Chapter 3
Social Implications of E−Government

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ABSTRACT

With increased ICT (Information and Communication Technology), the day-to-day life is shifting online. E-government is one of the crucial parts of the developing world. This chapter contains a detailed introduction of e-government, which includes a broad definition, pillars, goals, stages, delivery models of e-government, advantages, and disadvantages. The difference between e-governance and e-government is also clarified. This chapter clears up the concept of e-government and how e-government can have impact on society. Next is the background section, which covers the research and surveys done by UN (United Nations) and other researchers in order to monitor and analyze the developments of e-government across different countries, social implications of e-government, requirements to develop a robust e-government, future scope of the e-government, etc. Finally, the direct and indirect implications of e-government are stated along with a short review of the status of e-government across a few countries.

INTRODUCTION

Recent advancements have yielded many technologies, equipments, instruments, etc. and the same have evolved advanced skills, techniques, short-cuts, etc. And these all together have directly optimized the way of performing an action (job, service, task, etc.). One live example of such optimized action is E-government. E-government is one of the crucial parts of E-services. Services which use ICT (Information and Communication Technology) is termed as E-services. ICT is being vigorously used in various applications and services. All the E-services have not only improved the quality of services provided to the consumers but has also eased the task of providing services and getting services.

The world has witnessed many changes and advancements with much faster pace in the last few decades. All these have been possible due to improvement in ICT (Information and Communication

Technology). Use of mobile phones, internet, clouds, computers and other digital media are encapsulated in Information and Communication Technology. Today's life rotates around ICT at every level, be it micro or macro. At macro level, it is used around the globe by many MNCs, large industries and firms, governments, etc. of which we are a part either as a consumer or employee. At individual level, ICTs are used in most of our day-to-day activities, be it in contacting people, in cash transactions, in booking tickets, getting governmental subsidies, etc. The ICTs have diminished the distances between various parts of the world which subsequently, has made the whole world appear in one screen. The use of ICT by government to deliver various governmental services to people at their fingertip is called e-government. Government services includes almost all the services being provided directly or indirectly by the government. Online applications for getting government identification cards, passports, visas, online release of government data and even online railway ticketing system are a part of e-government. Nowadays, there are online portals for direct interaction between government and public. These all are included in services provided by E-Government.

E-government is no less than a revolution which has led to more transparency, less corruption, faster delivery of services, faster dissemination of information, etc. This is done by minimum middlemen involvement and maximum use of information and communication technologies such as internet, mobile, clouds, etc. E-government is like having a virtual government office which will provide all the services in an easy way. Government office with lots and lots of papers and piles of files are made available on palmtops and laptops (ICT devices). It was a time that for getting a government identification card, it was required to visit the government office with all the documents for number of times. Now, due to e-government the services are made available on our computer or mobile screen. Time and cost of commuting are relaxed along with many other implicit easiness. A very cliché example can be of a man from a village who needs a service from the government. Since, the government headquarters are in main town, the man takes a bus and reaches the office. After reaching the office, he has to look for the exact room of his concern. In the concerned room, as usual there is a long queue, he waits for his turn and finally when his turn is about to come he notices that other people have brought their photos also. He doubts whether he has brought it or not and after verifying, comes the worst part of his day. He has forgotten to bring his photograph. And for now, there are only two options with him either he can go back to home and bring a photograph, or he can go to a photo studio for a photograph. If he goes home, he cannot come back today as home is too far and if goes to a photo studio, they will give the photographs after two days. This is an example of redial one can have, and this can take place many number of times till the delivery of the service. This scenario is from perspective of common people. For government, it becomes really very difficult to manage all the documents and formalities. The huge repository of files, documents, letters, etc. are hectic to handle and no one can be made accountable for the faults. There can be many human errors, discrepancies, delay, misplacements, etc. Additionally, manual verification, manual signature on each document, manual creation of each and every document can be extremely cumbersome. Many fraudulent, brokers, miscreants are there who always misconduct and adds to already existing anxiety. Government is a very large body and handling such a large system manually can be erroneous. This example clearly manifests the hardships both government and citizen can probably face for getting and providing a government service. Now, with advent of e-government, any individual who wants a service, can directly visit the concerned website, check for the required documents, upload these documents online, few of them can be verified instantly and rest takes a bit time. The service is delivered within specified time, if not, there are provisions to make online complains. Apart from this, there are online help centers which provide 24x7 assistance. In this system, record keeping is much

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