

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-56978**Title: Between Access and Exclusion: A Secondary Analysis of E-Governance and the Digital Divide in India,****Recommendation:****Accept after minor revision**

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓,		
Techn. Quality		✓,		
Clarity	✓,			
Significance	✓,			

Reviewer Name: Dr Abdul Haseeb Mir**Detailed Reviewer's Report**

The article titled "Between Access and Exclusion: A Secondary Analysis of E-Governance and the Digital Divide in India" provides a critical and comprehensive evaluation of the digital transformation within India's public administration. By navigating the tension between the efficiency of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the persistent reality of the "digital divide," the author addresses one of the most pressing challenges of modern governance. This research is highly significant for political scientists, public policy experts, and sociologists, as it moves beyond the optimistic rhetoric of "Digital India" to examine the structural barriers that risk leaving marginalized populations behind in the transition to an electronic state.

The theoretical framework of the manuscript is well-established, correctly identifying e-governance not merely as a technical upgrade but as a tool for enhancing transparency, accountability, and accessibility. The author effectively uses secondary analysis to synthesize existing data on internet penetration, literacy rates, and bureaucratic resistance. The argument that e-governance has the "potential to offer priceless opportunities" for reduced corruption and increased efficiency is balanced by a sober assessment of the "exclusion" factors. By grounding the study in the specific Indian context—characterized by vast linguistic, economic, and regional diversity—the author ensures the analysis remains pragmatically relevant.

A primary strength of the article is its detailed examination of the "Digital Divide" across various dimensions. The author successfully categorizes these challenges into infrastructure issues, internet

REVIEWER'S REPORT

security, and the rural-urban split. The observation that low levels of education and the inherent resistance of bureaucratic institutions act as significant "bottlenecks" is particularly insightful. This section highlights that digital empowerment is not solely a matter of providing hardware; it requires a parallel investment in human capital and organizational culture. The mention of state-by-state e-governance systems provides a necessary comparative depth, acknowledging that progress in India is often non-linear and regionally dependent.

The forward-looking discussion on emerging technologies—such as data analytics, cloud computing, and blockchain—adds a sophisticated layer to the manuscript. The author argues convincingly that these tools can further reduce human intervention in service delivery, thereby minimizing the opportunities for corruption. However, the paper wisely cautions that the adoption of these advanced technologies must be preceded by solving the "access" problem. The assertion that "increasing internet penetration" is the foundational step for all other e-governance benefits provides a clear and actionable priority for policymakers.

To further enhance the manuscript for publication in a high-impact academic journal, a few minor revisions are recommended. While the secondary analysis is robust, the author could strengthen the "Results" section by incorporating more recent "Digital Readiness" indices or specific case studies of successful vs. failed e-governance projects in different Indian states (e.g., comparing the success of the Akshaya project in Kerala with challenges in more digitally isolated states). Second, a more detailed look at the "Linguistic Barrier"—how the lack of localized language support in ICT interfaces contributes to exclusion—would add a vital cultural dimension to the study of the digital divide.

From a structural perspective, the article is logically organized and maintains a high level of professional academic English. The bibliography is impressive and current, featuring essential references such as Radhakrishnan (2007), Saxena (2005), and more recent studies by Srivastava et al. (2016) regarding ICT and corruption. However, the author should ensure that the formatting of all references, particularly the Indian Journal of Political Science citations from 2005 and 2006, is consistent throughout. Providing a brief "Conceptual Framework" diagram that illustrates the transition from "Access" to "Inclusion" via ICT would also help readers visualize the paper's central thesis.

In summary, this article represents a significant and timely contribution to the scholarship on Indian public administration. It successfully captures the dual nature of the digital revolution: its immense

International Journal of Advanced Research

Publisher's Name: Jana Publication and Research LLP

www.journalijar.com

REVIEWER'S REPORT

potential for empowerment and its dangerous capacity for exclusion. By highlighting the need for a more "inclusive government" through improved internet penetration and educational reform, the author provides a compelling roadmap for the future of the Digital India program. With the addition of more specific regional comparisons and a deeper look at the linguistic divide, this paper will be an excellent resource for researchers and administrators dedicated to equitable governance.

Recommendation: Recommend for publication with minor revision.