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## **E-Governance: A study on e-district Mission Mode Project (SUGAM) of Assam**

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### **Abstract**

*The dynamics of public administration in India have changed drastically with the introduction of e-governance as a guiding concept in the early 1990s. Citizens, the world over, have been demanding smaller, effective and responsive governments, obviously inspired by the unprecedented and rapid success of the finance capital in the global market. Consequently, policy makers began the search for smaller and efficient governments. Re-engineering of service systems, performance management, transparency in government operations, downsizing or right-sizing the government workforce, emphasis on delivery of reliable and quick public services and citizen satisfaction came to be considered as benchmarks by most of the administrators. E-government has the ability to transform traditional administrative systems through effective utilization of ICTs. This paper is an attempt to study the working of various Mission Mode Projects especially e-district (SUGAM) in Assam.*

**Keywords:** *Public administration, E-Governance, Mission Mode Project, e-district, Assam.*

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**Introduction:** The term 'Governance' is wider than 'Government'. Governance may be an activity of governing/controlling a country by its Government, controlling of an organization or a company by its CEO or Board of Directors or controlling of a house hold by the head of the house, Accordingly E-governance may also involve governing of a country, organization, company or a household, however with the help of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

But when we talk of E-Governance in the popular parlance we only refer to the

governing of a Country/State using ICT. E-governance therefore means the application of ICT to transform the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability of exchange of information and transaction:

1. between Governments,(G2G)
2. between Government and Citizens (G2C)
3. between Government and businesses(G2B)

### **Objective of the study:**

The objective of the present study are:

- a)To study the working of e-governance project in Assam.
- b)To study the working of Mission Mode Project operating in Assam.
- c)To identify the working of e-district project (SUGAM) of Assam.

**Methodology:** The study is based on purely non-empirical method. Here only secondary source of data has been used like books, magazine, journal and various published work of national and international importance.

**E-Governance-in-India:** E-Governance practices in India emerged and evolved mainly from native intuition, but the range of success of e-Governance initiatives has not been uniform. The bottom-up demand for delivery of electronic services was bleak initially, but the change in public perception was for the better with the governments roping in private industry and service-oriented organizations gradually. Kautilya across his treatise '*Arthashastra delineated*' the traits for the king of a good governance state as "in the happiness of his subjects lies his happiness, in their welfare his welfare, whatever pleases himself, he does not consider as good, but whatever pleases his subjects he considers as good" (*Sharma, L.N. and Sushmita Sharma, 1998*). Plato is credited with developing the concept of the philosopher king as the ideal ruler Aristotle was perhaps the first political thinker to deal with the term "governance", when he classified constitution by indicating the manner in which they were ruled by a kind of numerical court of rule by one (dictatorship), a few (autocracy), or many (democracy) (*Sinclair, 1962*). Kautilya mentions the following few prerequisites of good governance;-

- Merge his individuality with his duties.
- Guide administration:
- Avoid extremes without missing the goal.
- Lead a disciplined life with a code of conduct.
- Pay fixed salaries and other allowances.
- Maintain law and order

Stress on *lekhaks* (writers)

Carry out preventive / punitive measures against corrupt officials.

Replace bad administrators by good ones.

Emulate administrative qualities.

The World Bank in its report on *Governance and Development 1992* *d e f i n e d* governance as the manner in which power is used in the management of a country's economic and social aspects for development. The bank realized that "good governance is central to creating and sustaining an environment which fosters strong and equitable development and it is an essential complement to sound economic policies. It has defined good governance as the one epitomized by predictable, open, and enlightened policy making, a bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos acting in furtherance" of the public good, the rule of law, transparent process and a strong civil society for public affairs. Whereas Poor governance is characterized by arbitrary policy making, unaccountable bureaucracies, unjust legal system, a civil society paring in public life and widespread corruption.

It identified the following three glaning aspects of good governance:-

- ❖ The form and nature of the political regions, military or civil, parliamentary or presidential, or democratic.
- ❖ The manner in which authority is exercised in the processing of a country's economic and social resources for sustainable development.
- ❖ The capability of governments to design, and formulate and implement politics.

The characteristics of good governance lay down by UNDP are as follow.

1. Participation,
2. Rule of Law,
3. Transparency,
4. Responsiveness,
5. Consensus Orientation,
6. Equity,
7. Effectiveness and Efficiency
8. Accountability and
9. Strategic Vision.

**Current Mission Mode Project (MMP) under the e-Governance unit:** A mission mode project (MMP) is an individual project within the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) that focuses on one aspect of electronic governance, such as banking, land records or commercial taxes etc.

**Status of Mission Mode Projects:** NeGP comprises of 44 Mission Mode Projects encompassing 13 central MMPs, 17 state MMPs and 14 integrated MMPs. MMPs are owned and spearheaded by various line ministries. State Governments are responsible for implementing State MMPs, under the overall guidance of respective Line Ministries in cases where Central Assistance is also required. DeitY acts as the facilitator and catalyst for the implementation of NeGP and provides technical assistance to various Ministries / Departments and State Governments.

### **Components of Mission Mode Projects:**

1. *Capacity building scheme* -the scheme envisions
  - A) Establishment of Institutional Framework for State Level Strategic decisionmaking including setting up of State e-Governance Mission Team (SeMT).
  - B) Imparting of specialized training, Orientation program for SeMTs and decision makers.
  - C) Setting up of a central Capacity Building Management Cell for coordination and implementation of the scheme.
2. *Awareness and communication*- The main objectives of the scheme are
  - A) Build NeGP as an umbrella brand.
  - B) Create awareness about e-Governance services and service delivery points
  - C) Build ownership/ stake of implementer in NeGP
3. *Impact and outcomes* - Besides assessment of projects, DeitY also undertakes e-Readiness Assessment of States and Union Territories.
4. *Standards and Policies* - Standards in e-Governance are a high priority activity, which will help ensure sharing of information and seamless interoperability of data across e-Governance applications.

**The Core Projects (Mission Mode Projects)**

Central MMPs	State MMPs	Integrated MMPs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Banking</li> <li>● Central Excise &amp; Customs</li> <li>● Income Tax (IT)</li> <li>● Insurance</li> <li>● MCA21</li> <li>● Passport</li> <li>● Immigration, Visa and Foreigners Registration &amp; Tracking</li> <li>● Pension</li> <li>● e-Office</li> <li>● Posts</li> <li>● UID</li> <li>● Common IT Roadmap for Para Military Forces</li> <li>● e-Sansad</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Agriculture</li> <li>● Commercial Taxes</li> <li>● e-District</li> <li>● Employment Exchange</li> <li>● Land Records (NLRMP)</li> <li>● Municipalities</li> <li>● e-Panchayat</li> <li>● Police(CCTNS)</li> <li>● Road Transport</li> <li>● Treasuries</li> <li>Computerization</li> <li>● PDS</li> <li>● Education</li> <li>● Health</li> <li>● e-Vidhaan</li> <li>● Agriculture 2.0</li> <li>● Rural Development</li> <li>● Women and Child development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CSC</li> <li>● e-Biz</li> <li>● e-Courts</li> <li>● e-Procurement</li> <li>● EDI For e-Trade</li> <li>● National e-governance Service Delivery Gateway</li> <li>● India Portal</li> <li>● Financial Inclusion</li> <li>● Roads and Highways Information System</li> <li>● Social benefit</li> <li>● National GIS</li> <li>● National Mission on Education through ICT</li> <li>● Urban Governance</li> <li>● e-Bhasha</li> </ul>

**E-Governance initiatives in Assam:**

The state of Assam has made numerous efforts to be a part of IT Bandwagon, so as to ensure efficiency and transparency in Governance. Assam has been placed in the category of "Expectant" on e-Readiness index. Assam has shown a tremendous potential towards realization of its goal of getting transformed into an IT governed state. This fact is also supported by the e-Readiness Report, 2008, which shows that the state has made a remarkable improvement in its e-Readiness ranking. It has moved up from L5 level in 2006 to L3 level in 2008. The weakness factor lies in the area of individual readiness. Assam Electronics Development Corporation Limited or AMTRON has been designated as the State Nodal Agency of Government of Assam for the execution of various State level and National level projects.

Among the core infrastructure projects under NeGP, SWAN, SDC and CSC are being

implemented in the state. State Wide Area Network is in its advance stages of development in the state. Network trials are being conducted at different tiers of SWAN. In case of SDC, Request of Proposal or RFP is under development by the state. Under the CSC scheme, 4375 Common Services Centres will be established in Assam.

Among State level projects, Prithvi Geographical Information System , Udyog Ratna, Magistracy Case Management System or VIDHAN, Affidavits Management System or SHAPATH , Computerized Bakijai (Loan Repayment) System or PARISHODH , Computerized File Monitoring System or NATHI-AWASTHITI, Computerized Circle Office to DC Office Monthly Reporting System or ANUSHRAWAN, Computerized Public Distribution System (PDS) or GRIHA-LAKSHMI, Computerized Personnel Information Management System or MANAB-SAMPAD , e-District , Broadband over Powerline etc. are being implemented in the state. Under the Prithvi Geographical System, all district boundaries of Assam have been digitized. Udyog Ratna is an effectual tool for monitoring the District Industries Centres (DIC's). VIDHAN manages various magistracy cases and generate reports. NATHI-AWASTHITI is a file monitoring system that tracks the movement of files in various Government Departments.

With regard to Assam, the state government has initiated many e-governance projects including Electoral Rolls computerizations system, BPL list, Pass port computerization system, computerization of land record system, Prithvi Geographical information system, Griha Lakshmi computerized public distribution system, online tender information system, pay- roll computerization system etc.

The e-District project is an important enhancement of the state's e-governance implementation of programme. This project is a Mission Mode Project (MMP) under National e-governance plan (NeGP) founded by government of India. The government of Assam has chosen two districts Sunitpur and Goalpara for the pilot implementation of the project. E-district provides support to the district administration to enable the citizen centric services, which would optimally utilize the Assam state wide area Network (ASWAN) and state data center at Guwahati to deliver services to the stake holders.

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Among the core infrastructure projects under NeGP, SWAN, SDC (State Data Centers) and CSC (Common service center) are being implemented in the state. Under the CSC scheme, 4375 common services centers will be established in Assam.

**The key e-governance project operating in Assam are-**

1. VIDHAN or Magistracy case Management system-it manages various magistracy cases and generates reports.
2. UDYOG RATNA-it is an effectual tool for monitoring the district industries centers (DICs).
3. PRITHVI GEOGRAPHICAL SYSTEM- all district boundaries of Assam have been digitized.
4. PARISHODH- computerized loan payment system.
5. ANUSHARAWAN-computerized circle office to DC office monthly reporting system.
6. MANAB SAMPAD-computerized personnel information management system.
7. GRIHA-LAKSHMI-computerized public distribution system.
8. NATHI-AWASTHITI or computerized file monitoring system-it's a file monitoring system that tracks the movement of files in various government departments.
9. SAPATH-Affidavits Management system.
10. SUGAM- It is a e-district project.

Assam Electronic Development Corporation Limited (AMTRON) is a nodal agency of government of Assam for the implementation of various state level and national level projects these are ARBAS, ASWAN, CSC, SDC etc. AMTRON in collaboration with BSNL have organized various state level awareness programmes. It for their initiatives that many of our state government departments like tax, agriculture, revenue, police power, municipal authority etc are starting e-governance project recently. Along with other e-ready states in the country Assam can bag the “Best e-government state Award and e-ready state Award.”

**e-District Mission Mode Project:**

The Assam e-District Project is a Mission Mode Project under the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP). This project is being implemented by the Information Technology Department, Government of Assam. This project aims to improve G2C interaction experience between the government and citizen. It aims at seamless service delivery of services to the citizen by enhancing the efficiencies at the districts. The e-District project is aimed at delivering G2C service in all the existing 27 districts of the state. It will make Government Services accessible to the common man in his locality through Internet, Common Service Centres (Arunoday CSCs) and Public Facilitation Centres (PFCs) at DC, SDO and Circle Offices. It is envisaged that electronic delivery of citizen centric services will ensure efficiency, transparency and reliability at affordable costs to the citizens. Front-ends under the project, in the form of Public Facilitation Centres (PFCs), are built at

District, Sub-division and Circle levels. Village-level front-ends are established through Arunoday Common Services Centres (CSCs) for delivery of services.

e-District project leverages the infrastructure created in the form of State Data Center:

(SDC), State Wide Area Network (SWAN), State Services Digital Gateway (SSDG), Common Service Centres (CSC) and the other ICT infrastructure created by the State under various initiatives and harmonize it with the e-District MMP. Line department applications already online and live, which are providing G2C services, are also being integrated by dovetailing and integrating them in the e-District architecture.

The key objectives of the project are:

- ◆ Efficient delivery of services with improved service levels
- ◆ Capacity building of field functionaries
- ◆ Access to efficient, reliable, transparent and accountable services
- ◆ Reducing service time and costs for the Government and Citizens
- ◆ Enhancing perception & image of the Government

The e-District technical architecture is based on n-tier architecture model. The application architecture follows industry standard protocols like HTTP, SOAP and XML for integration with back end department systems. The e-District application catering to G2C services is built on Java and is web enabled. This application hosted at the SDC, is a work flow based software, where services are configured based on roles, responsibilities, types & levels of access for various functionaries. The work flow is configurable in the State level as well as the District level. The eDistrict application business layer provides for:

- Work flow, for facilitating approvals at various levels while processing a citizen request.
- Authentication of the citizen through Aadhaar/NPR
- PKI Support for facilitating the usage of digital signatures.
- Payment Gateways, to make the payments directly by using credit/debit cards/net banking.
- Mobile services for communicating the updates to the citizen. Local Language Interfaces.

A core list of five categories of services has been identified at the national level which were implemented in the e-District project. The list includes Certificates, Government Dues and Recovery, Revenue Court Cases, RTI/ Grievances Cases, Certified Copies and Pensions. As part of the State Wide Roll Out, five other categories of services are also identified and selected by the State Govt. A total of 53 citizen centric services have been identified for delivery through e-District in Assam at first but all are subject to be change.

The management of the project is vested with a District e-Governance Society (DeGS). There are 27 DeGS functional across the State which has the District Deputy Commissioner

as the Chairman. To manage and monitor the functioning of the project at the district level, an e-District Project Manager (eDPM) is allotted at each district. As a part of implementation of e-District project in Assam, the Assam Electronics Development Corporation Ltd. (AMTRON), a Public Sector Undertaking of the IT Department, has been appointed as the State Designated Agency (SDA). As SDA, AMTRON shall be the authority responsible for overall management of the project across the State. As SDA, AMTRON would also be responsible for end-to-end implementation of the project as per the predefined scope and within the prescribed time lines.

A System Integrator (SI) has been selected through an open bid process to implement the project for a duration of 4.5 years after which the DeGS would take over the day-to-day implementation of the project at district level. Hardware at districts, State Data Centre are part of this project. Although Assam SWAN is the preferred backbone for Assam e-District, in remote areas use of 3G dongles from various service providers are also utilised to establish the digital connectivity. Back office local area networks (LAN) are also built in DC, SDO and Circle Offices to ease file application movement. A diesel Generating set also forms the part of infrastructure at the Public Facilitation Centres (PFCs) in e-District.

Under e-District project, Capacity Building has been one of the main focus area. Based on the roles and responsibilities of the government officials and staff at various levels, training programs have been designed and imparted under the project across the state in districts. The following training modules form the key component under e-District:

1. Basic Computer Training
2. Advanced Computer Training
3. e-District Application Trainings
4. Training on Usage of Digital Signatures
5. CSC Operator Training

The expected benefits, post implementation of this project, are:

- Citizen access to services in an integrated manner at doorsteps (CSCs)
- Responsive, Transparent and Accountable Service Delivery
- Modernization and Automation of District Administration
- Empowerment of citizens
- Cost savings for citizens on account of
- Less number of trips
- Less waiting time
- Tracking status of Applications
- Savings per transactions.

The Government of India has provided Project Management Consultancy support through consultants for e-district project. M/s. Wipro is working with Assam e-District

project as the State Project Management Unit (SPMU) and are responsible for finalizing the work flow, bringing in necessary Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) and project visioning under the over-all guidance of the State Level Apex Committee headed by the Chief Secretary. M/s. Wipro has brought out the “As is report”, “Gap Analysis report” and the “To-be Report” which forms the basic documents based on which the design and development of the e-District application has been done.

The following are the G2C services under Assam e-district project (SUGAM):

Sl no.	Citizen Service	Days Within which service will be delivered	Rate applicable (in Rs.) (to be paid to VLEs for G2C services through CSCs or at PFCs)
1	Senior Citizen Certificate	15 Working Days	Rs. 30/-
2	Income Certificate	10 Working Days	Rs. 30/-
3	Bakiji Clearance Certificate	15 Working Days	Rs. 30/-
4	Application for registration of Marriage	As per ARTPS Act. 2012	Rs. 30/-
5	Notice of Intendend Marriage	As per ARTPS Act. 2012	Rs. 30/-
6	Application For stamp Vendor Lisence	15 Working Days	Rs. 30/-
7	Renewal of Explosive License	For Crackers & Kerosene-7 working days and for others30 working days	Rs. 30/-
8	Permission for Fairs/ Religious/ Cultural Festivals/ Loud speakers/ Rallies/ Strikes	15 Working Days	Rs. 30/-
9	Permission For Special Events u/s 144 Cr PC	15 Working Days	Rs. 30/-
10	Application for Information under RTI	As per RTI Act. 2005	Rs. 30/-
11	Caste Certificate (SC)	As per RTPS Act. 2012	Rs. 30/-
12	Application for registration of deeds etc.	15 Working Days	Rs. 30/-
13	Certified Copies of cause list, judgement etc.	30 Working Days	Rs. 30/-

14	Permission for transfer of property by way of Mortgage, Lease, Gift, Sale, Etc.	30 Working Days	Rs. 30/-
15	Assessment of Stamp Duty and registration Fees	2 Working Days	Rs. 30/-
16	Submission of application for Mutation	45 working Days	Rs. 30/-
17	Certified copy of Mutation Order	As per ARTPS Act. 2012	Rs. 30/-
18	Issue of Land Valuation Certificate	20 Working Days	Rs. 30/-
19	Issue of Record of Rights (Jamabandi)	As per ARTPS Act. 2012	Rs. 30/-
20	Issue of Non-Encumbrance Certificate	As per ARTPS Act. 2012	Rs. 30/-
21	Application for New Enrollment	As per ARTPS Act. 2012	Rs. 30/-
22	Application for change of Name/ Address/Age	3 working Days	Rs. 30/-
23	Application transfer of enrollment to other District	3 working Days	Rs. 30/-
24	Surrender of Employment Exchange Card	1 Working Days	Rs. 30/-
25	Application for Learner's License	As per ARTPS Act. 2012	Rs. 30/-
26	Application for Driving License	As per ARTPS Act. 2012	Rs. 30/-
27	Issue of Migration Certificate- SEBA	As per ARTPS Act. 2012	Rs. 30/-
28	Application for Renewal of Driving License	7 Working Days	Rs. 30/-
29	Issue of Duplicate Marksheet- SEBA	As per ARTPS Act. 2012	Rs. 30/-
30	Issue of Duplicate Marksheet- AHSEC	As per ARTPS Act. 2012	Rs. 30/-
31	Issue of Duplicate Pass	As per ARTPS Act. 2012	Rs. 30/-

	Certificate- SEBA		
32	Issue of Duplicate Pass Certificate- AHSEC	As per ARTPS Act. 2012	Rs. 30/-
33	Issue of Migration Certificate- AHSEC	As per ARTPS Act. 2012	Rs. 30/-
34	Issuance of Death Certificate	As per ARTPS Act. 2012	Rs. 30/-
35	Issuance of Birth Certificate	As per ARTPS Act. 2012	Rs. 30/-
36	Application for Certified Copy of Electoral Roll	2 Working Days	Rs. 30/-
37	Application for First Appeal	As per ARTPS Act. 2012	Rs. 30/-
38	Application for Land Holding Certificate	30 Working Days	Rs. 30/-
39	Application for Driving Test	As per ARTPS Act. 2012	Rs. 30/-
40	Application for Fresh License of Pesticides/ Fertilizers	15 Working Days	Rs. 30/-
41	Application for Renewal of Pesticides/ Fertilizers	15 Working Days	Rs. 30/-
42	Permanent Resident Certificate	As per ARTPS Act. 2012	Rs. 30/-
43	Non Creamy Layer Certificate	As per ARTPS Act. 2012	Rs. 30/-
44	Next of Kin Certificate	As per ARTPS Act. 2012	Rs. 30/-
45	Permission for Delayed Birth Registration	7 Working Days	Rs. 30/-
46	Permission for Delayed Death Registration	7 Working Days	Rs. 30/-

(Source: Information technology Department, Govt. Of Assam, 2016)

### **Challenges of e-governance in Assam-**

Our study finds several challenges before successful working of e-governance in Assam, which are as follows-

I) low rate of literacy, II) inadequate power supply, III) low broadband penetration, IV) absence of user friendly interface, V) dearth of training manpower, VI) lack of awareness, VII) lack of interoperability, VIII) resistance to change, IX) poor projects planning and implementation, X) lack of defined outcomes and measurement mechanism, XI) inadequate data safety, XII) partial online execution services.

**In conclusion, the benefits of e-governance can be summarized as follows-**

I) Transparency, accountability and efficiency of service delivery. II) Increased participation by people. III) Reduced corruption. IV) Balanced development. V) Convenient and cost effective service delivery. VI) Improve the quality of life for citizens. VII) Reduce time and cost. VIII) Promote good governance.

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