Open Data for Inclusive Governance

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Abstract

Government Agencies collect & generate huge amount of data in various sectors of development in the process of their day to day functioning. These data range from traffic, weather, geographical, tourist information, statistics, business, public sector budgeting, and performance levels, to all kinds of data about policies and inspection, food, safety, education quality, employment etc. Data is the fuel of information Economy.

Open Government Data is a recent and rapidly growing phenomenon. Governments are increasingly taking initiatives to make their data available online in open formats and under licenses that allow use, reuse & redistribution of government data. As of now there are around two hundred data portals across the world belonging to governments at federal as well as state level. Some of cities across the world have also opened up their data as a platform encouraging development of applications over the data platform for public good. Open Government Data is a recent and rapidly growing phenomenon. Governments are increasingly taking initiatives to make their data available online in open formats and under licenses that allow use, reuse & redistribution of government data.

As of now there are around two hundred data portals across the world belonging to governments at federal as well as state level. Some of cities across the world have also opened up their data as a platform encouraging development of applications over the data platform for public good. Apps developed around these datasets can help citizens understand pollutants near their home, crimes in their neighborhood, public works, natural disasters and political activities. Thus government data available for personal or commercial use, has immense potential to increase the quality of life for communities, businesses, and government alike.

Open Data Initiative of Indian Government was launched with the announcement of National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP) in March 2012. The main objective of this policy is to allow access to Government owned shareable data in machine readable form through a network, across the country in a proactive and periodically updatable manner, within the framework of various related policies, acts and rules of Government of India.

NIC has set up an open government data platform to provide single point access to datasets published by different departments as per NDSAP policy at http://data.gov.in. Any one can access open government data platform of India to browse, and search for the data that is relevant to their needs and can also download the data sets. They can also explore datasets while on the platform by utilizing online visualization service, and have data transformed to variety of charts or even on maps.

Open Data implementation is now being extended to state governments. Opening data relating to State government services & municipal corporations (responsible for managing a lot of citizen services in Indian cities) shall open up a platform for huge innovation. Citizen Engagement & community participation can lead to a lot of innovation in delivery of government information & services to masses in the language & device of their choice.

To expedite this cycle Cloud based solution is being developed to enable any institution launch their open data initiative simply by making a request over the cloud as Software as a Service.
Neeta Verma has been associated with introduction of World Wide Web Services in Government way back in 1996. She has consulted a large number of Government departments on their Portal Development strategies.

She had set up the first ‘Internet Data Centre’ at NIC in 2002. Presently over 5000 Government websites, portals and a number of E-governance applications are hosted out of this Data Centre. NIC Data Centre at Delhi is also ISO 27001 certified. She has also been associated with design of a no. of National level Data Centres and Disaster Recovery Centre across the Country. She is currently leading implementation of Cloud Services in NIC Data Centres across the country.

As National Project Coordinator she has led the Development of National Portal of India, india.gov.in, Mission Mode Project under National e-Governance Plan. She has also authored “Guidelines for Indian Government Websites”.

She is also driving implementation of Open Data Initiative of the Government through Data Portal India, data.gov.in Neeta Verma has over 25 years of experience in the field of Information Technology. She is presently leading the Data Centre and Web services at NIC. Her major areas of Responsibility include Web Services at National Level, National Portal of India and Data Centre Operations & Management. & Open Government Data.