

E-GOVERNANCE: A TOOL TO REDUCE CORRUPTION

By Ujjwala Bhagwanrao Wagh

Abstract

This paper defines the E-Governance strategy to reduce corruption. How E-Governance increases the transparency, efficiency, and accountability in all the government services. This study focus on different projects of E-Governance that is helpful to reduce corruption. This paper explore these projects are really decrease the level of corruption in different states.

Keywords

E-Governance, corruption, anti-corruption strategies, Types of corruption, tools to reduce corruption, E-Governance policies against corruption.

Introduction

In the early 1990s, two changes swept across the world – the focus on good governance with increasing private sector participation in delivery of public services and Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) and internet – technologies that potentially could connect any and every one in real time. The concept of e-Government or e-Governance was born through the amalgamation of these two. E-Governance marked a paradigm shift in the philosophy of governance – citizen centricity instead of process centricity and large scale public participation through ICTs enablement.

E-Governance originated in India during the seventies with a focus on in-house government applications in the areas of defense, economic monitoring, planning and the deployment of ICT to manage data intensive functions related to elections, census, tax administration, etc. The effort of the National Informatics Center (NIC) to connect all the district headquarters during the eighties was a watershed. From the early nineties, e-governance has seen the use of IT for wide sectorial applications with policy emphasis on reaching out to rural areas and taking in greater inputs from NGOs and private sector as well. While the emphasis was initially on automation and computerization, later on forays began to be made into connectivity, networking, setting up systems for processing information and delivering services. At a micro level, this ranged from IT automation in individual departments, electronic file handling, access to entitlements, public grievance systems, service delivery for high volume routine transactions such as payment of bills, tax dues to meeting poverty alleviation goals through the promotion of entrepreneurial models and provision of market information. The thrust has varied across initiatives, with some focusing on enabling the citizen-state interface for various government services, and others focusing on bettering livelihoods.

E-Governance is about a process of reform in the way Governments work, share information and deliver services to external and internal clients. Specifically, E-Government harnesses information technologies (such as Wide Area Networks, the Internet, and mobile computing) to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government. These technologies

can serve a variety of different ends: better delivery of government services to citizens, improved interactions with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information, or more efficient government management. The resulting benefits can be less corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth, and/or cost reductions.

E-Governance applications normally evolve through a four-stage process. The first stage includes the publication of information on a website for citizens seek knowledge about procedures governing the delivery of different services. The second stage involves interactivity. Clients can download applications for receiving services. The third stage involves electronic delivery of documents. The fourth stage involves electronic delivery of services where more than one department may be involved in processing a service request or service. Models with public private partnerships are offered such as health exchanges.

E-governance helps to reduce the corruption

E-governance polices are used to provide the best services to the citizens, create more transparency and reduce the corruption. Now the governments have to choose to go online in departments such as customs, income tax, sales tax and property tax which are highly corrupt and citizens have interface with these departments. E-governance introduces competition which improves services level and reduce the corruption. All the E-governance application focuses on a single objective that is to reduce corruption.

E-governance: anti-corruption strategies

- E-government introduces transparency in all its decisions, actions, performance, rules and all kind of data.
- Build accountability for access the information through internet.
- Entry point for simplification of rules & reengineering processes.
- Makes decision traceable.
- Provide documentation to citizens for follow up.
- Automates processes to take away discretion.

Types of corruption facing by the citizens

- Administrative corruption
- Collusion
- Extortion

The internet decreases the costs associated with obtaining information, the availability of information allows citizens to right corrupt practices. First, I assume that the internet is a viable apparatus to disseminate information and promote transparency.

“The cost of corruption must be very high to serve as a deterrent to corruption. This would require a combination of sanctions, including prosecution and imprisonment and incentives, include public ranking of best performance.”

There are five tools to reduce corruption

1. Education
2. Change the government process
3. By increasing direct contact between government and citizens
4. Take strong action against corrupt person and institutions
5. Increasing transparency and professional accountability

E-Governance is not just about government websites and e-mail. It is not just about service delivery over the Internet. It is not just about digital access to government information or electronic payments. It will change how citizens relate to governments as much as it changes how citizens relate to each other. E-governance will allow citizens to communicate with government in the decision-making process, to reflect their true needs and welfare by utilizing e government as a tool. E-Governance will help To provide easy access of tangible benefits to the citizens such as online form filling, bill sourcing and payments, distance education, telemedicine etc.

- To make use of latest technologies that makes work sophisticated, easy and accurate.
- To increase transparency in the functioning of various departments.

- To provide citizens access to information.
- To make efficient use of resources and time.
- To enlighten people about the government's role in social and economic development.
- To strengthen the inner flaws in the working system.
- To improve the communication between government and citizens, and government and business.
- To benefit rural India and bridge the digital divide to build a digital community.
- To get the productive and efficient work from the people.
- To reduce corruption & differences among communities.

The end goal of E-Governance is to have a consolidated record-keeping facility for the local government, businesses and citizens and also to create a scenario where people can transact with the government without visiting government offices.

E-Governance policies against corruption

Corruption considered To the extent that increased transparency, accountability and predictability (of rules and procedures) are made priorities, e-government may offer a weapon against corruption. There are different action can be taken by e-governance to reduce corruption. Many governments chosen the entire department must be on-line like customs, income tax, sales tax, and property tax. Every services of government must be delivering online to every citizen all over the country.

E-Governance can lead to centralizes data which can be used for improving audit and analysis. Each decision can be traceable that is useful to exposure of wrong doing things and fear of embarrassment can be a deterrent to corrupt practices. E-Governance introduces competition which improves service level and reduces corruption. Take strict actions for complains of citizens that submitted against corrupt practices. The information present in a manner that leads to transparency of rules and their application in specific decisions, increasing accountability by building the ability to trace decisions, actions to individual civil servants represent the successive

stage to counter corruption E-Governance, however, does not guarantee the end of corruption. Officials who master technology-empowered processes can find new opportunities for rent seeking.

Under such circumstances, E-Governance may simply cause an inter-generational shift in corruption toward younger, more tech-literate officials. One especially sensitive issue, right from the start, is whether fighting corruption should be part of the e-government vision. Each society must answer that question for itself.

If fighting corruption is included in the vision, the next key question is when to announce the anti-corruption goal to the public. If fighting corruption is publicly announced as a major part of the e-government agenda, it could help build coalitions and public pressure for anti-corruption results. However, publicity too early in the e-government process runs the risk of causing fear and resistance from corrupt officials, who are likely to exert negative pressure even upon their uncorrupt colleagues.

Another option is to not publicize the anti-corruption goals of an E-Governance program but rather “sell” e-government (especially within the government) as a program to accomplish other goals such as improving government services, increasing attractiveness of the country for investment, reducing costs to the public/business or improving the competitiveness of the local private sector. Given the sensitivity of these issues, involvement of non-government stakeholders in the discussion is important.

REFERENCES

1. Suresh Bhatnagar, “e-Government From Vision to Implementation”, Sage Publications, Delhi, 2004
2. Suresh Bhatnagar, “Unlocking E-Government Potential Concepts, Cases and Practical Insight”, Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, 2009

3. V. M. Rao, "E-Governance", ABD Publishers, Jaipur, 2001
4. M. P. Gupta, Prabhatkumar, Jajit Bhattacharya, "Government On Line- Opportunities and Challenges", Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company Limited, New Delhi, 200
5. "Framework for Citizen Engagement in e-Governance", Department of Information Technology Ministry of Communications & Information Technology Government of India.

Bio

Ms. Ujjwala B.Wagh is an Asst. Professor in Department of Computer Science and Information Technology, Bharat College. She can be contacted at ujjwala_wagh4@yahoo.co.in