Chapter 3
Platform for Citizen Engagement for Good Governance in India: A Case Study of MyGov.in

Abhishek Singh
MyGov, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, India

Anjali Kaushik
Management Development Institute, Gurgaon, India

ABSTRACT
Citizens are important stakeholders and play a critical role in advocating and enabling public institutions to become more transparent, accountable, and effective and suggest innovative solutions to complex development challenges. Citizen engagement is at the core of good governance. Mygov.in is a platform to engage citizens and get their input and suggestions for various government policies and plans in India. MyGov platform provides an opportunity to citizens across the world to engage directly with the government departments, policymakers, and implementers. MyGov is planned as the key platform for all citizen engagement needs of the country across various departments and ministries. The presence of such a digital platform in a democratic country reflects willingness on part of the government to share information and make citizens a partner in decision making. This chapter elaborates on the need, discusses the MyGov initiative, compares it to other such initiatives globally and highlights major issues and concerns in the citizen engagement process.
INTRODUCTION

Governments across the world are using information and communication Technology (ICT) to enhance their internal and external operations and services (Anderson and Henriksen, 2006; Heeks, 1999). In this regard, e-government plays a critical role by transforming government services, improving their efficiency and effectiveness, providing more opportunities for citizen participation and eventually leading to better governance. Governance (UNDP, 1997) has been defined as “the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented)”. UNDP (1997) defines good governance by eight major characteristics viz. participation, consensus-orientation, accountability, transparency, effectiveness/efficiency, responsiveness, equity/inclusiveness, and rule of law. Citizen participation is at the core of good governance. Citizen participation has long been a subject of active discussions in political and administrative sciences. It is often defined as a citizen action that influences or seeks to influence policy decisions or as an action that incorporates the demands and values of citizens into public administration services (Florin and Wandersman, 1990). Rao (2004) has emphasized on the importance of grass root consultations prior to initiating projects in government. Researchers have elaborated on the importance of citizen engagement for strengthening the democratic processes (Lofstedt, 2017; Michel, 2005). With the advancements in ICT, citizen engagement is seen as an interactive two way process using digital platforms, which empowers exchange of ideas and flow of conversation between citizens (or interest groups) and state institutions. Jones et al., (2007) discuss the importance of citizen perspective as a critical success factor for e-government projects. Navarro et. al (2014) investigate the effect of technology knowledge and governance in empowering citizen engagement and participation and comment on its positive influence. Milakovich (2010), comments on the role of ICT in empowering citizen participation in government. Research by Warren et. al. (2014) suggests that government institutions need to enhance their presence in social media and increase online civic engagement for building citizen trust.

The governments are seen to evolve through well-defined stages (Lee, 2010). E-Governance has been defined as the last stage of e-government development. In this stage, there is a two way communication between the government and the governed and citizens are able to get more involved in political and administrative decision making. Lee (2010) describes this as the ideal stage where the “processes of administrative and political services can be reconfigured almost real-time based on citizens’ actual involvement in decision-makings of the government, actually utilizing the full capability of advanced information and communication technologies.”
Design of Interactional Decision Support Applications for E-Participation in Smart Cities

Development and Outcomes of a New Institutional Ranking System for Public Administration Research and Scholarship