

## **THE ROLE OF E-GOVERNANCE IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Umakanth. H. T.** M.A., M.Phil.,  
Research Scholar,  
Dept. of Political Science, Bengaluru University, Bengaluru.

**Dr. Venkategowda** M.A., M.Phil., P.hd.,  
Department of Political Science,  
Karnataka State Open University  
Mukthagangothri Mysore-06.

### **Introduction:**

The use of Information and Communication Technology in governance processes and by governments has been mostly centered in the deployment of ICT applications and solutions to streamline government's operations reduce transactional costs, and increase transparency and accountability of public institutions. E-government or online government has indeed taken off since the end of the millennium. 'Modernization' of public state institutions complemented by the delivery of specific government services has thus been the cornerstone of this approach. As a matter of fact, many developing countries have complemented existing national ICT strategies with e-government policies or adhoc deployment of solutions for specific national sectors. The latest trend on e-government suggests a more citizen-centric approach in which e-government priorities are much more responsive to citizens needs and development agendas. Rural e-governance applications in the recent past have demonstrated the important role. The Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) play in the realm of rural development. Several e-governance projects have attempted to improve the reach, enhance the base, minimize the processing costs, increase transparency, and reduce the cycle times. Several states have initiated the creation of State Wide Area Networks (SWAN) to facilitate electronic access of the state and district administration services to the citizens in villages. The significant efforts are required to design, develop and internalize the ICT solutions through well managed reengineering of back-end processes and capacity building efforts to ensure sustainability.

Suitable public private partnership models have to be adopted to ensure rapid progress in administration. The major object of the rural e-governance programme is individual's motivation to collective mobilization for an integrated rural development.

### **Rural Development:**

India has strong and wide range of rural background. Because 70% of Indian people are living in villages and 75% of them are directly and indirectly involving in agriculture and agricultural related activities. The development of India is based on the development of rural parts. The word "Rural Development" itself is a broad one and it refers the overall development. It includes the development of agriculture, cottage industries, rural human resource or power and communal services.

If we look into the rural problems of India, it takes us back to centuries and we could realize that economical and social condition of India is on the edge of devastating. In the rural parts, the people are facing the problems such as unemployment, integral distribution of income, poverty, corruption and illiteracy. Totally, they are far away from basic needs and facilities. The rural parts of India are important for global changes, also without solving these problems, the rural development or the Indian development in whole impossible. In order to solve these problems the government has to take and implement some developmental programmes. In this respect the word 'The rural development' has many purposes. They are, creation of employment, increasing the production and income, and at the same time maintaining good standard of living in minimum expenditure. Totally, the rural development implies the whole development of human.

According to World Bank "Improving the living standards of the masses of the low income population residing in rural areas making the process of rural development self-sustaining".

The rural development includes the following hints,

- Participation of people in all public programmes.
- Modernization of rural tradition and culture as a process and as an attempt through science and technology.

- Attempt to improve the quality of standard of living.

Totally, the rural development is collective development in all areas. That means it includes avoidance of poverty, illiteracy, inequality, unemployment and the providing basic facilities, increase in income, balancing environment and non-corruptive administration. As we know the above all developments depends on administration. Because every society is a part of system of the state and it falls under the administration of particular state. In the beginning stages of states existence the administration restricted to some particular areas only. But, in the modern ages every state has the principle of welfare state and this principle as enhanced the scope of the administration. The states have started to provide an administration which is helpful for the overall development of man. The innovations in the field of science and technology have made the administration to a technical one. That means the administration become electrification. That is E-Governance.

### **E-Governance:**

E-governance refers to the use of information and communication technology to carry out government operations such as delivering government information and services. E-governance is generally recognized as a means of making government more efficient and more responsive to customer needs. E-governance can also be defined as the application of electronic means in the,

- Monitoring the performance of various scheme started by government from time to time.
- Interaction between government - citizens and government-business.
- Simplification processes of the government.
- Internal government operations to simplify and improve democratic, government and business aspects of governance.

Administration is not a recent phenomenon. This was existed in the days of organized society. With the increase states activities the administration itself has been broadened. Particularly in the age of twentieth century the concept of welfare state has developed the concept of Public Administration. That means the administration was limited to the field of defense, later it extended to the fields of education, health, industry, commerce and etc. In order to provide the

fruits of welfare state concept the states have adopted modern methodology in administration. The result is concept of good governance.

The good governance means to provide equal opportunity, social justice, empowerment, employment, eradication of poverty and upliftment of democratic values. In twentieth century science and technology were limited only to the production area, from the 1960 onwards it expanded to the field of administration. In the initial stages the governments were using technology for computing the records of various departments and to exchange the some, among the departments. That is what we call E-Governance.

### **E-Governance in India:**

E-governance is a universal phenomenon and India is not an exemption for it. E-governance is evolved during 1970 in India. Initial attempts towards e-governance were made with a focus on networking government departments and developing in-house government applications in the areas of defense, economic monitoring, planning and the deployment of IT to manage data-intensive functions related to elections, census, tax administration etc. Later in 1980, The National Information Centre (NIC) had made all district head quarters as a part of under e-governance. In 1990 The Information of Communication Technology (ICT) Institute had organized a system to take Information Technology to every rural part of India. At present e-governance is working under 3 methods they are: Government to Government (G2G), Government to Consumer (G2C), and Government to Business (G2B).

In the beginning of twenty first century the central government of India wanted to boost up e-governance. At the same time II<sup>nd</sup> Administrative Reforms Commission recommendation give importance to reform e-governance. In order to make the recommendation true the commission in its eleventh report discussed the e-governance. In accordance with its recommendations, the central government in 2006 launched National e-Governance Plan (NeGP). The NeGP Vision consists of making all Government services accessible to the common man in his locality, through common service delivery outlets and ensures efficiency, transparency & reliability of such services at affordable costs to realize the basic needs of the common man. In order to provide the fruits and wishes of the Central Government the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP)

has programmed Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) and 27 projects have been given priority under MMPs. These 27 projects are classified into three groups.

- Central Mission Mode Projects: i) Banking ii) Central Excise and Customs iii) Income Tax iv) Insurance v) MCA 21 (Ministry of Company Affairs) vi) National Citizen Database vii) Pension viii) e-Office and ix) Passport, Visas and Immigration.
- State level Mission Mode Projects: i) Agriculture ii) Employment Exchange iii) Commercial Taxes iv) Land Records v) Road Transport vi) Gram Panchayats vii) Municipalities viii) Police, ix) Property Registration x) Treasuries and xi) e-District.
- Integrated Mission Mode Projects: i) e-BIZ ii) National Service Delivery Gateway iii) e-Procurement iv) Common Service Centers (CSC) v) Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) for a Trade vi) e-Courts and vii) Indian Portal.

### **E-Governance in Rural Development**

Several states have initiated the creation of State Wide Area Networks (SWAN) to facilitate electronic access of the state and district administration services to the citizens in villages. The Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are being increasingly used by the governments to deliver its services at the locations convenient to the citizens. The rural ICT applications attempt to offer the services of central agencies (like district administration, cooperative union, and state and central government departments) to the citizens at their village door steps. These applications utilize the ICT in offering improved and affordable connectivity and processing solutions.

Computerization of land records have been a great success in application of ICT in rural development. Land records are great importance to contemporary socio economic imperatives and their revision and updation are necessary for capturing the changes in rural social dynamics. Land records are an important part of rural development. The govt. of India started the centrally sponsored scheme of Computerization of Land Records (CoLR) in 1988-1989 with main objectives of:

- Creating database of basic records

- Facilitating the issues of copies of records
- Reducing work load by elimination of drudgery of paper work
- Minimizing the possibilities manipulation of land records, and
- Creating a land management information system

The farmers were largely benefited CoLR. The farmers can get all necessary records when they need it, these records are free from human arbitrations, the updating becomes easy, free from harassment and the farmers had direct access to information regarding their property.

### **Challenges in Rural Development**

ICTs alone can't bring about rural development. Education is one of the basic problems for application of ICT as 40% of India's population is illiterate. All modern economies have demonstrated in the past that education is the first step to building the capacity which people can then use. ICTs to succeed in India, education for all must be the first priority.

It is, of course, important to note that the proportion of the economy involved in some or other form of adaptation or usage of ICT is still very small. The proportion of people involved in the ICT Industry, especially in the rural areas is negligible. Thus, another priority action, in order for the benefits of ICT to trickle down as well as contribute to the rural prosperity, would involve setting up several rural and village level micro-enterprises.

The basic challenges that usage of ICT for rural development faces are-

- Illiteracy amongst the vast multitude of people
- Major power-cuts affecting the country-side ranging from 5 to 12 hours every day. Even though uninterrupted power supply systems are used; yet they prove insufficient to cope up with the power breakdowns
- Serious band-width issues and connectivity problems. Even though technology is available to upgrade the band-width; not enough resources have been budgeted by the

Government to change this scenario. However once a few projects for the up gradation of the band-width on the anvil get commissioned, there should be a significant improvement in the connectivity

- Financing difficulties encountered by the local grass root level institutions as well as by the state governments. Drastic steps are needed to inject funds or the development of the ICTs in the rural areas; increasingly by the participation of the private sector
- Acute shortage of project leaders and guides who could ensure implementation of the ICTs at the grass root levels. Unfortunately most professionals want to work in the urban areas where there are ample opportunities available to them for growth as well as prosperity. In the absence of these 'techno-catalytic' resources; development of ICTs in the rural areas will always be very slow.

Information and Communication Technology has great relevance in today's world. If implemented properly ICT can surely bridge the gap between economically and technology backward and forward classes. With the IT boom in India technology is easily accessible to the government machineries with relevantly cheaper and convenient manner. Proper training and implementation of ICT programmes in simple way and language which is easily understandable by the rural people can surely bring about revolution in rural development.

### **Conclusion:**

In the wake of increasing challenges to deliver quality of public services in developing countries like India, ICT driven e-governance applications making the citizens happier with timely and cost savings in availing services and improvement in the reliability of services. Special emphasis is needed in working out revenue models, ensuring the full implementations through appropriate tenure appointments of project champions, ensuring effective monitoring and maintenance of systems. It is important to understand the whys, which and the how's of public service delivery. It is very difficult to define this term. We do not have any comprehensive definition or understanding of what really is public service delivery. Briefly put, it is the inter-relationship between the government functionaries and the citizens to whom the services of the government

are addressed to, and the manner in which the services reach those for whom they were intended. Any effective public service delivery mechanism must ultimately lead to good governance. The governments generally utilize one or the other of a variety of mechanisms for delivering services to the citizens. There is no limit to the scale of such composite applications. Once the structure is in place, governments can more easily get down to the business of public services.

A key challenge for public service delivery is in designing and implementing a system that holds service providers accountable for the services delivered. Even if the clients are able to reach the policy makers, this does not necessarily lead to improved services because the policy makers cannot ensure that the public service provider (whether public, private or civil society) will deliver the services due to an equally long route of accountability between the policy makers and the service providers.

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