

# Free essay on e-governance

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



## **Abstract**

There have been practiced 2 ineluctable trends in reshaping the functions of a government. The initial trend sways away from the policies of centralization hierarchal or vertical governmental machines in the way of polycentric networks related to governance that relies on different horizontal connections between assorted actors and that too within multi-layered as well as complex societies. On the other hand, the next trend emphasizes on the introduction of ICT methods which is focused on the transformation within the delivery of various types of public services and generation. Within these 2 trends there lies the concept of e-governance (Coleman, 2005).

## **Introduction**

In simpler terms, e-governance can also be defined as the usage of information technology by the government for the purpose of exchanging services and information with that of businesses, citizens as well as different other supports of the government. The concept might be applied either through judiciary, administration or legislature so as to improve the overall situation of internal efficiency, procedures involved in democratic governance and within the delivery of various public based services.

## **United Nations defines e-governance in the following words:**

“ A government that applies ICT to transform its internal and external relationships” (United Nations, 2003)”

The basic delivery models of e-governance are G2C (Government-to-Customer/Citizen), G2B (Government-to-Business), G2E (Government-to-Employees) and G2G (Government-to-Government). Associated benefits with

e-governance are the increased level of efficiency, more accessibility to public services and convenience.

## **Methodology**

Based on the concept of taxonomies given by Nitro, following mentioned are the domains of e-governance (Heeks 2001a):

- Improving governmental process - E-administration
- Developing a connection between every citizen and the government - E-services
- Creating interactions within and with the civil society - E-society

The main reason for the E-administration domain is to bring in a great deal of improvement within the internal mechanism of the public sector through managing process performances, reducing process costs, creating empowerment as well as developing strategic connections in between the government bodies. A good example of e-administration can be the reduction in the lead time given to apply for passports from 15 days to that of 1 day.

On the other hand, the initiatives taken through E-services has its main aim in formatting relationships between the governing body of a country and the citizens by means of improving the flow of information within them.

Additionally, improving the entire level of services by the government for its citizens is also included in the category of E-services. Opportunity offered to citizens by the public service institutions to apply for the obtaining of a business license by a website is a good example of E-services.

The last domain of E-governance, E-society, tends to expand the previous domains of E-services by maintaining its focus on various institutional

shareholders like that of community or not-for-profit organizations, service providers from the private sector and various public agencies. Moreover, this last domain also aims in developing partnership aspects that are long lasting within the social-economic communities. Creating an effective business community portal can be referred to as a good example of E-society.

## **Literature Review**

Speaking about e-governance practically, the 3 domains are rarely separate within their implementations; as a matter of fact they are inclusive of overlapping activities being part of the similar initiative. Presenting the concept in a stronger way, a well-planned e-governance program should take into the story of all the 3 domains which are graphically illustrated as follows:

This diagram shows the prime vertical and horizontal factors which affects the actions to be inherently carried out by the government. Apart from the main action plans mentioned, the initiatives are also affected by the various actors or more precisely the variables that were mentioned earlier on.

## **SWOT Analysis**

The present economic downturn cannot be underestimated as this unstable period can be viewed either as a huge threat for rationalizing public financing or as an opportunity, ensuring an efficient as well as a systematic framework of operations along with addressing various societal challenges in a very efficient and consistent way. Following mentioned is the SWOT analysis of E-governance projects that are operating within the developing countries.

## **Strengths**

- Equipped human resources
- Developed strategic and legislation framework within the developing countries.
- Relevant e-readiness and infrastructure levels as well as indexes of the developing countries are present.
- Developing as well as implementing e-governance within cross border services.
- Internet being a pulling factor
- Is combined with democratic reforms.
- Portrays a modern image.
- People are eager to learn different IT skills.
- It is a transparent procedure for procurement of business items.
- Is considered to be a good way for external funding.
- Negative legacy is not present.

## **Weaknesses**

- The implementation of e-governance present strategies and legislations are quite insufficient.
- Shortage of principles in the overall structuring of the information of various E-governmental portals.
- Measuring the level of participation in the quality as well as the usefulness of different services and information is quite low.
- Developing countries are lagging behind as compared to developed countries in the implementation process of e-governance.
- The limited use of e-governance social media also limits the change within

the governmental scenario.

- Inconsistencies within national legislations, administrative habits as well as cultural aspects.
- Digital division and barriers within e-Inclusion.
- Absence of cyber laws in developing countries.
- Lower expertise in technology as well as high cost of obtaining it.
- The decision making process is slow.
- Organizations are operated on hierarchical basis.
- Intense competition with the private sector.

## **Opportunities**

- Hostile adoption of rapidly growing mobile technologies within e-governance services.
- Bridging the gap between that of the leaders and the followers within the implementation process of e-governance by means of regional cooperation.
- Scope to introduce effective partnership along with the opportunity to outsource strategies.
- High potential technological aspects are introduced as well as implemented within e-governance services such as social networks, mobile technologies as well as cloud computing.
- The approach of service oriented architecture is available inclusive of significant opportunities so as to offer e-governance services.
- Considerable development within applications which facilitates the citizens to gain easy access to services.
- The transparency within the procedure enables natural change within the governmental processes.

- A good source to raise funds from external sources.
- Education and employment situation improves.
- Cost efficient.
- Efficient in tax revenues.
- Used hardware solutions are available which renders the entire process to become cost effective.

## **Threats**

- The prevailing financial and economic crisis within Europe might change the priority of e-governance policies.
- The increasing gap within the availability of ICT procedures.
- The ever increasing rate of e-crimes and failures of developing countries in controlling it.
- The approach towards public services is government-centric.
- Failing to create effective interoperability within organizations and systems.
- The regulation of new and advanced technologies is delayed. Additionally, business models like outsourcing of public services and cloud computing is also present within the implementation of e-governance within developing countries.
- Lack of e-skills.

## **Findings and Results**

A report issued by the United Nations presents the guiding principles for the successful implementation of e-governance (United Nations, 2003). The report is inclusive of the underlying reasons because of which this process is

recommended to the government and the users. Successful carrying of e-governance policies are categorized within three basic groups that are mentioned as follows:

- Underlying reasons for the government in order to make use of ICT within the operations as well as to go online.
- Emphasizing the ability of the government in question to adopt ICT methods along with going online.
- The underlying reasons associated with the user for the purpose of using ICT in order to develop communication with government.

Following mentioned are the reasons why a government of a developing nation is recommended to adopt e-governance policies in its operations:

- Effectiveness and efficiency being the key factor for government concern:

The factors of ICT can best judge the role of government in different aspects either predominantly or partly. The connection between the applications of ICT, the optimization of every governmental operation and the achievement of various important goals of social development came out to be quite a convincing reason for developing nations to adopt e-governance policies.

- The need for priority development which also requires government intervention: The applications of e-governance are best fixed within areas which are in close connection with the priority development requirements of the society. Through this approach, broader support is developed thereby, making it very easy to overcome inherent hurdles as well as sustaining funding, commitment and attention.



## **Benefits of E-Governance**

The various advantages offered by the implementation of e-governance to the society, corporate sector as well as to the government are mentioned as follows:

- Improved delivery of services to citizens.
- Enhanced communication within businesses and industry.
- Easy access to information enables citizen empowerment.
- Government management become efficient.
- The electronic connection between government department and ministries offers a way to conduct better governance.
- The e-governance portal enables citizens to access government services easily along with conducting online transactions quickly.

## **Factors Responsible For Implementing E-Governance Projects**

A government's ability to implement ICT operations along with maintaining a successful presence online greatly depends upon the following mentioned factors:

- Availability of basic funding requirements: The operations of e-governance should be initiated with a good perceptive of the costs involved along with assured funding which is followed by a very careful analysis of different opportunity costs involved. Whenever, there arises a situation in which funding is treated in terms of business investment, either considered to be feasible or has been advised, should always include the expectations of returns.
- Culture and skills of civil service: By means of programmed management,

partnership development skills as well as through ICT methods, the civil servants should be willing and able to offer support to e-government policies or at least be eager to learn about this change in governmental operations. The prevailing culture within civil services tends to assess the loss of jobs, power as well as prestige that might be imposed by the e-government on individual civil servants.

- Legal framework: The implementation of e-governance policies impose different legal requirements which should not only be realized but, should also be dealt as early as possible.
- Co-ordination: The required Co-ordination as well as effort between and within different government agencies should be checked out prior to carrying any e-government applications so as to prevent duplication, meet all expectations associated with it and assure interoperability.
- Infrastructure of ICT: The requirements of infrastructure should be assessed as against the requirements and the preferred results of the development of e-governance plans. Assessing these risks insufficiently or limiting the results or doing the entire situation alternatively will eventually become expensive and will render ICT infrastructure to become idle furniture.
- Involvement of general public: The development of e-governance policies involves the active participation of general public to hold private stakes in this process. The involvement should include the soliciting of individuals to participate within the implementation of e-governance applications so that they are made in accordance of the way citizens live as well as work.
- Partnerships: Early in this process, the government should practice

involving organizations of civil society and business firms to enter into a partnership so as to obtain financial resources, improvement in skills, increased access as well as sufficient capacity to serve within the ICT network. Though, the development of partnership must not be forged on the cost of being transparent, the economic soundness within investments and accountability aspects.

- Evaluating plans for the development of technical infrastructure and human capital: A proper plan should be developed so as to close the current gaps prevailing within ICT access and skills. If this does not take place effectively, neither the citizenry nor the public administration can be expected to become literate from e-governance capabilities which are a core ingredient for its successful implementation.

- Evaluation and monitoring: Setting up of responsibilities as well as realistic benchmarks for the development of e-government along with conducting a transparent monitoring process is also considered to be essential for the eventual success. Moreover, it also facilitates the accountability framework and transparency within the public sector.

## **Challenges to E-Governance**

The concept of e-governance is, in actual, the tool towards good governance rather than the use of information technology within governance. It does not refer to the proliferation of computers and other technological accessories however, it involves political elements that call for change in attitude, discipline as well as the re-engineering of massive governmental process (Ravi Kant).

All drivers and implementers of e-governance are of the opinion that the

greatest challenge imposed for the deployment of e-governance projects within developing nations is not the technology but, it is the change within the management. This is essential in terms of cultural change as well as changing processes and operations workflow that will be automated by the implementation of e-governance projects.

Moreover, it is very important to let people know that the implementation of information technology will not have its effect on the reduction of job availability however; the employment process will be made easier. Moreover, since the project involves less requirement of manpower for smooth operations, the employees can be redeployed to other areas giving no threat to their growing career path.

The core challenges associated with electronic governance, which are apart from technological issues and are in association with organizational issues, are mentioned as follows:

- Transparency of information.
- Legal issues.
- Redefining of procedures and rules.
- Interdepartmental collaboration.
- Access to adequate information.
- Awareness, skills as well as infrastructure.
- The propensity to resist change within work culture.

In addition to these challenges, some other obstacles include geographical distances, lack of ICT penetration within remote areas and lack of skilled human resources. For example, applying a good e-governance project in remote areas will be unable to benefit anyone if it is not supported with

adequate infrastructure like that of computers, electricity and connectivity.

The challenge associated with connectivity has also been reduced in the recent times due to the decreasing rates of bandwidth and more access towards the service providers of connectivity.

Successful implementation of e-governance lies within the right selection of project's concoction, preparing a complete plan with that of the stakeholders along with carefully selecting appropriate as well as inexpensive use of technologies so as to create scalable and flexible systems to deliver efficient citizen services. The resources lying within the reach of the government and the citizens are quite limited which means that drafting proper conceptualization should continue to be a priority before starting new projects in this regard.

## **Conclusion**

The UN prepared a report 'E-governance at the Crossroads' (World Public Sector Report, 2003) in association with the department of Economic and Social Affairs in which they have arrived on three basic conclusions about the current situation of implementing e-governance within developing nations. The initial conclusion is based on an extensive survey which indicates that developing countries are attempting to create as well as apply e-governance projects which are quite the same to those being practiced within developed countries. As a matter of fact, the survey indicates that the level of services and information provided by developing nations are as or more mature and sophisticated as compared to those applications that are being used within developed nations. In spite of this situation, developing countries are still facing many challenges which are far greater to those challenges

being faced by developed countries in the process of pursuing e-governance applications. For example, they are required to content with the limited availability of human capital and financial resources during the procedure of creating an effective ICT infrastructure, to develop overall technological and educational skills along with widespread financing of technology within rural areas or various other populations that are deemed to be under-served.

The mechanism adopted for Telecommunication Infrastructure Index by the UN in its report, it has been admitted that less emphasis has been imposed upon the use of mobile technology as compared to that of a nation's own computer density, number of available telephone lines, the amount of internet users and the population on the Internet. The report says that developing nations are addressing implementation of e-governance by making use of presently available technologies in an innovative way such as telephone, mobile and radio.

The next two conclusions issued in the report of the United Nations are that both the developing as well as the developed countries have made quite limited use of different on-line services to make transactions and secondly, the conclusion says that participation within e-government ranges to be ' non-existent' to that of being ' rudimentary'. The ending of the report suggests that implementing e-governance successfully within developing nations requires no one perfect strategy. The basic is that these governments should be able to respond towards the particular needs of their societies.

The above mentioned conclusions portrays many areas where opportunity lies and within which developing countries can attempt to pursue their

underlying strategy for the implementation of e-governance by means of innovative and practical applications.

Efficient applications of e-governance are considered to be a transparent and an innovative way to pass out governmental services and to exchange information with that of the citizens thereby, saving money and time.

There are numerous developing nations which have reached to the edge of solid progress however, there are a still a number of challenges that should be faced. The governments must take more strategic steps in order to mobilize limited resources for the purpose of responding towards citizen's need effectively along with bridging the gap between citizens and public institutions. Moreover, developing a robust infrastructure for electronic participation can also be quite expensive.

There is a need to learn from each other experiences, investments in infrastructure projects, plans, policies, human capital and technological aspects for both the developing as well as developed countries. Having this in thoughts, multilateral organizations and countries tends to increase their efforts to share their e-governance experience with others.

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