



E-Governance in Virtual/Digital University - a review of tools and techniques implemented for e-governance in Digital University in India.

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ABSTRACT

Educational institutions today are taking an active part in the development of e-governance in the country. So much so, that there are virtual and digital universities available for the elongation of this cause. In the process a number of new age tools and techniques and various new technologies are required. This paper summarises the need for these tools and how they can help sustain a good e-governance system in the country.

Key words: E-Governance, Digital University, Tools and Techniques, Virtual University.

INTRODUCTION

E-governance should be the buzzword in the modern world and all energies should be channelized in that direction. In a way it is often known as good governance. The procedures along with the attitudes of the masses should be changed for the successful implementation of a program of this magnitude. Research points to the fact that in many cases the good equipment tends to make a lot of differences. It tends to improve productivity and efficiency of operations on a large scale (Sinha, 2006).

Good governance should be primary objective of the government. Governments all over the world have tried to incorporate efficient management procedures into the public administration system. In the overall scenario a holistic approach has been possible which helps the government to link it with the various subsidiaries. In addition to this the information transformation along with the exchange of the ideas takes place through the medium of a civilized society in place. In the earlier stages the government functioning was done through the electronic media, but gradually the e-governance has taken over it in a big way. Various mechanisms were adopted like establishment of LAN and WAN, filing systems along with the refilling aspects will improve. Along with it the computer terminals will be used for storage and retrieval of data and there will be opening of public outlets for exchange and interchange of information.

TOOLS IMPLEMENTED FOR GOVERNANCE

The e-governance in the country has paid less focus on the software and more on the hardware aspects. The society in the country is basically divided into two segments. In the first place the people who have access to computers and internet and secondly the people who have the requisite knowledge to use them. It needs to be kept in mind that e governance is itself a tool and no mechanism can work wonders. The success of any e-governance program depends on the environment in which it operates. There are some essential requirements before implementing an e-governance model which are

- Large scale operations of computers.
- The use of local language should be encouraged in the IT sector to make the people at ease.
- Influencing and changing the mindset of the various government departments.
- The creation and development of IT infrastructure.
- Networking knowledge for better governance.
- A standard policy in coding. Logic along with user interfaces (Biju, 2007).

In a way the implementation of e-governance should be in line with the federal structure of the country. Indian as a constitution is basically divided into three structures mainly the Union, State and the local bodies. With this aspect in mind the national e-governance set up has been launched big time where the capacity building aspect is stressed upon big time (Baghel, 2009).

TECHNIQUES IMPLEMENTED FOR E-GOVERNANCE

The core feature of e-governance is to streamline the process along with the activities. The governments need to be transferred and how the citizens take part in the democracy is the main aspect of focus. In a way citizen centric e governance is the order of the day and the urgent need of the hour is maintaining, processing along with retrieving the information through the basis of an electronic system and use that information in further decision making process (Wyld, 2011).

The application of the varied levels of information along with the communication levels can bring out massive improvements in the manner the public institutions function. In a way there efficiency carries forward to the next level. E governance tries to improve the efficiency and operations of the administrative machinery in the country through a combination of information technology along with multimedia. India has emerged as the most preferred destination for the outsourcing hub as e governance ensures cost effective and speedy provision of services. No second thoughts to the fact that the information technology is contributing big time with evolving new mechanisms of technology as well as developing new business practices in place. Taking a clue out of it various departments in the country like finance, insurance as well as transportation are using Information technology in a big way.

The government has realized this big time and the national E-governance plan (2003-2007) aims to preview the various aspects under the central government and it also tries to reduce the digital divide in the best possible way. On a political angle also the government after seeing the recent performance of some of the states in the recent elections has embarked on a journey of rural development. The use of information technology will provide information quickly to the farmers, will lead to faster dispersal of loans and the overall health and education system will be improved in the villages. In fact a major fact is that till now more than 60 % of the vote bank leave in the rural base of India (Raj, 2008).

ADVANTAGES AND UTILITIES OF E-GOVERNANCE

- The main advantages of a proper e-governance are summarized below:
- The record keeping improves as there is a massive reduction in the number of files. A small disk like a CD can store a large amount of information. This prevents the safety and security of information rather than relying on the physical keeping of information.
- Secondly many of the administrative functions can be simplified. Examples would be screening of candidates in alphabetical order or preparing a budget on the basis of past information.
- Integration and coordination among the various departments. This is more beneficial for companies in the global world who have a number of offices located in other parts of the world. This leads to reduction in the efforts of supervision and in the overall situation reduces time and resources.
- There is reduction in the hierarchal process and information can move from one level to another without too much hassles
- There is greater level of transparency among the various departments on the cultural along with the accounting aspects. It tends to remove a lot of the negatives involved in the process.
- The quality along with the efficiency of the services improves on a drastic level. The government can provide effective and quality service to the citizens with a greater sense of responsibility along with accountability. This sort of set up is more beneficial when a larger domain like the railway department are concerned
- The set of processes and mechanisms involved allows the citizens to take part in the decision making process as there is greater levels of transparency in the government related affairs
- With the present trends of globalization and liberalization the country cannot afford to lag behind in the implementation of the e-governance processes (Pratigyogita Darpan 2007).

E-governance is much more than information technology. It has primarily changed the way the relation between the citizen and the government. The new technologies are the main area of focus in a e governance which will improve the outlook of citizens. In a way it could be termed as the citizen's voice to improve the democracy. It also contributes better to collaborations and partnerships in the days to come. With an eye on the future the development of it is all the more important as it helps the country to move forward with cost effective and quality services. One thing which needs to be kept in mind is that it differs from e government as the public are a part of the constituent process (Remenyi, 2007).

From the management point of view the crux of the e-governance is the citizen interface. A task force was set up and they came up with a host of recommendations relating to Information technology. A national institute of smart government was launched whose main aim would be to promote social awareness and developing a system which would help the citizens in providing hassle free solutions. In a way high impact e-governance solutions would be developed which would help the central and the state government. The bottom line is that it would have a physical and virtual existence in place (Goel, 2007).

STATUS OF E-GOVERNANCE IN THE COUNTRY

The country India is a secular state and there is diversity of culture in the form of different languages as well as traditions which are followed. There is a huge gap between the rich and the poor and this gap has widened all the more due to rapid globalization along with industrialization on an economic as well as social level. Lot of governments have realized this and feel that e-governance could be a vital tool in the development of the country. It may act as a stimulus to the administrative set up and improve the overall quality of life. It is pre requisite for the developing countries to follow this mechanism. E governance is a tool which can transform the

level of governance in the country. The positive aspects of it are that it improves accessibility, reduces costs along with the efficiency of operations.

It also extends benefits to the lower strata of society and these techniques of experimentation have reached millions of people worldwide. As the information along with the services has improved it has led to a situation where more social groups have developed a sense of ownership and a local mechanism is also found. The government of the country aims at providing equal information on a transparent and even keel to the whole society (Goel, 2007).

With regards to this aspect the government has several objectives in mind. Firstly the governance is an open book and people can easily access it and participate in the democratic process. Transparency is the key word as it is open to scrutiny and inspection. Secondly the governance should be citizen centric as already stressed before because it ensures the respect of the individuals. Along with it personalized services are also provided. If an efficient government is in place it will derive maximum benefit for the taxpayers in a smooth as well as an efficient manner. These are the three major levels with the government of the country targets for the successful implantation of the e-governance program.

Considering the other side of the coin implementation of e governance in a developing country is entirely different from a developed country. This is because a huge burden on financial resources along with increasing personnel is required. Another challenge which the country faces is the integration among the various departments lead to a complex process being developed in a way.

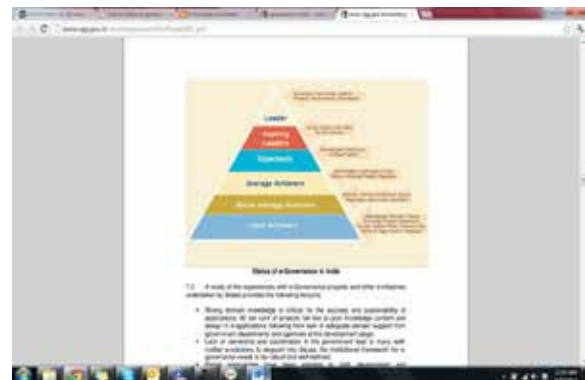


Figure 1: Status of E-Governance in India
Source: Mohanty (n.d.)

CONCLUSION

E-governance is essentially to bring in more governance. The government along with the public agencies should make the use of IT both at the national and the international level. The concept is an integral part of the democracy till now. Though the country has not been in the grasp of e-governance on a large level and in fact has a long way to go before it reaches the levels of advanced countries like United States. One can come across many stumbling blocks in the country in the form of poverty, illiteracy, lack of education to name a few. The legal system is not all that great and there are many facts which are not covered by any major guidelines. Some of them are data protection, taxation and protecting the rights of the e consumers. Unless a solution to all these problems cannot be found the concept of e governance cannot take off big time in the country. One of the methods could be to develop a national register and develop a committee which will coordinate and get in touch with the various departments. So the successful orientation of the e governance program in India will require more skills in the field of Information technology, the evolution of stakeholders along with team work. So the ideal think in the field of e-governance is a mechanism of proper planning and suitable adjustments are the order of the day.

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