

**RESEARCH PAPER**

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**COMBATING CORRUPTION THROUGH E-GOVERNANCE IN PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM**

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**Abstract:** This paper concentrates on the impact of E-governance to control the corruption based on analysis of various projects implemented in India especially in the State of Punjab. It has been observed that the primary objective of different e-governance projects was to provide services and information to the people and organizations. Both of them have been successful curbing or reducing the corruption by providing the transparency in service delivery system. The present study is in depth analysis of some successful e-governance projects implemented in Punjab. This study shows that E-Governance projects resulted in elimination of corruption totally or substantially in many of the places. This reduction in corruption has resulted in efficient public delivery system leading to uplifting the poor and improving transparency. Hence, this research proves that e-governance can be an anti corruption weapons for the development of transparent public delivery system in Punjab.

**Key words:** e-Governance, Corruption, Transparency International, Public Delivery System

**INTRODUCTION**

Corruption is a multidimensional & complex phenomenon. There is a huge literature dedicated to define term corruption. For the purpose of this paper corruption is defined as the “use of public service delivery system for the personal gains”. Transparency International (TI) is the global civil society. Main aim of this society is to fight against the corruption. It brings people together to end the drastic effects of corruption on the people around the world. TI introduced the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) to explain used measure for corruption in countries worldwide. But TI clarified It is perception and not "reality". Definition of Corruption is given by Transparency International ( TI ) as “Corruption is operationally defined as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. TI further differentiates between "according to rule" corruption and "against the rule" corruption. Facilitation payments, where a bribe is paid to receive preferential treatment for something that the bribe receiver is required to do by law, constitute the former. The latter, on the other hand, is a bribe paid to obtain services the bribe receiver is prohibited from providing.”

The Transparency International 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index shows the following data about corruption status in India.

Country	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002
Corruptio									
Scale --->	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.3	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.7

(Source: <http://www.transparency.org/>)

According to the 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index, nearly 178 countries in the index score below five, on a scale from 10 (highly clean) to 0 (highly corrupt). This indicates a serious

corruption problem<sup>2</sup> in the world. From the above index shows that India is still a highly corrupt but better than 2005.

It is difficult and challenging to assess the type of corruption, way of corruption and location of the corruption. In India corruption is now a part of general routine process, especially in the State of Punjab, where the public service delivery systems are facing problems of delay and corruption. This includes almost all officials at different levels in the administrative and political hierarchy. Without fighting with corruption, it is not possible to seek development of the country or any state. In the age of Information Technology, curbing corruption requires efficient design compatible with digital technology and implementation at the level of state administration.

The Level of corruption in India can be estimated with the statement of late Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, Ex Prime Minister of India. According to him it has been observed that out of each rupee being spent on such plans only 15 paisa reached the beneficiary with 40 paisa being spent on overheads and 45 paisa lost due to corruption. Therefore corruption is an important factor responsible for poverty miserable state of the people, apathy and social unrest and under development of countries.

**LITERATURE SURVEY**

There is various case studies, which proves E-Governance is acting an anti-corruption tool.

Authors	Title	Key findings
Pathak, R. D.	Role of E-	The study shows

and Prasad R.S (2005)	Governance in Tackling Corruption and Achieving Societal Harmony: Indian Experience	that e-governance projects Bhoomi, Computerized Inter-State check posts in Gujarat , Chief Vigilance Commission (CVC) Web site , Vijayawada Online Information Center (VOICE) resulted in elimination of corruption totally in many areas or reduced corruption substantially in others.
Subhash C. Bhatnagar et al. (2007)	A study of Impact of e-Government Projects in India	According to authors, in e-Governance projects like KAVERI(Karnatak a Valuation and E-registration), CARD(Computer-aided Administration of Registration Department), e-Procurement, AMC, Corruption significantly reduced or eliminated in public delivery services.
Adhikari and Ganesh Prasad (2007)	Key Issues in Implementing e-Governance in Nepal	In Nepal , e-Government Master Plan was prepared to improve the public service delivery, to reduce the delay and corruption in delivery of services.
Apostolov (2008)	Good Governance and the Concept of Electronic Single Window for International Trade	Electronic tools are only solution to fight against corruption. It creates more transparency and eliminate the inefficiency and unfair practices
Shahin Jamal and Finger Matthias (2008)	The Operationalisation of e-Governance	“E-Government” has ability to provide better delivery of government services to citizens, which results less corruption,

		increased transparency, and greater convenience.
Neeta Verma and Alka Mishra (2009)	India.gov.in - India's Approach in Constructing One-Stop-tion towards e-Government	Establishing a platform under e-Governance plan for participation of citizens in the process of governance is also one of the key factors to enhanced transparency, efficiency in service delivery, reduced corruption. It is also use to create awareness about Right to information Complaint and Appeal etc.

It is clear from the survey and studies of the above following factors are contributing to corruption in public delivery system

1. Complex Service Delivery System
2. Lack of Accountability and Responsibility
3. Delay in Judgment of Judiciary
4. Lack of Transparency in Government Policies
5. Poor Economic Policies
6. Poor Access to Information for the Citizen
7. Lack of Supervisions in Remote Areas
8. Poor Mechanisms of Complaint Handling
9. High rate of Inflation
10. Inadequate Training and Equipment in Government Departments
11. Political Pressures

### COMBATING CORRUPTION WITH E-GOVERNANCE

Many developing countries like India is realizing the need for E-Governance in order to provide citizen-focused, cost effective, and user friendly for citizens to improve the transparency in procedures of Government service delivery. E-Governance is application of Information and Communication Technology to improve the efficiency of government services delivery system. In other words it can be defined as interaction between Government and citizens and internal government operations to provide effective implementation of Government policies with the use of ICT. We can say it is automation of the existing paper based manual procedures. E-Governance plays a big role in public delivery system to provide various facilities to curtail the corruption. Fig 1 shows the features of e-Governance, which are helpful to curb the corruption in public services delivery system. That's why e-Governance acts as an anti corruption tool.

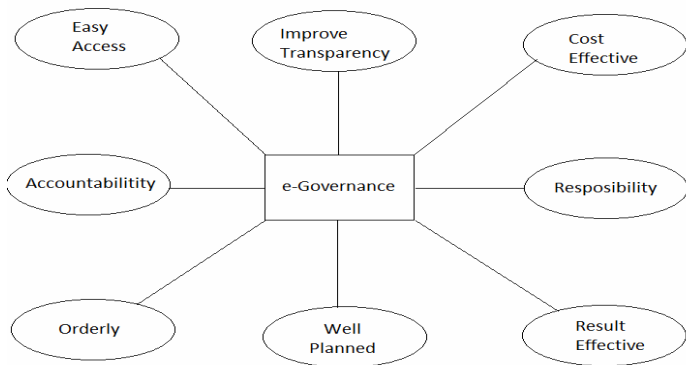


Fig 1 . ROLE OF e-GOVERNANCE IN PUBLIC DELIVERY SYSTEM

**Accountability:** Making the concerned authority accountable for the job is one of the prime advantages of the automation through computerization in the public delivery system. Many times the common people are harassed on the pretext of loss of application or its non receipt. This is common for reason avoiding the work or deliberately delaying it occurs or for grabbing the money from the applicant for avoiding the harassment. If the application had submitted electronically, this reason is automatically avoided via and unduly generating confirmation with the application number and date which serves as a proof of submission of application, also it helps to fix the responsibility of the appropriate authority and authority is bound to complete the assigned work in the fixed period of time. The concerned officer/authority automatically becomes accountable as by not allowing anybody to accept the bad application or manipulate the information on the application. In order to save him from the administrative proceedings that will be initiated against him on the pretext of non-compliance of the rules stated in respect to the application submitted by the applicant.

**Responsibility & Reliability:** Another major concern of every applicant is whether the information filled in the form is correct or not, is there any discrepancy in the application. Besides fee paid by the applicant is the appropriate fees and paid correct amount of fees in accordance with his/her application, whether the application is submitted to the authenticated person, whether necessary actions will be taken in order to entertain the request. These questions haunt the applicant and to add to more woes the applicant does not come to know if anything has gone wrong (in respect to stated above) until and unless one enquires about it. Looking from the prospective it is very time consuming and cumbersome to inform each and every individual telephonically or through post of the authority. Besides these is a shortage of facilities

and man power and lethargic attitude of the functionary. Hence computerization is solution to all the worries. Firstly the computerized/online application form will only be accepted if its complete in all respect. Secondly the applicant need not worry about whether he has submitted requisite fees as it will charged automatically and most importantly applicant need not worry about whom to submit the application form as it will the responsibility of the respective department to carry out further necessary action after the acceptance of the form.

**Authentication:** Authentication is the means of verifying the applicant on terms of his identity. If we talk about authentication in terms of E-Governance there would be two perspectives:

- a) Applicant or Client Authentication
- b) Authority Authentication

**Applicant or Client Authentication:** It means verifying the person to whom he/she claims to be. For example to get driving license , one needs is birth certificate and name on ration card or any address proof and in most cases neither the birth certificate nor the address proofs contains the photograph of the applicant as a result a person can get a driving license issued in somebody else's name by affixing his own photograph. Moreover maintaining record of all the applications in non-conventional ways is very difficult and searching a record is next to impossible. To overcome identity of applicant, photos are taken in the office with inbuilt facility of e-governance project.

**Authority Authentication:** To avoid issuance of fake certificates there is also need to ensure that certificates or other documents are being issued by the concerned and designated authority only. Computerization helps in ensuring this.

**Time Bound:** Amongst all the problems stated above the major and foremost is how much time it will take to complete the work and computerization provides the immaculate solution to it by printing the time and date on the receipt of the application about when the applicant will get his/her work done. This not only reduces the repeated rounds of the government offices by the applicant but also indirectly imposes a constraint on the authority to complete the work in the stipulated time as otherwise it would call for a disciplinary action. It will not only fasten the process but also reduce the number of foot counts at government offices as majority of people in government offices come to enquire about the completion of their work. The biggest advantage of this time bound work that, it will reduce the corruption to large extent as the applicant need not give any money to agents or the officer on the pretext of getting their work done faster, secondly the people who do not have

money to offer need not worry about their work getting delayed.

**Online Status:** e-Governance also provides the facility to check the current status of processing. It helps in the following way:

- Applicant comes to know about the status of the application time to time.
- Applicant need not go again and again to government office to know the status of the application and hence reduce corruption.
- Department can efficiently inform all the applicants about the status of the application by putting information on the internet.
- Avoid unnecessary rush at Government Premises.
- Ensures smooth functioning of the department, as every application will be completed in time.
- Probability of erroneous will be minimized as the work done is in proper frame of time and rules.

**Efficiency:** Efficiency will be increased as all work will be done in time. Time limit will force the department to complete stipulated work on the time given as a result number of application handled per day will definitely increased. Time consumed on filling the application, standing in queues to buy a form, submitting a form or to pay the fees will not be the point to ponder.

**Money Savings:** Applicant need not pay money to agents to complete the form as online forms are self-explanatory, there is no need to pay bribe to get your work done. These money is saved, which would have been spent on repeated rounds to the government office. It also reduce amount of money spent on repeated travellings to city for getting work done.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Above studies, confirm that e-Governance is the only way to provide transparency, accountability, improved public service delivery and overall reduced corruption.

E-governance is a current reality to reduce the corruption in public delivery system. It can achieve the following objectives of e-Governance

- To make passive participation to active participation of citizens
- To provide 24x7 days access of information for the citizen
- To make the Delivery system more efficient
- To make the delivery procedure simple
- To provide all basic services under one roof
- To provide the facility of process according to token
- To reduce the delicacy
- To provide flow of information without any delay
- To provide the result without any error

In the coming years to reduce the corruption, all the objectives are pursued at the same time, corruption will then be reduced significantly.

Goals of Good Governance	How it can be achieved with e-Governance
Accountability and Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fixing the time duration of each process</li> <li>▪ Putting receipt date on file</li> <li>▪ Giving punishment for delay in completion of job</li> <li>▪ Display the current status online</li> </ul>
Avoid crowd at Public service delivery centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ On Line Fee Receipt</li> <li>▪ Setup , public delivery centers at village levels</li> <li>▪ Interlinking of all Public service delivery centers</li> </ul>
Transparency in Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Making Decision of the administration available to the public online</li> <li>▪ Procedure of processing transparent</li> <li>▪ Availability of Government Fee Structure on Internet</li> <li>▪ Single Window System</li> </ul>
Reducing Administrative and Political Corruption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Automated Transparent Process</li> <li>▪ Elimination the need of intermediates for processing</li> <li>▪ Online transaction monitoring system</li> <li>▪ No political interference</li> </ul>
Accountability of Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collection of funds online</li> <li>▪ Online entry of each transaction</li> <li>▪ Monthly Computerized auditing</li> </ul>
Availability of all types of forms on the Internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uploading of forms and procedure guidelines</li> <li>▪ Online form entry</li> <li>▪ Online status availability</li> </ul>
Speedy Complaint Handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Putting Complaint date on File</li> <li>▪ Fixing time duration for decision</li> <li>▪ Status of Complaint and decision taken online</li> </ul>
Setup of kiosks at village levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Interlinking</li> <li>▪ Speedy Transfer</li> </ul>
Availability of basic services like Property, Birth and death record online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Computerisation of Existing Records</li> <li>▪ Online Status Availability</li> </ul>

**CONCLUSION**

No country in the world today can claim to be free from corruption. But, it is concluded that e-Governance initiatives can make important contributions to improve public services delivery system. It is a strong tool for combating the corruption. But complete implementations of e-governance depend upon the government and public awareness. For public awareness media can play a significant role to widen the scope of e-governance. Government can organize Citizen Awareness camp; educate the people at village level. It is the duty of Government to make the strict anti-corruption law and regulation to combat the corruption. Our political leaders and administrator should fully commit themselves to fight against corruption.

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