E- GOVERNANCE IN PANCHAYATI RAJ IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The revolution about information and communication technology in the new era has inspired changes in the administrative, economic and social spheres around the globe. These technologies have brought a change in the administration around the globe. Governments around the globe are converting into electronic governance. The last decade has looked at India on a wide range of experiments led by visionary administrators in e-governance, in their quest to use information and communication technologies to transform government and governance in India. The COVID -19 pandemic has drastically changed the governance and function of various organisations, with more emphasis on digital mode, digital platforms and digital education and training as well as e- governance. In view of the widespread global changes, many developed and developing countries adopted new approaches in public administration and governance. Against this background, present paper highlights the need and importance of e-governance and relevance of e- panchayats.

Keywords : e-Governance, e- Panchayat, ICT, Government.

Introduction :

In the period of globalisation and economic liberalisation, the revolution in information and communication technology prompted changes in the administrative, economic, and social realms all over the world. These technological advancements have resulted in a shift in global administration. Electronic governance is being adopted by governments all around the world. Over the last decade, India has seen a wide range of e-governance experiments headed by creative administrators in their effort to employ information and communication technology to revolutionise India's government and governance. India has become one of the world's largest e-governance laboratories, with trials taking place at all levels of government to improve governance and civic services[1]

ICT has been argued to be a valuable tool in the promotion of good governance. These systems are manifested in e-Governance and e-Governments, which aim to make various governance and government operations easier to assist development. Electronic governance, often known as e-government, can be characterised in a number of ways. E-governance aims to improve the way governments operate by exchanging information and providing services to both internal and external clients. E-governance is the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to provide services to citizens through e-governance, wide area networks, mobile phones, and other means, as well as the power to transform relationships with customers, businesses, and others. E-government, according to Christopher Baum, is "the transformation of the public sector's internal and external interactions through net-enabled operations, information technology, and communication to enhance government service delivery, constituency engagement, and governance."[2]

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E-governance is described as the use of electronic tools to streamline internal government processes and democracy, government, and commercial aspects, as well as (1) interaction between government (people) and government and businesses[3]. "e-governance aims to move forward with the goal of realising processes and structures and promoting good governance to leverage the potential of information and communication technologies at various levels of government and the public sector," according to W'O Okot-Uma [4].The phrase "e-government" refers to government agencies' use of information and communication technology (ICT) to transform connections with citizens and enterprises[5]and [6] E-governance can be interpreted in a variety of ways. E-governance aims to promote the use of information technology and improve citizens' lives.

E-governance enables active citizen involvement in order to inform, represent, and motivate residents to vote and participate [7].

Based on the kind of contacts and the agencies involved in the interactions, e-governance can be divided into many models. Government to Citizen (G2C), Citizen to Government (C2G), Government to Government (G2G), Government to Business (G2B), and Government to Non-Governmental Organization (G2N) are the eight categories[8].

The government engages with citizens in the G2C model to deliver information and services. Web sites provide information about government services, and citizens can learn about job development procedures. Citizens can get a range of application forms for a number of services, such as filing tax returns and renewing licences, by downloading them. Through Internet portals, a big number of government departments offer a variety of facilities and services in one location. Citizens can also apply for jobs and make payments online. E-education, e-medicine, e-registration, and e-transportation are all good instances of this. Based on policy design and implementation, e-governance can be divided into two types. The goal of e-governance is to employ information and communication technology to expedite administrative operations and improve public service delivery.

There are four key responsibilities that governments can play in attaining long-term economic and social growth in the twenty-first century.

The most crucial duty is to build institutional capability, which serves as the foundation for everything else.

The implementation of policies that create an enabling environment for effective involvement in a global economy is the second critical responsibility. The third function emphasises pro-economic measures that promote socially equitable economic development. The government's fourth role highlights the importance of government capacity building, facilitating participation in the global economy, and eliminating poverty in order to foster socially fair economic development. With the use of technology, the government and civil society have considerably improved their ability to implement transparency programmes during the last decade.

Common Service Centres

The Government of India approved the Common Service Centre project in September 2006, with the goal of establishing 100,000+ (one lakh) internet-enabled centres in rural areas through Public Private Partnership (PPP) under the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP). The Common Services Centre (CSC) is envisioned as a one-stop shop for government, business, and social sector services for India's rural inhabitants. Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal have issued Government Orders/Notifications to various departmental heads/District Level Authorities/Stakeholders for the use of CSC to deliver various G2C Services. Agricultural services, RTI services, NREGA MIS Data Entry services, Postal Products, Land Records, Issuance of Birth and Death Certificates, Utility Services, Electoral Services, Transport Services, Grievances, e-District Services, and so on are some of the G2C services available. As of March 2017, India had more than 3 lakh Common Service Centres. About 80 percent village panchayats had the facility of CSCs.

In the state of Uttar Pradesh, there were 41675 functional CSCs (Table 1).

Table1: State wise Registration of CSCs in India
(As on 31 July'2017)

	Total No. of Registered CSC	No. of Registered CSC at GP Level
Uttar Pradesh	71096	45051
Maharashtra	33863	21878
Rajasthan	30s436	15038
Bihar	23901	19000
Madhya Pradesh	21543	14995
West Bengal	18458	14269
Gujarat	18062	14845
Chhattisgarh	12342	8725
Tamil Nadu	12244	6452
Jharkhand	11125	8635
Odisha	9573	7645
Haryana	9264	6221
Karnataka	7147	3047
Punjab	7031	4991
Andhra Pradesh	6105	4063
Uttarakhand	5904	4637
Tripura	5895	3464
Assam	3241	2417
Kerala	2794	2094
Himachal Pradesh	2748	2379
Jammu & Kashmir	2246	1039
Others	2378	1603
Union Territories	2943	193

Source : Anand Raj Soni, 2017

State-wise common service centres in India is shown in Table 2. Common service centres have been setup in India in PPP mode. As on June, 30, 2017, there were 163226 functional CSCs at village panchayat level while number of functional CSCs was recorded 2.61 lakh in India. Most of the large village panchayats had many common service centres such as Jan Suvidha, E-Sewa, Sahaj Kendra and other service centres. In the state of

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Uttar Pradesh, there were 58876 functional common service centres while 35804 common service centres at village panchayat levels were found functional.

Table 2: State-wise Common Service Centres in India
(As on June, 30, 2017)

Service Area	Number of Gram Panchayat	Number of CSCs Registered	Number of CSCs Registered at Gram Panchayat Level	Number of Gram Panchayats Covered with Registered CSCs	Total Number of Functional CSCs	Total Number of Functional CSCs at Village Panchayat Level
Andhra Pradesh	12833	5488	3475	3475	5212	3119
Assam	2196	2735	2246	1883	2213	1559
Bihar	8463	22380	17541	8413	19090	11960
Chhattisgarh	9734	11929	8410	9734	11175	7940
Gujarat	13735	18062	14845	13735	16805	13885
Haryana	6155	8724	5834	5834	7900	4923
Himachal Pradesh	3243	2624	2269	2269	2552	1952
Jammu and Kashmir	4128	2123	1039	1039	1727	900
Jharkhand	4423	9799	7445	4161	9014	5295
Karnataka	5628	6564	2665	2665	4963	2333
Kerala	979	2676	1969	979	2119	1111
Madhya Pradesh	23012	19446	13175	13175	16194	11873
Maharashtra	27920	31066	19464	19464	25324	17788
Odisha	6234	8651	6832	5564	6545	5599
Punjab	12800	6261	4282	4282	5229	3464
Rajasthan	9946	30436	15038	9946	29814	14878

Tamil Nadu	12618	11069	5773	5773	7408	4646
Telengana	8787	5564	3180	3180	5043	2855
Uttar Pradesh	51914	67054	41675	41675	58876	35804
Uttarakhand	7555	5594	4441	4441	4339	3853
West Bengal	3351	17527	13584	3230	15653	6330
State Total	242352	298015	196741	166385	258966	163081
UT's Total	219	2759	181	152	2105	145
Grand Total	242571	300774	196922	166537	261071	163226

Source: **Ministry of Electronic and Information Technology, Government of India.**

E-panchayats :

E-government is a broad and multidimensional notion. The ability to make operational actions transparent to customers and the business community, as well as interlink between administrations, is a vital component of ICT tools for e-governance. The government's role in creating a solid legal foundation for its operations/services is critical to the success of e-government programmes and processes[9].Panchayats are local self-government units centred in villages. Panchayats play an important role in India because the majority of the people live in rural. As a result, the government saw the need to upgrade and replace it, and thus e-panchayat was born. In reality, the Mission Mode Project was named after the e-Panchayat (MMP). NIC developed e-Panchayat for Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh, which identified 2,50,000 Panchayati Raj Institutions, blocks, and district councils that needed to be connected with ICT. The information from gramme panchayats was gathered, and e-panchayat was launched as a result.The e-panchayat was made up of 30 modules and approximately 150 sub-modules. These modules also focused on informing villages about a variety of products, such as agriculture, irrigation, and fisheries, as well as other issues such as industrial loans, housing, and water. It also dealt with a variety of other services, such as property tax, death and birth certificate registration and issuance, payment of old age, widow and disabled pensions, and approval for residential purposes, among others.As a result, the project supports all parts of the panchayat's operations, including planning, monitoring, implementation, budgeting, accounting, social audit, and civic service delivery[10]. E-architecture Panchat's can be a web-based en-tier. It would deliver all Panchats level digital services to all stakeholders as an application service provider (citizens).Stakeholders include elected officials, Village panchayat officers, government officials, and knowledge workers. General customers can acquire a lot of information from the available e-panchayat at the panchayat level. As a result, this level can greatly reduce communication costs while also ensuring e-governance service uniformity and excellence[11].

The constitution's 73rd amendment is a watershed moment that will have an impact on the Panchayati Raj Sansthan's role in self-governance. Rural local governments (known as panchayats) are given a wide variety of rights and responsibilities in areas such as rural development, poverty alleviation, job creation, rural marketing, social and political empowerment of the poorer sectors of society, and more. Panchayats play a critical role in mobilising housing and other agencies to create and implement rural development programmes that are more responsive to local needs, including a payment portal for citizens, an e-signature facility for panchayat officers, and SMS and email alerts. State

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governments have also established e-Panchayats to aid in the development process and provide citizens with convenient access to information. Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, and Haryana have established Panchayat portals to provide information on development schemes such as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, organisational/departmental establishment, developmental policies, and annual reports. Has a notification, a report on the evaluation of development programmes, the state of development plans, and revenue, among other things. Panchayats, which take place at the intersection of rural inhabitants and governing structures, are a powerful tool for instilling large-scale ICT culture at the grassroots level. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj of the Government of India created a plan to enable ICT for all panchayats in the country on a mission mode approach with this broad perspective in mind. The e-Panchayat mission mode project's goal is to handle all areas of Panchayat functioning, from internal core operations including decentralised planning, budgeting, accounting, implementation, and monitoring to service delivery to Panchayats, such as certifications and licences. Exposure visits have been found to be one of the most effective strategies for elected members of Panchayati Raj institutions. Working of Gram Panchayats and management of e-resources can be studied by representatives of the people as well as officers.

Conclusion :

E-governance is the key to excellent governance achievement. It makes it easier for residents to take use of government services. In India, the percentage of people who use the Internet has risen dramatically. The use of ICT in e-governance is referred to as e-governance. The goal of e-governance is to aid government administration in becoming more effective and better managing social and economic resources for development. E-primary government's goal is not to digitise government records. The ultimate goal is to alter the e-government administration. The state and federal governments are involved in a number of governance initiatives. India is on the verge of achieving e-governance. Despite these efforts, Uttar Pradesh has the lowest record-keeping state in e-governance when it comes to ICT strategy and vision, as well as e-governance goals.

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