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E-governance enhancing the Quality of Education

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Abstract

With the advent of ICT, electronic governance is an emerging trend to re-invent the way the government works and has become a new model of governance. Such a comprehensive and integrated system can also enable authorities to analyze the performance of one of the best performing institutes and compare it with other schools and colleges to identify the gaps. Through e-governance we can surely improve the quality of education system in India. E-governance can create the transparency between the universities, colleges and students. It will bring forth new concepts of governance, both in terms of needs and responsibilities. Many problems of education system can be solved by the e-governance. This paper explains how e-governance enhances the quality of education. It describes need of introducing e-governance in education, areas of implementation of e-governance in education and initiatives taken by government in this direction.

Introduction

21st Century is the century of Information technology. There has been enormous growth in the field of Information Technology. Initially IT was used only to provide the back office support to organizations but now a day it plays a strategic role in organizations supporting many business functions and also shapes new strategies in organizations. Today IT has also entered in the field of Governance known as e-governance. E-Governance further has entered into the field of Education. Implementation of e-governance in education has led to new broader innovations. E-governance has enabled universities to expand their current geographical reach, to interact with prospective students all around the world and to establish

themselves as global education providers. Introduction of e-governance in education has led to improved quality of education.

Meaning of E-governance

"Governance refers to the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country's affairs, including citizens' articulation of their interest and exercise of their legal rights and obligations. E-governance may be under-stood 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."

E-Governance is the public sector's use of information and communication technologies with the aim of improving information and service delivery, encouraging citizen participation in the decision-making process and making government more accountable, transparent and effective.

E-Governance involves new styles of leadership, new ways of debating and deciding policy and investment, new ways of accessing education, new ways of listening to citizens and new ways of organizing and delivering information and services.

Need of introducing E-Governance in Education

The main purpose for introducing e-governance in education is to enhance the quality of education. E-governance in education provides new ways of communicating to the students, new ways of imparting education and new ways of organizing and delivering information and services. The advancements in the information technologies, internet and the mobile communication provide opportunities to transform the relationship between administration and students in a new way, thus contributing to the achievement of the good education goals .The implementation of information technology may increase the participation of the students in the process of achieving good education goals at all levels by providing the possibility of online discussion groups and by enhancing the rapid development and effectiveness of the learning methods. Advantages for the administration involve that the administration may provide better service in terms of time, making governance more efficient and more effective. In addition, the transaction costs can be lowered and the services become more accessible. Main advantage of e-governance in education is as follows

- Implementing e-governance in educational systems will enable effective monitoring of academic standards. 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.

- E-governance in education sectors allows use of information and communication technologies with the aim of improving education, improve information and service deli-very, encourage student participation in the decision making process, making administration transparent and effective and give universities a new channel of educational deployment.

- An effective use of IT services in educational Sector can greatly enhance efficiency of the existing system, decrease the costs, and increase transparency in the functioning of various departments.

- In a broad sense e -governance in educational sector provides better service delivery and the distribution of information to students and faculties using electronic means.

- E-governance can be a very powerful tool for the governing body of the institute. It may provide the following advantages

- Empowering faculties, students and encouraging them to participate in governance.

- Inculcating Transparency and absolute clarity in Administration, Governing and admission process.

- Increasing efficiency of faculties and of administration processes.

Areas of implementation of e-governance in Education Sector

E-Administration: It involves using ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in order to improve administrative processes and the internal working of the departments within an Educational organization.

E-Services: The main aim is to improve the delivery of services to students by providing interactive services. Some examples of interactive services are: requests for documents, requests for certificates, issuing admit cards and ID cards.

E-Participation: It involves active participation of students, faculty and administration enabled by ICTs in the decision-making process

Initiatives taken by Government

The communication technology has improved every facet of our life. In education also, beginning with the use of Satellite Instructional Television Experiments (SITE) in 1974 -75, it has advanced to several stages such as Countrywide Classroom (CWCR) for Higher Education in 1984, Gyan Darshan in 2000, and it has reached to now 24-hour Vyas Higher Education Channel and Eklavya Technology Channel in 2004. Technology has also advanced to enable 24 hours Worldwide Internet Communication. Now the initiatives like Digital India and Startup India are definitely empowering our education system.

Digital India Initiatives to Empower Educational Sector

With Digital India Campaign dream of having modern high tech education accessible to all seems to be reality now, Fortunately, tech giants including the likes of Intel, Qualcomm and Tata have made some strides in this direction. Intel recently launched 'Digital Skills for India' initiative under which it introduced Digital Skills Training Application that is comprised of modules on Digital Literacy, Financial Inclusion, Healthcare and Cleanliness in five Indian languages. Qualcomm has launched Play 'n' Learn program for school children ages 5-8 in. Qualcomm is providing 3G tablets under the Qualcomm wireless Reach initiative. Samsung recently launched a Smart Learning initiative to provide interactive study material to students.

According to an Indalyitcs report, Tata, Reliance and BSNL are among the big names that are going big on the segment. Tata is expanding its school education solution, 'Classedge', while Reliance took over 38.5 % stake in digital education company, Extramarks Education Private Limited, through its subsidiary, Infotel Broadband Services Limited. BSNL has teamed up with Greycell 18 Media Private Limited, to launch its online education service 'Topper Education'. Other notable names are DataWind, Meritnation, and Class teacher in this segment. If the e-learning/education market grows, it will definitely revamp the education landscape in India. Digital India is one of the most ambitious projects launched by the Indian government. Traditionally, India always had ambitious projects and plans, but implementation and execution has been sluggish. Good thing is there's a lot of positivity around the Digital India initiative. As said above, digital education could be one of the segments that can be best benefitted from the initiative.

Benefits of implementing E-governance in Education

Improved education system-The quantity and quality of output from education system will definitely improve with the introduction of e-governance in this sphere. An integrated e-governance system can enable the authorities to analyze the performance of one of the best performing institute in related field and compare it with other colleges to identify the gap areas. This will allow all the lesser performing colleges to reduce the gap with better performing institutes. It will be help in the betterment of the higher education in the country and increase the number of employable students.

- Enhanced Teaching Tools-There has been rapid development in learning technologies so as to turn them to advantage in learning. A student who is learning in a way that uses information and communication technologies (ICTs) is using e-learning. The impact of e-Learning initiatives has direct effects on the future structure of universities on both strategic and tactical levels. The changing role of lecturers, the changeable learning environment and the design of eLearning facilities all contribute to a potentially more flexible organizational structure. The online methods enable more effective education and offer significant advantages over traditional teaching methods. This has been possible by technological implementation based environments such as bulletin boards, virtual lectures and e Libraries. In an eLearning environment lecturers can offer constant educational support, as students are able to communicate with classmates and lecturers, visit web sites and view course material regard-less of their time and location.

- Centralised Information- E-Governance has provided electronic information infra-structure to simplify service delivery, reduce duplication, and improve the level and speed of service at a lower cost. It allows for creating, managing, and sharing information electronically among the various university/collage departments and the different courses offered by them. That is, information captured once can then be shared and re-used by all authorized users. This avoids manual transcription and re-entering of the same information repeatedly when-ever a student goes to a new university/collage department for some services.

- Integrated Services-Different types of services offered by different departments like collecting fees, granting admission, administering regulations, paying salaries and benefits, can be availed at one place. This greatly facilitates the

students by allowing them to perceive the administration as a single body to interact with instead of a number of unrelated entities, operating at different locations in different university/college buildings.

- Anywhere, Anytime Information-Delivery of public-domain information to students can be done without any official and student interaction. Students can obtain information related to university processes and procedures through an on-line system without interacting with any university official. In fact, e-Governance allows the average student quick, interactive access to a vast array of information, through computers at home or work or through kiosks in convenient public locations, because this access to information can be available at many different locations and at all hours, there is no pressure on individuals to physically visit a university Office.

- Lowering Costs-Lowering Costs E-governance saves universities money. Putting services on the Internet gets rid of the wasted time that is spent on get-ting the services that otherwise would have been available only in the university. University/collage Web sites are managed through a content management tool. This tool makes it easier to make changes on university Web pages. This, in turn, reduces the time and energy required to keep university Web pages up-to-date. The E-Governance also provides hardware and software needed to create and update state Web sites. This results in reduction of licensing fees and increases the ability of the state to maintain its Web sites.

- Improved Decision Making and Better Planning:- The ability of e-Governance to provide centralised information helps governing body, decision makers and faculties to perform extensive analysis of stored data to provide answers to the queries of the students. This facilitates taking well informed policy decisions for student facilitation and accessing their impact over the intended section of the students. This in turn helps them to formulate more effective strategies and policies for student facilitation.

- Better Security and Protection of Information:- The centralized information approach of e-Governance keeps all information at one place in electronic form. This approach of making information secure prevents it against any theft or leakage. Proper backup mechanisms and valuable information help in protecting the information from getting lost due to natural calamities such as fires, earthquakes, and floods.

Conclusion

E-governance initiates several programs and policies which promote the usage of ICT in education. It predicts that there are many benefits for both the students, learner and the teachers, including the promotion of shared working space and resources, better access to information, the promotion of collaborative learning and radical new ways of teaching and learning. E-governance and education is an institutional thinking that seeks to entrust in building, managing and sustaining students, teacher, learner and others for achieving the larger benefits of e-government system. The probable benefits are: for service users in terms of reduced cost of transmitting information and resources accesses, lesser time and cost for services; for service provider, reduced processing time, error rates, complaints; and for government, improved service consistency and equality; and finally, the benefits lead to enhance the outcomes, as well as the performance criteria.

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