

The Role of E-governance in Curbing Public-Sector Corruption (A Theoretical Overview)

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Abstract

A corruption free society is a prerequisite for development and good governance. Corruption is seen as an impediment to the development process of developing countries. Nevertheless, there are numerous efforts taken to prevent corruption in the public sector of those countries. One of the main strategies used to curb institutionalized corruption in the public sector today is use of e-governance, a by-product of ICT, which is an efficient and effective strategy. According to Robert Klitgaard's (1988) definition Corruption = Monopoly + Discretion – Accountability. The increase in the monopoly and the discretionary power of the public-sector officials in decision making and implementation lead to a decrease in accountability of public sector officials while increasing corrupt practices.

This study is aimed at identifying how e-governance could play a role to diminish the monopoly and the discretion power of the public-sector officials and thereby curb institutionalized corruption in the public sector. When considering the effectiveness of the e-governance

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as a strategy, some of the examples were drawn from the Sri Lankan context.

The study is based on secondary data. Books, articles, statistical records, relevant reports and websites were used as the sources of data. Largely a descriptive analysis method was used in the analysis of data. The study reveals that the use of ICT enhances transparency and accountability of public sector activities; and by being more accountable in the performance of their duties goods and services are efficiently being provided to the public.

Key words: Corruption, Public Sector Institutions, E-governance, Sri Lanka.

Introduction

Corruption is recognized as a major impediment for development and good governance mostly in the developing world though it is never confined to that region only. However, extreme poverty, violence and political discrimination in the developing world are further aggravated due to the existence of extreme corruption in those countries. As Iqbal and Seo (2008, 51) point out corruption is “sky high”, “very serious”, “an epidemic”, “highly common”, “a social ill”, “a major crisis”, “at an alarming stage”, and “extreme” in the Third World.

Even though e-governance is not the first and last method to curb corruption in the public sector, it is being practiced very efficiently in the developed countries and in a few developing countries as well. In general, developing countries have succeeded much in implementing e-governance. Their efforts to apply the tools and strategies of e-governance have been visible since the last couple of decades.

According to the United Nations E-government Survey 2014, 20 Asian countries practice e-governance well to achieve good governance while reducing corrupt practices. These countries are: The Republic of Korea, Singapore, Japan, Israel, Bahrain, Malaysia, Sri Lanka (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2014, 28). There are examples of other developing countries that have taken some sort of initiatives to establish e-governance to reduce corruption even though they have lagged in the implementation of e-governance.

International organizations such as the World Bank (WB), Transparency International (TI), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provide evidence of the misuse of public money and property and its adverse impact on governance. Furthermore, those organizations often try to encourage developing countries to move from traditional method of governance to the use of modern technology such as the application of ICT skills for the improvement of good governance practices.

Lee's (2017) research on *The Impact of E-government on Corruption Control* in 172 countries and found that the level of E-government development positively affects corruption control in each of those countries. Also, the impact of corruption control through E-government is strong in non-OECD (The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries but it is not so in OECD countries (Lee 2017:28) because they have already developed socially and economically and are equipped with all the bases for a transparent government and corruption management through E-government. When it comes to the non-OECD countries, since they are currently developing in all fields, E-government development can contribute more effectively to creating a transparent government (Lee: 2017:28).

So, it is clear that e-governance has its own potential to ensure transparency and accountability by reducing administrative mal practices such as public-sector monopoly and the discretion.

Statement of the Problem

According to donors' perspective, corruption is the greatest obstacle to economic development and it is discounting the rule of law. The institutional framework and capacity are essential requirements for economic development. A huge amount of public money and public property are being wasted due to corruption in public sector institutions. Such corruption directly and indirectly contributes to the deprivation of the poor. Corruption in any sense undermines the institutions, ethical values and justice. The Global Forum II which was held in Hague in 2001 on Fighting Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity (Iqbal and Seo, 2008, 52) described corruption as "a virus capable of crippling government, discrediting public institutions and

private co-operation and having a devastating impact on the human rights of populations” (Ibid). If citizens have access to information in a transparent manner, it enhances the responsibility and accountability of the governing process by reducing the monopoly of power and the exercise of discretion. Robert Klitgaard (1988) defined corruption by providing an equation, i.e., $Corruption = Monopoly + Discretion - Accountability$. The possibility of corruption is proportional to the monopoly of power and the exercise of discretion (Lee: 2017). In other words, if the institutional background is strengthened to prevent the increase of institutional monopoly and discretion, then the institutional accountability will increase. Most of the studies have already revealed that e-governance has that potentiality. Consequently, this study was directed by the research problem of how e-governance can play a role in diminishing the monopoly of power and the exercise of discretion thereby curbing the corruption in public-sector institutions.

Objective

The main objective of this paper was to identify how e-governance can play a role to reduce the monopoly and the discretion power of the public-sector officials thereby curbing the institutionalized corruption in the public sector with special reference to the Sri Lankan context.

Methodology

This study was qualitative in nature and it used sources such as books, articles, statistical records, relevant reports and websites as the secondary data collecting means. In this paper, since the motive was to undertake a theoretical analysis on the concept of e-governance and to find out how its strength would support in transforming a public sector working environment to more accountable, transparent and reliable place and thereby reducing the monopoly of power and the discretion, this was not an in-depth analysis on the Sri Lankan context. However, some of the examples were drawn to explain the varieties of capabilities of e-governance in curbing public-sector corruption and to explain the issues in the implementation of e-governance in Sri Lanka. The nature of the presentation of findings is mostly become descriptive.

Theoretical Framework

Governance, E-governance and E-government

There is no standard definition for the term e-governance. Different organizations and institutions use their own way to define the same. Occasionally, the term 'e-government' is also used instead of 'e-governance'. 'Governance' and 'government' are not synonyms. The term 'governance' may be described as a process by which a society steers itself. In this process, the State, Private Enterprise and Civil Society interact with each other, articulate their interests, exercise their rights and obligations and mediate their differences (Saxena, 2005, 313). In other words, citizens and organizations are sharing their goals, interests by creating, and executing decisions and actions. Those citizens and organizations may or may not have formal authority and policing power (Iqbal and Seo, 2008, 54). 'Government' refers to an institution which exercises the authority derived from a society in a legal and formal manner. Similarly, there is a difference between e-governance and e-government. "E-governance (Electronic Governance) or Digital governance is the effective use of information technology to improve the system of governance that is in place, and thus provide better services to the citizens" (Saxena, 2005, 313). As such e-government can be taken as the first step of e-governance. It can also be defined as "the use of emerging ICTs such as the Internet, World Wide Web (WWW) and mobile phones to deliver information and services to citizens and business (Iqbal and Seo, 2008, 55).

The World Bank definition on e-governance can be mentioned as follows.

"E-Government refers to the use of information technologies (such as Wide Area Networks, the Internet, and mobile computing) by government agencies that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government. These technologies can serve a variety of different ends: better delivery of government services to citizens, improved interactions with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information, or more efficient government management. The resulting benefits can be less corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth, and/or cost

reductions.” (World Bank Website; Accessed on: 26/10/2014].

The United Nations defined e-government as “utilizing the Internet and the world-wide-web for delivering government information and services to citizens” (Palvia and Sharma, n.d: 01). A government can also govern the country through electronic tools. Besides, it has more authoritative power to encourage the use of ICT in a broader sense of governance. The strategic objective of e-governance is to support and simplify governance for all parties—government, citizens and businesses (Backus, 2001, 03). It further provides citizens access to information and make them aware of the political process, services and choices available. Finally, a transition from passive information access to active citizen participation can be seen by informing, representing, encouraging, consulting and involving the citizens (Backus, 2001, 03).

Initiatives of E-government

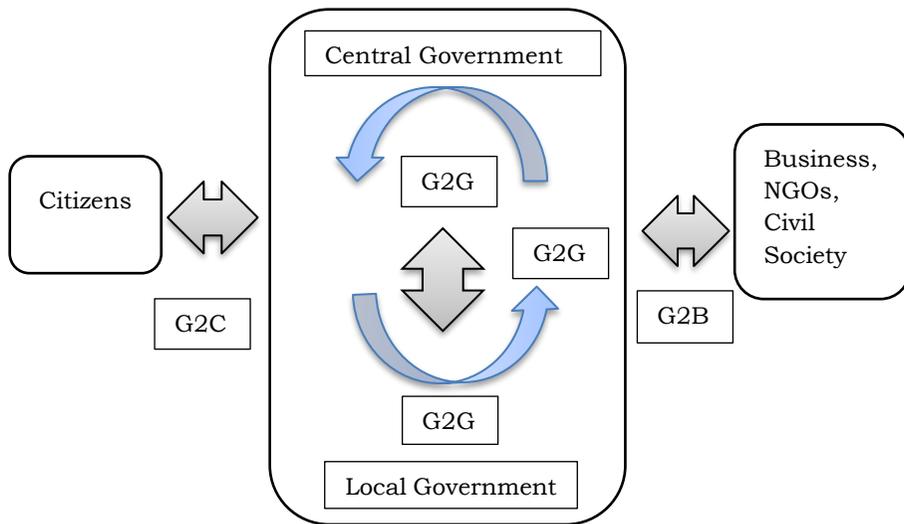
The initiatives of the E-government can be categorized as follows.

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| 01 | Government to Government (G2G, internal), | Interaction among government officials within an office or offices. Eg. Using e-mail for internal government communication. |
| 02 | Government to Employees (G2E, internal) | Giving services to employees. Eg. Pension Management System. |
| 03 | Government to Business (G2B, external) | Government services for the business societies. Eg. Government Procurement Process through the Internet. |
| 04 | Government to Citizens (G2C, external) | Creating interaction among government and citizens. Eg. Government services through the Internet such as online publication of government examination results, job announcements and application-downloading facilities. |

(Source: Iqbal and Seo, 2008: 53).

Figure 1: E-government Initiatives

Similarly, the above-mentioned interactions of the main groups of e-governance can be figured out as follows.



(Source: Backus, 2001:04).

Figure 2: Interactions between main groups in e-governance

E-governance is not merely a government website available on the Internet. It is more than that. It must determine all the political, social, economic, technological etc. factors. A government can start the process of e-governance simply but later it must follow other phases to be supportive of the complex demands of people. The process of e-governance consists of four phases as shown in the E-governance Maturity Model (Figure 03) developed by Gartner (An International E-business Research Consultancy Firm) (Backus, 2001: 05). This model includes four phases such as Information, Interaction, Transaction and Transformation (Backus, 2001: 05). The government may not be able to establish all the phases at the same time but after starting the first phase, the other phases will be gradually developed in response to the demands of people. Its gradual increase will correspondingly enhance the value towards the citizens/business/employees/government. The complexity of the process of e-governance is illustrated in Figure 03.

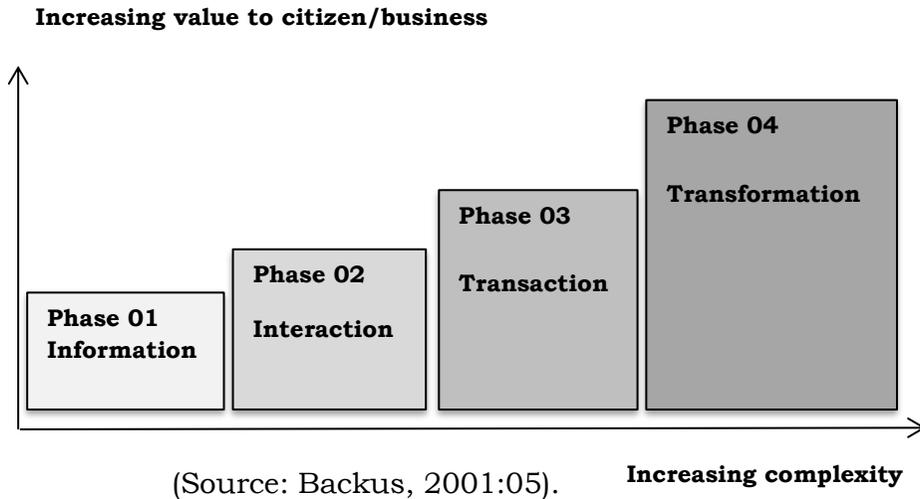


Figure 3: Gartner's E-governance Maturity Model

In Phase 01, the display of information through a website in the Internet can be seen. For example, if it is a G2C, the information may be related to the institutional vision, mission, structure, addresses, opening hours, responsible employee details, rules and regulations etc. In Phase 02, G2C interaction will be going on with the activities of downloading forms on websites, filling applications with the help of online facilities and submitting (permits, death/birth certificates), e-mails etc. The third phase is more complex and the use of paperless transactions with legal certification and the use of digital signatures can be seen. For example, license application renewals, vehicle registration, payments of taxes, tickets and fines could be achieved by maintaining personal accounts such as *myfines*, *mytax*, *mylicenses*. In the fourth phase, there may be personalized websites with integrated personal accounts for all services (Backus, 2001: 05). The change of traditional government culture into e-culture is visible at this stage. Throughout these four phases, the most important factor is mutual understanding of each party and the increase in dealings through the help of technology.

Defining Corruption

There is no commonly accepted single definition of corruption. Many researchers and research organizations have presented different interpretations on corruption based on their research activities. According to Saidman (1978, 48) it includes bribery, extortion,

speculation and nepotism of public officials. Government corruption can be considered as the sale by government officials of government property for personal gain (Shleifer and Vishny, 1993:599). For example, government officials collect speed money for providing services such as issuing permits, license etc. Transparency International in its 2014 report on *Curbing Corruption in Public Procurement: A Practical Guide* has defined corruption as:

“the abuse of entrusted power for private gain”. “Private gain” must be interpreted widely to include gains accruing to the government official, his or her family members, close friends, political party, favorite charity, hometown or a corporate or other entity in which the official or the official’s family or close friends have a financial or social interest” (Transparency International, 2014: 06).

According to Robert Klitgaard (1988), "A corrupt official deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private-regarding (personal, close family, private clique) pecuniary or status gains; or violates rules against the exercise of certain private-regarding behavior" (Azfar, Lee and Swamy, 2001: 44). Klitgaard has made an equation to define corruption as follows:

“Corruption = Monopoly + Discretion – Accountability”

All the public officials have the power specified by the government directly or indirectly to take decisions on worthy services and put them into action and it is called the monopoly of the public-sector officials.

Discretion refers to the freedom to judge or act. Public officials have the freedom of taking decisions according to their own opinions on various matters related to the supply of public goods and services. Accountability refers to being responsible for the execution of duties. For the above equation, when there is a combination of both monopoly and discretion, it results in the decrease in the

accountability of public officials and it tends to increase corrupt practices. Those corrupt practices can be named as misappropriation of public money and equipment, offering favors to people who propose gratification, acceptance of gifts, abuse of official position or power, under assessment of taxes, allotment of lands at cheap rates etc. (Goel, 2007: 200). Eventually, any kind of illegal action to gain a legal service, facility or right can be considered as a corruption. Furthermore, citizens, businessmen, bureaucrats and political representatives are the main stakeholders of the corruption process.

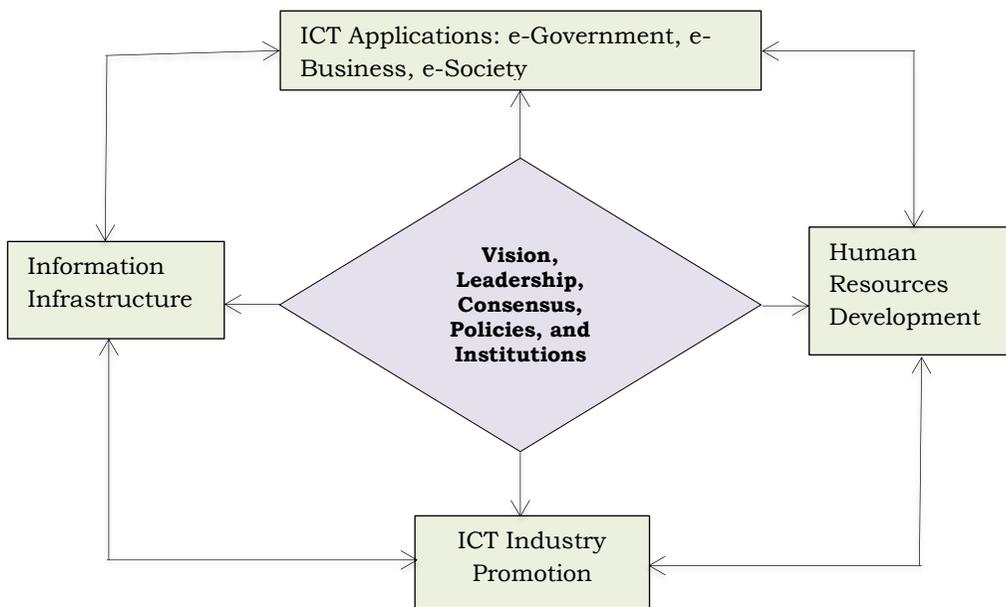
E-governance: Sri Lankan Experiences

Sri Lanka's e-governance policy originated with the vision of "adopting ICT in all its aspects to make government more efficient and effective, improve access to government services, and create a more citizen centric government" (Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka (ICTA), 2009: 01). The government of Sri Lanka officially launched the e-Sri Lanka programme as the first National E-development Programme in 2002 (ICTA, 2009). The main aims were to improve public services, quality of life of the people, poverty eradication and socio-economic development (ICTA, 2009 and Karunasena, 2010). Under the ICT National Policy, all the government organizations can create their own policies and procedures but there should be a unified approach for providing e-government services to achieve the following objectives:

- I. Improved efficiency and effectiveness of government organizations in Sri Lanka thereby making each government organization's budget go further,*
- II. Ease and accessibility of government information and services for citizens, and other government organizations,*
- III. Promote good governance,*
- IV. Develop ICT competence among government employees,*
- V. Manage ICT resources in sustainable manner (ICTA, 2009: 02).*

Also, the ICTA as the primary Agency for making ICT policies and actions has thoroughly emphasized the scope of ICT application as "all government organizations; Ministries, government Departments,

Provincial Councils, District Secretariats, and Divisional Secretariats and Local Authorities, Government Corporations, Statutory Bodies, and Companies fully owned by government” (ICTA, 2009:03). Its e-government initiatives have been established as an integrated approach. It means that ICT application through one sector alone does not benefit in achieving the desired targets. It must include varieties of stakeholders as the beneficiaries as well as the key supporters to enable the country’s long-term development while ensuring broad ownership and long-term sustainability (Rainford, n.d.). Thus, Sri Lankan government’s broader aspects of e-governance can be shown in Figure 04. The government has initiated e-governance by ensuring both capacities of human resources and infrastructure at the same time. It means, without improving the human literacy level on ICT, the implementation of ICT comes to nothing. The continuation of ICT infrastructure development is also essential for the continuation of e-services.



(Source: Rainford, n.d: 05).

Figure 4: Design of e-Sri Lanka

Thus, some of the government organizations and their e-services can be tabulated as follows:

Table 1: Government Organizations and their e-services

| Government Organization | E-services | |
|--|-------------------|--|
| Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka | 1 | Inquiry (SMS based) on reservoirs' storage details |
| Department of Examinations | 2 | Issuance of certificates and copies. |
| | 3 | Application for re-correction. |
| National Water Supply and Drainage Board | 4 | Billing and payment history and bill payments. |
| Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment | 5 | Examination results. |
| | 6 | Employment opportunities. |
| | 7 | Payment service. |
| Sri Lanka Railways | 8 | Purchase of Tender Documents. |
| Sri Lanka Tea Boards | 9 | Reasonable Price Inquiry. |
| | 10 | Elevation average price inquiry. |
| Merchant Shipping Division | 11 | Issuance/renewal of Shipping Agent License. |
| | 12 | Issuance/renewal of Container Operator License. |
| | 13 | Issuance/renewal of Freight Forwarders' and Non-vessel Operating Common Carrier (NVOCC) License. |
| | 14 | Vessel-wise License Issuance. |
| | 15 | Addition of Principals' License Issuance. |
| Department of Labor (Employee Provident Fund Activities) | 16 | View and change EPF profile. |
| | 17 | View EPF account details. |
| | 18 | View refund status. |
| | 19 | View housing loan details. |

| | | |
|----------------------------------|----|---|
| Department of Government Factory | 20 | Purchase of Tender Documents. |
| Department of Motor Traffic | 22 | Online Purchase of Vehicle Information. |
| | 23 | View ongoing vehicle registration number by vehicle category. |

(Source: ICTA, 2012: 26-27).

Results and discussion

The strength of E-governance in diminishing the monopoly of power and the exercise of discretion

Theoretically it is very clear that the usage of ICT will decline the misuse of monopoly of power and exercise of discretion by public sector officials. Now the discussion will move towards examining how that could happen using the data related to the Sri Lankan context.

As shown in the Figures 01 and 02, e-government initiatives promote an interaction between the different types of stakeholders such as the political representatives, administrators, citizens, technical supporters, private sector institutions, businessmen etc. Because of the engagement of many stakeholders in decision making and implementation, there is no space for the government monopoly resulting in its gradual reduction. The e-government policy of the Sri Lanka has been positively supported to its capacity building process as a prerequisite to the development since it has initiated e-governance following both top-down and bottom-up approaches. The top-down approach is used to change the traditional administrative culture into e-culture by changing the traditional administrative mindsets. The bottom-up approach encourages the participation of other stakeholders while enabling them through the terms of ICT skills and providing varieties of services, facilities, etc. Because of this G2C and G2B interactions, in other words, when the government activities are open to the citizens and businesses, the use of discretion of officials is decreased.

E-governance benefits in measuring the performances of public officials with facts and information. Therefore, it reduces the space for the misuse of power for illegal activities. E-governance helps to create the office environment to initiate Performance Management Processes (PMP). PMP is not a single task and it consists of a number of efforts to make the office environment like 'pay for work'. When there is a system to measure and evaluate the performances of workers, individually as well as collectively, as a group or an institution, it motivates people and makes them more competitive. It helps to develop moral sense and shame on illegal activities. It makes the workers more accountable and responsible for their performances. Before the establishment of e-government policies in Sri Lanka, the administrative culture was very rigid to change. Due to different types of technological improvements, people-friendly public offices and effective services with more confidence and trust can be seen.

E-governance is a prerequisite to implement Citizens' Charter in the public sector. It can easily inform citizens through electronic media and it helps to create a strong relationship between public sector workers and common people. Before the implementation of Citizens' Charter, the right for information and its transparency are required. When a government attempts to follow and establish the basic e-governance initiatives, it is automatically creating the necessity of free channels to access information. These types of actions strategically lead to a corruption free society. When the common people and other stakeholders know how the public-sector institutions function according to the rules and administrative procedures, they will also follow the proper channels for the services and that will also help to reduce the level of corruption in the public sector. For example, according to the E-Government Development Index (EGDI) of the United Nations E-government Survey-2014 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2014) most of the public-sector corruption exists in the governments' procurement activities and they have reduced successfully through the implementation of e-governance in countries such as Australia, Canada, Singapore, Republic of Korea etc.

As a further step of its e-governance policy Sri Lanka introduced the Citizens' Charter in 2008 (Public Administration Circular No. 05/2008, Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs, 2008)

which positively encourages public organizations to be more responsive to the public. Furthermore, due to its e-procurement services, the relationship with the private sector has increased and there is a discernible reduction in the corrupt practices such as accepting bribes, nepotism, concealing merit-based competitions, undue delays, etc.

The Sri Lankan government has made significant progress towards enhancing online portals and as a result is currently ranked the 79th in the world and the first in South Asia. It is within the top 20 countries in Asia according to the United Nations E-government Survey 2016 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2016). Its e-government policies have expanded to all segments of the population by offering services to everyone. According to the E-Government Development Index (EGDI), countries are grouped into four categories. Table 02 depicts how Sri Lanka and other South Asian Countries are grouped according to this index.

Table 2: South Asian Countries grouped by EGDI-2016

| Very High (EGDI) More than 0.75 | High (EGDI) Between 0.50 and 0.75 | Middle (EGDI) Between 0.25 and 0.50 | Low (EGDI) Less than 0.25 |
|--|--|--|----------------------------------|
| - | Sri Lanka | India | Afghanistan |
| - | | Maldives | |
| - | | Bangladesh | |
| - | | Bhutan | |
| - | | Nepal | |
| - | | Pakistan | |

(Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2016: 109).

Issues of e-governance in Sri Lanka

Sri Lankan society displays a distance of power between different social groups (Hofstede, 2010). It can be seen at different levels such as between political representatives, bureaucrats, common people as well as government and private sector stakeholders. This societal gap has led to corruption due to lack of communication, less competition and transparency. The bureaucrats enjoy an increase in their power

over the people that results from the rigid laws and regulations. For example, tax inspectors or regulators have higher incentives to engage in corrupt practices (Iqbal and Seo, 2008: 59). The Sri Lankan e-culture is yet to transform the traditional characteristics of bureaucracy into a citizen-friendly good service delivery system.

Though Sri Lanka comparatively scored high in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) as depicted in the following table, it is an open secret that there is widespread of corruption in Sri Lanka among high ranking government officials, politicians and others in the higher echelons of power (Transparency International, 2013). Thus, much of the central level development project planning and implementation fail to provide a picture of certainty for the common people who do not have access to information on the short and long-term outcomes, the sponsors and the negotiation process. By and large, the government has still failed to establish a machinery to prevent corruptions that exist in the higher levels of the development scenario.

Table 3: Corruption in the Public Sector: Country Ranks & Scores

| Name of the Country | Rank | Score |
|----------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Sri Lanka | 91 | 37 |
| India | 94 | 36 |
| Bangladesh | 136 | 27 |
| Nepal | 116 | 31 |
| Pakistan | 127 | 28 |
| Afghanistan | 175 | 08 |
| Bhutan | 31 | 63 |

(Source: Transparency International, 2013).

Though e-culture plays a vital role in curbing corruption at different levels of the public-sector institutions, many of the traditional administrators resist the new culture. They appear to be reluctant to perceive new technologies and do not believe in the functions of the electronic tools. Therefore, it has mostly resulted in wastage of public funds.

Moreover, a continuous process to maintain and update the services of the electronic infrastructure facilities in many public-sector institutions cannot be seen and this situation endangers the continuation of e-government policies resulting in unregulated corruption. On the other hand, public officials tend to be more involved in purchasing activities by highlighting the need of electronic equipment than putting them for right usage. Purchasing is the main path leading to corrupt practices involving the role of a middleman between the buyer and seller. This is a highly recognized corrupt practice in the local government institutions of Sri Lanka (Kanchana, 2016: 10). Public officials often use the breakdown of technology as an excuse to avoid their duties properly and to delay public services to the people. Due to the discontinuation of the usage of electronic tools, sometimes, most of the essential data may be lost prior to the auditing activities and, thus, those situations have led to a high degree of corruption.

It is not easy to measure the degree to which extent the discretion power can be used by a public official. It occasionally depends on the seniority, experiences, organizational and personal values, etc. When a public official tends to use discretion power for gaining personal benefits, there should be a proper machinery to track it. Most of the developing countries like Sri Lanka are suffering from a lack of control of the discretion of power of the government officials. Because of this discretion of government officials, especially, those who are attached to the security forces, most of human rights violations can be seen. When people try to find solutions for their injustices, monopoly of power of the government is used to dominate the processes and procedures.

Further, at the lower level of administration there is a high level of corruption; for instance, the field officers working on the issues of lands, revenue collecting, road cleaning, town maintenance etc. It is not easy to prevent corruption-related activities through e-governance. Delaying and unnecessary bargaining for deliveries of services also cause corruption. Such illegal practices are very much found among village level public officials such as *Grama Niladhari*, *Samurdhi* Officer and Technological Officers, etc. Further, corrupt practices can be seen not only at the point of delivery of public services but also at the decision-making levels, between political

representatives and public officials. In such instances e-governance has failed to curb corruption in Sri Lanka.

E-governance in Sri Lanka is challenged due to various factors such as lack of well-trained public officials and inadequacy of supervision done by the expert panels on technology, and inadequate alternative solutions for frequent failures of technology and lack of regular training of public sector officials on trouble-shooting the system errors which occur when online services are provided to the public and the heavy workload of public officials of many of the provincial level institutions. When there are overburdening pressures on duties which are not properly defined, public officials are unable to maintain continuous updates on online services. That overburdened work environment influences further corrupt practices.

There is still a gap between central and provincial level public administration. The implementation of e-governance has not bridged that gap totally. E-governance through ICT should not only be available for the central government activities but it should be available for the provincial level activities as well. Unavailability of equal access to e-governance by all the citizens of the country is a major repercussion of the digital-divide which needs to be addressed with careful consideration on the income level of the people. Also, there should be a linking process through e-practices to prevent overlapping of public services. Though there are many activities which can be done as paperless e-services, public officials do not have enough confidence to be adaptive with them due to inadequate technological support.

Nevertheless, it is not possible to ensure e-governance without the implementation of the Right to Information Act (RTI). Gartner's E-governance Maturity Model shows the major phases of e-governance as a process and implementation of those phases in Sri Lanka suffered a lot because of the lacks in right to access information. The Act was enacted in 2016 and a proper implementation mechanism is yet to be found. Because of the delay of its proper implementation, most of the civil society organizations, media channels and common people have not been able to receive proper e-governance services. Moreover, this kind of lacks in disclosure of information facilitates corruption at the higher levels of decision making. However, in the future, the Right to Information Act, No. 12 of 2016 (Democratic

Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, 2016) will facilitate the implementation of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th phases of e-governance maturity model.

The active participation of people in decision making and implementation in Sri Lanka is still a myth. Though there are online channels to convey the messages to public institutions, people know that those channels are only for display purposes. An interactive system which accepts people's feedback positively and considers them as serious matters requiring urgent attention is necessary for a transparent democratic process. In a way, it can be argued that the Public-Private Partnership is the main way to achieve e-governance targets and to avoid the difficulties caused due to technological and other shortcomings of the government. The government has not yet fully tested its capability or opened enough access to private stakeholders either. Therefore, many of the technological barriers, threats, inefficiencies can be seen in e-governance of Sri Lanka.

Conclusion

The use of e-governance in curbing corruption can be considered as a partial tool and is not a comprehensive solution to reduce the monopoly of the government. Political commitment is a must to the successful implementation of ICT. Sri Lanka's e-governance policy suffers considerably since it lacks a strong political commitment and due to prevalence of administrative malpractices. The administrative malpractices refer to the characteristics such as "resistance to change, rigid adherence to rules, reluctance to delegate authority, sycophancy toward superiors, "target" mentality, indifference to the standards of efficiency, ignorance of the purposes behind regulations, generalist-elitist orientation combined with hostility toward technology, overstaffing, corruption, xenophobia, and nepotism" (Caiden,1991:488). Sri Lanka's administrative culture still has not deviated from these negative qualities. E-governance is the main alternative solution to curb corruption and it needs time to be established within the society. The role of e-governance in curbing corruption depends on the success of its institutional establishment to the political system. It cannot address corruption directly and its first role is to change the societal mindset into e-culture. However, in

general, e-governance plays an important role in curbing public-sector corruption and it has demonstrated successful outcomes in comparison to other public-sector reforms in Sri Lanka.

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