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The role of e-governance in Indian public administration today

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Abstract
Recent times have witnessed how public administration has adopted information and communication technology to change the traditional functioning of public sector globally to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in the service delivery to general public. With the advent of technology, Indian public administration also emphasizes to achieve this goal. In this study, e-Governance practices brings the transparency and accountability which leads to control red-tape and corruption and will reduce the role of bureaucracy in the public sector organizations and also provides the efficient and effective service to citizens. Technological revolutions in government and e-bureaucracy, E-services, Information and Communication Technology, Indian Public Administration.

Keywords: E-Governance, E-Bureaucracy, E-Services, Information and Communication Technology, Indian Public Administration

Introduction

Reinventing government has been a dominant since 1990s, wherein governments world over are attempting to improve the systems of public service delivery. Rapid strides made in the filed of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have facilitated the reinvention of governments and prepared them to serve the needs of a diverse society. In other words, the information age has redefined the fundamentals and transformed the institutions and mechanisms of service delivery forever. The vision is the articulation of a desire to transform the way government functions and the way it relates to its constituents. The concept of electronic governance, popularly called e-governance, is derived from this concern. Democracies in the world share a vision of the day when e-governance will become a way of life.

India has been at the forefront of the IT revolution and has its effect on the public administration systems, as we would see later in this Unit. In fact, if the potential of ICTs are harnessed properly, it has a lot of opportunities, especially, in the social and economic growth of the developing world.

Concept of E-Governance: E-governance is the application of ICT to the processes of government functioning for good governance. In other words, e-governance is the public sector's use of ICTs with the aim to improve information and service delivery, encourage citizen participation in decision-making and make government more accountable, transparent and efficient.

The Ministry of Information and Technology states that e-governance goes far beyond mere computerization of stand alone black office operations. It implies fundamental changes in government operations; and new set of responsibilities for the legislature, executive, judiciary and citizens.

According to the Comptroller and Auditor General, UK, e-governance means providing public access to information via the internet by government departments and their agencies.

So in essence, e-governance is the application of ICT in government functioning to bring in SMART governance implying: simple, moral, accountable, responsive and transparent governance.

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Smart Governance

Simple: meaning simplification of rules, regulations and processes of government through the use of ICTs and thereby providing for a user-friendly government.

Moral: connoting emergence of an entirely new system of ethical values in the political and administrative machinery. Technology interventions improve the efficiency of anti-corruption agencies, police, judiciary etc.

Accountable: facilitating design, development and implementation of effective Management Information System and performance measurement mechanism and thereby ensuring accountability of public service functionaries.

Responsive: streamlining the processes to speed up service delivery and make system more responsive.

Transparent: bringing information hitherto confined in the government documents and functions transparent, which in turn would bring equity and rule of law in responses of the administrative agencies.

SMART Governance, thus, helps in

- Improving the internal organizational processes of governments;
- Providing better information and service delivery;
- Increasing government transparency in order to reduce corruption;
- Reinforcing political credibility and accountability; and
- Promoting democratic practices through public participation and consultation.

E-governance and E-government: E-government and e-government are often used interchangeably, so distinguishing between them at this stage is imperative. According to Thomas B. Riley government and governance are both about getting the consent and cooperation of the governed. But whereas government is the formal apparatus for this objective, governance is the outcome as experienced by those on the receiving end… E-government can be more productive version of government in general, if it is well implemented and managed. E-governance can evolve into participatory governance, if it is well supported with appropriate principles, objectives, programmes and architectures.

E-government is, thus, the modernization of process and functions of government using the tools of ICT as to transform the way it serves its constituents. As per the World Bank, e-government refers to the use by government agencies of information technologies (such as wide area networks, internet and mobile computing) that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses and other arms of government. It is the use of technology of enhance the access to and delivery of government services to benefit citizens, business partners and employees. E-governance, on the other hand, goes beyond the service delivery aspects and is seen as a decisional process. It is about the use of ICTs in the systems of governance, that is, using ICT to involve multi stake holders in decision-making and in making governments open and accountable.

Stages of E-governance

Difference stages of e-governance and identified on certain set of criteria. These stages are:

- **Simple information dissemination** (one way communication)- is considered as the most basic form, as it is used for merely disseminating information;
- **Two way communication**(request and response)- is characterized with e-mail system and information and data-transfer technologies in the form of website;
- **Service and financial transactions**- is online services and financial transactions leading to web based self-services;
- **Integration** (both vertical and horizontal)- in this stage the government would attempt inter and intra-government integration; and
- **Political participation**- this stage means online voting, online public forums and opinion surveys for more direct and wider interaction with the government.

Another classification of e-governance has six stages of which the first two are similar to that of the above classification. The remaining four are:

- **Third Stage:** refers to multi-purpose portals, which allow customers to use a single point of entry to send and receive information and to process transactions across multiple departments;
- **Fourth stage:** consists of portal personalization, wherein customers are allowed to customize portals with their desired features;
- **Fifth Stage:** is when government departments cluster services along common lines to accelerate the delivery of shared services and clustering of common services; and
- **Sixth and final stage:** technology is integrated further to bridge the gap between the front and back office.

After our discussion of the concept and stages of e-governance, we will now deal with significant models of e-governance that can be used in designing e-government initiatives.

Genesis of Public Administration and E-governance in International and Indian Scenario

Public Administration as a discipline is not very old and it is only a hundred years. During these years Public Administration has passed through several phases of development and evolved as the agency of state which runs the administration of the country. According to Woodrow Wilson the late evolution of public administration was due to the fact that the governments had passed through three stages the period of absolute rulers; the period of struggle for constitutionalism and popular control; and the period when on winning political battles, people started thinking about freedom and perfect machinery for democratic administration. The first systematic writer on Public Administration was the American President Woodrow Wilson whose article entitled "The Study of Public Administration" in the Political Science Quarterly in 1887 set the ball rolling for the study of Public Administration s a separate discipline.

Then, in 1900 Frank Good now in his influential work 'Politics and Administration', put forth the thesis that the fields of politics and administration must study only the field of administration and the study of politics of Political Science which resulted in the development of permanent Civil Service free from political influence. Many later writers have attempted to reduce the scope of Public Administration in an attempt to provide focus to the study of modalities of policy implementation rather than policy

information. "Introduction to the study of Public Administration", by L.D While published in 1926 primarily focused on the study of various principles of Public Administration and promoted further development of Public Administration in U.S.A. White has moreover defined Public Administration as consisting of all those operations having for their purpose the fulfillment or enforcement of Public Policy. The emphasis here is on the activities of the executive branch of the government and the classic work L.D White had the effect of directing the study of Public Administration towards the executive branch. Other prominent scholars like Luther Gullick and Herbery Simon also had the same opinion.

By 1939 we see that Public Administration had made great strides in its development into a science and in that year the American Society for Public Administration was formed with its Quarterly Journal, the Public Administration Review. The American was formed with its Quarterly Journal, the Public Administration Review. The American Society of Public Administration provided a forum for the scholars and practitioners to meet together and exchange views which helped in the spread of theories, ideas and let to the development of science of Public Administration. This development in U.S.A. was also aided by some management scholars who developed the scientific management movement in the country. The 'father' of the Scientific Management Movement in U.S.A. was F. W. Taylor. The Human Relations School of Elton mayo (to which school Herbert Simon belonged) contributed a human dimension to Public Administration which emphasized on the individual and his behavior in organizations. This development turned Public Administration from purely a mechanical study of the process of policy implementation as projected by Willoughby into a human subject interested in the role of the individual in the organization and in devising means to get the best out of the individuals manning the administration.

In the post way years, Public Administration changed its character and there was a change in its scope and methods of investigation. Till the end of the World War II, the development of the science of Public Administration was confined to U.S.A. and Europe and most of the scholars and practitioners in the field studied the administrative systems of USA of Europe and arrived at generalizations which they tried to apply to in all countries. After World War II came to an end, there came about the independence of the colonies and the need for development of administrative systems suited to these colonies arose. Scholars, therefore, found the need to arrive at generalizations in the filed of Public Administration which would be applicable in these countries with diverse political, economic and social systems. Led by scholars like F.W. Riggs, Ferrel Heady, Gabriel A. Almond and others, the comparative Public Administration came in to being and it started the comparative study of systems of Public Administration, comparing the systems of different countries, developed, underdeveloped, and arriving at principles applicable across a broad range of countries.

The comparative Public Administration movement greatly broadened the study of Public Administration by emphasizing the development of principles of administration applicable across the board in different situations. It was a timely extension in the scope of the subject because it greatly helped the process of economic development in the developing countries of Asia and Africa and made the study of Public Administration which led to the development of the Comparative Administration movement and the rise of Development Administration as an Important part of the Public Administration. Now the modern view of Public Administration is that it is government-in-action.

With this another new paradigm shift is in the offing and slowly becoming distinct from the amorphous shape of Public Administration and it is the ICT-blessed governance, or E-Governance. The adoption of ICTs and the new approach to management in symbiosis are e-Governance. E-Government is the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to improve the activities of public sector organizations. Some definitions restrict e-government to Internet-enabled applications only, or only to interactions between government and outside groups. In simple terms, e-governance revolves around the idea of performing the policy, service and development functions of the government with the help of the ICCTs so as to manage and steer the multi-sectoral stakeholder relations on a non-hierarchical way.

Indian Ranking Index

Table 1: Geographical position of India

List	India ranking/ Total Countries	Notes
Total Area	7/233	India is 32,87,364 km^2
Length of coastal line	18/196	7000 km coastline with 2.00 coastline with 2.00 coast/ area ration (m/km sq.)

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_rankings _of Indian

India is a South Asian country which became an independent nation on August 15, 1947. It is one of the largest countries in the world securing 7th position and having total area of 1,222,559 square miles with coastal line length of 7,0000 kilometers. Besides India is the second most populous country in the world after China with an estimated population of 1,296,834,042 on July 2018 (CIA World Factbook).

Table 2: Political position of India

List	India ranking/ Total Countries	Source	Notes
Corruption Perceptions Index	78/180	Transparency International	2018
Press freedom Index	140/180	Reporters Without	2019
Rule of Law Index	66/113	World Justice Project	2016
Democracy Index	42/167	Economist Intelligence Unit	2017-score 7.23-Flawed
Democracy Ranking	65/112	Democracyranking.org	2014-15
Corporate Governance	20/38	GMI Ratings	2010
E-Government	96/192	UN	2018

| Global Peace Index | 136/163 | Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) | 2018 |

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_rankings _of_India

In the recent years, India has a long way to go to achieve the desired goals in each and aspect as India is ranked in 78th in Corruption Perceptions Index; 140th in Press Freedom Index; 66th in Rule of Law Index; 42nd in Democracy Index; 65th in Democracy Ranking; 20th in Corporate Governance; 96th in E-Government; 136th in Global Peace Index.

Table 3: Technology position of India

List	India rankings/ total countries	Source	Notes
IT industry competitiveness index	18/166	BSA Global Index	2016
ICT Development Index	134/176	International Telecommunication Union	2017
Global Innovation Index	57/130	Global Innovation Index	2018
Space Competitiveness Index	6/15	Futron Corporation	2013
Networked Readiness Index	91/139	World Economic Forum	2016-Score 3.8

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_rankings_of_India

In technology the data shows that India is in advancing and developing stage and it has to cover big milestones to become a prominent figure in future in the world. Presently, India is ranked 18th in IT Industry competitiveness index; 134th in ICT Development Index; 57th in Global Innovation Index; 6th in Space Competitiveness Index; 91st in Networked Readiness Index.

Conclusion

The advancement in Indian public administration with Information and Communication Technology in the government sector will become more citizen-centric, transparent, accountable, responsive, and free from corruption and red-tape. ICT has reformed the functioning of Indian Public Administration in many ways to increase the efficiency and effectiveness in the traditional bureaucratic approach. The concept of functional e-bureaucracy has developed in shaping and analyzing the e-government solutions in government reforms and in the path of effective and efficient administration. Technology has increased the capacity of government in the delivery of e-services and will also play a crucial role in the future as well as although statistics revealed that the rankings are in dismal state. As it is evident in the study that the developing country like India has to work enoumously for the future development goals to attain better position in the delivery of government services in the world. India can develop the suitable policy course of action on the implementation of e-government and e-bureaucracy structures to deliver better e-services for their citizens in the democratic front.

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