Citizen Relationship and Grievance Management System (CiR&GMS) through Multi-Channel Access for e-Government Services: A Case from India

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ABSTRACT

Citizens are demanding greater access to interaction with government through their preferred channels or devices. The private sector uses different channels for their services, citizens expect the same level of services from the public sector. Therefore, public sector needs to focus on creating multiple delivery channels (Traditional such as face to face, Telephone and Modern channels such as Website, E-mail, SMS), so that citizens can have ‘channels of choice’, depending on specific needs, demands and preferences in order to increase citizens’ participation and satisfaction. For this reason, the paper’s purpose is 1) To understand multi-channel architecture, Integration, Management and its Strengths & Weakness 2) To develop a framework for Citizen Relationship and Grievance Management System (CiR&GMS) for a single view 3) By applying proposed framework, To identify what types of channels are providing to access public services at National, State and Local level governments in India as a case study 4) To find out challenges and issues in implementation of multi-channel service delivery. The key findings of the case study are: a) There is no declining in providing traditional channels after introducing modern channels b) Many departments are offering mixed channels c) Usage of Mobile/SMS, Social media and Wi-Fi hotspots based channels are in initial stage d) t-Government channel is not yet initiated in any department e) Multi-channel integration and management is not yet initiated by many departments, these departments are managed channels as separate silos. The proposed framework may provide some guidance to the decision and policy makers in the public sector. However, such initiatives have many challenges to the developing countries like India.

Keywords: Channel Choice, Citizen Relationship, e-Government, Grievance Management, Multi-Channel Service Delivery

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1. INTRODUCTION

Citizens have diverse needs and demands of government services, hence it is no longer sustainable for government to utilize only one preferred way of service provision over the other. All government services and information cannot be provided online as the targeted users may face different obstacles in making use of resources and hence the government should consider a balanced selection of multi-channel access. Multi-channel delivery channels such as digital TV, Internet, mobile networks, SMS, IVRS, notice boards, newspapers, public announcements, media broadcasts, visiting offices etc. have helped government to think innovatively in delivering public services (NCEG, 2012; Webratna, 2012; CCG, 2007). In the multi-channel approach, the citizens can have ‘channels of choice’, depending on needs. This approach ensures maximum participants of citizens, since different groups are different preferences and capabilities of access of these channels. It delivers better results than a single channel.

The mandates of the government can achieve only if public services are delivered seamlessly to the citizens through various modes at their door steps. The single-window government provides the public with a multi-channeled access to integrated services on a one-stop-shop basis across the whole of the government. This represents a transformational shift in how government operates (CGI, 2005). Citizens demand increasing amounts of information and services through their own personal devices, that can improved their lives, but many governments are not equipped to meet these needs (Microsoft, 2014). The government should provide multi-channel service delivery, including traditional channels such as Postal, Telephone, Face to Face, Print media etc, in order to increase citizen satisfaction and support for e-government services (Nag Yeon Lee and Kwangsok Oh, 2011). The multi-channel public service delivery can also be used to deliver sustainable services to socially excluded groups (UN, 2012). The goal for multi-channel service delivery is to provide the government with a consistent view of the citizen and that the citizen experiences the government as a unified and cohesive organization (OECD, 2012). Some governments, including the US and Australia have made it a priority to develop strategies to serve citizens in remote communities and to provide services in a citizen’s language of choice (source: www.vgov.org).

A few developing countries are exploiting the full potential of multichannel service delivery (UN, 2012). Leading countries, including the Australia, Ireland, US, and the UK are advocating the delivery of service through integrated delivery channels where citizens can access government by any means. Therefore, it motivates to develop and apply a framework for “Citizen Relationship and Grievance Management System (CiR & GMS)” through multi-channel access in the Indian context.

For this purpose, the paper is 1) To understand multi-channel architecture, Integration, Management and its Strengths & Weakness 2) To develop a framework for Citizen Relationship and Grievance Management System (CiR & GMS) for a single view 3) By applying proposed framework, To identify what type of channels are providing to access public services at National, State and Local level governments in India as a case study 4) To find out gaps, challenges and issues in implementation of multi-channel service delivery.

The paper is organized as follows; Section 2 presents the literature review to understanding E-governance and citizen service through a multi-channel. The Section 3 provides understanding Multi-Channel Architecture, Integration & Management and Strengths & Weaknesses. Section 4 defines Citizen Relationship and Grievance Management (CiR & GMS) followed by the conceptual framework for CiR & GMS. The Section 5 presents the case study of multi-channel services provided by some State Governments and Central Government in India by applying the proposed framework. Results and discussions are given in Section 6. Issues and challenges with CiR & GMS mentioned in Section 7. The Section 8 present recommendations and conclusions.
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