



## E-GOVERNANCE INITIATIVES IN GUJARAT: A CASE STUDY OF CITIZEN-CENTRIC SERVICES AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

**Harshalee N Jethva** Research Scholer – Saurashtra University, Gujarat INDIA

### ABSTRACT

This research paper explores the evaluation and impact of e-governance initiatives in Gujarat, focusing specifically on citizen-centric services and the underlying policy framework that supports them. Gujarat has emerged as one of the leading states in India in leveraging digital technologies to enhance public service delivery, transparency, and administrative efficiency. The paper examines key initiatives such as e-Gram Vishwa gram, digital Gujarat portal, SWAGAT, GSWAN, OJAS, e-Dhara Kendra, Gujarat Ration card management system. The study analyses how these initiatives have transformed citizen-government interactions by improving accessibility, reducing bureaucratic delays, and fostering participatory governance. Furthermore, it evaluates the legal, institutional and infrastructural frameworks that enable the effective implementation of e-governance in the state.

**KEYWORDS :** E-Governance, Gujarat, ICT, citizen-centric Services, Public Service Delivery, Policy Framework.

### INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of information and communication technology (ICT) has transformed the way governments interact with citizens, businesses, and other stakeholders. E-Governance, as a concept and practice, refers to the use of digital tools and platforms to enhance the efficiency, transparency, and accessibility of government services. In India, where administrative complexities and a large population often hinder service delivery, e-governance has emerged as a powerful mechanism to bridge the gap between the state and its citizens.

Gujarat has been at the forefront of implementing innovative e-governance initiatives aimed at delivering timely and efficient services to its people. Gujarat is an aspiring leader with e-readiness initiatives with the IT policy 2006-2011<sup>(1)</sup> The state has developed a digital infrastructure and policy framework to support citizen-centric services across the various sectors such as health, education, land records, grievance redressal and rural development. This research paper aims to analyse the e-governance landscape of Gujarat through a case study approach, with a particular focus on citizen-centric services and the enabling policy framework. The study explores how these initiatives have improved service delivery, strengthened institutional accountability, and empowered citizens.

### E-Governance Initiatives; Citizen Centric Services and Policy Framework:

E-governance in India, and specifically in Gujarat, has evolved as a powerful tool for enhancing the accessibility, efficiency and transparency of public services. A key feature of Gujarat's digital transformation has been its focus on citizen-centric services those that prioritize the needs, convenience, and empowerment of the people. These services are designed to simplify government procedures, reduce human interface, and promote timely and equitable service delivery.

### E-Governance Initiatives in Gujarat

Gujarat has been positioning at L2 stage in information communication technologies (ICTS) that are categorised based on environment, readiness and usage of applications<sup>(2)</sup> Here are some notable E-Governance projects in the state.

#### 1. E-Dhara Kendra

e-Dhara Kendra is digitization of land records to provide accurate and transparent access to land ownership details. Its services like issuance of computerized record of rights to farmers, facilitating easy access to land records and reducing disputes etc. implementation of e-Dhara Kendra is established at the taluka level across Gujarat, these centres have modernized land administration and enabled farmers to manage their land resources more effectively. Since January 2006, ROR (Record of rights) at village has been operational in

2279 villages of 166. Talukas and facility have been expanding with the availability of broadband under EGVG project<sup>(3)</sup>

#### 2. Digital Gujarat Portal

This unified platform offers a wide range of services such as applications for certificates, scholarships, utility bill payments, and grievance redressal. It provides a single-window access to more than 190 online services across multiple departments. The digital Gujarat portal provides government services through both online and physical assistance counters in district, taluka, and e-gram centres<sup>(4)</sup>

#### 3. Gujarat State Wide Area Network (GSWAN)

GSWAN main purpose is establishment of a dedicated closed user group network to provide high speed connectivity for government functioning. Its services like facilitates electronics transactions and communication between state headquarters and block headquarters, enhancing efficiency in government operations. GSWAN is one of the cores infract components under the national E-Governance plan providing a secure and high-speed network for government operations. GSWAN has leveraged ICT to provide a robust communication backbone and effective support for E-Governance for state government other government bodies. It offers a wide range of ICT services. Over 340+ websites of various government department and more than 22000+ email ids created for government officers.<sup>(5)</sup>

#### 4. Online Job Application System (OJAS)

This project is simplifying the recruitment process for government jobs. It allows candidates to apply for government positions online, access examination schedules, and receive updates ensuring a transparent recruitment process. OJAS managed by the Gujarat government to facilitate easy access to employment opportunities for citizens. Government of Gujarat has directive all major departments like GPSC, GSSSB, GPSSB, GSRTC etc to set off the recruitment process of class-1, 11 and 111 cadre through OJAS only<sup>(6)</sup>

#### 5. Gujarat Ration Card Management System

This project main purpose is digitization of ration cards to ensure efficient distribution of subsidized food grains. This project enables online application, modification, and status tracking of ration cards, promoting transparency in the public distribution system. Its implementation is overseen by the food, civil supplies and consumer affairs department of Gujarat.

#### 6. E-Gram Vishwa Gram Project

This project main purpose is bridging the digital divide by providing E-Governance services at the village level. It services offers various online services, including birth and death certificates, land records and utility bill payments, through village panchayats. E-gram Vishwa gram project is empowering rural citizens by providing access to digital services there by enhancing transparency and efficiency in rural governance.

Policy and Institutional Framework Supporting E-Governance  
The policy framework emphasizes interoperability, scalability, and inclusivity, ensuring that e-governance benefits are extended to marginalized and rural populations. Public-private partnerships, citizen feedback mechanisms, and legal frameworks under the information technology act 2000 also play a vital role in strengthening the eco system.

Some policy framework defined in details following under that below regarding E-governance initiatives.

### 1. Gujarat Informatics Limited

The nodal agency responsible for implementing E-governance initiatives across the state. GIL was established as the nodal agency for IT development in the state in February 1999, by the Government of Gujarat. It was stated with clear objective to promote IT and accelerate the process of E-governance in the Gujarat state.<sup>(7)</sup>

### 2. Department of Science and Technology (DST)

This policy plays a central role in policy formulation and implementation oversight. It can be offers policy documents, updates on E-governance programs, and institutional roles in digital governance.

### 3. Gujarat IT Policy

This policy focuses on building ICT infrastructure, capacity building, digital literacy, and promoting e-governance as a key development strategy. IT policy 2022-27 main vision to transform the IT landscape of Gujarat by becoming one of the leading states in terms of world-class infrastructure, availability of high skilled resources and innovation in emerging technologies<sup>(8)</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The E-governance initiatives in Gujarat reflect a well structured and citizen-focused approach that has significantly improved the efficiency, transparency, and accessibility of public services. The state has successfully leveraged technology to bridge the gap between government and citizens. The use of ICT tools has not only reduced bureaucratic red tape but also fostered accountability and faster service delivery. Gujarat E-governance model can serve as a replicable blueprint for other states, provided it continues to evolve with emerging technologies and inclusive strategies that prioritize the needs of all citizens.

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