

# Chapter 89

## Public Value of E–Government: The Case of Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs in Sri Lanka

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### ABSTRACT

*Main purpose of this study is to examine the level of Public Value of e-government in Sri Lanka. In this regard, a website of “www.pubad.gov.lk” of the Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs in Sri Lanka was selected. Other objective of this study is to identify e-government maturity level of the selected website. Both qualitative and quantitative data were used for achieving these two objectives. The quantitative data collection was done using a structured questionnaire. Population was 2204 Sri Lanka Administrative Service officers and the selected sample is 10% from the population. The website maturity level was evaluated mainly through observation. The study was conducted from January 2014 to March of 2014. It was found that the mean value of the level of the Public Value of the website is 3.34. This represents that the majority of officers have no idea about the Public Value of this website. Only 20% of the officers agreed that the website has this Public Value (2% of the sample strongly agreed and 18% of them agreed). This website belongs to the second e-government maturity level according to the UN ASPA model. The facilities to conduct online transactions and adhering to the web standards are recommended for enhancing the service delivery of the website.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Public organizations create value by efficiently operating the organizations for meeting citizens desire (Moore, 1995). Governments have been engaged in developing information and communication technologies for several decades to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their functioning (Bhatnagar & Singh 2009). Kearns (2004) identified that e-government offers numerous opportunities for governments

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to improve the delivery of public services through numerous automating processes. However, there is a lack of studies in assessing Public Value of e-government in developing countries even though such a study would be of great significance to developing countries in their developments of e-government (Karunasena & Deng, 2012). With the rapid development of e-government, adopting the concept of Public Value for evaluating the performance of E-government from the perspective of citizens is not only appropriate but also necessary (Karunasena et al., 2011). Gauld et al., (2010 cited in Karunasena & Deng, 2011) pointed out that the governments around the world continuously use e-government methods for transforming their public service delivery, promoting greater interaction between their citizens and government, streamlining two way communications between citizens and governments, improving the efficiency of public organizations, and saving tax payers money.

E-government vision of Sri Lanka is “SMART People SMART Island”. There have been many attempts to evaluate the performance of e-government in Sri Lanka. Many public sector organizations owned websites for the service delivery. However, take up rate of the e-government services by citizens in Sri Lanka is 22.3% (Karunasena & Deng, 2009). A recent study (UN, 2012) highlighted that 77.7% citizens are not aware about e-government services in Sri Lanka. Thus e-services utilization of Sri Lanka is very low. However, the government invests annually more than 2000 million Rupees for e-government implementation (ICTA, 2012). The investment for e-government in 2011 was Rs. 2045 million (the ICTA annual report of year 2011). The e-government world index of Sri Lanka has declined from 111 to 115 from 2011 to 2012(UN, 2012). Despite the government’s a huge investment on e-government activities, it is evident that many people in Sri Lanka do not use e-government. This situation highlights the necessity of increasing the e-government adoption rate in Sri Lanka. Thus, it can be argued that the awareness about the e-government and the level of public value of e-government are very crucial factors in improving the e-government adoption. Hence, the lower rate of e-government adoption in Sri Lanka exists partly due to a lack of awareness and also a lower public value of e-government. Thus, improving Public Value of e-government is very crucial for improving the performance of the Public sector organizations in Sri Lanka.

By selecting a website [www.pubad.gov.lk](http://www.pubad.gov.lk) of the Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs, this study examines the public value of e-government. This study focused on the government employees, not the general public or the grass root level people. There is an important set of employees who supports and involves in human resource management activities of the Ministry. Especially, the Sri Lanka Administrative Service officers (SLAS) are the direct users of the website of the Ministry and practitioners of public policies including e-government policies. The selected websites contains important information related to all departments of the ministry and its sub officers and regional branches which are useful to the public employees of the country. There are 2204 Sri Lanka Administrative offices attached to different Public sector organizations in all over the Sri Lanka in January 2014. The SLAS Officers involve in two ways in e-government implementation and diffusion of the e-government projects of the Ministry. Firstly, as officers, they involve in policy making. Secondly, they implement activities of e-government projects. The Ministry of Public Administration has especially chosen to conduct the study because this Ministry has the responsibility for handling human resource management of other ministries, departments, district and divisional secretariats. It is the focal point of human resource management in the national level of public services. The Ministry serves both general public and a huge number of civil employees except employees of a few all island services, departmental services and provincial public services.

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