Chapter-7

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7.1 INTRODUCTION

e-Governance is considered as an important step in bringing good governance and serving the people in a better way. Initiatives have been launched for the project in different countries of the world. India also has her own National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) initiated since late 1990’s. It has also reached the North Eastern region of the country since the last two decades. An assessment of the same has been done for the seven states of the region. Its focus has been on “Use Analysis” of the programme, understanding the availability of the infrastructure developed so far for the same.

In this concluding part of the work, the major findings of the study are being presented to have a bird’s eye view on the use of G2C information services under e-Governance initiatives of the seven states of the region.

The scenario of G2C services presented is based on data collected from stakeholders viz., implementing agencies, government departments, information centres, common service centres, libraries, and users such as students, agriculturists, government employees, housewives, businessmen, NGO employees and the self-employed people.
As a part of the study, possible suggestions and recommendations have also been made. As a time bound study the investigator came across certain limitations during the work which have been stated in the beginning. Scope for further research in the area of study has also been highlighted.

7.2 GENERAL FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The major general findings of the present study can be generalized into two sections;

a) Infrastructure Assessment of the Implementing Agencies in the NE Region
b) G2C Information Services under the e-Governance Initiatives: A Use Analysis.

7.2.1 Infrastructure Assessment of Implementing Agencies

i) e-Governance in the seven states under North East India lies under the purview of the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, Government of India. The implementing agencies for the programme are National Informatics Centre (NIC) and Department of Information Technology (DIT). These agencies are found to be established since late 1980’s.

ii) e-Governance initiatives in the region have been implemented since late 1980’s, Assam being first and Arunachal Pradesh being the last in the list.
iii) A project co-ordinator is responsible to carry out programmes under the e-Governance initiative in the region.

iv) BSNL and NICNET dominate the figure in providing the Internet service under the NeGP in the region as is the case in the rest of the country.

v) The readiness for the ICT in various departments in North East India under the initiative is low. The priority given towards this end on certain areas however needs to be enhanced such as libraries, legal aspects, registration, taxation, etc.

vi) The number of IT trained manpower deployed in the e-Governance sector of the region needs to have a relook for effective delivery of the services.

vii) Accessibility to the e-Governance service in all the states by the citizens is through state portal under two agencies each. The accessibility and functionality of the common service centres need to be evaluated. The number of departments towards functioning of e-Governance G2C services, on the other hand needs to be increased upon.

viii) The concerned states organize awareness programmes from time to time to extent to familiarize the users with G2C information services under the initiatives and also enable them to use them.
ix) Level of satisfaction of the G2C Information Services available under the e-Governance programme, as endorsed by the co-ordinators is good, which, on the other hand, need to be assessed regularly through the concerned users.

x) The standard and minimum infrastructure required for implementing e-Governance in the region with respect to hardware, software and human ware, as they considered, may be improved upon in phases.

xi) Internet, newspaper, mass media, portals are the major channels through which information is delivered.

xii) All the states are under study have IT policy with the permission of e-Governance and Citizen Service, through G2C interfaces, while 85.71% of the states have SWAN Project.

xiii) The expectation of the service providers and usability of the same does not match the frequency of use of the service. It is due to low familiarity of the services amongst users, poor connectivity, lack of awareness amongst citizens and limited access points.

xiv) A number of access points are in existence through which G2C services are made available such as – ministry, service providers, agencies, SSDG, portals, CSC, etc.

xv) Seminars, workshops, advertisements, campaigns, training are some of the activities carried out and tools used to make the citizen aware of the G2C services under the project.
7.2.2 **G2C Information Services under the e-Governance Initiatives: A Use Analysis.**

i) The users of the G2C information services under the e-Governance initiatives in the region comprise of varied age groups from 15 years to senior citizens (above 55 years) who are students, agriculturists, housewives, businessmen, employees of government, private sectors, NGO and self-employed.

ii) Majority of the users (64.43%) of the region are computer literate which is a good indication. Near similarities are observed in practicing and using e-mailing, internet surfing, social networking sites. However their level of ICT skills on voice mailing, downloading web-resources, video conferencing are not encouraging. Less than 30% of the users have undergone any ICT related courses. The computer literacy rate is higher among the male groups, 15-24 years of age, students in the region.

iii) Majority of the citizens (59.57%) are not aware of the G2C information service under the E-governance initiatives in the region. The ways how they try to gain awareness on the aspect, are varied, the efforts made by them to take part in the process are very less, which calls for the need for more publicity in this regard.

iv) A low percentage of the users (33.57%) of the region feel the need for G2C information to understand policy and programmes of the government. This opinion needs to be corrected.
v) Variety of services are made available under the e-governance initiatives in the region comprising of G2C, G2B, G2G, G2E, C2G, etc. in which majority of the users give first preference on G2C than others, the rank of preference being G2C, G2E, G2G, G2B and C2G.

vi) People of the region enjoy the advantage of the services under e-Governance initiatives on various aspects, though the rate of access to the same is not encouraging. In the health sector, it is “hospitals” whereas “examination results” and “career/employment opportunity” in education for which they use the services. While “online billing and recharging” dominates in telecommunication aspect, “weather” and “agriculture market information” dominates in the agriculture sector. In case of business “registration” occupies top priority, “access to e-journals/books” in libraries, while “FIR lodging” in the case of police and security, “birth and death registration” in rural/urban development, and “telephone bill” with respect to utility service prevailing in the region. “Treasury” in respect of Finance “Fundamental Rights” in case of legal aspects, “Internet banking” for general information, “issue of smart card/driving license” in transport and “Land ownership” in Revenue are also considered important by the citizens/users in the states.

vii) Concerning access to government departments by the citizens, “education department” dominates the rest of the departments in the region. Rate of accessibility to all the departments is not encouraging.
viii) While is “cell phone internet” as used by the stakeholders as the most convenient and cost effective mode for internet connectivity, “google” tops among other search engines as profound by them to access resources under internet. On the other hand, “e-mail” is the most commonly use internet based service by the users of the region.

ix) The level of satisfaction of the services under the e-Governance initiatives in the entire region is very low (40%) which needs to be evaluated by the agencies responsible for the programme. e-Governance initiatives should be implemented with the expectation of the people’s participation.

x) The overall G2C e-Governance project experiences in the entire region is very low (21.43%) which most of people are not familiar and aware of the projects taken up by the Government. Respondent rate is highest in case of Assam followed by Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland the least being in Mizoram and Tripura.

xi) Respondents who have the experience of G2C information services in the NE region were found to have access and received many types of information from different government departments which include information related to utility payment, finance, legal, development aspects, agriculture, education, health care, taxation, police security, transport, employment exchange, etc.
xii) There are different sources that make the users aware of G2C and e-Governance projects, of which seminars/workshops tops the list followed by mass media, websites, etc.

xiii) It is a matter of concern that only on fifth of the users (20.85%) of the region are fully satisfied with the delivery of G2C information service under the e-Governance initiatives. It also calls for attention to note that 28.27% are not satisfied with the services at all. Majority of the users (68%) feel the need for improvement of the system.

xiv) Majority of the respondents (39%) access these services at home. Use of other access points is relatively low and information kiosks are used the least. Information kiosks are meant for those who cannot afford to have personal or institutional facilities for accessing these services. It is an indication that this cross-section of the society is not using G2C services. Citizens from rural areas need to be motivated to use them and gain familiarity of accessing the available information services through various access points such as CSCs, libraries etc. with less cost, saving time and easily.

xv) Majority of the respondents are found to have used cell phone with mean score (2.25) as the most useful information channel in the region followed by department service centre (2.18) and library and information centres (2.08). Use of subject gateways is prevalent among the stakeholders of the region. Near similarity is observed on
the use of common service centre and portal. Use of kiosk and State Service Delivery Gateway (SSDG) however are less. In all the states under consideration more or less similar trend on these aspects of use of information channels is revealed.

xvi) The North East India has strongly felt that the implementation of e-Governance has helped to improve the image of the government. However the quality of the services under the e-Governance initiatives has been rated to average mostly.

xvii) The users face a number of challenges in the environment and they came out with various suggestions for overall improvement of the same which has given us an ample opportunity to suggest and recommend to improve upon the e-Governance project as well as services under it in the region.

7.3 TESTING THE HYPOTHESES

The findings of the present study have proved the truth of the hypotheses formulated at the very beginning of the study as understood from the following:

i) Hypothesis 1: “Government information is not properly communicated to the citizens of the region”.

In order to check the provision of government information through e-Governance programme one question was asked to the respondents having 15 variables. The responses of the users in this regard were not
encouraging at all though there were differences among them. The Chi-square test result was statistically insignificant. Thus, the hypothesis holds true that government information is not communicated to the citizens of the region.

ii) Hypothesis 2: “The existing infrastructure of information service under e-Governance is not developed to fulfill the information needs of the citizens of the region.”

Two questions were asked to the respondents to understand the readiness for ICT in the existing infrastructure of information services under the e-Governance initiative and accessibility to the services through different access points. Findings of the study have shown that many departments of the region need to evaluate, as importance given to the department’s e-Governance services were found to be low. The readiness for successful implementation and for better accessibility of information service also needs to be developed. As such this hypothesis also holds true.

iii) Hypothesis 3: “Majority of the citizens of the North East region are not familiar of G2C information services”.

As per the responses of the users on two specific questions, 59.57% of them are not aware of the G2C information service. The Chi-square test also shows insignificant results in this regard. As such this hypothesis is also proved to be true.
iv) **Hypothesis 4:** “The level of satisfaction of the users of the G2C information service is very low”.

To test the truth of the hypothesis, one question was asked to the respondents comprising of 10 variables taking into account 4-point scale. As the ANOVA test shows, it was statistically not significant at 5% level of significance. **This proves the truth of the hypothesis.**

v) **Hypothesis 5:** “G2C information services are not efficient and effective in North East India”.

Four questions were asked to the respondents to understand the efficiency and effectiveness of the G2C information services. In this regard, as the Chi-Square test shows, the services are statistically insignificant. **Thus, this hypothesis was proved that G2C information services are not efficient and effective in the region.**

### 7.4 SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings of the study, the issues, challenges, problems as faced and experienced by the users and suggestions given by them to remove the issues or problems can be stated as the concluding remark of the study.

i) Taking into account the importance of e-Governance that has been facilitated by advances in ICT, all government departments of the NE region should take up steps for launching e-Governance programmes.
ii) It should be ensured that all departments have the requisite infrastructure including the software, before the programme is launched.

iii) Trained personnel should also be appointed to operate in the new environment. Existing staff of the departments also required to get training in this regard.

iv) Training programmes for citizens on handling of computers and access to information resources/data bases of the governments should be arranged regularly by the government through different service centers under the e-Governance programme.

v) Efforts need to be made to cover all the citizens of the society to enable them avail the services under the e-Governance projects irrespective of their geographical border/location on timely basis by increasing number of access points with high speed Internet connectivity.

vi) There must be a monitoring mechanism to ensure that expected impacts are achieved and to some extent the accountability is ensured.

### 7.5 AREAS FURTHER RESEARCH

Study also can be conducted for further research on e-Governance to make e-Governance programme successful as well as provision of G2C services effectively under the following aspects.
i) Assessment study of the e-Readiness to ascertain feasibility of e-Governance programme.

ii) Studies on e-Governance domain services can be conducted for viz. Government to Citizens (G2C), Government to Business (G2B), Government to Government (G2G), Government to Employee (G2E) and Citizen to Government (C2E) to understand their needs as well as their access to the Government information.

7.6 CONCLUSION

To make the governance more dynamic, transparent and democratic, e-Governance becomes inevitable in this era of ICT. The study brings to light issues regarding the use of G2C information services in NE for the overall development of the system. To make it more effective and successful, persistent efforts need to be made. ICT is important but it is important to ensure that records are available and updated. Accessibility to the records is an important area so that benefits of e-Governance can be accrued. Motivating the citizens to make use of these services and training them in using ICT is equally important.