



# **DEVELOPING AN E-GOVERNANCE MODEL FOR CITIZEN CENTRIC ADMINISTRATION**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The term e-governance is frequently used in the discussions in seminars, conferences, leadership summits, print and social media. The use of information communication technology has transformed the world and the governance. every nation is extensively relying on the technology to establish a Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsive and Transparent (SMART) public administration system in the country. The interaction between the government, citizens and business community depends on the use of modern technology for exchange of thoughts and ideas. The journey from web 1.0 to 5.0 has transformed the society and revamped the public administration system of every country. Use of technology has created opportunity for start-up companies to work in various sectors ranging from agriculture to delivery of public services. e-governance has helped in curbing corruption and time-consuming official rules and procedures. This paper explores the meaning, challenges of e governance. the paper highlights the meaning of citizen centric administration, how can e-governance be used in public delivery of services, focusses on citizen centric approach to policy making and delivery of public services.

**Keywords:** e governance, good governance, Information communication technology, UNESCAP, Cloud technology

## **INTRODUCTION**

Whether renewing a driving licence, applying for passport, booking appointment slot for corona vaccine or looking for contact numbers of vendors of oxygen cylinder supplier on internet, citizens on routine basis interact basis. The interaction between citizens and governments follows traditional style of governance. on the other hand, citizens in their daily lives communicate with others through social media applications. When the union, state, or local government provide services to citizens, the citizens experiences frustration and disappointment. Lack of modern infrastructure to provide services, and distrust towards government has translated into low citizen satisfaction. Citizens are less satisfied with government service as compared to private services. The meaning of e-governance varies from one discipline to another discipline. The term e-governance means the use of modern communication technology to provide quality services to citizens within a time frame. The delivery of public services to citizens is a difficult task. The governments across the world are working hard to improve the mechanism for delivery of services to citizens through new technology innovations. The use of ICT has impacted the society and citizens life in significant ways. The traditional governance was characterised with long queues at public offices, adding of xerox papers in files, giving bribe to public officials to get work completed, frequent visits to public offices to give xerox papers. Moving from web 1.0 to web 5.0 has forced the governments to changed their governance approach. Governments are now adopting modern new form of technology like artificial intelligence, chatbots, internet of things to communicate with citizens. e governance helps in flow of information and exchange of ideas between government to government and government to citizens in multi directional way. Digital technology is changing the citizens social, political and civic life. Digital platforms have reshaped the social communities across the globe. E governance is about the use of information communication technology to improve the efficiency of government agencies. It also helps in strengthening the citizens by empowering them through welfare policies with zero tolerance towards corruption (Agangiba & Agangiba, 2013). E governance is when the government uses the information communication technology as a tool for delivering public services, exchange of information, communication, ideas, transaction between the government to government, government to citizens and government to businesses to empower the citizens. E governance is about adopting cloud-based technology as a medium of change from paper-based governance. in the 21<sup>st</sup> century cloud

technology has emerged as an innovation in providing the citizen centric governance. (Muda, Tumsa, Tuni, & Sharma, 2020)

E governance initiatives when implemented efficiently help in reducing paper-based work, simplifying the processes of government transactions, establishment of single point of access for public services and capacity enhancement of government personnels (OECD, 2019).

United nations members through a resolution 66/288 entitled “the future we want” reaffirm that rule of law, good governance and democracy at the national and international level are necessary for sustainable development. The resolution also says that use of information communication technology facilitates in sustainable development. e-governance has been used to improve the working of government agencies and government personnels. E governance is about the use of innovative ways in delivery of services and make governance citizen centric. E governance is the application of technology in government operations and engaging with the end users through digital means of communication. e governance works towards to improve the internal workings of public sector units thereby reducing the financial costs of transactions and raise the productivity of personnels and organization. The e governance aims to reduce the delays and integrate different operations involved in delivery of services. through e governance, government continuously strives to work according to citizens expectations, bring transparency in government transactions, strengthening the principle of accountability and re-establishing the citizens trust in the government (Nations, E Government, n.d.) .

According to Second Administrative Reforms Commission, the 11<sup>th</sup> report focuses on e governance. the title of 11<sup>th</sup> report is “Promoting e-Governance – The way forward”. The report has recommended various measures for the successful promotion and implementation of e- governance. Second Administrative Reform Commission defines e-governance as the use of ICT like wide area network, internet, mobile computing, artificial intelligence by the government agencies, that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and various arms of government agencies, which will result in better delivery of government services to citizens, improved transactions with business community and empowering the citizens through access of information. The result of e governance is increased transparency, growth in revenue, reduction in financial cost and curb on corruption (Commission, 2008). e-governance is the communication between the “governing “and “governed”, and the test of good governance is “harmoniously living society (Vijayankhar, 2000). In traditional governance the Citizen to government interaction was more influenced by bureaucratic culture. But with introduction of digital platform the bureaucratic style of working has weakened. Citizen to government should be explored with a new perspective enhancing the citizen participation in administration. focus. in this interaction between the government and citizens transformation of governance is a major challenge before the government. Use of technology application like web1.0 to web 5.0 can help the government in transforming the governance process (Dais, Nikolaidou, & Anagnostopoulos, 2013).

According to united nations citizen centric means “understanding of the specific needs of different segments of society and their capacity to benefit from online and mobile services” while citizen-centric approach revolves around targeting of eservices to provide tailor-made services to be benefit segmented citizen groups (Nations, United Nations E-Government Survey 2012: E-Government for the People,, 2012). According to the author, analysis of definition given by UN shows that more focus is on e-services.

Citizen centric administration can be established by using elements like openness, transparency, participation and responsiveness. Each of these elements have certain features which helps in establishing a citizen centric model for e governance (refer figure 1) (Kamaruddin & MdNoor, 2017).

Figure 1- citizen centric requirements

Citizen-centric requirements	Characteristics	Features desired	Examples
Openness	Government provide free access to its structured and unstructured data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Machine-readable, easily categorized, indexed and sharing what it is about</li> <li>Openness by default</li> <li>Can be used by simple or complex tools to manipulate the data</li> </ul>	(UK) Data.gov.uk (USA) Apps for Democracy
Transparency	Government provide information about their operations and decisions to the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Honest, simple to understand and relevant information</li> <li>Be clear what information can't be released</li> <li>Clear and traceable process flow</li> </ul>	(Sweden) Debatt Älmhult (USA) Sandy Transparency Portal
Participation	Citizens contribute in government's planning and decision-making and use government's data to create better service for the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give direct benefits to citizens</li> <li>Control of participation process</li> <li>A proper framework and guidelines in place</li> <li>Engaging contents to interest citizens</li> </ul>	(Singapore) Public Consultation Portal (UK) Love Clean Streets
Responsiveness	Government listens to citizens' feedback and acknowledges it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Real-time communication</li> <li>In easy and simple to understand messages</li> <li>Enforcement of Service Level Agreement</li> <li>Culture change in public sectors</li> </ul>	(Australia) vic.gov.au (UK) BusinessGov. UK



## **E-GOVERNANCE NOMENCLATURE**

The e-governance approach involves the communication between the different stake holders. Broadly there are three stakeholders which are involved in the exchange of ideas, information and communication process (Nations, E Government, n.d.).

1. Government to government (G 2 G)- this involves the exchange of data and information at inter government and intra government level. This also involves the interaction at national, provincial and local level governments.
2. Government to citizens (G 2 C)- this involves the exchange of data and interaction between the governments and citizens. It includes the citizens participation in governance and citizens opinion on government policies. Delivery of public services to citizens within a specific time is the motto of government.
3. Government to business communication (G 2B)-this involves the flow of financial transactions, buying and selling of goods and services, strengthening of online services between government and business.

## **GOALS OF E-GOVERNANCE**

1. Better delivery of services to citizens
2. Promoting transparency and accountability
3. Citizen empowerment through information access
4. Improving the efficiency of government departments
5. Improved interface with business communities

### Principles of e governance

For any e-governance policy to be successful it is imperative to identify those principles. These principles help the academicians, policy makers, civil society members, politicians and others to understand the concept of e governance. according to second administrative reform commission e governance principles focus on citizen centric administration.

It is important to understand the purpose of adopting the e governance approach. Any of the e governance initiatives should aim at the citizen centricity. There should be clarity of purpose for adopting a particular technological innovation in governance. The e governance policies should be capable of bringing the desired change and benefiting the citizens. Marginalized people of the society should be informed about these e governance policy initiatives. Due to lack of information about new initiatives citizens do not use ICT enabled services.

Moving from traditional form of governance to e governance requires a strong will power for adopting a new way of working. New technological innovations may not be according to the liking of every age group person. all the stakeholders involved i.e., bureaucrats, politicians, government personnels have to change their mindset in adopting new technologies. Government personnels should be trained accordingly to adopt new ways of working and interacting with other stakeholders. Introduction of new technology and working environment should be taken in a positive way. Government should work towards removing the fear arising from adopting digital initiatives. Public awareness programmes should be started to inform the citizens about the adoption of digital reforms started by the government. Citizens should be motivated to use digital ways for using the public services. the positive approach of government personnel's in adopting new innovations in technology will help in building a conducive environment that will promote e governance. public private partnerships act as an important instrument in achieving the objectives of citizen centric administration.

e-governance approach cannot be separated from the governance. e governance approach has to be integral part of government agencies and processes. adoption of new technological tools should be kept in mind according to the needs of citizens and government. Emphasis should be made on using Digital initiatives in Intra Government and intra government transactions with citizens. Based on the feedback from citizens about the digital reforms it is important that necessary changes are made accordingly.

Technology does not work according to likes and dislike of human behaviour. There is certain requires prerequisite behaviour when adopting the e governance. digital initiatives work on standard operating protocol. Technological procedures follow a method of working where every step is important. None of the steps involved in procedure can be bypassed. Users have to adapt themselves to this new work environment in a disciplined way.

e-governance initiatives have to be regularly monitored and evaluated at continuous interval so that the problems arising are rectified. Citizen's feedback is important about the digital reforms. If the feedback of citizens is ignored then the very objective of e governance fails. Mere implementing a digital initiative will not help in making administration citizen centric.

Use of technology has facilitated and made the lives of citizens easy and comfortable. but this has also given birth to rising cases of financial fraud, cybercrime, malware attack, leak of personal data to marketing companies and phishing etc. Citizens should be informed about the different ways to tackle the cybercrimes. Government should

develop a mechanism for reporting of cybercrimes. E governance initiatives will not give desired result when there is constant threat from the cyber-crimes. a citizen who is victim of cybercrime does not trust the government agencies when his grievance is ignored by the public officials. government should check that a feeling of mistrust is not developed among the citizens.

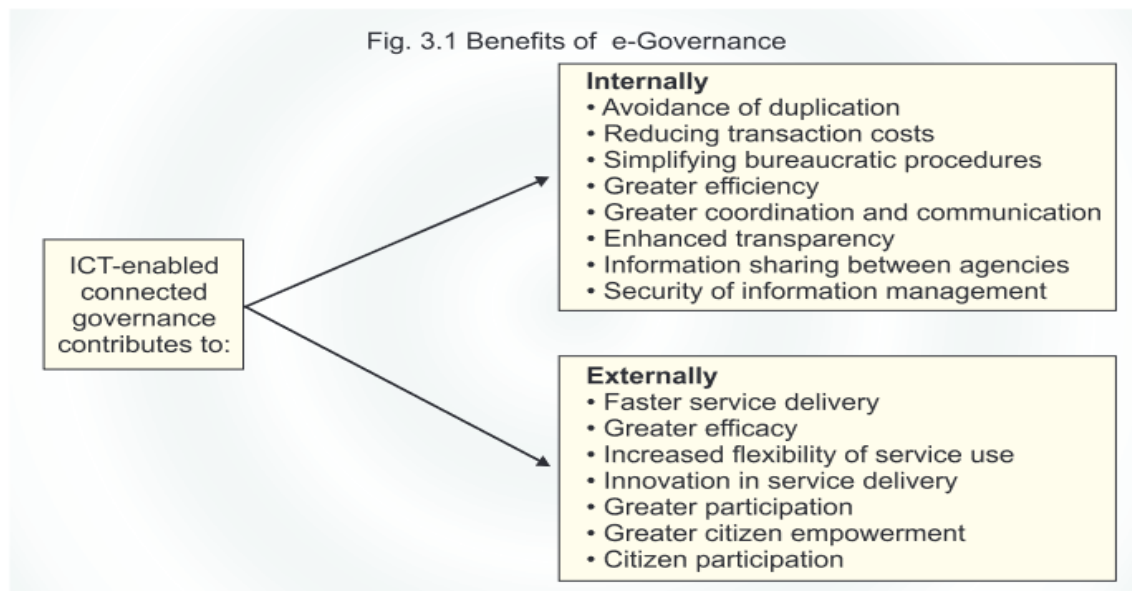
In democracy citizens, apart from being the customers are the stakeholders of public services. through payment of taxes citizens are the investors in the public services and public sectors. A major question from an owner perspective that often arises is whether the government is doing the job efficiently or the money spent for availing the public service is worth or not? In response to these questions, citizens deserve a better information access in a way that is acceptable to citizens (Parigi, 2003).

Why there is need of e-governance model

With the invention of smartphones and use of 5G mobile network people across the globes are well connected with each other. Social media platform has expedited the process of exchange of information. The geographical distance between the countries located on north pole and south pole may be in thousand kilometres but the virtual distance is less than one kilometre. Any news about major event, tragedy, disaster happening in one country reaches to citizens of other nations within a second. Technology has made cross border communication swift and easy. Concept of Social welfare government evolved during the time of Margaret Thatcher. The traditional form of governance has led to red tapism, corruption, bribery, delay in taking decisions, undue favour to near ones, wasting of taxpayer's money by raising the costs of government projects etc. the benefits of the government policies were not able to reach the citizens due to corruption and malpractices adopted by public officials. the inefficiency of public sector agencies to work in fair way and inability to raise the productivity of personnels paved the way for use of new innovative technologies. ICT enabled e-governance initiatives will help in better communication between the public officials and elected representatives and other public agencies. Citizens access to public officials and public services can be improved by use of new means of technology (Europe, 2004)

E governance initiatives help the government in delivering the fruits of development to the marginalized and disabled section of society. Reform of government from traditional way of working to digital way of working needs a well-established infrastructure for delivery of services. e governance initiatives have helped in the evolution of digital society. Citizens of every country, be it the developed, under developed or developing country, want to have access to government service through a single login. Citizen wants to have the 24\*7\*365 days access to government services without paying a physical visit to government office. E-governance policy minimizes the distance discomfort of the citizens and ensures easy sharing of information and services with the citizens (Muda, Tumsa, Tuni, & Sharma, 2020).

Figure 2- Benefits of e-governance

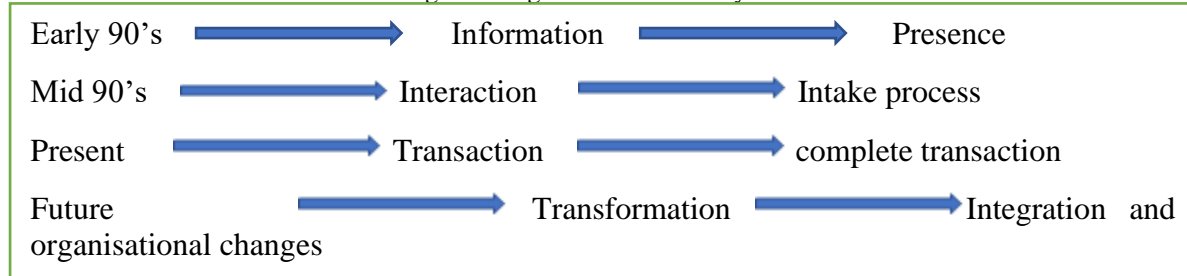


Source (Commission, 2008)

Governments across the globe are continuously making efforts to work according to the expectations of citizens. Objective of Administrative reform is to simplify the government procedures and citizens interaction with public officials. e governance aims to reduce the paper work in government transaction's and adopt e government or e Office as preferred mode of working. E governance aims to follow the principle of minimum government and maximum governance.

According to Backus (2001) the working of e governance initiatives matures in phases (Refer Figure 3). He proposed a four-phase maturity model of e governance. this model was is based on experiences with European and western nations in e commerce and e governance.

Figure 3: e-governance maturity model



Source (Backus, 2001)

#### Characteristics of e governance strategy

The ultimate objective of any administrative reform is the welfare of citizens and make administration citizen centric. When any e governance policy is designed and executed it imperative to keep certain concerns in mind to achieve the desired results (Europe, 2004). A good e governance strategy helps in upliftment of marginalized, disabled and weaker section of the society. Some of the concerns are as following-

1. The provisions of e-governance policy should seek to bridge the gap between the government, citizens and businesses. For citizens to benefit from e governance it is important that citizens are motivated to access the various services.
2. A major challenge exists before the public authorities is for building a conducive atmosphere of "information access to all". While adopting new ICT tools in governance, public officials must be aware of difference between "access of services" and "accessibility of services".
3. While designing the framework for delivery of public services through ICT it is important to follow the global standards and principles. These standards and principles regarding the public services bring fame to nation among the global community.
4. Government should ensure that the persons with disabilities, due to financial constraints are not able to take benefits of the technology enabled governance. e governance services should be available to all persons without any discrimination. extra cost in providing access to e governance services should not be passed to persons with disabilities.
5. E governance initiatives should be designed in a way that it reduces the time and effort of citizens in completing the formalities when applying for public services. the administrative formalities should be minimum and not maximum. Less paper work helps in reducing the administrative costs associated with government procedures.
6. E governance strategy should be designed in a way that all the stakeholders at national, regional and local level work in coordination and each of the administrative units ae involved in decision making.
7. A mechanism for knowledge sharing about the benefits of e governance should be developed with Inter government and intra government agencies. Knowledge sharing helps in reducing the minimum duplication of efforts and financial resources. Exchange of ideas and thought among public agencies helps in building a coordination between departments which ultimately benefits the citizens.
8. E governance initiatives should be able to safeguard the citizens privacy and the personal data. There should be stringent provisions for punishing those who violate the privacy and breach the data. A strong data protection law helps in building the trust towards the government initiatives.
9. E governance strategy should include the quality management system. Quality management system means that in the access of information and delivery of services, a standard adopted in this process should be designed by the respective departments based on the feedback from the citizens.
10. E governance strategy should spread awareness about the benefits of using the e -services. appropriate steps should be taken to develop the infrastructure needed for the success of e governance policy. Technical Assistance from International organizations like UNITED NATIONS, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNDP should be taken when in formulation and implementation the e governance initiatives.

Figure 4: e-governance imperatives

Process	Simplicity	Efficiency	Citizen-centricity	Sustainability	Cost effectiveness
People	Vision	Leadership	Commitment	Competency	Change
Technology	Architecture	Open Standards	Reliability	Scalability	Security

Resources	Holistic	Efficient	Service oriented	Sustained	Adequate
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Source (Commission, 2008)

e-governance approach for delivery of public services

the benefits of e governance initiatives are diverse in nature. they can be adopted in different sectors ranging from agriculture to consumer protection. While adopting the e governance policy the benefits of citizen should be kept in mind. Regarding the service delivery, E-governance policy follows two basic approaches. These approaches are agency centric approach and citizen centric approach (Salam, 2013).

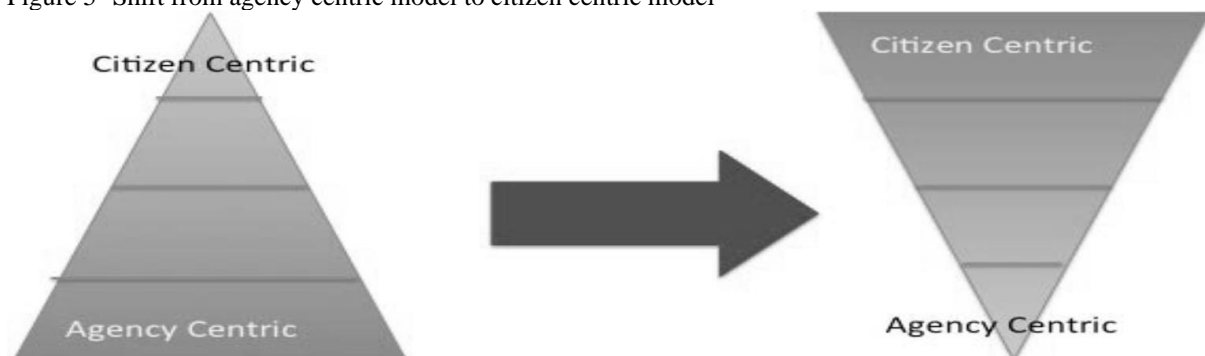
agency centric approach- this approach particularly works on the basis of working of government department. the working of passport department will differ from the health department. Both of these departments have to adopt the e governance initiatives according to their respective way of delivering public services to citizens. E governance policies should be implemented in a manner that they can be customised according to the need of public agencies. Government should make a blueprint to implement the e governance policies for respective departments. An e governance initiative can only be successful when it caters the need of the citizens. Government offices should develop a system of feedback which helps in identifying the hurdles that citizens are facing. This feedback will guide the policy makers in removing the hurdles that are pointed out by citizens. It is important that e-governance policy is to be evaluated at regular interval. An outdated policy will not help neither the citizens nor the government in delivery of public services.

citizen centric approach- introduction of mobile technology has deeply changed the relationship between the government and citizens. The digital initiatives started by government for delivery of public services to citizen has created the demand for digital reforms in administration. citizen centric approach plays important role in adopting the e governance initiatives. Citizen centric approach for delivery of services should follow the objective of last mile connectivity to citizens (Oghuma, Park, & Rho, 2012).

Shaureen describes that e governance helps in building the citizen trust through citizen centric governance. she discusses about the case of Canada where the government integrated all the public services through the initiative "Government Online" (GOL). THE GOL initiative is about citizen interaction with government, receive information, access to government services and schemes, doing business with the public agencies through electronic mode. The initiative aimed to integrate the all the federal organization of Canada government on one platform and provide quality public services by online mode only. This initiative was started after taking feedback from the citizens. The feedback from citizens was continuously studied for one year. The GOL Initiative clustered all the public services and programmes from the citizen perspective. Necessary changes were made in Government websites based on client and user feedback. The GOL initiative helped in improving the services delivery. there was increased trust towards the government institutions. The citizens expressed this trust by citizen participation, demand for improved services, and use of online services (Furlong, 2005).

Citizens are the core of the governance system and the ultimate end users of government policies. Citizen centric model is one that considers citizens at its core and provides a single interface to access variety of government services. citizen centric governance is a transformational tool which provides basis for new administrative models based on the citizen feedback system (Schelin, 2003). To fully utilize the advantage of ICT, it is important that government should move from agency centric to citizen centric administration (Refer Figure 4). a citizen centric approach is about the delivery of services that meets citizen demands and expectations and maintain the privacy of citizens personal data (Sigwejo & Pather, 2016). The government-to-government interaction is done by multiple citizens to government bodies. This kind of perspective keeps the citizens in the centre of the interaction process, leading to transformation from service provide centric to citizen centric approach.

Figure 5- Shift from agency centric model to citizen centric model



Source Yong 2004

Classification of services

E governance services are possibly classified into three categories (Commission, 2008). They are as following-



1. Services related to providing information
2. Improving the efficiency of processing mechanism of services
3. Facilitating secure transactions between government, citizens and business community.

#### Challenges of e governance

The citizen centric approach of e governance is crucial for the holistic development of citizens. Citizen centric governance promotes democratic ethos and principles in the citizens. Citizen participation provides opportunity to citizens to take part in the public affairs and governance of the nations. E governance model to be successful it is important that all hurdles and problems are addressed and resolved. Although government takes necessary steps at regular intervals to address these challenges (Europe, 2004). The challenges in e governance basically are centred around people, process, resources and technology (Commission, 2008). Few of the challenges of e-governance are as following –

1. A primary challenge before the government is to properly investigate and understand the expectations and needs of its citizens. Adopting a new way of working is difficult for the under developing nations When the citizens expectations change frequently. Investment on digital initiatives will only return when there are economies of scale. Government will only profit from invested money on e-governance when the citizens widely use e services (Sigwejo & Pather, 2016).
2. Another major challenge is regarding the technology. government when formulate and implement e governance initiative only consider the technological aspects rather than considering the end users (citizens)needs. While designing the framework for public services it is important that concerns of citizens are kept in mind. For an efficient public services delivery, it is important that there is continuous evaluation of e-services from the citizen perspectives.
3. In e governance the issue of data protection and trust of citizens holds an important place. In the process of citizens interaction with government through digital platform, citizens interact with third party agencies like banks, e commerce sites, government portals. It is important that the personal data of citizens is not exploited or leaked for commercial purpose. Maintaining the Confidentiality of data is major challenge of e governance policy.
4. Another major challenge in implementing and realization of e governance is the lack of availability of accurate information or the unavailability of timely information or no record of any information at all. The non-availability of information undermines the government efforts to making administration citizen centric. Citizens access to information should not be denied on the basis of official secrets act. Public officials should not take shelter themselves behind the official secret act (Broome, 2015).

#### Way forward to strengthen the e governance

1. The Exchange of data between the government, citizens and businesses to be simple, priority should be about the data and privacy protection. The citizens consent should be taken regarding the data processing and transfer of data by public agencies. Citizens should be given the right to withhold their data from sharing with public and private agencies.
2. The provisions of e governance for public information and services should be made easier, quicker and convenient.
3. In democratic public institutions, designing the framework for delivery of public services is use centred. Serving the citizens is the core of principle of institutions, democratic institutions. It is the responsibility of institutions, public institutions to ensure that the e governance framework follows the principle of non-discriminatory access or access to all.
4. Personalisation of services is the key to maintain the standards and quality of services. Personalisation of services helps in citizen satisfaction.
5. The accurateness and the authenticity of public information should be guaranteed by any means of access, either it is physical visit to public office or communication over phone through social media applications. The information management system should work in close coordination with the other departments. For gaining citizens trust on public delivery of services it is must that quality of information accessed by any means is genuine.
6. Nowadays public private partnership has gained importance in roads, railways and defence sector. The PPP model can be used in in the governance field. A transparent process should be adopted to select the private sector.
7. For the success of e governance policy, it is important that there is coordination and consistency in the seamless delivery of public services.
8. There public offices should have a reception or “may I help you counter” where the senior citizens or citizens who are not very can take help regarding the public services and access to information.
9. Redesigning the mechanism of citizens access to information and delivery of public services according to citizens requirement and not according to the government convenience (Dudley, Lin, Mancini, & Ng, 2015).
10. Use of new technological inventions like artificial intelligence, cloud computing data sharing, chatbots to communicate with citizens can be deployed by the government in communicating with citizens.



## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Citizens when using 5G smartphones and connected with people across the globe through Facebook, Instagram, twitter and other applications, want a digital government. This digital communication should communicate with citizens in multidirectional way. Improved digital services will positively impact the citizens view of government. This increases the public trust. E governance model helps in speedy disposal of citizens grievances. The unilateral communication is the feature of traditional governance. this unilateral communication led to corruption, time consuming official rules and procedures, delay in decision making, bribery, undue favour to near ones, no accountability, more emphasis on papers and files, changing rules and regulations to give favours etc. e governance has helped government to tackle these problems. The citizens trust in public institutions is being restored. Access to information and public services delivery changes when e governance comes into play. The mechanism for public delivery services should not be made according to governments requirements but it should be designed according to citizens requirement. Adopting e-governance also changes the global community perspective. This perspective is visible when any country moves upward in ranking in major reports or indexes prepared by UNO, IMF, WB, UNDP, UNESCO etc. for e governance plan to be successful it needs a conducive atmosphere to take shape and then give desired results. The fruits of administrative reforms only be visible when the shortcomings are removed. A continuous evaluation of the user's feedback can help in achieving the success. A good example of feedback system is initiative started by Canada government known as "government online" (GOL). Increased Citizen satisfaction leads to reduced financial costs. For citizen centric governance the political leadership has to take first step of understanding the citizens expectations and requirement and then translate those needs into a mechanism that is efficient to deliver public services accurately. New innovative technologies will help in making governance good and citizen centric.

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