



6. The Role of Mobile Governance in Society: A Study of Rampur District, Uttar Pradesh

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Abstract

In the contemporary digital era, mobile technology has emerged as a powerful tool for transforming governance, reshaping the way public services are delivered and how citizens engage with government institutions. This research focuses on the role of mobile governance (m-governance) in society, with a special emphasis on its impact in the Rampur district of Uttar Pradesh. Mobile governance refers to the use of mobile and wireless technologies-such as smartphones, SMS, and mobile applications- for providing government services, sharing information, and facilitating two-way communication between the state and its citizens. This study examines how m- governance initiatives contribute to improved administrative efficiency, greater transparency, enhanced accessibility, and more inclusive public participation in governance.

The study also explores the role of mobile governance in promoting transparency and accountability. In Rampur, as in many other parts of India, corruption, red tape, and administrative inefficiencies have often hindered effective governance. However, mobile applications that allow real-time service tracking, public feedback, and instant communication with authorities have begun to counter these challenges by creating a more responsive system. This not only improves service delivery but also fosters trust between the government and the people.

Keywords: Mobile Apps, Digital Technology, Government, Public Service Innovation, Digital Literacy and Society



Introduction

The inspiration for choosing the topic “The Role of Mobile Governance in Society” emerged from my curiosity about how mobile devices- something so ubiquitous in our daily lives—have evolved into powerful tools for civic participation, service delivery, and administrative efficiency. In a country like India, where mobile phone usage surpasses internet-enabled computer usage, m- governance holds immense potential to bridge the digital divide and bring governance closer to the people, particularly those in remote and marginalized communities.

The research delves into real-world examples and case studies to highlight how mobile governance initiatives have improved sectors such as healthcare, transportation, agriculture, sanitation, and education. Apps like UMANG, m-Aadhaar, m-Kisan, and Aarogya Setu are more than just digital tools; they represent a new era of governance that empowers individuals by placing services at their fingertips. Furthermore, this study also reflects on the challenges that come with the implementation of m- governance, such as technological infrastructure, data security, and inclusivity, and suggests ways to overcome these barriers for a more effective governance model.

As a budding media professional, I consider this research not just an academic exercise but a stepping stone to understanding the broader responsibilities of communication in governance and nation- building. Through this study, I hope to contribute to the ongoing discourse around digital democracy and inspire more students to explore the role of technology in public service and citizen empowerment. In the following sections of this research, I will present a comprehensive analysis of the evolution, advantages, limitations, and future scope of mobile governance, aiming to provide valuable insights into how mobile technology is reshaping governance and contributing to the development of a more informed, connected, and participatory society.

History

‘The concept of mobile governance, or m-governance, is rooted in the broader evolution of e-governance, which began gaining traction in the late 1990s and early 2000s with the advent of the internet and digital technologies in public administration. E-Governance emerged as a way to use electronic means- primarily computers and internet connectivity—to streamline government services, improve transparency, and foster citizen participation. However, access to computers and stable internet was limited in rural and underdeveloped areas, especially in countries like India. This digital divide posed a major challenge to making governance truly inclusive and accessible.



The concept of m-governance gained international recognition in the mid-2000s, as several countries started pilot projects to deliver services like health alerts, agricultural updates, and emergency warnings via SMS and mobile platforms. Nations like Estonia, South Korea, and the United Kingdom became early adopters of digital governance models, with mobile integration following soon after. In developing countries, especially in parts of Africa and Asia, mobile governance became a game-changer by extending government services to populations previously excluded from formal systems due to infrastructure or literacy barriers.¹

Mobile governance in Rampur District, Uttar Pradesh, involves the use of mobile technology to deliver various government services to citizens. This research focuses on the sectors of health, food, electricity, and police services

Health Sector

‘In the health sector, mobile governance initiatives in Rampur District include telemedicine services, allowing patients to consult doctors. Remotely through mobile phones. This service is particularly useful for rural areas where access to healthcare facilities is limited. The district has also launched mobile health units that provide basic healthcare services, including vaccinations, check-ups, and medication, to rural areas. Citizens can access healthcare information, including disease surveillance, health alerts, and health education, through mobile phones.

Food Sector

In the food sector, mobile governance initiatives in Rampur District include a mobile-based Public Distribution System (PDS), allowing citizens to access their ration cards, check availability of ration, and receive alerts on ration distribution through mobile phones. Citizens can access food security services, including information on food availability, prices, and subsidies, through mobile phones.

Electricity Sector

In the electricity sector, mobile governance initiatives in Rampur District include online bill payment, allowing citizens to pay their electricity bills online through mobile phones. Citizens can report power outages through mobile phones, allowing the electricity department to respond quickly and restore power supply. Citizens can access energy efficiency services, including information on energy-saving tips, energy-efficient appliances, and renewable energy sources, through mobile phones.³

Police Services



‘In the police services sector, mobile governance initiatives in Rampur District include an emergency response system, allowing citizens to report crimes, accidents, or other emergencies through mobile phones. Citizens can register First Information Reports (FIRs) online through mobile phones. Citizens can report crimes and track the status of their complaints through mobile phones. The contact details of various officials in Rampur District, including the District Magistrate, Chief Development Officer, and Superintendent of Police, are available online. Additionally, the district has a dedicated website that provides information on various government services, including health, education, and public welfare schemes. The police department in Rampur District has also launched several mobile apps, including the Uttar Pradesh Police app, which allows citizens to report crimes, track the status of their complaints, and access various police services. The district has also implemented a mobile-based system for reporting and tracking crimes, which has improved the response time of the police department.

In conclusion, mobile governance initiatives in Rampur District, Uttar Pradesh, have improved the delivery of various government services, including health, food, electricity, and police services. These initiatives have increased transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in governance, and have improved the overall quality of life for citizens in the district’⁴.

Access to Agricultural Information via m-Kisan

‘In Rampur, where a significant portion of the population is dependent on agriculture for livelihood, mobile governance through platforms like m-Kisan has been transformative. M-Kisan delivers essential agricultural information directly to farmers via SMS, such as weather forecasts, crop advisory, pest management tips, and updates on government schemes. This service is especially important in Rampur’s rural areas, where many farmers may not have access to regular internet connections or extension services. By providing timely information, m-Kisan helps farmers make informed decisions that lead to better crop yields and financial outcomes’⁵.

Example: Farmers in Rampur can receive SMS alerts on crop prices, weather conditions, and guidance on best agricultural practices. This minimizes losses and maximizes productivity, especially during unpredictable monsoon seasons.

Health Services through Aarogya Setu

‘During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Aarogya Setu app became a crucial tool in the government’s effort to curb the spread of the virus. In Rampur, as in other districts, the app helped individuals track their health status, access important health advisories, and stay informed about nearby COVID-19 hotspots. The app also allowed citizens to register for



vaccination, schedule appointments, and receive real-time health alerts, all from their mobile devices'⁶.

Example: In Rampur, rural citizens who would otherwise need to travel to urban centers for health services could use Aarogya Setu to register for vaccinations, access health guidelines, and receive updates on health campaigns.

Digital Identity Services through m-Aadhaar

'Mobile governance platforms like m-Aadhaar have streamlined access to digital identity services, such as Aadhaar card verification, updating personal details, and linking Aadhaar to various welfare schemes. In Rampur, where many individuals do not have easy access to government offices or the internet, m-Aadhaar provides a convenient mobile platform for residents to manage their Aadhaar-related services without needing to visit distant government centers.

Example: Residents in Rampur can use m-Aadhaar to update their biometric information, check their Aadhaar status, and ensure their Aadhaar card is linked to various social welfare programs such as direct benefit transfers (DBT).

Transport Services and Vehicle Registration through m-Parivahan

'For residents in Rampur who need to access transportation-related services, m-Parivahan simplifies processes like vehicle registration, driving license applications, and traffic violation tracking. Through mobile governance, citizens can check the status of their documents, renew licenses, and even access information related to road safety—all without needing to travel to government offices'⁸.

Example: Rampur residents can check the status of their vehicle registration, renew their driving licenses, and even file complaints regarding traffic violations through the m-Parivahan app, saving time and reducing the need for physical visits.

Financial Inclusion and Welfare Scheme Access

'In Rampur, where a large portion of the population is part of the marginalized sections of society, mobile governance initiatives have been crucial in ensuring that the benefits of various welfare schemes reach the intended beneficiaries. Platforms like PMGDISHA (Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan) and UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance) offer easy access to government benefits and financial inclusion services. This is particularly beneficial for women and economically disadvantaged groups in rural Rampur, who can access services like the Jan Dhan Yojana (bank accounts for



the unbanked), PM Kisan (farmers' income support), and other direct benefit transfers via mobile phones'⁹.

Example: Through UMANG, citizens of Rampur can directly access information about government schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (housing scheme) or MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act), apply for benefits, and track the status of their applications.

Significance

- The study explores how mobile governance (m-governance) is transforming interactions between the government and citizens, especially in developing regions like Rampur district, Uttar Pradesh.
- Mobile phones offer a cost-effective and accessible platform for overcoming barriers in service delivery, communication, and citizen participation-particularly where traditional infrastructure is lacking.
- Rampur's socio-economic diversity and high mobile penetration (despite low computer/internet access) make it a representative case for evaluating m-governance in rural and semi-urban India.
- For residents in remote villages, mobile devices create a direct channel to government offices, promoting inclusivity and accessibility
- The research reinforces the idea that governance must be accessible to all, and in today's digital age, that often means reaching citizens through their mobile phones.

Objectives

The primary objective of this research is to explore and understand the growing impact of mobile governance (m-governance) in society, especially focusing on how it impacts the lives of citizens in Rampur district of Uttar Pradesh. The following specific objectives guide the direction of this research:

1. Explore the purpose of mobile governance, how it differs from traditional e-governance, and what technology and communication tools are involved.



2. To assess the use of mobile governance in Rampur district and to assess the level of awareness, access and usage of mobile services among different demographic groups of the district.
3. To study how mobile governance has improved services like healthcare, education, electricity grievance redressal in Rampur.
4. To explore the role of mobile governance in enhancing transparency and accountability.
5. Identifying the challenges and barriers to effective mobile governance, while the potential of m-governance is vast, there are many barriers to its effective implementation.

Hypothesis

- Rampur citizens who live far away can use M-Governance apps to access services such as social programs, education, healthcare, and agriculture.
- Transparency, bureaucracy, and corruption can be decreased with the use of mobile complaint redressal systems and service tracking.
- Citizens are kept informed about government programs, deadlines, and public information through periodic SMS notifications and mobile apps.
- Targeted services like maternal health tracking and the Kisan Suvidha app can help women, farmers, and other economically weaker sections
- By eliminating the need for physical facilities & brokers, mobile platforms increase the affordability and scalability of governance.

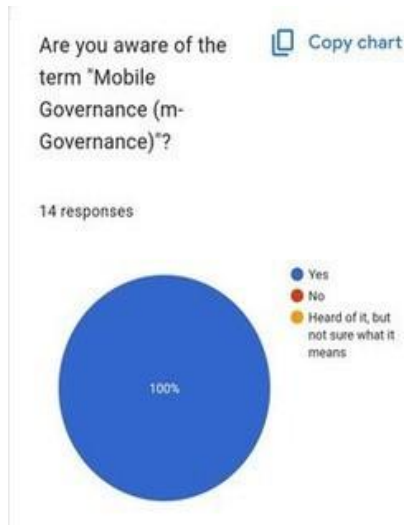
Research Methodology

Sampling Method:

1. **Stratified Random Sampling:** For citizens (Sample Size: 25) to ensure representation from different age groups, gender, income levels, and geographic areas.
2. **Purposive Sampling** for officials with direct involvement in m-governance services.

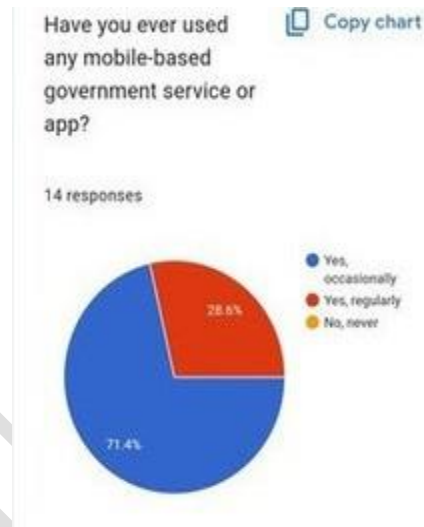
- **Interview Method:** To find out more about the effects of mobile governance on society in the urban areas of the Rampur district, interviews have been conducted with mobile users and officials of the relevant departments.
- **Research Limitations:** Data from several departments was incorporated to determine the effects of mobile governance in the district of Rampur.
- **Data Interpretation:** During observation, 14 respondents participated in the mobile governance-based research. It asked respondents to provide their thoughts on some of the selected subjects via a survey conducted online. These questions are as follows:

1. Are you aware of the term *Mobile Governance* (m-Governance)?



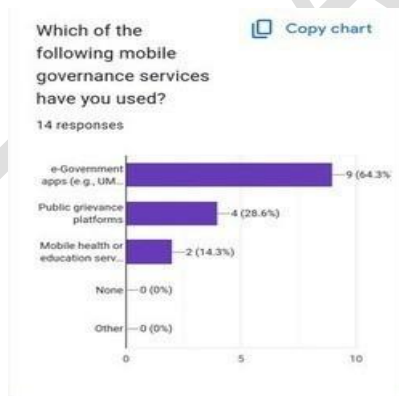
Based on the above pie chart, it is reported that all the respondents are aware of mobile governance.

2. Have you ever used any mobile-based government service or app?



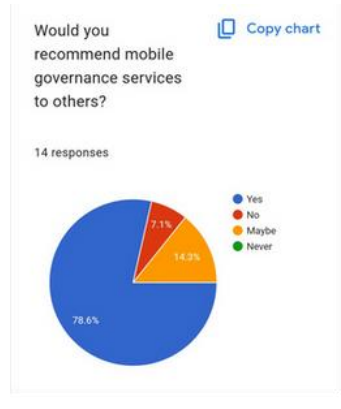
71.4 percent of respondents believe they have used mobile-based services, while 28.6% answered no.

3. Which of the following mobile governance services have you used?



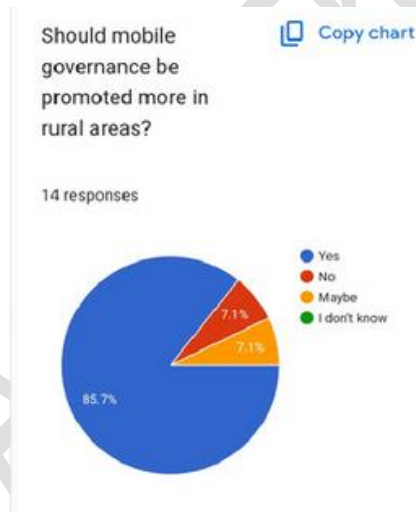
64.3% respondents said they have used mobile services through the UMANG platform, 28.6% respondents said they have used the services of the government governance platform. While 14.3% of the respondents use health and education related services on mobile.

4. Would you recommend mobile governance services to others?



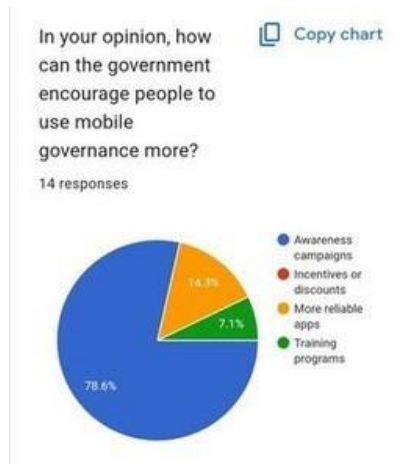
78.6% respondents admitted that they told others about mobile services, while 14.3% did not give any recommendation, and 7% did not give any suggestion to anyone.

5. Should mobile governance be promoted more in rural areas?



85.7% respondents have promoted mobile governance in rural areas, while the same 7.3 % respondents have not. 7.1% does not say.

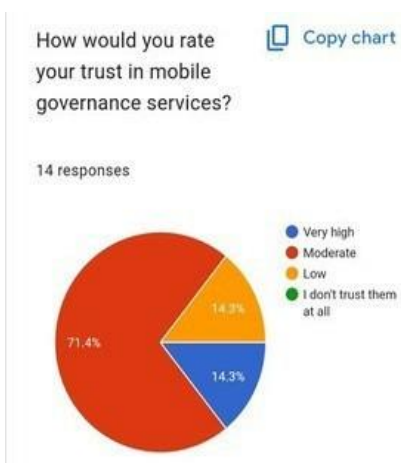
6. In your opinion, how can the government encourage people to use mobile governance more?



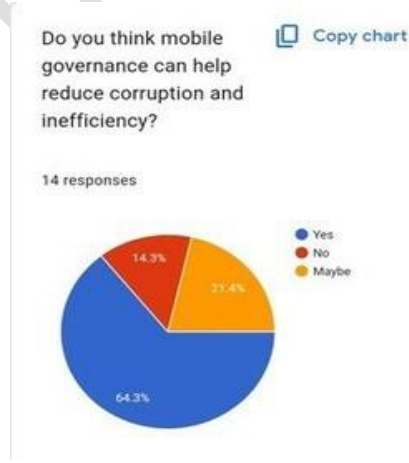
78.6% respondents said mobile governance can be encouraged through awareness campaigns, 14.3% said more credible, while 7.1% respondents said training programmes can encourage people towards mobile governance.

7. How would you rate your trust in mobile governance services?

8. Do you think mobile governance can help reduce corruption and inefficiency?

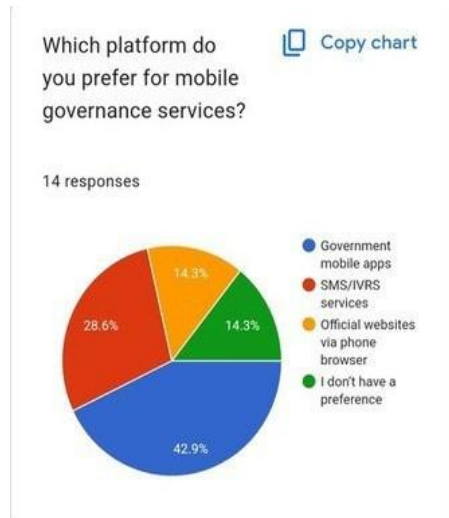


71.4% of respondents believe in mobile services, while 14.3% of respondents believe very much, while 14.3% of respondents believe slightly in mobile services



64.3% respondents said mobile governance is effective in reducing corruption. 21.4% of respondents said it would work. 14.3% answered no.

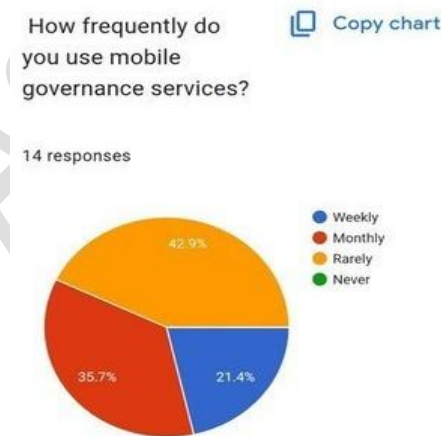
9. Which platform do you prefer for mobile governance services



42.9% respondents said they use government mobile apps more, while 28.6% respondents use services like SMS and IVRS. While 14.3% respondents said they do not use the mobile platform, 14.3% said they use the toll-free number through the government official websites.

10. How frequently do you use mobile governance services?

42.9% of respondents said they use mobile services rarely, while 35.7% do so once a monthly.



While 21.4% use mobile services once a weekly.

Conclusion

The research on mobile governance in Rampur, Uttar Pradesh, has provided valuable insights into the impact of mobile governance on the lives of citizens. The research has shown that mobile governance has improved the delivery of government services, increased transparency and accountability, and enhanced citizen participation.



1. 71.4 percent of respondents believe they have used mobile-based services, while 28.6% answered no.
2. 64.3% respondents said they have used mobile services through the UMANG platform, 28.6% respondents said they have used the services of the government governance platform. While 14.3% of the respondents use health and education-related services on mobile.
3. 78.6% respondents admitted that they told others about mobile services, while 14.3% did not give any recommendation, and 7% did not give any suggestion to anyone.
4. 85.7% respondents have promoted mobile governance in rural areas, while the same 7.3% respondents have not. 7.1% does not say.
5. 78.6% respondents said mobile governance can be encouraged through awareness campaigns, 14.3% said more credible, while 7.1% respondents said training programmes can encourage people towards mobile governance.
6. 71.4% of respondents believe in mobile services, while 14.3% of respondents believe very much, while 14.3% of respondents believe slightly in mobile services
7. 64.3% respondents said mobile governance is effective in reducing corruption. 21.4% of respondents said it would work. 14.3% answered no.
8. 42.9% respondents said they use government mobile apps more, while 28.6% respondents use services like SMS and IVRS. While 14.3% respondents said they do not use the mobile platform, 14.3% said they use the toll-free number through the government official websites.
9. 42.9% of respondents said they use mobile services rarely, while 35.7% do so once a monthly. While 21.4% use mobile services once a weekly.

In conclusion, the research on mobile governance in Rampur, Uttar Pradesh, has demonstrated the potential of mobile governance to improve the lives of citizens. The research has highlighted the benefits of mobile governance, identified challenges, and provided implications for policy and practice. The research contributes to the existing body of knowledge on mobile governance and highlights the need for further research in this area.



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