Part IV Internet and Information Technology for Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Business

Improving Citizen – Government Interface through e-Governance: A Study of India

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Abstract
The search for smaller government through efficiency, reengineering of service systems, performance management, transparency of government operations, and emphasis on citizen service with citizen satisfaction as a strategy are the buzzing words for administrators. Quick decision-making, data based-planning, effective implementation through quantitative techniques seemed to clinch the issue in its favour. The Information revolution promises to change the world like never before. The objective of this paper is to examine and analyzing the improving citizens interface with the government through electronic means in India. For this purpose we selected the Andhra Pradesh (herein after referred as AP) state in India. In the state of AP, IT is an important tool for governance. AP is the first state in India for design a state-wide computerization programme covering all levels of the administrative spectrum from the smallest - the village level revenue offices- to the top most, largest and most powerful. The successful implementation of e-Governance in the administration in AP has indicated positive response by various communities. The analysis indicates that almost 100 percent respondents are appreciating the electronic means of operation of citizen services and use of computers in administration. It is saving their valuable time and money. The e-governance is helpful in establishing a two-way information communication network vertically and horizontally across the public and administrative system and helps in reinstalling and reinforcing people faith in government.

Keywords: Digitalization Process, SMART Government, CARD, e-Seva, FAST, APSWAN

Introduction
Last two decades have witnessed many changes in managing the public sector and public services and they had an effect on the social, economic and political aspect of the state. These changes not only affected the size and composition of public sector but also the ways in which public organizations were structured and managed. Citizens are demanding smaller, effective and efficient governments. The challenges forced the governments everywhere to launch major innovations.

The classical administrative model with its major emphasis on structure, hierarchy, rules, differentiation and several functional features were itself under serious threat for administrators. The search for smaller government through efficiency, reengineering of service systems, performance management, transparency of government operations, down sizing or right sizing the government workforce, strong emphasis on citizen service with citizen satisfaction as a strategy are became the buzzing words for administrators. Quick decision-making, data based planning, effective implementation through quantitative techniques seemed to clinch the issue. These changes forced the governments in search of new techniques and technologies.

The impact of managerialism has been greatest within the public services and it has changed the orientation of the public services. The traditional principles of public administration are changed towards the principles of ‘public business’ and ‘customer awareness’, focusing on the instrumental objectives of economy, efficiency, effectiveness and quality through the agency more professionalised management. The governments experimented to achieve efficiency and citizen satisfaction through various measures, and recognized the importance of information and communications technologies (ICTs) and started exploiting the capabilities ICTs. The ‘new’ public services with the use of IT created a new ‘informational logic’ for public administration. ‘ A new public administration is being forged, and new information flows, and the computer networks which facilitate and mediate them, are fundamental to the innovation process’. The purpose of this study is to discuss the significance and impact of Information and communication technologies for managing and delivering the public services.

The Impact of Management on Public Services

Public sector consists of many organizations and it is very difficult to generalize their goals, structures and styles of management. These public organizations have
in common is that they are created by governments to achieve political goals and to support political objectives and policies. The present trend is on the principles of ‘public business’ and customer awareness, focusing on the instrumental objectives of economy, efficiency, effectiveness and quality through the agency of more professionalized management. These changes game way to private sector and using the techniques of private sector to public organizations. Private sector management is largely market driven. This means that the ways in which private organization are managed reflect the market environment in which they operate. Success, growth or even survival for private organization depends on the ability of their managerial cadres to manage effectively the dynamic economic environment facing their business. Private organization must be both profitable and economically efficient to survive in the market place. Private organizations have less complex, more easily stated and less disputed goals than those of public organizations. This is because they are market centred enterprises. All organization whether it is private or public are ultimately responsible though their governing bodies, for the actions they take, to achieve their goals and objectives. Public service organizations are managed with private sector management ideas, techniques and practices penetrating the public services.

Information technology will facilitate an open government and access to information and knowledge by providing transparent and open dealing in government services through simultaneous use of infinite, expandable, diffusive and instant transmission of information. It becomes feasible through re-engineering of the system and procedures to reap the benefits of new media and new technologies. New means of involving citizens through wide access, procedures to gain access, knowledge about the available systems, services, communication channels and the degree of involvement built in, is going to be the greatest challenge facing the administration, technology providers and the citizenry. Information technology has been found to be very useful technology to reinvigorate government by enhancing the administrative capacity and organization efficiency of the public and development administrative system. The current experience with the application of IT world over in government business and transactions is that, it leads to:

- Increased transparency in administrative processes, there by reinstalling peoples faith in the government
- Opportunities for promoting participation of the people and their organizations in government processes
- Openness in the functioning of the government
- Encourages innovations and introduction of new ideas and concepts in government transactions, and
- The evolution of intuitive solutions to development issues and problems facing community.

**e-Governance**

Given the extraordinary pace of changes in the IT industry, the term e-governance, itself is some what new and essentially implies upgrading of their efficiency and effectiveness of the administrative machinery through the combination of Information Technology and sophisticated multimedia to deliver better, cost – effective and speedy services to the citizens. The present generations are in the rapidly changing periods in the history. There has been a shift in importance from the traditional inputs of a production process to the processes involve in the creation, storage and use of information. The new technology has already had impact in the manner in which large organizations has function. Many of these organizations have had to restructure themselves to create a flatter – less hierarchical- structure. At the same time one of the principal efforts of all organizations have been devoted to creation and sustenance of an environment of learning in view of quantum increases in knowledge and changes in technology. In government the transition to electronic delivery of services will not only involve to changes to the systems, procedures and processes of the relevant services but will also the effect the way in which the public and business community deals with the government. Customer will no longer need to interface directly with government officials in order to secure a particular service. They also do not need to know which agency is a service provider, as the service can be obtained through a kiosk or a personal computer. The important benefit to the customer is to secure the required service speedily and easily. These new trends will influence the nature of government administration and management, there by reinventing the government to make it experience seamless to the citizens.

**The Present Study**

The above discussion raises specific aspects of the use of Information Technology in general covering number of areas of administration. We are in the age of ‘Digitalization process’. Use of IT in administration was initiated particularly in developed world, but not in the developing world. The availability of the literature is purely from the developing world, may not be compared to ours. The literature and studies in this area is very scanty in our country. The yawning gap in the body of the knowledge on this imperative and innovative development must be supported by new studies and research. The present study therefore is an attempt on the working of Information technology in Andhra Pradesh.

**Objectives of the study:**

The study aims at examining and analyzing e-seva (Electronic Citizen Services) with special reference to Andhra Pradesh. In particular, the study examines:
e-Seva (Electronic Citizen Services)

As citizens had to run around various departments for payment of utility bills and had to spend long hours to pay the utility bills, Government of Andhra Pradesh has taken a vital leap in providing citizens with convenience and comfort in all transactions with the government. E-seva is one of the major IT project undertaken by the government of Andhra Pradesh as a part of e-governance. E-seva is the first kind of service in the country, providing a wide spectrum of citizen friendly services that will save citizens running around various departments. E-seva is built on the success of TWINS (Twin Cities Network Services) pilot project, which was launched in December 1999 in Hyderabad, the state capital. It is designed to provide citizens of Hyderabad and Secunderabad to handle integrated 19 services pertaining to six departments for delivery on a one-stop mode. Services range from utility bill/tax payments, issue of certificates, provision of information and facilitation. TWINS has been renamed e-seva as the state government plans to extend it to major towns and municipalities in the state. E-seva is a citizens service with a difference, which provide a clean, transparent, efficient and effective administrative system through state-of-the-art electronic technology. Citizens are benefited by the direct interface between government, which saves time, energy and money and gives hassle free dealings with the administration. All the administrative departments come to the customer under one roof offering the citizen a wide range of citizen friendly services.

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- Analyzing the role of e-governance in improving citizen services;
- The methods of restructuring the government for change;
- To identify the citizen awareness activities on e-seva;
- To study the people’s satisfaction on e-seva;

**Methodology:**

The present study is basically an analysis of e-seva in Andhra Pradesh. The data will be collected through net, official documents, discussions, questionnaires and interview schedules. The areas of study are: (i) Citizen Services through Technology; (ii) Restructuring of Administration; (iii) Public-Private Partnerships. We selected the state of Andhra Pradesh for this research. Andhra Pradesh has moved faster on the road to e-governance than any other state in India. The state has undertaken various e-government initiatives to provide better, most efficient, transparent and responsive services to the citizens and promote greater efficiency with in the government. The first department of IT in the country was formally established in Andhra Pradesh in 1998, to focus upon IT and give the sector the impetus that it deserves. Andhra Pradesh provide better services to citizens by establishing Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsive and Transparent (SMART) government. The state has initiated a number of e-government projects under the concept of SMART government, which have been successful and appreciated. Significant among these are CARD (Computer Aided Administration in Registration Department), e-Seva (Electronic Citizen Services), FAST (Fully Automated System for Transport), APSWAN (Andhra Pradesh State Wide Area Network) etc. The primary reason for selection was because of the states IT initiative in various sectors. The researcher’s familiarity with the environment is another important, but a secondary factor, in the selection. The study is basically concerned with the citizen satisfaction on the use of IT in services and the restructuring of administration with public – private partnerships.

**Structure of the Department**

The main department is headed by the Director, who is an IAS Officer, and the head office is situated at Banjara Hills (Address: MCH Building, Road No. 7, Hyderabad). Down the hierarchy is Deputy Director 1 & Deputy Director 2, followed by Additional Director (Technical) and Additional director (Public Relation Officer), followed by Manager, Assistant Manager, Accountant and below than computer operator. This hierarchical structure is found in Head Quarter. At present 18 e-seva centres (with over 200 services counters) spread over the twin cities. Manager followed by Assistant Manager, Accountant and computer operator, heads each centre.

**Public-Private Partnership**

E-seva is a government organization build on public-private partnership model. Infrastructure and building are provided by the government. Staff is provided by government as well as by the private. Government recruits the staff through deputation and the respective departments pay salaries. Private hire the staff through tenders and they are protected by minimum wage act. Private organizations provided the network and the software. The technological partnership is provided by the M/s CMS computers Ltd and M/s Ram Informatics Ltd. Apart from technological aspect, maintenance, telephone bills, connection charges, electricity charge, day-to-day charge, security and office boys are taken care by the private organizations.

**Salient Features of e-Seva**

- All services can be availed at any center
- All services can be availed at any counter within the centre, i.e., a consumer need not visit one counter for one service and another for another service.
There are no jurisdictional limits. A resident of Secunderabad can pay his bills at the old city of Hyderabad and vice-versa.

Services can be availed on holidays as well.

Bill payment can be made over the Internet.

Online service: e-forms, e-filing, and e-payments.

**Mode of payment**
At all the e-seva counters payment can be made through cash, cheque, demand draft & credit card. E-seva receipt is treated as a conclusive proof of payment. As the payment particulars get updated on the departmental servers from time to time.

**Direct debit system**
For using direct debit system, one has to register with www.esevaoonline.com. This process is similar to an e-mail registration and secondly one need to have an Internet banking account with any of the following banks with whom e-seva has an agreement. They are UTI/GTB/HDFC/IDBI/ICICI and planning to extend with other banks.

- Once registered you can add services like payment of electricity bills, telephone bills & property tax etc. on line.
- After selecting the bank where the customer has an account, the control is transferred to the bank site. Here the customer log in with the user name and password given by the bank and the amount is debited from the account and credited to e-seva account. The transaction is updated on-line on the departmental server.
- Citizen gets a receipt, which can be printed. The transaction reference number can be quoted for any future correspondence.

**Public Opinion on e-seva**
E-seva is the first kind of service in the country, which provide a wide spectrum of citizen friendly services that saves citizens from running around various departments for the payment of utility bills. To find out the impact study of e-seva, around 11 questions are covered in the questionnaire and the data was collected from different localities of Twin Cities. Total 21 localities are covered from 6 centres 27 centers. The next section presents the details of the public opinion on e-seva.

Table No. 1 to 4 explains the respondents gender, education qualification, localities, and occupation respectively. Table No. 5 to 12 explains the time taken for the payment of utility bills before e-seva and after the implementation of e-seva. Table No. 13 explains the citizen benefits due to e-seva service.

**Respondents:**

**Gender:** 100 people 90% are male and 10% are female.

**Educational qualification:** Of 100 people out of which 10% are SSC, 12% Inter, 45% are graduates, 20% are post graduates, 4% LLB graduates, 6% are Engineer Graduates and 3% Ph.D.

**Occupation:**
5% are accountants, 23% are business people, 2% are Engineers, 40% are working in govt. service, 5% are Housewife, 2% are Lecturers, 19% are working in private service and 4% are students.

**Time taken (Before and After e-seva)**
38% says less than an hour and 62% say half an hour to 2 hours before e-seva.

Under e-seva we see that 77% says 1 to 5 minutes and 23% says 10 to 15 minutes.

**Electricity Bill:** we see that 18% says less than half an hour and 82% says half an hour to 2 hours before e-seva, but after e-seva we see that 77% says 1 to 5 minutes and 23% says 10 minutes to 15 minutes.

**Payment of water bill:** The time taken for the payment of water bill before and after e-seva. When 19% says less than half an hour and 81% says half an hour to 2 hours before e-seva and after e-seva 76% says 1 to 5 minutes and 24% says 10 to 15 minutes.

**Property tax:** Before e-seva the time taken for the payment of property tax after e-seva.
We see that 19% takes less than half an hour and 81% takes more than half an hour to 2 hours before e-seva and under e-seva 76% takes 1 minute to 5 minutes and 24% take 10 minutes to 15 minutes.

Citizen benefits by e-seva service: 100% approves for e-seva. Above given data show the opinion of the people from different localities regarding department payment of bills and newly introduced e-seva service by the Government of Andhra Pradesh.

**Difficulties faced by citizens while visiting various departments for the payment of utility bills:**
Citizens used to face lot of difficulties while paying utility bills in different departments; some of the difficulties faced are as follows: Manual operation used to take lot of time; Large queue; No cooperation from the staff; Always citizen argue with each other and time is wasted; Illiterate uses to face lot of problems as there are no concern person to direct these people. The above difficulties are expressed by the people while paying the bill in the respective departments.

**Benefits due to e-seva**
Though people face some difficulties due to e-seva service, there are many benefits provided by e-seva. They are as follows: Due to computerization lot of time is saved for citizens; Quick service, calm atmosphere providing mental relief to the citizen compared with
their previous experiences; Friendly behavior of the staff; Timing of e-seva suits all type of citizens, due to their working long hours and even on Sundays & holidays; Bills can be paid at any location; All the bills can be paid under one roof; E-seva centres are located at walk able distances in various localities; There is no queue as everything is at fingertips.

**Suggestion for improvement of e-seva service**

Though people are satisfied with the services provided by the e-seva at present, there are some areas where there is a need for improvement. The important suggestions given by the citizens are as follows:

1. To open more centres at each and every corner of the locality.
2. To undertake other services of central government and state government.
3. There should be no charge for any service offered by e-seva.
4. Particular about the month and other particulars of the bill should be mentioned in the receipt.
5. There is lack of communication among the e-seva and concerned departments, sometimes creating hurdles for citizens.
6. E-seva must work 18 hours.
7. E-seva centres accept credit card bills are beneficial for the community.
8. Punctuality should be maintained. In some centres the employees are coming late.
9. There is no need for token system as there is not much rush. Due to token system it takes longer times and in the centers where there is no token system payment of bills takes only seconds and the lastly, citizen hopes that e-seva maintains the same tempo with the helpful attitude. Citizens hope that the maintenance of the premises as good as new and do not let it turn into another government buildings.

**Conclusion**

The launching of e-seva in Andhra Pradesh represents three important dimensions i.e., New Mangerialism, Public Private Partnerships and the use of Technology for the benefit of the citizens. By all appearances, e-seva dramatically improved the interaction between citizens and government departments through quick and convenient access to automated services. The study clearly indicates that citizens are satisfied with the e-seva and they want to continue the same tempo of functioning in future. The maladies of bureaucracy and the performance of public office were totally restructured in the e-seva. 85% of the respondents were felt that their time of two hours and more to pay the utility bills were reduced to five to ten minutes and they can visit the center whenever they like, including holidays. It has witnessed not only growth in revenue collection, but also timely payment by the citizens is a positive indication of good citizenship. Public organizations should keep abreast of the changing needs and aspirations of the citizens. In other words, they should become, what Warren Bennis calls ‘organic-adaptive’ organizations to prevent them from becoming inefficient. Public organizations can continue to act as change agents when they become adaptive organizations.

**References:**


