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Study of Success and Failure of E-governance

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Introduction

E-governance is basically means the use of a range of Information and Communication Technologies such as Internet, Local Area Networks, mobiles etc. by Government empowerment of citizens and increased transparency in public dealings by governments; increased efficiencies in delivery of public goods is an inherent underlying assumption¹. The big question is that what actually we want to do by adding the letter 'e' in front of various words (government, democracy, commerce, business, politics, warfare, etc.). The main objective of it is just only computerizing the manual process running from last so many number of years or we want to improve it without changing the way of processing. The term 'E-governance' is one such term². E-governance come into the picture to give benefits to all sectors of the society by modifying the working of government with all possible sharing of information to the citizens by engaging them also in the work. E-governance allows direct participation of constituents in government activities. The main objective of the E-governance models is that better use of information and makes a clear transparency in government-people transactions. It also creates a platform for profitable participation of government in business transactions. Customer relationship management gives better service to the citizens in less time and

costs as well as better utilization of space by paperless work environment. Different departments of the government can also communicate very effectively which infect give benefits to the society and helps in the growth of a new economy. The overall reduction in transaction costs can be up to 45%. Also, a citizen can avail multiple government services from a single point³.

While looking at these advantages from the E-governance, we also have to take care about all challenges which play a big role in success of E-governance system. Some of these challenges are Lack of Integrated Services, Lack of Communication between different Departments, Lack of Key Persons, Population, Establishing Person Identities, and Different Languages. According to an officer from NIC, success factors of e-Gov projects - 10% Technology, 60% Process, 20% Change Management, Rest is luck.

Some E-governance Initiatives

Shifting to IT-enabled processes will increase efficiency in different area and delivery of the services will also improve. Saukaryam (Vishakapatnam, AP) computerization is one of the projects which is self-sustaining and does not require government funding and actually imply revenues for governments⁴. The project has brought in transparency, accountability and speed of

delivery and has helped to reduce their unnecessary movement to government offices. In a developing country like India where the dependence of people on government is very high, the project has helped better their lives immensely. More importantly, the real spin-off is in the enhanced image of the government as being citizen-friendly. Here is the list of the State/Union Territories and respective ICT programs running there⁵:

Andhra Pradesh: E-Seva, CARD, VOICE, MPHS, FAST, E-Cops, AP online—One-stop-shop on the Internet, Saukaryam, Online Transaction processing

Bihar: Sales Tax Administration Management Information.

Chhattisgarh: Chhattisgarh Infotech Promotion Society, Treasury office, e-linking project.

Delhi: Automatic Vehicle Tracking System, Computerisation of website of RCS office, Electronic Clearance System, Management Information System for Education etc.

Goa: Dharani Project.

Gujarat: Mahiti Shakti, request for Government documents online, Form book online, G R book online, census online, tender notice.

Haryana: Nai Disha.

Himachal Pradesh: Lok Mitra.

Karnataka: Bhoomi, Khajane, Kaveri.

Kerala: E-Srinkhala, RDNet, Fast, Reliable, Instant, Efficient Network for the Disbursement of Services (FRIENDS).

Madhya Pradesh: Gyandoot, Gram Sampark, Smart Card in Transport Department, Computerization MP State Agricultural Marketing Board (Mandi Board) etc.

Maharashtra: SETU, Online Complaint Management System—Mumbai.

Rajasthan: Jan Mitra, RajSWIFT, Lokmitra, RajNIDHI.

Tamil Nadu: Rasi Maiyams—Kanchipuram; Application forms related to public utility, tender notices and display.

Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram & Nagaland: Community Information Center. Forms available on the Meghalaya website under schemes related to social welfare, food civil supplies and consumer affairs, housing transport etc.

E-governance: Success or Failure

Central to E-governance success and failure is the vast gap between 'Current working scenario' and 'where the E-governance project wants to get us'. 'Current working scenario' means the current realities of the situation, i.e. E-governance success and failure therefore depends on the size of gap that exists between 'current realities' and 'design of the E-governance project'. Analysis of E-governance projects indicates that seven dimensions, Information, Technology, Processes, Objectives and values, Staffing and skills, Management systems and structures, Other resources: time and money, are necessary and sufficient to provide an understanding of gap stand between reality and design⁶.

As per of quoted 2003 survey on E-Government initiatives in developing/ transitional countries shows only 15 % of E-Government projects can be termed as successful with 35 % as total failures and 55 % as partial failures where the outcome is classified as Total failure, Partial failure and Success¹.

E-governance: Issues and Challenges

Achieving the benefits of E-governance may not be easy and goes far beyond mere computerization of government processes. Its successful implementation poses technical challenges as well as it requires a fundamental change in the working environment and strategic of the government. Governments are likely to face the challenges of re-engineering the government processes and functions and related issues of new responsibilities for civil servants, businesses and citizens. Some of the technical challenges in the successful implementation of E-governance are⁷:

1. First basic requirement of E-governance is to gathering and integration of information. For this various type of data entry systems require that can operate close to the source of data and by capturing the data create an integrated information base. Efforts must be put to make a decision of what data to keep, how to capture these data, and how to integrate information to create the integrated information base.
2. Design and installation of easy-to-operate access devices such as kiosks, push-button telephones and access terminals at different locations to make these data universally and easily accessible by the end users so that they

can use maximum of it. This also requires wide-area networking of all these equipment and the integrated information base. Visualize software to make available this data in visualize form is also required.

3. The integrated information base can be used by different users to quickly finding and accessing a desired piece of information from this large ocean. The system must have the necessary tools to properly structure the data and quickly search for the desired information.
4. Proper user authentication and access control mechanisms need to be implemented with E-governance, these to protecting information from unauthorized changes and safeguarding personal privacy. Additionally, encryption techniques will be required to safeguard tampering of information by unauthorized users when critical information flows on communication channels or networks.

E-governance: Success Factor Identification

Some of the critical factors which lead to successful E-governance projects are⁸:

- Strong political and administrative leadership, detailed project management
- Clearly identified goals and benefits
- Significant process re-engineering required
- Start small, scale up through stages, and manage expectations.
- Adopt established standards and protocols –minimize customization
- In-source analysis: outsource design, software development, data preparation, training, etc.
- Training expenses should not be minimized
- Public private partnerships

E-governance: Failure Factor Identification

Identifying Failure Causes are center to why, when, who and how tagged general questions. These questions benefits to⁹:

- Learning and knowledge building either in order to reduce the risk on future E-governance

projects and/or in order to revive the currently failed project.

- Suggest at what time identification of failure causes can be done after implementation of the E-governance project.
- Identify small team consisting of a mix of different stakeholders to identify causes of E-governance system failure.
- Identify failure causes which can best be seen as part of a larger process of learning from E-governance system failure.

Impact of E-governance Failure

Failure of E-governance project will give an impact of direct financial costs, indirect financial costs, opportunity costs, political costs, beneficiary costs, and future costs.

Learning from Failure E-governance

Recognition, Capture Knowledge, Transfer Knowledge, Apply Knowledge are four steps used to learn from failure of a E-governance Project which help to improve project success ratio.

E-governance: Success Stories

These are some success stories of E-governance:

- **Bhoomi Project:** Bhoomi project is an attempt made by Karnataka State Government for computerization of Land Records. Under the Bhoomi E-governance project all 20 million land records of 6.7 million land owners in 176 talukas of Karnataka have been computerized. This system works with the software called “BHOOMI” designed fully in-house by National Informatics Center, Bangalore¹⁰.
- **Indian Railways RAILNET:** The Indian Railways is Asia’s largest and the world’s second largest rail network. Adopting E-governance in right earnest and to reap the benefit of IT explosion, Indian Railways have established a ‘Corporate Wide Information System’ (CWIS) called RAILNET. It provides smooth flow of information on demand for administrative purposes, which would enable taking quicker and better decisions. Realizing the important role that information plays in customer services and in railways operations, IR had embarked on its computerization program. IR

developed a dedicated skeletal communication network, as a basic requirement for train operation. After the early introduction of basic computer applications e.g. pay rolls, inventory control and operating statistics, railways went for deployment of computers for productivity improvement through building up operational databases¹⁰.

- **Case of Gujarat checkpoints:** In Gujarat, a team of techno-savvy bureaucrats have finally succeeded in bringing corruption under check and consequently increasing state's tax revenues through the effective usage of computers and other electronic devices at some 10 remote interstate border checkpoints. Until now in Gujarat, inspection of 100% of commercial vehicles had been impossible with checkpoint inspectors being notoriously corrupt. The drive to curb the number of overloaded vehicles has only proved to be ineffective. In order to maximize their earnings from each vehicle, trucking companies have prompted transporters to load their trucks beyond permissible axle load thus creating a serious safety hazard. In Gujarat's traditional checkpoint system, a suspect vehicle is flagged to a stop, and then weighed on a weighbridge located away from traffic. The legal penalty for overload is Rs 2,000 per ton¹⁰.

- **E-governance in New Zealand:** In New Zealand, e-government has developed rapidly since the 1990s. In April 2001 the work of the new unit resulted in the publication by the government of New Zealand's first E-government strategy. This document defined the strategic aims of New Zealand's E-Government programme, with the vision of establishing New Zealand as "a world leader in e-government"¹⁰.

- **SARITA:** A truly successful E-governance application delivering transparent and efficient service to the public in a most cost-effective manner (BOT basis) - a true Private Public Participation¹¹.

Conclusion

The E-governance projects should define a set of business processes and Technology standards to be followed throughout the government enterprise, providing services which are citizen centric, open, standards based, interoperable, transparent, flexible, secure, result oriented and dynamic. A clear understanding of the problems associated with E-governance system will help tackling them during planning and implementation.

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