Capacity building for e-Governance and challenges

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Abstract

India is a land of diversity. This diversity spans across culture, tradition, language, geography and the economic condition of the people. It is a nation that has a significant number of people who are below the minimal socio-economic benchmarks. This includes rural and urban poor, women in rural areas, street children, people belonging to historically disadvantaged castes and people living in less developed areas. The vulnerability of these sections of society has increased with globalization and this section is prone to become even more marginalized - economically and socially. Successive governments have committed themselves to addressing these divides, but effective implementation of various economic development programs aimed at individuals belonging to these sections of society has proved an elusive goal. Government of India (GoI) recognizes that e-Governance, in the context of developing countries, provides an excellent opportunity for improving governance. Used imaginatively, it is a trigger for introducing various administrative reforms. These changes could not only go a long way in improving the quality of life of these sections of society, but could actually provide them more equitable access to economic opportunities than ever before. In this context, the Government of India views e-Governance as a strategic tool for transforming Governance and improving the quality of services provided by the government to its people.

Keywords: e-Governance; Public service; Management challenges.

Abbreviations: GoI - Government of India; CARD - Computerization Administration of Registration Department; NSC - Dematerialization of Savings Certificate; KVP - Vikas Patras; RTC - Record of Rights Tenancy & Crops; NeGP - National e-governance Plan; CSCs - Common service centers; SDLC - Software Development Life Cycle; NIC - National Informatics Centre; MCA21 - Ministry of Company Affairs project; DIT - Department of Information Technology; PMU – Programme Management Unit; NISG - National Institute of Smart Government; SeMT - State e-Governance Mission Team; PeMT - Project e-Governance Mission Team.

Introduction

E-Governance and its relevance

India is a land of diversity. This diversity spans across culture, tradition, language, geography and the economic condition of the people. It is a nation that has a significant number of people who are below the minimal socio-economic benchmarks. This includes rural and urban poor, women in rural areas, street children, people belonging to historically disadvantaged castes and people living in less developed areas. The vulnerability of these sections of society has increased with globalization and this section is prone to become even more marginalized - economically and socially. Successive governments have committed themselves to addressing these divides, but effective implementation of various economic development programmes aimed at individuals belonging to these sections of society has proved an elusive goal. Government of India (GoI) recognizes that e-Governance, in the context of developing countries, provides an excellent opportunity for improving governance. Used imaginatively, it is a trigger for introducing various administrative reforms. These changes could not only go a long way in improving the quality of life of these sections of society, but could actually provide them more equitable access to economic opportunities than ever before. In this context, the Government of India views e-Governance as a strategic tool for transforming Governance and improving the quality of services provided by the government to its people.

India's experience in e-Governance / ICT initiatives has demonstrated significant success in improving accessibility, cutting down costs, reducing corruption, extending help and increased access to un-served groups. In this phase of experimentation, e-government initiatives have reached millions of people belonging to these sections of society. Improved access to information and services has provided economic and social development opportunities, facilitated participation and communication in policy and decision-making processes and empowerment of the weakest groups. This has led to fostering a sense of ownership and building of social capital, which in turn, constitute a basis for local revitalization.

The Government of India, in various forums, has indicated its commitment to provide efficient and transparent government to all strata of society. E-Governance is now mainly seen as a key element of the country's governance and administrative reform agenda. The Government of India aspires to provide:

- Governance that is easily understood by and accountable to the citizens, open to democratic involvement and scrutiny (an open and transparent government)
- Citizen-centric governance that will cover all of its services and respect everyone as individuals by providing personalized services.
- An effective government that delivers maximum value for taxpayers' money (quick and efficient services)

Hence the Government of India views e-Governance as a vehicle to initiate and sustain reforms by focusing on three broad areas:

Governance

- Transparency
- People's participation
- Promotion of a democratic society

Public services

- Efficient, cost-effective and responsive governance
- Convenient services to citizens and businesses
- Greater citizen access to public information
- Accountability in delivery of services to citizens

Management

- Simplicity, efficiency and accountability
- Managing voluminous information and data effectively
- Information services
- Swift and secure communication

While pursuing these goals, it is recognized that the motivations and imperatives for adopting e-governance in a developing country like India are vastly different from those in developed countries. Manpower costs and constraints were among the imperatives driving technology induction in developed countries. Further, the advent of ICT in governance preceded the emergence of the Internet. Hence one of the main challenges in these countries was to integrate heterogeneous backend computer systems through complex middleware to leverage the Internet and achieve integration of services. By contrast, in countries like India, there was hardly any significant back end computerization in government before the advent of the Internet. Consequently, while planning e-governance projects today, the ubiquity, convenience and power of the Internet can be factored in right from the planning stage itself. Moreover, it is neither the availability constraint nor the cost of manpower that is the driver for e-governance. Primarily, the motivations are higher efficiency, transparency, accessibility and accountability as well as reduction of procedural complexity that breeds corruption. It is also a realization that there is no other way to effectively provide services to a population of over one billion people.

Besides, the economic and social environment is very different in India compared with that in a developed country. Per capita income is much lower. Telephone, PC and Internet penetration

levels are low in comparison. Availability of reliable electric power supply is still a problem, particularly in rural areas. Universal literacy is still a distant goal. IT literacy is very low, both in absolute and relative terms. India has 22 official languages. Several hundreds of dialects are spoken all over the country. Less than 5% of the population can speak English. Hence e-governance initiatives need to be planned with reference to these ground realities in the country.

Initiatives till date

Recognizing that e-Governance is playing an increasingly important role in modern Governance, various agencies of the Government and civil society organizations have taken a large number of initiatives across the country. Indicated below are some of the key initiatives taken in the country across some of the important citizen/business related departments:

Customs and excise (Government of India)

- 98% of export and 90-95% of import documentation computerized
- Electronic filing through ICEGATE at 3 locations (Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai)
- 80% of Service Tax returns electronically processed

Indian Railways (Government of India)

- Anywhere to anywhere reservation from anywhere
- Electronic Booking of tickets on select sectors
- Online Information on Railway reservation on Internet

Postal Department (Government of India)

- Direct e-credit of Monthly Income Scheme returns into the investors accounts
- Dematerialization of Savings Certificate (NSC) and Vikas Patras (KVP), offering full portability

Passport / Visa (Government of India)

- 100% passport information computerized
- All 33 Regional Passport Offices covered
- Machine readable passports at some locations

AP Online (State Government of Andhra Pradesh)

An Integrated Citizen Services Portal providing citizen centric services such as: Birth/Death Certificates, Property Registration, Driver's License, Govt. Applications & Forms, Payment of taxes / utility bills etc.

Bhoomi – Automation of land records (State Government of Karnataka)

It provides computerized Record of Rights Tenancy & Crops (RTC) - needed by farmer to obtain bank loans, settle land disputes etc. It has also ensured increased transparency and reliability, significant reduction in corruption, exploitation and oppression of farmers. This project has benefited 20 million rural land records covering 6.7 million farmers.

CARD – Registration project (State Government of Andhra Pradesh)

Computerisation Administration of Registration Department (CARD) impacting 10 million citizens over a period of 3 years. It has completed registration of 2.8 million titles with title searches made in 1.4 million cases. The system ensures transparency in valuation of property and efficient document management system. The estimated saving of 70 million man-hours of citizen time valued at US$ 35 mil (investment in CARD - US$ 6million). Similar initiatives in other states like SARITA (State Government of Maharashtra) STAR (State Government of Tamil Nadu), etc. have further built upon this initiative.

In India, most citizen services are provided by state i.e. provincial governments and very few by the central i.e. federal government (Li *et al.*, 2007). However, both central and state governments provide different services to business and industry.

Gyandoot: Intranet in tribal district of dhar (State government of Madhyapradesh)

This project offers e-governance services including online registration of applications, rural e-mail facility, village auction site etc. It also

provides services such as Information on Mandi (farm products market) rates, On-line public grievance redressal, caste & income certificates and Rural Market (Gaonka Bazaar).

Lokmitra (State government of Himachalpradesh)

- Offers e-governance services:
- Online registration of applications,
- Rural e-mail facility, village auction site etc.
- Key services provided to citizens
- Information on Mandi (farm products market) rates
- On-line public grievance redressal
- Sending and receiving information regarding land records, income certificates, caste certificates and other official documents.
- Market rates of vegetables, fruits and other items

e-Mitra - Integrated citizen services center (State Government of Rajasthan)

- Implemented using a PPP (Public Private Partnership) model
- Private partner paid by the government department / agency
- G2C services like:
- Payment of electricity, water, telephone bills
- Payment of taxes
- Ticket Reservations
- Filing of Passport applications
- Registration of birth/death
- Payment by cash/cheque/ credit card

The above cases of e-Governance initiatives are only illustrative. Many of the State Governments have successfully implemented several such initiatives. This has positively impacted the quality of life of citizens. Hence e-Governance affords an excellent opportunity for India to radically improve the quality of governance and thereby:

Allow for two-way communication between government and citizens not only for service delivery but also to receive opinions of citizens on policies and government performance. Provide greater access to excluded groups, who have few opportunities to interact with government and benefit from its services and schemes. Include all sections of the society in the mainstream of development. Enabling rural and traditionally marginalized segments of the population to gain fast and convenient access to services in their own neighborhoods.

E--Governance: key challenges

The Government of India has embraced e-governance as a trigger and means to redefine and streamline outdated, inefficient processes and procedures while simultaneously exploiting the full power of modern ICT. The aim is to provide citizens with easier and faster access to government services. India has recognized the benefits of e-governance and through it, ushered in a paradigm of citizen-centric service delivery. E-governance is reforming the way government manages and shares information with external and internal clients. Specifically, it harnesses information and communications technologies (such as Wide Area Networks, the Internet, and mobile computing) to transform relations with citizens, businesses and amongst various arms of government.

There are however, numerous challenges. Some of the key areas needing attention are:

Clarity in objective setting: Project approval and funding of projects through multiple departmental budgets lead to wide variations in the approach to project objective setting, without a clear focus on outcomes or on building sustainable services. The service needs of citizens/ businesses and those of other departments are often either overlooked or accorded lower priority in relation to internal needs. Very often, objective setting is purely in ICT terms such as computers, networks and so on which are specified in great detail, while government business process outcomes are either not defined or are defined in vague terms that do not lend themselves to measurement post implementation.

Ensuring service delivery: E-governance projects have primarily focused on internal process

automation and generally are hardware and infrastructure driven (sometimes even vendor driven) with little focus on citizen service delivery or outcomes.

Leveraging private capital: Experience of successful e-governance initiatives indicates that well-structured service-oriented projects can attract private capital linked to explicit service-linked revenues from users or from government. The current system of project formulation i.e. based on budgetary allocation / grants places little or no pressure on departments to develop project structures that can attract private capital, a goal that necessitates additional rigour and complexity at the project formulation and development stage.

Need for government process reengineering: Computerization of inefficient processes can lead to higher rather than lower levels of inefficiency and spiraling cost. Hence, it is essential to undertake process re-engineering as an integral part of e-governance project implementation in order to ensure increased efficiency and reduced costs.

Standardization: Departmental approach and absence of a national framework for common standards has resulted in adoption of different technical standards and varied architectures. This has significant implications for designing effective integrated applications and also entails long-term costs and sub-optimal results.

Independent impact assessment: In the current system, there is no requirement or institutional mechanism for an independent assessment of projects post-implementation to determine whether they have achieved the set objectives, except in purely financial terms. Further, very few projects have formal performance metrics defined at the start of the project to measure outcomes.

Localization: ICT solutions were mostly developed with an English Language interface. However, in India vast majorities (95%) of the citizens do not know English and use the local language. The fact is that India has 22 official languages; for success of e-Governance, this reality needs to be reflected in the implementation strategy.

Internal Capacity/Project Management Expertise: Departments/ states have limited access to any institutional mechanisms for building capacities in the areas of e-governance project development and design, bid process management, professional project management, development of Contractual Frameworks, Service Level Agreements, etc. They also have no means of accessing external (outside Government) competencies that are difficult to procure within the governmental framework.

National E-governance plan

Taking note of the potential of e-governance to improve the quality of life of the vast population of the country, the Government of India has formulated a national program – the National e-governance Plan (NeGP). This plan attempts to cover all the important areas relating to e-Governance – Policy, Infrastructure, Finances, Project Management, Government Process Reengineering, Capacity Building, Training, Assessment and Awareness etc. across the Central and State Governments.

NeGP is a comprehensive "programme" of the Government of India and is designed to leverage capabilities and opportunities presented by ICT to promote good governance across the country. One of the learning that is at the core of the NeGP is the emphasis on implementation of such projects with clear timelines and responsibility allocations – in a "Mission Mode". The Plan initially extends over a 4-year period at an estimated cost of over USD 3 billion. NeGP is aimed at introducing e-Governance systematically through 25 Mission Mode projects, which would touch the lives of more than 1 billion people.

The vision of NeGP is to make all Government services accessible to the common man in his locality through common service delivery outlets. The implementation strategy envisages clear definition of service goals and metrics for each project and structured stakeholder consultations

with all stakeholders including citizens and civil society organizations before the service goals of each project are firmed up. Even at the stage of formulation of the NeGP, its vision and proposed strategy, consultations were held with various stakeholders including state governments, ministries/departments, IT industry representatives and civil society organizations.

The focus of the plan includes the following sectors/projects:

Agriculture

E-governance projects in the agricultural sector can provide benefit to farmers and the rural people and also enhance the lives of urban poor. There are numerous sub-projects pertaining to provision of timely expert advice to farmers, food security, marketability and commercial information relating to agricultural products, enhancing crop productivity, enhancing the reach of and ease of access to micro-credit, etc.

Municipalities

The coordinating agency is the Ministry of Urban Development. The main programs relevant to vulnerable and marginalized groups are registration of births and deaths, grievances and suggestions, health programs, etc.

Village administration gram panchayats (elected)

The important programmes being implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development for poverty reduction are employment generation, provision of basic services, infrastructure development etc. The objective is to increase participation of rural population in the government and women empowerment.

Common service centres (CSCs) is one of the integrated projects envisioned in NeGP. The CSCs provide assisted community access points – a necessity in a country with relatively low levels of literacy and ICT penetration in rural areas. These centres are very effective in providing multiple services provided by different departments at a single location. For a common citizen, it is often confusing and time-consuming to have to visit different departments and identify the right official or office to avail of some service. This one stop shop is also helpful in increasing accessibility, enabling faster service delivery, curbing corruption and reducing difficulties faced by vulnerable and marginalized groups. Under this program, it is aimed to establish 100,000 CSCs predominantly in the rural areas to serve the needs of the traditionally underserved areas.

Core infrastructure such as State Wide Area Networks, Data Centres, Gateways, etc. forms another critical element of the NeGP. Approximately 15% of the total program outlay is earmarked for common core and support infrastructure that is shared across projects, excluding the cost of infrastructure that is created specific to, and as a part of, individual projects.

The diagram presents the E-Governance framework that includes back-ends (databases of different government agencies, service providers, state governments etc.), middleware and front-end delivery channels (home PCs, mobile phones, kiosks, integrated citizen service centers etc) for citizens and businesses. The middleware comprises of communication and security infrastructure, gateways and integrated services facilitating integration of inter-departmental services.

GoI has further planned to carry out Impact Assessments of such projects to see whether the benefit is actually percolating to the marginalized sections of society. The Impact Assessment would cover the following:

1. Efficiency Attribute - Are the type of e-services given through the e-governance initiatives benefiting the socially and economically backward users?

2. User Convenience Attribute – The suitability of the service locations and ease of access by socially and economically backward users.

3. Citizen centricity attributes –

a. Reduction of visits to government offices - it is very annoying to have to meet several officials for a task that actually takes perhaps just 5 minutes. Sometimes this also entails a number of visits that a citizen has to make to an office.

b. User friendliness – The service provider should have sufficient knowledge or access to it to answer the queries of the common user. The familiarity of the service provider with the services applicable to different user groups becomes an important element in faster and hassle-free service delivery.

However, implementing the e-Governance agenda needs to be seen in the context of the federal structure of the country. The Indian Constitution declares that India is a Union of States, with a three-tier federal structure – the Union, State and Local Bodies/Authorities. Although the legislative and policy-making powers are vested with the Central (Federal) and State Governments with clearly defined lists of central and state subjects, the delivery of most common services to citizens are overseen by the local bodies such as municipalities (town councils) in urban areas and panchayats (village bodies) in rural areas. This is appropriately reflected in the comprehensive plan and policies prepared by the GoI for implementing e-Governance across India, especially under the National eGovernance Plan (NeGP). The NeGP also lays emphasis on capacity building that is discussed in detail in the subsequent sections.

Why capacity building?

The nature and scale of e-governance initiatives planned within the domain of the State Governments, present a considerable enhancement in the aspiration level of Government. Major managerial and technological challenges are one consequence of this, particularly in the context of the need for implementation of these projects in a "mission/projectized mode", by departments concerned of the State Governments. There is also a need to manage the entire programme at the State level in a coherent manner with consistent

strategies for cost optimization and integration. For achieving this, the Governments need to provide the overall direction, standardization and consistency across initiatives and at the same time, have the resources and flexibility to drive this plan.

Given the federal structure of India, this brings in diversity in local laws, rules for transacting government business, implementation approach and responsibilities. Hence while designing the NeGP, GoI recognized the importance of building human capacities in terms of necessary knowledge and skills to conceptualize, initiate, implement and sustain e-Governance initiatives. It is equally important to foster an attitude and mindset that is receptive to ICT based administration and ICT based delivery of services. The Government recognizes that mere development of e-Governance strategies and induction of technology will not help deliver the quality of services envisaged unless human resources are aligned to provide the right services to the right customers from the right sources with the right tools at the right time. To achieve this, what is required is comprehensive capacity building across key areas relating to:

Policy making – The agenda for e-Governance is typically set at the highest level of Government. Thus, the capacity at the highest political and bureaucratic levels is extremely critical for informed policy making. This also helps in sustaining such programmes. Further as NeGP entails significant Government Process Reengineering (GPR), adequate capacity at these levels is necessary to catalyse and drive such decisions.

Institutional arrangements – Implementing e-Governance policies that are consistent with a broad policy and adhere to common standards despite being implemented by numerous state and central government departments requires setting up of appropriate and empowered institutional arrangements to oversee, drive and manage implementation. These arrangements would vary from Central to State Governments although there would consistency of key roles i.e. formulating and ensuring implementation of e-Governance policies,

addressing implementation bottlenecks and dependencies and finally monitoring progress and desired outcomes. These institutional mechanisms include full-time bodies and committees/ groups that meet on an episodic or periodic basis.

Access to professional expertise– For any institutional arrangements to be effective, there needs to be not only enough manpower; the competencies put together should be suited to the roles envisaged. This is an area, which probably requires the maximum attention. The focus of the capacity building initiatives has been to source the right people for the right job so as to make existing and proposed institutions effective. It is recognized that all the expertise required is not present within government and cannot be created exclusively by retraining existing personnel. Government departments and ministries were created to perform certain functions. Implementing e-governance projects was not one of them. Yet, no e-governance project can be meaningfully implemented without the active participation and leadership of the departmental personnel themselves. Even though the NeGP envisages accessing skills outside the government, a certain minimum level and combination of skills within the government are essential. Hence a carefully calibrated mix of inducting professionals at various levels from the market and retraining of existing personnel has been built into the NeGP.

Outcome monitoring – It has been our experience that to make an e-Governance initiative sustainable and cost-effective, there needs to be enough benefit accruing out of the project, which is monitored closely. Wherever possible, there also needs to be an explicit linkage between the benefit and the financing of the initiative.

Levels of capacity building

As NeGP in the states cuts across departments, it is expected that the State Government would provide leadership, direction and vision for e-Governance at the highest political and administrative levels, which would lead to a broad roadmap and prioritization of projects. To enable the State administration to carry out the requisite groundwork, prepare project proposals, implement the projects and oversee O&M thereafter, adequate support through dedicated, professional teams need to be in place with appropriate skill-sets and aptitudes at two levels:

Programme level (i.e. at the State Level)

Project level (i.e. at Department Level)

The first level deals with issues that cut across projects such as overall policies, strategies, technologies, common infrastructure and so on. These issues need to be dealt with by a department designated by the State Government typically the State IT department / e-Governance department. The second level deals with all project level (i.e. departments of State Government initiating e-Governance projects) issues from conceptualization to implementation and O&M phase. The issues involved here are considerably different and are intimately connected with the domain in which the department functions. Further Capacity Building also helps to maintain continuity of approach despite changes of key incumbent officials. Training programmes as a part of capacity building have been designed to cater to various needs. These are briefly described below:

E-Gov champions programme

This programme is intended for political and administrative heads of departments/ organizations who may not be concerned with the details of an e-governance project, but who nonetheless have to provide the leadership and an environment conducive to make it happen. Since such persons are typically extremely busy people, a short weekend program has been designed to familiarize them with the main issues that a CIO has to deal with and key perspectives regarding their role, particularly in change management.

Chief information officers

The accumulated wisdom from experience is that an e-governance project that is not lead and driven by a senior person from within the government domain in which it functions, is

unlikely to succeed. Most such people, however, do not have the skills to lead a project through all its developmental stages. Hence a comprehensive training program extending over duration of 3-6 months has been designed for identified officials. Typically, such persons have a scientific or technical background or an aptitude for project management. After undergoing this training program, an official is expected to have all the skills necessary to implement an e-governance project from conceptualization to complete rollout stage. This program has been designed in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmadabad. The number of people given this kind of training is small; say about one hundred or so, over the entire country. However, their impact on accelerating spread of e-governance is enormous.

Chief technology officers

Since most projects require extensive technical skills which CIOs as defined above may not have, key personnel drawn from technical bodies like the National Informatics Centre (NIC) or state government departments/ PSUs are proposed to be trained to impart the skills that they need to have other than purely technical skills. Such CTOs with good domain knowledge could also function as CIOs. Another effort in this area is to provide opportunities for technical personnel to undergo advanced training programs in security, architecture, standards and so on to supplement their skill set appropriately (Li Rong, 2008).

Users of it systems in government departments

Such personnel are trained specifically on the package developed for that organization. Since this involves performance of tasks that they were already performing manually before the advent of the computerized system, a short two-week training program is found to be quite adequate. Typically, such training is part of the project and is built into the project in terms of cost, timing and content. The number of people to be trained depends on the size of the organization and the activities covered by the

e-governance project. Typically, it runs into several hundred per project.

External users of government it systems

In many projects, there are organized bodies of external users of specific systems. For example, in the Ministry of Company Affairs project ('MCA21'), Company Secretaries and Chartered Accountants acting on behalf of companies incorporated in India have to file all returns, applications and other documents electronically as a mandatory requirement. An extensive program of training, awareness building and sensitization was built into the project as a part of the change management plan. Most e-Governance projects have external stakeholders for whom a capacity building plan is essential for success of the project in terms of utilization.

General it training

As computers become more pervasive, it is necessary to impart training to existing employees in use of computers for general purposes like word processing, spreadsheet, power point, etc. Typically, a five to ten day program is imparted by organizations like the National Informatics Centre (NIC) or private training institutions. The number of people to be so trained is very large (Liu Xing rong, 2008).

Capacity building requirements

To initiate any e-Governance project, the capacities required are much more comprehensive and holistic than a conventional Software Development Life Cycle (SDLC) project. E-Governance initiatives entail policy development/refinement, Financial Management, Program Management and warrant a higher emphasis on Change Management. Apart from this, creation of Institutional structure which brings continuity to a project. However traditionally these have not been areas of focus. Hence while initiating any e-Governance projects there is an urgent need to develop capacities in all these areas at all the levels of Governance – Centre, State and Local Bodies.

To address these issues, we have factored in the federal structure of the country. Hence there is a need to create suitable institutions/capacities at different levels.

1. Central Government, for

   Overall Policy Development, direction and Financial Management

   Program Management and Support for e-Governance at national level

   Management and implementation of projects under the Central Government

2. State Government, for

   Providing direction at the state level to the e-Governance initiatives from the highest office in the State Government

   Providing full time knowledge support to the policy makers and implementation teams

   Individual project management

   Creation/Strengthening of State Training Institutions

3. Local Bodies

   For having in-house capabilities to manage e-Governance initiatives

   Training Programme

4. Citizens

Awareness Programme

Right to Information

Civil Society Organizations

Taking cognizance of the above requirements, GoI has taken the following steps:

Capacity building at the centre

The Prime Minister's Office is directly involved in driving NeGP implementation. Further an Apex committee under the chairmanship of the Cabinet Secretary was constituted for overseeing and providing policy directions for the implementation of the National e Governance Plan (NeGP), and ensuring inter-ministerial coordination. The Department of Information Technology (DIT) services the Apex Committee with the Secretary, DIT serving as the Convener of the Committee.

It was also felt that the resources required to manage and monitor a programme of this magnitude just did not exist anywhere in the country and needed to be developed. Therefore, a Programme Management Unit (PMU) has been created to ensure that individual e-Governance initiatives are given a "Programmatic" shape and content, adhere to a common set of objectives, approach and philosophy.

Capacity building in public private partnerships

Considering the important role that Public Private Partnerships are expected to play in the unfolding e-governance agenda, the Government of India, jointly with the IT industry body NASSCOM, set up the National Institute of Smart Government (NISG) which is itself a Public Private Partnership with 51% industry/ Financial Institution stake. The stated mission of this entity is to lead private sector resources (financial, technical and manpower) in an orderly and structured manner into the national e-governance effort. The NISG undertakes project development, training for policy makers and CIOs and provides handholding support to departments during the initial stages of project conceptualization and implementation by combining the best of resources from the government and the private sector. The NISG has also helped set up the PMU for the NeGP.

Capacity Building at the State Government

There is a huge variation in the capacities of various State Governments in the country to handle e-Governance. The size of the IT departments across the 28 states varies from a nucleic structure to a large full-fledged department. As part of the capacity building initiative at the State Level, NeGP proposes the formation of dedicated institutionalized full time task forces at the state level and respective departmental levels called State e-Governance Mission Team (SeMT) and Project e-Governance Mission Team (PeMT) respectively. The approach to Capacity Building

starts with formulating a detailed e-Governance roadmap for the State Government and deriving from it the expertise required to achieve the goals laid out.

Institutional Framework at State Level

An apex council headed by the Chief Minister (elected Chief Executive of the State Government) steers the entire e-Governance Program of the State at the highest level. This steering committee is indicative of the political will of the state administrative machinery to champion the cause of e-Governance and helps in synergizing efforts across the state to enable ICT emerge as a core enabler of good Governance in the state.

A state apex committee headed by the Chief Secretary addresses all operational issues. It consists of Secretaries of various departments. The Committee oversees and provides policy direction to NeGP& ensures inter-departmental co-ordination at the state level. It is expected that all Secretaries of departments implementing Mission Mode projects under NeGP are members of this committee.

Program and Project Management Capacity Building

SeMT- is a dedicated body at the State level consisting of full-time experts to provide an overall direction, standardization and consistency through program management of e-Governance initiatives under way in the State Government. All interdependencies, overlaps, conflicts etc. across projects as well as core and support infrastructure shared across several projects would fall under the purview of this group. Broadly, this capacity at the State Level would:

- Function as a permanent advisory body to the State Government / NeGP State Apex Committee (under chairpersonship of Chief Secretary) in undertaking e-Governance projects.

- Institutionalize processes and tools for effective program management of e-Governance initiatives.

Provide inputs to the State Government during IT policy/roadmap making process

Assist individual departments of the State Government in putting together dedicated teams for undertaking e-Governance projects in their departments and managing the process (i.e. building capacity at the department/project level) through the constitution of individual project groups

The exact nature of support provided by the SeMT to the program would vary over a period of time. Initially it would be to assist the State Government in providing direction & prioritization and subsequently it would evolve to a program management role.

PeMT: This capacity building is at the department level and provides support to the departments for preparation of the DPRs, business process re-engineering, change management, financial sustainability planning, getting technology expertise and managing the implementation of the project. The objectives of PeMT include:

A dedicated capacity is required by the Departments in the State Government for conceptualization and management of the individual projects. On a broad level the PeMT at the Department/project level would:

- Work in close consultation and co-ordination with the departments to conceptualize and prepare Project Proposals

- Identify (and plan the process) for BPR (administrative, legal and process changes) required for improving the efficiency of the department through e-Governance

- Provide assistance to the department for change management, financial sustainability, technology expertise

- Provide project management and implementation support

- Assist the Department in institutionalizing the processes and tools required for managing the program

- Engage agencies for hardware, networks, software development, data entry, etc. during the implementation of the projects

Areas of capacity building

The areas identified in all the tiers of Governance, which will require some specific skill sets for implementing e-governance projects are:

Financial management, for

- Ensuring long term financial viability and sustainability of a project
- Institutionalization of mechanism for meeting operational costs
- Ensuring efficiency and efficacy in resource allocation against various expenditure categories
- Conceptualization and development of Public Private Partnership (PPP) models
- Ensuring inventory (or asset) tracking
- Ensuring quality in financial reporting

Change management and process Re-engineering, for

- Creating suitable plans to deal with organizational issues that arise during implementation of e-governance projects. E-governance projects tend to redefine power equations within departments. Stakeholders outside government are also often impacted. Some people lose power, some people gain. This leads to stresses and strains within and outside the organization, which if not managed with finesse, lead to early demise of the project. The first challenge is to clearly identify all internal and external stakeholders in a project, their goals, the extent to which these can be harmonized and factored in, the likely impact on all stakeholders and their likely reaction. This forms the basis of a credible and effective change management plan
- Ensuring continuity of the program and project in the event of change in key persons / project champions, during the course of the project

- Synchronization of individual initiatives with the State level / National level initiatives
- Providing "capacity ramp-up" plan for manpower scaling
- Providing full ownership to the State Government and Government Departments for implementing the projects
- Catalyzing administrative, process and legal changes required within the State Government
- Providing stronger focus on change management through efficient communication, workshops, etc.
- Alignment of interests of the key stakeholders (Central Line Ministries, State Governments, Department of IT at Centre and State, etc.) thereby synergizing various efforts

Technology leadership, for

- Ensuring quick turnaround in developing and conceptualizing the technological solution, for each department and functional area which is interoperable, standardized and scalable; taking it to a point where implementation agencies could be deployed for specific work.
- Development of standards for systems, applications and processes across the State
- Development, integration and leveraging of infrastructure of various departments across geographies for reducing overall investments

Program/project management, for

- Enabling administrative and legal changes through involvement of top leadership in the state
- Adoption of a project oriented approach for the e-Governance initiatives in the State
- Development of program and project plans integrating timelines, roles and responsibilities
- Monitoring, tracking and reporting status regularly
- Development of a communication plan
- Establishment of project control mechanisms like responsibility matrix, escalation matrix,

etc. Undertaking mid-course corrections (if required)

Capacity building for citizens

It is important to understand that even if e-Government initiatives are implemented successfully, it would still be a big challenge to ensure that citizens use the services effectively. Though India has emerged as a major player in the sphere of IT enabled services and the knowledge industry, the movement has, by and large, remained urban oriented, with the exception of a few rural initiatives in some States. The urgent requirement today is to address the digital divide in the country in an integrated and holistic manner. This is only possible when the citizens are made aware about the e-Governance initiatives and how they can effectively utilize it in their day-to-day affairs.

The Capacity Building amongst citizens could be done through mobilization of all relevant tools like Internet, cable TV, community/FM radio and the vernacular press. Combined with appropriate content, connectivity and Capacity Building measures the media can help in usher in higher awareness. Since India has opted for a model of assisted access, particularly in rural areas, building capacity amongst the service center operators is a key area of attention. Educating citizens about their powers under the Right to Information Act is another dimension. It is now recognized that e-governance has the potential to catapult India on the development path and to facilitate better quality public services in areas such as health, education, environment, provision of business services providing market prices and other information, e-trade opportunities, e-entertainment, e-banking, e-learning, digital photos, e-booking of tickets, internet linked services, etc (Wang Qi nu, 2006).

The Government has also established effective partnership with Apex organizations of civil society bodies that are working for empowerment of citizens and use of IT for this purpose. For example, the Common Services Centres project is being implemented in close collaboration with Mission 2007, a National Alliance of nearly 200 civil society and private sector organizations aiming to leverage ICT for rural development and empowerment (Xu, 2007).

Conclusions

NeGP is a massive initiative that can be successfully implemented in the 28 states and 7 Union Territories covering more than 1 billion population only if comprehensive capacity building is undertaken covering all segments likely to be touched by the Plan. Through such capacity Building measures, India would further strengthen the strong and dynamic democratic institutions and thereby secure growth and development for all its citizens in an equitable manner.

Acknowledgments

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