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Impact of e- Governance on Scheduled Tribes in Telangana- A study

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ABSTRACT

The present paper deals with e-governance, which means providing public ingress to information via the internet by government departments and their organizations. E-governance is widely accepted as an effective tool of service delivery and is equated with good governance by all developed countries in general, and developing countries like India in particular. The National e-Governance Plan was approved in 2006. The purpose of this study is to assess the efficiency and effective implications of e-service centers in the Mulugu district, state of Telangana. There are many remote and agency areas in the state of Telangana that utilize these centers to fulfill their goals. The people of Adivasi communities are satisfied with the e-Seva and Me-Seva centers in the Mulugu district. The service centers provide various services, i.e., land records, death, birth, and caste certificates, etc. This study focuses on the response and satisfaction levels of the Scheduled Tribes people and their satisfaction with electronic services. In the present study, 80 samples of primary data were collected from respondents in the Mulugu district, state of Telangana. Telangana is the 29th state of our country, with a total population of 3,50,03,674, a population density of 312, and a geographical area of 1,12,677.01 sq. km. The Scheduled Tribes population is 31,77,940. The sample area of Mulugu district has a population of 2,94,671, out of which the Scheduled Tribes population is 86,352 (29.2 percent). The total geographical area is 4,126.6 sq. km, with a population density of 71. The literacy rate of the district is 62.3 percent. Mulugu is the smallest district in the state. A majority of students are utilizing services such as applying for different recruitment examinations and higher studies.

Introduction

Recognizing the increasing importance of electronics, the Government of India set up the Department of Electronics in 1970. A significant development followed with the establishment of the National Informatics Centre (NIC) in 1977, which marked the first major step towards e-Governance in India. This initiative highlighted the crucial role of 'information' and its communication in governance.

In the early 1980s, the use of computers was restricted to very few organizations. However, the main thrust for e-Governance was provided by the launch of NICNET in 1987 – the national satellite-based computer network. This landmark initiative marked a turning point in the digitization of governance. Building on this, the District Information System of the National Informatics Centre (DISNIC) was launched to computerize all district offices in the country. For this purpose, free hardware and software were offered to State Governments.

By 1990, NICNET had been expanded via the State capitals to all district headquarters, laying the foundation for a digitally connected administrative structure. Continuing this momentum, a National Task Force on Information Technology and Software Development was established in May 1998. While recognizing Information Technology as a frontier area of knowledge in itself, the Task Force focused on utilizing IT as an enabling tool to integrate and process all other spheres of knowledge. It recommended the launch of 'Operation Knowledge', aimed at universalizing computer literacy and promoting the use of computers and IT in education.

In 1999, the Union Ministry of Information Technology was created, marking another milestone

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in institutionalizing e-Governance. This structural transformation was essential because, for a government in a country like India—with a population of 1.2 billion, more than 600,000 villages, and a growing economy—there was a pressing need to adopt Information Technology for improving governance processes. This was not just important but vital, as without IT, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to serve the citizens efficiently, transparently, and inclusively. It was necessary to ensure the participation of a large number of people in decision-making at all levels—Central, State, and local governments.

E-Governance, i.e., rendering of government services and information to the public using electronic means, represents a paradigm shift from traditional approaches in public administration. This new model has brought about a revolution in the quality of service delivered to the citizens. It has ushered in transparency in the governance process, saved time, simplified administrative procedures, improved office and record management, reduced corruption, and enhanced the job-handling capacity of government personnel.

Moreover, e-Governance signifies the public sector's use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to improve information and service delivery and to encourage citizen participation in governance. It also facilitates feedback mechanisms between citizens and institutions. Thus, e-Government can be seen as a part of e-Governance, focusing mainly on enhancing administrative efficiency and reducing corruption, as noted by Bhatnagar (2004).

One of the key initiatives in this direction was India's National e-Governance Plan (NeGP), first implemented in the late 1990s. NeGP aimed to revolutionize governance by using ICT to ensure universal access to all government services. The plan was structured in three tiers: the first tier focused on establishing essential ICT infrastructure, the second on capacity building, and the third on delivering citizen services. E-Governance, therefore, should be seen as the process of making governance compatible with the knowledge society that is emerging globally.

The ultimate objective of e-Government is "Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsive, and Transparent" (SMART) governance, which can be achieved by integrating ICT into the operations of the government. An example of this is the Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance (UMANG), launched by the Government of India in 2017. UMANG aimed at providing e-Governance services to citizens on a single digital platform. It has been a game-changer in making public services more accessible and citizen-friendly.

Earlier, the National e-Governance Action Plan had been presented to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India on 6th November 2003. This plan highlighted the four key pillars of e-Government: People, Process, Technology, and Resources. Correspondingly, the challenges in e-Governance have also been categorized under these four areas, underscoring the comprehensive nature of the transformation needed.

To understand the local implementation of e-Governance, it is important to look at the state-level context. The state of Telangana was formed on 2nd June 2014 and is the youngest state in the Indian Union. It is a land-locked state located in the southern Indian peninsula on the Deccan Plateau. Telangana is ranked 12th in population and 11th in area in the country, with a population of 3,50,03,674. The Scheduled Tribes population in the state is 31,77,940, comprising 16,07,656 males and 15,70,284 females. The population density is 312 per sq. km, and the total geographical area is 1,12,077.01 sq. km.

Within Telangana, Mulugu district serves as a significant example of localized e-Governance efforts. Mulugu was formed on February 17, 2019, by bifurcating Jayashankar Bhupalpally district, which was earlier part of Warangal district. The district has one revenue division, 9 mandals, and 174 village panchayats. As per the 2011 Census, Mulugu has a population of 2,94,671, with around 75,600 families residing in the district. It has the lowest population among all districts in Telangana, and the entire population is rural.

The district is home to the Eturunagaram Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), which works for the welfare of tribal populations. Mulugu is also known for its tourist attractions like Ramappa Temple, Ramappa Lake, and Laknavaram Lake. Notably, it hosts the world-famous Sammakka Saralamma Jathara, or Medaram Jathara, celebrated in Medaram village of Tadvai mandal. This tribal festival is believed to be the largest gathering of devotees in the country after the Kumbh Mela, drawing attention to the cultural significance of the region.

In the context of e-Governance, the sample area of Mulugu—with a population of 2,94,671, including 86,352 Scheduled Tribes (29.2%), a total area of 4,126.6 sq. km, a population density of 71, and a literacy rate of 62.3%—provides a valuable case for understanding the challenges and opportunities of implementing ICT-driven governance in small, rural, and tribal-dominated districts. As the smallest district in the state, Mulugu highlights both the grassroots potential and the infrastructural hurdles in realizing inclusive and effective e-Governance.

Review of Literature

- Joshuv O. Milluwi and Hina Rashid (2013) The National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) includes 26 Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) and 8 Support Components to be implemented at the central, state, and local government levels. The plan aims to cover all key areas related to e-governance such as policy formulation, infrastructure development, financing, project management, government process re-engineering, capacity building, assessment,

evaluation, and awareness generation, among others. These components are designed to be integrated across both central and state government systems.

- V.M. Rao (2007) The Government of India approved the National e-Governance Action Plan for implementation during 2003–2007. The plan was designed to lay the foundation and provide the necessary impetus for the long-term growth of e-Governance in the country. It sought to establish appropriate governance and institutional mechanisms, set up key infrastructure and policy frameworks, and implement a number of Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) at central, state, and integrated service delivery levels. The ultimate goal was to create a citizen-centric and business-friendly environment for governance.
- Vas Deva (2005) The core objective of governance initiatives lies in ensuring sustainable human development, which can be achieved through planned economic growth. Values such as empowerment, cooperation, honesty, sustainability, and security are essential to fostering inclusive and sustainable development. These principles directly impact the lives of marginalized, underprivileged, and vulnerable segments of society, making governance more humane and equitable.
- Sanjay Kumar Dwivedi and Ajay Kumar Bhart (2005–2010) Despite challenges such as poor infrastructure, poverty, illiteracy, and language barriers, India has implemented several award-winning e-Governance projects. These initiatives have contributed significantly to delivering quality services to citizens. Effective developmental schemes launched by the Indian government are instrumental in this process. Therefore, it can be argued that e-Governance is a critical component of "Good Governance," especially in developing countries like India. It helps reduce corruption and ensures efficient and effective service delivery to the population.
- Pardeep Mittal and Amandeep Kaur (2003) A major concern in the implementation of e-Governance in India has been the lack of public awareness and engagement. The government needs to take proactive measures to educate and inform citizens about the benefits and functionalities of e-Governance initiatives. Public participation plays a crucial role in the successful implementation of such projects. Enhancing citizen awareness and involvement will significantly increase the effectiveness and outreach of e-Governance programs across the country.

Objectives of the Study

1. To know the effectiveness of the me seva centers in public service delivery.
2. To evaluate the impacts of e-services to the service of scheduled tribes.
3. To empathize the e-governance scheme make possible to good governance
4. To examine the status of e service mechanism in Telangana

Methodology

The present study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data. Secondary data relevant to the research problem has been collected from various sources such as books, journals, research dissertations, and government reports. As for the primary data, the researcher has gathered information directly from respondents residing in the Mulugu district of the state of Telangana.

Limitations of the Study

The present study is strictly confined to the state of Telangana. More specifically, it is limited to the Mulugu district of Telangana. The study focuses on assessing the impact of e-governance in the delivery of various applications and services through Meeseva and e-Seva service centers, which implement different service mechanisms within the district.

Data Analysis

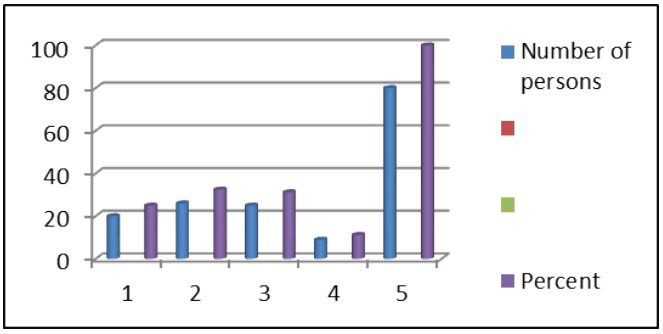
The study collected responses from 80 individuals in Mulugu district, Telangana, regarding the effectiveness of e-Governance services, particularly those offered through MeeSeva and e-Seva centers.

Land Records Services

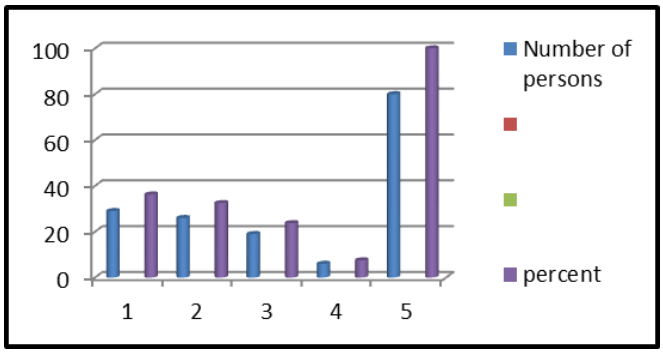
Most respondents expressed satisfaction with the digital governance system for land records. As seen in graph 1, about 32.5% rated the service as "very good," 31.25% as "excellent," and 25% as "good." Only 11.25% considered it "very excellent." Overall, farmers expressed contentment with the services.

MeeSeva/e-Seva Centers

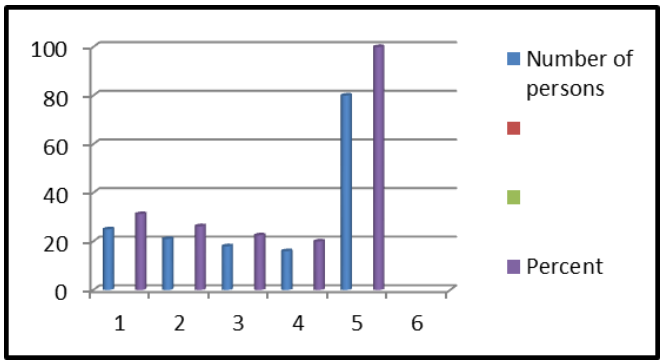
As seen in the graph 2, these centers were praised for reducing corruption and saving time. Among respondents, 36.25% rated the services as "good," 32.5% as "very good," and 23.75% as "excellent." Only 7.5% gave a "very excellent"



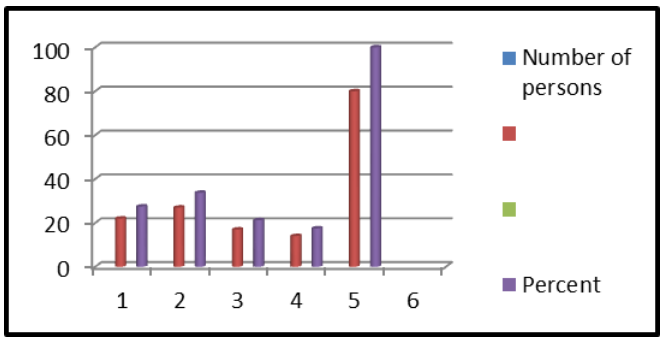
Graph 1: Services related to land records



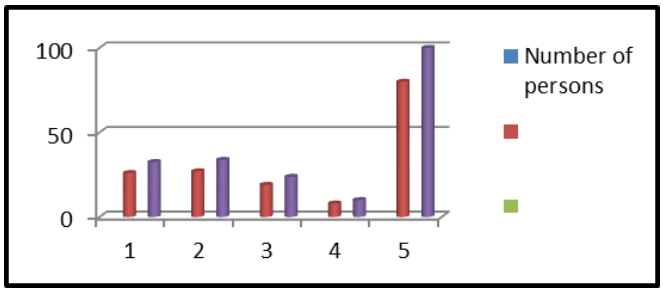
Graph 2: Services at MeeSeva



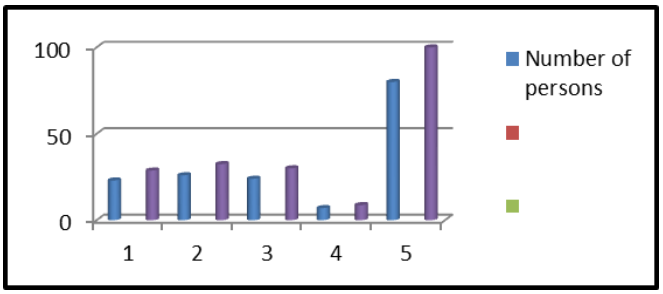
Graph 3: Certificates for essential services



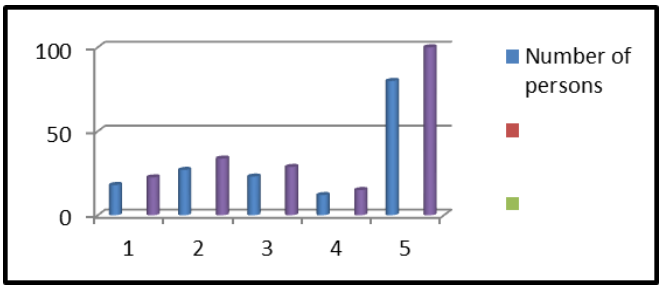
Graph 4: Procedure to acquire certificates for birth & death



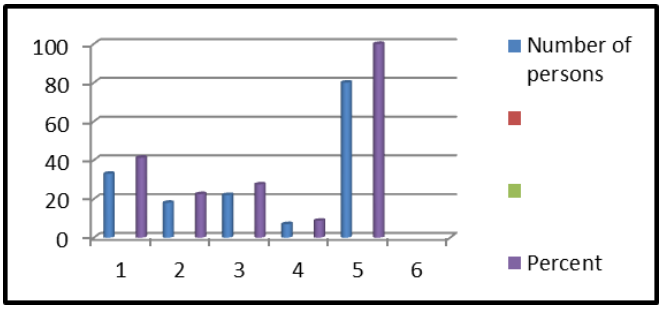
Graph 5: Providing building permits



Graph 6: Convenience of e-governance



Graph 7: Access to education services



Graph 8: Online Recruitment system

rating, suggesting strong general approval with scope for further enhancement.

Certificate Services

For essential certificates like identity, caste, income, and residence, 31.25% of respondents rated the service as "good," followed by 26.25% as "very good." About 22.5% marked it "excellent" and 20% as "very excellent." This indicates the online application process has made these services more efficient and accessible (graph 3).

Birth and Death Certificates

As seen through graph 4, 33.75% found the service "very good," 27.5% said "good," while 21.25% and 17.5% considered it "excellent" and "very excellent," respectively. The simplified procedures have made a noticeable impact.

Building Permits (B-Pass System)

As seen through graph 5, most respondents rated the current system for building permissions as "very

good," reflecting ease and satisfaction. However, fewer respondents rated it as "very excellent," indicating a generally positive but cautious response.

Online Permissions and Applications

Graph 6 makes it clear that, respondents acknowledged that applying for permissions and certificates online saves time, energy, and money. The majority supported the present e-Governance model for streamlining bureaucratic processes.

Education Services

Students appreciated the ease of accessing educational services and applying for higher studies online. The majority rated the system as "very good," with a few also marking it "very excellent," highlighting success in the education sector (graph 7).

Recruitment Process

The graph 8 shows that, online recruitment system received positive feedback for being fast, error-free, and efficient. Most respondents rated the system as "good" or "very good," recognizing its value in saving time and facilitating smooth application procedures.

Conclusion

E-Governance is a powerful tool for modernizing public administration and improving the quality of governance. Its objectives focus on increasing efficiency, transparency, inclusivity, and citizen participation, while reducing corruption and fostering innovation. By embracing digital technologies, governments can better serve their citizens, create more accountable institutions, and promote sustainable development in the long run.

E-Governance is very important nowadays as it helps reduce corruption and red tape. The existing system is very successful in many ways. The previous offline system was very difficult for people to use. According to respondents' opinions, the current system is helpful to society. This paper highlights the ratings of various services: the majority of respondents rated e-governance services as very good; next, many said the services are good for a better future society. Last but not least, excellent services were reported for scheduled tribes. Scheduled tribes often live in remote or interior areas where transport and communication are not easily available. Therefore, e-governance is particularly useful to scheduled tribe communities.

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