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# E-Governance Initiative and the Concept of Digital Bangladesh: A Critical Analysis

**Sabina Yeasmin & Shamima yasmin**

**Abstract:**

Government functions are the most profound areas where the new information and communication technologies (ICT) can play a pivotal role in fostering and ameliorating citizen centric services. This can make a significant contribution to the achievement of the socio-economic livelihood of the people. E-Governance, being a strategic outcome, relates to spread digital dividends across different social segments especially in any developing country. In Bangladesh, newer ICT tools remained beyond the access of most of its citizens. As part of the national delivery strategy, the Government has decided with the vision of creating a 'Digital Bangladesh' by 2021. The very idea started as part of the election manifesto of the ruling party in the last national election held in 2008. This paper attempts to identify the issues and challenges, which Bangladesh is currently facing with regard to the implementation of e-Governance. E-Governance is recognized as a comprehensive system of specific change and strategic tools that support and simplify governance to improve specific policies such as information, citizen participation, efficiency, rapid service delivery, reducing fraud, forwarding, and responding to changes in the Outdoor area. However, the main focus of the paper is to critically analyze various factors to identify success and failures in implementing such programme in Bangladesh.

**Keywords**: ICT, E-Governance, Digital Bangladesh, Livelihood, Digital dividends

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## 1.0    Introduction:

Information and communication technology (ICT) had been recognized by the world leaders as a key development enabler in World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva in 2003 and in Tunis in 2005 (Tunis Commitment). In the Poverty Reduction Strategy of the country called National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction (NSAPR) 2009, ICT has also been similarly identified and given due importance. Government functions are the most profound areas where the new ICT can play a pivotal role in fostering and ameliorating citizen-centric services. This can make a significant contribution to the achievement of the socioeconomic livelihood of the people. Today ICT drives the technological and economic advancement of the developed as well as emerging economies. In the era of globalization, ICT is a cross-cutting issue as well as an essential tool for economic development. It can play an important role in creating employment, raising work skills, and production. It can contain corruption and attain social development.  ICT can play a special role in the following tasks—

 (a) Communication with citizens, business and non-governmental organizations or other government departments; (b) faster and more efficient delivery of public services; (c) improvement of internal efficiency; Increasing, d) Decrease cost /revenue (e) restructuring of administrative processes (f) quality of services and Improving accuracy. The current government's 'Digital Bangladesh' by 2021 vision proposes to mainstream ICT as a pro-poor tool to eradicate poverty, establish good governance, ensure social equity through quality education, healthcare and law enforcement for all, and prepare the people for climate change.

## 2.0    Objective:

This paper has been aimed to describe the discourse of e-Governance in the context of developing countries in general and Bangladesh in particular. This has attempted to identify the issues and challenges, which Bangladesh is currently facing with regards to implementation of e-Governance. However, the main focus of the paper is to critically analyze various factors to identify success and failures during implementation. Besides The purpose of the analysis is to: a). Introduce steps to implement e-governance or create an environment. b) .Configures pre-and post-organization services in relation to e-governance. c) Determine the steps to reach the goal and measure its acceptability. d). Identify the regulatory authority or central committee that will abide by the general rules of infrastructure as a whole. e). Determine the benefits that the general public expects or expects in the future. f). Identify major obstacles and ways to solve problems. g). Identify external and internal governmental barriers clearly. E-governance can make using life easier to provide the right support using ingenuity, speed and effective use of ICT. E-management will provide information and services from the central location in the shortest possible time .There should have real statistics of e-governance of the country to identify the lackand progress. So it is much more necessary to study e-governance in respect of Bangladesh.

## 3.0    Methodology:

Through review of literature, it becomes evident to have proper understanding of e-Governance and problems associated with the process. Accordingly, the present study is an exploratory study using both qualitative data that are collected from secondary sources.

## 4.0 Summary of Results:

The challenges and complexities of a country gradually increased in the new millennium for globalization i.e. increased competition. Reforms and restructuring in the government is becoming evident for cutting cost, increasing efficiency, transparency and accountability, managing process, building strategic connections and empowering citizen and private sector. In the millennium development goals (MDGs), most of the countries adopting e-Governance need to serve the citizen

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best like customer relationship management in business. Bangladesh has potentially stepped into building information society and going for introducing e-Governance which offers an opportunity for governments to get closer to the citizen and to build a partnership with diverse communities of interest, practice, expertise, conviction, and inter-dependence. Despite all of the confusion and frustration associated with ICT initiatives in Bangladesh, e-Governance is not a history here, now it is a fact in the lives of its citizens through the progress is slow and there is little confusion about the means to achieve this. Government agencies can use ICTs for the following reasons: (1) quality of services and Improving accuracy. (2) Restructuring of administrative processes (3) improvement of internal efficiency, Decrease cost. (4) Faster and more efficient delivery of public services; (5) Communication with citizens, business and non-governmental organizations, other government departments.

## 5.0  Discussion:
### 5.1  Trends in Governance Discourse
Management is viewed as the sum of three major components of the process, content, and delivery: the process, in which governments are elected, managed, monitored, and reinstated; the ability of governments to effectively manage resources and develop, implement, and implement sound policies and policies; and the level of citizen participation in state affairs (Aminuzzaman, 2011). Governments, like corporations, have two important functions. First, in the short term it should reduce the cost of producing raw materials, and secondly, in the long run, it should also improve shareholder wealth by increasing its market value. In the case of government, both stakeholders and consumers are equal, people. And the market also makes up almost the same group of people. In the context, it can be said that the government must deliver its services at the least possible cost and, in the long run, it must gain people's confidence by providing the services that people want. Morshed (2005) finds that a well-designed and well-implemented e-Governance system has the potential to help the government achieve both of these processes. According to Aminuzzaman (2011), strong findings indicate that an average increase in the deviation of selected governance indicators results in a 0.5 to 2 percent increase in per capita income; a four to fourfold decrease in infant mortality; with a 15 to 25 percent increase in tuition. Openness and transparency are fundamental elements of any democratic government. Government agencies are not expected to hide under the warehouses. People want to know more about the functions of their government that they must represent in running the state. Fast and secure communication In years of information and communication technology (ICT) e-Rule can be used to make life easier by providing appropriate support using intelligence, speed, and effective use of ICT.

### 5.2  E-Governance: An Overview
E-Governance concept is adopted by most of the developed countries for efficient and good governance. It may also get the supreme priority for a developing country to enhance transparency, alleviate poverty, empowering citizens and create business opportunities. The government is a facilitator in e-Governance which was an actor for some century of practice. The majority's understanding of e-Governance is the electronic delivery of government services to the people whereas the potential for e-Governance is beyond the electronic delivery of government services to the people. Okot-Uma (2001) has defined e-Governance as the processes and structures pertinent to the electronic delivery of government services to the public. Drucker (2001) defined e-Governance as the use of emerging ICT to facilitate the processes of government and public administration. UNESCO describes e-Governance as the public sector's use of ICT with the aim of improving information and service delivery, encouraging citizens' participation in the decision-making process and making government more accountable, transparent and effective. People's participation in

decision-making and at the implementation stage is vital for any development project to be successful.

E-Governance is composed of three major components: Government-to-Citizen (G2C) involves interaction of individual citizens with the government; Government-to-Business (G2B) involves interaction of business entities with the government; and Government-to-Government (G2G) involves interaction among government officials, whether within a government office or within government offices. Three entities, government, citizen and business (NGO, civil society) participation are very crucial factor for economic development of a country. Moreover, in a post colonial government, this interaction and participation are very seldom observed. As a result a real gain from political commitment, benefits from public services and efforts for moving the wheel of development become most difficult. Information and Technology has not only been used to reorganize government processes involved in the operation of government bodies but also to increase the flow of information and services within and between different organizations. This type of communication exists only in the public sphere and can be both means between different government entities and between different functional areas of the organization, or that is, between national, provincial, and local organizations and between different levels within the organization. The ultimate goal is to maximize efficiency, effectiveness, and impact. The ultimate objective of e-Governance is to establish good governance. The attributes of good governance can be identified as honesty, efficiency, effectiveness (in terms of time, space and money), fair play, reliability, participatory democracy, accountability, accessibility, transparency, equity, and vision in decision making. All these can be achieved through the proper implementation of e-Governance using the state of the art technologies. In this paper, the operational definition of e-Governance in its real sense is the use of ICT to support good governance. IT Training: As a person, we don't like to go to a technological change or a new place especially where he or she hasn't been. To be friendly and resilient we need to be disciplined and step by step. Provide appropriate courses for officers /staff members who work on computers through various programs.

### 5.3 Governance: Bangladesh Perspective

Bangladesh is a small country with a present population of nearly 164.69 million (BBS, 2018). As an independent nation, the country began its journey in 1971 as a socialist economy that placed most major industries under government ownership and control. But with the passage of time and political change in power, the country was opened up gradually initially following the mixed economic trend and finally neo-liberal capitalist economic system. Now Bangladesh is a country of paradoxes, which is a homogenous nation with a rich culture, yet it remains one of the underdeveloped nations in the world. From1990s onward, Bangladesh has considerably improved its economic performance and human development indicators though she is facing a large number of challenges that are typical of developing countries. The country has recorded noticeable success in health and family planning, non-formal education, micro-credit, women empowerment, agricultural growth, and macro-economic stability and management. Despite a turbulent international economic environment, the Bangladesh economy showed some signs of stabilization and growth. However, all such achievements and track records of success have faded because of 'poor governance' in the broader politico-administrative system and processes. The country is perceived as a poorly governed country and falls in the bottom third in global governance indices. Most National Survey (BRAC University, TIB, Dhaka University) supplement such observation. For consecutively four terms Bangladesh has been listed as the most corrupt country in the world by Transparency International (TI). Ahluwalia and Mahmud (2004) find a growing concern regarding how far the economic growth momentum can withstand a 'weakening' of the institutions of political governance.

As per a study of Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (2004), Bangladesh is deeply submerged in corruption and maladministration because the government does not have to account for its activities to the people. The country faces a variety of governance challenges, including corruption, public administrative malaise, and lack of adequate transparency and accountability in the exercise of public decision-making powers and the delivery of public services. These practices are not only hindered the progress of economic development but also fallen the country in a vicious circle of poverty. It has a multiplier effect in the internal investment, entrepreneurship, and safety and security of normal citizen life. Ahmed (2002) finds widespread poverty in Bangladesh has been a driver to corruption in both public and private sectors as individuals seek bribes in order to maintain their livelihoods. Even with such situation, some of the successful e-Governance initiatives of Bangladesh include automation of internal processes, electronic birth registration system, government forms online, automated cheque processing system of Bangladesh Bank; admission process in different public universities and e-ticketing of Bangladesh Railway and banking facilities with the help of the mobile phone, etc. The Government has also approved a National ICT Policy 2009 on 1st April, 2009.  The use of e-governance can make public administration faster and more efficient, provide better services, and respond to needs for clarity and independence.  E-governance facilitates economic growth and promotes the inclusion of the disabled and unprotected parts of society. E-governance can provide benefits in the form of new employment, better health, better education, knowledge sharing, skills development, and capacity building for sustainable development.  E-governance services eliminate intermediaries and save time and money. Without such online activities, our cities and towns would have turned out to be difficult places to live.

## 5.4    Challenges of e-Governance in Bangladesh

In the context of Bangladesh, e-Governance can bring most direct gain to the country by enhancing the transparency, accountability, and efficiency of the government; making greater decentralization of governance; making ICT relevant to the masses; and developing the private sector. However, there are many challenges which include technological aspects, lack of necessary regulatory/legal framework, inadequate human resource capacity, lack of preparedness of local software companies due to obvious reason, insufficient supply of electricity across the nation, high-cost but low-reliability of internet access, lack of capital, and at last but not the least few social issues such as lack of literacy, 'Brain Drain' of ICT skilled human resources from the country, etc. Internet services require significant improvement in terms of speed. Starting from e-commerce, the Internet is used for many applications and the high speed of Internet services is critical to e-mail operations leading to rapid economic growth. Many countries of the world are now focusing more on the development of internet speed. The average internet speed of users is over 10 Mbps in many countries such as South Korea, Hong Kong, Japan, and Singapore, etc. A notable trend in ICT is that many devices and services have new and innovative technologies that are quickly replaced by older ones. New technologies soon include 3D printing, thumbs up, increased smartphone storage, increased use of IPv6, and consumer broadband services, cloud computing, real-time transaction transactions, wearable devices, cybersecurity, smart cities, Internet of Things (IoT), etc. New trends, strategies, devices, and systems will increasingly incorporate online activities that affect our lifestyle.

## 5.5    Contesting Idea about e-Governance: Need for a National Strategy

The nation needs to be 'adequately prepared' before firing the goals of e-Governance. A national e-strategy is required to address the fundamentals elements of e-Governance readiness such as e-Governance awareness among public servants including the adoption of new public management (NPM), facilitate public-private partnership model to work, enhance access to ICT tools for citizens, creation of local content, long term planning, etc.  Bangladesh has just started at the first level of e-governance. In the first phase, the availability of personal computers, other IT

infrastructure, and software system in all functions constitutes a large number of government-installed government offices Many smart machines and processes will be needed for decision making in management, and they will affect the way we live and the work of decision-makers in the public service. All types of tasks, including business and management, will be digitized. We in Bangladesh will be forced to use and adapt new technologies and will need expertise in new technologies such as cloud computing, 3D printing, Big Data, gaming, photography, and more.

**5.6 The Concept of 'Digital Bangladesh': The Beginning of Citizen Centric e-Governance?**
Bangladesh has already defined its roadmap and priorities to move ahead of the implementation of e-Governance. As a part of national development strategy the very idea with the vision of creating a 'Digital Bangladesh', by 2021 on the golden jubilee of the independence of the country, started as part of the election manifesto titled 'Vision 2021 Bangladesh: A New Horizon' of Bangladesh Awami League (AL) for the 9th Parliamentary elections held in 2008. The idea captured the imagination of the whole nation even without understanding the depth or scope of the issue by the mass people. It generated enormous enthusiasm among the people and they started to think of it as a magic word that will transform the country into a developed country.

What is 'Digital Bangladesh'? It is an all-encompassing idea, which is not just e-Commerce, e-Education, or e-Banking or e-Governance. However, among all the components e-Governance is the most important for the initiative of 'Digital Bangladesh'. It will entail a digitalized government, ICT-enabled services, nationwide internet connectivity, a high-tech park for businesses, and ICT-trained human resources. This unprecedented political initiative provides an opportunity to use ICT tools for further development, strengthen poverty reduction and improve citizen's quality of life. A country that goes digital means it will be an e-state means all its activities of governance, commerce, education, agriculture etc., will be powered by computer and internet (Rahman, 2009).

**5.7   Way Forward**
In order to make the 'Digital Bangladesh' idea truly focused there is an urgent need of making e-Governance a national priority and pushing for a comprehensive regulatory framework for e-Governance. At the same time it is essential to enhance and retain human capacity development, knowledge creation, and sharing. Huge investment in public ICT literacy including improve the connectivity, increase access and lower costs are also important. The government should take all possible steps to foster enterprise and entrepreneurship for sustainable economic development; and encourage local software companies to prepare themselves. There is an immediate requirement to invest in a reliable supply of electricity. At the same time deregulation of the internet service providers (ISP) and telephony service providers including voice over internet protocol (VoIP) are also important. The nation should take all possible steps to promote ICT for healthcare and to establish and support dedicated initiatives for ICT inclusion.

At present, the ICT sector falls under four separate ministries, namely post and telecommunication, information, science and technology, and ICT and technology. For obvious reasons, there is a need for bringing the ICT sector under a single umbrella to ease policy formulation and realize the potential. A holistic approach needs to be taken by all the stakeholders to reach the ICT facilities to the doorstep of the common people. In the first phase, this information will be made available in relation to simple governance features such as forms, rules, procedures, procedures, etc. Over time information was added including reports (including performance reports), public information, decision-making processes, etc. As for services, there will be an immediate impact in terms of savings in time, effort and money, coming from the availability of the Internet and one of the community services that are automatically supported by back-end processes. The evolving challenges of e-Government go far beyond technology, and skills, new approaches to leadership, public-private transformation. Digital Bangladesh has created renewed interest in Government and

commercial organizations in the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in management and service delivery. In a general sense, Digital Bangladesh is understood as a governance. Digitization helps to maximize the efficiency and the product provided support infrastructure construction works well. This is a tool that will help speed up economic development. The purpose of this paper is to identify and analyze the main ones the challenges, opportunities, and challenges that e-Government efforts have developed countries how this could finally do Digital Bangladesh

### 6.0 Conclusion:

Broad-level digitization helps Bangladesh to become a middle-income country. Otherwise possible. However, the government needs to define its vision for proper management, Formulate mission and goals and strategies and prepare necessary action plans Financial and human resources so that plans can be implemented. It is expected to be by 2021 Bangladesh has a nationwide ICT network that works to ensure high speed**.** The flow of information between decision-centers that is transmitted from the instruction**.** Electronically to the activity centers to perform the intended actions. The goal is to accelerate Monitor performance, execute at a national decision-making process, and decisions Government operatives at all levels from the National Parliament. To ministries, administrative offices at districts, sub-districts, and schools at the village level; this is true that available resources for e-Governance in Bangladesh are inadequate. The low fixed telephone density is one of the major barriers to digital communications (which paves the way to Internet communication). However, the rapid growth of the mobile telephonic network presumably overcomes this barrier. For establishing e-Governance in Bangladesh, ICT infrastructure can be built step by step even at the village level, if we have a Road Map or master plan for e-Governance using our limited resources. The decentralization of a distributed database is one of the essential features of the e-Governance. A decentralized or localized database ensures autonomy as well as reduces traffic loads in network communication. Keeping this in mind, we need to design e-Governance for Bangladesh.The challenges and complexities of a country gradually increased in the new millennium for globalization i.e. increased competition. Reforms and restructuring in the government is becoming evident for cutting cost, increasing efficiency, transparency and accountability, managing process, building strategic connections and empowering citizen and private sector. The philosophy of "Digital Bangladesh" consists of ensuring democracy, and rights, transparency, accountability, fairness and ensuring the delivery of government services to each department through the use of state-of-the-art technology to improve the daily life of the general public. Government "Digital Bangladesh" encompasses all categories of people and does not discriminate on the basis of technology. Therefore, the government has emphasized the four elements of "Digital Bangladesh Vision" namely human resource development, human resources, social services, and the use of information technology in business. In the MDGs, most of the countries adopting e-Governance to serve the citizen best like customer relationship management in business. Bangladesh has potentially stepped into building information society and going for introducing e-Governance which offers an opportunity for governments to get closer to the citizen and to build a partnership with diverse communities of interest, practice, expertise, conviction, and inter-dependence. Despite all of the confusion and frustration associated with ICT initiatives in Bangladesh, e-Governance is not a history here, now it is a fact in the lives of its citizens through the progress is slow and there is little confusion about the means to achieve this. However, there is no doubt about the goal of attaining e-Governance in the mind of the mass people. In order to facilitate the growth of the ICT sector, and, hence, the socioeconomic development of Bangladesh; a coordinated effort by political leaders, bureaucrats, and private entrepreneurs is critical. It is the expectation of the mass people that the government will take all possible steps to create a SMART

(simple, measurable, accountable, responsive, and transparent) 'Digital Bangladesh' and establish a knowledge-based society within 50 years of the country's independence in 2021.

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