



INTERDEPENDENT FACETS OF E-LEARNING & E-GOVERNANCE

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ABSTRACT

E-Learning plays a vital role in the implementation and success of E-Governance. E-Governance & E-Learning is related with each other. Rather, E-Governance is depended on E-Literacy. E-Governance and E-Learning is connected with the terms like Digital Divide, E-Computer, Internet, Network and so on. E-Learning is considered to be a very important skill to use the E-Technologies used for E-Governance.

Definition of certain terms is used, or co-related with E-Governance frequently. E-Governance is defined by various ways by many experts. Though the definition varies from each other, the content of them are same like "E-Governance is a process which function automatically and provide interaction with the Government and Citizen through Information Communication Technology (ICT)". The E-governance is good and beneficial for country, as it may reduce substantial time required, for information transfer. For this, the citizen of that Government should be E-literate, irrespective of the knowledge and education background they posses. Earlier, the Central Government did not have a well-defined policy on developing computer-learning skills in schools, leaving it to the State Governments. Central Government and many State Governments initiated various E-Governance programs at Central and State level in the recent past. Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Kerala, Haryana States have to tell many success stories of E-Governance. The fate of the project is decided by the private companies whom the project assigned by the State Governments, who in turn benefited with these projects.

The definition of "Computer Literacy" can vary from group to group. Generally, literate is one who can read any arbitrary book in their native languages. Similarly, a computer literate may consider the ability to use and meet the requirements of the Computer Programs. Hence, Computer literacy is defined as a knowledge and ability to use computers and related technology efficiently, with a range of skills covering levels from elementary use to programming and advanced problem solving. Another valuable component of computer literacy is, knowing how computers work and operate. Having basic computer skills is a significant asset in the developed countries.

Keywords: Digital Divide, E-Learning, E-Governance, E-Literacy, ICT.

1. Introduction

E-Learning plays a vital role in the mediation or bridging of common people and E-Government together. The ICT mediate as a tool to achieve better governance between these two. The technologies bridge each other and help to create a more transparent government. If required, it can be used for an opinion poll in implementing new policies, allowing voters to immediately evaluating their representation in the policy making, administrative decisions and ultimately the E-Governance. The transparency of Government will give direct involvement of the public to make decisions and hold elected officials or public servants accountable for their actions through E-Governance. The public could become a direct and prominent influence in government legislature if E-Governance is used appropriately. The Government can move towards a true democracy with the application of E-Government like Election, Opinion poll etc. E-Governance inevitably also embraces new models like policy formulation, new forms of citizenship, new patterns of relationship and power, new options for economic development etc.

It is become common that 'E' is added as a prefix in many terms in the 21st century like E-Commerce, E-Services, E-Government, E-Voting, E-Villages, E-Learning and etc. In all these 'E', we find many similarities. One common factor among these 'E' are, they all contain the digital environments to execute or perform the task. Hence, the implementation and promotion of all 'E' events are, through digital environments only. The Central Government did not have a well-defined policy on developing computer-learning skills in schools, leaving it to State Governments to work out arrangements with private companies. The fate of the project is decided by these private companies who in turn benefited with the projects. When the use of ICT is enhanced, the access and delivery of government services to benefit by the citizens of the Society. Naturally, the level of awareness also increased the individuals of that Society (Emmanuel C. Lallana & Margaret N. Uy, 2003).

2. E-Governance

E-Governance is defined by various ways by many experts. Though the definitions varies from each other the content of them are same like "E-Governance is a process which function automatically and provide interaction with the Government and Citizen through Information Communication Technology (ICT)". For this the citizen of that Government should be E-literate irrespective of the knowledge and education background they posses (Anil Monga, 2008).

The goal of E-Government will be greater citizen participation. Through the internet, implementation of Information Technology, and using various Information Communication Technologies, people from all over the country can interact with politicians or public servants and make their voices heard. A government to operate effectively or for an E-Government, the infrastructure of E-Governance is required to establish a government-citizen-government relationship (Vineet Agrawal, Manish Mittal, Lavanya Rastogi; 2012). This will establish the flow of information between the government and citizens of a nation through the implementation of E-Governance. When the citizens become informative about the activities of Government, the citizens can enjoy faster, effective and timely government services. This will help to sprout up the culture of self-service wherein citizens can help themselves wherever and whenever required in a intelligent or meaningful manner. This will lead the government to take decision on policy matters only in the benefit of the citizen but also in favor of the government itself. Hence the government could focus its resources where they are needed the most.

3. Advantages of E-Governance

Individuals with disabilities or conditions no longer have to be mobile to be active in government and can be in the comfort at their own homes. Presently, government Web sites provide customers with access to government information, allow simple transactions, and provide links to other relevant agencies. E-Governance prevents or discourages corruption due to the direct involvement of citizen in the Government activities. In this process the middle men who demand bribe has no chance due to the transparency of the government, e-governance and online system.

Increased contact improves the flow of information between government and its citizens both ways. Once E-Government begins to develop and become more sophisticated, citizens may be forced to interact

electronically with the government on a larger scale. Use of paper documents should be reduced which also saves the environment. E-Government allows citizens to interact with computers to achieve objectives at any time and any location, and eliminates the necessity for physical travel to government agents sitting behind desks and windows. Improved accounting and record keeping can be noted through computerization, and information and forms can be easily accessed, equaling quicker processing time. On the administrative side, access to help find or retrieve files and linked information can now be stored in databases versus hardcopies stored in various locations (RD Pathak, Gurmeet Singh, Rakesh Belwal, RFI Smith; 2007). By all means the E-Governance will be very much useful not only to any individual, but to the whole nation for the betterment of citizen and development of nation. Once E-Government begins to develop and become more sophisticated, citizens will be forced to interact electronically with the government on a larger scale. This could potentially lead to a lack of privacy for civilians as their government obtains more and more information on them. Gradually With the speed that technology continues to increase, it has become economically feasible for government agencies to implement all measures of surveillance.

4. E-Learning & Computer literacy

The definition of "Computer Literacy" can vary from group to group. Generally, literate is one who can read any arbitrary book in their native languages. Similarly, a computer literate may consider the ability to use and meet the requirements of the Computer Programs. Hence, Computer literacy is defined as a knowledge and ability to use computers and related technology efficiently, with a range of skills covering levels from elementary use to programming and advanced problem solving. "E-Literacy" may be defined simply as the awareness, skills, understandings etc. to operate comfortably in Information Technology (IT) enabled environments. A person who wants to be an E-literate must be able or prepare to meet the above IT environment. Here it does not mean the awareness of computer or computer literacy, but the knowledge of handling any instrument or media to access the information he wanted either for him or others.

Instead of thinking as a luxurious item, personal computers become common and considered as an 'essential' house-hold electronic gadget for daily life. The reduction in the cost and the increase in income level enhanced the option of purchase of computer by all class of people. Slowly the fear and approach toward the computer is diminishing and the use of computer is increasing by all age group of people day by day. This also encourages computer literacy and E-Learning in common man. Presently the computers become the part of education. Computers are used in schools and the use of Internet is also tremendously encouraged. This will lead people become computer literate. The young generation who used the computer in the home also motivates the literate and illiterate elders to acquaintance with Computer literacy or being an E-literate. Since illiterate people represent a large population, disconcerting that a high proportion of older people in India do not use the Internet and therefore lack E-Learning skills. It would seem that there are a number of different reasons for this: lack of motivation, not interested in learning new skills, having a fear of technology, not having access to IT, not being able to afford going online, lacking infrastructure etc.

5. Barriers of E-Learning

Implementation of Literacy, particularly the E-literacy, it is very difficult to train the people (Morris A., 2007). It is a big task to E-literate the educated as well as uneducated. Both the literate as well as illiterates are equally afraid or avoid learning this technology due to the technical involvement. Some important reasons block the E-Learning is explained here.

A. Lack of Interest:

Literate as well as illiterate people are reluctant to learn any thing new. They simply don't want to learn any thing. Such people be made aware of the benefits and must motivated one way or other. According to a brief study conducted with the literate and illiterate consisting different age group revealed that either they are not interested or they feel that it is irrelevant to them.

B. Feeling too old:

Many old people, even educated are not interested in E-Learning because they feel that they are too old to learn any new things. Hence, "Feeling too old" was also seen to be more of a barrier in the implementation of e-literacy. Being a citizen and active part in E-Governance, they should be made aware of the use of E-Governance and E-literacy.

C. Fear of New Technology:

Fear is a major barrier in the e-learning process. The fear of an illiterate can be reasonable. But even the literate persons, even the highly literate people are afraid of using the computer. Educated as well as uneducated are not able acquaintances with computer, because they simply feared of new technology. Some of them worry that they will break a computer by pressing the wrong button. Infarct, the anxiety is turned to fear and this prevent them become an E-literate. However, the young generation showed little interest in the use a computer.

D. Lack of Knowledge:

Many people simply do not know the advantages E-Learning and e-Governance. They, therefore, need to be better informed. One way of doing this might be to implement a targeted marketing campaign by the Government. Strategy should be made to provide information and activities relevant to the E-Learning program (Neena Singh, 2007).

E. Lack of Motivation:

Lack of motivation is a big problem. The E-literate, Computer literate, NGOs, Government Policies should encourage and motivate to covert the people to become E-literate. The Government sector should initialise with this strategy. First the government has to implement this type of schemes within the government department and slowly compel the common people to become E-literate.

F. Non-availability of Computer:

The main reason for the failure of E-Learning is the non-availability of Computer and proper infrastructure to the common man. Even if both are made available, the Electricity problem in rural area was persisting. Government should take some initiative to solve this problem. Use of unused or old computer at various Government Departments or NGOs may be used to train E-Literacy. These computers may be used as a Terminal in a Network System. Or the same may be updated re-cycled (Neena Singh, 2007) at a cheaper cost to meet the requirements. To make the people E-literate, these old or unused computers are more than enough. This not only saves the e-waste and environment but promote the E-Learning campaign of Government.

6. Common problems of E-Governance & E-Literacy

The use and implementation of Information Technology (IT) and Digital Technologies (DT) has improved people's day-to-day in all over the world. The Communication Technology also had a great influence on the socio-economic factors and geographic factors and living styles of the people across the world. India has been one of the emerging super powers in IT. The country has achieved impressive progress in the field of science and technology and proved as one of the fast developing country in the world. Various technologies have brought significant changes in the development of the Indian Society. The social life of Indians improved in all walks of life like living conditions, transportation, Science & Technology, Information & Communication Technologies, their level of education etc. The government of India has declared IT as one of the thrust areas for the country's development and has recognized it as an "essential service." Internet and Computer Literacy has increased and the E-Learning and proved as best media to reduce the digital divide across the country (Margaret Rouse, 2005). Even though the unequal access to information has posed challenges to the government to take appropriate steps to bridge the gap, the digital divide is reducing day by day. The inclusion of Computer in school education also extended maximum support to achieve this goal. The software professionals also contribute more than one quarter of the country's total export earnings (Neena Singh, 2007). The fast developments that have taken place due to technological changes have also propelled a great divide of the information haves and have-nots in the country. The digital divide is one major cause of the failure of the E-Governance in India. There is always the risk of the implementation of E-Governance projects being so prioritized as to benefit only a certain sections of the society. Additionally E-Governance delivery mechanism may not account for the existing digital divide. This would cause even the most well intentioned initiatives not achieving the objectives. The fact remains that without bridging the digital divide E-Governance projects may not gain critical mass to be effective. The main components of successful E-Governance implementation are end-users need identification, Business Process Modification, Use of Information Technology and finally committed government. Deficiency in any of these would lead in the failure of E-Governance projects and their objectives. E-Governance project failed in India because of lack of proper IT education. More than 60% people live in rural areas that do not have e-literacy, and they can not understand and operate E-

Governance system. Main reason for failure of E-Governance is lack of education among people. A variety of reasons exist for the failure of projects include lack of Proper IT Education, e-awareness, Time Frame, Training and support after the completion of the atomization, No proper vigilance on the phase wise developments by the competent authorities. Indian Politics, lack of interest in taking training by the Government employees also a major reason for the failure of E-Governance project in India.

7. Conclusion

Projects like E-District should be started for the E-Learning campaign. As described earlier, E-District Project is the prime Mission Mode Project (MMP) of Govt. of India by Ministry of Comm. & IT under NEGP (National E Governance Programme). This project was initialised to give various services offered by the State Government through E-Governance Programme. The same may extended to given training to the people to make them E-literate. These centre can, not only bring computer facilities to rural areas, but also helps to provide e-education and training to the rural citizens, until they are able to use these facilities by themselves. These centres have to have train at least one person from every family in the rural area. The local bodies of that area may be taken the responsibilities of the funding for training. Various organisations may be involved in the implementation process, depending on local needs by these local bodies. The E-literate and trained persons may be employed to convert all records of village level or panchayat level government records to digital data. Many employment projects like MPNREGA etc. will certainly be useful to the Government, as well as the general people. Thus the opportunity of employment also opened to the citizens. This will encourage the people to spread the E-Learning program and will motivate others to become E-literate.

The computer centers described in the above paragraphs are not only a centre of e-education and access to the internet but also act as an instrument in rural empowerment and economic development. They can also support the e-governance in the state, and also import E-Learning to the rural people. These people could use their E-Learning knowledge to use various Information Technology and Communication Technology Tools. It means that these centres act a media of Information Communication Technology (ICT) centre and also act like training centre for accessing Information Technologies. These two actions taken together mean that villagers need not to reach distant government offices to get relevant records, papers, information etc. It not only saves their time by not going to the distant government offices, but also saves their money spends for transportation as well as losing a day's wage. This is the first stage of implementation of E-Government and the use of E-Governance. Through E-Governance and E-Literacy, the chances of corruption also reduce, which is another curse of the Nation. Apart from all, This E-Learning renders the Government more transparent and effective through E-Governance. Similarly, the old and unused computers lying at various places like Government and Semi-Government organization may be used for primary or initial education of computer with or without internet for computer literacy and e-literacy.

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