CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In this digital world, research interest has been increasing on e-governance; existing research has not been adequately addressing key issues regarding the development, implementation and integration of the e-governance projects. The delivering of e-services to the citizens at their door step is considered as the primary function of government. The main objective of the e-governance project is to provide efficient and enhanced service delivery to the citizens. The central and state government have invested a lot on the ICT to make their functioning effective and transparent. It will also help the government departments to well organize their future investments to get maximum benefits. A citizen-centric approach enables the government to provide improved service quality, which enhances the citizen satisfaction. In this approach, the citizens are considered as customers, as in the case of the product or services based company, while providing the services to the citizen. There are several stakeholders in e-governance namely government, citizens, employees, business, government officers, government agencies, project managers. The e-governance initiatives are categorized as Government to Citizens (G2C), Government to Business (G2B) or Business to Citizens (B2C) and Government to Government (G2G).

The information revolution has created enormous opportunities for citizens, businesses and government. It enables government to provide state of the art services to citizens and businesses, meeting the ever-increasing demand for greater efficiency, effectiveness and accountability while reducing costs and risks in the delivery of citizen's service. The fast development of information and communication technologies (ICT) in particular Internet has dramatically enhanced organizations capabilities to gather process and share information. These technological advancements can be applied for sustainable human development. The areas of applications of ICT can be widely used in all spheres, especially in the government sector. Appropriate use of ICT can play a prominent role in fulfilling political commitments towards citizens. A large number of development interventions focus on the role of ICT for enhancing the efficiency, accessibility, and democratic accountability of public administration and collective decision making.
The present research work is an effort in order to identify and establish linkages between the factors responsible for creating a suitable environment for effective implementation of e-governance services in government offices. The objective of the present research is to establish the background for the development of a conceptual framework of e-governance initiatives. Based on the existing literature review, this research work provides an analysis of existing empirical findings and conceptual perspectives related to e-governance initiatives in Satara district, Maharashtra state, India.

1.2 Introduction of ICT and e-Governance

National Informatics Centre (NIC) was incepted in 1977 and it was the first major step towards e-Governance which brought ‘information’ and its communication in focus in India. NIC has long been committed to provide solutions to address the governance needs at all levels. ICT also plays an important role to accelerate the flow of information and knowledge among the government and citizens and for transforming the way in which governments and citizens interact with each other. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), ‘the challenge for all countries is to develop a governance system that promotes, supports and sustains human development’[1]. Most of the governments in the world have made a lot of ICT investments to improving governance processes.

Electronic Governance is the service delivery to the citizens, business, and government from the government through the information and communication technology (ICT). The electronic government essentially refers to the emphasis on utilization of ICT for delivering public services to citizen’s doorstep, businesses and government itself. Electronic Governance or E-Governance is primarily related to executing the functions and achieving the results of governance using information and communications technology. E-Governance is about transforming government’s view to be more citizen-centric. Technology is a key tool in these efforts. E-Governance successes require changing how government works, how it deals with information, how officials view their jobs and interact with the citizens. E-Governance is also within the Indian context split up into different sectoral areas such as e-services, e-education, e-health, Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) and local content. Achieving e-governance success also requires active partnerships among government,
citizens and the private sector. The e-government process needs continuous input and feedback from the government’s customers - the public, businesses and officials who use e-governance services. Their voices and ideas are also essential in making e-governance as good governance.

E-governance is considered as the ICT-enabled route to achieving good governance since it wraps people, processes, information, knowledge, communication and technology in the service of governance initiatives. The expected benefits of such public sector reforms have been identified as an increase in the efficiency of government operations, strengthening democracy, enhancing transparency and providing better services to citizens and businesses[2].

E-government defined broadly, is the use of ICT to promote more efficient and effective government, facilitate more accessible government services, allow greater public access to information, and make government more accountable to citizens. E-government has emerged beyond electronic service delivery and is part of the ongoing reform and transformation of government enabling participatory governance and partnerships to improve efficiency and effectiveness[3].

ICT and e-Governance, these two terms are seen as elements of the modernization program of a government. It is well known that simply buying and installing the computers and its software in the government departments or offices will not improve the services of government, nor will only automating the same old processes, procedures and practices. Making unhelpful procedures more efficient is not fruitful. Focusing only on the computers and connectivity will not make officials more service-oriented toward their government’s customers and partners. Leaders and policy makers should think about how to use technology to achieve objectives for reforming the system. Thus, the ICT is an instrument to enable and empower government reform.

1.2.1 Definitions of e-Governance

UNESCO Defines e-Governance is the use of ICT by different actors of the society with the aim to improve their access to information and to build their capacities[4].

Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, former President of India, visualized e-Governance as a transparent smart e-Governance with seamless access, secure and authentic flow of
information crossing the interdepartmental barrier and providing a fair and unbiased service to the citizen[5].

**International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) defined** e-governance as the application of electronic means in: (1) the interaction between the government and citizens and government and businesses, as well as (2) in internal government operations to simplify and improve democratic, government and business aspects of governance[6]. E-Governance is the use of modern ICTs like Internet, Intranet, Mobiles, Web Applications, and Mobile Apps by the government to improve the efficiency, effectiveness of service delivery to promote the democracy.

**World Bank** Defines 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[7].

**The US E-Government Act of 2002 (Section 3601) Defines** Electronic Government means the use by the Government of web-based Internet applications and other information technologies, combined with processes that implement these technologies, to-

(A) enhance the access to and delivery of Government information and services to the public, other agencies, and other Government entities; or

(B) bring about improvements in Government operations that may include effectiveness, efficiency, service quality, or transformation[8].

**Prof. Subhash Bhatnagar, Adjunct Professor IIM, Ahmedabad defines** E-Governance is a process of reform in the way Governments work, share information, engage citizens and deliver services to external and internal clients for the benefit of both Government and the clients that they serve[9].
1.2.2 What e-governance is NOT!

Digital democracy, E-politics, Data resale; these terms are also frequently used synonymously within the same concept as e-governance. Neither of these terms, however, observes the principle of leveraging the Internet to simplify government. Digital democracy is, in fact, E-politics rather than e-governance; that is, leveraging the Internet to simplify the election process (rather than government). It is important that these terms are not muddling the objectives of e-government.

1.2.3 Technology Specific e-Governance

There are a few technology specific subcategories of e-governance, like g-governance (GIS/GPS applications for e-governance), m-government (mobile governance) and u-governance (ubiquitous governance).

E-Governance portals, platforms and e-Governance primary delivery models classification depends on the benefits which are providing to the citizens. In the development of government, private or corporate sector websites/portals and platforms, a system is developed which will benefits to all constituents of the society. A citizen who wants to renew their vehicle registration has a convenient way to accomplish it whereas already engaged in meeting the restrictive scrutiny demand. On behalf of a government partner, business provides what has historically and solely, managed by government and might use this service to get profit or attract new customers. Government agencies are relieved of the cost and complexity of getting to method the transactions.

To develop these government departments' website/portals or platforms, governments have the choice like in-house development and managing, outsourcing, or signing self-funding contracts. The self-funding model developed portals that pay for themselves by charging nominal convenience fees for e-government transactions, known as self-funding portals. Social networking is another well known and emerging area for enhancing the e-governance. The social networking entry purpose is inside the citizens surrounding and also the engagement is on the citizen's terms. Proponents of e-government understand government use of social networks as a medium to assist government act additional just like the public it serves. Most of the central and state government portals reach to the citizens through the Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube widgets.
1.2.4 Good Governance

Good governance is a concept that has come into regular use in public administration, political science and more particularly, development of public administration and management. It appears alongside terms such as democracy, civil society, participation, human rights and sustainable development etc. In the last decade, it was closely associated with the public sector reform [10]. Good governance has eight major characteristics as follows

1. Participation
2. Transparency
3. Effectiveness and efficiency
4. Responsiveness
5. Accountability
6. Consensus oriented
7. Equity and inclusiveness
8. Rule of Law

This implies e-Governance has all the above properties and in addition inventive ICT for the powerful and proficient governance in all area which guarantee to limit defilement, the perspectives of minorities are considered and that the voices of the most helpless in the public eye are heard in basic leadership. It is likewise, dependable to the present and future needs of society.

1.3 Need of e-Governance

The main purpose and the need of implementing e-governance are to sustain and enhance good governance in the country. Good governance is generally characterised by citizen’s participation, transparency and accountability of the system. The recent research and advances in ICT offer opportunities to remodel the relationship between citizens and government in an exceedingly new approach, therefore, these are contributing to the achievement of good governance objectives. The use of ICT will increase the broad participation of people in the process of governance at all levels by providing the possibility of online discussion forum groups and by enhancing the speedy development and effectiveness of pressure groups. Advantages for the government involve that the government may provide better and enhanced services in
terms of time, making governance more efficient and more effective. Additionally, the transaction cost is often decreased and government services become easily accessible to the citizens.

The fields of execution of e-governance are:

- **E-Administration:**
  It alludes to the enhancing of government procedures and of the inner workings of the government offices with new ICT-empowered information processes.

- **E-Services:**
  It alludes to enhanced conveyance of government services to the common citizens. For illustrations, interactive services like requests for government archives, authoritative reports and endorsements, issuing grants and licenses.

- **E-Democracy:**
  It infers more noteworthy and more dynamic citizen participation and involvement empowered by ICTs in the decision making process.

1.4 Objectives of E-Governance

- **To build an well-informed society**
  The main objective of the e-governance is to build a well-informed and knowledgeable society so that the citizens get empowered. This is possible when citizens can access all government data easily.

- **To increase government and citizen interaction**
  In the real world, the government and citizens rarely interact. Feedback from the citizens is very less and it is almost negligible. E-Governance aims to build a feedback system, to get feedback from the citizens and to make the Government aware of citizen's problems.

- **To encourage citizen participation**
  Minimize the gap between the government and the citizens by motivating the citizens for participation in the e-governance services. In its true sense, e-governance system helps to restore democracy by improving citizen participation in every process of the government, by improving the feedback system, access to information and all inclusive participation in the decision making process.
• To bring transparency in the governing process
Citizens must know the decisions and policies of the government. By producing all the data and information available to the citizens for access, e-governance helps to enhance the governing process and makes the procedure transparent.

• To make the Government accountable
Government must be responsible and accountable for every decision taken in favour of citizens. E-governance would help to make the government more responsible and accountable by bringing transparency and making the citizens more informed.

• To minimize the cost of Governance
This objective can be achieved by reducing the cost on expenditure on physical delivery of services and information to the citizens. This can be achieved by cutting down on stationery and daily utilities which minimize the government’s expenditure.

• To minimize the reaction time of the Government
Issues are fundamentally government's issues as Government is for the general population. Ordinarily because of red-tapism and different reasons, the government takes long time to answer to the individual’s inquiries and issues. E-Governance means to decrease the response time of the government to the general population questions and issues.

1.5 Benefits of e-Governance
Benefits of e-Governance may be categorized in three types i.e. benefits to citizens, benefits to business and benefits to government.

Benefits to Citizens:

a) Cost and time saving
b) Certainty in getting services
c) Ease of access of information
d) Convenience
e) Possibility of self service

Benefits to Business:

a) Increase velocity of business
b) Ease of doing business with government

c) Better investment climate

d) Transparency

Benefits to Government:

a) E-Governance can be a catalyst for legal reforms
b) Faster and better formulation of policies
c) Speed up registration and licensing
d) Better revenue from tax
e) Better positive image of government
f) Cost cutting
g) Better targeting of benefits
h) Control on corruption and more transparency in the government system

1.6 Present Status of E-Governance in India and Maharashtra

The most prominent advantage of e-government from an organizational point of view is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing system so that it results into saving public money, efforts and time. While delivering the services to the various stakeholders of the society, it is the duty of government to design integrated services and the citizen centric system and deliver services at the doorstep of the citizens, seven days of a week and twenty-four hours. Among these services some projects initiated and maintained by the central government, some services by the state government and some by local bodies. From the citizens’ point of view, one of the most significant benefits of electronic government over a manual system is ‘anywhere and anytime’ availability of government services to citizens. Apart from this, there is a provision of local or multilingual information content, user friendly navigation, accessibility of information, regular updates and latest changes in government services and schemes.

1.6.1 United Nations E-Government Survey

United Nations Division for Public Administration and Development Management has been publishing the E-Government Survey of the 193 member countries of United Nations. This survey publishes every two years since 2003. E-Government Survey
2016 published in July 2016. In this survey, two reports are published i.e. E-Government Development Index (EGDI) and E-Participation Index [11].

A. E-Government Development Index

E-Government Development Index (EGDI) presents the status of the E-Government Development of the member countries of United Nations. This survey publishes the assessment of website development patterns in a country and EGDI incorporates assess the parameters, such as infrastructure and educational levels, to judge the country how using the IT to promote access of IT and participation of citizens in e-government. EGDI is combined determination of three dimensions of e-government i.e. provision of online service, telecommunication connectivity and human capacity. Table 1.1 shows the top 10 country list in EGDI. UN E-Government Survey 2016, India is not even in top 100 ranks in EGDI. India is gradually developing in the ranking of Electronic Government Development Index (EGDI) in the world. Among the 193 member countries of United Nations, India stands at the 107th rank in EGDI 2016 survey whereas earlier at 118th rank in EGDI 2014 survey. India stands at the 2nd rank among the 8 countries of South Asia. Table 1.2 shows the status of India in EGDI in the South Asia.

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Table 1.2 Status of India in EGDI in South Asia

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(Source: UN E-Government Survey website)

B. E-Participation Index

E-Participation Index (EPI) is an initiative by the United Nations for participation of the citizens in the cornerstone of socially inclusive governance. The objective of the E-Participation is to enhance the citizens' access to information and public services and to encourage citizens in decision making which will have an impact on society for enhancing their lives. Table 1.3 shows top 11 countries in E-Participation Index in the world. UN E-Government Survey 2016, India is in the top 100 ranks in EPI. India is at the rank 27th out of 193 member countries of the United Nations whereas the 1st rank among the 8 countries of South Asia. Table 1.4 shows Status of India in E-Participation Index in the South Asia.

Table 1.3 Top Eleven Countries in E-Participation Index

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<th>Sr. No.</th>
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(Source: UN E-Government Survey website)

Recently, Maharashtra state has made significant progress in the area of e-governance in the form of Digital India, MyGov (Aaple Sarkar) [12]. In the last few years, Maharashtra government has also realized that ICT has been playing a crucial role in transforming government services to the doorsteps of the citizens. The Maharashtra state is the pioneer in citizen centric e-governance initiatives like Common Service...
Centre (Maha e-Seva Kendra, SETU), Land Record System (Bhoomi Abhilekh) and Public Distribution System (Sarvajanik Vitaran Pranali).

At the district level, the researcher selected the Satara district for the study of the e-governance initiatives. Satara district is one of the diversified districts in the Maharashtra. The Collectorate office of the Satara district is responsible for implementation and sustaining the e-governance services in throughout the district. There are so many e-governance initiatives are implemented by the district administration out of that the researcher concentrated on the three most important e-governance initiatives that are Maha E-Seva Kendra (CSC), Bhoomi Abhilekh (Land Record System) and Sarvajanik Vitaran Pranali (Public Distribution System). The current status of the CSC is fully implemented stage, Land Record System is in partial implemented stage and PDS is in development stage. Detailed discussion is provided in subsequent chapters.

Conclusion

This chapter provides the basic concepts and introduction of ICT and e-governance. Various definitions of the e-governance and general terms in the e-governance are elaborated. Further, the need of the e-governance for the society as well as the government, objectives and benefits of the e-governance are described. At the end of the chapter, brief outline of the present status of the e-governance in India, Maharashtra and Satara district.

References


