DIGITAL DEMOCRACY AND E-GOVERNANCE IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT:
Digital democracy and e-governance in India have been significant factors in recent years, and we can see here that this system has grown unprecedentedly with the prevention of corruption through a technology-based approach to governance. It is composed of both concepts in India, which are one is digital democracy and the second is e-governance. Digital democracy refers to the use of digital technologies to enhance democratic processes and citizen participation in governance. Especially referring to the internet and social media. Another one is E-governance it is the efficiency of government services. The use of electronic communication technologies to increase effectiveness and transparency suggests that citizens of many countries are becoming more aware of the costs of corruption as new global standards of governance emerge. They are pressuring their governments to adopt efficient and responsible governance. India's objective is to establish a digital democracy by implementing e-government and launching the "Digital India" initiative. Undoubtedly, e-governance introduces the necessary automation to eradicate corruption. The improvement of good governance is facilitated by the effortless, seamless, and rapid interaction of citizens with the government. Prepared on the basis of secondary sources like journals, books, reports, etc., the paper highlights the perspective of digital democracy and e-governance in India. This is the descriptive approach used for this paper. The paper pursues the following objectives: 1. To understand Digital Democracy and E-Governance in India. 2. To know the possibilities and interconnection between digital democracy and e-government in India. 'Digital democracy' is envisioned as a 'perpetuity' in India. A summer of good governance in this scenario'. It will take the nation to new heights of success and achievement.
Key words: e-governance, Digitaldemocracy, digital India, People participation

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY :
The following objectives are pursued
1. Understanding Digital Democracy and e-Governance in India.
2. To know the possibilities and inter-linkages between digital democracy and e-governance

INTRODUCTION :
Democracy is a form of government. In which the people choose their representatives through free and fair elections. This idea has been extended to the realm of technology through digital democracy, sometimes called the Internet or e-democracy. The primary force of democracy is the voice of the people, and a key element of good government is the ability to hear that voice. The need for good governance and global public administration has changed as a result of the information and communication technology revolution. E-government is a new form of governance as a result. E-government is the use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) to establish "simple, ethical, accountable, efficient, and transparent" (smart) governance in government operations. In this COVID-19 era, 'Digital Transformation' is the new paradigm of governance. The latest digital technology has become a global precursor to rapid economic growth. It is an important factor in promoting social and economic fairness in India by reducing corruption and expanding access to information for all. Internal and external affairs of national governance. More focus on management is essential these days. No country can afford to ignore the dishonest and unethical actions of its officials.

It leads to an increase in inefficiencies in governance. Openness, accountability, and public involvement should be incorporated into the country's governance structures. Political development is now highly dependent on information. ICT has also contributed to the goal of better governance. It simply means bringing government to people's doorsteps. Online availability is immediately available to the public. Otherwise, the time they need. It helps reduce corruption by increasing transparency of government operations. But e-governance goes beyond official emails and websites. Online service is not limited to delivery. Nor is it about sending payments or digital access to public information. It's all people communicating with each other. It is a neo-culture, in fact, in which citizens interact with each other, governments, and institutions in shaping public communications.

METHODOLOGY OF STUDY
An essay prepared based on secondary sources like journals, books, reports etc. This paper highlights the perspective of digital democracy and e-governance in India. This is the descriptive approach used for this paper.

LITERATUREREVIEW :
It reviews the literature on e-governance, information and communication technology, digital politics, and the digital divide. As e-governance is viable in all formal governments, e-democracy is viable only in democratic systems. There is a basic principle behind the implementation of e-governance or e-democracy worldwide. The primary principle in this context is that e-government gives preference to government to the individual. To provide integrated digital facilities to the citizens to provide their overall welfare.

"E-Democracy: A New Challenge for Measuring Democracy" is an article that emphasizes the importance of media in democratizing political communication and procedures. It raises the question of how digital media can contribute to enhancing the quality of democracy.

"E-Governance: A Step towards Digital Democracy" is an academic study discussing the importance of e-Governance in India. E-government provides critical insights into government accountability and policy-making processes. Efficient use of ICT will enable mechanization of general administrative functions. It accelerates the growth of the revenue and the ability of the citizens to engage with the citizens at any time and from any place.

"E-Democracy: A New Challenge for Measuring Democracy" is an article that emphasizes the importance of media's ability to democratize political communication and mechanisms. It raises the question of how digital media can contribute to enhancing the quality of democracy.

Ravinder (2023) the potential of digital democracy in India is multifaceted. There is greater citizen participation, greater openness, and greater accountability in decision-making. However, it also brings significant problems. This study aims to explore the potential of digital democracy in India while highlighting the significant barriers and challenges that hinder its implementation. Mujeebullah (2021) India is making progress towards e-governance. Diffusion of e-governance schemes has a beneficial effect on the quality of governance. The primary barriers to achieving integrated e-governance are disparity in geography, society, and economy. Additional limitations include low literacy rates, inadequate infrastructure, and concerns regarding the security and privacy of personal and financial information. The fact that it is the largest democracy, second in terms of population, and has a large topography presents significant obstacles. Pick on, T. (2018) Democratic governments face different obstacles in optimizing the benefits of digital technology while mitigating its risks to their more transparent communities. Preserving equitable elections to uphold strong democracies at a time of increasing insecurity, increasing limitations, and geopolitical strife. Protecting Essential Online Rights

and Implementing Multi-Stakeholder Approaches to Regulate the Internet Three interconnected focal points Organization Sangola H and Palaria R (2017) The ambitious National e-Governance Plan (NEGP) and its successor, NEGP 2.0, have been implemented by the government. Significant progress has been made in providing e-government to our citizens. For its success and efficiency, some problems need to be solved. We attempt to address these concerns in the latter part of the paper. Digital Democracy Initiatives in India It is important to look at factors that promote e-democracy in India rather than factors that give or contribute to digital democracy. By establishing various institutions, schemes, policies, and programs, the government is actively transforming itself into a cyber-government. Launched in 2015, the Digital India program aims to ensure that residents can access government services electronically by improving online infrastructure and promoting digital transformation in society. Computerization of government departments led to the advent of digital democracy in India and encouraged responsible governance. India began efforts to digitally connect the country in the 1990s and early 2000s. In an effort to strengthen democracy through technological advancement, the Government of India has launched several technology-related initiatives. Common Service Centers helped bridge the divide between rural and urban areas in Indian society. The government launched the MyGov app in 2014 for people from government services to give their thoughts and opinions. The National i-Governance Project (NIGP) is notable because it seeks to integrate community-based governance efforts into a single, overarching goal. When it comes to recording digital democracy at a national level like India, it offers an opportunity for analysis of the impact of technology on promoting cordial public-government relations and public-elected governance, commitment, and related conditions, institutions, and structures. Digital India Initiatives This is a comprehensive initiative to prepare India for a knowledge-based economy. It combines many concepts and ideas into one unifying vision. Each seems to be an aspect of the overall objective. It was introduced by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEIT). Possibilities of Digital Democracy in India Digital democracy is the amalgamation of the words "electronic" and "democracy." Internet democracy, commonly known as digital democracy, refers to the use of information and communication technologies in political and governance processes. In the Indian context, digital democracy has the potential to empower citizens and establish a broader and more inclusive system of governance. Here are several potential applications of digital democracy in India.

1. Increased Participation a fundamental principle of democracy is the active participation of citizens in the government and governance process. Using digital democracy can increase citizens' access to the political process by providing greater availability and convenience. This includes disenfranchised communities, persons with disabilities, and those living in geographically isolated areas. Currently, democracy has extended its reach to people's mobile devices. As a result, his political behavior is widely diffused.

2. Ensuring Transparency and Accountability Availability of information about government actions and policies in digital democracy ensures transparency and accountability in governance. Facilitates citizens' ability to make well-informed judgments about these measures. Also promotes greater accountability to their constituents. Obviously, today's political endeavors are a testament to the past's lack of transparency and broad building. As a result, the public's response to the government's successes and failures is not quickly received. It heralds a new era for both the common people and the governing body.

3. Effectiveness Adoption of digital democracy has the potential to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of government services. This is to enable citizens to access and use these services easily and quickly. By reducing paperwork and regulatory hurdles, it can streamline decision-making. It is

more efficient. Furthermore, digital plots give governments the ability to collect and evaluate more. Helps to choose better informed policies and improve service delivery.

4. Dimension of Inclusion One of the key advantages of digital democracy is that it allows individuals from many backgrounds and regions to participate in the democratic process. By using digital platforms, individuals have the opportunity to engage effectively with their peers and elected officials, regardless of their geographic location or socio-economic status.

5. The advent of unquestionably more dynamic and flexible means of communication between citizens and their political authorities. Empowering individuals with the ability to respond, raise issues, and express ideas through social media, online forums, and other digital platforms promotes openness, accountability, and a more engaged democracy. As technology advances, opportunities for communication between citizens and them are expected to increase. So the goal of efficient governance is the connection between citizens and their representatives.

6. Enhancing Customer Experience The incorporation of technology into government services will fundamentally transform their engagement with government. By using online platforms, mechanization, data analytics, and greater transparency, governments can provide more efficient services, reduce bureaucratic hurdles, and prioritize the needs of citizens. Governments can enhance their governance systems by adopting technological innovation. This is related to the changing needs of their population.

7. A trust approach based on trust between citizens and government, relational effects are beneficial to both parties involved. Citizens benefit from enhanced availability of information, heightened responsiveness, and engagement opportunities, thereby actively contributing to decision-making. However, governments benefit from gaining useful insights, increased public support, and a more knowledgeable population. This ultimately leads to improved policy outcomes and more effective governance. Through technology, governments can provide the foundation of a democratic system characterized by transparency, inclusiveness, and accountability, thereby building trust.

CHALLENGES FOR DIGITAL DEMOCRACY :

- **Problems in use**

In India, many citizens are still not able to use the internet and are not properly aware of the need for it, which in a way poses a problem for digital democracy.

- **Security and privacy concerns**

The concept of privacy has significant relevance within the field of digital democracy, in which citizens must disclose personal information to government agencies and other entities to engage in the democratic process. Concerns arise as individuals fear e-service websites.

- **Differences in digital technology**

Rural areas and marginalized communities are generally affluent sectors of society with a significant digital divide compared to all urban areas and most. Access to digital platforms and tools is limited for this small population. Further exacerbating is the exclusion of citizens, especially marginalized communities, from participating in digital democratic initiatives in the area of the Internet and digital literacy skills that can impact Assam's decision-making process. Such resources hold more sway with those who have access. Consequently, the lack of digital tools

- **Lack of digital literacy**

    A significant obstacle to the progress of digital democracy is India's prevailing lack of digital literacy and awareness among its citizens. A substantial portion of the population is unfamiliar with various digital platforms and tools, lacking the necessary skills to use them effectively. This lack of

familiarity and proficiency limits their ability to actively engage in the decision-making process within the digital democratic framework.

- **Language problem**

India is known for its linguistic diversity, with a wide range of languages spoken across the country. However, this rich linguistic tapestry presents a challenge when it comes to accessing and participating in the digital realm. Where English is primarily the dominant language used in various online platforms and tools. This language barrier poses a significant limitation to the accessibility of e-democracy. is significantly disruptive

- **Limited digital infrastructure**

The concept of digital democracy revolves around the idea of using digital technology to enhance democratic processes and enable broader participation in decision-making. To achieve this, it is very important to establish a strong digital infrastructure and connectivity to support the necessary equipment. This infrastructure includes various components such as high-speed Internet connection, reliable power supply, and advanced technical equipment. In urban areas, high-speed Internet access is usually readily available. Enable residents to enjoy a smooth online experience and use digital platforms and tools effectively.

- **Cybersecurity concerns**

Cyber-attacks and data breaches can compromise the privacy and security of citizens' personal information and limit their trust in the digital governance system. Strengthening infrastructure, implementing robust encryption protocols, enhancing data protection laws, and raising awareness against cyber threats are critical steps to protect citizens' personal information and maintain public trust in digital governance systems. By addressing these challenges and investing in cyber security, India can ensure a more secure and resilient digital democracy that protects the privacy, integrity, and trust of its citizens.

- **Limited human interaction**

The emergence of digital democracy initiatives has brought some implications that deserve further consideration. However, one such challenge is the potential reduction in face-to-face interaction between citizens and their elected representatives. This shift toward digital platforms and online communication channels can inadvertently limit opportunities for direct personal engagement that traditionally occurs in physical settings such as town halls, meetings, public forums, or one-on-one conversations.

- **Technological dependence**

Digital democracy initiatives refer to the combination of technology participation in democratic processes and government transparency to improve citizen participation. While initiatives in this context have the potential to bring numerous benefits, it is important to consider their potential drawbacks. The functioning of digital democracy initiatives is highly dependent on the uninterrupted availability and proper functioning of technical systems in the event of technical failures, such as power outages, server caches, or cyber-attacks. The entire digital infrastructure that supports these initiatives can be compromised.

- **Absence of strong political support**

India, a country with diverse and socially abundant responsibilities, often faces the challenge of social barriers impeding the progress of e-democracy. The average citizen in India, who is not widely familiar with the Internet, finds it inconvenient to navigate through many

CHALLENGES TO EXISTING GOVERNANCE :

Extending the reach of e-governance services to rural India, where 70% of the population lives, is a primary concern of the government. Consequently, a concentrated effort needs to be made to target e-

governance reforms towards the average citizen. Another factor complicating e-government service delivery in India is the lack of unique identity for individuals. ICT penetration is very low in rural areas, especially in hilly areas. The Aadhaar card is an initiative of this government. Even in metropolitan areas, e-governance the benefits are mainly enjoyed by the rich. As a result, only a small fraction of the Indian population can benefit from e-government. Aadhaar is a 12-digit personal identification number issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India on behalf of the Government of India. This number acts as an identity and address proof anywhere. Aadhaar number helps you access services like banking and mobile phone connections. Schemes like Aadhaar, NEGP (National e-Governance Plan), and SWAN (State Wide Area Network) have been implemented so that government services are expected to reach all corners of the country and all sections of society. Moreover. There is a need to create awareness among the public that the effectiveness of e-governance depends on expanding the number of citizen-government interactions rather than merely creating e-governance infrastructure. E-government is expected to help the government to do more of its functions. However, this necessitates a change in government operations, perspective, laws, rules, and regulations, and the way it interacts with individuals.

IMPROVEMENTS:
A major nod to the progress of digital democracy in India is the widespread lack of digital literacy and awareness among its people. A substantial portion of the population is still unfamiliar with the use of various digital devices and platforms and lacks the necessary capabilities to do so. Their ability to participate in the decision-making process within the framework of digital democracy is severely limited by this lack of experience and expertise. While digital democracy in India has many potential benefits, it also comes with many drawbacks. To fully realize the potential of digital democracy in India, policymakers and civil society members must acknowledge these issues and take aggressive steps to address them. The idea of digital democracy is a significant turning point in the continuous progress of democracy. Acknowledges the role that interactive technologies can play in the governance process. It's time for governments to take advantage of digital opportunities and meet the expectations of an increasingly internet-savvy generation. Along with implementing inclusive and fully inclusive platforms that cater to the multiple needs of citizens, successful implementation of digital democracy efforts in India requires awareness of local contexts and needs. To achieve this, it is essential to prioritize skill development and digital literacy, as they are essential for the success of Digital India. For e-democracy to be effective, citizens must actively and extensively participate in everyday government operations through digital means. Therefore, the only way to advance e-democracy is for citizens to actively participate in the digital realm. Regional language e-governance is commendable in countries like India, where participants come from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

CONCLUSION :
India is still in the early stages of e-governance development. Although the government has made great strides in providing citizens with e-governance capabilities, this access is still limited to a small segment of the population. E-government can yield positive results only when it is available to all social sections and is inclusive and sustainable. The problem facing the nation is that the visionary and former President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam succinctly summed it up as "e-government, for citizen-friendly." Providing services to its citizens is one of the key responsibilities of the government in a democratic country like India, home to more than a billion people. E-government should facilitate easy availability of information and smooth transfer of information between state and central branches of government. So far, no country has successfully operated an e-government system serving one billion citizens. We have

an important task ahead of us. India is witnessing growth in e-governance. However, there are significant problems that need to be addressed, such as the digital divide and public awareness. High-speed Internet access is essential to the success of e-government initiatives, and the upcoming nationwide deployment of 5G technology reinforces our commitment.

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