

BUILDING EFFECTIVE E-GOVERNANCE

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Abstract

The fact is merely computerization of government will not achieve the objective of e-governance. It will only increase costs and bureaucracy without largely changing the way decisions are made or having an impact on the perceived quality of services. Successfully implementing the e-governance calls for fundamentally changing how Government operates and implies a new set of responsibilities for civil servants, businesses, and citizens. The new services, information and channels of Government to interact with the different constituencies will require all parties to become familiar with new technologies and to develop new skills.

This paper focuses on how to Build effective E-governance projects. In this paper we had tried to explain you various gaps in designing and delivering various E-governance project. It gives insight in to the factors which government agency should keep in mind while implementing E-governance projects.

This paper will be helpful to all people who are interested in developing E-governance project like civil servants in government agency, businesses houses developing E-governance projects, etc.

Detailed Paper

The liberalization of the early 1990s, if it is to prove anything more than episodic raising of expectations, has to ensure high growth for several decades to come. Liberalization, precisely because it succeeded in the sense of creating a more open and market oriented economy, has resulted in the present situation, where the three challenges mentioned earlier arise and need to be overcome. These challenges are:

- Challenge for Economic Policy
- Challenge for Policy and Organizational Development and Governance
- Challenge of Governance

Today what we are? Is because of certain bold decisions, which were taken stretching beyond the normal decision-making process, like the decision to liberalize the economy due to oil crisis of 1990s. It depicts that a lot of autonomy is called for, for bringing in action.

The toughest of all the challenges is 'Good Governance'. As for any system, its performance can be judged only by the outcome resulting from it. Similar example can be seen in Noble Prizes, they are awarded not for concepts and theory but for showing their use for betterment of Human Life (as a matter of fact Einstein was given Nobel Prize not for 'Theory of Relativity' but for showing the 'Photoelectric Effect').

The limitation of very notion of governance in societies with extreme inequalities and severe deprivation is a really in all terms a challenge. Indian economy and society is

characterized by certain aspects:

- High level of Corruption.
- Limited autonomy for Policy Making or Changes in Policy.
- Information filtering and non-availability.
- Lack of Infrastructure for Delivery in the System.
- Traditional means and ways of implementing things.
- Illiteracy.
- Lack of Advanced Technology.
- Several stages between Policy-makers and Implementers and Benefit seekers.
- Resource Crunch.
- Inequalities in society.
- Diversity in religion, culture, geography, political will....
- Population explosion.

On the eve of 50 years of Indian Independence, media initiated a debate on where India stood after 50 years of Independence? and they even tried to probe the reasons for the result. Much was attributed to Government and its Policies for the failure on majority of parameters. Governance through the entire system is more often not the leverage point for change, but has to be effected by simultaneous changes in other dimensions of society-economic policy, politics and law

Given the complexities of Indian political, legal and social systems, poor governance can be seen as the reason for all acts of omission and commission, poor design of institutions and their improper working. The problem is of failure to deliver what has been planned? The reasons are many:

- Lack of Transparency in the system.
- Corrupt practices in the system.
- Lack of commitment at all levels.
- Lack of synergy between various sub-systems.
- Information delays.

Here one thing comes in to picture is absence of 'Consumerism' in benefit seekers. In the last decade, 'Technology' came as an answer to most of the problems prevailing in Governance. The term that came in picture adopting technology was e-governance. In developed nations it was effective as they had the available base for operationalizing and implementing the same. India is all together a much different case, not only because of developing nation status but also due to above mentioned reasons.

The fact remains whether e-governance or any other form of governance, until and unless can deliver on transparency will remain as the reason of failure of system. Here **Johari's Window** will come in handy. It is as below in *Fig.1*

As per the above proposition by **Johari**, existence in 'Arena' box will ensure minimum strife and strain in relations. At the base of this were three factors:

1. Openness.
2. Communication.

3. Broad Perspective.

	Known to Self	Not Known to Self
Known to Others	ARENA	BLIND
Not Known to Others	CLOSED	DARK

Fig.1

The same is expected to be delivered by e-governance, as at the base of it is technology. *Example* can be seen in the case of Brazil. Till recent past, government agencies in Brazil conducted auctions for purchasing goods and services. However, the auction process had several drawbacks since participating suppliers knew their competitors and their pricing strategies. Companies were able to make an accurate prediction of their competitor's bid and used to price their offering slightly higher resulting in a loss of cost savings expected from auctions for the government agencies. It was then that Brazilian Government opted for 'ComprasNet', a fully integrated e-marketplace for all its purchasing activity which not only overcame all the drawbacks of auctions but also helped in realizing better results from its public bids.

Government can face the challenges of good governance by integrating and offering their services through Internet. Internet has the potential to transform government-to-citizen and governments-to-business interface without the need to dismantle the traditional delivery mechanism of government agencies. However, e-governance has its own challenges to be addressed. These are pertaining to complex social, regulatory and legal issues in delivery models.

Another important aspect is, unlike business, government is not necessarily in the business of building loyalty, given the lack, for most services, of competing providers, the prospect of providing better services at lower cost must certainly be appealing.

How to make E-governance Successful ?

We purposed following model for delivering quality governance through technology.

This model identifies various gaps which government must fill to provide quality governance. Here we had identifies such type of Gaps in delivering successful e-governance.

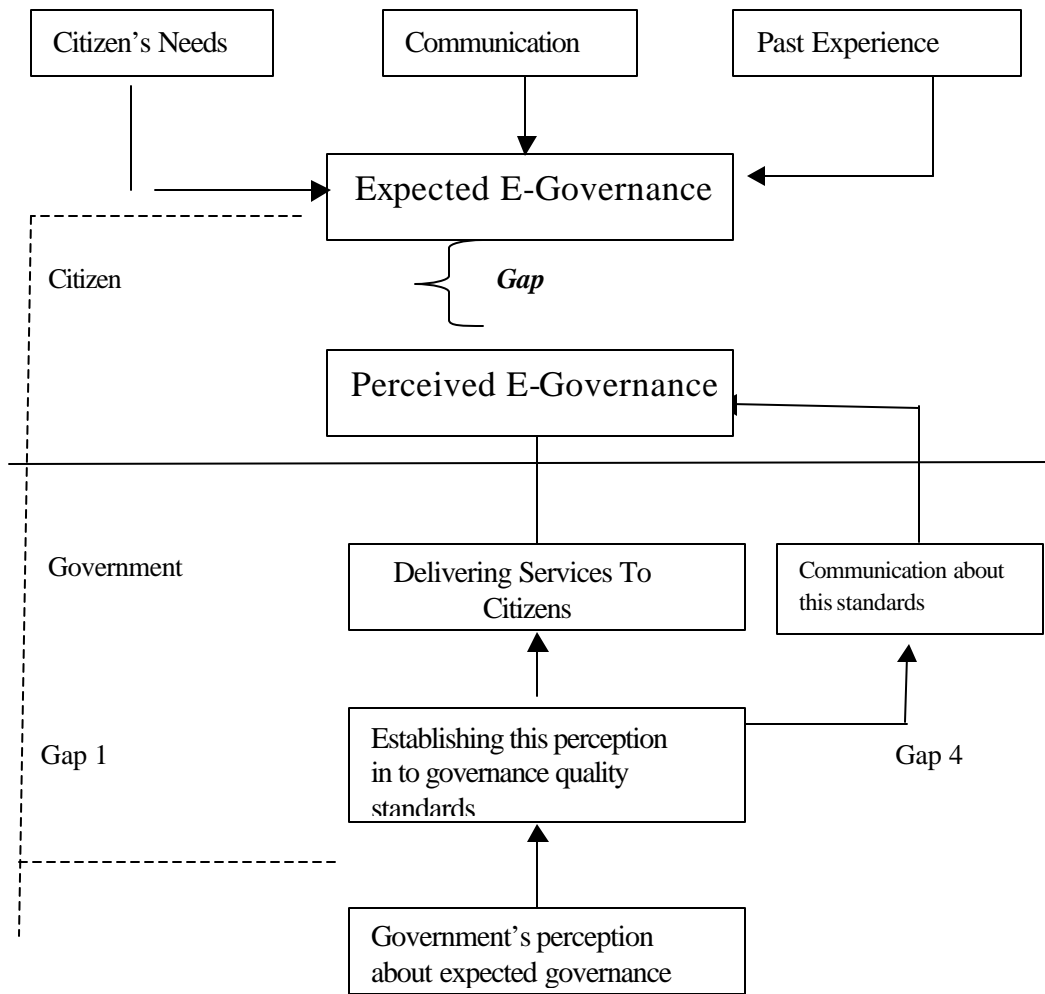


Fig. 2

Let us try to understand this model . Successful E-governance project has minimum differences in citizen's expectation and perception about E-governance. This Expectation is based on their past experience with any E-governance project, their Needs regarding good governance and external communication. received through media, word of mouth publicity etc.

The gap between this expectation and their perception about projects make any project successful or unsuccessful in real time situation. Though whatever advance technology you use or whatever claims government agency makes until and unless this gap exists in citizen's mind, E-governance projects will not be successful. To make this gap minimum government has to reduce the other gaps shown in model. These gaps are elaborated below in detail.

Gap 1 : *Understanding Citizen's Need* : Any E-governance projects has to first rightly identifying and prioritize citizen's needs. Many time government misinterprets the needs of citizens. Citizen's expected need of governance and government's interpretation of this expectation might be different, this creates a gap. Here governments can use technology for minimizing this gap. E-governance project should first identify and prioritize customer segments and needs of these groups. Project should map needs of

information and services organized by citizen's expected needs. Say for example, many state governments have started Information Kiosks or Availability of information through Internet. The success of any of these ventures rests on the ability of the system to deliver quality and right information rather than quantity of information. The base is correct recognition of citizen's information needs. You will also find many sites or information is not regularly updated.

Gap 2 : *Establishing Wrong Standards* : This is because while converting the perceptions in to quality governance, government perception about good governance by faster service has lead them to set standards like providing ration cards in three days, driving licenses in one day, passports in 60 days. This has created the Gap because many times citizen's not only required faster service delivery but timely committed service delivery. Once you set such standards and if you are not able to adhere to that standards then that created dissatisfaction regarding governance. Any E-governance project should set right standards for quality governance.

Gap 3 : *Delivering Governance*. This gap is because of establishing standard and delivering governance. Once you set such standards and if you are not able to adhere to those standards then it creates dissatisfaction regarding governance. Any E-governance project should set right standards for quality governance. Many times in India we are setting good standards but we fail in delivering standards, in terms of behavioral issues and implementation. Any E-governance project has to minimize this gap. Due to technology more and more transparency is coming in system. This gap will minimize, but behavioral and attitude level problem will minimize only when we provide extensive training to employees.

Gap 4 : *Communicating Standards* : Many time our communication of this standards are creating wrong perception about governance. Any E-governance project must provide proper communication to the stakeholders. This should not create hype about the project other wise this will add gap between expected governance and perceived governance.

In general, in order to have effectiveness in the e-governance model it must have following characteristics imbedded so that gaps shown in models are minimized.

- Customer focused
- Reliability
- Relevant for different user groups
- Assurance
- Community building through communication
- Tangibility
- Empathy
- Responsiveness
- Integration with back end legacy system
- Change orientation

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citizens. The new services, information and channels of Government to interact with the different constituencies will require all parties to become familiar with new technologies and to develop new skills.

Conclusion :

To conclude a successful e-governance initiative can guarantee India becoming a fully developed nation. The vision of e-governance calls for reinventing the government by using multimedia/information technology to improve productivity and creating a collaborative environment that fosters an ongoing development of Indian multimedia/IT industry. The initiative should focus on effectively and efficiently delivering services from the Government to the citizens thereby enabling Government to become receptive to the needs of customer.

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