

Chapter 30

Platform for Citizen Engagement for Good Governance in India: A Case Study of MyGov.in

Abhishek Singh

MyGov, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, India

Anjali Kaushik

Management Development Institute, Gurgaon, India

ABSTRACT

Citizens are important stakeholders and play a critical role in advocating and enabling public institutions to become more transparent, accountable, and effective and suggest innovative solutions to complex development challenges. Citizen engagement is at the core of good governance. Mygov.in is a platform to engage citizens and get their input and suggestions for various government policies and plans in India. MyGov platform provides an opportunity to citizens across the world to engage directly with the government departments, policymakers, and implementers. MyGov is planned as the key platform for all citizen engagement needs of the country across various departments and ministries. The presence of such a digital platform in a democratic country reflects willingness on part of the government to share information and make citizens a partner in decision making. This chapter elaborates on the need, discusses the MyGov initiative, compares it to other such initiatives globally and highlights major issues and concerns in the citizen engagement process.

INTRODUCTION

Governments across the world are using information and communication Technology (ICT) to enhance their internal and external operations and services (Anderson and Henriksen, 2006; Heeks, 1999). In this regard, e-government plays a critical role by transforming government services, improving their ef-

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-3706-3.ch030

efficiency and effectiveness, providing more opportunities for citizen participation and eventually leading to better governance. Governance (UNDP, 1997) has been defined as “the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented)”. UNDP (1997) defines good governance by eight major characteristics viz. participation, consensus-orientation, accountability, transparency, effectiveness/efficiency, responsiveness, equity/inclusiveness, and rule of law. Citizen participation is at the core of good governance. Citizen participation has long been a subject of active discussions in political and administrative sciences. It is often defined as a citizen action that influences or seeks to influence policy decisions or as an action that incorporates the demands and values of citizens into public administration services (Florin and Wandersman, 1990). Rao (2004) has emphasized on the importance of grass root consultations prior to initiating projects in government. Researchers have elaborated on the importance of citizen engagement for strengthening the democratic processes (Lofstedt, 2017; Michel, 2005). With the advancements in ICT, citizen engagement is seen as an interactive two way process using digital platforms, which empowers exchange of ideas and flow of conversation between citizens (or interest groups) and state institutions. Jones et al., (2007) discuss the importance of citizen perspective as a critical success factor for e-government projects. Navarro et. al (2014) investigate the effect of technology knowledge and governance in empowering citizen engagement and participation and comment on its positive influence. Milakovich (2010), comments on the role of ICT in enhancing citizen participation in government. Research by Warren et. al. (2014) suggests that government institutions need to enhance their presence in social media and increase online civic engagement for building citizen trust.

The governments are seen to evolve through well-defined stages (Lee, 2010). E-Governance has been defined as the last stage of e-government development. In this stage, there is a two way communication between the government and the governed and citizens are able to get more involved in political and administrative decision making. Lee (2010) describes this as the ideal stage where the “processes of administrative and political services can be reconfigured almost real-time based on citizens’ actual involvement in decision-makings of the government, actually utilizing the full capability of advanced information and communication technologies.”

Different countries have different models for Citizen Engagement. US (digitalgov.gov), UK (parliament.uk), Australia (my.gov.au), Singapore (reach.gov.sg) are government initiatives for consultation, collaboration and participation of citizens in decision making and policy implementation. Citizens across the world are now empowered with social media tools to make their government to listen to what they care about and to demand respect (Kirkpatrick, 2011). vTaiwan is a platform in Taiwan developed by volunteers. Here, the engagement process is usually started by government on specific questions. In the past the issues included electric vehicle regulation, decision on whether Uber should be allowed in the country and other issues of concern to citizens. The platform is intended to be transparent, inclusive and consensus oriented. Votes on vTaiwan are aggregated to show clusters of consensus which eventually can be acted upon. While there is evidence that governments are adopting social media for civic engagement, there is not enough work on how to promote citizens’ online civic engagement and, more importantly, what practices can lead to greater citizen trust in institutions, including the government. It is with this backdrop that this chapter discusses some of the global frameworks and practices for citizen engagement. Specifically, it elaborates on the MyGov initiative which is a comprehensive platform for citizen engagement in India.

13 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/platform-for-citizen-engagement-for-good-governance-in-india/295013

Related Content

In the Midst of Digital Economy: The Level of Financial Literacy Amongst Millennials in Delhi City

Neelam Tandon and Deepak Tandon (2021). *International Journal of Political Activism and Engagement* (pp. 46-62).

www.irma-international.org/article/in-the-midst-of-digital-economy/282512

Ballooning Non-Performing Assets in Indian Banking and Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code: Resolution Plans and Cases

Deepak Tandon and Neelam Tandon (2019). *International Journal of Political Activism and Engagement* (pp. 1-24).

www.irma-international.org/article/ballooning-non-performing-assets-in-indian-banking-and-insolvency-and-bankruptcy-code/227751

Culturally Responsive Teaching to Empower Indigenous Student Communities

Ingrid N. Pinto-López, Cynthia M. Montaudon-Tomas, Marisol Muñoz-Ortiz and Ivonne M. Montaudon - Tomas (2021). *Research Anthology on Empowering Marginalized Communities and Mitigating Racism and Discrimination* (pp. 317-339).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/culturally-responsive-teaching-to-empower-indigenous-student-communities/277571

An Educationally-Beneficial Experience for Undergraduate Students: A Service-Learning Mentoring Project With Native American Youth

Crystal S. Aschenbrener (2024). *Transformational Learning in Social Work and Human Services Education* (pp. 169-179).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/an-educationally-beneficial-experience-for-undergraduate-students/352109

Digital Literacy in the EFL Classroom: Main Barriers and Implications

Francisco Pradas-Esteban (2024). *Educational Innovation to Address Complex Societal Challenges* (pp. 59-73).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/digital-literacy-in-the-efl-classroom/340261