

Session on e-Governance TAPMI

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Indian Context

- Economic transformation since early 1990s without corresponding positive change in social development.
- Uneven expansion of social opportunities with growing disparities across regions, castes, sex and other characteristics
- Typical of Developing countries (post colonial societies)

Striking features

- ➔ Every second young child in India is malnourished
- ➔ Less than $\frac{1}{4}$ of rural population use toilets
- Only 4 out of 10 girls who enroll complete eight years of schooling
- ➔ Largest adult illiterate population
- ➔ Health expenditure lowest in the world, biggest cause of moving people into poverty
- ➔ More than $\frac{3}{4}$ th population living on < Rs 20 per day

2. Purpose of Governance in the Indian context

Social change - equity and social justice

Gender, caste, religion and several other factors that cause marginalization

Purpose of e-Governance

- Greater participation of the poor and marginalized in the processes of development (making local government meaningful)
- Greater transparency from the government
- NREGA social audits
- Making RTI meaningful

- e-Governance purpose needs to be a derivative of that of Governance
- Case study – CSC program of DIT, GOI

CSC Program

Need for a 'policy' base for a national program for community development

- Bringing in socio-political issues of community mobilization etc
- Role of government in community development

- Implications of lack of policy
- Simplistic techno-managerial goals as efficiency
- Incremental change vs structural change

CSC Program

Structure

- DIT / GOI
- State Government
- SCA (Service Centre Agency – a large private sector company)
- VLE (Village Level Entrepreneur, franchisee)

Kinds of Services

- Commercial computer/Internet based services (cyber cafe)
- IT enabled services
 - Large corporates – benefits of economies of scale
 - Regulatory safeguards needed – private monopoly under government branding
 - Vs smaller companies, specialised in this business

CSC Program

Public Services

- Business models (merged)
- USO vs for profit models

- Parameters
 - Extent of digitization
 - Extent of productisation

- Digitazable and productizable
 - Government utility payments, records/certificates

- Digitizable but not productizable
 - Information about government schemes, entitlements and support to avail of entitlements

CSC Program

Issues and challenges with current CSC model for public services

- Accountability to public interest – government and community
- Involvement of community
- Tail wagging the dog

Possibilities that may be unrealised

- Transform government working
- Vitalise community development

CSC Program

Holistic approach to ICTs for community development needed

- Policy framework
- Design of parameters on segregating into public and private domains
- Consultations with experts in rural governance and community development

- Public service perspective vs private interest
- Recognise complexity of the transaction (human interaction intensive)
- Role for development communication
- Putting development work in a commercial framework
- Empowerment vs service delivery
- Community Information Systems, local information and knowledge

CSC Program

Community-centred tele-centre models

- Mahiti Manthana, eGram, Akshaya, DHAN, Abhiyaan
- Public ownership
- Linkages to local government
- Public interest
- Public investment/funding
- Pooling extension activities of different departments – supporting extension worker, capacity building
- Community mobilisation/participation
- Community information pull-in
- Local content/knowledge

ICTD – Tail wagging the dog

- Public Private Partnership (on design/goal setting)
- Financial models
- Technology driven visioning and design
- Technology experts and vendors dominant, traditional development actors largely missing

The ICT experience in the business sector

- Initial technology projects led by the CIOs – computerization of payroll and financial accounting
- Later visioning and design led by the business – CEO/COO/VPs → MRP, ERP
- Domain knowledge is the most important factor in appropriating benefits of technology
- Underlying principles of the domain critical for design

Need for redefining ICTD (and e-Governance)

- Community or Development Informatics
- Participation over 'service delivery'
- Social sustainability over economic/financial sustainability
- Change in the status of the poor and marginalized over aggregate economic figures
- Greater involvement of traditional developmental actors / civil society
- Redefining the role of private enterprise (to provide required support and technology solutions, rather than design of programs)
- Same principle relevant to other ICTD domains – education, health, agriculture ...

ITfC's work

Building theory / Research

- Recasting ICTD from a developmental/political perspective as against the techno-managerial approach widely prevalent and accepted
- ICTD – a new species of development
- The Political Economy of the Information Society
- Developmental models for ICTs
- Kerala Akshaya and **IT@Schools**, Dhan Foundation, e-Gram (GoG)

Building alliances with traditional developmental actors, academic, civil society communities

- Governance / Gender / Education / Public Software
- Internet / Technology governance (Global)

ITfC's work

Continuous engagement with government

- Recommendations for a 'e-Governance' to be a political process (Policy)
- IT for Change Open Government project with Mysore district administration (Program)
- NISG support to the Mahiti Manthana program with Mahila Samakhya in Mysore
- Workshops on Development Informatics with participation of policy makers