E-Governance in Education - New Horizons

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Abstract: *E–Governance is a link between government and citizen. It is the use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) by the government to improve efficiency, services and productivity of Government services for the people. E-Governance in India had a modest start in the form of computerization of Government departments initially to come a long way to involve the overall functioning of the Government. Furthermore, the concept of e-Governance has spread it span to field of education, making this field more student and faculty friendly.It has become absolutely imperative to implement fast and reaction based e-Governance into education sector, so that Indian educational Institutions can match world class standards of efficient administration in the face of challenges caused by globalisation, international competition andscience & technology development,. The implementation of e-Governance in the field of education will lead to empowerment of faculty and students; transparency and absolute clarity in administration, governing and admission process. For this purpose, UGC has issued a notification to all universities to establish 24 hours helpline regarding information and admission process to increase efficiency of faculties and of administration processes. In a broad sense, the better application of e-Governance in educational sector will provide better service delivery and the distribution of information to students and faculty members. E-Governance provides higher educational institutions like universities a way to exceed competition and provide the students and faculty members an opportunity to make full use of available resources. However, challenges in its implementation like resistance from faculty and students, budget constraints, proficiency in using internet and technology based programs and connectivity exist but they can be overcome with proper allocation of funds and training of involved personnel.*

Keywords: E-Governance, ICT, SWAYAM, CBCS

1. Introduction

UNESCO defines e-Governance as[1]:

"Governance refers to the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country's affairs, including citizens' articulation of their interests and exercise of their legal rights and obligations. E-governance may be understood as the performance of this governance via the electronic medium in order to facilitate an efficient, speedy and transparent process of disseminating information to the public, and other agencies, and for performing government administration activities."

When government of any country uses computer and network to perform their task in order to bring efficiency and crystal clarity in work and spread their policies and information to whom they are responsible. It is a two way process and reduces the gap between government and citizen of the nation. People of nation can make aware of government to inform about their issues and problem. This is also very helpful in reducing red-tapism present in bureaucracy.

E-Governance in India had a modest start in the form of computerization of Government departments initially to come a long way to involve the overall functioning of the Government. Now new initiatives to improve the performance of Government to increase citizen centricity, service delivery and transparency are also underway.The National e-Governance Plan of Indian Government seeks to lay the foundation and provide the impetus for long-term growth of e-Governance within the country. The NeGP aims at improving delivery of Government services to citizens and businesses with the following vision[2]:

"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 to realise the basic needs of the common man."

Why to introduce e-governance in education sector:
It is stipulated that introduction of e-governance in education will empower good education by providing new ways of communication between teacher to student, teacher to their fellow teachers elsewhere and student to student. This system will enhance and promote new methods of delivering the desired knowledge to the students and will offer new insights to organise and deliver the requisite services.

The relationship between educational administration of institute and students will improve in long run with the introduction of information technologies, internet and the mobile communication. This enhanced relationship will ultimately lead to achievement of ultimate educational goals.

The use of information technology based system in education will lead in increase of the participation of students and will ultimately increase the development and effectiveness of the learning methods.
Administration may provide better service in terms of time, making governance more efficient and more effective by use of Information technology. In addition, the transaction costs can be lowered and the services become more accessible. Implementing e-governance in educational systems will enable effective monitoring of academic standards.

Fry[3] proposed that if universities are to compete in a global higher education market they must introduce the technological advancements and use them as a strategic tool, capable of transforming educational and business practices.

In general, it provides following advantages to the administration:

- Empowerment of faculties, students and encouragement of their participation in governance.
- Transparency and absolute clarity in Administration, Governing and admission process.
- Increased efficiency of faculties and of administration processes.

Initiativesof Central Government for e-Governance in field of education:A number of schemes related to education were also launched by the Government[4].

Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM): SWAYAM is the Indian electronic e-education platform which proposes to offer courses from the high school stage to Post-Graduate stage in an interactive electronic platform covering all disciplines. Here Massive Open On-line Courses (MOOCs) will be available on all kinds of subjects. This would provide the best quality education to more than three crore students across the country.

Know Your College portal: Launch of this portal is to provide informed decision making opportunity for students along with complete availability of all e-learning resources. It will also work as one stop shop for all educational resources. More than 40000 higher educational institutions are already mapped under the KYC.

Campus Connect programme: Under this programme, all the Central Universities in the country are going to be connected through WIFI network. Under this, all the classrooms, libraries, laboratories, hostels and places frequented by the students would be connected through a secured WIFI hotspots providing access to the educational and information resources to the students on 24x7 basis.

Credit framework for Skills and Education (CBCS): The CBCS will enable students to take courses of their choice, learn at their own pace, undergo additional courses and acquire more than the required credits, and adopt an interdisciplinary approach to learning. All 39 Central Universities are implementing the CBCS system from 2015-16. Major State Universities are also going to implement CBCS from the next academic session.

Global Initiative for Academics Network (GIAN): It was launched as an initiative to attract the best foreign academics to Indian Universities of Excellence. The programme has been launched to facilitate the partnership between Higher Education Institutions of India and other foreign universities. Under this (352) courses are being offered by foreign faculty from 38 Countries.

National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF): In NIRF,each higher educational institution is evaluated on 5 broad parameters namely teaching/learning resources, research, graduation outcomes, outreach/inclusive nature and the public perception. The Ranks are declared on the first Monday of April every year.

The above flagship programmes, new schemes and innovations of the Ministry of HRD prove beyond doubt that it is playing a significant role in building strong foundations in implementation and successful integration of e-Governance in the field of education.

Challenges in e-governance:
There are number of potential barriers in the implementation of e-Governance in educational institutions which can hamper effective implementation and delivery of e-Governance solutions to its target population[5].

Cost:
Cost is one of the most important prohibiting factor that comes in the path of e-governance implementation particularly in the developing countries like India, where budget allocated for the education sector is almost always below requirement.

Resistance to change:
The resistant to change phenomenon can explain much of the hesitation that occurs on the part of constituents in moving from a paper based to a Web-based system for interaction among student, faculty and administration.

Digital Divide:
The digital divide refers to the separation that exists between individuals. In educational institutions it is usually due to lack of proper training and access to the internet and web.

Trust: Trust, on the technology used and financial security, are two critical factors limiting the adoption of e-government services. The implementation of administrative functions in educational setup and Universities via e-governance requires two levels of trust. The first is trust of user and second is the, trust of administration.

2. Conclusion

The increased access to internet provided the ideal launching pad for the government to start e-Governance programs. Now newer fields such as field of education and administration of educational institutes are being revolutionised with the use of e-Governance programmes. As with any other field, innovation is the most important factor for establishment and development e-Governance in education.

Information and communications technology based e-Governance in educational institutions will lead to attainment of world class standards in education and will achieve the goals of efficient administration and tackle the challenges of globalisation, international competition and modern science and technology development.

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