# E-Governance: Concept, Evolution, Models, and Contemporary Relevance

## Authoritative Definitions and Conceptual Understanding of E-Governance

- Definitions by International Organizations and Key Perspectives
  - World Bank (1999) defines e-Government as the use of information technologies by government agencies to transform relationships with citizens, businesses, and other government arms.
  - United Nations (2002) describes e-Governance as the application of ICT to deliver government services, exchange information, communicate transactions, and integrate systems.
  - ARC-II (2008) emphasizes that e-Governance is not mere computerisation of records but a paradigm shift towards smart governance focused on citizen-centric, transparent, and participatory administration.
  - Exam hook: E-Governance should be understood as a citizen-centric, transparent, and participatory form of administration rather than just computerisation.
- Distinction Between E-Governance and Computerisation
  - E-Governance involves transforming governance processes to be more inclusive and accountable using ICT.
  - Computerisation is limited to digitising records and data without changing governance dynamics.
  - The shift to e-Governance implies empowering citizens and improving institutional accountability.
- Dimensions Highlighting the Nature of E-Governance
  - Transparency: Example of e-tendering in Madhya Pradesh reducing corruption.
  - Efficiency: Services like IRCTC and Aadhaar-enabled platforms improving service delivery.
  - Participation: Platforms such as MyGov enabling citizen feedback and engagement.
  - Accountability: Online grievance redressal mechanisms like CPGRAMS ensuring government responsiveness.

## Evolution of E-Governance in India

- Early Foundations: 1970s to 1980s
  - Formation of National Informatics Centre (NIC) to spearhead computerisation in government offices.
  - Initial efforts focused on digitising government records and office automation.
- Expansion and Network Development: 1990s
  - Establishment of National Informatics Network (NICNET) to connect government departments.
  - Computerisation extended to district-level administration to enhance local governance.
- National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) in 2006
  - Launch of NeGP with 27 Mission Mode Projects targeting key government services.
  - Focus on integrated service delivery and citizen-centric applications.
- Digital India Initiative from 2015 Onwards
  - Emphasis on "Power to Empower" through digital infrastructure, digital literacy, and digital services.
  - Expansion of broadband connectivity and mobile governance platforms.
- Recent Developments: 2020 to 2025
  - Integration of emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and blockchain in governance.
  - Launch of platforms like CoWIN for vaccination management, UMANG for unified mobile access, and MyGov for citizen engagement.

## Models of E-Governance and Their Applications

- Government to Citizen (G2C)
  - Focus on delivering services directly to citizens through digital platforms.
  - India examples: Passport Seva Kendra for passport services, UMANG app for multiple government services.
  - Global example: Estonia's e-Residency program enabling all citizen services online.
- Government to Business (G2B)
  - Facilitates interactions between government and businesses for compliance and trade facilitation.
  - India examples: GSTN portal for Goods and Services Tax, MCA21 for corporate compliance.
  - Global example: Singapore's TradeNet providing a single-window clearance system for trade.
- Government to Government (G2G)
  - Enhances inter-departmental communication and data sharing within government entities.
  - India example: Crime and Criminal Tracking Network System (CCTNS) for police data integration.
  - Global example: UK's GOV.UK Verify platform unifying departmental services.
- Government to Employee (G2E)
  - Focuses on internal government employee services such as performance appraisal and training.
  - India examples: SPARROW for online performance appraisal, iGOT Karmayogi for capacity building.
  - Global example: Canada's GCpedia intranet for knowledge sharing among government employees.

## Legal Framework, Recommendations, and Current Affairs in E-Governance

- Judicial Backing and Case Laws
  - PUCL v. Union of India (2003) established citizens' right to information, supporting digital information sharing initiatives.
  - Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017) recognized privacy as a fundamental right, influencing Aadhaar implementation and the Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDP).
- ARC-II Recommendations for Promoting E-Governance (2008)
  - Use ICT primarily for service delivery rather than just data collection.
  - Move from departmental silos to integrated service delivery models.
  - Encourage public-private partnerships to build robust IT infrastructure.
  - Develop standards and interoperability frameworks to ensure seamless service integration.
- Recent Policy and Technological Developments (2024–25)
  - Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 balancing privacy concerns with digital governance needs.
  - National AI Mission 2024 promoting AI integration in governance processes.
  - One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) enabling portability of ration cards through digital platforms.
  - BharatNet Phase-III (2025) aiming to strengthen rural internet connectivity.
  - Global parallels: EU AI Act (2024) and UK Digital Strategy (2025) shaping international e-Governance trends.

## Illustrative Examples and UPSC Relevance

- Notable Indian Examples
  - CoWIN app recognized globally as a benchmark for digital vaccination management.
  - DigiLocker with over 200 million users facilitating paperless governance and secure document storage.
- International Examples
  - South Korea noted for the world's fastest adoption of e-Government indices.
  - Denmark ranked #1 in the UN e-Government Survey 2022 for excellence in digital governance.
- UPSC Previous Year Questions (PYQs) Related to E-Governance
  - 2015: Role of e-Governance in promoting good governance.
  - 2018: Use of ICT in making governance more participative and inclusive.
  - 2020: E-Governance as an instrument of good governance.

## Conclusion: The Essence of E-Governance

- Core Message
  - E-Governance transcends mere computerisation; it is about empowering citizens and ensuring accountable institutions.
  - As per the 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission, ICT should serve as the nerve centre of citizen-centric governance, bridging the gap between the state and society.