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H. No. 5-11-559, Srinagar Colony, Naimnagar,
Hanmakonda, Warangal- 506009. Telangana State (India)
Website: www.spwingo.org/www.spwijournal.com
Email: spwi.ngo.2014@gmail.com / devathsuresh@gmail.com
editor@spwijournal.com Ph: 9959026635
spwijournalforsocialwelfare@gmail.com

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editor@spwijournal.com Ph: 9959026635
spwijournalforsocialwelfare@gmail.com



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E-GOVERNANCE AND CORRUPTION – A STUDY



M. Sambashivaiah

Researchers, Department of Public Administration,
Osmania University,
Hyderabad, TS

Abstract: *E-governance is a new paradigm of public administration, displacing the traditional, and paper, bureaucratic paradigm, which, according to Max Weber, is described as “centralization, specialization, standardization and routine”. The e-governance paradigm is based on one-window services, where public services are carried out electronically. Thus simplifying, standardizing, and anonymizing the public services to citizens, making them much more mobile and transparent. The transition from the industrial to the post-industrial stage of development leads to the transformation of the whole life of society, including the economic, social, and political areas. Answering the question of how relations between citizens and the state are changing, we can confidently say that e-governance enhances transparency, accountability, the gap between government and society and the anti-corruption component. This paper explains the status of corruption in India and Telangana and focused on the role of E-governance in corruption in India and Telangana.*

Keywords: *E-governance, Corruption, Controlling of Corruption, Role of E-governance, Telangana*

Introduction

In the late 90s, the increased deployment of information technologies by the government led to the foundation of e-Governance throughout the world. With the advent of the World Wide Web (www), people began to use the internet and mobiles in large numbers. They have started expecting more and more information and services online from governments and corporate organizations to further their civic, professional and personal lives. Thus, creating abundant evidence that the new ‘e-citizenship’ is taking hold. In 2002, The UN addressing on e-Governance and signifies five categories for measuring progress towards e-Governance.

1. Emerging Web presence: one or a few websites offering static information
2. Enhanced Web presence: growing numbers of web pages offering dynamic information
3. Interactive Web presence: exchanges between users and governments (electronic forms)
4. Transactional Web presence: services such as purchases (licenses) and payments (taxes)
5. Fully integrated Web presence: a combination of information, exchanges, and services.

Since then, nations around the world began to develop their planning and strategies regarding e-Governance. In the last few decades, e-Governance has been widely used by countries throughout the world.

Around the late 90s, IT projects related to governance began to make their mark in the USA. The primary objects of these projects were to "Deliver service to the citizens". The USA Government conducted the National Performance Review (NPR) which suggested Reengineering the government through the employment of Information and Technology (February 1997) and it was for the first time the Federal government of the USA addressing about e-government. In July 2001, The USA (United States of America) Government has initiated the process of 'Expanding Electronic Government' as a part of the President's Management Agenda. The objective was to make use of information technology to eliminate wasteful federal spending, reduce governmental paperwork and improve government response time to citizens. The e-Government Act of 2002 emphasized the enhancement of website features and improved customer services. On 31st April 2002, the US government launched another program "EZ Tax filling" which aimed at - Filling and refunding taxes online, the initial deployment of industry partnership free e-filling solution for the 2003 season. Another ambitious project was developed by the US government on 1st July 2002. It was known as "E-Authentication" which aimed at the Initial authentication gateway prototype, Full deployment The "Federal Assets Sales" project started on 31st March 2003 to develop pilot business integration and to Re-host the federal sales. In 2009 the US government launched Data.gov to make more data available to the public. By utilizing the services Citizens can also make apps, websites etc. Presently the federal government of the USA has a broad framework for Government Citizen (G2C) technology to enhance citizen access to government information and services. Likewise, the United Kingdom government has launched several projects which provide e-Governance services to its Citizens. The transformational government-enabled by technology strategy published in November 2005 set the goal for e-governmental development throughout the country. The Cornwall Electronic Health Record Pilot project was started in April 2000. It provided services like-Connect with all General Practitioners to NHS net (national-

level NHS Virtual Private Network or intranet), 24-hour emergency care record, and Common information architecture The Plymouth Bus Project was developed by Plymouth City Council to undertake a comprehensive study of the bus network and propose initiatives for its future development and investment. The project was completed in January 2009. The Integrating Transport project was started in South West Hertfordshire. It was completed in October 2008 the goal of the project was to prepare a sustainable transport strategy for implementation over the next ten years. The government of New Zealand produced its e-Government Vision Document in May 2000. Since then, an 'e-Government Unit' was established by the State Services Commission to look after public affairs. France had the oldest history of e-governance. The release of "Minitel Terminal" in 1984 provides citizens and companies with to access several public services and information remotely. But later after a long period, in 1998, e-governance was launched as a government policy. France's government announced the year 2012 as "Digital France". In the Middle East, Jordan has developed an e-Governance system for its citizens since 2002. Likewise, in Saudi Arabia, Iran has also developed an e-Governance of their own. Asian countries are not far behind in respect of providing E-Governance services to their citizens. Taiwan has a top-class online motor vehicle service system which provides 21 applications and payment services to its citizens. South Korea's Home Tax service (HTS) provides citizens with 24 hours online services such as Tax Declaration. Singapore's Citizen Portal is an organized single access point to government information and services. Countries like Malaysia, China, and Thailand have used advanced technologies to provide e-Governance to their citizens.

Implementation of e-Governance projects in developing countries helps people in accessing government schemes. In 2003, Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) was launched by the Government of Myanmar to provide easy access between the government and the city's citizens via the internet, to reduce paper usage, reduce the city budget, build the city's fibre ring, to provide timely public information, to store public data etc. The Nepal government developed their e-governance concept, planning and infrastructure with extensive support from the government of Korea. The government of Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh has their e-governance strategy and planning. Different web portals have been developed by the authorities to provide easy access of people to government activities.

E-Governance in India

The history of e-Governance goes back to the 1970s when the government of India established the Department of Electronics, followed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) in 1977. Till the 1980s, several government officials used computers, but their applications were restricted to word processing. Gradually computerization process focused on the development of in-house government applications in the areas of defence, economic monitoring, planning and the deployment of Information and technology to manage data-intensive functions related to elections, census, tax

administration etc. The first department to make wide use of e-Governance was the tax department at state and union levels to make their internal working more efficient.

With the formation of The National Satellite-Based Computer Network (NICNET) in 1987, the e-Governance agenda in India gained momentum. In a later period, District Information Systems of the National Informatics Centre (DISNIC) was launched and state governments offered free hardware and software to computerize all district offices. In a later period along with the centre, state governments also developed their e-Governance projects. Some important projects are given below:

The scheme of 'Computerization of Land Records' was started in the year 1990-91 in Haryana. It helps the rural masses in getting their computerized land ownership certificates, tracking any documents of the land of the circle office, updating etc.

'Gyandoot', an internet-based mechanism of Dhar district Administration of Madhya Pradesh started on 1st January 2000 provides the rural people with various information e.g. Income certificate, public grievance redressal, BPL (Below Poverty Level) family list, Domicile certificate, daily agricultural commodity rates (Mandi Bhav), Rural Hindi email, Rural Hindi newspaper etc.

The 'Akshaya project' of Kerala was started in 2002. It involves setting up around 5000 multipurpose community technology centres called Akshaya e- Kendra across Kerala. Run by private entrepreneurs, each e-Kendra is set up within 2-3 kilometres of every household; catering to the requirements of around 1000-3000 families to make available the power of networking and connectivity to the common man. Akshaya is a social and economic catalyst focusing on the various facets of e-learning, e-transaction, e-governance, information and communication.

In Kerala, the project 'FRIENDS' (Fast, Reliable, Instant, Efficient Network for the Disbursement of Services) acted as a multiple agency bill collection system or in other words provides citizens with the means to pay taxes and other financial dues to the State Government. The project was launched in Thiruvananthapuram in June 2000 and now it is operated in all 14 districts of Kerala.

The 'BHOO MI Project' of Karnataka started in 2002. It is an online service delivery mechanism which also manages land records. Under the BHOO MI project, there has computerized 20 million records of land ownership of 6.7 million farmers in the state.

Since 2004, the 'E-Seva' project of Andhra Pradesh is designed to provide online services to the citizens/customers regarding by connecting them to the respective government departments and providing required information.

The 'Lokvani' is a public-private partnership project at Sitapur District in Uttar Pradesh which was initiated in November 2004. It helps the people to interact with the government without a physical visit to any government office regarding the handling of grievances, land record maintenance and providing a mixture of essential services.

The 'E-Mitra' Project was started in Jaipur city of Rajasthan in October 2005. It facilitates the urban and rural public by providing them with various government departmental services through Lokmitra-Janmitra Centers/Kiosks.

The above-mentioned e-Governance initiatives have created the base for the smooth running of e-Governance in India. But a united programme is not developed yet to assist the e-Governance nationwide. To deal with this aspect central government has taken major initiatives. The 11th report of the administrative reform commission titled- "Promoting e-Governance-The Smart Way Forward" has imitated the process of setting the base of e-Governance nationwide. The final report was submitted on 20th December 2008. To achieve the goal set by this commission, the "National e-Governance Plan" was formulated by the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DEITY) and the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances. The Government of India has allocated the subject of 'e-Governance' to The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances under the second schedule to the Government of India Allocation of Business Rules 1961. The department has been entrusted with the role to promote e-Governance activities in consonance with the overall national objectives and priorities. This Task mainly involves conceptualization and overall coordination for governance-related issues in collaboration with the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DEITY) for technical expertise.

In the initial stage, The Government of India approved the NeGP, comprising 27 Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) and 10 components on 18th May 2006.

E-Governance in Telangana

Information Technology opens up tremendous opportunities to provide basic government services to a much broader segment of the population at the optimal quality, time, place and cost. The Government of Telangana is determined to leverage its strength in IT to provide anytime, anywhere citizens services.

1. Mee Seva Portal
2. Citizen Service with a Difference e-Seva
3. Telangana State Portal
4. TS Online
5. E-Procurement
6. CFST- Transport Department Services
7. TSSWAN- TS State Wide Area Network
8. TS State-Wide Video Conference
9. SoFTNET
10. e-Return – VAT eReturn

11. CDSC – Online issue of statutory Forms of CT (Commercial Taxes) Department
12. MGNREGS – Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
13. e-Suvidha – Complete Application for Municipalities
14. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in e-Governance Projects

Corruption

Corruption is an age-old phenomenon and can be seen everywhere nowadays. It is like cancer in public life, which has not become too rampant and perpetuated overnight, but over a course of time. The word corruption means destruction, ruining or spoiling a society or nation. A corrupt society is characterized by immorality and a lack of fear or respect for the law. It is the abuse of public power for private gain. Corruption comes under many different guises like bribery, extortion, fraud, and embezzlement. misappropriations of public goods, nepotism (favouring family members for jobs and contracts) cronyism and influence pending.

Corruption has been defined in many different ways, each lacking in some aspect. A few years ago, the question of definition absorbed a large proportion of the time spent on discussion of corruption at conferences and meetings. However, like an elephant, even though it may be difficult to describe, it is generally not difficult to recognize when observed. Unfortunately, the behaviour is often difficult to observe directly because typically acts of corruption do not take place in broad daylight.

According to Oxford Dictionary - “perversion of the destruction of integrity in discharge of public duties by bribery or favour is called corruption.”

Webster’s Dictionary defines corruption as “inducement to wrong by improper or unlawful means as bribery.”

The most popular and simplest definition of corruption is given by the world bank. According to this definition corruption is that it is the “abuse of public power for private benefit”. From this definition, it should not be concluded that corruption cannot exist within private sector activities. Especially in large private enterprises, this phenomenon exists, for example in procurement or even in hiring. It also exists in private activities regulated by the government.

Corruption in India

Corruption is widespread in India. India has been ranked 85 out of 180 countries in Transparency International’s 2021 corruption perception index (CPI). Corruption has taken the role of a pervasive aspect of Indian Politics and Bureaucracy. In recent years so many major scandals involving high-level public officials have shaken the Indian public services. These scandals suggest corruption has become a pervasive

aspect of the Indian political and bureaucratic system. Some of the major scams are the following:

| | |
|----|--|
| 1 | Coal Allotment Scam (Cost – 186000 Crores) |
| 2 | 2 G Spectrum Scam (Cost – 176000 Crores) |
| 3 | Commonwealth Games (CWG) Scam (Cost – 70000 Crores) |
| 4 | Mega black money laundering Scam (Cost – 70000 Crores) |
| 5 | Adarsh Housing Scam (Cost – 18978 Crores) |
| 6 | Stamp Paper Scam (Cost – 20000 Crores) |
| 7 | Boforce Scam (Cost – 400 million) |
| 8 | Fodder Scam (Cost – 950 Crores) |
| 9 | Hawala Scam (Cost – 8000 Crores) |
| 10 | Satyam Scam (Cost – 14000 Crores) |
| 11 | Stock Market Scam (Cost – 3500 Crores) |
| 12 | Madhu Koda Scam (Cost – 4000 Crores) |

Nature of Corruption

Under the Indian constitution, the government consists of three branches: the legislative, the executive and the judiciary with a clear mandate for the independent functioning of each branch. For good governance, each of these units must function with integrity and efficiency. The legislators are elected representatives of the people and are responsible for making laws. The executive branch consists of ministers, bureaucrats and the whole government machinery, which is responsible for the implementation of laws made up of legislative assemblies. The judiciary acts as an impartial watchdog to see if the people are governed as per the law. It lacks the power to frame any law, it can only interpret the laws passed by the lawmakers under the constitutional framework and give its verdicts. But when corruption invades, governance begins to degrade implying a loss of integrity and efficiency. Now - a - days corruption is widespread in every segment of the Indian government system and politics.

The behaviour of Indian legislators both at the union and in the state leaves a lot to be desired. Every time they act motivated by personal gain. Corruption in the assemblies as seen from this perspective implies floor crossing, the case for a vote taking money or other benefits to ask questions, and framing rules under the influence of big corporate houses at the cost of common people. The criminalization of politics is yet another fact of corruption in the current parliament. These are over a quarter of MPs with criminal records. Many with serious charges against them. It also highlights an area where electoral reforms are urgently needed so that criminals don't enter the parliament or state assemblies.

In the executive branch, ministers are placed at top of the hierarchy. They are responsible for making policies for the public because the public trusts them and elected by votes to make government. In a recent analysis, we have seen that the level of corruption in ministers is highest. 2 G spectrum scam, coal allotment scam, commonwealth games scam, fodder scam etc. are the best examples of it.

In the Indian parliamentary system, the responsibility of executing the policies made by the government at the ground level is taken hand over by the bureaucracy. But the report card of the Indian bureaucracy is also not very flattering. Bureaucratic corruption in India thrives on red tape, complicated procedures and discretionary power. Governance in India is characterized by a lack of transparency in rules. Complicated procedures and a bureaucracy that enjoys broad discretionary power. According to a recent analysis of reports of bribery demands in India conducted by trace international was published in January 2009, 90% of demand for bribes came from government officials of which over 65% was for avoiding harassment, 50% of bribery was for timely delivery of services to which the individuals were already entitled, about 10% were meant to provide any advantage. Bureaucratic corruption pervades the Indian administration system with widespread practices of bribery, nepotism and misuse of official positions and resources.

Independence of the judiciary is guaranteed by the constitution of India. But corruption is also rampant in Indian courts. According to Transparency International, judicial corruption in India is attributable to factors such as "delays in the disposal of cases, shortage of judges, and complex procedure, all of which are exacerbated by a preponderance of new laws." Almost 3% of respondents in India consider the judiciary to be corrupt.

Causes of Corruption in India

Corruption is a global phenomenon and it is omnipotent. It has progressively increased and is now rampant in our society. Corruption in India has wings, not wheels. As the nation grows, the corrupt also grow to invent new methods of cheating the government and the public. The causes of corruption are many and complex. The following are some other causes of corruption:

- 1 The emergence of a political elite which believes in interest-oriented rather than nation-oriented programmes and policies.
- 2 Artificial scarcity created by people with malevolent intentions wrecks the fabric of the economy.
- 3 Corruption is caused as well as increased because of the change in the value system and ethical qualities of men who administer. The old ideals of morality, services and honesty are regarded as anachronistic.

- 4 Tolerance of people towards corruption, the complete lack of intense public outcry against corruption and the absence of a strong public forum to oppose corruption allow corruption to reign in our people.
- 5 The vast size of the population coupled with widespread illiteracy and the poor economic infrastructure led to endemic corruption in public life.
- 6 In a highly inflationary economy, low salaries of government officials compel them to resort to corruption. Graduates from Indian institutes of management with no experience draw a far handsome salary than what government secretaries draw.
- 7 Complex laws and procedures deter common people from seeking help from the government.
- 8 Elution time is a time when corruption is at its peak. Big industrialists fund politicians to meet the high cost of election and ultimately to seek personal favour. Bribery by politicians buys influences and bribery by politicians buys votes. To get elected, politicians bribe poor, illiterate people.

Consequence of Corruption

Corruption is as much a moral as a development issue. It can distort entire decision-making processes on an investment project and other commercial transactions, and the very social and political fabric of societies. In India corruption is like cancer to society. It is destroying the Indian economic, democratic and political system.

Corruption reduces public revenue and increases public spending. It thus, contributes to larger fiscal deficits, making it more difficult for the government to run a sound fiscal policy. Corruption is likely to increase income inequality because it allows well-positioned individuals to take advantage of government activity at the cost of the rest of the population. Corruption distorts markets and the allocation of resources because it reduces the ability of the government to impose necessary regulatory controls and inspections to correct market failures. It acts as an arbitrary tax and reduces the fundamental role of the government, and the legitimacy of the market economy and increases poverty.

India is the largest democratic country in the world. According to the fundamental corruption of democracy Indian constitution provides that no taxation can be charged without permission of the legislature. The money yielded by the taxation process is the precious wealth of the public. But black money is generated through corruption. Black money is like oxygen for corruption. According to an international report much more amount of black money is deposited in foreign banks. If its money will be taken reversed in India then all the foreign debt can be removed and after the much will be kept out that about 20000/- rupees gain by every Indian or if all the black money will be taken reversed then the budget of India can be made without any tax for next 30 years. This black money is destroying our democratic system.

Politically, corruption increase injustice and disregard for the rule of law. Basic human rights and freedom come under threat as key judicial decisions are based on the extent of corrupt bribes given to court officials rather than on the innocence or guilt of the parties concerned. Police investigations and arrests may be based on political victimization or personal vendettas rather than on solid legal grounds. Commenting on the socio-political consequence of corruption the supreme court of India observed that corruption in a civilized society was a disease like cancer. If not detected in time it was sure to turn the polity malignant leading to “disastrous consequences”.

Highly Corrupted Government Departments in India

Most corruption in India is related to property registration and land matters. A maximum of 26% of bribery cases are related to this department.

Property Registration and Land Matters: Experts believe that in many states of India, there is a big reason for not having consolidation and the possession of land papers in the name of forefathers. The second reason is the rapid rise in property prices. From big cities to small cities, cases related to land fraud continue to come up.

Police: The police are second in the case of corruption and bribery. 19% of bribery cases are related to this department.

Municipal council: The Municipal Corporation is also not behind in the matter of taking bribes. 13% of bribery cases are related to this department. A person from Patna, the capital of Bihar, said that he had been trying for months to get his house map, but he was given a round of office for months after talking about today. Eventually, after giving money to the employee, his work was done.

Electricity Department: 3% of the people involved in the survey have said to give a bribe to the electricity department. Since the introduction of prepaid meters, there has been a decrease in corruption cases in this department, but the issue of connecting and cutting connections continues with money.

Transport office: 13% of the people involved in the survey have said to bribe in the transport office. Experts say that the transport department employees take a bribe for work from giving vehicle passes on the highway to making driver’s licenses in the office.

Tax department: 8% of the people involved in the survey said to give bribes to the tax department. The bribery in the tax department can be gauged from the fact that the Modi government at the centre is forcibly retiring by taking action against the tax officials accused of corruption.

Water department: 5% of the people said that they have given bribes to the water department. At the same time, 13% of people have said to give bribes to other departments.

Survey people: 1,90,000 people from 248 districts of 20 states participated in the 'India Corruption Survey 2019'. According to the survey, 51% of Indians have been given a bribe once in the last 12 months.

More corruption in these states: Rajasthan, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand and Punjab have the highest corruption in India.

Less corruption in these states: There is less corruption in Delhi, Haryana, Gujarat, West Bengal, Kerala, Goa and Odisha. The overall level of corruption has decreased by 10% in 2019 across India as compared to 2018.

Corruption in Telangana

According to the report of India Corruption Survey 2019, about 67% of citizens of Telangana who participated in the survey admitted to paying a bribe to get their work done, out of which 56% gave bribes several times (directly or indirectly) while 11% paid bribes once or twice (directly or indirectly). 11% said they got work done without paying a bribe. In terms of authority to which residents of Telangana gave bribes, 40% gave bribes to property registration and land issues while 33% paid off the Municipal Corporation. 7% paid a bribe to the police and 20% paid bribes to others (Electricity Board, Transport Office, Tax Office, etc.).

E-Governance as A Tool to Reduce the Corruption

E-governance policies are used to provide the best services to the citizens, create more transparency and reduce corruption. Now the governments have to choose to go online in departments such as customs, income tax, sales tax and property tax which are highly corrupt and citizens have to interface with these departments. E-governance introduces competition which improves services level and reduces corruption. All the E-governance application focuses on a single objective which is to reduce corruption.

E-Governance Policies Against Corruption

Corruption considered to the extent that increased transparency, accountability and predictability (of rules and procedures) are made priorities, e- governance may offer a weapon against corruption. Different actions can be taken by e-governance to reduce corruption. Many governments choose the entire department must be online like customs, income tax, sales tax, and property tax. Every service of government must be delivered online to every citizen all over the country. E-governance can lead to centralized data which can be used for improving audit and analysis. Each decision can be traceable which is useful for exposure of wrongdoing things and fear of embarrassment can be a deterrent to corrupt practices. E-governance introduces competition which improves service levels and reduces corruption. Take strict actions for complaints of citizens that submitted against corrupt practices. The information is presented in a manner that leads to transparency of rules and their application in specific decisions, increasing

accountability by building the ability to trace decisions, and actions to individual civil servants representing the successive stage to counter corruption.

E-governance, however, does not guarantee the end of corruption. Officials who master technology-empowered processes can find new opportunities for rent-seeking. Under such circumstances, e-governance may simply cause an inter-generational shift in corruption toward younger, more tech-literate officials. One especially sensitive issue, right from the start, is whether fighting corruption should be part of the e-governance vision. Each society must answer that question for itself. If fighting corruption is included in the vision, the next key question is when to announce the anti-corruption goal to the public. If fighting corruption is publicly announced as a major part of the e-governance agenda, it could help build coalitions and public pressure for anti-corruption results. However, publicity too early in the e-governance process runs the risk of causing fear and resistance from corrupt officials, who are likely to exert negative pressure even upon their uncorrupted colleagues. Another option is to not publicize the anti-corruption goals of an e-governance program but rather “sell” e-governance (especially within the government) as a program to accomplish other goals such as improving government services, increasing the attractiveness of the country for investment, reducing costs to the public/business or improving the competitiveness of the local private sector. Given the sensitivity of these issues, the involvement of non-government stakeholders in the discussion is important.

E-Governance-based Strategies to control Corruption in India

E-DISHA (Electronic Delivery of Integrated Services of Haryana to All): Haryana Government has started several government e-services to the citizen under one roof called E-DISHA Kendra in each district. It was initiated in March 2006. E-DISHA is a web-based service. All these services are strictly for a citizen of Haryana. These services are given across the counter and reduced the time gap for getting the service very significantly. A helpdesk has been setup at each e-DISHA Kendra to guide the users. Before the establishment of E-Disha Kendras, citizens have to run from pillar to post to get the services which largely depend upon the availability of the dealing hand. Citizens even didn't know where to go and whom to contact for those services. He has to spend a lot of time & money on transportation etc. to avail of these services. There was no defined timeline by which he could be able to receive these services or respond to his grievance. Hence a large number of touts were used to exploit the citizens. No computerized MIS was available for decision-making. Now citizen has direct access to these services. The middlemen/ exploitation/corruption has been removed from the system. The services include various kinds of Certificates issuance, Driving License related services, Vehicle registration-related services, Nakal of RoR, Arm Licenses related services, Social Welfare schemes applications acceptance services, jobs providing etc. The time-bound service delivery has resulted in improving the efficiency in the delivery of the services.

Administrative Vigilance Commission: In 1955, the Administrative Vigilance Commission was created within the Ministry of Home Affairs (later located within the Department of Personnel & Training) with the responsibility to provide direction and coordinate the various efforts of the Ministries to deal with corruption.

Chief Vigilance Commission (CVC) Website: CVC is the most inventive e-governance-based success of a government department to control corruption in the government. The website guides the citizens on the procedure to be followed to lodge complaints without fear of retaliation. In 1964, as per the approval of the Santhanam Committee or Committee on Prevention of Corruption, Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) was set up. Along with the CVC two other institutions at the Union (federal) level are established i.e., individual vigilance units in each of the Ministries and Departments of the Government of India, central public enterprises and other autonomous organizations and the Central Bureau of Investigations (CBI). The CVC advises the Government of India on all matters about the maintenance of integrity in administration and supervises the CBI and other vigilance administration agencies. The CBI is the principal investigative agency of the central government in all anti-corruption matters. Other information on the website includes the list of nominated officers from different departments who are trusted with the responsibility of taking the complaints and the corruption statistics published.

Customs Online: This is an e-government project of the central government (Government of India). The Customs department was perceived as one of the most corrupt departments even by Indian standards. The government of India has introduced online functioning in all 23 customs offices all over the country. The process has been re-engineered and the number of stages of processing in imports has been reduced from 18 to 6 and in exports from 15 to 5. The use of digital signatures and payment gateways, E-filing of customs documents for imports and exports have been brought in.

Bhoomi (Karnataka): Bhoomi, is an ICT-based e-governance project from Government to Citizen implemented by Karnataka, a state in southern India. Nearly 20 million records of land ownership of 6.7 million farmers in the state have been computerized. Previously, farmers had to seek out the village accountant to get a copy of the record of rights, tenancy and crops (RTC)- a certificate needed for many tasks such as obtaining bank loan verification and government pensions. Before this e-governance project became operational, the accountant maintains a record of 9000 villages, and crop survey is 3 times a year and this data was printed back to RTC. There was no accountability or transparency in the process of providing that service. The long-time taken by an accountant from 3 to 30 days and time also depends upon a range of bribes. But in the BHOOMI project, a printed copy of RTC can be obtained online by just entering the name or plot number. To provide these services 180 kiosks are established and a fee of Rs. 15. A farmer can check the status of a mutation

application on a touch screen provided on a pilot basis in three of the computerized kiosks. Many efforts at the computerization of land records in India have failed in past. BHOOMI succeeded because there was a supporter in the departmental head who worked a 15-hour day for 12 months, devoting 80% of his time to the project.

Computer-aided Administration of Registration Department (CARD, Andhra Pradesh): Computer-aided Administration of Registration Department (CARD) is one of the major successful projects of e-governance to reduce corruption in registration procedure in AP. In the manual system, there are 387 registration offices in AP. So, the offices are heavily loaded with work, with a total number of registrations running into 120,000,000 documents a year. There is no transparency and guidelines for all processes. The conservative system of registration was burdensome and included 13 steps determining the value of the property, calculating the stamp duty, getting the legal document written, verification by sub-registrar, copying the document, posting entries into the register etc. Even a person selling a small piece of land had to go through multiple agencies like stamp vendors, document writers, registration agents (middlemen) and registration offices. Each step and each person in the process caused and contributed to corruption. CARD project aimed to establish a corruption-free, citizen interface, fast and transparent registration system. The first functioning was started in 1988 but not with much growth. A second study was conducted in 1996 and the pilot project started functioning in September 1997. With the success of the pilot project, this project was extended to 212 registration offices. At present CARD has been made operational at more than 300 sub-registrar offices in Andhra Pradesh. After the implementation of CARD, the time for registration has come down from 1 to 7 days to 1 hour, issuing hindrance certificates from 1 to 5 days to 10 minutes, and copies from 1 to 3 days to 10 minutes. Document writing, which used to take several days, could now be completed in 30 minutes and the issue of valuation certificates, which used to take 1 complete day, now take less than 10 minutes. The most significant achievement of CARD is the abolition of middlemen and organized corruption.

E-Seva: E-Seva project was implemented by the Andhra Pradesh government on 25 Aug 2001. In a manual era, the provision of these services involved running around a large number of offices, petty bureaucratic corruption and generally resulted in a lot of wasted time for citizens. The aim of E-Seva (electronic service) is to provide citizen services like payment of utility bills, taxes, registration of births and deaths, issue of birth/death certificates, registration of applications for passports, filing sales tax returns, and also Business to consumer (B2C) services like payment of bills to some telecom companies under one roof.

Karnataka Valuation and E-registration (KAVERI): Kaveri is an e-governance project of the Karnataka government with a means of speeding up the registration process and delivery of documents to citizens through a fully automated registration process. It also works like the Andhra Pradesh CARD project.

Computerized Inter-State check posts in Gujarat: The check posts on interstate highways in Gujarat were computerized to tighten the scrutiny of incoming trucks for overloading and the legitimacy of the document. Gujarat has an extensive road network. The project was started in 9 months at a total expenditure of \$14 million, of which construction of roads leading up to the check posts accounted for 70% of the costs. The fundamental parts of computerization were: a video camera to capture registration numbers of incoming vehicles; an electronic weighbridge for weighing trucks to determine overload; the creation of a database of trucks to retrieve Unladen weight of the truck; and the installation of a wide circuit video camera-based monitoring system. The central office in the capital state of Ahmadabad was to receive images from the check posts to scrutinize the activities. The primary duties of the officials include checking whether these interstate vehicles have paid the required road taxes or not, having all the documents like insurance and permissions and also ensuring that they are not overloaded. The current system is better than the manual system. The system was expected to reduce corruption by automating the fine levying process on overloaded trucks. However, corruption continues unabated. A bribe of one dollar is being charged from every driver and a third of the overloaded trucks are allowed to go without fines. Bribes are collected from such trucks averaging three dollars, which is only 10% of the fine that should have been collected.

Vijayawada Online Information Center (VOICE): VOICE was an e-governance project launched by the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation in 1999. Municipal corporations are well known for their corrupt practices. Citizens are dependent on Municipal Corporation for services and had to make several visits to the municipal office and pay bribes. After the implementation of VOICE, five kiosks located close to the citizens were opened in the town connecting them to the central server and eliminating the need for personal visits by the citizens. Some information was also provided on the voice response system. Citizens could get most of the services or information including building approvals, payment of taxes, public health, and engineering, municipal budget allocations, tax payment, grievance registration and monitoring, and birth/death certificates online.

UID (Unique Identification Number): It is a 12-digit unique number which the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) will issue for all residents in India (voluntarily) Example: 2653 8564 4663. The number will be stored in a centralized database and linked to the basic demographics and biometric information - photograph, ten fingerprints and iris - of each individual. It is easily verifiable in an online, cost-effective way. It is the best way to eradicate duplicate and fake identities in government and private databases. The number will be unique which means No resident can have two numbers because AADHAAR is based on a combination of the standard information like name, address, age and biometric information which is unique to every person. The records of demographic and biometric information of the resident

are stored in the central database (CIDR-Central ID Data Repository). This central database will be stored on a computer which will be linked to all government and private agencies. To avoid fraud, the AADHAAR number will have no additional information within its value or structure. AADHAR will be used to prove identity not citizenship

Micro ATMs: A device which meets the specifications as per micro-ATM Standards version 1.5 Micro ATMs will allow customers to perform basic financial transactions using only their Aadhaar number and their biometric/OTP as identity proof (along with a Bank Identification Number for inter-bank transactions). Unlike an ATM, the cash-in/cash-out functions of the micro-ATM will be performed by an operator, thus bringing down the cost of the device and the cost of servicing the customer. The micro-ATM will support the following financial transactions: 1. Deposit 2. Withdrawal 3. Funds transfer 4. Balance enquiry. A customer can access their Aadhaar-enabled bank account (AEBA) through a BC (Business Correspondents) operating a handheld micro-ATM device.

The prevention of corruption act, of 1988: was enacted to combine various anti-corruption provisions from different sections of legislation under one head and to make them more effective.

Mee-Seva

Initially, the Government of Telangana service delivery systems were manual and opaque. Citizens faced several hardships in accessing Government offices and waiting for longer times. The citizens had a negative opinion of the functioning of the public functionaries due to larger delays in addressing their issues. The government of Andhra Pradesh initiated e-Seva in 2001 intending to provide convenience to citizens by incorporating IT-driven systematic changes in government procedures. e-Seva was started to provide bill payment services for various Government Departments and Private organizations in urban parts of the State. Though e-Seva paved the way for an easy way of bill payments, it was still serving like a 'postoffice'; accepting applications, sending them by post to the concerned office, receiving them back and then handing them over to the citizens without any integrated service delivery model. Subsequently, Common Service Centers (CSCs) were established to extend similar benefits to the rural Citizens of the State as part of the National e-Governance Project (NeGP) of the Government of India. The process of metamorphosis of e-Seva to Mee Seva started with this backdrop.

Unique features of Mee Seva

1. Single sign-on: Mee Seva provides a single sign-on facility to enable departmental users to move seamlessly between departmental and Mee Seva applications.

2. Mass digitisation, mass porting and bulk-signing: While adding new departmental services, the relevant databases/records existing in digital form are cleaned and ported to the central database serverco-located at the SDC; where databases/records are still in manual form, they are digitised. Authorised officials provided with Class 3 digital signature certificates do bulk signing of records ported to the central database. The bulk-signing mechanism helps increase the pace of digitisation; it is tamper-proof and has an audit trail for all transactions.
3. SMS alerts at each stage of application processing: Mee Seva has integrated SMS alert support for tracking the progress of service requests by citizens.
4. Secured stationery: Mee Seva certificates are issued in secured stationery that employs 11 security features, which make duplication difficult, create public confidence and minimise fraudulent and malafide practices. All certificates issued by Mee Seva are stored in the State Electronic Certificate repository to enable their online verifications by any authority.
5. Automatic Payment Gateway: The payment collected from the applicant at the kiosk is distributed online to the various stakeholders in realtime. This solves the problem of reconciliations, late payments and embezzlements.

Thus, Traditionally the interaction between a citizen or business and a government agency took place in a government office which was time-consuming and non-transparent. With emerging information and communication technologies the services are delivered through the service centres closer to the citizens.

Conclusion

E-governance plays an important role in reducing or eliminating corruption. E-governance not only reduced corruption but also improved the revenues of the government which could be used for socially relevant areas like health, education, eradication of poverty and uplifting the down trodden. ICT-enabled reforms can yield many benefits, including lower administrative costs, faster and more accurate response to requests and queries every day. Corruption is the main problem all over the world that never be ignored. The public must be aware by all the government policies and online services. The media play a great role in this. Public institutions need to be more open about their work and officials must be more transparent in their decision-making. Most e-governance projects studied above have increased transparency, accountability; close the opportunity of middleman and developing societal harmony. However, E-governance, does not guarantee the end of corruption, but certainly can complement all other efforts. Elimination of corruption results in good governance. Thus, in the light of Indian experience, we conclude that e-governance has the potential to tackle corruption effectively and lead societal harmony.

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