Impact of E-Governance Among Rural & Urban Areas of Punjab

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Abstract

Return on investment is not the primary objective when e-government projects are conceived. They are mostly driven to achieve operational efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. Governments run with tight budgets, hence there is an increasing demand to re-examine their spending priorities. Further, e-government programmes are subjected to scrutiny to find out whether they are delivering the payoff as has been promised or not. This paper focuses on the various parameters for evaluating the success of e-governance projects. A flexible framework is suggested to choose an appropriate strategy to measure the tangible and intangible benefits of e-government. E-government being a new phenomenon, at most places, e-government projects are still found to be in a nascent stage; hence proper information flow for calculating ‘return on e-government’ considering tangible and intangible benefits cannot be fully ascertained. Moreover an assessment of the same is not completely possible.

Statement of Problem

It has been several years since the first E-Governance Project began in the country, and here are over hundred such projects today, though only half of these projects would qualify as e-governance projects in the sense they have a direct interface with citizens or other consumers of such services. Spending on E-Governance has gone up by an impressive 25% annually. Over a period of 5 years, while conducting various round tables and conferences on E-Governance, certain project name s have kept coming up again & again as examples of successful projects like ‘Bhoomi’in Karnataka, ‘Bhu Lekh’ in Haryana, “Suwidha” IN Punjab.

Better Governance is high on the agenda of most Indian states. A few have managed to use technology toward that goal—but for too many states it’s slow moving. It is not just sufficient to have an IT vision & budget to support the vision unless the budget is spent on appropriate initiatives that would benefit the state & citizens. As per DQ-IDC E-Governance survey “Goa & Kerla has performed well on this front, However Punjab have performed highly on IT Vision and high per capita IT spend, but has not been able to translate this into appropriate improvement on the services throughout e-governance’.

Objectives of the study

From various surveys it is clear that “Besides increased investments, states need to focus on putting in quality infrastructure & mechanisms to educate the people to use e-governance features. Each State is facing financial crisis & there is no time to experiment on different projects. Its a time to learn from other’s failures & to join hands as a team work for eradication of hurdles in the way of successful e-governance. Main Objectives of this study are:-

I) To evaluate those services which are mostly used by the common citizen?

II) To evaluate their satisfaction level from present system.

III) To evaluate which factors they feel to improve in present system.

Scope & Limitations of the study

Following are the points which make my study reasonable.

1). All elected Governments are accountable to people. The elected representatives are accountable to the People and the Executives are accountable to the elected representatives. Any spending in a Government program without the measurement of results and impact cannot go on indefinitely. There will always be one stakeholder who will ask for the impact assessment of the investment. Therefore, the spending on IT and e-Governance in the Government has to be assessed. This is part of the e-governance initiative and audit also plays a pivotal role in this, as audit findings are submitted to the legislative .

2). Some States are alike states in Geographical, Political, Economic, Public & Social regimes. The basic needs, thoughts of these state’s people are alike. The centre of E-Governance is ‘Citizen’ & my study centrally based on ‘citizen ’ i. e. what level of satisfaction has been gained by the citizens of Punjab & what are their basic needs & how they can be fulfilled by making necessary changes in existing projects. Other states having same features may take clue from this study to find out the weak points of their various projects.

3). Evaluation of E-governance projects in terms of their objectives will help the government to analyze the work progress of each project.

4). How to better utilize the IT Vision & budgets for e-governance initiatives by comparing pros & cons.

5). Any MMP(Mission Mode Project) can not be successful until we doesn’t approach rural people which is the core
centre of the e-governance. Comparison will suggest both states how to benefit maximum the rural people.

6). As per DQ-IDC 2006 E-Gov. Survey shows that Punjab has not performed well as compared to other states like Goa & Kerla. However Punjab have spent a considerable amount. Punjab gives maximum benefit to business from e-governance initiatives. This will highlight the core factors for e-governance initiatives & operation methodologies to be adopted by the governments in different areas.

Limitations
In this study Sample size is of 3 Districts of 3 Regions of Punjab(Majha,Malwa,Doaba) & 5 Village from each District & impact relates to some common services provided by the Government to common citizen.

Significance of Study
It is hoped that this study will give direction to the efforts of Researchers in E-governance Field for the development of most effective model of E-Governance which will cover all the pitfalls encountered during previous E-Governance initiatives in Punjab.

This study particularly evaluating the initiatives taken by the state government, Frequency of use of services by common citizen on yearly basis and what is their satisfaction level. This evaluation of impact shows how much successful each project in terms of citizen satisfaction because citizen satisfaction is the main motive of any e-governance plan.

Research Methodology
This study will be conducted in 3 phases:

1. Desk Research
   In this phase extensive knowledge collected from various journals, Magazines, Newspaper Articles, Internet search, Papers published by scholars on E-Governance Projects.

2. Survey of IT Secretaries /Heads of State /Nodal IT agencies
   Secondary Research
   Punjab State profiled terms of the clarity of their IT Vision, Goals and scope of various e-governance projects in terms of services offered, no. of towns/municipal areas/villages/block panchayats covered or to be covered, expected benefits to the state’s citizens and so on.

3. Survey of Common citizens
   This part of the study evaluates the effectiveness of IT deployment by the governments of both states based on primary survey of common citizens regarding the actual/perceived improvement in delivery of government services. Feedback sought on all major government services to citizens. To make meaningful and broad based assessment interviews of citizen users & business users conducted. Professionals like lawyers, Doctors, charted Accountants and administrative heads of small, mid-size questioned regarding e-governance projects in their perspective areas.

A Common Questionnaire has been prepared for this purpose, which includes personal detail, income level, type of services availing offered by government, satisfaction level for each service. This Questionnaire is in English, But Punjabi language used during conversation with illiterate/less literate citizen.

DATA ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH
As we observe from above that some aspects of e-Government projects may be for tangible benefits such as increasing access, decreasing cycle time, staff reduction and improving service quality. Such benefits can easily be measured and hence can easily be quantified. Although it is difficult to be precise about their actual value, especially in quantitative terms, these intangible benefits could make a significant or critical contribution to the effectiveness or efficiency of an e-Government initiative.

Intangible benefits have to be quantified by evaluation tools such as questionnaires/surveys but, still these are difficult to be transformed into creditable financial or physical values. A possible way to measure such benefits is to Questionnaire may use Ranking system like 1-5 (1 least and 5 last) & -2 to 2 (-2 most irrelevant & 2 most relevant)

Punjab can be distinguished in to 3 regions as per conversation language, life style, Agricultural Land, water resources i.e Malwa, Doaba, Majha, so to make study more effective This has also been divided into 3 regions taking a centralized district of each region & 5 villages of each district to get the rural touch. In this way research will cover 3 District Headquarters & 15 villages.

References
1). DQ-IDC 2006 E-Gov. Survey
3). http://rural.nic.in - Government of India’s portal on Rural Development. This site gives access to a whole lot of information about the government’s initiatives/activities in the RD domain. It also provides access to a host of related sites such as Department web sites, SRDs, DRDAs, NIRD etc., CAPART etc.
4). http://ruraiinformatics.nic.in - This is a one-stop portal on ICT solutions for Rural Development. This includes both e-governance initiatives undertaken by NIC as well as other ICT initiatives undertaken by organizations apart from NIC. It also provides links to web sites of products (ICT solutions) developed by NIC for RD.

