

E-GOVERNANCE APPLICATIONS AND THEIR POSITIVE EFFECTS ON PUBLIC POLICY

Abstract

The rapid advancement of information and communication technologies has revolutionized the way governments interact with citizens and deliver public services. E-governance applications, encompassing a wide array of digital tools and platforms, have emerged as pivotal instruments for enhancing public policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation. This research paper explores the positive effects of e-governance applications on public policy by examining their impact on transparency, citizen engagement, efficiency, and accountability. Drawing upon a comprehensive review of literature and case studies, this paper underscores the transformative potential of e-governance applications in shaping modern governance and fostering more effective and inclusive public policies.

Keywords: E-governance, Mobile Applications, Positive Effects, Public Policy, Users

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I. INTRODUCTION

E-governance refers to the utilization of electronic and digital technologies to facilitate the operation and transformation of government processes and services. E-governance applications have gained substantial momentum due to their capacity to bridge the gap between citizens and government entities. This paper delves into the positive effects of e-governance applications on public policy, elucidating how they contribute to improved transparency, increased citizen engagement, enhanced efficiency, and heightened accountability.

Bannister, F., and Connolly, R., (2012) gave their definitions and perspectives on e-governance from a global perspective. E-governance has its roots in the 1980s in India. Prabhu, CSR (2013) in his book E-governance: Concepts and Case Studies explored various facets of e-governance. His book speaks in-depth on the concepts, definitions, history, and evolution. It also spoke about the various e-governance activities and initiatives made by various state governments.

The core objective of e-governance is to provide enhanced quality government services to citizens and in turn, accelerate the communication process through effective technological usage. It also addresses reducing government spending, providing more accountability, reducing corruption and subjectivity, reducing the cost to people of implementing infrastructural projects and making the government more open and accountable (Gaspar and Leite, 1989).

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Transparency and Information Dissemination: Transparency is a cornerstone of good governance and crucial in the policy-making process. E-governance applications empower governments to disseminate information about policies, decisions, and their implementation to the public in a more accessible and timely manner. Through online portals, open data repositories, and real-time reporting mechanisms, citizens gain insights into government actions, allocations, and expenditures. This transparency not only fosters trust but also enables informed public participation, which is essential for crafting effective policies that align with citizens' needs and aspirations.

Finger, M., & Pécoud, G. (2003) in their study focussed on the travel of the concept of e-government to e-governance in the world. Their study focussed on the major role played by local people and governments and also on how governance has emerged and made its foray and journey towards emerging governance mechanisms and the conceptualization of e-governments and e-governance.

E-Governance is facilitated by the inventive use of knowledge and communications technology to help people and users to be beneficiaries of government services and policies. The decrease in operational price and increase in efficiency: According to Bwalya (2018), proper implementation of e-governance practices and reforms culminates in improved public service delivery for the citizens. K P Rao (2018) found out that e-governance improves the potency of the current system of paperwork and reduces the necessity for pulling in a lot of workforces.

- 2. Citizen Engagement and Participation:** E-governance applications provide platforms for direct citizen engagement in the policy-making process. Online consultation forums, surveys, and interactive interfaces enable citizens to voice their opinions, concerns, and suggestions on various policy matters. This enhanced participation leads to policies that are more inclusive, representative, and responsive to the diverse demands of the population. Furthermore, e-governance tools enable citizens to track the progress of policy implementation and provide feedback, fostering a sense of ownership and accountability among both the government and the public.

Heeks, R. (2001) in his article spoke at length on how e-governance can be used effectively for development purposes. For him, the end users or the citizens need to accept mediation processes between them and the government agencies.

Saxena K.B.C. (2005) in his study spoke about citizen engagement and participation and more predominantly on the reasons and factors that contribute to their failure. He attributed the chief reason for the failure in aspects of focus being techno-centric in nature rather than governance-centric for the betterment of e-governance.

Agatayeva (2016) added information provided to citizens in a very added timely fashion is envisioned to enhance the transparency of government and it will help to empower citizens to observe the performance of the government. Ham et., al (2015) pointed out that transparency allows citizens to know a government's accomplishments as a result of the govt provides them the required info. K P Rao (2018) in his study observed that there is a preconceived notion among the public/citizens politicians and bureaucrats often indulge in corrupt practices in various areas such as sand transport, unlawful building permissions fund diversion, etc.

III. EFFICIENCY AND SERVICE DELIVERY

Efficiency in public service delivery is a critical factor in effective governance. E-governance applications streamline administrative processes, reducing bureaucratic bottlenecks and minimizing delays. Online portals for government services, such as tax filing, permit applications, and social welfare assistance, expedite procedures and eliminate the need for unnecessary physical visits. This efficiency translates into cost savings for both citizens and the government. By leveraging digital platforms, governments can optimize resource allocation and ensure that policies are executed promptly and accurately.

Dawes S.S., (2008) in his study explored the evolution and challenges in e-governance for several players such as the users, and various key stakeholders at various levels. He concluded in his study that an electronic commerce guide for the states, e-government strategic planning, enterprise e-government, and leveraging e-government activities were needed to keep the e-governance mechanisms in place and move towards better policy-making by including the key stakeholders in the process of legislation and making it into a law or code.

Seifert, J. W. (2003) in his study explored various sectors, factors, opportunities, and challenges of online governance. It also spoke at length on improving the delivery of essential services to the people through e-governance.

IV. ACCOUNTABILITY AND MONITORING

E-governance applications facilitate rigorous monitoring and evaluation of policy outcomes. Real-time data collection and analysis tools enable governments to assess the impact of policies continuously. This data-driven approach enhances accountability by holding government entities responsible for achieving predetermined targets. Moreover, citizen access to performance metrics and progress reports fosters a sense of vigilance and encourages governments to maintain transparency in their actions. The availability of comprehensive data also aids in identifying areas that require policy adjustments, leading to evidence-based policy refinement.

Okot-Uma, R. W. O., & London, C. S. (2000) in their study spoke about e-governance existing as a form of electronic democracy by being a platform for the people who are voiceless. For them, it is also a greater and an efficient way of empowering people whilst improving the accountability of public servants and monitoring them.

V. CASE STUDIES

Several countries have embraced e-governance applications to bolster their public policy frameworks. Estonia's digital governance model, for instance, has streamlined administrative processes, resulting in efficient public service delivery. The country's digital ID system enables secure access to an array of government services, minimizing paperwork and enhancing citizen convenience. In India, the "MyGov" platform has successfully engaged millions of citizens in policy discussions and implementation, promoting a sense of civic participation. Several mobile applications across states have been proven to be helpful for end users to make their tasks easier. These include getting e-versions of their birth certificates, educational certificates, and even property deeds and documents, and that too at no cost and without corruption and bribes to the public servants (Agatayeva, S., 2016).

VI. CHALLENGES AND CONSIDERATIONS

While the positive effects of e-governance applications on public policy are substantial, challenges persist. Ensuring equitable access to digital tools, safeguarding data privacy, and mitigating the digital divide are pressing concerns. Additionally, the rapid pace of technological advancements necessitates continuous updates and security measures to protect against cyber threats.

VII. CONCLUSION

E-governance applications have ushered in a new era of governance that is transparent, participatory, efficient, and accountable. The positive effects of these applications on public policy are evident through enhanced transparency, increased citizen engagement, streamlined service delivery, and improved accountability. As governments worldwide continue to harness the potential of digital technologies, it is crucial to address challenges and ensure that e-governance remains a force for positive transformation in public policy. Through a commitment to inclusivity, privacy, and adaptability, e-governance applications can pave the way for more responsive and effective governance in the digital age.

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