CHALLENGES IN e – GOVERNANCE PRACTICES IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) has bought numerous changes in the present systems like Education, Government, Business, Agriculture, etc ,. One of the major and much useful emergence or change is the implementation of e – Governance in India. e – Governance is the process of offering government services and information to all citizens at their door step by means of ICT, i.e., thus making various government processes and systems easy and handy for the citizens. This can be considered an evolution in the field of public governance to promote good and easy governance. This is a standing evidence that the country is developing towards advancement. e – Governance makes the procedures and systems simplified for the users and encourages transparent governance. This evolved mainly to reduce paper works, to make work easier and faster and to reduce costs. Though there are numerous benefits seen from e – Governance, there are equal challenges and threats. In India, with recent evolution of e – Governance, people are getting used to the new practice and with the illiteracy level high in India, yet there are many who are not aware of the benefits of e – governance. This stands as one of the challenges in e – Governance. This paper discusses on the various practices and challenges faced in implementing e – Governance in India.

Keywords: e – Governance, India, ICT, Challenges

I. INTRODUCTION

e – Governance is the practice of dissemination of government or public services through technologies (ICT), thus making a cultural and evolutionary change. The idea of e – governance had its advent when WWW (World Wide Web) came into existence. The practices of e - Governance began at early late 60's and early 70's. In 80's the initiative of National Informatics Centre to support large scale computerisation in India was remarkable and lead to the early phase of e – Governance. In 90's IT evolved much more and enabled the use of few technologies and services. As IT evolves and trends change dayby day, e – Governance practice has successfully been implemented currently in India. This is considered as a giant step towards the mission of "Developed India" from "Developing India". Technologies have shrunk the whole world and this stands as an advantage to implement effective e – Governance practice. In Earlier days people used to stand in queues, wait for hours to get a job done in the government offices. Now, with IT evolved, people can use the three main services of e – Governance: Publishing, Interaction and Transaction, anywhere through Internet. This covers the long distance travel and reduces cost. As well known, there are many challenges involved in implementing and using ICT as equal as its benefits.

TYPES OF GOVERNMENT INTERACTION IN e – GOVERNANCE

There are four types of interactionsdone by the government through e – Governance as:

    i.   G2G: Government to Government
   ii.   G2C: Government to Citizen
  iii.   G2B: Government to Business
  iv.   G2E: Government to Employee

Government to Government:

G2G is nothing but sharing of data and information through electronic means among the government agencies, departments or organisations. It is an inter sharing of information from one government to other or only between government agencies.

*Government to Citizen***:**

G2C is the process of delivering various public services to the citizens through ICT. It is more of a two-way communication, where both the citizen and the government interact and acknowledge each other that the services where successfully delivered.

Government to Business:

Businesses are often required to interact with the government regarding various data, laws, etc., G2B enables a transparent business practice and makes everything handy and simple in business through Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). This helps in procurement of products both for business and government.

Government to Employee:

G2E is offering services like e – payroll system e –training, work assignments, etc.,.to the employees of that government or organisation. This also improves transparency between the government and the employees, easy access to information and services and know better about policies through online.

e – GOVERNANCE PRACTICES IN INDIA

Various practices, platforms, opportunities and progresses has been set through e – governance in India. The main goal is to contribute more towards development of India and focus on citizens. The various practices in India according to the types of their interaction are discussed below:

E – Seva:

E – Seva is a G2C practice where the citizens are provided with online services like payment of utility bills, issuing licence certificates, delivery of land records and more. The most useful and frequently used service is the payment of utility bills online. People can conveniently access various departments of the government, gain information on payment procedures and pay them online easy and fast. There is also a provision to apply for passports online. The citizens can fix an appointment date and time of their convenience, pay online and visit the allocated passport centre to proceed further. Every e – Seva is enabled by connecting the user's Aadhaar (Identity number) number to ensure safe transactions.

E – Procurement Project:

It is a G2B project which involves making businesses transparent and simple. This project was introduced in the year 2003. The early manual tendering system had many deficiencies like lack of transparency, delays, biases, etc.,. Hence this project was introduced to suppress those deficiencies in business. This also helps in building trust among the citizens during business transactions and bidding process.

SmartGov:

SmartGov is a G2G project. Government is a big centralized organisation. The manual method i.e., maintaining paper works and file for each department, consumed more space, time and delayed processes. To accomplish a request or a command an officer had to cross various departments, various files and procedures. With the application of ICT in these processes as a SmartGov, the paper work is highly reduced, procedures are simplified and automated efficiently. This also applies for G2E type of interaction where the employees can access their payroll details and other details online in just a matter of few clicks.

SERVICES IMPLEMENTED IN TAMILNADU

The above mentioned are a few among various practices followed in India. Further few e – governance services provided in Tamil Nadu are discussed below.

Online Employment service:

The job seekers can apply register online to receive job alerts and career guidance. The employers can also post various job vacancies.

*Public Utility Forms***:**

As mentioned earlier the citizens can pay their utility bills through utility forms. There is also a provision in choosing language of convenience. It is available in Tamil and English.

*Online Land Records***:**

Facilities to view patta and registered land details. Verification of patta issued and Poramboke land.

*Transport Service***:**

Booking appointment for Learner's license and driving license, Applications for vehicle registration, status check, fee details of different services are provided under transport services.

Online Text Books:

Online text books are available for classes 1 to 12. The books are in PDF format and downloadable.

II. BENEFITS OF E-GOVERNANCE

E-Governance does not only hold economic potential but social potential as well. The benefits of E-Governance are,

*Speed***:**

Use of technology makes communication easier and faster. Communication and implementation through Internet and Cell phones consume less time than normal and manual communication. E-service delivery has improved and the government is providing services and information with a greater convenience.

Cost Reduction:

Paper based communication needs a lot of paper, stationary, etc. which results in high cost. E-based systems are saving valuable money for the government.

Transparency:

All information of the government is made available on the internet. The citizens are able to see the information whenever and wherever they wish to see it. This happens only

when every piece of information is uploaded without any concealing. ICT helps make the information available online without any hiding. This helps in building mutual trust.

*Accountability***:**

Once all the information is made transparent the government is automatically accountable and answerable to the citizens. An accountable government is a responsible government.

*Convenience***:**

E-Government brings accessibility of services publically to the citizens in their places on time. Hence the citizens can access their services regardless of their place and time.

Participation by the people:

The citizens access the government services easily and it builds a faith between the citizens and the government. Citizens come forward to share their views and give feedback. The increased accessibility has increased the participation of people and the get used to ICT more.
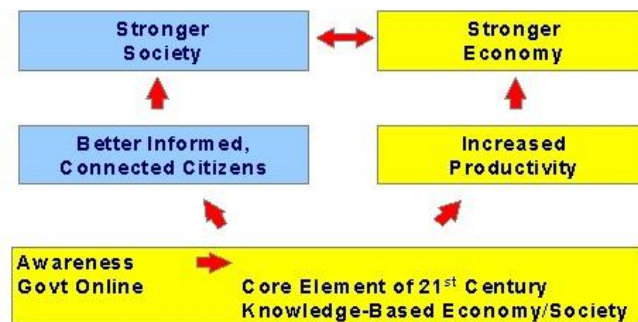
III. CHALLENGES

When a practice is implemented besides success there are also hindrances. Likewise the e-Governance services face challenges both in implementation and usage of services in India.

Challenges in implementing e – Governance in India:

  i.   The biggest challenges are the political and socio cultural environment in our country. There is a political instability and the policies are not well defined.

 ii.   Lack of infrastructure for sustainable e-Governance projects on national level.

iii.   Insufficient IT manpower and their lack of experiences in implementing and managing complex e-Governance projects.

 iv.   ICT penetration is less in remote areas where there is no supporting infrastructure such as electricity, computers and connectivity.

  v.   Issues related to availing and affording of broadband connections in all parts of the nation. Though steps are taken to increase the broadband services it has miles to go.

 vi.   The English language acceptance is very low in our nation. So, there is a lack of success as the e-Governance applications are written in English language. Therefore applications must be developed in local languages too.

vii.   The lack of coordination among various government departments and agencies who are working towards e-Governance.

viii.   Another main challenge to overcome is corruption in all levels of governance.

ix.   Hesitation of some people to change from paper based system to a web based system as there is a lack of knowledge, awareness and skill in implementation of technology.

x.   The delays in the delivery of services(due to server crashes) by the government which will reduce the efficiency.

xi.   As Information Technology keeps on changing it is difficult to keep updating the whole system at every time of change. The systems must be maintained properly to provide the services.

xii. The initial setup cost is high and it takes long time for implementation.

Challenges faced in using e – Governance in India:

Even though best services are provided by the government, people face lot of issues while using it and this leads to other set of challenges as below:

i.   Since illiteracy level is high in India, illiterate people cannot access the e-Governance applications and it will not make much success for the projects.

ii.   The IT literacy is also low and most of the people in our country are not aware of information technology.

iii. Lack of awareness and less recognition of the e-Governance services provided by the government.

iv.   The people with less or no English knowledge will not be able to understand the applications and use it. Services provided in local language are less or none.

v.   Digital divide is the main challenge as many people who live below the poverty line can't afford computer for themselves and will not be able to access the services.

vi.   A lack of clear security standards in protecting the personal information of the people.

vii. Sometimes the data can be lost and this will lessen the trust in e-Governance projects.

As population is very large, keeping a database of all the people and periodically updating the information is difficult and it becomes a major challenge for E-Governance.

IV. FUTURE SUGGESTIONS

A few suggestions for successful implementation of e – Governance services in India:

a)   The existing services can be evaluated for their success rates. Each service has to be assessed individually for effectiveness and efficiency.

b)   Conduction of surveys to gather user's opinions and feedbacks regarding the services provided. Because few states must have a well developed e –governance schemes and services while few states would have just entered the field. Hence surveys should be conducted appropriately.

V. CONCLUSION

As the growth and demand of Information Technology is high, Indian government is making efforts to provide services to the citizens through the E-Governance. Although government is spending more money on the projects, there are various challenges in the implementation of E-Governance like lack of good infrastructure, lack of interest from government officials and politicians, etc. Besides that people's resistance to change andilliteracy are also standing reasons for unsuccessful e-Governance. A clear vision, awareness and change of minds is the need of the hour. For the vision to be achieved the challenges must be broken. A good

environment must also be developed for the implementation of the e-Governance. Government must take steps to create awareness about the benefits of e- services and they should also take steps to educate them on the threats. This can be done to help them take precautions and backups for safety usage of e- services. Therefore e-Governance is a stepping stone for Good Governance in our developing nation, to reduce corruption and to provide fruitful service to the citizens of our nation. This stands as a major step towards our mission "Developed India". This paper discusses about the various practices and challenges faced in implementation and usage of e- Governance services. However, the further more methods to overcome these challenges can be discussed in future.

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