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Political Science

ROLE OF E-GOVERNANCE IN LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

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ABSTRACT   India is 2nd largest country after China based on its population. Even whole country is divided based on different language, region, rituals and lots many differences. Efficient governance of such large country with such diversity is tough task. Government of India is aggressively using Information and Communication Technologies in their daily work to provide SMART (Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsive and Transparent) governance to every citizen of India. The tools, technology and methods used in E-Governance application provide a roadmap for effective and timely delivery of services at the door step of citizen. Majority of regular interaction of government and citizen is done through Local Bodies of government. Local Body is classified in Urban Local Body (ULB) and Rural Local Body (RLB). Purpose of this paper is to examine E-Governance implementation in Local Bodies in India. The Government of Karnataka (GoK) was a pioneer in leveraging information and communication technology (ICT) for better governance and has been at the forefront of implementation of electronic-Governance (e-Governance) initiatives in the country. Government of Karnataka conceived and implemented a number of e-Governance projects like computerization of land records (Bhoomi) and treasury operations (Khajane) much before announcement of the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) by the Government of India (GoI) in May 2016.

INTRODUCTION:

The Constitution of India has bestowed a very powerful identity to it by lending the word 'democracy'. The government here, works for the welfare of its people with the participation of its citizens and the manner in which it functions, is what we call as governance. Governance is all pervasive. It starts with controlling a household by the head of the house, or a company or an organisation by its board of directors and ends at governing or controlling the country at large. The Governance scenario in India changed to e-governance since computers were first introduced. The e-governance initiative taken by the government in the year 2006 did not yield much benefit, but thanks to India's first Cyber Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi who increased the efficacy of e-governance by providing the relevant infrastructure and policies in this regard. Owing to technological changes and the introduction of the "Digital India Programme" the concept of e-governance has made its place in the country. E-Governance is also one of the important topics of discussion nowadays. It is monitoring the transactions and working of organisations or individuals with the application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in order to promote effectiveness, efficiency and transparency.

Evolution

It was in early 1990s that the concept of good governance came to the limelight with the publication of two reports by the World Bank. In the first report entitled "Sub- Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth (1989), the bank emphasised on need for good governance. While in the second report entitled "Governance And Development"(1992),the bank identified the various aspects of good governance. The emphasis on good governance has now shifted to SMART governance implying: simple, moral, accountable, responsive and transparent governance. E-governance is one such initiative in the move towards smart governance. The National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) prepared by the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DEIT) and Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) in the year 2006, laid down the foundation for building a technology-enabled knowledge economy. Under this plan, all the government services are made available to the citizens of India via electronic media. The "e" in e-Governance stands for 'electronic'. It implies the application of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to the functioning of the government. E-governance aims at bringing efficiency and effectiveness in the functioning of the government.

Legal Framework E- Governance

Government has enacted two important pieces of legislation to giveteeth to implementation of e-Governance initiatives. These include:

1. Karnataka Information Technology (Issue of Digital Extracts and Certificates for e-Governance Projects) Rules, 2007: These rules provide for a comprehensive process for delivery of electronic delivery of e-Governance services to citizens. The rules, among other things, provide for -
2. Appointment of departmental document security controllers, departmental digital certificate controllers and e-Governance digital systems controllers and supervise their functioning,
3. Supervise the departmental e-Governance centres and conduct periodical audit of their activities,
4. Notification of e-Governance services,
5. Appointment of e-Governance delivery centres and organizations,
6. Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act, 202: Amendment issued in 2008, making e-procurement a part of this act.

Organizational Framework Of E-governance

The importance given to the e-Governance can be ascertained by the fact that a separate Department of DPAR (e-Governance) was created by Government in 23, to plan and leverage the ICT for the benefit of the common man. This is a unique feature, as no other state had a separate Department for e-Governance. Creation of this Department as part of Administrative Reforms stems from the strong conviction of the State that e-Governance is a tool to bring about administrative reforms.

Department Of E-governance Plays The Following Rules:

1. Creation of Policy framework, setting the vision and guidelines for e-Governance projects.
2. Creation of Administrative framework f1or approval of e-Governance Projects of all the Departments.
3. Creation and maintenance of Core e-infrastructure that can be used by Departments for planning and implementing e-Governance initiatives.
4. Development and promotion of common standards in designing of the e-Governance
5. Projects The Department has created two unique institutions to give thrust to planning and implementing e-Governance infrastructure that can be used by all the Government Departments for planning and implementing e-Governance initiatives. These are:

Centre for e-Governance: A Society created in 2000 with the mandate of establishing and maintaining the core e-structure such as Networks, Data Centre, core applications and capacity building activities. Directorate of Electronic Delivery of Citizen Services (EDCS): a Government Department mandated with the operations of common citizen service delivery centres such as Bangalore One & Karnataka

One. This institutional structure is unique to Karnataka.

Benefits Of E-governance In Local Administration

E-governance has offered a plethora of benefits not only to the citizens but it has brought a complete ease and transparency in transactions thereby leading to smart governance. The important role of e-governance is highlighted in the following points:

1. Increased transparency has reduced corruption in the economy. Corruption
1. which is one of the major challenges ahead of Indian economy can be mitigated by e-governance.
2. Increased efficiency and effectiveness in the way services are delivered. People's convenience is given due consideration.
3. Empowerment of rural communication with the help of making bank accounts mandatory and linking adhaar cards to avail various benefits.
4. Increase in taxation revenue as tax payments and filing of returns when done electronically bring more transparency and lesser chances of tax avoidance.
6. Increased legitimacy of government, by making everything digitalised. The launch of various portals and apps like mygovt app help in bringing a greater transparency and legitimacy.
7. Flattened organisational structure is promoted with the help of e-governance as people stand on common parlance with the government.
8. Reduced paper work and red tapism in the administrative process is possible only with the help of e-governance.
9. Greater citizen participation in the governance process, brings enlightenment among the people.
10. Improvement in relationship between the public authorities and civil society brings a congenial atmosphere in the entire country and makes it a better place to work in.

Challenges In E-governancein Local Administration

Governance which is being done electronically (e-governance) is a good measure for bringing convenience and transparency. But there are certain challenges which the government will have to face. The first and the foremost being the lack of means of assessing such facilities. A country where still a major share of the population works just to earn a livelihood can't think beyond that. Now whether the government announces some measures for their benefit, it is hardly going to make any difference. Talking about the literate masses, the story is almost similar. Indian people by nature are risk averters and still rely on doing things manually rather than electronically. The reason for such an attitude is lack of security when things are done via electronic mode. And, as regards increase in the number of people using internet, though the number is increasing substantially, yet again there is a problem with the network provided by various internet service providers. The launching of various websites or portals will not yield great benefits unless a proper upkeep of such sites is done. Cyber Crimes are on the rise nowadays. Therefore, people don't want to furnish their details of bank accounts or other important documents while transacting electronically. The government though has introduced Digital Lockers, with the aim of imparting digital identity to its citizens, but proper care of such lockers is required. Not only the introduction of initiatives, but their proper implementation and monitoring can help in mitigating the challenges faced.

SCOPE FOR IMPROVEMENT

1. Awareness campaigns to be organised in order to disseminate information regarding the initiatives taken by the government.
2. People should be encouraged to be a part of digital literacy programme which is provided free of cost, only then they will be able to fully understand and utilise the governance schemes.
1. High speed internet access to be provided by the various service providing companies.
2. Upkeep of various sites, portals and websites should be done in order to deliver right services to the right people.
3. A proper monitoring of the e-governance schemes is required to be done so that necessary changes can be done timely.

CONCLUSION

The Digital India Programme launched on 1st July 2015, has provided an impetus to e-governance. The existing systems of e-governance have been revamped to the Digital India initiative. E-governance has made the functioning of the respective authorities more convenient and transparent Also, various states have digitalised their working thus gaining the trust and confidence of its people. But, a lot is yet to be done. The facilities which are aimed to be provided to the marginalized people are far behind in availing them. Also, many of them are not even aware of such programmes. Efforts should be made not only to promote such schemes or initiatives to catch the attention of the countrymen but to actually create a social change... a change for good. And, such changes cannot be developed overnight. Though a lot of time will be needed to make India an enlightened economy, but it will definitely be what it is desired to be with the dual efforts of Digital India and E-governance.

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