

**STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF CONTINUITY AND CHANGE:
A STUDY OF SELECT E-GOVERNMENT PROJECTS IN INDIA**

by

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Submitted

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Dedicated to my father

Late Dr. Syed Mohammad Nasim

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled '**Strategic Management of Continuity and Change: A Study of Select E-Government Projects in India**' being submitted by *Ms. Saboohi Nasim* to the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)**, is a record of bonafide research work carried out by her. She has worked under my guidance and supervision and fulfilled the requirements for the submission of the thesis, which has attained the standard required for a Ph.D. degree of the Institute. The results presented in this thesis have not been submitted elsewhere for the award of any degree or diploma.

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(Saboochi Nasim)

Abstract

The ever increasing pace of change has compelled organizations to focus more on 'change and transformation'; and 'government' is no exception. However, despite the unprecedented focus on change, the record of change success is abysmally low, both in business organizations and in the context of e-government projects (especially in developing countries), thus, prompting the need to explore the emerging alternatives beneath and beyond change.

A conceptual review of organizational change literature reiterates the fact that 'managing change is invariably managing paradoxes'. As a result, various approaches to managing such dualities and paradoxes have emerged as a possible solution for enhancing change outcomes. One such approach that seems to have gained considerable attention recently, calls for managing continuity and change concurrently for better change outcomes. Drawing from the literature, the research under consideration, explores this emerging approach to strategize for better outcomes in e-government domain.

The domain of e-government calls for radical changes embracing new technologies and processes, on one hand; and 'government'- as an entity, on the other hand, is largely driven by rules, norms and laws strengthening forces of continuity. Further, given the enormity of investments and low success rate of e-government projects, it becomes imperative to explore beyond 'change management'. Hence, a new construct of 'continuity' is introduced and proposed to be managed concurrently with change forces to attain better delivery of strategic deliverables in e-government projects. The main objective of the research is, thus, to suggest a strategic framework to facilitate the performance of e-government projects based on management of continuity and change. The scope of the study, however, is limited to government-to-citizen (G2C) e-government projects in India.

The research work has been carried out in five phases. The first phase laid down the foundation of the study by undertaking an extensive literature review that highlighted the research gaps and facilitated the identification of research variables. An expert survey was conducted to confirm the variables for the Indian context.

Further, qualitative techniques like Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) and Total Interpretive Structural Modeling (TISM) were used to gain deeper insights about the relationships among the research variables. Insights gained from these methods were used in hypothesizing the conceptual research framework in the second phase of the study. Possible relationships among three broad sets of research variables, namely – managing forces of change, managing forces of continuity and strategic deliverables of e-government projects were hypothesized.

During the third phase, the hypothesized relationships were empirically tested based on opinion surveys using a questionnaire – the reliability and validity of which had been suitably established. Hypotheses of difference were tested to find the difference in perception of the key stakeholders, namely service providers (planners and implementers) and citizens. Further, cluster and discriminant analysis has been undertaken to categorize the projects surveyed into high and moderately performing cases to determine their discriminating characteristics. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the interaction, mediating and moderating roles of the research variables as proposed. These statistical tests were conducted using the software package of SPSS Version 17. In addition, AMOS Version 17 was used for structural equation modeling of the hypothesized model which was structurally validated, both at the macro and micro levels.

Case research was undertaken in the fourth phase of the study. Four e-government projects were selected for an in-depth case analysis which includes Online Income Tax (citizen interface) project, Online Monitoring of NREGA (NREGASoft - the e-initiative of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act Scheme), Online Passport, and CIC Online (online filing of second appeal and complaints as per Right to Information Act). Finally, in the last phase, the results from the empirical study and the insights from the case studies have been triangulated and synthesized, based on which a validated model has been suggested.

As per the findings of the study, managing forces of continuity variables (especially culture) emerged as the more significant predictors of higher performance as compared to managing change forces. The interaction of continuity and change variables explained greater variation in the performance factors than when

addressed or managed independently. Change forces partially mediate relationship between 'cultural continuity' and the performance factors; and managing cultural continuity forces moderate the relationship between change forces and the performance factors. Further, striking difference in perception among stakeholder groups, i.e. service providers and citizens availing the services, were found related to citizen oriented performance factors. Finally, the validated models for the macro and micro variables, as obtained by using structural equation modeling and interpreted in case contexts, indicate that the proposed model fit the data well and highlight significant paths affecting performance factors.

The results of the study strengthen the basic premise of the research that 'managing continuity and change concurrently is a significant predictor of performance factors'. Besides the usual contribution of a validated research model, the structural paths, case insights etc, the study attempts a modest contribution to the theoretical assumptions of the 'neo-institutional theory' and the 'duality theory'. The study is, thus, a novel attempt at presenting a strategic framework linking management of change and continuity to performance variables, in the context of e-government in general and e-government in India, in particular. It reiterates the importance of addressing softer issues like 'culture' and suggests the pathway to various project and citizen related performance factors, providing strategic insights for practitioners in the domain.

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