E-Governance: Helping in times of Covid-19 Lockdown

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Abstract - E-governance facilities have been helping public in general. Here we present the functioning of E-facilities in times of Covid 19 Lockdown, and how they are making lives of common man easier in the pandemic times.

E-facilities have always occupied an important part in our lives. During this lockdown period due to covid-19, e-facilities have proved to be all the more important alternatives of local facilities. As this lockdown has resulted in schools, offices, shops etc. shut all across the world, e-facilities are playing significant roles in providing people these services through online platforms. The District Administrations are using technology to implement India's strategy as a process- oriented approach to contain the spread of covid-19 pandemic in their jurisdiction. The use of Integrated Command and Control Centre, e-pass, artificial intelligence-enabled CCTV cameras and e-office are some of them. The district administrations are working on many fronts. First and foremost is to stop the spread of covid-19 by following the protocols given by the Government of India. This include proper contact tracing of positive cases, quarantine suspected people using Aarogya Setu application, and preparedness study of the covid-19 hospitals.

In education sector, e-Learning had emerged even before covid-19 and there was already high growth and adoption in education technology. Now that online learning has completely substituted the traditional teaching systems and offline classrooms, it has been observed that there is an increase in retention of information and it takes less time.

E-Learning platforms like e-PG Pathshala, Swayam, NPTEL provide books, notes and videos for school education as well as higher education. As the demand of online learning increased, platforms like BYJU'S, Vedantu etc. are offering free access to their services.

Students can learn new skills and even acquire degrees in professional online courses. Renowned universities are availing their popular online courses to the students across the globe for free. MOOC is an example of free online course that supports learning in a variety of different subjects. E-books are being provided by websites like PDF drive, Google books etc. Application softwares like Google Classroom, WhatsApp, Cisco Webex, Zoom, Google meet help in conducting online classes and virtual meetings. Media organisations such as BBC are also powering virtual learning.

E-Governance plays a major role in emergency situations. However, the technology has proved its strength as we have used it efficiently during the crisis. The use of tech has proved that emergency situations can be handled better and safeguard efficient workflow as well. Technology has made 'work from home' possible for people so that the lockdown may not stop them from doing their jobs as well as from earning a living. In IT sector, companies are conducting online meetings. People can also purchase online insurances. The home deliveries of groceries have become possible only due to e-facilities. In Govt. Sector the Video conferencing facility of NIC has been extensively used by district administration officials including Commissioner Division, Commissioner Municipal Corporation, Deputy Commissioner, Addl. DC, SDMs, City Magistrate, DRO, DDPO, Covid Core Group etc. Technical support has also been provided for conducting Desktop based VCs through different apps, including Vidyo app, at the residences of Officers.

E-commerce has given us facilities to order and buy essential goods and in green and orange zones, non-essential goods also using apps like Amazon, Flipkart etc. Today we can pay our water and electricity bills, telephone and internet bills using digital banking. Online banking provides services like online money transferring, recharging our phones etc.

At a time when the entire world is facing unprecedented challenges due to COVID-19 outbreak, the government agencies are on their toes to support the Central, state and district agencies to carry on rolling out necessary citizen services with the assistance of e-governance. In such times, the MeitY's technical arm, National Informatics Centre (NIC) is leveraging technology at its best to support the government-run organizations to carry out essential tasks during the lockdown. It is supporting the administration during this hour of crisis through its ICT solutions and infrastructural competence. Through its technology-enabled services and platforms, NIC has been successful in providing a sustainable environment to a great extent. Prime Minister is leading the way by widely using VC service to connect with the

administration at all levels and the peoples at large thereby observing the entire COVID-19 situation closely and promising them of all likely support by the government.

The government banks are depositing Rs.500 in accounts of female PMJDY account holders under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana so that the females who depend on daily wages and are now facing problems in running their homes may get some help from it. Govt. of Haryana has taken a step to provide financial assistance in current situation of Covid-19 to unorganized workers such as street vendors, rickshaw puller, domestic helper, and street vendors etc. who are not registered with Government to get any benefit. . Citizen can visit http://poorpreg.haryana.gov.in or call helpline 1100 to register himself/herself. After due diligence of information, eligible would be provided Rs. 1000 per week till lock down. In the background, details are being cross checked from various other databases to find out if applicant is not getting any benefit under any other financial scheme. Rickshaw Puller, Labour in Restraunt/Dhabas and Auto Rickshaw with valid registration no. were auto included in eligible list. Govt. of Haryana is various Portal like TRACKPDS (A Unified Platform to capture the Food grains requests during Lockdown). TrackPDS is a unified platform for capturing the requests for Food by the needy residents of Haryana State during the Lockdown period. This platform is integrated with State Help lines, District Headquarters and Unorganized Labour Portal and provides facility to manage the beneficiaries. This portal is also seamlessly integrated with Public Distribution System for checking whether beneficiary is already has access to free food grains through PDS System or not and Distress Ration Token Portal for issuance of Distress Ration Token to the beneficiaries which needs Food grains. Further, The TrackPDS is integrated through Web APIs with the Public Distribution System (PDS), Relief Camps, Jan Sahayak Mobile App, Help Me Mobile App, Unorganised Labour Portal, Distress Ration Token Portal (DRT) portals

Government websites like e-NAM (National agricultural market) and other state grain market portals are helping farmers to sell their crops efficiently during lockdown period. Farmers can also detect the diseases of their crops by sending the photo of the affected plant and can get the required pesticides and insecticides by consulting the agricultural experts on these portals. Using e-facilities we can also seek medical help. Most of the hospitals have closed their OPDs and majority of medical issues are being solved by online consultation for minor illnesses.

Aarogya Setu app helps people to check whether they are in safe zone or not. On such

apps patient can give their symptoms and get e-prescriptions and order online medicines also. Aarogya Setu App access with the WebVPN accounts got created by NIC for required officers so that the Aarogya Setu App usage, Analytics and various other Dashboards support has been provided. The access to the Deputy Commissioners has been provided along with the raw data of the persons on Unwell, Bluetooth Contacts, Quarantine (travel), Healthy & Proximity, Quarantine due to Proximity and test, Unwell & Travel etc. has been provided to DC so that the appropriate actions could be taken and spread of COVID-19 could be contained.

In this worrying lockdown situation, there has been an increase in demand for support from mental professionals too. Many psychiatrists are offering virtual sessions and telephonic support which is extremely important. The Parliament meetings and Prime Minister Office meetings are being conducted online. Sports activities are being telecasted live without any audience in the stadiums. This shows that e-facilities are helping us in staying entertained. People can also get live darshan of prominent temples, Gurudwaras and other places of worship. Last but not the least, in this lockdown as we all are isolated in our homes, e-facilities are helping us to remain in contact with our friends and relatives via social media.

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