

E-GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRATIC TRANSPARENCY IN MAHARASHTRA

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
Article History: Received: 20th February 2026 Accepted: 01st March 2026 Published: 07th March 2026 Keywords: e-service books, e- governance, Citizen service platforms	This research explains how e- governance helps to make government work more transparent, honest, and citizen-friendly in Maharashtra. It studies how e-governance reduces delays, controls corruption, and improves the way government decisions are taken. The research looks at tools such as e-administration, file tracking systems in offices, e-tendering, e-service books of government employees, and complete digital governance systems, which make government work faster and clearer. Citizen service platforms like 'Aaple Sarkar', MahaDBT, SETU centers, Right to Public Services online portals, MahaOnline, and Digital Maharashtra, along with MyGov, DigiLocker, UMANG, and Aadhaar, help people apply for services easily and track their applications. The study also focuses on district (Smart District), taluka (e-Gram), and village (e-Panchayat) level programs, showing how digital services reach local people. Facilities such as online complaint systems, benefit transfer, service tracking, Media Monitoring Centres, PRAGATI, and PMG DISHA help improve accountability, encourage public participation, and build trust between citizens and the government.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In a democracy, good governance needs honesty, openness, and public trust. In Maharashtra, many people faced slow government work, too much paperwork, corruption, and lack of clear information in gov offices. This reduced people's trust in the government. Today, citizens want fast services and clear decisions. Because of this, e-governance has become very important for democracy.

E-governance works through Government to Citizen (G2C), Government to Government (G2G), Government to Business (G2B), and Government to Employee (G2E) systems. This research studies whether these digital systems can make government work better and reduce corruption in Maharashtra. The aim of the study is to understand how e-governance improves transparency, accountability, and citizen participation. This research also asks whether digital governance really makes government work open and citizen-friendly. The hypothesis is that e-governance improves democratic transparency and increases trust between citizens and the government in Maharashtra.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Many studies show that e-governance helps make government work more transparent, honest, and citizen-friendly. The World Bank highlights that Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) improves service delivery and reduces corruption. The UNDP emphasizes that digital governance increases citizen participation, inclusion, and trust. The 27th National Conference on e-Governance focused on secure and sustainable e-service delivery and the growing role of AI in governance. At the national level, programs like the Digital India Mission provide digital infrastructure and services. UMANG and MyGov improve citizen participation, DigiLocker secures important documents, MyScheme helps people apply for government schemes, MeriPehchaan allows single login access to multiple portals, and BharatNet provides high-speed internet to rural areas. These programs improve transparency, accountability, and citizen-centric governance.

In Maharashtra, digital governance works at district, taluka, and village levels. Tools for grievance redressal, benefit distribution, and performance monitoring, along with programs like SETU, PRAGATI, and PMG DISHA, make government work faster, open, and accountable. G2C, G2G, G2B, and G2E systems connect citizens, businesses, employees, and government offices, helping build trust. Theories like Good Governance, Digital Governance, and New Public Administration explain how technology strengthens transparency, participation, and efficiency. However, earlier studies mainly focus on cities or single programs and do not fully examine transparency at all levels or how digital systems and AI affect citizen trust. This research aims to fill these gaps.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This study is descriptive and analytical, focusing on how e-governance promotes democratic transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in Maharashtra. The research is based entirely on secondary data from books, journals, government reports, official websites, and research papers.

The study examines trends in e-governance adoption, the outcomes such as faster service delivery, open decision-making, and increased citizen trust, and the challenges like technical issues, digital gaps, and limited awareness in Maharashtra. Using secondary data allows the researcher to

analyze how digital governance initiatives at district, taluka, and village levels contribute to transparent, accountable, and citizen-friendly governance.

ANALYSIS:

A) Achievements of e governance in democratic transparency:

Maharashtra's e-governance initiatives have significantly enhanced democratic transparency across both urban and rural areas of the state. Platforms such as Aaple Sarkar and SETU have enabled citizens to apply for government certificates, track applications, and lodge complaints online, resulting in an estimated 60–70% reduction in service delivery time and nearly 65% decline in middlemen involvement. The File Tracking System (FTS) implemented in several departments allows real-time monitoring of official files, leading to an approximate 50% improvement in administrative accountability and reduction in file pendency. Similarly, welfare delivery platforms such as MahaDBT have ensured that benefits are transferred directly to beneficiaries' bank accounts, reducing financial leakages by around 40–50% and increasing citizen trust in government schemes by nearly 55%. Digitalization of property and land records through initiatives like SARITA, e-SRO, and Mahabhulekh has reduced land-related disputes by approximately 45–50% and strengthened legal security and institutional transparency. The adoption of MahaGov Cloud, blockchain-based certificates, and the e-Cabinet / e-Legislative Assembly system has improved document authenticity and decision-making transparency, ensuring secure and tamper-proof governance processes. Furthermore, the Media Monitoring System tracks government communication and public information dissemination, contributing to around improvement in accuracy and responsiveness of public information.

At the local level, E-Panchayat, Maha E-Seva Kendras, and Common Service Centers empower villagers to access services, monitor funds, and participate in governance. Notably, the Zilla Parishad like Ahilyanagar has fully adopted e-governance, making its administration paperless and digitally transparent, serving as a model for rural governance. According to the National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA) report, Maharashtra has achieved 100 % saturation of mandatory e-services, meaning all required public services are now available online, which positions the state at the forefront of digital governance in India. Overall, these digital initiatives demonstrate that e-governance in Maharashtra has not only streamlined administration but also deepened democratic transparency, these figures indicate that e-governance has significantly strengthened transparency, accessibility, and citizen participation in Maharashtra's public administration

B) Direct Government-to-Citizen Engagement via E-Governance:

E-governance has made it easier for citizens to participate in politics and connect directly with the government. Online systems for complaint registration, digital ration cards, health services, and virtual public meetings allow people to get government services and raise issues without middlemen, which increases transparency and accountability. Digital tools for tracking government budgets, online school enrollment, and paying taxes let citizens monitor how the government works and check that public money is used properly.

At the local level, service centers and online participation platforms help people take part in decision-making, local e government projects, and be part of governance. Systems that digitally track

official documents and government announcements also keep citizens informed about administrative work. By making services easier to access and the government more open, e-governance encourages people to participate actively, strengthens democracy, and builds a direct, responsible relationship between citizens and the government. E-governance initiatives in Maharashtra have led to significant, though varied, increases in government-to-citizen (G2C) engagement, with studies indicating a 65% to 80% improvement in areas like service delivery, transparency, and citizen participation.

C) Challenges

Despite progress, problems like low digital literacy, poor internet connectivity, technical issues, language barriers, and data privacy concerns limit access in some areas. These challenges need to be addressed to make e-governance fully effective and achieve more transparency.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The study shows that e-governance in Maharashtra has transformed governance from opaque and slow processes to transparent, accountable, and citizen-centric systems. Service delivery times have decreased, grievance redressal has improved, and citizen trust has grown significantly. Digitalization of records and AI-enabled monitoring have further strengthened transparency and efficiency. E-governance is not just technology—it is a tool for deepening democratic participation. Sustained awareness, youth training, and adoption of advanced digital tools are essential to ensure equitable, efficient, and truly transparent governance in the future.

To further strengthen democratic transparency and ensure accountable, citizen-focused governance, the following steps can be considered:

1. The government should use a clear 'file tracking system, showing which file is on which table and how many days it is pending, to improve more democratic transparency.
2. Government employees should receive special training for future AI-based government services so they can help citizens and ensure transparent use of AI.
3. Practical training sessions should be organized in schools, colleges, and community centers where people can actually use AI-based service portals.
4. Citizens should be able to check their application, gov. certificates status online at every stage.
5. E-governance literacy campaigns should be conducted at villages, rural areas, remote areas to help people understand and use digital government services.
6. Digital services should be simple and easy to use for all citizens.
7. Internet and digital facilities should be improved in rural and remote areas.
8. Government departments should share data digitally to reduce delays and improve efficiency.

Data privacy and security should be ensured to maintain public trust.

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