Impact Assessment of E-Governance in India

Dr. Gian Chand

Assistant Professor
University College kurukshetra university kurukshetra

ABSTRACT

E-Governance is the use of ICT by the government, civil society and political institutions to engage citizens through dialogue and feedback to promote their greater participation in the process of governance of these institutions. Thus, e-Government can be viewed as a subset off e-Governance, and its focus is largely on improving administrative efficiency and reducing administrative corruption. In the paper authors have discussed about the e-government initiative in India, its benefits, its acceptability in India and its impact in development of developing countries.

Keyword - *e-Governance, Impact, e-Government*

---

1. Introduction

Public Administration, governed by bureaucratic structures built on rationale principles, that dominated the twentieth century, has failed to respond to the changing requirements of the present times. E-Governance, which is a paradigm shift over the traditional approaches in public administration, means rendering of government services and information to the citizens using electronic means. This new paradigm has brought about a revolution in the quality of service delivered to the citizens. It has led to transparency in the governing process; saving of time due to provision of services through single window, simplification of procedures; better office and record management; reduction in corruption; and improved attitude, behaviour and job handling capacity of the dealing personnel.

The two terms e-Government and e-Governance are independent and synonym of each other, but boh are at times used alternatively, there by the major distinction between e-Government and e–Governance. E-government is understood as the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to promote more efficient and cost effective government, facilitate more convenient government services and allow greater citizens access to information, and make government more accountable to citizens, whereas governance is a wider term which covers the state's institutional arrangements, decision making processes, implementation capacity and the relationship between government officials and the public. Egovernance is the use of ICT by the government, civil society and political institutions to engage citizens through dialogue and feedback to promote their greater participation in theprocess of governance of these institutions. Thus, egovernment can be viewed as a subset off e-Governance, and its focus is largely on improving administrative efficiency and reducing administrative corruption3

While this definition is simply stated, it is actually quite broad. It incorporates different connotations which reflect the functions of government itself. They are: .

e-Services — the electronic delivery of government information, programs, and services over the Internet to bring the government policies closer to the citizens.

e-Democracy — the use of electronic communications to increase citizen participation in the public decision-making process. Such as:online disclosure policies, online grievance redress forums and e-referendums.

e-Commerce — the electronic exchange of money for goods and services such as citizens paying taxes and utility bills, renewing vehicle registrations, and paying for recreation programs, or government buying supplies and auctioning surplus equipment

e-Management — the use of Information Technology to improve the management of government, from streamlining business processes to maintaining electronic records, to improving the flow and integration of information

e-Administration — the use of ICT to modernize the state; the creation of data repositories for MIS, computerization of records.

It has radically defined the way a government provides servic to the citizens, businesses and other arms of the government using the following delivery models:

• Government to Citizen (G2C)
• Government to Business (G2B)
• Government to Government (G2G)
• Government to Employees (G2E)

E-GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES IN INDIA:
The Government of India kick started the use of IT in the government in the right earnest by launching number of initiatives. First the Government approved the National e-Governance Action plan for implementation during the year2003-2007. The plan is an attempt to lay the foundation and provide impetus for long-term growth of e-Governance within the country. It proposed to create the right governance and institutional mechanisms at the Centre, State and Local levels to provide a citizen centric and business centric environment for governance. The Government has given approval in-principle to the plan and overall programme content; implementation approach and governance structure. While endorsing the plan, it was observed that: weight age must be given for quality and speed of implementation in procurement procedures for IT services; suitable system of motivating the states for quick adoption be incorporated; provision of delivery of services to the citizens through a single window should be encouraged; Out sourcing of services wherever and whenever feasible; efforts be made to promote and develop public private partnerships to utilize the full potential of private sector investments; and connectivity should be improved and extended up to the block level in the states. Apart from the action plan, the following measures have also been introduced:
• Adoption of Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 by the Government of India to provide legal framework to facilitate electronic transactions. The major aims of this act are to: recognize electronic contracts, prevents computer crimes, and make electronic filing possible. The Act came into force on 17 October, 2000;
• Establishment of the National Taskforce of Information Technology and Software Development in May 1998;
• Creation of Centre for e-Governance to disseminate the best practices in the area of e- Governance for the use by the Central and State Governments and act as a nodal centre to provide general information on e-Governance, national and international initiatives, and IT policies of the government(s);
• Developing e-Office solutions to enable various Ministries and Departments to do their work electronically. Modules such as Workflow for Drafts for Approvals, e-File, e -Noting, Submission of Reports, Integrated Personal Information and Financial Accounting Systems have been developed;
 • Setting up of a High Powered Committee (HPC) with Cabinet Secretary as its Chairman to improve administrative efficiency by using Information Technology in Government;
• Designating a Joint Secretary level officer as IT manager in every Ministry/Department; and
 • Instituting websites by almost all Ministries and Departments and providing information on aspects such as their objectives, policies and decisions, contact persons, etc. Some of them have started their electronic newsletter for giving publicity to their activities on wider scale; and identifying departments, which have frequent inter-face with the citizens, and computerizing them on priority basis.

BENEFITS OF E-GOVERNANCE
Adoption of e-Governance leads to multiple advantages:
• It greatly simplifies the process of information accumulation for citizens and businesses.
• It empowers the   citizens to gather information regarding any department of government and get involved in the process of decision making.
• E-Governance strengthens the very fabric of democracy by ensuring greater citizen participation at all levels of governance
• E-Governance leads to automation of services, ensuring that information regarding every work of public welfare is easily available to all citizens, eliminating corruption.
• This revolutionizes the way governments function, ensuring much more transparency in the functioning, thereby eliminating corruption.
• Since the information regarding every activity of government is easily available, it would make every government department responsible as they know that every action of theirs is closely monitored.
• Proper implementation of e-Governance practices make it possible for citizens to get their work done online thereby sparing themselves of unnecessary hassles of traveling to the respective offices.
• Successful implementation of e-Governance practices offer better delivery of services to citizens, improved interactions with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information, better management, greater convenience, revenue growth, cost reductions etc.

• Furthermore, introduction of e-Governance brings governments closer to citizens. So much so that today it becomes extremely convenient to get in touch with a government agency. Indeed, citizen service centres are located closer to the citizens now. Such centres may consist of an unattended kiosk in the government agency, a service kiosk located close to the client, or the use of a personal computer in the home or office.

• E-Governance practices help business access information that might be important for them at a click.

E-Governance helps to simplify the processes and make access of government information easier. The other estimated benefits of e-Governance include efficiency in services, improvement in services delivery, standardization of services, better accessibility of services, and more transparency and accountability. According to OECD e-book Good Governance has eight major characteristics i.e. Participation, Transparency, Effectiveness and efficiency, Responsiveness, Accountability, Equity and Inclusiveness, Rule of Law, for the effective and efficient governance. All these properties revolve around the ICT will explains innovative definition of e-Governance This means e-Governance has all the above properties as well as innovative Information and Communication Technology for the effective and efficient governance in any sector which assures that corruption is to be minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsible to the present and future needs of society.

It is convenient and cost-effective for the Government also in terms of data storage and access to the stored data. The government benefits from reduced duplication of work. In addition, the processes of data collection, analysis and audit are simplified, and become less tedious. Another cherished goal of e-Governance is greater citizen participation in the governance of the country. In the context of the statement, a government may theoretically move more towards a true democracy with the proper application of e-Governance. With increasing concern about the environment, e-Governance has an important benefit. Online government services would lessen the need for hard copy forms and thus produce significant savings in paper, contributing to a greener planet.

E-GOVERNANCE – ACCEPTABILITY IN INDIA

How is e-Governance important in the context of India? The answer may be found in the following lines quoted from Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, the former President of India, "Delivery of services to citizens is considered a primary function of the government. In a democratic nation of over one billion people like India, e-Governance should enable seamless access to information and seamless flow of information across the State and Central Government in the federal set up. No country has so far implemented an e-Governance system for one billion people. It is a big challenge for us".

Keeping in mind the various positive impacts of e -Governance; in May 2006, the Government of India approved the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) with the vision: "Make all Government services accessible to the common man in his locality, throughout common service delivery outlets and ensure efficiency, transparency & reliability of such services at affordable costs to realize the basic needs of the common man". The NeGP currently consists of a series of Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) and Support Components which are being implemented at the Central, State and Local Government levels. These include Projects such as Income Tax, Customs & Excise and Passports at the Central Level, Land Records, Agriculture and e-District at the State Level and Panchayats and Municipalities at the Local Level. There are also a number of integrated MMPs like e-Procurement, Service Delivery Gateway, etc. where delivery of services envisaged in the project entail co-ordinated implementation across multiple Departments of the Government. The mission Mode Projects are envisioned to enable the backend computerization of various departments, thereby e-Enabling them for any time anywhere service delivery, to achieve the vision of providing government services at the door-step of the citizen. For this, a common service delivery platform is being created. The three important elements that form the basis of this effective service delivery framework are State Wide Area Networks (SWANs), the Front-End outlets for the service delivery i.e. Common Service Centres (CSCs) and the State Data Centres (SDCs). The SWAN scheme envisages establishment of an intragovernment network with a minimum of 2 Mbps connectivity from the State Headquarters to Block Headquarters through District Headquarters. The SWAN project provides the connectivity to facilitate the rolling out of citizen -centric services under various Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) under NeGP. The Government of India has approved the scheme of establishing Common Service Centres (CSCs) across the country and the CSC scheme envisages the establishment of 100,000 broadband Internet - enabled kiosks in rural areas, which would deliver government and private services at the door-step of the citizens. An additional 10,000 CSCs would be set up in the semi-urban/urban areas. The CSCs are being made operational in most states. State Data Centres (SDCs) along with Disaster Recovery (DR) are being established in order to provide shared, secured and managed infrastructure for consolidating and securely hosting State level data and applications. SDC would provide better operations and management control and minimize overall cost of Data Management, IT management, deployment etc. SDCs would ordinarily be located at the State

Headquarters and help the State Government, State Line Ministries and Departments in providing central repository (database consolidation), application consolidation, and State Intranet / Internet portal.

IMPACT OF E-GOVERNANCE :
Return on investment is not the primary objective when e-Government projects are conceived as they are mostly driven to achieve operational efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. But with Governments running on tight budgets, especially in case of developing countries like India, there is an increasing demand to re-examine their spending priorities. Further, e-Government programmes are subjected to scrutiny to find out whether they are delivering the payoff as has been promised or not. There are three kinds of situation that require evaluation in e-Governance. One is the e-Environment; second is about evaluating the performance of an e-Governance programme or a project; and the third is the overall impact of e-Governance on general government functioning, economic development and citizen servicing. Accordingly, we need three kinds of approaches of evaluation as under:
• E - readiness assessment of States or Regions
• Hierarchy of measures taken by the e - Governance programme or project
• Overall impact of e –Governance
On the backdrop of our discussion on evaluation of e- Governance initiatives, let us look at some success stories in India and their impact on governance. Some of the successful e-Governance projects include VAT Information Computerization to Optimize Revenue Yields (VICTORY) under the G2B delivery model in the State of Bihar, Stamps and Registration Automation with Technology and Information (SARTHI) under the G2C model in the State of Rajasthan, Service and Payroll Administrative Repository for Kerala (SPARK) under the G2E model and Integrated Information System for Food grains Management (IISFM) under the G2G model. The VICTORY system has facilitated unearthing crores of tax evasion by micro and macro analysis of tax data. It has also helped in scrutinizing of returns and validation of Input Tax Credit (ITC) from seller and purchaser data in acentralized way thus speeding up the refund process. The satisfaction index for VICTORY effectiveness is extremely high at around 90% despite of all the odd circumstances in Bihar. This creativity in reforms in tax administration fetched it the Oracle Excellence Award in the category of 'IT against odds' in the World Summit, 2006. The successful implementation of Project SARTHI in the year 2003 was instrumental in reinforcing citizen's confidence in Government to serve citizens. The simple, effective time bound and innovative project has proved to be the role model for similar e-Governance projects in the State of Rajasthan. SPARK is a web based Personnel Administration and Accounts Software for Government of Kerala covering more than 3.25 lakhs employees. The Centralized Integrated Computerized Personnel and Payroll Information System has helped the government to get details of any employee immediately, achieve highest level of transparency in dealing with the employees, more consistent application of rules, etc. On the payroll side, accurate and automatic payroll processing is facilitated. It also ensures that the rules and regulations are uniformly applied to all employees thereby avoiding complaints and achieve better employee relations.
IISFM is an MIS solution developed and implemented by National Informatics Centre (NIC) for the Food Corporation of India (FCI). This system aimed at improving the ITC and better online stock inventory management system. The system is being used to bring in more transparency and curb mismanagement of food stocks. The project was a joint winner under the G2G/G2E category of the Computer Society of India e-Governance awards 2006 – 07.
It has been seen that most often e-Government initiatives suffer delays and encounter failures as the implementation agencies lack guidance in the areas of planning and implementation of e-Governance projects. The investment in e-Governance tends to produce below par results in the absence of standards also. It is therefore critical to have suitable policies, guidelines and specifications well laid out to overcome the problems associated with planning and implementation of e-Governance projects. Further, it is essential that there is a mechanism in place to ensure compliance of the laid down policies, guidelines and specifications. In spite of some reservations and potential negative implications of implementing and designing e -Governance, including disintermediation of the government and its citizens, impacts on economic, social, and political factors, vulnerability to cyber-attacks, and disturbances to the status quo in these areas, e-Governance can radically change the face of governance, especially in a big country like India and provide its citizens, an interface to get better and more efficient government services.

2. CONCLUSIONS

In spite of poor infrastructure, poverty, illiteracy, language dominance and all the other reasons India has number of award winning e-Governance projects. The effective promotion schemes by the Central Government are a boosting

factor to provide quality services to their citizens. According to Skoch consultancy New Delhi, 81% citizens report reduction in corruption, 95% find cost of e-Governance affordable and 78% favours fast of delivery of services. Therefore we can say that e- Governance is the key to the "Good Governance" for the developing countries like India to minimize corruption, provides efficient and effective or quality services to their citizens.

REFERENCES

[1] Neelesh Jain (2011), "Cyber Crime: Prevention, Detection and Prosecution", Career Motivation Centre Sagar.

[2] Citizens as Partners - Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy- Making, "OECD e-book", http://www.oecd.org/publications/ebook/4201131E.Pdf.

[3] Murthy C. S. V (2011), "e – Commerce", Himalaya Publishing House New Delhi.

[4] Heeks Richards, "e-government for development", http"//www.manchester,edu.uk accessed on 30.09.2012 at 2120 Hrs.

[5] Bhatnagar Subhash (2004), "E-government from vision to implementation", Sage publications, New Delhi.

[6] Gupta Pyush and Bagga R. K., "Compendium of e -Governance Initiatives in India", Universities Press, Hyderabad.

[7] Kochhar, S. & G. Dhanjal (2004), "Governance to e -Governance: An initial assessment of some of India's best projects, Technical Report", Skoch Consultancy Services. New Delhi:

[8] Government of India, "Information Technology Action Plan: IT for All Indians by 200", http://it-taskforce.nic.in.

[9] Gupta, M.P. (2004),"Towards E-Government Management Challenges", Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company Limited, New Delhi.

[10] Kaushik, P.D. (2004), "E-Governance: Government Initiatives in India", in Bibek Debroy, Agenda for improving Governance, Academic Foundation in Association with Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies, New Delhi.

[11] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E-Government accessed on 06.09.2013 at 2030 Hrs.

[12] http://india.gov.in/sectors/communication/egovernance.php accessed on 06.09.2013 at 2051 Hrs.

[13] http://www.expresscomputeronline.com/20050131/egover nance01.shtml accessed on 14.09.2013 at 2210 Hrs.

[14] http://dqindia.ciol.com/content/top_stories/1031011501.as p accessed on 14.09.2013 at 2216 Hrs.

[15] http://informatics.nic.in/archive/inf2001jul/web_watch.ht m accessed on 20.09.2013 at 2115 Hrs.