Thinking beyond Project Management

The convergence of technology is ushering in a new epoch to render services to the users. A project varies considerably in size, duration and involves a small group of people or large numbers in different parts of the organizations. Project management is a discipline for execution of IT projects. But, organizations are striving to improve its performance by combining deliverables from several related projects through Programme Management in place. Its management involves application of improved technologies that may bring reduced operating costs and increased aggregated benefits.

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Technology creates change and the change creates problems also. It is established that a large number of solutions are lost or looses focus during its execution. This necessitates a holistic approach to managing change involving people, process, technology and knowledge to work together and deliver growth and performance.

Programme management differs from project management. It is a layer above the project management which focuses on selecting the best group of projects and defining them in terms of their objectives and providing an environment where projects can be run successfully. It is a dynamic process that utilizes the appropriate resources of the organization in a controlled and structured manner to achieve some clearly defined objectives. It is always conducted within a defined set of constraints.

Programmes executions are usually phased, with target end dates for the initial phases which are well defined and committed. Subsequent phases are defined when initial phase approaches completion to enable initiation of new related projects. To say programme management is basically the utilization of project management and its inherent processes to manage a collection of closely inter-depended projects in a controlled and structured manner with alignment to the strategic needs.

Programme Management emphasizes on the coordination and prioritization of resources across projects, managing links between the projects and overall costs and risks of the programme. The execution of Programme Management have a number of factors e.g. Governance, Infrastructure, Planning, Integration, Management, alignment to higher level of vision, goal and objectives including assurance of ensuring adherence to standards etc. Many programmes are concerned with delivering a capability to change. Only

Flowchart of Programme Management
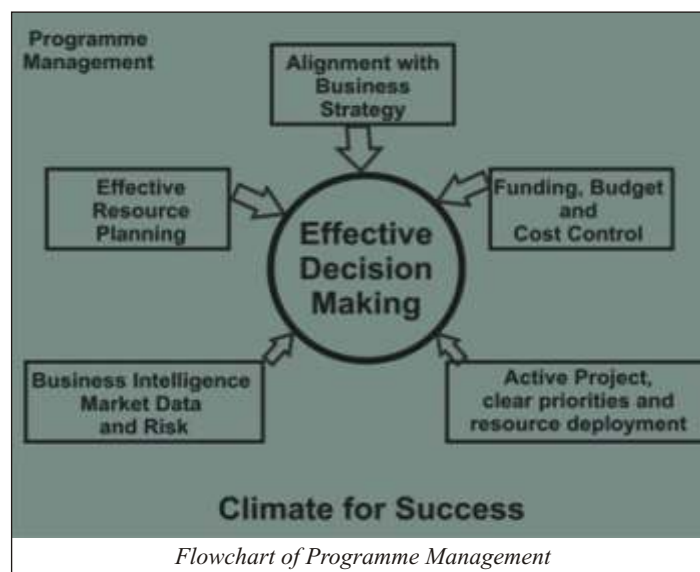
when that capability is transferred to the line management/department and utilized by the host organization/department the benefits are perceivable. On this view, benefits can only be delivered through utilization of a new capability.

Considering a case study of a programme, the National e-Governance Plan/Programme of Indian Government seeks to lay the foundation and provide the impetus for long term growth of e-Governance within the country through setting up the core infrastructure and implementation of a number of Mission Mode Projects and integrated services to create a citizen-centric and business-centric environment for the governance. The objective is the rapid introduction of e-Governance in the country.

Flowchart of Programme & Project Steering Team
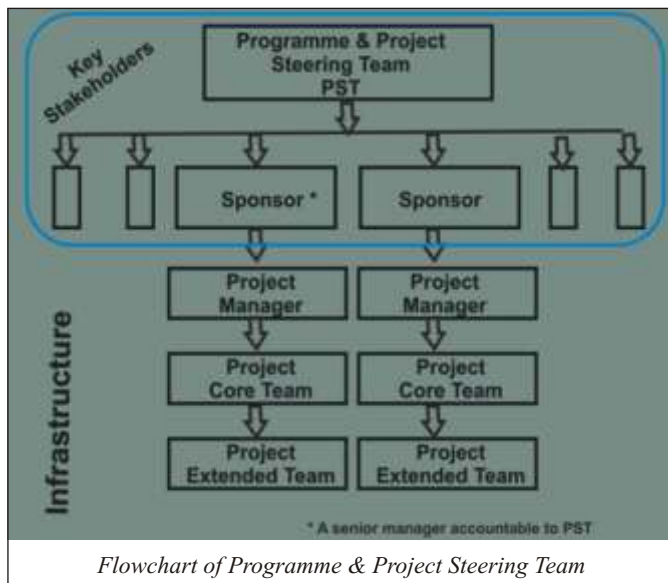
Likewise, a number of departments are executing programmes to benefit an organization that might include increased income or profits, decreased costs or reduced wastage, more satisfied customers or improved socio-economic conditions of the people at large. National Land Records Modernization (NLRMP) is also a programme. The ultimate goal of NLRP is to usher in the conclusive titling system with the guarantee to replace the current presumptive title system in the country through creation of a number of projects viz. computerization of property registration, land records,

digitization of maps, integration etc. Similarly there is an ICT programme of Surface Transport Department consisting of a number of related projects with their deliverables. The objective of the department is the formulation of National and State Registers for Vehicle Registration and Driving License. Various other departments have their own programmes/projects that are outcome driven and align to the vision, goal and objectives of the department. So, their governance, infrastructure, integration and management factors have a natural shift from project management.

Basically, when a Programme is formulated, inter-related projects are also created keeping the strategic needs of an organization. Such approach of creation of projects under a programme is bound to achieve results with their programme management in place. Looking from project management perspective, in course of project execution, key learning from projects usually triggers for subsequently change in scope of a project that may lack proper impact analysis and may not align to the strategic needs. This not only loses the essence of project but it also becomes difficult in turning the outputs to outcome. There must be a process to change the pre-determined scope of a project. Programmes often have to react to changes in strategy and changes in the environment in which the organization changes.

Keeping the evolving characteristics of e-Governance initiatives, scope enhancement must be analyzed with programmes in mind to deliver G2C, G2G, G2E and G2B service. This may not come from a single project with its limited scope. Hence, a work is divided into a collection of 'suites of projects' across an organization. And, programme management or portfolio management can help in better e-Governance implementation using a holistic approach involving people, process, technology and knowledge. Moreover emphasis on training, innovation and learning are also needed for the change and enhanced performance to bring economic growth and prosperity to make us stronger. **i**