



E-Governance in Panchayat Raj Institutions in Karnataka

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1. Introduction

The present world is full of revolutionary changes. Things which are dynamic are considered as alive. The rise of E-governance has been one of the most striking developments of the world. The development of e-Government in India with a huge population is being the world's largest English-speaking nation has made a special effort to rendering services to the huge population.

India is pioneer in adopting e-governance among all developing countries. The concept of e governance has its origins in India during the seventies with a focus on development of in government applications in the areas of defence, finance monitoring, planning and the development of IT to manage data intensive functions in relation to Elections, Census, Tax administration Passport etc. After many years, public service delivery through e- Governance has reached to many stages. In such a favourable environment where e-Governance is growing, it is a significant development that people friendly local government especially Panchayat Raj institutions are adopting e-Governance mode of administration to deliver services to the people.

2. E-Governance

The "e" in e-governance stands for electronic. Thus e-governance is basically associated with carrying out the functions and achieving the results of governance by utilising ICT (Information and Communication Technology). While Governance relates to safeguarding the legal rights of all citizens, an equally important aspect is concerned with ensuring equitable access to public services and the benefits of the 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 review the government to change itself its processes, its can enforce laws rules and regulations and also its way of interacting with the citizens. It is required to capacity building within the government and creation of general awareness about e-governance among the citizens, it also provides efficient storing and retrieval of data. Instantaneous transmission of information, processing information and data faster than the earlier manual system, it would speed up government process in taking decision expeditiously and judiciously, increasing transparency and enforcing accountability. It also helps the government to reach both geographically and demographically.

The government of India and its state governments and union territory government have taken e-governance measurers with the intension of people friendly governance. Several government departments have taken initiative to deliver services to the people through e-governance and have a more advanced vision.

3. Advantages of E-Governance

Following are the advantages of E-governance:

Speed: Technology makes communication speedier, Internet, Phones, Cell Phones have reduced the time taken in normal communication.

Cost Reduction: Most of the government expenditure is appropriated towards the cost of stationery. Paper based communication needs lots of stationery, printers, computers etc. Which leads to continuously heavy expenditure, Internet and phones makes communication cheaper by saving money of the government.

Transparency: Use of ICT makes governing process transparent; all the information of the government would be made available on the internet. The citizens can access to the information whenever they need.

Accountability: Accountability is Answerability of the government to the people. It is the need of the government to be answerable. An Accountable government is a responsible government.

Convenience: E-Government brings public services to citizens on their schedule and to their venue.

Improved customer service: E-Government allows redeploying resources from back-customer services.

Increasable Access to Information: E-Government Improves the accessibility of government information to citizens by allowing it becomes an important resource in the making the decisions that affect daily life and so it helps in empowerment of citizens.

4. E-Governance Models

The main beneficial group of E-government service are governments, citizens and business. The e-government concept was developed from the E-Commerce Model; therefore, it has similarity with E-commerce however E-governance mainly focuses on B2B (Business to Business) and B2C (Business to Customers) models to generate good profit or income. But in the case of E-government, government cannot generate good income from these services as they are required to offer reliable and secure services on very low margin. E-government services are to fulfil citizen needs and make profit.

G2C (Government to Citizen) model concept is based on E-commerce patterns, where government offer the services directly to their citizens, G2G (government to government) model concept government develops connection between different government department to each other in this model, government department shares and exchanges the required services and a required very good securing infrastructure in G2E (Govt to Employees) model, employees are network administrator develop and manage the information and databases for the government processes. In G2B (Government to Business) model, government can generate good revenue by offering and promoting third part services to citizens.

5. E-Governance in Panchayat Raj System

India being the largest democracy in the world has much to gain from e-Governance especially when citizen participation in governance is of the features of the fully evolved stage of E Government.

Government of India has acknowledged widely for the past three decades that expanded use of ICT in the Public sector can offer important benefits such as improved planning and monitoring mechanism, cost savings through rationalization and more effective administration and delivery of certain public services.

E Governance needs to transform all levels of government but the focus should be on Panchayat Raj institutions, which are Main interface with upper tiers of government.

The relationship of rural People and Panchayat Raj institution tends to be based on proximity as the interest at stake of both parties are closely intertwined concerning issues such as public services, rural development, rural health, education etc.

Thus E- Governance based on administrative reforms operations in Panchayat Raj institutions can have maximum impact on rural citizens. At the national level the union government is active through many

measures to implement E Governance in the Panchayati Raj system, while all the state governments of the country have taken steps in their respective state. Every state government has created a separate website for Panchayati Raj department to implant E Governance in their state Panchayati Raj department and also designed and adopted much unique software to provide necessary services to the people, there by implementing the objectives of good governance by providing people friendly administration through the e- Governance.

“An effective Public Service Delivery mechanism leads to good governance and affects the life cycle of the citizens from womb to tomb”- e-Governance is an important way to provide people-friendly governance in Panchayat Raj system which is committed to this issue.

6. E-Panchayat Background

As per the World Bank, "E-Government refers to the use by government agencies of information technologies (such as Wide Area Networks, the Internet, and mobile computing) that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government." Government of India (GoI), with an intention to transform the governance landscape by ensuring participation of citizens in policy making and providing ease of access to information to the citizens, introduced the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) in 2006. The vision of the NeGP was to "Make all Government services accessible to the common man in his locality, through common service delivery outlets and ensure efficiency, transparency & reliability of such services at affordable costs to realise the basic needs of the common man." e-Panchayat is one of the Mission Mode Projects (MMP), currently being implemented with a vision to empower and transform rural India.

As a first step towards formulating the project, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj constituted an Expert Group in June, 2007 under the Chairmanship of Dr. B.K. Gairola, Director General, NIC, and Government of India. The Expert Group was entrusted with the task of assessing the IT Programmes of Ministry of Panchayati Raj and recommending cost effective solutions along with the cost implications. Adopting a consultative approach, the Committee interacted with the States/UTs to assess the existing status of computerization up to the Gram Panchayat level, including the initiatives undertaken by the State Governments. In order to understand the ground realities, the Committee conducted field visits to some of the Gram Panchayats in the selected rural areas where some IT initiatives had been undertaken. Inputs from eminent experts in the public and private sector were also taken into account as part of the consultative process. In essence, it found that while some computerization efforts had already been made at Panchayat level by States like Gujarat, West Bengal, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Goa, these attempts were limited as they were driven by short term goals and were unable to completely transform Panchayats due to lack of a holistic perspective. It was felt that a more comprehensive approach was required to make a cognizable impact on the functioning of the Panchayats for the benefit of the citizens. These recommendations formed the basis for the conceptualization of e-Panchayat MMP. The e-Panchayat project holds great promise for the rural masses as it aims to transform the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) into symbols of modernity, transparency and efficiency. This is a one of its kind nationwide IT initiatives introduced by Ministry of Panchayati Raj that endeavours to ensure people's participation in programme decision making, implementation and delivery. The project aims to automate the functioning of the 2.45 lakh Panchayats in the country. The project addresses all aspects of Panchayat's functioning including Planning, Monitoring, Implementation, Budgeting, Accounting, Social Audit and delivery of citizen services like issue of certificates, licenses etc.

7. Objectives of e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project

If the Panchayats are to perform efficiently and effectively all the mandated tasks, which are increasing day by day, extensive use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is needed. Moreover, there is a strong need to build a "digital inclusive society" where large sections of rural population are

able to benefit from new technologies; can access and share information and services freely and can participate in the development process more effectively.

The Panchayats being at the interface of rural citizens and governance structure are an effective vehicle to induce mass ICT culture at the grassroots level. It is with this broad vision that Ministry of Panchayat Raj formulated a scheme for ICT enablement of all the Panchayats in the country on a Mission Mode approach. The e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project (MMP) is intended to address all the aspects of Panchayat's functioning from internal core functions such as Decentralized Planning, Budgeting, Accounting, Implementation and monitoring etc. to service delivery like issue of certificates, licenses etc.

Hence the key objectives of e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project are to use ICT for:

- Automation of internal workflow processes of Panchayats
- Improving delivery of services to citizens
- Capacity building of Panchayat Representatives and Officials
- Social Audit
- Transparency, Accountability, Efficiency and RTI compliance of Panchayats
- Improving Governance of local self-government

The Panchayats being the basic unit for planning and implementation of a large number of schemes and services, this Mission Mode Project (MMP) would also go a long way in improving public service delivery through Panchayat Raj Institutions with better outcomes.

8. E-Governance and Ministry of Panchayat raj

The ministry of Panchayat Raj is a branch of the government of India looking after the ongoing process of decentralization and local governance in the states ministry of Panchayat Raj looks into all matters relating to the Panchayati Raj and Panchayati Raj institutions. It was created in May 2004. The ministry is headed by a minister of cabinet rank.

To realize the concept of good governance the ministry has given a lot of priority to e-governance and has taken many steps in this regard, as part of this, ministry has its own website the website is very well designed, many links are available on this website through these links it is possible to get information as regard and connect directly to other complementary websites related to the Panchayat Raj system Contains brief information about ministry of Panchayat Raj, organizational structure of the ministry contact point for redressal of Public grievances through ministry and information of concerned authorities. Finance Commission is another link on this website which includes the report given by the finance commission in relation to Rural Local Bodies, Ministry of finance's operational guidelines for the relationship between the finance commission and the Panchayat Raj Ministry.

Also, on this website there is another link called 'PESA'. In which complete information related to Panchayat Extension to scheduled Areas (PESA ACT 1996) can be accessed through this link there is another link called PRI. PRI means Panchayat Raj institution which includes Constitutional Provisions related to Panchayat Raj institutions conference report, statistics of PRIs under Panchayat Raj institutions by state and union territory representation of women in Panchayat Raj institution etc. Sub links of elements will be opened.

There is another one link called RGSA (Rastriya Grama Swaraj abhiyan) which members the complete details of RGSA programme, training material people's plan campaign ministry of Panchayat Raj institution. After this there is another one link SDG (Sustainable development Goals) which includes AKAM – Iconic week, write – shop programme, LSDG Logo, BDPD and DPDP workshop. After this, there is another link e-governance, this link is very important in the website because this is a direct way

to connect with Grama Swaraj, Swamithwa, Audit outline, LGD (Local Government directory) this is a very useful link for common people.

After this link there is another link awards link this link includes revamped awards, scheme Guidelines, Questionnaires for awards, list of award Panchayats and achievement, miscellaneous, national write shop on revamped awards.

After this there is another link Research Study this link includes Background and scheme guidelines, themes identified during 2021-22 and 2022-23 and copies of study report.

After this there is another link Parliament and Coordination this link includes parliament and coordination this link includes parliament Questions, matters raised under article 377, report of the parliamentary committees monthly important activities special mention, special campaign.

After this there is another one link this links methods National Panchayat Raj Day special media links YouTube links, Gramoday Sankalp, National Panchayati Raj day, Yoga Day.

After this there is another link (IFD) This link includes general financial rules 2017, Guidelines institutions tender document, government e-market place (GEM) and vigilance manual, After this there is another one link official language this link includes Rajya Bhasha Adhiniyam, Hindi Pakwadha, Parliamentary committee on official language, Hindi Salakaar Samitti, official language workshop, training on official language for quick translation status of officials on knowledge of Hindi as per Rajyabhasha Adhiniyam.

After this link there is another link Best practices this link has complete information about the best practices followed by the Panchayats and the awards given to them

Along with all these links there is another one more link that links best practices regarding e-Gramaswaraj LGD (Local Government directory), SWAMITHVA, GPDP (Grama Panchayat Development), AUDIT online, Grama Manchitra, Vibrant Grama Sabha Service Plus, Panchayat charter there (VGS) are supplementary links to provide complete information about them by providing direct connection with them.

Thus, the Ministry of Panchayat Raj includes a website containing comprehensive information on the entire Panchayat Raj System and its functioning.

Overall, this website of ministry of Panchayat Raj is reflection of the adherence to the principle of transparency of the Panchayat Raj System and also this website of Ministry of Panchayat Raj.

9. E-Governance in Panchayat Raj institutions in Karnataka

The Panchayat Raj system of Karnataka has its own strong background, a system that has under gone a long process of reforming itself, undergoing structural and functional changes to make governance more popular and bring it closer to the people.

Rural development and Panchayat Raj is the government department that administers the Karnataka. It also established the necessary and associated organizations for e-initiatives, namely

1. The Karnataka State Decentralised planning and development committee
2. Decentralization Analysis cell
3. MGIRED (Mahatma Gandhi institute of Rural Energy and Employment)
4. 4) ANSSIRD (Abdul Nazir Sab State Institute of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj)
5. KRRDA (Karnataka Rural Road Development Agency)

10. Rural Development and Pachayat raj Department website

Rural Development and Pachayat Raj (RDPR) Dept is Providing Many other types of Services links are given on the website of the department to get this open the link and it contains information about the Service contact of the department providing the Services, Purpose of the department, contact Method, orders, regulations all these necessary website and sub link have been given to the general public, an example of this is MGNREGA Rural Drinking Water and Sanitation Department (SWACHAMEVA JAYATHE).

There are many more links in the website of RDPR department these links are divided into four sections in which information section e-initiative services of the department related information, brief profile of the department, department administration and officers coming from the respective position.

Zilla panchayats are also mentioned in this section as well as in the second section services and schemes, contains link to Mahatma Gandhi rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Swachh Bharat Mission (Rural), Rural connectivity, JALAMRUTHA, Chief Minister Grama Vikas and Suvarna Gramadhaya. This section is an online service which mainly includes important software used to provide services to the citizens through Grama Panchayat and links that enable them to contacts to the website to provide services, the software in this section, they are Bapuji Seva Kendra, Panchathantra, Gandhi Sakshi Kayaka, e-Swathu, in the same department there are MGNREGA Karnataka Rural Drinking water and Sanitation Department (Swachamevajakayathe). Similarly, the fourth section is Department Section in which the documents related to administration, rural infrastructure, plan documents, Panchayat Raj records, plan monitoring and infrastructure cell, Monitor Financial advisor, e-governance, solar power plant are available.

Any public can Access all these through the website can be freely accessed and viewed the necessary document can be obtained which is a proof that the department of rural development is adopting and following transparency. It is also testament to the RDPR department adoption of transparency that mirrors the steps taken to make Panchayat Raj institutions more transparent.

11. Bapuji Seva Kendra

The Panchayati have established 100 Bapooji Service Centres is particularly known as “Panchayat 100 Bapuji Seva Kendra”, these centres have 43 rural development and Panchayat Raj department service 40 revenue department services and 17 services of 7 B2C in total of 100 Services. The other services or centres that are digitalized are document digitalization AADHAR correction centric and public grievances cell.

The services provided at Bapuji Seva Kendra are categorised as follows:

1. Property Related service
2. Business Related (all licenses and NOC for business)
3. Household utilities (water and sanitation services)
4. MGNREGA (service under this scheme)
5. Other Department Services (More Services by RDPR)

12. Gandhi Sakshi Kayaka 2.0(GSK 2.0)

The rural development and Panchayat Raj Department implements the works at Grama Panchayat/Villages through Various implementing agencies such as Karnataka rural Road development Agency (KRRDA) Panchayat Raj Engineering Department (PRED), Karnataka rural infrastructure Development Limited (KRIDL), Karnataka rural water supply and sanitation department (KRWSSD) has Zilla Panchayats, Taluk Panchayats and Grama Panchayats. The department has devised a mechanism in order to monitor the implementation, physical progress and completion of the works through a new software application called Gandhi Sakshi Kayaka 2.0 (GSK 2.0).

13. E- SWATHU

Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department has implemented advanced software called E-SWATHU to get fully computerized Grama Panchayat Coverage property details thereby increasing transparency.

The major role of E-Swathu Karnataka is to maintain the record of ownership and physical details of properties under each Grama Panchayati jurisdiction updating of details in case of inheritance, transfer of ownership or gift of property, acquisition of land for government projects, court cases restrictions liabilities etc. is also done on the E-Swathu platform through this portal a property owner can share property details with the Grama Panchayat and other related government department court and town planning office to prevent forgery and to maintain record.

Two types of documents are provided by e-SWATHU software:

- 1) Form 9
- 2) Form 11

1) From 9: Form 9 is also known as A-Khata document is created by the Grama Panchayat specifically for non agricultural properties under their jurisdiction

2) From 11: Form 11 is also issued by the respective Grama Panchayat office for non agricultural properties under their jurisdiction. It is issued under the Karnataka Panchayat Raj (Grama Panchayat Budgeting and Accounting) Rules 2006, (Rule 30, Amendment Rules 2013) form 11 is an extract form Registration of demand collection and balance of land and building.

Every Form 9 and form 11 will have a unique certificate number which is printed under heading *Serial Number of Certificate*, with this is printed under heading one has cross check the genuineness of the form document. Also, every form 9 and form 11 is issued on secured stationery with a having water mark each paper is numbered which is painted in the top right-hand corner.

Thus, with the help of E-SWATHU software adopted by the RDPR department, Grama Panchayats provide an accurate and standardized record regarding the property.

14. Panchathantra (RDPR Software)

The Rural Development and Panchayat Raj department has been the flag bearer in adopting e-governance practices and developed the award winning Panchathantra 1.0 Solution a decade ago and laid the path of digital transformation of PRIs in the country, Modules carrying its legacy as the leader in e-Governance.

The Rural Development and Panchayat Raj department Government of Karnataka developed the Panchathantra 2.0 solution that is a step ahead towards further modernization and digital transformation of all functions of Grama panchayati.

Panchathantra 2.0 is invented as a comprehensive and holistic platform to strengthen, digitalize of Grama Panchayats.

15. Vision and objectives of Panchathantra 2.0

- 1) Enhance impact and Reach:** Enhance the reach impact of benefits through streamlined services procedures for citizen service delivery through Bapuji Seva Kendra.
- 2) Strengthen Panchayath Raj institutions:** Enable adherence to guidelines and processes through adoption of technology leading to enhanced operational and governance efficiency.
- 3) Streamline operations:** Standardize and streamline processes for higher performance participatory planning and Sustainable development.
- 4) Measure and Improve Performance:** Track Measure and report performance of Panchayati Raj institutions across key indicators to drive data driven outcomes.

5) Enhance Revenues: Adoption of technology enabled tax calculations, additional service avenues for citizens leading to enhance transparent system of revenue collection and management.

16. Panchathantra 2.0 Impact and Benefits

Panchathantra 2.0 envisions to enable and empower not just the citizens but also stakeholders at all levels to perform their role in a more efficient and outcome driven manner along with enabling higher performance and maintaining transparency at every level keeping citizen service delivery at the heart of governance.

17. Way forward of Panchathantra 2.0

Panchathantra 2.0 has developed initially for the core functions of Grama Panchayats with a vision to scale to more functions and stake holders in the future following highlights the Phased approach for the digital transformation of Panchayat Raj institution in the state.

Phase-1

Panchathantra 2.0- Grama Panchayati core function

- Core function of G. Ps
- Scheme/ Funds coverage: Execution / Expenditure by GPs
- Co-ordination and integration with select Financial Management Solutions, Payment gateways select applications and database

Phase2

Coverage expansion

- Expansion of Scheme/ Funds coverage to ones where GPs identify beneficiaries or facilitate reach/ execution / expenditure to ensure appropriate digital enables and reporting core functions of GPs.

Phase-3

Panchayati Raj institution Expansion

- Inclusion of ZP, TP, and IAS
- Scheme/ Funds Coverage: Execution by GPs, ZPs, TPs, IAS
- Co-ordination and Integration with other scheme and the development application.

Phase-4

Holistic Expansion

- Integration and Alignment with key line departments followed by all across Participatory and decision-making processes ICT application and rural development metrics.

18. Modules under Panchathantra 2.0

1. Finance and Accounting:

The module captures receipt and expenditure details through voucher entries and automatically generates cash book, registers etc. through Double Entry Accounting System.

2. Revenue Collection: The Module help Grama Panchayats in Preparing Perspective Annual and GPDP Action the Module would provide the facility to collect the Various types of taxes, fees, rents etc at Grama Panchayati in offline and online mode this will facilitate ease of demand generation and collection enabling the Grama panchayats to systematically increase the Grama Panchayati revenue.

3. Citizen Services: The module will help in providing electronic delivery of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department Services in all Grama Panchayath through “Bapuji Seva Kendra” Service Delivery Portal. The Module will enable end- to-end Service flow from raising the request to Service delivery.

4. Planning: The module helps Grama Panchayats in Preparing Perspective. Annual and Grama Panchayat development programme Action plans and Panchayat user to better visualize the various developmental works to be taken up across different sectors and provide a decision support system for Grama Panchayat Development plan.

5. **HRMS Module:** This Module will assist the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj department to manage the Human resources at various levels of Panchayats and enable Smooth operations of applicable Human Resources of the department.
6. **Panchamitra:** Panchamitra is a single point of access that pro actively discloses key details of the Grama Panchayat to public. Public can access information related to elected Representations. Grama Panchayat's government staff, meeting and revenue details, general information of the Grama Panchayat office event and initiatives conducted at the Grama Panchayati among other details.
7. **Meeting Management:** The Module Shall provision Scheduling and Management of Critical governance meetings digitally including schedules, Participation, Proceedings and follow up for key governance meeting like Grama Panchayati general Body, Grama Sabha, Field level Committee Meeting etc.
8. **Family and Beneficiary identification, Enrolment and Database Management:** The Module contains beneficiary selection, Validation and Connected master database system including details of families, citizens, beneficiaries, benefits etc. It also includes profile management of Panchayat Raj institutions including location, office, staff, citizens etc.
9. **Learning and Knowledge:** The module addresses training needs of various stakeholders at Zilla Panchayats, Taluk Panchayats and Grama Panchayats level and captures their feedback and provides training materials and calendar of training etc.
10. **Admin and User Management:** Admin and user management involves defining roles and responsibilities and managing user's access levels in a system. A user management console provides system administrators with a high-level view of a system's active user session, and the privileges of each use. It would involve Implementation of a wide range of functionality such as adding /deleting user activity through permissions managing user roles, defining authentication policies, manual / automatic logout and resetting password.

Thus, Panchathantra 2.0 which is an important part of Grama Panchayat's e-Governance has several Modules.

The Panchayat Raj system of Karnataka has its own strong background, a system that has under gone a long process of reforming itself, undergoing structural and functional changes to make governance more popular and bring it closer to the people. Performance of Rural development and Panchayat Raj is the government department that administers the Karnataka.

19. Conclusion

A people friendly administration means that people's aspirations should easily fulfilled and problems should solve quickly.

A pro-people administration that is aware of the needs of such people and acts with sensitivity will contribute to the development of the country.

The needs of the people are increasing according to the changing situations, the good administration only is able to fulfil the increasing demands in the changing situation as quickly as possible, such an administration is necessary for present and future well-being. In this view the role of Panchayat Raj institutions is very important. India has constitutionally established panchayat Raj institutions in order to implement the Good Governance.

Panchayat Raj institutions are an image form of decentralized administration system. There are several necessary actions being taken in order to achieve the purpose of decentralization.

The idea of e-governance and people friendly administration is intimately connected. E-governance is a powerful tool for Panchayat Raj System to bring Efficiency, Effectiveness and Economy in administrative system.

The e-governance acts as a delivery of services in transparent manner at all the levels of the government and at all time. Panchayat Raj Institutions are providing people-oriented governance by taking several initiatives related to e-governance.

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