

Customer opinion of the E-government services providing from the government Organization: Reference to Ja-Ela Urban Council (Sri Lanka)

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Abstract: In the world public administration service, there should be a proper co-ordination among the state officers, clients & the state resources to provide and obtain services at a satisfactory level. The expected efficiency and effectiveness collapsed and people had to face various problems since there was no proper co-ordination among the three sections. At this backdrop world administration service introduced many kind of New Public Management aspects like 5S methods, Citizen Charter, E-Government projects to solve this problems & to provide efficiency service. E- Governance means the use of electronic communications devices, computers and internet to provide public services. Generally e-governance concept includes four major models. Those are, government to citizen, government to employees, government to government and government to business. According to the scholars e-government is a subset of the E-governance concept. Presently, government to employee model label as e-governance & government to citizen, business & government to government label as e-government. This research mainly consider about the e-government concept. The main objective of this paper is to find the customer awareness of the E-Government Services. This study is based on both primary and secondary data. Questionnaires were contributed and interviews were conducted to obtain primary data. Also the UNDP reports, relevant books, articles have been referred to get secondary data. Through the stratified random sampling method, 100 of customers who visited to Ja-ela municipal government in Sri Lanka were selected for the study. The collected primary data were analyzed from the SPSS software and analyzed data presented from bar charts and pie charts. This study reveals that most of the customers didn't have positive opinion of e-government services providing from Ja-ela urban council. As the recommendation this study propose that ja-ela urban council must adopt more e-government projects and have to be conduct more programmes for the citizens to improve the knowledge of E-government service.

Keywords: Administration, Customer, E-government, Organization, Satisfaction.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Raise of New Public Management

According to Premathilaka (2004), there are two tendencies in Public Management. Those are,

1. Traditional Public Management
2. New Public Management

Anyhowthere were many criticisms about the traditional management approaches since 1970s. Because the traditional management approaches were not workout progressivelywith the changing community needs (Fatemi and Behmanesh, 2012: 42). At this backdrop the politicians, policy makers were consider of new public management approaches.The scholars have defined the New Public Management concept in various ways. Some definitions are below mentioned.

“NPM theory is an influential model for public sector for effective service delivery; encouraging government to be more efficient and responsive “(Hood, 2002).

“Entrepreneurial governments have begun to shift to systems that separate policy decisions (steering) from service delivery (rowing) as per NPM” (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992).

“NPM shifts the emphasis from traditional public administration to public management” (Lane, 1994).

Anyhow the new public management approaches were used for the first time in 1980s’ by the Prime Minister of England, Margaret Thatcher for the public administration reforms which adopted to United Kingdom (Fatemi and Behmanesh, 2012: 42). In early 1990s, above term was used to describe public sector reform in Britain and New Zealand too. However after that United State also adopted this approach in early 1990s’. Anyhow according to Pollitt (2003) & Hood (1991), the New Public Management concept introduced to fix the problems in government such as low public confidence in bureaucracy, waste, weakness of designing part in programmes/projects and performance deficiencies. However presently many countries considering of new public management principles for public sector reforms. Also some world organizations such as Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) fans encouraged to spread this reforms throughout the world. However today principals of new public management considered by not only Develop countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zeland, United Kingdom but also the developing countries such as India, Jamaica and Thailand. Recently this principles considered by the Asian countries through the support of World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). In this case the new public management approaches are popular in all over the world. However, according to Hood, (1991) explained that the new public management based on seven components. Those are as bellow:

1. The first principle: Emphasis on management skills for active, objectively and voluntary control of organizations.
2. The second principle: Defining standards and criteria for measuring performance through determining the objectives and indicators success.
3. The third principle: Emphasis on use of output controls, instead of using input controls.
4. The fourth principle: Moving toward separation units and decentralization in public sector.
5. The fifth principle: Moving toward greater competition in the public sector that leads to lower costs and better standards.
6. The sixth principle: Emphasis on private sector management styles.
7. The seventh principle: Emphasis on efficiency, effectiveness and economic efficiency to use the resources (Fatemi and Behmanesh, 2012: 43).

From above components it surface that management in government organization should be more active and the personnel management should be converting to effective management. Presently lots of developed and developing countries introduced many kind of new public management tools to increase the effectiveness of their government sector. Some of them are CC (Citizens Charter), E-government projects, E-handbook, Five S methods, Pocket guide, Customer service training, Performance management system projects and Government service directory likewise (George simataa, 2004: P 7-10). From the above mentioned new public management aspects E-government projects are the most popular aspect in the world. In this backdrop it is important revels the public opinion of E-government services providing from the Ja-ela urban council.

1.2 E-Government Concept

“E-Government concept/ Projects” is a major new public management approach, introduced to accelerate economic progress while achieving effectiveness & efficiency in the state sector services. E-Government means to use electronic communications devices, computers and the Internet to provide public services to citizens. Electronic government also known as digital government, online government and connected government. Many countries conducting several kind of projects to provide effective service to citizens. There are three main definitions of E-government concept as follow,

According to Subash Batnagar (2004), E- Government is about a process of reform in the way governments work, share information and deliver services to external and internal clients.

World Bank (2008), mentioned that E- Government refers to the use by government agencies of information technologies that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government.

Gartner Group (2008), explained that E-Government as the continuous optimization of service delivery, constituency participation, and governance by transforming internal and external relationships through technology, the Internet, and new media.

(Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka, 2010: 17).

However above definitions are the most popular definitions of E-government concept. From the above definitions we can identify some of the advantages of E-government concept. Such as it can enhance better relationship between the client and the service provider, to increase the speed and quick service to the client and to provide citizen friendly service. Although there are four models of E-government services based on the categories of stakeholders. Those are:

Government to Citizen service model / G2C

(Ex: On line checking of account balance of Employee Provident Fund, Checking Train schedules and Booking train seats, Obtaining vehicle revenue license online)

Government to Business service model /G2B

(Ex: Procurement, E-Company Registry, Tax On line and GIC

Government to Employees service model / G2E

(Ex: Employee Provident Fund services, E-Human Resource Management, E-Pensions)

Government to Government service model/ G2G

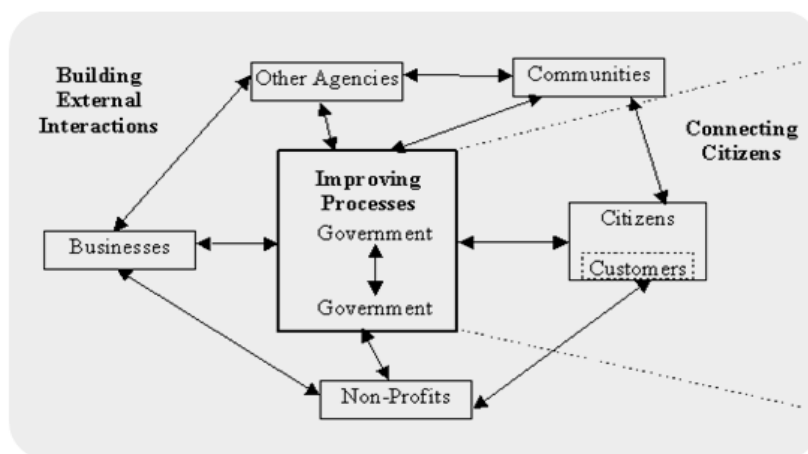
(Ex: E-mail and video conference for convenient communication, Integrated financial management systems, Integrated human resource management systems).

(Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka, 2010: P 17).

Presently, government to employee model label as e-governance & government to citizen, business & government to government label as e-government. There are three main domains of e-government as bellow mentioned:

1. Improving government processes: E-Administration
2. Connecting citizens: E-Citizens and E-Services
3. Building external interactions: E- Society

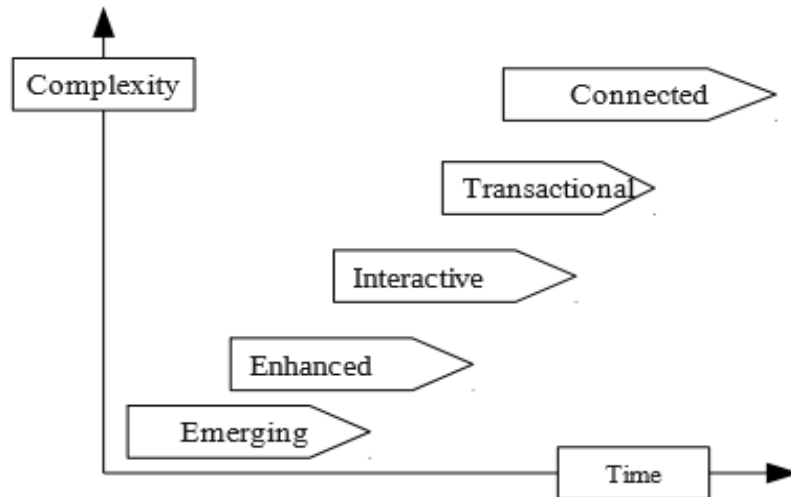
Respectively, these particularly address the problems that government is too costly, too inefficient and too ineffective (e-administration); too self-serving and too inconvenient (e-citizens and e-services); and too insular (e-society). Bellow figure 01 is explain the focal domains for E-government initiatives.



(Source: www.egov4dev.org)

Figure 1: Focal Domains for E-Government Initiatives

However there are many kind of E-government maturity models which have evaluated the evolution of E-government. Out of those models UN E-government maturity model has indicated five maturity level. Bellow mention figure 2 explain it.



(Source: Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka, 2010: P 26)

Figure 2: E-government maturity levels

In the first stage the organization is limited to a static website or a webpage of the website of a line ministry or line department. There are non other relationship between the client and service provider. Also in the second stage the government organization maintain their own web site and provide the policies and information which related to governance. In this stage the website provider reports, acts, application forms and other rules & regulation which make citizen friendly governance process. In “Interactive” level it provider circulars, legal enactments etc. Also it provide forms and applications such as tax payment, license for build up interaction between the citizens and the service provider. Furthermore the website provides complex interactive services such as, train journey planning and booking train seats, interactive dictionaries and glossaries and booking government holiday bungalows. Although, in the “Transactional” level citizens fulfill their neednesses in online such as tax payments, submission of ID applications and attain copies of birth certificates. However in this level government organization is well organized ICT system for administrative as well as functional requirements. In the final stage all government organizations use a common ICT infrastructure/ government network. In this level all the government organizations connect with a one network. So the citizens can obtain the services at a “one- stop- shop” without going to numerous government organization. As an example “Lanka Gate (www.lk)” website (<http://www.egov4dev.org>).

Anyhow presently many countries are adopting e-government projects to provide a accurate and quick service for the citizens. As a example in America there are two levels of administration service called state administration and national administration. So e-government project able to build inter relationship between this two levels. Also since 2008 the government officers of America able to get remuneration information through the website (<http://www.msg.itlg.blogspot.com>). Although the American government trying to improve the transparency of their government services through the websites such as www.data.gov and www.govdata.co.uk. However there are many countries which have built up a connection through the social media WebPages between the citizens and government organizations such as Haringey online facebook page, www.twitter.com/harringayonline and www.youtube.com/user/harringayonlinepage in United Kingdom. Not only developed countries but also developing countries such as India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nambia considered to promote e-government projects in their countries. However, annually UNA conducting a survey about the e-government concept in administration sector. According to 2016 United Nation annual survey below are the top ten countries in e-government development index.

Table 1: E-Government Development Index - Top 10 Countries

Country	Index
United Kingdom	0.9193
Australia	0.9143
Republic of Korea	0.8915
Singapore	0.8828
Finland	0.8817
Sweden	0.8704
Netherlands	0.8659
New Zealand	0.8653
Denmark	0.8510
France	0.8456

Source: <https://publicadministration.un.org>

The above charts make to identify neither Sri Lanka or any Asian country has able to include for the top 10 countries. Anyhow, Sri Lanka able to get 79th place out of 193 countries on 2016 survey which conducted by United Nation. According to this kind of a back drop it is important find the citizen opinion about the e-government concept as a new public management reform in Sri Lanka.

1.3 E-government Policy in Sri Lanka

Today the role of the state has been changed to state police to welfare provider. Because of that the people tend to go to state organizations to fulfill their need nesses. But later on, people had waste lot of money, time when they are tending to fulfill their neediness's. However Sri Lankan government introduced New Public Management aspects as for a solution for this matter. However the government of Sri Lanka needs to develop ICT through the National computer policy (COMPOL) of 1983. This first attempt was taken by the Natural Resource, Energy and Science Authority of (NARESA) Sri Lanka under the superior of the then president. The "NARESA" after that appointed a committee and it has given birth to the national computer policy in Sri Lanka (Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka, 2010: P 36). After all in 2002 Sri Lankan government had established the Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA) under the Information & Communication Technology Act of 2003(De Alwis, 2013: P 84). It attempted to introduce ICT for deliver public services while redesigning the ongoing delivery processes in order to make government business more citizen-focused & friendly without any delays. Under this act it has introduced " e-Sri Lanka Development Project" during the period of 2002-2005. From, this projects it expected to adapt new public management aspects to Sri Lankan administration service & sustainable improvements in efficiency, openness, effectiveness & quality of the service. However gradually by 2007 the majority of government institutions, including the district and divisional secretaries were started to deliver public services using ICT. Under this government process 500 "Nanasala" (knowledge Centre) centers established with internet, e-mail, telephone facilities throughout the country. Also given a computer training to citizens to use internet, e-mail and to share knowledge without much of cost. After a long process E-Government policy was officially introduced to Sri Lanka on 16th of December in 2009. It is a result of the meetings, workshops & seminars attended by experts in both private and state sector since 2004. Anyhow, The E-Government policy of 2009 had 177 policy clauses. The new policy comprises 132 policy clauses formulated after group activities and inter-action taking into consideration the feedback, trends in technology and stakeholder thinking. For view of the draft new E- Government policy and expression of views log on to [http://egovpolicyen\(engage.icta.lk\)](http://egovpolicyen(engage.icta.lk)). However Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA) work with the society under the specific mandates given by the Sri Lankan cabinet of ministers. Those are:

1. Electronic Transaction Act No.19 of 2006
2. Computer Crimes Act No. 24 of 2007
3. Data Protection Code
4. Intellectual Property Act No.36 of 2003(Sources: www.labour.gov.lk).

Presently Sri Lankan government providing various kind of E-government services. Some of them are:

1. Train Schedule Information
2. Check the Status of ID Card Application
3. Can obtain Birth certificate, Death certificate and Marriage certificate services.
4. Tea Price Information – Sri Lankan Tea Board
5. Water Level Information of Mahaweli Reservoirs
6. Check your Sri Lanka Identification Number (SLIN)
7. E-education services
8. Information about Government Organizations
9. Train Schedule Information
10. People can get information of the prices of fish, vegetables and etc,

(Sources: www.labour.gov.lk).

Also to obtain information of government services in any language (Sinhala, Tamil, English), the Sri Lankan government has introduced three websites. Those are, Lanka Gate website/ www.srilanka.lk, Government Information centre/ www.gic.gov.lk and Official Web Portal of Sri Lanka/ www.gov.lk. Bellow are the welcome pages of above websites.



Figure N: Welcome Page of some websites

According to the article of E-government in “Arthika wimasuma”, 2011 October/November volume mentioned that from distributing ICT resources for the citizen will be reduce the poverty level, economic range & child death quantity in Sri Lanka. “Information Technology Usage in Government and Society” is another article which focused on to importance of the E-government concept in “Public Focus, 2014 January/February 1st volume. Below mentioned statement will describe how the e-government concept improve the economic development.

“The E-government via ICT activities will definitely improve efficiency, accuracy, effectiveness & quality of the government sector” (shamika, 2014:7).

Although the second volume of “Public Focus” (2014 March/April) published an article name as “E-citizen”. This is a new E-government project which conducting in selected gramaniadhari division in 12 district in Sri Lanka. However presently there is a critical discussion in the Sri Lankan society about E-government policy. According to this kind of a backdrop it is important to revel the citizens opinion of E-government services providing from the government organization special reference to Ja-ela urban council.

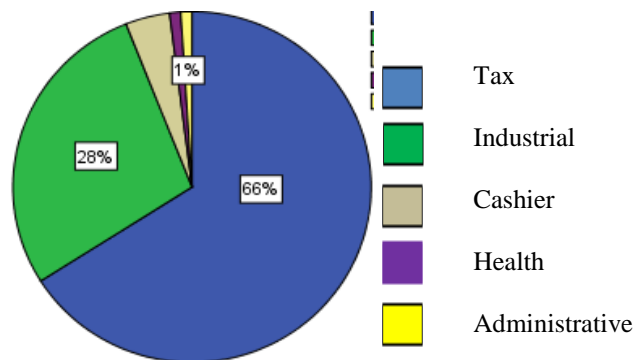
1.4 Citizens' Opinion of E-government services providing from the local authorities

(Reference to Ja-Ela Urban Council)

“Pradeshiya sabha” is the new local administrative unit, which introduced in 1981. Also in parallel urban councils were established based on town areas & municipal council were established based on relatively developed areas/cities. Presently, people reach to above local government organizations to fulfill their neediness's and those neediness's include with public health, roads, public markets & leaving taxes. Anyhow E-government policy was introduced on 2003 by United Nation Party to increase the efficiency & effectiveness of the government organization. But now there are both positive & negative criticisms about the efficiency & effectiveness of the state services under the E-government policy. At this backdrop it is of timely important to examine the public opinion of the E-government services in relative to the Ja-Ela urban council.

There were 41% of female and 59% of male respondents out of hundred (100) of respondents. From the bellow chart it amplify the range of the respondents who came to get services according to the departments wise in Ja-ela urban council.

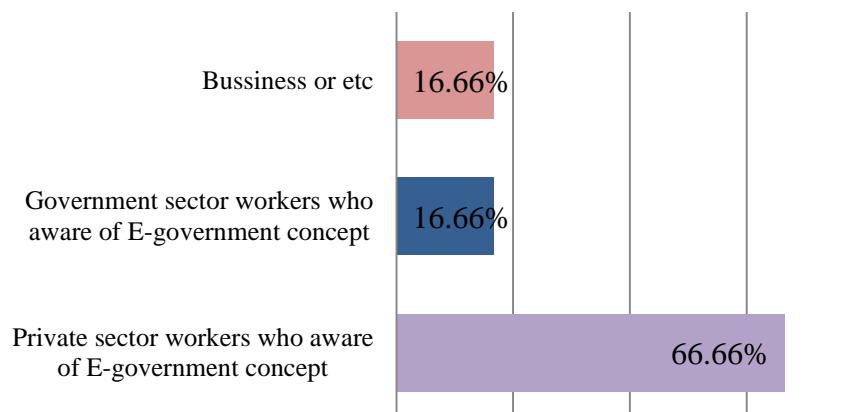
Graph 01: Respondents who came to get services according to the department wise.



(Source: Field research, 2015)

As per the survey, around 92% of the respondents were not aware about the E-government concept, 6% of responded were aware about the E-government concept & 2% of customers have awareness of E-government concept in a satisfactory level. This study found that most of the responded who aware about the E-government services are attached to the private sector. Statistically it's about 66.7% (4 responded). Bellow graph 02 describe the above statistic details clearly.

Graph 2: Citizens' awareness of E-government concept as per the job sector

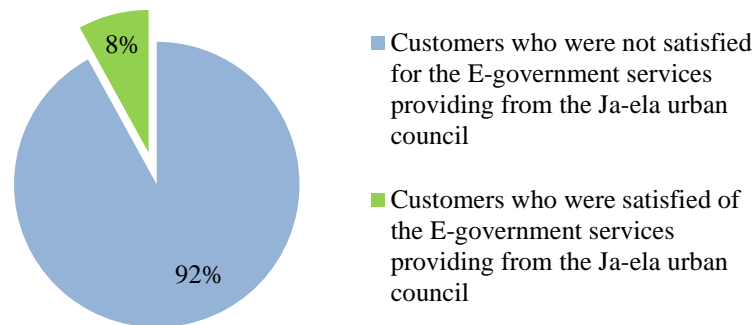


(Source: Field research, 2015)

This research observed that Ja-ela urban council using phones & other telecommunication strategies to provide documentary services to the customers. But the study has found that Ja-ela urban council doesn't have web page, any kind of a social media page or an E-mail address to provide services to the customers.

Also from the 100 of population 92% (92 customers) were not satisfied of the E-government services providing by the Ja-ela urban council & 8% (8 customers) of them were satisfied about the E-government services providing by the Ja-ela urban council. Bellow Graph 03 explain it statistically.

Graph N: Citizens' satisfaction of E-government services providing from the Ja-ela urban council



(Source: Field research, 2015).

How ever finally this research reveals still the E-government policy is implementing in a poor level in local authorities under the various kind of legal steps in Sri Lankan government. It collapsed expected efficiency and effectiveness of government services of Sri Lanka. But when comparing I was able to found that some government organization such as Gampaha district secretary, Ja-ela provincial secretary, Kandy provincial secretary were conducting E-government services in satisfactory level than Ja-ela urban council. Also altogether this study reveals that that citizens of Sri Lanka have negative public opinion of E-government services providing from the government organization such as urban council.

2. CONCLUSIONS

E-government policy is a new public management aspect which introduced to the government sector to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and more citizen friendly service. Under the many kind of rules and regulation Sri Lankan government also introduced this policy officially on 16th of December in 2009. However presently it is timely important neediness to find the public opinion of the E-government services providing from the government organization. According to this study customers didn't have positive kind of a public opinion about E-government services providing from the Ja-ela urban council as a government organization. Therefore the study concludes that government organization in Sri Lanka must provide E-government services for the customers in a satisfactory level. The study recommend that Sri Lankan government must have guideless for ground level government organizations such as urban council & "pradeshiyasabha" to conduct E-government projects, plans and programmes more effectively. Also the Sri Lankan government must conduct programmes to improve customer awareness of E-government concept. Presently government sectors in many countries such as Malaysia and India practicing E-government services in a customer satisfactory level. It signifies that the importance of providing E-government services to the customers in a satisfactory level.

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