From E-government to E-governance

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ABSTRACT

With the advancement of ICT (Information, Communication Technology), the words like E-government and E-governance have come into prominence. In fact both these terms are used synonymously although they are quite different and have differing audiences to cater to and different objectives to achieve. The purpose here is to create clarity in relation to these terms precisely because e-government and e-governance have been used so interchangeably. Such clarity could lead to a greater depth of exploration of the subject matter and assist in the development of the internal process of government, and the impacts these processes and subsequent delivery mechanisms are having on individual citizens and groups overall that is a part of governance. E-Governance is a wider topic that deals with the whole spectrum of the relationship and networks within government regarding the usage and application of ICTs. E-Governance is a wider concept that defines and assesses the impacts technologies are having on the practice and administration of governments and the relationships between public servants and the wider society, such as dealings with the elected bodies or outside groups such as not for profits organizations, NGOs or private sector corporate entities.

Keywords: E-government, E-Governance, Electronic workflow, electronic engagement,

1. Introduction

With the advancement of ICT (Information, Communication Technology), the words like E-government and E-governance have come into prominence. In fact both these terms are used synonymously although they are quite different and have differing audiences to cater to and different objectives to achieve. The purpose here is to create clarity in relation to these terms precisely because e-government and e-governance have been used so interchangeably. Such clarity could lead to a greater depth of exploration of the subject matter and assist in the development of the internal process of government, and the impacts these processes and subsequent delivery mechanisms are having on individual citizens and groups overall that is a part of governance. The areas generally covered under the ambit of e-government are given Table 1.

A government (from the Greek Κυβερνήτης kubernites - steersman, governor, pilot, or rudder) is an organization that has the power to make and enforce laws for a certain territory. E-government is the utilization of electronic technology to streamline or otherwise improve the business of government. E-Government is actually a narrower discipline dealing with the development of online services to the citizen, more then on any particular government service - such as e-tax, e-transportation or e-health. E-Governance is a wider topic that deals with the whole spectrum of the relationship and networks within government regarding the usage and application of ICTs. E-Governance is a wider concept that defines and

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assesses the impacts technologies are having on the practice and administration of governments and the relationships between public servants and the wider society, such as dealings with the elected bodies or outside groups such as not for profits organizations, NGOs or private sector corporate entities.

Table 1: Areas generally covered under the ambit of e-government

Governance	Core business	Management of workflow, finances, personnel, documentation, records, information, knowledge, internal communication, executive information and decision making
	Transparency	E procurement, government portal, on-line availability of laws, regulations
	Participation	On line petitions, notices, comments, citizens' network, publication of election records, e mails to parliamentarians
Economic	Revenue generation	Taxation, custom, fee information and management
	Financial management	Budget planning, accounting, expenditure, investment, payroll and other information
	Resources management	Geographic and natural resources information and management, land/property/dwelling management, urban planning, development planning
	Business development	Enterprise registration, investment, technology and technology transfer information, patent information, market information, statistical analysis, economic forecasting, laws/regulations
Social	Social services	Civil applications, civil registrations, land and property registrations, personal identification documents, social security, vehicle registration.
	Education and Culture	Digital libraries, community information centers, educational institutions—information and management
	Health	Distant medicine and prescription services, hospital information and appointment, blood availability reports, Health insurance reimbursement, direct settlement.
	Public safety	Crime information, drug monitoring and control, prison information and management, transportation information and management, natural disaster forecasting and management
	Natural environment	Natural environment information and management, weather forecasting

2. E-government

The use of information technologies and new business processes to transform how Governments interact with citizens and businesses is e-government. It refers to the use by government agencies of information technologies (such as wide area networks, internet, and mobile computing) that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government, as per World Bank definition. E-Government is expected to allow for less corruption, provides increased transparency, affords greater convenience, improves revenue and reduces costs. Preconditions for e-government are (a) Government in good working order, (b) Functioning governance processes, (c) Availability of resources, (d) Consensus on drivers for e-Government and (e) Political support & leadership. Government Stakeholders include citizens, businesses, government employees, government ministries, department and agencies, union leaders, community leaders, politicians and foreign investors. Governments are the societal superstructure for politics, policies, and programs. The components of E government are as follows,

i) Electronic Service Delivery
Governments can query, inform, and transact with the public over electronic networks. Since the public began to use the Internet for leisure and business, governments have been progressively migrating their service delivery onto electronic platforms. Notwithstanding the cost effectiveness, the concern in this solution was the "digital divide" The expectations were,

- Access by a person to all the personal data on that person that is held in government data banks. So far this is limited by security, privacy, and confidentiality concerns.
- Access to all government documentation of all kinds by anyone. At present the storage and retrieval costs are prohibitive, and there are also security, privacy, and confidentiality concerns here as well.
- Information architecture that permits one-stop-shopping for all information from all governments in a simple thematic directory. There are also cost constraints, and no known technology to integrate, index and search all of this information.

ii) Electronic Workflow
There are some user-friendly templates currently designed and deployed throughout government intranets. There has to be the same standardized set for every type of transaction located in every government department and agency. Like "business rules", there is the potential to develop "administrative rules" that would routinize substantially information processing and decision-making. The larger issues in this area are security, privacy, and confidentiality. Effective policy analysis and program design must be evidence-based using comparative data. Most additional improvements in policy analysis, program design, and service deployment will only come from automated data processing and integrated data repositories.

iii) Electronic Voting
The system is working well in India. In developed countries, the concerns over security, privacy and confidentiality could be more challenging than with most other electronic interactions. An elected official in the United States was once overheard to claim he knew the way every single member of his constituency had voted, and to prove his point went on to name off street after street of results! Whether this was authentic or just hype, it is a basic fear of many voters, the reason being that the official then went on to explain that he spared no effort to reward his supporters and punish those who hadn't voted for him. If the suspicion arises that candidates can access the record of electronic voting, voters are unlikely to trust the process enough to agree to use it. The challenge for any proposal to increase electronic voting is to build sufficient public trust in the security of the record of results.

iv) Electronic Productivity
The rationale for e-government is *better operations at lower cost*, i.e., productivity. Despite the forecasts of Marxists and anarchists, there does not seem any prospect of the "withering away of the state" within the foreseeable future. The social need to ensure public health and safety, national security and crime control, economic prosperity and environmental sustainability, will all guarantee the presence of governments and their active involvement in our lives, whether visibly or "behind the scenes". Efficiency of the expenditures has to be the target.

3. E-governance

E-Governance refers to the use of information and communication technologies to transform and support the processes and structures of a governance system. It is the use by government agencies of information technologies to improve and transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government. E-Governance involves making and implementing decisions, proper Leadership, putting in place Organizational arrangements, ensuring Resources and funding, establishing Accountability and measuring success. The infrastructure requirements include, Telecommunications network, internal agency systems, Cross- Government systems, Service delivery network – access points, Internet access and skilled staff. The expected outcomes are Better delivery of government services to citizens, improved interactions with business and industry, Citizen Empowerment through access to information and more efficient government management. The accruable benefits are increased transparency, Greater convenience, reduced corruption, Revenue growth and reduced cost of running government. The scope of e-Governance covers

- Electronic Service Delivery (G2C)
- Delivering information and services electronically to citizens and businesses
- Government to Business Transactions (G2B)
- Delivering information and transacting electronically with businesses.
- Government procurement and infrastructure projects.
- Internal Government Administration (G2G, G2E)
- Improving efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of intradepartmental and inter-department interactions within government, and with government employees
- Foreign Trade (G2X)

Governance is the societal synthesis of politics, policies, and programs. The components are as follows,

i) Electronic Engagement
The possibilities for the public to engage in the policy process via electronic networks range all the way from sending elected officials an e-mail to creating a distinct conferencing facility (e-mail box, document repository, chat room, etc.) for each major policy initiative (whether a new policy, or changes in an existing policy). Considered on a global basis, there have been some examples of almost every degree of involvement and combination of elements that one can imagine, although full-fledged electronic engagement is still not very frequent. More useful would be an outline of effective practices that could be used to direct the design of future efforts. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has proposed just such a list. OECD guidelines will enable agenda setting, analysis, synthesis, implementation and monitoring, the five stages in the OECD policy-making paradigm.

ii) Electronic Consultation
This refers to interaction between public servants and the citizenry and interest groups, contact between the public service and interest groups. But two recent developments have come together to produce something quite extraordinary: (1) ordinary citizens now have the potential to participate in rule making (crafting regulations); and (2) electronic rule making has gained a foothold in the U.S. national government. Gary Coglianese of John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University considers that e-rulemaking does have great promise, but at this early stage it raises more questions than it answers although he has identified the issues for e rule making.

iii) Electronic Controllership
There are two aspects to successful controllership, both of which much be optimized and integrated to achieve full benefits, namely hardware configuration, and software customization. To effect controllership all informatics and telematics hardware must be interconnectable into a single system. Capacity should also be standardized. Employee e-mailboxes should have similar storage space; all Internet connections should have the same baud rate, and attached documents should all have the same byte-limit on their size. Electronic technologies are playing a large role in shaping the mind-set of citizens, and they will want that mind-set reflected in social governance. Governance software should also be standardized. The other aspect of software design that needs standardization to accomplish controllership is the use of extensible markup language (XML) for file formats and document layouts. It is used on the Internet, and can be incorporated into each and every software application.

iv) Networked Societal Guidance
Who watches the watchers, who govern the governors, has been a central question of political analysis. The concept of distribution of powers, between branches within a government, and between jurisdictions within a country, has gone part way to answering this question. Those who are competing for power will watch each other, either to keep everyone honest or to expose the illicit practices of competitors. The rise of the

mass media served to inform public opinion of such infractions much more quickly and thoroughly than when all news traveled by word of mouth. Recently the Internet has become an even speedier vehicle for such disclosures.

4. Differentiating e-Government and e-Governance

It is recognized that both the e-government and e-governance need similar enablers for success. Broadly they are, Educational levels, Cultural readiness, Income levels, Confidence/trust in Government, Customer readiness, Privacy & data protection, Use of Customer Data by Government, Freedom of Information, Electronic commerce, Copyright regulations, Telecommunications and Cross agency operations. Government is an institutional superstructure that society uses to translate politics into policies and legislation. Governance is the outcome of the interaction of government, the public service, and citizens throughout the political process, policy development, program design, and service delivery. The institution of government involves a narrower range of considerations than the wider functions of governance. Governments are specialized institutions that contribute to governance.

Governments are bureaucratically organized and constitutionally legitimated. They serve as both the highest forum for policy making within their jurisdictions, and as the final court of appeal within their jurisdictions for dissenters to those policies. Most of the work of governments consists of actually implementing policies through service delivering programs. Individuals and groups assess governmental performance in terms of their own perception. Governments often face the need to rationalize discrepancies amongst people's desires to achieve their own ends. Governance is distinct from government as it concerns longer-term processes rather than immediate decisions. Governance is a set of continuous processes that usually evolve slowly with use unlike government. The governance focuses on processes instead of decisions. Governance takes the larger view of social objectives, so it involves the coordination of efforts rather than the implementation of specific programs. This is the systemic perspective as opposed to a focus on the individual practice, or player, or process. The "bottom line" for governance is outcomes rather than the outputs of government.

There are a multitude of situations that require government decisions, and a variety of types of decisions that governments render. Decisions that are confined to a particular policy, program, department, region, or group, are usually be easier to frame, negotiate, and finalize. Unfortunately the unexpected can occur, when a previously insignificant occurrence suddenly acquires disproportionate importance "out of the blue", often because of a change in its political salience. Even for these situations there are now coping skills. Joint decisions that need to be agreed between various levels of jurisdiction (i.e., national, regional, municipal, etc.) can also be particularly tricky to arrive at. Governments may lack the money, personnel, or expertise to implement decisions they desire, or they may face constitutional limits regarding what they can impose without the consent of the governed. These kinds of government decisions are becoming the fastest-growing type in today's policy environment. Some experts and writers contend that many knowledge workers within governments are resistant to assignments to "manage processes" rather than to deal with "substantive issues". But since government is not a single-issue or a single-instance exercise, on-going processes are what governance is all about. If governing processes were directed by flexible guidelines rather than minute rules, and if those on the front line were permitted to respond to unforeseeable particulars in a creative way, the larger aim of policy and program improvement may be more favorably achieved. The Engagement Process consists of citizens and interest groups interacting with government representatives. The Consultation Process involves direct contact between the public service, and citizens and interest groups. In the case of interest groups, they have sought and gained access to bureaucrats for decades. What is changing is that individual citizens and community groups are now beginning to obtain similar access even if in limited numbers at this point in time. This process helps citizens to actually shape regulations, in a small way.

Earlier governments had been organized either on the basis of traditional deference, or a leader's charismatic persuasiveness. Now that knowledge workers are expected to master multi-tasking, governments seem to be trying to re-invent the "special generalist" Another important section of government rules concerns provisions to limit partisan political interference in program design and delivery. Rules that are the bane of every bureaucrat's existence are those for assessment and evaluation. What things are done, what things are not permitted, how things are done, how things are not to be done, when things can or cannot be done, where things can or cannot be done, even why things can or cannot be done, are all subject to assessment (estimation of consequences) and evaluation (estimation of effectiveness). As rules have proliferated so has the possibility of conflicts between rules. Judgment is required on which rule (or rules) applies in a situation, and how strictly to abide by their provisions. People can either "hide behind the rules" or use them to innovate - and they do. When it comes to E-governance, the emphasis on attainment of the goals perceived in the E-governance model. Rules are very much there but the orientation more towards achievement of objectives rather than sticking to the rules.

The powers and prerogatives of bureaucratic office were attached to the role in the organization, not to the person occupying the position. In practice it has turned out to be much harder to actually ensure. Initially the preference for the "personal touch" was attributed to the persistence of traditional or charismatic attitudes. The focus on E-government remains on the role while that of E-governance rests on the performance. Reaching out to the desired levels of users, may be from government, businesses or general public becomes the fundamental issue in respect of E-governance. Many proposals within governments gather dust. Auditors often find examples of this situation and criticize the practice as a waste of money. The "lack of political will" or "lack of sufficient resources" is the response given. The major challenge that governments have with implementation is the risk of project failure and/or cost overruns. Since governments are publicly accountable for their choices, their main performance criterion is dependability. In some cases however, the result of risk management processes has been to make government decision-makers even more cautious and less innovative. Governance has a challenge in coordinating the activities than implementation per se.

E-government programs have steadily shifted to measures of output to gauge both efficiency and productivity. There are a variety of outputs that governments measure. One is case-load: the number of assignments per person, the length of time to completion, and the type of results produced, are standard types of measures. This is a version of labor productivity. Wider measures include the size of the staff, personnel turnover, the average duration of assignments, the ratio of supervisors to workers, and the aggregate rate of assignment completion. All of these measures give an indication of the rate of activity, so that comparisons can be done between similar workers or similar units. Pay scales and promotion prospects are often designed to reward improvements in these rates. What is much more difficult to record, measure, or evaluate is the effectiveness of the government employees' activities. Part of the problem centers on what measures of effectiveness are appropriate. Should the major emphasis be on inputs, that is to say, size of staff, qualifications of staff, salaries paid, and equipment available? Or should the focus be on throughputs, which include hours worked, supervision needed, equipment used, and supplies consumed? The most room for improvement now is with the flow of tasks and assignments between people.

5. The Issues

The review of various programs of government and others lead one to believe that the thrust of all these efforts is narrowly pinned down to government and not governance. The programs have been largely successful notwithstanding the grey areas that remain to be addressed. Arya Chanakya 2500 years back states, "The secret task of a king (*now the government*) is welfare of his people incessantly. The administration of the kingdom is his religious duty. His greatest gift would be to treat all as equals." "The happiness of the commoners is the happiness of the king. Their welfare is his welfare. A king should never

think of his personal interest or welfare, but should try to find his joy in the joy of his subjects." What possibly he refers to is governance. He talks only about king or the government, as corporate world was not existent then. When one talks of governance or Egovernance in corporate sector, the reference is more towards probity in corporate life, risk management and compliance of applicable rules/regulations with societal good in mind. The concept of trusteeship on behalf of all stakeholders is at the core of such governance practices. With or without 'E' as the pre-fix, the content of both government and governance is evolving.

E-governance comprises many organizations and actions essential for good functioning of markets, most notably protection of property rights, enforcement of contracts, and provision of physical and informational infrastructure. In most modern economies, governments provide these services more or less efficiently, and modern economics used to take them for granted. Governance is a set of continuous processes that usually evolve slowly with use rather than change dramatically (as with a change of government). There are three categories of processes to cover the interactions between the government, the public service, and the citizenry. The coverage of governance is much broader than the concept of government. By equating government and governance, it is likely that the target of attaining highest level of governance can be lost sight of while focusing on government. Governance takes the larger view of social objectives, so it involves the coordination of efforts rather than the implementation of specific programs. How it all fits together is more important than exactly who does what to whom by which means. Because governance focuses on goals rather than rules it does not mean that the situation is any easier to understand or deal with. Goals are often based on values, and in today's diverse society, value consensus can be difficult to find or build. Instead, just as there are conflicts of values, so there are conflicts of goals. As such, attaining highest level of E-governance seems more relevant but challenging.

Government and governance are both about getting the consent and cooperation of the governed. But whereas government is the formal apparatus for this objective, governance is the outcome as experienced by those on the receiving end. E-government can be a more productive version of government in general, if it is well implemented and managed. E-governance can evolve into participatory governance if it is well supported and architected. The means of E-government are focused more than the end itself that is E-governance. Transparency is the one policy that expanding government networks can easily support. It can also shift the locus of contention away from public officials and onto disputing social factions. This could be more aspiring towards E-governance efforts rather than E-government. As the scale, scope, and complexity of situations and circumstances increases, the significance of E-governance shall have to be intensified.

6. Concluding Remarks

It would be a good idea to address to larger issue of E-governance with broader contours rather than getting restricted to ICT in government defined by E-government. Arya Chanakya futher says, "Before you start some work, always ask yourself three questions — Why am I doing it, what the results might be and will I be successful. Only when you think deeply and find satisfactory answers to these questions, go ahead." It is necessary to be clear about the end-result, whether the goal is E-governance or E-government needs to be certain. What is the work i.e. the goal, of E-government or E-governance shall have to be the pivotal issue for decision in furtherance of the E-government projects. Issues of accountability, transparency and responsiveness (often quoted as the cornerstones of good governance) depend on the character and nature of prevailing institutions. At the E-governance forums, representatives push forth on citizen-centric services. The standardization, interoperability is one of the major issues that is evolving and needs to be addressed urgently. There is need for an in-depth discussion so as to evolve the next generation government.

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