E-GOVERNANCE : AN ANALYSIS

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Introduction

Governance is an old concept. It involves interaction between formal institutions and civil society. It is the process of decision making to formulate policies with proper and continuous monitoring for implementation. The mechanism requires the balance of powers, prosperity and associated accountability. Good governance is consistent management, cohensive policies and right decision processes. It is responsility, accountability, transpareny, participatory, effective, efficient and consensus oriented governance by government.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has provided means for speedy and better communication, with exchange and utilization of information to individuals, business organizations and governments. This has led to business process re-engineering. Increasing awareness among citizens about their rights has increased their expectations from government regarding transparency, accountability and faster in its response. This has made the use of ICT in the agenda towards achieving good governance. I-Governance or electronic governance, also called E-Governance or integrated governance is basically application of ICT to the process of Government functioning in order to bring about simple, moral, accountable, responsive and transparent (SMART) governance. It improves interaction between government and citizens called as e-services, internal government operations called e-administration, and external interaction among members of society called as e-society. E-governance provides better access to information and quality service for citizens. National e-Governance Plan (Ne-GP) includes massive country wide infrastructure reaching down to remotest of villages. The vision is to make all Government services accessible to the common man in his locality, through common services delivery outlets and to ensure efficiency, transparency and reliability of such services at affordable costs to realize the basic needs of the common man.

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E-Governance

E-governance is the application of ICTs to the processes of government functioning so as to have simple, accountable, speedy, responsive and transparent governance.

The UNESCO definition is: "E-governance is the public sector's use of information and communication technologies with the aim of improving information and service delivery, encouraging citizen participation in the decision-making process and making government more accountable, transparent and effective. E-governance involves new styles of leadership, new ways of debating and deciding policy and investment, new ways of accessing education, new ways of listening to citizens and new ways of organizing and delivering information and services. E-governance is generally considered as a wider concept than e-government, since it can bring about a change in the way citizens relate to governments and to each other. E-governance can bring forth new objective is to engage, enable and empower the citizen.[1]

Further, the World Bank defines[2] E-governance as the use of information and communication technologies by government agencies to transform relations with citizens, business and other arms of the government. It involves information technology enabled initiatives that are used for improving.

1. The interaction between government and citizens or government and business commonly known as e-services;

2. The internal government operations commonly known as e-administration; and

3. External interactions among the members of society commonly known as e-society.

The US E-Government Act of 2002 defines "electronic Government" as:[3]

"The use by the Government of web-based Internet applications and other information technologies, combined with processes that implement these technologies, to-

(a) Enhance the access to and delivery of Government information and services to the public, other agencies, and other Government entities; or

(b) Bring about improvements in Government operations that may include effectiveness, efficiency, service quality, or transformation".

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[1]   www.unesco.org accessed on 01.10.2016
[2]   http://go.worldbank.org/M1JHE0Z280 accessed on 01.10.2016
[3]   Section 3601 of E-Government Act of 2002 available at
       http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgiin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=107_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ347.107.pdf
       accessed on 02.10.2016.

The Council of Europe has given following meaning of e-Governance:[4]

> "The use of electronic technologies in three areas of public action:
> - Relations between the public authorities and civil society;
> - Functioning of the public authorities at all stages of the democratic process (electronic democracy);
> - The provision of public services (electronic public services)"

Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, former President of India, has considered e-Governance in the Indian context as:

> "A transparent smart e-Governance with seamless access, secure and authentic flow of information crossing the interdepartmental barrier and providing a fair and unbiased service to the citizen."[5]

Significantly, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam opined that e-Governance is transparent and smart governance and its main object is to provide a fair and unbiased service to the citizen.

Models of E-Governance

E-Administration

- G to G (Government of Government- within and across the Government)

E-Service

- G to C (Services by the Government to Citizens)
- C to G (Interaction of Citizens with the Government)
- G to B (Services of the Government to Business)
- B to G (Business interaction with the Government)

E-Governance is not only providing information about the various activities of the government to its citizens and other organizations but it involves citizens to communicate with government and participate in government decision making.[6] E-Governance is applied in following ways:

1. Putting government laws and legislations online.
2. Putting information relating to government plans, budgets, expenditures and performances online.

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[4] http://www.coe.int/T/E/Com/Files/Themes/e-voting/definition.asp accessed on 02.10.2014.
[5] Inaugural address at IIT Delhi during International Conference on e-Governance. Available at http://arc.gov.in/11threp/ARC_11thReport_Ch2.pdf accessed on 02.10.2016.
[6] Goel Ritendra, *Fundamental of Information technology*, p. 400-401.

3. Putting online key judicial decisions like environment decisions, citizens' right to decisions, etc. which are important to citizens and create precedence for future actions.

4. Making available contact addresses of local/regional/national/international officials online.

5. Making available corruption data about a particular ministry/division/official online to the concerned electoral constituency or to concerned governing body.

6. Making available the reports of enquiry committees/commissions online to affected parties.

7. Making available information about human rights violations by government or its officials online to concerned citizens and NGO's.

8. To evaluate the effectiveness of current policies and identify their strengths and weaknesses and measures to overcome those weaknesses.

9. To enable informed decision making at all levels by enhancing the background knowledge and providing a rationale for future course of action.

10. To evaluate the performance of decision makers/decision making bodies.

11. To establish an interactive communication channel with key policy makers and members of the planning commission.

12. To conduct public debates/opinions polls on issues of wider concerns before formulation of policies and legislative framework.

13. Filing of grievances and receiving feedback from citizens.

14. Establishing decentralized forms of governance.[7]

Difference between E-Government and E-Governance

E-Government is Electronic Service Delivery, Workflow, Voting and Productivity. E-Governance is Electronic Consultation, Administration & Management, Engagement and Networked Societal Guidance.

Advantages and Disadvantages of E-Governance

It has following advantages: It is Cheaper governance because it cuts financial and time costs, Close monitoring of govt. processes or performance, More accountability of public

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[7] http://www.cips.org.in/public-sector-systems-governmentnnovations/documents/E_GOvernance_vs_E_GOvernment.pdf accessed on 05/10/2016.

servants for their decisions and actions, Improves government efficiency and productivity, Facilitates the delivery of government services to citizens through procedural simplicity, speed and convenience & transparency.

First is there is lack of equality in public access to internet, hyper-survelliance citizens will he forced to interact electronically with government departments, lack of privacy for civilians as their govt. obtains more and more information from them, e-governance sites often does not offer the potential to reach uses living in remote areas.

Some Important E-Governance State Projects

Projects in Punjab

In order to deliver various services across the counter, currently following channels are operational in Punjab:-

Suwidha:- (Single user widow disposal helpline for Applicants) project implemented in 2005. It is G2C service, presently, 115 SUWIDHA centres are operational to 35 public services at District, Sub Division level.

Web Suwidha: Project implemented in 22 districts of Punjab in Dec. 2013. It will provide access of application form anywhere. Project has led to standardization of outputs and services across all distt.

Saanjh Kendras: An initiative by Punjab police (more than 500) to provide access point to citizens to lodge a complaint and status of complaint.

Fard Kendras: Punjab Land record Society under department of Revenwe with the objective of computerizing Land records and easy for accessibility to citizens with nominal fee has maintained record of rights in 12780 villages.

Gram Suwidha Kendra under Common Service centre:- B2C & G2C services are offered by these Kendrar.

E-Vidya in 4 districts Patiala, Gurdaspur, Jalandhar & Hoshiarpur to provide computer training to more than 6000 women under National mission for empowerment of women project.

CCTNS:- Crime and Criminal Tracking Network System. Ministry of Home Affairs and National Crime Records Bhreau (NCRB) are implementing the project across the country. In Punjab total 504 rites will he covered under CCTNS project, out of which 351 are the police stations.

Aadhaar:- Suwidha centers esure easy access to Aadhaar services to common man.

E-Courts:- Digital inter-connectivity between all courts from block level to apex court. All 57 courts in Punjab are connected with this project.

View:- Conferencing facility can enable the trial of Prisoners without their physical presence in courts.

WebCITI (Web Based Citizen-IT Interface): This project was offered by district administration at Fatehgarh Sahib. It provides complete workflow for issuance of certificates such as death, birth, caste, rural area etc; licenses such as arms license, permission for conferences/rallies etc. and benefits form socio-economic schemes.[8]

E-Sampark (Chandigarh)

It was initiated to bring together the services of various departments under a single umbrella and give the citizens of Chandigarh a 'multi-service', 'single-window' experience, apart from eradicating the undue harassment met by the citizens due to lack of transparency. Payment of taxes, Issue of bus passes, Issue of senior citizen card, Issue of disability identity card, Disbursement of pension for old-age persons, widows and disabled persons, payment of bill, issue of birth and death certificates, payment of water and sewerage bills, space bookings, Tenant registration, Domestic servants registration, sticker and postal challan, Passport application submission, Telephone bill payment and Chandigarh Housing Board- sale and receipt of forms.

Project in Himachal Pradesh

Lok Mitra: The Lok Mitra project was formally dedicated to the people of Hamirpur in Himachal Pradesh. The services offered include information about vacancies, tenders, market rates, matrimonial services, village e-mail.

Projects in Rajasthan

Gramdoot: This project was developed in Dabri Rampura (near Jaipur), State of Rajasthan and it provides various online facilities to the villagers, like Jamabandi i.e. copies of land records, Shikayat online, Gramdak i.e. rural E-mail account, Mandibhao i.e. online rates Gramhut i.e. village Bazar, Vaivahiki i.e. Matrimonial service, Avedanpatra i.e. application for driving licence, bank loans and ration cards and Praman Patra i.e. issuance of domicile for caste, income certificate etc.

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[8]   http://www.mapit.gov.in/compendium.pdf accessed on 04/10/2016.

Raj Nidhi (Information Kiosks): "RajNidhi" is a web enabled information kiosk system developed jointly by Rajasthan state's Department of Information technology and Rajasthan State Agency for Computer Services (Raj Comp).

Raj-SWIFT (Government's Intranet): The Rajasthan State's Department of Information Technology (DoIT) has development Government's own Intranet called as Statewide Intranet on Fast Trad i.e., "Raj-Swift". This system would facilitate online data, text and E-mail communication between the office of the Chief Minister and all the District collectors on one-to-one basis.

E-Mitra: Project in Rajasthan based on Lokmitra & Janmitra Pilot project launced in 2002, Lokmitra in jaipur and Janmitra Jhalawar distt. to provide service & information e-mitra project was launched to provide-back office processing by computerization & service counters.

AARAKSHI: AARAKSHI is an Intranet based system that has been developed and implemented for Jaipur City. The Software provide a facility to update & perform queries on database of: FIRs, Latest News of criminals & Crimes, Telephone Directory of Police Officers, Messaging, Instructions of Police Control Room on Real Time basis, Habitual offenders details along with photo gallery, Description of criminals, Missing persons, Police personnel, property Details, Numbered/Unnumbered property, Vehicle theft/Seizure and Cultural property.[9]

Single Window Clearance System: Government of Rajasthan, has introduced a Single Window Clearance System through a Single composite Application form so as to oversome the inordinately long time required to obtain the statutory approvals/licences etc. from various government departments/agencies, the Bureau of Industrial Promotion & Office of the Commissioner (Investment & NRIs).[10]

Project in Madhya Pradesh

Gyandoot: Gyandoot is an intranet in Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh, connecting rural cybercafés catering to the everyday need of the masses. The web site is an extension of Gyandoot intranet, for giving global access. The site offers following services:

- Commodity/Mandi Marketing Information System;
- Copies of Khasra, B1/Khatauni and maps;
- On-line registration of applications;

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[9] http://www.mapit.gov.in/compendium.pdf accessed on 06/10/2016.
[10] For details long. on to: http://www.rajgovt.org/news/singwindow.htm.

- Income Certificates; Domicile Certificate (Mool niwasi);
- Holder's passbook of land rights and loans (Bhoo adhikar evam rin Pustika).[11]

Project in Uttar Pradesh

Lokvani: It is public private partnership project at sitapur distt. in U.P. stated in 2004.

- Single window for handling grievances, land records, on net Khataunis, essential services.
- Online availability of prescribed Govt. forms, information of govt. schems online status of Arms licence application.
- GPF account details of Basic edu. Teachers.
- Details of allotment of funds to gram sabha.
- Details of allotment of food grains to Kotdars (fair price shops).

Project in Bihar

RACE: Revenue Administration through in Bihar computerized energy electricity bills generated by barcodes, consumers can download bill & bill paid on-line.

Project in Kerala

FRIENDS: It is Fast, Reliable, Instant, Effected Network for Disbursement of services.

Package for Effective Administration of Registration Laws Project (PEARL): The Government of Kerala has launched a project titled PEARL (Package for Effective Administration of Registration Laws) for computerization of the Registration Department in the State.[12]

Project in Andhra Pradesh

E-Cops (E-Computerised Operations for Police Services): It was launched in 2002, as part of the Vision 2020, in Andhra Pradesh. In main objective is modernization of police administration. It helped police stations in reducing paperwork and automated the maintenance of registers, report generation, data analysis, planning and coordination enabled the speedy detection of crime and monitor prosecutions. For citizens, it enabled online interaction with the police department over the Internet.

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[11] For details log onto: http://www.gyandoot.net.
[12] For Details log on to: http://www.hindubusinessline.com/2000/08/12/stories/141260rl.htm.

Project in Karnataka

Bhoomi: It is online delivery of Land records. This record contains multiple data elements like ownership tenancy loans, nature of title irrigation details crops grown used for crop loans & litigation action. The purpose of this project is that land records were not open for public scrutiny. It may result into manipulation & Favouritism. Transfer of title was earlier cumbersome time consuming & prone to harassment of public. It Assists to avoid transfer of govt. Land to influential people. It is covered under multilayered security access to avoid danger of hacking of passwords and to ensure accountability at all levels with no scope of repudiation. Original papers are scanned & any type of notice for frivolous litigation is also scanned. Land records are issued with digital signature. Also there is connectivity of Bhommi project with courts & banks.

E-Chaupal: It was started by ITC's international Business Division as a cost-effective alternative supply chain system to deal directly with the farmer to buy products for exports and had become very important for rural India.

Conclusion

With the advent of ICT the transition cannot be stopped as it is part of global movement. With the support of Internet, government processes can be made efficient, effective and citizen friendly. Government needs to make significant investments in areas such as government process re-engineering, capacity building, training and awareness. Security issues need to be tackled very carefully supported by technical security. Strong political will power & the social acceptability of e-governance not only in Urban but rural areas as well is essential.