Chapter IX
E-Government: Good Deliverance through Effective Performance Management

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ABSTRACT

Successful implementation of e-government programs, policies, and effective service delivery to citizens is faced with many obstacles related to operations, technology, and human resource management, amongst others. The changes brought about due to introduction of Information and Communication Technology require changed work patterns, work styles, and overall management of performance. In this context, five key issues have been identified. These are identification of new performance measures, creating an environment for innovation, teamwork, fostering employee empowerment, and developing new competencies. A theoretical framework for performance management in e-government departments and agencies is proposed. A model for delivering improved service to citizens has also been developed.

INTRODUCTION

E-governance is a form of e-business in governance and refers to the processes and structures pertinent to the delivery of electronic services to the citizens and businesses, collaborating with business partners and conducting electronic transactions within an organizational entity (Backus 2001) by e-government. E-governance promises full service available 24 hours a day, seven days a week; greater accessibility; capability to obtain government services without visiting government offices; and reduced service cost. The services include those related to taxation, infrastructure, regulatory services (licenses etc.), social security, health care, defense, foreign trade and so on.

Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) requires new styles of leadership, inclusion of new dimensions in deciding policies and investment, new ways of accessing tasks, new ways of interacting with public and new ways of organizing and delivering information and services.
E-Government

In this context Good Deliverance may be understood as delivery of services by e-government that are satisfactory to users in respect of quality, quantity and timeliness, efficiency, effectiveness, ease of access and cost (of providing and using the service). This also means that e-governance needs to be citizen-centric. Appropriate skills and competencies need to be developed in employees to make good deliverance a reality.

In spite of world-wide diffusion of e-government initiatives, getting the claimed benefits of e-governance has not been easy for various technological as well as organizational reasons in both developed and developing countries (Pacific Council on International Policy, 2002; Strejeek & Theil, 2002; Holliday, 2002; Wescott, 2001).

E-governance is an ambitious plan and huge resources have been allocated towards it. The concept is still in nascent stage and hence a lot remains to be done in (1) designing effective policies (2) successful implementation of policies. Government of India allocated US $ 4.92 billion in the tenth five year plan (2002-07) for implementation of e-government (www.egovonline.net). Every government department is expected to invest 2% of its budget on e-government (www.mit.gov.in). National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) was commenced in May, 2006 in order to expand e-government initiatives in India with the objective of making all government services accessible through integrated service delivery mechanism ensuring effectiveness, efficiency, cost reduction and transparency. The whole work has been split up into various Mission Mode Projects.

The objective of efficient public service delivery has not yet been successfully met by e-government (Misra, 2006), in spite of all the efforts. This is due to various reasons. There is a lack of coordination among the various departments of the Union government with each other and with the states (Sebastian, 2008). Capacity building is an integral component of NeGP, which requires State Governments to build capacity in terms of human resources, tools and processes. Certain gaps have been identified in building capacity (Narayananurthy, n.d.). These include

- Lack of personnel with appropriate background and aptitude
- Inadequate skill sets of personnel already deployed
- Inadequate expertise and skills within the state training institutions to lead training programme for policy makers

Resolution of the employee related issues are the key to successful e-delivery. Cultural change can result from innovative approaches to all Human Resource Management (HRM) functions in an integrated and strategic programme. Thus strategic HRM has a major role to play in ensuring that a corporate culture conducive to the achievement of overall strategic objectives is developed and maintained (Schuler and Jackson, 1999).

This chapter deals with one of the important aspects of HRM, i.e., performance management. Effective performance management is essential for good deliverance of services by e-government employees. The objectives of this chapter are to

- identify the reasons for non-achievement of efficient service delivery
- identify the key issues that need to be addressed for effectiveness in e-governance (and hence effectiveness in service delivery)
- identify the need for a new framework of performance management in e-government
- propose a theoretical framework of performance management in e-government
- evolve a model for effective service delivery in e-governance
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