

E-Governance as a Catalyst for Effective Public Service Delivery in India: Envisioning the Path to Viksit Bharat @2047

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Abstract: India's vision of becoming a developed nation by 2047 depends on the transformation of public service delivery. Certainly, this is a journey to be undertaken through an effective model of digital governance. To explore this connection, the current paper examines the role of e-governance in improving public service delivery in India within the framework of the Viksit Bharat @2047 agenda. The paper uses theoretical perspectives from co-production, co-creation, and citizen-centric governance to analyze the traces of India's digital governance evolution from the pre-2015 era of bureaucratic silos to the current ecosystem of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) and Artificial Intelligence (AI)-enabled administration. The paper argues that India's e-governance approach has fundamentally redefined the citizen-state relationship by enhancing transparency, efficiency, and accessibility while also confronting persistent challenges including the digital divide, digital literacy gaps, and institutional resistance. The paper examines key initiatives such as Digital India, the National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA), Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS), and the emerging DPI-AI convergence to show that e-governance serves as both an instrument of administrative reform and a foundation for substantive democratic participation. The analysis concludes that realizing the Viksit Bharat vision requires moving beyond digitization toward a unified and citizen-centric governance platform that combines technological innovation with human judgment, constitutional values, and inclusive design.

Keywords: E-Governance, Public Service Delivery, Digital Public Infrastructure, Viksit Bharat @2047, Citizen-Centric Governance, Digital India, Artificial Intelligence.

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between citizens and the state in India has come across various stages of transformation over the past decade. Where public services once meant bureaucratic delays, paperwork, and limited connectivity, digital governance has progressively reimagined how citizens access entitlements, lodge grievances, and engage with government institutions. This transformation is not merely administrative but fundamentally political: it speaks to the very nature of citizenship, state accountability, and the promise of democratic governance in the twenty-first century.

The vision of Viksit Bharat @2047 places technology-led governance at the core of India's development agenda. The Government of India has recognized that "Electronics industry is the world's largest and fastest growing industry and is increasingly finding applications in all sectors of the economy" (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology [MeitY], 2019, p. 1). This understanding extends to the governance domain, where digital technologies are reshaping how citizens interact with the state. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology's vision is "e-Development of India as the engine for transition into a developed nation and an empowered society" (MeitY, 2023, p. 9). Thus, governance transformation through digital means

is positioned as central to India's developmental aspirations.

The theoretical underpinnings of this transformation draw on established frameworks of citizen engagement in governance. Alford (2013) distinguishes between citizens as collective beneficiaries of public value and citizens as clients who receive private value from services, arguing that co-production, where citizens participate in producing services, offers a fundamental reimagining of service delivery (p. 3). Similarly, Bason (2013) emphasizes "co-creation" as a process of involving citizens and stakeholders as "experts" in policy innovation (p. 7). These perspectives resonate with India's e-governance trajectory, which has progressively shifted from administration-centric to citizen-centric models.

METHODOLOGY

This paper adopts a qualitative research design combining document analysis and theoretical synthesis to examine the role of e-governance in public service delivery in India. The analysis draws on government reports, policy documents, academic literature, and official data sources to trace the evolution of e-governance initiatives and assess their impacts on service delivery outcomes. Primary sources include Digital India programme documentation, the National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA) reports,

CPGRAMS data, and policy papers from the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and NITI Aayog. The theoretical framework integrates concepts of co-production, co-creation, and citizen-centric governance to analyze the transformation of citizen-state relationships through digital platforms. The analysis is structured around three thematic dimensions: transparency and accountability, efficiency and accessibility, and citizen empowerment through co-creation. The paper acknowledges limitations inherent in relying on secondary data sources and government-reported statistics, which may not fully capture ground-level implementation challenges or citizen experiences.

THE EVOLUTION OF E-GOVERNANCE IN INDIA: FROM DIGITIZATION TO DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

The Pre-Digital Era: Bureaucratic Silos and Citizen Exclusion

Prior to the launch of the Digital India programme in 2015, public service delivery in India was characterized by fragmentation, opacity, and procedural burdens. Citizens navigated complex administrative structures, submitting physical paperwork across multiple offices, often with limited visibility into the status of their applications. This administrative architecture not only imposed significant transaction costs on citizens but also created conditions ripe for rent-seeking and discretionary decision-making.

The challenges of this era were rooted in institutional structures that had become outdated. The National Policy on Electronics 2019 acknowledged that “the electronics hardware manufacturing sector faces lack of level playing field vis-à-vis competing nations on account of several disabilities which render domestic electronics hardware manufacturing uncompetitive” (MeitY, 2019, p. 2). This statement, though focused on manufacturing, reflects a broader recognition that India’s institutional frameworks needed fundamental reform to become competitive and citizen-friendly. The governance sector faced analogous challenges not limited to outdated processes, lack of integration, and insufficient responsiveness to citizen needs.

The citizen-state relationship in this era was predominantly transactional and asymmetrical.

Citizens approached government as supplicants rather than stakeholders, with limited mechanisms for feedback, redressal, or co-production. Briggs (2013) captures this dynamic in her discussion of citizens as “unwilling clients” who receive services they may not want, highlighting the need for “different and effective strategies for citizen-centric delivery” (p. 2). The challenge was not merely technological but institutional: bureaucratic cultures, siloed departments, and hierarchical decision-making structures militated against responsive, citizen-centric service delivery.

The Digital India Programme: Foundations of Transformation

The launch of the Digital India programme in 2015 marked a watershed moment in India’s governance trajectory. The programme was built around pillars designed to provide a unified framework to expand digital access and foster innovation. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology articulated this vision clearly: “Digital India, a flagship programme of Government of India, aims to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy” (MeitY, 2023, p. 13). The programme’s focus on three key areas such as “Infrastructure as Utility to Every Citizen, Governance & Services on Demand and Digital Empowerment of Citizens” represented a comprehensive framework for digital transformation (MeitY, 2023, p. 13)

The e-Governance pillar promoted “paperless, integrated, and public-centric administration” through platforms such as DigiLocker and the National Single Sign-On ecosystem. As the MeitY Annual Report notes, “DigiLocker is a platform for issuance and verification of documents & certificates in a digital way, thus eliminating the use of physical documents” (MeitY, 2023, p. 20). The report further highlights that “More than 60 crore educational documents are accessible to students nationwide” through this platform (MeitY, 2023, p. 21). This means that citizens could now access their official documents digitally, reducing the burden of physical paperwork and enabling seamless verification across government departments.

The e-Kranti pillar accelerated the shift from traditional service delivery to digital platforms, while the India Stack comprising Aadhaar, UPI, and other foundational layers established a robust digital infrastructure for governance. The State of Governance Report 2024 noted that “citizen-centric innovations have redefined governance

delivery in India” (SKOCH, 2024, para. 3). This implies that the Digital India programme fundamentally shifted the paradigm of governance from a top-down administrative model to a citizen-centric service delivery model.

The Emergence of Digital Public Infrastructure

The concept of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) has become central to India’s governance strategy. Jarke (2021) defines digital public services as “services in the public interest and offered by social welfare organisations and other non-profit civic society organisations, which complement governmental services” (p. 20). India’s DPI ecosystem including Aadhaar for identity, UPI for payments, DigiLocker for document storage, and emerging platforms for health, education, and skilling represents an institutionalization of this principle at population scale.

The significance of DPI for governance transformation cannot be overstated. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology’s Annual Report 2022-23 emphasizes that “Public Digital Platforms have been identified as the main catalysts in the overall growth and transformational change in the economy” (MeitY, 2023, p. 6). The report specifically notes that “Digital platforms like Aadhaar, UPI, GeM, DigiLocker, DIKSHA, Co-Win, etc have demonstrated the transformational potential of nationwide digital platforms” (MeitY, 2023, p. 6). This means that DPI is not merely a technological infrastructure but a foundational enabler of economic and social transformation.

The scale of India’s DPI achievements is remarkable. The MeitY Annual Report 2022-23 states that “India is world leader in Digital Identities; world’s largest Digital Identity Programme with 1.36 billion Aadhaar has helped poor to receive benefits directly in their accounts” (MeitY, 2023, p. 6). The report further notes that this “has led to disbursement of ₹27.76 lakh crore and led to savings of ₹2.2 lakh crore cumulatively till December 31, 2022” (MeitY, 2023, p. 6). Clearly, DPI has not only improved service delivery efficiency but has also generated substantial economic benefits through reduced leakages and improved targeting.

However, the DPI journey is uneven. Challenges including the need for stronger data governance, wider system-level compatibility, and the thoughtful use of emerging technologies persist. Interoperability cannot be taken for granted as

several states continue to lag in onboarding government departments to digital workflows, resulting in fragmented user experiences and delays in service delivery.

E-GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY: IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES

Transparency and Accountability

One of the most significant impacts of e-governance has been the enhancement of transparency in public service delivery. Digital platforms create audit trails, reduce discretion, and make government processes visible to citizens. The Proceedings of the Regional Conference on Good Governance and Replication of Best Practices at Guwahati (2018) emphasize that “e-Governance removes several obstacles that otherwise slow the pace of work and progress. E-governance ushers in transparency, eliminates corruption, timeliness of action, eliminates delay and reduces cost, and removes middlemen, etc.” (Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances [DARPG], 2018, p. 11). For this reason, digital governance fundamentally alters the operational dynamics of government by reducing opportunities for discretionary decision-making and rent-seeking.

The Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) exemplifies this transparency-enhancing function. The CPGRAMS portal has transformed how citizens can seek remedy for administrative failures. The Proceedings of the Regional Conference at Itanagar (2022) note that “CPGRAMS is receiving more than 18 Lakhs grievances per year and having disposal percentage of more than 90%” (DARPG, 2022, p. 55). The platform’s tracking mechanism embodies the principle that citizens should have visibility into government responsiveness.

The National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA) framework further institutionalizes accountability. The NeSDA Way Forward Monthly Report for States/UTs (November 2024) provides “a detailed overview of status of e-service delivery across States/UTs” (DARPG, 2024, p. 1). The report highlights that “18,335 services are provided across States/UTs” and “Karnataka provides maximum e-services (1414)” (DARPG, 2024, p. 3). Certainly, NeSDA helps identify service delivery gaps, strengthen digital governance systems, and enhance citizens’ experience in accessing public services online.

Efficiency and Accessibility

E-governance has dramatically improved the efficiency of service delivery by reducing paperwork, eliminating physical travel, and enabling 24/7 access. The Proceedings of the Gandhinagar National Conference on Good Governance (2025) note that the Digital India programme has been “leading the transformation in India for ease of living and digital economy” (DARPG, 2025, p. 6). The conference proceedings highlight that “over 40 crore average e-Transactions happening on daily basis and 7.8 billion monthly transactions over UPI worth ₹12.8 trillion on December 31, 2022” (DARPG, 2025, p. 6). This means that digital governance has become deeply embedded in the daily lives of citizens, with massive transaction volumes demonstrating both adoption and impact.

The expansion of digital services is evident in the numbers. The NeSDA report indicates that states and union territories across the country now provide thousands of e-services, with Karnataka leading at 1,414 e-services and Tamil Nadu at 1,128 (DARPG, 2024, p. 3). The report further notes that “1,579 out of 2,016 mandatory e-services (56x36 States/UTs) are available, making saturation at 78%” (DARPG, 2024, p. 3). This represents a fundamental shift from the pre-2015 era when citizens were constrained by geography, office hours, and administrative procedures.

The Common Service Centre network has been particularly transformative for rural access. The MeitY Annual Report 2022-23 states that “As on October 2022, total 5,21,225 CSCs are operational across all states & Union Territories of the country, out of which, total 4,14,766 CSCs are operational at Gram Panchayat (GP) level” (MeitY, 2023, p. 31). The report further notes that “More than 400+ services across the country are being delivered through CSCs” (MeitY, 2023, p. 31). This means that even in rural and remote areas, citizens now have access to digital services through assisted modes, addressing what Jarke (2021) identifies as a key challenge in ensuring that digital services “respond well enough to the life worlds, use contexts and use practices of its target audiences” (p. 19).

Citizen Empowerment and Co-Creation

Beyond efficiency gains, e-governance has the potential to transform citizens from passive recipients of services to active participants in governance. This aligns with what Alford (2013) describes as “co-production”, that is, “the process

of something being undertaken jointly by a government organisation and an external party” (p. 2). Alford argues that “clients are more likely to do that if government agencies try to understand what it is that they want, and try to give it to them—which is essentially client focus” (p. 4).

The Digital India programme embodies this shift toward citizen-centric governance. The MeitY Annual Report 2022-23 emphasizes that “the focus of this programme pulls together many existing schemes. The programme targets to provide digital services, digital access, bridge the digital divide, language divide and thereby, ensure digital inclusion, financial inclusion, and digital empowerment” (MeitY, 2023, p. 13). This implies that digital governance is not merely about efficiency but about fundamentally reimagining the relationship between citizens and the state.

Bason’s (2013) concept of “co-creation” further illuminates this transformation. Bason argues for “involving a wider variety of people in policy design” and understanding “more specifically how people live their lives, what their real experiences are in concrete and qualitative ways” (p. 8). The NeSDA framework, which assesses e-services from the citizen’s perspective (DARPG, 2024, p. 1), operationalizes this principle by making citizen experience the benchmark for governance quality.

Grievance Redressal and Responsiveness

Effective grievance redressal is a critical dimension of public service delivery. The CPGRAMS platform has transformed how citizens can seek remedy for administrative failures. The Proceedings of the Regional Conference at Itanagar (2022) note that “CPGRAMS is receiving more than 18 Lakhs grievances per year and having disposal percentage of more than 90%” (DARPG, 2022, p. 55). The platform’s tracking mechanism embodies the principle that citizens should have visibility into government responsiveness.

The Proceedings of the Regional Conference at Guwahati (2024) highlight the evolution of CPGRAMS: “The current version 5.0 of CPGRAMS has been operational since 2011. With the inclusion of PMO in late 2014, there has been an exponential rise in the number of grievances received and also disposed in 2015” (DARPG, 2024, p. 16). It is quite clear that the integration of political leadership into the grievance redressal mechanism has significantly enhanced both the volume and effectiveness of grievance handling.

CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS TO INCLUSIVE E-GOVERNANCE

The Digital Divide: Connectivity, Access, and Literacy

Despite significant progress, the digital divide remains a formidable barrier to inclusive e-governance. The Proceedings of the Regional Conference at Guwahati (2018) note that “Connectivity is the most important key to the development of a region” and that “there are around 8,621 villages in NER, which are still uncovered with mobile connectivity” (DARPG, 2018, p. 92). This implies that despite significant investments in digital infrastructure, large portions of the population remain excluded from the digital ecosystem.

The digital divide has concrete consequences for service access. As the Proceedings of the Regional Conference at Itanagar (2022) note, “Telecom Connectivity is the backbone for implementation of any e-Gov initiative and a major challenge in reaching the last mile for delivery of services” (DARPG, 2022, p. 22). The conference proceedings highlight that “the total telecom bandwidth available is only 1.3 Gbps as against the requirement of 55 Gbps which is less than 3% of the requirement” (DARPG, 2022, p. 22). This means that even where digital services exist, inadequate connectivity infrastructure severely limits their accessibility and effectiveness.

Digital literacy compounds connectivity challenges. The National Policy on Universal Electronic Accessibility (2013) recognizes the need to “ensure that Electronics & ICTs are accessible to differently abled so that they act as an enabler for providing equal opportunities” (MeitY, 2013, p. 1). While focused on differently abled persons, this principle applies more broadly: digital governance must be designed to be accessible to all citizens, regardless of their level of digital literacy.

Institutional and Bureaucratic Resistance

The transition to digital governance has encountered resistance from within government institutions. Bureaucratic resistance, fear of job displacement, and lack of awareness additionally affect the adoption of many e-governance initiatives. This resistance reflects deeper tensions between hierarchical bureaucratic cultures and the collaborative, transparent ethos of digital governance.

Briggs (2013) captures this dynamic in her discussion of the shift from “control culture” to citizen-centric delivery. She argues that “control is anathema to the creativity and innovation needed from public servants to get true transformation” (p. 12). The challenge, she suggests, is not merely technological but cultural: “public servants will also have to accept that they don't always know best—or even, don't know at all and so should go out and actively seek ideas and input” (p. 12).

The iGOT Karmayogi platform represents an institutional response to this challenge. The Proceedings of the Gandhinagar National Conference on Good Governance (2025) note that “iGOT has democratized learning across all levels, with a notable 70% course completion rate, which is far superior to other platforms in India” (DARPG, 2025, p. 34). The platform “has attracted 75 lakh users and recorded over 3.4 crore enrolments to date” (DARPG, 2025, p. 34). It is noteworthy that capacity building initiatives are being scaled to address the institutional and human resource challenges of digital governance.

Trust, Privacy, and Data Security

As digital governance expands, concerns about trust, privacy, and data security have become increasingly salient. The Report of Committee - A on Platforms and Data on Artificial Intelligence (2019) notes that “AI systems (using big data), filter, sort, score, recommend, personalize, and otherwise shape human experiences. These systems have inherent risks, such as privacy breach, codifying and entrenching biases, reducing accountability and thus increasing the information asymmetry” (MeitY, 2019a, p. 10). As AI and data analytics become more integrated into governance, the risks to citizen privacy and data security also increase.

The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 represents a legislative response to these concerns. The Act establishes a comprehensive framework for data protection, defining “personal data breach” as “any unauthorised processing of personal data or accidental disclosure, acquisition, sharing, use, alteration, destruction or loss of access to personal data, that compromises the confidentiality, integrity or availability of personal data” (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2023, p. 3). The Act further establishes the Data Protection Board of India as an independent regulatory body with powers to “inquire into such personal data breach and impose penalty as provided in this Act” (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2023, p. 14). This

implies that the government recognizes the importance of establishing institutional safeguards to protect citizen data in the digital governance ecosystem.

The Administrative Burden of Digital Classification

Jarke (2021) identifies a more subtle challenge: the “administrative burden” imposed by digital public services that “are based on classifications that do not correspond to the life worlds of their target user groups, but rather represent bureaucratic ways of organising and thinking” (p. 19-20). This mismatch between bureaucratic classification and citizen experience can make digital services difficult to navigate, even when technically accessible.

This challenge resonates with the findings of the Committee - C Report on Mapping Technological Capabilities (2019), which notes that “much of our legacy data is not even in digital format and even where it is, is often not standardized” (MeitY, 2019b, p. 8). The report emphasizes the need to “put in mechanisms to ensure cleaner data collection for the future, while working with available data in the interim” (MeitY, 2019b, p. 8). This implies that the administrative burden of digital governance is not merely a design issue but reflects deeper challenges in data standardization and interoperability.

The solution, as Jarke suggests, lies in co-creation: involving citizens in the design of digital services to ensure they reflect lived experience rather than merely administrative convenience. The Report of Committee - C notes that “AI is not a standalone discipline... Most AI applications typically have only about 5% of real AI in them. Much of the system is dealing with general information processing, interfacing and management” (MeitY, 2019b, p. 8). Therefore, citizen-centric design principles must be integrated throughout the system, not just in the AI components.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS: REALIZING VIKSIT BHARAT @2047

From DPI to AI-Enabled Governance

The vision for Viksit Bharat @2047 envisions a fundamental shift from digitization to intelligent governance. The Report of Committee - B on Leveraging AI for Identifying National Missions in Key Sectors (2019) articulates this vision: “AI can play an impactful role in India if it is applied to problems that are important, and which are amenable to AI technology” (MeitY, 2019c, p. 5).

The committee identified 20 sectors where AI could have transformative impact, including agriculture, health, education, transportation, and disaster management (MeitY, 2019c, p. 6-15).

The convergence of DPI and AI represents a qualitative leap in governance capacity. The Report of Committee - A on Platforms and Data on Artificial Intelligence (2019) recommends that the: Development of an enriched National Artificial Intelligence (AI) Resource Platform (NAIRP) of India: a platform that will bring together all publicly shareable data, information, tools, literature, solutions, best-practices to enable a large number of people to individually and in collaboration take up AI tasks. (MeitY, 2019a, p. 3)

AI-enabled governance requires not just algorithms but a comprehensive ecosystem of data, tools, and collaborative platforms.

The Report of Committee - C on Mapping Technological Capabilities (2019) emphasizes the importance of “application mind set” in AI adoption: “From early stage we should look to identify domain areas and specific problems we want to prioritise AI for - as that can help to prioritize and accelerate research, application and data creation for that domain” (MeitY, 2019b, p. 13). The committee recommends creating “National Level mission program that creates the right policies to let a cross functional team of technologists create data sets, algorithms and solutions for desired result” (MeitY, 2019b, p. 13). This means that AI-enabled governance requires focused, mission-driven approaches that prioritize specific domains and problems.

The Platform State: Unified, Seamless, and Proactive

A compelling vision for Viksit Bharat is what has been described as “the state as platform.” By 2047, a unified Digital Public Infrastructure should knit together identity, payments, registries, and entitlements so tightly that citizens experience ‘one government’, not a maze of departments. The Proceedings of the Regional Conference at Bengaluru (2022) emphasize that “the future consumers will want a lot more... the expectation to be much higher” (DARPG, 2022, p. 32). This implies that citizens increasingly expect government services to match the seamlessness and user-friendliness of private sector digital services.

The Unified Mobile Application for New-Age Governance (UMANG) represents a significant step toward this vision. The MeitY Annual Report 2022-23 notes that “UMANG has been developed as a single mobile platform to deliver major Government services” and “has about 1,643 services (799 Central and 814 State Govt. services) from 300 departments” (MeitY, 2023, p. 29). The platform has “about 4.75 Crore users... and more than 320 crore transactions have taken place on UMANG” (MeitY, 2023, p. 29). Clearly, a unified platform approach is already demonstrating significant adoption and impact.

The Policy for “Agent Assisted Delivery of UMANG Services” (2021) further extends this platform approach by enabling “Companies interested in providing select UMANG Services through agents or human assisted platform to citizens and residents of India” (National e-Governance Division [NeGD], 2021, p. 2). The policy recognizes that “NeGD desires to increase the reach of UMANG services to a larger user base through some assistive modes like agents or Human Assisted Platform” (NeGD, 2021, p. 2). This implies that the platform approach is inclusive, recognizing that not all citizens can access digital services directly and providing assisted modes of service delivery.

Citizen-Centric Design and Co-Creation

Realizing the Viksit Bharat vision requires embedding citizen-centric design principles in governance. The Guidelines for Capacity Building and Institutional Framework for e-Governance under NeGP (2005) emphasize the importance of citizen-centricity: “The nature and scale of e-governance initiatives planned within the domain of the State Governments, present a considerable enhancement in the aspiration level of government” (Planning Commission & Department of Information Technology, 2005, p. 2). The guidelines note that “major managerial and technological challenges are one consequence of this, particularly in the context of the need for implementation of these projects in a ‘mission/projected mode’, with clearly defined goals, timelines and responsibilities” (Planning Commission & Department of Information Technology, 2005, p. 2). This means that achieving citizen-centric governance requires structured, mission-driven approaches with clear accountability frameworks.

The Report of Committee - C on Mapping Technological Capabilities (2019) emphasizes the

importance of “personalized service delivery at scale” as “a key ingredient for inclusion, in communication, in identifying specific issues and offering advice, and many other areas” (MeitY, 2019b, p. 6). The report notes that “Personalized service delivery at scale is an engineering challenge” (MeitY, 2019b, p. 6). Thus, achieving citizen-centric governance requires not just technology but sophisticated engineering approaches that can deliver personalized services at population scale.

Bason's (2013) concept of “professional empathy” offers a methodological framework for citizen-centric design. Bason defines this as “the systematic ability for a public organisation, or any organisation, to experience what citizens experience” (p. 9-10). This requires going “much deeper and move more toward qualitative inputs in order to drive innovation” (p. 10). The goal is not merely to consult citizens but to “interrogate them as experts in what they are experts in, which is their own lives” (p. 15). This resonates with the approach of the NeSDA framework, which evaluates e-services from the citizen's perspective (DARPG, 2024, p. 1).

Institutional Capacity Building

The transition to digital governance requires sustained investment in institutional capacity. The Guidelines for Capacity Building and Institutional Framework for e-Governance under NeGP (2005) recognize that “keeping in view the enormous task of driving NeGP in line with the overall spirit of service orientation most states are inadequately equipped in terms of personnel and the skill-sets needed to handle the host of issues involved” (Planning Commission & Department of Information Technology, 2005, p. 2). The guidelines emphasize that “for NeGP to achieve its goals, this is the first gap that needs to be addressed” (Planning Commission & Department of Information Technology, 2005, p. 2). This means that institutional capacity building is a prerequisite for successful e-governance implementation.

The Report of Committee - C on Mapping Technological Capabilities (2019) emphasizes the critical importance of talent development. The committee notes that “AI is still an open and highly competitive area, with fresh developments always around the corner. India cannot afford to be mere adopter of technology, it needs to be active in this space for it to be able to play a key role in the international arena and drive the growth of this

field” (MeitY, 2019b, p. 7). The committee recommends that “the AI ecosystem must encourage a strong collaborative effort between the industry and the academia” (MeitY, 2019b, p. 22). Therefore, building institutional capacity for AI and digital governance requires collaboration between different sectors and sustained investment in talent development.

The iGOT Karmayogi platform represents a strategic response to this challenge. The Proceedings of the Gandhinagar National Conference on Good Governance (2025) note that “iGOT has democratized learning across all levels” and features “personalized learning paths based on the user's role and department” (DARPG, 2025, p. 35). The platform has “attracted 75 lakh users and recorded over 3.4 crore enrolments to date” (DARPG, 2025, p. 34). Institutional capacity building is being scaled through digital platforms that provide personalized, competency-based learning opportunities for government officials.

Addressing the Digital Divide

Realizing inclusive e-governance requires sustained attention to the digital divide. The E-mail Policy of Government of India (2014) recognizes that “the Government uses e-mail as a major mode of communication” but also acknowledges the need for “secure access and usage” (Department of Electronics and Information Technology [DeitY], 2014, p. 4). The policy mandates that “users working in sensitive offices” should “use VPN/OTP for secure authentication” (DeitY, 2014, p. 5). This implies that while digital governance is expanding, the government is also conscious of the need to ensure security and accessibility for all users.

The National Policy on Universal Electronic Accessibility (2013) provides a framework for inclusive digital governance. The policy recognizes the need to “eliminate discrimination on the basis of disabilities and to facilitate equal access to Electronics & ICTs” (MeitY, 2013, p. 1). The policy emphasizes that “Electronics & ICTs can mitigate the barriers faced by differently abled persons as well as help them to participate independently in day-to-day life” (MeitY, 2013, p. 1). Thus, inclusive design principles must be integrated into digital governance from the outset, not added as an afterthought.

The Proceedings of the Regional Conference at Bengaluru (2022) highlight the importance of addressing the digital divide in rural areas. The

conference featured a keynote address by Sridhar Vembu, founder of Zoho, on “Creating Unicorn Magic (and Jobs) in Rural India” (DARPG, 2022, p. 83). Vembu noted that “the kids continue to be born in villages” and emphasized that “as a business person, if you're an entrepreneur, you should go where resources” (DARPG, 2022, p. 83). He noted that “last about a year we have actually trained, recruited and trained over 1000 rural engineers from Thenkasi to Thirunelveli to Madurai, Tanjavur district now” (DARPG, 2022, p. 83). Addressing the digital divide requires not just infrastructure investment but also creating economic opportunities in rural areas through digital technologies.

CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the role of e-governance in improving public service delivery in India within the framework of the Viksit Bharat @2047 vision. The analysis reveals a profound transformation in the citizen-state relationship, driven by the expansion of Digital Public Infrastructure, the institutionalization of citizen-centric assessment frameworks, and the emerging integration of artificial intelligence into governance.

The theoretical frameworks of co-production and co-creation illuminate this transformation. Alford's (2013) distinction between citizens as collective beneficiaries and clients as recipients of private value captures the dual nature of e-governance: it serves both collective public purposes and individual citizen needs (p. 3). Bason's (2013) emphasis on “professional empathy” and citizen expertise in their own lives provides a methodological foundation for citizen-centric design (p. 9-10). Briggs' (2013) call for “different and effective strategies for citizen-centric delivery” underscores the need for institutional and cultural transformation alongside technological change (p. 2).

The evidence presented in this paper demonstrates that e-governance has significantly improved transparency, efficiency, and accessibility in public service delivery. The Guidelines for State Data Centre (SDC) established a framework for “consolidating services, applications and infrastructure to provide efficient electronic delivery of G2G, G2C and G2B services” (Department of Information Technology, n.d., p. 2). The Government of India recognized that “State Data Centre would provide many functionalities and some of the key functionalities

are Central Repository of the State, Secure Data Storage, Online Delivery of Services, Citizen Information/Services Portal, State Intranet Portal, Disaster Recovery, Remote Management and Service Integration” (Department of Information Technology, n.d., p. 2). The foundational infrastructure for digital governance was established with a clear understanding of the need for integration, security, and comprehensive service delivery.

However, persistent challenges remain. The digital divide, digital literacy gaps, institutional resistance, and concerns about trust and data security must be addressed if e-governance is to be truly inclusive. The Report of Committee - D on Cyber Security, Safety, Legal and Ethical Issues (2019) notes that “in order to be accepted for use by the society, AI systems have to meet high degree of safety standards” and emphasizes that “comprehensive testing is must before releasing any system for use by the public” (MeitY, 2019d, p. 17). As e-governance becomes more sophisticated and AI-enabled, rigorous safety and ethical standards are essential.

The vision of Viksit Bharat @2047 offers a roadmap for addressing these challenges. The convergence of DPI and AI promises to unlock new possibilities for predictive, proactive governance. The platform state model envisions seamless, integrated service delivery that eliminates bureaucratic silos. Citizen-centric design principles and institutional capacity building provide the foundations for sustainable transformation. And sustained attention to the digital divide ensures that no citizen is left behind.

The Report of Committee - B on Leveraging AI for Identifying National Missions in Key Sectors (2019) articulates a compelling vision: “AI as a technology holds a lot of promise. It uses data platforms, AI algorithms and AI applications. It can be applied in many sectors, particularly where a large amount of data is available or likely to be available” (MeitY, 2019c, p. 19). The committee identified “about 20 sectors” where AI could have transformative impact and proposed “national missions” in each sector (MeitY, 2019c, p. 19). This implies that realizing the potential of AI-enabled governance requires a structured, mission-driven approach across multiple sectors.

Ultimately, the path forward requires not merely technological innovation but institutional imagination: the willingness to reimagine the

relationship between citizens and the state in ways that honor both the dignity of the individual and the collective aspirations of the nation. As the Guidelines for Capacity Building and Institutional Framework for e-Governance under NeGP (2005) note, the goal is to “provide for overall direction, standardisation and consistency across initiatives and at the same time, have the resources and flexibility to drive this plan” (Planning Commission & Department of Information Technology, 2005, p. 2). The successful realization of Viksit Bharat @2047 will depend on whether India can harness the transformative potential of e-governance while ensuring that its benefits reach all citizens, particularly the most marginalized and vulnerable populations. This dual imperative of technological advancement alongside inclusive design represents the central challenge and the defining opportunity for India’s digital governance future.

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