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Role of E-Governance in Modern Administration

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Abstract

E-Governance can be defined as the application of communication and information technology for providing government services, exchange of information, transactions, integration of previously existing services and information portals. It also helps in decreasing the cost of the administration. In India e-governance has developed into an effort in which the critical elements of government are imbibed such as "centralization of citizen, transparency of government process". As it is clear fact that India is the country with largest population (density-wise) and to administrate the country which is an emerging as world leader e-governance is must in both in Government and corporate sector of India. In the present paper an attempt has been made to assess the role of the E-governance in modern administration.

Key words: Governance, Administration, ICT (Information Communication Technology)

Introduction

E-Governance can be defined as the application of communication and information technology for providing government services, exchange of information, transactions, integration of previously existing services and information portals. It also helps in decreasing the cost of the administration. "The government of All over the world is initiating e-governance for transparency and saving the time of all government processes.e-Governance refers to the use by government agencies of Information Technologies (such as Wide Area Networks, the Internet and mobile computing) that have the ability

ISSN:0971-1260
Vol-22-Issue-4-October-December-2019

to transmute relations with citizens, businesses, and various arms of government ensuing in better delivery of government services to citizens, improved interactions with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information, or more efficient government management. The resultant benefits are less corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth, and cost reductions." (World Bank)

In India e-governance has developed into an effort in which the critical elements of government are imbibed such as "centralization of citizen, transparency of government process". As it is clear fact that India is the country with largest population (density-wise) and to administrate the country which is an emerging as world leader e-governance is must in both in Government and corporate sector of India. It makes the whole administrative process convenient, efficient, transparent, fully accountable and responsible. e-Governance is in quintessence, the application of Information and Communications Technology to government functioning in order to create 'Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsive and Transparent' (SMART) governance.

The revolution in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has brought a whole new plan for governance into the territory of prospect. e-Governance comprises decisional processes and the use of ICT for broader contribution of citizens in public affairs. Citizens are participants in e-Governance. The drive of implementing e-Governance is to develop governance processes and outcomes with a view to improving the delivery of public services to citizens.

The goals of e-Governance are:
a. Better service delivery to citizens
b. Ushering in transparency and accountability
c. Empowering people through information
d. Improved efficiency within Governments
e. Improve interface with business and industry

ISSN:0971-1260
Vol-22-Issue-4-October-December-2019

E-Governance Initiatives in India

History

National Informatics Centre (NIC) was established in 1976, and has since emerged as a "prime builder" of e-Government / e-Governance applications up to the grassroots level as well as a promoter of digital opportunities for sustainable development. NIC, through its ICT Network, "NICNET", has institutional linkages with all the Ministries /Departments of the Central Government, 35 State Governments/ Union Territories, and about 625 District administrations of India.NIC has been instrumental in steering e-Government/e-Governance applications in government ministries/departments at the Centre, States, Districts and Blocks, facilitating improvement in government services, wider transparency, promoting decentralized planning and management, resulting in better efficiency and accountability to the people of India. (emphasis added). NICNET – the brain behind e-Governance in India

NICNET does all the spade-work behind the entire connectivity in the country. With its rich expertise, over the years it has been able to come up with new means of digitizing Government works and providing consulting to the state governments. The major activities undertaken are:

- Setting up of ICT Infrastructure
- Implementation of National and State Level e-Governance Projects
- Products and Services
- Consultancy to the government departments
- Research and Development
- Capacity Building

The objectives of governments are absolute: maintaining joint security, administering justice, providing the institutional infrastructure of the economy and ensuring that vital social capital is heightened through improvements in health and education. e-Governance needs to transform all levels of Government but the focus should be on local governments since local governments are the closest to citizens, and constitute for many, the main interface with government. The relationship of citizens and local authorities tends to be one based on proximity as the interests at stake for both parties are closely entangled concerning issues such as public services, local development, education etc. e-

ISSN:0971-1260
Vol-22-Issue-4-October-December-2019

Governance based administrative reforms in local governments can have maximum impact on citizens.

Central and State Government Initiatives

The Government of India has embraced e-governance as a trigger and means to redefine and streamline outdated, inefficient processes and procedures while simultaneously exploiting the full power of modern ICT.

The National Task Force on IT and Software Development, constituted by the Prime Minister's office, have envisioned India emerging as an IT Superpower in the world by 2008. The Task Force has already submitted its report in 3 parts. Task Force has set a target of US$ 50 billion for software export from India by 2008. Domestic software industry is targeted to reach the level of US$ 30 billion by this time. A number of initiatives have been implemented by the concerned ministries/ departments. The Task Force has also identified Citizen-IT Interface as one of the key areas to service the information necessities of citizens through deeper penetration of IT in society and through the extensive use of latest tools in the networked society. Information Technology applications can be used in everyday administration to make the quality of life of the citizen better, by removing hassles.
For this IT force gave some recommendations to the central government that are:
Government-wide Information Infrastructure.

1). Government-wide electronic information infrastructure should be created to simplify service delivery, reduce duplication, and improve the level and speed of service to the public. This would provide the public (business and individuals) with the opportunity to send and receive, over electronic terminals, the information that currently passes between them and the government on paper.

2). Nation-wide National Info Infrastructure is essential for carrying the services and information from government to citizens. Government and the private sector have to invest to develop this infrastructure.

ISSN:0971-1260
Vol-22-Issue-4-October-December-2019

3). The government should encourage the establishment of Internet Service providers (ISPs) which will provide access to the Network based services from even the most remote locations in the country.

4). The government and the private sector would need to collaborate to put in place Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) system, since this is critical to the successful implementation of Electronic Commerce, as well as direct service delivery to citizens.

5). It is necessary that computers should be cheaper to increase their penetration

The possibility of procuring cheaper second-hand computers available elsewhere should also be explored. These can be canalized through ET&T and NICSI by proper coordination with groups of NRIs abroad. National e-Governance Plan 3 Taking note of the potential of e-governance to improve the quality of life of the vast population of the country, the Government of India has formulated a national program – the National e-governance Plan (NeGP). This plan attempts to cover all the important areas relating to e-Governance – Policy, Infrastructure, Finances, Project Management, Government Process Reengineering, Capacity Building, Training, Assessment and Awareness etc. across the Central and State Governments. NeGP is a comprehensive "programme" of the Government of India and is designed to leverage capabilities and opportunities presented by ICT to promote good governance across the country.

One of the learning that is at the core of the NeGP is the emphasis on implementation of such projects with clear timelines and responsibility allocations – in a "Mission Mode". The Plan initially extended over a 4-year period at an estimated cost of over USD 3 billion. NeGP was aimed at introducing e-Governance systematically through 25 Mission Mode projects, which would touch the lives of more than 1 billion people. The vision of NeGP was to make all Government services accessible to the common man in his locality through common service delivery outlets. The implementation strategy envisaged clear definition of service goals and metrics for each project and structured stakeholder consultations with all stakeholders including citizens and civil society organizations before the service goals of each project are firmed

ISSN:0971-1260
Vol-22-Issue-4-October-December-2019

up. Even at the stage of formulation of the NeGP, its vision and proposed strategy, consultations were held with various stakeholders including state governments, ministries/departments, IT industry representatives and civil society organizations.

Where central government had launched a national programme on e-governance throughout the country, there the efforts of state government also went successful. Some effective examples of successful implementation of E-Governance to the governmental function include projects like; e-Mitra project (Rajasthan), e-Seva project (Andhra Pradesh), CET(Common Entrance Test). Some are:

Some e-Governance projects already implemented

Agriculture

E-Governance projects in the agricultural sector can provide benefit to farmers and the rural people and also enhance the lives of urban poor. There are numerous subprojects pertaining to provision of timely expert advice to farmers, food security, marketability and commercial information relating to agricultural products, enhancing crop productivity, enhancing the reach of and ease of access to micro-credit, as for examples:

Gyandoot: In the State of Madhya Pradesh it is an Intranet-based Government to citizen (G2c) service delivery initiative.

BELE: It is a web-based application with 3-tier architecture for capturing and monitoring the major activities and services.

AGMARKNET: It is a project approved by Department of Marketing & Inspection (DMI), Ministry of Agriculture, and Government of India.

SEEDNET: It is a SEED informatics network under ministry of Agriculture, Government of India. The project was started in Chhattisgarh in the month of July' 2008 for Kharif season.

Mustard Procurement Management System: It is started by Haryana government.

ISSN:0971-1260
Vol-22-Issue-4-October-December-2019

Land Records

Bhoomi: It is the first e-Governance land records management system project which is successfully implemented for the benefits of the common man by the Government of Karnataka.

Comprehensive Modernization of Land Records (CMLR): This project is started by the government of Andhra Pradesh. It allows integrating functions of property registration, mutations and updating of field survey maps.

Land Record Computerisation: The objective of the project is to computerize fresh allotment, land transfer, regularisation of occupied land etc. related actives of the Dept. of Land Management at district level.

Gyandoot: it is an intranet in Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh, connecting rural cybercafés catering to the everyday needs of the masses [4].

Land Records Management System State Government of Punjab.

Devbhoomi State Government of Uttarakhand.

Bhu-Lekh UP State Government of Uttar Pradesh.

E-Dhara State Government of Gujarat

Municipalities

E-Panjeeyan: It is started by Assam government to deals with the computerization of the Document registration work at Sub Registrar Office.

Palike: The Palike-property tax software capture the basic details of the owner and property, payment details for which receipt is generated and given to the citizen was hosted.

Rural Digital Services (Nemmadi): Provide services such as issuance of certificates, issuance of orders in respect of Social Security Schemes such as old age pension, widow pension, freedom fighter pension etc.

TRIS: Tripura Registration Information System is meant for capturing of online photograph and biometric impression,

ISSN:0971-1260
Vol-22-Issue-4-October-December-2019

Panchayat level

E-GramViswa Gram Project: This Project Initiates e-Gram Project connecting 13716 Gram Panchayats and 6000 Citizen Common Service Centres as a part of the e-Gram connectivity Project by Gujarat.

RajNidhi: is a web enabled information kiosk system developed jointly by Rajasthan state's Department of Information Technology and Rajasthan State Agency for Computer Services (Raj Comp)

Raj-SWIFT: The Rajasthan State's Department of Information Technology (DoIT) has developed Government's own Intranet called as "raj SWIFT"

Payment of Bills and Taxes

FRIENDS: This project is started by Kerala Government for its citizens to make online payment of electricity and water bills, revenue taxes, license fees, motor vehicle taxes, university fees, etc

E-SEVA: Electronic seva by Andhra Pradesh government to pay utility bills, avail of trade licenses and transact on government matters at these facilities.

BWSSB ganakeekrutha Grahakara Seve, water billing, and collection system: This e-governance project is started by the Bangalore government. In this every month bills of houses are generated through BGS software

DOMESTIC: This project is started by Daman and Diu. It is an Electricity Billing System for domestic consumers.

E-Pourasabha Municipal Application: E-Pourasabha is an e-governance application for urban local bodies. It is implemented for Tax Collection system, Property Tax, Water Tax etc.

E-Mitra by the Government of Rajasthan

SAMPARK by Chandigarh government

E-Suvidha by the government of Uttar Pradesh.

Public Services

Lok Mitra: By the government of Himachal Pradesh. The services offered include information about vacancies, tenders, market rates, matrimonial services, village e-mail.

Mahiti Shakti: By Gujarat government to provide information related to its working to its citizens.

ISSN:0971-1260
Vol-22-Issue-4-October-December-2019

OLTP: By Andhra Pradesh government. With this project 16 government departments in Andhra Pradesh are connected on a single network.

Road and Traffic

BHOOSWADEENA: This project is computerized land acquisition system with tight integration with BHOOMI.

I-Geo Approach Internet Geometrics: Purpose of this project is development of Geometrics based web enabled decision support system for Rural Road Network of Madhya Pradesh.

RSPCB (Rajasthan State Pollution Control Board): The project relates to establishment of computer based system by fulfilling the Hardware,

CFST: Citizen Friendly Services of Transport Department This project is started by the government of Andhra Pradesh to keeps check on pollution control, road safety, road signs and safety of its citizens.[

Rural E-Governance Initiatives

E-Jan Sampark: Services & Information accessible to the common man in his locality to meet his basic need. This project is started by Chandigarh.

Prajavani: it is started by the Government of Andhra Pradesh.it is a Web based On-line Monitoring of Public Grievances.

Web Portals for Hyderabad and Cyber bad Police: It is designed by Hyderabad, developed and hosted with many exciting public utility features like Safety tips for all citizens, verification status of Passports, Stolen vehicles etc.

E-DISHA Ekal Sewa Kendra: This project is started by Haryana government. E-Disha to deliver any service from any counter/location,

E-Samadhan: Government of Himachal Pradesh stressed upon to develop grievances redressed mechanism so that the genuine public grievances may be redressed in a time bound manner.

Health and Hospital

Online Vaccination Appointment for International Traveller: Citizen centric application for the purpose of vaccination of the persons proceeding abroad and issuance of International Health Certificate

SMS based Integrated Disease Surveillance System: it is an SMS based Integrated Disease Surveillance System

ISSN:0971-1260
Vol-22-Issue-4-October-December-2019

Hospital OPD Appointment: Hospital OPD Appointment System is another welfare measure undertaken by Chandigarh Administration to make life of citizens simpler.

Education

CASCET: This project is started by the Karnataka government for Education Department.

Online Scholarship Management System: It is meant for the purpose of distribution of scholarships and fees reimbursement.

AISES (All India School Education Survey): this project is started by Assam government. This project is used for surveying the number of schools in district. Census

CAPnic: This is for the Centralized seat allotment process for professional courses and come under Kerala.

VHSE Examination Management System: it has been developed to handle pre-examination related activities of the vocational higher secondary education.

Benefits Achieved

e-Governance affords an excellent opportunity for India to radically improve the quality of governance and thereby:

• Allow for two-way communication between government and citizens not only for service delivery but also to receive opinions of citizens on policies and government performance

• Provide greater access to excluded groups, who have few opportunities to interact with government and benefit from its services and schemes

• Include all sections of the society in the mainstream of development

• Enabling rural and traditionally marginalized segments of the population to gain fast and convenient access to services in their own neighbourhoods. e-Governance:

ISSN:0971-1260
Vol-22-Issue-4-October-December-2019

Key Challenges

Implementing the e-Governance agenda needs to be seen in the context of the federal structure of the country. The Indian Constitution declares that India is a Union of States, with a three-tier federal structure – the Union, State and Local Bodies/Authorities. Although the legislative and policy-making powers are vested with the Central (Federal) and State Governments with clearly defined lists of central and state subjects, the delivery of most common services to citizens are overseen by the local bodies such as municipalities (town councils) in urban areas and panchayats (village bodies) in rural areas. This is appropriately reflected in the comprehensive plan and policies prepared by the GoI for implementing e-Governance across India, especially. But in a country with the diversity and size as India's, there are bound to be several challenges, least of which are technical.

Interaction and integration: The success of any e-Governance initiative lies in complete integration between the services. India is a country with 18 official languages and states having different parties in power than at the Center. This creates language issues and also political issues. Even though NIC is the one body responsible for the whole framework, but there is no ready-made framework out there that can be used by NIC to easily dove-tail different components together. Whatever it does in a way becomes the standard.

Technical divide: Even though awareness has grown over the last decade. Still, the Urban-Rural divide is quite huge in terms of technical capabilities and accessibility. Internet access is not that readily available in villages and small towns.

Infrastructure and Speed: Even in the urban areas, the speeds of Government websites and its user friendliness is suspect. People would like to use the resources available, but it can all go waste if the websites are badly designed (which many are) and do not open up fast enough

Security and technical changes: technology is changing at such a fast pace while the government is not ready to pace it up. Both don't work well. Within a matter of months at present, the entire technologies change – old ones become

ISSN:0971-1260
Vol-22-Issue-4-October-December-2019

obsolete and new ones become standards. In such a scenario pacing up with technology change and with security from hackers is needed.

Process and administrative inertia: At the core of it, e-Governance is not a "technical initiative". It hinges on the re-engineering of process and administrative methods. If one has to enable technology to do things better and faster, then people and processes need to change the ways. That is most often not possible in a government set up.

Capacity Building for e-Governance in India

The Government of India, in various forums, has indicated its commitment to provide efficient and transparent government to all strata of society. e-Governance is now mainly seen as a key element of the country's governance and administrative reform agenda. The Government of India aspires to provide:

• Governance that is easily understood by and accountable to the citizens, open to democratic involvement and scrutiny (an open and transparent government)

• Citizen-centric governance that will cover all of its services and respect everyone as individuals by providing personalized services.

• An effective government that delivers maximum value for taxpayers' money (quick and efficient services) hence the Government of India views e-Governance as a vehicle to initiate and sustain reforms by focusing on three broad areas: Governance

• Transparency

• People's participation

• Promotion of a democratic society

•Public services

• Efficient, cost-effective and responsive governance

• Convenient services to citizens and businesses

• Greater citizen access to public information

• Accountability in delivery of services to citizens Management

ISSN:0971-1260
Vol-22-Issue-4-October-December-2019

• Simplicity, efficiency and accountability

• Managing voluminous information and data effectively

• Information services

• Swift and secure communication

While pursuing these goals, it is recognized that the motivations and imperatives for adopting e-governance in a developing country like India are vastly different from those in developed countries. Government of India should carry out Impact Assessments of e governance projects to see whether the benefit is actually percolating to the marginalized sections of society. The Impact Assessment may cover the following:

1. Efficiency Attribute - Are the type of e-services given through the e-governance initiatives benefiting the socially and economically backward users?
2. User Convenience Attribute – The suitability of the service locations and ease of access by socially and economically backward users.
3. Citizen centricity attributes –
a) Reduction of visits to government offices - it is very annoying to have to meet several officials for a task that actually takes perhaps just 5 minutes. Sometimes this also entails a number of visits that a citizen has to make to an office.
b)User friendliness – The service provider should have sufficient knowledge or access to it to answer the queries of the common user. The familiarity of the service provider with the services applicable to different user groups becomes an important element in faster and hassle-free service delivery.

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ISSN:0971-1260
Vol-22-Issue-4-October-December-2019

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