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## M-GOVERNANCE IN SOCIAL LIFE

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### Keywords:

Mobile,  
governance,  
process,  
economic  
conditions

### Abstract

The 'M' in M-Governance stands for "mobile". Thus M-governance is basically associated with carrying out the functions and achieving results of governance through the utilization of ICT (Information and communication technology). While governance relates to safe guarding the legal rights of all citizens, an equally important aspect is concerned with ensuring equitable access to public services and the benefits of economic growth to all. It also ensures government to be transparent in its dealings, accountable for its activities and faster in its responses as part of good governance. However, this would require the government to change itself- its processes, its outlook, laws, rules, regulations and also its way of interacting with the citizens.

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### 1. Introduction

A century ago, companies stopped generating their own power with steam engines and dynamos and plugged into newly built electric grid. The cheap and affordable power did not just change how businesses operated, it was a set of a chain reaction of economics and social transformation, which brought the modern world; the global village. Today a similar revolution is under way, when internet's global computing grid is pumping massive data, information and software code into our home, offices and businesses. Internet technology is the key to 21st Century growth and progress and is used to refer to the collection of tools and techniques to improve productivity both in public and private sectors. In this context, it is the current state of humanity's knowledge which combines resources to solve problems, fulfil needs of citizens, or satisfies their wants. That is exactly the charter of

all governments all over the world. The use of technology by the man began with the conversion of natural resources into simple tools to build automatic machines that are able to help human beings in cooking, washing, entertainment and travelling. The discovery of the wheel helped man in travel and other technologies development during previous centuries helped man to do work in much easier ways. In the same way, the development in information technology has impacted.

### STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The development of information technology has impacted the press, the media, the communication using internet, which has reduced the physical barriers and allowed human beings to network on a global scale with the click of a button. E-Governance is expected to become a common mode of meeting people's needs which is in infancy particularly in developing country

like India. Can India, with abundant of computer literate professionals take a quantum jump by using the explosive growth of mobile device and meet the need of masses particularly in rural area by directly focusing on m-Governance?

## **M-GOVERNANCE**

M-Governance is a sub-domain of e-Governance and it is not a replacement of e-Governance, through which the governments delivers their services to the citizens using mobile devices.

M-Governance is as an alternative to e-Governance especially for the country like India that has very large population of citizens where accessing or having the personal computers and internet usage is comparatively low as compared to mobile phones. Hence, the alternative of m-Governance or mobile Governance can help make public information and government services available anytime and anywhere by bringing personalized, localized and context aware services close to citizens and officials. Most of the government realized a long time back that mobile is no longer a tool meant only for communication but it's a medium for empowering the citizens and a powerful enabler of good governance. M-Governance can be defined as a strategy and its implementation involving the utilization of all kinds of wireless and mobile technologies, services, applications and devices. It improves upon the benefits for those involved in e-Governance, including citizens, businesses, and all government units. m-Governance offers a great potential for enhancing the provision of basic public services, especially to the poor and marginalized populations. Furthermore, it also enhances the participation of non-State agencies in critical democratic governance issues, such as transparency, electoral processes, oversight of governments and public policy making.

## **NEED FOR M-GOVERNANCE IN INDIA**

There is no need to re-emphasise the importance of ICT systems in good governance. ICT, as seen in many developed countries,

facilitates a free flow of information between the government and citizens and opens up opportunities for citizens to participate in decision-making processes that directly affect them. World over, we have seen that mobile phones help create an informative, connected, innovative, participative and converging societies. But then the reasons behind use of mobile phones for governance in India are:

**Access** – Penetration rate of mobile phones in India is ever increasing. Also, more people gain access to phones through shared usage and ownership. In addition, mobile phones add the dimension of 'anywhere and anytime' to the usage.

**Reach** – Due to its mobility and network infrastructure, mobiles can reach areas where there is no other ICT infrastructure (like internet, fixed lines).

**Adoption** – Since mobile phones are becoming an integral part of people's lives, m-commerce and m-government will become the usual way of doing business. Further, there is an increasing public demand for mobility and easy access to services.

**Interaction** – Mobile phones make real-time, two-way dialogue possible as opposed to radio, brochures, posters, public speeches, etc.

**Costs** – The relatively lower cost of mobile phone technology versus internet technology has lowered the entry barriers for poor people.

**Efficiency** – Due to high access, reach, adoption and real-time interaction, mobile phones offer efficient solutions to government's communication challenges.

**No other option** – In developing regions with poor infrastructure, going mobile may be the only viable option.

## **INDIAN INITIATIVES AND PILOTS**

**M-governance services:**For a mature m-government service, there's a need to provide transaction oriented services to citizens. However, introduction of transactional services require a step-by-step transformation – from

simple information based services over SMS to application based services using WAP/3G, etc.

**SMS based services:**SMS form the simplest of the services and can be used to provide information using Push / Pull based services.

**USSD Services:** Unstructured Supplementary Services Data (USSD) is a session based service unlike sms which is store and forward service. It can be used by the user to send command to an application in text format. USSD acts as a trigger for the application.

**Bluetooth based services:**Bluetooth can be used for exchange of information among bluetooth compatible devices in close proximity. It could also be used through a compatible handset to access application on another device

**Wi-Fi/Wimax/WLan based Service:**A mobile phone can be used to connect to internet, using wi-fi or wireless connection, to access applications.

**3G based services:**With the introduction of 3G services, mobile phones can directly connect to internet to access any online application or to process request using a mobile based application and transmitting data/ information/ transaction using 3G connections.

**Location-aware applications:**The use of GPS will provide another option for m-government applications to be tailored to a specific location. The citizen or government employee will be able to access specific information about services, facilities and specific requirements in the immediate area. For example, City Guides which provides information about location of historical structures/ buildings, government offices and interactive commercial services.

**Critical issues for m-government applications:**

Choose m-government applications wisely. Make sure they are non-trivial and also not very difficult.

Make sure that the application is user-friendly. Balance your need for information with the

comfort (or frustration) level of user with the technology.

In deploying m-government applications, ensure that citizens get exactly what the application claims to be able to deliver in the shortest possible time. If it is a channel to receive complaints, be sure to regularly get back to complainants about the status of their complaint until it is resolved.

Ensure that there are suitable back-office systems in place to deliver on m-government promises.

**M-government benefits and challenges:** M-government can bring potential benefits to the public sector. However, the task is full of challenges.

### **BENEFITS**

- Increasing the productivity of public service personnel.
- Improving the delivery of government information and services: m-government can deliver data and services whenever and wherever the citizen is.
- Increasing channels for public interactions: m-government provides an additional channel for interaction among its stakeholders – service deliverers, policy makers, service consumers, civil society representatives.

### **CHALLENGES**

Cost – M-government is another channel of e-government, thus leading to additional costs.

m-Digital divide – Everyone does not have a mobile phone, especially, older and poorer groups in society.

Mobile mindsets – Mobile devices, cell phones particularly, are seen by many as tools for fun and entertainment than for serious activities.

Trust/ security – If m-government is to encompass m-payment systems or other transactional public services, then it should have tamper-proof security.

Data overload – The service can lead to an increase in the number of messages being circulated among people – some valuable, some

not – thus leading to devaluation of public service communications

## CONCLUSION

Today, India is moving towards m-Governance after major involvement in e-Governance. It's known that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is very essential for processing, storing, organizing, and presenting data and information. The reasons for the keen interest in governing through mobile are not tough to guess. As the Indian telecom subscriber base reached the extraordinary figure of 700mn, mobile phones have become the most accessible tool of communication available to such a large population. Thus, making the best way for delivery of information at citizen's site is a personalized way. It has emerged as a delivery channel for different kind of services and now anyone can transfer amount from one bank account to another using their mobile phone. Government and private agencies have also started using "Mobile Phone" to deliver citizen and business services to common man. Recently, Reserve Bank of India has allowed commercial banks to provide banking services on mobile phone, whereas Government of India has approved the "Framework for delivering financial services through mobile phone" developed by Inter-ministerial group. After the launch of 3G technologies in India, users will be able to access health, educational, agricultural, infotainment services on their mobile phone. Around 54 Gram Panchayats in five remote blocks of West Bengal State will soon have SMS alerts on disasters, funds inflow and outflow, information about health camps and pulse polio campaigns will be sent to and from between the State departments, district offices and Gram Panchayats, block development offices. In India, m-Governance is still at a nascent or new stage. Embracing the possibilities and opportunities that this technology provides will only lead to an effective and cost-efficient way of exploiting the same.

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