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### E- Panchayat

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#### Abstract

There are various models and solution available for E-Governance. However cost effective solution is always preferable. An electronic knowledge based system titled “e-Panchayat” with effective involvement of the stake holders at lowest administrative level was successfully designed, developed and being implemented successfully in Andhra Pradesh. In this paper, we are just giving some informative solution for the emerging concept of E-panchayat. The E-panchayat initiative is useful in that it can connect to users at different levels cheaply and effectively. The state governments have created several Panchayat Raj Institutions to ensure grass root level development at village level. E-Panchayat is a software product conceptualized, designed and developed with the active involvement of the stakeholders at lowest administrative level and is implemented in Palwal block spreading initially to Faridabad District of Haryana state. Palwal development block is located between the geo-coordinates of 28°05’52” to 28°14’10”N and 72°11’24” to 77°32’48”E and is having 124 villages and 102 villages Panchayat. The same project is going to be replicated after due customization in several states such as Uttar Pradesh, North Eastern States, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu etc.

**Keywords-** Panchayat information management system (PIMS), PRI – Panchayat Raj Institution, GP – (Gram Panchayat) BOO – (Build Own and Operate), SMART – Simplicity, Morality, Accountability, Responsiveness and Transparency, SCA (Service Centre Agency), Wireless Connection.

#### Introduction

E-Panchayat has been designed taking into account all the information and knowledge management requirements in a Gram Panchayat. The 1992 Panchayat Raj Act of Government of India and the success stories of the Gram Panchayat in various states in the country have been taken into account while developing E-Panchayat. The objective of achieving E-Panchayat goes beyond mere computerization of stand alone back office operation. We differentiate basic three terms inter-related with each others are E-Government, E-Administration, E-Governance where E-Panchayat is the unit key.

##### 1. E-Government

Inter-organisational relationship including policy coordination, policy implementation and public service delivery.

##### 2. E-Administration

Intra-organisational relationship, policy development, organizational activities and knowledge management.

##### 3. E-Governance

It defines Interaction between people, government firms, and elected officials including democratic processes, open government and transparent decision-making [1].

#### Why do we require digital Panchayat?

1. To empower citizen of every Panchayat with bottom up and top down information and content.
2. To put every Panchayat on the global digital map.
3. To generate on ICT (information communication technology) environment in every Panchayat.
4. To facilitate growth of Panchayat economy through encouragement of Panchayat tourism.

#### Pre- Computerized Scenario

1. The word “Panchayat” is the combination of two words that is “panch” and “ayat”. It means “assembly”(ayat) of five (panch) and respected elders chosen and accepted by the local community.
2. The panchayati raj or we can say panchayat is a south asian political system which is mainly implemented in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal.

3. In earlier days, these assemblies settled disputes between individuals and villages.
4. The leader of the panchayat was generally known as the “mukhiya”, a position which was both hereditary and elected.
5. Mahatma Gandhi was the first person who advocated Panchayati raj, a distributed form of government where each village is answerable for its own affairs, as the basis of India’s political system.
6. The term for such a vision which was advocated by Mahatma Gandhi was Gram Swaraj (“village self-governance”).
7. The panchayats receive money or funds from 3 sources:
  - a) Local body grants, as recommended by the central finance commission.
  - b) Funds for developing centrally sponsored schemes.
  - c) Funds released by the state governments on the recommendations of the state finance commissions.

The 3-tier system of the panchayat consist of :

- i.) Village-level panchayats
- ii.) Block-level panchayats
- iii.) District-level panchayats

Establishment of a 3-tier panchayat in following areas are as follows:

- i.) Gram panchayat at the village level
- ii.) Panchayat samiti at the block level
- iii.) Zila parishad at the district level

There was committee known as The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee which was appointed by the government of India in January 1957 to examine the working of the community development programme [2]. The main aim of this committee is to provide a 3-tier system of panchayat:-

- i.) For all the states having a population of over 2 million
- ii.) To hold panchayat elections regularly after every 5 years.
- iii.) To provide seats reservations for SC (scheduled castes), ST (scheduled tribes) and women.

### Post- Computerized Scenario

With the help of e-panchayat our country is developing day by day. Now there is a very good example of post computerization scenario of e-panchayat i.e. of EPES (E-panchayat experimental sites).

EPES will help us to create a knowledge base on how rural broadband can be leveraged

effectively, to strengthen rural Panchayat. Under EPES, High speed internet connectivity, technical architecture, and Information Technology manpower is being provided to 10 panchayat in Srinagar block, Ajmer district, on a pilot basis – building on the prior accomplishments of Rajasthan agencies (including the National Informatics Centre) in this area. These 10 panchayat will consequently offer test and display sites, where applications and approaches in High speed internet-enabled governance and development can be assessed and show-cased. EPES make emphasis on two key issues:

1. Design and development of realistic, feasible, strong thoughts and policies for ICT integration with governance and developmental programs.
2. Demonstration, sharing, and dissemination of these ideas and strategies among panchayat and other government agencies – aiding their efforts to adopt, customize, and deploy these programs. This would include a focus on demand motivation among rural citizens and officials for ICT-enabled services and capacity.

EPES (E-panchayat experimental sites) will result in a set of approaches and assessments for broadband-enabled governance, education, and healthcare projects [3]. These will be dispersed in various forms to officials, policy-makers, and people offering them input in adopting, customizing, and implementing broadband application projects at rural panchayat. Some benefits can be listed as:-

- Increased accountability
- Increased transparency
- High availability of public domain information.
- Reduced corruption.
- Higher penetration due to automation
- Improved efficiency because of connectivity.

### *Needs and benefits of Data warehouse for E-Governance*

- Government has to deal with enormous data and when it is used properly, it can help planners and decision-makers in making proper decisions.
- Due to absence of data warehouse in government, government have to dependent on IT staff for making special reports, which often takes long time to generate.
- Data warehousing can deliver strategic intelligence to the decision-makers and provide an insight into the overall situation from the historical data.

- With the help of decision-makers, government can take their micro-level decisions in a timely manner without depending on their IT staff.

### Progress

A State-level EPES scheme management and analysis Group, with representatives from different key departments from the Rajasthan government, have been formed. In its planning, the Group (with its Executive Committee) has identified and approved proposals for technological infrastructure and tools, manpower, and content resources.

Activity in government and panchayat-level education has already been kick-started: panchayat schools are being provided with Information and communication technology (ICT) enabled content, and response from teachers and principals on ICT is currently being collected. Other areas of attempt like digital literacy, and healthcare are presently being brought online.

### Impact

E-panchayat has a great impact on the people living in village level, block level, district level. With the help of e-panchayat people are getting many facilities which they were not getting before.

Some of these features of e-panchayat are:

- i.) Below poverty line – enumeration.
- ii.) Meetings managements.
- iii.) Village level planning.
- iv.) Monitoring attendance in the GP meetings.
- v.) Managing information related to the atrocities against women & children (if any).
- vi.) Gram panchayat registers computerization.
- vii.) Maintaining information for organizing literacy classes.
- viii.) Managing information to assist in loan recovery.
- ix.) Generation of certificates for citizens.
- x.) System to report accidents immediately to higher-ups.
- xi.) Maintenance of information to ensure clean and green.
- xii.) Birth-death registration related information management.
- xiii.) Crops related information management.
- xiv.) Tax demands, receipts generation, revenue accounting.

Information Technology Department will attempt to:-

- Provide Government services to society at their door steps through the internet at the earliest.

- Make nation the Best in IT enabled Governance.
- Significantly raise the software exports of country.
- Take Computing in nation to a higher level.
- Improve the class of life of people through ICT.



Digital Panchayat in Maharashtra

Digital Panchayat in Maharashtra



Digital Panchayat in Uttarakhand

Digital Panchayat in Uttarakhand



Digital Panchayat in Bihar

Digital Panchayat in Bihar

### Hurdles

1. Politicised gram panchayat is a major hurdle for the development of villages where e-panchayat is implemented.
2. Minority people such as *dalits* etc also have to face the challenges of being in this community and all of this is due to illiteracy as they are

unaware of the government policies and its benefits.

So the less connectivity with a group of minority people is also a major hurdle.

In some hilly states such as Himachal Pradesh the typical and tough geography proves to be the hurdle in the successful implementation of the project i.e. e-panchayat.

3. Another major problem the government is facing in present is to create more employment opportunities for its citizens at least cost.
4. The main issue is how to ensure successful implementation of e-panchayat in all the panchayat, in minimum time with least amount of resources and overheads by the government.
5. Illiteracy
6. Electricity problem
7. Internet problem
8. Technology adaption
9. Awareness about government portal among Indians.

### Conclusion

The information and communication technology provide good governance principles. This not only involves the improvement of society with information but also making governance an interactive process facilitating transparency and accountability in the public domain, thus providing operational ease in accessing government services, among many others. E-panchayat aims to cover all information requirements of the village panchayat. E-panchayat is already operational (by national information centre) in many villages of India. A strong plan for implementation at the rational level is being taken up. This case study summarizes the main features of e-panchayat.

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