Socio-Politico Dimension of Information Communications Technologies: Exploring the Options of Realizing Human Rights in India

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ABSTRACT

Constant development in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has contributed overwhelmingly for a dynamic perceptive of Human Rights. However, there are oppositions to this aspect of ICTs in promoting Human Rights. The paper provides for a discussion between the Cyber Optimists, who see a great potential in enhancing Human Rights through ICTs and on the other hand it discusses the Cyber Pessimists, who doubt the potentials of ICTs support to realize the Human Rights. Post liberalization in India we have adopted e-governance as a reform in governance, which consolidates the position of the Cyber Optimists school of thought, which the paper attempts to elucidate in detail.

Keywords: Human Rights, E-governance, Globalization, Civil Society, Digital Divide.

"Rapid changes and new developments in technology have improved our ability to communicate and spread the human rights message around the world. The fact that some racist groups have misused the Internet to spread repugnant hate speech needs to be addressed urgently. In considering this issue, however, we must keep in mind that the right of freedom of expression is a precious fundamental right - any attempt to restrict it must be approached with absolute care and considered within the strict parameters of human rights norms."

- Mary Robinson, High Commissioner for Human Rights

1. Introduction

Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) offer a number of new opportunities and challenges to the human rights community across the globe, and it is good to see that they are increasingly being addressed by human rights scholars, practitioners, organisations, commissions and activists. The Nehruvian vision of a vibrant India did materialize progress in atomic energy, space exploration, communications, defence, science and technology, agriculture, etc. But post-independence euphoria began vanishing as instruments of development began yielding sub-optimal results. Poverty, illiteracy and hunger, among others, kept revisiting (Human Rights issues) the country's galloping population with nauseating regularity, confounding planners and policy-makers alike. *Where do the faultlines lie?* Deficiencies were noticed in governance. Since the early 1990s, which incidentally coincide with the beginning of the economic reforms era in India, seven yard sticks were identified as measures of what came to be called as 'good governance'.

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These were: public sector management, accountability, legal and regulatory frameworks, transparency and information, human rights, participatory approaches, and military expenditure (related preconditions for project assistance by International Donor Institutions). I would like to highlight three important measures mentioned above: transparency and information, participatory approaches and human rights as far as my paper if concerned. It is important to understand the interdependency between transparency and information, participatory approaches and promotion, protection and processing of human rights. All the three are interdependent.

The 1992 development lending institution-induced reform agenda for governance stimulated a lot of introspection among decision-makers in India as elsewhere in the world. It was acknowledged that governance had to extend beyond conventional bureaucracies to involve citizens (irrespective of any sort of discrimination) and consumer groups at all levels actively, to empower and inform the public and disadvantaged groups, and to ensure service and programmes execution through autonomous elected bodies. With the coming in of globalization it is inevitable that we ignore the dynamics of ICTs and its influences. It would be our fallacy if we do so. Considering the relevance of ICTs towards better governance, I shall indulge in exploring the option of whether ICTs do play a role in understanding human rights? If yes, what are its advantages and disadvantages?

India is the largest democracy of the world. Its administrative set up is composed of the central government, state governments and local administration. To reach everybody in a diverse and highly populated country like India e-governance seems to be an appropriate mode of better governance. E-Governance has been introduced as a catalyst of change and development by the central, state and local governments to re-energize the administrative structures. The private sector, non-government organizations and rural sector have also taken recourse to e-Governance to lift their performance levels. The objective of the introduction of e-Governance has been to make the processes transparent, quantifiable, result-oriented and simple, and to make them function with greater speed. The paper examines various aspects of the application of e-Governance in the central and various state governments, non-government organizations and the rural sector in India. Besides examining the philosophy and agenda of e-Governance, the paper brings out the cost and benefits related to its application within the legal frame work. The paper highlights centralisation vs. decentralization dimensions in relation to e-Governance.

2. Theoretical Framework

The new paradigm we are talking about can be called - *New Public Management (NPM)* emerges as an important development in administrative theory. NPM emphasizes the role of public agencies in adopting private sector techniques in providing high quality services to citizens and advocates managerial autonomy in public management.

- NPM suggest that traditional output-oriented administration should be replaced by the process-oriented administration with emphasis on performance evaluation indicators to measure actual achievements and quality services. *The citizens are re-conceptualized as active consumers and not just passive recipients of public goods and services.*
- Organizational structures are being redesigned and hierarchies abandoned to create environments for more effective and productive managerial leadership. Significant here is that successful managerial performance needs to be backed up by motivated and focused human technological resources (Caiden, 1971).
- Personal responsibility and accountability is sought to be built into the production process. Public agencies are told to switch from cash accrual accounting and become more cost effective. There is a shift of general emphasis from policy to management with full cost consciousness before making any decisions (Bhattacharya, 2002).

- NPM is characterized by network society; the opportunity costs of alternative ways of organizing teams depend on the evolution of society and technological change. Hierarchies are not the most efficient forms of organization in a post-modern society where information is easily accessible and storable. The implication for public sector organization is to find a governance model which fits the theory of the networking society (Kooiman, 2003).
- Among the background conditions discussed above we can provide for the receptivity of the NPM philosophy, for which following could be mentioned:
  - Maturing of the public sector;
  - Growth of civil society;
  - Globalization: although the globalization wave derives its force first and foremost from the global market economy and the information revolution, it has clear implications for government operations.
  - Information Revolution: large government operation such as education, health and social security will be affected by technological change. The potential use of ICT is enormous in government where information is crucial, both in terms of quality and quantity. Public organizations can be managed with the full employment of the potentialities of the information revolution – the coming of E-governance. Organizational structure will be affected by the computerization of work processes, as tasks are redefined and new skills identified.

From above discussion it is evident that e-governance model fits into NPM theory of administration because, e-governance involves transformation of the organizational culture of the government. Recent authors argue that governments are mandated by the citizen and business demands to operate within new structures and parameters precipitated by Information Technology. Current demands require cross cutting services, which in turn require government to improve communication and interaction across traditional bureaucratic lines (Alexander & Grubbs, 1998). These new requirements, which fundamentally alter the nature of government, are made possible through the strategic use of information & communications technologies. Garsons (1999) has divided the theoretical frameworks of e-governance (e-gov) into four main areas: decentralization/democratization, normative/dystopian, socio-technical systems, and global integration theories. As far as this paper is concerned the first two suffice to explain basic variations in e-governance theory towards administrative efficiency. The democratization/decentralization theory of e-governance revolves around the progressive potential of Information & Communications technologies and focuses on the positive governmental advances associated with e-governance. Normative/dystopian theory emphasizes the high rate of conflict and failure associated with information technology application and counters the positivist progressivism of decentralization/democratization theory with realist view of inherent technological limits and contradictions (Figure 1).

Decentralization/democratization theory is the most commonly held orientation associated with e-governance. In the 1990s, the reinventing government movement sought to alter the core focus of government, moving from departmentalization and centralization to citizen-centric decentralization, much in contrast to the traditional Weberian model (Osborne, D & Gaebler, T, 1992). According to HO, 2002), the new paradigm mirrors many of the tenets of the reinventing government, including user control and customization, flexibility in service delivery, horizontal and vertical integration culminating in “one stop” shopping, and innovative leadership focused on the end user. We can say that this paradigm shift is precipitated by the advent of the ICTs (especially Internet), which provides government the ability to use technology to impact customers directly (especially poor citizens), instead of simply reengineering internal processes. The decentralization theory predicts that e-governance diffusion will escalate its benefits (access to information) to citizens and to the agencies themselves are demonstrated.

Having understood the indirect dynamics of ICTs towards Human Rights let us interrogate the following questions. What is the role of the ICTs in Human Rights? Does ICT create new divisions between rich and poor or does it intensify existing socio-economic divides? Does it have any direct role in enhancing the access to Human Rights or is it just a luxury that the people can ill afford? There are two opposing "opinion camps": those that consider ICT to be the panacea for protection, promotion and processing of Human Rights (democratization/decentralization theory) and those that claim that ICT has no reasonable role in poverty reduction as long as the basic needs of the poor are not met (normative/dysfunctional theory). The argument in this paper falls somewhere in between. It is argued that the ICT, if supported with the right policies and with cross-cutting and holistic approaches, will complement and strengthen other multi-sectoral efforts that are required for spread of Human Rights, including those meeting basic needs.

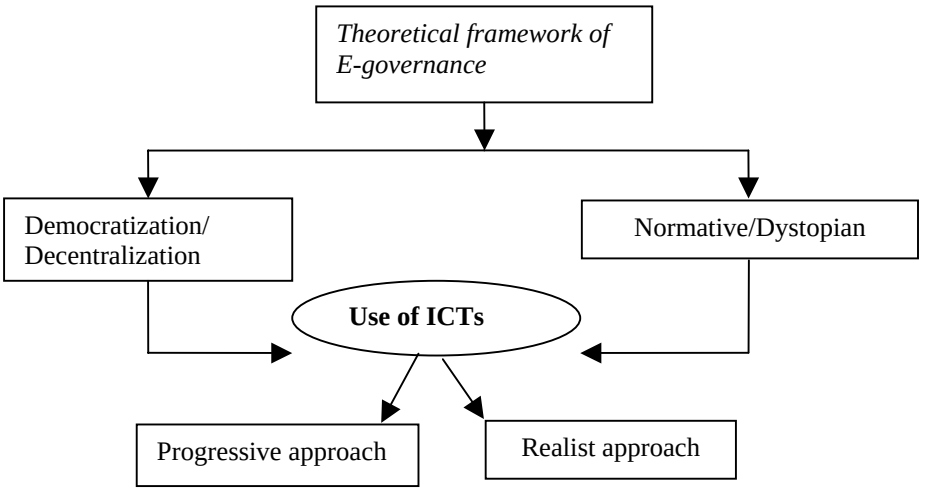

Figure 1: Technological limits and contradictions

3. Legal Dimensions

Having explored the significance of ICTs in e-governance it is important to analyse certain legal provisions enumerated in the country regarding. Human Rights and Judiciary are closely blended; in fact judiciary is the facilitator/protector/promoter of Human Rights in a democratic country like India. Following which understanding Law(s) is fundamental to understand the protection, promotion and processing of Human Rights trough ICTs.

3.1 Information Technology Act, 2000

India enacted its first cyber-law on the internet, the Information Technology Act, 2000. The Indian cyber-law has a limited focus; its three main objectives are enshrined in the preamble to the IT Act. The preamble of the IT Act states: An Act to provide legal recognition for transactions carried out by means of electronic data interchange and other means of electronic communication, commonly referred to as "electronic commerce", which involve the use of alternatives to paper-based methods of communication and storage of information, to facilitate electronic filling of documents with the Government agencies and further to amend the Indian Penal Code, the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, the Banker's Book Evidence Act, 1891 and the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto (Bannerjee, Inderjit, 2003). By means of such legal provisions, it is now possible that we can actually file, issue, grant or receipt by means of such electronic form as may be prescribed by the appropriate government.

3.2 The Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Act, 2006:

The above Act of Parliament received the assent of the President on the 13th September, 2006. The Act (Amendment) provides that, in Section 13 of the principal Act (1993), after sub-section (5), the following sub-section shall be inserted, namely:- "(6) Where the Commission considers it necessary or expedient so to do, it may by order, transfer any complaint filed or pending before it to the State Commission of the State from which the complaint arises, for disposal in accordance with provisions of this Act: Provided that no such complaint shall be transferred unless the same is one respecting which the State Commission has jurisdiction to entertain the same. (7) Every complaint transferred under sub-section (6) shall be dealt with and disposed of by the State Commission as if it were a complaint initially filed before it". (GOI, 2006)

It is important to contextualize our discussion of ICTs and Human Rights with this Act (2006) as this provides for legal transfer of any complaint filed or pending before the respective state governments (commissions) in order to dispose the complaints as per the Act (1993). The Amendment of the act (2006) has come in order to rectify the earlier dilemmas in the Act (1993). The Act (2006) also avoids duplicities, as once the complaint has been received from a State; usually it's the tendency of an individual to file a complaint in the apex authority (NHRC) as well, thus reducing the pressure on the Complaint Management System (CMIS) of NHRC. So the current Amended Act (2006) helps to avoid this, by not considering a complaint if it is already being field at a State level. Further we can also say that, the amended act (2006) indirectly obligates the State Governments to setup their Human Rights Commissions in order to expedite the process of re-addressal of human grievances.

4. Information Communication Technologies and Human Rights:

The convergence between telecommunications, broadcasting multimedia and information and communication technologies (ICTs) that are driving the development of the global 'Information Society' is responsible for the transformation of a variety of economic and political sectors, as well as the socio-cultural strata of nations around the world. The benefits of information and communication technologies (ICTs) lie not purely in the range of their functionality (See Table 1), but in the variety and versatility of their application. Much has been written about the potential of ICTs to 'revolutionize' society, particularly in the context of their role as catalysts of the 'Information Revolution'. This 'revolution' is often juxtaposed with its predecessor, the Industrial Revolution, usually for the purpose accentuating the idea that communication networks are as integral to the process of development as was the birth and development of industry in the 19th century. While it is the question of access that has risen to the forefront of development agendas in the context of the famed 'digital divide', much work remains to be done in analyzing and understanding how these technologies are utilized and *applied* to bring about expected revolutionary societal and economic changes and improvements.

Among the most important yet sensitive areas affected by ICTs are those of human rights and governance, thereby revealing the big question: what are the true benefits and changes that communications technologies can provide for *everyone*? While the conventional wisdom is that new technologies contribute to economic development, and that this in turn trickles down to the whole of global society, it is relevant to bear in mind that such diffusion depends on relatively equal patterns of income distribution (Senker, 2000), as well as a variety of other variables that are not necessarily prevalent in the developing world. The subject of how modern communications alter the way in which various entities of the private sector, the public sector and civil society interact has spurred much debate. More specifically, such debate targets the underlying theme of whether they are conducive to fundamental shifts in the distribution of power towards the dissolution of strong, centralized political hierarchies. In the context of this paper, ICTs include the workings of all digital communications networks (principally the Internet), wireless networks, and radio broadcast networks. Across different phases of policymaking and information dissemination, they can be applied in various forms as database technologies, decision support technologies, networking technologies,

and personal identification and tracking technologies.

One key to uncovering the complexities of the relationship between ICTs and social change – in a human rights context – may lie in the assessment of the degree of functional interactivity of a given technology (Table 2). "A relatively high level of functional interactivity of networked electronic media [as shown above to include Internet, telephone, and radio-communication] confirms the presumed suitability of those electronic media for multi-directional communication processes" (Koert, 2001), which support the idea that ICTs, in the process of empowering people to exchange information, may help to effectuate change by supporting decentralized, participatory development. Conversely, lower levels of functional interactivity are more likely to render a technology supportive of more centralized power structures. A similar type of analysis across communications media, as shown below in Table 3, emphasizes the interactivity element – in this case referred to as 'reciprocity'. The unit of analysis is a subjective measure of each technology's capacity to support an 'ordinary' individual's activities, with darker shading indicating greater capacity for reciprocity in each of the five major categories. E-mail unequivocally stands apart from its predecessors as being more conducive to reciprocity in communication (Kedzie, 1997). The aim of this table below is contrast and not precision.

Table 1: Functional interactivity of various ICTs

Medium		Functional Interactivity					Relative degree of functional interactivity
		Multi-directional	Participant Control	Supports exchange of roles	Possibility of Feedback	Nature of communication	
Networked electronic media	Telephone	Yes	Yes	Yes	Immediate	Synchronous or asynchronous	High
	Radio Communication	Yes	Yes	Yes	Immediate	Synchronous	High
	World Wide Web	Yes	Yes	Yes	Immediate or delayed	Synchronous	High
	Email	Yes	Yes	Yes	Immediate or delayed	Synchronous	High
Networked mass media	National TV	No	No	No	Limited, delayed	Synchronous	Low
	Local TV	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Synchronous	Low/ medium
	National Radio	No	No	No	Limited, delayed	Synchronous	Low
	Local Radio	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Synchronous	Low/ medium

Source: *Adapted from a model by R. Van Koert, 2001.*

The use of ICTs in the realm of human rights can be broken down broadly to four main realms whose level and quality of interaction - amongst themselves and with one another - has been vastly heightened as a result of the deployment of communications networks. Individuals, NGOs, national governments (including State Governments), and supranational institutions have all been empowered insofar as they have the means to effectively communicate their stories, agendas, laws and agreements, respectively and with maximum impact. Indeed, the ICTs like the Internet may facilitate the networking and mobilizing functions of many NGOs working across national borders, as a countervailing force to the influence of technocratic elites and government leaders running traditional international organizations, and may be even more effective as a force for human rights, providing a global platform for opposition movements challenging autocratic regimes and military dictatorships, despite government attempts to restrict access in certain countries (Ayres, 1999). The evolving relationship of each of civil society entities with one other – as enhanced and strengthened by ICTs – is significant to any analysis of governance.

This change and dynamics has contributed in many ways to the development of a new 'diplomacy of human rights, which highlights the alleged tension between power and morality, and which supersedes the predisposition of organizations like the UN to focus 'selective morality' on certain areas of the world over others. Whereas national governments and supranational institutions have long been positioned to guide, respectively, the formation of national/international policies through various well-oiled gears of public diplomacy – individuals and civil society representatives have not. A wide range of governments throughout the world continue to utilize a variety of tools, including licensing, limits on access to newsprint, control over government advertising, jamming, and censorship, to restrain independent voices. The growth of new, Internet-based media did help facilitate public access to a wide range of information, but some governments continued to develop means to monitor e-mail and Internet use and restrict access to controversial, political, news-oriented, and human rights web sites. Other governments have chosen to prohibit Internet access or limit it to political elites (U.S Department of State, 2000). For those who subscribe to a 'technological determinist' approach (Finnegean, 1988), these types of examples are indeed supportive of the idea that communications technologies are fundamental drivers in the transformation of society at every level – including social interaction between institutions and individuals.

The importance of general information sharing and more transparent and accessible knowledge management systems (typically private sector specializations that are now being transposed upon organizations of the public sector - *NPM*) are being emphasized through ICTs coordination in the promotion of humanitarian aid. Information gathering as far as 'human rights data' is concerned is in itself a tremendous challenge, for prior to the actual sharing of information between various organizations and networks arises the question of how to quantify and represent acts of violence. The idea that ICTs can help to avoid the duplication of work and enhance the organizational efficiency of those working in the field of humanitarian aid is only just beginning to be explored. The main impact of ICTs [and the internet] "… on democratic life concerns [their] ability to strengthen the public sphere by expanding the information resources, channels of electronic communication, and the networking capacity for many organized interest groups, social movements, NGOs, transnational policy networks, and political parties with the technical know-how and organizational flexibility to adapt to the new medium." (Norris, 2002)

5. Multiple Level s of ICTs operation towards Human Rights

Having referred to the use and importance of ICTs towards Human Rights in the previous chapter, it is important to the different levels of ICTs presence towards Human Rights. As a matter of fact ICTs provide for 'global public sphere'. We have to contextualize that Human Rights is a Public Good and it exists in a Public Sphere. It is this global public sphere which has to be understood at different levels in its specificity towards Protection, Promotion and Processing of Human Rights. The different levels which I would like to analyse the Human Rights activity would be four fold:

5.1 Individual Level

All individuals irrespective of any discrimination use ICTs. It is the responsibility of all of us who utilize ICTs to make sure that we use the tool of ICTs to Protect, Promote and Process (PPP) Human Rights and its violations. It is always said that it's the youth who are more aware about the innovations and fast accessibility of ICTs, so its matter of observation that the Youth of this country has to go ahead and deliver the best of ICTs. Globalization which is the propagator of ICTs across globe has influenced the Youth most. This globalization should be a boon not a bane to the humanity. Realizing the importance of the young population towards PPP of HR, its is also important that all other individuals like the Government Employees, Senior Citizens, and others to change their mind set from traditional (conservative) to more modern (progressive) mind set. *Changing with time is not a crime*. Individuals put together makes a group, groups together makes a community and community put together makes a society. Individual level should be an ernst beginning towards the role of ICTs towards Protection, Promotion and Processing of Human

Rights in societies where civilization lives.

5.2 State Level

India has a quasi-federal model of governance. In India we have State Human Rights Commissions (SHRCs) at the respective States (provinces). Hitherto there are around 17 states that have set-up SHRC's out of 29 States. However, Setting up of SHRCs is not obligatory on the part of the State governments and they are autonomous bodies. The problem here is most of the SHRCs have been set up in the recent past and thus have not, so far, developed systems and procedures. Other hurdles are financial constraints towards innovations and establishing systems.

What is the role of ICTs here at this level? For a quasi-federal kind of governance in India, e-governance comes in as an effective tool towards good governance. India has a diversity of states, no state in as same as the other, they are unique in all sense. Each state has to be dealt with respective State governments who understand it better than others. We have one central Human Rights Commission (NHRC). However, the SHRCs functions are not obligatory or under supervision of the NHRC. SHRC's are autonomous. It is a matter of fact that this diversity or gap between NHRC and SHRC can be filled in through e-governance, that is to say the use of ICTs in governance.

There should be a network between the State Human Rights Commissions (SHRCs) and NHRC. People discontented with the State government would like to approach the apex authority (according to them) NHRC. When they are discontented or unsatisfied with SHRCs action they move to NHRC leading to dual complaints from the same complainant; one at the State level and the other at the Central Level. This problem of duplicity further accumulates complaints and decreases efficiency as such. It is advisable to utilize the efficient tool of ICTs and create a network between the SHRCs and NHRC to access to complaints and other relevant information regarding NHRC and its activities. Some sought of SHRC*net* should be created to detect and avoid duplicity of complaint registration both at the SHRCs and at the NHRC. This facility can be operated through CMS Application Software if it is implemented otherwise it can also be made operational through NHRC website using the database located at NIC Head Quarter, New Delhi. We need to perform following activities: (a) Assessing and setting up the hardware requirements at site for each SHRC; (b) Commissioning of the package including the customisation at the users end; and (c) Training the personnel at the users end. The software package can be provided by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) team working at NIC shall provide the software support. The software package has been developed by the NIC with the domain knowledge provided by the NHRC. NIC has coverage in the entire country and can provide IT support as and when required at the SHRCs end. Having a SHRC*net* is an important innovation as it can help in providing time and cost effective working of the SHRC with NHRC. There would be increased coordination among the Human Rights organizations across the country. Thus ICTs have to be used to its fullest in order to achieve the above.

5.3 National Level

In India we have National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) at the National Level located at New Delhi. The NHRC is using ICTs (Computers) right since its inception in the year 1994. Initially it started with Complaint Monitoring System (COMMONS) developed by NIC in Oracle 6.0 under UNIX platform. This was using 10 dumb terminals connected with one server. There was substantial increase in the number of cases registered with the Commission. The Commission consulted McKinsey and they submitted their system study report in December 1996. These suggestions were incorporated by the NIC in the COMMONS application software and this upgrade was known as CMIS. The Commission is receiving complaints @ 70,000 per year approx. In order to cope up with the increasing number of complaints being received, the commission required a re-engineering and rationalization of the process of various divisions of NHRC and their computerization in order to speed up the complaint disposal process and to award speedy relief to the complainants/victims. In order to over- come these problems, NHRC decided to go for

state-of-art Compliant Management System (CMS) from 25th August, 2007. This new work environment has increased productivity substantially; thereby helped organization in handling the disposal of cases more efficiently. In order to find out the status of the complaint the victims/complainant can visit the facilitation counter (MADAD) in the NHRC campus. The IT setup at NHRC was declared best among the Commonwealth countries Human Rights Commissions in the workshop on "ICT in Commonwealth Countries Human Rights Commissions" held at Johannesburg, South Africa from 12-14 March, 2002.

It would be better if network through ICTs can be set up between NHRC and SHRCs so that they can share their information about the complaints registered with them, using one Human Rights Complaints Network (HRCnet) facility. This HRCNet shall hold all the complaints registered at all the SHRCs and NHRC along with actions taken by the concerned Commissions as a central repository. Further the Commission can avail certain benefits like; orders passed by the Commission (NHRC) can be referred as case law by others (esp. SHRCs), Uniform information dissemination, and better analysis of Human Rights violations. There is no doubt that we desperately need an *"internet (information) - revolution"* towards Human Rights in India today.

With recent amendment in *The Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Act, 2006* the Act provides that, in Section 13 of the principal Act (1993), after sub-section (5), the following sub-section shall be inserted, namely:- " sub-section (6), Where the Commission considers it necessary or expedient so to do, it may by order, transfer any complaint filed or pending before it to the State Commission of the State from which the complaint arises, for disposal in accordance with provisions of this Act: Provided that no such complaint shall be transferred unless the same is one respecting which the State Commission has jurisdiction to entertain the same. Considering the above it would be more relevant and intelligent that networking SHRCs and NHRC.

5.4 NGO's/Civil Society Stake Holders

I would like to argue that, civil society plays an important role in promoting, protecting and processing Human Rights. My focus here would be more on processing of human rights movements in consultation with NGOs, as this phenomenon has been seen increasingly in India recently [NHRC does have a association with core group of NGOs]. Networking these NGOs through ICTs with respective Governmental Human Rights Organizations is important both at local and global level, because NGOs are effective in reaching people and Governments have legitimacy from people. What is Civil Society and why is it important. Civil society includes, NGOs, Women's organizations, research institutes, libraries, organizations of Indigenous people, trade unions, universities and others. Civil society is a critical to tap into and building on the expertise and experience of potential partners towards promoting, processing and protecting Human Rights.

Networking the Civil Society especially NGOs, Universities, Libraries and other active centres with National Human Rights Commission is the need of the hour. The only way to do so which is time and cost effective is through use of ICTs. Dissemination of information or programs of NHRC and the SHRCs to the local civil society organization increases the legitimacy and concern for Human Rights promotion and protection. A diverse country like India it is difficult or impossible to reach each and every individual. The best possible alternative can to use the tool of ICTs (which is highly used today, thanks to globalisation) in order to reach the maximum individuals.

6. Concluding Remarks

It is important to highlight that, there are two camps in the arena of e-governance: cyber-optimists and cyber-pessimists. Cyber-optimists are hopeful that the development of interactive services, new channels of communication, and efficiency gains from digital technologies will contribute towards the revitalization of

the role of government executives in representative democracies, facilitating communications between citizen and the state. In contrast, cyber-pessimists express doubts about the capacity of governments to adapt to the new environment effectively and with positive result insofar as the questions of access and digital divide have repercussions for political participation. According to optimists, however, the Internet serves multiple functions for organizations fighting for human rights and democracy, including email lobbying of elected representatives, public officials, and policy elites; networking with related associations and organizations; mobilizing organizers, activists and members using action alerts, newsletters and emails; raising funds and recruiting supporters; and communicating their message to the public via the traditional news media. The Internet is most useful for trans-national advocacy networks, exemplified by diverse campaigns such as the movement against the production and sale of land mines, demonstrators critical of the WTO meeting in Seattle, environmentalists in opposition of genetically modified foods, and anti-sweatshop campaigners. Indeed, see information technologies as the "backbone of NGO collaboration."(Wally N'Dow, 2000). Finally, it is important for us to realize that a comprehensive human rights information system (networking) through ICTs towards promotion, protection and processing of Human Rights is need of the hour. This comprehensive information system requires collaboration among not only the government agencies of human rights, but also cooperation with UNO and its agencies, with diverse elements of civil society – NGOs, Universities, and organizations of indigenous peoples, research institutes, libraries and others. In India in order to achieve this we need to have a reformative mind set, which would help us in reforming our Administration from traditional bureaucratic (hierarchical) to New Public Management with Decentralization/Democratisation model.

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