

Public Service Delivery

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ABSTRACT: It is the mechanism through which public services are delivered to the public by local, municipal, or federal governments. Sewage and trash disposal, street cleaning, public education, and health services are some of the examples of public services. It is on improving governance through the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in the delivery of services to the poor, i.e., improving efficiency, accountability, and transparency, and reducing bribery. A number of papers recognize the potential benefits but they also point out that it has not been easy to harness this potential. In this the use of ICTs in the management of delivery of public services in health, education, and provision of subsidized food. Cases on electronic delivery of government services, such as providing certificates and licenses to rural populations, which in turn provide entitlements to the poor for subsidized food, fertilizer, and health services are also included. ICT-enabled provision of information to enhance rural income is also covered.

KEYWORDS: public service delivery, ICT, health, government, populations, certificates, income

I. INTRODUCTION

Public service is an essential service facility or commodity linked to the livelihood or existence of the society or the common man. Public service is a bridge connecting the government and the general public. Such services are provided by the government through its administrative channels. Similarly, a public service is a service provided to the general public or citizen or organizations. Such as security, defense, rule of law, community service, essential services, employment, communication and technology services and other service. As a whole, the work performed by the state and the goods and services provided to fulfill the needs and wants of public are public services. [1,2]

It seems appropriate to present Adam Smith's views on public service. According to Smith, "all those public institutions and public works that are characterized by the fact that their profits can never be repaid by investment or it is a public function, which is the kind that cannot be repaid by investment." Therefore, individuals or groups of individuals cannot build or maintain it. " We can also say that public service is the service provided by the service provider i.e. government or state to the service recipient i.e. public or general people.

The flow of public service is the process by which the government or the state provides services to the citizens in a fast, economical and effective manner, which can be guaranteed by the common man. It is the responsibility of the state to provide public services. In this context, the technology / method / mechanism to provide services, facilities, goods to the general public is called delivery system. The delivery system is the mechanism for distributing the beneficial goods, services and facilities received from any organization.

All the essential, basic, infrastructure-based, commercial and other services are provided from the public (government) level. There are various policy, legal, institutional and procedural arrangements to make the basic service delivery systematic and effective. However, there is not much effectiveness in service delivery. The government has put great efforts in administrative reform for a long period of time to make the flow of services to the general public effective. Although efforts have been made to simplify and streamline government work, decentralize services, provide adequate and capable manpower in service centers, and streamline service delivery, its implementation has been weak and even the basic foundations for ensuring public services have not been strengthened. Due to traditional thinking and lack of positive perceptions in the administration; limited means and resources; lack of transparency, accountability, responsibility; lack of highest utilization of information technology; lack of awareness of the client; lack of pressure groups; lack of simple and clear procedures etc., public service has not been effective.[3,4]

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Features and Characteristics of Public Services

- Public services are provided by government and governmental body.
- It is the responsibility of government or state to deliver public services.
- The state never aims for profit while providing public services.
- Receiving public services from the state is a civil right. It is also linked to human rights.
- Public services are theoretically fair.
- Public service is related to the life of a citizen.
- Public service flows in accordance with the law and prescribed guidelines.
- The service recipient or the consumer of the service can also participate in the distribution of public service.
- Public service investment cannot be paid as profit.
- Public service is a means of connecting the government and the common man.

Importance of Public Services

- Related to the existence of community or citizen.
- As the main responsibility of the state.
- The main basis for increasing the trust of the people towards the government.
- Helps to increase the legitimacy of the government in state power.
- Good public service is also a sign of good governance. Accountable and forward-looking government.
- The most important task or objective of any government is to provide necessary services to the people.
- Adequacy, timeliness, equity, equality, quality, economy, efficiency, relevance, etc. are important elements of the flow of growth.[5,6]

II.DISCUSSION

We can improve public service delivery systems [Government Process Re-engineering](#) (GPR) seeks to address problems in the delivery of government services through internal departmental overhauls. An indispensable tool in the fight against red tape and corruption, GPR aims to bring transparency and accountability to the system. With the advent of e-governance initiatives, GPR has been gaining attention.

At its core, GPR is about increasing access to public services and the concurrent benefits to citizens. However, it is often confused with and confined to only technological interventions. While technology can help achieve this feat, it cannot substitute for the fundamental changes which need to be made in the way the system functions. Therefore, while the term is frequently referred to in conversations on good governance, it still largely remains misunderstood and underexplored.

Broadly, the effectiveness of GPR is measured on three essential parameters:

1. Ease of applying for a service

The details asked in the applications forms are analysed against relevant laws, rules, notifications, and a list of essential versus dispensable fields is created. Similarly, supporting documents required for submission are also scrutinised. Language should not be a barrier for anyone applying for a service; hence inclusivity is an important criterion against which forms and documents are measured.

2. Movement of files within departments

Assessing the movement of files within organisations or departments can allow for the possibility of reducing the total steps involved. Additionally, it is important to check if each step or actor in the process adds value, other than sharing

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the responsibility for the decision. The nature of the service is also analysed to see if it can be clubbed together with other similar services or if it can be delivered instantly or replaced with self-declarations or deemed approvals entirely. In the majority of GPR cases, this is the most crucial stage.

3. Tracking the application and delivery of service[7,8]

It is necessary to know how the applicant is informed about the status of the application and how the service is delivered to them. This makes it easier to ensure that citizens have to make physical visits and follow-ups only when necessary. Additionally, it also helps keep a check on corruption and opportunities for harassment. Subsequently, the re-engineered service is notified under the Right to Service Act of the state to ensure compliance with the revised timelines.

Under each GPR parameter, it is essential to understand the reasoning and requirement of documents, steps, and asks. Wherever possible the process should be digitised to make it more traceable, transparent, and accessible, thereby minimising opportunities for in-person off-the-record interactions.

However, it is crucial to understand that digitisation is only an enabler to a good GPR and not the solution in itself. Archaic processes, digitised as is, do little to improve service delivery, nor make the process more efficient or effective.

III.RESULTS

The volume of applications for this service in recent years has been low and it was probably because the application process was tedious. This is what was done under the GPR process:

1. Simplification of the application process

A simple application form was created as part of the GPR, eliminating all extra requirements not mentioned in the Punjab Cooperative Societies Act, 1961, including the caste of the proposed members and nominee details.

2. Reduction in the number of documents required Documents that were not mentioned in the Act (such as the balance sheet of the proposed society and inspection copy of concerned Inspector Cooperative Societies) were removed. This reduced the number of required supporting documents. Through our fieldwork, we learnt that several documents were required to verify a person's address. This included a person's Aadhaar, voter ID, driving licence, SC Certificate (if applicable), and a certificate from a notary. All of this made the application process cumbersome, exclusionary, and open to channels of harassment.

The GPR process strongly recommended a single document requirement for ID proof and proof of address; it also provided a list of standard documents as options.

3. Digitisation and decentralisation of the process[9,10]

Apart from just making it digital, it was suggested that the service be made available through Sewa Kendras as against the earlier requirement of visiting the district co-operative society office to apply for registration.

The GPR process also suggested a two-step approach for registrations:

- i. Decentralisation of the entire backend-process of approval and scrutiny: This was deemed important to remove the multiple channels between the various people involved, which did not add any value to the process.
- ii. Automatic time-bound registration: A society should be deemed to have been registered if no response was received within a specific duration—in this case two months—from the assistant registrar. This was suggested since only around 60 percent of the societies that applied for registration received approvals, in the analysed time period. Moreover, there already exists a statutory requirement for yearly audits of all societies by the registrar, thus ensuring proper checks of these societies.

4. Ensuring updates are accessible

Lastly, it was observed that citizens had to personally follow up on their applications; there were no regular updates on the status, and they were required to physically collect their registration certificates from the local offices.

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It was therefore recommended that the status of the application could be regularly updated via SMS or the government portal, and the final output certificate could be made downloadable through SMS, portal, or DigiLocker, and collectable through Sewa Kendra.

This example shows that in a GPR exercise, some essential parameters must be considered. However, when one evaluates conversations and dialogues around GPR, a disproportionate focus seems to be on technological interventions. This is also visible from the fact that the primary mandate for GPR lies with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeITY) at the Centre and IT departments at the level of the state governments. As we have seen above, technological interventions in public service delivery should follow, and not precede, an assessment and reengineering of the service itself.

More specifically, there should be a primary needs analysis of what is required for ensuring a seamless experience for the end-user, and whether making the service online is required and to what extent. Digitisation, in itself, only duplicates the pre-existing organisational hierarchies online, without any systemic modifications.[11,12]

Until now, states in India have largely been unable to tap the full potential of GPR. This is partly due to a gap in understanding of how it is implemented and what it seeks to achieve. GPR has the potential to help ease the system into change through systematic interventions at the minutest levels, and technology can play an important supporting role in this regard. Digitisation may not even be required in all cases. The change could be as simple as removing certain fields from application forms or reducing the number of documents required alongside the form.

GPR can empower citizens with accessible, transparent, and efficient governance and reduce the burden of pendency in service delivery on governments. Simpler processes not only reduce in-service delivery time but also ensure better and clearer accountability. They also help enhance service equity by eliminating channels of discrimination and harassment that target the most vulnerable people in our society.

There is, however, an immense need to improve the understanding of GPR for achieving its potential. Therefore, state governments must realise the true need for GPR through internal awareness drives wherein departments are encouraged to look inwards and analyse their systems and processes and carry out internal reforms for seamless public service delivery.[8,9]

IV.CONCLUSIONS

The delivery of public services to the citizens is the most critical function of the government, among the other functions being development and regulation. The three essential pillars of public service delivery are timelines, quality and grievance redressal. The concept of public service delivery emerged in the 1990s, with New Public Management and Citizen Charter's evolution. With the shift in the role of the state from provider to facilitator and regulator of public services, the focus is to ensure transparency, accountability and citizen centricity in administration and maintain citizen's satisfaction and trust in the government.[12]

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