



A case study of the impact of Akshaya projects- An innovative e-governance initiative in Kerala

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Abstract

The study focuses that the impact of Akshaya project in Kerala. Akshaya center is one of the main innovative initiatives of e-governance in Kerala Government. The e-governance scheme was introduced to facilitate Government governance. The scheme is being implemented mainly through Akshaya centers. The services of Akshaya centers can be affordable to ordinary people also. Now a day the use of ICT (Information Communication Technology) is increasing day-by-day. A lot of initiatives was taken to promote digitalized worlds and familiarize the ICT to the common man. People can avail various certificates, e-filing, e-payment, e-governance services etc. through Akshaya centers. E-governance simply means the application of ICT in Government services. Akshaya centers provide different and important services to the public. The present study aims to identify the impact of the services provided by the Akshaya centers.

Keywords: ICT, e-governance, information, technology, Akshaya, project

Introduction

Akshaya project is one of the important ICT based venture to bridge the digital life of common man. It is a social project delivering various information, e-learning, e-transaction, communications and e-governance. Akshaya project first started in Malappuram district of Kerala, first e-literate district, in 2002. It was the first district based e-literate project in India.

Entrepreneurs from the locality with services orientation were to be selected like social entrepreneurship model for running the project. Each Akshaya center is equipped with all computer peripherals including broadband internet connection. The implementing agency is Panchayath institutions. The main aim of the Akshaya centers is to provide basic IT literacy to at least one member of each family in Kerala.

Akshaya aims at achieving three main objectives such as by promoting e-literacy, by bringing the benefits of household and assuring e-governance. These centers will provide easy access to common man and also generate employment opportunities. These are run by self-employed entrepreneurs with technical knowledge.

Akshaya was one of the landmark ICT project by the Kerala State Information Technology Mission.

Review of literature

The number of studies has been made in the area of e-governance and its impact, sullener, Challenge etc. A brief overview of a few of them is given below.

Karnika Goswami (2007) ^[1] in his study Akshaya units' mission to increase Computer Literacy- a case study on Malappuram District "Analysis that, the Akshaya mission was launched, in November 2002 and it has about 1200 centers across the Kerala State. The District of Malappuram has nearly 350 Active e-Kendra's or Computer education centers, to address more than 1000 families. Initially, there was one e-Kendra for every 1000 families, now, each center 2500-300 families. Malappuram has at least one computer literate person in every home. He added

that the I.T Mission team made customized ICT Programs for fisherman and farmers another barrier to change was language, for which the state IT Mission developed multimedia course formats in Malayalam. With the first phase of Akshaya Operational, the original plan and undergo changes. Going forward, Akshaya seeks to provide an even wider umbrella of services, in the expectation that Kerala will have at least five computers per Village with minimum connectivity band.

Rajendra Kumar (2008) ^[2] in his study, inclusive development through e-governance political economy of e-government projects in Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu and Kerala in India opines that E-government projects have assured prominence in the developing countries in the last decade to improve the quality of citizen – Government engagement, the auditor has analyzed project namely; E-Seva and computer aided Administration. Poverty, illiteracy language dominance and all the other reasons India has number of an award winning e-governance project effective promotion scheme by the Indian Government will also a hosting factor to provide quality services to their citizen, e-governance and considered as a high priority agenda in India, as it is considered to be the only means of taking I.T to the "Common Public development in e-governance" provide opportunities to harness the Power of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to make the business of governance –inexpensive, qualitatively responsive and truly encompassing.

The findings of the study made by Arun Kumar P S, Alvin Abraham, Girish S, 2015 revealed that majority of the citizens happy with the e-governance system. Research Guru: Volume-13, Issue-1, June-2019 (ISSN: 2349-266X) Page | 392 Research Guru: Online Journal of Multidisciplinary Subjects (Peer Reviewed) FRIENDS and Akshaya have an important role in rural areas, because they provide better public utility services through a single window system. The study revealed a comparative result that FRIENDS owned by Government itself

and deals with departmental payment in Governments and universities. While the other term Akshaya managed and owned by a single person and delivering many public utility services such as e-district, UID enrolment, e-literacy, rural empowerment and economic development. Further, they noticed that Akshaya was not properly worked because they have the problem of lack of fund.

Dr. Shruti Singh and Dr. Rubee Singh, 2018 outlined the impact of E governance in India. According to the author, e-governance is considered as a full-fledged package of transparency, accountability, time boundless, cost efficiency and customer satisfaction. E-governance is a substituted approach, in which people are replaced by technology and developed an innovative administrative culture in middle management. It helps to fast, speedy and better disposal of grievance of citizen or clients. But there are some challenges involved in this implementation. They are creation of infrastructure, sound policy, legal framework and uploading of data in local language.

Dr. Sanjay Kumar Dwivedi and Ajay Kumar Bharati (2008), in their study e-governance in India- problem and acceptability analyses about the basic problems and acceptability of e-governance in India – E Governance is the key to the ‘ Good Governance’ for developing countries like India to minimize corruption, provides efficient and effective or quality services to their citizens in spite of four infrastructure of registration Department (CARD) in Andhra Pradesh Sustainable Access in Rural India (SARI) project in Tamilnadu and Akshaya and Information Kerala Mission (IKM) in Kerala using data from both primary and secondary sources and employing a comparative multiple case study approach, he found that while all the three station, tried to implement projects that aim at improving delivery of Government services to the common people, Kerala has taken much greater efforts to make these projects more inclusive Government ensuring that the benefits reach each and every household.

Anu Paul & Varghese Paul (2011) [3] in their study, “e-Governance in the context of Kerala State”. Opines that Govt. of India (GOI) acknowledged the pivotal role that information and communication Technology (IC) has played since the last decade, in bringing Govt. service to the door step of the people across different segments and geographical locations. Kerala is one of the federal states of India, implementer e-governance for the effective and efficient administration and services to the State. Implementation of E-governance projects has defined goal like time lines and cost optimization. But still, it is a dream. This paper proposes a model, which can be functional in a team for a governance projects and its completion in time while respecting timeliness and cost optimization.

Statement of the problem

The present study entitled “A case study of the impact of Akshaya projects-An innovative e-governance initiative in Kerala”. This study is regarding the impact of services rendered by Akshaya Kendra. It also aims to know whether the real customers are aware of Akshaya Kendra. Akshaya project basically aims at providing the benefits of IT services to the people and thereby help them to build a good future. This study aims at evaluating how the project has achieved those objectives. The study focuses on how far customers are satisfied with Akshaya Services.

Need and significance of the study

Akshaya project is one of the most successful E-governance projects in the State. Akshaya Kendra provides different opportunities across the state in such situation, it is necessary to evaluate whether the services are effective or not to assess Customer’s response on the services of Akshaya Kendra.

The present study is very significant because the study tries to analyze the impact about the services of Akshaya, awareness about the services and opportunities provided by Akshaya Kendra. Through this study opinion and suggestions of customers are analyzed so as to in the services of Akshaya to all beneficial access the State.

Objectives

- To identify the various types of services provided by Akshaya
- To find out the customer satisfaction of services provided by Akshaya project
- To study the impact of e- governance initiatives through Akshaya centers.

Research Problem

A case study of the impact of Akshaya projects-An innovative e-governance initiative in Kerala” is to find out the impact of e-governance initiatives and understand how the customers are satisfied with the services provided by the Akshaya centers.

Research methodology

This study is conducted from secondary data.

Findings

The Government of Kerala has implemented various projects to with an aim to make a clear and transparent communication with the people. The state realizes the importance of the ICT in the development programs of which communications is an important one in the development process. The technology makes the communication more easy and transparent one. The state of Kerala realized the importance of technology in the communication and develops different programmed to develop the same with the people. Akshaya is one of the projects developed by the state to provide governance service and technological communication to the people. A finding of the study listed below.

1. E-governance system will reduce red-tapism corruption and influences by the political parties, personnel’s etc.
2. Akshaya project act as an instrument in rural empowerment and Economic development
3. It is found that most of the people are Aware about Akshaya Kendra.
4. Majority are aware of e-governance provided by Akshaya Kendra.
5. The study reveals that majority services preferred by common man are for Adhaar card registration and various certificates.
6. It is found that most of the common people have regularly used the services of Akshaya Kendra.
7. FRIENDS and Akshaya projects providing most of similar services to the public. Akshaya performed better than FRIENDS. Therefore Akshaya centers create values.

8. The study reveals that the majority says e-governance has reduced corruption.
9. The study reveals that majority are availing the quality services provided by Akshaya.
10. It is found that people are more feasible and dependant the Akshaya Kendra.
11. It is cleared that people were understood the objectives of Akshaya.

Suggestions

Akshaya Kendra's improve their e-governance services by;

1. The procedure for availing Akshaya services should be made so as to reduce the time consumed and make it more user-friendly.
2. Charges levied on services should be made reasonable so as to attract more customers to it.
3. Attitude of Akshaya trainees towards people is of utmost importance, when it comes to their satisfaction level. So, steps to fine tune their attitude via training programs should be taken up.
4. Akshaya should take up awareness programs to educate people about e-pay, e-filing services.
5. More programs and campaign should be taken up to promote the reach e-literacy services in the society.
6. Conduct usability survey for the assessment of the Akshaya Kendra's in Kerala.
7. Provide training programs for the government servants in the Akshaya Kendra's in all aspect like governance services and attitude towards the public.
8. Provide awareness to educate to rural people about Akshaya services, it uses and benefits.
9. Private participation creates socio-economic benefits to the public.

Conclusion

The present study entitled "A case study of the impact of Akshaya projects-An innovative e-governance initiative in Kerala" is done in order to identify the various services provided by Akshaya Kendra. It also aims to know whether the rural customers are aware of Akshaya. It is basically aims at providing the benefits of IT services to the people and thereby helps them to build a good future; it also aims at evaluating how far customers are satisfied from Akshaya centers.

The present study is very significant because the study tries to analyze the impact about the services of Akshaya, awareness about the services and opportunities provided by Akshaya Kendra. Through this study opinion and suggestions of customers are analyzed so as to in the services of Akshaya to all beneficial access the State.

From this study, it was found that, the Akshaya is performed in an above average manner. Customers are satisfied with Akshaya services, but the main problem associated with them is that customers are not fully aware about the services of Akshaya. So, more awareness campaigns should be taken up to expand the reach of Akshaya services and to bring more people into literacy and e-governance. Akshaya and FRIENDS plays an important role in Kerala for better implementation of e-governance. It is one of the successful programme. Lack of quality trainees and poor internet connection are the major problems faced by the Akshaya

entrepreneurs. The study concluded that it is highly impacted the ordinary life of people.

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