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Q. e-Governance facilitates interaction between different stakeholders in governance. Mention the types of interaction in e-Governance. Also, highlight various stages of e-Governance. (250 words)

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Approach

- Briefly explain the concept of e-Governance and its benefits in governance.
- Enumerate the different types of interaction in e-Governance.
- Then discuss the various stages of e-Governance.
- Conclude by mentioning some of the steps taken by the government to facilitate e-Governance.

Answer

E-Governance, in essence, is the application of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to government functioning in order to create 'Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsive and Transparent' (SMART) governance

The goals of e-Governance are

- Better service delivery to citizens
- Ushering in transparency and accountability
- Empowering people through information
- Improved efficiency within Governments
- Improve interface with business and industry

E-Governance facilitates interaction between different stakeholders such as citizens, businesses, employees and other government agencies in governance using ICT. These interactions may be described as following:

- **G2G (Government to Government):** This kind of interaction is only within the sphere of government. Here, ICT is used to restructure the governmental processes involved in the functioning of government entities and also to increase the flow of information and services within and between different entities. The primary objective is to enhance efficiency, performance and output.
- **G2C (Government to Citizens):** In this case, an interface is created between the government and citizens which enables the citizens to benefit from efficient delivery of a large range of public services. The primary purpose is to make the government citizen-friendly.
- **G2B (Government to Business):** Here, e-Governance tools are used to aid the business community – providers of goods and services – to seamlessly interact with the government. The objective is to cut red-tapism, save time, reduce operational costs and to create a more transparent business environment when dealing with the government. Employing methods of e-governance across all departments has been one of the primary reasons which results in improving India's Ease of Doing Business ranking.
- **G2E (Government to Employees):** This interaction is a two-way process between the organization and the employees. Use of ICT tools helps in making these interactions fast and efficient on the one hand and increase satisfaction levels of employees on the other

In order to guide and benchmark e-Governance development, e-Governance maturity model has outlined various stages for e-Governance development:

- **Information:** This is the first phase in the e-Governance process. In the first phase, e-Governance means being present on the web, and providing the external public (G2C and G2B) with relevant information. Government information is publicly accessible; processes are described and thus become more transparent, which strengthens democracy and improves service delivery.
- **Interaction:** In this second phase, people can ask questions via email, use the search engines for information and are able to download all sorts of forms and documents thus facilitating the interaction between government and the public.
- **Transaction:** In the third phase, complete transactions can be done without physically going to an office. For example, online services of filing income tax, property tax, extending/renewal of licenses, visas and passports, online voting, etc. Now the complete process is online, including payments, digital signatures etc. This saves time, paper and money.
- **Transformation:** The fourth phase is the transformation phase in which all information systems are integrated and the public can get G2C and G2B services at one (virtual) counter. One single point of contact for all services is the ultimate goal.

The UN e-Governance Survey 2008 report has taken this model a step further and introduced, as fifth phase, the concept of 'Connected Government', which means Governments transform themselves into a connected entity that responds to the needs of its citizens by developing an integrated back office infrastructure.

With the ongoing mobile and broadband revolution, India can become a world leader in e-Governance. Government is pushing for e-Governance via programs like Digital India Programme, Aadhaar Enabled Payment system, National e-Governance plan, PRAGATI platform and by providing services through Common Service Centres, etc. Such efforts must

be supported with a robust data protection framework as recommended by the Justice Srikrishna Committee, while enabling India to reap the benefits of e-Governance.