

Digital Governance and Policy Innovation in India: Opportunities and Constraints

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ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on the importance of e-governance, India's progress towards e-governance, systems and services between (1) Government-to-Customer (GIC) (ii) Government-to-Business (G2B) (iii) Government-to-Comment (G2G). The paper highlights the delays and absence of good governance in the country, Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) and Different Divisions, Arogya Setu Application, TRACKPDS, BHIM (Bharat Interface for Money), Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AEPS), *e-kranti* scheme and Survey of India. It is high time that the country addressed this issue. A vision is required to implement the e-governance successfully in India.

Keywords: e-governance, government, national services, exchange, information, public institutions.

INTRODUCTION

The term 'governance is wider than the term 'government' Governance defined as an activity of governing or controlling a country by its controlling of an organization or a company by its CEO or Board of directors or controlling of household by head of the house e-governance can be defined as governing of a country, organization company or household with help of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) e-Governance facilities an efficient, speedy and transparent process of disseminating information to the public, and other agencies and for performing government administrative activities. The National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) is an initiative of them India to make all government services available to the citizens of India electronic media. India's progress is towards e-governance.

India's progress towards e-governance: India started its own e-Governance initiative with the establishment of National provided by the (National Informatics Centre (NIC) 1977 But the main thrust for e-Governance was provided by the launching of NICNET (National Informatics Center Network) in 1987 which was the national satellite-based computer network.

This was followed Informatics Centre (DISNC) programme to computerize all district offices in the country by the launch of the District Information System of the National Informatics which free hardware and software was offered to State Governments NICNET was extended via the state capitals to all district headquarters by 1990. "Black money eradication: The 2016 Union budget of India announced eleven technology initiatives including the use of data analytics to prevent tax evasion. Digital Literacy mission will cover six crore rural households" (Mendonca, Jochelle 2016)

A large number of e-Governance initiative were taken at the union and state levels In 1999, the Union Ministry of Information Technology was created by 2000 12-point minimum agenda for e-Governance was identified by Government of India for implementation in all the Union Government Ministries/Department. "Some of the facilities which will be provided through this initiative are Bharat, digital locker, e-education, e-health, e-sign, e-shopping, and the National Scholarship Portal" (Singh, Dr. Vinod 2016)

Importance of e-governance: e-Governance is the application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for delivering government services, exchange of information, communication transactions, integration of various stand alone systems and services between (1) Government-to-Customer (GIC) (ii) Government-to-Business (G2B)(iii) Government-to-Comment (G2G).

The goal of Government-to-Customer (G2C) e-Governance is to offer variety of ICT services to citizens in an efficient and economical manner, and to strengthen the relationship between government and citizen's wing technology. Under G2C,

various projects viz Bhoomi project by Karnataka Government, E-Mitra by Rajasthan Government, E-seva by Uttar Pradesh Government, Lokavani-Uttar Pradesh Government, Gyandoot by Madhya Pradesh Government, UMANG project App by the Union Government have been launched.

Government-to-Business (G2B) is the online non-commercial interaction between local and Central Government and the commercial business sector with the purpose of providing business information and advice. G2B refers to the conduction through the internet between government agencies and trading company. Under the projects like MCA-21 implemented by Ministry of Corporate Affairs were launched.

Government-to-Government (G2G) is the electronic sharing of data and/or information systems between government agencies, departments or organizations. The goal of G2G is to support e-government initiatives by improving communication, data access and data sharing. Some successful G2G projects are North East Gang Information System (NEGIS), *Khajane* of Karnataka Government Smart Government of Andhra Pradesh. Apart from these, Central Government introduced Mission Mode Projects (MMPs)

Delays in disbursal of licences, contracts, projects and normal official clearances to passports, driving licences, birth certificates, etc., have always been and criticized debated in India. By mid-1990s, once the factor of governance entered the domain of policy-making, we the issue of delays getting increasingly linked with it. And today, delays are considered as the absence of good governance. The 10th Plan became the first official document at which the Government accepts governance as a factor of development The 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission also deliberates enough on delays. Since then enough water has down and the governments at the centre as well as in the states, have taken several steps to root out the menace of delays in India Though, India enjoys a good rank in the 'Doing Business' report of the World Bank, enough remains to be done in this regard.

Indian offices and public institutions have been infamous for delaying the process of giving clearances. It somehow got ingrained in our system. It is known how the industrial licensing policy of India followed since 1950s has crippled the industrial expansion resulting into it being among the most cumbersome and irrational policies of India. Such a policy gave rise to a kind of thinking which believed in 'delaying' the process in the government offices in the name of better scrutiny transparency and proper justice. Even if they the policy has been reformed now as per experts, the hangover of it will government machinery. Most public offices have a kind of sameness in delaying every possible official procedure. In almost every public office Indian today face this element, right from the level of procuring birth certificates, driving licence this ration card, etc., to the issuance of environmental clearance. It is seen the menace of delays crippling the very growth prospects of the economy. The different negative impacts of delays may be seen in the following way:

- An entrepreneur faced with delays in his official works feels stuck ins system and thus loses the entrepreneurial zeal. By the time the office do the issue the time might have changed and the opportunity might have lost its significance and importance
- Delays in government offices ultimately make the needy common resort to bribing the concerned offices to get things done. This way the whole process of corruption in public offices originated in the country
- Talking benefit out of the corrupt and greedy officials the common man develops a perception that just anything can get done by bribing public servants. This leads to another level of corruption. Public officers start favouring the higher bribe-giver and for this they start resorting to the tactics of tiling the decision-making in favour of one and against the other. And this way corruption goes on multiplying
- Over time, this process gets institutionalized which creates an environment withdrawal and pessimism among the common man about the government and its various departments and offices a complete breach of trust between the public official and the people. Government office-bearers get their salaries, pensions and all related benefits from the public to delay the words of the public.
- As one officer makes money through bribes the colleagues get encouraged to do the same. As there are departments with higher and lower scope of earning bribes, there starts a competition among the officials to get posed in such departments with high prospects of bribes, which breeds bribe in the rank and file of the system (high ranking officers bribed by the lower ones for prize postings).
- In competition almost each and every department searched out how to cam bribes, right from government schools to police stations.
- Thus, we see a vicious cycle of corruption and bribery coming into being by just the factor of 'delays' in the public offices. Situation has worsened to a level where a father needs to bribe a complaint of molestation or eve-teasing of his daughter. Even if a complaint is registered, the common perception in the country is that police won't act till a bribe is given. A similar situation prevails other departments as well.

Right from the World Bank reports (Doing Business) to the Planning Commission Ministerial reports and expert committee, all have highlighted economic and other costs of delays. The regulatory framework plays a very important role in the life cycle (birth, failure and death) of an enterprise. In the globalised world India needs to be competitive on all fronts. It has been found that the cumbersome process of various clearances given by the public offices but at the core of the problem which discourages an entrepreneur in India to go new venture in almost every area of economic activity.

Time over-runs' and 'cost over-runs have been another maladies of India's cal procedures. The reality is that every time over-run results into a cost over-run of the concerned project. Thus, the aspect of delays and governance are linked at all the levels with each reinforcing the other. Checking delays in an up towards good governance and a movement towards good governance will check the delays. It is high time that the governments went for effective steps in checking the double menace of delays and absence of good governance in the country.

Suggested Steps:

- To unleash the hidden potential of the human resource and entrepreneurship in the country, it is necessary to provide a favourable atmosphere. Following measures may be suggested in this regard
- Any project-public, private or based on PPP should not be allowed to get delayed as it hampers growth prospects directly together with increasing the cost of project.
- Timely and needful administrative reforms should be started. Adequate number and right kind of administrative staff should be inducted into the bureaucracy.
- New and timely methods of 'good governance' should be devised at the levels of central and state governments.
- Performance budgeting should be implemented across all ministries and departments.
- Time-bound frameworks should be devised for different kinds of government approvals, clearances, inspections, etc.

Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) and Different Divisions: The Mission Mode Project is individual project within the National e-governance plan (NeGP) that focuses on one aspect of electronic governance records or commercial taxes, etc. With NeGP mission mode implies those projects are clearly defined objectives, scopes and implementation of timeline and milestone, as well as measurable outcomes and service levels.

NeGP comprises 31. Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) which are further classified as Central State and integrated MMPs Central MMPs include Banking, Central Excise Customs, and Income Tax (IT). Insurance, MCA 21. Passport, Immigration, Visa and Foreigners Registration and Tracking, Pension, F-office, Posts, VID.

State MMPs include Agriculture, Commercial Taxes, E-District. Employment Exchange National Land Records Management Programme (NLRMP). Municipalities, E-Panchayats, Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and System (CCTNS), Road Transport, Treasuries Computerization PDS, Education and Health Integrated MMPs include CSC. e-Biz, e-courts, e-Procurement, FDI for e-Trade. National e-Governance Service Delivery Gateway, India Portal etc. "As part of Digital India, Indian Government planned to launch Botnet cleaning centers" (Jones, Claire 2019)

Some Recent Initiatives in the Field of e-governance Taken by the Government of India:

Some of the recent initiatives taken by the Government of India in the field of Governance in the country include:

- Arogya Setu Application: The Arogya Setu application was launched in April, 2020 by the Union Government to map the spread of Covid-19 infection Apart from contact tracing, Arogya Setu application was used for providing citizen services such as e-pass for travel and entry into a number of facilities such as metros and airports.
- TRACKPDS: It was developed by the state of Haryana to capture food grain request during the Covid-19 lockdown period from the distressed residents. It was integrated with state help lines, district head quarters and unorganized labor portal..It also provides facility to manage the beneficiaries.
- On 22nd June, 2020, Jammu and Kashmir Governor launched e- Application-cum-Issuance of Domicile Certificate developed by JaKeGA. It is meant to speed up public delivery mechanism through minimum w intervention, besides ensuring efficiency, transparency and reliability of such services.
- BHIM (Bharat Interface for Money) mobile app launched in 2016 to facilitate e-payment directly through banks.
- Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AEPS) allowing online interoperable inclusion transaction through the business correspondent of any bank Aadhaar authentication
- Digital India Programme aiming to transform the country into an empowered society and knowledge economy.
- Direct cash transfer to facilitate disbursements of government entitled like MGNREGA. Social security pension, etc. of any Central or State Government bodies using Aadhaar as supported by UIDAI (Unique Identification Authority of India

- *e-kranti* scheme for linking the internet with remote villages in the country launched 2014
- Survey of India has launched a new web portal called *Nakshe* to make open service maps available to Indians for free. These maps are meant for development activities in the country and can also be used to plan scientific expeditions, research etc.

e-Government modules Some states West Bengal Odisha and Andhra Pradesh have implemented e-government module in Panchayat. MMPs for e-Governance in Municipalities under Phase I of Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (INNRIRM) and applicable to 65 mission cities. The government has to publish the Information online through websites. This can be facilitated through centralized storage of information, localization of content and content Management. The information of government is public information; therefore the citizens are entitled to know every piece of information of the government, because the government is of people by the people and for the people.

Challenges Faced by e-Governance: Despite its advantages, e-governance faces many challenges in various ways. Universal access to the internet is still far way in India. India has a wide digital divide between rural and urban India, thus the reach of e-Governance initiatives is very limited. Lack of proper infrastructure particularly rural areas, restricts the people from reaping the benefits of e-governance.

Illiteracy of the users and their lack of ability to use computers is also a great impediment. Other hindrance include public concern over the cyber security, not providing email address due to the fear of spam and government retention of States like Maharashtra, Gujarat and Kerala are ahead in e-governance but others like Bihar, Jharkhand, North-East are Tagging behind

CONCLUSION

The delay factor has got institutionalized in the administrative system of to country and it has much hampered the country. This factor prevents the country to utilize its real socio-economic potential. This breeds environment pessimism and dilutes the legitimacy of the state, too. To meet the vision the challenges in the implementation of e-Governance should be overcome. Then, the government needs to be developed for the effective implementation of Governance in India. In spite of many challenges India has amber of award wine projects like Andhra Pradesh rural, e-seva project, e-panchayat etc. Therefore it is said that e-Governance is the key to good governance for developing countries like India to minimum corruption provide efficient and quality services to their citizens.

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