

E- Governance Culture in Institutions of Higher Education

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Governance refers to the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country's affairs, including citizens' articulation of their interests and exercise of their legal rights and obligations. E-governance may be understood 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 generally considered as a wider concept than e-government, since it can bring about a change in the way how citizens relate to governments and to each other. E-governance can bring forth new concepts of citizenship, both in terms of citizen needs and responsibilities. Its objective is to engage, enable and empower the citizen. The purpose of implementing e-governance is to enhance good governance. Good governance is generally characterized by participation, transparency and accountability. The use of information technology can increase the involvement of citizens in the process of governance at all levels by providing the possibility of on-line discussion groups and by enhancing the rapid development and effectiveness of pressure groups. Some examples of interactive services are: requests for public documents, requests for legal documents and certificates, issuing permits and licenses. *e-democracy*- implies greater and more active citizen participation and involvement enabled by ICTs in the decision-making process. During 1980s and early part of 1990s, the policy thrust was on creating "Management Information System (MIS)" and "Decision Support System (DSS)" for development , planning and responsive administration in governments which led to

the genesis of present day "e-Governance" / "e-Government". "Bridging the Digital Divide", "Social and Financial Inclusion through ICT" and "Reaching- the-Unreached" concepts were tried and made operational in the late nineties. The governance space in the country witnessed a new round of projects and products, covering the entire spectrum of e-Governance including G2C,G2B, G2G, with emphasis on service delivery. National Knowledge Network (NKN) has been set up to connect institutions/organizations carrying out research and development, Higher Education and Governance with speed of the order of multi Gigabits per second. Further, State Government secretariats are connected to the Central Government by very high speed links on Optical Fibre Cable (OFC). Districts are connected to respective State capitals through leased lines. The purpose of such a knowledge network goes to the very core of the country's quest for building quality institutions with requisite research facilities and creating a pool of highly trained professionals. The NKN enable scientists, researchers and students from different backgrounds and diverse geographies to work closely for advancing human development in critical areas. NIC Network NICNET utilizes variety of technologies including terrestrial, wireless and VSAT networking to provide connectivity across the country and is now extending to the grassroots level. Mode of connectivity is decided based on suitability depending on factors such as user requirement and terrain.

The Government approved the National e-Governance Plan on May 18, 2006, comprising of 27 Mission Mode Projects (MMPS) and 8 components – three Core Components, and five others. Guidelines for Indian Government Websites (<http://web.guidelines.gov.in>) were developed with an objective to make the Indian Government websites comply with the essential pre-requisites of UUU Trilogy i.e.; Usable, User- Centric and Universally Accessible. These guidelines are based on International Standards as well as Information Technology Act of India. E-Governance provides government services through interactive website and portals. Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) can also leverage the benefit of e-Governance by collaborative resource sharing through grid computing. The underlying goals for adopting e-Governance practices are to ensure improved quality in disseminating education and administration; establish dynamic and need-based communication with various internal, external and peer entities across the country/globe; and conforming to regulations. Grid computing can be an ideal framework for HEIs to effectively and efficiently handle need-based computational and on-demand query processing for enabling e-Governance. Implementing an e-Governance solution using grid can potentially lower the cost of developing, deploying, and managing governance solutions and providing better services to the stakeholders as well as the citizens (students, guardians). The state of Indian higher education has been examined by a number of education committees and have identified the major problems and suggested the remedial actions for them e.g. the system of affiliation of colleges, followed by most universities, discourages accountability due to lack of proper monitoring facilities. In reference to the Institutes of higher education (IHE), there is tremendous increase in the number of colleges and universities. There are number of aspects related to the quality education like progression of course, quality of faculty

members, research facilities given to teachers and students, number of students, examination system and administration. For any Government, it is very important to keep an eye on the above factors prevailed in any university. Although there are number of regulating agencies like UGC, AICTE, MCI, PCI, BCI, RCI etc. which monitors the performance of the university on an overall basis. The quality factors are also assessed before giving NOC to the universities or also before renewing the recognition/affiliation. Presently, the current procedure compels universities to submit the documents to UGC, MHRD, and AICTE etc. separately for various reasons like approvals/renewal of recognition, resulting in wastage of time and lot of stationary. Ideally, a single window should exist for approval process of performance measurement. The need is to deliver services at the doorstep making it hassle free transparent and to facilitate decision makers to get all analysis and decide. As a result of such type of governance, there may be perceptible changes in both administrative and academic output of the department. Minimization of human intervention and discretion exhibits a fair, transparent accountable and responsive system. E-Governance is not doing all the activities on-line or other sort of computerization but it is actually the way to rethink and re-engineer the existing structure of the system of higher education in India with its functions, processes, etc. The fundamental difference between the computerization and e-governance is that the former seeks to replace existing processes by their electronic counterparts. We conclude by saying that by implementing e-governance system in Higher education Institutes it can help in maintaining a centralized database of students that will provide better opportunities to the bright students. It empowers the government to plan the development of education system in the whole country. By this the governing bodies can very easily develop a mechanism to analyze which course is in heavy demand in a particular area or region. The information obtained can help the government in analyzing employment versus passing graduates ratio. Government can plan the generation of employment according to the passing graduates in the country. Interface can be used to get the feedback from the students related to course and performance of university. This will help to keep an eye on the institute in remote areas and help them in their full development. e - governance will remove the need of Transfer Certificates or Migration and reduce unnecessary administrative work and paper work. Interlinking of universities will enable regular updating of curriculum. Common curriculum can also be improvised. The road map to achieve above objectives, can be an amalgamation of e-governance mechanism like computerization at the university level, online management system and last but not the least is information management system i.e. maintenance of websites/web portals.

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