

## **The Role of E-Governance in Curbing Corruption of the Public Sector: A Case Study of Devinuwara Divisional Secretariat Office**

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Corruption is not a new phenomenon in Sri Lanka. Although deep rooted in the public sector, it does not mean that the corruption in the public sector cannot be controlled in Sri Lanka. Thus, necessary action should be taken to control corruption. The Devinuwara Divisional Secretariat Office (DDSO) has introduced several initiatives to prevent corruption that has been a major barrier in achieving its development goals and efficient service delivery. However, corruption is still one of the major issues in DDSO. Achievements in public services are far below levels of public satisfaction. According to the public, corruption is the best way to access the DDSO for information and services. Therefore, E-governance could be a solution to improve the quality of their services and provides greater opportunities for public to participate in the democratic process. In other words, E-governance could be a solution for corruption in DDSO. In view of these facts, DDSO was selected as a case study. Through this case, researchers tried to find answers to the following questions: (1) Does e-governance curb corruption in DDSO? and (2) How could e-governance be a solution for corruption in DDSO? The objectives of this study were: to analyse the role of e-governance in curbing corruption in DDSO, and to identify the e-governance initiatives in DDSO.

The study was mainly based on two types of data collection methods; survey methods and content analysis. Two types of survey methods were employed for this study, namely, structured questionnaire surveys for the public, and semi-structured interview surveys on DDSO officials such as the Divisional Secretary, Assistant Divisional Secretary, Assistant Director Planning, Accountant and Administrative Officials. Also, the interviews were extended to some selected citizens to get their insights about corrupt practices in DDSO. It helped the researchers to analyse the level of public satisfaction and to validate the data obtained from other sources. The sample size was 42 (32 randomly selected citizens and 10 DDSO officials). Besides this, content analysis was used to gather secondary data, information and facts. Data collected from different sources, as mentioned above, were analysed using qualitative and quantitative methods, and it was presented using tables, charts and figures.

The findings of this study are given below:

1. E-governance can lead to centralised data which can be used for improving audits and analyses.
2. E-governance can make decisions traceable.
3. The introduction of Information Communication Technology (ICT) can reduce corruption by improving the enforcement of rules, lessening the discretion of officials, and increasing transparency.
4. Web publishing of DDSO information builds accountability by providing documentation to citizens to substantiate their complaints against corrupt practices.
5. E-governance provides new sources of corrupt incomes for ICT professionals.
6. DDSO has still not gained significant savings or adequate efficiency through e-governance.