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The Role and Awareness of E- Governance in Kashmir A Study of Kupwara District

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Abstract: Situated at a distance of 90 kms from Srinagar, Kupwara, a Kashmir Valley frontier district, has lush forests and a diverse wildlife. This makes it important for tourism and wildlife. The NIC centre established E-Government in 1996. In 2004, community information centres were established in each Kupwara block, bringing e-governance to the rural masses. E-Government is the process of modernising traditional governance to better serve citizens and run government using ICT applications. Digital governance, leadership, delivery, investment, and transparency are all new concepts. Good governance requires e-Governance. A wide range of organisations around the world are implementing e-governance initiatives to better serve their constituents. Changing with the times, the District Kupwara administration has implemented e-government in various departments for better and faster delivery of goods and services to their citizens. The goal of e-governance is to improve governance. The present aim of the study is to investigate the role of administration of district Kupwara for implementing e- governance for residents and its level of awareness and challenges among the citizens of Kupwara district.

Keywords: E- governance, Services, Challenges, Projects, Awareness etc.

Research objectives:

1. To access the role of administration for implementing the e- governance at District Kupwara.
2. Explain the level of e-governance awareness among Kupwara residents.
3. To analysis the challenges of E- governance at District Kupwara.

Tools and Techniques

The survey research design was used in this study to determine the study's objectives. It's a descriptive explanatory study. This study is based on primary and secondary data and employs both a qualitative and quantitative approach. To validate the research, a semi-structured (both open and closed ended) questionnaire was used to collect data from respondents via face-to-face interviews. As a result, respondents from the Kupwara district

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were included in the sample. The present study consists of 180 randomly selected respondents of Kupwara district. Secondary data collected from different official district administration, government publications and books, journals, and the internet. The collected data have been presented in tables and analysed using tools like SPSS 23.0 package and Ms Excel. The techniques utilized were frequency and t- test.

1. INTRODUCTION

The "e" in e-Governance stands for 'electronic'. Thus, e-Governance is the use of ICT to carry out the functions and results of governance (Information and Communications Technology). While Governance protects citizens' legal rights, it also ensures equitable access to public services and the benefits of economic growth for all. As part of good governance, it ensures government is transparent, accountable, and responds quickly. However, the government must change its processes, outlook, laws, rules, and regulations, as well as its interactions with citizens. It would also require government capacity building and citizen awareness of e-Government. ICT enables efficient data storage and retrieval, instantaneous information transmission, faster data processing than manual systems, accelerating government processes, facilitating timely decisions, increasing transparency and accountability. It also helps expand the government's geographical and demographic reach. The NIC Centre was established in 1996. A video conferencing facility was established in 2004 and was used extensively during the October 2005 earthquake. District and other government offices are currently heavily utilising VC services (Verma, 2012). With the advent of ICT in 2004, Kupwara Community Information Centres were set up in every block. http://kupwara.gov.in Information on the District's official website includes Who's Who, Tourist Spots, Tenders, and Elections & Recruitment. There are also important web links. Global development now hinges on IT. The district deputy commissioner expressed pleasure in presenting NIC's e-Government initiatives. It will connect residents to the state, country, and world. This improves the administration's public face. Elected officials and district residents are encouraged to use e-governance.

2. DISCUSSION

Projects and services of e- overnance at District Kupwara
Computerization of Urban Local Bodies: - The website http://jkhudd.gov.in allows citizens to obtain birth certificates by entering their parents' names, birth dates, email addresses, and mobile numbers.

Building Permits: Citizens can check the status of their building permits via SMS, email, or the website.

Monitoring System for Public Complaints: Anyone can register their grievances and attach supporting documents online (http://jkhudd.gov.in). Officials who are concerned can use their logins to update the status, and applicants can check the status. Employees of ULB can

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access information about their pay, accounts, promotions, and other administrative details. (Verma, 2012)

E-Court: The District Court is now fully computerised, with E-filing and the generation of Cause Lists. Web cause lists, case status updates, VC production of under-trials, and the creation of subordinate courts are among the future plans.

Elections: NIC created and implemented an Urdu-English electoral roll management system. The commission requests summary revisions, special summary revisions, on-going data updates, and final electoral rolls/supplements. The department's website has electoral rolls. On the other hand, during Parliamentary, Assembly, and Municipal elections, the election department issues Electoral Photo Identity Cards and provides comprehensive support. (Verma, 2012).

Transport: For the past few years, services such as payment, GR generation, and learner licence issuance have been available. The process of obtaining a permanent driver's licence will begin soon. The information is being transferred to the State Register.

Health: The Mother and Child Tracking System and the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme, web-based software that assists in the collection of important statistical data to monitor disease spread through early warning signals, have both been implemented. The National Animal Disease Reporting System will be connected to a national network and will cover 11 Block Animal Husbandry Offices, allowing for rapid data flow and analysis. (Verma, 2012).

Monitoring System for Public Complaints: http://jkgrievance.nic.in is monitored by the Chief Minister's office. The complaints are routed to the correct department. The status of the complaint can be tracked online by the complainant. It increased the efficiency and transparency of the system.

Centralised Personal Information System: All of the employees' personal information is stored in a Web-based application. So far, all of the employees in the finance department have had their information uploaded.

The National Land Record Modernization Program consists of the following components: - It was established to modernise land records management, reduce land/property disputes, improve land records maintenance transparency, and make the transition to guaranteed conclusive titles to immovable properties easier. As a result, a strategy was created and approved. (Verma, 2012).

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act services like updating job cards, slips, muster rolls, job registration, payment transaction, funds utilisation, reconciliation, etc. Since 2007-08, Plan Plus has been used to prepare the District Plan to demystify and strengthen decentralised planning. (Verma, 2012).

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Census of Social and Economic Castes, 2011: The charge centre provides space, equipment, internet connectivity, manpower, and overall project supervision. The cataloguing has been completed. The field survey has been completed by nearly a quarter of the EBs. The completed EBs is currently being data verified. (Verma, 2012).

National e-Government Strategy: SWAN has District POPs and is implementing District Offices and Block POPs. Kupwara, Handwara, the Postal Service and the District Court now have 2Mbps Leased Line connectivity. To keep track of all ICT activities in the district, NIC joined KeGA (Kupwara e-Governance Agency). (Verma, 2012).

Police: The Investigating Officer's case progress events are recorded by CCTNS to assist the duty officer in registering cases. Uncovering the truth behind high-profile cases requires an Electronic Surveillance Unit (ESU).

Education: Each educational zone has two computer-assisted learning centres and two Holes in the Wall centres with touch screens. All government and private secondary and higher secondary schools now have access to a Secondary Education Management Information System.

Training: For officials from various departments, a regular computer basics, Internet, and application software training programme is held (Verma, 2012) .The TSP scheme is also preparing schedules for ICT training for tribal students.

Advantages of E-Governance

1. **Speed:** Technology has increased the speed with which people can communicate. The use of the internet, telephones, and cell phones has reduced the time required for normal communication.(Insights ,2018)
2. **Cost-cutting:** The majority of government spending is devoted to the purchase of stationary. Paper-based communication necessitates a large amount of stationary, printers, computers, and other equipment, all of which necessitate on-going high expenditure. The Internet and telephones reduce the cost of communication, saving the government money.
3. **Transparency:** The use of information and communication technology (ICT) makes the governing profession more transparent. The government's entire information would be available on the internet. The citizens have access to the information at any time. However, this will only be possible if the government's entire data set is uploaded to the internet and made accessible to the general public. The current governing process provides numerous avenues for concealing information from the general public. ICT assists in making information available online, removing all potential for information concealment. .(Insights ,2018)
4. **Accountability:** When the governing process is transparent, the government becomes accountable automatically. The term "accountability" refers to the government's responsibility to the people. It is the government's accountability for its actions. A responsible government is one that is accountable.

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5. Convenience: E-government allows citizens to access government services on their own time and in their preferred location. .(Insights ,2018)
6. Better Customer Service: With e-Government, resources can be reallocated from back-end processing to front-line customer service.
7. Better access to information: Citizens' access to government information is improved through e-government, empowering them to make decisions that affect their daily lives.

Challenges

Change management is critical not only in terms of culture, but also in terms of changing operations and workflow processes. Change management, not technology, is the most difficult aspect of implementing e- governance. It is critical to inform people about the advantages of technology. It should be made clear from the start that the goal is to gain widespread support and thus a higher chance of success. Workers can be reassigned if less manpower is required for operations, without jeopardising their career advancement. The most significant challenges (Maroof, 2014) with e-government are not technological or internet-related, but rather organisational and regional issues at district Kupwara such as:

S.No	Challenges
01.	Redefining rules and procedures
02	Access to the right information
03	Transparency of information
04	Collaboration between departments
05	Legal Concerns
06	Infrastructure, expertise, and knowledge
07	Aversion to change in the workplace culture.
08	Literature with a low ICT content
09	Confidentiality and safety
10	There is a digital divide.
11	Jammu and Kashmir's armed conflict
12	Climate and Language
13	Low Internet access and low electricity

Background of the respondents

Table 1: Demographic profile of the Respondents

S.N0	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
01	**AGE :** 18-23 Years 24-29 Years	 100 88	 55.5% 48.8%
02	**Gender:** Male Female	 116 64	 64.4% 35.5%
03	**Educational:**		

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	Graduate Above Graduate	85 95	47.2% 57.7%
04	**Place of living:** Rural Urban	 107 73	 59.4% 40.5%

Source: Primary Data

The above table 1 reveals that the dominant majority of the respondents i.e. 55.5 per cent of the respondents belong to the age group of 18 to 23 years while the 48.8 per cent belong to the age group of 24 to 29 years, Further the distribution of respondents with respect to their gender. It is revealed that of the total respondents in the sample, 180 i.e. (64.4%) respondents were male and 64 (35.5%) respondents were female. Further, the majority of the respondents were graduate 85, i.e. (47.2 %) while the above graduate respondents were only 95 i.e. (57.7%). Table 1.1 reveals the place of living wise distribution of the respondents. 107 (59.4%) of the 180 respondents live in the city, while the remaining 73 (40.5%) live in the rural area, as shown graphically below. The study's findings on citizen awareness of e-governance in the district of Kupwara, as gathered from the respondents, are presented in tabular form below.

Table 2: Awareness of e- governance at Kupwara District in Kashmir

S.No	Awareness of e- governance	Yes	%age	No	%age	To some Extent	%age
1	Awareness about e governance services?	145	80.5%	23	7.2%	12	6.6%
2	Projects of e -governance?	95	52.7%	45	25%	40	22.2%
3	Level of Satisfaction with e-governance	113	62.7%	41	22.7%	26	14.4%
4	Lacunas associated with e-governance?	123	62.7%	21	11.6%	36	20%

Source: Primary Data

Findings of the study

Table 2 shows the frequency of awareness of e- governance among the respondents of district Kupwara of Jammu and Kashmir. The total number of 145 (80.5%) of respondents showed Yes with the question and said that they are aware about e- governance services providing by their administration. There are 23 (7.2%) of respondents who choose no when they were asked about the awareness about e- governance. But, a minuscule percentage of respondents 12 (6.6%) opined to some extent, when asked about the awareness about e- governance.

The data from the above table shows that 95 (80.5%) respondents strongly said yes with the statement, stating that there is implementation of e – governance projects by the government at the district. There are 45 (25%) of respondents who said no for the question. However, there are 40 (22.2%) of respondents who choose to some extent for the said question.

The above mentioned data reveals 113 (62.7%) are strongly said yes with the question of level of satisfaction with e- governance. It clearly exposes that 41 (22.7%) of respondents

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said no when asked about the level of satisfaction with e- governance. There are 26 (14.4%) of respondents who choose to some extent with the statement.
The above table found that 123 (62.7%) of respondents who said with the yes that clearly exposes that there are lacunas associated with e -governance at District Kupwara. There are 21 (11.6%) of respondents who choose no when to enquire about the difficulties associated with e- governance. The analysis of the data shows that 36 (20%) of respondents come across through to some extent.

Table 3: Mean Difference in the awareness of e- governance with regard to Age Background of the Respondents

Dependent Variable	Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Sig.
E- governance awareness	18-23	100	41.5610	4.436322	-.381	0.94
	24-29	88	36.1312	4.42315		

Source: Primary Data

Level of Significance = 0.05
Table 4 indicates the variations in the level awareness of e- governance between the age group of 18-23 and 24-29 respondents, as an outcome of t-test. The results of this t-test show that the t- value of -.381 corresponding to the awareness about e – governance awareness is found to be significant at 5 percent level. Hence, null hypothesis is accepted at 5 percent level of significance. The results thus suggest thatthe level of awareness about e- governance awareness is not varying significantly with the Age of respondents.

Table 4: Mean Difference in the awareness of e- governance with regard Gender Background of the Respondents

Dependent Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p
E-governance awareness	Male	116	25.24	5.27	6.68**	.000
	Female	64	22.04	4.11		

Source: Primary data
* Significant at 0.01 level of confidence (2- Tailed).
Table: 4. shows the variations in the level of "level of awareness of e- governance" between male and female respondents, as an outcome of Independent Samples t-test. From the results of this test, it can be opined that the t-value of 6.68 corresponding to the "awareness about e governance is found to be significant at 0.01 percent level. Hence, null hypothesis is rejected at 0. 01 percent level of significance the results thus suggest that the level of awareness is varying significantly with the Gender of respondents.

Table 5: Mean Difference in the awareness of e- governance with regard to Educational Status Background of the Respondents

Dependent	Education	N	Mean	Std.	t-value	Sig.

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Variable				Deviation		
E-governance awareness	Graduate	85	29.5067	5.56976	-.003	.455
	Above Graduate	95	21.7010	6.43671		

Source: Primary Data
Level of Significance = 0.05
Table 5 indicates the variations in the level of awareness of e- governance between the educational status of graduates and above graduate respondents, as an outcome of t-test. The results of this t-test show that the t- value of -.003 corresponding to the awareness about e-governance is not found to be significant at 5 percent level. Hence, null hypothesis is accepted at 5 percent level of significance. The results thus suggest that the level of e – governance is not varying significantly with the educational status of respondents.

Table 6: Mean Difference in the awareness of e- governance with regard to Place of living Background of the Respondents

Dependent Variable	Place of Living	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p
E-governance awareness	Rural	107	27.10	4.54	5.26**	.000
	Urban	73	22.70	4.24		

Source: Primary data
** Significant at 0.01 level of confidence (2- Tailed).
Table: 5. shows the variations in the level of "awareness about e- governance" between rural and urban respondents, as an outcome of Independent Samples t-test. From the results of this test, it can be opined that the t-value of 5.26 corresponding to the "awareness about e-governance is found to be significant at 0.01 percent level. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected at the 0.01 percent level of significance. The findings suggest that the level of awareness about e-government varies significantly depending on where people live.

3. CONCLUSION

E-governance in Kupwara, a district in Jammu and Kashmir, has developed over the years, and we saw how important it is for government transparency and accountability, as well as increasing public participation in policymaking by providing timely information. For the first time, residents of Kupwara, Jammu and Kashmir, can look forward to an end to poverty, corruption and regional disparity as a result of increased internet and telecom service penetration. However, the desired outcome has not been achieved because of the slow pace of project completion, red tape, and citizen opposition. The Kupwara district administration has improved the system and made information readily available to residents around the clock, seven days a week, in an easy-to-use format. E-success Government's or failure is largely dependent on the public's perception of the technology and how well it is accepted by stakeholders. District administration in northern Kashmir's Kupwara district has won the Web Ratna Gold award (Raafi, 2016). Only three districts in India received this honour in

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2016, and Kupwara was one of them. While conferring the award, a committee headed by Secretary IT took into account various parameters such as an informative website, effective and innovative initiatives in service delivery, effective monitoring of schemes, grievance redressal mechanism, and so on (Rafi, 2016). Citizen satisfaction is widely acknowledged as one of the most important factors in the spread of e-government and its adoption. E-governance is a boon and should be welcomed, if properly implemented and rescinded, and if its services can be accessed easily by the public. In looking at the challenges and opportunities, researchers open the door for future work in which such areas can be empirically and experientially explored.

Limitations of the study

A number of constraints hampered our ability to conduct and complete the study. For example, as a young researcher, you may find it difficult to conduct research due to a lack of skill, knowledge, or experience. This was due to a variety of factors, including personal reasons, time constraints, and others. More problems have arisen as a result of the lack of necessary books, journals, and written documents in various libraries, as well as district administration. Due to a lack of knowledge about e-governance, respondents were sometimes hesitant to provide necessary information. As a result, determining the truth was difficult. Because they were preoccupied with their jobs, they didn't want to answer the entire question. Coverage was difficult due to the larger concept. It took a long time to get permission from the authorities. To collect data from the district administration and respondents, I had to follow procedures.

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and Kashmir in achieving target oriented objectives, i.e. transforming the district administrati on into an efficient and transparent system that benefits society in general, I will be failing in my profession. The District continues to improve and develop more e-governed systems in order to increase transparency, accountability, reliability, and service.

Conflict of Interest and Funding

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