Chapter 4
Open Government Data (OGD) Initiative in India:
An Empirical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Open Government Data (OGD) is a relevant discussion concerning transparency in governmental procedures. The chapter examines how India has followed up on the open data policy and constituted the Open Government Data (OGD) Platform and National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP) to ensure that citizens can access data generated from public-funded governmental activities. The author has conducted an empirical examination of the status of the Open Government Data initiative in India, its scope, how the programme ranks against other countries, and has evaluated the same against the parameters of Democracy Index (33 out of 165), Open Data Barometer (43 out of 100) of Open Government Data and webometric analysis. India has taken proactive steps towards releasing government data to public domain. This can be seen in the rising growth in contribution of datasets and increase in OGD literature. The NDSAP and OGD Platform can be applauded as a healthy step on the part of the Government of India towards transparency and encouraging public participation in governance.

INTRODUCTION

Structured data available in open format and open license for public access and use is usually termed as "Open Data," and is of prime importance in the contemporary world. Data is also one of the most valuable resources for modern governance, sharing of which enables various and non-exclusive usage for both commercial and non-commercial purposes. Licenses, however, are crucial to ensure that such data is not misused or misinterpreted (for example, by insisting on proper attribution), and that all users have the same and permanent right to use the data.

National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP)

The open government data initiative was started in India with the notification in the Gazette, of the NDSAP, and was submitted to the Union Cabinet by the Department of Science and Technology, on 17th March 2012. While the appropriate open formats and related aspects for implementation of the Policy has been defined in the "NDSAP Implementation Guidelines", which was created by an inter-ministerial Task Force constituted by the National Informatics Centre, the open license for data sets published under NDSAP and through the OGD Platform remained undefined till now.

Aims and Objectives

The NDSAP intends to "provide an enabling provision and platform for proactive and open access to the data generated by various Government of India (GoI) entities. The objective of this policy is to facilitate access to GoI owned shareable data (along with its usage information) in machine readable form through wide area network all over the country in a periodically updatable manner, within the framework of various related policies, acts and rules of Government of India, thereby permitting a wider accessibility and usage by public." (Government of India, n.d.)

Scope

The NDSAP states that it "covers all data and information created, generated, collected and archived using public funds provided by Government of India directly or through authorized agencies under the various Ministries/Departments/ Organizations/Agencies and Autonomous bodies. Data sharing and access are to be based on the principles which include but are not limited to: Openness, Flexibility,

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