

Chapter 7

E–Government Approaches to Facilitate the Process of Democracy in the Administration of Bangladesh: Rhetoric or Reality

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ABSTRACT

In order to expedite the process of democracy, through the openness the functions of government's administration, multifarious initiatives have been taken by almost every government in the world. The most recent and viable one is the initiative of e-government. The main aim of e-government is to make the administration ready to endow accountability, transparency, and to ease the communication process between the government and the citizens. Bangladesh is a developing country in the world, has initiated a massive programs to introduce the e-government application through the different administrative levels. Moreover, the special emphasis has been given in the field administration of Bangladesh where from almost 70% citizens directly benefited and take part into the administrative process. However, the gap is yet not up to mark to promote the actual level of democracy. This chapter will elaborate different initiatives of e-government taken by the government of Bangladesh for endorsing the process of democracy. Moreover, the actual present situation of government will also be outlined here. In order to elaborate this paper different secondary sources of data such as, books, journals, web, etc. will be used as much as possible.

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INTRODUCTION

With the introduction of e-government in the later part of 90s the expectation of both the government and its customers has raised a lot. In one hand the government wants to provide its services in a faster manner with low cost and practice the highest level of democratic process and on the other hand citizens and different stakeholders i.e. NGOs, want to establish their democratic rights into the process of government (Mutula & Wamukoya, 2007). Basically, the democratic process means ‘to rule by the people’. However, this easy concept is not as easy as it looks like. In order to secure the process of democracy now the emphasis has been given on the different approaches of e-government (Pardo, 2000). Moreover, different features of democracy must be in mind while the e-government approaches has been initiated.

Although the concept of e-government is new, however, the democratic process has a long history. In the beginning, democracy was thought as the political system where the expectation was that all the members of the society have an equal share of formal political power. However, with the advent of time the expectation have been changed from the political power to individual freedom (Stahl, 2005). Moreover, the freedom has been conceptualized as the freedom of participation in the process of government, freedom of getting services at anytime from anywhere in the world, etc. Eventually, now it has been considered that the freedom is possible with the massive initiation of e-government in the government and its administration.

The history of the use of ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) in government organization is quite old as since the computer was invented (Grönlund, 2007). However, the term e-government is new and the application is still on going all over the world. E-government mainly represents e-administration, e-service, and e-democracy (Schellong, 2009). This chapter is mainly based on the e-government in order to promote the democracy in the society by the field administration of Bangladesh.

BACKGROUND

Technological change has been considered as the main source of the evolution of ICTs into the government. With the beginning of ICTs, especially the widespread application of PCs (personal computer) into the public offices, the hope has been raised for the application of e-government into the government process. Moreover, the persistent of e-government has strongly appeared in the year 1999-2000 (expressed as Y2K), because of rapidly expanding technological assets and their wider application in the public administration (Brown, 2005).

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