Good Governance Through E-Governance in India: Need For Innovative Approaches

Dr.Y.Sivaramaiah

Lecturer in Political Science, Dept. of Political Science,Silver Jubilee Govt. College(A), Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh

ABSTRACT

Good Governance means securing justice,empowerment, more employment andefficiently delivery of services to a common man.e-Governance has been recognised as a vital forcefor transformational improvement in quality, efficiency andeffectiveness of governance.A governance strategydriven byinformation and communication technology has to bedeveloped and applied with the objective ofbringing in moretransparency and increased accountability.e-Governance is good governance and every government is supposed to provide good governance to its citizens. The role and process of governance need to be redefined and redesigned with reference to citizens' needs and aspirations. Citizens want execellence in governance – high quality of governmental services delivered on time and at minimum costs. They want governance to be citizen-centric.ICT has been recognized as the engine for growth and a source of energy for the socialand economicempowerment of any country, specially a third world country.Relationship between Information andCommunication Technologies (ICT) is coming tobe recognized increasingly world over. Today, governmentsare empowering massesthrough IT as it can prove to be effective short-cut to higher levels of equity in theemerging Global Digital Networked Information Economy.This research is an effortto study whether the new information and communication technologies can make asignificant contribution to the achievement of good governance.In this context, this paperexplores how far e-governance is useful for achieving goodgovernance in India and suggests innovative approaches.

INTRODUCTION

According to the World Bank has define good governance as "t*he one epitomized by predictable, open, and enlightened policy-making, a bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos acting in furtherance of the public good, the rule of law, transparent processes, and a strong civil society participating in public affairs. Poor governance is characterized by arbitrary policy-making, unaccountable bureaucracies, unenforced or unjust legal systems, the abuse of executive power, a civil society unengaged in public life and widespread corruption*".

Governance describes the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented. The Good Governance is the process whereby public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources and guarantee the realization of rights and services. Good governance defines an ideal which is difficult to achieve in its totality. Good Governance may be defined as the process that guides the political and socio-economic relationships, with commitment to democratic values, trusted services and just and honest business.

The central challenge before good governance relates to sociale development. In his famous 'tryst with destiny' speech on 14 August, 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru articulated this challenge as 'the ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunities'. Good governance must aim at expansion in social opportunities and removal of poverty. In short, good governance, as I perceive it, means securing justice, empowerment, employment and efficient delivery of services.

Good Governance has major implications for equity, poverty and quality of life. Public Administration is concerned with the activities of the three branches of Government namely, Legislature, Executive and Judiciary, at national level, state level and Grassroot levels (district/sub-district levels) in the Country.

Good goverannce is associated with accoutnable political leadership, enlightened policy-making and a civil service imbued with a profesional ethos. The presence of a strong civil society including a free press and independent judiciary are pre-conditions for good governance.

e-governance is not really about technology. This is about people, processes, and results – using information and communications technologies (ICT) to improve the transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness of public institutions.

e-governance has often defined as 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 from the Government to its customers, businesses, other governments, and also management of the entire back office processe and interactions within the government system.

Some of the objectives indicative of a road map for e-governance are as follows:

- Set-up and faciiltate specific communication networks for the government sector.
- Assist central and state government in identification and implementation of suitable hardware and software packages for e-governance.
- Establish links Worldwide with institutions engaged in similar activities so as to optimise synergies and benefits, by building platforms for interchange of ideas and experiences.
- Develop special pilot projects on 'paperless government' online through an electric 'intelligent government' concept by extensive use of electronic forms and data entry interface through the use of the Web and Internet Technology.
- Develop commercial and governmental systems for issuing and managing signatures/electronic signatures and smart cards.

Achieving success in e-governance requires active partnerships between government, citizens and the private sector.

e-GOVERNANCE IS GOOD GOVERNANCE

e-Governance is Good Governance and every government is supposed to provide good governance to its citizens. In the context of e-governance, there has to be adequate emphasis on 'governance'. Governance needs to be 'e-enabled'.

e-governance is concernced with the relationship between citizens and government. The role and processes of governance need to be redefined and redesigned with reference to citizens' of governmental services delivered on time and at minimum costs. They want governance to be citizen-centric.

The objective of citizen-centric governance is to ensure that the interests of citizens are safeguarded. This will need a complete reorientation of citizen-government relationships. This will necessitate a complete redesign of governmental processes. This has to be much more tha a website or a new delivery window.

This should ensure simple and trouble-free service to the citizens. Thus, e-governance should facilitate the lives of citizens.

MODI'S 'SMART' VISION

Smart Cities:

Smart Cities, in the most basic terms, are urban settlements that exploit technoloy to offer more structured and hospitable living conditions for residents. Such cities have a centralised control system which provides real-time inputs on availability of water, electricity, public transport, healthcare and education.

Cities such as Delhi, Hyderabad, Surat, Coimbatore, Bangalore, Mangalore, Jamshedpur, Mumbai and Chennai have launched initiatives for deployment of advanced communications systems, Metro networks, traffic management frameworks, smart meters, GPRS for solid waste management, online water quality monitoring, online building plan approval schemes, etc.

Intelligent Transport:

Smart cities have an integrated transit corridor, where Bus Rapid Transit corridors as well as suburban train networks are linked with pedestrain and cycle lanes. Furthermore, there are pods to carry people directly from point to point, with no stop at intervening stations.

- Smart cards facilitate travel in multiple modes of public transport.
- Real-time transport displays can provide visibility and informaiton on availability of public transport as well as the condition of traffic on routes.
- Digital parking meters send information to mobile phones when a space opens up.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) forms the backbone of smart cities and is the main tool to address common problems like congestion and waste of energy. Intelligent communication tools enable administrators to manage and respond to emergencies faster. Better energy management systems help people automate energy cosuming systems in buildings. There is emphasis on the use of renewable sources of energy.
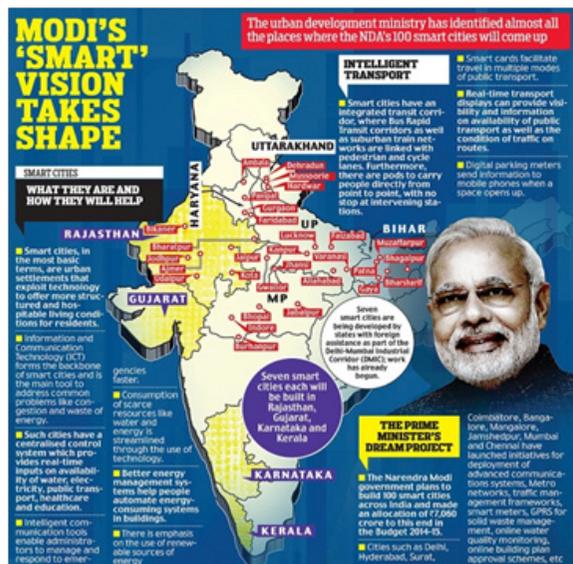

Fig.1.Modi's 'SMART' Vision Takes Shape
[Source: www.dailymail.co.uk]

TOP FIVE PROGRAMMES LAUNCHED BY MODI IN 2014

On May 26, 2014, our Prime Minister Narendra Modi took charge of the Government of India. Since the time he has taken office, certain important decisions have been taken by the Cabinet.

Just as the year 2014 is about to end, let us try to recollect the important programmes and projects that our new Government announced during the year for the development and welfare of the country.

Digital India:

On August 21, 2014, the "Digital India" campaign was launched. The idea is to change India into an electronically empowered economy. According to this programme, the Government of India wants all Government departments and the people of India to connect with each other digitally or electronically, so that there is effective governance. It also aims at reducing paperwork by making all the Government services available to the people electronically. There is also a plan to connect all villages and rural areas through internet networks.

There are three major components of Digital India: Digital infrastructure, digital literacy and digital delivery of services. The Government plans to complete this project in five years. That is, by 2019, the Digital India project is expected to be fully functional.

Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana:

On August 28, 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana. This scheme was announced when he gave his first Independence Day speech on August 15 , 2014. This is a prestigious financial inclusion programme. On the very first day of the launch of the programme, 15 million bank accounts were opened and each of the account holders was given Rs 1,00,000 insurance cover. By September 2014, 3.02 crore accounts were opened and around Rs 1,500 crore were deposited. According to the yojana, anyone can open new bank accounts with zero balance too.

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan:

On 24 September 2014, Prime Minister approved the Swachh Bharat campaign, which was a modification of the Nirmal Bharat Programme, launched by the previous Government. The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan was launched formally on October 2, 2014, the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The objective is to make India a clean India by 2019, the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The plan is to provide toilet and sanitation facilities in all rural and remote areas, to create public awareness of cleanliness, to clean roads, streets, encroachments and make India one of the cleanest countries of the world.

Make in India:

This was basically a slogan, coined by Narendra Modi on September 25, 2014 to attract the global world to invest and manufacture in India. It then became an international marketing campaign. "Make in India" campaign was initiated so that India has ample job opportunities and the economy gets a boost. 'Make in India' seeks to make India a self-reliant country. It also aims to allow FDI in the country as well as bring back to health the loss-making Government firms. The Make in India campaign is completely under the Central Government, in which the Government has identified 25 major sectors which have the potential of becoming a global leader.

Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana:

On October 11, 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana. According to this yojana, each MP will take the responsibility of developing three villages by 2019. The idea is to make India's villages to be fully developed with physical and institutional infrastructure. There are certain guidelines for this scheme, which has been formulated by the Department of Rural Development. The Prime Minister released the guidelines on October 11, 2014 and requested all MPs to develop one model village by year 2016 in their constituency and two more by 2019.

MODI GOVERNMENT'S DETERMINED "DIGITAL IN-DIA" PROGRAMME

In India, the e-governance initiative is handled via what is known as the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP). It is a comprehensive framework for the government to engage with its stakeholders. Here is how the Government of India defines it:

The National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) has been formulated by the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DEITY) and Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG). The Union Government approved the NeGP, comprising of 27 Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) and 10 components on May 18, 2006.

The NeGP aims at improving delivery of Government services to citizens and businesses with the following vision: "Make all Government services accessible to the common man in his locality, through common service delivery outlets and ensure efficiency, transparency & reliability of such services at affordable costs to realise the basic needs of the common man."

Given the expanse of the country and the diversity in every sphere of life, and the overall federal structure where the states in India are major stakeholders in governance.

CONCLUSION

The good governance comes out from the strong commitment of the government where all commitment is made with keeping people as central focus. Policy, legislation, rules, programmes etc are essential for governance reforms which determine the governance rules where as its execution with same or even higher commitment is much more important to have the outcomes.

The e-government solution strongly supports digitisation of government administration by using network technology and security technology to meet the needs of both, the people providing services and those receiving them. As the Internet spreads throughout society, and in public as well as private sectors, operations such as e-applications and e-procurement become common place. Internet access is thus a pre-requisite to the e-government solution.

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