

UNDERSTANDING CITIZENS PERCEPTIONS OF E-GOVERNANCE SERVICES

(WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO E-DISHA PANCHKULA)

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Abstract

The application of information and communication technology (ICT) is jumping day by day. After locating information and communication technologies, management visualized of a new government. Restored by IT industry, government utilizes E-government services for the swap and modernization in its processes, policies and for better interaction with citizens. For these changes and renewal E-governance becomes a magic formula. So, after studying E-Governance initiatives at National and state level in India, examines the user perception of E-Governance service through a case study of E-Disha Panchkula. E-Disha is an IT Driven electronic interface between government and citizen. E-Disha is a praiseworthy E-Governance project of Panchkula district and is scaling new heights day by day and has done a lot to reduce the distance between citizen and government which is a true spirit of democratic government.

Keywords: Governance, Good Governance, E-Governance, I-Government & E Government.

Introduction

The application of information and communication technology (ICT) is jumping day by day. After locating information and communication technologies, management visualized of a new government. Restored by IT industry, government utilizes E-government services for the swap and modernization in its processes, policies and for better interaction with citizens. For these changes and renewal E-governance becomes a magic formula.

E-governance plays a role of impetus and route for E- business in business community. With regard to E-governance projects, government replaces its role from an 'Implementer' to a 'Faciliator' and 'Regulator'. Government will inspire participation of private sector in E-governance projects and more projects based on public private participation (PPP) model should happen in near future to reach at long term sustainability and the future for E-governance looks shining.

E-Governance (Conceptual Framework)

Progress in the information and communication technology (ICT) has been increasing at a brisk pace. India in its E-literate resources comes out as a major founder in E-Governance adoption. In past we had just government and governance while the future will be characterized by E-Government and E-Governance.

Governance

Governance is the act of governing. Governance has an interrelationship between four principal institutions of democracy- legislature, executive, judiciary and media. The idea of governance build in government's interrelationship with private firms and not for profit sector.

Good Governance

The notion of good governance has set foot in the vocabulary public administration in 1990's courtesy world bank. It implicit start up of new values of governance to prove more efficient, effective, legitimate and credible government system. Good governance has been recommended as an appealing remedy in these countries. Good governance has been cited as an essential requirement of an accelerated socio-economic development of developing countries. An important tool for good governance is E- governance. Good governance and E-governance are the two edge of a same coin. In such conceptualization, they reinforce each other. They are indistinguishable.

E-Governance

E-governance is an designlift by former US vice president (Al gore) having his inspiration ofcreating linkof citizen to various agencies of government for getting all kinds of government services in an automated and automatic way. The surfacing of ICT had provided means for jammed and cured communication, efficient storage, retrieval and processing of data & exchange and utilization of information to its users. Electronic government or E governance is the latest patios for government trying to entail people in administration , address, transparency issues in their bureaucratic and make themselves more responsive to their citizens. E- Governance is slowly becoming a patios in passage of power. E- Governance is the employing of ICT by government, civil societies and political institutions to grab citizens through chat and feedback to encourage their greater participation in the initiative of governance for all three concerned parties' i.e. government, business and citizens. ICT canbridge all three parties and support its process and activities.

E-Government Thinking:

- Old government + new technology
- Old government + interest

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) To Study the Background and Working of e-Disha Projects in Panchkula District.
- 2) To Study the Problems faced by customers at e-Disha centres in Panchkula District.
- 3) To Suggest recommendation for more efficient working of e-Disha centres.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Sampling design aids in decision making in the following Area:-

1. **Sampling Universe:** Sampling universe of the study were customers of E-Disha centre in Panchula District.

2. **Sampling Unit:** Sampling unit is the basic unit containing the elements of the universe to be sampled. The sampling unit of the study was the customers availing E-Disha services of all age group.
3. **Sample size:** The data was collected from 50 respondents with the help of open-ended interviews.
4. **Data collection:** Information was collected from both Primary and Secondary Sources. Primary data was gathered from Questionnaire.

Background of Project E-DISHA

- The IT-PRISM, in its 13th meeting held on 01/09/2005, has approved the Networking of District Secretariats, providing of Hardware & Software under D-NET/NAIDISHA Project and establishment of IT Training Labs in District Secretariats, utilizing the funds available with IT Department under State IT plan fund and Society for IT initiative fund for e-Governance. Further, the IT-PRISM has also approved the establishment of e-DISHA Citizen Service Centres at Districts, Sub Divisions and Block level in a phased manner, wherein the Dy. Commissioners will identify a space of 1500 Sq. ft for each e-DISHA Centre.
- In the 13th meeting of IT-PRISM it was suggested by F.C. PWD (B&R) Sh. Dharamvir that the project may initially be run in three-four centres on pilot basis in respect of the services which can be provided straight away.
- The D-NET is expected to facilitate the general public to have information/status about transactions being done with the various Government departments at district and lower levels by having intra district communication backbone and to provide effective and timely services to the farmers and general public at large. The Network at the District Level is to act as the Backbone for all the locations at the District Headquarter interconnecting various departments and offices of the District Administration and integrating with NIC District IT Centres, which are the Network Control and Management Centre for District Network. D-Net has been established at Mini Secretariats of Sonapat, Rohtak, Hisar, Panchkula, and Kaithal.

- The e-DISHA is a propel of IT through electronic confederate between the Government and citizens. The software for design for this application in various public services has been established by NIC-HRSC as a Citizen interface on D-NET in collaboration with the Department of Information Technology for implementing at e-DISHA Centres.

3.2 Proposed Plan of Implementation

- It is proposed to establish and operationalize one District Level e-Disha Centre at every District HQ of the State before 01.03.2006. Each District Level e-Disha Centre (DLeDC) would be located in the District Mini Secretariat and would have around 10 public service counters opening in to a Corridor/Verandah/Open Space, where sitting arrangements can be made / queues can be formed. For this centre around 1500 sq. ft. constructed area would be required so that it can accommodate service delivery counters, Cabins for Server, Supervisor, UPS/Genset, Doctor and Helpdesk. The department of IT will create the infrastructure for DLeDC at all mini secretariats as an extension of the D-Net project. This infrastructure will be used to extend the citizen services to the public. Initially 10 service counters are proposed to provide the citizen services. These may be increased in future depending upon the requirement/ workload. The District IT Society will implement the project.

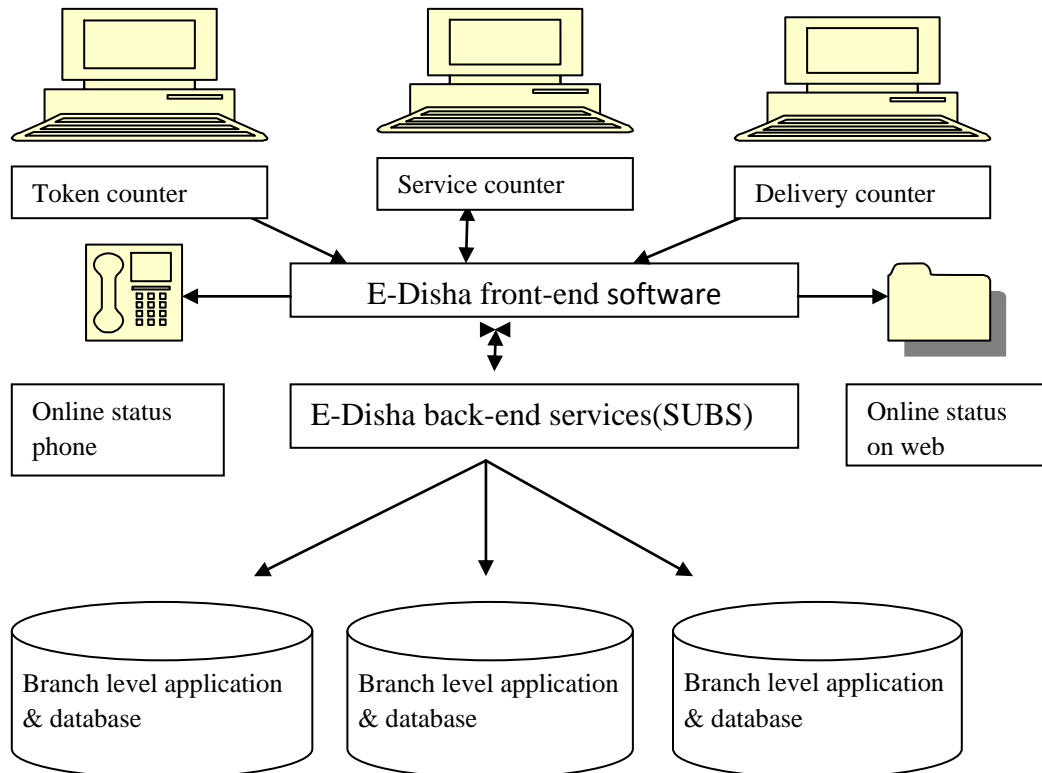
Technology

- The NIC Haryana developed, taior made and relocated various applications to Microsoft Sql Server RDBMS at the back end and integrated different applications in the standard e-DISHA software. Some of the applications, which were on JAVA/JSP/Tomcat platform,has also been coalesce with e-DISHA product.

Integration of Front-End and Back-End Services

E-Disha project is Based on open architecture and is to exchange data with external application of Back-end, other front-end and public interfaces.

Network Diagram of E-Disha centres



Workflow of E-Disha centres in Panchkula District

E-Disha centres works in a very efficient manner for its proper working to provide transparent, accurate, accountable and responsive manner. It works in a proper channelized manner.

In E-Disha Panchkula, G2C services for applying DL, RC and Certificates are provided.

- 3 counters for computerized DL/ RC forms.
- 1 counter for issuing computerized token.
- 3 counters for new vehicle registration.
- 1 counter for old vehicle (HPA cancellation, sale/purchase, NOC etc).
- 4 counters for driving license.
- 1 counter for domicile/ residence/ caste/ income certificates.
- Separate cabin for getting medical done.

Services Provided by e-Disha Centre in Panchkula

To get Driving License(Learner, Permanent, Renewal, Duplicate, conductor etc)

1. Citizen
2. Take application file of Rs. 15/- from form vendor & fill it.
3. Attach Xerox copies of Required documents with application form.
4. Medical test(for learner license)
5. Show documents & take token number
6. Submit file & fees at service counter
7. Biometrics(photo,sign-ature) of applicant at service counter.
8. Documents is sent to concerned branch at D.C office for backend processing.
9. After the completion of backend processing documents are returned back to E-Disha centre.

To get Vehicle Registration done (New vehicle, sale, transfer, HPA cancellation, NOC etc.)

1. Citizen
2. Take application file of Rs. 15/- from form vendor & fill it.
3. Attach Xerox copies of Required documents with application form.
4. Show documents & take token number
5. Submit file & fees at service counter
6. Biometrics(photo,sign-ature) of applicant at service counter.
7. Documents is sent to concerned branch at D.C office for backend processing.
8. After the completion of backend processing documents are returned back to E-Disha centre.

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Customers should be fully aware about services provided at E-Disha centres

It has been observed that some customers are not fully aware about the services provided at E-Disha centres.

It is proposed that Advertisement through Television in local language e.g. e-Kranti programme on E-Governance initiatives which telecast on Doordarshan and publicity through movies and newspaper is also needed so that people become fully aware of the services provided at E-Disha centres.

B. Service delivery mechanism needs improvement

Consumers of E-Disha services felt problems with pre-service elements. Service is provided through token system. The policy of servicing the consumers is through token system. Accessibility of the centre is also a problem with regard to consumers from rural areas as they have to visit cities. Many consumers felt the e-Disha centres to be over crowded.

It is suggested that consumers have to get their Token by 12.30pm to get the service on the same day and the staff members should provide proper instructions and knowledge about documents required by the consumers so that they can get token number easily or there must be inquiry counter available at E-Disha centres for listening the queries of the people so that their aspect may be favourable affect subsistence level consumers.

C. Credit/Debit card facility is needed at E-Disha centres

It was found during the survey that credit/debit card facility for making payment was non-existent in all E-Disha centres.

It is suggested that the latest modes of payment such as credit card, debit card swipe facility which are widely used in shops, private and public organization etc. for the

payments of dues should be introduced for the convenience of customers at all E-Disha service centres.

D. Timings of E-Disha centres need Rationalization

Working customers were of the view that the timings of E-Disha centres need to be rationalized as they have to take leave from office to avail E-Disha services. The present working days and timings- Monday to Friday 9 am to 5.00 pm are not convenient for the customers who have to attend office.

It is proposed that as convenient timing is a very important determinant of service quality and on the basis of suggestions and timings should be from 8.00 am to 5.00 pm so everyone can avail the services. It may be mentioned that E-Samparkcentres in Chandigarh and similar E-Governance centres in many other states function from Monday to Saturday and from 8.00 am to 8.00 pm.

E. E-Disha centres should cater to the needs of physically challenged, senior citizens and ladies

E-Disha centres are not sensitive about the needs of senior citizens, ladies and physically challenged. It is suggested that E-Disha centres should pay special attention to needs of elderly and physically challenged. Provision of ramps, separate counters for them, easy and wide approach etc. availability of drinking water, proper sitting arrangement, provision of toilets, proximity to bus stops are some of the steps which can be initiated towards this objective.

F. Grievance redressal mechanism needed

Many of customers are not aware of the channels to redress their grievance. The study also revealed that suggestion boxes, helpline and other mechanisms were difficult to locate and they were not even existing at some of the E-Disha centres.

It is suggested that it is very necessary to provide effective complaint helpline numbers etc. for feedback from the customers so as to know their grievances and to deliver their efficient, timely, hassle-free services at E-Disha centres.

G. Role of intermediaries should be eliminated

Many of subsistence level consumers relied on intermediaries to get the services from E-Disha service centres. These intermediaries ranged from their relatives/ friends to people who they met outside the E-Disha centre on that day these intermediaries were helpful in getting the services. Consumers felt that payment to these intermediaries were expensive when compared to Government charges. People approach the intermediaries when they don't know how the process works.

It is suggested that there is a need to improve the process of E-Disha services centres. Consumers relied on intermediaries for reason of working system, delay in work, lengthy procedures of service centres and even because of not fully aware about the processing system of E-Disha consumers felt that transactional elements in the service delivery were found to be lot quicker with less cycle time.

H. Employees salary should be increased

Many of employees expressed that they were not satisfied with the salary as was found during the study. The salary provided is low. And it may also be noted that few employees were reluctant to mention salary issues due to the fear of retrenchment and high unemployment rate.

According to number of administrative thinkers, salary is one of the major factor directly related to motivation to work efficiently. Employees of E-Disha centres were found to be very hardworking and qualified but the salary given to them is miniscule compared to their workload. So, employees salary structure should be revised and rationalized according to their workload and qualifications.

I. *Employees should be made permanent instead of contractual*

It was found during the survey, all the employees working at E-Disha centres are on contract basis. So they have a feeling of insecurity.

It is recommended that employees should be made permanent as job security enhance efficiency. Moreover they will feel that they are a part of institution and will therefore perform better.

J. *Employees should be provided Economic/ non-economic incentives*

Employees working at all E-Disha centres are not getting economic/non-economic as they are on contract basis.

It is proposed that economic/ non-economic incentives should be provided to employees of E-Disha centres to boost their morale and to motivate them to work .

Conclusions

The citizens with educated subsistence level detects the process easier to acknowledge and feel that the overcharging by the service-brokers has reduced as all the processes are transparent and easy. The cost for various services are unveiled and there is tiny chance of their being overcharged. The ease in getting the E-disha services helped the citizens to obtain loans from the banks, apply for jobs and avail reservation of the jobs, and also avail several healthcare services. Technology has emerged as a useful interface between the subsistence level consumers and the government and has made the processes more efficient, transparent and cost effective for both the stakeholders. However, adopting a process-reengineering perspective could help in achieving a larger perspective in improving the service delivery. With the success of this first phase of e-governance initiatives, the governments need to switch over to networking and sharing of the data between the data warehouses to further improve upon their services aimed at the welfare of the subsistence level consumers. The research offers several policy level suggestions for the government.

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