

MyGov Initiative: Empowering Citizens and Society Using Information Technology to Improve Public Policy Formation

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Abstract

Today we are living in the era of information technology. We are connecting to everyone around the globe through this technology. Every information linked to any incident can be received through information Technology with lightning speed. Today's Government is using this technology to serve their public in democratic way. And to leverage the benefits of information technology Indian government launched a digital platform 'MyGov' to bring citizens at decision making desk for healthy exchange of ideas and views with ultimate goal to contribute to the social and economic transformation of state. Through this platform citizens are able to rise their voice in the governance process of the country. The ultimate aim of this initiative is to establish 'SURAJ (good governance) in one of the largest countries of the world. If India wants to usher in true 'Suraj' then its leadership must develop a habit to listen its citizens before thinking of bringing any durable alternations in the system. To translate good governance ideas it is imperative to have high quality management in government and this information technology based platform provides new tools of management that would improve 4Es in governance like Effectiveness, Economy, Efficiency and Equity. The study showing impact of this information technology based initiative on evolution of modern participative society and on public oriented governance.

Keywords: Decision Making, Digital Platform, Good Governance, Information Technology and MyGov.

Introduction

MyGov platform is a unique first of its kind participatory governance initiative involving the common citizen at large. Now it has become a key part of the policy and decision making process of the county. It creates grounds for the citizens to become stakeholders not only in policy framing and recommendations bit but also implementation through actionable tasks. Government puts all bills and policies on this platform for public scrutiny and get effective opinions and feedback. At present through this platform passive consumers of 'propaganda theory' transformed into 'prosumers'. This initiative is guided by the approach is thus no longer exclusive to few experts but involves wider inflow of ideas. In the present governance scenario Internet based information technology has become enabler of citizens' constitutional and human rights. And this platform is driven by this approach to make the government decision more collective and for the realisation of starting words of preamble of India constitution 'we the people of India'. Through this initiative Mahatma Gandhi's idea of 'Swaraj and political and administrative decentralisation' has been realised. In the 4th report of 2nd ARC 'Ethics In Governance' eight elements are described such as consensus oriented, participatory, accountability, rule of law, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusiveness, responsibility and transparency these elements can only be established by using Information Technology in interactive way. E-governance using information technology is understood good governance in itself. Only through the this revolutionary platform Dr. Ambedkar's principle of social democracy can be attained. MyGov platform is a quality control mechanism that established its importance through its paradigm shifting role. Alternations are directed by many factors and society has always been in the direction to change. India

is counted in one of the greatest ICT leadership and innovations. This kind of initiative modifies citizens into responsible ones, citizens are forced to consider their democratic role and powers entitled in constitution and by nature. A state can grow when its denizens are responsible enough to build a strong and sound nation. This initiative is able to develop administrative leadership in citizens. The other acts the central government and state governments enacted can be implemented keenly because this platform motivates citizens to use powers provided in these acts. In 2005 government provided a tool named 'Right To Information(RTI) to ask government anything about its work progress and this MyGov Portal is a next step to RTI as it gives opportunity to citizens to share their ideas to modify modus operandi of doing Task. Really this step made more clear the mandate to supreme governing authority about know how of today's requirements. It creates an open governing environment that is outward looking and considers citizens part of whole system. It is well said that 'a leader must work to cultivate the ideas sown and that is the spirit of this MyGov Portal to establish true participative governance. We are living in a time which has been changing quickly with overhaul changes in the direction of more improvement and inclusion. If role of leadership is considered in promotion of inclusion Many of our difficulties stem from the overriding and all pervasive mistrust between the public and the design of governance. We run a structure that is designed to serve emperors and emperors are located far away from us in another land. But even where they were earlier in our own land the interest of the emperor came first. Now it is altogether in the opposite direction. Therefore, time is ripe to rethink on governance. A true measure of governance is gauged through the extent of people's participation. Without the people's participation in governance, there is no real Swaraj. After his famous victory, Barack Obama in his first address prophetically said, "A democracy requires accountability and accountability requires transparency". In this regard, India's MyGov initiative which encourages accountability through transparency is the most prominent expression of a profound national commitment to establishing an open government. At the core of that commitment is the idea that accountability is in the interest of government and citizenry alike. Gandhi says ' Politics without principles' can be harmful for nation and Dr B. R. Ambedkar says "Equality May be a fiction but nonetheless one must accept it as a governing principle." Both prominent persons who helped in constructing the 'Idea Of India', directed that there should be some principles of governance and which must be followed as much as can be possible. And the government is trying to follow all these principles through this MyGov Portal'. So it can be the bottom

line that in a largest democracy and one of the biggest states in terms of geographical area and population India's all directions progress can be ensured by full implementation and realisation of the idea of e governance based democratic 'MyGov initiative'.

Study Duration

A one month study has been done for this research.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the effectiveness of this digital platform.
2. To study the impact of public participation on public policy designing.
3. To study citizens perceptions about this platform.
4. To study overall effect of this initiative on government functioning in broad spectrum.
5. To conduct a impact study in social perspective.

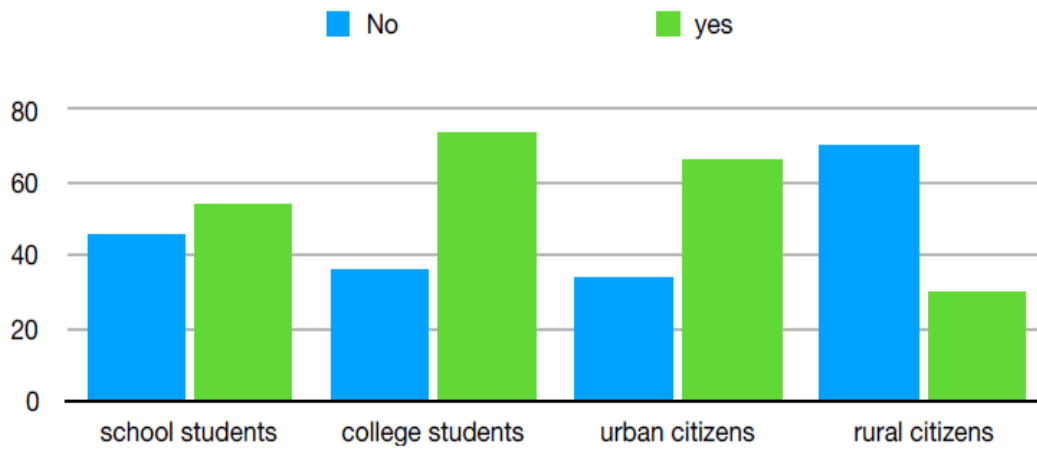
Research Methodology

For the purpose of study primary and secondary data are used. Information from civil and social activists, MyGov platform visits and comments analysing are used as primary data. And data from government reports are used as secondary data. To study the role of this platform in integrating citizens to government descriptive method of research has been adopted and to assess the impact of citizens participation on government functioning has been done using analytical method.

Analysis and Interpretation

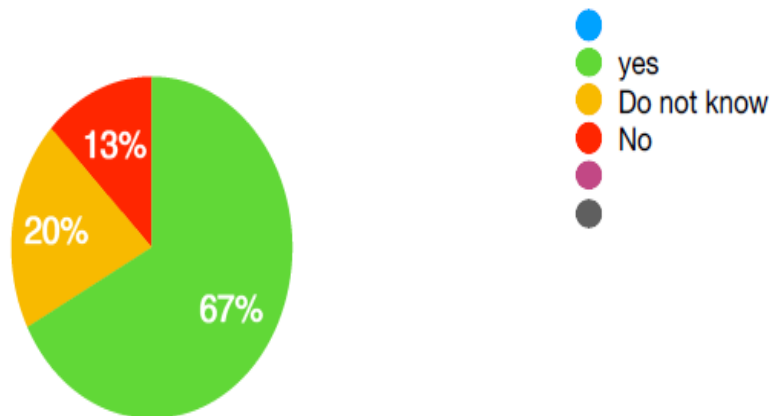
In the first week of August 2014, MyGov received 100,000 registered users, barely two week after its initiation. And after 2 months as many as 1.15 lakh users were more enrolled. On 10 June, 2019 there are 8,097,380 registered users. And till today there are total 1,11,15,007 registered users. About 1500 comments have been reviewed on this platform to do impact study. Most of registered users are from urban areas. On this platform many kinds of activities like blog, discuss, talk, poll/ survey, group. In the group section recently a topic listed on 'fight against Covid-19 corona virus'. Till now there are 102970 submissions on it. And the cut off date for submit your view is 30 April, 2020. Means submissions can be increased with time. In Talk section, there are a range of topics for thoughts churning. PM's 'Mann ki baat' episode of 26th March 2017 has been selected and approx. 500 comments visited. And it is observed that citizens like to connect directly with supreme authority and lodge their complaints to them. In the blog section of the MyGov Portal, year of 2015 has been selected and studied that total posts from government side are 113. In April month government put merely one post and in November 39 posts has been put. In January 2015 a post titled ' new education policy' posted it was divided into 33 themes. This platform gets more than 10000 posts on various topics which are analysed and put together as suggestions for the cornered department who are capable to convert them into actionable agenda.

**Question 1. Citizens have asked that 'Do you know what is 'MyGov Portal'?'
 (100 Response)**



This chart is showing that college students and urban citizens are well known of 'MyGov Portal' where as school students are less known and rural citizens has little information about this platform.

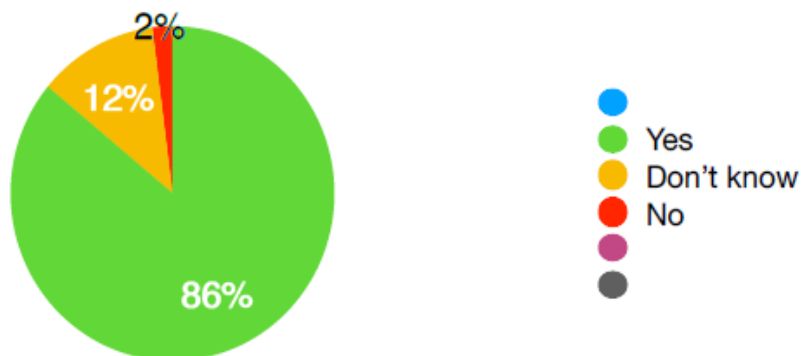
**Question 2. Do You
 Think That 'Mygov Portal' Is Playing An Effective Role In Policy Formation Using Public Feedback
 ?
 (100 Responses)**



This pie chart is indicating 67% citizens think that this platform is playing effective role in policy designing through public suggestions but 13% people replied in negative.

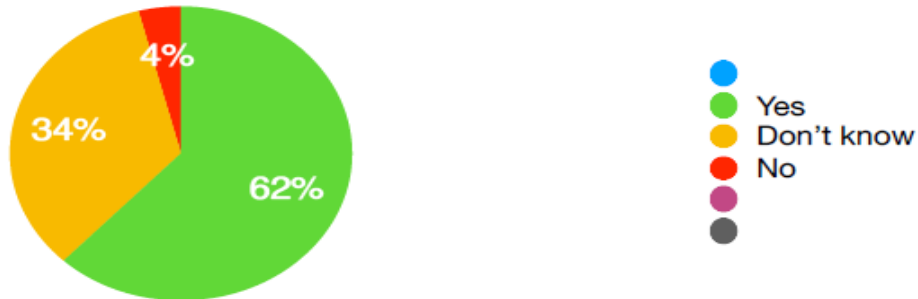
Question. 3 Has 'MyGov Portal' been an effective tool in improving the role of women policy making in new age IT based governing system?

**(Asked only to females)
 (67 responses)**



Data is indicating that 86% women replied that yes this platform increases women's role in policy making.

Question. 4 Do you really think that government is reforming itself according Public Feedback?
(80 responses)



Majority of sampled citizens showing that government really do work according Public feedback.

Question. 5 Is any improvement required in this platform?
(55 responses)



It can be inferred that only 29% citizens are satisfied with this initiative in current form. And majority of replies want more modification of platform.

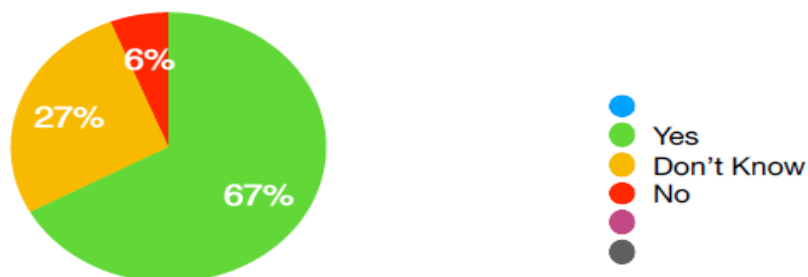
Question. 6 Has 'MyGov Portal' been helpful in ensuring good governance?
(56 responses)



Data is showing that most of citizens considered MyGov Portal helpful in ensuring good governance. Only 2% citizens replied in negative.

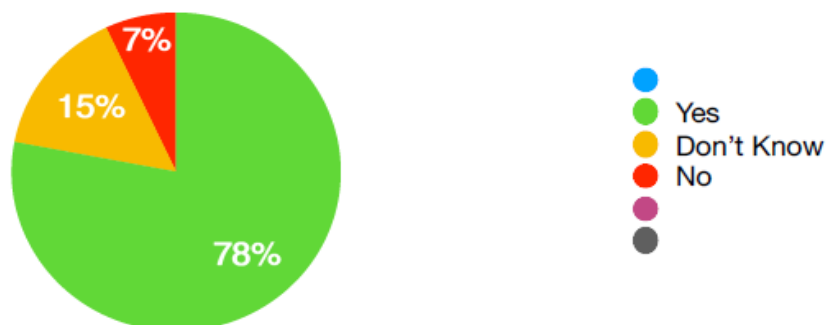
Question. 7 Is the blog section of MyGov portal promoting healthy discussion that is helpful in improving social fabrication?

(66 responses)



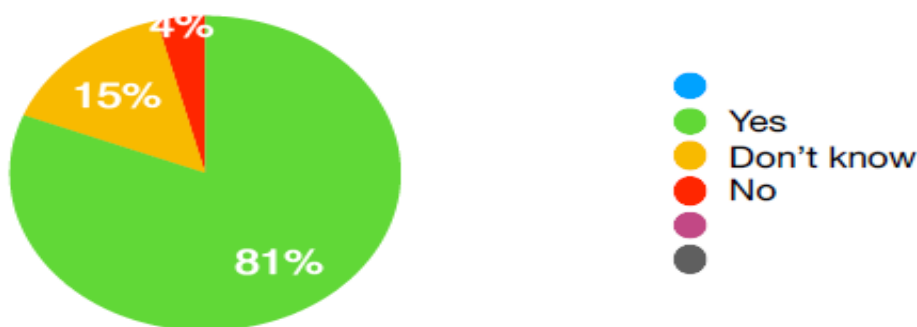
It's clearly shown that this IT based platform is improving social fabrication and national integration.

Question. 8 Has 'MyGov Portal' been Helpful In Improving Political and Civic Sense? 55 Responses



Majority of sampled citizens replied in positive way that citizens' political attitude is changing.

Question 9. Is 'Mann Ki Baat' Series On Mygov Platform Connecting Citizens Of India To Supreme Authority Emotionally? 70 Responses



Data is clearly indicating that 'Mann Ki Baat' is a very effective series to connect citizens to government interactively.

*Government put 'IdeaBox' on MyGov Portal. There are 57461 submissions/ comments on this post. This post has been put to gather crucial ideas, views and opinions to improve governance and that will help in building new India by 2022. Some submissions have been visited and valuable ideas given below.

Vendhur Reddy Nukala suggesting as-

1. Skill up-gradation of youth between 20-35 years through smart phone based skill up- gradation portal in regional languages/ Hindi.
2. All school children be given smart phones, dedicated to e-schools.
3. JAM based smart ration card country-wide validity to help migratory labour.
4. Cold storage facility and Food processing unit in every block for horti products
5. Special Manufacturing Zones in coastal states to attract foreign investment shifting from China.

Raj parihaar suggesting as-

1. अधिकतर स्कीम वेबसाइट में शिकायत के लिये Complaint Section नहीं है या तो PDF Download होती है।
सूझाव— एक शिकायत पोर्टल/Section हो जो सभी Device (Android) में आसानी से खुल सके।
2. पुरानी वेब पोर्टल जिन्हे स्थानान्तरित किया जाता है उन्हें हमेशा के लिये हटा लिया जाये।
3. शिकायतकर्ता को अपनी जानकारी गाँव वालों को पता चलने का भय रहता है।

4. ग्राम स्तर पर एक गुप्तचर (बेरोजगारों) हो, जो दुसरे गाँव जाके प्राप्त शिकायत का मुआयना, अकेले (बिना सरपंच, सचिव) करे।

Binay Kumar suggesting as-

Dear PM

In Current Financial Crisis In India, The Time has come to implement the retirement age against 30 year of government service or 60 year's retirement age whichever is earlier. it will be beneficial to reduce the unemployment crisis in our country.

Also it is right time to encash the young energy to contribute our country.

Anil kumar suggesting as-

Respected Prime Minister Ji

From analysing these comments we can evaluate the real importance of this Portal. Citizens have the broad knowledge pool in a fragmented manner but this platform is helping in integrating it.

1. Identifying idle resources with PSU for contract manufacturing
2. Cheap / free resources for Rural farm implements
3. Revisiting of government contract documents for financial efficiency new projects.

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Findings

1. It is observed that new user registration is increasing every year. And this show that citizens are becoming more aware about this initiative and how to approach this platform.

2. It is observed that government is reforming functioning according to the feedback of citizens.
3. Public policy formation is becoming more participatory, collaborative and collective that shows the insight of citizens.
4. Data shows that villagers also getting them registered on this platform but they are silent spectators now. They are in nascent stage but gradually they will put this opinions and views.
5. Women's and marginalised citizens' voice is also rising on this platform means it promotes social inclusion.
6. Citizens are getting aware through exchange of views, ideas, opinions of each other.

Reasons behind Ineffectiveness of This Platform

1. Citizens specially rural citizens are not aware about this platform this is due to digital divide.
2. Lack of digital and computer skills
3. Lack of trust in government form citizens, citizens are afraid of retaliation from government if they criticise government.
4. Fear of identity theft
5. Lack of digital infrastructure due to it rural people are not able to connect to this platform.
6. Language and semantic barriers
7. Lack of education due to which citizens do not like to participate in public issues discussions they think these issues are subjects of politicians and officials to consider.
8. Generational gap is also shown.

Recommendations

Some recommendations to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of this platform are given below:

1. Digital infrastructure should be spread rapidly. Because digital infrastructure is primary and

essential to ensure access of every citizen in public discussions.

2. Digital literacy and skills should be increased by formal and informal way of education.
3. Citizens can be incentivised if they suggest any effective idea.
4. Awareness should be spread through mass media.
5. International and national competitions and Techfests can be arranged to attract citizens towards this platform.
6. Periodic impact audit should be done of it and accordingly reformative actions must be taken.
7. More government departments are required to integrate with this platform.

Conclusion

It is a first of its kind initiative that bring public insights to limited government knowledge pool. Now these days government functioning is becoming more technical and complex. And with limited resources it's difficult for government to tackle every aspect of governance effectively. Through this platform government can achieve its vision of ' minimum government with maximum governance'.

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