International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Good Governance in India through e-Governance: Moments for Recall

Muzibullah

Research Scholar (Ph.D), Dept. of Political Science, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India.

A B S T R A C T

India is moving towards achieving e-governance. A positive impact on the quality of governance due to spread of e-governance initiatives. Geographical, social and economic gaps are the biggest barriers for full-fledged e-governance. Other constraints like Illiteracy, lack of infrastructure, security and privacy of personal and financial data. Being the largest democracy, second in terms of population and diversified geography itself creates the big challenges. Actually, this paper is related with discuss the position of India through e-governance environment, the issues, challenges and obstacles ahead. It makes an effort to provide a framework for e-governance in India by identifying its essential features and analyzing the shortcomings in its working and emphasizes need for innovative approaches. The aim of the paper is to evaluate the programme against a theoretical background, and also to draw practical lessons from the programme that could provide guidance to new e-governance programmes in the development context.

Keywords: E-Governance, Corruption, India, Administration, Women.

1. Introduction

Good Governance in India through e-Governance: Moments for Recall

The best guarantor of social justice and it forms an orderly society by an efficient, effective and democratic government. India is moving towards achieving e-governance. The spread of e-governance initiatives have a positive impact on the quality of governance. E-Governance is an important tool to enhance the quality of government services to the citizens, to bring in more transparency, to minimize corruption, to minimize costs for citizens and to make government more accountable. It also the principle response of the state, is to facilitate to enable to coordinate. The main indicators of good governance which are: Efficiency and effectiveness, rule of law, people's participation, democracy, inclusiveness, transparency, accountability and respect for human rights. Neither the market nor the civil society can perform this role as effectively like the government. The strong political will power and the social acceptability decide by e-governance in urban as well as rural areas. However, geographical, social and economic disparities are the biggest barriers for full-fledged e-governance. Governments need to continue their efforts to develop 'Information and Communication Technology' (ICT) infrastructure especially concentrating their efforts in the rural areas. The aim of this paper is to discuss the position of India in e-governance environment, the issues and challenges ahead. It makes an effort to provide a framework for e-governance against a theoretical background by identifying its essential features and the shortcoming in its working and emphasizes need for innovative approaches that could provide guidance to new e-governance programmes in the development context. If e-governance is the input, good governance is the output and the major variables are: democratic political system, good economy, effective legal system, open culture, and technical infrastructure.

The major questions arise in this paper is: Does the introduction of ICT produce good governance in India? Is there a direct causal relationship between the adoption of information and communication technology by government agencies and the practice of good governance? The paper also focused on flaws of present government in India and in order to address the systematic inefficiencies and suggests key legislative and institutional reforms. With the help by this study to better understand the concept of 'e-governance and good governance' and also to facilitate its adoption and to priorities its practices.

* *Corresponding author*

E-mail address: *muzib1591@gmail.com*

Through this study, there is an attempt to explore the lessons, which should be learnt to face the challenges. It offers beneficial source of information for policymakers, activists, academicians and researchers. Except from the facts, despite of the e-governance has made significant contribution in the economies of developed countries in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as well as to the efficiency of the public management systems, but not the same about developing countries especially India. The relationship is both controversial and complex. From the study substantiates these theoretical assumptions about e-governance by analyzing some experiences at the local, state and federal levels of government in India. The aim of this paper is especially on the performance of e-governance in India in the context of its role in rural development and promoting social welfare. The paper employs a qualitative methodology based on analysis of published articles and research papers and a number of case studies.

From the studies, which have been conducted in developed as well as developing countries to assess the parameters leading to good governance? Case studies are used to show that e-governance is a current reality for developing countries. However, most e-governance initiatives fail. Overall, e-governance is the information and communication technology-enabled route to achieve good governance. Leading governments are emphasizing the need for their e-government programs to deliver an earlier return on their investment through greater service effectiveness. World has improved its e-governance performance in every region on nearly every indicator. However, there are continuing problems in the areas of privacy and security that need to be addressed. Government's ability to improve service delivery to other governments, employees, citizens and businesses is directly attached to government's ability to effectively collaborate across organization, processes and IT systems.

The term good governance needs to be understood before moving onto e-government and e-governance. Governance covers every institution and organisation from family to state. It involves exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage the affairs in, and "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development".

2. Concept of E-Governance

The concept of e-governance is of recent origin in Information Technology. The emerging concept has brought about a paradigm shift in IT usage and applications for good governance. The word 'governance' is often used. But term of its not fittest always in defined as a term, although several international organisations have tried to define governance and what it covers. Generally, governance refers to the system of directing and controlling the actions, affairs, policies and functions of a political unit, organisation or nation (Majumdar, 2004). E-governance, or electronic governance, is attempts of government's connect information technology to improve the efficiency or effectiveness of the executive function of government including the delivery of public services. It can be defined as, "The application of electronic means in the interaction between government and citizen (G2C), and government and business (G2B), as well as in internal government operations (G2G) to simplify and improve democratic government, and business aspects of governance". So e-governance governance is lot more than online voting or electronic town hall or just delivering services online. It is all about how government, business and citizens interact on an ongoing basis (Schoeniger, 2002).

The system of e-governance is supported by 5 pillars: (1) Computer, (2) Connectivity (3) Content (4) Consumer and (5) confidence building (Miglani, 2001). "Computer" in this context refers to all the hardware and software requirements of government. "Connectivity" refers to all the information carries system, bandwidth etc. "Content" refers to the information that is exchange between the 'consumers' of the system. "Consumer" refers to the entire human and human substitutes system that access and uses the 'Content' in the e-governance system. "Confidence building" refers to such of these measures that helps the citizens develop a confidence in the e-governance and encourage them to take to e-transformation.

3. Objectives of E-Governance

According to Richard Heeks, we are moving on from IT to Information Communication Technology (ICT) and from ICT to Information Society (IS). But only technology can't solve anything unless the objective is properly stated and sought to be achieved with deliberate action (Parsad, 2002). With a strategic objective to support and simplify governance for all parties (Govt., Citizens and Business), by using ICT for attaining good governance, the following objectives of the E-Governance can be identified.

- Impart a citizen-friendly image of government.
- Deliver essential services to citizens.
- Ensure transparency and right to information in governmental activities.
- Create healthy relationship between government and citizens, and encourage their participation in governance.
- Enhance citizen empowerment and democratization.
- Enhance productivity and efficiency of administrative functions.
- Eliminating poverty.
- Encourage for direct participation of citizens in government policy-making process and development efforts.

- Creating a business friendly environment.

- Eliminating touts and undesirable practices such as delays, harassment and unnecessary documents.

- Improving the overall quality of life of the common man.

- Providing speedydelivery of services at the doorsteps.

4. Benefits of E-Governance

E-Governance has emerged because of the increasing interest of government and citizens around the world to experiment with and learns to exploit new media and the latest technologies. It prefers new styles of leadership, new ways of debuting and deciding policy and investment, accessing education, listening to citizens and organizing and delivering information and services (Natarajan, 2003). If e-governance is implemented successfully, it can provide following benefits for development.

- Increase the accessibility of individual citizens to information and services that allows them to influence government operations.

- Creates opportunities to learn a living by learning a new skill in the knowledge based economy.

- Producing of same output by lower total cost.

- Creates opportunities to trade and banking online.

- Reduction in time and paperwork.

- Supports effective decentralized decision making by providing an efficient information flow.

- It creates very easy to perform their functions like collection of tax, water charges, and professional taxes in various government departments.

- Enhance access to information and communication across large distance.

- Deliver essential services to citizens.

- Create improvement in agriculture productivity.

- Improves resource management.

- Enables marketization by supplying information related to the market and enhances public services.

- Creates transparency in judicial and in administrative work.

- All the circulars and notifications can be put online, so that cases can be handling in faster disposal.

- Responsible in confidence building among the citizens and government machinery.

- Helpful in market expansion and organized job creation and its overall impact on the macro economy.

- Transition from bulky procedures for clearance to improved relations by providing quick approvals.

- It is a tool for innovative way of administration. It facilitates easy monitoring and tracking of files. There is no place for red-tapism.

5. Implementation of E-Governance in India

In the fast changing scenario, e-governance has become an essential setup where people are the biggest stakeholders (Krishnaiah, 2001). There are three e-governance models in India. (1) Government initiated and funded projects eg: NIC, CMC, C-DAC, and State Electronic Corporations. Now, a shift towards private IT companies. (2) Non-profit and for profit sector project: Tarahocit, Franchisee/Kiosk Model. (3) Joint initiatives by government and private organizations: E-Seva, where return of investment comes from sale of government data or services eg: land records, license etc. (Anandakrishnan, 2003). Several Indian states are implementing e-governance projects to replace traditional models of working. Nasscom, analysis of e-governance implementation undertaken in 10 key states revealed that the southern states Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu are leading in terms of implementing projects at different citizen-government interface point. Others states like Kerala, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, and Rajasthan are catching up fast. In this process, Karnataka have already implemented many e-governance projects in the areas like Common Entrance Test (CET), Education Dept., Nandini, Khajane etc. Others states like Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and Odisha, e-governance projects are implementing, but comparatively at slow rate (Bhoomi, 2003).

5.1 Areas of Implementation

If we study various e-governance projects of various states, we can make a list of services offered by e-government to citizens and businesses.

Services offered by e-government to citizens (G2C):

- Income or caste certificate
- PAN Card.
- Public Grievance Registration
- Marriage certificate
- Railway reservation
- Death certificates
- Passport
- Car registration
- Licence
- Job services by Labour offices
- Health and Medical benefits
- Applications for plot/buildings
- Public libraries
- Price of commodities in all major centres of the states and other states
- Announcement of moving (change of address)
- Unemployment allowance
- E-lottery
- Education
- Entrance Examination
- Public Stations, Crime and Crime records
- Employment Exchange registration

Services to farmers

- Land records
- Crop loans
- Weather forecasting at district level
- Crop disease management
- Natural calamities and emergencies
- Information regarding prices of commodities in different markets.
- Crop protection guidance.
- Information regarding new methods and technology of cultivation.

Services offered by E-government to Business:

- Income tax payment
- VAT : declaration or notification
- Police inquiry of employees
- Corporation tax

- Registration of a new company

- Customers declarations

- Public procurement

- Submission of data to statistical offices.

5.2 Application of E-governance in the Indian Legal Perspective

The Parliament of India has passed its first cyber law, the Information Technology Act, 2000. The aim of this Act is to promote not only to e-commerce but also promote to e-governance in India (Kaur and Singh, 2002). With a view to facilitate electronic governance, the IT Act, 2000 establishes the legal validity and enforceability of digital signature and electronic records, as well as secure digital signatures and secure electronic records in the government offices and its agencies (Sumanjeet and Mehlawat, 2004). This is helpful in developing the citizen's interaction with the governmental office stress free. Section 4 to 10 of IT Act, 2000 deal with provisions relating to electronic governance (Taxmann's IT Act, 2000).

- Legal recognition of electronic records (sec.4),

- Legal recognition of digital signatures (sec.5),

- Use of electronic records and digital signatures in govt. etc. (sec.6)

- Retention of electronic records (sec.7)

- Publication of rule, regulation, etc., in electronic gazette (sec.8)

- Acceptance of electronic documents cannot be insisted (sec.9)

- Power of central government to make rules (sec.10)

5.3 E-Governance and Implementation in India

A government with no paper but information directly in the hands of people is creating a real democracy in India, according to Kiran Bedi. But e-governance cannot operate in an institutional vacuum. It can prosper only in an enabling institutional environment and a set of influencing factors (Mehta, 2001). By various studying of e-governance projects, following interferences about various issues that are involved in implementation of e-governance in India can be drawn.

- Infrastructural issue

- Legal issue

- Administration issue

- Security issue

- Social and cultural issue

- Financial issue

- Economic issue

Except of these, there are the problems which are power problem in various states; poor rural telecommunication and network connectivity are the major issues to implement e-governance.

6. The Problems Evolve in the Implementation of e-governance Projects in India

Despite the island of excellence, e-governance has not been able to make rapid progress in India (Lokhande, 2004). There are many responsible for it. Some of the most areas under:

- Without any clear roadmap with measurable milestones.

- Focus on computerization and hardware spends low emphasis on process re-engineering.

- Poor management of knowledge and human resources.

- Non-capability between IT projects and business processes.

- Lack of coherent government policies.

- Government unwilling to commit funding.

- Over ambitious project.

- No above the line treatment of IT spends.

- The uncertainty in viability of public-private ownership.

- Corruption, inefficiency, and incompetence present in public services and welfare/development projects.

- Availability of information and lack of baseline data needed for decision-making.

- Less funding from government of India and International Funding Organisation.

- Lack of co-ordination between different service agencies.

- Psychology fear of IT.

- Brain drain of IT professionals from our country has lessened the speed of e-governance in India.

7. Pre-requisites for e-governance Implementation in India

E-Governance is a tool. It can't do anything itself. For its successful implementation it requires proper environment in which e-governance can be operated (Rangan and Mehrotra, 2005). Before implementing of e-governance model, there are some pre-requisites. Some of the most important in context of India are as under:

- Large scale computerization.

- Capability of use of local language in the IT sector (Sumanjeet, 2004).

- Creation of adequate and appropriate IT infrastructure.

- Changing the mindset of government functionaries.

- Standardization in data encoding, application logic, user interfaces etc.

- Knowledge networking for better governance.

- Creation of PKI and certification authority.

8. Action Needed for Promoting E-Governance in India

The government of India adopted credible initiatives in this direction to accelerate the usage of information technology in the governance. Centre for E-Governance, a new division within the Ministry of Information Technology, was setup on 15th August 1999. The Union Information Technology minister declared in 2001 as the year of 'E-Governance'. From the above points, the Indian Parliament has passed the Information Technology Act 2000, to boost e-governance and to make electronic transactions safe and secure in India (Tiwari, 2002). These initiatives demonstrate the commitment of Union Government to embrace information technology in all the sectors of Indian economy. But all initiatives cannot be implemented successfully, especially in the developing countries like India. As mentioned above, three are many uncertain blocks in implementation of e-governance in India. In addition to these, government in developing countries claims too much and delivers too little and not sufficiently responsive or accountable (Shukla, 2002). Therefore, it is very much necessary to keep in mind some additional action plan, while drafting e-governance project. E-governance project should be guided by the following:

- A clearly focused vision of what is objective of introducing e-governance.

- Areas of public funding should be clearly brought out.

- For e-governance implementation should be strong IT infrastructure.

- Building e-governance awareness and commitment.

- Before implementation, there should be a strong need to evaluate the e-governance project.

- E-Governance project should not be over ambitious.

- Establishment of national networks.

- There should be budgetary provision for revenue expenditure.

- Continuous training and development of government functionaries.

- Client driven and responsiveness.

- Any plan or scheme for e-governance should have sustainability.

- The situation in various states should be gone into details and appropriate plans and schemes suggested suited to different states (Ventatesan, 2000).

- Growing reliance of computers has increased security risks, and appropriate mechanisms must be in placed to provide a secure environment to users of public services.

Last but not the least, existing policies need to be modified, new policies to be initiated to ensure the environment in which e-governance can really take off (Rattan, 2003). Finally, the government should make the procedure and rules and regulations simpler and transparent, and there is strong need to create trust in e-governance system.

9. Concluding Remarks

E-governance is that tool which to accomplish good governance. The main focus of e-governance for improves in government tasks by improvements in service delivery, dissemination of information, transparency, public and private partnership, efficiency and accountability. Government and its multiple agencies being the largest service providers in the country for the need to make extensive use of IT for its major services both a national and local level. Thus, today e-governance has become an integrated part of democracy. Though at this time India is not successful to accomplish good governance by e-governance, because of there are many challenges like poverty, illiteracy, poor IT infrastructure, lack of awareness, political as well as psychological problems in the growth of e-governance in India. Legal system is still very outdated for the growth e-governance. There are many issues, which are not covered by IT, Act, 2000, like IPRs, privacy, e-taxation, data protection, protection of e-consumers. All these issues are directly or indirectly concern with the e-governance. Unless all these issues and problems are dealt with e-governance can't really take-off in India. Another factor is concerning development of a national register on digital programmes, which will help in duplications in the efforts. To achieve this, it would be appropriate to constitute a national coordination committee to get in touch with various segments and evolve the mechanism to collect and collate the information of digital projects. Finally, successful implementation of e-governance in India will require, more than skills in IT, good programmes management techniques, good programme managers, involvement of stakeholders and teamwork. Thus for India's development and prosperity in the area of e-governance, a proper planning and adjustment is inevitable.

Finally, e-governance allows for government transparency. Government transparency allows the public to be informed about the government's policies. India is not e-governance deficit but governance deficit. It is good governance that will propel and sustain economic growth in India. Good governance creates the opportunities of new employment. Good governance can restore trust of citizens in governments and make governments accountable to them. In democratic country, citizens have to play an active role which cannot be healthy without participation. The country needs to make serious effort in implementing the policies. E-governance is that tool in good governance if it is channelized all energies, debates and resources into a singular mission of improving governance in India not just for service delivery but also in policy settings, resource allocation, and its implementation. Good governance should be technology-independent so that the focus is on providing good governance to everyone.

The institutions should be strengthened and re-invented in order to be competitive, efficient and accountable. Good governance is not given naturally in any system. It has to be cultivated by developing institutions of democracy. Good governance implies a framework that has well-being of the people as its focal point. "Nations worldwide must be part of making the transition to e-Governance the new paradigm in public sector reform. The pains of inaction will be greater than the trials and tribulations of action" (Bare: 55).

REFERENCES

[1]   Annan, K. (1999), "Preventing War and Disaster: 1999", *Annual Report on the Work of the Organization,* Paper contributed by UNDP.

[2]   Anandakrishnan, M. (2003), "E-Governance for Improved Services: Choices Made by Tamilnadu", in Vayunandan, E. and Mathew, Dolly (ed), Good Governance Initiatives in India, Prentice- Hall India, pp. 121-126.

[3]   Bare, T. Commonwealth Secretariat, "Electronic Governance for Good Governance: From concept to Implementation", *e-Africa,* Commonwealth Secretariat, Regional Workshop on Building e-Governance Capacity in Africa.

[4]   Bhoomi, Karnataka (2003), "E-governance for Information Dissemination", Successful Government Initiatives and Best Practices: Experience from India, Planning Commission, Government of India, and Academic Foundations.

[5] Jaju, Sanjay (2003), "Information Technology and Governance", in Vayunandan, E. and Matthew, Dolly (Ed), Good Governance Initiatives in India, Prentice- Hall India, pp. 70-85.

[6] Kaur Harlovleen and Singh Gurjeet (2002), Emergence of Electronic Commerce in India: Contemporary Legal Issues, Trends and Challenges", Punjab University Law Journal, Vol 44, pp. 118-131.

[7] Krishnaiah, V.S.R. (2001), "The Emerging E-Citizens: Information Handling in a Democratic Government", Productivity, Vol. 42, No.4, pp. 580-581.

[8] Lokhande, M.A. (2004), "E-Governance in India", Yojana, January, pp. 44-46.

[9] Majumdar, S. (2004), "Government Information in the Digital Era", Libraries, Information and Knowledge", Vol. 21, No. 1, pp.27-42.

[10] Mehta, Dewang (2001), "E-India", Computerworld, January issue, pp. 17.

[11] Miglani, S.Parinder (2001), "E-Governance", Productivity, Vol.41, No.4, pp. 596-601.