E-Government: Expectations Among People in Bangladesh

S. S. M. Sadrul Huda, East West University, Bangladesh
Rumana Parveen, Dhaka University, Bangladesh
Masud Ibn Rahman, Daffodil University, Bangladesh

ABSTRACT

E-Government can be used as an effective tool to create a relationship of trust and confidence between government and people as well as to generate greater efficiency and responsiveness of government. This empirical study observes people’s opinions and expectations about positive outcomes of e-Government. The researchers have identified the expectation level among urban people in Bangladesh concerning outcomes of e-Government and the variability in these expectations in terms of their demographic characteristics. In this regard, the authors emphasize the application of e-Government to improve government’s performance as well as locating the critical factors to succeed in such application.

Keywords: Demographic Characteristics, E-Government, Efficiency, Expectations, Responsiveness

INTRODUCTION

E-governance is more than just a government website on the Internet. It can be defined as the application of electronic means in the interaction between government and citizens, government and businesses, as well as in internal government operations to simplify and improve democratic government and business aspects of Governance (Backus, 2001).

Drucker (2001) defined e-Government as “the use of emerging ICT (Information & Communication Technologies) to facilitate the processes of Government and public administration”. In reality though, e-Government is about choice, it provides citizens with the ability to choose the manner in which they interact with the Government and it is also about the choices that Governments make about how ICT are to be deployed to support their citizens’ choices.” West (2000) expressed similar views, maintaining that “e-Government is the delivery of Government information and services online via the Internet or through any other digital device on a continuous basis”. Heeks (2004) argues that e-Government can be considered an augmented outcome of ICT usage in the public sector in terms of improving Government process (e-administration), connecting citizens with Government (e-service) and building external interactions (e-society).

Though some researchers used the two terms ‘e-Governance’ and ‘e-Government’ interchangeably; recent views draw a line...
between these. According to Sheridan and Riley (2006), e-Governance, as a broader topic, covers the whole spectrum of the relationship and networks within Government regarding the usage and application of ICT; e-Government, as a narrower discipline, deals with the development of online services to the citizen, such as e-tax, e-transportation, or e-health.

It has been observed that e-Government is improving the condition of people in many developing countries of the world by improving access to information useful to their daily lives, providing Government services, and offering new opportunities to participate in the political process (InfoDev and The Center for Democracy & Technology, 2002).

E-Government enables people to get necessary information provided by Government as well as responses from Government officials in cases of complaints and assistance through the Internet, mobile phones and other IT tools. E-Government is expected to reduce the bureaucratic problems of Government as well as to increase the Government efficiency in terms of lower costs, fewer employees and higher efficiency. It is also expected that e-Government will add to transparency and accountability of Government activities and decision making.

In Bangladesh Government’s initiatives to adapt e-Government led to increased expectations about positive outcomes from this initiative. Though only a few people have access to IT tools like the Internet or mobile phones, the number of such people is increasing. The all-pervasive use of IT in all aspects of life has made it imperative for Government to prioritize the application of e-Government to meet the expectations of people.

There is currently a shortage of empirical information about what people expect from e-Government. Both the ruling and opposition parties in Bangladesh, i.e., Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) emphasized ICT development as a core election issue. AL had a landslide victory in the last general election on December 29, 2008. In its manifesto, the party stated that its goal was to build a ‘Digital Bangladesh’ where people will get a better life free from crime, corruption, and misrule.

Thus, the ruling party of Bangladesh has a strong political commitment towards implementing an effective e-Government in the country. The result is that significant public resources are being used at this time for creating a ‘Digital Bangladesh’ by 2021. As this is a recent phenomenon, many aspects of it are still unfolding, especially issues to do with people’s expectations of e-Government applications. The dearth of knowledge in this area is the major justification for this study. Thus, this study focuses e-Government in Bangladesh, with particular emphasis on the public perceptions and expectations of e-Government services.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The recent drive towards e-Governance throughout the world can be considered a part of a wider phenomenon as it is believed to help reform Government administration through providing improved services to citizens (Madon, 2004). By facilitating two-way interaction, e-Government has hailed a way towards better responsiveness to citizens which eventually would generate greater public confidence in Government (Gore, 1993; Markoff, 2000; Raney, 2000). By encouraging bureaucrats to work together and develop cross-agency-“portals”-websites that integrate information and service offerings; e-Government offers the prospect of considerable changes in how the public sector functions.

Indeed Fountain (1999, p. 142) cites estimates demonstrating “cost-performance ratios to be declining at a rate of 20%-30% a year”. If it is implemented strategically; e-Government can not only improve efficiency, accountability and transparency of Government processes, but it can also be a tool to empower citizens by enabling them to participate in the decision making processes of Government (Bestle, 2005). In other words, e-Government can be a way for Governments in developing countries to reach the poor in rural and remote areas enabling better
related content

Gender Differences in Motivations to Use Social Networking Sites
www.igi-global.com/chapter/gender-differences-in-motivations-to-use-social-networking-sites/203324?camid=4v1a

Interview with Catarina Carneiro de Sousa: Multimedia Artists and Art Educator
Yasmin Ibrahim (2012). International Journal of E-Politics (pp. 57-61).
www.igi-global.com/article/interview-catarina-carneiro-sousa/63036?camid=4v1a

ICT as an Enabler for Small Firm Growth: The Case of the Mompreneur
www.igi-global.com/article/ict-enabler-small-firm-growth/51348?camid=4v1a
Designing an Ethical Structure for Social Influence Marketing (SIM)
www.igi-global.com/chapter/designing-ethical-structure-social-influence/60314?camid=4v1a