

FROM E-GOVERNMENT TO DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP: EXAMINING THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS IN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMUNICATION IN BANGLADESH

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the transformative power of social media platforms (SMP) in public service communication in Bangladesh. It discusses the move away from the e-government models to a developing model of digital citizenship. This study looks at how government ministries and ultimately civil services use social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to disseminate information, crisis management and two-way dialogue with citizens with the help of contemporary theories of networked governance and public value. The study shows that SMPs has reconfigured power dynamics between the government and citizens. Citizens are able to avoid and hold the authority accountable, thus creating early forms of digital new citizenship. Nonetheless, the research reveals that even after 10 years of innovation, propagating the same disease of digital public service delivery through script distortions will not solve the problem and hence appropriate institutional level policy changes are needed. This study adds to the digital governance literature by offering a focused contextual analysis of a rapidly growing digitally South Asian country.

Keyword: *E-Government, Digital Citizenship, Social Media, Public Service Communication, Bangladesh, Networked Governance, Accountability.*

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1.0 Introduction.

The services offered by government across the world are being transformed radically because of digitalisation and technology. A distinctive categorization can be made during the course of the development of digital government. This can be traced through certain stages. It started with the initial stages of e-Government or e-Gov. Such programs aim to computerize various provision of information along one way. Although these early projects were quite important, they mainly introduced a digital foundation for further online services and was limited to the first two stages of the e-Gov model and classic model. The transition to Digital Government involves putting more emphasis on centring designs on citizens and incorporating the delivery of integrated services across silos. Additionally, it will help create real-time feedback loops that enhance participative governance (Papadopoulos et al, 2019). This intended change calls for technology to not just automate but also redesign the entire architect between the state and the citizen.

This worldwide development is highly noticeable in many developing nations including Bangladesh. Bangladesh is a highly populated country with over 180 million people. Similarly, there are over 120 million mobile internet users which are increasing at an exponential rate. In the early 2000s, the e-Gov journey of Bangladesh began. The journey was initiated formally. In high-level circles, the journey gained much momentum. It set not only high-level goals for physical infrastructure development and establishment of basic service access points, but also human resource development and the aim of digitalizing hundreds of vital public services (A2I, 2020). These efforts may have greatly expanded service access and reduced wait times for basic services, but they often retained the fundamental limitation of the traditional e-Gov model, which was essentially a one-way transaction. Official website and dedicated portal, used for formal and compliance purpose. (Hossain & Al-Hakim, 2017) Efforts are concentrated entirely on efficiency rather than citizen outcomes.

The key agent of change and the main focus of this work is the explosive and largely organic adoption of social media platforms (SMPs). Platforms like Facebook which dominate the Bangladeshi digital space and the high usage of WhatsApp and strategic use of YouTube are no longer social or entertainment platforms only. Online forums have quickly become virtual public squares, direct access points to administrative bodies and forums for political and social criticism. The government institutions of Bangladesh, such as high-level ministries (like the Ministry of Health), local law enforcement etc have through clever design or operational necessity driven by citizen demand integrated these platforms into a core public service communication strategy. The integrated use of SMPs is crucial because their superior affordances, immediacy, viral potential, public visibility and casual conversational character enable citizens with demands for immediate responsiveness and accountability.

I strive to analyse and map functional cultural and political changes, and this is the crux of my research motivation. My contention is that SMPs are becoming one of the most important and compelling tools for the shift towards real Digital Citizenship, rather than e-Gov merely upgrading with technology. Citizenship is defined as the active ability and willingness of citizens to engage in the process of governance, holding institutions to account in real-time and effectively co-creating public value (Schulz, 2018). However, the rate at which this transfer takes place establishes a basic misfit between technology's flat, open and the countries deeply entrenched hierarchical bureaucracy.

Despite the prevalence of SMPs among government agencies in Bangladesh, there has been limited academic study on the mechanisms, impact and systemic challenges of their use to date. In existing literature, the governmental adoption of socially beneficial marketing practices (SMPs) is often seen as a technical extension of the existing e-Gov model, i.e., information dissemination rather than a means for more serious democratic restructuring and administrative accountability. Because there is little focused, contextualized analysis, we do not have clarity on the genuine public value created (or destroyed) by the platforms in a developing democratic context with evolving institutions. This paper has been drafted in the knowledge gap that these neural spaces serve as new frontiers for the state and the citizenry.

Guided by the above research questions, the study will try to find out how government institutions in Bangladesh have used Social Media Platforms (SMPs) to alter the communication of public service from one-way dissemination to two-way engagement? In what ways do citizens use social media platforms to engage with public services, demand accountability and exercise 'Digital Citizenship'? What are the main institutional, socio-economic and technological upgradation to practical, fair and beneficial deployment of SMPs for public service communication in Bangladesh?

2.0 Literature Review: Tracing the Conceptual Trajectory

The core conception of this research derives from the well-known evolution of the digital governance theory which moves decidedly in recent times from the more conventional E-Government (e-Gov) model towards Digital Government (DG) model. The basic premise of e-Gov (Layne and Lee 2001; Moon 2002) is to use ICTs to internally create a more efficient bureaucracy and provide simply online, one-way public information. Similar to other ICT4D solutions, e-Gov consisted of a public website where the citizen could view information, usually in the form of a database.

2.1 The Four-Stage Model of E-Government Evolution

To understand the extent of the change, it is helpful to place the Bangladeshi experience within the established four-stage model of e-Gov evolution (Layne & Lee, 2001):

1. **Stage 1: Cataloguing (Information):** Static, one-way information (e.g. government websites providing a listing of services, contacts, law texts)
2. **Stage 2: Transaction (Interaction):** Concentrate on uncomplicated communication like accessing download forms or email queries.
3. **Stage 3: Vertical Integration (Transaction):** Citizens should have the power to do a whole transaction on-line, like - renewing license, paying tax, submitting application, etc. This often requires complex back-office integration.

4. **Stage 4: Horizontal Integration (Transformation):** To ensure that real policies, processes and programmes are aligned around the needs and aspirations of citizens, we must implement feedback loops. All levels of government must implement integrated service delivery. This is the stage that fully embraces Digital Government.

Through 'Digital Bangladesh', many services like land records, passport application, etc. has successful case studies for achieving Stage 3 (Transaction). However, our manner of communicating and our engagement were often need modifications in Stage 1 (Information). SMPs are currently forcing the state to fill a basic gap. The need for stage 4 formal top-down integration at the governmental level can be easily achieved through SMPs. SMPs offer an agency-centric informal ways for citizen feedback, forcing them to adopt stage 4 responsive principles. The internal infrastructural systems were ready much longer ago than most think. The study findings reveal informal pressures of SMPs are becoming an expected change agent in Bangladesh.

2.2 Social Media Affordances as Communication Disrupters

Due to the characteristics of social media platforms, the one-way route of public service communication is turned two-way. The affordances of technology- the features, or technical capabilities, inherent to a medium that enable certain actions- are central to explaining the emergence of the change in state-citizen relations that we observe (Treem & Leonardi 2012).

- **Visibility and Persistence:** Interactions on Facebook often happen on a public platform and the content remains there indefinitely, unlike a telephone call or an official letter. Visible to the public and journalists, a citizen complaint creates a real-time on the official recipient which is a strong pressure. The visibility serves as an informal way to hold them accountable, in the sense that they cannot ignore the demand of the service or the demand of justice. The transparency produced directly facilitates the generation of Procedural Value.
- **Searchability and Immediacy:** SMP content can be accessed and shared in a matter of moments, providing citizens with the necessary verification and information. Platforms enable government agencies to take action in response to the delayed media gatekeepers, especially in a disaster and deliver crucial Substantive Value information directly and instantly to a victim.

Associability and Networkability: In SMPs, connections are fluid and non-hierarchical. This assists in creating network governance efforts to a state. It allows people to mobilize support more quickly, share their grievances and amplify their voice, shifting from personal complaint to group demand for systemic change. Essential aspect of Digital Participation is the associative characteristic.

2.3 The Three Dimensions of Digital Citizenship

The phrase Digital Citizenship shifts the emphasis from just digital access to an individual's personal and political right to engage and act in society and governance (Isin & Ruppert 2015) through digital technologies. The government agencies' effective and strategic use can strengthen Digital Citizenship among citizens, which is analytically classified into three conflicting and important dimensions (Rahman & Khan, 2021):

1. **Digital Literacy:** The ability to access, evaluate and create information using the internet is the basic competency. Critical literacy undermines the democratic potential of platforms that, in the digital ecosystem, are saturated with sensational content. When citizens are unable to differentiate between official, verified communiqués and malicious propaganda, the platforms become tools of confusion rather than governance.
2. **Digital Participation:** This is the active use of platforms to comment, petition and leave detailed service feedback. The clear proof that a citizen is willing to participate. Our purpose here is to distinguish between token participation – a case like, or comment that simply shows appreciation – and substantial participation – detailed actionable feedback, or verifiable complaint.
3. **Digital Rights and Accountability:** The most vital dimension for democratic health is the citizens' power to use these platforms to monitor governmental performance, report government and demand redressal.

When anyone feels the need to react to a public post talking about a broken road or arbitrary fine, the exercise of Digital Rights takes place, as also, the traditional administrative opacity of the state is breached.

The current study aims to showcase how these three dimensions are operationalised and mediated through SMPs by exploring the state-citizen interaction patterns that play out on these platforms. As a result, it will facilitate framed measurable assessment of national digital governance interventions to the actualization of democratic practice in Bangladesh.

3.0 Theoretical Framework: Networked Governance and Public Value

According to the theory of Networked Governance and Public Value, this study intends to review the complexity of public service communication through SMPs.

3.1 Networked Governance: From Hierarchy to Polycentrism

Networked Governance (NG) represents a crucial theoretical shift in Bangladesh from a traditional, hierarchical, and state-centric public administration. The framework explicitly identifies umbrellas for each layer, including the state, civil society, private sector, and crucially, the citizens themselves, as implementation of policies and service delivery. Under this framework, the SMPs form the fundamental infrastructure engine of these networks. This allows horizontal and direct links among citizenry and departmental heads. Most crucially, they help coordinate various ministries especially during inter-ministerial crises. The arrangement is not just a matter of flow; it is co-production. Citizens and state actors contribute to the service outcome through their input.

In the Bangladeshi context, two types of networking are very important to differentiate:

1. **Operational Networking:** This is the low-level, transactional networking driven by immediate necessity, such as a law-enforcement officer using WhatsApp to connect with a health worker during a pandemic; or a citizen on getting an immediate response on Facebook to a complaint about a service. This is a common and easy-to-use form giving you immediate Substantive Value.
2. **Strategic Networking:** This is the widespread, systemic integration necessary to proceed from responding to single complaints to reforming the underlying policy which causes the complaints. To illustrate, a potential real application of Participation is for example aggregating thousands of complaints about a specific permit process originating via SMPs to fundamentally redesign the permit system. Institutions still find it hard to ensure institutional buy-in and data-driven analysis in this form. Nonetheless, the key challenge is to translate their operational success into strategic reform so as to realise Networked Governance potential.

3.2 Public Value Theory: Measuring Digital Outcomes

As clarified by Moore (1995), the ultimate objective of public managers is to create 'value', or a public good, for citizens. This is clearly seen as the two components of the public value theory, or PVT. PVT changes the focal point from inputs (budget) and outputs (number of transactions) to outcomes that are directly aligned to public need and democratic accountability. PVT applied in digital government means the value is multi-dimensional as quantified evaluation of the success of SMP usage will provide critical lens to judge the use of SMP in a developing democracy:

- **Substantive Value (Direct Outcomes):** This refers to direct, tangible service improvements. On SMPs, a successful resolution of an individual complaint, timely dissemination of live-saving crisis information or successful access to a complex service can be a measure of success through a platform's support channels. The easiest metric to measure is the primary driver of initial public engagement.
- **Procedural Value (Process Quality):** There is increased transparency, equitable treatment, and genuine participation of citizens in service design through user feedback mechanisms. On social media platforms, this happens when the agency responds and shows its work with evidence. For example, agency documentation that outlines the steps taken to solve a problem or a public acknowledgement of collated citizen feedback that leads to a policy change. It fosters the creation of lasting trust and aids Digital Participation.
- **Symbolic Value (Trust and Legitimacy):** With this in mind, the state is seen as accessible, modern and responding, leading to more public trust and legitimacy (Rhodes, 2016). When a senior official responds to a public question or an agency acts in a professional, empathic and consistent manner online, this has

symbolic value. Inconsistency and slow bureaucratic or technical response on social media will, in fact, devalue this strategy.

That said, social media use is not an end in itself. Instead, it is a strategy whose effectiveness must be measured in the degree to which it generates and sustains these three public values. Networked governance and public value increasingly need a new legitimacy, given their complexity, which is a key issue. SMPs enable a new model of networked systems but also bring the challenges of institutional overload and inconsistency. Agencies in Bangladesh must make systematic use of this transparency offered by SMPs to build Trust, Credibility and Procedural and Symbolic Value as scepticism grows with citizens becoming tech-savvy.

5.0 Findings and Discussion: The Transformative Role of SMPs

The findings suggest that the progress of e-Gov is slowly but progressively leading SMPs to become a key public management instrument. The transition takes place according to the organization but at the same time, there are institutional high points and systemic gaps which we can understand in terms of Public Value and Networked Governance.

5.1 From Information Dissemination to Two-Way Operational Value

At first, Bangladeshi government agencies are using the SMPs in a manner similar to the informational stage of the e-Gov. Thus, they post press releases, holiday announcements, links to services, and so on.

5.1.1 The Catalyst of Real-Time Service Delivery and Substantive Value

The advent of two-way communication had its beginnings when very visible front-facing agencies, law enforcement chiefly at the forefront, realized the benefits of SMPs for a myriad of operational needs, often immediate in nature. According to the reports from several sources, citizens are reported to post about lost documents, offences, and even small crimes on the official pages.

A consistent trend has been observed throughout the literature that mentions the demand to resolve issues immediately. For instance, when a citizen reported a blocked drain or flooding in their locality on a Facebook page, they received a public response asking for specifics like the location of the incident, followed by an internal referral. The social media team initially screens all the information and turns it into useful outputs for subsequent action. Many propagandas campaign against the government agencies including Armed Forces can be rebutted. The newspaper agency uses the platform for operational intelligence and not just to make complaints. For instance, it has asked citizens for witnesses to a hit and run case. It also has put out public notices for people to be aware of new rules. While it may take time to implement the solution, the initial institutional acknowledgment provides a lot of Substantive Value, i.e. a problem is solved or action taken. This also provides tremendous Procedural Value – the complaint mechanism is equally visible and accessible. This system by-passes the often intimidating and slow system of traditional complaint petitions fundamentally changing citizen experience and resulting in higher citizen expectation for response (Rahman & Khan, 2021). This kind of operational success is transactional and aimed at mitigating public relations risk, not systemic reform intent. The agency is connecting the citizen to the field unit through effective Operational Networking, but the success is limited to the individual service delivery level only.

5.1.2 Engagement Metrics and Dialogue Gaps Limiting Networked Governance

Several researches indicate that actual engagement in policy conversations, despite high engagement scores (likes, shares, comments), especially on educational issues and emergency services, is underdeveloped. The ability of the institution to collect, analyse and systematically use this feedback for policy making (the ‘transformation’ stage of e-Gov) lags far behind its ability to redress individual grievances (Haque, 2019). The main conflict with Networked Governance is this institutional lag. The main limitation is in the design of institutional data. Nearly all of the qualitative data produced in real-time through SMP interactions (e.g., DMs, public comments, photos) remains in an informal data silo, and is not at all included in the official internal Management Information Systems (MIS) for policy planning and budgeting. The bureaucracy cannot translate the unstructured data stream residing on Facebook because of the third-party nature of the platform and also due to technical non-delicateness. This non-delicateness refers to the lack of staff (Data scientists, policy analysts) and institutional mandate. However, it is extremely poor at Strategic Networking (bundling together the thousands of individual posts on traffic violations to change traffic law/enforcement practice). This systematic failure to close a feedback loop creates limits on long-term Procedural Public Value being generated, in continued transactional firefighting.

5.2 Crisis Management and Networked Service Innovation

SMPs are most useful during national crises. For instance, natural disasters like cyclones and floods, and health emergencies. These events compel the government to take on a more decentralized, networked posture, if only temporarily.

5.2.1 Real-Time Crisis Response and Symbolic Value

During the 2020-2021 COVID-19 lockdown, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) made extensive use of Facebook, Youtube as a medium to share advisories, vaccine schedule, and daily cases. SMPs were much better than “traditional media” for rapidly evolving stories which had to overcome the lag in print and state-controlled television news. To illustrate, there were advisories to distribute cylinders of oxygen or mobile teams for vaccination, which were circulated first on social media for more localised action.

The continued flow of information at a time of high public anxiety was important for generating large amounts of Symbolic Value. The state was portrayed as vigilant, informed and engaged (World Bank, 2020). Being constantly visible helps stem the panic and chaos that can lead to rumours as well as avoid a vacuum. During the crisis period, such platforms essentially supported Networked Governance by assisting with horizontal agency coordination and vertical communication to the public, thus helping to command-and-control effectively. Targeted messaging on Facebook, MoHFW used the platform to quickly rebut misinformation around treatment efficacy, an activity traditional media could not have performed as swiftly. Temporary application of networked principles in a crisis arises from an existential need. However, this opportunity for horizontal communication is rapidly restored once the crisis ends.

5.2.2 Initiative: Co-Production and Last-Mile Value Delivery

This is a dynamic powerful demonstration of co-production under Networked Governance: the government provides the platform and framework for contributing to the service delivery and tuning. A citizen from a remote Upazila can ask on Facebook Page for a land deed service, be pointed instantly to his local contact and then will provide his feedback on the service quality. The important auction of micro entrepreneurs who run the service point are using their private and public social media networks to push out other government service offers in local dialects through cultural references which central govt accounts cannot. This structural link of citizen and entrepreneurial communication significantly enhances the Substantive Value of a historically underserved rural community by utilizing the SMP as a connecting tool to fill their information gap and trust deficit thus marking a high level of Operational Networking within a purposefully designed government framework.

5.3 The Operationalization of Digital Citizenship and Accountability

The most significant finding, as evidenced by various studies, has been the observable proof, an excellent example of Digital Citizenship, through SMPs, i.e., going beyond mere access to democracy but to participation and monitoring.

5.3.1 Citizen-Led Accountability and Procedural Enforcement

The citizens of the country use the medium not only to request any services but also to expose and report details about corruption or failure of service. Often, we find in literature that one can observe a pattern. The pattern shows that a post with rich visual evidence (photos and videos) of faulty infrastructure, official inaction, or misuse of taxpayers' money tagged or addressed to official pages prompts quick institutional action. This action is taken on account of high reputational risk. This is the public shaming mechanism in effect.

According to the research, compliance speed varies depending on the channel used for communication. If you submit an official complaint using a complaint email or complaint portal, you can expect to receive a formal response week or months later. On the other hand, lodging a complaint, along with proved visual evidence and posted on a well-known Facebook page, usually leads to an official response or statement of an inquiry within 48 hours. The short time frame shows that the SMP Visibility affordance acts as a formidable non-traditional point of pressure for enforcing the dimension of Digital Citizenship encompassing Digital Rights and Accountability. Because SMPs are visible system, they act: so, albeit informal, they provide a powerful and non-traditional countervailing power that is in line with the polycentricity of Networked Governance (Klijn & Skelcher, 2007). In effect, visibility to the public acts as a procedural enforcement mechanism, creating a Procedural Value that otherwise would not exist. Public transparency comes through the idea that the SMP will become an administrative valve due to potential image to reputation.

5.3.2 The Youth Factor: Demand for Procedural Transparency

Demographic studies show that the young, native digital population largely controls digital participation. The youth use these platforms to critique, mobilize and offer solutions. It views the relationship between state and citizen as immediate, transparent service exchange. The high participation rates suggest that SMPs create a new space, which traditional institutions mostly age-stratified often bypass. They are asking for Procedural Value – fairness, clear information, and a say in things. Youth-led political debates on official pages constantly call attention to the clarity of processes and budgets. Their debate shows a want to put the state focus on the resulting outcomes and not just outlay.

Nevertheless, this group suffers the consequences of digital toxicity and cyber-bullying as a repercussion of their political speech. Thus, while their Digital Participation is considerable, the state is not yet able to guarantee the requisite legal and social protection for Digital Rights (Schulz, 2018). Young critics often suppress their genuine participation because of the aggressive counter-narratives or personal attacks they encounter online. This shows that in a non-managed public sphere; Digital Citizenship is fragile. The agencies cannot deal with complex, critical debate in an official capacity. As a result, they often just delete or ignore substantive critical comments. This is a direct mechanism for the destruction of Procedural Value and frustration of the participatory urge.

5.4 Systemic Friction: Barriers to Public Value Maximization

Due to the systemic constricted approach, the effective and equitable transition which essentially represent the friction between the aspirations of Digital Government and the realities of a administration.

5.4.1 The Digital Divide as an Equity Barrier

The country has a high level of mobile penetration but there is a digital divide between urban and rural areas regarding quality internet access and above all Digital Literacy (BBS, 2022). Many citizens, especially older and less-educated groups, find it hard to use the official SMP communications or critique the messages. A consistent finding in the reports is that rural citizens heckle third-party mediation (e.g. a relative posting on their behalf) or information-level services, which are related. Urban users continued to dominate complex service inquiries, which require higher levels of Digital Literacy to articulate.

The gap between technology and education, therefore, is a direct barrier to the equal delivery of Public Value that only concentrates the profits of better services in the hands of an already privileged digital elite. Consequently, this can lead to further widening inequality. For example, a government notification on a change in the land tax law posted on the Facebook page of the ministry will only benefit the connected, literate and urban persons. The rural folks, who rely on traditional notification and notices, will remain unattended to. Based on the report, policies need to focus on literacy as much as connectivity in order for SMPs to be able to deliver maximum public value for all.

5.4.2 Institutional Resistance and Capacity Limitations

Insufficient institutional capacity prevents networked governance to be fully realized. Government agencies frequently assign SMP management to junior or unqualified personnel, resulting in inconsistent messaging, significant delays or failure to respond to more complicated inquiries (Mannan et al., 2018). A very deep-rooted culture is in fact often suspicious of open, two-way communications. It fears a political backlash to become victim of public ire. The preference for risk aversion within a hierarchy means senior management usually opts for a policy of disengagement to prevent controversy.

A major finding here is the fear of logging. Use of Private Channels by many officials like using private encrypted chat applications (like WhatsApp groups) for internal Operational Networking regarding citizen complaints (e.g., “Field unit, please check this Facebook complaint”). This is because these do not leave a formal record. Through untraceable methods of communication, the principals are directly contravening the openness and transparency principle of Procedural Value. Moreover, the production of valuable information for Strategic Networking remains outside the administrative record. This way of limiting accountability for fear of accountability, makes sure that the polycentric ethos of Networked Governance is not fully realized. Thus, even when the network is technically available, the hierarchical mindset ensures that it does not participate effectively and consistently limits the generation of Procedural Value. SMP stays a tactical, not policy responsive tool for firefighting without an inflection of institutional mindset that rewards forensic rather than punishes engagement.

5.4.3 The Threat of Misinformation and the Erosion of Symbolic Value

Social media platforms (SMPs) are open and viral and so they are vulnerable to misinformation/fake news and propaganda spreading quickly. Often the efforts made by government to combat this fall short, which itself undermines the Symbolic Value (trust and legitimacy) that genuine engagement seeks to create (Rahman & Khan, 2021). The misinformation ecosystem consists of a number of types. They are: Public health hoaxes: false cures, conspiracy theories. Service disruptions hoaxes: false announcements of school closure, cutting off utilities etc. Trolling: discrediting the specific agencies.

The ongoing struggle against fake news causes officials to waste resources while undermining public confidence as it is affecting the Symbolic Value. Public service communication through SMPs has to be sophisticated and real-time. However, that vetting of information and verification of sources is beyond the facility of many public agencies. The fact that there is no high-level mechanism created on a unifying basis means that individual organisations are left to fend for themselves in an environment of systemic distrust. As such, instead of proactively setting authoritative narratives, agencies react defensively. Digital governance efforts face a major and long-term threat.

6.0 Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Bangladesh has come a long way in its journey away from centralized e-Government toward a more engaged, decentralized digital public service through the adoption of Social Media Platforms. A social media platform (SMP) allows citizens to gain access to services quickly. It allows for a rapid response in crises. Most importantly, it allows for a new form of Digital Citizenship that affords for real-time accountability against citizens. State has not technically embraced the philosophical concept of Networked Governance. However, the use of social media platforms (SMPs) is working as a strong pull force in the direction of Networked Governance. This is essentially through the generation of Substantive Value at the point of interaction of the service and the citizen.

The most important finding of this study is the tension between the possibility of networked, horizontal co-production and the reality of hierarchical. This often occurs spontaneously and refers to the generation of Substantive Value through the Digital Citizenship dimension of Digital Rights and Accountability. This is the citizens' push for to become responsive and effective. The system lacks strength in Strategic Networking. To close the feedback loop, the lack of use of public dialogue in developing policy normalizes limited long-term generation of Procedural Value. Moreover, obstacles in society – which include the Digital Divide and misinformation – hamper public value, while the latter jeopardises the Symbolic Value (public trust and legitimacy) meant to be created by positive service encounters. This means that while digital possibilities can lead to democratic deepening, the actual impact is being limited by structural inequalities and institutional inertia, which need active, non-digital reforms. So, in order to maintain our progress, and quicken the speed of becoming a fully-fledged digitally-savvy citizen, we should not just look at the introduction of technology but intensely concentrate on the cultural, institutional and educational tensions.

6.1 Policy Recommendations

To build on the achievements and expedite the transition to mature Digital Citizenship, the following policy interventions of the Government of Bangladesh, designed on the identification for maximizing public value, are suggested:

1. **Standardize Institutional Social Media Policy:** All governmental authorities should prepare and adopt high-level mandatory guidelines. The regulation succinct enshrining guidelines for responses, content creation standards, and the processes of clinching inputs to affect the policy review cycle. The complaints system must be designed to acknowledge complaints within an hour. Follow up on the complaint about the system issue within a week at most. Most importantly, it requires the communication of referral-related events through channels that can be verified. This works against a fear of logging. This strengthens the push to drive operational connectivity towards strategic Networked Governance. It also reinforces uniformity regarding Procedural Value.
2. **Invest in Digital Literacy as a Public Service:** Initiate nationwide campaigns, potentially, with a focus not solely on ensuring access but also on educating individuals about critical information evaluation and safety in online participation. The modules must include mechanisms to expose the deepfakes and propaganda therefore helping the digital divide and enhancing the underpinning of Digital Citizenship. Rural areas and the senior citizen community must be given priority in literacy programmes.

3. **Mandatory Capacity Building and Cultural Shift:** Make upper and middle level officers undertake periodic training on ethical digital communication and reputation management, and for using qualitative social media data for changing policy after proper analysis by data scientist. The training must include modules on data governance and analysis, promoting the proactive pooling of SMP data to perform policy analysis. This initiative is a direct counter to Institutional Resistance which provides incentives for the realization of Procedural Value by rewarding transparency, not punishing controversy.
4. **Establish a Multi-Agency Misinformation Task Force:** Establish a dedicated cross-ministerial body to monitor and rapidly respond to misinformation that damages public services, especially related to health and safety. This body should work with platform owners (for e.g. Facebook) for immediate flagging of content and push back verified counter-narratives from all official channels simultaneously. It is significant for sustaining symbolic value and protecting the public from the spread of misinformation.

It is projected that communication for public services in Bangladesh will be carried out through digital means in the future. If Bangladesh can get ahead of the institutional and social challenges of the transition, it may get to a situation where the Digital Bangladesh is a reality of common Digital Citizen rather than that of the state alone of an accountable Digital Citizen state.

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