

E-Governance System: A New Approach of Punjab Residents

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Abstract

In the recent times, online services have taken control over the traditional rigid norms of availing facilities served by the government or private sectors. One of this facility is e-Governance that has become an easy and citizen-friendly service. The hurdles occurred during personal visits are now curbed into an online interface where every facility provisioned by the government is available to each and every citizen. On considering State of Punjab, various urban and rural areas are equipped with e-governance but the citizen approach towards e-governance is yet to be analysed. In this paper, an attempt is made to understand citizen outlook.

Keywords: *Electrical-Governance, e-Governance, ICT, ICT Growth, Rural Punjab*

Introduction

E-governance can be defined as “a government structure, which is efficient and effective and is duly controlled by citizens”. In other words e-governance means “exploiting the power of information and communications technology to help transform the accessibility, quality and cost-effectiveness of public services”. The topic of e-government and e-governance has become increasingly acknowledged over the last few years, and many governments desire for online services. However developing countries are disadvantaged due to lack of capital and knowledge of the internet and Information Technology. E-governance also relates to the relationship between citizens and those in power. To increase accountability and empowerment, the use of e-government is vital, in order to achieve citizen participation.

According to Al Shihi (2006), ICT offers three processes to promote governance:

1. Automation: It is computerization of clerical functions
2. Informatisation: It means using information systems to support decision making and to enhance communications
3. Transformation: It is implementing new ICT-based information processes and process engineering.

All over the world governments are using e communication that is e-governance which is used to govern the public and private activities in which Punjab is one of them. Governments are using tools of Information & Communication Technologies to provide various services efficiently. This is the fastest and easiest way of communicating information. E-Government means different things for different people. Small towns and rural areas were left behind for availing such services due to long distances. However, ICT makes it possible to reach to faraway places easily. This creates transparency and minimizes the cost of availing the services. E-Governance minimizes the time as well as corruption while availing the services. As a result this helps in improving the social and economic development. SUWIDHA center in Punjab is the live example of E-Governance; SUWIDHA has been conceived to facilitate citizen by capturing the

Input at a single point, defining a specified delivery date depending upon the type of service and accepting cash at the counter itself.

Literature Review

Estevez and Janowski (2013) researchers reported that Centre for Electronic Governance, United Nations University International Electronic Governance (EGOV) research studied the use of Information and Communication Technologies to improve governance processes. Sustainable Development (SD) research studies possible development routes that satisfy the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs. The main contribution of the paper was establishing a foundation for Electronic Sustainment Development research.

Pathak and Singh (2014) stated that information technology has brought a revolution changes in the working of whole world. Today, government has full trust in e-Governance. Government provides the services to the citizens, business and local government through information technology. E-Governance was adopted by many developed countries like USA, UK, Brazil and India. Government provides web based services to the citizens according their needs like online payment of bills, taxes and so on.

Kaur and Singh (2015) researchers gave an overview of state of Punjab in the present paper which includes economy overview, status of ICT and e-Governance in the state. In state of Punjab, where IT literacy rate was very low and large segment of population was living below the poverty line, also there is unawareness among the people regarding the usage and benefits of e-Governance services. Hence, there existed a number of barriers to execute e-Governance service.

Khan et.al., (2015) stated that government and public sector organizations around the world are facing to reform their public administration organizations, deliver more efficient and cost effective services as well as better information/knowledge to their users. In developing countries like India, where literacy level is very low and most are living below poverty line, people were not even aware about the benefits of e-Governance activities and people do not use ICT much, there existed a number of problems to implement e-Governance activities. Developments in e-Governance provided opportunities to harness the power of ICT making the business of governance inexpensive, qualitatively responsive and truly encompassing.

Research Objectives

The objective of e-governance is to focus on exploring the priorities of the citizens to adopt e-governance services and perspectives as well as strategies for integration of e-governance services. Analysis of this objective is an on-going procedure in the present research.

Research Methodology

A survey questionnaire was used as it is inexpensive, less time consuming and has the ability to provide both quantitative as well as qualitative data from a research sample. Questions are

Compiled from information technology adoption literature to represent the construct proposed research model and wording of the questionnaire has been modified to fit the research context/background of information collected.

Analysis

Priorities of Citizens to avail e-Governance services

1. Dependability

The degree to which a service is able to perform the promised service in a dependable and accurate manner. E-governance is able to perform or execute the promised service in a dependable way. E-governance service is accurate

The people of both regions do not recognize the dependable parameter and partially accept the accuracy parameter of dependability. However, various demographic classes do not differ in their opinion.

2. Personalization

The degree to which website or application gives personal attention or can be customized for specific needs and communicate or can be customized for the users directly with the language they understand. In e-governance, the service is presented to the citizens directly in a clear and simple language and E-governance service gives citizen personal attention.

The opinion regarding personal attention has been recorded alike in all the demographic categories (age, gender, education and occupation). Thus, for the t-statistics and F-statistics are insignificant. So far direct provision of service is recognized differently by different age groups. It can be concluded from the foregoing discussion that direct provision of service is partially recognized by Punjab and Chandigarh people. The personal attention is acknowledged by the people of both the regions.

3. Believability

The information is trustworthy if the information is from a credible source. The believability attribute of information quality is partially approved by the residents of Punjab. The table shows that 37.8 % of the respondents in Punjab could not give their clear mandate regarding the trustworthy parameter while 26.5 % did not approve this parameter of believability. Similar are results for the 'information from the credible source'. The people of different demographic groups do not hold different opinion. Thus, none of the test statistic (t-statistics and F-statistics) turned out to be significant.

The opinion manifested by the Chandigarh is relatively different. The overall average rating is biased towards the acceptability of parameter. Around 48 % of the respondents approved the 'information from credible sources' parameter. Approximately 40 % sampled individuals agreed to the trustworthiness of the information but 31.7 % did not give their clear opinion. These results are truthful across the gender, age, occupation and education levels due to insignificant values of t-statistics and F-statistics.

Thus, the believability is accepted partially by the people of Punjab regardless of their demographic class. However, such attribute is better approved by the people of Chandigarh.

Perspective of Citizens to avail e-Governance services

1. Assurance

The degree to which E-governance service is assured as well as reliable. The response towards service quality in the form of assurance is mixed. 46 % of the respondents do not approve the assured service but 34 % answered in affirmative. The overall average rating is in the category of 'disagreement'. So far the reliability parameter of assurance attribute of service quality is concerned, results are again partially accepted. 30 % did not accept the reliability but 42 % approved the reliability. Surprisingly, 28.2 % could not give decisive answer. Opinion displayed for reliability and service with assurance does not vary among the demographic classes. So, t-statistics and F-statistics are far from being significant. The foregoing discussion leads to the result that reliability is doubted and service with assurance is accepted in the state of Punjab irrespective of the demographic classes. This is in relatively lesser strength in Chandigarh, though its demographic classes do not differ.

2. Useful

The extent to which information is beneficial, helpful and provides advantages from its use. The information is useful and meets the need for the task.

The attribute of usefulness of information is accepted by the people of Punjab with reservations. Thus, the reaction of respondents is spread over all the rating classes. Even large number (23.2 %) of sampled people could not give clear mandate. Either they are unable to answer or they have both the bad and good experiences. These results are truthful in both the parameters case. All the demographic groups do not hold different opinions regarding these parameters. It is due to insignificant values of t-statistics and F-statistics. The results are not different for the Chandigarh. They have also approved the usefulness with some reservations. The people who have shown their neutrality are also very large (23.5 % and 29.5 % approximately). The people of different gender recognise the first parameter differently due to significant value of t-statistic. However, all other demographic groups do not differ in their opinion regarding usefulness of the information quality. Hence, all the other t-statistics and F-statistics are recorded as insignificant.

3. Responsive

The degrees to which employee's concerned are willing to provide service. It involves timeliness of service. In e-governance, there is no delay in responding to citizens and also shows sincere interest in resolving any problems.

The delaying in the provision of service is partially accepted by the people of Punjab. Only 27 % of the respondents gave their verdict in 'no delay' in service. However, 39.5 have out rightly rejected the parameter of 'no delay' and rest of them are not clear in their opinion. The sincerity of the governance system is relatively less doubted. While 47 % of the respondents did not doubt the sincerity but 23 % are neutral in response.

The overall average rating is also tilted towards 'agreed' segment of rating. The people of Punjab belonging to different categories of their demography manifested the same opinion without any difference for not delaying parameter. The tests t-statistics and F-statistics turned out to be insignificant for all the demographic classes. However, opinion regarding sincerity was different for different education groups. The results displayed by the people of Chandigarh are not considerably different. About 39 % of the respondents have clearly given their verdict against the 'no delay' parameter. Rest of them was either indecisive or agreed with this parameter. So the no delay parameter of responsiveness attribute has been basically rejected. So far the sincerity parameter of responsiveness attribute is concerned; it has been accepted with some reservations. About 49 % people accepted the sincerity of the e-governance system but 24 % could not give their clear mandate. All demographic groups think alike so far as the delay is concerned except for age groups. The F-statistic obtained from the ANOVA is significant for all age groups. So far the sincerity parameter is concerned; it has a similar thinking among the different demographic groups.

The people of Punjab and Chandigarh accused the e-governance for delay in service. However, the sincerity is relatively less doubted.

Attending the service needs of the citizens is vital for better quality service of e-governance. They need to provide information directly and personal attention should also be given. This attribute has been assessed through two parameters. They have been asked to record their opinion on direct access of service to the citizens. Although, their opinion has also been required on personal attention.

Strategies for integration of E-Governance

1. Regularity

Regularity refers to the conformance and compliance to the rules, laws, standards and specifications. E-governance service conforms to the rules and laws and E-governance service is in compliance to the standards.

The overall average rating is also skewed towards the 'agreed' segment of rating. There are also large amount of people did not give their decisive opinions (22 % in second parameter and 29 % in first parameter). This may be due to the fact that people are unaware about the laws and rules. Moreover, they may not be efficient enough to understand the compliance of standards. Different genders and people of different age groups are similar in their opinion regarding both the parameters. While people of different occupations and education levels do not think differently. So, the t-statistics and F-statistics turned out to be insignificant.

2. Transaction

The degree to which a service should provide a full transaction or process with consistency and durability for smooth execution, integrity and good result assurance. E-governance introduces a full process. The result of the transaction or process is satisfactory. The transaction or process is executed smoothly. It can be inferred from the foregoing discussion that transaction attribute of

e-governance is partially accepted by the people of Punjab and Chandigarh regardless of their demographic class.

Findings & Conclusions

The following findings are listed on the basis of data collected in the questionnaire:

1. The people of Punjab and Chandigarh do not recognize the dependable parameter leading to partially accept the accuracy parameter of dependability. Also, various demographic classes do not differ in their opinion.
2. It is concluded from the foregoing discussion that direct provision of service is partially recognized by Punjab and Chandigarh people. The personal attention is acknowledged by the people of both the regions.
3. Thus, the believability is accepted partially by the people of Punjab regardless of their demographic class. However, such attribute is better approved by the people of Chandigarh.
4. The foregoing discussion leads to the result that reliability is doubted and service with assurance is accepted in the state of Punjab irrespective of the demographic classes. This assurance is in relatively lesser strength in Chandigarh, though its demographic classes do not differ.
5. The usefulness of the e-governance system is better approved by the people of Chandigarh than Punjab. Different age and occupation groups approve certain parameters of usefulness attribute differently
6. The people of Punjab and Chandigarh accuse the e-governance for the delay in service. However, the sincerity in execution of service is relatively less doubted.
7. The regulations in the context of e-governance are well provided regardless of the regions and demographic classes.
8. It is inferred from the foregoing discussion that transaction attribute of e-governance is partially accepted by the people of Punjab and Chandigarh regardless of their demographic class.

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