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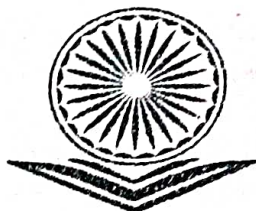
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35. Delivery of Public Services in India : Role of Information Technology

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Abstract

Governance and quality public services can impact countries economic growth. The objective of public services is to deliver social protection to the poor and vulnerable and to alleviate poverty. Public services reduce inequitable distribution of resources and correct historical inequities, such as caste based discrimination and gender inequities. The purpose of this research is to investigate the role of information technology (IT) and e-governance in the delivery of public services in India. This paper also tries to find out various E-Governance initiatives taken by Govt. of India. Besides, an attempt will also be made to discuss how the use of IT in the delivery of services can improve the governance improving efficiency, accountability, and transparency, and reducing bribery.

Key Words: E-Governance, Information Technology (IT), Quality Public Service.

1. INTRODUCTION

Public service is a service which is provided by government to people living within its jurisdiction, either directly (through the public sector) or by financing provision of services (McGregor et al., 1982). The quality of public services affects economic growth via its impact on poverty alleviation, human capital formation and corruption (Farzana Afridi, 2017). Targeted delivery of public services, thus, have the potential to reduce economic inequalities which have been rising in rapidly growing economies, such as China and India, over the last few decades (Datt et al., 2016). IT facilities make both the public and private sector work more effectively by giving attention to the needs of citizens/customers while, at the same time, reducing costs, time and improving the quality of services (Boniphace Makene, 2009). IT promotes good governance in three basic ways:

- ✓ by increasing transparency, information, and accountability;
- ✓ by facilitating accurate decision-making and public participation; and
- ✓ by enhancing the efficient delivery of public goods and services.

The citizen's right to gain access to public documents is supported under the country's constitutional framework. Promotion of this right is pursued through the government's computerization program and the availability of these documents through the Internet. Many government agencies use IT facilities to tell the public about their accomplishments, achievements, programs, and plans. The use of IT could enable the

government, as well as civil society, to inform the people of their rights and privileges (Franchisee Magazine, 2016).

2. Objectives

- To know the various challenges in the delivery of public services in India.
- To know the various E-Governance initiatives taken so far by Govt. of India.
- To investigate the role of information technology (IT) in the delivery of public services in India.

3. Methodology

Secondary data is the basis for present study. The Data has been collected from various Statistical handbooks, KIL websites, PhD Thesis and Research Journal.

4. Results and Discussion

The quality of governance and public service delivery can affect economic growth through its impact on human capital, poverty and inequality, and corruption. It is widely agreed that there is a governance deficit in India and while there has been progress in the delivery of public services, it is unsatisfactory when compared with other countries at similar levels of development. There are large disparities between the poor and non-poor in the country and it is the poor that suffer much more due to weak public service delivery than those who can access these services from the market.

4.1 Challenges in the delivery of public services

In India, the government has been omnipresent in the lives of its citizens, envisaged by the architects of the nation following its independence from British colonialism in 1947. With the aim of alleviating endemic poverty, free or heavily subsidised provision of basic and essential services has been the hallmark of public policy. However, there is broad consensus that the state has failed to effectively deliver public services to its citizens, particularly the poor. This is reflected starkly in the dismal performance of the country on almost all dimensions of human development (Dreze and Sen 2013).

In India, as well as in other developing countries, there is evidence that the effectiveness of some vast public programmes designed at the national level has been consistently undermined by serious corruption at the local level. Consequently, the intended beneficiaries fail to see benefits from programmes that draw significant amounts of government resources. A pressing policy question—particularly in an era that increasingly emphasises decentralised delivery of public services—is how to mitigate this corruption and ensure that services reach their intended targets. Improved monitoring and enforcement from higher levels of government may prove effective, but may be too costly in many circumstances.

Even after 70 years of independence, the quality of service delivery in public office is largely poor. One of the major reasons for this failure is poor governance. To overcome this situation, Government is moving towards e-governance to improve the quality of service delivery in public offices (Parzana Afridi, 2017).

4.2 E-Governance initiatives

Electronic governance is implementation of Information technology (IT) in delivering government services, exchange of information and communication transaction services between government-to-customer (G2C), government-to-business (G2B), and government-to-government (G2G). E-Governance is an important tool to enhance the quality of government services to citizens, to bring in more transparency, to reduce corruption and subjectivity, to reduce costs for citizens and to make government more accessible (ARC Report, GOI). While Governance relates to safeguarding the legal rights of all citizens, an equally important aspect is concerned with ensuring equitable access to public services and the benefits of economic growth to all. It also ensures government to be transparent in its dealings, accountable for its activities and faster in its responses as part of good governance.

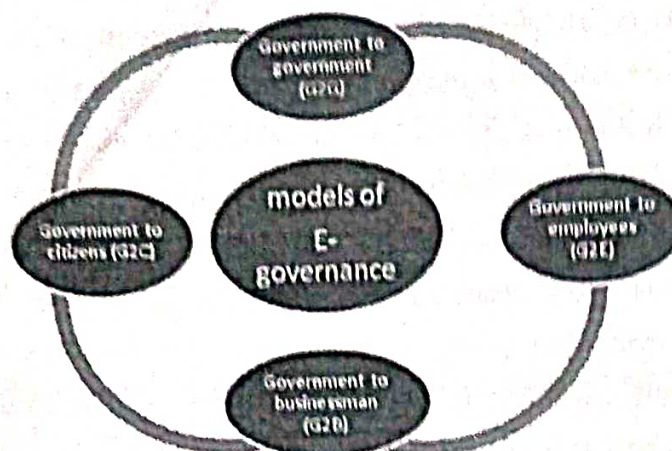
Today's is the world of change and revolution. Things which are not dynamic are considered as mortal. The rise of e-government has been one of the most striking developments of the web. Global shifts towards increased deployment of IT by governments emerged in the nineties, with the advent of the World Wide Web. The technology as well as e-governance initiatives have come a long way since then. Recognizing the increasing importance of electronics, the Government of India established the Department of Electronics in 1970. The subsequent establishment of the National Informatics centre (Nlc) in 1977 was the first major step towards e-Governance in India as it brought 'information' and its communication in focus. However, the main thrust for e-Governance was provided by the launching of NicNET in 1987 –the national satellite-based computer network. This was followed by the launch of the District Information System of the National Informatics centre (DISNlc) program to computerize all district offices in the Country for which free hardware and software was offered to the State Governments. Nic NET was extended via the State capitals to all district headquarters by 1990. E-Governance was started in India by AHSAYA in Kerala. This project involves setting up around 5000 multipurpose community technology centers called Akshaya e-Kendra's across Kerala. Run by private entrepreneurs, each e-Kendra set up within 2-3 kilometers of every household, will cater to the requirements of around 1000-3000 families to make available the power of networking and connectivity to common man. Akshaya is a social and economic catalyst focusing on the various facets of e-learning, e-transaction, e-governance, information and communication (Nikita Yadav, 2012).

4.3 E-Governance models :

E-GOVERNANCE services can be shared between citizens, businessman, government and employees. These four models of e-governance are as:-

- Government to citizens (G2C)
- Government to government (G2G)
- Government to employees (G2E)

➤ Government to businessman (G2B)



4.3.1 Government to citizens (G2C)

This model of e-governance refers to the government services which are shared by citizens. Here, citizens visit to the link of services that they want to use. This models strong the bond between government and its citizen. Type of services which are provided by this model includes:-

- ❖ Payment of online bills such as electricity, water, telephone bills etc.
- ❖ Online registration of applications.
- ❖ Copies of land-record.
- ❖ Online filling of complaints.
- ❖ Availability of any kind of online information.

4.3.2 Government to government (G2G)

This model refers to the services which are shared between the governments. There is lots of information that need to be shared between various government agencies, department and organizations. These types of services or information are as:-

- ❖ Sharing of information between police department of various state.
- ❖ Government document exchange which includes preparation, approval, distribution, and storage of all governmental documents is also done through e-governance.
- ❖ Most of the finance and budget work are also done through e-governance.

4.3.3 Government to businessmen (G2B)

Through this model, bond between private sector and government increase and businessmen use to communicate. They share information through this model like:-

- ❖ Collection of taxes.
- ❖ Rejection and approval of patent is also done by this model.
- ❖ Payment of all kind of bills and penalty.

- ❖ Sharing of all kind of information, rules and data.
- ❖ Complaints or any kind of dissatisfaction can be shown by this.

4.3.4 Government to employees (G2E)

This model increases the transparency between government and its employee. Here, employee can keeps a check on the functioning and working of government and government can keeps on its employees. Information that can be shared by this model:-

- ❖ All kind of data submission (attendance record, employee record etc) from various government offices is done by this model
- ❖ Employee can file all kinds of complaints and dissatisfaction by this model.
- ❖ All kind of rule-regulation and information for employees can be shared by this.
- ❖ Employees can check their payment and working record.
- ❖ Employees can register all kind of working forms online.

4.4 Role of Information Technology in the delivery of public service

The rapid development of IT has a transformative effect on society. Investment in IT is considered one of the significant factors that can contribute to the development of entire economy (Haluza & Jungwirth, 2015). Many governments are able to deliver information in an efficient way to citizens, employees, businessmen and government agencies. The development of E-Government may improve the delivery of public services that improves accountability, transparency and governance (Al Hujran & Chatfield, 2008).

India's economic agenda, as laid out by the present government, largely focuses on economic revival and inclusive growth. It aims to carry these out by financially empowering citizens, focusing on industrial development and reducing subsidies through the use of digital technologies. The agenda has the following action points: poverty elimination, containing food inflation, agricultural reforms, co-operation between Centre and states, transparent and time-bound delivery of government services, e-governance and governance enabled through mobile devices, ease of doing business, job creation and development of infrastructure. To enable these, several large-scale campaigns have been launched by the government. Flagship initiatives such as JAM (Jan-Dhan Yojana, Aadhar, mobile), DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer), PM's Bima Yojana, smart cities, etc. have received significant traction. Jan-Dhan has secured international acclaim by setting a world record for most number of bank accounts opened under a financial inclusion programme in a week. The reach of such schemes among the masses has been made possible through the use of technology-enabled channels. Additionally, subsidy reforms have also been initiated with the aim of reducing the burden on the economy and ensuring that the benefit of subsidies reaches the right people. Under the PAHAL scheme, for instance, LPG subsidies will be directly transferred to the bank accounts of those who need them. The impact of these schemes has been visible in a short span of time. The Aadhar programme is expected to achieve 1 billion enrolments by December 2015. The Jan-Dhan programme

received 15 million enrolments on the opening day itself, and reached 115 million enrolments by 17 Jan 2015. This has been possible only through the use of technology-enabled automation for managing data and a centralized banking system, which has also reduced the cost of operations in rural areas. Given that over 700 million Indians have mobile connections, the next step is to enable citizens to transact with the government via online or mobile channels. It is, thus, vital that people and processes be brought onto a common, integrated technology and services platform. The key enabler in this regard is technology. It is only through technology that documents, transaction logs, bank accounts and identities can be integrated and accessed seamlessly.

1. Conclusions :

We can conclude that IT can, on the one hand, increase the efficiency, speed, and transparency in delivery of services and, on the other hand, assist in the generation and dissemination of knowledge. This paper has argued that both these attributes need to be exploited for the benefit of the poor.

Governments are the largest provider of information and services that are important for the poor. Methods of public service delivery have not changed for decades, making them inefficient and corrupt. There is sufficient evidence that well-designed e-governance projects with process reforms that target enhanced transparency and accountability reduce discretion vested with civil servants, enhance efficiency, and can lower corruption. However, very few such projects have been implemented to their utmost potential. There is a necessity to accelerate the pace of implementation of e-governance and build capacity to reform the process of public service delivery.

To realize the vision of promoting inclusive growth through empowerment of citizens, it is important to reach out to citizens in the remotest of locations and make them part of India's growth story. Globally, technology has been the greatest enabler in causing disruptive change. India's story is no different, and the use of digital technologies to educate and empower citizens is being seen as a game-changer. Given India's vast expanse and differences in demographics across the nation, there is also a vast difference in the level of adoption among the citizenry.

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