



# A Brief Study of the Evolution & Development of E-Governance in India

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## Abstract

This paper discusses about the Evolution and Development of E-Governance in India. E-Governance takes birth with the introduction of Internet in the country in the year of 1995. Followed by the set up of Department of Information Technology came up with the Statewide Area Network, Common Service Centers, State Data Centre initiated in random fashion in 1998. In the same year National Taskforce of Information Technology and Software Development was constituted. E-Governance got its momentum with the approval of National E-Governance Plan (NeGP) in 2006 by the Government of India. E-Governance in India is still in its primary stage of development. However it is growing at a faster pace after the launch of 4G network and Digital India movement throughout the nation. Considering the large population, diversity and low computer literacy rate, it has miles to go. Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) has started various Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) under National E-Governance Plan.

**Keywords:** E-Governance in India, NeGP, Mission Mode Projects, Evolution of E-Governance.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The whole world is changing into a global village. The media theorist Marshall McLuhan gave us the memorable term "Global Village" to describe the world's new electronic Interdependence. In this era of digital world we cannot imagine a government without a digital tool or a digital system of governance. Governments have been engaged in deploying Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for several decades to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their functioning. The term E-governance was perhaps coined about

15 years ago after the success of E-commerce to represent a public sector equivalent to E-commerce.

E-Governance could be defined as an IT-led reconfiguration of public sector governance and how knowledge, power, and purpose are redistributed in light of new technological realities. To make it more simpler E-Governance or digital governance would refer to governance processes in which information and Communication Technology play a significant role. The role played by ICT could be wide ranging in delivery and standard of governance services, to how people access such services and the participation of people in governance sphere. In other word, E-Government refers to the use by government agencies of information technologies that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of governments

## II. THE EVOLUTION & DEVELOPMENT OF E-GOVERNANCE IN INDIA

India is a land of diversity. This diversity spans across culture, tradition, language, geography and the economic condition of the people. It is a nation that has a significant number of people who are below the minimal socio-economic benchmarks. This include rural and urban poor, women in rural areas, street children, people belonging to historically disadvantaged castes and people living in less developed areas. The vulnerability of these sections of society has increased with globalization and this section is prone to become even more marginalized economically and socially. Successive governments have committed themselves to addressing these divides, but effective implementation of various economic development programs aimed at individual belonging to these sections of society has proved an elusive goal.



Government of India (GOI) recognizes that e-Governance in the context of developing countries provides an excellent opportunity for improving governance. Used imaginatively, it has a trigger for introducing various administrative reforms. These changes could not only go a long way in improving the quality of life of these sections of society, but could actually provide them more equitable access to economic opportunities than even before. In this context, the Government of India views e-Governance as a strategic tool for transforming governance and improving the quality of services provided by the government to its people. India's experience in e-Governance/ICT initiatives has demonstrated significant success in improving accessibility, cutting down costs, reducing corruption, extending help and increased access to un-served groups. In this phase of experimentation, e-government initiatives have reached millions of people belonging to these sections of society. Improved access to information and services has provided opportunities for economic and social development; facilitated participation and communication in policy and decision making process and empowerment of the weakest groups. This has led to fostering a sense of ownership and building of social capital, which in turn, constitute a basis for local revitalization. The Government of India, in various forms, has indicated its commitment to provide efficient and transparent government to all strata of society. E-Governance is now mainly seen as a key element of the country's governance and administrative reform agenda.

## 2.1 The Chronology of Evolution of E-Governance in India

The chronological details in respect of E-Governance must be read in conjunction with the development of internet also. Some details are furnished below.

**15 August 1995** – Launch of Internet in India

**1998** - Department of Information Technology, Government of India e-Procurement, Statewide Area Network, Common Service Centers, State Data Centre are initiated in random fashion.

**May 1998** - Establishment of the National Taskforce of Information Technology and Software Development.

**May 18, 2006** – Government of India approves the **National E-Governance Plan. (NeGP)**

**2007** – Broadband Launched

**2009** – Total Broadband connections in the country have reached 2.996 million by the end of August 2009. During August 2009 there is an increase of 0.09 million Broadband connections (TRAI Report)

**2010** – Introduction of 3 G Services. (International Journal of Electronic Governance online ISSN 1742-7517)

**2015** - 4G introduced across India in limited phases. Digital India boosts E-Governance

**2016 - Smart Cities concept announced.**

All the above Protocols and Services have contributed to the growth of E-Governance in India. E-Governance is more than just a government website on the Internet. But what is it exactly? What are the benefits of E-Governance? What can governments do to make it work? Solutions to development issues often require changes to government processes, e.g. by organizational SOPs. Objectives are generally to improve efficiency and effectiveness and to save costs. The driving force can also be public demand for online services and information that increase democratic participation, accountability, transparency, and the quality and speed of services. The implementation and use of ICT solutions can support governance reforms.

E-Governance will become more and more present around the world in the next few years. Internationally most countries are in the early stages of E-Governance. A good start has been made in Europe, USA and in other Westernized countries such as Australia and Singapore.

## 2.2 Important Milestones in E-Governance.

• **IT Evolution and Pre-requisites** It is turning Public administration into public management. Rajiv Gandhi can be truly credited to be father of Telecommunication in 1980s. On the other hand for liberalization and open economy credit goes to PV Narsimha Rao and Dr Manmohan Singh in 1990s The credit for IT revolution and E- governance and the information society goes to late Parmod Mahajan and his mentor Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in early 2000s. In fact it was an idea whose time had come.

• In pace with these **global trends**, India has also undertaken massive initiatives to introduce E-Governance at the national, state and local levels. In fact India was one of the few developing countries venturing into E-Governance by legislating IT Act in 2001. In terms of the total number of government websites, although the advanced industrial countries top the list, India is still ranked 7th in the global list.

• **Connectivity Computerization and Connectivity** were defined as the main goals of the 10th Five Year Plan (2002-2007). The Government had set the target of delivering at least 25% of its dealings and services electronically by taking all needed measures. Obviously goal has not been reached. Expansion is ongoing.



### •Initiatives and Institutions at the National Level

On the recommendations of the National Task Force on IT, a new Ministry of Communication and Information Technology was created in 1999 to act as a nodal agency for implementing official policies on IT and to facilitate the growth of the IT sector.

•**Centre for E-Governance.** On 15th August 2000 DIT under the above ministry set up a centre for E-Governance at its premises —Electronics Niketan in Delhi ( [www.mit.gov.in/ceg1/index.asp](http://www.mit.gov.in/ceg1/index.asp) ) The primary activities of the centre are: To showcase the best practices in the area of E-Governance; To Demonstrate the feasibility of E-Governance to decision makers. To Help the centre and state governments in implementing the E-Governance processes.

•**Right to Information Act(2005)** Another closely related legislation is the Right to Information Act. Information is the most treasured and potent tool in the hands of rulers to maintain political power. Govt. information to public was usually denied under the pretext of the official Secret Act of 1889 amended in 1923. Now the Right to Information Act 2005 passed by the Parliament on 15 June 2005 mandates timely provision of information to any citizen requested from any government office. The act also requires every public authority to computerize their records and proactively publish certain of information. It enormously facilitates E-Governance.

•**National E-Governance (NeGP) Action Plan** The government had approved the National E-Governance plan for its implementation during the year 2003-2007. The plan laid the foundation and provided the impetus for long term growth of E-Governance in the country. The plan had a budget of Rs. 6000 million with a matching amount allotted by the Planning Commission. The World Bank provided \$500 million assistance for various E-Governance plans.

DIT is driving the national E-Governance plan, which seeks to create the right governance and institutional mechanisms, and implement a number of Mission Mode projects at the centre and state government level. Almost all ministers and departments have their Web pages on the NIC website displaying objectives, responsibilities, contact person, their policy and other decisions.

•**State Level Initiatives.** 29 Indian states and union territories have their own IT policies in place with the aim of evolving themselves from being an IT aware to an IT enabled government. The central government has adopted certain measures to assist various states in pursuing E-Governance. The state governments themselves have also undertaken

massive initiatives to transform their governance system based on IT. Some of the leading states are Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, New Delhi and Tamil Nadu. In implementation of the projects Maharashtra has emerged as a leader with 38 projects, followed by West Bengal (29), Tripura (27), Haryana (25), Andhra Pradesh (23), Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh with 21 each. Nearly 13 states or UTs have not implemented even a single project.

•**NGOs and Private Endeavours** A public-private partnership is the bedrock to make e-Community services a reality. Some existing such Programs are:

(i) **Tara haat:** It is a project to provide online services to large number of rural people of north India. It has been promoted by the Development Alternatives (DA), a Delhi based NGO. Its pilot projects are in place at several locations in Bundelkhand, MP and in Punjab.. A wide range of services like E-news, Ecommerce, E-Governance, e-education, E-Health and e-entertainment are provided through computerized 'Tara dhabas'.

(ii) **Drishtee Meaning Vision,** it offers E-Governance, education and health services through a software package which facilitates communication and information interchange within a localized intranet between villages and a district centre. This is operational in five Indian states, namely, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. The objective of the project is to use IT to serve rural people directly rather than through civil servants

(iii) **Ikisan.com** The Nagarjuna Group has developed this website which offers weather forecasts, commodity news, products availability online loan facilities, chat rooms and network with other farmers. It has also initiated setting up websites for farmers in 13 Indian states to provide agriculture advice as well as commodity prices for farmers in their own languages (<http://www.ikisan.com>).

### 2.3 Recommendations of National Knowledge Commission —

E-Governance is more about an opportunity for administrative reforms than merely about electronics and information technology and infrastructure. The NKC recommendations to the government broadly relate to processes and standards, infrastructure and organizations. It focuses on the need to reengineer the process first, to change our basic governance pattern for simplicity, transparency, productivity, with less paper and more efficiency. The Commission has suggested that the government



should select 10 to 20 important services that make a critical difference, offer web-based services, develop common standards and deploy common platform/infrastructure for E-Governance to make it citizen centric. It has also proposed that new national programs like Bharat Nirman, Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, etc. should be begun with well-engineered E-Governance with strong committed leadership, autonomy, flexibility, clarity of purpose, predefined deliverables, measurable milestones and periodic monitoring. [www.knowledgecommission.org](http://www.knowledgecommission.org)

•**Causes of Concern.** In spite of some encouraging ranking and responses, the E-Governance in India has not shown any promising results even in terms of service delivery. The gains in India are on the technical side and the organizational and behavioral dimensions of the process of governance are ignored. The result is that application of IT is half-hearted and it has delivered less than optimal results. There is a general feeling that the key challenges with E-Governance are not technology or Internet issues, but organizational issues like redefining rules and procedures, information transparency, legal issues, infrastructure, skill and awareness, info literacy access to authentic sources through enforcement of the right to information, interdepartmental collaboration and tendency to resist the work culture. Adopting a holistic approach can give desirable results. It is a big challenge as our Ex. President Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam says, providing E-Governance service to over one billion people is a big challenge. No country has ever implemented it fully.

**2.4 National E-Governance Projects:** The National E-Governance Plan (NeGP) has been formulated by the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DEITY) and Development of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG). It got the approval by Union Government on 18 May 2006. The vision statement of this plan mentions that, it aims to, "Make all Government services accessible to the common man in his locality, through common service delivery outlets and ensure efficiency, transparency and reliability of such services at affordable costs to realize the basic needs of the common man." Implementation of E-Governance is a highly complex process requiring provisioning of hardware and software, networking, process re-engineering and change management.

#### Features Of National Projects

Based on lessons learnt from the past and the experience from successful E-Governance applications, the approach and methodology adopted for NeGP (as mentioned on the Government of India Web Portal) contains the following features:

**(i) Common Support Infrastructure:**

NeGP implementation involves setting up of common and support IT infrastructure such as State Wide Area Networks (SWANs), State Data Centres (SDCs), Common Service Centres (CSCs) and Electronics Service Delivery Gateways (ESDGs).

**(ii) Governance:** Suitable arrangements for monitoring and coordinating the implementation of NeGP under the direction of the competent authorities have also been substantially put in place. The programme also involves evolving/laying down standards and policy guidelines, providing technical support, undertaking capacity building, R&D etc. the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DEITY) is required to adequately strengthen itself for this purpose.

**(iii) Centralized Initiative, Decentralized Implementation:** E-Governance is being promoted through a centralized initiative to the extent necessary to ensure citizen-centric orientation, to realize the objective of inter-operability of various E-Governance applications and to ensure optimal utilization of ICT infrastructure and resources while allowing for a decentralized successful projects and replicating them with required customization wherever needed.

**(iv) Public Private Partnerships:** It is to be adopted wherever feasible to enlarge the resource pool without compromising the security aspects.

**(v) Integrative Elements:** Adoption of unique identification codes for citizens, businesses and property is to be promoted to facilitate integration and avoid ambiguity.

**(vi) Programme Approach at the National and State Levels:** For implementation of the NeGP, various Union Ministries/ Departments and State Governments are involved. Considering the multiplicity of agencies involved and the need for overall aggregation and integration at the national level, NeGP is being implemented as a programme, with well-defined roles and responsibilities of each agency involved. For facilitating this, appropriate programme management structures have also been put in place.

**(vii) Facilitator role of DEITY:** DEITY is the facilitator and catalyst for the implementation of NeGP by various Ministries and State Governments and also provides technical assistance. It serves as a secretariat to the Apex Committee and assists it in





managing the programme. In addition, DEITY is also implementing pilot/Infrastructure/technical/special projects and support components. Planning Commission and Ministry of Finance allocate funds for NeGP through Plan and Non-plan budgetary provisions and lay down appropriate procedures in this regard. **(viii) Ownership of Ministries:** Under the NeGP, various MMPs are owned and spearheaded by the concerned line Ministries. In case there are any ongoing projects which fall in the MMP category, they would be suitably enhanced to align them with the objectives of NeGP. For major projects like Bharat Nirman, Rural Employment Guarantee Schemes, etc. the line ministries concerned are advised to make use of E-Governance as also automation techniques from the inception stage. States have been given the flexibility to identify a few additional state-specific projects, which are relevant for the economic development of the state.

## 2.5 The Mission Mode Projects

An MMP or Mission Mode Project refers to an individual project within the framework of National E-Governance Plan (NeGP 2.0) that emphasizes on, any one aspect of electronic governance, such as Banking, Commercial taxes, land records or Panchayatiraj etc. here “mission mode” indicates that, these projects have clearly defined objectives, scopes, and implementation timelines and milestones, as well as measurable outcomes and service levels.

## Components of Mission Mode Projects

The components of MMPs include **(i) Capacity building scheme-** The scheme envisions Establishment of Institutional Framework for State Level Strategic decision- making including setting-up of State e-Governance Mission Team (SeMT), Imparting of specialized training, Orientation program for SeMTs and decision makers, Setting up of a central Capacity Building Management Cell for coordination and implementation of the scheme. **(ii) Awareness and communication** - The main objectives of the scheme are- Build NeGP as an umbrella brand, Create awareness about e-Governance services and service delivery points, Build ownership/ stake of implementers in NeGP. **(iii) Impact and outcomes** - Besides assessment of projects, DeitY also undertakes e-Readiness Assessment of States and Union Territories. **(iv) Standards and Policies** - Standards in e-Governance are a high priority activity, which will help ensure sharing of information and seamless interoperability of data across e-Governance applications.

**Status of Mission Mode Projects:** NeGP comprises of 44 Mission Mode Projects encompassing 17 central MMPs, 16 state MMPs and 11 integrated MMPs. MMPs are owned and spearheaded by various line ministries. State Governments are responsible for implementing State MMPs, under the overall guidance of respective Line Ministries in cases where Central Assistance is also required. Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) acts as the facilitator and catalyst for the implementation of NeGP and provides technical assistance to various Ministries / Departments and State Governments.

## The Core Projects (Mission Mode Projects)

Central MMPs	State MMPs	Integrated MMPs
1. Banking	1. Agriculture 2.0	1. CSC
2. Central Excise & Customs	2. Commercial Taxes	2. e-Biz
3. Income Tax (IT)	3. e-District	3. e-Courts
4. Insurance	4. Employment Exchange	4. e-Procurement
5. MCA21	5. Land Records (NLRMP)	5. EDI For eTrade
6. Passport	6. Municipalities	6. National e-governance Service Delivery Gateway
7. Immigration, Visa and Foreigners Registration & Tracking	7. e-Panchayat	7. India Portal
8. Pension	8. Police (CCTNS)	8. Financial Inclusion
9. e-Office	9. Transport	9. Roads and Highways Information System
10. Posts	10. Treasuries	10. Social benefit



	Computerization	
11. UID	11. PDS	11. National GIS
12. Central Armed Para Military Forces	12. Education	
13. e-Sansad	13. Health	
14. e-Bhasha	14. e-Vidhaan	
15. NMEICT - National Mission on Education through ICT	15 Rural Development	
16. IVFRT- Immigration, Visa Foreigner's Registration & Tracking(Immigration)	16 Women and Child Development	
17. Urban Governance		

### III. CONCLUSION:

Started with the introduction of Internet in the middle nineties E-Governance has travelled a long in its journey. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) is doing a commendable job in the direction of E-Governance through implementing Mission Mode projects. The announcement of Digital India programme in 2015 has given a big momentum to the transformation of governing process from offline to online. Mere computerization of the government offices cannot be said E-Governance. it's a complete transformation towards a citizen centric approach of the governance. Computer literacy of the common citizen, Robust IT infrastructure , Good quality of IT professionals, Reach of the digital network to every nook and corner of the country and Cyber safety are the key area to be focused. India has miles to go in the way Electronic Governance. It will bring the democracy in a true manner.

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