



Building Capacities & Leveraging Mobile and New Media Technologies for effective Citizen Engagement – Opportunities and Challenges

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Citizen Engagement

What it is...

- Engages individuals
- Engagement from agenda setting and planning to decision-making, implementation and review
- Includes forums and processes through which citizens come to an opinion which is informed
- Collective problem solving

What it is not...

- Engages leaders of the stakeholders
- Involves participants only in last phase of policy making
- Seeks approval for a pre-determined choice of alternatives
- Intends to fulfil public consultation obligation

Citizen Engagement

Citizen engagement values the right of citizens to have an informed say in the decisions that affect their lives. It is a two way dialogue and emphasizes the sharing of power, information, and a mutual respect between government and citizens.

Was it citizen engagement?



Engaged only a few leaders in consultation

Alternatives were worked out in advance – each side wanted its alternative accepted

Drafting committee and Parliamentary Panel had limited public consultation

Emotional movements – rather than an informed decisions

Limited engagement was at the last stage after each side had a draft ready

Why Citizen Engagement ?

Shift in government-citizen relations - pressure on government to change

Wider participation to ensure the initiatives are widely accepted

With the emerging new technologies and mediums like social media and mobiles, citizens are more informed

New medium facilitates two way communication

Citizens now have a right to information

Challenges in citizen engagement

India's geographical, linguistic and cultural diversity

Three tiers of government

Illiteracy and low income levels

Limitation of information with a select few

Trust deficit with government

Challenges posed by intermediaries

Social Media for Citizen Engagement

Help releasing as much information

Reduced cost of engagement with almost zero cost of citizen participation

Collective wisdom of the key stakeholders

Grievance redressal

Ensure compliance (MCD)

Real time feedback to citizens (DTP)

Citizens trusts third party independent mediums

Survey – Technocrat Vs IAS

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Mobiles and Citizen Engagement

Any 2G phone with SMS can be used for getting citizen feedback

Way Forward

Shift the focus to citizen rather than procedure

Involve all community institutions

Use new technology - mobiles, social media

Go beyond traditional venues (political rallies) - schools, workplaces

Research about what works and why

Help communities move from deliberation to action

Thank you

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