



Mains Marathon

Day 10: “E-governance is easy governance, effective governance, and also economic governance. It paves the way for good governance.” In this context discuss the various e-governance initiatives taken by the government. (250 words)

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Approach / Explanation / Answer

- Give a brief introduction about E-Governance.
- Explain the importance of E-governance in relation to easy, effective and economic governance and good governance.
- Discuss the various e-governance initiatives taken by the government.
- Give a suitable conclusion.

Answer

Governance’ is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented). The **National e-Governance Plan** envisions 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.

As India grows more urban, the importance of effective governance and service delivery by city governments becomes central to the well-being of Indians. We hope to live in ‘smart cities’, where digital systems enable the use of data — generated by people living and working in the city itself — to continuously

Easy Governance

Government proposed a five-level framework for assessing where a given function, department, or city stands in its journey of e-governance to make the process and governance easy. This framework looks at how the department has been able to apply digital technologies across three domains of processes, human resources, and citizen-centricity in order to work more smartly to ease the governance. The core insight of the most advanced e-governance systems stand on the foundation of a simple behavioral change: when doing their work, local government employees have to switch from using pen and paper and records to using digital tools and systems. This is the first step in the e-governance journey. The reality in most local government offices in India is that records are kept on paper; if they do get digitised, it is as part of a post-facto data entry exercise. This creates scope for errors and manipulation.

Effective Governance

In Andhra Pradesh, for instance, ULB employees reported saving an average of 11 hours every week after a digital system was adopted. At the same time, leaders can set phased targets for adoption of the new tools, and ensure adequate technical support and education for employees during the transition. These changes are reflected in the 'process' and 'human resources' levers of the framework. In implementing such changes, however, administrators must ensure that e-governance is not reduced to an exercise in performance management alone. The framework incorporates a 'citizen centricity' lever to emphasize that urban local bodies are service delivery organizations, and that internal reforms have to reflect in better and effective experience and empowerment for citizens.

Economic Governance

- Information technologies may lessen the theft of public funds by making information accessible in real-time.
- Program expenditures decreased by 24 percent, but employment slightly grew, reducing leakages.
- The nationwide expansion of the E-governance resulted in a consistent 19% reduction in programme expenditure.
- The number of fake households in the official database decreased and targeting became efficient.

Various e-governance Initiatives

- **Bhoomi Project (Karnataka): Online Delivery of Land Records:**
 - Bhoomi is a self-sustainable e-Governance project for the computerized delivery of 20 million rural land records to 6.7 million farmers of Karnataka.
- **KHAJANE (Karnataka): End-to-end automation of Government Treasury System:**
 - Government-to-Government (G2G) e-Governance initiative of the Karnataka State Government.
 - It has been implemented mainly to eliminate systemic deficiencies in the manual treasury system and for the efficient management of state finances.
- **e-Seva (Andhra Pradesh):**
 - Designed to provide 'Government to Citizen' and 'e-Business to Citizen' services.
 - All the services are delivered online to consumers /citizens by connecting them to the respective government departments and providing online information at the point of service delivery.
 - The project has become very popular among the citizens especially for the payment of utility bills.
- **e-Courts:**
 - Launched by the Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice.
 - The Mission Mode Project (MMP) aims at utilizing technology for improved provisioning of judicial services to citizens.
- **e-District:**
 - Launched by the Department of Information Technology.
 - The MMP aims at delivery of high volume, citizen-centric services at the District level such as the issue of birth/death certificate, income and caste certificates, old age and widow pension, etc.
- **e-Office:**
 - Launched by the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances.
 - The MMP aims at significantly improving the operational efficiency of the Government by transitioning to a "Less Paper Office".

All the benefits associated with e-governance are the ease of interaction, the gains in efficiency through both performance management and process reform, and the potential for data driven preventive maintenance of infrastructure hinge upon adoption of the system by local government employees and citizens themselves.

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