

ICT to Promote E-Governance in Municipal Corporation Ludhiana

Dinesh Sharda^{1*}, Taniya²

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Public Administration, Government College for Girls, Ludhiana, India

²Student, Department of Public Administration, Government College for Girls, Ludhiana, India

Abstract: The use of ICT in government has set the stage for greater transparency and the possibility for greater citizen participation. ICT such as Internet, GSM system, Computer and Online tools for effective information and communication service delivery should be made available in the local government area. The term e-governance focuses on the use of new ICT by governments as applied the full range of government functions. ICT acts in speeding up the flow of information and knowledge between government and citizen and transforming the way in which government and citizen interact. ICT holds particular promise in areas of governance and public participation. Open government and e-government proponents believe government in the digital age can use information to reduce corruption and increase government transparency, accountability, efficiency and citizen participation. Municipal Corporation Ludhiana aims to introduce automation and governance through ICT and GIS to simplify and improve service delivery, provide better information management and ensure citizen participation in governance.

Keywords: ICT, E-Governance, municipal corporation, local government.

1. Introduction

Municipal Corporation came into existence in 1978. First time elections of Municipal Corporation Ludhiana were held in year 1992 and Chaudhary Sat Parkash was elected as first Mayor of Municipal Corporation, S. Surjit Singh Ahluwalia became the senior deputy Mayor Ludhiana is the largest city of Punjab both in terms of area and population. The city is spread over an area of 159.37 sq. km. and accommodates approximately 16.0 lacs population. It is one of the prime industrial and educational centre in Northern India, as the cross roads of many different cultures. Presently, the city is commonly known as the “Manchester of India”, the hub of Indian Hosiery Industry and also as industrial capital of small scale industry in the country. Municipal Corporation, Ludhiana is divided into four zones (Zones A, B, C and D) and into 95 wards.

E-Governance: Municipal Corporation, Ludhiana intends to introduce automation and e-governance by leveraging ICT & GIS to streamline and improve upon its functioning in order to improve service delivery mechanism, provide better information management and ensure citizen participation in governance.

The department of local government, Punjab had decided to computerize the working of the Municipal Corporation and councils in state. The Municipal Corporation, Ludhiana has been identified for the pilot project. Municipal Commissioner informed that for this assignment, Punjab government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Microsoft, the International IT company. E-Governance can be defined as the application of Communication and Information Technology (ICT) for providing government services, exchange of information, transactions, integration of previously existing services and information portals. It makes the whole administrative process convenient, efficient, transparent, fully accountable and responsible. As a fast growing economy and an emerging world leader, E-Governance is must in country like India, both in Government and Corporate sector.

A. What is ICT (Information and Communication Technology)?

ICT stands for Information and Communication Technologies. It refers to several sets of technological tools that can help to provide right to information and equal services to the people by minimal cost, time and effort. ICT is an umbrella team that indicates any communication device or application, encompassing: Radio, Television, Cellular phone, Computer and Network, Hardware and Software, satellite systems and so, as well as the various services and application associated with them, such as video conferencing and distance learning.

B. What is Governance?

Governance refers to the processes of governing in which policies are made and implemented. In this process of governing the role of civil society, state and market is very important. All these are important aspects of governance take a very critical role in decision making or policy making process and its implementation process as well. Relationship between ICT and Governance: Through the application of ICT in public administration, the governing processes are more effective and more efficient and also ensure sustainable development. Use of ICT in all aspect of governance can remove irrelevant human involvement in the processes of service delivery from the government to the citizens. ICT has been promoting good governance by increasing transparency, accountability in public

*Corresponding author: dineshsharda96@gmail.com

sector. It helps to faster the process of decision making, public participation and reinforcing fare delivery of goods and services to the people. Municipal Corporation, Ludhiana has been providing the information related to their accomplishments, achievements, programmes and plans through their websites or e-platform to the citizens. Citizens also can send feedback or query on any plans, programmes which mostly affected to them from their home using the ICT tools. Through the online process, people can easily upload and download forms, filling taxes, doing financial transactions through e-banking services through different online portals.



Fig. 1. Ludhiana Municipal Corporation

2. Objectives

The key objectives of E-Governance in Municipal Corporation, Ludhiana is:

1. Provide single window services to citizens on anytime, anywhere basis.
2. Develop a GIS based platform to increase the efficiency and productivity of Municipal Corporation, Ludhiana.
3. Develop a single and integrated view of Municipal Corporation, Ludhiana information system.
4. Provide timely and reliable management information relating to municipal administration for effective decision making.
5. Adopt a standard based approach to enable integration with other related applications.

1. *Features:* It has been proven from the concept of e-governance that it is a powerful means of public service in the present era. De-bureau-cartelization, E-services, International Services, Right to express, Right to information, Economic Development, Reduce inequality are some important features of E-Governance.
2. *Advantages:* The ultimate goal of the e-government is to be able to offer an increased portfolio of public services to citizens in an efficient and cost effective manner. It allows for government transparency because it allows the public to be informed about what the government is working on as well as the policies they are trying to implement. The main advantage while implementing electronic government or ICT in Municipal Corporation, Ludhiana will be to improve the efficiency of the current system

(paper base system). It facilitates better communication between government and citizens. The anticipated benefits of e-government include efficiency, improved services, better accessibility of public services, and more transparency and accountability.

3. *Disadvantages and Challenges:* The main disadvantage of e-governance is the loss of interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication is an aspect of communication that many people consider vital. Technology has its disadvantages as well. Specifically, the set up cost is very high and the machines have to be regularly maintained. Some of the challenges identified are illiteracy, lack of IT infrastructure, epileptic power/electricity supply, lack of trained and qualified personnel, the resistance to change attitude by most public servants and so on.



Fig. 2. Advantages of E-Governance



Fig. 3. E-Services Provided by MCL

Punjab Govt. to have special IT Cadre for Effective implantation of E-Governance Programme: The Punjab Government will soon have a special IT cadre for effective implementation of its ambition e-governance initiatives as part of the ‘Digital Punjab’ mission. The need for the cadre was felt by the government on account of the general lack of capacity in various departments for proper implementation of administrative/governance reforms, e-governance and backend computerization initiatives. The specialized IT manpower would help the departments Coordinate closely with the department of Governance Reforms, enabling efficacious and various e-governance projects including e-office. Notably, the Punjab government envisioned the ‘Digital Punjab’ project to transform the state into a digitally empowered society and

knowledge economy by transforming the old established physical ways of doing business and providing government services in new ways that are optimized around real-time system. Municipal Corporation, Ludhiana is responsible for the implementation of the urban development activities in their respective areas.

E-Services provided by the Municipal Corporation, Ludhiana:

- Online Building Plan Approve
- Birth & Death Registration
- Public Grievance Management System
- Property Tax Management System
- Water Connection & Sewerage Connection
- Water Tax and Sewerage Tax
- Municipal License Management System
- E-Tender
- Human Resource Management System
- Contractor Registration System

- Project Management System
- Anybody who are interested to use above services can access through official website: main.mcludhiana.gov.in

3. Conclusion

Municipal Corporation Ludhiana provides e-services to the citizens. The main purposes of these e-services are to save time and effort of citizen as well as service provided. These services ensure transparency in work. These services are available anywhere, any time to the citizen. Municipal Corporation, Ludhiana provides complete online assistance to the citizens.

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