

Good Governance & E. Governance

Abstract

The term Good Governance is meant by attainment of sound management of basic demand of services and utilities of the citizens by the Government like- health, education, security, food employment opportunities etc.

While E -Governance is alternative Government with an objective to offer all Government related services & utilities online E - Governance cannot entirely replace manual government. It is a shift from traditional public administration to IT base administration.

Keywords: NPM - New public Management.

Smart - Simple model, accountable, Responsible and transparent.

ICTS - Information and communication technologies.

Introduction

Governance has entered in the vocabulary of public administration since 1990s dictionary, meaning of which is method or system of government or management.

Aim of the Study

To Study the Potential of application of internet technologies in delivery of government services & utilities at lower cost and making them more accessible and transparent.

The concept of 'Governance' was first time highlighted in the World Bank document on sub Saharan Africa in 1989. Good governance was meant by attainment of sound development management. Four key dimensions identified in this context were.

1. Public sector management.
2. Accountability.
3. Legal framework of development.
4. Information & transparency.

Good governance is being recognized as an important goal by many countries across the world. They have taken up specific initiatives for open government.

Achieving the agenda for reforms towards good governance we require operationalization of the concept of 'new public management. New public management (NPM) approaches ranging from triple 'D' i.e. Decentralization, disaggregation and downsizing to electronic delivery of 'public services' are being tried by the public sector organizations to cure the evils of misgovernance. The internet revolution has proved to be a powerful tool for good governance initiatives. An important dimension of the internet potential is the possibility of providing services any time anywhere.

Some of agenda items of good governance are:

1. Enhancing effective & efficient administration
2. Improving quality of life of citizens by conscious effort to put them as a center of focus of the governance.
3. Establishing legitimacy & credibility of public organizations and institutions.
4. Making administration responsive, citizen friendly and citizen caring.
5. Ensuring accountability & cost effectiveness.
6. Delivery of services to citizen to be considered as a primary function of the government.
7. Citizens are being perceived as customers and clients.
8. Eradication of corruption to reestablish credibility of government.
9. Improving quality of public services and make them result oriented.
10. Removal of arbitrariness in exercise of administrative authority.

E governance is the application of information and communication technologies (ICTS) in general & internet in particular to the process of governments functioning & bring about simple, model , accountable, responsible and transparent (smart) government that work better, costless and is capable of fulfilling the citizens need as never before. E-governance

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should enable seamless access to information and seamless flow of information across the state and central govt. in the federal setup.

IT is essential that government functions which have interfaces with public especially where the state and central functionaries have to serve the citizens, such functions have to be done through the tools of information technology and communication. This requires software have to be written to codify the rules, procedures and other related government functions and public access should be through IT. Then the government's functions can provide equal access to all based on predetermined rules.

E governance is alternative government which is a government any time anywhere with a objective to offer all government related services and utilities on line. It is a shift from traditional public administration to IT based administration e.g.

1. IT is a shift from unwieldy paper files with torn covers to computer based files.
2. Delayed access of information to instant access.
3. Wielding power through hiding information to empowerment through sharing information.
4. Expenditure orientation to performance orientation.
5. More time for routine repetitive work to more time for creative work

Chapter III of The Information Technology Act 2000 makes provisions for electronic governance. Section 4 to 10 of chapter III deal with legal recognition for transactions carried out by means of electronic data, storage of information & electronic filing of documents with the government agencies important provisions of each section have been discussed below.

Sec. 4 this section gives legal recognition to electronic records and provides that where any law requires that any information or matter should be in the type written or printed form then such requirement shall be deemed to be satisfied if it is in an electronic form.

Sec. 5 this section relating to legal recognition of digital signatures, provides that where any law requires that information of document or other matter should be authenticated by means of digital signature are affixed in such a manner as may be prescribed by the rules framed by the central government.

Sec.6 this section lays down the foundation of electronic governance. The filing of any form, application or other documents, creation, retention or preservation of records, issue or grant of any license or permit or receipt or payment in government offices and its agencies may be done through the means of electronic form.

Sec. 7 retention of electronic records under any law.

Sec. 8 this section provides for the publication of rules, regulation and notification in the electronic gazette in lieu of official gazette.

Sec. 9 this section provides that the conditions stipulated in section 6,7 and 8 shall confer any right to the public to insist that documents should

be accepted in electronic form by any ministry department of central government or the state government.

Sec. 10 this section contains rules relating to digital signature. It provides that central government may by rules prescribe.

1. The type of digital signature.
2. The manner and format in which the digital signature will be affixed
3. The manner or procedure which facilitates identification of the person affixing the digital signature.
4. Controls processes and procedures to ensure adequate integrity, security and confidentiality of electronic records or payments and
5. And other matter which is necessary to give legal effect to digital signatures.

The basic ethos of the act was to provide legal sanction to E-governance so that the country can move onto the 4th generation of the digital era. The framework may be in place but the procedures are not. E-governance demands amendment to the existing law.

Amendments are to be needed at the central as well as the state level. In order to give the project a specific focus it would have to be financed under a separate budget head Cyber law should be available to the public so that the IT system and information documents stored in the system will have the same legal validity as the documents stored today on paper.

E-governance implies a smoother interface between Government and citizen while E-Governance can't entirely replace manual governance but use of IT in enhancing the delivery of government services leads to a very responsive and transparent administration facilitating empowerment of people & satisfying their right of information. Some of the areas representing good interface between IT & Governance are

1. Registration of vehicles
2. Public distribution system
3. Water & power supply
4. Property tax
5. Monitoring of traffic violation through smart card.
6. Immigration information & monitoring
7. Integration of passport, driving license, ration card and income tax identification 2 voter identification etc. Into an electronic (smart) card that can serve one purpose of being a citizen card.
8. E filing of police complaints and firms.
9. Development of online integrated information and monitoring system for delivery, accounting and payment of utilities services.

Advantages Flowing From It

1. Provides different services at one window
2. Flatters organizational structure
3. Speeds up operations and saves time thus reduces corruption
4. Reduces paperwork & ensures transparency in functioning
5. Improves team performance

E-Governance Initiatives

Some examples of e- governance that have tremendously improved the efficiency of the economy can be cited below.

1. Establishment of successful networks like nic net for connecting state & central government offices, ernet to connect educational and research institutions, rail Nbt to connect railway networks.
2. India's first Vsat based communication network vidyudnet, supports real time data applications for power generation & distribution. Some of these systems can be replicated & used by other states to avoid the duplication of efforts & to speed up the implementation process.
3. Several state governments made significant use of it in government, integration of it government services and their electronic delivery. Andhra Pradesh has become a trend setter in e-governance. The whole state is being networked by Andhra Pradesh state wide area network (APSWAN) for voice, data & video communication for enabling public services fast & free of complaints.

Challenges

E-governance in India is gaining popularity but there are challenges, which are hampering its progress resulting, E-Governance has not been able to make rapid progress.

1. E-governance in India has focused heavily towards investing in hardware and very little in developing software and services.
2. There is a general resistance from the bureaucrats for implementing e-governance initiatives, the main reason being if will put an end to bribe taking and may reduce government jobs.
3. The present e-governances dishes out information just one way about government policies with a lot of statistics. The recipients of information are not allowed to have a participatory role. Even the material provided is of outdated stuff clouded with bureaucratic jargons.
4. In most states e-governance relies on private participation. Hence some government employees feel that e-governance would deprive them of power and status.
5. Low emphasis on process re-engineering & lack of coherent government policies regarding e-governance

Suggestions

There are fundamental issues to be looked into for implementation and overcome the challenges of E-governance.

1. Careful planning and formulation of strategies for effective implementation. Through establishment of E-Governance commission or empowered board.
2. Intranet networking of all the Government departments for speedup transfer of files and papers.
3. Identification of government departments with maximum citizen interface like public grievances, rural services, social services, public information

agriculture sector etc. For use of it for providing services.

4. Enhancement of the capabilities of individuals, groups, families and communities and empowering them with the digital Democracy.
5. Focused efforts to use local languages in the IT implementation process and improving the technology for transliteration.
6. Electronic connectivity through dedicated broadband, VPN based connectivity from center to state, state to district & district to block level & block to village level through the options like wireless microwave & Vsat.
7. Setting up of e-governance data center at the center & state level & real time updation of data from various units of the Government.

Conclusion

E-governance offers potential to reshape the public sector and build relationship between citizens and government online delivery of services benefits both government and its constitutions, as it lowers cost and makes services more accessible.

Setting up primary data of all citizens for all governance application across the state & central government will certainly be a initiative step towards E-Governances.

However the challenges in processing, transmitting and storing information in a manner which protects its authenticity, integrity and confidentiality will be a big challenge for us and have become part of the public debate on the future of communications in general. The government must meet these challenges while supporting the goal of modernizing government/ business processes by conducting these processes electronically.

Dr. A.P.J Abdul kalam ex. President of India has rightly said once in his speech

I visualize e governance as 'a transparent smart e-governance with seamless access, secure & authentic flow information crossing the inter departmental barrier & providing a fair & unbiased service to the citizen'.

No doubt e-governance if implemented systematically with proper integration between human resources and technology would not only simplify official systems and procedures but will also offer better, faster services to the people.

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