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## UNIT 2 E-GOVERNANCE

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### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

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In the previous unit, we have discussed the concept of E-Commerce, which includes the role of ICT in the area of commerce. Now let us see the role of ICT in the public administration area.

Global shifts towards increased deployment of IT by governments emerged in the nineties, with the advent of the World Wide Web. What this powerful means to publish multimedia, support hyperlinked information and interactive information meant was a clearer avenue for G to C interactions and the promise of the attainment of the goals of good governance. Governments weighed down by the rising expectations and demands of a highly aware citizenry suddenly began to believe that there can be a new definition of public governance characterized by enhanced efficiency, transparency, accountability and a citizen-orientation in the adoption of IT enabled governance.

In this unit, let us study the concepts of E-Governance.

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### 2.1 OBJECTIVES

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After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- define the role of ICT in education ;
- define E-Learning, its features and benefits;
- discuss the E-Learning media creation tools and the communication tools;
- describe the teleconferencing ,its advantages and disadvantages;
- discuss about EDUSAT and its usage; and
- discuss online examination and E-Learning standards.

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### 2.2 GOVERNMENT, GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRACY

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*"Government's foremost job is to focus society on achieving the public interest. Governance is a way of describing the links between government and its broader environment - political, social, and administrative."* - Thomas B Riley

Government, governance and democracy have been with us for a long while. Government and governance are both about getting the consent and cooperation of the

governed. Government is the formal apparatus for this objective, governance is the outcome as experienced by those on the receiving end. Governance in the public context is closely related to government and democracy, but has a different focus. These three concepts can be considered as different views or political entities. Government is the Institutional view. Democracy is the legitimacy view and Governance is the regulatory view.

The role of information in all areas of the private sector and in government is now paramount for continued growth and stability in our societies. Information has become the lynchpin in the way we think, act and operate as a society. The significance of the growth of ICTs, new technologies, the Internet and the rapid deployment of information and creation of information is the “potential” for change these phenomena are creating. These are pressing issues for modern governments as the new technologies are contributing to the creation of faster communications, the sharing of information and knowledge, and the emergence of new forms of our respective cultures. Networked communities are quickly evolving through the Internet, and citizens are increasingly using the new technologies to organize themselves so their voices can be heard, and to develop tools to attempt to influence government policy and programs at the political and public administration level. It is important to put the whole question of how ICTs will be used to further engage the citizenry into a wider context of democracy as we practice it. The current trend of attaching ‘e’ to just about every topic (like E-Commerce, E-Learning, E-Health, E-Governance) is nothing more than a simple way to create a name for the use of information and communications technology to support the tasks within the topic. More importantly, the use of terms such as e-government, e-governance and e-democracy, leads to the creation of an identifiable discipline. This then widens the development of the subject beyond the parameters of simply government boundaries to the larger spheres of civil society, associations, unions, the business community, international organizations and the academic world. Governance is not a synonym for government.

We will study in the next section how the concepts of E-Government and E-Governance differ and how workable they are in our new digital environments.

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## 2.3 E-Governance: An Introduction

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The term E-Governance has different connotations:

**E-Administration:** The use of ICTs to modernize the state; the creation of data repositories for MIS, computerization of records.

**E-Services:** The emphasis here is to bring the state closer to the citizens. Examples include provision of online services. E-administration and e-services together constitute what is generally termed e-government.

**E-Governance:** The use of IT to improve the ability of government to address the needs of society. It includes the publishing of policy and programme related information to transact with citizens. It extends beyond provision of on-line services and covers the use of IT for strategic planning and reaching development goals of the government.

**E-Democracy:** The use of IT to facilitate the ability of all sections of society to participate in the governance of the state. The remit is much broader here with a stated emphasis on transparency, accountability and participation. Examples could include online disclosure policies, online grievance redress forums and e-referendums. Conceptually, more potent.

E-governance is beyond the scope of e-government. While e-government is defined as a mere delivery of government services and information to the public using electronic means, e-governance allows direct participation of constituents in government activities.

Blake Harris summarizes the e-governance as the following; E-governance is not just about government web site and e-mail. It is not just about service delivery over the Internet. It is not just about digital access to government information or electronic payments. *It will change how citizens relate to governments as much as it changes how citizens relate to each other.* It will bring forth new concepts of citizenship, both in terms of needs and responsibilities.

E-governance will allow citizens to communicate with government, participate in the governments' policy-making and citizens to communicate each other. The e-governance will truly allow citizens to participate in the government decision-making process, reflect their true needs and welfare by utilizing e-government as a tool.

Governments are specialized institutions that contribute to governance. Representative governments seek and receive citizen support, but they also need the active cooperation of their public servants. Governance is the outcome of politics, policies, and programs.

The **Table 2.1** summarizes the characteristics of both conventional and electronic government and governance.

*Table 2.1: Characteristics of Government and Governance*

<b>Government</b>	<b>Governance</b>
superstructure	functionality
decisions	processes
rules	goals
roles	performance
implementation	coordination
outputs	outcomes
<b>E-Government</b>	<b>E-Governance</b>
electronic service delivery	electronic consultation
electronic workflow	electronic controllership
electronic voting	electronic engagement
electronic productivity	networked societal guidance

### 2.3.1 Objectives of E-Governance, E-Government and E-Democracy

#### E-Governance

The *strategic objective* of e-governance is to support and simplify governance for all parties - government, citizens and businesses. The use of ICTs can connect all three parties and support processes and activities. In other words, in e-governance uses electronic means to support and stimulate good governance. Therefore the objectives of e-governance are similar to the objectives of good governance. Good governance can be seen as an exercise of economic, political, and administrative authority to better manage affairs of a country at all levels, national and local.

## E-Democracy

The two main objectives of *e-democracy* are:

- To provide citizens access to information and knowledge about the political process, about services and about choices available
- To make possible the transition from passive information access to active citizen participation by:
  - Informing the citizen
  - Representing the citizen
  - Encouraging the citizen to vote
  - Consulting the citizen
  - Involving the citizen

## E-Government

Regarding *e-government*, the distinction is made between the objectives for internally focused processes (operations) and objectives for externally focused services.

**External strategic objectives:** The external objective of e-government is to satisfactorily fulfil the public's needs and expectations on the front-office side, by simplifying their interaction with various online services. The use of ICTs in government operations facilitates speedy, transparent, accountable, efficient and effective interaction with the public, citizens, business and other agencies.

**Internal strategic objectives:** In the back-office, the objective of e-government in government operations is to facilitate a speedy, transparent, accountable, efficient and effective process for performing government administration activities. Significant cost savings (per transaction) in government operations can be the result.

It can be concluded that e-governance is more than just a Government website on the Internet. Political, social, economic and technological aspects determine e-governance.

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## 2.4 ORIGINS IN INDIA

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E-Governance originated in India during the seventies with a focus on in-house government applications in the areas of defence, economic monitoring, planning and the deployment of ICT to manage data intensive functions related to elections, census, tax administration etc. The efforts of the National Informatics Center (NIC) to connect all the district headquarters during the eighties was a watershed. From the early nineties, e-governance has seen the use of IT for wider sectoral applications with policy emphasis on reaching out to rural areas and taking in greater inputs from NGOs and private sector as well. There has been an increasing involvement of international donor agencies such as DfID, G-8, UNDP, and WB under the framework of e-governance for development.

While the emphasis has been primarily on automation and computerization, state endeavors to use IT include forays into connectivity, networking, setting up systems for processing information and delivering services. At a micro level, this has ranged from IT automation in individual departments, electronic file handling, and access to entitlements, public grievance systems, service delivery for high volume routine transactions such as payment of bills, tax dues to meeting poverty alleviation goals through the promotion of entrepreneurial models and provision of market information. The thrust has varied across initiatives, with some focusing on enabling the citizen-

state interface for various government services, and others focusing on bettering livelihoods.

## 2.5 E-GOVERNANCE PROJECTS IN INDIA

IT revolution, a world-wide phenomenon today has stirred societies and governments to embark upon an IT-based social, educational and administrative processes. India, as one of the pioneering countries in I.T revolution has made a great stride in e-governance. Let us study some of the project state wise / union-territory wise from the Table 2.2.

*Table 2.1 E-Governance Projects in India*

<b>State/Union Territory</b>	<b>Initiatives covering departmental automation, user charge collection, delivery of policy/programme information and delivery of entitlements</b>
Andhra Pradesh	e-Seva, CARD, VOICE, MPHS, FAST, e-Cops, AP online—One-stop-shop on the Internet, Saukaryam, Online Transaction processing
Bihar	Sales Tax Administration Management Information
Chhattisgarh	Chhattisgarh Infotech Promotion Society, Treasury office, e-linking project
Delhi	Automatic Vehicle Tracking System, Computerisation of website of RCS office, Electronic Clearance System, Management Information System for Education etc
Goa	Dharani Project
Gujarat	Mahiti Shakti, request for Government documents online, Form book online, G R book online, census online, tender notice.
Haryana	Nai Disha
Himachal Pradesh	Lok Mitra
Karnataka	Bhoomi, Khajane, Kaveri, Mahiti, Smart Card System
Kerala	e-Srinkhala, RDNet, Fast, Reliable, Instant, Efficient Network for the Disbursement of Services (FRIENDS)
Madhya Pradesh	Gyandoot, Gram Sampark, Smart Card in Transport Department, Computerization MP State Agricultural Marketing Board (Mandi Board) etc
Maharashtra	SETU, Online Complaint Management System—Mumbai
Rajasthan	Jan Mitra, RajSWIFT, Lokmitra, RajNIDHI
Tamil Nadu	Rasi Maiyams—Kanchipuram; Application forms related to public utility, tender notices and display
North-Eastern States	
Arunachal Pradesh,	Community Information Center. Forms available on
Manipur, Meghalaya,	the Meghalaya website under schemes related to
Mizoram & Nagaland	social welfare, food civil supplies and consumer affairs, housing transport etc.

These are only a few to mention. Other than these there are several cities, state and individual department portals available and providing services to the public.

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## **2.6 MEASURES TO BE CONSIDERED BEFORE GOING FOR E-GOVERNANCE**

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In addition to the need for a concrete set of goals and objectives the following are the detailed list of criterion and factors which are to be considered before opting for an E-Governance.

- Improve E-Readiness in aspect of E-Governance which includes human resources, budgeting resources, inter/intra departmental communication flows, society's readiness.
- Investment in Telecommunication infrastructure
- Internet connectivity speed
- Governmental human resources
- Budget resources
- E-Business atmosphere which includes legal framework and security of the information.
- Start with a simple approach and as with development of infrastructure and acceptance of E-Governance among the various entities, functions can be added in stages.
- Involve top leadership
- Promote awareness in the public about the importance and potential of E-Governance
- Encourage and support from all the departments
- Maintain consistent implementation
- Monitor assessment
- Ensure security
- Encourage private sector
- To start with plan locally, but keep the global user community in mind.
- Involve stakeholders such as high-tech companies, software houses, the banking sector etc.
- Adoption of international standards wherever possible minimizing customization thereby reducing the risks of software and compatibility problems.

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## **2.7 WORKPLAN AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

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Once the vision and priorities are established, a detailed work plan helps maneuver the agencies and officials for implementing E-Governance projects. Some of the key elements on which the work plan, infrastructure and development of website should focus are:

- Content Development: These include development of applications, local language interfaces, and e-learning materials.
- Competency building: Training personnel for human resource development must be implemented at all levels.
- Connectivity: Intranet/Internet connections must be established across related agencies.
- eSecurity, eEthics and ePrivacy
- Two way communication flow
- Cyber laws: Providing legal framework to support objectives of E-Governance policies.

**E-Governance**

- Citizen Interfaces: Establishing a delivery channel to ensure accessibility & affordability of E-Governance by the citizens.
- Capital: Identifying revenue sources to help achieve a financial equilibrium.
- Citizen oriented services to offer
- Other services
- Networking and gateways
- Feedback and interactivity
- Mailing
- Generation of on spot reports
- Transformation of forms
- Selection of platform independent languages like JAVA and .NET platforms for website development
- LINUX and UNIX based applications
- Selection of Open Standards s/w such SOAP, WSDL, XML, Open GIS etc.
- Use of VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol)
- Use of Wireless LAN and 3G Technologies, wherever applicable.
- Use of multimedia

For many governments the world over, the choice of Open Source is a strategic one. This preference towards Open Source platforms is firstly because, acquiring and upgrading proprietary software is expensive. There is also the proposition that it is safer to entrust knowledge in the public domain to Open Source, which is also in the public domain, than to proprietary platforms. Thirdly, using open source would enable India to encourage our own software professionals to provide software support in the form of add-on applications that could be written at a cost much smaller than that required to buy multi-featured packaged software. This would also decentralize software production, from the current paradigm of large transnational production of packaged software. While Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Goa have preferred Linux software in their official IT programmes, states like Punjab and Rajasthan fully rely on Windows while even Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh and the central government continue to base their initiatives on the windows platform in addition to Linux.

**Check Your Progress 1**

1) Explain the National E-Governance Plan?

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2) List some of the E-Governance projects in India (state-wise).

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**2.8 SUMMARY**

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Governance is a burning topic for many reasons, including the changing role of knowledge and information, a trend towards networks as an organizational form,

globalization issues and, last but not the least advances in ICTs. Like all the “e” subjects, E-Governance is about playing advanced information and communications technology to improve and support all tasks in the governmental domain. Public awareness and Digital divide is important issues to be addressed. E-Governance through regional languages is appreciable for the nations like India where people from several states are the participants.

E-governance is not just the Internet as the common perception goes and governments need to move back in a certain sense, to re-appropriate the older communication tools like radio and cable TV. A critical mass of people is required to push e-governance to the next gear.

In this unit, we had studied the role of ICTs in the public administration. In the next unit we will go through the ICTs in Education.

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## 2.9 SOLUTIONS / ANSWERS

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### Check Your Progress 1

- 1) The National e-Governance Plan (2003-2007) of Indian Government seeks to lay the foundation and provide the impetus for long-term growth of e-Governance within the country. The plan seeks to create the right governance and institutional mechanisms, set up the core infrastructure and policies and implements a number of Mission Mode Projects at the center, state and integrated service levels to create a citizen-centric and business-centric environment for governance.
- 2) See *Section 2.5*.

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## 2.10 FURTHER READINGS

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- 1) *Governance.Com: Democracy in the Information Age*, Elaine Ciulla Kamarck (Editor).
- 2) *Reinventing Government in the Information Age : International Practice in IT-enabled Public Sector Reform*, Richard Heeks(Editor),Routledg,January 2001
- 3) *Egov: Ebusiness Strategies for Government* by Douglas Holmes.
- 4) *Electronic Government: Design, Applications and Management*, Ake Gronlund (Editor).
- 5) *E-Government, 2003*, Mark A. Abramson (Editor), Therese L. Morin (Editor)
- 6) *E-Government in Asia: Enabling Public Service Innovation in the 21st Century*, James SL Yong.



