3. Vishakhapatnam Declaration On E-Governance – Polity

Visakhapatnam Declaration Charts Roadmap for India's Digital Transformation. The Visakhapatnam Declaration on E-Governance aims to deepen digital service delivery by scaling up AI-driven platforms, ensuring digital inclusion in remote regions, and reforming the civil service. It seeks to implement the "Minimum Government, Maximum Governance" vision by replicating successful local e-governance models nationwide.

The Visakhapatnam Declaration on E-Governance

The Visakhapatnam Declaration on E-Governance was formally adopted during the 28th National Conference on e-Governance, held in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. This declaration outlines a forward-looking strategy to deepen and expand digital governance across India.

Key Highlights of the Declaration

Hosting and Theme - The conference was co-hosted by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY), and the Government of Andhra Pradesh. Its central theme was "Viksit Bharat - Civil Service and Digital Transformation," reflecting the vision of "Minimum Government, Maximum Governance."

Focus on Digital Inclusion - The declaration prioritizes extending digital governance to underserved and connectivity-challenged regions, with a special focus on the North-East and Ladakh. This will be achieved by expanding the list of mandatory e-services under the NeSDA (National e-Governance Services Delivery Assessment) framework to ensure uniform service delivery.

Scaling AI-Driven Platforms - A key goal is to scale up the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in public services. This includes expanding initiatives like -

1. **Digital India BHASHINI** - For breaking down language barriers and enabling multilingual communications.
2. **Digi Yatra** - For seamless and paperless airport check-ins.
3. **NADRES V2** - An advanced system for agricultural disaster risk reduction.

The declaration emphasizes the need for ethical, transparent, and accountable use of AI in all government applications.

Replicating Regional Innovation - The plan includes identifying and replicating successful grassroots digital governance models nationwide. For instance, the digital transformation success of Rohini Gram Panchayat in Maharashtra will be studied and scaled up, along with other effective digital Panchayat models.

Support for Agriculture - It calls for accelerating the rollout of the National Agri Stack. This digital infrastructure aims to provide farmers with seamless access to essential services like credit, market information, and agricultural advisories, while also promoting climate-smart and sustainable farming practices.

Civil Service Reform - The declaration endorses a whole-of-government approach to reform. It stresses the need for strengthening the civil services by equipping officials with advanced digital skills and promoting agile, data-driven governance frameworks.

Developing Visakhapatnam as an IT Hub - The declaration supports the Government of Andhra Pradesh's vision to transform Visakhapatnam into a premier IT and innovation hub through targeted infrastructure development and the creation of special IT zones.

Understanding E-Governance

What is it? - E-Governance refers to the application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by the government to deliver public services, exchange information with citizens, and streamline administrative processes.

Benefits -

1. **Efficiency** - Enables faster, cheaper, and paperless transactions, reducing administrative overhead.
2. **Transparency & Accountability** - Reduces opportunities for corruption by making processes visible and allowing for direct monitoring of service delivery.

3. **Inclusivity** - Extends the reach of government services to rural and remote areas, often through **Common Services Centres (CSCs)**.
4. **Citizen Empowerment** - Provides citizens with 24x7 access to information and services, fostering a more participatory form of governance.
5. **Economic Growth** - Acts as a catalyst for the digital economy, boosting the IT industry and creating opportunities for startups.

Key Challenges to E-Governance in India

Implementation Disparity - Significant variations exist between states and even within states, with some local governments lagging in digital capacity, infrastructure, or funding.

The Digital Divide - Unequal access to the internet, smartphones, and a lack of digital literacy remain major barriers, particularly in remote, tribal, or underdeveloped districts.

Data Protection and Security - As digital services scale, the risk of data leaks, cyberattacks, and misuse of personal information increases. Ensuring data confidentiality, user consent, and strong legal safeguards is critical.

Sustainability and Capacity-Building - Maintaining and upgrading complex digital systems, continuously training personnel, and providing user support are resource-intensive, ongoing challenges.

Governance vs. Execution Gap - Strong policies often fail to translate into effective on-ground implementation due to administrative inertia, a lack of skilled technical staff, or resistance from legacy systems.

Major E-Governance Initiatives

Connectivity and Infrastructure (Digital India) - The flagship Digital India program has been instrumental in building a robust nationwide digital infrastructure, which serves as the backbone for all e-governance services.

Aadhaar & DBT - Aadhaar-enabled e-KYC has simplified identity verification and reduced paperwork. Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) ensures that welfare benefits are transferred directly to beneficiaries' accounts, curbing leakages and corruption.

Karmayogi Bharat - This initiative is a capacity-building program aimed at creating a future-ready civil service. It focuses on equipping officials with the right Attitude, Skills, and Knowledge (ASK) for citizen-centric governance. As of July 2025, it has over 1.26 crore users and has issued more than 3.8 crore certificates.

DigiLocker - This platform aims for the 'Digital Empowerment' of citizens by providing them with a secure digital wallet to store and access authentic documents like driver's licenses, vehicle registrations, and academic mark sheets.

UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance) - This "super app" provides a single, unified platform for all Indian citizens to access a wide range of e-Gov services from Central, State, and Local government bodies on their mobile phones.

Source - https - //www.pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetailm.aspx?PRID=2170271