

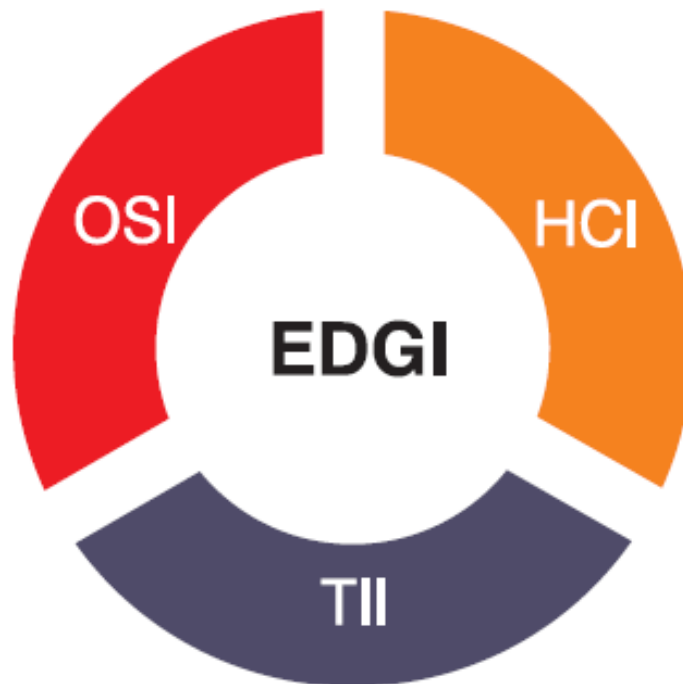


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e-Government Development Index

INTRODUCTION:

- **Aim:** It presents the state of E-Government Development of the United Nations Member States. Along with an assessment of the website development patterns in a country, the E-Government Development index incorporates the access characteristics, such as the infrastructure and educational levels, to reflect how a country is using information technologies to promote access and inclusion of its people.
- **Not an absolute index:** The EGDI is not designed to capture e-government development in an absolute sense; rather, it aims to give a performance rating of national governments relative to one another.
- **UN DESA:** The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) has been publishing the EGDI and survey report since 2001.
- **Intended for:** The Survey is intended mainly for policy makers, government officials, academia, civil society, private sector and other practitioners and experts in the areas of sustainable development, public administration, digital government and ICTs for development.
- **The EGDI is a composite measure of three important dimensions of e-government, namely:**
 - Provision of online services
 - Telecommunication connectivity
 - Human capacity
- **Mathematically,** EGDI is the weighted average of normalized scores on these three dimensions of e-Government:
 - The Scope and quality of online services as online Service Index (OSI)
 - The Status of the development of telecommunication infrastructure or the Telecommunication Infrastructure Index (TII)
 - The inherent human capital or the Human Capital Index (HCI).



- **Nodal Ministry:** The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology is working as a nodal Ministry for Monitoring of E-Government Development Index.
- **Number of participating countries:** 193

INDIA'S RANK AS PER UN EGDI:

Year	Rank	EGDI Composite Score
2020	100th	0.5964
2018	100th	0.5669
2016	100th	0.4637
2014	100th	0.3834

UN E-GOVERNMENT SURVEY 2020

- **During Pandemic:** The launch of Survey 2020 took place during unprecedented time of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the pandemic has reinvigorated the role of e-government, both in its conventional delivery of digital services as well as new innovative efforts in managing the crisis, it has also brought challenges and multiple forms of digital divides to the fore, especially among the poorest and the most vulnerable groups.
- **India's Position:** India slipped 4 places to rank 100th in the UN's E-Government Survey 2020. In the last survey in 2018 India had jumped 22

places to rank 96. In the latest survey, India ranks behind Bolivia (97) and Iran (89).

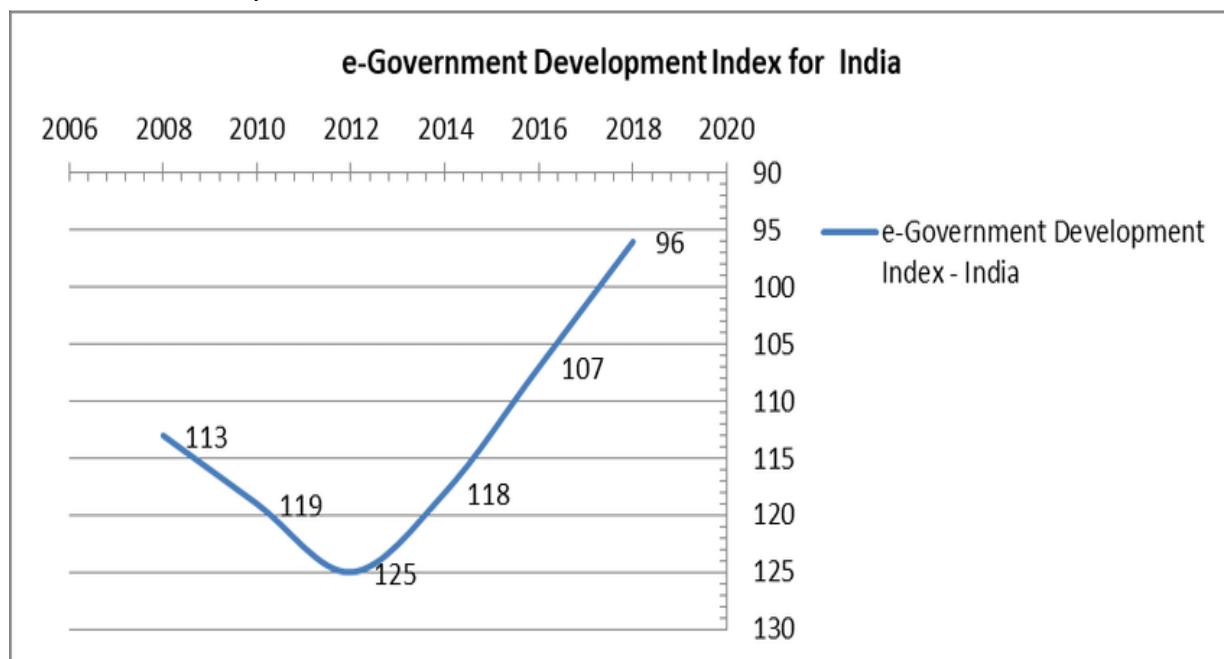
- **Ranking of Other Countries:** Leading the 2020 ranking of the 193 United Nations Member States are:
 - Denmark was ranked first with a near-perfect E-Government Development Index (EGDI) rating of 0.9758. Followed by the Republic of Korea and Estonia, Finland, Australia, Sweden, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, the United States, the Netherlands, Singapore, Iceland, Norway and Japan.
 - Among the world's least developed countries, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Cambodia have become leaders in digital government development, advancing from the middle to the high E-Government Development Index (EGDI) group in 2020.
- **Period of Survey:** The survey covers a two-year period from July 2018 to June 2020.
 - Overall, 65 per cent of Member States are at the high or very high EGDI level.

E-GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT INDEX 2020			
 Saint Kitts and Nevis	HEGDI	95	0.6352
 San Marino	HEGDI	96	0.6175
 Bolivia	HEGDI	97	0.6129
 Antigua and Barbuda	HEGDI	98	0.6055
 Dominica	HEGDI	99	0.6013
 India	HEGDI	100	0.5964
 Ghana	HEGDI	101	0.5960
 Grenada	HEGDI	102	0.5812
 Bhutan	HEGDI	103	0.5777
 Namibia	HEGDI	104	0.5747
 Maldives	HEGDI	105	0.5740
 Morocco	HEGDI	106	0.5729

INDIA'S PERFORMANCE:

- India's overall score was 0.5484.
- India scored well on the Online Services sub-index with a score of 0.9514.
- However, it had a dismal score of 0.20091 in the Telecommunication Infrastructure Index.

- With a score of 0.6627, India ranked well below the global average on the Human Capital Index.



Innovative digital government responses to COVID-19 by different countries:

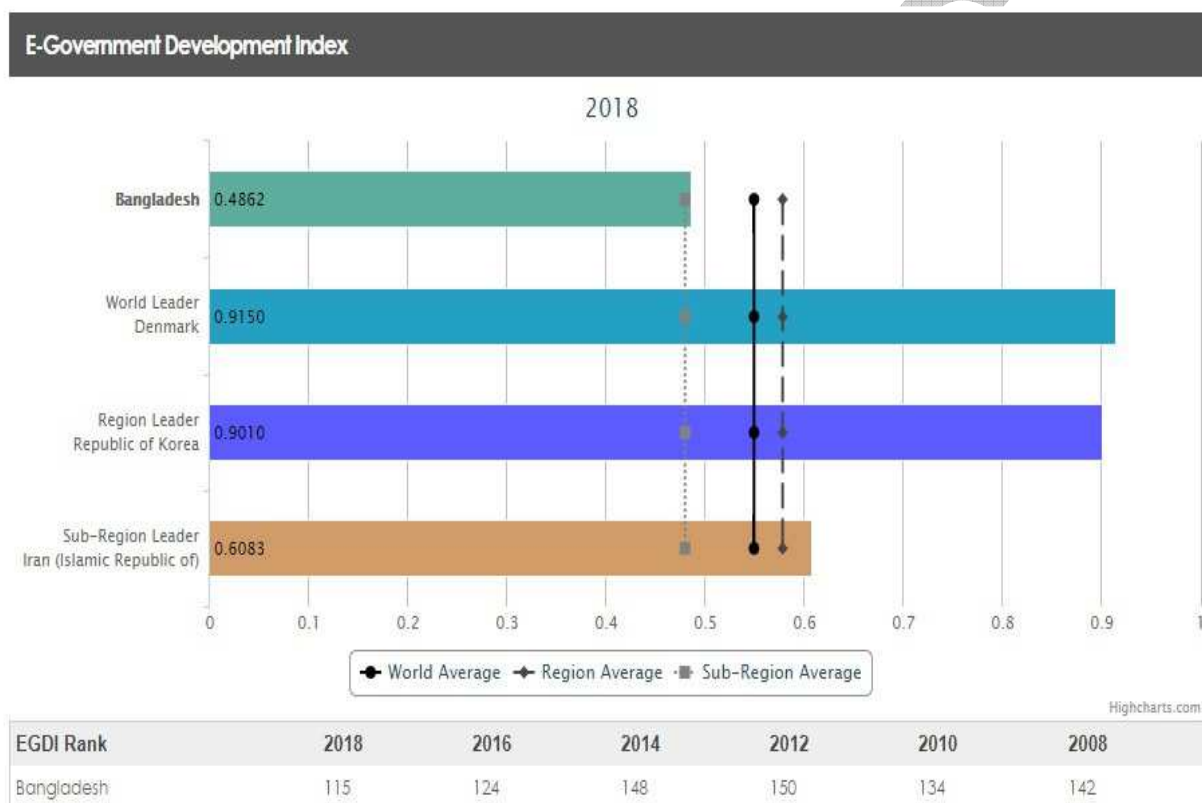
- Online dashboards in Canada and Australia to share information and track emergency responses.
- In China, chat bots are used to assess patients' risk of being infected.
- A community engagement app in Estonia allowed local governments to directly interact with their constituents, including through sharing COVID-19 information, posting photos and videos and even organizing virtual events.
- In Croatia, a "virtual doctor" is powered by artificial intelligence and developed by technology firms in cooperation with epidemiologists.
- In London, the use of cameras, sensors and AI algorithms, normally intended to control traffic, now measures distance between pedestrians to control social distance.

The Methodology:

- The EGDI, which assesses e-government development at the national level, is a composite index based on the weighted average of three normalized indices.
- One-third is derived from the Telecommunications Infrastructure Index (TII), one-third from the Human Capital Index (HCI), and one-third from the Online Service Index (OSI) the latter based on data collected from an independent Online Service Questionnaire (OSQ), conducted by UNDESA, which assesses

the national online presence of all 193 United Nations Member States, complemented by a Member State Questionnaire (MSQ).

- The Survey also includes the E-Participation Index (EPI), a supplementary index to the United Nations E-Government Survey focusing on the government use of online services through “e-information sharing”, “e-consultation” and “e-decision-making” and the Local Online Services Index (LOSI), a study assessing progress made in local e-government development through the e-government portals of cities.



CHALLENGES:

- **Risk of Digital Divide:** There is a risk of a new digital divide, as low-income countries with insufficient infrastructure are lagging behind, leaving already vulnerable people even more at risk of not being able to gain any advantage from new technologies.
- **Low pace of technological progress:** Despite some investments and developmental gains, many countries are still unable to benefit from ICTs because of poor connectivity, high cost of access and lack of necessary skills. These factors have a detrimental effect on the further development of e-government in low EGDI-ranked regions such as Africa as the pace of technological progress intensifies.

- **For India:** One of the biggest challenges for India, a country with the world's second highest number of languages, is finding content online in a local language. Despite progress providing local, relevant and useful content, in addition to raising awareness about it, much more effort is required.

IMPORTANCE OF e-GOVERNMENT:

- **Role in SDGs:** According to the UN, e-government is a key factor in order to advance the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Accessibility:** Public services should be accessible for all and e-government has to harness existing and new technologies in order to ensure that.
- **E-government services:** Transactional services are among the most common features offered by e-government websites worldwide. In 2018, it was found that 139 countries enabled their citizens to submit income taxes via national websites. The majority of countries enable citizens to access downloadable forms, receive updates or access archived information about a wide range of sectors such as education, employment, environment, health and social protection.
- **For developing countries:** E-governance is an informative and flourishing aspect of the public sector of developing countries. It has become a prime focus of these countries to achieve citizen-oriented and innovative governance.

E-Participation Index:

- The e-participation index (EPI) is derived as a supplementary index to the UN E-Government Survey.
- It extends the dimension of the Survey by focusing on the use of online services to facilitate provision of information by governments to citizens ("e-information sharing"), interaction with stakeholders ("econsultation"), and engagement in decision-making processes ("e-decision making").

E-Participation Framework:

- **E-information:** Enabling participation by providing citizens with public information and access to information without or upon demand.
- **E-consultation:** Engaging citizens in contributions to and deliberation on public policies and services.
- **E-decision-making:** Empowering citizens through co-design of policy option and co-production of service components and delivery modalities.

DIGITAL DIVIDE:

- In developed countries: the evaluation of various aspects of digital democracy is made from the perspective of a digital divide (i.e the accessibility of e-governance projects through either increasing number of project or increasing accessibility to internet).
- In most South Asian countries: like in India, there exists a wide disparity within the parameters of digital inclusion. Therefore we cannot simply rank the idea of Digital Democracy in these countries based simply on the basis of the supply of each parameter as provided to users.
- Suggestion: Instead, there is a need to analyze and study user specific barriers, which at times exclude them from being part of the whole digital democracy initiative. Only then with the help of the UN will countries like India effectively enable its citizens to fairly contribute to civic life online.

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