

Chapter 13

Information Governance for Public Authorities: An Indian Perspective

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ABSTRACT

In an era dominated by digital transformation, public authorities globally face a profound challenge in effectively managing and governing the burgeoning volumes of information under their purview. Using specific case study of teacher attendance monitoring system (TAMS) in State of Meghalaya, this chapter seeks to explore the landscape of information governance within the context of public authorities in India. As the country undergoes significant advancements in digital infrastructure and governance, understanding the nuances of information governance becomes imperative for ensuring transparency, accountability, and optimal service delivery. This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the current state of information governance in Indian public authorities, identifying key challenges, proposing strategic solutions, and offering insights into the potential impact on public administration and citizen engagement.

INTRODUCTION

Governance refers to the processes adopted to address a common cause and devise mechanisms to regulate it afterward. When public institutions uphold the rights of citizens while addressing their issues, the scheme is called good governance. Among others, the two main components of good governance

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-0472-3.ch013

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remain ‘transparent and accountable processes and institutions’ and ‘sustainability’ to reach the ultimate development goal (About Good Governance, n.d.). These ensure that fundamental human rights, such as the right to education and privacy, are effectively implemented. Without a good governance setup, society cannot see the progression of human rights.

The institutional bodies of the State can act as torchbearers of the governance model through custom-made strategies and programs. In the digital age, strategy requires technology to discover newer and sustainable solutions for niche problems. Information access, storage, and security are all handled by well-developed information management strategies in most government agencies. Nevertheless, these have frequently developed at the departmental level to address single solutions. Furthermore, government agencies often implement knowledge management initiatives to identify the value of this data. Managing the information explosion in the digital age to foster greater cooperation and direct government access while safeguarding personal information and privacy is challenging. A comprehensive information governance plan is needed for this.

This chapter first introduces the reader to the advantages of digital tools deployment in service delivery by the government, highlighting good governance strategies of the Indian administration. It then utilizes a recent technology adoption move by the education department of East Jaintia Hills in Northeast State of Meghalaya, India to highlight how the good governance aspiration of State entities hinders the privacy rights of its employees. It further explores the possibility of creating a consent-based database of employees with enhanced security features and with option of deleting personal information once the employee leaves. The intermediary apps being used in the process of good governance should also be made accountable in case of data breach.

Methodology

The chapter uses doctrinal methods of analysis. It engages with literature, legal frameworks, and case studies related to information governance in public authorities, both within India and globally. It utilizes case laws that have been decided by the Indian Supreme Court and relevant High Courts, reports of government entities on privacy concerns, House debates on the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2023 (hereinafter referred to as DPDP Act) in India, and the general outline of education and good governance setup. Media reports will be used only to highlight the current debates and suggest a theoretical information governance model by public authorities owing to their particular responsibilities and limited resources.

Expected Outcomes

1. Comprehensive assessment:

Offer an all-encompassing evaluation of the information governance situation in Indian public authorities, stressing advantages, disadvantages, possibilities, and risks.

2. Strategic Recommendations:

Make recommendations that are specifically suited to the Indian environment, taking into account changes for improvement and resolving issues that have been highlighted.

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