

Role Of Akshaya In Providing E-Governance Services

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INTRODUCTION

E-governance or electronic governance is the application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for delivering government services to the beneficiaries."Electronic Service Delivery" means the delivery of services through electronic mode. UNESCO defines e-governance as" Governance refers to the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country's affairs, including citizen's 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 provide services between G2C, G2B, G2G, G2E as well as back office process and interaction with in the entire government framework. Through the e-governance the government services will be made available to the citizen in convenient, efficient and transparent manner. It is like a giant canvas on which the people can draw a new citizen centered view of their government. E-governance is being deployed not only to provide citizen service but for public sector efficiency purpose, empowering transparency and accountability in government functions and allowing for cost saving in government administration.

Akshaya, an innovative project implemented in the state of Kerala aimed at bridging the digital divide by enabling ten thousands of ordinary citizens to access relevant information in the local language over the internet. Today Akshaya is acting as an instrument in rural empowerment and economic development. The project is a catalyst in creating massive economic growth and creation of direct and indirect employment in the state by focusing on the various facts of e-learning, e-transaction, e-governance etc... Thus, the

project is having a long standing impact on the social, economic and political scenario of the state.

One of the important objectives of Akshaya is to provide e-governance services to citizens especially to rural people. An e-literate citizen is a key component of a successful e-governance strategy. In the initial phase of Akshaya project, the focus was placed on educating one person in each family to be e-literate. When many renewed organization come up with computer education Akshaya changed its directions into citizen service delivery. In 2007 Akshaya moved into phase two of the project rendering new G2C and B2C services through its 2000+ Akshaya centers. It is now providing more than 23 services to citizen in rural area.

This is the study on the role of Akshaya in providing e-governance service with special reference to the performance of Akshaya e-Kendra Mukkam, Calicut, Kerala as a common service centre. Mukkam Akshaya centre is one of the premier centres in the state. It has come long and successful way in their service delivery.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Akshaya project is the latest IT project of the state. It is now providing more than 23 services to the citizen in rural area. In Mukkom Panchayath, it is common to the rural villagers to travel long distance to government district headquarters in order to submit application, meet officials, obtain copies of public records or seek information regarding various services. But, this involves the loss of income of a day as well as the cost of transportation and time. If the information is not available in the government office the customers are forcing repeated visit and they incurred additional expenses. Customers may also face discomfort, harassment and corruption on the part of public officials and are often given incorrect information about government programs and services. Hence Akshaya common service centre in this local area launched with the aim of increased transparency, less corruption, better delivery of government services and greater responsiveness. Thus it is relevant to analyze the role of Akshaya in providing e-governance services. The researcher find it is necessary to attend a study in akshaya project by framing the following questions

1. Why the akshaya is important in providing e-governance service
2. What are the services providing through akshaya centre
3. What are the problems faced by people while using akshaya facility

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyze the role of Akshaya in providing e-governance services.
- To identify the various services provided through Akshaya centre.
- To study on perception of users on cost of service and time of service delivery.
- To identify the barriers of e-governance services.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study focused on Akshaya project, towards the common people of Mukkom Panchayath, Calicut, Kerala. The feedback of users about e-governance services may help to identify the barriers in effective service delivery; it will be beneficial for the government to bring improvement in future.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodology is one of the most vital areas of the study, as it highlights the overall approach of the research process. This basically comprises of research design, questionnaire design, selection of study area, study population, study sample, period of study, data collection techniques and data analysis.

1-RESEARCH DESIGN

It is a descriptive type of study. A primary set of data collected from various respondents in mukkam panchayath. The sample size is limited to 50 respondents.

2-COLLECTION OF DATA

Primary data collected through interview schedule. Schedule consists of 30 questions which include closed end questions and optional questions as shown in appendix. Appropriate recommendations from the participants and the supervising professor were incorporated in to the final version of the original schedule. The secondary source were collected from various journals, newspapers and related articles.

3-SELECTION OF AREA

For this study, the researcher have selected respondents from Akshaya, a common service centre located at Mukkam, Calicut, Kerala

4-TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS

The data collected were tabulated and analyzed with the help of statistical tools like percentage and graphs. MS EXCEL is also used in analyzing the data collected through schedule.

TOOLS FOR PRESENTATION**1. Simple percentage analysis**

It is a method to represent raw streams of data as a percentage for better understanding of collected data. It is applied to create a contingency table from the frequency distribution and represent the collected data for better understanding

2. Rank analysis

Ranking is a relationship between a set of items such that, for any two items, the first is either 'ranked higher than' ranked lower than or ranked equal to the second

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A research carried out by **P.V Sangeetha** and **I Arul Aram** on the topic found that though awareness about Akshaya ICT project was generally high amongst the intended beneficiaries, only a few people accessed the project component services due to such factors as high service charges, limited knowledge, illiteracy and failed attempts.

A study conducted by **Anand Shukla, Anil Philip, Avishek Bose, Prakash Singh** and **Rupsha Banerjee** (2007) on the topic aimed at studying the structure and functioning of Akshaya as well as the issue of financial sustainability. As could be seen from the findings, the structure of the centres and the issue of financial sustainability are interlinked. . The Akshaya Kozhikode project realised this and accordingly reduced the centre in each Panchayats. Additionally to reach out to more people, the idea of mobile subcentres was instrumental in this effort.

AKSHAYA PROFILE

Kerala is a small state with the highest population density in the country, stands apart from rest of the states in India. It has achieved remarkable progress on all indicators

of social development. Its achievement in areas like literacy, education, healthcare, health and longevity, male to female ratio, etc are impressive and it is on par with the developed nations in some of these.

The IT Department in the state is setting goals for converting Kerala into Gods own e-land. Its vision is enabling Kerala to choose its future and thrive in an interdependent 21st Century driven by ICT. The state has achieved comparable quality of life as of advanced nations. With a vast pool of educated unemployed youth, the state plans to exploit the possibilities of IT for employment and e-governance.

Project Akshaya is the latest IT project of the state. It is bold plan to provide e-literacy to common people and to 'bridge the digital divide' by enabling tens of thousands of ordinary citizens to access relevant information in the local language over the Internet. Akshaya will develop a comprehensive statewide digital network. On 18 November 2002, at Thiruvananthapuram, the Akshaya project was launched by the president dr. A P J Abdul kalam . The project was piloted at Malappuram district.

Akshaya Pilot Project Implementation

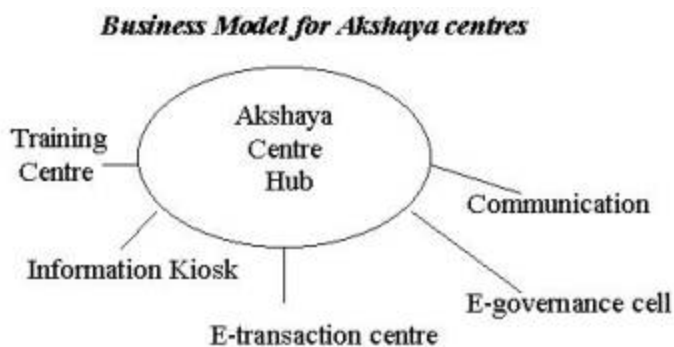
Akshaya project is to be implemented in two phases: e-literacy phase and product launch phase.

Akshaya Phase I

Malappuram district is chosen for the pilot implementation. The district is unique with a large minority (Muslim) population and low political rivalry. The pilot phase implementation was completed by December 2003. The e-literacy program imparts basic keyboard and mouse skills in 15 hours of training. In addition, it introduced windows and word processing to the trainees. About 90 percent of the families in the district have been reached through a network of 617 e-entrepreneurs with the e-literacy program. Each Akshaya centre was allotted, on average, 1000 households. Thus, each Akshaya centre had an exclusive geographical area for its operations. The Akshaya centres trained at least one member from each of the families allotted to them. For such training, each Akshaya centre was to get Rs.140 per trainee. The trainee is to pay Rs.20 to the Akshaya centre. The rest of the money (Rs.120) came from gram panchayat, block panchayat and district panchayat.

Akshaya Phase II

In the second phase of the project, the state will create a wireless infrastructure and the Akshaya entrepreneurs are to meet part of the capital cost and pay for using the infrastructure for providing various services over the network. Malappuram district will move on to Phase II soon. The initial cost of setting up the wireless infrastructure is to be shared by the entrepreneurs and the state in a 50:50 ratio. In addition, each entrepreneur is to pay monthly rent of around Rs.1000 for using the infrastructure. Work is under way to setting up a high bandwidth wireless infrastructure in the district. Majority of Akshaya entrepreneurs are apprehensive of the project's future. The business model of the first phase was simple and certain about revenue generation. In the second phase, they need to introduce services based on market requirements. Hence, there is high risk involved in the second phase. They have already made some investment hoping to get returns. The investment required for the next phase depends on the service to be offered through the Akshaya centre. Anyway, it must be made though the return is dicey. This has put them between the devil and the deep sea.



The entire project is conceived to be implemented through three-tier Panchayati Raj Institutions. District Panchayat will be the overall coordinator. Committees are proposed at State, District, Block, Panchayat/Municipality, and Ward levels for the implementation of the project. .

During 2012 the government of Kerala selects it as the second rank in the state level and 1st rank in the district level for health insurance card registration and better service delivery. At present a new office started near the Bus stand for efficient service to the entire customers. Today Akshaya common service centre citing as an instrument in rural empowerment and economic development.

Analysis & Interpretation**1-Simple percentage analysis****THE FREQUENCY OF VISIT**

Frequency of visit	No of Respondents	Percentage
Frequently	8	16
Rarely	17	34
Very often	6	12
Occasionally	19	38
Total	50	100

From the above table it is clear that most of customers visit Akshaya centers occasionally. Earlier Akshaya centres were given equal importance in providing both government and non-government services. But now most of the customers started to use Akshaya centers for getting e- governance services only.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT SERVICES

Sources	Frequency	Percentage
Friends or relatives	20	40
Existing customer	21	42
Local body representatives	5	10
Website of Akshaya	4	8

This analysis shows the sources of information about services provided through Akshaya. It can understand that the word of mouth communication is the main source of information delivery. So it is clear that the formal communication medium is not much effective.

SERVICE DELIVERY SPEED OF AKSHAYA

Delivery speed	Frequency	Percentage
Very quick	26	52
Quick	7	14
Medium	7	14

Slow	4	8
Very slow	6	12
Total	50	100

The above analysis shows that most of the customers have an opinion that Akshaya delivers services very quickly. The customers said that they face delay in getting government services when they approach them directly. Through Akshaya they get e- governance services within the reasonable time period. It can conclude that Akshaya is effectively and efficiently deliver their service.

	YES	NO	Some extend	TOTAL
1.Necessity of increasing the number of akshaya centres in panchayath	70	30		100
2.Time saving by akshaya	74	26		100
3.Reduction of corruption through akshaya	56	12	32	100
4.Difficulties faced by akshaya	76	24		100

OVERALL PERFORMANCE OF THE AKSHAYA

Satisfaction level	Frequency	Percentage
Highly satisfied	11	22
Satisfied	32	64
Neutral	1	2
Dissatisfied	5	10
Highly dissatisfied	1	2
Total	50	100

Almost all customers are satisfied with the performance of this Akshaya centre. Akshaya can provide various government services to the public transparently. It can conclude that Akshaya 'bridge the digital divide' by enabling access to e- governance services.

2-Rank Analysis

SERVICES USED BY CUSTOMERS AND THEIR SATISFACTION LEVEL

Services	HS	S	ID	DS	HDS	Total
UIDAI/Aadhar enrollment	7	3	0	0	1	11
E-Grant	0	2	0	0	1	3
E-payment	1	1	0	0	1	3
E-manal	2	1	0	2	0	5

Application for ID card(PAN,Voter ID,Passport)	1	5	0	2	0	8
Ration card related services	1	3	0	1	0	5
Application for various certificates (income, marriage etc...)	14	10	0	5	4	33
E-ticketing	0	0	0	0	0	0
RSBY-CHIS health card	1	0	0	0	0	1
AABY-Registration	2	1	0	0	0	3
Others (SBI A/C, Exam results, PSC online apply & degree application)	2	1	0	1	2	6
Total	31	27	0	11	9	

(HS : Highly satisfied, S : Satisfied, ID: Indifferent, DS : Dissatisfied, HDS : Highly dissatisfied)

From the above analysis it can identify that most of the customers visit Akshaya for getting various certificates like income certificate, marriage certificate etc. There is no need for seeking other centers for avail these services because almost all the customers are satisfied in it. However the use of ICTs for delivering government services reduces the role of local bodies and empowers the citizens. Thus government can more depends on Akshaya for providing more and more government services.

THE TYPE OF DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED BY CUSTOMERS

Problem	Rank							Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Busy websites	20	10	6	2	0	0	0	38
Large queue	15	17	6	0	0	0	0	38
Time delay	2	9	16	7	2	2	0	38
Non response of staff	0	2	6	10	14	6	0	38
Absence of employees	1	0	4	12	13	8	0	38
Lack of knowledge	0	0	0	7	9	22	0	38
Others	0	0	0	0	0	0	38	38
Total	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	

In the above graph and table we can identify that 20 customers are ranked website problem as the major one. Large queue is the second major problem faced by them. Time delay is another problem experienced by them.

FINDINGS

- ❖ Existing customers and friends or relatives are the facilitators of Akshaya regarding its growth.
- ❖ Majority of the customers are visiting Akshaya for applying various certificates like income, marriage, community etc and they are highly satisfied with these services.
- ❖ Akshaya had been in common use by the customers for the last few years.
- ❖ Most of the customers have an opinion that Akshaya deliver services very quickly and is time saving to them.
- ❖ Majority of the customers are says that Akshaya charges medium fee for their services.
- ❖ Most of the customers said that there is adequate employees in the centre ,they have sufficient training and good behavior also.
- ❖ Busy website and large queue are the main problems faced by the customers.
- ❖ Most of the customer's opinion that there is a proper coordination between government and Akshaya.
- ❖ Majority of the customers are not satisfied with the present number of Akshaya centre in the Panchayath.
- ❖ Most of the customers opinioned that e-governance services through Akshaya is useful for uneducated people.
- ❖ Most of the customers agreed that e-governance services through Akshaya reduce corruption.
- ❖ Majority of the customers are satisfied with the overall performance of the centre.
- ❖ Most of the customers expect improvement in technological, infrastructural and human resource sectors of Akshaya.
- ❖ Only small number of customers are still likes the traditional system of service delivery.

SUGGESTION

While going through the findings it is clear that the government is successful in providing their services by AKSHAYA but the following suggestions may further help them for more effective service delivery in future.

The use of the internet however reduces the role of local authorities and empowers citizens

- ✓ Establish number of Akshaya centres in the Panchayath and appoint more employees in the Akshaya centre in order to reduce the problem of large queue.
- ✓ Fast internet service should be provided to overcome the problem of busy website.
- ✓ Concerned people or authority should conduct awareness program to make the system more effective.
- ✓ Provide awareness to customers about the facility of other centers as like Akshaya.

CONCLUSION

E-governance is improving the lives of billions of people worldwide and is integrating government services altogether different ways. E-governance is an application of ICTs to transform the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability of informational & transactional exchanges within government to government, government to citizen & government to businesses and to common citizens. AKSHAYA has been trying to make government services more accessible to villagers, which attempts to reduce the time and money people spend, trying to communicate with public officials and to provide immediate, transparent access to local government data and documentation.

This project report is a study on the role of Akshaya in providing e- governance services with special reference to consumers at Mukkom Akshaya centre is conducted to analyze the pros and cons of Akshaya among customers and to analyze the role of Akshaya in providing e-governance service.

The positive factor in Akshaya services are most of the customers are satisfied with the overall performance of Akshaya, useful for uneducated people, time saving, charges medium fee, quick service delivery, behavior of employees, reduce corruption, convenient and a necessity at present etc. The negative factors such as less number of Akshaya centres, technological, Infrastructural and human resources inadequacy, large queue, less awareness about the services of other centre like Akshaya etc.

In conclusion, it should be noted that Akshaya centre in providing e- governance services are useful for common households and they are performing effectively in delivering e- governance services.

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