



E-Governance & its Barriers

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ABSTRACT

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) includes any communication device or application, including radio, television, cellular phones, computer and network hardware and software, satellite systems and so on. ICT covers any product that will store, retrieve, manipulate, transmit or receive information electronically in a digital form.

E-Government is the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to improve the activities of government agencies. With the help of e-readiness one can know the ease and level of implementation of various ICT projects. At national level Government of India (GOI) has launched Digital India programme to transform the traditional form of interaction and public services with a vision to transform India into digitally empowered society and knowledge economy through ICT.

KEYWORDS : ICT, CSC, IT, E-government, E-governance**1.0 Introduction**

E-Governance is the concept of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for delivering government services to their citizens and exchange of information. The term e-Government came into existence with the advent of government websites in late 1990s. Government has planned that through e-governance, most of government services will be made available to citizens in a convenient, efficient and transparent manner. E-governance is not limited to the public sector only but also includes the management and administration of policies and procedures in private sector as well. To make success Digital India Abhiyan, Digital India Week (DIW) was celebrated from 1st July to 7th July 2015. It was also celebrated in Haryana as well and District Jind ranked second in Digital India Abhiyan. Jind is also the first district in country in which land records have been interlinked with Aadhaar cards to prevent any fraud in land registrations [4]. In every developing country, E-Governance has been talked about a lot; some government offices have even taken innovative steps towards certain E-Government projects [1]. E-governance is the effective use of Information & Communication Technology (ICT) to improve the system of governance that is in place, and thus provide better services to the Citizens[2].

2.0 PPP mode for CSC project

E-governance practices in India evolved with native intuition, but under the pressing need for administrative reforms with emphasis on transparency, accountability, responsiveness and reduction in time and costs for citizens in availing public services. For this there was requirement of collaboration with the private sector and civil society. Public-Private Partnership (PPP) module involves key features such as lesser government investment in delivery of public services, collaboration in conceptualizing, designing and implementing the e-projects besides increased participation of stakeholders to saturate the reach of such projects. The main advantages of this PPP mode are efficiency in service delivery and increased effectiveness of citizen-government interaction [6]. In India, the governments both at the central and state levels, are allowing participation only at the front-end (e-services kiosks and centres) and are handling all the back-end work. A stimulating way to keep track of how technologies evolve is to take as key classifying factor not the particular technologies or applications involved. The broad service functions provided in a combined form by these technologies and applications, in particular with regards to the e-governance perspective are the evolution of networks infrastructures, interfaces, security and identity, intelligence and tracking & tracing [7]. IT has played a significant role in enhancing the efficiency of government organizations in developed countries; however, government organizations in developing countries have so far failed to fully exploit IT to support improvements envisaged by e-governance [8].

3.0 Problems in implementation of CSC (E-Governance Project)

Implementation of e-governance is difficult in India because of its developing status. The government agencies find lot of difficulties in

the smooth implementation of e- government in India [5]. It is very difficult to implement such type of project where the most of the people are un-aware of computer literacy and living in below poverty line. Some of the challenges faced by e-governance sector are here as follows.

Digital divide:

Universal access to the internet is still far away in many countries. In some countries significant proportion of population cannot afford to access the technology even when it is available. Internet access is cheaper in developed countries as compared to developing countries. In United States Internet connection speed has increased a lot. It has tripled over three and half years. Average speed of Internet in United States is had increased to nearly 31 Megabits Per Second (Mbps) in September 2014 from about 10Mbps in March 2011[3]. Number of Internet users is many times in developed countries as compared to developing countries. This gap can be minimized by providing high speed Internet and connectivity to the rural population at a very low rate.

Political nature of public sector reforms:

Political dynamics partly explain why e-government projects, which have governance reforms as their principal target, do not impact the system beyond achieving politically neutral goals such as improved access and increased efficiency. E-governance will continue to advance but its pace, spread and impact will be determined by the extent of technology diffusion and the pressure of public demand for reforms.

Project awareness:

In India large population resides in villages where people are poor, less educated and are not aware about various schemes implemented for them by their government. Most of the people do not know the meaning, use and services provided by common service centres (CSCs) and they are unaware about various useful government schemes. Hence there is a need to have proper awareness campaigns for the general public before rolling out any e-governance projects like CSCs. People may be made aware through advertisement on banners, televisions, social media, newspapers, magazines, radio and hoardings etc.

Computer awareness:

There are various points where people can know the status of their service on their own mobile phones or computers. But major hurdle is that people do not have the basic knowledge of computer. Hence there is requirement to provide the basic knowledge of computers to citizens in this digital world. It can be possible by providing the computer centers at CSC level, at each cluster level or block level in every district by govt. Small duration courses may be arranged free of cost or on minor/small cost. This work is being done through National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM) with the help of HKCL Centres. But quality of education provided by these centres needs to be monitored. HARTRON in Haryana may also play a big role in providing computer awareness to the rural masses.

5) General literacy level:

In Indian scenario illiteracy level is high. Hence it is very difficult to provide computer knowledge to an illiterate person. Hence adult education like programmes may be restarted to make people literate. Government and private schools may play a major role in providing facilities and services to make such a mission success. Hence prior to provide the computer knowledge another minor project may be run to make all citizens literate first.

6) Poverty:

Poverty is major hindrance in the overall growth of any country and India is not an exception. Because of poverty everyone is not capable to afford computer or digital devices in India. But this problem can be sorted out by providing computer centres at cluster level, CSC level, village level so that everyone could get relevant information and may use computer facilities at his own. Such centres must give access to Internet at very nominal or low rates. Government may provide economic help to open such cyber cafes.

7) Number of users handling the webpage at a time:

This limitation on number of users handling webpage at a time can be removed by NIC (National Informatics Centre) staff or by the particular agency hired for this purpose of making website or portal. Portal is combination of various websites that are linked together. Due to language problems it may be possible to design state wise so that it could be usable for all citizens residing in same state. To make it more flexible one language like English may be taken as language in which other states people can make use of the website or the portal in effective way along with one native language. Number of users must also be taken in consideration while designing website so that site could work smoothly. Portal must be usable by users of the other states.

8) Maintenance of citizen database:

Maintenance of citizen's information in proper manner is very tough task and experienced professional should be appointed for this purpose. Security and safety of database must be kept in mind at the time of designing a database. This job is already in progress by Unique Identity Authority of India (UIDAI) and about eighty to ninety percent work is complete as it is a continuing process and data is growing. Hence there is a need to maintain and update the database of citizens.

9) Websites efficiency and maintenance:

Websites designers should be proficient in his work. Website should work in such way that its down time should be zero and work efficiently so that citizens could get the services instantly and on time. Maintenance phase starts after creation of website. This phase of maintenance is back bone and building block for the success of any e-governance project. If grievance/complaints of the users are sorted out in time then number of users of such portals will automatically increase.

10) Network facility:

State Wide Area Network (SWAN) project was initiated by GOI to provide network facility to village level. But this facility is not provided and network has not yet reached to village level till date. There is strong need to provide network facility and Internet facility being a primary need. Digital India can not be imagined in the absence network and internet facility. Government must endeavour to provide this facility in each state and up to village level so that everyone could be in touch with the digital world. Internet facilities can also be provided through 'Dongle' at very reasonable rates by many Internet Service Providers (ISPs).

4.0 Conclusion

Every Government tries its best for providing services to the people. Providing offline services has been traditional phase for giving services to the citizens. There are many problems like illiteracy, large population and poverty etc. provision of online services may reduce some of the problems. With the rapid explosion of internet technology in the world in the last few years there is need to think where we will be and we want to be in the future. With the time grows new technology will come and develop at a rapid pace. E-governance can help the governments to avoid these problems and reach to the people. Government and other stakeholders must take some actions to make the

people aware about the e-Governance activities so that people may take full advantage of these activities and e-Governance projects can be implemented successfully. Furthermore participation of people can play a vital role in implementation of e-Governance in India.

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