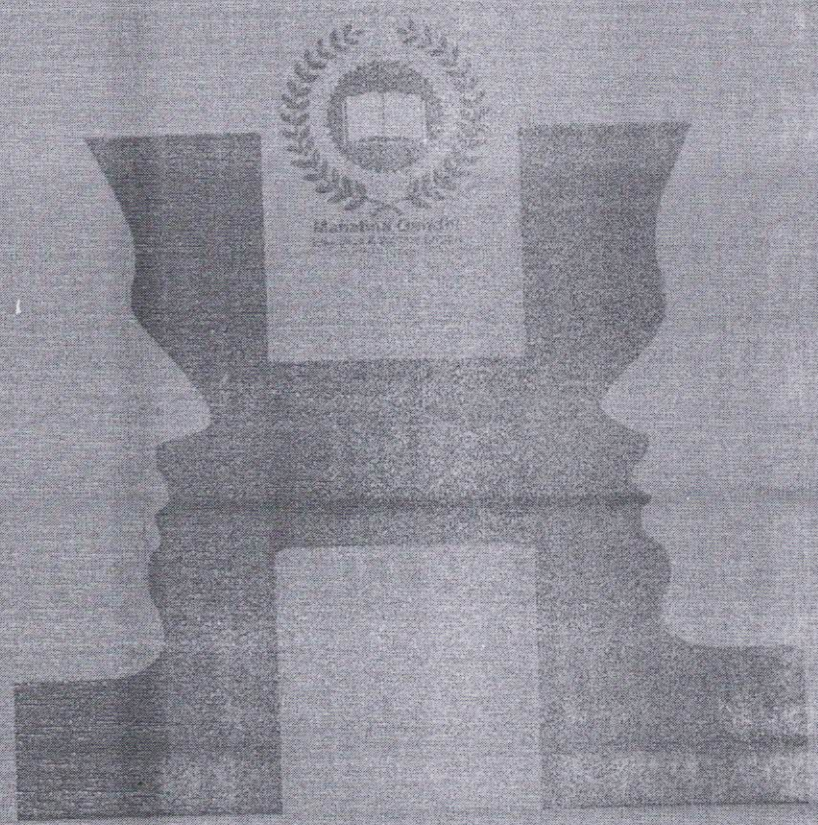




VOL. 6 | ISSUE 1 | JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2018

CHRONICLE OF HUMANITIES AND CULTURAL STUDIES

A Peer Reviewed Bimonthly International Journal



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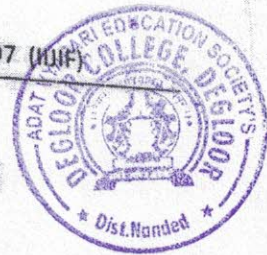
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Good Governance, E-Governance and Public Administration

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Good Governance & E-government has been an important notion within the discipline of public administration. In the research project "Benchmarking E-government: A Global Perspective," the United Nations (UN), provides a definition of e-government which refers to "virtually all information and communication technology (ICT) platforms and applications in use by the public sector". In this sense, e-government exists when the public sector employs new information technologies. The UN elaborates on this definition: e-government refers to "utilizing the internet and the world-wide-web for delivering government information and services to citizens". This suggests that e-government is in place when the public sector provides citizens with web-based information and transaction services via technologies such as the internet and the world-wide-web.

Based on several studies, E-government systems have been found to produce a number of benefits that foster good governance. For instance, the World Bank defines e-government by listing its benefits. In this regard, e-government is defined as 'the use by government agencies of information technologies 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'. Good Governance and E-government further promotes the responsiveness of government institutions, Administrative offices including growing citizens' demands to have improved access to the needed public services, as well as concerns about fostering public institutional efficiency and improving security measures E-government systems reduce government institutions' costs. investigated how using the internet makes local government purchasing operations cost-effective. Sending web-based purchasing proposals to a list of suppliers through a simple click of mouse helps local governments save time since they no longer need the "time-consuming administrative steps of photocopying, folding, addressing and mailing bid packages". In this respect, the time for making and communicating those proposals becomes a matter of minutes, as opposed to hours. This is because suppliers' lists can be shared by different government agencies while frequent bids modifications can be done easily and quickly online. Thus, the use of the internet eliminates the slow manual chain of repetitive actions.

It is interesting to notice that most of the studies (only few of them have been mentioned in this section because of space constraints), address the link between E-Government systems and Governance on a fragmentary, contextual and, in many cases, theoretical basis. They are mostly local (specific to a given country, city or community) and theme-oriented (cost reduction, organizational change, better service to citizens, etc.). This means that they don't consider Governance as a system that cannot be reduced to one of its constituents or aggregated using particular features of several of its elements. This is why these studies are not relevant for generalization purposes. Rather, what we need is a structured framework, based on a systemic approach that considers the Governance in all its aspects and with all its constituents, without reference to a specific experience results or a specific context description. E-Governance is slowly becoming a buzzword in the corridors of power. What actually then is E-governance? Simply stated, the use of Information and Communication Technology in governance may be termed as E-Governance. It has radically defined the way a government provides service to citizens, businesses and other arms of the government using the following delivery models:

- Government-to-Citizen (G2C)
- Government-to-Business (G2B)
- Government-to-Government (G2G)
- Government-to-Employees (G2E)

The term E-Governance has different connotations:

- E-Administration—The use of ICT to modernize the state; the creation of data repositories for MIS, computerization of records.
- E-Services—The emphasis here is to bring the state closer to the citizens. Examples include provision of online services. E-administration and e-services together constitute what is generally termed e-government.
- E-Governance—The use of IT to improve the ability of government to address the needs of society. It includes the publishing of policy and programme related information to transact with citizens. It extends beyond provision of on-line services and covers the use of IT for strategic planning and reaching development goals of the government.
- E-Democracy—The use of IT to facilitate the ability of all sections of society to participate in the governance of the state. The remit is much broader here with a stated emphasis on transparency, accountability and participation. Examples could include online disclosure policies, online grievance redress forums and e-referendums.



For the past few years, a great deal of focus has shifted to this concept of e-governance which has varying meaning and significance, as already stated. Initially, the term was a little more than a general recognition of a confluence of information technology developments and application and use of these technologies by government entities. With the passage of time however, the term is being used as a reference to both current applications of Information Technology to government operations and a goal of realizing more efficient and transparent performance of government functions. E-Governance involves access to government information and services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in a way that is focused on the needs of the citizens. E-Governance relies heavily on the effective use of Internet and other emerging technologies to receive and deliver information and services easily, quickly, efficiently and inexpensively.

E-Governance helps simplify processes and makes access to government information easier. The other anticipated benefits of e-governance include efficiency in services, improvement in services delivery, standardization of services, better accessibility of services, and more transparency and accountability. It is convenient and cost-effective for the Government also in terms of data storage and access to the stored data. The government benefits from reduced duplication of work. In addition, the processes of data collection, analysis and audit are simplified, and become less tedious. Another cherished goal of e-governance is greater citizen participation in the governance of the country. In the context of the statement, a government may theoretically move more towards a true democracy with the proper application of e-governance. With increasing concern about the environment, e-governance has an important benefit. Online government services would lessen the need for hard copy forms and thus produce significant savings in paper, contributing to a greener planet! E-governance holds advantages for the business community too, playing the role of a catalyst and a channel for e-business, a fact evidenced by developments in the US and Singapore. But perhaps the single-largest benefit of E-governance is its potential to give birth to an entire web-based economy.

E-government is the use of information and communications technologies (ICT) to transform the traditional government by making it accessible, transparent, effective and accountable. E-government does not mean putting more computers on the desks of government officials. And e-government is more than just a government website on the Internet. Political, social, economic and technological aspects determine e-governance. It establishes a relationship between government officials and citizens, providing greater access to government information and services by making the government accessible online; promoting citizen participation by enabling citizens to interact more conveniently with government officials, such as by requesting government service and filing required documents through website; increasing government

accountability by making its operations more transparent, thereby reducing the opportunities for corruption, and supporting development goals by providing business, rural and traditionally underserved communities with information, opportunities and communications capabilities. E-government is not only used in developed countries. Some of the most innovative uses of the Internet in governance are being successfully used in the developing countries, as well.

E-government will not be successful just only buying more computers and putting up websites. It's not sufficient to automate administrative practices from the paper system to digital system. Rather, e-government is a process of transforming government; it requires planning, political will and a sustained dedication of resources. Success of e-government will not be guaranteed with the mere purchase of advanced technology or the direct automation of complex procedures until it can increase the rate of citizen participation there by bringing about the greater effectiveness in government. Technology introduction cannot change the mentality of bureaucrats who do not view the citizen as valued customer of government or an important participant in decision-making.

Conclusion: Development is not an end in itself but a means to an end. The ends of development are achievement of freedom from hunger, poverty, illiteracy and deprivation. Most importantly the freedoms enable and are enabled by capabilities that citizens enjoy. Sen argues that the most important instrumental freedoms, required for development, are political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and protective securities. Political freedoms allow citizens to choose their representatives and participate in setting the agenda for political discussions. Economic facilities are the freedoms citizens enjoy to transact in the market and to use available economic resources and entitlements. Social opportunities have to do with the facilities made available to citizens for health, education, and infrastructure that allow them to live healthily and participate in economic and political activities. Transparency guarantees have to do with the basic trust that citizens enjoy in their day-to-day transactions, with an assurance of disclosure and lucidity. Protective security is some measure of protection from basic deprivations such as poverty or unemployment or protection from natural disasters. E-government projects are development initiatives that are best studied by the perspective of development proposed by Sen. Sen's ideas of substantive freedoms provide a framework by which to ask focused questions about the impact of e-government projects.

- As a development intervention, in what way did the project facilitate citizens' access to economic resources such as credit and their ability to access markets?
- In what way did the project improve the transparency guarantees to citizens related to documents about their dealings with government officials and government services?



• Did the project increase the political participation of citizens about governance by allowing them to be involved in setting policies and agendas for governance?

• Did the project enable or enhance protective security to citizens, against droughts or other natural disasters?

In India, many projects experienced conflict and resistance at the time of implementation. Both demand and supply-side stakeholders resisted and contested the powerful e-government systems that disrupted their existing ways of working. Although this was overcome by the project managers, it left an impact on the outcome of the projects. In this study, many issues related to concepts of governance, good governance, and e-government have been addressed. At the beginning, concepts were defined and contextualized. Governance has been defined as the sum of relations and interactions between government and players such as civil society and private sector. Good governance was mainly viewed as the quality of governance. E-government was defined as the public sectors' online provision of information and services. This research also explored the attributes and indicators that can measure good governance. In addition, this study identified how e-government fosters the different aspects and indicators of good governance. Furthermore, guiding principles of e-government success were also investigated. Finally, this paper provided a method on how to assess the good governance related outcomes of e-Government Projects in India efficiently, effectively and economically. We are aware that the methodological framework that we propose is still in its early stage. We believe though that it has a strong potential in the sense that it explicitly addresses the link between E-

Government and E-Governance from a qualitative/empirical point of view. The preliminary results that we have obtained so far do not allow for generalization (due to the shortness of experimentation time), but they invite to optimism and to further investigation of the methodological framework that is being developed in the framework of Indian administration.

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