personnel management system.

Vehicle Registration: It includes registration of vehicles and other services.

**Advantages of E-Governance**

i. Low cost: The cost of setting up E-Governance centre is slightly higher but the long run benefits are much high. With the full utilisation of these services, the recurring cost becomes very economical. Computer hardware set up has become very reasonable. Less human resources are required for running e-Governance services.

ii. Fast speed: e-Governance uses latest methods of working which is technology used. The working of e-Governance functions is very fast than the traditional methods of working.

**Areas of E-Governance**

- For payment of taxes
- Payment of water bills
- Payment of electricity bills.
- Payment of telephone bills
- Sale of housing board forms
- Receipt of filled in housing board forms
- Sale of university prospectus
- Receipt of instalments of Government Flats and Residential Quarters.
- Sale and collection of stamp papers
- Issuing monthly bus passes
- Issuing senior citizen card
- Issuing of certificate to handicapped persons.
- Issuing of birth and death certificates
- Keeping records of patients in government hospitals.
- Registration of domestic servants
- Issuing of passport
- Issuing of pension to eligible persons
- Booking of community centres, halls for marriage and other purposes.
- Issuing of reserved categories OBC certificates.
- Registration of tenets
Types of Interactions In E-Governance

G2G (Government to Government): In this case, information and communication technology is used not only to restructure government process but also to increase flow of services and information between different organisations. This kind of interaction is horizontal i.e. between different government agencies as well as between different functional areas or vertical i.e. between national and local government agencies as well as between different levels within an organisation.

G2C (Government to Citizens): In this case, an interface is created between the government and citizens, which enables the citizens to benefit from delivery of public services. It expands the availability and accessibility of public services on one hand and improves the quality of services on the other hand. It gives citizens the choice of when to interact, how to interact, and from where to interact etc.

G2B (Government to Business): Here, e-Governance tools are used to aid the business community. The objective is to cut red tape, save time, reduce operational costs and to create a more transparent business environment when dealing with the government. It promotes trade, tourism and investment.

G2E (Government to Employees): Government is the biggest employer; it has to interact with its employees on a regular basis. This type of interaction is a two-way process between the organisation and employees. Information technology tools helps in making these interactions fast and efficient and also increase the satisfaction level of employees.

Benefits of E-Governance

Better access to information and quality services for citizens: Information and communication technology would make available timely and reliable information on various aspects of governance. As regards services, there would be an immediate impact in terms of savings in time, effort and money, resulting from online and one point accessibility of public services backed up by automation of back end processes. The ultimate aim of e-Governance is to provide public services to citizens which would be required right from birth to death.

Simplicity, efficiency and accountability in the government: Application of information and communication technology to governance would lead to simplification of many complicated processes, avoiding unwanted processes, simplification in structures and statutes and regulations.

Expanded reach of governance: Rapid growth of information and communication technology and its adoption in governance would help in bringing government machinery to the door steps of the citizens. Expansion of telephone network, rapid strides in mobile telephony, spread of internet and strengthening of other communications infrastructure would facilitate delivery of a large number of services provided by the government.

E-Governance Initiatives in India

FRIENDS: Fast, Reliable, Instant, Efficient Network for the Disbursement of Services is part of the Kerala State IT Mission. FRIENDS’ counters handle 1000 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.

Bhoomi: The Bhoomi software, launched as part of the combined efforts of the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, and the state government of Karnataka, aims at computerising all the government land records in the state of Karnataka. This software is developed by National Informatics Centre, Bangalore; the Bhoomi software has not only eased the manner in which land owners and farmers access and update their land ownership records but it has also benefitted the administrators a great deal.

CONCERT: Country-wide Network of Computerised Enhanced Reservation and Ticketing is a popular Passenger Reservation System implemented by the Indian Railways to allow passengers to
book, modify, and cancel tickets from any source location to any destination location all over India. The passenger’s just need to log on to the railway’s website based application that connects all the regional reservation centres and allows ticket reservation in a synchronous manner.

**e-Seva:** e-Seva centres offer 118 different services like payment of utility bills / taxes, registration of birth / death, registration of application of passports, issue of birth/death certificates, filing of sales tax returns, and trade licences of MCH, B2C services like payments of Tata Teleservices, Reliance, and sale of Airtel magic cards. These services can be availed at any counter in the centre and at any place in the city.

**CARD:** The computer aided Administration of Registration Department – CARD in Andhra Pradesh is designed to eliminate the maladies affecting the conventional registration system by introducing electronic delivery of all registration services. CARD was initiated to meet objectives to demystify the registration process, bring speed, efficiency, consistency and reliability, substantially improve the citizen interface etc. Six months following the launch of the CARD project, above 80% of all land registration transactions in AP were carried out electronically.

**Gyandoot:** The Gyandoot project was initiated in January 2000 by a committed group of civil servants in consultation with various gram panchayats in the Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh. Gyandoot is a low cost, self-sustainable, and community owned rural intranet system (Soochanalaya) that caters to the specific needs of village communities in the district.

**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.

**DRISHTEE - Connecting India Village by Village:** Drishtee’s software platform enables e-governance and provides information about and access to education and health services, market – related information, and private information exchange and transactions. Drishtee offers its network platform to any service providers who perform the transactions as per their requirements. CONCERT is a distributed internet wishes to market its range of services to rural India by plugging their application in with Drishtee’s s/w offered directly at the village level.

**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.

**Akshaya:** As a part of Kerala’s ambitious e-literacy campaign, Akshaya e-Centres are being set up throughout Kerala. These centres will initially provide e-literacy to one member from every household. It acts as information and communication technology dissemination nodes.

**CONCLUSION**

The national e-Governance Plan, takes a holistic view of e-governance initiatives across the country, integrating them into a collective vision, a shared cause. Around this idea, a massive country wide infrastructure reaching down to the remotest of villages is evolving, and large scale digitalisation of records is taken place to enable easy, reliable access over internet. Large number of applications has been developed by Government to improve the governance plan. For improving the government interactions the role of technology is very high.

**REFERENCES**

