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## NeGP and India for e-governance: A search for its utility and challenges

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### Abstract

This paper is made to focus on E-governance, NPM, and NeGP for its possible output and challenges therein as manifests in related literature and research development on the e-governance in India as well as the globe. The bureaucratic administration had been governance in 20th century but failed miserably to respond the challenging public demands. The e-governance is a paradigm shift over the traditional administration as an alternative to hassle free public services and informations. The New Public Management has simplified the administrative process with e-governance, rationalization of government activities, efficiency, accountability, decentralization and Marketisation. It delivers quality of service to citizens with transparency, time save, hassle free, reducing corruption, simplification of procedures; improve attitude, behaviour and job handling of personnel. National e-governance Plan of India comprises of 27 Mission Mode Projects encompassing 10 Central MMPs, 10 State MMPs and 7 Integrated MMPs are well-defined milestones and timelines for implementation. Presently it aims to provide on line services under NeGP in regards to income tax, passport or visa, contemporary affairs, central excise, pensions, land records, Road and transport, property registration, agriculture, municipalities, gram panchayats (rural), police, employment exchange, and e-courts as it carries public utility besides some challenges implementing it. Key words: NeGP, India, E-Governance, Challenges.

**Keywords:** E-governance, NeGP, NPM, India, public services, challenges

### Introductions

#### E-Governance and India

E-Government is a fairly complex process of creating and harnessing the right environment that consists of People who are committed to the cause and who have the right knowledge, skill sets, and attitude. Taking note of the potential of e-Governance in improving the quality of life of the masses and the learning associated with earlier initiatives, the Government of India has come up with a national program National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) which has been approved. E-Governance is also a part of the Government's agenda of governance as mentioned in its National Common Minimum Program. In this context, the national program has identified several e-Governance projects called Mission Mode Projects (MMP) at the Centre and State level, which are to be implemented by the respective Line Ministries. The National E-Governance Action Plan comprises of core components and 27 Mission Mode Projects to be executed across the country. Certain mission mode projects (MMP) are to be implemented by the line ministries at the National Level, some by the State Governments and certain integrated projects.

#### NeGP

NeGP is set up to make all Government services accessible to the common man in his locality, through common service delivery outlets and ensure efficiency, transparency & reliability of such services at affordable costs to realize the basic needs of the common man, Indian government has committed around 23 crores for overall development for five year plan in 2006. In addition, various ministries and departments organizes-summit other mechanism to raise awareness programs to make varieties of information available to citizens through electronic link like State Wide Area Network (SWAN), Government of India has come up with a national program National e-Governance Plan (NeGP), which has been approved. E-Governance is also a part of the Government's agenda of governance as mentioned in its National Common Minimum Program.

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### Background

The actual term governance comes from an ancient Greek word, *kebernon*, which means to steer. In current usage, to govern means to steer, to control, and to influence from a position of authority. According to Former Secretary General of the U.N. Kofi A. Annan, "Good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development. Therefore, governance is an exercise of power for steering social systems, as well as a process by which organizations are directed, controlled, and held to account to their society. It is a set of the systems and processes concerned with ensuring the overall direction, effectiveness, supervision and accountability of an organization. E-Governance involves new styles of leadership, new ways of debating and deciding policy and investment, new ways of accessing education, new ways of listening to citizens and new ways of organizing and delivering information and services. E-Governance is defined as "E-governance is the application of information & communication technologies to transform the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability of informational & transactional exchanges with in government, between government and government agencies of National, State, Municipal & Local levels, citizen & businesses, and to empower citizens through access & use of information". In other words e-Governance is the implementation and delivery of government services through the information communication technology to provide Transparent, Effective, Efficient, Responsive and Accountable governance to the society.

### Objectives

This paper is prepared with the three objectives on e-governance in India as follows:

1. It aims to highlight about the activity of NeGP in India;
2. It aims to highlight the utility of e-governance in India; and
3. It aims to the challenges ahead NeGP for implementing the e-governance in India.

### Methods and Data

The preparation of the study report is purely based on the historical method and all data of this paper are based on secondary data that collected from available scholarly journals of national and international level. The support of web pages, e-journals, NeGP plan are also taken for preparing this report.

### Activities

NeGP has the major capacity building activities to adopt are-Core Policies, Core Projects like Mission Mode Projects (MMP), Core Infrastructure, Support Infrastructure, Human Resource Development or Training, Technical Assistance, Awareness & Assessment, Organizational Structures and Research and Development.

### Utility of E-Governance in India

E-governance is popularized by utility of efficiency. Unexpected demand of electronic governance is hailed by the people due to the bureaucratic failure and delay on

information service because e-governance promises and ensures speed delivery of service to the citizens. It is also compliance to committed service within specific time frame, reliability and quality of service. The simplicity of it is that user action required for obtaining the service. E-governance is also user convenient utility. The e-governance eases of access also available to the service at any user dependence of time (24 x 7) which can be operated and collect informations from any locations in hassle and corruption free State wide Area Network (SWAN), State Data Centre (SDC) and National e-Governance Service Delivery Gateway (NSDG) integrates the service enabling access to several agencies through one request followed by mechanisms for problem resolution. Now we can think how e-governance attributes user friendly in such smooth mechanisms with promising service to socially and economically backward areas also. E-governance has also utility relating to reach out to Citizen. It is not easy to provide service in conventional process for the citizens in a democratic country like India having about 1.3 billion population. With the development of Information and Technology in the world advanced countries availing the service of e-governance round the clock in lieu of conventional office hours which was not accessible on holidays. People can avail the access to any information with the help of e-governance at their own language in short period of time, cost effective and zero paper work.

### Status of e-governance in India

E-Governance is a way to solve the social as well as economical problems that exist in the developing countries like India According to WEF Global Information Technology Report, India ranks 24th out of 134 countries with 5.38 score in accessing and overall priority of ICT. Therefore there is tremendous potential for e-Governance to provide exponentially benefit to their citizens and maximize return on government investment. Which represents the growth of e-Governance in India is quite encouraging. Initiatives for e-governance in India is hailed by the policy-makers justifying the adoption and expansion of it on the grounds that it costs less, reduces waste, promotes transparency, eliminates corruption, generates possibilities to resolve rural poverty and inequality, and guarantees a better future for citizens. It also tends to portray e governance as the panacea for all ranges of problems confronting India making a target to deliver to people at least 25 percent of its dealings and services electronically. To achieve the target Indian Government has decided to boost computer density by making computers easily affordable; to increase connectivity by improving the telecommunication based on optical fiber networks. Indian government has taken major initiatives to setup institutions for making policy, control and account deployment of e-Governance which will provide effective and efficient services. In purpose of it government of India has also framed laws Information Technology Act in 2000 aiming to regulate cyberspace and define offences and penalties related to information technology such as tampering with computer source documents, breach of confidentiality and privacy, publication of false digital signatures and so on. Government of India has also passed Right to Information Act (2005) and promises to provide information to its citizens. So, NeGP is a bold step to reach out to all and give freedom and justice of the right. But it shall require

maintenance of all public authorities of information and records.

Ministry of Information Technology is playing a crucial role in facilitating e-governance by reinforcing knowledge based enterprises, encouraging coordination among users, adopting procedures based on international standards, promoting the internet and introducing it education in India and it may widely manifest in XII Plan. The Government has also decided to establish a National Institute of Smart Government in order to enhance capacity building in e-Governance at all administrative levels for smart governance. Indian government has also established Centre for Electronic Governance to promote IT and e-governance in the country which is to identify the appropriate forms of ICT necessary for better service delivery, to conduct training for generating it awareness among government officials and to help state governments in implementing policies and reforms based on best e-governance practices. National e Governance Projects (NeGP) is a set up to make all government services accessible to the common man in his locality, through common service delivery outlets and ensure efficiency, transparency and reliability of such services at affordable costs to realize the basic needs of the common man. Indian government has committed around 23 crores for overall development for five year plan in 2006.

In addition, various ministries and departments organizes summit, other mechanism to raise awareness programs to make varieties of information available to citizens through electronic links. In Indian states Bhoomi or Automation of Land Records is initiated by Karnataka to provide computerized Record of Rights Tenancy & Crops (RTC) needed in time by farmer to obtain bank loans, settle land disputes etc. aiming to ensure increased transparency and reliability, significant reduction in corruption, exploitation and oppression covering 20 million rural land records covering 6.7 million farmers at a nominal cost of Rs. 15 only. The State Government of Andhra Pradesh has also started Registration Project Computer-Aided Registration Department (CARD). For the same purpose, the State Government of Tamil Nadu has also started Vahan & Sarathi. Vahan can be used to issue Registration Certificate, Fitness certificate and Permits. Sarathi can be used to issue a Learner's License, Permanent Driving License and Conductor License to the applicant. The system was implemented on pilot basis in RTO Chennai (North). In Assam e-governance is initiated in Panchayat and Rural Development department

### **Challenges of NeGP implementing e-governance in India**

E-Governance has several demerits besides its tremendous attributes and it is significance. Its feasibility in countries like India where people are poor and Infrastructures are not up to the mark carries with surmounting questions. There are number of challenges ahead as follows: Poverty of people and cost effectiveness is a serious concern in e-governance. Internet access is too expensive exercise for the poor people for developing countries like India as installation of the necessary telephone lines needed for internet or email access is equally an affordable in most poor countries. In India, each telephone connection may cost as much as Rs 30,000 in urban areas and Rs 70,000-80,000 in villages, which is unaffordable by most low income families. It is also very expensive to gain internet access in India: it may cost about Rs. 25 per hour in cities and Rs150-1200 per

hour in rural areas. In India 2.76% have PCs, 3.37% users telephone lines and 6.93 uses internet where its ratio is 81.21% 55.43% and 66.15% respectively in UK (ICT Indicators, Sept, 2008). Large people of India are still in technical illiteracy. It is to be mentioned here that there is a general lack of technical literacy as well as literacy in countries like India, the correlation between education level and use of electronic means or Internet and other ICT means are quite significant. Implementation of the e-governance is made on html language and the dominating language always the beneficiary of this facility. For example, the dominance of English on the internet constrains, the access of non-English-speaking population everywhere. Report shows that of all the web pages in the world, about 84 percent are in English followed by 4.5 percent in German, 3.1 percent in Japanese, 1.8 percent in French, 1.2 percent in Spanish, 1.1 percent in Swedish, 1 percent in Italian and less than 1 percent in all other languages. In the case of India, 95 percent of the population does not speak English. Due to such overwhelming dominance of English over these communication channels, computers and the internet are quite useless in Indian villages, and the use of local languages does little to alleviate the problem due to the poor literacy level mentioned earlier.

### **Challenges due to lack of stake holders participation**

E-governance is recent arrival in India and society is new access to it. Government initiative is also found start up only from XI plan. Private sectors like banks, telecom companies, MNCs, national companies have been taking the advantage of e governance. But the level of participation and reach out is still not in tune of developed countries. The designing of NeGP requires a very close interaction between the government department and the agency developing the solutions to cater all the areas of nation through SWAN and MMP. But in India telecom departments do not contribute enough to design the solution Information and Communication Technology and thus the solution developed and implemented does not meet the requirements of an e-governance project and hence does not get implemented. We have economically different level of the people in India. India has still 10.4 percent people below poverty level. Inequality in gaining access to public sector services between various sections of citizens, especially between urban and rural communities, between the educated and illiterate, and between the rich and poor. In the context of the ICT infrastructure, India is still to cover all the areas of the nation. For the security reason some parts of the country treated as vulnerable. The geographical constraints also stands in the way of the establishment of state wide area network. Lack of necessary infrastructure like electricity, internet, technology and ways of communications and also will affect the speed which delays the implementation. Journal of Theoretical and Applied Information Technology (JATIT, 2010) [1] admits the problems in implementation of e-governance projects requirements. Operational reluctance of the country also stands on the way of e-governance. The step of government servants is quite different from that of private sectors in this regard. The large number of government servants is reluctant to cope with the new technologies arrival and some are not in the position of rejuvenation Government is also in the need of technological skill training provisions for the old staffs.

Thus the step to implement e-governance still gets an internal resistance from the government servants.

### Concluding Observation

Therefore we can say that e-Governance is the key to the "Good Governance" for the developing countries like India to minimize corruption, provides efficient and effective or quality services to their citizens. In spite of poor infrastructure, poverty, illiteracy, language dominance and all the other reasons India has number of award winning e-governance projects. Effective promotion schemes by the Indian government will also a boosting factor to provide quality services to their citizens as in table 2, which means there is huge potential for the development of e governance in various sectors. According to Skoch consultancy New Delhi, 81% citizens report reduction in corruption, 99% find cost of e-governance affordable and 78% favors fast of delivery of services. The Government of India's e-Governance projects should be transparent, lexible, secure, result oriented and dynamic. It is also better if it improves reliability", "convenience", "efficiency and effectiveness" and "business flexibility

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