

SOUTH ASIA POLITICS

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Articles on governance, development, economics and politics and books for review are invited.

Opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors.

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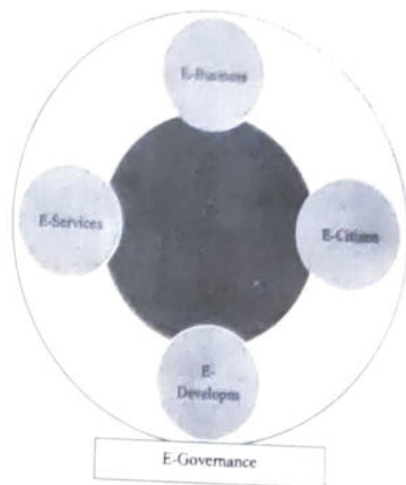
E-Governance: Trends and Challenges

M R Biju and M R B Ananthapadmanabha

E-Governance originated in India during the seventies with a focus on in house government applications in the areas of defence, economic monitoring, planning and the deployment of ICT to manage data intensive functions related to elections, census, tax administration etc. The efforts of the National Informatics Center (NIC) to connect all the district headquarters during the eighties was a watershed. From the early nineties, e-governance has seen the use of IT for wider sectoral applications with policy emphasis on reaching out to rural areas and taking in greater inputs from NGOs and private sector as well. There has been an increasing involvement of international donor agencies such as DFID, G-8, UNDP, and WB under the framework of e-governance for development. While the emphasis has been primarily on automation and computerization, state endeavors to use IT include forays

into connectivity, networking, setting up systems for processing information and delivering services. At a micro level, this has ranged from IT automation in individual departments, electronic file handling, and access to entitlements, public grievance systems, service delivery for high volume routine transactions such as payment of bills, tax dues to meeting poverty alleviation goals through the promotion of entrepreneurial models and provision of market information. The thrust has varied across initiatives, with some focusing on enabling the citizen-state interface for various government services, and others focusing on bettering livelihoods.

In short e-Governance is the application of Information and communications Technology to government functioning in order to create 'Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsive and Transparent' (SMART)



governance. The revolution in Information and communications Technology (ICT) has brought a whole new agenda for governance for wider participation of citizens in public affairs. The purpose of implementing e-Governance is to improve governance processes and outcomes with a view to improving the delivery of public services to citizens. Some authors have defined e-Governance as the e-business of the State. This seems appropriate as both e-Governance

E-governance

India needs to implement information technology extensively to bring liability and clarity in the system and to make the operations more efficient. E-Governance is the implementation of information technology for sharing government services between citizens, business persons, government, and employees. India has adopted E-governance as a tool for good governance. Today, e-governance is implemented by the government in almost every field from rural areas to urban states.

E-Governance in India faces following economic, technical and organizational challenges in its implementation.

E-Governance towards maximum governance, minimum government

E-Governance in India has transformed to promote inclusive growth that covers electronic services, products, devices and job opportunities. An initiative driving this growth is the Digital India. The Digital India programme is

a flagship programme of the Government of India with a vision to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy.

In line with the Digital India programme, Vikaspedia contributes to the key vision area of "Digital Empowerment of citizens". Through its various activities, Vikaspedia enables digital literacy, Universally accessible digital resources, Availability of digital resources / services in Indian languages through a Collaborative digital platform.

The major focus of e-Governance vertical of this portal is to support the ongoing e-Governance movement in India by providing one stop information access to available online citizen services, state specific e-Governance initiatives and awareness about online legal services, mobile governance, RTI etc. Keeping in mind the importance of empowering the VLEs, the portal has included an exclusive section "VLE Corner" to enrich them with resource materials and provide them a platform to share their experiences in their own languages.