

Public Policy And E-Governance: Analysis Of Awareness And Usage Of E-Public Services During Covid-19 In India

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Abstract

Information technology has revolutionized almost every aspect of life, including governance, by fostering good governance, accountability, and transparency through e-governance, which has substantially changed how the government deals with the public and private sectors. In the present information technology era, the extent to which e-governance is implemented in a nation is a key indicator of its level of development. E-governance, with its attributes of accountability, openness, and public participation, serves as a vital platform to improve the standard of timely state service delivery to the citizens. Thus, in order to assess the potential application of e-governance in the Indian context among the under-30 age-group citizens, this paper has attempted to determine the level of awareness and usage. The primary goal of the study is to determine the degree of e-governance service adoption and knowledge, as well as the reasons behind non-use of these services and the effects of the lockdown during the Covid-19 pandemic on these factors. The study aims to ascertain the degree of gender disparity and occupational distribution in the awareness and usage of e-governance services among the individuals who have been selected from the aforementioned age groups for the study

Keywords: Awareness, Covid-19, E-Governance, ICT Usage, Public service delivery.

“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.”¹

Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam

Introduction

Any form of Government deals with number of aspects that affect the lives of its citizens and the ambit of the governance is broad enough to touch almost all the aspects of life ranges from-social welfare, health, education, finance, trade, maintenance of law and order, revenue collection, agriculture, industry, defense, communications and infrastructure. In the Indian context, the general perception among the citizens is that the quality of governance at the different tier of government is not citizen-centric, unaccountable and deteriorating. There also exists a wide gap between the expectations of citizens from the state and the ultimate services delivery. This void can only be filled by simplifying the functioning of governments at the different tiers and change in attitude of public servants vis-à-vis citizens. Therefore, it is necessary to enhance the quality of governance in line with the principles of good governance.

The information technology age has also affected the thought process and resulted in an increase in awareness among citizens about their rights. As a result, citizen expectations of the government to provide and perform changed completely altering the paradigm of governance. The citizenry expects the government to respond promptly, be accountable for its actions, and be transparent in all of its dealings. Furthermore, governance in general has grown more complex to manage.

The term ‘e-governance’ has become the buzzword in every nation. The word ‘e’ in e- governance stands for ‘electronic’, which implies that functions of governance, is carried out by using Information and Communications Technology (ICT). In the words of the European Information Society, e-governance can be defined as “e-governance is the use of information and communication technology in Public Administration combined with organizational change and new skills in order to improve public services, democratic processes and strengthen the support to public policies.” G2G (Government to Government), G2C (Government to Citizens), G2B (Government to

¹ Former President of India, Inaugural address at IIT Delhi during International Conference on e-Governance.

Businesses), and G2E (Government to Employees) are the four categories of interaction that are involved in e-governance.

To meet these expectations and to make governance manageable, the Government of India has changed its system of dealing with citizens. Through the efficient use of ICT in governance, it has changed from being centered on the government to being centered on the citizenry. The seeds of digitization in Indian governance were sown in the early 1990s and 2000s with the number of diverse but disjointed e-governance programmes introduced by the different Government of India's Ministries and Departments. Under the e-governance initiatives of the 1980s and early 1990s, attempts were made primarily aimed at networking various government Departments in order to develop in-house government applications in the areas of planning and economic monitoring as well as to manage data-intensive works related to tax administration, election procedures, and census. Rather than enhancing public service delivery systems, the use of ICT in governance concentrated on automating internal government processes.

In 2006 a National E-governance Plan (NeGP) was introduced with a holistic introduction of several e-governance initiatives across the country. The NeGP aims to make all Government services accessible to common citizen in his/her 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 citizen. With the introduction of NeGP, the Government of India views governance as a vehicle to initiate and sustain reforms by focusing on three aspects such as (i) public services, (ii) management and (iii) governance. NeGP is a major initiative of the Government of India, for the first time under which a concerted effort is being made to take IT to the masses in areas of concern to the common citizen. It aims to make most services available online, ensuring that all citizens would have access to them, thereby improving the quality of basic governance at an extraordinary level.²

The NeGP has the below mentioned three tier system:

1. The first tier is the Common Service Centres (CSCs) which are the front-end delivery points for a wide- range of citizen

² Website of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
<https://www.meity.gov.in/>

- services. The common citizen feels empowered when he/she is able to get a service in a transparent manner, at a convenient location and at an affordable cost.
2. The second tier is of the common and support infrastructure that can allow information to be shared electronically between different agencies of the government and with citizens. Included in it, are the State Wide Area Networks (SWANs), which form the converged backbone network for data throughout a state/union territory and the State Data Centers (SDCs) which can provide common secure IT infrastructure to host state-level e-government applications and data.
 3. The third tier comprises the 27 Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) which will transform high priority citizen services from their current manual delivery into e-delivery. Each MMP is owned and spearheaded by the relevant ministry/agency of the national government or by a state government, and is called 'mission mode' because it has a definite timetable, service levels, project implementation team and process reengineering plans. The NeGP has shifted from the approach of inter-ministries and inter-departmental to citizen centric governance.

E-Governance and Second ARC

To redefine NeGP with transformational and outcome-oriented e-governance initiatives, the Government of India has introduced e-Kranti in 2015. It is not about public service delivery alone, it also facilitates in strengthening digital literacy, digital connectivity, digital inclusion and digital identity. In order to achieve SMART (Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsive and Transparent) governance, application of ICT in government functioning is necessary. This is what the core subject of the 11th Report of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission.

The types of services possible through e-Governance can be broadly classified into three categories as mentioned in the 11th ARC Report. These are: (1) providing information (2) improving processing efficiency and (3) facilitating transactions. Amongst these, providing information is the simplest and the degree of complexities increases as we move from information to transactions. But it is the second and the third category of services that provide maximum convenience to the citizens. The challenge is to cover such services. e-Government is not about 'e' but about 'government'; it is not about computers and websites, but about services to citizens

and businesses. e-Government is also not about translating processes; it is about transforming them. e-Government is concerned with the transformation of government, modernization of government processes and functions and better public service delivery mechanisms through technology so that the government can be put on an auto-pilot mode.

Owing to ICT adoption, the government has been able to make timely policy decisions based on real-time data since it analyzes data more quickly and precisely than earlier manual procedures and enables for instantaneous distribution of information. Additionally, it improves administrators' abilities to coordinate more effectively. By directly offering services and opportunities for involvement to people who are underrepresented and rural areas, digital governance can expand the reach of government both geographically and demographically.

Since ICT was incorporated into governance, the government has been more accountable for its actions, more transparent in its dealings, and more efficient in providing services by lowering costs and improving quality. By streamlining bureaucracy, the electronic service delivery system eliminates excessive expenditures and expedites service delivery. Additionally, it improves accessibility because citizens can use integrated service delivery platforms at their doorsteps to obtain government services. As such, it raises citizens' comfort and satisfaction levels while interacting with the government.

The concept of e-governance does not end with the service delivery from government to citizens, it also focuses on feedback/suggestions from citizens to government in the decision making that to a great extent ensures people's participation in governance. Therefore, it can be stated that a range of developmental objectives could be met by adopting digital technologies.

Rationale for the paper

Globally, the Covid-19 outbreak sparked catastrophic socio-economic and political issues. The Covid-19 epidemic was regarded as the greatest worldwide disaster. The world economy was seriously impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Nearly every country was having trouble containing the disease's spread. In India also various measures taken to address this crisis and to restore the governance was one of such important aspects that was addressed through the

application and implementation of E-governance by using information and communication technologies (ICTs) to provide essential services to the citizens during the pandemic.

Major Initiatives by the Government to Promote e-Governance during 2019 Pandemic

India's Public Administration paradigm was redesigned in light of the Covid-19 outbreak. Living with the corona-virus has resulted in a decrease in contact governance. In the cooperative federalism-focused regulatory governance paradigm, institutions have taken on a significant role. The central ministries' and institutions' contributions to the delivery of vital health services were clearly obvious during the pandemic. In the Central ministries, digital decision-making has received substantial attention. In the Departments where e-Office was used, virtual offices were feasible. As the Central Government moved to a digital mode, web-room meetings and new protocols were implemented, and the affiliated, autonomous, and subordinate offices embraced digital procedures. Policies pertaining to home working and virtual private networks have been also more simplified.

The process of implementing e-governance was successful as the 75 Central ministries used e-Office, and 57 of them completed more than 80% of their work with it. During the pandemic, as the country's administrative institutions prepared to combat the pandemic, it was evident that many of India's digital infrastructure projects had borne fruit as Bharat Net, Megh Raj, e-Sign, and DigiLocker all had a major impact in e-services delivery.

The emphasis on integrated service portals was another aspect of the redefined governance. A portal for Covid-19 public grievances has been established by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG). Priorities included guaranteeing fast internet, giving everyone a distinct digital identity, and granting access to shared service centers as digital infrastructure grew to become every citizen's main utility. Real-time e-services assurance was required, and the government made efforts to offer integrated services across ministries. Digital citizen empowerment was particularly noticeable in participatory government, online learning classes, and literacy platforms. During the pandemic, the advantages of multiple effective e-governance initiatives were observed, ranging from e-Hospital, PMJDY, Aarogya Setu app, e-NAM, and SWAYAM.

Additionally, in the midst of the pandemic but even after the lockdown, the government is trying to innovate and employ technology as best it can for efficient governance. One such measure is taken by the state government of Goa to maintain social distance and a hygienic workplace is developing an alternative contactless biometric attendance system that is Bluetooth enabled for its employees after the lockdown. Among the available alternatives for implementing the e-office notion throughout state government agencies and departments the e-mode of communication is the most preferred method as it will encourage a nearly paperless work culture? It will also promote the effectiveness and speed at which the departments address the citizen grievances. The promotion of digital literacy via PMGDISHA is also identified to be very crucial for promotion of e-governance services.

The Scope of the paper

This paper has not been confined to any geographical location but rather it has confined itself to a particular age group of 18-30 years. In other words, the scope of this primary survey is limited to 18-30 years of population. The focus of this paper is only on the interactions between Government and Citizens (G2C). The e-governance services or initiatives of e-governance that are used to measure internet users' awareness are the prominent and popular ones.

Methodology

The nature of the paper is descriptive and analytical, as it tries to discover the extent of awareness and usage of e-governance services provided by the Government of India among the population below 30 years of age.

The primary sources provide evidence in support of the paper's conclusions i.e. survey which was held in the month of March-April, 2021 when the second wave of Covid-19 was at peak. A questionnaire was designed through Google Form, to measure the awareness and usage of e-governance services among the people under-30 years of age. A structured questionnaire was employed which was divided into few parts was divided into a few sections, like the respondents' profile, the extent of awareness and e-governance service utilization, barriers to the adoption of e-governance services and the impact of Covid-19 on their awareness and usage. Some questions in the questionnaire were designed response specific to get in-depth analysis and to make the questionnaire precise.

The data was collected from a total number of 395 individuals and their responses were used for the data analysis. The link of Google form was circulated through social media, particularly WhatsApp and Instagram.

Findings and discussions

1. Respondent's Profile Analysis

- **Age Group** – The 395 respondents fall under 18 to 30 years of age-group from whom data was collected and analysed.
- **Gender Distribution** - Out of 395 total respondents 276 (70%) were male respondents and 119 (30%) were Female respondents and no respondent was under Transgender category.

Employment Status: Out of 395 respondents, 205 (52%) respondents were Students, 28 (7%) respondents were Self Employed, 134 (34%) respondents were working in Private Sector, 20 (5%) respondents were working in Government Sector and 8 (2%) of the respondents falls under other category as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Occupational Distribution and Awareness of Respondents

Occupational Distribution and Awareness about E-governance programmes						
Occupation	Aware	Not Aware	Total	Aware (%)	Not Aware (%)	Total (%)
Students	135	70	205	66.00	34.00	52
Self-employed	13	15	28	46.00	54.00	7
Service: Private Sector	78	56	134	58.00	42.00	34
Service: Government Sector	18	2	20	89.00	11.00	5
Other	3	5	8	37.50	62.50	2
Total	247	148	395	62.46	37.54	100

Source: Based on the information collected online through google form

Analysing the level of Awareness

Table 2 shows the level of awareness among the respondents about the services provided by the government under 'e-governance' schemes. It was found that out of 395 respondents, 247 (62%) were well aware of the e-governance services and 148 (38%) were unaware of the services. Out of the 276 total male respondents, 174 (63%) were aware and 102 (37%) were unaware. On the other hand, out of the 119 total female respondents, 73 (62%) were aware and 46 (38%) were unaware. Hence, awareness among males is slightly more than females (63% and 62% respectively).

Table 2: Awareness among the respondents about the services under 'e-governance' schemes

Status of Awareness	Total Respondent	In Percent	Male	In Percent	Female	In Percent
Well-aware	247	62.46	174	63.00	73	62.00
Unaware	148	37.54	102	37.00	46	38.00
Total	395	100.00	276	100.00	119	100.00

Source: Based on the information collected online through google form

Out of 205 the students, 135 (66%) were aware; out of 28 self-employed respondents 13 (46%) respondents were aware; 78 (58%) out of 134 private sector employee respondents were aware; out of total 20 government sector respondents, 18(89%) were familiar with e-governance services and under other category 3 (37%) respondents were aware (Table 3). Hence, it can be stated that the awareness about the e-governance services among the government sector is highest followed by students, followed by private sector respondents, self-employed respondents and the other respondents.

Table 3: Employment status-wise awareness among the respondents about the services under 'e-governance' schemes

Status of Awareness	Student	%	Self-employed	%	Private Sector	%	Govt. Sector	%	Other	%
well aware	135	66	13	46	78	58	18	89	3	37.5
unaware	70	34	15	54	56	42	2	11	5	62.5
Total	205	52	28	7	134	34	20	5	8	2

Source: Based on the information collected online through google form

Awareness about different e-governance Initiatives of the Government

The notable e-governance initiatives that have been chosen for this question to evaluate the awareness of the sample population provide a comprehensive framework of the e-governance services provided to the citizens. The e-governance initiatives that are taken for the study- (i) Jan-Dhan Aadhar Mobile (JAM), (ii) NeGP, (iii) Public Service Guarantee Act and (iv) E-Kranti (Ensure the transformation of the entire government functioning by providing citizens with all services electronically through integrated, interoperable technologies in a multitude modes). The collected data from the respondents shows that JAM Trinity is most popular among the respondents, followed by National E-Governance Plan (NeGP), Public Service Guarantee Acts and E-Kranti. It was found that out of 247 aware respondents, 59 (23%) respondents were aware of all the four initiatives, 48 (19%) respondents were aware of three and 46 (18%) respondents were at least aware of two given initiatives. 94 (38%) of the respondents were familiar with only one of the given initiatives (Table 4).

Table 4: Respondents Awareness about Number of E-governance Initiatives

No. of E-governance Initiatives	No. of Respondents Aware	Percentage
Four Initiatives	59	23.89
Three Initiatives	48	19.43
Two Initiatives	46	18.62
One Initiatives	94	38.06
Total	247	100.00

Source: Based on the information collected online through google form

Availing of the E-governance services by Respondents

After analysis of the data, it was found that out of 247 respondents who were aware of the e-governance services, only 116 (47%) respondents have availed the services of e-governance. As far as the gender-disaggregation of collected data is concerned it was found that out of the 174 aware Male respondents, 88 (50.6%) have used e-governance service(s), and out of 73 aware Female respondents, 28 (38%) have used e-governance services. This shows greater gender disparity availing e-governance services.

The occupational distribution analysis for availing of e-governance services shows that out of 135 aware students, 75 (55%) students have availed it; out of the total aware 13 self-employed respondents only 7 (53%) have used it; 10 (55%) out of the total 18 aware government sector employees' respondents and 35 (44%) out of the total 78 private sector employees' respondents who were aware with the e-governance services have availed e-governance services. Only 1 (33%) out of 3 aware other category respondents have availed it. Thus, the collected data reveals that e-governance services are mostly being used by students and government sector employees, followed by self-employed respondents, private sector employees and respondents from other categories. And a total number of 52 employed respondents (self-employed, private sector employees and government sector employees) have availed the e-governance initiatives.

Purpose for which E-governance services used

The majority of respondents, it was found, utilized e-governance platforms for citizen-centric services like to get the government documents of Aadhar card, Passport, Permanent Account Number (PAN), DigiLocker etc. followed by Payments (bills, challans, fines etc.), e-Booking of Tickets (air ticket, railways, and buses,). It is followed by employment, education etc. services availing judicial and police services like e-filing of FIR and complaints, virtual courts etc.), and availing of subsidies from government schemes, scholarships, pensions, civic services etc.

The majority of the Male respondents have used e-governance services for availing Citizen services (20%) followed by payment (19%); booking tickets (17%); education, research and employment (10%); maintenance of records (11%); availing of subsidies, scholarship, pensions (7%); judicial services (7%) and civic services (9%). However, Females have used it mostly for booking tickets (25%) followed by payment (21%); citizen services (13%); education, research and employment (17%); civic services (5%); availing of subsidies, scholarships, pensions etc. (7%); judicial services (4%); maintenance of records (7%) and other services (1%).

Most students have availed e-governance services equally for citizen services (19%); payment (19%) and booking tickets (19%). Followed by education, research and employment (11%); maintenance of records/documents (10%); availing of subsidies (6%); judiciary services (8%) and civic services (8%).

However, respondents from the working-class used it mostly for the payment (65%) followed by education, research and employment (20%); citizen services (12%) and availing of subsidies, scholarships, pensions etc. (3%), and respondents from other categories have used e-governance initiatives for availing citizen services (50%) and maintenance of documents (50%).

Types of E-governance services used

The collected data from the 395 respondents shows that Digi Locker is being highly used by the respondents followed by E-KYC, FASTag, MyGov/Mobile Seva, Umang, National Career Service and Saral. It is necessary to mention here that the concerned university and government must make aware the students about the importance of online information guide i.e. Vikaspedia. In a nation such as India, where unemployment rate is high, job seekers students & unemployed and job-givers (self-employed, employers, companies, government etc.) must utilize the potential of National Career Service and the government must publicize it through different modes of mass media. Out of the total users of e-governance services, 87% have visited government Websites to get information on government services. 13% of respondents have not visited any of the government websites before.

Feedback or complaint by respondents regarding E-services

The concept of E-governance initiatives does not end with the service delivery from government to citizens; it also focuses on feedback/suggestions from citizens to government in the decision making, ensuring people's participation in governance and continuous improvement in public service delivery system. Citizen's feedback is one of the major ways of e-participation and improving service delivery. Out of 116 users, 59% have lodged online complaint/s or provided online feedback for public services. Out of 88 Male respondents and 28 Female respondents 54 males and 11 females have lodged online complaint/s or provided online feedback for public services. Hence, the male respondents (61%) have lodged more online complaint/s or provided online feedback for public services as compared to female respondents (39%). Hence, there is a need that females should come forward and provide their opinions in decision making through online complaints or feedback and make public service delivery mechanisms gender sensitive.

Out of 75 students who have used e-governance initiatives, 45 of them have given feedback or lodged an online complaint, on

the other hand out of 52 working respondents, 30 of them have given feedback or lodged an online complaint. There was only 1 respondent from the other category who hasn't either lodged an online complaint or provided online feedback for public service. Both categories student and working have fulfilled their duties as citizens equally, by sharing their opinions for improving public service delivery system.

Level of Satisfaction with E-governance services

It was found from the data that most of the respondents were satisfied with the e-governance services provided to them by the government. Out of 88 aware Male respondents 7 males were Very Satisfied, 44 were satisfied, 34 were Neutral, 2 were dissatisfied and 1 was very dissatisfied. On the other hand, out of 28 aware Female respondents 2 were Very Satisfied, 13 were satisfied, 12 were Neutral, 1 was dissatisfied and none of them chose Very Dissatisfied. It was found that males were more satisfied as compared to females. Males were more neutral than females. After considering the outcome of the data it was found that people are satisfied with the e-governance, hence, it can be stated that people are willing to adopt the e-governance services by the Government.

Out of 75 student respondents who have availed the e-governance services, 6 and 40 respondents were very satisfied and satisfied respectively, 27 were neutral, only 2 were dissatisfied and none of them chose very dissatisfied. Out of 52 respondents of different service classes who have availed the e-governance services, 10 and 25 respondents were very satisfied and satisfied respectively, 15 were neutral and both the dissatisfied category and the very dissatisfied category were chosen by 1 respondent each. It was observed that student respondents were more satisfied than the service class respondents.

Reasons for not using E-governance services

Out of the 247 number of respondents who were aware of the different e-governance services 131 respondents have not used any of the e-governance services. While analyzing the reasons for not availing e-government services, it was found that poor infrastructure and connectivity (26%) is one of the major reasons for nonuse of e-governance services, followed by obsolete information (23%), complexity in usage (21%), privacy issues (20%) and other issues (10%). Among the other issues, the majority of the respondents highlighted that they never felt the requirement to use, some respondents

mentioned that there is lack of popularity and awareness, and some respondents that they don't know how to use it etc. As an outcome, in addition to providing infrastructure support for e-governance, it is especially important to educate the public how to use it and to inform them of the services that are accessible to them through the different modes of mass media.

Out of 247 aware, but 131 not using e-governance services 61 respondents (47%) are most likely and 66 respondents (50%) are likely to use e-governance services if the government provides better infrastructure and user support. Only 4 respondents (3%) like to interact directly with the public sector. This demonstrates that the majority of respondents choose digital public delivery mechanisms over in-person ones. For effective public service delivery, the government must concentrate on e-governance transformation.

Out of the total aware, but non-users of e-governance services 131 respondents, it was found that 45 aware but not used e-governance services females (49% most likely & 51% likely) are more likely to use e-governance services if government provides better infrastructure and user support as compared to 86 aware but not used e-governance services males (45% most likely & 49% likely). It was also found that students (40% most likely & 59% likely) are more likely to use e-governance services. The government provides better infrastructure and user support as compared to working respondents (54% most likely and 42% likely) and respondents from another category (67% likely).

The Covid-19's impact on awareness and use of E-governance services

Covid-19 has given e-government an entirely different form of governance, and e-governance is now the norm emerged specifically during the pandemic when life was standstill. Through the sharing of information and the provision of online services, e-governance has kept people and governments connected throughout the entire period of pandemic. Thus, to evaluate the effect of Covid-19 on e-governance, the study has focused on two areas: How has the Covid-19 period affected the frequency at which you use e-governance services? Has Covid-19 introduced you to any new e-governance services?

The data regarding frequency of use of e-governance services was collected from the 116 respondents who used e-governance services during the pandemic to measure how Covid-19 has impacted the frequency of their usage. 75%

respondents said that their usage frequency of e-governance services has increased during the pandemic. 25% respondents replied that their usage frequency didn't change or decreased marginally. Out of the 88 Male respondents who used e-governance services, the usage frequency of 66 (75%) males had increased and usage frequency of 22 (25%) males did not change or decreased marginally. Out of 28 Female respondents who used e-governance services, the usage frequency of 23 (88%) females increased and 5 (12%) females' user-frequency was not changed or decreased marginally. From the results it was revealed that usage frequency of 88% female respondents has increased more than the 75% male respondents during the pandemic. Therefore, it may be stated that during the pandemic e-governance services have helped female respondent's digital abilities to some level and the Covid-19 to some extent supported to bridge the gender digital gap.

The usage frequency distribution analysis for e-governance services shows that of 75 students who have availed e-governance services, the usage frequency of 60 students increased and the user frequency of 20 students remained unchanged or marginally decreased. And a total number of 52 employed respondents who have availed the e-governance services, the usage frequency of 40 employees got increased and user frequency of 12 employees remains unchanged or marginally decreased. This shows that during the pandemic the usage frequency of 80% students had increased and the usage frequency of 76% employees had increased.

To determine how Covid-19 has affected respondents' awareness, 131 non-user respondents provided information about their familiarity with e-governance services and only 40% of non-users of e-governance services during the pandemic were found to be familiar with the new e-governance service or services.

Conclusion

The Public Administration domain is moving from government centric to citizen centric governance through the utilization of digital technologies. Innovations and digital technologies are impacting the functioning of both the public and private sector. E-Governance has revolutionised the world of public administration. The pandemic has not only created havoc but has also provided space to improvise the public delivery system. It has ushered the concept of e-governance, thus alleviating digital divide to some extent. As social distancing is

leading to online interactions, the utilization of e- governance services is becoming more and more widespread. António Guterres, Secretary-General of United Nations recently stated that the post-Covid-19 world will be different and much more digital than before³.

E-governance is a means, not an end, to improve public service delivery, boost public participation, improve accountability and transparency, provide social justice and inclusivity, and eventually accomplish the objectives of good governance. In addition to removing red-tapism and promoting transparency and inclusivity in the public service delivery system, this will also save citizens' money and time.

In light of the research findings, it may be inferred that India has immense potential for e-governance. In order to address the gender gap in technology usage, the Indian Government needs to prioritize improving user interface design, bolstering infrastructure support, and educating internet users about the services that are available and how to use them. E-governance is of critical importance for more rapid, equitable, and widespread development. In a nation like India, which has 136.64 crore people living in more than 6,64,000 villages as of 2019, e-governance is no longer optional but it is absolutely necessary. If ICT-based governance is not implemented, it will be very difficult to serve the public effectively and guarantee citizen participation in decision-making at all tiers of governance, including Local, State, and Centre. It can help achieve our national aim of "Sabka saath, Sabka vikas, Sabka vishwaas" by introducing citizen centricity, efficiency, accountability, transparency, and openness into governance.

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