Public private Partnership and E-Government in India: Study of Selective Cases

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Abstract:
E-Governance in India has steadily evolved from computerization of Government Departments to initiatives that encapsulate the finer points of Governance, such as citizen centricity, service orientation and transparency. Due cognizance has been taken of the notion that to speed up e-Governance implementation across the various arms of Government at National, State, and Local levels, a programme approach needs to be adopted, guided by common vision and strategy. NeGP which was launched in 18 May 2006 takes a holistic view of e-Governance initiatives across the country, integrating them into a collective vision, a shared cause. However, E-Government initiatives in developing countries are constrained by lack of financial resources, low level of skills and capacity within governments, and the absence of incentive structures for rewarding performance. PPPs in e-government have help overcome many of these constraints, while at the same time increasing opportunities for the private sector and economic sustainability of e-Government projects. The Present Paper proposes to study the successful ‘PPP in e-Government’ projects, implemented in India, to highlight the best practices and key learning obtained from each project.

Keywords : Public private partnership; E-government

1. Introduction to E-Government

With the development in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) all across the world the interaction of the citizens with government online has increased.

Electronic Service (e-Service) Delivery which is the provision of government services through use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has helped the government get closer to the citizens by creating awareness about their rights and empowering their participation. Moreover, it has increased transparency, reduced corruption and encouraged balanced regional development in the country. With India's vast population and geographic dispersion, one of the real challenges faced by the government is to reach every citizen at the grass root level and provide them with information and access to different government services. This has made it difficult for the people to leverage the full potential of government initiatives. To deal with this challenge, the Government of India had launched the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) in 2006 with a vision to make the government services accessible to the common man while ensuring efficiency, transparency, reliability and effective delivery of services at affordable costs. This has been facilitated by the rapid evolution of India's IT industry.

E-Government initiatives in developing countries are constrained by lack of financial resources, low level of skills and capacity within governments, and the absence of incentive structures for rewarding performance. PPPs in e-government has helped overcome many of these constraints, while at the same time increasing opportunities for the private sector. E-Government includes wide range of activities which can be broadly classified into three distinct areas Government-to-Government (G to G), Government to Citizen (G to C) and Government to Business (G to B).

2. NeGP and Public Private Partnership

The National e-Governance Plan (NeGP), which was launched in May 2006 takes a holistic view of e-Governance initiatives across the country, integrating them into a collective vision and a shared cause.

NeGP comprises of 27 Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) encompassing 10 Central MMPs, 10 State MMPs and 7 Integrated MMPs spanning multiple Ministries/Departments.

Public private Partnership is broadly refer to long term contractual Partnerships between Public and Private sector agencies specifically targeted towards financing, designing, implementing, and operating infrastructure facilities and services that were traditionally provided by the public sector. Under PPP contracts the responsibility and accountability of the government does not get reduced. The government still remains actively involved throughout projects life cycle. The role of the government is redefined as that of the facilitator.
and enabler while the role of the private players is that of the financier and operator of the services.

PPP has emerged as an important Element of NMMP in India. Implementation of e-Governance is a highly complex process requiring provisioning of hardware & software, networking, process re-engineering and change management. In the implementation of e-Government projects PPP model has been adopted wherever feasible to enlarge the resource pool without compromising on security aspects.


The foremost benefit of PPP in E-Government projects is increased access to capital funding from the private sector, as funding is limited from public sector budgets. It has further resulted in timely completion of projects. PPP has brought innovation and efficiency in providing better public services through improved operational efficiency. As per Sinha (2011) PPP is gaining huge popularity due to its invaluable contribution to the infrastructural development. As per Sharma (2007) E-Government has emerged as a popular governance reform in recent years, to improve the productivity of the government and quality of services provided to various stakeholders. However, e-government implementation is hampered by certain roadblocks, such as lack of financial resources, lack of technical and soft skills, etc. Public private partnership (PPP) has emerged as a viable model to counter these factors, apart from improving the economic sustainability of e-government projects.

4. Case Studies of Successful PPP in E-Government

4.1 MCA-21

Ministry of Company Affairs (MCA), Government of India has initiated the ‘MCA21’ project in partnership with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) as a private partner under (Build, own, operate, Transfer) model in 2006. MCA 21 is one of the biggest mission mode projects under Ministry of Corporate Affairs. Both MCA and TCS have innovated and evolved continuously to ensure program remains up to date and also delivers highest levels of service delivery. The MCA21 MMP was designed and implemented to automate the functions related to enforcement and compliance of laws under the Companies Act 1956. Its objective was to ensure availability of all registry related services such as document filing, companies’ registration and public access to corporate information from anywhere and anytime through a secured web portal.

There are over 100 services offered under this initiative, some of which include:

- Name Approval
- Incorporation of New Companies
- Annual Statutory Returns Filing
- Filing of Forms for Changes in Names / Address / Director's Details
- Filings for Various Statutory Services Required Under The Companies Act
- Inspection of Company Documents (Public Records)
- Investor Grievance Redressal

TCS has designed the system and is responsible for maintaining the system for a period of six years after roll out. The ownership of the system also remains with TCS for this period. The revenues generated from the fee charged for availing services on MCA21, are shared between the government and TCS in a certain ratio.

Some of the key change from the projects is:

- MCA21 has enabled anywhere, anytime secure e-filing for transactions through providing e-forms.
- E-filing of forms has reduced the probability of errors that are committed while filling forms.
- It provides convenient multi-model payment mechanism comprising the existing payment system and payment through cards and internet banking.
- The services can be accessed from home using the software that is freely available with no additional costs to the user.
- The use of digital signatures while making transactions ensures security of electronic forms and documents in confirmation with the IT Act 2000.
- The waiting time during each user trip at the service delivery centre has come down from 75 minutes to 25 minutes.

Currently the India's second largest IT company Infosys Technologies has emerged as the winner for the new phase of the MCA 21 project, and will displace its bigger rival Tata Consultancy Services to bag the second phase of the project, beginning from January 2013.

4.2 Passport Seva Projects

Economic liberalization, greater international trade and higher disposable incomes have led to greater number of Indians travelling abroad for business and tourism. This, in turn, has led to a rapid increase in the number of passport applications.

Measures like extensive computerization, decentralization of collection of passport
applications, opening of new passport offices and reforms in the Central Passport Organization having fallen short of meeting the fast growing passport demand and heightened expectations of the public, a need was felt for complete overhaul of passport issuance system. To address this need, a Mission Mode Project named Passport Seva Project (PSP) was identified under the National e-Governance Plan. The PSP aims “to deliver all Passport-related services to the citizens in a timely, transparent, more accessible, reliable manner & in a comfortable environment through streamlined processes and committed, trained & motivated workforce”.

The PSP has been launched in Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) mode with Tata Consultancy Services as Service Provider in 2010. The sovereign and fiduciary functions like verification, granting, issuing/revocation/impounding of passports have been retained by MEA. The ownership and strategic control of the core assets including data/information is with the Ministry. Passport Seva enables simple, efficient and transparent processes for delivery of passport related services. Apart from creating a countrywide networked environment for Government officials, it aims to integrate with the state police for physical verification of applicant’s particulars and antecedents and with India Post for delivery of passports.

Key aspects of the service transformation achieved by PSP are as follows:

- **Increased Network** : As extended arms of 37 Passport Offices, 77 Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) and 16 Passport Seva Laghu Kendras (PSLKs) are being established across the country as part of Passport Seva.

- **Anywhere Anytime Access** : Citizens can submit their passport applications and seek an appointment through the PSP portal (www.passportindia.gov.in) at their convenience. The portal provides comprehensive and latest information on all passport related services. Citizens can plan their visit to the nearest PSK at the appointment date/time, thus avoiding long queues and inconvenience.

- **State of the Art Technology Infrastructure** : Passport Seva is supported by state-of-the-art technology infrastructure which enables end-to-end passport services to be delivered with enhanced security comparable to the best in the world. The photograph and biometrics of the applicants are captured when they visit the PSK. Their applications and supporting documents are digitized and stored in the system for further processing.

- **Improved Amenities** : The PSK provides a world class ambience. Amenities in every PSK include helpful guides, information kiosks, photcopying, food and beverage facilities, public phone booth, baby care, newspapers and journals and television in a comfortable air-conditioned waiting lounge. The Electronic Queue Management System ensures the “first-in-first-out” principle in application processing.

- **Call Centre & Helpdesk** : A multilingual call centre operating in 17 Indian languages enables citizens to obtain passport service related information and receive updates about their passport applications, round the clock, seven days a week. An e-mail based helpdesk also provides information on passport services.

- **Integration with Police and India Post** : The PSP network connects with the State Police across all the states and union territories. The applicant's data is sent electronically for police verification. PSP also provides an interface to India Post for tracking delivery of passport to citizens.

### 4.3 eBiz

In order to enable businesses and investors to save time and costs and in order to improve the business environment in the country, an online single window was conceptualized in the form of the eBiz Mission Mode Project under the National eGovernance Plan. The project was launched on January 2013 between the Government of India in Partnership with Infosys has under PPP model. The project aims to create a business and investor friendly ecosystem in India by making all business and investment related regulatory services across Central, State and local governments available on a single portal, thereby obviating the need for an investor or a business to visit multiple offices or a plethora of websites.

The key benefits of the projects are:

- eBiz will create a 24x7 facility for information and services and will also offer joined-up services where a single application submitted by a customer, for a number of permissions, clearances, approvals and registrations, will be routed automatically across multiple governmental agencies in a logical manner.

- An inbuilt payment gateway will also add value by allowing all payments to be collected at one point and then apportioned, split and routed to the
respective heads of account of Central / State agencies along with generation of challans and MIS reports. This payment gateway is the first of its kind designed in India and can become a universal payment gateway for all eGovernance applications.

In this MMP The Department of Industrial Promotion and Policy, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, will remain the Nodal Government Agency responsible for the implementation of the eBiz Project and Infosys Technologies Ltd. as project Implementation Partner and is responsible for the design, development, implementation and maintenance of the eBiz Solution.

The main aim of this project is to foster the business environment in the country in a holistic manner and to leverage the technology in a manner to bring transparency, improve efficiency and promote convenience in partnership with Infosys and to become a benchmark for successful PPP in the country.

5. Conclusion

PPP in has emerged as one of the important element for the implementation of e-government in the developing countries like India where there is a lack of the critical resources such a finance, technical skills and expertise. In this paper I have shed a light on the cases where PPP has proved to be a successful tool for the development of the country and successful implementation of the MMP in India. Thus with the credit of one of the fastest growing economy around the globe development of the urban sector along with the rural sector is must and in which PPP model is proving successful to take the country to the new heights.

References:


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