A Study on the advantages of Akshaya e-Centres among citizens in the Thiruvananthapuram District

Sheedhal K Reji [1]

Research Scholar, Department of Visual Media and Communication, Amrita School of Arts and Sciences, Mysuru
Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, India
Sheedhalriya7@gmail.com

Dr. Moulya B [2]

Assistant Professor (SG), Department of Visual Media and Communication, Amrita School of Arts and Sciences, Mysuru
Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, India
b_moulya@my.amrita.edu

Abstract

Information and communication Technology (ICT) is critical to India's success in e-government, infrastructure, and economic development. The Akshaya project is Kerala's most successful e-governance initiative. It was one of India's first district-wide e-literacy projects, with the goal of increasing IT literacy among Kerala residents. Every Akshaya e-center provides a single point of access to government services. This initiative contributes to tremendous economic growth and creates numerous job possibilities. They've also concentrated on aspects such as e-learning, e-transactions, and e-governance. As a result, the initiative has a considerable impact on the state's socioeconomic, economic, and political perspectives. The purpose of this study is to look at the benefits of Akshaya e-centers and to learn about the issues that citizens have with the services offered by Akshaya Common Service Centres in Kerala's Thiruvananthapuram district. According to the study's hypothesis, there is a substantial relationship between the benefits provided by Akshaya e-centers and the people' age in the Thiruvananthapuram district. Citizen engagement is essential in a democratic society like India, and it is required to create a platform for it. Implementing ICT is the most cost-effective strategy to gain access to all government services while also reducing the digital gap and enabling participatory e-governance. The Akshaya project offers a variety of e-services to citizens, yet they still encounter significant difficulties in using them. All rural residents in every Panchayats must be able to use e-governance schemes like Akshaya centres.

**Keywords**: e-Governance, Akshaya e-centers, ICT, Thiruvananthapuram

Introduction

Every country is implementing e-Governance, or electronic governance. India is a rapidly developing country, and e-governance has become a critical component of its economy. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in government activities facilitates and simplifies tasks. One of the foundations of digital India is e-Government. e-Governance is defined as the government's use of information and communication technology (ICT) to facilitate and expand activities at various levels of government and the public sector, with the goal of achieving good governance (Pani N and Misra,2009).

SMART governance, which stands for 'Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsible, and Transparent' governance, is another term for e-Government. Simplicity refers to the streamlining of government processes in a user-friendly manner. Moral shows how to improve one's ethical principles. Efficiencies of anti-corruption institutions, the courts, and law enforcement, among other things the effective 'Management Information System and Performance Measurement Mechanisms,' accord to Accountable. Transparent means to make the entire e-Government activities more transparent. Responsive means to speed up service delivery. (Bharthwal, P C 2003).

The ordinary people are accessing services from several departments from a single-window centre' efficiently and sustaining the interaction between the citizen and the government as a result of the influence of these technologies such as computerization services or e-governance (Guptha A & Goutham,2018). It includes ICTs, notably the internet, to improve 'government to citizens' (G2C) facilities; it refers to government services and information shared with ordinary people or citizens. Government applications and websites are available to the public. It improves residents' communication with the government by allowing them to pay bills, make online payments, register for events, and file grievances at any time and from anywhere. The second is 'government to businesses' (G2B), which outlines how the government and businesses communicate. Tax collection, complaints, and unhappiness are examples of interactions. data and information exchange, and bill payments; the third is 'government to government' (G2G), which describes interactions between multiple departments within the same government, as well as between the federal, state, and local governments (Soni P, 2016).

The government's services are made available to citizens in an effective, convenient, and efficient manner through e-Government. It includes things like the "Digital India project," the "National Portal of India," the "Prime Minister of India portal," Aadhar, online tax filing and payment, digital land management systems," and the "Common Entrance Test" (Bhatia A & Kiran C, 2018).

E-Governance: Application Domains
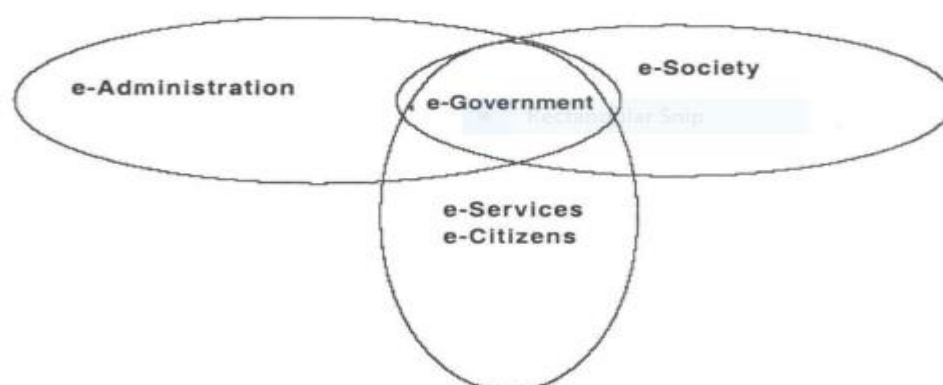
E-Governance is a concept that necessitates "political will, an agreement between the public and private sectors, and a long-term assurance of resources." E-Government is necessary for excellent policy, citizen involvement, and improved service quality (Suresh K B & Paramashivaiah P, 2016).

Importance of e-Governance
The World Bank (2002) elucidates the benefits are;
1. It shortens the procedure of information accretion for businesses and citizens.
2. It allows people to collect information from any government department and decision-making process.
3. E-Governance reinforces our democracy through citizen participation.
4. E-Governance guarantees public welfare and enhances the automation of services, finally eliminating corruption.
5. It ensures more transparency and accountability in the functions of government because every action is monitored by the citizen.
6. Citizens can collect every information related to the activities of the government. Through this, the departmental activities are more responsible.
7. The implementation of e-Governance leads to better services to citizens, Improved communication with industry and businesses.
8. Citizen empowerment through cost reductions, good management operations, and the right to access information from the government departments.
 10. Citizens can make touch with the government.

Implementation of E-Governance in different fields
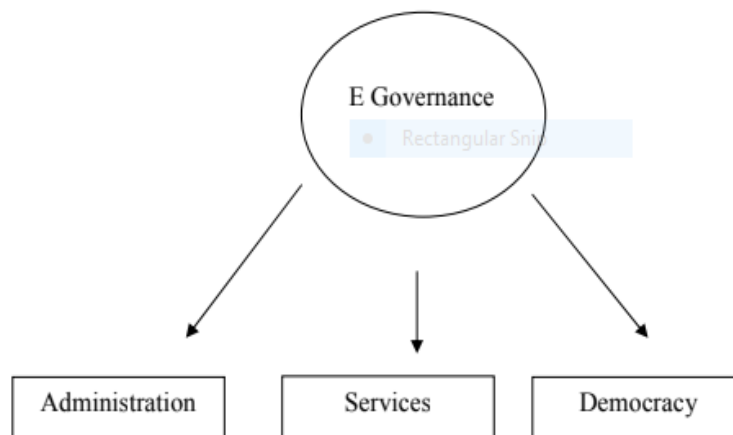
Administration indicates to improve the activities of government. Improved delivery of services through ICT. Democracy explains public participation.

Four pillars of E-Governance
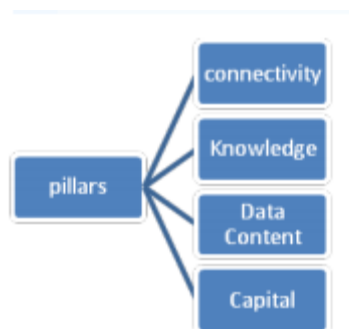
For effective e-Government, connectivity is required to connect citizens to government apps. Employees with IT skills are required to manage the e-Government process. Every transmitting information that pertains to government services should be stored in a database. The term "capital" refers to the money that the government uses to deliver its buildings or run its operations.

With ICT the rural area people can access information about different e-governance services like health, agriculture, employment, and business. Akshaya is one of the first e-governance projects in India. It includes e-literacy, dissemination, women empowerment, poverty reduction, transparency, and accountability in the government actions to increase better health, productivity, and the economy as well (Sangeetha V P & Aram A L, 2010). The implementation of the technology in the different sectors made drastic changes from the traditional viewpoint (Balasubramanian A, 2012).

E-governance describes how the government is utilising new technical advancements to provide better government services. The major goal of e-governance is to improve individuals' ability to communicate and engage in a variety of government activities. Finally, the success of e-Government programmes depends on citizen participation in government activities. With access to information and communication technology, government activities are brought closer to citizens, fostering transparency, morality, and accountability (Singh A, 2014).

By the end of the twentieth century, information and communication technology interventions had grown, resulting in a new change in society, according to Mukherjee S (2011). This century has been impacted by ICT development, which may be seen in policymaking, infrastructure development, government services, and more. Kerala's millennial are no exception. The ICT explosion in India has already wrought significant changes in the Indian population.

ICT is not only popular among city dwellers and in urban areas; it also has an impact on rural places. In this changing environment, the role of ICT in rural development must be considered.

National E-Governance Plan (NeGp)
NeGp increases the services and valuations of residents' amenities. Every department of the government has been thoroughly remodelled to provide computerised services. Citizen centricity, service orientation, and transparency are three advanced e-governance services. The major goal of this service is to save costs and increase citizen interoperability. The National E-Governance Plan (NeGP) is a comprehensive overview of India's e-government initiatives. The Department of Electronics and Information Technology

(DEITY) and the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) launched NeGP with the goal of providing good governance to the general public.

NeGP focuses on holistically boosting e-governance projects. The majority of the programmes are aimed at improving our country's infrastructure. State Data Centres (SDCs) are among the most important infrastructural components.

State Wide Area Networks (S.W.A.N), Common Services Centres (CSCs), and middleware gateways, such as the National e-Government Service Delivery Gateway (NSDG), State e-Government Service Delivery Gateway (SSDG), and Mobile e-Government Service Delivery Gateway (MSDG).

Construction of E-Governance Projects in Kerala
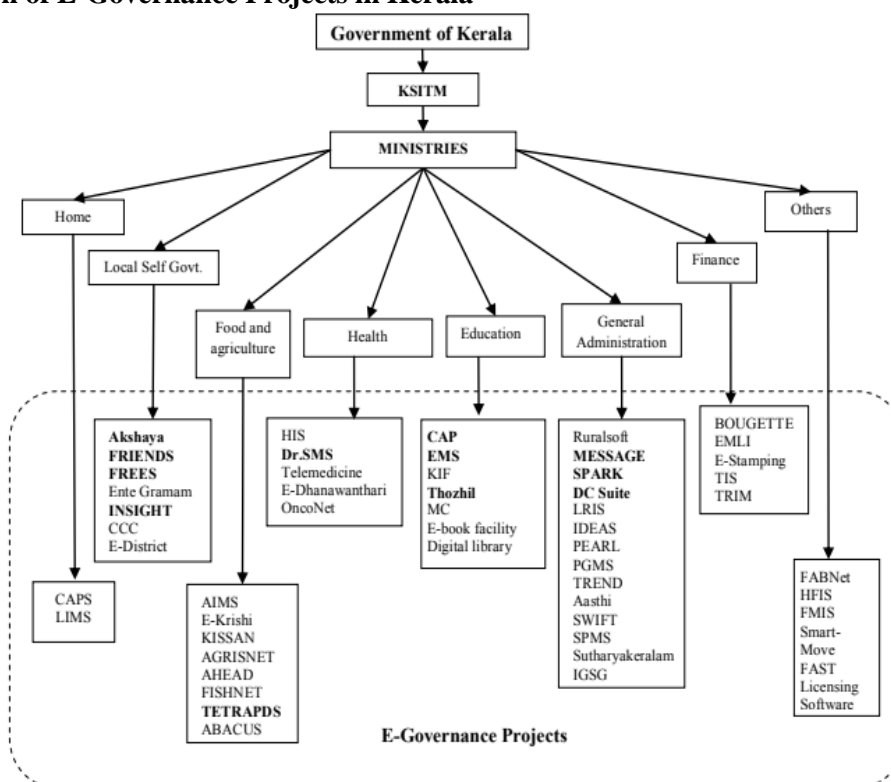
The Akshaya ICT Project is described as follows:
Kerala's Akshaya Project is an ICT-enabled rural and urban development project. Under the direction of the Kerala State IT Mission and the Kerala State Department of Science and Technology, it was founded in 2002 and inaugurated by Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam. It is affiliated with local bodies and voluntary organisations. Akshaya is a Sanskrit word that

signifies "prolonging fortune." The pilot study took place in the Kerala city of Malappuram. By 2010, the initiative had spread over the entire state. The project's major goal is to expand ICT services to all levels of government and society. The goal of the mission is to bridge the information divide between the "Information Rich" and the "Information Poor."

The Akshaya ICT project intends to establish Akshaya e-Kendras around the country.

- In Kerala, there are 5000 networked multi-purpose technology centres.
- Make sure that everyone is aware of his project and that they are computer literate.
- Improve the infrastructure and service quality in rural communities.
- Allow people to use technology centres to conduct e-governance and e-transactions.
- In three years, create 50,000 new work opportunities.
- In three years, attract over Rs. 500 crores in direct investment.

Each centre, which is run by private tycoons, is a minimum of 2 to 3 kilometres long and serves 1000 to 3000 families. By 2010, there were 2,662 Akshaya e-kendras operational, according to Akshaya office records. Rural areas account for 87.50 percent of Akshaya e-centres.

Services Offered Akshaya website or at Akshaya Common Service Centres

1. Aadhaar enrolment
2. Utility bill payment
3. e-District services
4. Motor 2 wheeler and 4 wheeler insurances
5. Universal Health Insurance
6. Personal Accident or Mediclaim Insurance
7. Overseas Mediclaim Insurance
8. Ration card applications
9. Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana / Comprehensive Health
10. Insurance Agency of Kerala enrolments
11. Motor vehicle license payments
12. Labour welfare boards Aadhaar seeding
13. SC/ST pre-matric scholarship applications
14. Farmer's data entry
15. Commercial tax e-filing
16. Pharmacist registrations
17. Food Business Operator (FBO) registration
18. Kerala Academy for Skills Excellence (KASE) registration
19. University Fee Payment
20. Haj registration

AKSHAYA- PPP Framework
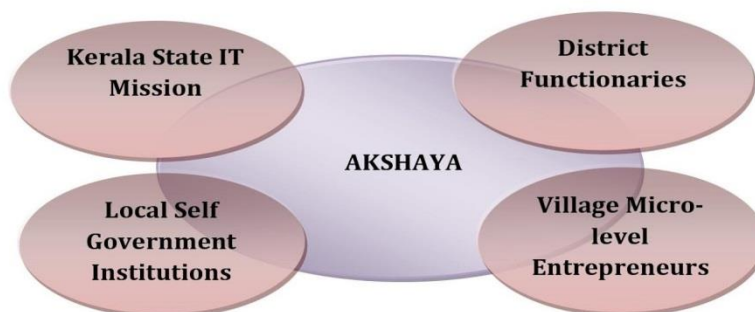
Akshaya Centers is a real Common Service Center (CSC) that connects residents through various communication formats such as G2C, G2B, and B2C all under one roof. Kerala currently has almost 2,650 Akshaya e-centers. Panchayats must have at least two centres. The purpose of this study is to identify the benefits of Akshaya e-Centres among people, the impact of Akshaya in many fields, and the concerns citizens have with the services given by Akshaya centres in Kerala's capital city.

Review of Literature

According to Srivastava S (2017) Computer technology became more powerful in this present era. It has become more user-friendly. The PC revolution leads the citizens closer to technology and tries to develop their IT skills. In the present scenario, we can simply see the drastic changes in government sectors after the ICT infused with them. We can thoroughly judge the transparency of the works and political processes that are done by the

government officials for the citizens. Most of them are useful to the citizens and others are not useful or harmful to them (Parmar V et.al, 2017).

Governance was able to achieve its goal with the support of ICTs. Some key mechanisms can be elucidated through e-government. In government actions and procedures, the mechanisms are participation, transparency and accountability, information and service delivery, and communication and interaction. (Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2012; Pina et al., 2007). ICT is often regarded as the most reliable means of bridging the gap between citizens and government (Agangiba A W & et.al, 2013). E-governance has the ability to provide excellent service to its clients. E-governance is not just a tool for improving government service quality, but also for improving cost-quality ratios in citizen services (Mahajan N, 2015).

The goal of e-government is to use ICT to achieve effective governance. By enhancing management processes, it benefits both citizens and government employees (Kumar S, 2013). Good governance has enormous implications for quality of life, equity, and poverty (Kalsi S N & et.al, 2018). The Indian government should raise people knowledge of e-government programmes and projects. It will remove the barriers that citizens had when using e-governance online portals (Borthakur P P & et.al, 2019).

The Indian government has taken a number of steps to make its services and activities more accessible to the general public. However, the projects face a number of technical, economic, and environmental hurdles. Citizen-centric issues such as "non-availability of user-friendly interfaces," "high levels of illiteracy," "low broadband penetration," and, most importantly, "inadequate power supply in rural areas," "process or human resource issues within the government," and "lack of awareness" of e-Government initiatives are among the challenges (Yadav K & Tiwari S, 2014). The Indian government invests a significant amount of money on e-governance projects, yet some of them are not successful. People are unaware of these efforts, and they exclusively speak their own tongues; privacy is also a concern (Mittal P & Kaur A, 2013).

Each and every Akshaya center as a part of our economic revenue. These centers provide employment to the citizens. The Kerala state implemented a lot of projects with the aid of ICT, which is quite appreciable (Manoj P, 2008). The Kerala citizens are not taking IT (Information Technology) as a tool of development. The IT literacy rate is still less in this state. As a result of this 'Digital Divide' emerged. Finally, the Kerala state realizes the importance of IT literacy among people (Vimala P, 2018).

The Kerala government launched Mobile Governance, or M-Governance, with the goal of increasing 'Mobile penetration' in the state by utilising the concept of 'always-on' communication for the provision of government services to citizens. Rather than visiting government offices, the government department provides residents with mobile phone services and accessibility in the field, on the street, at home, or anyplace at any time (Nissar. P, 2014).

The Right to Information (RTI), which gave citizens of India access to records kept by the central government and state governments, was hailed as one of the most revolutionary pieces of legislation in recent Indian history, with the potential to transform the country into one of the world's most developed democracies. He's also talked about some hot efforts that can help lead the results of this piece, which show that e-governance is facing a number of obstacles (Sharma P, 2011).

Methodology

The data was collected from both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected from the beneficiaries of the Akshaya e-centers in the Thiruvananthapuram district. There are 264 Akshaya Kendra's in the community. Secondary data was collected from the various research papers, Akshaya web portal, Kerala government official sites, etc. Non- probability purposive sampling method is used for selecting the respondents. The study's total sample is 200 from the capital city of Kerala.

Objectives

1. To examine the advantages of Akshaya e- centers among the people.
2. To know about the citizens' problems in the services provided by the Akshaya centers.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis governing the study is given below:

H0: There is no significant difference between in advantages provided by Akshaya e-centers and the age of the citizens in the Thiruvananthapuram district

H1: There is a significant difference between the advantages provided by Akshaya e-centers and the age of the citizens in the Thiruvananthapuram district.

Scope of the Study

The researcher tries to find out the advantages of the Akshaya project and the troubles faced by the citizens while using these e-centers.

Limitation of the Study

This study is only focusing on the citizens in Thiruvananthapuram. The primary data is collected through questionnaire response bias may influence the results. The sample size of this study is 200 only.
Spearman's Rank Order Correlation

Data Analysis and Interpretation
To know the reliability of the questions, which consisted of 50 items, the Cronbach alpha was conducted, and by testing the reliability, the Cronbach's alpha value obtained is 0.821, which indicates a high level of consistency, i.e., the extent to which a scale produces a consistent result.

Table: 1

| Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
0.821	50

For analysis have done the normality test from the result. The data was non-parametric since the P-value is >0.05 and is not normally distributed. So, non-parametric Spearman's Rank Order Correlation is being used as a statistical tool for the analysis. A sum revision has been directed to discover a significant difference between advantages provided by Akshaya e-centers and the age of the citizens.

Age and Accountable service
Table: 2

		Value	Asymptotic Standard Error	Approximate T^b	Approximate Significance
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.026	.073	.364	.716[c]
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	-.011	.073	-.154	.878[c]
N of Valid Cases	200				

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.
b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.
c. Based on normal approximation.

Table no 1 shows a significant difference between the advantages provided by Akshaya e-centers and the age of the citizens in Thiruvananthapuram. Since p-value <0.05, df=9, reject the null hypothesis and alternative Hypothesis is accepted.

Table: 3

		Value	Asymptotic Standard Error	Approximate T^b	Approximate Significance
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	-.002	.076	-.027	.979[c]

| Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	-.014	.073	-.200	.842[c]
N of Valid Cases	200	200			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.
b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.
c. Based on normal approximation.

Table 2 shows a significant difference between the advantages provided by Akshaya e-centers and the age of the citizens in Thiruvananthapuram. Since p-value <0.05, df=9, reject the null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Advantages of Akshaya e- centers among people
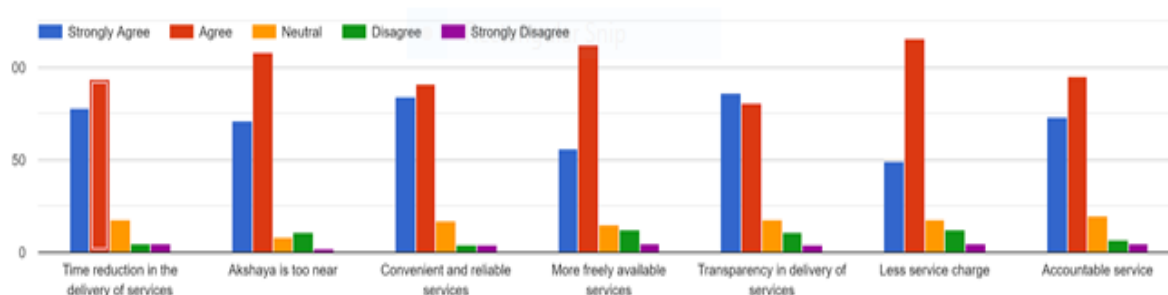
Problems faced by the citizen's
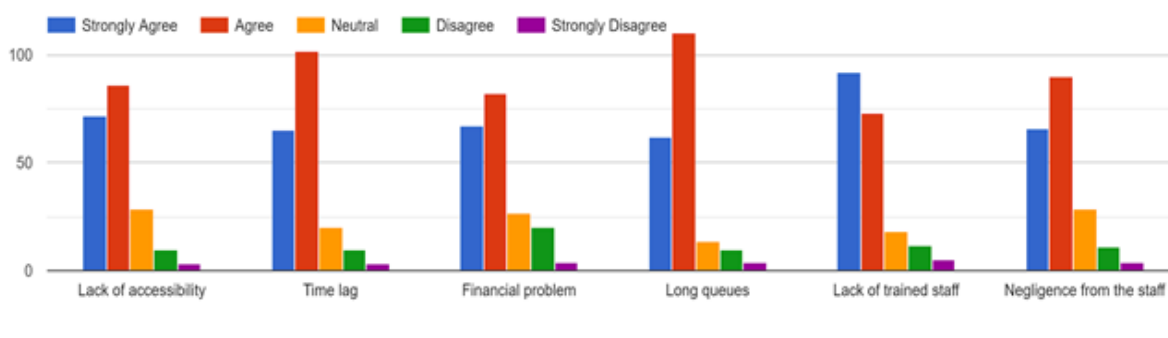
Findings

- Most of the respondent is in the age group of 26-35 in the Thiruvananthapuram district.
- The majority of the respondent in the Thiruvananthapuram district are female.
- The majority of the respondent in the Thiruvananthapuram district are from the business field.
- The majority of the respondents are using Akshaya e—centers sometimes.
- The majority of the information about the services provided by the Akshaya e-centers is from newspapers.

- Also, most of the respondents use the Aadhar enrolment service and ration card application service.
- The citizens' issues with the Akshaya centres' services include lack of accessibility, time lag, financial issues, long lines, a lack of skilled employees, and team negligence.

- The study resulted that the respondents being well satisfied with the services provided by the Akshaya e-centers.

Conclusion

AKSHAYA has been working to improve villagers' access to government services. This project aims to save individuals time and money while also allowing them to engage with government officials and gain rapid, transparent access to local government data and documents. Overall, this project helped the Kerala government improve a variety of services and continues to serve as a doorway to new prospects.

Conflicts of Interest

We hereby, declare that this research article entitled "A Study on the advantages of Akshaya e-Centres among citizens in the Thiruvananthapuram District" is the original work. This research article is submitted to Journal of positive school psychology, no submitted to any other journal and our contribution has no conflict with any others publications.

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