

## **A Relationship Study with Good Governance and ICT in India**

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### **ABSTRACT**

ICT has been recognized as the engine for growth and a source of energy for the social and economic empowerment of any country, specially a third world country. Relationship between Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) is coming to be recognized increasingly world over. Today, governments are empowering masses through IT as it can prove to be effective short-cut to higher levels of equity in the emerging Global Digital Networked Information Economy. Framing Information and Communication Technology Strategies and Policies are complex exercises which encompass a variety of issues covering areas such as infrastructure, human challenges, technology, architecture, standards, administrative, information, security, financial, legal, privacy, quality of service etc. The enthusiasm for realizing the potential of ICTs is often dampened by the barriers to successful implementation.

**Keywords: e-Governance, Good Governance, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)**

### **Introduction**

Governance and good governance are increasingly being used in development literature. Governance describes the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented). Thus the Good Governance is the process whereby public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources and guarantee the realization of rights and services. Good governance accomplishes this in a manner essentially free of abuse and corruption, and with due regard for the rule of law. Good governance defines an ideal which is difficult to achieve in its totality. Good Governance may be defined as the processes that guides the political and socio-economic relationships, with commitment to democratic values, trusted services and just and honest business. Good Governance should be participatory, transparent and accountable. It provides a framework within which political, social and economic priorities are

based on a broad consensus in society, and the voices of the poorest and most vulnerable are considered for the decision-making processes. In addition, Good Governance has major implications for equity, poverty and quality of life.

The rapid development, deployment and proliferation of the new and emerging information and communication technologies (ICTs) herald new opportunities for growth and development in countries around the world. Governments worldwide are seeking to harness the potential offered by these new technologies to create new dimensions of economic and social progress. Immediate challenges relate to the need for requisite efforts by Governments to aim at transcending the digital divide by narrowing the digital gap through incrementally (i) putting in place the necessary national information infrastructure; (ii) developing and nurturing the necessary human resource to operate the national information infrastructure; and (iii) providing adequate financial resources to implement both the infrastructural and human resource requirements.

### **Review of Literature**

A review of literature pertaining to the study is a pre-requisite for research as it enables the investigator to have a proper perspective of the subject and avoid the pit falls and difficulties experienced by predecessors. Thus, the planning and execution of any research study should be preceded by a thorough review of literature in related fields since it helps to familiarize with the work that has been done in that area., eliminates the possibility of unnecessary duplication of efforts and helps in providing a valuable information on research techniques. After analyzing the concept of good governance, the review of ICT related studies has been presented under the following heads:

- Good Governance
- ICT for Improved Governance
- Knowledge and IT for Decision Making Strategies

2.1 Good Governance More research is definitely needed to take a closer look at the relationship between transparency and governance or information and economic growth. Information flows as proxied by the two indices, the transparency index and the access to information index. These two indices are positively correlated with the quality of governance. Better governance has been empirically demonstrated to be correlated with higher growth. The indicators used to assess better information flows are of two kinds. One index is based on the existence of freedom of

information laws and second index is called the “transparency” index which measures the frequency with which economic data are published in countries around the world.

Roumeen, Islam (2003) explored the link between information flows and governance through his study “Do More Transparent Governments Govern Better?” with the objective to examine how the availability of information may affect governance. Specifically, it looks at (a) how the availability of basic economic data affects governance and (b) how the legal framework governing access to information might affect the quality of governance. Empirical analysis showed that countries which have better information flows as measured by both indicators have better quality governance. Regions where the media have a greater reach were also the areas where voters were more informed about political choices and able to cast votes accordingly. They need timely information on decisions related to various aspects of government activity, on how these decisions will be implemented, information on the consequences of these decisions and the process through which they are reached. This paper examined how the presence of Freedom of Information (FOI) laws may affect how countries govern. The purpose of all such laws is to define a framework for the sharing of information. Economic theory tells us that information is needed to make sound economic and political choices, to monitor agents and reward or punish accordingly. Better availability of economic data and the ability of people to demand and receive the information they need is highly correlated with governance. Governments that do not produce, organize and share information will be hampered in policymaking. Good policymaking requires up-to-date information on the economic situation; good policymaking requires the sharing of information for better coordination, analysis and monitoring. It is well established fact that improvements and legitimacy will only be delivered if two things are in place. First, the strategic e-readiness infrastructure-the leadership and integrated vision on which e-governance depends. Second, the tactical best practices that are needed to close design-reality gaps and to steer e-governance projects from failure to success. Through various case studies, it is found that most e-governance initiatives that are begun currently fail. Surveys of e-governance initiatives are incredibly rare; a shortcoming that needs to be addressed. Even donors, who should be committed to monitoring and evaluation, rarely seem to produce reports. From the material that is available, two main types of e-governance failure can be identified. In some cases, there is the total failure of an initiative never implemented or in which

a new system is implemented but immediately abandoned. Alternatively, there is the partial failure of an initiative in which major goals are unattained or in which there are significant undesirable outcomes. One type of partial failure that particularly seems to affect e-governance initiatives is the sustainability failure of an initiative that succeeds initially but then fails after a year or so.

Richard Heeks (2001) studied the effect of new information and communication technologies and how it can make a significant contribution to the achievement of good governance goals through his study "Understanding e-Governance for Development". The paper outlines the three main contributions of e-governance: improving government processes (e-administration); connecting citizens (e-citizens and eservices); and building external interactions (e-society). Case studies are used to show that e-governance is a current, not just future, reality for developing countries. However, most e-governance initiatives fail. Countries therefore face two challenges. First, the strategic challenge of e-readiness: preparing six identified pre-conditions for e-governance i.e. Data Systems Infrastructure, Legal Infrastructure, Institutional Infrastructure Ready, Human Infrastructure, Technological Infrastructure, and Leadership and Strategic Thinking. Second, the tactical challenge of closing design-reality gaps: adopting best practice in e-governance projects in order to avoid failure and to achieve success. The study further elaborates new systemic approaches to information systems (IS) to the heart of reform. A central role for ICTs, as governance becomes and recognised as more information-intensive, ICTs become an essential part of more governance initiatives. ICTs are also recognised as a key lever to change. They are no longer isolated on the sidelines. An integrated role for ICTs, e-governance means using ICTs as servants to the master of good governance. ICTs are no longer seen as an end in themselves and they are seen to work only as part of a wider systemic 'package'. Overall, then, e-governance is the ICT-enabled route to achieving good governance.

2.2 ICT for Improved Governance The enthusiasm for realizing the potential of ICTs is often dampened by the barriers to successful implementation. The first task in using ICTs as a tool to improve governance is to ignore ICTs altogether and focus on selecting and prioritizing improvement goals that are urgent or important. Once the most important goals are established, senior level policymakers must establish milestones that will indicate that the project is on track. The next step is to review alternative solutions to the problem given constraints on financing,

infrastructure, literacy and skills. Each solution must be associated with costs -of infrastructure, training, etc. and benefits. Once a solution is accepted based on the planners' estimation of its merits and costs, a detailed work plan must be developed, with provisions for adequate training and capacity building. The final step in the process is to lay the groundwork for monitoring and evaluation.

Bhavya Lal (1999) reviewed the issues facing African countries in adopting information and communication technologies (ICTs) to enhance governance in four areas, reducing poverty, providing basic human needs, improving public administration, and enhancing democratization through his paper "Information and Communication Technologies for Improved Governance". It summarized the use of ICTs in these areas – both successes and failures – around the world and in Africa. The paper focused on many of the caveats that should accompany ICT deployment and ends with an action framework for practitioners anxious to get started. The paper discussed how Information and communication technologies (ICTs) can help to sustain e-governance process in three ways: (i) they can support tasks that involve complex decision making, communication and decision implementation, (ii) they can automate tedious tasks done by humans, and (iii) they can support new tasks and processes that did not exist before. When ICTs are properly aligned with governance goals, they can help to create gains in both efficiency and effectiveness. A cross-national multilingual online survey focused on issues related to the European Knowledge Society and its impacts on living conditions, industrial relations and working conditions by the year 2015.

A Delphi report "European Knowledge Society Foresight" was submitted to by Rafael Popper (2003) to European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. The report concluded that one of the major contributors in reinforcing KS (Knowledge Society) trend would be widespread use of ICT in e-governance. This enhances transparency in the procedures concerning the relationship between the citizen and the state in my country. This was further seen as a KS trend that will increase two industrial relations factors (economic growth / wealth creation, and entrepreneurship and innovativeness). Furthermore, the widespread use of ICT in e-governance will increase social cohesion and sustainability / environmental quality. A considerable number of participants believed that the use of ICT in e-governance will increase the employee autonomy and responsibility at work but there was still a substantial amount of

opinions that the statement will have no effect over the factor. Uncertainties about the impacts of ICT in e-governance were reported in the way it will affect social exclusion or divides, work-life balance and job creation. The study by Danish Dada,(2006) provides a review of academic literature on the failure of e-governance in developing countries. Drawing from extensive research on the topic conducted by Richard Heeks, the paper suggests that there exists wide gaps between the current reality in developing countries and the future of e-governance systems. These gaps could be classified into three types: a hard-soft gap, implying a gap between the technology and the social context in which it is applied; a private-public gap, suggesting that what works in the private sector may not work in the public sector; and a country context gap, that arises from the application of the same e-governance systems for both the developing and developed countries. The paper recommends that administrators in developing countries must assess the situation at hand before implementing e-governance.

The study by Christopher A. Cooper et al (2008) tests theories about political trust and citizen competence using the case of zoning. Many scholars argue that citizens with higher levels of political trust are more likely to grant bureaucratic discretion to public administrators than citizens with lower levels of trust. Trust, therefore, can relieve the tension between managerial flexibility and political accountability in the modern administrative state. Unfortunately, there is little empirical evidence showing that trust is actually associated with citizens' willingness to cede policy-making power to government. The results depict that trust in local government is found to be an important predictor of support for zoning, but trust in state government and trust in national government have no effect. These findings suggest that trust affects policy choice and helps determine how much power citizens grant to local administrators.

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