



E- GOVERNANCE: MAJOR CHALLENGES IN INDIA

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Abstract: The traditional approaches dominated in the 20th century failed to respond to the changing environment in rendering the services to the public. E Government brought the revolution in India where government of India has taken steps to deliver the services to the citizens through the means of Information communications and technology (ICT). E government is the transformation of public sector internal and external relationship through internet enabled operations. The contribution and the role of Information communications and technology is very high. Through ICT knowledge has been created, information is shared, delivery of services, reduced cost, paperless office and many more.

The present study explores the theoretical assumptions about e governance by studying the some of the successful projects implemented by the various states in India. While studying we have identified some challenges at the time of implementation of the e governance projects. Experiences of the several successful projects reveal that though wider scope is there for implementation of projects nationwide unable to implement because lack of infrastructure facilities, technology feasibility, financial feasibility and huge investments

Keywords: E – Government, E – Governance, ICT, National E Governance Plan (NEGP).

Introduction

As India's economy is growing at a faster pace therefore faces a faster growing governance gap, causing our problems to scale faster than the attempted solutions. The exposure of series of high profile scandals in recent weeks is the clearest reminder yet that Indian governance has fallen so far behind the Indian economy and there is a serious risk that it will extinguish prospects of the nation's development. The National E-Governance plan is going to bridge the

divide between the work of the public offices and the beneficiary – the citizens thanks to the Indian Government for taking the E-Governance initiatives. In this new plan the other forms of e-governance also cover like government to business (G2B), government to government (G2G), and government to employees (G2E) channels.

Governance refers to the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in management of the country's affairs. E- Governance may be understood as the performance of this governance via electronic media to facilitate speedy, efficient and transparent process of disseminating the information to the public and for performing the Government activities. In simple words Governance term can be understood as the complex mechanisms, relationships and institutions through which public exercise their rights and obligations.

E-Governance in India: Emerging trends:

E-government is organizing public management in order to increase efficiency, transparency, accessibility and responsiveness to citizens through the intensive and strategic use of information and communication technologies in the inner management of the public sector (intra and inter governmental relations) as well as in its daily relations with citizens and users of public services.

E-Governance and Development.

The public service delivery system in the developing nations 'costs too much, delivers too little, and is not sufficiently responsive or accountable. Good governance reforms aim to revamp this delivery system. E- Governance offers new solutions, helping improve government processes, connect citizens, and build interactions with and within civil society. E-governance has the power of ICTs, which provide three basic change potentials for good governance for development:

- **Automation:** It means replacing the human-executed processes which involve accepting, storing, processing, outputting or transmitting information..
- **Informatisation:** It means supporting human- executed information processes. Like, supporting current processes of decision making, communication, and decision implementation.
- **Transformation:** It creates new ICT-executed information processes or supporting new human- executed information processes.

Reasons of Success or Failure of E-Government Projects in India

An estimated US\$3 trillion was spent during the first decade of the 21st century on government information systems. Yet recent studies suggest between 60 to 80% of e-government projects fail in some way leading to "a massive wastage of financial, human and political resources, and an inability to deliver the potential benefits of e-government to its

beneficiaries". Systems failures are recognized as occurring from a complex interaction of technical and human factors set in a social situation rather than as the result of the failure of one particular component.

If we take the view that an e-government project has failed if it misses any of the criteria that are implicit in such a common-sense definition of success, then it is hardly surprising that most projects are categorized as failures. But to understand failure, we need to examine the basis on which academic writers, who generally adopt an informative stance to evaluation, decide to provide descriptive and diagnostic information on the projects being considered. These diagnostic approaches fall into three main categories – factorial analyses, systems approaches and interpretive studies. Heeks (2002) applied a factor-based approach to an analysis of the significant number of failures in e-government projects. A survey of relevant case studies in the literature led him to the identification of seven dimensions necessary and sufficient to measure the gap that exists between 'current reality' and the 'design concept' of the intended application. He contends that the wider the gap that exists on each of these dimensions, the higher the risk of failure for the project.

E-Government Project Management: Issues and Challenges in India

E-Government is recognized internationally as an enabler toward achieving good governance, reducing cost of operations for the government, and increasing the ability of citizens and businesses to access public services in an effective and cost efficient manner. The successful implementation of e-Government project is a challenging task.

Some current challenges for managing E-Government Projects in India

- a. Lack of effective project management tools and methods.
- b. Absence of proper planning, various ad hoc tasks are taken up by the project team due to which the focus on critical activities is lost.
- c. The knowledge of project management concepts is very low in Government officials forming part of the e-Government Project team.
- d. E-Government projects do not follow any standardized project management implementation frameworks.
- e. Resources are over loaded with work due to inadequate staffing. Sometimes tasks not assigned to the team appropriately.
- f. No control of central IT agencies during project execution. The decision making process is generally left to individual line ministries and departments since funding comes from them.
- g. No provisioning of Project Management dashboard for collaborative project monitoring by all stakeholders in large e-Government projects.

- h. Inadequate tracking of how the project is being implemented, tasks causing delays.
- i. No monitoring of Cost and Schedule at project checkpoints.
- j. During the project initiation, the baseline data is not captured which is useful for benchmarking of activities.

Some Suggestion / Solutions to the above Challenges

- a) Government needs to have their own project management tools.
- b) Project tracking tool should be integrated to the tasks/ activities of the project and these should be monitored instead of status reports with only long text paragraphs being generated for monitoring the project status.
- c) Complete transparency/ work break down/ what are the issues blocking the project progress should be provided in the PM tools. Projects should be tracked through milestone based approach and evaluation done at various critical checkpoints.
- d) Cost, schedule, quality milestones checkpoints should get included as part of the project deliverables.

Future Prospects of E-Governance in India

Vision and Objectives of the Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-17)

- a. To deliver all Government services in electronic mode so as to make the Government process transparent, citizen centric, efficient and easily accessible.
- b. To break information silos and create shareable resources for all Government entities
- c. To deliver both informational and transactional government services over mobiles and promote innovation in mobile governance
- d. To build Shared Service Platforms to accelerate the adoption of E-Governance and reduce the -cycle time|| of E-Governance project implementation
- e. To strengthen and improve sustainability of the existing projects through innovative business models and through continuous infusion of advanced technology
- f. To promote ethical use of technology and data and to create a safe and secure E-Governance cyber world
- g. To create an ecosystem that promotes innovation in ICT for Governance and for applications that can benefit the citizens
- h. To better target the delivery of welfare schemes of the Central and State Governments
- i. To reduce asymmetry in information availability, accessibility and ability to utilize the information
- j. To increase the all round awareness and create mechanisms that promotes and encourages citizen engagement.
- k. To make available as much data as possible in the public domain for productive use by

the citizens.

Major Recommendations for the Twelfth Five Year Plan

The brick and mortar models of development have limitations with respect to reaching the last mile of our population. Information Communication Technology offers an efficient and speedier solution to deliver public services in a transparent and reliable manner to every citizen through ICT needs to be leveraged in every aspect of governance. DIT has been able to build the core E-Governance infrastructure (Data Centers, State Wide Area Networks, Common Services Centres (CSCs), Mobile Service Delivery Platform) across the country during the 11th Plan which will continue in the XII Plan so as to bring it to its logical conclusion. Also, the focus of the XII Plan will be on leveraging to catapult India in the top quartile of HDI ranking through quantum improvements in the delivery of Public Services. This will also bring in process efficiency, accountability and transparency.

E-Governance: Major Challenges in India

Poor people and poor infrastructure are major challenges in countries like India. It poses a major challenge in reaping the full benefits of service provision under e-governance. Certain challenges are as follows:

- **Poverty:** Accessing Internet is a costly affair for the poor who struggle for their livelihood in developing countries like India. Lack of required infrastructure is also a challenge.
- **Technical illiteracy:** There is general lack of technical literacy as well as literacy hence is a challenge.
- **Language Dominance:** The dominance of English on the internet constrains the access of non-English-speaking population. Due to overwhelming dominance of English, computers and the internet are quite useless in Indian villages.
- **Unawareness:** There is general lack of awareness regarding benefits of E-Governance as well as the process involved in implementing successful Government to Citizen, Government to Government, Government to Employees and Government to Business projects.
- **Inequality:** Inequality in gaining access to public sector services between various sections of citizens, especially between urban and rural communities, between the educated and illiterate, and between the rich and poor.
- **Infrastructure:** Lack of necessary infrastructure like electricity, internet, technology and ways of communications will affect the working of the e-governance projects.

Conclusion

E government refers to the use of information and communications technologies to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability of government. By studying some of the successful projects in India the current e government practice is project specific. The projects are not nation wide and differ from state to state. Lack of financial feasibility, infrastructure facilities and huge investments on the software and hardware making this initiative to less scope for the governance. Even though there are large and small e-governance projects being implemented but it hasn't been a smooth ride upwards for all of them like Right to Information Act and the electronic voting machine had faced a lot of negative feedback and shortcomings are exposed. The real challenge in front of the Government of India lies in the area of quality deliverance of services.

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