



# Leadership Traits and Styles Underlying Successful E-Governance

Ashish K. Srivastava<sup>1</sup> and H. M. Jha “Bidyarthi”<sup>2</sup>

## ABSTRACT

*The success stories of e-governance cases are the outcome of visionary persons in positions. They exhibit the traits and styles uncommon to many other enterprising successes. This paper tries to bring forth the leadership styles of such heroes who have displayed their potentials to lead e-governance projects in the government at the center and state levels and in the private and public organizations.*

**Keywords:** Champions, Visions, Policy-makers

## 1. Introduction

*“Good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development” - Kofi Annan*

An efficient e-government is vital for improving administration as well as achieving economic and social growth. E-governance is not just the Internet as the common perception goes. Even Internet today is more than just a technology it is a social phenomenon that has the power to touch the day-to-day lives of every citizen. E-government involves changing the entire system – targets, methods, processes, practices – and modernizing the functioning of Government agencies. It means changing public administration from personal and paper-based working to an on-line environment to provide efficient, better, and clear services. Govt. leaders in India are starting to realize that e-governance is the key to drive today’s economy with an increased participation from citizens (Bellamy and Warleigh, 2001). Hence, the Governments have tried to improve the environment for e-government by passing several new laws on electronic transactions, copyright protection, and information technology.

Many Indian States have implemented e-governance projects. All States have not been equally successful nor all projects have been as successful as others nor even the States ranked higher in the primitive days of e-governance implementation have remained so during later years (Gupta, Kumar and Bhattacharya, 2004). This has been due to the persons handling these projects from the background. There are typical leadership traits and styles found in these men who have shown to the nation how e-governance projects can be conceived and run for the benefit of all the stakeholders. In the present paper the authors critically present these styles and traits of the e-governance leaders of our country.

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<sup>1</sup> Institute of Management, Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University, Raipur, Chattisgarh, India

<sup>2</sup> Dept. of Business Administration and Research, S. S. G. M. College of Engineering, Shegaon, Maharashtra, India

\* Corresponding Author: (E-mail : ashish\_1k@rediffmail.com, Telephone: +91 9424215539)

## 2. Methodology of Study

The present paper picked up 47 e-governance projects implemented in 19 States and Union Territory of India and studied the struggle story of the brain behind each of them to identify their traits, styles, approaches, strategies and interventions during the course of conception to commercialization of these projects. The list of these projects is given in the table no. – 1 below. Focus was given to those projects which were more successful such as e-Panchayat, CARD, LRMIS, Rural e-Seva (Andhra Pradesh), e-AWAS, DC-CMS, ICES, PLI & RPLI, ICS, PCIS (NIC HQ), Computerization of Directorate of Pension, PF and Group Insurance, IMPACT (West Bengal), Vahan and Sarathi (Jharkhand), e-Kosh (Chhattisgarh), Treasury Computerization System (Rajasthan), ITSANIC- (Uttar Pradesh), Computerization of PAY & ACCOUNTS OFFICE (Gujarat), FAIS (Kerala), ASHA (Assam), and VICTORY (Bihar).

Another sample of ten e-governance projects was picked up and studied in detail as these projects have been recognized through prestigious awards at national and international levels and are treated to be path-breaking projects of the field. These projects are HIMRIS, e-Pension (Himachal Pradesh), Koshvani (Maharashtra), ASHA, Dharitree (Assam), HALRIS, Result through Binocular (Haryana), Lokvani (Uttar Pradesh), Vahan (Jharkhand) and Bhoomi of Karnataka.

**Table 1:** Showing Sample of E-Governance Projects chosen for the present study

S. No.	Indian State / Union Territory	E-governance Projects	Website of Indian State / Union Territory
1.	Andhra Pradesh	e-Seva, CARD, VOICE, MPHS, FAST, e-Cops, AP online—One-stop-shop on the Internet, Saukaryam, Online Transaction processing	<a href="http://www.aponline.gov.in/apportal/index.asp">http://www.aponline.gov.in/apportal/index.asp</a>
2.	Bihar	Sales Tax Administration Management Information	<a href="http://bihar.nic.in/">http://bihar.nic.in/</a>
3.	Chhattisgarh	Chhattisgarh Infotech Promotion Society, Treasury office, e-linking project	<a href="http://chhattisgarh.nic.in/">http://chhattisgarh.nic.in/</a>
4.	Delhi	Automatic Vehicle Tracking System, Computerisation of website of RCS office, Electronic Clearance System, Management Information System for Education etc	<a href="http://delhigovt.nic.in/newdelhi/index.html">http://delhigovt.nic.in/newdelhi/index.html</a>
5.	Goa	Dharani Project	<a href="http://goagovt.nic.in/">http://goagovt.nic.in/</a>
6.	Gujarat	Mahiti Shakti, request for Government documents online, Form book online, G R book online, census online, tender notice.	<a href="http://www.gujaratindia.com/index.htm">http://www.gujaratindia.com/index.htm</a>
7.	Haryana	Nai Disha	<a href="http://haryana.nic.in/">http://haryana.nic.in/</a>
8.	Himachal Pradesh	Lok Mitra	<a href="http://himachal.nic.in/">http://himachal.nic.in/</a>
9.	Karnataka	Bhoomi, Khajane, Kaveri	<a href="http://www.kar.nic.in/govt">http://www.kar.nic.in/govt</a>
10.	Kerala	e-Srinkhala, RDNet, Fast, Reliable, Instant, Efficient Network for the Disbursement of Services (FRIENDS)	<a href="http://www.kerala.gov.in/">http://www.kerala.gov.in/</a>
11.	Madhya Pradesh	Gyandoot, Gram Sampark, Smart Card in Transport Department, Computerization MP State Agricultural Marketing Board (Mandi Board) etc	<a href="http://www.mpgovt.nic.in/">http://www.mpgovt.nic.in/</a>

12.	Maharashtra	SETU, Online Complaint Management System—Mumbai	<a href="http://www.maharashtra.gov.in/">http://www.maharashtra.gov.in/</a>
13.	Rajasthan	Jan Mitra, RajSWIFT, Lokmitra, RajNIDHI	<a href="http://www.rajasthan.gov.in/">http://www.rajasthan.gov.in/</a>
14.	Tamil Nadu	Rasi Maiyams–Kanchipuram; Application forms related to public utility, tender notices and display	<a href="http://www.tn.gov.in/">http://www.tn.gov.in/</a>
15.	North-Eastern States - Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram & Nagaland	Community Information Center. Forms available on the Meghalaya website under schemes related to social welfare, food civil supplies and consumer affairs, housing transport etc.	<a href="http://arunachalpradesh.nic.in/govt.htm">http://arunachalpradesh.nic.in/govt.htm</a> , <a href="http://manipur.nic.in/">http://manipur.nic.in/</a> , <a href="http://meghalaya.nic.in/">http://meghalaya.nic.in/</a> , <a href="http://mizoram.nic.in/">http://mizoram.nic.in/</a> , <a href="http://nagaland.nic.in/">http://nagaland.nic.in/</a>

Bhoomi, the Karnataka government's ambitious land records computerisation programme and India's largest e-governance programme, won silver at the 2002 Commonwealth Association of Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) awards in Glasgow, Scotland. Chosen from among 150 entries representing 10 nations, 'Bhoomi project' won the CAPAM International Innovation Award for the theme 'Creating self-confident government: Reflections and new frontiers'. The honour came as a boost for Rajeev Chawla, Additional Secretary (Revenue), the brain behind Bhoomi, whose 36-month-long labour is beginning to bear fruit. It was his single-handed initiative that has made Bhoomi land records computerisation system, the most successful e-governance project taken up by any state government in India. It is no surprise that the project has already started earning revenue. Rajeev Chawla exudes with confidence when he speaks about the economics of this initiative. "While both the central and state governments had infused Rs 20crore into Bhoomi, it has already netted more than Rs 10 crore by issuing land-records or Record of rights, Tenancy and Crops (RTCs) to farmers. Normally, we don't look at administrative work as revenue generating activity, Bhoomi has surprised us by earning income while giving valuable documents to farmers. Though it is my brain child, I should compliment the state government for executing the project properly. If I am the 'front end of' of the project, the state unit of National Informatics Centre (NIC) has been the 'back end', who developed the technology and created the software."

### 3. Leadership Traits underlying National E-Governance Projects

The leaders of nationally implemented e-governance projects exhibit following prominent traits:

- Ability to carefully monitor: Government projects have very tightly defined user specifications. Unlike other (regular) business applications, they have no room for negotiation because a change in them may invoke legal implications for the government department concerned. E-governance projects could be part of some strategic deliverables of the government to its citizens. Thus great care has to be exercised throughout the project lifecycle (Hatchard and Ndulo, 2004).
- Ability to integrate: An effective e-government program requires successful and seamless integration of appropriate ICT, quality information, engaged public employees, good administrative processes, and government leadership. Otherwise, the existing bureaucracy and ineffective processes may only be exacerbated by leading edge ICT (Bloem and Doorn, 2005).
- Ability to win commitment at high levels: They create Literacy and win commitment to e-governance at high level.
- Ability to replicate: They starting with implementation of pilot projects and go on to replicating the successful ones.
- Ability to centralize: They build National resource Database of e-governance projects by centrally

- pulling the same from spreads.
- Ability to manage and update: They manage and update content on government websites efficiently and regularly.
- Relevance: Governments are needed to provide services and e-governance will make it possible to give prompt, honest, and visible service. Kiran Bedi, the Magsaysay award winner Indian police official, gives instances. If an aggrieved citizen wants to lodge a first information report [FIR], he need not go to the police station but file it on the Internet. This would take away the power of the police officer to refuse to file a FIR, which is so often the case (Pani, Mishra and Sahu, 2004).

#### **4. Leadership Traits underlying State E-Governance Projects**

The leaders of regionally implemented e-governance projects at states or union territory levels exhibit following prominent traits. Some of these traits match to those of leaders of nationally implemented e-governance projects.

- Integrating ability: E-governance assignments always involve multiple vendors, many systems, internal or external, and are even across a number of technologies. The bespoke applications developer has to take care of integrating the main application with various other systems and sub-systems.
- Citizen-orientation: They have the true understanding of the citizens' difficulties which they eradicate through their e-governance projects.
- Ability to re-orient government: They are people who want to "re-invent government" hoping that those in government will adopt a new focus on outcomes to replace outputs.
- Exemplary effectiveness: The e-governance leaders work for the e-government projects which are not only exemplary for their effectiveness but they also meet global standards of government work-flow automation and citizen services delivery.
- Innovation: They are the entities who find solution to every problem in innovation. Creativity is the way of their lives.
- Ability to signify: It is necessary that a project's impact is significant and measurable. These leaders of e-governance have always ensured visibility of the project on the life and health of the society.
- Ability to involve the mass: It is necessary to involve the mass in the project so as to spread its acceptance and hence benefits. The leaders have left no stone unturned for people to react to their projects. They have only responded to it, the pace however may be slow.

#### **5. Leaders' Distinctions**

There are three categories of processes to cover the interactions between the government, the public service, and the citizenry in an e-governance project (Haus and Heinelt, 2005). These are as follows:

- The engagement process covers the interaction between citizens and government;
- The consultation process covers the interaction between public servants and citizens; and
- The implementation process covers the interaction between the government and the public service

The "bottom line" for governance is outcomes rather than the outputs of government. One lesson learned from all of these experiences is that a "free-for-all" approach will not work – effective citizen engagement requires that the process be managed to maintain focus and momentum. The distinctions amongst the e-governance leaders lie; apart from their technical competence, social orientation, managerial maneuverability, and so on; in their approach to circumstances society and government are held. It is this understanding, perfectly to the core and their urge to deal with it, that all e-governance projects have been conceived and successfully implemented (Mitra, 2005). The distinction of the leaders are reflected in these understandings some of which are stated below:

The kind of habituation is not necessary for governance to be effective – it arises instead from an inappropriate way to try and ensure compliance to centralized control. The consequence however, is that flexibility is slowly squeezed out of governing processes as rules are proliferated to cover more and more eventualities. The assumption is that this will protect those in positions of responsibility from being held accountable (and punishable) for anything that can be construed as politically discreditable.

In terms of governance, the two major concerns are efficiency and effectiveness

In the case of interest groups, they have sought and gained access to bureaucrats for decades. What is changing is that individual citizens and community groups are now beginning to obtain similar access.

There is no rational way to calculate majority support amongst conflicting goals and groups. People can be economic liberals, cultural radicals, and religious traditionalists, or any other combination, all at once. Whether their objectives are economic, cultural, ideological or personal, citizens who do engage themselves regard it as worth their while to "sit at the table" and to persist in their efforts to achieve what they want (Rocheleau, 2007).

One of the truisms of business management is that customers don't care how either the production process or the "back office" works as long as they get good products at acceptable prices. Customers still usually focus on the deliverables rather than the methods and so are the citizens. The honesty and competence expectations are perennial. Public health, national security, a prosperous economy, a safe environment, and other issues of this kind are the "bread and butter" of governance, and negligence is not usually tolerated for very long.

The expectation of competency covers "good services", and the expectation of honesty covers "acceptable costs". When the public begins to feel either cheated or jeopardized they can suddenly begin to follow arguments and chains of events extraordinarily well (Coakes, 2002).

The social psychology of the modern world's political economy instills in people the belief that they are entitled to a relatively prosperous, secure existence, and that the major social institutions around them have an obligation to ensure that this happens. This is called as "Contract with the People" (Wong, Fearon and Philip, 2007).

There is a propensity on the part of government officials to replace "why" by "how" on most occasions where they can display discretionary behavior. In other words, given a choice, those in government will usually focus on what they want rather than what the citizenry wants. Perhaps this is where the logic of "disintermediation" can be lifted from business and applied to governance. If templates for routinized decision-making could be developed for governance, and these could be loaded onto the Net, these aspects of governance could be built right into the social infrastructure and the arbitrary choices of government officials could be eliminated (Mateja and Mirko, 2004).

## **6. Styles Manifest**

Governance is a way of describing the links between government and its broader environment – political, social, and administrative. Each of these dimensions forms a side of the "governance triangle". All of the other characteristics of governance are just aspects of its functionality. "Understanding Governance", refers to the effects that are produced as a result of the procedures used which every brain behind any e-governance project has manifested.. They clearly understand that the major cause of organizational malfunction is neither knowledge worker intransigence nor support staff sabotage, but rather persistent management missteps and ineptitude (Williams, 2008). It is this that they have fought and fought out

successful through their respective e-governance initiatives. The successful e-governance leaders' strategies have been on the following lines

- Start planning early - duration, participants, preparatory info, format of acceptable inputs, utilization of acceptable inputs
- Demonstrate commitment - high-level support, outline purpose, agree to publish results, explain utilization intentions
- Guarantee personal data protection - assure and insure data security, data privacy, data confidentiality and even anonymity (if desired)
- Tailor the approach to fit the target group - select suitable participants, customize sessions to suit group, provide additional support when appropriate (disability, etc.)
- Integrate online engagement with traditional methods - use such complementary methods as public roundtables, focus groups, and dedicated web sites to provide multiple channels
- Test and adapt the tools - before launching ensure tools (software, questionnaires, etc.) actually work, and modify based on user suggestions
- Promote the online engagement - use press conferences, advertising, links to websites, e-mails, and posters to create awareness and support
- Analyze the results - commit the wherewithal (time, resources, expertise) to assure that the results are understood and interpreted for use
- Provide feedback - publish results of the online engagement as soon as possible, spell out next steps, explain uses of engagement inputs
- Evaluate the engagement process and its impacts - do a "lessons learned" after the engagement process to assess choice of participants, level of satisfaction, quality of inputs

However, they have taken every precaution to ensure the features (Jorgensen and Cable, 2002) like Ease of use, user-ship, speed of delivery, SLAs, simplicity of procedures, time savings compared to manuals, single window access to many services, low incidence of errors, speed of rectification of errors, alignment with user expectations, affordable cost of service, reduction in corruption, staff behavior, staff competence in their e-governance projects. They have thus emerged the greatest ever change agents for the society and the government by touching the lives of the millions the full-scale magnitude of which is yet to be seen.

## **7. Concluding Remarks**

Developing and sustaining successful e-governance projects and delivering state of the art e-services to citizens is a challenging task. Unfortunately it's not as easy as adding "e" in front of one's service delivery mechanism (Davison, Wagner, and Louis, 2005). Successful e-governance initiatives can never be taken in haste. It is evident from above discussion that objectives of achieving e-governance and transforming a country like India go far beyond mere computerization of stand alone back office operations. It means, to fundamentally change as to how the government operates, and this implies a new set of responsibilities for the executive and politicians. It requires basic change in work culture and goal orientation, and simultaneous change in the existing processes. It requires skilled navigation to ensure a smooth transition from old processes and manual operations to new automated services without hampering the existing services. The change in the mindset to develop and accept the distributed and flat structured e-governance system is required at the top-level system to beat the inertia. The leaders of the field have brought about strong alignment with national goals, leadership, governance and co-ordination, public sector reform and process redesign before ICT lead to successful e-government. Having a suitable business model, focus on service delivery channels and quality, security and privacy for trust building, and adopting an "enterprise" approach are other important factors that they have focused in addition to collaboration between the government, business, and community, capability development, ICT planning, and markets. For success of an e-governance project and superior service delivery, it is imperative that one draws on whole citizen experience. Focusing on the citizen is essential for long term success, which has been the core competency

of leadership underlying every successful e-governance project. Leaders of every field overcome challenges, but those of e-governance are challenges personified.

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## About the Authors

Ashish Kumar Srivastava is a Reader in the Institute of Management, Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University, Raipur, Chhattisgarh. His academic qualification is B.Sc, MBA, LL.B and PhD in Business Administration. He obtained his PhD from M.J.P. Rohilkhand University, Bareilly (UP). The area of his research work is consumerism and other related fields of Marketing. He has participated and presented papers in more than Twenty five Seminars and Conferences of national and international repute held in India. Three students have been awarded their PhD and five students are doing their research work under his supervision. He is also associated with various assignments of teaching, research and administration.

H. M. Jha "Bidyarthi" is Professor, Department of Business Administration and Research, Shri Sant Gajanan Maharaj College of Engineering, Shegaon, Maharashtra, India. He holds an I.D.D. (D.H.) from Allahabad Agricultural Institute, Allahabad under ICAR Sub-Committee on Dairy Education, New Delhi, M.B.A. and Ph.D. from University of Bihar, Muzaffarpur, Bihar, India. In his 27 years of teaching experience he has published over 100 research papers including those on e-governance on which he also completed a project financed by AICTE, New Delhi under its Research Promotion Scheme during 2004 – 2007 and successfully supervised a doctoral research work under Sant Gadge Baba Amravati University, Amravati.