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Role of Information and Communication Technology (I.C.T) for Good Governance in Covid-19 Pandemic: An Analysis to Indian Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Technology is considered as an leverage for growth in underdeveloped nations. The growth of IT has a broad potential in many areas of social development. In particular, IT has brought a general change and growth in any developing country. In the 21st century, poor nations need to concentrate on 6C IT – i.e. computer density, communications, connections, cyber legislation, costing, and common sense.

The ICT is playing an increasingly important role in enabling effective governance and regional development. The term ICT includes all types of computer systems, telecommunications and networking systems. In brief, it's a digital method to collect, analyse, store and transfer data (Duncombe, and Heeks, 1999). Michiels & Van Crowder (2001) described ICTs as a spectrum of adaptive, flexible, organisational and socially transformable electronic technologies when convergent to a new configuration. Nowadays ICT may be found in computer or other digital technology as well as in all its applications and variations, such as Internet, mobile devices, computers and other new technologies such as electronic commerce, e-banks, telecommunications and digital applications. In recent years, the use of ICT's to promote good democratic accountability and rural social development of the country, generally underneath the banner of e-government, has been a practise that has received considerable attention. These technological innovations, supported by Internet connectivity, have only recently become available for mass applications, offering the potential to raise public administration efficiency and enhance communication between government and public authorities. For some time now, ICT's have played a significant role in sparsely populated development efforts, particularly as it relates to raising living standards in rural areas. ICT's have garnered significant attention at present in the quest of effective governance and rural development. Because ICT's are efficient and productive instruments, they are now an instrument of good governance and management in many nations. This study aims at analysing the impact of ICT in the Indian

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context as an instrument for democratic accountability and rural development. The aim was also to highlight some of the ICT facilities necessary for good governance and rural development as well as to propose a policy framework that would encourage recommended method for rural development in India. This research paper aims for identifying ICT resources possible role and usefulness in good governance.

Keywords: Policy, Effective Governance, E-governance, Rural, Internet, Mobile, Communication.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 epidemic has limited the people and the public institution's capacity to gather and discuss national issues physically. Virtually all government apparatus and public and commercial organisations were stopped owing to lock-out and social distancing standards. Remote work is the new norm and information empowerment is essential for a functioning democracy in this situation. The introduction of ICT has fostered the rapid creation of a comprehensive information society that changes the way people live, study, work and communicate. The government should thus rethink its Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) strategy and increase its innovativeness via actively engaging of development groups, in order to maintain the institution of democracy. In the current situation, the significance of technology in good governance and public service delivery becomes really important.

II. ICT AND GOOD GOVERNMENT

The flow and accessibility of information may affect the quality of management, which in turn helps enhance the quality of life. Greater information allows improved research, monitoring and evaluation of activities essential

to the economic and social well-being of people (Islam, 2003). It helps government policymakers evaluate risks and handle threats appropriately. Practical research has also demonstrated that nations with high flows of information always have superior governance performance. Nowadays, ICT has become a way to enhance the timeliness and accountability of public services. Consequently, without any question, growing usage of ICT will assist enhance the governance system and contribute to social socioeconomic changes. ICT progress offers the opportunity to change government-citizen interactions in innovative ways that contribute to good governance. This has provided new possibilities for government policymakers to address problems creatively and more effectively via information and reengineering. In addition, adopting ICT would decrease transaction costs for individuals and governmental organisations and make public services available to the general population. In reality, ICT may change the governance system and can be a strong tool for enhancing public management and democratic values and helping to accomplish the Millennium Development Goal (M.D.G and, in particular, the objective of poverty alleviation (Avgerou, et. al., 2005).

ICT may provide a substantial contribution to developing nations like India, where the bulk of the people, particularly in rural regions, are heavily reliant on agriculture. Despite their enormous potential, the application of ICT in the regional development sector was rather sluggish, because most of the ICT projects and financing were focused in urban centres. The main reasons are inadequate rural Includes equipment and low rural ICT awareness. However, ICT provides the chance to launch new rural projects, new infrastructure and services or to enhance existing infrastructure.

III. USE OF GOVERNANCE IN TECHNOLOGY

E-Legislature Striving

1. Due to the Covid-19, the function of Parliament and also many national legislatures as an institution for discussion, deliberation and legislation has been disturbed.

2. These legislative bodies are indeed an instrument of public confidence and must continue to monitor government activity, particularly in crisis times.

3. Technology-focused solutions may guarantee continuation in the functioning of legislative institutions even if meetings cannot be conducted physically. For example, these online gatherings of legislatures will assist in fostering discussion and discussion on key topics.

4. The creation of electronic legislation will assist to reduce the frequent usage of ordinances. After then, the Virtual Parliament was established in democracies such as the UK, New Zealand, etc.

REINFORCEMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

1. The activity of legislative committees must be stopped immediately.

2. Those committees are smaller subgroups of parliamentarians that meet outside the House to discuss public concerns. The committee play a crucial role in examining government legislation in detail.

3. Thus, the usage of ICT systems will allow legislative committees to operate properly.

4. The additional benefit may be that a broad array of stakeholders could hear from the Committee who would normally find it impossible to come before the committees in person.

Virtual Judiciary

1. It is clear that normality will not return in court proceedings in a brief duration, even in the early post-locking era.

2. It is thus the chance for the court to embrace ICT, so that fairness can reach all of us without delay.

3. In addition, the backlog of cases may be reduced by implementing programmes like e-courts judicial.

Encouraging Participatory Democracy

1. There is an unparalleled chance for collective community choice where people impacted by a set of regulations may help choose and define policies, rank the priorities of expenditure and, in conjunction with local government representatives,

2. Such a mechanism may contribute to social audit strengthening. Citizens may, for example, immediately offer the government ideas via myGOV portal.

Good Governance Implementation

1. Information technology has meant that government policy decisions may be adopted and applied rapidly at many places throughout the nation.

2. It also guarantees openness, accountability and ensures that government responds to people's concerns and ideas quickly and effectively.

Achievement of Sustainable Development Objectives

Many e-government efforts have been launched by the government in order to provide efficient public service. It may also assist achieve sustainable development objectives when coupled with new technology.

Research Methodology

The current research describes the function of ICT in promoting good governance and livelihood opportunities in India and examines it. The approach used here is based on a set of literature reviews and looks at the growing importance of ICT in effective governance and rural livelihoods. The background of this study is previous research on ICT efforts, good governance and regional social development of the country. All data and information are taken from secondary sources for this study. Secondary information includes books, different reports, papers, journals and other items of this kind. Features like data dependability, data

appropriateness and data adequacy in the secondary sources were taken into consideration, ELECTRONIC BANKING IS USED TO PAY PENSIONS AND WAGE AWARDS

In these first-type instances, ICT has entirely redesigned the payment mechanism for the poor in two significant social programmes provided by the Andhra Pradesh government. The National Old Age Security Scheme is one such programme (NOAPS). Social security for the elderly is becoming increasingly important as the population becomes older. Widows and those with physical impairments are included in the programme. Panchayat officials paid monthly installments to the designated recipients as part of this programme.

For adults who are willing to undertake unskilled manual labour, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) provides a pay job guarantee on public works projects for 100 days per household every financial year. In 13 Andhra Pradesh districts, the programme was established in 657 sub-districts. Work such as issuing rural families with job cards, identifying work to be done, generating work estimates, and checking task execution is simplified with an end-to-end ICT solution. Wages must be paid to state employees from savings accounts they create at the post office down the street. When cash payment has been made prior to this regulation, there were allegations of workers receiving lower salaries or not being paid at all.

Andhra Pradesh's government has partnered with an NGO called Zero Mass Trust (ZMF) to implement a new payment method that deposits rural payees' monthly payments held in checking

and savings accounts and allows them to withdraw funds from those accounts without having to visit a bank branch or panchayat office.

The Reserve Bank of India's financial inclusion programme allowed financial institutions to designate enterprise envoys as bank intermediaries who are authorised to open an account and to make deposits and withdrawals from a beneficiary account, which made it possible to apply this technique. This project was successful.

IV. SYSTEM ORGANIZATIONAL COMPONENTS

Six banks have been given particular areas to provide pension and NREGS payments, and ZMF serves as their business correspondent. ZMF maintains offices in all of the districts that are part of the initiative. Women from local self-help groups have been selected and provided with a kit that includes a GPRS-enabled special smart telephone and accoutrements in each district. It depicts a rural CSP as well as the equipment that was provided to the CSP (see caption). By exchanging information with the bank's database in real time, these kits can perform financial transactions like deposits and withdrawals electronically. Customers may get banking services in each community at a specific location. Members of the self-help group serve as guarantors for the CSP.

Recruiting and preparing CSPs is handled by ZMF offices. Kits are provided to CSPs, and the kits are maintained in the field. Enrollment forms are collected and stored. Data submitted into the forms is input. Cash is withdrawn from the local

bank and moved to the CSPs. Bank workers, ZMF officials, and local government bureaucrats undertakes the enrollment of sessions in villages whenever the list of insured persons is released publicly to the banks. The beneficiary's five fingerprints, picture, and other personal information are stored. Registration information is retained on the phone and afterwards transferred over GPRS to the ZMF facilities for use by ZMF programme participants only. When the forms are filled out, the data is scanned and saved as an electronic filing system at the bank's main branch. Once the data has been confirmed, it is sent to the link branch via the central bank server. There is a 3-week waiting period before a bank branch will allow the establishment of an account once they have reviewed the information.

Before beginning transactions in a session, the CSP must execute a biometric log-in by putting her fingerprints on the fingerprint reader. The beneficiary's account information is stored on the CSP's cell phone. The biometric gadget captures an index fingerprint when the recipient arrives to withdraw money. A receipt is generated in duplicate using the CSP and the device, which additionally displays the beneficiary's saved picture. ZMF has over 6,000 CSPs servicing 1.5 million NREGS account holders and 0.7 million retirees in India's 127 districts and 26 states. GPRS-enabled smart phones with cheap initial investment, low running costs, and no need for a regular electricity supply are used in this project to show the possibilities of the technology. The initiative provides free and convenient services for senior citizens. By eliminating "ghost"

pensioners, the government is able to save roughly 30% of the monthly pension payment. In 2010, the ZMF experiment was on the verge of failure due to insufficient reimbursement fees from the administration to ZMF for individual transactions.

The cost structure of such enterprises is often not appreciated by policymakers, and the necessity of making them economically viable is often not understood. Using biometric identification, ZMF demonstrated the feasibility of providing financial subsidies to the underprivileged while eliminating the flow of funding into the wrong hands. However, compiling biometric data on all of the world's impoverished is an enormous undertaking that cannot be handled by a small non-profit like ZMF. Maybe the answer rests in offering easy-to-verify identity to every citizen. It's been tried in a few places including the Republic of Korea and India.

V. THE UNIQUE IDENTIFICATION PROGRAM OF INDIA

UIDAI was established in 2009 to provide inhabitants of India with a 12-digit personal identification number known as Aadhaar. Aadhaar is a one-of-a-kind identification number connected to a person's basic demographic and biometric data. With each Aadhaar card issued, a unique set of biometric data is collected from the user. The data is not broken down by race, ethnicity, creed, or religious affiliation. The Aadhaar number and a fingerprint may be sent to a central database to verify a citizen's identification via hand-held devices connected to the mobile phone network. Within 8 seconds, the

UIDAI promises to respond with a "yes" or "no" response after verifying the identity of the user. Having an Aadhaar isn't required, but you'll need to show confirmation of your identification, residence, and date of birth to get one. Existing Aadhaar holders can introduce new applicants to the issuing agency, which will then issue them an Aadhaar. The arguments in favour of implementing a UID system for each resident were compelling. There was a very tiny percentage of the people that had their identities documented. Access to government antipoverty programmes such as old-age pension, subsidised food grains, and rural jobs is sometimes denied to the poor because of their inability to provide proof of their identification. For example, 180 million impoverished people in the United States get subsidised food grains through the Subsidy Scheme (PDS). Through a network of 500,000 licenced stores, this is accomplished with an average subsidy of Rp400 billion. The subsidy is squandered on individuals who don't deserve it: "nonpoor" persons who get a "card" entitling them to subsidised food; poor who overstate the number of family members; and cards manufactured in the name of nonexistent people. Bribery is a common method of obtaining false credentials. The program's ability to achieve its full promise will be determined by two key milestones. For starters, an enormous chunk of India's population must be enrolled, and error-free data must be collected. By the 15th of May 2013, almost 340 million people have received a UID. Around 73.35% of the people were between ages of 16 and 45, with women making up the majority.

However, even if the quality of biometric data obtained has been checked many times within application software, the administrative framework required to collect data from a billion of people is complex. Each province has a register, a government entity in charge of data collection, which contracts out the task to private organisations that are responsible for purchasing the necessary equipment and setting up the organisation needed to collect data on the ground. For this purpose they have farmed out to smaller businesses that are in charge of collecting data on site. There have been complaints about data quality issues, and if the UID is put to use for service delivery, those issues will become more apparent. Once data collection accuracy has been established, it will be necessary to reduce duplication. It's a complicated technological challenge.

Once data collection accuracy has been established, it will be necessary to reduce duplication. The technological challenge is formidable, but given India's competence in programming and algorithm creation, it should be manageable. In the second place, many federal agencies utilise Aadhaar to verify the identity of individuals requesting services. Government agencies are just now starting to supply services on the basis of Aadhaar cards. Front-end delivery locations will have to electronically collect fundamental transactions in order to supply services. Half a million stores, for example, will be forced to use the PDS to access the central database's fingerprint authentication. Maintaining the stores' hand-held gadgets in

good working order and teaching shop owners how to utilise them are two major issues.

Rural India's experience with electronic service delivery is uneven. Nearly 90% of the 100,000 internet kiosks built in rural regions for the delivery of certificates and licences do not provide any government services. Departments in counties and taluka offices where basic data are stored and certificate issuance is allowed do not have information and communications technologies (ICT) in place. Reductions in the lower bureaucracy's ability to delay or reject services have been opposed to any procedural change. Departments may also reject the implementation of Aadhaar for a variety of reasons. Only a few experimental projects have used Aadhaar for end-to-end service delivery. Aadhaar service delivery pilots have been established in a few regions since the debut of authentication and authorization in February 2013. Aadhaar verification is used, for example, in Andhra Pradesh's East Godavari district for the distribution of food grains under the PDS. Seventy-five thousand cards were safeguarded, and 242,000 transactions were handled. In Jharkhand, pension payments are made through micro-ATMs, whereas in Mysore, Karnataka, liquefied petroleum gas is distributed. Direct cash distributions in place of subsidised goods have yet to take off as a major effort in 51 districts. A low-cost organisation like ZMF, which can assist operations in rural regions, must be emphasised for their vital function. Policymakers should have realised the requirement for organisations like ZMF to manage the Government of India's cash subsidy

plan when employing UID to authenticate the beneficiary's identification.

It is not required to enrol in the UID programme, however certain state officials will make it such for certain groups that they will only join in the programme if they get benefits for their families living below the poverty line UID numbers will be used as record identifiers in resident databases maintained by various authorities in states like Karnataka. Indeed, the databases will be linked so that various BPL people may be analysed to see the benefits they are receiving. Many Aadhaar detractors question the wisdom of creating a central repository that may be abused by law enforcement and other government organisations (Bidwai 2010). Incumbent regimes are well-known for secretly mining data on property ownership, revenue tax liabilities, and other records to uncover criminal activity and track down political opponents. Even if solid law is in place to prevent abuse, residents will have little recourse due to the lengthy court processes. There have also been concerns raised concerning the privacy of the data. People have been deceived into agreeing to allow their personal data to be shared at enrollment centres. Rather than giving out discounted food grains and generating state-sponsored jobs in rural regions, the Aadhaar is projected to be extensively used to register bank accounts, allowing cash subsidies to be sent to the needy. Changing the role of government in the social sector in such a radical way is unpalatable to many individuals. Media sources also claim that the adoption of Aadhaar as evidence of domicile by the Indian banking sector is a source of uncertainty. The

Aadhaar has had to surmount several significant challenges. The Statistical Commissioner of India recommended a parallel scheme to issue smart identification cards to the whole Indian population at the same time that Aadhaar was being implemented (Times of India 2011). The ruling party's strong support has helped to settle several issues. The Aadhaar originated with the idea of improving the efficiency, convenience, and the corruption in delivery of public services to the underprivileged is highly noted. These promises might be tougher to maintain than expected because of implementation issues and turf wars.

Although the Republic of Korea is a technologically advanced country, early attempts to construct a unique citizen identity were not very effective. To prevent noncitizens from using electronic services, South Korea's RRN, a 13-digit number assigned to every adult citizen, was introduced instead of using it for the developmental purposes intended for Aadhaar. Age, place of birth, and nationality are all factors that the RRN may use to create a detailed profile of a person. There were several cases of identity theft in the system's early non-biometric version.

VI. COMPUTERIZED LAND RECORD MANAGEMENT

To maintain property records and distribute copies of the register of ownership, nearly 15 Indian states have launched an e-governance initiative. This document is necessary, among other things, when applying for bank agricultural loans. During the course of a year, multitudes of rural landowner utilise this service. Karnataka,

for example, publishes approximately 10 million copies each year. E-governance apps in service delivery from seven major agencies across ten Indian states, including the Faculty of Information Technology (DIT), were shown to have a directly measured and perceived impact on citizens' access to such services, according to the findings of a study¹⁶. As part of the study, a standard measuring methodology was utilised to determine how much a service costs the average citizen to access (amount of journeys to the delivery location, waiting time at that location, as well as payment of bribes). Nearly 700 people from all through the state were polled on their experiences with various government services before and after they were computerised. The influence of the land information project on important components in ten states as well as the results show that the manual system has a bad condition of service delivery. It took 3–4 journeys to the government office on average, with each trip requiring a wait of at least 2 hours (up to six hours in some states) and the payment of regular bribery (20%–90% of all transactions). There was a massive improvement in delivering services on all three metrics for a rural landowner once computerization took place. The average number of trips to the workplace went down to 2.7 from 1.8. Waiting times were decreased by 30% as a result of computerization. e-governance appears to have the potential to cut corruption by as much as half in five of the 10 states where it has been implemented so far.

Well-designed, ICT-enabled customer service projects with process reforms that improve accountability and transparency, reduce the

discretion given to civil servants, and increase efficiency can reduce corruption. Undertakings like Bhoomi demonstrate this fact. The DIT research, on the other hand, found wide variations in project impact among states after automated delivery. Performance deteriorated following computerization in a few states. An extra investigation revealed that no best practises were being followed by different states. Prior to computerization, the service delivery procedures had not been standardised or reengineered.

Implementing ICT-enabled changes is a time-consuming process that might take many years before it pays off in the long run. The execution is hampered by the short term of project champions. The project leader's six-year term is directly responsible for the project's success. Many significant alterations have been made throughout the project's second phase. Information was shared among the three land transaction processing agencies: the subregistrar's office, revenue, and survey. When a land transaction is registered, a mutation occurs in the revenue department's database automatically. Ownership information is automatically retrieved from the land information database when a deed is registered, avoiding fraudulent registration. To include a variety of services, including online land-related services, a private partner has opened over 1,000 cybercafes in rural regions.

Improved service delivery and accountability enabled by ICT may benefit different stakeholder groups to varying degrees. According to the survey results used to evaluate the impact of Bhoomi, 94% of smallholder farmers preferred it

over the manual approach. However, of the big sample of peri-urban farmers, 39% favoured the manual technique, maybe because it permitted them to modify the information (Bhatnagar and Chawla 2007). The ease in which land sharks may purchase enormous swaths of land on the outskirts of metropolitan centres was an unforeseen consequence of Bhoomi's disclosure of ownership records.

VII. ACCESS TO DATA AS WELL AS INFORMATION EDUCATION AND HEALTH PROGRAMMES EMPLOY TECHNOLOGY

Many projects are attempting to improve the performance of school education by utilising information and communication technology (ICT). When it comes to computers and the internet, youngsters in metropolitan areas are spoiled for choice, while those living in rural regions confront a huge digital gap. As a way to help close the digital divide, numerous organisations are giving out laptop computers to underprivileged students and rural schools. That programme aimed to provide millions of \$100 computers to underdeveloped nations as part of the One Laptop per Children (OLPC) initiative (Quelch and Knoop 2008). OLPC initially only accepted orders in batches of 1 million in the hopes of reducing production costs through high volume. Developing countries, on the other hand, did not participate. Several people felt that the suggested content did not adequately address their principal issues. Due to increased costs and decreased order quantities, there were few buyers. There was no technical assistance for the computers given out, thus they sat unused. In Uruguay, "a recent poll found that 27.4% of

machines would be out of service, or more over 100,000 of the country's 400,000". When it came time to mass-produce the tablets, India opted to create its own lower-cost "akaash tablet," which cost \$60 each. The akaash project was also regarded a failure because there were no tablets available on the market. When compared to the approach taken by previous projects to "wire the schools," DHS is trying to conduct pilots in many regions and nations to recognise the pricing structure and illustrate concrete value by constructing systems that solve education problems from beginning to end, developing technology and teaching methods in harmony with one another.

Other approaches, such as ICT-enabled monitoring and absenteeism incentives, have been tested. Teachers' attendance was rigorously monitored using cameras in selected schools, and their incomes were tied to their levels of participation in a nonlinear way. Through randomised studies, the impact of such efforts was assessed, and it was found that teacher absenteeism decreased by 21% compared to the control group, while test results for students improved about 0.17 standard deviation.

In several Asian nations, public health initiatives have made use of mobile phones in the same way. Even though Bangladesh has achieved great strides in health care, 1 woman and 15 newborns die per hour as a result of difficulties during pregnancy and the first two days after birth. It's worth noting that almost 80% of these tragedies might have been avoided. The vast majority of deaths are the result of a dearth of information and understanding on the part of the victims.

Aponjon, a mobile communication programme developed by MAMA Bangladesh²⁵, aims to raise public knowledge about excellent practises so that it can help reduce maternal and infant death rates. In addition to expecting and new moms, messages sent to a recognized mobile phone will also reach gatekeepers such as spouses, mother-in laws, mothers and other relatives.
