

Digital Governance

Dr. Hemant Garg

Abstract--- This paper is a literature review of the earlier studies explaining Digital Governance, its impacts on society and its practical models. The fundamental questions that shall be discussed in this paper include how the term Digital Governance can be defined in contemporary times; what the role of modern information technologies in achieving goals under Digital Governance is; whether Digital Governance is a revolutionary instrument for transforming the way governments around the world govern their citizens; and what those theoretical models of Digital Governance are that may help governments to ensure delivery of services and facilities to the citizens at their door step. Digital Governance means using information and communication technologies at various levels of the government and the public sector and beyond, for the purpose of enhancing governance. It also implies utilization of Information Technology, Information and Communication Technologies, and other web-based telecommunication technologies to improve and/or enhance on the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery in the public sector. The core theme of Digital Governance rests on enabling citizens to communicate and interact with government officials via the Internet with graphical user interfaces, instant-messaging, audio/video presentations, and in any way more sophisticated than a simple email letter to the address provided at the site. Digital Governance facilitates interaction between Government to Government, Government to citizens, Government to business and Government to employees. The broad goals of the Digital Governance are to provide better service delivery to the citizens, ensuring transparency and accountability, empowering people through information, improving efficiency within Government and enhancing interference with business and industry. Digital Governance aims at satisfying citizens, initiating processes and interactions, using technology as a tool to ensure good governance, spreading democratization, delivering government services at door steps of citizens and simplifying administrative processes. It is pertinent to mention that Digital Governance can bring revolutionary transformation in the developing countries when it comes to good governance, therefore the paper tries to identify how Digital Governance is a need of the hour for disadvantaged communities, under-developed and developing countries. Following this pattern, India launched its National E-Governance Plan in order to promote excellence in Digital Governance in shape of implementing the newly emerging governance mechanisms at local, national, regional levels. The paper further compares different models of digital governance namely Broadcasting model, Critical Flow model, Comparative Analysis model, E-Advocacy model and Interactive Services model. Finally, this paper explicates the measures and goals that ought to be taken in order to provide better quality services to citizens at lower cost. In this age of modern technology, there is a need of creating an echo-system that bread on technological based e-solutions, which shall ensures that good governance is achieved through Digital Governance.

Keywords---Digital Governance, Government, Good Governance, Technology, Communication

Dr. Hemant Garg, Master Student, Department Of Laws, Panjab University, Chandigarh, India.

I. INTRODUCTION

The future of concept of good governance rests upon foundations of Digital Governance and role of modern information and communication technologies in achieving the objectives of Digital Governance. The fundamental questions that needs to be thoroughly discussed here are 1) how the term Digital Governance can be defined in contemporary times? 2) What is the role of modern information technologies in achieving goals under Digital Governance? 3) Whether Digital Governance is a revolutionary instrument for transformation the way governments around the world govern their citizens? 4) What are the theoretical models of Digital Governance that may help governments to ensure delivery of services and facilities to the citizens at their door steps?

II. OBJECTIVES

Digital Governance is composed of the three elements, namely e-Government, e-regulation and e-democracy. The objective of this paper is to discuss definition of Digital Governance, contribution of modern technologies in implanting Digital Governance, advantages and impacts of Digital Governance and models of Digital Governance.

III. METHODOLOGY

Primary method of research was to search the Internet and review peer reviewed scholarly articles and papers in order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

V. Defining the term "Digital Governance"

Digital government and Digital Governance are used interchangeably. Digital or e-government refers to primarily on providing information and online transaction kinds of services to citizens in a state by the government. On the other hand, Digital Governance or E-Governance focuses on public's participation and their role as citizens [1]. Digital Governance is broadly defined as an application of information technology to the functioning of the government to enhance the delivery of public services to the citizens and other individual and organizational consumers of the government services [2]. According to West in Digital Governance under an e-government, the delivery of information and services online through the internet or other digital means is ensured.

Digital Governance or E-governance can also be defined as the application of electronic means in (1) the interaction between government and citizens and government and businesses, as well as (2) in internal government operations to

simplify and improve democratic, government and business aspects of Governance. According to Kettl "Governance" is a way of describing the links between government and its broader environment - political, social, and administrative" [4].

VI. Digital Governance and the role of the Modern Information and Communications Technologies

There are three levels of interaction between the customers/citizens and the administration namely oneway information (e.g., information portals), interaction (e.g., filling out forms and submitting them via internet), and transaction (e.g., advice or consultations via internet). These can still be labeled as a first step i.e. "substitution", as traditional paper or interactive services are simply being digitalised or substituted by an electronic interface, without however changing the way the services are produced.

Indeed, beyond substitution, there are three additional steps lying in between whereby the State operations are going to be transformed by the modern technologies. These are: (1) mirroring, (2) new digital products, and (3) total outsourcing of production.

- *Mirroring*

The next step in the use of the modern technologies in the modernisation of the State's operational activities pertain however to substantial changes in the way the services are being produced. At first, these technologies are merely used to improve the production process, while simultaneously improving customer service. This is for example the case when the customer is able to follow a file through the maze of the administration by means of some tracking and tracing function.

- *New services*

After the first step, new services are created with the management of the information about the production process and the customers. Most of these services are distributed via the internet or other technology based interfaces (SMS, etc.). As an example one may take statistical information on administrative performance (e.g., time it takes in average to receive a permit). The governments sometimes have to use services of private operators for developing such new services.

- *Efficient management*

The third step is to efficiently manage the outsourced or privatized services.

Digital Governance is a dynamic concept, which implies the growing use of the modern information and communication technologies for the three State's main functions (e.g. e-Government, e-regulation and e-democracy), increasingly involving non-state actors at levels other than the national one.

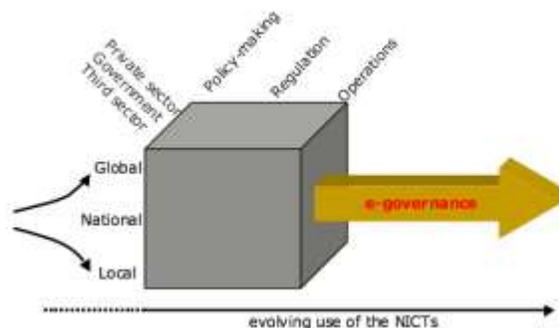


Fig. 1. E-Governance through evolving use of New Information and Communication Technologies

VII. Aims, objectives and utility of Digital Governance

- i. Satisfying the Citizens
- ii. Digital Governance as Processes and Interactions
- iii. Digital Governance as a Major Tool for Government
- iv. Democratization
- v. Environmental Benefits
- vi. Express Service Delivery with Convenience
- vii. Public Approval
- viii. Government Transparency
- ix. Simplifying Processes

VIII. Models of Digital Governance

There are a few basic theoretical models of Digital Governance, which may serve as a guide to implant this idea into reality. There are two characteristics of the new technologies that remain the same in these models. First one is that these models of Digital Governance enable equal access to information to anyone who is a linked to the digital network, and second one is de-concentration of information across the entire digital network [11].

- Broadcasting/Wider-Dissemination Model
- Critical Flow Model
- Comparative Analysis Model
- E-Advocacy/Lobbying and Pressure Group Model
- Interactive-Service Model

- a. Broadcasting model

In Broadcasting model, governance-related information, which is already available in the public domain, is further spread into the wider public domain using modern information and communication technologies. This raises awareness among the citizens about ongoing governance processes and government services that are available to them and how they can benefit from them.

It allows citizens to form an opinion of the government and its administration based on services delivered to them - whether the government services were available to them, and the quality of service received.

Few examples of this model may include putting governmental laws and legislations online; making available online the contact details of government officials; making available government's fiscal information such as governmental plans, budgets, Putting key judicial decisions online.

b. Comparative Analysis Model

Comparative Analysis Model is used to empower people by comparing cases of bad governance with those of good governance and identifying specific aspects of bad governance, the reasons and people behind them, and how the situation can be improved.

The model is based on using immense capacity of information and communication technologies and social media tools to explore given information sets with comparable information available in the public or private domain. Essentially, the model continuously assimilates “best practices” in different areas of governance and uses them as benchmark to evaluate other governance practices. It then uses the result to advocate positive changes or to influence 'public' opinion on existing governance practices. The comparison could be made over a time scale to get a snapshot of the past and the present situation or could be used to compare the effectiveness of an intervention by comparing two similar situations.

c. Critical Flow Model

The model is based on broadcasting information of 'critical' value (which by its very nature will not be disclosed by those involved with bad governance practices) to targeted audience using ICTs and other tools. Targeted audience may include media, affected parties, opposition parties, judicial bench, independent investigators or the general public.

Applications

This model could be applied in the following possible ways:

- Making available corruption related data about a particular Ministry / Division/ Officials online to its electoral constituency or to the concerned regulatory body.
- Making available Research studies, Enquiry reports, Impact studies commissioned by the Government or Independent commissions to the affected parties.
- Making Human Rights Violations cases violations freely available to Judiciary, NGOs and concerned citizens.
- Making available information that is usually suppressed, for instance, Environmental Information on radioactivity spills, effluents discharge, information on green ratings of the company to concerned community.

Examples

- Wikileaks www.wikileaks.org
- Transparency International Daily Corruption News
- Human Rights Portal of Bangladesh
- India's Central Vigilance Committee
- India's Project VIGEYE <http://www.vigeeye.com/>
- China's Human Rights in China <http://www.hrichina.org/>
- El Salvador's Probidad <http://www.probidad.org/>

d. E-Advocacy Model

E-Advocacy/Mobilization and Lobbying Model is one of the most frequently used Digital Governance model and has often come to the aid of the global civil society to impact on global decision-making processes.

The model is based on setting-up a planned, directed flow of information to build strong virtual allies to complement actions in the real world. Virtual communities are formed which share similar values and concerns, and these communities in turn link up with or support real-life groups/activities for concerted action. The model builds the momentum of real-world processes by adding the opinions and concerns expressed by virtual communities.

Applications

This model could be applied in the following possible ways:

- Fostering public debates on issue of larger concerns, namely on the themes of upcoming conferences, treaties etc.
- Formation of pressure groups on key issues to force decision-makers to take their concerns into cognisance.
- Making available opinions of a suppressed groups who are not involved in the decision-making process into wider public domain.
- Catalysing wider participation in decision-making processes.
- Building up global expertise on a particular theme in absence of localised information to aid decision-making.

Examples

- [Greenpeace Cyber-activist Community](#)
- Drop the Debt Campaign
- India's PRS Legislative Research
- [Independent Media Centre](#)
- [IGC Internet](#)

e. Service Delivery Model

Interactive-Service model is a consolidation of the other Digital Governance models and opens up possibilities for one-to-one and self-serviced participation of individuals in governance processes.

Under this model, the various services offered by the Government become directly available to its citizens in an interactive manner. It does so by opening up an interactive **Government to Consumer to Government (G2C2G)** channel in various aspects of governance, such as election of government officials (e-ballots); decision to make on specific issues (eg: health plans), delivery of individualised government services, gauging public mood and opinions, targeting specific communities for specific governance advice or services, bringing mass awareness.

Applications

This model could be applied in the following possible ways:

- To establish an interactive communication channels with key policy-makers and members of planning commissions.
- To conduct electronic ballots for the election of government officials and other office bearers.
- To conduct public debates / opinion polls on issues of wider concern before formulation of policies and legislative frameworks.
- Filing of grievances, feedback and reports by citizens with the concerned governmental body.
- Establishing decentralised forms of governance.

- Performing governance functions online such as revenue collection, filing of taxes, governmental procurement, payment transfer etc.

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