

E-Governance: A Tool for Good Public Administration

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Introduction:

Many problems arise in the go running of good administration and they include red tapism, delay, corruption, etc. As such, the present bureaucracy has become weak. E-Governance acts as a solution to the problems of bureaucracy in India. Information and communication technology is playing an important role in administration of e-governance in India. A few of the e-governance projects of the central government and various state governments are stated in the paper. The paper is concluded with the remarks that e-governance measures of the governments have made the public administration transparent and corruption is reduced considerably. Further, there is also no delay in the government offices for public works. Hence, e-governance is playing an important role to solve the problems of bureaucracy in India.

Information Revolution

Information system is the nervous system of any organization and sine qua non for its survival. Information systems in organizations are as old as organizations themselves. With the growing complexities of modern organizations, not to speak of the systems of public administration, information systems are playing greater role in providing integration and enhanced customer service in organizational and public functioning. Developments in Information Technology (IT) during the last few decades have had profound effect on the style and quality of life in general, and operation and management of organizations in particular. The term IT has come into common use since the mid-80s with the integration of computer technology and communications technology and the emergence of the Internet. IT provides integrated solutions to different aspects of information systems in society and organizations. Information systems have become integral, on-line, interactive tools deeply involved in the minute-to-minute operations, decision making, and policy analysis in public and private organizations. The main components and sub-systems of information systems are:

- i. Information storage, selection and retrieval (database) systems;
- ii. Information consolidation (data and text processing) system;
- iii. Information communication (networking) system; and

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iv. Information analysis support) system.

Role of Information Technology

Information Technology, especially the use of networks, can help organizations to reduce transaction cost of market participation making it worthwhile for them to outsource processes instead using internal resources. Reducing transaction costs consequent outsourcing is likely to make the organizations in size (the number of employees) without reducing their revenue Information Technology can also reduce agency costs or intern management costs of organizations. By reducing the costs or acquiring and analyzing management information, it becomes easier for managers to oversee a larger number of employees, and for the organization to become leaner and flatter.

Concept of E-Governance:

It is emphasized that Indian democracy is a large with 121 million populations. It has its long history of more than 61 years. Further, in the course of time, the Indian Constitution has become old and as such there are frequent amendments. The political parties are more competent in getting the weakness of the electoral democracy and coming into power. Further, for the sake of their own benefits, the politicians have weakened system. As a result, there is red tapism and corruption in the system. Many of the intellectuals are struggling against these problems of bureaucracy, but still such challenges have weakened bureaucracy in particular and Indian democracy in general. Weakening of bureaucracy means there is increase in corruption; consequently increase in black money, which has resulted into inflation. Further, red tapism here means unnecessary delay in work in Government offices. Considering all the difficulties of the bureaucracy, new measures were also initiated by the Government .Of these measures, the e-governance is playing an important role in reducing the difficulties faced from the bureaucracy-governance is made possible through use of information and communication technology applications in Government offices.

The advent of Information and Communication Technology as a highly leveraged enabling tool for delivery of products and services has now redefined the fundamentals and changed the institutions and mechanisms of delivery forever. This Information Age paradigm shift is characterized by Citizen and service focus integration driven as it were by the choice of service providers and means of access. This new practice of administration of the Public has dev eloped into the concept of Electronic Governance. Hence the Electronic Governance (EG) has a wider meaning than mere computerization of stand alone back office operations. It means to fundamentally change as to how the Government operates and this implies a new set of responsibilities for the executive, legislature and the

citizenry. Electronic Governance is the application of Information Technology to the processes of Government functioning to bring about simple, moral, accountable, responsive and transparent Governance, The Central and State Governments have now taken up the charge of translating this definition into definitive reality by; harnessing advances in IT to achieve at least 25% of the government dealings and services to the people to be delivered electronically through computers, telecommunication etc.

Emergency of the e-governance in India can be traced back to 1970s when National Informatics Centre (NIC), a pioneering institution set up by the Government of India, started networking government departments to exploit their knowledge repository for ensuring good governance. Since its evolution, NIC has become the largest repository of knowledge pertaining to the country.

E-Governance seeks to achieve efficiency, transparency and citizen's participation at urban and rural levels. Enabling e-governance through ICT contributes to Good Governance, Trust, Greater Accountability, Citizen's Awareness, Empowerment, Rural Development, Citizen's Welfare, Democratic values and overall national economic growth.

Advantages of E-Governance:

Information Technology (IT) helps in reinvigorating government by enhancing the administrative capacity and organizational efficiency. Application of IT leads to the following:

1. Increased transparency in administrative processes, thereby reinforcing people's faith in the government.
2. Opportunities for promoting participation of people and their organizations in government processes.
3. Openness in the functioning of the government.
4. Innovations and introduction of new ideas and concepts in government transactions.
5. Evolution of intuitive solutions to development issues and problems facing the community.

E-Governance Is 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. It will necessitate a complete redesign of governmental processes. This has to be much more than a website or a new delivery window. It should ensure simple and trouble-free service to the citizens. Thus e-governance should facilitate the life of citizens.

In fact, a major part of corruption in public life would be eliminated if personal contact between the citizens and the government officials is reduced. With e-governance in place, the moment a citizen goes online to a “governance portal” using higher identification and password referred to as digital certification; he/she can automatically get access to any of the services, irrespective of their physical location. The citizen will be able to know online their liabilities to any government department file any return pay any bill or tax without actually going to a cash counter.

They will be able to file their application for renewal of driving license or ration card online. A large number of citizens continue to be critical of the urban authority for wrong billing and long queues for payment of water power and telephone bills. This can be lessened with the computerization of citizen services.

Conclusion:

E-governance is a step towards reform in government and administration. These reforms focus on bringing improvements in the service delivery , dissemination of information, transparency, public and private partnership, efficiency and accountability .The various models for e-governance that is the general information Dissemination model, Critical information Dissemination Model, Advocacy Model and Interactive Model, aim at providing information to a wider public domain through the application of the IT. These models help in publishing government laws, regulations and legislations, making available the names, addresses and contact details of government officials, highlighting the performance of the government; and furnishing corruption related information. Research studies, enquiry reports human rights violations and environmental information on the internet. These models foster public debate and discussions, elicit opinions and views, catalyze wider participation and organize opinion polls. They help in facilitating reforms in governance.

The four elements of the Information System–information, technology, processes and people–enable e-governance to function. Likewise, e-governance also requires an institutional environment with a set of influencing factors to operate. E-governance thus entails the options and opportunities for providing services to people in a more efficient and effective manner.

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