

# Effective app-based governance

Three years ago, MyGov may have made a modest start, but today it is a platform that not only acts as an enabling mouthpiece for people but stands as a reflection of the Government's performance

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It isn't a cover-page advertisement on a newspaper with lifespan of a day...it isn't an assembly of sentences in a typical Government advertisement, struggling to fit in more numbers of words in a line which will make you turn the page once you reach its third line...it isn't decked with some charts or tables, forcibly drawn to suit advertiser's convenience.... Welcome to <https://threeyears.mygov.in/>, the microsite at MyGov — an effort by the Modi Government to showcase its work on completion of three years in office before the citizens of this country with the objective of propagating its various initiatives as well as to gather feedback. Get ready for a gamified experience of governance... It is a two-month long activity to evaluate your Government.

If you have not heard about it, seen it, gone through it or engaged with it, you have certainly missed something. The observers of Government should go through it, both to critique as well as to appreciate. Once you have logged on and wonder where to begin with, Prerna, an animated character will welcome you to give an overview of the site.

The approach has been a modest attempt and has not been used for glorification of the achievements which have been quite significant. For example, the infographics on a number of new LPG connections displays that the Modi Government has given many times more new LPG connections in three years (6.9 crore in 2014-17) than the previous UPA Government gave in 10 years (5.31 crore in 2004-14) — it doesn't brag about it. Or while the number of toilets constructed have jumped by over 400 per cent in a year, compared to last year of UPA Government in 2013-14, it doesn't overly underline this momentum. It also states, in simple graphics, that the optical fibre broadband network is now 2,05,404 km in place of just 358 km in 2014.

The voice of India section hosts an array of videos that represents a diversity which is a testimony of expanding footprints of the Government's various schemes and that they are not confined to either urban or rural areas only. An increase of ₹100 a day in earnings may not mean much for many but Kiran, a weaver story, that she has not only been able to increase her income by 100 per cent from ₹100 to ₹200 a day but also could spare more time for her family with the help of Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojna touches you. There is also the story of Kavita who used Udan to fly to a new destination at an affordable price and saved time. There are no flashy ads with models but real people narrating the stories



of change in their lives.

From steps of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ensure a clean Government to issues such as demonetisation to farmer welfare, the microsite offers insights on issues on most of the initiatives taken by the Government in the past three years. There is also a quiz section that has questions related to the Government's achievements, such as policies and figures quoted above. There is also Making of Developed India (MODI) festival which gives details of the various programmes that are there to mark the Government's anniversary.

MyGov is an equally important tool for the Government to receive feedback through discussions and surveys. For instance, after the completion of two years in office, the Government sought responses from the citizens on a specially designed micro-site with a section called 'Rate My Government'.

On the micro-site, there is also a call to the citizen to be champion of a new India by taking steps such as referring BHIM app or sharing photographs of yoga etc — it has variety of activities to attract citizen of diverse age groups and interests. New India Championship is a two-month long championship to engage citizens with daily contributions and other exciting activities which began on May 27 and will be over on July 26. There are also several time-bound contests. The championship has been launched with the objective of fostering citizen engagement on various Government-related schemes such as the Swachh Bharat

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Mission, International Yoga Day, Shramav Jayate Karyakram, Incredible India, Skill India and Digital India. While educating the masses about these national goals and action plans, the championship is targeting people's participation in newer and exciting ways.

Though the media section could have been made better with captions and significance of the photos as not all the photographs are self-explanatory, considering the diverse interests of the Prime Minister. Also, the flyers, especially the ones in English, could have been done with better colour contrast and layout design for easier readability.

Whether you want to critique or laud the efforts of Prime Minister Modi's Government, MyGov will help you understand, decipher the governance jargon and help you form your opinion with facts and figures. It is not a Public Relation statement, drafted to play with data, but designed with an honest attempt to communicate with the people, for harnessing collective wisdom and building a new paradigm of transparency to ensure participation of common citizen in governance.

That MyGov isn't simply a token platform of the Prime Minister's ambitious digital plans is evident from the fact that the Government has paid actual attention to all the proposals from the citizens on the discussion boards and even implemented them whenever possible. Even Finance Minister Arun Jaitley's Union Budget this year reflected some of the notable suggestions made by MyGov users.

Three years back, MyGov may have made a modest start, but its role today in engaging the citizen for a truly participatory democracy, is now a case study. The platform not only acts as an effective mouthpiece for the people but also stands as a reflection of the Government's performance. While it employs technology as the enabler, it also pushes the people to make physical contributions at ground zero. Technology has become omnipresent in the present Government's agenda and why not?

The transformative power over governance that technology possesses simply cannot be measured by any other medium. In 2016, the number of smartphone users in India crossed the 300 million mark. This large user base believes in staying connected 24x7 and wants information at their fingertips. The Government has been quick to realise that the best way to reach this new tech-savvy generation is through digital platforms like MyGov. The various tools MyGov uses like suggestions, discussions, competitions, polls, creative contributions, in terms of slogans, designs and logos, has probably made it a unique platform to help the Modi Government achieve what it is today — a Government for the people, by the people and of the people in terms of inclusion and participation in policy planning and execution. The use of this gamification, to engage citizen in its three-years journey will add another feather in its cap.

*(The writer is an independent journalist with interest in politics and governance issues)*