E-Governance Programme of Akshaya in Thrissur District

[a]**Arya. K. R,** [b]**Deepthy. P. V.**

[a]Guest lecturer, Department of commerce Sree Keralavarma College, Thrissur, Kerala India

[b]Assistant professor, Department of commerce Sree Keralavarma College, Thrissur, Kerala India

Abstract

Kerala a small state stands apart from rest of the states in India. TheIT Department in the state is setting goals for converting Kerala into Gods own e-land. The state has achieved comparable quality of life due tothe arrival of ICT. Unless the records are kept properly, accessing information and tracing the precedents becomes time consuming and this is one of the reasons for the delays in government administration. The rules and procedures lead to enormous red tape and delay and this in turn leads to corruption. Today, we find that the present paper based system is very time consuming and inefficient. The rules, procedures can be made transparent to the citizens, information can be made freely available to the citizen, and trace precedents faster and in short, improve the pace of effectiveness of governance by using Information Technology.E-Governance is mainly conducted through "Akshaya".The three main target groups that can be distinguished in Governance concepts areGovernment, citizens and business/ interested groups. In e-governance, there are no district boundaries. This paper also makes an attempt to find out the effectiveness of Akshaya project as per the part of E-Governance application in ICT and to analyse usage of e-governance services provided through Akshaya Centre in Thrissur district. The findings will help the Akshaya centres to identify the areas required for improvement in order to create greater awareness among people regarding e-governance and its benefits.

INTRODUCTION

The word "electronic" in the term E-Governance Implies technology driven governance. E-Governance is the application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for delivering government services, exchange of information communication transactions, integration of various stand- alone systems and services between G2G,G2B,G2C as well as back office processes and interactions within the entire government framework. There are three kinds of services extended by the Government:

1. G2C or Government to Citizen Services (accessed by the Citizens)
2. G2B or Government to Business Services (accessed by the Businesses)
3. G2G or Government to Government Services (accessed by Government Department)

Through the e-governance, the government services will be made available to the citizens in a convenient, efficient and transparent manner.

Objectives of the Study
1. To find out the effectiveness of Akshaya project as per the part of E-Governance application in ICT.
2. To study the basic e-literacy, structure and functioning of an Akshaya E-Kiosk.
3. To know the awareness of e-governance services provided through Akshaya Centre.
4. To analyse usage of e-governance services provided through Akshaya Centre in Thrissur district.
5. To study on perception of users on effectiveness of cost and time of service delivery

Need of the Study

A study on the impact of E-Governance with special reference to Akshaya. The aim of the study is to find out the effectiveness of Akshaya project as per the part of E-Governance application in ICT.The Government of India's National e-Governance plan has a clear vision: to deliver, and make accessible all Government, social and private sector services in the area of agriculture, health, education, utility payments, banking and financial services, etc. to the citizen at affordable cost. With this intent, the Common Service Centres (CSC) were conceptualized in may 2006, as the friend end service delivery outlets enabling smooth and transparent governance at the village level.CSC is meant to be a low cost vehicle for Government institutions to deliver e-Governance services to the rural population of India in 'Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsive and Transparent' (SMART) and most cost effective manner. In Kerala Akshaya centres act as CSC for delivering government services.

Scope of the Study

An e-literate citizen is a key component of a successful e-governance strategy. In the initial phase of Akshaya projects, the focus was placed on educating one person in each family to be e-literate. When many renowned organizations come up with computer education Akshaya changed its direction in to citizen service delivery.

Accordingly all Akshaya centres are now Akshaya Common Service Centres. 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. The study aims at understanding the acceptance and awareness of e-governance services provided through Akshaya centres in Thrissur district. Akshaya centres have been examined for measuring awareness and acceptance of the e-governance services provided through the Akshaya centres projects in Thrissur district. These services are:-
1. UIDAI/ Aadhaar enrollment 2. E-Grantz 3.E-District 4. Ration Card related services 5. E-Ticketing 6.E-Payment 7.E-Manal 8.E-Vidhya 9.RSBY-CHIS Health Card 10.Online Application for Passport.

Research Methodology

Sources of data

Primary data: Direct response of hundred respondents is collected through questionnaire.

Secondary data: The data from various secondary sources like akshaya centers, reports, websites, magazines, books and journals etc. are considered for the study.

Sample size: Sample size taken for the period is 5 Akshaya centers and 100 respondents.

Sampling technique: The sampling method used was Cluster Analysis.Clustering is the partitioning of a data set into subsets (clusters), so that the data in each subset (ideally) share some common trait- often proximity according to some defined distance measure.

Tools for analysis: Percentage analysis is used to conduct the study.

Period of study: The study covers a period of one month.

Limitations of the Study

1. The respondents taken to conduct the study is limited to hundred.
2. The analysis and interpretation is purely based on the data collected from various   respondents. The accuracy of interpretation depends upon the accuracy of these data.

Review of Literature

The Akshaya Program was officially launched in Thrissur District with the setting up of a center or an Akshaya E-Kiosk on 16th December 2005. The projects aim was to implement the IT mission of government of Kerala, vision of making at least one individual in the family PC literate. Thrissur District consists of 81 panchayats, 2 municipalities and a corporation. According to Thrissur District Planning officer "Akshaya is a prestigious project implemented by the IT mission of govern meant of Kerala with an aim to bridge the digital divide with an additional goal of bringing ICT to the general public for better awareness of E-Governance and to be a part of governmental activities".

A large number of studies were conducted .Brief reviews of the following are given below:-

1. M. O. H. Farook: "the states it mission proposes to bring out a sovenier in connection with akshaya day celebration that falls on 18th November every year. E-governance through akshaya has grown into a successful network of cscs of national and international repute. And hence, the theme of the day – *"enabling akshaya is empowering Kerala"*.
2. Oomen Chandy: The Akshaya project of the mission has been a success as it could successfully take the revolutionary *IT to the common men at grass root level.* The IT Mission will come up with more innovative projects *to make our E-Governance program more meaningful.*
3. K.S. Sreenivas, IAS (Special Secretary Of It Department) : Akshaya has been one of the best gifts of the state to citizens, its achievements remain unparalleled . E-Governance is the main platform avenues an IT mission.
4. Akshaya Authorities : states that-" Enabling Kerala to choose its future and thriven an independent 21st centuary driven by ICT "
5. Sunandhi (A Student in Hyderabad University): E-Governance through Akshaya is a successful implementation of this project and it would also be throw up investment opportunities to the of Rs. 500 crores, all within a time span of 3 years.

Data Analysis and Interpretation
Table 1: Demographic profile of the Respondents

	Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	60	60
	Female	40	40
	Total	100	100
Age	15 - 25	35	35
	25 - 45	40	40
	Above 45	25	25
	Total	100	100
Employment status	Government	20	20
	Private	35	35
	Professionals	25	25
	Business	20	20
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary data

Table 2: Table showing Innovative services of E-Governance used by people through Akshaya

Innovative Services	No: of Respondents	Percentage (%)
E-Krishi	3	3
E-Payment of BSNL, KSEB and E-Ticketing	40	40
Getting Examination Results	3	3
E-Learning programs	54	54
Total	100	100

Source: Questionnaire

Interpretation:The 3% of peoples are using the e-krishi services of government. About 40% of the people are using e-payment facilities. Most of the people are learnt with the educational courses. Only 3% of usersare using the availability of examination results.

Table 3:**Awareness of e-governance services**

Source: Primary data

Services	Aware		Not aware	
	No.	%	No.	%
UIDAI	67	89	8	11
E-Grantz	13	17	62	83
E-District	52	69	23	31
Ration Card	45	60	30	40
e-Ticketing	25	33	50	67
e-payment	71	95	4	5
E-Manal	20	27	55	73
E-Vidya	18	24	57	76
RSBY-CHIS Health card	58	77	16	23
Passport Application	19	25	56	75

Interpretation: Table 3 shows the awareness level of various e-governance services provided through the Akshaya Centres. It is clear that 89% of respondents are aware about the UIDAI/ Aadhaar services. Services like e-payment, RSBY health card, e-district and ration card services are to some extend aware by people. But the awareness levels of other services are not in a satisfactory level. Services having least awareness are E-grantz, e-manal and e-vidhya services. In short it can be justified that awareness level of the services provided through Akshaya are low.

Table 4: Usage of E-Governance Services

Services	Aware		Not aware	
	No.	%	No.	%
UIDAI	58	77	17	23
E-Grantz	5	7	70	93
E-District	41	55	34	45
Ration Card	32	43	43	57
e-Ticketing	13	17	62	83
e-payment	47	63	28	37
E-Manal	11	15	64	85
E-Vidya	9	12	66	88
RSBY-CHIS Health card	46	61	29	39
Passport Application	5	7	70	93

Source: Primary data

Interpretation: Table 4 shows the usage of e-governance services provided through Akshaya centres in Thrissur District. Mainly used services are UIDAI, e-payment and RSBY health card. 77% of respondent uses UDAI Services, 63% uses e-payment and 61% respondent uses RSBY services. 93% people are not using e-grantz and passport application and other least used services are e-vidhya and e-manal respectively. So it can be say that usage level of services provided through the Akshaya centre are not in satisfactory level.

Table 5: Perception of Users on Effectiveness of Cost and Time of Service Delivery

Services	Cost		Time	
	No.	%	No.	%
UIDAI	58	90	58	76
E-Grantz	5	84	5	80
E-District	41	68	41	44
Ration Card	32	80	32	72
e-Ticketing	13	66	13	80
e-payment	47	76	47	84
E-Manal	11	84	11	56
E-Vidya	9	74	9	80
RSBY-CHIS Health card	46	68	46	76
Passport Application	5	72	5	72

Source: Primary data

Interpretation: Table 5 analyses perception of users regarding effectiveness of cost and time of services delivered under e-governance. Respondent perceive UIDAI, e-grantz and e-manal are highly cost effective compared to other services. In short,the percentage of cost effectiveness shows that the services provided through Akshaya centres are cost effective to the respondents. It should be noted that even though there is effectiveness of time for delivering e-governance services, as far as the e-district and e-manal is concerned the time effectiveness is very low. From the table cost effectiveness are higher than the time effectiveness. It means e-governance services are cheaper than it save time.

Table 6: Table showing whether the transparency in Procedure.

Level of Opinion	No: of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	5	5
Agree	72	72
Disagree	20	20
Strongly Disagree	3	3
Total	100	100

Source: Primary data

Interpretation: The 5% of the respondents strongly agreed that the transparency in procedure instills confidence among them, 72% also agreed to it. But 20% were against it and the remaining 3% were totally against to it.

Table 7: Table showing the E-Governance through Akshaya is a success

Level of Opinion	No: of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	3	3
Strongly Agree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Agree	97	97
Total	100	100

Source: Primary data

Interpretation: The 3% of respondents are strongly agreed that the E-Governance through Akshaya is a success. The majority of the persons are agreed with it. Nobody had any contradictory opinion.

FINDINGS

As stated in the objectives, this exploratory study is aimed at studying the structure and functioning of Akshaya centre towards E- Governance. As per the study the Akshaya centres are owned by local entrepreneurs on PPP (Private Public Ownership) model, which is a new concept of government service delivery that is fast, efficient, hassle free and accessible to the common man. Majority of people are widely misunderstanding the Government and e-Governance efforts. They are not aware about the necessity and ultimate benefits of e-governance system. People have many doubts in the new system of governance.

1. As per the study it is estimated that about 40% of the people are using e-payment facilities and 54% of the people are learnt with the educational courses.
2. Awareness level of the services regarding e-payment, RSBY health card, e-district, ration card services, E-grantz, e-manal and e-vidhya servicesprovided through Akshaya are low.

3. 77% of respondent uses UDAI Services, 63% uses e-payment and 61% respondent uses RSBY services. 93% people are not using e-grantz and passport application and other least used services are e-vidhya and e-manal respectively. So it can be say that usage level of services provided through the Akshaya centre are not in satisfactory level.

4. The 3% of respondents are strongly agreed that the E-Governance through Akshaya is a success.

5. There is effectiveness of time for delivering e-governance services, as far as the e-district and e-manal is concerned the time effectiveness is very low.

6. Cost effectiveness is higher than the time effectiveness. It means e-governance services are cheaper than it save time.

7. The 5% of the respondents strongly agreed that the transparency in procedure instills confidence among them, 72% also agreed to it. But 20% were against it and the remaining 3% were totally against to it.

8. The 3% of peoples are using the e-krishi services of government.

9. Akshaya Project is an enormous step towards making the Government accessible to citizens.

10. Through Akshaya e-centres, E- Governance would encourage social inclusion of hitherto hereby marginalized communities and under-privileged sections of the rural society.

Suggestion

1. Conduct usability and capacity Surveys regarding E- Governance for the assessment of existing Akshaya projects in Thrissur District.

2. It is also need to make more awareness of common man for efficient and successful implementation of e-Governance projects and their benefits.

3. Make healthy environment in existing ICT infrastructure of Akshaya projects.

4. Change in traditionally attitude of servants of government departments and also make internal functions flexible to integrate with e-Governance projects in-order to have fast development and better integration of front office and back office governance.

CONCLUSION

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. The pilot project in Thrissur was hindered by several drawbacks. Some of the notable ones were the reluctance to accept such an initiative by the largely conservative populis, and more importantly the over proliferation of centre that led to financial loss. So in order to compensate this problem more number of Akshaya e-centres should be implemented. And must educate and should create awareness among the citizens regarding the various benefits of E-Governance and their operations. The best approach in e-Governance implementation is to think big, start small and scale fast.

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