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A Study on Awareness of Good Governance and E-Governance among Rural College Students

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Abstract

Good governance and e-governance are important components of democratic administration and public service delivery in India. Good governance emphasizes transparency, accountability, participation, responsiveness, equity, and the rule of law, whereas e-governance involves the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to provide government services efficiently and transparently. Rural college students constitute an important section of the younger generation and have the potential to contribute to democratic participation and digital transformation. However, their awareness of governance principles, online public services, digital platforms, and citizens' responsibilities may differ according to their educational background, access to technology, and exposure to government initiatives. The present study aims to examine awareness of good governance and e-governance among rural college students using a proposed sample of 46 respondents. The study focuses on students' understanding of governance concepts, familiarity with online government services, and awareness of digital platforms, perceived benefits, and challenges in accessing e-governance services. A descriptive research design and a structured questionnaire are proposed for data collection. Illustrative statistical tables are included to demonstrate how the findings may be presented. Since actual respondent-level data have not been supplied, the numerical results are provisional and should not be interpreted as empirical findings. The study highlights the importance of digital literacy, civic education, and awareness programmes in strengthening students' understanding of democratic governance and digital public services.

Keywords: *Good Governance, E-Governance, Rural College Students, Digital Literacy, Transparency, Accountability, Public Administration, India.*

Introduction

Governance refers to the processes through which public institutions exercise authority, formulate policies, implement decisions, and deliver services to citizens. In a democratic country such as India, effective governance is essential for social justice, economic development, public welfare, and the protection of citizens' rights.

Good governance is an approach to public administration that promotes transparency, accountability, participation, responsiveness, efficiency, equity, inclusiveness, and the rule of law. It seeks to ensure that government institutions function in the public interest and that citizens can participate meaningfully in decision-making processes.

In India, the importance of good governance has increased with the expansion of democratic institutions, decentralised administration, citizen-centred service delivery, and public accountability mechanisms. Citizens are expected not only to receive government services but also to understand their rights, fulfil their responsibilities, and participate in democratic processes.E-governance represents the application of information and communication technology in government administration and public service delivery. It includes online applications, digital certificates, electronic payments, information portals, digital grievance redressal systems, and other technology-based services.

The Digital India initiative has encouraged the development of digital infrastructure, online public services, and digital empowerment. Platforms such as UMANG, DigiLocker, and various state government portals have made several public services accessible through digital channels.However, the availability of digital services does not necessarily mean that every citizen understands or can use them effectively. Students in rural colleges may face challenges such as limited digital literacy, unreliable internet connectivity, language barriers, lack of awareness, and difficulties navigating government websites.Rural college students are particularly important because they represent a generation that can influence democratic participation, community awareness, and the adoption of digital public services. Their knowledge of good governance and e-governance can help them access educational scholarships, certificates, employment-related services, welfare schemes, and grievance redressal mechanisms.

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Therefore, examining the awareness of good governance and e-governance among rural college students is important for understanding the role of education and digital literacy in promoting informed citizenship.

Review of Literature

Good Governance and Public Administration

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has emphasised participation, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, equity, effectiveness, and the rule of law as important dimensions of governance. These principles provide a useful framework for assessing citizens' understanding of democratic administration.

E-Governance and Digital Transformation

Heeks (2001) examined the relationship between e-government and development, highlighting the importance of aligning information systems with institutional and social conditions. His work suggests that the introduction of technology alone does not guarantee successful digital governance. Effective digital governance requires more than simply placing existing services online; it also requires institutional coordination and attention to citizens' needs.

Digital Literacy and Rural Communities

Digital literacy influences the ability of individuals to locate information, understand online procedures, evaluate digital content, and use electronic services safely. In rural communities, access to devices, internet connectivity, language accessibility, and opportunities for digital training can affect the use of e-governance platforms.

Research Gap

Existing discussions of good governance and e-governance frequently focus on institutional performance, technological infrastructure, public service delivery, and national digital transformation. A focused assessment of awareness among rural college students can provide useful local evidence regarding civic knowledge and digital public service literacy.

The present study proposes to address this issue by examining awareness among 46 rural college students. Since the respondent-level data have not been supplied, the study's actual empirical contribution will depend on the results obtained through the proposed questionnaire.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives are:

- To examine the level of awareness of good governance among rural college students.
- To assess students' awareness of e-governance and digital public services.
- To identify the digital platforms and online government services familiar to students.
- To understand students' perceptions of transparency, accountability, and efficiency in digital governance.
- To identify the major barriers that may prevent rural students from accessing e-governance services.
- To suggest measures for improving governance awareness and digital literacy among rural college students.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses may be examined after collecting actual survey data:

- H_0 (Null Hypothesis): There is no statistically significant association between students' access to digital resources and their awareness of e-governance.
- H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a statistically significant association between students' access to digital resources and their awareness of e-governance.

Research Methodology

Research Design: The study adopts a descriptive research design to examine awareness of good governance and e-governance among rural college students.

Study Population: The population consists of students studying in a rural college or colleges serving rural communities.

Sample Size: The proposed sample consists of 46 rural college students.

Sampling Technique: Convenience sampling may be used if respondents are selected based on their availability and willingness to participate

Sources of Data

- Primary data: Data collected directly from students through a structured questionnaire.
- Secondary data: Books, research articles, official government websites, and publications of national and international organisations concerned with governance and digital administration.

Research Instrument: A structured questionnaire may contain questions relating to:

- Demographic characteristics.
- Awareness of good governance.
- Knowledge of transparency and accountability.
- Familiarity with e-governance.
- Awareness and use of digital public service platforms.
- Difficulties in accessing online government services.
- Suggestions for improving awareness.

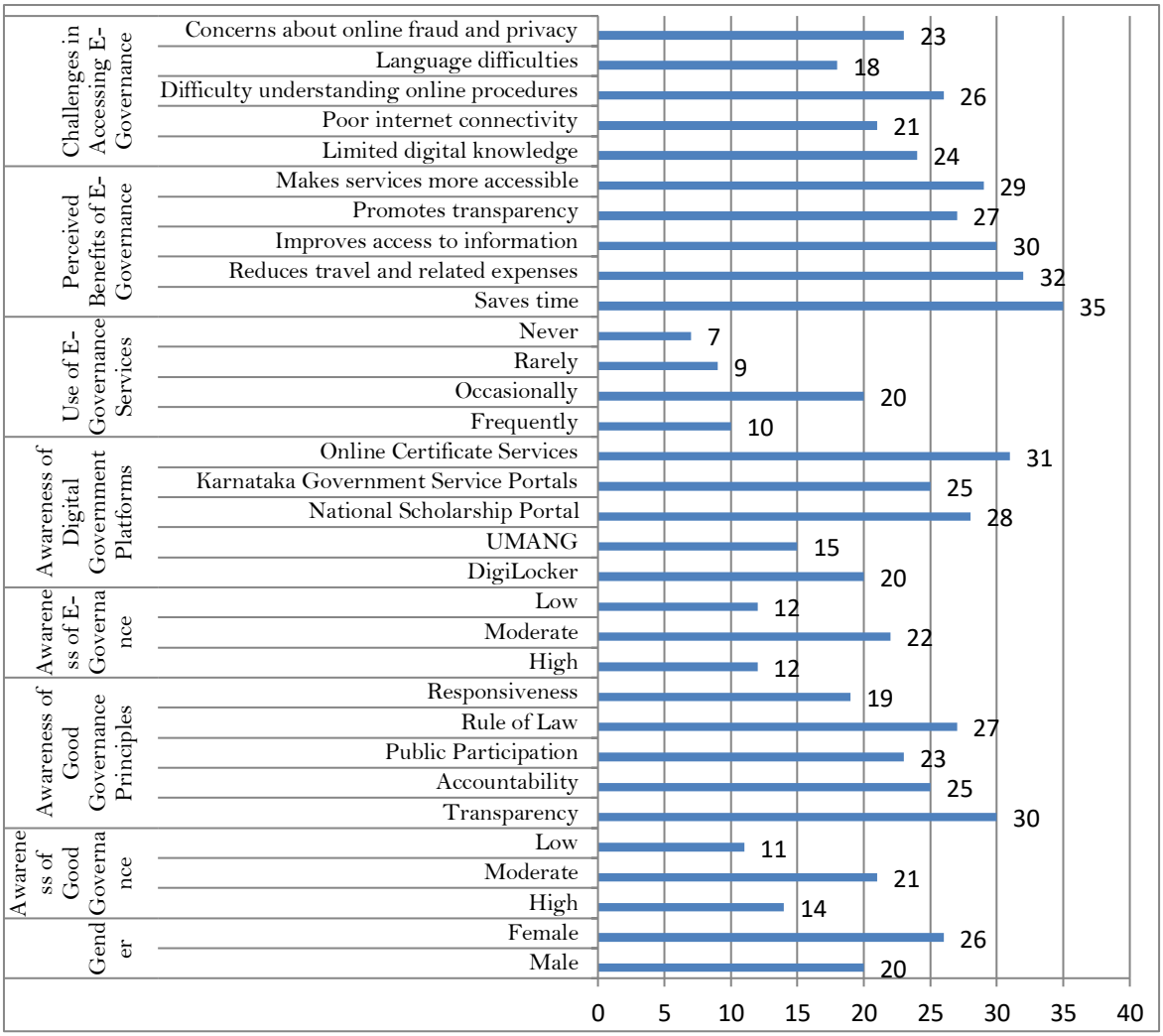
Method of Data Analysis: The data may be analysed using frequencies and percentages. Cross-tabulation and the chi-square test may be used where appropriate to examine associations between categorical variables.

Table 1: Consolidated Analysis of Awareness of Good Governance and E-Governance among Rural College Students (N = 46)

Sl. No.	Variables	Categories / Indicators	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	20	43.48%
		Female	26	56.52%
2	Awareness of Good Governance	High	14	30.43%
		Moderate	21	45.65%
		Low	11	23.91%
3	Awareness of Good Governance Principles	Transparency	30	65.22%
		Accountability	25	54.35%
		Public Participation	23	50.00%
		Rule of Law	27	58.70%
		Responsiveness	19	41.30%
4	Awareness of E-Governance	High	12	26.09%
		Moderate	22	47.83%

		Low	12	26.09%
5	Awareness of Digital Government Platforms	DigiLocker	20	43.48%
		UMANG	15	32.61%
		National Scholarship Portal	28	60.87%
		Karnataka Government Service Portals	25	54.35%
		Online Certificate Services	31	67.39%
6	Use of E-Governance Services	Frequently	10	21.74%
		Occasionally	20	43.48%
		Rarely	9	19.57%
		Never	7	15.22%
7	Perceived Benefits of E-Governance	Saves time	35	76.09%
		Reduces travel and related expenses	32	69.57%
		Improves access to information	30	65.22%
		Promotes transparency	27	58.70%
		Makes services more accessible	29	63.04%
8	Challenges in Accessing E-Governance	Limited digital knowledge	24	52.17%
		Poor internet connectivity	21	45.65%
		Difficulty understanding online procedures	26	56.52%
		Language difficulties	18	39.13%
		Concerns about online fraud and privacy	23	50.00%

Graph 1: Consolidated Analysis of Awareness of Good Governance and E-Governance among Rural College Students (N = 46)



Interpretation of Data

The consolidated data presented in the table provide an overview of the awareness of good governance and e-governance among 46 rural college students. Regarding gender distribution, 26 respondents (56.52%) are female, while 20 respondents (43.48%) are male. In terms of awareness of good governance, 21 students (45.65%) have moderate awareness, 14 students (30.43%) have high awareness, and 11 students (23.91%) have low awareness. Concerning the principles of good governance, 30 students (65.22%) are aware of transparency, 27 (58.70%) are aware of the rule of law, 25 (54.35%) understand accountability, 23 (50.00%) recognise the importance of public participation, and 19 (41.30%) are aware of responsiveness. Regarding e-governance, 22 students (47.83%) demonstrate moderate awareness, while 12 students each (26.09%) fall into the high- and low-awareness categories. With respect to digital government platforms, 31 students (67.39%) are aware of online certificate services, 28 (60.87%) know about the National Scholarship Portal, 25 (54.35%) are familiar with Karnataka government service portals, 20 (43.48%) are aware of DigiLocker, and 15 (32.61%) know about UMANG. Concerning the use of e-governance services, 20 students (43.48%) use these services occasionally, 10 (21.74%) use them frequently, 9 (19.57%) use them rarely, and 7 (15.22%) have never used them. Regarding the perceived benefits of e-governance, 35 students (76.09%) believe that it saves time, 32 (69.57%) feel that it reduces travel and related expenses, 30 (65.22%) believe that it improves access to information, 29 (63.04%) consider it helpful in making services more accessible, and 27 (58.70%) associate it with improved transparency. However, students also identify several challenges in accessing e-governance services: 26 (56.52%) report difficulty understanding online procedures, 24 (52.17%) identify limited digital knowledge, 23 (50.00%) express concerns about online fraud and privacy, 21 (45.65%) report poor internet connectivity, and 18 (39.13%) experience language difficulties. Overall, the illustrative data indicate that awareness of good governance and e-governance exists among the respondents, but there may be scope to strengthen their understanding of governance principles and improve their practical digital skills. The results also highlight the potential importance of digital literacy programmes, practical demonstrations of online government services, Kannada-language guidance, and awareness campaigns in rural colleges. Since these figures are illustrative rather than actual survey results, the final interpretation and conclusions must be revised according to the responses collected from the 46 students.

Major Findings

The following are potential findings to be examined after collecting the actual responses. They are not conclusions established by the illustrative tables.

- The proportion of students who understand the basic principles of good governance needs to be assessed.
- Students' awareness of transparency, accountability, public participation, and the rule of law should be compared.
- Familiarity with digital public service platforms may differ from general awareness of e-governance.
- The frequency of online service use may be influenced by students' access to devices and internet connectivity.
- Difficulties in understanding online procedures, limited digital skills, and language barriers may affect access to services.
- Awareness programmes and practical digital training may help students understand governance concepts and use digital public services more effectively.

Scope for Further Research

Future studies may compare awareness among rural and urban college students, examine differences across academic disciplines, investigate the relationship between digital literacy and e-governance usage, or evaluate the impact of awareness programmes. A larger sample drawn from multiple colleges could provide a broader understanding of the subject. Researchers could also conduct interviews or focus-group discussions to understand students' experiences with digital public services in greater depth.

Conclusion

Good governance and e-governance are essential for strengthening democratic administration, improving public service delivery, and encouraging citizen participation. Good governance promotes transparency, accountability, responsiveness, equity, and the rule of law. E-governance uses digital technologies to support the delivery of public services and improve communication between government institutions and citizens. Rural college students are an important group for studying the relationship between civic awareness and digital participation. Their understanding of governance principles and ability to use digital services may influence their educational opportunities, access to welfare schemes, and participation in democratic processes.

The proposed study of 46 rural college students provides a framework for examining awareness of good governance, familiarity with e-governance platforms, perceived benefits, and challenges in accessing online services. The illustrative tables show how the results can be organised and interpreted once the survey has been completed.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of thesis paper.

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