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AWARENESS OF CITIZEN ABOUT VARIOUS E-GOVERNANCE INITIATIVES- THE ROLE OF SOCIAL ATTRIBUTES: A STUDY IN THE CONTEXT OF KERALA STATE

Kavitha K S ^{*1}, Berny B Raj ², A Rajasekaran ³

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce,
S. N. College, Kollam, Kerala (India)

²Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce,
TKMM College, Nangiarkulangara, Kerala (India)

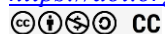
³Associate Professor, Department of Commerce,
S. N. College, Kollam, Kerala (India)

ABSTRACT: *While considering the socio economic development of various regions of the country, Kerala can be considered as a pioneer state which has achieved a high social development. Various e-governance projects has been planned and implemented in the state after the implementation of NeGP(National E governance plan)in 2005 which aims at enhancing, accessibility and transparency of e governance and thereby enhance the efficiency of administration which helped Kerala to be first India's first digital state. Numerous studies has been conducted for analysing and evaluating the performance and achievements of Kerala E governance system , but research which focus on the socio-economic attributes or determinants of citizens which has contributed in the development of e governance initiatives has not been made. The major aim of the present study is to explore and analyse the socio-economic profile of citizens who availed e-governance services across Kerala by studying various variables such as their age, income education, religion etc. The study reveals that highly educated and high income group are more utilising the privilege of e governance rather than persons having lower standard of living.*

KEYWORDS: E Governance, Social attributes, NeGP

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1. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of ICT had brought tremendous changes in the life of human kind. World is under going a transformation, and the ICT had made revolutionary changes in various fields such as trade, commerce, education, communication, governance etc. E-governance or electronic governance, the process of utilising the tools of ICT in governance process has improved the service delivery mechanism of modern governments and the quality of governance. The main attraction of e governance is that it ensures the participation of citizens in the governance process, thereby ensuring transparency and speed in the process of governance process. It also helped to reduce red tapism and increased the responsibility of officials ICT is considered as a cornerstone for development and citizen empowerment after the campaign of digital India. In this context while considering the case of Kerala state, it is a state which has high literacy rate and better social developments; it has also achieved the privilege of becoming first e-literate and fully digital state. The activities of Kerala government has been highly supported by institutions such as the Kerala State IT Mission (KSITM), Centre for Development of Imaging Technology (CDIT), National Informatics Centre (NIC), and Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), which were the pioneering agencies which plans and implement various e governance projects in Kerala.

Infact the achievements of Kerala in e governance process has been attained mainly through the support and participation of citizens in the e So it is important to study who has been actively participating in the e governance process and how various social attributes such as age, gender, education, and socio-economic background can significantly affect the adoption and utilisation of e-governance services. For ensuring digital inclusivity and for developing new plans, policies and initiatives, these variables are to be studied thoroughly.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

- E-governance refers to the use of ICT by governments to deliver services and information to citizens, but the extent of awareness of citizen about various e governance initiatives are different and it may depend upon various attributes.
- Citizens' attitudes towards e-government and e-governance: a UK study made by Alisa Kolskaer and Liz Lee Kelly (2008) analysed the attitude of citizen towards e governance in UK , and identified that citizen express a positive attitude towards the ability of the e governance system for bringing in user friendliness , personalisation, proper communication system etc.
- The role of demographic and personality characteristics on the extent of usage of e governance portals in rural India was studied by VA Venkatesh and T A Sykes(2014) and identified 40% variances in the extent of usage of e governance portals due to the discrepancies in demographic and personality traits .
- Nadine et. al. (2023).) Studied the impact of demographic and social factors on the utilisation of local e governance in Brazil and pointed out a positive correlation between the social and demographic factors and extent of the utilisation of e governance and ICT technology and the availability of various facilities.
- Saranyamol (2019) attempted to check the influence of demographic components of the beneficiaries in their satisfaction level of availing the e governance service through a field study and identified that demographic conditions of the beneficiaries highly influence their attitude and satisfaction level towards the e governance services.
- Study conducted by Al althmay (2015) based on UAE has pointed out the impact of demographic variables such as age, gender, type of education, job etc. influences the extent of the usage of e governance.
- Batastia et.al (2023) studied the impact of socio economic attributes of society in the implementation of local e governance and identified a positive correlation between with some

indicators namely: GDP per capita, per capita income, internet connection by fixed broadband, internet usage in households and degree of urbanisation of the municipality with the maturity in the implementation of e governance in the local society.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study aims to check the influence of some social attributes of citizens on awareness about various e governance services. Although various studies has made regarding the influence of demographic factors on e governance usage has been made, but ,a research gap occurs in profiling the relationship between the demographic background of citizens and the extent of their awareness level on e-governance services in Kerala. The study on these aspects may contribute more understandings regarding the demographic disparities prevailing in the society and its influence in the utilisation level of e governance, the extent of digital inclusion of various sessions of the society and extent of the growth of e governance process.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- (i) To check the impact of gender, and education on the level of awareness on e-governance
- (ii) To verify the influence of education on the awareness level of the e governance beneficiaries

5. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Both primary and secondary data has been used for the study. Primary data has been collected from a sample size of 326 beneficiaries availing various e governance initiatives of Kerala Government, adopting the method of Convenience Sampling, which may provide empirical evidence on the extent of utilisation of e governance services based on socio economic attributes of the beneficiaries. Secondary data is collected from books, journals, websites etc.

6. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The Level of Awareness about the e-governance across Gender and Educational Qualification of the People of Kerala

Hypothesis

H₁ There are is an effect of gender on the level of awareness about e governance initiatives

H₂ There is an effect of education on the level of awareness about e governance initiatives

H₃ There is an interaction between the gender and education on the level of awareness about the e-governance initiatives in Kerala.

The gender did not influence the level of awareness of the people about the e-governance initiatives in the state. Hence the hypotheses set as there is a significant influence of gender in the level of awareness of the people about the e-governance initiatives in the state is rejected .The null hypotheses are tested as false in the case of influence of educational qualifications in the level of awareness of the people about the e-governance initiatives in the state. So that the null hypotheses were rejected. There is a significant influence of education on the awareness status of the beneficiaries.

The null hypotheses set as there is no statistically significant interaction between the gender and education on the level of awareness about the e-governance initiatives in Kerala, is rejected as the there was a statistically significant interaction between the gender and education on the level of awareness about the e-governance initiatives in Kerala. $F(4,316) = 2.54, p=.040$.

Two-Way Anova Results

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Gender	Educational Qualification	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Female	Under Metric	1.01	0.89	27
	SSLC	1.74	0.50	23
	Undergraduate	1.84	0.73	47

	Graduate and above	2.05	0.73	62
	Others	1.17		1
	Total	1.76	0.81	160
Male	Under matric	1.16	0.60	37
	SSLC	1.39	0.70	45
	Undergraduate	1.96	0.79	28
	Graduate and above	2.27	0.54	47
	Others	2.52	0.69	9
	Total	1.75	0.80	166
Total	Under matric	1.10	0.73	64
	SSLC	1.51	0.66	68
	Undergraduate	1.88	0.75	75
	Graduate and above	2.15	0.66	109
	Others	2.38	0.78	10
	Total	1.75	0.80	326

Source: Calculated primary data

A two-way between-subjects ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of the gender and the educational qualification of the people on their level of awareness about the e-governance initiatives in Kerala. There was no statistically significant main effect of gender on the level of awareness about the e-governance initiatives of the people in Kerala, $F(1,316) = 3.48, p = .063$. However, the main effect of education of the people on their awareness of e-governance initiatives was statistically significant, $F(4,316) = 25.70, p < .001$. There was a statistically significant interaction between gender and education on the level of awareness about the e-governance initiatives in Kerala., $F(4,316) = 2.54, p = .040$.

Table 2: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable:	Level of Awareness About Different Components					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	59.05 ^a	9	6.56	13.68	<.001	0.280
Intercept	219.17	1	219.17	457.03	<.001	0.591
Gender	1.67	1	1.67	3.48	.063	0.011
Education	49.30	4	12.32	25.70	<.001	0.245
Gender * Education	4.88	4	1.22	2.54	.040	0.031
Error	151.54	316	0.48			
Total	1213.64	326				
Corrected Total	210.59	325				

a. R Squared = .280 (Adjusted R Squared = .260)

Source: Calculated primary data

Table 2 shows the test of between subject effects on the level of awareness about different components of awareness. The gender factor is not significant due to the p value is greater than 0.05. But education is highly significant in the population; the p value is less than 0.01. However the interaction between gender and education is significant in the 5 per cent significant level.

Table 3: Multiple Comparisons across Districts

(I) Education(J) Education		Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p-value	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Under Metric	SSLC	-.4134*	0.121	.007	-0.75	-0.07
	Under Graduate	-.7881*	0.118	<.001	-1.12	-0.45

	Graduate & Above	-1.0489*	0.109	<.001	-1.36	-0.74
	Others	-1.2870*	0.235	<.001	-1.95	-0.62
SSLC	Under Metric	.4134*	0.121	.007	0.07	0.75
	Under Graduate	-.3746*	0.116	.014	-0.70	-0.05
	Graduate & Above	-.6355*	0.107	<.001	-0.94	-0.33
	Others	-.8735*	0.235	.002	-1.54	-0.21
Under Graduate	Under Metric	.7881*	0.118	<.001	0.45	1.12
	SSLC	.3746*	0.116	.014	0.05	0.70
	Graduate & Above	-.2608	0.104	.126	-0.55	0.03
	Others	-.4989	0.233	.331	-1.16	0.16
Graduate & Above	Under Metric	1.0489*	0.109	<.001	0.74	1.36
	SSLC	.6355*	0.107	<.001	0.33	0.94
	Under Graduate	.2608	0.104	.126	-0.03	0.55
	Others	-.2381	0.229	1.000	-0.88	0.41
Others	Under Metric	1.2870*	0.235	<.001	0.62	1.95
	SSLC	.8735*	0.235	.002	0.21	1.54
	Under Graduate	.4989	0.233	.331	-0.16	1.16
	Graduate & Above	.2381	0.229	1.000	-0.41	0.88

Source: Calculated primary data

Based on observed means.

The error term is Mean Square (Error) = .480.

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Bonferroni-adjusted multiple comparisons indicated that there was a significant difference in the level of awareness of the people across 70 per cent of their educational qualification pairs compared. The results indicate that the level of awareness of male members about the e-governance in Kerala was not significantly different from that of the female members, and therefore, gender did not influence the level of awareness of the people about the e-governance initiatives in the state. But the educational qualification of the people had a significant effect on the level of awareness of the people about the e-governance initiatives in the state.

7. CONCLUSION

In this advanced era of technology governance has wide scope. The busy and advanced life of people boosts the necessity of speedy and easy accessibility of government services. It brings the relevance of e governance initiatives by government. E governance ensures speedy and hassle free services to the citizens. It brings services accessible in the finger tips of citizens. But the success of any programme depends upon the level of awareness of the beneficiaries about the programme. With regard to the level of awareness of people of Kerala about various e governance initiatives of state government is studied based on various social attributes such as gender of the population and the educational qualification of the beneficiaries. From the study it has been identified that the gender has no significant effect with regard to the awareness level on various initiatives provided by government, which means that the level of awareness of male and females are almost of the same level. While considering the relationship between education and the level of the awareness regarding the e governance initiatives, it has been identified that the education level of the beneficiaries influences their awareness level. It means as the people are more educated the level of their awareness regarding the various initiatives of e governance seems to increase.

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