



## **ROLE OF M. GOVERNANCE IN ADDRESSING PUBLIC GRIVANCES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Governance is not all about decisions and administration of the state. It has acquired a new meaning in the democratic process of state decisions that, governance is all about collecting continuous feedback, recognizing public grievances and timely redressal of such grievances. There has been a practice of installing drop boxes establishing complaint cells and other supervising authorities to accept public grievances with respect to utility services, public distribution system and other agencies of the state ever since the government of modern age have started administrative reforms for implementing effective public administrative system. But these methods were time consuming and often tested the patience of complainants which is partially addressed through e. governance in the 90's and took a radical improvement in new millennium through m. governance. Various state governments and government of India have launched many mobile enabled platforms to implement m. governance at all the levels despite which thousands of grievances are still unaddressed. Therefore it is proposed to discuss the role of m. governance in addressing the public grievance through this research paper*

**Key words:** M. governance, mobile applications, public grievances

### **Introduction:**

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A Monthly Double-Blind Peer Reviewed Refereed Open Access International e-Journal - Included in the International Serial Directories.

India is one of the pioneering countries in adopting m. governance for which seeds were sown way back in the year 1987 by launching NICNET. It is a satellite linked networking program dedicated for the technical administration of e. governance platform of the central government. Initially it was confined only to the extent of sharing macro level information between government agencies (G2G mode). But DISNIC launched by national informatics centre in the year 1990 has enhanced the scope of accessing only macro level information to the micro level information at district level. The uniqueness of information science is its ability in collecting as much micro level data as possible. This principle aptly suits to attribute the mettle of DISNIC which helps administrative agencies at district and zonal levels to collect timely information and address the local grievances. These two initiatives have sparked many divergent ideas among the proactive state governments and led to the adoption of e. governance in the areas like land records, health care , municipal administration, law and order etc. for example Bhoomi project of Karnataka designed for digitalization of land records, Gyandoot of Madhya Pradesh for providing citizen services, Locvani project of Uttar Pradesh redressing the public grievances, project FRIENDS of Kerala for encouraging speedy disposal of public grievances and e. seva of Andhra Pradesh for creating an electronic interface between the public and government for utility services have shown the indispensable importance of e. governance in public administration. But these initiatives have hardly perceived any time to acquire the idiosyncrasies of government agencies and also mirrored time delays in addressing the public grievances as would be seen in the environs of bureaucratic red tape. Therefore it is tendered to review the literature contributed by various researchers to m governance over e governance and construct the concrete objectives of the paper.

### **Review of Literature:**

Kiranmai (2012) has conducted a study on the merits and demerits of e seva portal in Andhra Pradesh and interpreted that e seva centers are acting like mere franchising centers of paying utility bills and submitting application forms. There is no provision to track the status of forms filed by the applicants. Therefore, she has advised in her paper to link the mobile numbers of applicants to every transaction accepted by the e seva centers and communicate the status through SMS service or toll free numbers which must be accessible through any mobile service provision. Lokanathan (2013) has conducted a comparative study of web and mobile governance services of Kerala and found that, m governance has improved the degree of transparency in

government services he also interpreted that governance helps avoiding unnecessary intermediaries between the government and citizens.

Harpana Halli (2014) has conducted study on various models of governance and predicted in his paper that m governance may face the problem of technology disruption very soon, though many government agencies are still under the contemplation of adopting m governance model. He felt that, real time governance shall soon replace the existing models where a mobile platform shall be substituted with other smart gadgets. Shareef (2016) has articulated that m governance is as good as traditional models of public administration. He is of the opinion that m governance differs only in terms of mode of communicating the grievance to government. He observed that most of the government agencies have not yet re configured their web sites in mobile compatible mode, yet, they think the idea of smart governance through mobile phones. Premanidhi (2017) expressed in his paper that, m governance did not prove any radical change in the way state agencies address the grievances. He is of the opinion that, social media channels of the policy makers like Twitter have been showing more positive results than the formal mobile applications developed for redressing the public grievances.

### **Objectives:**

1. To study merits and demerits of m. governance
2. To study the status of m. governance in India
3. To study the role of m. governance in addressing public grievances.

### **Research methodology:**

This paper is based on the secondary data on m. governance available in the formal website of the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, That provides authentic information on the progress made by m. governance platforms. The data needed to study the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> objectives is collected from the DeitY with respect to mobile apps and their usage in government services.

### **Merits and demerits of m. governance:**

It is well established from the review of literature that m. governance is not substitute of e. governance, rather e. governance is the strong edifice based on which mobile applications are developed. Therefore the sound merits of e. governance are presumed to be existing in m.

governance either. However it is worth recognizing little advancement made by m. governance over the e. governance channels. The earlier portals of e. governance were customized to isolate G2G (Government to Government), G2C (Government to Citizens) and G2B (Government to Business) transactions which was a cumbersome situation for the decision makers to scroll between multiple servers and portals to accumulate the data needed for taking timely decisions. This problem is effectively addressed through m. governance which can envelop all three transactions into a single mobile application which also provide ancillary information sought by the decision makers. Another advancement made by m. governance is the fastest communication of grievances by the public. For example a citizen having smart phone in his palm can shoot the photos of a damaged road or other public utility infrastructure and immediately upload the same as an evidence to launch his grievance. This process under e. governance is based on traditional websites which requires a camera, scanner and desktop to launch the grievance with same authenticity.

The notion of real time administration would not acquire any meaningful shape in the absence of m. governance because, the real time administration requires voiced based communication along with visual and other digital data sources. Mobile applications installed in the smart phones not only enables the process of launching grievances in the form of written complaints but also helps illiterates and differently abled citizens to make use of voice communication and complain their grievances. Indeed most of the public utility deficiencies are faced by illiterates but they are not convergent to express them in the form of a grievance which can be addressed through mobile application configured with local scripts and voice commands. The local scripts are very easy to type in mobile phones rather than on desktops. Therefore m. governance is certainly superior in terms of its merits.

M. governance enables the government employees responsible for addressing public grievances to carry smart phone and tabs to the locality or sites where the problem exist and resolve the issue which can be updated against the complaint number of the grievance. It helps improving transparency and accountability among such employees.

### **Demerits of m. governance:**

Like any other technology, m. governance has also got its own demerits. Though India is ranked in second position with respect to mobile users, there is a huge gap between the mere usage and effective usage. Among 750 million of mobile users, only sizable proportion of them have

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downloaded the government service applications which is one of the prime concerns to be addressed by the government. Similarly most of the mobile users including the educated elite are not aware of the m. store of Indian government where all the mobile applications developed for the transactions of the government can be downloaded at free of cost. In other words the store of mobile application among millions of mobile uses is still Google play store alone. It is a major disadvantage observed in the process of reviewing the literature. Another demerit that m. governance facing today is the feasible payment gateways. Most of the public utility services receiving the payments are not recognizing the payment gate way apps of government entities. For example the department of railways has developed 14 mobile applications for various services which have special preference to the payment gate ways of State Bank of India. This discrimination is certainly an impediment of m. governance.

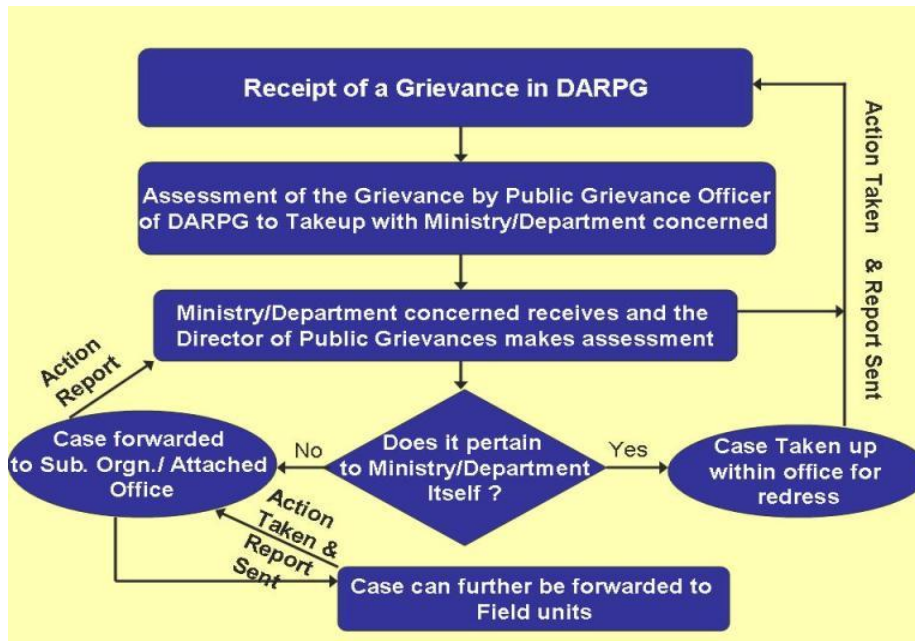
### **Status of m. governance in India:**

The decision of the state to separate the department of electronics and information technology which was under the control of the Ministry of Communications in the year 2015 to create a separate ministry of electronics and information technology implies the seriousness and commitment of Indian government to implement m. governance. The Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology has developed 240 mobile applications exclusively for the services of Government of India and also created m. store where all the applications can be downloaded at free of cost. The uniqueness of mobile apps developed by government agencies in USSD platforms i.e. unstructured supplementary data which can be accessed or initiated in low configured phones also to avail government services, especially SMS enabled mobile apps which are economical and toll free in many cases are brought in to the existence to reduce the gap between governance and citizens. Indian government has been encouraging state government and their agencies to develop fiber grid in the name of State wide Area Network (SWAN), establish state data centers (SDCs) and State service delivery gate ways on war foot bases to implement m. governance and to establish a linkage between the central and state services. Indian government is inspired by the success stories of mobile governance in other countries integrating their merits into m. governance model. For example Ireland own the credit of conceiving an idea of mobile applications in effective policing for the first time., South African government took the initiative of developing mobile applications for preventing domestic violence and Singapore that developed mobile applications for the first time to address public grievances. These models were

studied by Indian government and every service right from birth certificate to death certificate is integrated through mobile applications. These effects were further fueled with the data base of aadhar which is going to be revamped with facial reorganization provision in March 2018 will certainly add synergy to the efforts of m. governance in India. It can be seen from the formal statistics that the world's biggest economy, United States has got only 279 million of mobile users whereas, India has got more than 750 million of Urban and Rural mobile users. Which provide a very vast scope for the third party agencies to create public private partnership (PPP) in furthering mobile governance. Indian government is able to succeed in creating competition among the data service providers, such that mobile tariffs have changed their emphasis from talk time per rupee to data per rupee in the past 2 years. This radical development has made internet and mobile phones to go hand in hand that navigates m. governance to every house hold.

### **Role of M Governance in Redressing Public Grievances:**

Government of India has set up a separate department named The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1988 under the cabinet secretariat. It was initially confined to only to four departments which were prone to public complaints. But the responses of the stakeholders has motivated the government to enhance the scope of DARPG to maximum number of departments and linked them to the Directorate of Public Grievances over the period of time. National Informatics Centre has developed a mobile app which can be downloaded by anyone to launch the grievance. It receives more than one thousand complaints every year which shall be disposed in the following manner.



Source [www.pgportal.gov.in](http://www.pgportal.gov.in)

A complaint launched through mobile app or any other mode by DARPG is assessed by the grievance officer and forward the same to concerned ministry or department in the first stage and an SMS alert is sent to the mobile number of complainant with respect to the acceptance of grievance. The receiver of grievance shall forward it to the sub offices or divisions to verify whether the complaint pertains to their department or not. if it pertains to their operations, action shall be initiated and forwarded the same to DARPG. This entire process has been linked to the mobile app of DARPG, such that, the status of grievance can be tracked by the complainant at every stage. Thus, it is obvious to understand beyond any peradventure that M Governance has got very important role in expediting the process of redressing the public grievance.

### Conclusion:

It does not generate any paradox to conclude that operations and transactions of the state involving millions of stakeholders with a huge configuration of value chain now and then are fraught with deficiencies and lead to grievances. But how meticulously such grievances are redressed by the state determines its commitment towards the quality of public administration. Therefore, modern approaches like Mobile Governance must be fostered to magnify the reach of public grievance system of the country.

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