

E-governance justified

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Abstract—Information and Communication Technology today has become an indispensable part in our lives, gaining wide application in human activities. This is due to the fact that, its use is less expensive, more secure, and allows speedy information transmission and access. It serves as a good base for the development and success of today's relatively young technologies. It has relieved people of manual day-to-day activities in such areas as businesses organizations, transport industry, teaching and research, banking, broadcasting, entertainment amongst other. This paper takes an overview study of e-governance, one of the most demanding applications of information and communication technology for public services. The paper summarizes the concept of e-governance, its major essence and some ongoing e-governance activities in some parts of the world.

Keywords—E-governance; Government; Human activities; Information Technology (IT); Service delivery; citizen.

I. INTRODUCTION

E-Governance is the application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for delivering government's services, exchange of information communication transactions, integration of various stand-alone systems and services between Government-to-citizens (G2C), Government-to-Business (G2B), Government-to-Government (G2G) as well as back office processes and interactions within the entire government frame work. Through e-Governance, government services are made available to the citizens in a convenient, efficient and transparent manner. Three main target groups that can be distinguished in governance concepts are governments, citizens and businesses/interest groups [5]. Three notable aspects to e-governance are (a) automation of government routine functions (b) Web-enabling government functions for access of the citizenry (c) Achievement of openness, accountability, effectiveness

and efficiency through improvement of government processes. E-governance promotes efficiency, reduces time delays, enforces accountability and brings transparency in the working of the governmental system. As a result, it

has become an integral part of democracy. All important government policies, acts, rules, regulations, notifications that are useful to the general public including land records, examination results, crime records, vehicle registration, birth and death registration, training and education, employment information, policies and legislation, telephone directory, etc. are made available on the Internet and can be accessed by the public free of cost. It is beneficial to the citizens as they can enjoy faster, effective and timely government services and also to the

government as it can become more integrated into the community and can focus its resources where they are needed the most. E-governance that involves technology, policies, infrastructure, training and funds is becoming popular around the world including India and other European and Western countries. E-Governance is not just about government web sites and e-mails. Neither is it just about service delivery over the Internet or digital access to government information or electronic payments. E-governance aims at changing how citizens relate to governments as well as how citizens relate to each other. It brings forth new concepts of citizenship, both in terms of needs and responsibilities [1],[2],[3],[4].

II. CONCEPT AND BENEFITS OF E-GOVERNANCE

The term e-governance emerged in the late 1990s and has become a viable concept as a result of the advancement and proven reliability of ICT. E-government is widely understood as the use of the information and communication technology (ICT) to achieve:

- improved information and service delivery;
- citizen participation in decision making process;
- more accountable government;
- effective and transparent governments.

E-governance means using ICTs as servants to the master of good governance, enabled route to

achieving good governance [9]. In its most ideal sense, e-governance is a practical concept meant to achieve all aspects of citizen-oriented governance; bringing the citizenry closer to the government and decision making process. Commitment to e-governance tends to transform how public servants work, relate to each other, do business, and engage citizens and others. E-government is a process that requires a sustained commitment of political will, resources and engagement among the government, private and public sectors [8].

The concept also seeks to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery between Government-to-citizens (G2C), Government-to-Business (G2B), Government-to-Government (G2G) as well as back office processes and interactions within the entire government frame work.

Governments all over the world are faced with the common challenge of improving their quality of services and gaining the confidence of their citizens. Citizen-centric service delivery has been identified as a key method to establish greater connections with the citizenry and build trust with them. This is to enable governments deliver better services to

citizens more cost effectively. E-governance has been at the center of governments' success in many developed countries today. Such countries benefit from cheaper and more effective delivery of public services resulting in efficient public administration which is a backbone of retrieving the maximum responsibility owed by citizens to government. Governments' services, policies and strategies are availed at the door step of citizens while citizens' responsibility to the government is duly fulfilled, hence maximizing the enforcement of government's power in the state with high monitoring of affairs. Countries with well established system of e-governance correspondingly have a relatively better public service delivery [6],[7]. In the sections that follow, we take an overview study on the role of e-governance to development worldwide.

III. E-GOVERNANCE AS A DESIRABLE TOOL FOR DEVELOPMENT.

A. E-governance as a means for effective citizen-government relationship and corruption reduction tool

[14], researching under the hypothesis "e-Governance initiatives are positively related to government-citizen relationships and corruption reduction" the authors used a structured questionnaire, to explore the perceived role of e-Governance in reducing corruption amongst 400 respondents each from Fiji and Ethiopia. By their findings, e-Governance is positively related to improved government-citizen relationships and corruption reduction. The authors suggest that

e-governance initiatives can make important contributions to improving public services improving overall relationships between governments and the citizenry. The authors however state that, even though e-Governance initiatives cannot cure all the structural factors that breed corruption in states and societies, its strategic implementation can help improve the critical variable in combating corruption—government-citizen relationships.

Roumeen, Islam (2003) showed that there is a strong relationship between good information flow and good governance. The authors explored: i) The role of existence and free flow of information in good governance and ii) how often economic data is made accessible in countries around the world. Both indicators showed a positive relationship between better information and better quality of governance.

Regions with higher information accessibility had better knowledge concerning the available political choices and made better decisions in their votes. The citizenry need information concerning governments' activity, on how decisions are being implemented.

B. E-governance as an effective managerial and administrative tool through board portals in organizations.

[10], The role of board portals; online software-service solutions in the successful running and governance of business bodies is significant as it allows board members to store and retrieve information as well as connect with each other in real time. The wide range of board portals have a common aim of providing boards of directors a platform for achieving good,

efficient and transparent governance through document sharing, communication, and collaboration online through a web-based interface.

[11], the number of companies using board portals grew from 12 percent in 2005 to roughly 26 percent in 2007. More nonprofits are beginning to take notice of e-governance and to investigate the options available [12]. Even though e-governance is new in the nonprofit sector, organizations are testifying to the impact on their boards' ability to govern well [10]. The implementation of board portals in the Enterprise Center (TEC) [10] has produced a number of positive effects including:

- Saving of staff time and subsequent profitable reorganization of administrative staffing structure;
- Elimination of costs for express delivery of documents, paper, and publishing.
- Management estimate a 660 percent return on the annual investment.
- Increase in organization's transparency and ability to manage knowledge transfer

C. E-governance as an effective service delivery tool

Gradually, the positive influences of e-governance are being identified and enacted by governments all over the world with the aim of providing the best for their citizens. Advanced and developed countries like United States of America, Canada, United Kingdom and the Netherlands among others have taken the lead in e-governance and are doing really great in terms of public service delivery [13].

The developing countries on the other hand are putting up the necessary strategies to climb to achieve better status in e-governance in order to develop faster. [14], The governments of Ghana, India and South Africa for example have developed e-governance plans in which the provision of public services through local e-content is the main aim. Ghana and south Africa have prioritized the implementation of ICT infrastructure and processes for effective government-to-government governance while the government of India is simultaneously implementing government-to-government infrastructure and providing public services to citizens. [15], Promotion of e-government applications and government communication is one of the major aims of the e-Ghana project. The main concentration of this component of e-Ghana project is information sharing, communication and government database security. Other objectives like speedy delivery of government services, training of technical and information officers, development of interoperability standards are expected to be effected shared portal infrastructure to reduce costs. The Ministry of Communications has been charged with the responsibility of implementing the project.

The expected results of the e-Ghana project includes among others:

- 1) *increase in ICT-based jobs by 200% over five years with equal opportunities for women,*
- 2) *an increase in export-led revenues generated by ICT/ITES industry by about US\$90 million,*

- 3) an increase by 25% in satisfaction of users with selected government services taken up for electronic delivery,
- 4) an increase by 10% in number of ICT SMEs reporting increased revenues.

IV. DISCUSSION

E-governance is a medium meant to provide better services to the citizenry. A way of involving the people in policy making and gaining their confidence. With e-governance, a different paradigm of leadership is introduced. The attitude of leaders and government officials is citizen oriented. The concept of e-governance is not limited to be implemented in managing the affairs of countries only. The same concept can be used for the administrative purposes of organization and institutions. The base of good leadership is information. The more the flow of information, the easier the involvement of the citizens in policy making. The citizenry being up to date with policies in the country lays more solid foundation for good governance. We identify ICT as the most reliable medium to closing the bridge between the citizenry and the government by enhancing quicker and more reliable information access.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper is a summary of e-governance, its essence and e-governance recent activities in some parts of the world. We have made a modest effort to present e-governance as a concept and explore the most fundamental of its aims and objectives. We see that the good effects of e-governance can be applied in any organized body where people have to be managed through, information sharing and communication using the internet as a medium. We have also realized that, e-governance is the provision of more effective, efficient and transparent public services economically.

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