

GOVERNANCE

Governance; meaning and definition

*The term governance simply refers the government in action. It is the **process** by which authority is conferred on rulers. The rulers by this authority make the rules and enforce them and also modify those rules when needed.*

Thus, to understand the governance an identification of both the rulers and the rules, as well as the various processes by which they are elected/selected is required.

Further, it is also equally important to identify that in which manner they are linked together and with the society.

In the community of nations, governance is considered “good” and “democratic” to the degree in which a country’s institutions and processes are transparent and their functioning is in accordance with the Rule of Law.

The institutions include the parliament and its various ministries and other politico-administrative agencies while processes include such key activities as elections and legal procedures. The elections must be seen to be free of corruption and accountable to the people. A country’s success in achieving this standard has become a key measure of its credibility and respect in the world.

The concept of governance as envisaged by the World Bank and other global institutions includes the following:

- The processes by which governments are chosen, monitored, and changed.
- The systems of interaction between the administration, the legislature, and the judiciary.
- The ability of government to create and to implement public policy.
- The mechanisms by which citizens and groups define their interests and interact with institutions of authority and with each other.

Considering these issues in the context of governance in India, There are various forms of power such as--ideological, political, legal, military, economic, administrative, and so on..... and governments everywhere frequently use various combinations of power to govern the society.

SOME DEFINITIONS OF GOVERNANCE

According to UNDP- "Governance is the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage a nation's affairs. It is the complex mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights and obligations, and mediate their differences."

According to the Asian Development Bank- "GOVERNANCE is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's social and economic resources for development. Governance means the way those with power use that power."

According to World Bank the GOVERNANCE is "... the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised for the common good. This includes

1. The process by which those in authority are selected, monitored and replaced,
2. The capacity of the government to effectively manage its resources and implement sound policies, and
3. The respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them. "

For the purposes of discussing **governance in India**, the issues of governance can be distinguished into the **macro and micro** level.

- **Macro level** At the macro level matters include such things as constitutional reform; the overall role of government itself (size and resources); the relationship between the key national institutions of the administration, the legislature, the judiciary, and the military; and the manner in which the political system operates.
- **Micro level** At the micro level such issues of governance can be included-
 - 1-** Issues in many sectors of the nation including at the regional and unit level: government departments and
 - 2-** State owned enterprises (SOEs) and commercial firms,
 - 3-** Education and health institutions, cooperatives,
 - 4-** Organizations active in civil society affairs (such as the media, think tanks, and non-government organizations), and informal institutions of governance which operate in the large informal sector across India.

Whether government and governance are same

The term Governance is made from the Greek words *kybernao* *kybernetes*, meaning 'to steer' and 'pilot' or 'helmsman'. It is the process whereby 'an organization or a society steers itself and the dynamics of communication and control are central to the process'.

Government describes a more rigid and narrower set of activities among a narrower set of participants (usually civil servants, elected politicians and some influential or privileged interests). The word 'governance' is often used because it is a better fit for the issues of global significance such as Environmental change, terrorism, poverty, gender empowerment, etc. It has spread like wildfire through debates on a range of issues, but particularly around environment and development issues, because it acknowledges that there is a range of institutions, rules and participants, both within and beyond the nation state, who are involved in making decisions. This is happening at both national and international levels, but also in innovative new forms of organization that cut across government boundaries. The state is seen as having progressively lost its monopoly over the control of citizens and the regulation of business and other institutions. It is still a player, but commentators have to take into account a range of other participants and scales. Political scientists are having to think in terms of webs or networks of governance. They have to consider these as being both horizontal and vertical, and as representing new ways of distributing the business of managing societies' concerns across local, national, regional and international scales. Involvement of a wider circle of stakeholders is seen as central. Although this is true of all discussions of new patterns of governance, it has been particularly true of environmental governance. This is probably best demonstrated by the gradual emergence of

environmental and social NGOs as major players in international negotiations, such as around climate change. They can claim to represent a global movement, yet can also draw on very local voices as 'witnesses' to environmental problems. They can also keep watch on individual national delegations to underpin their commitment to action. Increasingly, there are instances of NGO representatives being invited to join national delegations, both to represent environmentalist strands within civil society and on account of their expert knowledge of the negotiation processes. Another set of stakeholders known as QUANGOs (quasi non-governmental organisations) has taken on roles that might previously have been associated with government, such as the Environment Agency in the UK.

What is good governance?

Again, the debate on the **quality of governance** has been clouded by a slew of slightly differing definitions and understanding of what is actually meant by the term. Typically, it is defined in terms of the *mechanisms* thought to be needed to promote it. For example, in various places, good governance has been associated with democracy and good civil rights, with transparency, with the rule of law, and with efficient public services.

Good governance promotes equity, participation, pluralism, transparency, accountability and the rule of law, in a manner that is effective, efficient and enduring. In translating these principles into practice, we see the holding of free, fair and frequent elections, representative legislatures that make laws and provide oversight, and an independent judiciary to interpret those laws.

The greatest threats to good governance come from corruption, violence and poverty, all of which undermine transparency, security, participation and fundamental freedoms.

Democratic governance advances development, by bringing its energies to bear on such tasks as eradicating poverty, protecting the environment, ensuring gender equality, and providing for sustainable livelihoods. It ensures that civil society plays an active role in setting priorities and making the needs of the most vulnerable people in society known. In fact, well-governed countries are less likely to be violent and less likely to be poor. When the alienated are allowed speaking and their human rights are protected, they are less likely to turn to violence as a solution. When the poor are given a voice, their governments are more likely to invest in national policies that reduce poverty. In so doing, good governance provides the setting for the equitable distribution of benefits from growth

Important Aspects of Governance;

The **quality of governance** is an issue of increasing concern in countries around the world, both developed and developing. The **UN Secretary-General** had stated, “Good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development.” However, a lack of systematic data, both over time within countries as well as between countries around the world, ensures that fundamental questions remain to be answered adequately. How can we best measure governance? How does governance performance differ across time and space? Which are the most critical issues of governance?

In India, at the broadest levels of governance, many major issues still remain unsettled. We have an especially daunting array of key issues which, one way or another, have not been properly addressed since Independence in 1947. What are these issues? Since such a list can become endless, we include the following:

- The role of the state, and the government in India, vis-à-vis the people.
- The capacity of (i.e., the resources available to) the government in India.
- The separation of powers between the executive, legislature, and judiciary, and the way that the constituent parts of these three arms of government operate internally.
- The way the political system operates.
- The state and markets in India.
- The role of selected institutions in the Indian intellectual community in contributing to governance in India.
- The management of economy, fiscal imbalances and deficits.
- Regional disparities within and across states.
- Poverty and unemployment.
- Denial of basic needs of food, water, shelter and clothing to a substantial proportion of the population.
- Environmental degradation and climate change.
- Internal Security issues viz. naxalism and home grown terrorism.
- Exclusion and marginalization of people on the basis of parochial identities.
- Lack of transparency and accountability in the working of the State and its agencies.

How important are these matters? The answer is that while day to day life continues despite the fact that issues of this kind remain unsettled, they are very important indeed.

It is very difficult-perhaps impossible-to have satisfactory processes of governance at other levels across the nation when so many key high level issues remain unsettled. It is notable that the comment that "we don't have the rule of law in this country" is often heard in India, and that many Indians comment about the confused state of the Indian society. It would seem clear that it will be necessary to make considerable progress on some of the main questions of governance in India before more orderly processes of public life can be firmly established.

GOVERNANCE AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

In general, governance is associated with efficient and effective administration in a democratic framework. It involves the exercise of political, economic and administrative powers in managing the country's affairs, and includes the processes of formulation as well as implementation of decisions. But as discussed in the preceding Section, over the past decade, the concept of governance has become wider in complexion integrating a number of key elements and principles. Governance is being propagated to promote good government. Government is considered to be effective and good if it is able to fulfill its basic commitments efficiently, effectively and economically. The basic goal of governance is to establish quality relationship between 'good government' and the 'governed' or citizens. Good government has been

defined by John Healey and Mark Robinson as a high level of organisational effectiveness in relation to policy formulation and the policies actually pursued, especially in the conduct of economic policy and its contribution to growth, stability and popular welfare. Good government also implies accountability, transparency, participation, openness and the rule of law.

‘Governance’, in the present context is an attempt to widen the scope of public administration by stretching beyond formal ‘governments’. It is broader in nature extending upto the private sector, non-governmental mechanisms along with governmental institutions. Collective problem-solving is taking the place of individualized decision-making. There are many forms of community organisations, voluntary, and collective self-help groups through which people are organizing themselves to achieve common goals and objectives. It intends to make public administration more open, transparent and accountable. According to the UNDP (1994), the challenge for all societies is to create a system of governance that promotes, supports and sustains human development especially for the poorest and the marginal.

According to Kettl (2001), “Government refers to the structure and function of public institutions. Governance is the way government gets its job done. Traditionally government itself managed most service delivery. Toward the end of the 20 century, however, government relied increasingly on non-governmental partners to do its work, through processes that relied less on authority for control”. To Kettl, governance, as an approach to public administration, has primarily to do with contracting out and grants to sub-governments.

The process of governance has gained a transformative perspective in recent times due to the changing nature of the concept of 'development'. Development has now acquired a wider meaning; it is not just confined to growth in Gross National Product or increase in national income, or per capita income as was the notion earlier. Development is no longer determined by economic growth, but progress in all spheres-political, social, environmental, and cultural. It encompasses all aspects of human life. The first Human Development Report (HDR) 1990, included three distinct components – longevity, education and income per head as indicators of Human Development Index (HDI).

The HDR 2001, indicated that human development means much more than the rise or fall of national incomes. It is about creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential and lead productive and creative lives in accord with their needs and 6th interests. People are the real wealth of nations.

Development is about expanding the choices people have in order to lead lives that they value. It is thus much more than mere economic growth. Development is being thus looked upon as a process of creating a suitable enabling environment for people to lead long, healthy, productive, and creative lives. In facilitating this, the governance processes need to be effective and efficient. This leads us to the crucial aspect of governance, which is called Good Governance. According to Leftwich (1993), Good Governance involves an efficient public service, an independent judicial system and legal framework to enforce contracts; an accountable administration of public funds; an independent public auditor responsible to a representative legislature; respect for the law and human rights at all levels of government, a pluralistic institutional structure and a free press.

While governance, on the one hand, deals with collaborative partnership, networking which is necessary for policy formulation, and implementation, Good Governance on the other hand, attempts to make this activity not just efficient and effective but also more accountable, democratic and responsive to the public needs. Through good governance, an attempt is being made to establish an all-encompassing relationship between government and the governed.

SIGNIFICANCE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

Good governance aims at achieving much more than efficient management of economic and financial resources or public services. It is a broad reform strategy to make government more open, responsive, accountable, democratic, as well as strengthen institutions of civil society and regulate private sector. Good Governance is a combination of efficiency concerns of public management and accountability concerns of governance. Good Governance as a prerequisite for promoting people-centred development is assuming importance.

Good Governance aims at:

- Improving the quality of life of citizens
- Enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of administration
- Establishing the legitimacy and credibility of institutions
- Securing freedom of information and expression
- Providing citizen-friendly and citizen-caring administration
- Ensuring accountability
- Using Information Technology-based services to improve citizen-government interface
- Improving/enhancing the productivity of employees; and

- Promoting organisational pluralism – State, market and civil society organisations for governance.

Good Governance, hence, relates to the quality of governance through attributes such as participation, empowerment, accountability, equity and justice. Adherence and promotion of these attributes provides avenues to the citizens, especially the poor and the marginalised to articulate their interests, to exercise their rights and improve their living standards. Good Governance includes the capacity to formulate and implement sound policies by the government with due respect for citizens.

From this framework, governance can be construed as consisting of six different elements. These are (1) Voice and accountability, which includes civil liberties and freedom of the press, (2) Political stability, (3) Government effectiveness which includes the quality of policy making, and public service delivery, (4) Quality of regulations, (5) Rule of law, which includes protection of property rights and an independent judiciary, and (6) Control of corruption. Good Governance aims at enhancing the quality of life and entails governing processes which strive for maximum good for the maximum number of people.

GOOD GOVERNANCE: CHARACTERISTICS

The goal of governance initiatives should be to develop capacities that are needed to realise development that gives priority to the poor, advances women's issues, sustains the environment and creates necessary opportunities for employment and other livelihoods(UNDP,

1994). A strong viewpoint that has emerged is that globalization could provide the necessary impetus for bringing about efficiency, effectiveness and accountability in the government and administrative system. Hence, efforts are on in several countries to reexamine, assess and remove dys-functionalities threatening the governance system. Good governance relates to enhancing the quality of governance through empowerment, participation, accountability, equity and justice. Without transparent and accountable institutions and the capacity to develop the policies and laws to enable a country to manage its markets and its political life in an open but just way, development is not sustainable. Several Researchers, policy makers, international institutions have attempted to conceptualize the concept of governance and identify its basic characteristics. On the basis of their conceptualization major characteristic of Good governance are as follows:-

1. Participatory,
2. Consensus oriented,
3. Accountable
4. transparent,
5. Responsive,
6. Effective and efficient,
7. Equitable and inclusive, and
8. Rule of law.

Good governance is responsive to the present and future needs of the organization, exercises prudence in policy-setting and decision-making, and that the best interests of all stakeholders are taken into account.

1. **1. Rule of Law:-**Good governance requires fair legal frameworks that are enforced by an impartial regulatory body, for the full protection of stakeholders.
2. **Transparency:-**Transparency means that information should be provided in easily understandable forms and media; that it should be freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by governance policies and practices, as well as the outcomes resulting therefrom; and that any decisions taken and their enforcement are in compliance with established rules and regulations.
3. **Responsiveness:-**Good governance requires that organizations and their processes are designed to serve the best interests of stakeholders within a reasonable time frame.
4. **Consensus Oriented:-**Good governance requires consultation to understand the different interests of stakeholders in order to reach a broad consensus of what is in the best interest of the entire stakeholder group and how this can be achieved in a sustainable and prudent manner.
5. **Equity and Inclusiveness:-**The organization that provides the opportunity for its stakeholders to maintain, enhance, or generally improve their well-being provides the most compelling message regarding its reason for existence and value to society.
6. **Effectiveness and Efficiency:-** Good governance means that the processes implemented by the organization to produce favorable results meet the needs of its stakeholders, while making the best use of resources – human, technological, financial, natural and environmental – at its disposal.

- 7. Accountability:-** Accountability is a key tenet of good governance. Who is accountable for what should be documented in policy statements. In general, an organization is accountable to those who will be affected by its decisions or actions as well as the applicable rules of law.
- 8. Participation:-** Participation by both men and women, either directly or through legitimate representatives, is a key cornerstone of good governance. Participation needs to be informed and organized, including freedom of expression and assiduous concern for the best interests of the organization and society in general.

These characteristics reinforce each other. A proper governance strategy needs to take cognisance of these features. Many countries in the present times, are trying to bring about administrative reforms to foster Good Governance. The World Bank has also outlined certain basics of Good Governance. These include:

- Operation of rule of law, which involves adequate laws to ensure personal security and to facilitate the functioning of the market. The laws need to be adequately enforced through an independent and predictable judiciary in an ambience of absence of official corruption.
- A policy environment, which facilitates economic growth and poverty reduction. This includes sound macro-economic and fiscal policies, sound budgetary institutions and good prioritization of government expenditure as well as predictable and efficient regulation of the private sector, including the financial sector.
- Adequate investment in people (particularly through public expenditures on basic health and education) and in infrastructure,

involving good allocation of public expenditures between and within different sectors.

- Protection to the vulnerable through affordable and targeted safety nets and generally ensuring an appropriate 'pro-poor' emphasis in public expenditure.
- Protection of the environment assuring that economic growth does not cause environmental degradation.

GOOD GOVERNANCE INITIATIVES: THE INDIAN CONTEXT

In India, efforts are afoot and have also in some respects gained momentum in the direction of Good Governance reforms. The major administrative reforms in our country during the 1950s and 1960s were basically structural in nature with a view to improving the administrative machinery. With the nature of administration undergoing a change in the 1990s (from traditional bureaucratic to responsive, citizen – oriented), the reforms are also now geared in this direction. Evolving a citizen-centered bureaucracy, ensuring transparency and right to information, streamlining the public grievances machinery, providing for code of ethics, and citizens' charters are some landmarks in this effort. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments are important reform measures fostering empowerment and participation of people in the governance process. The current changes in government under the impact of reinvention are often considered to be the market-oriented neo-liberal approach, and initiatives towards furthering this are visible in both developed as well as developing countries. The role of the government, which was earlier direct in nature, is now assuming a facilitating and

indirect role. Good Governance, as a strategy in the context of managerial reforms, assigns a steering and regulating role to the government vis-à-vis the private sector and a productive partnership between the government and societal organisations.

In India, efforts have been initiated since independence to improve the governmental functioning. Several measures were taken in this direction as the then administrative system suited the British government's needs of revenue; and law and order administration. The post-independence scenario was more in favour of Welfare State in order to ensure responsiveness to the needs of People. The adoption of the Constitution, Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles of State policy, planning as the means of achieving social and economic development made the reorientation of the administrative machinery imperative. The governance structure and systems had to undergo a major revamping from revenue collection and maintenance of law and order towards socio-economic development, social welfare and citizens' satisfaction. During 1950s and 1960s, in order to ensure responsiveness, several committees were set up which went into systematic review of the organisational structure and functioning of the Government of India. These include Secretariat Re-organization Committee (1947), Gopala swamy Ayyanagar Committee on Re organisation of Government Machinery (1949), and Gorwala Committee (1951). In 1953, on the Government of India's request, Paul H. Appleby of Syracuse University, USA submitted two reports on reforms in Indian administration. Based on these recommendations in 1964, a separate Department of Administrative Reforms was set up in the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The most comprehensive set of recommendations including that of administrative efficiency, were made by the Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) set up in January 1966. It examined the entire gamut of administration at the Centre as well as the states and submitted twenty major reports during its working of nearly four and a half years. Based on the recommendations of ARC, a Department of Personnel was created in 1970, which was later transformed into a full-fledged Ministry of Personnel and Training, Administrative Reforms, Public Grievance, Pensions and Pensioners' welfare. Several institutions, such as, Central Vigilance Commission, Central Bureau of Investigation, Lok Pal and LokAyukta have also been created. These reform measures basically attempted to look into the structural changes that were desired at that time to strengthen and streamline the administrative machinery.

As we have discussed in the earlier sections, since the '80s, globally, many changes have taken place in social, economic and political spheres. Even in India also, there has dawned that the bureaucracy is inaccessible and indifferent to common citizens and is more bothered about adherence to procedures, rules and regulations. Hence, there is a need for administration to be more efficient, responsive and accountable for promoting Good Governance. It is now perceived that governance structure has to extend beyond traditional bureaucracy and involve citizens, consumer groups, local bodies, etc.

The Conference of Chief Secretaries and Chief Ministers of all the Indian states and Union Territories in 1996 and 1997 deliberated on the issue of improving governance, and an action plan was formulated to bring about accountable and citizen-friendly government. In accordance with

this, several initiatives were taken by the Union and state governments. Let us highlight some of these measures in the following section:

Citizens' Charters

The concept of Citizens' Charters originated in Britain. Citizens Charters are formulated by all those public organisations providing different kinds of services to the people. These Charters are statements that provide information to the general public about the nature of services being provided by that organisation, procedures, costs involved, mechanisms for lodging complaints in case the citizens are not satisfied, time taken for its redressal and so on. Nearly 68 organisations at the Central government level in India have formulated Citizens' Charters. These are being done by state governments also. Next time you visit any government organisation, including a hospital, municipal body, you can have a look at their Citizens' Charters.

Redressal of Citizens' Grievances;

The machinery for getting redressal of any grievance that the citizen has against any government organisation has been strengthened. A Directorate of Public Grievances has been set up in the Cabinet Secretariat in 1988 to examine complaints relating to various ministries and departments which have direct public dealings. Also, the organisations keep a track of the complaints or grievances the citizens have lodged. You can also notice certain counters set up by government

organisations as Information and Facilitation Counters (IFCs) including “May I Help You” counters. These help the citizens get the necessary information to facilitate their work done.

Use of Information Technology

Good Governance gives importance to use of Information Technology (IT) for efficient and effective service delivery. As you know, train, airline, bus reservations are now computerised and at the village level also computerisation of land records, registration of births, deaths, and application for necessary documents from district headquarters is making the tasks easier for the community. For example, in the State of Madhya Pradesh, the **Gyandoot** Programme launched in Dhar District has been a tremendous success. It has even won the Stockholm Award in 2000. Under this, initially, computers in 31 villages have been set up in Gram Panchayats which provide user-charge based services to the people. The services include agriculture produce, auction centre rates, online public grievance redressal information regarding the government programmes. Also, one-stop services are being offered to the people in some state governments where supply of ration card, registration of vehicles, payment of property tax, electricity bills, issue of land holding certificates, etc. are done at one place. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has started many ‘e-seva’ centres. Maharashtra has set up **Setu Project** in Thane for this purpose.

Right to Information;

It has been increasingly felt that secrecy and lack of openness in government operations results in administration using powers arbitrarily in their dealings with people. Hence, efforts have been on in recent years to ensure and bring about greater transparency in administrative decisions to enable people to have an easy access to information except those related to national defence and security. After several efforts, a “Freedom of Information Bill” was introduced in the Parliament, which aims to provide freedom to every citizen to secure access to information under the control of public authorities.

This Bill has been passed by the Parliament in 2001 and several state governments including Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka have passed the Right to Information Acts. At the central level the, Right to Information Act 2005 was passed by the Parliament on 11 May, 2005 .

People’s Participation and Decentralization

The government is ensuring people’s participation in governance through the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments by which Constitutional status is conferred on rural and urban local bodies. These bodies are given necessary powers and authority to function as institutions of self-government. State governments have passed necessary legislation to this effect by providing for the constitution of these bodies, functions, conduct of elections, devolution of resources, etc.

These are, in brief, some of the key initiatives taken by Indian government in fostering responsive governance. Any reform measure to be effective has to be sustained in the long run. Similarly, Good Governance can bring results by concentrating on certain key concerns

that can ensure its longevity and success. Let us now throw light on these issues.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Transparency means that the criteria, process and systems of decision-making are openly known to all in a public manner. For example, the selection of beneficiaries for any government scheme would be based on explicitly known and publicly communicated criteria; it will also be known as to who will apply these criteria, when and how? And, what benefits would accrue to those families and individuals who fit these criteria? When will these benefits accrue, at what costs or mutual obligations? It is now generally accepted that transparency in government is an essential element of good governance. The more informed citizens can be, the more meaningful the role they will play in dialogue with their governments and with each other. This does not imply that citizens are entitled to know everything about the workings of their government. But it does suggest not only that there should be clear definitions as to what is and what is not in the public domain, but also that there should be clear and cogent reasons for any secrecy, justified by the demands of the “public interest” – and not just the interests of those holding power.

Corruption, it is said, thrives in the dark. By contrast, “Sunlight is the best disinfectant.” So noted Justice Brandeis in one of the most quoted utterances of any US Supreme Court judge. Any campaign to counter corruption can usefully start with efforts to minimise the extent and depths of the shadows within official dom. Broadly speaking, there have been **three distinct phases** in the global movement against

corruption, **starting** from the late 1980s when mass mobilizations in countries as diverse as the India, Philippines, Bangladesh, China, Brazil, and Venezuela demonstrated that many people throughout the world were no longer prepared to tolerate corrupt leaders. A decade-long phase of awareness-raising and the “breaking of taboos” followed, so that by the end of the 1990s, development agencies, international organisations, and many governments were no longer in denial, and countries were now expected to address corruption openly and systematically in their funded programmes.

The **second** phase was one of standard setting and convention-making. Starting in the mid-1990s with the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption (1996) and the development of the OECD Convention Against the Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions (1997), and continuing with the Council of Europe’s Criminal and Civil Conventions (1999), the phase culminated in the signing of the UN Convention Against Corruption in Mexico in December 2003.

The **third** and current phase is by far the most challenging: that of implementation and enforcement of these standards. A number of governments have embarked on this third phase and many are finding the path extremely difficult. The answers are proving to be elusive. Reforms are being attempted in the face of myriad obstacles. The situation in each country is to a greater or lesser degree unique, and there seem to be no “off the shelf ” solutions. Containing corruption is not a mere matter of drafting the right laws – in many countries, for diverse reasons, legal systems are not functioning reliably. Nor is it

primarily a matter of establishing a major anti-corruption agency with draconian powers. Rather it is the challenge of making containing corruption the business of every manager within public service and of forging an ethic of “public service for the public”.

Transparency can be measured along three principal dimensions:

1. Government openness,
2. Whistleblower protection and
3. Publicity.

Government openness/Access to information

Government openness is defined as the information that the government releases, i.e. the extent to which governments publish information electronically or in any form, as well as the extent to which citizens can demand and receive information not published proactively. Studies interested in government openness sometimes use the existence of access to information laws such as RTI act of India to capture this dimension. However, using legal frameworks to assess actual access to and availability of information is far from ideal, since countries' level of implementation of laws varies considerably between countries. Access to information depends on well-organized records and a professional civil service. Responding to citizen requests for information requires well worked-out routines for saving documents and making them available for the public, which can be costly in terms of monetary and human resources. Moreover, access to information laws vary tremendously in their legal and institutional strength.

Whistleblower protection

Whistle-blowing and whistleblower protection has received increasing attention in recent decades. Recent instances of WikiLeaks, Ashok Khemka, Manjunath Shan mugam, etc have brought to limelight the importance of whistleblowing and their protection. Whistleblower protection refers to laws and policies meant to protect any one who exposes alleged wrongdoing. The wrongdoing might take the form of fraud, corruption or mismanagement. **India does not have a law to protect whistle blowers**; however, The Public Interest Disclosure and Protection to Persons Making the Disclosures Bill, 2010 was approved by the Cabinet of India as part of a drive to eliminate corruption in the country's bureaucracy and Passed by Lok sabha.

Need of legislation: There have been multiple instances of threatening, harassment and even murder of various whistleblowers:

1. An engineer, Satyendra Dubey, was murdered in November 2003; Dubey had blown the whistle in a corruption case in the National Highways Authority of India's Golden Quadrilateral project.
2. Two years later, an Indian Oil Corporation officer, Shan mugham Manjunath, was murdered for sealing a petrol pump that was selling adulterated fuel.
3. A Karnataka official SP Mahantesh, said to be a whistle-blower in controversial land allotments by societies was murdered in May 2012. Mahantesh was working as Deputy Director of the audit wing in the state's Cooperative department and had reported irregularities in different societies involving some officials and political figures.
4. A senior police officer alleged that Mayawati's government was corrupt and had embezzled large amounts of money. Shortly

thereafter, he was sent to a psychiatric hospital. Activists are seeking a quick passage of the Whistleblowers Protection Bill in Parliament. The demands are that a law should be framed to protect whistle blowers, facilitate the disclosure of information and uncover corruption in government organisations. Whistle-blowing is one of the fundamental conditions upon which disclosure of abuses of power rests. However, despite substantial legal improvements in whistleblower protection laws, the level implementation of these laws can be expected to vary between countries. The discrepancies between legal and actual protection of whistleblowers can be expected to be particularly important. A legal right of protection is difficult to implement, since an organizations retaliation against “traitors” can be sophisticated and subtle and therefore difficult to prosecute.

Publicity

Finally, publicity refers to the extent to which detected improprieties actually stand a reasonable chance to reach the public and relevant stakeholders. The concept of publicity goes somewhat outside the narrowest definition of government transparency, as it factors in the willingness and capacity of media actors to address and draw attention to abuses once detected. Publicity is sometimes measured using related constructs, such as press freedom.

Transparency: Indian Context

As a concept, transparency is relatively new to Government functioning in India. While inclusion has been an underlying theme since independence, transparency was assumed, but not enshrined. The biggest step to change this has been the Right to Information Act which enabled monitoring and accountability for every citizen as a right. But apart from this law, several other efforts at improving transparency have been initiated at several levels of the Government, Such as:

1. The Right to Information (RTI) Act
2. The National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP)
3. The Whistleblowers Bill
4. Public Procurement Bill5) Citizen's Charter

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability ensures actions and decisions taken by public officials are subject to over sight so as to guarantee that government initiatives meet their stated objectives and respond to the needs of the community they are meant to be benefiting, there by contributing to better governance and poverty reduction.

Accountability is one of the cornerstones of good governance; however, it can be difficult for scholars and practitioners alike to navigate the myriad of different types of accountability. Recently, there has been a growing discussion within both the academic and development communities about the different accountability typologies. This Note outlines the present debate focusing on the definition and substance of different forms of accountability and considers the key role that legislatures play in ensuring accountability.

What is Accountability?

The notion of accountability is an amorphous concept that is difficult to define in precise terms. However, broadly speaking, accountability exists when there is a relationship where an individual or body, and the performance of tasks or functions by that individual or body, are subject to another's oversight, direction or request that they provide information or justification for their actions. Therefore, the concept of accountability involves two distinct stages: **answerability** and **enforcement**.

Ans- Werability refers to the obligation of the government, its agencies and public officials to provide information about their decisions and actions and to justify them to the public and those institutions of accountability tasked with providing oversight.

Enforcement suggests that the public or the institution responsible for accountability can sanction the offending party or remedy the contravening behavior. As such, different institutions of accountability might be responsible for either or both of these stages.

Why is Accountability Important to Governance?

Evaluating the ongoing effectiveness of public officials or public bodies ensures that they are performing to their full potential, providing value for money in the provision of public services, instilling confidence in the

government and being responsive to the community they are meant to be serving.

Types of Accountability?

The concept of accountability can be classified according to the type of accountability exercised and/ or the person, group or institution the public official answers to. The present debate as to the content of different forms of accountability is best conceptualized by reference to opposing forms of accountability. As such the main forms of accountability are described below in reference to their opposing, or alternate, concept.

Horizontal vs. Vertical Accountability

The prevailing view is that institutions of accountability, such as parliament and the judiciary, provide what is commonly termed horizontal accountability, or the capacity of a network of relatively autonomous powers (i.e., other institutions) that can call into question, and eventually punish, improper ways of discharging the responsibilities of a given official. In other words, horizontal accountability is the capacity of state institutions to check abuses by other public agencies and branches of government, or the requirement for agencies to report side ways. Alternatively, vertical accountability is the means through which citizens, mass media and civil society seek to enforce standards of good performance on officials. While parliament is typically considered as a key institution in constructs of horizontal accountability, it is also important in vertical accountability. Citizens and civil society groups can

seek the support of elected representatives to redress grievances and intervene in the case of inappropriate or inadequate action by government. In addition, through the use of public hearings, committee investigations and public petitioning, parliament can provide a vehicle for public voice and a means through which citizens and civic groups can question government and seek parliamentary sanctioning where appropriate.

Political versus Legal Accountability

Parliament and the judiciary act as horizontal constitutional checks on the power of the executive. The role of these two institutions can be further delineated in that parliament holds the executive politically accountable, whilst the judiciary holds the executive legally accountable. These classifications stem from the fact parliament is apolitical institution, while the judiciary can only adjudicate on legal issues. Together they provide ongoing oversight in order to keep the government accountable throughout its term in office. They may also be aided by other institutions, such as supreme audit institutions, anti-corruption commissions, ombuds offices and human rights institutes. These secondary 'autonomous institutions of accountability' are typically designed to be independent of the executive; in the case of supreme audit institutions (in 'Westminster parliamentary systems'), anti-corruption commissions and ombuds offices they often report to parliament while in the cases of supreme audit institutions in Franco phone countries and human rights institutes, they may be part of the judiciary. Political accountability usually manifests itself in the concept of

individual ministerial responsibility, which is the cornerstone of the notion of responsible government.

Social Accountability

The prevailing view of social accountability is that it is an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement, namely a situation where-by ordinary citizens and/or civil society organizations participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability. Such accountability is sometimes referred to it as society driven horizontal accountability. The term social accountability is, in a sense, a misnomer since it is not meant to refer to a specific type of account-ability, but rather to a particular approach (or set of mechanisms) for exacting accountability. Mechanisms of social accountability can be initiated and supported by the state, citizens or both, but very often they are demand-driven and operate from the bottom-up.

Social accountability initiatives are as varied and different as participatory budgeting, administrative procedures acts, social audits, and citizen report cards which all involve citizens in the oversight and control of government. This can be contrasted with government initiatives or entities, such as citizen advisory boards, which fulfill public functions. Often overlooked in considerations of social accountability is the role that legislators can play in providing weight to such grass roots accountability mechanisms. For example, a Member of Parliament can represent the concerns of his/her constituents by questioning a Minister during Question Period in Parliament or by requesting information directly from a government ministry or department.

Diagonal Accountability

The concept of diagonal accountability is far from settled with two groups of commentators adopting different definitions. The literature does not support a convergence of their ideas. Although, there is conjecture as to what constitutes diagonal accountability, the prevailing view is that diagonal accountability entails vertical accountability actors. Generally speaking diagonal accountability seeks to engage citizens directly in the workings of horizontal accountability institutions. This is an effort to augment the limited effectiveness of civil society's watch dog function by breaking the state's monopoly over responsibility for official executive oversight. The main principles of diagonal accountability are:

- a. Participate in Horizontal Accountability Mechanisms–** Community advocates participate in institutions of horizontal accountability, rather than creating distinct and separate institutions of diagonal accountability. In this way agents of vertical accountability seek to insert themselves more directly into the horizontal axis.
- b. Information flow–** Community advocates are given an opportunity to access information about government agencies that would normally be limited to the horizontal axis, for instance internal performance reviews etc. Furthermore, they have access to the deliberations and reasons why horizontal accountability institutions make the decisions they do. Meanwhile, community advocates bring first hand experience about the performance of the government agency to the accountability process.
- c. Compel Officials to Answer–** Community advocates co-opt the horizontal accountability institution's authority to compel a

government agency to answer questions (as in the example given above of an MP questioning a Minister about issues of concern to his/her constituents); and

- d. Capacity to Sanction**— Community advocates acquire the authority of the horizontal accountability institution to enforce the findings or influence elected officials.

Some argue that civil society can strengthen the effectiveness of horizontal accountability institutions by pressuring existing agencies to do their jobs more effectively. This type of participation in accountability is not direct action against wrongdoing, as with vertical accountability, but rather society-driven horizontal accountability, such as citizen advisory boards that fulfill public functions, like auditing government expenditures or supervising procurement. More generally, active citizens and civil society groups can work with elected representatives to enhance parliaments' representation role.

Social Accountability versus Diagonal Accountability

Recently the World Bank argued that social accountability is broad enough to encompass mechanisms of diagonal accountability. It was argued that diagonal accountability mechanisms can also be considered a form of social accountability. Considering social accountability is not meant to refer to a specific type of accountability, but rather to a particular approach for exacting accountability, it might be a broader concept than diagonal accountability. This lends weight to the idea that diagonal accountability mechanisms could be a component of the broader approach of social accountability. However, this is contrast to some commentators who draw a sharp distinction between social

accountability and diagonal accountability. They argue that the state is often resistant to citizens poaching its exclusive oversight domain, instead encouraging new forms of social accountability, which they dismiss as being merely a form of outreach that provides an opportunity for civil society to inform government about public perception of government behavior.

Conclusion

Parliaments are key actors in what has been termed the 'chain of accountability'. They are, along with the judiciary, the key institution of horizontal accountability, not only in their own right but also as the institution to which many autonomous accountability institutions report. They are the vehicle through which political accountability is exercised. Along with civil society organizations and the mass media, they are also important institutions in vertical accountability. Newer concepts of accountability have emerged: social accountability and diagonal accountability. The former, defined as 'society driven horizontal accountability' seeks to provide direct answerability from government to citizens; parliaments and elected representatives are important vehicles through which citizens and civic groups can also extract enforcement. And – no matter how defined – parliaments are one of the institutions through which diagonal accountability can be exercised.

CONTROL - The contemporaneous mechanisms to check whether work is being done and done in the proper manner as specified on time is Control. It is carried on simultaneously while work is being done through its various forms which will be discussed below.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTROL:

Accountability happens after the job is complete or when some work has been done whereas control is performed simultaneously as the work is being done, side by side.

Types of Accountability & Control:

1. Internal Control & Accountability: It is a part of the Administrative Machinery and work automatically and spontaneously with the movement of the machinery as self-regulating devices and act as brakes in an automobile.

It comprises of –

a) Budgetary control - Every department and official is given information about the amount of funds they have and they have to perform within it, if it goes overboard then they are accountable. These funds are passed by the Parliament/Legislature through voting and is not easy to get and once they are used they are audited by the CAG and the Finance Ministry sanctions funds to the departments and Ministries once Parliament passes it.

b) Personnel Management Control- Every official is made aware of his rank, grade and salary and there are rules and regulations that govern the work conditions and conduct of the personnel and if that is not followed and then a pre-prescribed punishment is meted out.

- c) **Organisational and Method/Management Control**- Regular inspections are done and requisite training is provided to officials for efficient execution of their responsibilities.
- d) **Administrative Ethics and Professional standards**- Moral and accepted beliefs of behaviour are promoted amongst officials.
- e) **Leadership**- Leadership acceptance increases with an increase in hierarchy and position and that is encouraged to keep the motivation and morale of officials going. It should not be seen only in the negative light of a control mechanism for irrational patterns of individual's employees' activities but as a positive mechanism of harmonising individual's activities into rational patterns.
2. **External Control & Accountability**:-The controls within the constitutional machinery e.g. Legislative control, executive control, Judicial control. Public control through media, interest groups, voluntary organizations, Civil Society, Citizen's Charters, Right to Information, Social audit are also a form of external control. A thing to note is that external and internal controls are not exclusive categories but are interdependent and complement and supplement each other.

LEGISLATIVE CONTROL AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The legislature exercises general power of 'direction, supervision and control of Public administration' as per Willoughby. Through budgetary review and other devices of investigation it keeps a check on them. The bureaucrat is shielded for his actions by the minister through the policy of ministerial responsibility to the legislature. However, there are many

means by the legislature to enforce responsibility in the executive, which are:

a) *Control on delegated legislation:* Normally the legislature is entrusted with the job of making laws but in complex and stressful conditions of the modern society, the State is caught up with many things at one time and is not able to concentrate and study a particular issue properly. This leads to a situation of delegated legislation or delegation (giving) of some of its law making powers to the administrative authorities. However, the administrative authorities are strictly subordinate or under the terms of the statute of the delegation and is subject to judicial review if it violated the terms of conditions of the agreement and its validity can be measured as well. Delegated legislation has become a necessary evil as nowadays matters brought before the legislature to make laws are highly technical and usually the legislators do not possess such specialist knowledge and so lay down the general principles (basic ideas/rules) and leave the technical details to be sorted out to the administration to make the rules through the process of delegated legislation. It brings in flexibility and is immensely helpful in times of emergencies. The legislature should clearly spell out the limit of the power delegated so that there is control maintained. The delegation should function under the rules and regulations of the agreement made between the legislature and them. It should be transparent and public should be allowed to participate. Judicial review is a must for the smooth and legal functioning of the delegated legislation.

b) President's speech: Addressing both the Houses of Parliament before starting every new session of the parliament and also on other occasions aims to broadly and clearly read out the policies and activities of the executive in the time immediately ahead. General discussion is then held regarding the president's speech and this gives an opportunity to the parliamentarians to appreciate or criticise the administration for doing or not doing their duties. President's speech is a means to bring in the public's voice in the parliament and not to coerce the parliamentarians as they follow the party guidelines.

c) Financial control: Parliament exercises control over the finance and funds given to administration for their various activities.

- i. **Budget discussion:** Before the financial year begins there is an 'annual financial statement' called the 'Budget' that is laid down before the houses of parliament. After that the general discussion takes place on it and all doubts are sought to be cleared. Then there is a voting done to pass it and then the funds are granted. So it is not an easy procedure to get funds.
- ii. **Audit Report:** The CAG, an independent agency, audits all the accounts of income and expenditure of the govt. at centre as well as States and causes to lay down the same before the parliament as well as legislatures of different states through the president and governor of respective states respectively to be reviewed and hold accountable the concerned people.
- iii. **Reports of the Estimates Committee and Public Accounts Committee of Parliament:** The parliament appoints these committees from amongst themselves through voting and

consensus. The PAC scrutinises the CAG's report and also reviews the financial transactions of governmental departments. Then there is an audit report compiled by the PAC that is presented for discussion and questioning before the House. The Estimates committee makes recommendations for improving organisation, securing economy and providing guidance and alternative policies and examine whether the money is well laid out within the limits of the policy implied in the estimates in the presentation of their estimates.

d) Other forms of Legislative Control:

- i. ***Question hour-*** one hour, that is 11 a.m to 12 p.m. of every parliament day is reserved for questions where around 30-40 oral questions are asked normally and then there are supplementary questions along with the original question that helps cross examine the minister. It helps the public attention to focus on a particular issue and avoids ministerial and bureaucratic arrogance from creeping in.
- ii. ***Half an hour, short discussions, Calling attention motion-*** The half an hour discussion is subsequent to the question hour when there is dissatisfaction regarding a particular answer given by the concerned minister and so there is more time given to extract relevant information and ventilate public grievance, etc. Short discussions needs prior notice to the speaker and is of a matter of urgent public importance and the govt. has to reply. No voting takes place here and not

more than two hours in a day can be devoted to this. The Calling Attention Motion is a tool used for drawing the govt's attention to a serious policy administration/implementation issue and the govt. has to answer immediately once the motion is admitted by the speaker of the house or it may ask for time to prepare the answer if thorough detailing and understanding is required.

- iii. **Zero hour discussion:** It happens after the question hour that is 12 p.m. and since 12 p.m. is also called zero hour therefore it is named 'Zero Hour'. Here upto five members are allowed by the Speaker to raise matters of public importance under rule 377 (If in the opinion of the Speaker, any notice contains words, phrases or expressions which are argumentative, unparliamentary, ironical, irrelevant, verbose, or otherwise inappropriate, he may, in his discretion, amend such notice before it is circulated) of the rules of parliamentary procedure.
- iv. **Adjournment debates:** On intimation of an urgent matter for debate, the normal business of the House is adjourned and the debate on the topic ensues.
- v. **No-Confidence Motion:** Also called censure motion. It is raised by a member or members when they express a lack of confidence in the govt. for any reason. If the motion is allowed by the Speaker then the debate is held and at the end of it a vote of confidence is sought by the govt. failing which the entire cabinet/govt. has to resign thus leading to formation of a new govt.

vi. **Debates on Legislation:** Normal business of legislation where new laws are enacted or amendments are sought to existing laws.

e) **Parliamentary Committees:** Estimates and Parliament Accounts Committee we have already discussed so now we will discuss other relevant ones:

- i. **Committee on Assurances-** It undertakes scrutiny of promises, assurances, undertakings, etc. given by the Ministers from time to time on the House floor and reports on: to the extent that they have been implemented and whether it has fulfilled the minimum conditions of its purpose. Thus making the Ministers wary of their promises and efficiently performs their duties through the administration.
- ii. **Committee in Subordinate Legislation-** It controls and scrutinises the govt. activities regarding administrative delegation of legislative powers.

LIMITATIONS TO LEGISLATIVE CONTROL:

So as we can see that the legislature keeps a stronghold on the Government as well as administration in every minute way.

Now, let us see how these are limited due to various reasons mentioned below:

1. Lack of time, staff and expertise and technical knowledge to exert effective control in the most meaningful areas.
2. No sustained measure of control and surveillance.
3. Imperial or rigid mindset of administrators and huge public illiteracy.
4. Business groups lobbying.
5. Seniority instead of merit given preference for promotion of bureaucrats thus not letting them do their work with vigour and new ideas.
6. Declaration of emergency cuts their hands off.
7. Govt. bills to become laws out shadow private member's bills which are mostly for the public cause.
8. Funds are not provided many a times as the legislature lacks technical knowledge and is not able to understand the need by the executive for excess grants.
9. Parliament cannot raise money or any tax unless executive demands it but can only increase or reduce those demands.

EXECUTIVE CONTROL AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In a parliamentary and democratic system of governance there is the political executive (govt.) and the permanent executive (bureaucracy). Here will be discussing the political executive's control over the permanent executive where the permanent executive works under the political executive through ministries and departments and is responsible to the political executive who in turn is responsible collectively to the House of Parliament especially the House of the

people or the Lok Sabha and that's how they are answerable to the people.

- i) **Recruitment and promotion system:** The UPSC and state PSC's appoint and remove personnel however the general rules of appointment, eligibility, age, etc to these posts and the recruitment procedure are laid down by the govt. of the day.
- ii) **Executive law making:** Through the process of delegated legislation as discussed above and ordinances (rule made by the govt. or president which is temporary in nature unless passed in due time by the Houses of parliament) in times of emergencies and is not questionable in a court of law however if the objective of the ordinance is not fulfilled then people can approach court for accountability.
- iii) **Budget:** Explained before above.
- iv) **Staff agencies:** Union Cabinet committees like Economic committee, Foreign affairs committee, etc whose task is to advise, direct and coordinate the ministries linked to the subject matter of these committees. Cabinet Secretariat which is headed by a civil servant called the Cabinet Secretary and a joint secretary, two deputy secretary, two under-secretary, two assistant secretary and four staff officers from the defence services. It deals with coordinating between various ministries and departments and the govt. and also maintains all details of meetings, deals with matters of organisation and personnel and presides over various committees on the behalf of the govt.
- v) **Civil service code for conduct and discipline:** Bureaucrats are supposed to be neutral and apolitical to carry out their duties and they have guidelines and rules laid down for correct and

ethical behaviour which they follow lest they attract disciplinary action and suspension/dimension.

- vi) *Appeal to Public Opinion:*** The bureaucracy is generally change resistant and likes to follow their own rules where the public is concerned and this is the reason for public dissatisfaction with the bureaucracy. Therefore, to counter this the bureaucracy is often seen being directed to coordinate with pressure groups and other voluntary organisations to carry out/implement public policy and this is how they connect with the people to maintain their status.

JUDICIAL CONTROL AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Courts have the authority and right as per the constitution of India to examine the legality and validity of acts of the permanent executive in order to safeguard the citizen's rights. An aggrieved citizen or party on his/her behalf can file a civil or criminal suit in the court if his rights have been violated or if any particular act of the legislature is ultra vires or unconstitutional that is not in spirit of the constitution and has a corrupt objective it is struck down and made null and void by the courts of law.

CITIZEN AND ADMINISTRATION: Citizens and administration are interconnected and interdependent as the job of public administration is to protect and provide services to citizens and they receive their salaries and funds from the taxes the citizens pay. And this relationship

has come all the more in the limelight and importance due to the concept of welfare state.

There is generally hostility between the two due to the rigid and high handed behaviour of public officials and the illiteracy of the public regarding their rights and political happenings that leads to the alienation between the two.

Channels of redressal for grieving citizens:

- 1) Redressal through parliament/legislature:** It is the same as discussed above under Legislative control and accountability topic.
- 2) Judicial remedies:** Same as discussed above under judicial control and accountability topic. Apart from that a special mention should be given to *Public Interest Litigation(PIL)* where citizens who have been denied their rights due to any reason and maladministration but cannot approach the courts for relief due to social and economic constraints can approach through a group or NGO on their behalf.
- 3) Administrative tribunals (special court appointed by the govt.):** Central Administrative Tribunal deals with grievances of public or government employees(All India Services) and their service matters whereas the State & Joint Administrative Tribunals deals with employees of State public services. The Industrial Tribunals, Income Tax Tribunals, Railway rates tribunals etc deal with citizen's grievances concerned with that subject matter.
- 4) LokAdalats:** have been set up to deal with ordinary grievances of citizens against the administration like pensions, utilities, telephones, compensation, etc and if the parties are not happy with the decision then they can approach the courts of law.

To deal with administrative corruption:

- i) **Central Vigilance Commission:** It is headed by a Central Vigilance Commissioner and deals with grievances of citizens involving corruption and lack of integrity on the part of governmental servants. It takes into matters even complaints against the Union govt. who is ruling and is to set up an enquiry or investigation through the concerned administrative Ministry/department vigilance officers into the matter or ask the CBI to take charge. Complaints can come directly from grieving individuals as well from other sources like press reports, audit reports, parliamentary committee reports, etc. Each Ministry/dept has a chief vigilance officer and he is responsible for coordinating and guiding the activities of other vigilance officers of his ministry/dept and report to the Commission from time to time. The role of the CVC is advisory in nature.
- ii) **Ombudsman:** Appointed by the legislature and deals with complaints made against the legislature or govt. In India its forms are known as 'LOKPAL' at the central level and 'LOKAYUKTA' at the State level. The LOKPAL is to deal with all complaints of corruption made by any citizen against the ruling govt. and the Union/Central Ministers as well as State Ministers regarding any action taken by them and it should not be done more than five years ago. After the investigation is complete, the report will be submitted to the Prime Minister (where complaint is against Union Minister) or a Chief Minister (Complaint against State Minister) as the case maybe. If the complaint is frivolous

and based on malafide then it can be rejected and the complainant penalised or tried in a court of law. The LOKAYUKTA deals with State level corruption complaints against State Ministers. The setting up of Lokayukta offices in the states is sparse and still many do not have one.

iii) CBI:-Anti Corruption wing entrusted with the following mandate in the resolutional though it continued to derive its jurisdiction and powers from Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946.

- Cases in which public servants under the control of the Central Government are involved either by themselves or along with State Government servants and/or other persons.
- Cases in which the interests of the Central Government, or of any public sector project or undertaking, or any statutory corporation or body set up and financed by the Government of India are involved.
- Cases relating to breaches of Central Laws with the enforcement of which the Government of India is particularly concerned, e.g.
 - a) Breaches of Import and Export Control Orders
 - b) Serious breaches of Foreign Exchange Regulation Act,
 - c) Passport frauds
 - d) Cases under the Official Secrets Act pertaining to the affairs of the Central Government.
 - e) Cases of certain specified categories under the Defence of India Act or Rules with which the Central Government is particularly concerned
- Serious cases of cheating or fraud relating to the Railways, or Posts &Telegraphs Department, particularly those involving

professional criminals operating in several States. a) Crime on the High Seas, b) Crime on the Airlines

- Important and serious cases in Union Territories particularly those by professional criminals.
- Serious cases of fraud, cheating and embezzlement relating to Public Joint Stock Companies.
- Other cases of a serious nature, when committed by organised gangs or professional criminals, or cases having ramifications in several States including Union Territories, serious cases of spurious drugs, important cases of kidnapping of children by professional inter State gangs, etc. These cases will be taken up only at the request of or with the concurrence of the State Governments/Union Territories Administrations concerned.
- Collection of intelligence about corruption in the public services and the projects and undertakings in the public sector.
- Prosecution of cases investigated by this Division.
- Presentation of cases before Enquiry Offices in which departmental proceedings are instituted on the recommendation of this Division.

iv) Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG): The **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India** is an authority, established by the Constitution of India under Chapter V, who audits all receipts and expenditure of the Government of India and the state governments, including those of bodies and authorities substantially financed by the government. The CAG is also the external auditor of government-owned companies. The reports

of the CAG are taken into consideration by the Public Accounts Committees, which are special committees in the Parliament of India and the state legislatures. The CAG is also the head of the Indian Audit and Accounts Service. The CAG is mentioned in the Constitution of India under Article 148 – 151. Recent Achievements Recently the CAG under Vinod Rai has constantly been in the limelight for its reports exposing mega corruption, particularly in 2G Spectrum Scam, Common wealth Games scam and other scams.

CAG: An Analysis

For some time now, there has been a stream of criticism aimed at the Comptroller and Auditor General. There has been a series of media 'reports' and even editorials questioning the accuracy, motivation and propriety of the CAG's reports. Many of the criticisms of the CAG are based on ignorance, misperception and elementary error (leaving dubious motivations aside) and it seems necessary to put matters in the right perspective.

The CAG is the institution through which the *accountability* of the government and other public authorities — all those who spend public funds — to Parliament and State Legislatures and through them to the people is ensured. Accountability is not the same thing as accounting, though the latter may be a part of the former; the word 'accountability' really means answerability. We are of course talking about *financial* answerability. The Executive is answerable to Parliament and to the people for all its decisions, but that answerability is enforced through the CAG where it involves finance and accounts. If we understand

accountability to mean answerability, much of the confusion disappears. Vouching expenditures and rendering accounts are of course important: Parliament votes funds to the Executive and those funds have to be accounted for. However, answerability is more than that: it also means exercising prudence, avoiding waste, not incurring in fructuous expenditure, showing results for moneys spent, and achieving those results at least cost. If the CAG is our prime accountability-ensuring institution, that institution must go into all these matters. If the CAG were 'merely' an auditor, why should Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, during the debates in the Constituent Assembly, describe the CAG as the most important functionary in the Constitution, more important than even the judiciary? Again, if the CAG was meant to be merely an auditor, why did the Constitution prescribe for this functionary an oath identical with that prescribed for the Chief Justice and Judges of the Supreme Court, including the words "I will uphold the Constitution and the laws" while a Minister of the Union swears or solemnly affirms only that he will act "in accordance with the Constitution"? Those who try to belittle the importance of the institution and limit its functions must really ask themselves these two crucial questions. Should the CAG question policy decisions? The answer that immediately suggests itself would be "No", but consider the following hypothetical cases:

- (i) the financial implications of a policy were not gone into at all before the decision was made;
- (ii) the assessment of financial implications was quite clearly wrong;
- (iii) the numbers were correct but the reasoning behind the decision was specious or fallacious; or
- (iv) the financial implications in fact turn out to be far higher than the assessment on which the decision was made. In such cases, would it

not be within the CAG's mandate, would it not in fact be the CAG's duty as the instrument of accountability, to comment on such a policy?

Further, if the CAG is bound by his (or her) oath of office to uphold the Constitution, can he (she) refrain from commenting on something that *prima facie* seems unconstitutional? If the government were to formulate a scheme or policy that selectively confers benefits from public funds on an individual or group to the exclusion of others on no stated grounds, or on grounds which seem questionable, would it not be the CAG's duty to point this out? If the above understanding is correct, then the various activities that the CAG has been undertaking, such as propriety audit, performance evaluations, and so on, are clearly well within his ambit, as different modalities of ensuring accountability. Moreover, there are two other grounds for this understanding: century-old traditions, and international consensus.

Even during British rule there was an Auditor General, and traditions of the independence and objectivity of that office were fairly strong. Gradations of audit were recognised proceeding from simple vouching and expenditure audit through regularity audit, audit of authorisation, audit of the sanctions themselves, and propriety audit, to what used to be called 'Higher Audit'. After the constitution, the CAGs have been following that tradition and adding some technical and methodological innovations. Internationally, there are Auditors General, Comptrollers General, Audit Commissions, and other forms of what are known as Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) not only in democratic countries, but even in authoritarian systems. In India, the CAG is the SAI. There are professional organisations such as the International Association of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) and the Asian

counterpart (ASOSAI) in which the Indian SAI plays an important part, and is held in high esteem. The relevant point in the present context is that the Indian CAG has not stretched the audit function beyond the functions performed by other SAIs.

For instance, the National Audit Office of the U.K. has published, among others, reports on: Information and Communications Technology in Government: Landscape Review; Delivering Regulatory Reform; Assessing the Impact of Proposed New Policies; and so on. Some of the reports of the U.S. Government Accountability Office include those on: The U.S. Postal service ("Mail Trends Highlight Need to Fundamentally Change Business Model"); Aviation Safety ("Status of FAA's Actions to Oversee the Safety of Composite Airplanes"); Electronic Waste: Strengthening the Role of the Federal Government in Encouraging Recycling and Reuse; and so on. Having regard to those examples, it can hardly be said that the CAG of India has been guilty of over-reach. In the CAG's report on the 2G case, the notional loss figure of Rs. 176000 crore has been much criticised. The report in fact makes it clear that it is difficult to arrive at a firm figure of loss, calculates it in three different ways through different methods, and makes no claim that any of the figures is definitive. However, the media delight in reporting that the CAG's figures have been questioned by various people, and a Cabinet Minister immortalised himself by claiming that there was zero loss.

That leads us to the relationship between the CAG and the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and the Committee on Public Undertakings (COPU). The CAG finalises his reports after taking the government's and PEs' responses to his initial queries and observations and his draft reports, signs them, and submits them to the President of India, who causes them to be laid before Parliament. They are then taken up by the

PAC and COPU. It is not the Reports that are under examination but the Ministries and other government offices and PEs, on the basis of those Reports. The CAG assists and advises the parliamentary committees in that examination.

Unlike the CAG of the U.K. (an officer of Parliament) or the CG of the U.S. (a part of the Legislative Branch), the Indian CAG is not an officer of Parliament, but an independent constitutional functionary. The reason for this is that the CAG is CAG for the Union as well as the States, which is a unique feature of the Indian quasi-federal system.

Finally, we come to the question of publicity. The CAG's reports have suffered from too little and not too much publicity. One of the major weaknesses of the Indian system is that very few of the CAG's reports are widely known, and that not all of them get discussed in Parliament. Some years ago, press conferences began to be held after the Audit Reports were placed before Parliament, and that practice continues. This is not anew departure introduced by the present CAG. If the CAG is to become more effective as an institution for the enforcement of accountability, it is necessary that Audit Reports be more widely known and discussed. The people have a right to know their contents. If, as a result of the CWG and the 2G controversies, the CAG and his reports are now better known than before, that is a very good development. If the present CAG manages to enhance the effectiveness of this constitutional institution, the country would owe a debt of gratitude to him.

Many of the criticisms of the CAG are based on ignorance, misperception and elementary error, and it seems necessary to put matters in the right perspective.

iv) GRIEVANCE CELLS IN VARIOUS MINISTRIES AND DEPARTMENTS: For speedy justice many ministries and departments of govt. centre as well as state have set up grievance cells headed by a grievance officer.

ROLE OF MEDIA

Media is a collective/plural word for medium. And by media here we mean the various mediums of mass communication which is news channels, newspapers, radios, journals, magazines, etc. It airs public views and is a medium of connection between citizens and the State. It has wide reach. State policies and public views on it are disseminated through the media and thus helps both parties effectively leading to development of the country. It holds the political and permanent executive accountable to the people through its forums for debates, discussions and polls, etc. There is the State controlled media that is the govt. media which is more than often biased and then there is the pvt. funded media that does lobbying for its investors and there is the independent media that is free from govt. or corporate control and are small in each.

However, what worries the people many a times is when the media resorts to unfair means and gets corrupt ending up as mouthpieces of various politicians and corporate houses. Therefore, it is necessary to regulate them from time to time regarding ownership and management. There should be a code of conduct along with a grievance redressal cell

for each office of the public media. Local and folk media should be encouraged.

INTEREST GROUPS

Interest group refers to virtually any voluntary association that seeks to publicly promote and create advantages for its cause. It applies to a vast array of diverse organizations. This includes corporations, charitable organizations, civil rights groups, neighborhood associations, professional and trade associations. They often resort to legal and illegal means, violent or peaceful and make the govt. bow down to their cause and make a certain policy or amend certain policies by putting pressure on the govt. and administration via their sheer number and financial as well as political strength.

There are two types of Interest Groups:

- 1) *Sectional Interest Groups*: Work for interests of a particular section like for example writers association or teachers association, etc.
- 2) *Promotional Interest Group*: Work for public good and not any particular section. Example - Group against child labour, etc. They help in holding the govt. and administration accountable because people have confidence in them.

VOLUNATRY ORGANISATIONS

Voluntary association or union (also sometimes called a voluntary organization, unincorporated association, or just an association) is a group of individuals who enter into an agreement as volunteers to form a body (or organization) to accomplish a purpose. They are to confirm to a certain requirement. There should be a formal structure and the

members should be free of any vested or personal interests and work for the public good.

Three types of Voluntary organisations:

- a) Service oriented voluntary organisations-** Provide certain services like care of old age people, orphans, etc.
- b) Mutual Aid Voluntary organisations-** Collectively help each other like for example self help groups.
- c) Resources and Coordination providing voluntary organisations-** Specifically provide expertise and information relating to something for public purpose for example micro finance institutions, etc. Good governance has brought these organisations into the limelight and they are of great importance to the govt. while formulating as well as implementing policies as they are close to the people and have their trust and have grass root level expertise and knowledge of issues and help in people participation. Thus they hold the govt. and administration accountable in various times by ensuring public participation and making administration transparent.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society is the arena outside of the family, the state, and the market where people associate to advance common interests. It is sometimes considered to include the family and the private sphere and then referred to as the "third sector" of society, distinct from government and business. Dictionary. com's 21st Century Lexicon defines civil society as :

- 1) The aggregate of non-governmental organizations and institutions that manifest interests and will of citizens or

2) Individuals and organizations in a society which are independent of the government. Sometimes the term is used in the more general sense of "the elements such as freedom of speech, an independent judiciary, etc, that make up a democratic society". NGO's and NPO's are part of civil society. However there is no unanimous view to define civil society and it keeps changing. The civil society also does include political parties and professional organisations. They help encourage public interest and participation and helps in formulation and implementation of policies of govt. as well as bring core issues of concern in the eyes of the govt. to take care of.

RIGHT TO INFORMATION

It is the citizen's right to know and right to information regarding administration and its performance. This has helped bring immense transparency and efficiency in the administration since it was implemented in 2005 in India. It was hailed that the fundamental rights of 'freedom to speech and expression' as well as right to life cannot be fulfilled and safeguarded without relevant information. Tamil Nadu was the first to implement this act in its state and now almost all states have followed suit. Each central level government office or organisation has to have a RTI cell headed by a Public Information Officer who will receive RTI's from common citizens and is to disseminate the relevant information within the time specified usually 30 days to provide an answer to the appellant. But if there is a threat to life of the applicant than that information is to be provided within 48 hours and if the information is regarding a third party then it has to be provided within 45 days. The RTI department is headed at the Central level by the Chief

Information Officer and his subordinates. At the state level there is the State Chief Public Information Officer and his subordinates.

Appellate authorities:

If the applicant does not receive a answer or does not receive a satisfactory answer where information is denied then he/she can approach the appellate authority which are:

a) First appellate authority: Should be an officer senior to that of the Public Information officer in that agency and designated as the appellate authority.

b) Second appellate authority: If still unsatisfied or denied information the applicant can then approach directly to the State Chief Public Information Commissioner and then the Central Chief Information Commissioner which is provided on the website of each govt. organisation and the Chief Information Commissioner's official website. The tenures of the Chief Information Commissioner and his State counterparts are secured for 5 years or 65 years, whichever comes earlier. They are appointed by the President on consultation with PM, opposition leader and cabinet ministers. At the state level, the authorities are appointed by the Governor and a committee appointed by the governor. They are not eligible for reappointment but a State Chief Information Commissioner can be promoted to the rank of Central Chief Information Commissioner but still it should be within his 5 years tenure. They can be removed from office for proven misconduct by the president at centre and governor for state level. In case of

delaying information, destroying evidence, malafide information provided, denying information by any agency or organisation of the centre or state govt. like UPSC, UKPSC, RAILWAYS, etc. then the Chief Information Commissioner of centre as well as states can penalise the Public Information officers of those organisations and other officers there to the tune of Rs. 250 per day to maximum rs. 25000 which will be recovered from their salary/pension. The commission's verdict can be challenged in the High Court and Supreme Court. Only restricted information can be withheld from the public that can cause:

- a. Contempt of court
- b. Affects national safety and security
- c. Affects Intellectual property rights and trade secrets and competition
- d. Affects privacy of individuals
- e. Breaches the privileges provided by the constitution to the elected representatives

Any act which goes contrary to the RTI act will be considered null and void (the acts are section 5 of the official secrets act and Indian evidence act).

If an application has been sent to the wrong department then also it cannot be rejected and it is the duty of the receiver to redirect it to the concerned dept and PIO within 5 days as the information has to be provided to the applicant within 30 days. If there are some information that cannot be provided for the above mentioned reasons in an application but 2-3 other questions can be answered then the whole application will not be rejected and the relevant information will be provided for those 2-3 questions.

However, people need to be educated and should on their own get educated about this act and mechanism and there needs to be a proper system that should be in place and also there is a lot of corruption that goes on here as a corrupt officer does not worry about giving Rs. 25000 and file notes are put on files and then removed as and when required when it is to be said that do not provide this information, so the culprit is not able to be caught. Therefore, stringent measures are needed. People need to be educated that if they are not satisfied by anything and all rules have been violated after the application was made then they should approach the courts and sort things out only then this corruption will end.

RTI Act: An Evaluation

The seeds for the Act were sown decades ago at national and state level. The National Campaign for People's Right to Information (NCPRI) campaigned for a national RTI law in 1996. In 1997, the Rajasthan Government announced that every citizen shall have the right to obtain copies of departmental documents related to local development works. In 2000, the precursor to RTI was tabled in the form of the Freedom of Information Act. It was passed in 2002 but was not brought into force. It took years before the RTI Act, in its current form, could be introduced and was finally brought into effect 2005. In the last seven years, RTI itself has evolved in scope and interpretation. While it had a benign beginning, the established struck back with efforts to mitigate its sweep. Even as the Act grew in popularity with citizens, it began to be shunned by Government agencies and officials. Though the broad framework is the same, section 27 of the Act empowers states to make rules to carry out the provisions of the Act. E.g., earlier this year, the Maharashtra

Government proposed to limit each RTI application to one subject and 150 words. The notification has been challenged in the Bombay HC and the matter is currently sub-judice. The RTI Act is working at limited effectiveness because of several structural reasons. Many of these reasons were highlighted in an evaluation done by the central Government's Department of Personnel and Training. Offices meant to service information claims have not been adequately staffed. The Central Information Commissioner is appointed by the Government and in recent years there has been an increasing trend of retired public servants occupying these posts which clearly negates the object of appointing persons of eminence from diverse fields leading to claims of compromising the position. Roughly 30% of the posts for information commissioners in states are lying vacant.

Besides, state information commissions of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh have not uploaded any of their annual reports on their websites. About 59% of the state information commissions do not display cause lists on their websites.

There is continued failure to consistently disclose information proactively on the internet relevant to the implementation of the Act, as is evident from the fact that the Central Information Commission (CIC) and the State Information Commissions of Andhra Pradesh and Bihar are the only information commissions to have uploaded all annual reports for the period 2006-2011.

Further, the RTI Act mandates for these annual reports to be tabled before Parliament and respective state legislatures. However, there is no

information available in the public domain regarding such discussions in Parliament or state legislatures, till date.

Some Success Stories Related to RTI Act :

- a) **Adarsh Society Scam:** The applications filed by RTI activists like Yogacharya Anandji and Simpreet Singh in 2008 were instrumental in bringing to light links between politicians and military officials, among others. The 31-storey building, which had permission for six floors only, was originally meant to house war widows and veterans. Instead, the flats went to several politicians, bureaucrats and their relatives. The scandal has already led to the resignation of Ashok Chavan, the former chief minister of Maharashtra. Other state officials are also under the scanner.
- b) **Public Distribution Scam in Assam:** In 2007, members of an anti-corruption non governmental organization based in Assam, the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti, filed an RTI request that revealed irregularities in the distribution of food meant for people below the poverty line. The allegations of corruption were probed and several government officials arrested.
- c) **Appropriation of Relief Funds:** Information obtained through an RTI application by an NGO based in Punjab, in 2008 revealed that bureaucrats heading local branches of the Indian Red Cross Society used money intended for victims of the Kargil war and natural disasters to buy cars, air-conditioners and pay for hotel bills – among other things. Local courts charged the officials found responsible with fraud and the funds were transferred to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund.

Attacks on RTI Activists:

Since the advent of RTI act, activists have been exposing many cases of maladministration and corruption in government & its agencies. But at the same time these activists been victimized by these unscrupulous people. Some of the many cases have been mentioned below:

- a) **Amit Jethwa**- Used RTI to expose illegal mining in the Gir Forest area. BJP MP Dinu Boga arrested by CBI in this case. Earlier Gujarat police has given clean chit to Dinu Boga Jethwa was killed later.
- b) **Lalit Mehta**- Mehta used RTI to expose NREGA related scams. Fought for the social audit of NREGA. He was killed.
- c) **Rinku Singh Rahi**- Rahi is a bureaucrat who used RTI to expose welfare scheme fraud in Muzzaffar nagar. He was Assaulted and removed to a mental institution.

SOCIAL AUDIT

Audit is a mechanism to appraise loyalty of expenditure and revenue to check whether the mandate has been followed as specified and the purpose is achieved.

Different types of audit:

- a) **Regulatory audit**: To check whether there are fraudulent activities going on.
- b) **Proprietary audit**: Money may not have been spent economically and is wasted. This audit helps check that.
- c) **Performance audit**: Nature of spending or earning may not come out with the required result/objective. This type of audit helps check the functional (job related) and structural level (organisation) in performance and increases efficiency. Social audit as a term was used as far back as the 1950s. In a nutshell, it refers

to the steps that are taken to ensure that the work done by the government is actually benefiting the people whom it is intended to benefit. It is based on the principle that the local governance should be carried out, as much as possible, with the consent and in complete understanding of the requirements of the people concerned. It is a process and not an event. Thus, Social Audit is nothing but understanding, measuring, reporting, and most importantly improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the local governance. India being a welfare state, several programs and policies are implemented for the benefit of people. Politicians and executives are usually the ones who control and implement these policies. Some policies are common to all and some are special that are meant to benefit the weaker sections of the society. To implement all such policies, funds are drawn from the state exchequer. The social control over withdrawal and usage of this fund is called Social Audit.

Definition by Prof. Ranjan Mohapatra of VISION foundation:

Social Audit is a process in which the details of the resources, financial and nonfinancial, used by the public agencies for the development initiatives, are shared with the people, often through a public platform. It allows people to enforce transparency and accountability, thereby providing the ultimate users an opportunity to scrutinize the development initiatives.

Basis of social audit

The main reason for the push for social audit is the huge disconnect between what the people need, what the government thinks it needs, and what is actually done.

Objectives of Social Audit

Accurate identification of requirements

1. Prioritization of developmental activities as per requirements
2. Proper utilization of funds
3. Conformity of the developmental activity with the stated goals
4. Quality of service

Implementation of Social Audit

1. **Empowerment of people**: Social audit is most effective when the actual beneficiaries of an activity are involved in it. However, people can only get involved in the process when they are given appropriate authority and rights. To this end, the 73rd amendment of the constitution has empowered the Gram Sabha to conduct social audit. This is relevant only in the villages. In the cities, the Right to Information Act empowers the people to inspect public records.
2. **Proper Documentation**: Everything right from the requirement gathering to planning to implementation must be properly documented. Some of the documents that should be made mandatory are:
 - Applications, tenders, and proposals
 - Financial statements, income - expense statements.
 - Registers of workers
 - Inspection reports.

3. Accessibility of Documents: Merely generating documents is useless if they are not easily accessible. In this information age, all the documents must be put on line.

4. Punitive Action: The final and most important provision, about which nothing is being done yet, is to have punitive actions for non-conformance of the process of social audit. Unless there is legal punishment, there will be no incentive for the people in authority to implement the processes in a fair manner.

General Steps for Social Audit

1. Clarity of purpose and goal of the local elected body.
2. Identify stakeholders with a focus on their specific roles and duties. Social auditing aims to ensure a say for all stakeholders. It is particularly important that marginalized social groups, which are normally excluded, have a say on local development issues and activities and have their views on the actual performance of local elected bodies.
3. Definition of performance indicators which must be understood and accepted by all. Indicator data must be collected by stakeholders on a regular basis.
4. Regular meetings to review and discuss data/information on performance indicators.
5. Follow-up of social audit meeting with the panchayat body reviewing stakeholders' actions, activities and viewpoints, making commitments on changes and agreeing on future action as recommended by the stakeholders.
6. Establishment of a group of trusted local people including elderly people, teachers and others who are committed and independent,

to be involved in the verification and to judge if the decisions based upon social audit have been implemented.

7. The findings of the social audit should be shared with all local stakeholders. This encourages transparency and accountability. A report of the social audit meeting should be distributed for Gram Panchayat auditing. In addition, key decisions should be written on walls and boards and communicated orally.

Hindrances in Social Audit

1. Mindset of people. Even after 50 yrs of independence people do not understand the concept of govt. for the people, of the people, and by the people. Most of the people still think themselves as being ruled by the politicians, while politicians think that they are the rulers. Due to this reason, common people do not get involved in the developmental activities.
2. Lack of any legal proceedings for not following social audit principles. Unless there is a stringent penalty on authorities for not implementing social audit, they will not give up control because it reduces their kickbacks and authority.
3. Lack of education among the common masses. Since common people are not that educated, they do not know their rights, let alone get them enforced.

Benefits of Social Audit

1. Involvement of people in developmental activities ensures that money is spent where it actually needed.
2. Reduction of wastages.

3. Reduction in corruption.
4. Awareness among people.
5. Promotes integrity and a sense of community among people.
6. Improves the standard of governance. Social audit is a contemporary version of Audit and not only takes into consideration economical activities but also social and cultural aspects by taking a holistic view of policy impact. It does a detailed study of socio-politico-economic-psychological dimensions of the society and also the environmental dimensions in order to bring about true development of the country and its people. To conduct a social audit proper and measurable indicators as well as techniques and skills/expertise as well as unbiasedness are required and are employed by bringing in civil society too along with the government. Panchayats are a big help in this. Once problems are identified then actions and steps are taken that are relevant to cure and prevent the issue from cropping up in future.

Jan Sunwai

Jan Sunwai (Public Hearing) is mechanism of Social Audit by which people that may have been affected by a particular action or decision have the opportunity to ask questions, make submissions or register objections to a panel of experts. The panel may comprise of elected representatives, government officials, non-government organizations, experts from the field, media, etc. It gives them a platform to voice their concerns and provides for speedy justice and instant resolution. It is also a formal meeting for the public to express their support or opposition for any project or scheme in an open forum. In MP every Tuesday has been designated as the Jan Sunwai day in various departments.

Benefits and Impact

This programme has mobilized masses and had state-wide reverberations. It has shaken the very foundations of the traditional monopoly, the arbitrariness and corruption of the state bureaucracy. It is an effective manifestation of Community-based monitoring. Jan Sunwai programme is implemented in all departments and at all levels of government official's right from the State Secretariat down to the district level and right from the Police to Public Distribution System department. It is a huge hit, so much so that the number of complaints made to agencies like MP Human Rights Commission has actually gone down because of the open hearings into people's grievances by the police top brass.

Concerns

Currently, this programme is being implemented by individual agencies and departments. This mechanism leads to a lot of wastage of time as the people come up their problems at wrong forum. For example a health department issue at Police department Jansunwai. A mechanism is needed so that the applications are monitored and they are presented at the appropriate and timely action is taken.

CITIZEN CHARTER

In the present liberal democratic world, It has been recognized globally that good governance is essential for sustainable development. It is being advocated by the developmentalists that for both social and economic development states should emphasize on '**Minimum government- maximum governance**'. It can be achieved through good

governance only. There are several aspects of good governance and three essential aspects are;-

1. Transparency,
2. Accountability and
3. Responsiveness of the administration.

“Citizens’ Charters” initiative is a response to the quest for solving the problems which a citizen encounters, day in and day out, while dealing with the organisations providing public services.

The concept of Citizens’ Charter enshrines the trust between the service provider and its users. The concept was first articulated and implemented in the United Kingdom by the Conservative Government of John Major in 1991 as a national programme with a *simple aim: to continuously improve the quality of public services for the people of the country so that these services respond to the needs and wishes of the users.*

The programme was re-launched in 1998 by the Labour Government of Tony Blair which rechristened it “Services First”. The basic objective of the Citizens’ Charter is to empower the citizen in relation to public service delivery. There were six principles of the Citizen Charter framed originally, which **are as follows:**

- (i) **Quality** : *Improving the quality of services;*
- (ii) **Choice** : *Wherever possible;*
- (iii) **Standards** : *Specify what to expect and how to act if standards are not met;*
- (iv) **Value** : *For the taxpayers’ money;*
- (v) **Accountability** : *Individuals and Organisations; an*
- (vi) **Transparency** : *Rules/ Procedures/ Schemes/Grievances.*

These were later elaborated by the Labour Government as following nine principles of Service Delivery (1998) :-

1. Set standards of service
2. Be open and provide full information
3. Consult and involve
4. Encourage access and the promotion of choice
5. Treat all fairly
6. Put things right when they go wrong
7. Use resources effectively
8. Innovate and improve
9. Work with other providers.

The Indian Context;

Over the years, in India, significant progress has been made in the field of economic development. This, along with a substantial increase in the literacy rate, (from 51.63% to 65.38% in the last decade) has made Indian citizens increasingly aware of their rights. Citizens have become more articulate and expect the administration not merely to respond to their demands but also to anticipate them. It was in this climate that since 1996 a consensus had evolved in the Government on effective and responsive administration. In a Conference of Chief Ministers of various States and Union Territories held on 24 May, 1997 in New Delhi, presided over by the Prime Minister of India, an “Action Plan for Effective and Responsive Government” at the Centre and State levels was adopted. One of the major decisions at that Conference was that the Central and State Governments would formulate Citizens’ Charters, starting with those sectors that have a large public interface (e.g. Railways, Telecom,

Posts, Public Distribution Systems). These Charters were required to include standards of service and time limits that the public can reasonably expect, avenues of grievance redress and a provision for independent scrutiny with the involvement of citizen and consumer groups. Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances in Government of India (DARPG) initiated the task of coordinating, formulating and operationalizing Citizens' Charters. Guidelines for formulating the Charters as well as a list of do's and don'ts were communicated to various government departments/organisations to enable them to bring out focused and effective charters. For the formulation of the Charters, the government agencies at the Centre and State levels were advised to constitute a task force with representation from users, senior management and the cutting edge staff. A Handbook on Citizen's Charter has been developed by the Department and sent to all the State Governments/UT Administrations.

The Charters are expected to incorporate the following elements:-

- (i) Vision and Mission Statement;
- (ii) Details of business transacted by the organisation;
- (iii) Details of clients;
- (iv) Details of services provided to each client group;
- (v) Details of grievance redress mechanism and how to access it; and
- (vi) Expectations from the clients.

Primarily an adaptation of the UK model, the Indian Citizens' Charter has an additional component of 'expectations from the clients' or in other words 'obligations of the users'. Involvement of consumer organisations, citizen groups, and other stakeholders in the formulation of the Citizens' Charter is emphasised to ensure that the Citizens' Charter meets the needs of the users. Regular monitoring, review and evaluation of the

Charters, both internally and through external agencies, are enjoined. Till April, 2006, Citizens' Charters had been formulated by the Central Government Ministries/Departments/ Organisations and 668 Charters by various agencies of State Governments & Administrations of Union Territories. Most of the national Charters are posted on the government's websites and are open to public scrutiny. The organisations with Citizens' Charters are advised to give publicity to their Charters through such means as print/electronic media and awareness campaign.

Comprehensive Website on Citizens' Charters

A comprehensive website of Citizens' Charters in Government of India (www.goicharters.nic.in) has been developed and was launched by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances on 31 May, 2002. This contains the Citizens' Charters issued by various Central Government Ministries/ Departments/Organisations. The website provides useful information, data and links.

Exemplary implementation of the Citizens' Charter

While the overall efforts and initiatives of the government on Citizens' Charter were continuing, it was realised that exemplary implementation of the Charter in a major public interface area of government would not only establish the new concept in the inertia-prone bureaucracy but also act as a role model for replication in other sectors/areas. The banking sector was identified for this purpose keeping in view the second phase of economic reforms and the fact that this sector was fairly advanced in terms of customer service and was also taking advantage of information technology to speed up various processes. The primary objective of this

exercise was to build the Banking Sector as a model of excellence in the implementation of the Citizens' Charter. To begin with, three major National level Banks, namely, Punjab National Bank, Punjab and Sind Bank and Oriental Bank of Commerce, were selected for a Hand-Holding exercise by the DARPG in the year 2000. The following key issues were highlighted for exemplary implementation of the Citizens' Charter :-

- (i) stakeholder involvement in the formulation of Citizens' Charters;
- (ii) deployment of the Citizens' Charters in the Banks by full involvement of the staff, specially the employees at the cutting-edge level;
- (iii) creation of awareness about the Charter amongst the customers of the Banks; and
- (iv) special training for employees at all levels about the concept and implementation of Citizens' Charter.

After an evaluation of the current status of the Charters by the identified banks through independent agencies, Action Plans were chalked out to rectify short comings. The Charters were, accordingly, revised and standardised on the basis of the model/mother Charter developed by the Indian Banks Association (IBA). Training for employees of selected branches through master trainers, trained by the National Institute of Bank Management using a module developed in consultation with Department of ARPG were organised. Several measures to give wide publicity to Citizens' Charter were also undertaken.

An external agency was engaged to once again assess and evaluate the implementation of Citizens' Charter of these banks at the end of this exercise and also to document the Hand-Holding Exercise. National Institute of Bank Management was assigned this task which had since been executed and a documentation was brought out in the Year 2003.

Evaluation of Citizens' Charters

An evaluation of the Citizens' Charters of various government agencies was carried out by DARPG and Consumer Coordination Council, New Delhi, an NGO, in October 1998. The results were quite encouraging given the nascent stage of this initiative in India. A brief questionnaire has been circulated to all Ministries/Departments and State Governments/Union Territories to enable them to undertake an in-house evaluation of their Citizens' Charters. Organisations have also been advised to undertake external evaluations, preferably through NGOs.

During the Year 2002-03, DARPG engaged a professional agency to develop a standardised model for internal and external evaluation of Citizens' Charters in a more effective, quantifiable and objective manner. This agency also carried out evaluation of implementation of Charters in 5 Central Government Organisations and 15 Departments/ Organisations of States of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh. This Agency was also required to suggest methods for increasing awareness, both within the organisation and among the users, and to suggest possible methods for orientation of management and the staff in the task of formulating and deploying Charters.

As per the report of evaluation carried out by the Agency, major findings were :-

- In majority of cases Charters were not formulated through a consultative process;
- By and large service providers are not familiar with the philosophy, goals and main features of the Charter;

- Adequate publicity to the Charters had not been given in any of the Departments evaluated. In most Departments, the Charters are only in the initial or middle stage of implementation;
- No funds have been specifically earmarked for awareness generation of Citizens' Charter or for orientation of staff on various components of the Charter;

Key recommendations, inter alia, include :-

- (i) Need for citizens and staff to be consulted at every stage of formulation of the Charter,
- (ii) Orientation of staff about the salient features and goals/objectives of the Charter; vision and mission statement of the department; and skills such as team building, problem solving, handling of grievances and communication skills,
- (iii) Need for creation of database on consumer grievances and redress,
- (iv) Need for wider publicity of the Charter through print media, posters, banners, leaflets, handbills, brochures, local newspapers etc. and also through electronic media,
- (v) Earmarking of specific budgets for awareness generation and orientation of staff, and
- (vi) Replication of best practices in this field.

Compendium on Citizens' Charters in Government of India

With the objective of generating awareness among the citizens as well as government functionaries of the commitments of various organisations enshrined in their Citizens' Charter, the Department of

Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances brought out a Compendium of abridged versions of all Citizens' Charters in Government of India in a book as well as in CD form on 14 May, 2003. The Compendium contains the operative standards and quality of services proposed to be provided as also the public grievance redress mechanism as committed in the Citizens' Charters. The Compendium also contains the name, address, telephone number, e-mail address etc. of nodal officers for Citizens' Charters in Central Government Ministries/ Departments/ Organisations and also the list of website addresses of concerned Ministry/ Department/Organisation. The Compendium shall not only be useful to the citizens for ready reference, but will also enable them to critically review the functioning of these organisations. This would also help the organisations to compare the standards set by them, vis-à-vis, those set by other organisations.

Regional Seminars

Four Regional Seminars on Citizens' Charters were organised during the year 2001-02, with a view to bring national and state level organisations along with other stakeholders including NGOs, intelligentsia, media etc. on the same platform and to share experiences in formulation and implementation of Citizens' Charter. These seminars were organised at Administrative Staff College of India, Hyderabad, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, R.C.V.P. Noronha Academy of Administration, Bhopal and Assam Administrative Staff College, Guwahati. In all 24 State Governments/ UT Administrations and 15 Central Government Departments/Organisations participated.

Capacity Building Workshops

On the basis of the feedback received and experience gained in these seminars, it was decided to organise separate Capacity Building Workshops with specific focus on

- (i) formulation of Charter
- (ii) effective implementation of Charter and
- (iii) enhancing the capacity of trainers available at State Administrative Training Institutes/ Central Civil Services Staff Colleges.

Evaluation of Delivery of Services

The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances has developed a model for conceptualizing and implementing a Scheme for recognizing excellence in service delivery by government organizations. The Scheme has been tailor-made for government organizations with specific focus on citizen interface and expectations and is slated for implementation in the Ministries in a phased manner. The model synthesizes the ground realities in India with International Best Practices and is based on proper implementation of citizen charters, effectiveness of public grievance redress mechanism and status of service delivery enablers from the citizen's perspective and efforts made by the departments in improving their own capability to deliver. The model had been tested among several organizations and was presented before Workshops of NGOs, citizen groups and government departments. These discussions have eventually culminated in implementation of the certification requirements. Using the tools provided by this model, government agencies can self-assess and improve quality of their service delivery, and over a period of time graduate to a level where an objective evaluation can be done and excellence can be publicly recognized.

Information and Facilitation Counters (IFCs)

Information and Facilitation Counter (IFC) is a facility set up by selected Central Government organisations to provide information to citizens about their programmes/schemes, rules and procedures etc. as well as status of cases/applications. An IFC also acts as a nodal point for redress of public grievances. The IFC, therefore, is a physical manifestation of Citizens' Charter. Hence it has now been decided to set up IFCs in all government ministries/ departments having Citizens' Charters. 105 Information and Facilitation Counters/ May I Help You/ Inquiry Counters have been set up so far. Evaluation of the functioning of the IFCs was carried out by the DARPG and the Consumer Coordination Council. The organisations concerned have taken action on deficiencies pointed out in these evaluations. This Department also regularly monitors the working of the IFCs through a half-yearly return prescribed for all the organisations that have set up IFCs.

Impediments in Implementing the Citizen Charters;-

As we know the Citizens' Charters initiative in India had started in 1997 and the Charters formulated are in a nascent stage of implementation. Introduction of a new concept is always difficult in any organisation. Introduction and implementation of the concept of Citizens' Charter in the Government of India was much more difficult due to the old bureaucratic set up/procedures and the rigid attitudes of the work force. *The major obstacles encountered in this initiative were :-*

- 1. The general perception of organisations which formulated Citizens' Charters was that the exercise was to be carried out because there was a direction from the top .The consultation process was minimal*

or largely absent. It thus became one of the routine activities of the organisation and had no focus.

- 2. For any Charter to succeed, the employees responsible for its implementation should have proper training and orientation, as commitments of the Charter cannot be expected to be delivered by a workforce that is unaware of the spirit and content of the Charter. However, in many cases, the concerned staff were not adequately trained and sensitised.*
- 3. Sometimes, transfers and reshuffles of concerned officers at the crucial stages of formulation/implementation of a Citizens' Charter in an organization severely undermined the strategic processes which were put in place and hampered the progress of the initiative.*
- 4. Awareness campaigns to educate clients about the Charter were not conducted systematically.*
- 5. In some cases, the standards/time norms of services mentioned in Citizens' Charter were either too lax or too tight and were, therefore, unrealistic and created an unfavourable impression on the clients of the Charter.*
- 6. The concept behind the Citizens' Charter was not properly understood. Information brochures, publicity materials, pamphlets produced earlier by the organisations were mistaken for Citizens' Charters.*

Lessons and Experience;

The following lessons have been learnt from the experience to date of implementing Citizens' Charter initiative:

- As with any new effort, the Citizens' Charter initiative is bound to be looked at initially with skepticism by bureaucrats as well as citizens. An effective awareness campaign amongst all the stakeholders at the initial stage is essential to overcome this skepticism. These awareness campaigns should be designed and delivered innovatively and effectively.
- The issuance of Citizens' Charter will not change overnight the mindset of the staff and the clients, developed over a period of time. Therefore, regular, untiring and persistent efforts are required to bring about the attitudinal changes.
- A new initiative always encounters barriers and misgivings from the staff. There is a natural resistance to change, particularly among the cutting-edge staff. Involving and consulting them at all the levels of formulation and implementation of Citizens' Charter will go a long way in overcoming this resistance and will make them an equal partner in this exercise.
- Instead of trying to reform all the processes at once and encounter massive resistance, it is advisable to break it into small components and tackle them one at a time.
- The charter initiative should have a built-in mechanism for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the working of the Charters, preferably through an outside agency.

Future Vision: Development of Charter Mark

In 1992, the UK Government introduced Charter Mark, a scheme for recognising and encouraging excellence in public service. To win a

Charter Mark the organisation has to demonstrate excellence against the following nine Charter Mark criteria which correspond to the principles of public service delivery, namely,

- (1) Performance Standards;
- (2) Information and openness;
- (3) Choice and Consultation;
- (4) Courtesy and helpfulness;
- (5) Putting things right;
- (6) Value for money;
- (7) User satisfaction;
- (8) Improvements in service equality; and
- (9) Planned improvements and innovations.

The Government of Malaysia also instituted a “Best Client’s Charter Award” in 1993 based on the UK model. In India, the DARPG has identified a professional agency to develop an appropriate Charter Mark scheme. This scheme will encourage and reward improvement in public service delivery with reference to the commitments and standards notified in the Charter. The ‘Charter Mark’ is proposed to be awarded after assessment by an independent panel of judges. This would not only give a sense of achievement to the organisation awarded the Charter Mark but also promote a spirit of competitiveness amongst various organisations that have issued Citizens’ Charter and generating awareness among citizens. A prototype has been developed by the professional agency and is in the process of validation in identified Departments/ Organisations. The implementation of Citizens’ Charter is an on-going exercise because it has to reflect the extensive and continual changes taking place in the domain of public services. Indian Government continuously strives to serve the citizens in an effective and

efficient way so as not only to meet but to exceed their expectations. The Citizens' Charter initiative is a major step in this direction.

Sevottam

Sevottam comes from the Hindi words "Seva" and "Uttam" and means excellence in service delivery. *It is an administrative citizen- centric measure to improve the quality of public services India and includes the following three main components.*

1. **Citizen Charter** and Service Standards- Citizen Charter is the document where a public sector Organization declares its key services along with delivery timelines and requirements . Sevottam focuses on the formulation, monitoring and review of Citizen Charter to ensure the organization promises what it can deliver and delivers what it has promised.
2. **Public Grievances** - Here Sevottam focuses on receipt, redressal and prevention of grievances.
3. **Service Delivery Enablers** - This includes the key pillars which are required to give excellent service and includes Customer Feedback, Employee Motivation and infrastructure. *Currently Sevottam is being implemented in all Government of The Department of Administrative Reforms and public Grievances has developed a model for benchmarking Excellence in Public Service Delivery through Sevottam.* The model provides the framework to organizations to assess and improve the quality of service delivery for the citizens. It involves the identification of the services delivered to the citizens, quality of service, its objective, improvement of quality, by using innovative methods for developing business process and more informative with the help of information technology. The CBDT and Central Board of Excise and

Customs are the biggest departments where this is undertaken. It is the United Progressive Alliance's pet project.

Targets of Sevottam;

Sevottam targets stated needs like

- Timeliness: time norms for specific services are enumerated in Citizens' Charter.
- The services and norms are set as per active discussions with different stakeholders.
- Effectiveness: a single window system for service deliverables is targeted for delivery to cut down on assess shuttling from one desk to another to get services.
- Responsiveness: a robust grievance redress system is needed to listen to assesses grievance as well as redress them timely.
- Courteous behaviour: norm for behaviour, specially in assessee's facing positions, is described in the Citizens' Charter and pro-active feedback on service delivery is gathered to judge this.
- Information: facilitation centers and help centers are targeted to meet assesses needs of information.
- Empathy: public grievance officers are needed to listen to assessee's in their time of need

E-Governance

CONCEPT OF E-GOVERNANCE

The emergence of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has provided means for faster and better communication, efficient storage, retrieval and processing of data and exchange and utilization of information to its users, be they individuals, groups, businesses, organizations or governments. What had begun as a faster, more accurate and simpler means of word-processing quickly lent itself to being used as a tool for processing and tabulating data as an aid in decision making. With growing computerization and increasing internet connectivity, this process has presently reached a stage where more and more users are motivated to modifying their ways of doing things in order to leverage the advantages provided by ICT. In other words, this has led to 'business process reengineering'. So far as governments are concerned, the coming together of computerization and internet connectivity/web-enablement in association with process reengineering, promises faster and better processing of information leading to speedier and qualitatively better decision making, greater reach and accountability, better utilization of resources and overall good governance. In the case of citizens, it holds the promise of enhanced access to information and government agencies, efficient service delivery and transparency in dealings and interactions with government. E-governance is the application of ICT to the processes of government functioning for good governance. In other words, e-governance is the public sector's use of ICTs with the aim to improve information and service delivery, encourage citizen participation in decision-making and make government more accountable, transparent and efficient. The Ministry of Information and Technology states that e-governance goes far beyond mere computerisation of stand alone back office operations.

It implies fundamental changes in government operations; and new set of responsibilities for the legislature, executive, judiciary and citizens.

The “e” in e-Governance stands for ‘electronic’. Thus, e-Governance is basically associated with carrying out the functions and achieving the results of governance through the utilization of what has today come to be known as ICT (Information and communications Technology). The reason why countries around the world are increasingly opting for ‘e-Governance’ is that governance per se has become more complex and varied in the last few decades and more importantly, citizens’ expectations from government have increased manifold. ICT facilitates efficient storing and retrieval of data, instantaneous transmission of information, processing information and data faster than the earlier manual systems, speeding up governmental processes, taking decisions expeditiously and judiciously, increasing transparency and enforcing accountability. It also helps in increasing the reach of government – both geographically and demographically. The primary purpose of governance is the welfare of citizens. While one aspect of governance relates to safeguarding the legal rights of all citizens, an equally important aspect is concerned with ensuring equitable access to public services and the benefits of economic growth to all. It is expected that e-Governance would enable the government to discharge its functions more effectively. However, this would require the government to change itself – its processes, its outlook, laws, rules and regulations and also its way of interacting with the citizens. It would also require capacity building within the government and creation of general awareness about e-Governance among the citizens. E-Government is about governments interacting, conducting business and delivering services to their citizens and private companies electronically through

the use of Information and communications Technology (ICT). Hence, ICT is an enabler in the realisation of e-Government applications which involve Government to Government(G2G), Government to Citizens (G2C), Government to Business (G2B), business to Citizen(B2C) transactions amongst others. E-Governance is in essence, the application of Information and communications Technology to government functioning in order to create 'Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsive and Transparent (SMART) governance.

India, being the largest democracy in the world, has much to gain from e-Governance, especially when citizen participation in governance is one of the features of the fully evolved stage of e-government. Many e-readiness assessments have been carried out at the global level that shows the current state of India's e-readiness. Some of the more recent study findings are as follows: The July 2002 EIU ranking found that 55 of the countries navigating the information super highway account for 98 per cent of all IT in 150 countries. It ranked India at 54 among the group of elite 55. The May 2001 Mc-connell ranking of e-readiness assessment indicated that substantial improvements were needed in the area of connectivity. Improvements are also required in the areas of E-Leadership, Ebusiness, Information Security and Human capital. The Global Information Technology Report, 2002-03, ranked India 37 above china which is ranked 43rd, whereas the 2001-02 Report ranked India 54 (adapted from INDIA: E-Readiness Assessment Report 2003, Department of Information Technology, Government of India). E-Governance refers to the use by government agencies of Information Technologies (such as Wide Area Networks, the Internet and mobile computing) that have the ability transform relations with citizens, businesses, and various arms of government resulting in better delivery of government services to

citizens, improved interactions with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information, or more efficient government management. The resultant benefits are less corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth, and cost reductions. Analogous to e-commerce, which allows business to transact with each other more efficiently (B2B) and brings customers closer to businesses (B2C), e-government aims to make the interaction between government and citizens (G2C), government and business enterprises (G2B), and inter-agency relationships (G2G) more friendly, convenient, transparent, and inexpensive.

E-Governance vs E-Government

E-Government Definitions

E-government is a generic term for web-based services from agencies of local, state and federal governments. In e-government, the government uses information technology and particularly the Internet to support government operations, engage citizens, and provide government services. The interaction may be in the form of obtaining information, filings, or making payments and a host of other activities via the World Wide Web.

E-Governance Definitions

“E-governance is the public sector’s use of information and communication technologies with the aim of improving information and service delivery, encouraging citizen participation in the decision-making process and making government more accountable, transparent and effective. E-governance involves new styles of leadership, new ways of

debating and deciding policy and investment, new ways of accessing education, new ways of listening to citizens and new ways of organizing and delivering information and services. E-governance is generally considered as a wider concept than e-government, since it can bring about a change in the way citizens relate to governments and to each other. E-governance can bring forth new concepts of citizenship, both in terms of citizen needs and responsibilities. Its objective is to engage, enable and empower the citizen.”

“E-democracy builds on e-governance and focuses on the actions and innovations enabled by ICTs combined with higher levels of democratic motivation and intent” (Clift,2003). The concept of electronic governance chosen by the Council of Europe covers the use of electronic technologies in three areas of public action; relations between the public authorities and civil society; functioning of the public authorities at all stages of the democratic process (electronic democracy); the provision of public services (electronic public services).

E-Governance is a wider concept that defines and assesses the impacts technologies are having on the practice and administration of governments and the relationships between public servants and the wider society, such as dealings with the elected bodies or outside groups such as not for profits organizations, NGOs or private sector corporate entities. e-Governance encompasses a series of necessary steps for government agencies to develop and administer to ensure successful implementation of e-government services to the public at large.

E-Government E-Governance

Electronic Service Delivery Electronic Consultation

Electronic Workflow Electronic Administration & Management

Electronic Voting Electronic Engagement

Electronic productivity Networked Societal Guidance

The goals of e-Governance are:

- a. Better service delivery to citizens
- b. Ushering in transparency and accountability
- c. Empowering people through information
- d. Improved efficiency within Governments
- e. Improve interface with business and industry.

E-Governance needs to transform all levels of Government but the focus should be on local governments since local governments are the closest to citizens, and constitute for many, the main interface with government. The relationship of citizens and local authorities tends to be one based on proximity as the interests at stake for both parties are closely entwined concerning issues such as public services, local development, education etc. e-Governance based administrative reforms in local governments can have maximum impact on citizens.

STAGES OF E-GOVERNANCE

Different stages of e-governance are identified on certain set of criteria.

These stages are:

- 1. Simple information dissemination (one-way communication)-** is considered as the most basic form, as it is used for merely disseminating information;

- 2. Two-way communication (request and response)**- is characterised with e-mail system and information and data-transfer technologies in the form of website;
- 3. Service and financial transactions**- is online services and financial transactions leading to web based self-services;
- 4. Integration (both vertical and horizontal)**- in this stage the government would attempt inter and intra-governmental integration; and
- 5. Political participation**- this stage means online voting, online public forums and opinion surveys for more direct and wider interaction with the government.

Gartner, an international consultancy firm, has formulated four-phase e-governance model. This can serve as a reference for governments to position where a project fits in the overall evolution of an e-governance strategy. An effort as tremendous as complete realization of e-governance has to be addressed in these phase. This approach would allow for retrospection after each phase, and the ability to retrace steps if required, within a feasible frame of time and money. The design and purpose of each step would have to serve the relevant needs of all G2C, G2B and G2G sectors.

Phase I – Presence

This first phase calls for making the intentions and objectives of the government known. Development of an inclusive government website, or a network of sites dedicated to different ministries and departments would set the stage for further advancements. These sites would convey the government's initiatives, providing information such as official

addresses, working hours, as well as forms and applications to the public, economic reviews, corporate regulations for business and budgetary allocations and spending as a reference for government agencies. With this first phase, the very critical task of building the infrastructure, such as telecommunications would be undertaken.

Phase II – Interaction

This phase would allow for basic interaction with the government. Besides hosting search engines on the sites for easy navigation, information detailing social records and job application forms for the public, permit and license documentation for businesses and census details, submission of requests and approvals to the centre by local government officers would have to be provided. The task of building the underlying infrastructure would have to be sustained through these two stages, allowing for rapid implementation of advanced applications as endorsed by the consequent phases.

Phase III – Transaction

This phase onwards would signify direct interaction of the government and relevant entities. With the infrastructure in place, complete online service suites can be put forth for the public, businesses and governmental agencies. Services for the public such as bill and fine payments, license renewal, aggregating opinion etc online procurement tax returns etc. for businesses, cooperative budget preparation, tax records, etc for governmental agencies can be envisaged here.

Phase IV – Transformation

This final phase would strive to achieve the true vision of e-Governance.

1. A single point of contact to constituent entities would provide an integrated platform for government services and organization totally transparent to citizens and businesses.
2. Focus on 'virtual agencies' where government information is readily available to all allowing a seamless interface to respective agencies involved in the transactions.
3. State-of-the-art Intranets linking government employees in different agencies extranets allowing seamless flow of information thereby facilitating collaborative decisions among government agencies, NGO's and the public.

The following factors have to be taken into account when examining the risk of implementing e-governance.

- Political stability: Democracy or dictatorial regime
- Level of trust in government: perception of service levels
- The importance of government identity: fragmentation or integration
- Economic structure: education, agriculture, industry or service
- Government structure: centralized or decentralized
- Different levels of maturity: weakest part of the chain determines speed
- Constituent demand: push or pull

MODELS OF E-GOVERNANCE

Prof. Dr. Arie Halachmi in his paper, namely, 'E-Government Theory and Practice:

The Evidence from Tennessee (USA),' has given five important models of e-governance, which can be used as a guide in designing e government

initiatives depending on the local situation and governance activities that are expected to be performed. These models are:

1. The Broadcasting Model
2. The Critical Flow Model
3. The Comparative Analysis Model
4. The E-Advocacy/Mobilisation and Lobbying Model
5. The Interactive-Service Model

We will now discuss these models individually.

The Broadcasting Model

The model is based on dissemination/broadcasting of useful governance information, which is in the public domain into the wider public domain with ICT and convergent media. The strength of the model rests upon the fact that a more informed citizenry is better able to judge the functioning of existing governance mechanisms and make an informed opinion about them. Consequently, they become more empowered to exercise their rights and responsibilities. Widespread application of this model corrects 'information failure situations' by providing people with the relevant information relating to the governance sphere to make informed opinion and impact governance processes.

Further, the use of ICT opens an alternative channel for people to access information as well as validate existing information from different sources.

The Critical Flow Model

The model is based on disseminating/channelling information of critical value to the targeted audience or into the wider public domain with ICT and convergent media. The strength of this model is that ICT makes the concept of 'distance' and 'time' redundant when information is hosted

on a digital network, and this could be used advantageously by instantly transferring the critical information to its strategic user group located anywhere or by making it freely available in the wider public domain.

The Comparative Analysis Model

This model is highly significant model for developing countries and can be used for empowering people. Essentially, the model continuously assimilates best practices in the areas of governance and then uses them as benchmarks to evaluate other governance practices. It then uses the result to advocate positive changes or to influence 'public' opinion on these governance practices. The comparison could be made over a time scale to get a snapshot of the past and present situation or could be used to compare the effectiveness of an intervention by comparing two similar situations. The strength of this model lie in the infinite capacity of digital networks to store varied information and retrieve and transmit it instantly across all geographical and hierarchal barriers.

The E-Advocacy/Mobilization and Lobbying Model

This model builds the momentum of real-world processes by adding the opinions and concerns expressed by virtual communities. This model helps the global civil society to impact on global decision-making processes. It is based on setting up a planned, directed flow of information to build strong virtual allies to complement actions in the real world. Virtual communities are formed which share similar values and concerns and these communities in turn link up with or support real-life groups/activities for concerted action.

Hence, it creates a diversity of virtual community and the ideas, expertise and resources are accumulated through this virtual form of networking. In addition, it is able to mobilise and leverage human resources and information beyond geographical, institutional and bureaucratic barriers and use it for concerted action.

The Interactive-Service Model

It opens avenues for direct participation of individuals in governance processes and brings in greater objectivity and transparency in decision-making processes through ICT. Fundamentally, ICT has the potential to bring in every individual in a digital network and enable interactive (two-way) flows of information among them. Under this model, the various services offered by the Government become directly available to its citizens in an interactive manner. It does so by opening up an interactive Government to Consumer to Government (G2C2G) channel in various aspects of governance, such as election of government officials (e-ballots); redressing online of specific grievances; sharing of concerns and providing expertise; opinion polls on various issues; etc.

Types of Interactions in e-Governance

E-Governance facilitates interaction between different stake holders in governance. These interactions may be described as follows:

G2G (Government to Government)– In this case, Information and communications Technology is used not only to restructure the governmental processes involved in the functioning of government entities but also to increase the flow of information and services within and between different entities. This kind of interaction is only within the

sphere of government and can be both horizontal i.e. between different government agencies as well as between different functional areas within an organisation, or vertical i.e. between national, provincial and local government agencies as well as between different levels within an organisation. The primary objective is to increase efficiency, performance and output.

G2C (Government to Citizens)—In this case, an interface is created between the government and citizens which enables the citizens to benefit from efficient delivery of a large range of public services. This expands the availability and accessibility of public services on the one hand and improves the quality of services on the other. It gives citizens the choice of when to interact with the government (e.g. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week), from where to interact with the government (e.g. service centre, unattended kiosk or from one's home/workplace) and how to interact with the government (e.g. through internet, fax, telephone, email, face-to-face, etc). The primary purpose is to make government, citizen-friendly.

G2B (Government to Business)—Here, e-Governance tools are used to aid the business community – providers of goods and services – to seamlessly interact with the government. The objective is to cut red tape, save time, reduce operational costs and to create a more transparent business environment when dealing with the government. The G2b initiatives can be transactional, such as in licensing, permits, procurement and revenue collection. They can also be promotional and facilitative, such as in trade, tourism and investment. These measures

help to provide a congenial environment to businesses to enable them to perform more efficiently.

G2E (Government to Employees)—Government is by far the biggest employer and like any organisation, it has to interact with its employees on a regular basis. This interaction is a two-way process between the organisation and the employee. Use of ICT tools helps in making these interactions fast and efficient on the one hand and increase satisfaction levels of employees on the other.

LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The following provisions have laid down the legal and policy framework for ICT and e-governance:

- **Information Technology Act 2000**

The Action Plan endorsed by the Conference of Chief Ministers in 1987 had already addressed the pertinent issues of accountable and citizen friendly administration; and transparency and right to information. In pursuance of these issues, the Information Technology Act was promulgated in 2000. The objective of the Act is “to provide legal recognition for transactions carried out by means of electronic data interchange and other means of electronic communication, commonly referred to as ‘electronic methods of communication and storage of information’; to facilitate electronic filing of documents with the Government agencies; and further to amend the Indian Penal Code, the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, the Banker’s Book Evidence Act, 1891 and the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. ”Both e-commerce and e-governance transactions

are covered under the ambit of this Act, which facilitates acceptance of electronic records and digital signatures.

The Act, thus, stipulates numerous provisions. It aims to provide for the legal framework so that legal sanctity is accorded to all electronic records and other activities carried out by electronic means. The said Act further states that unless otherwise agreed, an acceptance of contract may be expressed by electronic means of communication and the same shall have legal validity and enforceability.

CHAPTER III of the Act details about 'Electronic Governance' and provides Inter-alia amongst others that where any law provides that information or any other matter shall be in writing or in the typewritten or printed form, then, notwithstanding anything contained in such law, such requirement shall be deemed to have been satisfied if such information or matter is:

- i. Rendered or made available in an electronic form; and
- ii. Accessible so as to be usable for a subsequent reference.

Report of the Working Group on Convergence and E-governance 2002-07

Report of the Working Group on Convergence and E-governance proposed the need for administration to transform itself from a passive information and service provider to a platform/ forum for the active involvement of citizens. This Report primarily concerned itself with public investments. It could not visualise the extent of private initiative that could be expected to come forth in the convergence area or in e-commerce or allied segments. It felt the need to set up a central body for

taking stock of the total IT picture in the country. This central body could be a 'Council for E-governance' or an adhoc 'Commission On Re-engineering Administrative Procedures for E- governance. 'Another alternative it suggested was to set up a National Institute of Smart Governance.

- **Common Minimum Programme**

The importance of e-governance has been recognised in the Common Minimum Programme of the UPA Government, which inter alia states that e-governance will be promoted on a massive scale. It made a solemn pledge to the people of the country with a government that would be corruption free, transparent and accountable; and an administration that would be responsible and responsive at all times.

- **National E-Governance Plan**

Three important elements of the National E-Governance Plan, which form the core infrastructure for effective service delivery are- Data Centres, State Wide Area Networks and Common Service Centres. The 10-point agenda of the Department of Information Technology announced for growth of ICT in the country includes expeditious implementation of a 'National E-Governance Plan' to bring about transparency and citizen centric approach in administration.

The National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) has been formulated by the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DEITY) and Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG). The Union Government approved the NeGP, comprising of 27 Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) and 10 components on May 18, 2006.

The NeGP aims at improving delivery of Government services to citizens and businesses with the following vision:

"Make all Government services accessible to the common man in his locality, through common service delivery outlets and ensure efficiency, transparency & reliability of such services at affordable costs to realise the basic needs of the common man."

Implementation Strategy, Approach and Methodology of NeGP

Implementation of e-Governance is a highly complex process requiring provisioning of hardware & software, networking, process re-engineering and change management. Based on lessons learnt from the past and the experience from successful e-Governance applications, the approach and methodology adopted for NeGP contains the following elements:

- a) **Common Support Infrastructure**: NeGP implementation involves setting up of common and support IT infrastructure such as: State Wide Area Networks (SWANs), State Data Centres (SDCs), Common Services Centres (CSCs) and Electronic Service Delivery Gateways.
- b) **Governance**: Suitable arrangements for monitoring and coordinating the implementation of NeGP under the direction of the competent authorities have also been substantially put in place. The programme also involves evolving/ laying down standards and policy guidelines, providing technical support, undertaking capacity building, R&D, etc. DEITY is required to adequately strengthen itself and various institutions like NIC, STQC, CDAC, NISG, etc. to play these roles effectively.
- c) **Centralised Initiative, Decentralised Implementation**: e-Governance is being promoted through a centralised initiative to the extent necessary to ensure citizen centric orientation, to realise the objective of inter-operability of various e-Governance

applications and to ensure optimal utilisation of ICT infrastructure and resources while allowing for a decentralised implementation model. It also aims at identifying successful projects and replicating them with required customization wherever needed.

- d) **Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)**: PPP model is to be adopted wherever feasible to enlarge the resource pool without compromising on the security aspects.
- e) **Integrative Elements**: Adoption of unique identification codes for citizens, businesses and property is to be promoted to facilitate integration and avoid ambiguity.
- f) **Programme Approach at the National and State levels**: For implementation of the NeGP, various Union Ministries/Departments and State Governments are involved. Considering the multiplicity of agencies involved and the need for overall aggregation and integration at the national level, NeGP is being implemented as a programme, with well-defined roles and responsibilities of each agency involved. For facilitating this, appropriate programme management structures have also been put in place.
- g) **Facilitator role of DEITY**: DEITY is the facilitator and catalyst for the implementation of NeGP by various Ministries and State Governments and also provides technical assistance. It serves as a secretariat to the Apex Committee and assists it in managing the programme. In addition, DEITY is also implementing pilot/ infrastructure/ technical/ special projects and support components. DARPG's responsibility is towards Government Process Re-engineering and Change Management, which are desired to be realised across all government departments. Planning

Commission and Ministry of Finance allocate funds for NeGP through Plan and Non-plan budgetary provisions and lay down appropriate procedures in this regard.

- h) **Ownership of Ministries:** Under the NeGP, various MMPs are owned and spearheaded by the concerned line Ministries. In case there are any ongoing projects which fall in the MMP category, they would be suitably enhanced to align them with the objectives of NeGP. For major projects like Bharat Nirman, Rural Employment Guarantee Schemes, etc. the line ministries concerned are advised to make use of e-Governance as also automation techniques from the inception stage. States have been given the flexibility to identify a few additional state-specific projects, which are relevant for the economic development of the State.

- **Expert Committee**

An expert committee had also been constituted for the amendments in the IT Act 2000 to include the technological developments post IT Act 2000. The Expert Committee completed its deliberations and submitted its report in August 2005. Now the Expert Committee's recommendations have been put on the website of the Department of Information Technology for inviting public views and suggestions. The Committee, during its deliberations, analysed some of the relevant experiences and international best practices. The Committee, while formulating its recommendations, kept in view the twin objectives of: (i) using IT as a tool for socioeconomic development and employment

generation; and (ii) further consolidation of India's position as a major global player in IT sector.

Right to Information Act 2005

The Right to Information Act 2005 confers on the citizens the right to:

- a) Inspect works, documents and records of the government and its agencies;
- b) Take notes, extracts or certified copies of documents or records;
- c) Take certified samples of material; and
- d) Obtain information in form of printouts, diskettes, floppies, tapes, videocassettes or in any other electronic mode.

This has ensured a transparent and accountable government to the people. It has also established a two-way dialogue between the citizens and the government. It has enabled citizens to make well-informed decisions. Further, it is an important step toward tackling corruption and has ensured better monitoring of services provided by the government.

IMPORTANCE OF E-GOVERNANCE

The application of ICT impacts upon the structures and processing of public administration. As technological advancements facilitate the administrative systems by enabling:

1. Administrative Development;
2. Effective Service Delivery

1. Administrative Development

Administrative reforms, often, have focused on procedural details and restructuring of systems and processes of government organisations. The basic objective of these reforms is to enhance capacities of the systems. ICTs can be used and are being used now to give further impetus to the process. They help in the following manners:

- a. Automation of Administrative Processes*
- b. Elimination of Hierarchy*
- c. Paper Work Reduction*
- d. Quality of Services*
- e. Change in Administrative Culture*

- a. **Automation of Administrative Processes:-**A truly e-governed system would require minimal human intervention and would rather be system driven. While initially the solutions that were offered were quite primitive with poor information layout ,inadequate navigation provisions, occasional disruption in services, periodic outdated content and little or no 'back office' support. However, technological advancements and increased pressure from citizenry have prompted improvements in these areas. Now administrative departments are computerised and connected through network. Software has been built and designed around government departments ensuring efficiency in operations. The department shave launched individual websites carrying information of their respective departments. This has enabled online carrying of operations and file movements. Budgeting, accounting, data flow, etc. has become easy. This has increased the efficiency of office operations and processes and has reduced unnecessary delays.

- b. **Elimination of Hierarchy**:-ICT has reduced procedural delays caused by hierarchical processes in the organisation. Through Intranet and LAN, it has become possible to send information and data across various levels in the organisation at the same time. Computerisation and communication patterns facilitated by ICT have increased efficiency and have led to the involvement of all levels in decision-making.
- c. **Paper Work Reduction**:-An immediate impact of automation would be on the paperwork. Paperwork is reduced to a greater extent with communication being enabled via electronic route and storage and retrieval of information in the electronic form. All this has led to emergence of 'less paper office'. This concept is defined as an office situation where all the information (file and mail) amongst various functionaries is distributed online. Less paper office is the implementation of effective electronic communication processes that enable elimination of reproductive works and unnecessary papers. The concept is where files and mails (information) are transmitted over wires to small computers at each employee's desk. Office work, such as, file movements, nothings, etc. is computerised and documentation, report preparation, databases are now maintained in computers. Due to interconnectivity through LAN, transfer of information and files take place online, thus reducing the physical movements and consumption and storage of huge piles of paper.
- d. **Quality of Services**:-ICT helps governments to deliver services to the citizens with greater accountability, responsiveness and sensitivity. Quality of services improves, as now the people are able to get services efficiently and instantaneously. As volumes of

transactions and information can be electronically handled and delivered over a wider area through the net and web, qualitative services become possible in least time, in least cost, in least difficulty and in greater convenience. By ensuring online redressal of grievances the accountability of officials is ensured. They have become sensitive to the issues affecting people. Monitoring by way of video conferencing has further facilitated central monitoring, reporting and face to face communication that has assured effective service delivery by the officials.

- e. **Change in Administrative Culture:-**Bureaucratic structures have been plagued by characteristics aptly described by Victor Thompson as 'bureau-pathology'. From the days of New Public Administration, efforts have been made to find ways to deal with the pathological or dysfunctional aspects of bureaucratic behaviour and to make delivery of public services effective and efficient. With e-governance, publications coming under public glare would certainly induce norms and values of accountability, openness, integrity, fairness, equity, responsibility and justice in the administrative culture. Rather, administration would become efficient and responsive.

2. **Effective Service Delivery;**

ICTs play an important role in effectively delivering services to the people. ICTs ensure:

- a. *Transparency*
- b. *Economic Development*
- c. *Social Development*
- d. *Strategic Information System*

- a. **Transparency**:-by dissemination and publication of information on the web. This provides easy access to information and subsequently makes the system publicly accountable. Also as web enables free flow of information, it can be easily accessed by all without any discrimination.
- b. **Economic Development**:-The deployment of ICTs reduces the transaction costs, which makes services cheaper. For example, rural areas suffer on account of lack of information regarding markets, products, agriculture, health, education, weather, etc. and if all this could be accessed online would lead to better and more opportunities and thereby prosperity in these areas.
- c. **Social Development**: The access to information empowers the citizens. Informed citizenry can participate and voice their concerns, which can be accommodated in the programme/project formulation, implementation, monitoring and service delivery. Web enabled participation will counter the discriminatory factors affecting our societal behaviour.
- d. **Strategic Information System**:-Changing organisational environment and increasing competitiveness have put pressures on the performance of the functionaries. Information regarding all aspects need to be made available to the management at every point to make routine as well as strategic decisions. ICTs effectively enable putting such strategic information systems in place. After the above-mentioned discussion on the significance of ICTs in governance, we will now highlight certain measures that will enable its effective implementation.

Challenges and the way forward;-

Now it is clear with the above discussion that the role of ICTs in governance is very crucial. In order to maximize the benefits of ICTs, we need to develop sufficient and adequate infrastructure, provide sufficient capital and investment, enable easy and wider accessibility and generate ample and skillful human resources.

Followings are some of the immediate and pertinent challenges to effective implementation of ICT and e-governance.

1. *Infrastructure*
2. *Capital*
3. *Access*
4. *Utility of Information*
5. *Human Resource Development*
6. *Capacity Building*
7. *Changing the Mindset of Government Functionaries*
8. *Language*
9. *Standardisation in Data Encoding*
10. *Grievance Redressal Mechanism*
11. *Cyber Laws*

1. **Infrastructure**:-The foundation of e-governance is based on the telecommunication services. To develop telecommunication, infrastructures are to be created so that the end-user is able to access the services promptly and effectively. To strengthen the infrastructure, 'The National Task Force on Information Technology and Software Development' in 1998 recommended broadband connection (also known as 'the lastmile') linkage for IT Applications Service Providers (ASPs), Internet ServiceProviders (ISPs) and IT

promotional organisations, either by fiber optics or by radiocommunication, with the aim to 'boost efficiency and enhance market integration' through Internet/Intranet for sustainable regional development.

2. **Capital**:-A high rate of investment in IT capital and a supportive environment is necessary to achieve digital economy. In view of the resource crunch with the government, there is need to generate resources from the market and private sector. Public-private partnership may be beneficial in this regard, as the private sector can participate and contribute with capital and expertise support.
3. **Access**:-At present, there are more than 10 million users of internet in the country. But the irony is that more than 75 percent of these users are in urban India. Internet has still to reach the rural and disadvantaged sections. However, efforts are being made to expand ICT connectivity into rural areas through involvement of Gram Panchayats. NIC has developed a comprehensive web-based software for panchayati raj and rural applications, which is being implemented in states like Andhra Pradesh. With most of the panchayats getting computerised, accessibility to various services has become easy.
4. **Utility of Information**:-There is a need to provide information, which is useful. The content of the information should be such that it should be interesting, beneficial and appealing to the people. In this regard, Government of India and some of the state governments have prepared a vision document for e-governance keeping in mind the needs of the citizens. Though Citizens' Charters of many departments are available on the net, further publicity of

such facilities is required to enable the public to access the necessary information.

5. **Human Resource Development**:-Despite the ascending growth rate observed in employment in IT sector, there is dearth of quality manpower. There exists a demand and supply gap in the IT manpower market. India apparently needs to have more technical institutes to impart education and training to build a pool of human resources in the field.
6. **Capacity Building**:-Service delivery will be effective if there is a trained manpower. Though computer training is being imparted to all the basic public functionaries, except in few cases, an effective use of ICT is yet to be seen. Moreover, there is an immediate need to launch a nation wide 'Train the Teachers Programme' (3TProgramme). This should be done at all levels including schools and colleges. A combination of physical and virtual training also needs to be imparted.
7. **Changing the Mindset of Government Functionaries**:-To accept the change there is a need to change the mindset of service providers and receivers. The government functionaries need to be made aware that they are there to serve the clients as per the policies and programmes and that technological advancement is only a facilitator to solutions of problems faced by people and not a solution in itself. To change the mindset of the service providers there is a need to impart orientation and training programmes to them.
8. **Language**:-Success of e-government also depends on communication with the people in their local languages. Currently, the most widely used language is English for e-government. But

given the Indian social conditions, unless we develop interfaces in vernacular languages, it would remain out of reach of many people who are not capable of accessing these services in English. In this context, it is essential that a clear strategy be formulated to provide access to local level data bases maintained in regional and local languages as well as to use appropriate interfaces to aggregate such data. However, it may be mentioned here that organisations like Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC) has developed multilingual software for the purpose.

9. **Standardisation in Data Encoding:-** Once multiple access points maintained in various languages at various levels are established, there is a need to update them in conformity with similar standards for data encoding-an application logic for a common horizontal application and data dictionary. This is also important for finding aggregates in the national context.
10. **Grievance Redressal Mechanism:-**The mechanism planned for various functions need to make provision for grievance redressal as well. Interactive platforms on the internet may speed up the process and may be useful in this regard. The BMC-Praja Foundation's joint initiative of the Online Complaint Management System (OCMS) is perhaps the world's first in citizen-government partnership for solving public grievances in municipal services. Inaugurated in April 2003, the OCMS has been receiving grievances on behalf of citizens availing services of municipalities in Mumbai. It uses IT as a tool to bring in efficiency and effectiveness into the system. One can register his/her complaint online regarding various municipal services and the Municipal Corporation will redress this complaint in the time stipulated in the Citizens' Charter

adopted by the Corporation. Central Vigilance Commission has also provided such a platform for people to register their complaints against corrupt officials. Such sporadic instances need to be made broad-based and effective, though it may be conceded that more and more public service agencies are now providing or contemplating such facilities.

11. **Cyber Laws**:-The government needs to enact appropriate laws, especially those, which are necessary to enable transactions over the internet. Safety concerns regarding use of credit cards or other modes of payment stops the consumers from using such facilities. The Maha nagar Telephone Nagar Limited, Delhi for example has provided the online facility for payment of telephone bills, but not even one percent of its consumers are making use of this provision. Hence, security has to be ensured for generating confidence in the system.

E-GOVERNANCE INITIATIVES – INDIA

India has been harnessing the benefits provided by the Information & Communication Technologies (ICT) to provide;-

1. Integrated governance,
2. Reach to the citizens faster,
3. Provide efficient services and
4. Citizen empowerment through access to information.

The aim is to redefine governance in the ICT age to provide SMART GOVERNANCE. Several significant initiatives have been taken at the Centre and the State level in this Direction;

At the Central level, the government has extensively promoted the use of IT in managing its internal processes and has drawn up a 'Minimum

Agenda of e-Governance'. Further Ministries / departments have provision of 2 to 3 percent of their annual budgets to be spent on IT related activities. The government has enacted IT Act 2000 which provides legal status to the information and transactions carried on the net.

Several State Governments have also taken various innovative steps to promote e-Governance and have drawn up a roadmap for IT implementation and delivery of services to the citizens on-line. The applications that have been implemented are targeted towards providing G2B, G2C and B2C services with emphasis on use of local language. There are details of some significant e-governance initiatives / projects implemented are given below.

Project Bhoomi-

Under this project the Department of Revenue in Karnataka State has computerized 20 million records of land ownership of 6.7 million farmers in the State. This system works with the software called "BHOOMI" designed fully in-house by National Informatics Center, Bangalore. The Department of Information Technology, Govt. of India has embarked upon a major programme to rollout Land Records Computerisation in several States of the country.

Previously, farmers had to seek out the Village Accountant to get a copy of Record of Rights, Tenancy and Crops (RTC) – a document needed for many tasks such as obtaining bank loans. There were delays and harassment. Bribes had to be paid. Today, for a fee of Rs. 15, a printed copy of the RTC can be obtained online at computerized land record kiosks (Bhoomi centers) in 177 taluk offices.

End Users/Beneficiaries: Rural People

State where Implemented: Karnataka

Awards/Appreciation: Silver CAPAM award 2002

Project: e-Seva (electronic Seva);

Launched on the 25th of August 2001, electronic seva (e-Seva) is the improved version of the TWINS project launched in 1999, in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad in Andhra Pradesh. There are currently 36 e-Seva centres spread across the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad and Ranga Reddy district, operating from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm every day and between 9:30 am and 3:30 pm on holidays. 70 centers are in operation at different municipalities covering thirteen districts. e-Seva centres offer 118 different services like payment of utility bills/taxes, registration of births/deaths, registration of applications for passports, issue of births/deaths certificates, filing of Sales Tax returns, Trade licenses of MCH, B2C services like payments of Tata Tele services, Reliance, sale of Airtel Magic cards. These services can be availed at any counter in the centre and at any place in the city. 21 more services like railway reservations, TTD services, bill payments of Airtel, Hutch etc. are in the pipe line. Though the e-Seva had a very lukewarm response from the citizens, the initiative has picked up tremendous confidence on the way and has so far netted a thumping collection of close to Rs2,000 Crore (February end 2003) from a meager collection of Rs 43 lakh in August 2001. The government has rolled out the project to other parts of the state, including rural areas like the West Godavari district.

End Users/Beneficiaries: Populace

State where Implemented: Andhra Pradesh (Hyderabad and Secunderabad and Ranga Reddy district)

Project: CARD;

The abbreviation CARD stands for *Computer-aided Administration of Registration Department* -

This project was designed in Andhra Pradesh to eliminate the maladies affecting the conventional registration system by introducing electronic delivery of all registration services.

CARD was initiated to meet the following objectives;-

1. To demystify the registration process,
2. To bring speed in the processing and delivery of service,
3. To improve efficiency,
4. To focus on consistency and reliability,
5. To work substantially
6. To Improve the citizen interface etc.

After Six months of the launch of the CARD project, about 80% of all land registration transactions in AP were carried out electronically. Since 60% of the documents, Encumbrance Certificates (ECs) and certified copies relate to agricultural properties, the success of the CARD project has great benefit for the rural farming community. CARD is operational at 387 Sub-registrar offices in the entire state of Andhra Pradesh since 1998.

Project: FRIENDS-

The abbreviation 'FRIENDS' stands for ***Fast, Reliable, Instant, Efficient Network for the Disbursement of Services***. It is a part of the Kerala State IT Mission. FRIENDS counters handle 1,000 types of payment bills originating out of various PSUs. The payments that citizens can make include utility payments for electricity and water, revenue taxes, license

fees, motor vehicle taxes, university fees, etc. Firewalls safeguard data from manipulation.

The application has provisions for adding more modules and for rolling back incorrect entries without affecting the database even at the user level. One important feature of FRIENDS is a provision for adding more modules and a queue management system.

Project: Gyandoot

This project was initiated in January 2000 by a committed group of civil servants in consultation with various gram panchayats in the Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh. Gyandoot is a low cost, self-sustainable, and community-owned rural Intranet system (Soochnalaya) that caters to the specific needs of village communities in the district. Thirty-five such centres have been established since January 2000 and are managed by rural youth selected and trained from amongst the unemployed educated youth of the village. They run the Soochanalayas (organised as Kiosks) as entrepreneurs (Soochaks); user charges are levied for a wide range of services that include agricultural information, market information, health, education, women's issues, and applications for services delivered by the district administration related to land ownership, affirmative action, and poverty alleviation. Kiosks are connected to the Intranet through dial-up lines, which are soon to be replaced by wireless connections using Cordless DECT technology. The Soochanalayas have been equipped with Pentium multimedia colour computer along with dot matrix printers. The user interface is menu based with information presented in the local Hindi language and the features of the Gyandoot software are continuously being updated.

Awards/Appreciation: Stockholm Challenge Award 2002; CSI National IT Award

Project: VidyaVahini

This portal provides the opportunity for schools, teachers and students all across the nation, to express and share their creative and academic potential via the internet. The portal aims at creating such an environment by providing facilities for Content Development, Content Deployment and collaboration. *Shiksha India is a non profit organization launched in **December 2001 to equip schools with the 5 Cs:***

1. Computers,
2. Connectivity,
3. Coaching (teacher Training),
4. Content and
5. Models of Commercial sustainability.

Its mission is to spread better education, uniform quality of education across India to develop their creativity and problem solving skills. By providing computer literacy, Shiksha strives to increase the earning capacity, reduce information arbitrage in rural India and promote entrepreneurship. Shiksha India is working in partnership with The Ministry of Information Technology in the project Vidya Vahini and Ministry of Human Resources under the CLASS scheme which aims to connect 60.000 schools (approximately 20 million students) across the country in next five years.

Project: LOK MITRA (Integrated Citizen Service Centre / e-Kiosks ICSC)

Lok Mitra is the first of its own kind of Electronic service in the state of Rajasthan. It aims to deploy Information Technology for the benefit of the masses. It is a one-stop, citizen friendly computerized centre located in the heart of the city at Government Hostel, Jaipur. This has provided relief to a common man as he gets efficient services through IT driven interfaces at a single window.

It is an e-governance project in which the computer server is linked to different Departmental servers through Dedicated Leased Line & Dial-up Network with multiple e-counters, which can handle all services. It has facility of making payments through Internet using Credit Card.

End Users/Beneficiaries: Populace

State where Implemented: Rajasthan

Project: STAMPS & REGISTRATION SOFTWARE

The Stamps and Registration Department of a State is typically one of the two revenue earners for any Government. Stamp & Registration software provides efficient government citizen interface, and also enables enhanced revenue earnings for the Stamps and Registration operation. The heart of this application consists of the Registration and Valuation module. Other modules are the Networking and Scanning modules that enable exchange of information securely across departments, and "electronic copying" of the registered documents thereby enabling return of the original document within few minutes of presentation. The stipulated turnaround time is approximately 25 minutes; 15 minutes for registration and 10 minutes for scanning the document (Before getting computerized, it used to take many hours and sometimes days). The project after being successfully run for IGR, Maharashtra in Pune sites, is

being proposed to be implemented in BOT (Build Operate Transfer) basis with participation from private parties.

Project: SETU- A bridge for facilitation between Citizen & Government

Harnessing the benefits of Information Technology for effective and transparent functioning of the administration is one of the core focus areas of the IT policy of the Government of Maharashtra. IT offers the possibility of making routine interactions faster, smoother and transparent. The Integrated Citizen Facilitation Centres (SETU) is an approach in this direction. At present there are multiple points of interaction between the citizen and individual departments spread over so many different Government offices. A one-stop service center for all such routine matters must be made available. The Integrated Citizen Facilitation Centres (SETU) is to work on these very basic needs of the citizens and reorienting our administrative processes accordingly. The aim is to lay the foundation for e-governance, create visible impact of the intention of the Government in this direction, and facilitate the interaction of the citizens with the Government to make it more transparent, pleasant and satisfying. To create foundation for citizen centric e-governance, at district headquarters & subsequently at taluka headquarters- Single window clearance of 83 important certificates (includes renewal of leases, permits & licenses)

- Quick redressal of public grievances
- Common registry of letters, petitions for all sections of the office.
- On line pendency monitoring of all above

- To provide services after office hours & on holidays also in order to save Time, Money & Energy of the public.

Project: JAN MITRA

Jan Mitra is an Integrated e-platform through which rural population of Rajasthan can get desired information and avail services related to various government departments at kiosks near their doorsteps. To achieve this end, a system has been integrated using IT tools. This project has been successfully implemented on pilot basis in Jhalawar, Rajasthan. Jhalawar is the first district among five project location districts in India, where the project has been implemented before schedule.

Services:

- E-Governance Services - Public Grievance Redressal System, Online Submission of Application forms and Land & Revenue Records.
- Public Information Services
- Ongoing Development Works, Public Distribution System, BPL List, Electricity Priority Connection List, Drinking Water Resources, Village Schemes, Citizen Charters and Immovable Property rates
- Public Awareness Services
- Health Information, Agriculture information, Education information and Animal Husbandry Information

- Agriculture Mandi Rates Daily Mandi rates and Weekly / Monthly Mandi rates Village to Village Services Gram Haat and Event Information
- Messaging Services e-mail Facility across Departments / Kiosks and Broad casting of Bulletin.
- MIS for District Collectorate and District level officers for effective monitoring of information flow.

End Users/Beneficiaries: Rural People

State where Implemented: Rajasthan

National E-governance Plan

The National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) has been formulated by the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DEITY) and Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) in 2006.

The NeGP aims at improving delivery of Government services to citizens and businesses with the following vision: “Make all Government services accessible to the common man in his locality, through common service delivery outlets and ensure efficiency, transparency & reliability of such services at affordable costs to realise the basic needs of the common man.”

Central government initiatives as mission mode projects (MMP)

e-office

The Government of India has recognized the need to modernize the Central Government offices through the introduction of Information and

Communications Technology. e-Office is aimed at increasing the usage of work flow and rule based file routing, quick search and retrieval of files and office orders, digital signatures for authentication, forms and reporting components.

Immigration, Visa and Foreigner's Registration & Tracking (IVFRT)

India has emerged as a key tourist destination, besides being a major business and service hub. Immigration Check Post is the first point of contact that generates public and popular perception about the country, thus necessitating a state of the art system for prompt and user-friendly services.

UID

The unique identification project was conceived as an initiative that would provide identification for each resident across the country and would be used primarily as the basis for efficient delivery of welfare services. It would also act as a tool for effective monitoring of various programs and schemes of the government.

Pensions

The pensions MMP is primarily aimed at making the pension/ retirement related information, services and grievances handling mechanism accessible online to the needy pensioners, through a combination of interactive and non-interactive components, and thus, help bridge the gap between the pensioners and the government.

Banking

The Banking MMP is yet another step towards improving operational

efficiency and reducing the delays and efforts involved in handling and settling transactions. The MMP which is being implemented by the banking industry aims at streamlining various e-services initiatives undertaken by individual banks. Implementation is being done by the banks concerned, with the banking Department providing a broad framework and guidance.

Posts

Modernization of Postal Services has been undertaken by the Department of Posts through computerization and networking of all post offices using a central server-based system, and setting up of computerized registration centers (CRCs).

State Mission Mode projects

e-Governance in Municipalities

It is a unique initiative of the Government of India conceptualized under the umbrella of the overall National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) and the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) aimed at improving operational efficiencies within Urban Local Bodies (ULBs).

Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems

Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS) MMP aims at creating a comprehensive and integrated system for enhancing the efficiency and effective policing at all levels and especially at the Police Station level through adoption of principles of e-Governance, and creation of a nationwide networked infrastructure for evolution of IT-enabled state-of-the-art tracking system.

Public Distribution System

Computerization of the PDS is envisaged as an end-to-end project covering key functional areas such as supply chain management including allocation and utilization reporting, storage and movement of food grains, grievance redressal and transparency portal, digitization of beneficiary database, Fair Price Shop automation, etc.

Health

ICT for programme management has been undertaken by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare in the Mother and Child Tracking System (MCTS) programme and the Ministry envisages a more comprehensive use of ICT including for Hospital Information Systems, supply chain management for drugs and vaccines, providing ICT tools to ASHA and ANM workers, programme management of National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), etc through this MMP.

e-panchayat

The Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) are saddled with the problems of inadequate physical and financial resources, technical capabilities and extremely limited computerization. As a result, the potential of PRIs as the preferred delivery channel for the schemes of State and Centre as well as for citizen services has not been fully realized. While some computerization efforts for PRIs have been made by NIC over the years, the e-Governance revolution sweeping the country has not touched the PRIs yet in significant measure. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India has therefore decided to take up the computerization of PRIs on a mission mode basis.

e-District

e-District is one of the 31 Mission Mode Projects under National e Governance Plan (NeGP) with the DIT, GoI being the nodal ministry. This project aims at providing support to the basic administrative unit i.e. District Administration by undertaking backend computerization to enable electronic delivery of high volume citizen centric government services which would optimally leverage and utilize the three infrastructure pillars of State Wide Area Networks (SWAN), State Data Centers (SDC) and Common Service Centers (CSCs) to deliver services to the citizen at his doorsteps.

National Land Records Modernization Programme (NLRMP)

A Project for Computerization of Land Records (CLR) was launched in 1988-89 with the intention to remove the inherent flaws in the manual system of maintenance and updation of Land Records. In 1997-98, the scheme was extended to tehsils to start distribution of Records of Rights to landowners on demand. The focus of the entire operation has always been to employ state of the art information technology (IT) to galvanize and transform the existing land records system of the country.

Integrated Mission Mode Projects

e-procurement

Ministry of Commerce & Industry (Department of Commerce) has been nominated as the Nodal Ministry for implementation of e-Government Procurement (e-GP) Mission Mode Projects (MMP). The vision of the e-Procurement MMP is “To create a national initiative to implement procurement reforms, through the use of electronic Government

procurement, so as to make public procurement in all sectors more transparent and efficient”.

e-Courts

The e-Court Mission Mode Project (MMP) was conceptualized with a vision to transform the Indian judiciary by making use of technology. The project had been developed, following the report submitted by the e-Committee under Supreme Court on national policy & action plan on implementation of information communication tools in Indian judiciary. A clear objective – to re-engineer processes and enhance judicial productivity both qualitatively and quantitatively to make the justice delivery system affordable, accessible, cost effective, transparent and accountable.

e-Biz

The e-Biz Mission Mode Project, being executed by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, was conceptualized with the vision. Its vision is “To transform the business environment in the country by providing efficient, convenient, transparent and integrated electronic services to investors, industries and business throughout the business life cycle”.

Common Services Centres

The CSCs would provide high quality and cost-effective video, voice and data content and services, in the areas of e-governance, education, health, telemedicine, entertainment as well as other private services. A

highlight of the CSCs is that it will offer web-enabled e-governance services in rural areas, including application forms, certificates, and utility payments such as electricity, telephone and water bills.

Recent Initiatives

Direct Cash transfer

To facilitate disbursements of Government entitlements like NREGA, Social Security pension, Handicapped Old Age Pension etc. of any Central or State Government bodies, using Aadhaar and authentication thereof as supported by UIDAI.

Aadhar Enabled Payment system (AEPS) :

AEPS is a bank led model which allows online interoperable financial inclusion transaction through the Business correspondent of any bank using the Aadhaar authentication. This has helped in financial inclusion. The four Aadhaar enabled basic types of banking transactions are as follows:-

1. Balance Enquiry
2. Cash Withdrawal
3. Cash Deposit
4. Aadhaar to Aadhaar Funds Transfer
5. Digital India program

This programme has been envisaged by Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DeitY). The vision of Digital India aims to

transform the country into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. The programme will be implemented in phases from the current year till 2018.

The Digital India is transformational in nature and would ensure that Government services are available to citizens electronically. It would also bring in public accountability through mandated delivery of government's services electronically, a Unique ID and e-Pramaan based on authentic and standard based interoperable and integrated government applications and data basis.

The program aims at providing digital infrastructure as a utility to every citizen as well as high-speed internet as a core utility in all gram panchayats. The overall scope of this program is "to prepare India for a knowledge future", "to make technology central to enabling change" and "to become an umbrella program covering many departments"

MyGov citizen portal

Prime Minister launched an online platform mygov.nic.in to engage citizens in the task of "good governance" (surajya) as he completed 60 days in office on Saturday. MyGov is a technology-driven platform that would provide people with the opportunity to contribute towards good governance.

E-Kranti scheme

This is project for linking the internet with remote villages in the country. This scheme will broaden the reach of internet services to the rural areas in the country. The fundamental features of this scheme will be making the records handy to the government with ease. It also includes

Expansion of internet and commencement of IT-based jobs in rural areas. It will also boost the use of mobile phones and computers in rural areas. It will also expand the use of IT in agriculture and retail trade too.

Digital Cloud for every Indian

Certificates issued by the government — education, residential, medical records, birth certificates, etc. — are to be stored in individual 'digital lockers' and a communication protocol established for government departments to access them without physically having to see the hard copy. The purpose of government is that copies of certificates issued by the government itself not to be carried around by people to government offices for various services.

M-governance

M-Governance is not a replacement for e-Governance, rather it complements e- Governance. M-Governance, is the use of mobile or wireless to improve Governance service and information “anytime, anywhere”. Mobile applications also rely on good back office ICT infrastructure and work processes. It has potential of using mobile phones as input devices in certain areas where last mile connectivity becomes issues for simple data inputs of critical importance for decision making in government departments.

M-Governance is not a new concept. The private sector has been greatly leveraging these of mobile phones for delivery of value added services for the following which however are mostly SMS based: Banking, Media, Airlines, Telecom, Entertainment, News, Sports, Astrology, and Movie

Tickets Etc.

M-governance has increased the productivity of public service personnel, improving the delivery of government information and services, increasing channels for public interactions and Lower costs leading to higher participation of people.

Recent thrust to m-governance is being provided through USSD Services Unstructured Supplementary Services Data (USSD) is a session based service unlike SMS which is store and forward service. It can be used by the user to send command to an application in text format. USSD acts as a trigger for the application

Government initiatives for m-governance

Mobile Seva

It aims to provide government services to the people through mobile phones and tablets. It has been developed as the core infrastructure for enabling the availability of public services through mobile devices.

Mobile Seva enables the integration of the mobile platform with the common e-Governance infrastructure consisting of State Data Centers (SDCs), State Wide Area Networks (SWANs), State and National Service Delivery Gateways (SSDGs/NSDG).

It enables a government department to integrate both web and mobile based services seamlessly and enhances the access to electronic services tremendously leveraging the very high penetration of mobile phones, especially in rural areas

A Mobile Applications Store (m-App Store) has also been developed by

DeitY as part of Mobile Seva. The Mobile Governance Portal and the m-App Store can be accessed at <http://mgov.gov.in/>. The m-Appstore currently hosts over 240 live mobile applications. The live applications can be downloaded and installed free of cost on a mobile phone by any person.

The project, “mobile seva” has won the second prize at the prestigious United Nations’ Public Services Awards in the category “Promoting Whole of Government Approaches in the Information Age” for Asia Pacific.

A few years ago, Kerala launched ‘Dr. SMS,’ an m-health information system, for providing information on medical facilities available in the locality of the resident.

Goa followed, with a mobile governance initiative for issuing alerts for receipt of government applications and complaints and status tracking. Next came Maharashtra. It adopted a similar traffic management system through mobile alerts.

A laudable initiative launched by the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation in September tries to use technology in a mobile phone-based Intelligent Garbage Monitoring System enables sanitary supervisors to report the status of cleaning of garbage bins through their GPS-enabled mobile phones. Centralised reports as well as those of individual bins can be generated with the system.