



Prospect of Digital Platforms in Getting Service-Related Information and Providing Feedback



3rd December, 2019
CIRDAP, Dhaka

With the number of smartphone and internet users drastically increasing in Bangladesh, a mobile app named "Kolorob" has been introduced by Save the Children to increase the service quality across multiple industries by ensuring bilateral interaction between the service provider and the service recipient. Save the Children organized a roundtable titled "Prospect of Digital Platforms in Getting Service-Related Information and Providing Feedback" on December 3, 2019 at the CIRDAP office. The discussion was moderated by Md. Ashiq Iqbal, Deputy Director – Governance & Public Finance, Save the Children and moderator of the session. Here we publish a summary of the discussion.

Abdulla Al Mamun, Director, Child Rights Governance and Child Protection, Save the Children in Bangladesh



Save the Children has been working all across the globe for the last 100 years to ensure the rights of the children. We work to ensure an enlightened and safe childhood for children all across the world; ignoring the boundaries of race, color, and gender. It is our sincere belief that every child has the right to partake his/her views in every action that directly or indirectly affects him/her. Hence, all our decision-making strategies are implemented keeping the best interest of children in mind. Stemming from that, we recognized the absence of a platform or a process through which a child or his/her parent can provide feedback after taking any particular service. Save the Children works with the most disadvantaged and marginal children all across the country, the dire necessity of such a platform seemed to be much prevalent in the far-flung areas of Bangladesh. Keeping this in mind, we have brought you the Kolorob mobile app. With more than 90 million citizens of Bangladesh having access to mobile phones and the internet, the app has the potential to soar into great heights. We intended to reciprocate with the rising tide of the digitalization that the country is going through and create such a digital platform through which service providers will disperse the necessary service-related information. On the other hand, the recipients of the services can also provide appropriate feedback to the service providers, thus creating a culture of transparency and accountability.

Md. Lokmann Hossain, Managing Director, Aalok



Our journey with the Kolorob app began a year back. The app has been very instrumental for us in receiving honest feedback from our customers. There was a scene when the customer informed us about some of our service flaws via the app. Needless to say, the necessary rectifications were immediately made. One threat that must be tackled is the tendency of some people to confuse others by providing false information on the app. Misinformed feedback from users can pose to be very threatening for organizations' reputation.

Prof. Dr. Ehsanul Kabir, Managing Director, Essential Drugs Company Limited



In my viewpoint, the country is witnessing development particularly in two areas – structural development and service development. However, we must ensure that the core service is effectively designed and is beneficial for the users. Will infrastructural advancement be of any use if the end products are not up to the mark? Therefore, while the Kolorob app is the benchmark of a technology product, the offering that the service providers will present has to match the same level of standards. Even though technology evolves through time, the service must be designed keeping the end-user in mind. The services offered in the app has to be very easy to use. Simplicity is the key.

Shakil Bin Mustaq, Senior News Editor, TBN 24



I believe that the Kolorob app itself is a service provider; both for the ones who offer services through the platform and the ones who access the service via the platform. Speaking of feedbacks, Kolorob itself has to process user feedback and act accordingly. In case of feedback from users, the app should take corrective measures and rectify the issues that the users have pointed out.

Saila Farzana, Joint Secretary, Local Government Division



Only focusing on the rating aspect will not do. Rather detailed steps or way forwards on how to address the problems or difficulties must be mentioned. My experience

of working hands-on at the field level has given me a good understanding of the fact that the problems faced by rural and urban populations are vastly different. If multiple problems of a particular problem are registered then the relevant information must be handed over to the relevant authority in order to take further corrective measures.

Farzana Zaman, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Dhaka DC Office



With a diverse number of service offerings, the app is set to gain traction among users belonging to multiple socioeconomic classes. Hence, the issue of monitoring the entire value chain must be emphasized and acted upon. If someone is at fault, the agency or authority should be delegated to rectify the mistakes and hold that person accountable. Since the vast majority of our population lives in a rural setting, a separate strategy needs to be implemented in order to bring that user segment under the app's service coverage. Collaboration with multiple government stakeholders, such as a2i and the cabinet must also be ensured.

Pallab Mohaimen, Joint Feature Editor, Prothom Alo



Information provided in the Kolorob app should be accurate in all manner. If any service provider provides wrong information, there should be some monitoring system in the app and complaining system should be available as well. User interface of the app is good to use but, it has many competitors like Google map, Facebook. So, some unique features should be in mobile application so that user found interest to use this app. Some emergency hotline number like 999 or 333 can be integrated in the app.

Mahmud Hassan, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forest



Users will naturally have a resistance to change, but I'm glad that things are working the other way around. Active involvement of users from all demographics must be ensured. Service providers must develop the capability to process both types of feedback – positive and negative – and strive to refine their services accordingly. I believe there is a strong need to emphasize the training of the service providers as well; since this is one of the prime ways by which they can improve their service offerings.

Mohammad Tarikul Islam, Associate Professor, Department of Government and Politics, Jahangirnagar University and Visiting scholar of Oxford University



For the Kolorob app to thrive, the priority should be in creating a nexus between the service provider and the service recipient. The usage of the app is indeed posing the question of a paradigm shift, however, I believe that the users will indeed use the app if the fact of e-governance is ensured. Lastly, I would like to say that the Government should support the app in every way possible since the Kolorob is indeed playing a role in crafting Digital Bangladesh. Numerous other stakeholders should also be taken into consideration to further increase the app's capabilities and to raise awareness among the people.

Manjurul Haque Khan, Director, Directorate of Student Affairs, United International University



There is a risk of service providers uploading false information. This can be very detrimental to the service recipients of the app. Imagine walking up

a street where most of the necessary information about the nearby schools, colleges, and hospitals is wrong. Therefore, a checking mechanism must be installed in order to obstruct fabricated information being put up on the app. Data validation is true that the app must ensure in order to attain long-term success.

Arsen Stepanyan, Team Leader – Platform for Dialogue, British Council



The app is offering two solutions in particular – 1. Connecting service providers with service recipients. 2. Implementing a rating/accountability mechanism. One thing that has been ensured very well is the anonymity factor. It's very convenient since people usually don't feel comfortable giving direct feedback when it's negative. My recommendations will be twofold – 1. Inspect whether the issues of problems related to service access and the problems related to feedbacks can be separately identified. 2. Categorize service providers in terms of the various services that they provide. The last observation will be to look at the part of the beneficiaries and to develop processes through which Kolorob app can reach even the most marginalized people out there.

Santanu Lahiri, Senior Decentralization Consultant, The World Bank



Bangladesh is doing a remarkable job in terms of ensuring digital services for the people. The Kolorob app is one such a phenomenal example. It is about time the app finds its niche and focus on it and generates traction among the users. The commercial prospects of the app should also be considered; in order to make the app last for the long haul. Lastly, the Government of Bangladesh must be involved with the progress of the app, in order to further increase its potential. In order to pique the Government's interest, Kolorob must aspire to reach users across multiple demographics and geographic segments, for example – the ones in the poverty prone, disaster-prone areas.

Mondip Gharai, Assistant Project Director, LGSP-3, Local Government Division



A separate module must be made for the services that are offered for children. Plus, details about other necessary services, such as the locations of public toilets and the spots that offer drinking water, should also be incorporated in the app. We have developed an app which consists the contact details of all the functionaries of Union Councils – starting from the Chairman to the member. In order, to ensure the app's proper penetration into the rural market, we will be happy collaborate with the Kolorob app and facilitate it accordingly.

Khairul Hassan, Regional Executive Officer, DSCC



Authentication of the service providers is very necessary. Both the stakeholders that the app brings together – the service provider and the service recipient – must be bound into a contract to ensure the safe dissemination of information. The app must be governed by a framework; something that must be ensured to make this app sustainable in the long run. From my viewpoint, Kolorob is competing with World's leading social networks and search engines.

Sayed Almas Kabir, President, BASIS



Access to information and communication technologies is not a novelty, rather a dire necessity. We have seen the presence of such service-based apps all across the globe. Yelp and Zomato are globally renowned for putting up user reviews and recommendations of best

restaurants, shopping, food, entertainment etc. Taking that into account, the Kolorob app is already revolutionizing the process of giving feedbacks via digital platforms in Bangladesh. Moreover, features like an incentive system for the users giving precise feedback can be incorporated in the app. The primary language of the app should be Bangla and the app's user experience must ensure utmost ease in terms of navigation. To ensure long term sustainability, the commercial viability of the app must be ensured. Sensitive issues such as ensuring proper registration of the user and protecting his/her data should also be taken into account.

Mahmud Hassan, Co-founder, DNET



There is still a lot of room for improvement in terms of fine-tuning the app's layout design and holistic integration. The app must portray the stories of convenience that it is bringing in the everyday lives of its users. Ensuring customer is necessary, and so is ensuring the quality improvement aspect of the people who will be providing the services. The app should focus on increasing the

Kolorob App in a brief:

Bangladesh is becoming one of the fastest growing economies in the world. This transformation is leading Bangladesh to another dimension which is resulting in rapid urbanization and proliferation of different service points from which mass population are availing different services every day. However, there are lack of existing interactive digital accountability mechanism through which service quality can be improved and good governance can be ensured. To address this issue, Save the Children in Bangladesh created an Android based application called Kolorob which started its journey in 2015. The app acts as a bridge between service providers and service recipients.

Users can access detail information on service providers, provide rating and feedback directly to the service providers. The app ensures users' anonymity therefore users can freely express their opinions. Authority of claimed service points can view these feedbacks, identify their areas of improvement. Besides, they have access to an analytical dashboard which provides comparative information on user demand, allow the service provider to announce important notices, update information, and conduct satisfaction survey with live report. Kolorob is currently working on a web version of the app to ensure wider accessibility to users. Moreover, an overview dashboard is being developed



reach of its services and to customize some of its services. A keen eye should also be placed on exploring alternative revenue generation sources and associating the app with other relevant stakeholders. With the current features and service offerings, I am quite hopeful of this app in turning into a social enterprise.

Dr. Ashish Kumar Saha, Consultant – DGHS, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare



My particular area of interest revolves around the quality of care and patient satisfaction; and I'm very optimistic about the service offerings of the Kolorob app. With the array of services that the app offers, we need to bear in mind that this will result in the formulation of a large amount of consumer data. Hence, strategies need to be created by which these data will be analyzed and corrective actions should be taken to amend the problems once the data highlights them. This vast amount of user data must be utilized to further improve the app.

Mr. Nahid Hassan, MIS Analyst (Research) LGSP-3, Mustaque Md. Sami, MIS Analyst (GIS), LGSP-3, Masudur Rahman, MIS Analyst (M&B), LGSP-3 and Sheikh Ruhul Islam, Khan Foundation was also present at the discussion

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The list of services in the Kolorob mobile app should be properly categorized; by types of organization or businesses providing them.
- Attempts to include and engage people in rural areas who have limited access to the internet and smartphones should be prioritized.
- Bengali should be the default language of the app to make using it easier for as many people as possible across different parts of the population.
- The app should include information of emergency services as part of its default user interface.
- The user experience must be simplified as much as possible to ensure benefit for both the service providers and recipients. The simpler the app, the more users the platform can attract and overall the whole culture of feedback develops among people.
- Cooperation with relevant government agencies should be undertaken to obstruct the spreading of misinformation on the app.
- Regulators of different industries and sectors should be included in the platform to make the app a great tool for collecting relevant information, that can eventually be relayed to regulators to help them analyze and take steps regarding prominent issues in their respective industries.
- Collaborations with industry associations will enable Kolorob app to easily find out more firms in varying sectors and industries.
- The use of feedback feature of the app should be incentivized to encourage users to provide feedbacks on a frequent basis.
- The idea should be commercialized to avoid discontinuation in case budget constraints arise.
- Authenticity should be ensured by registering users through the NID verification process.
- Data localization must also be maintained in accordance with the ICT legislation. Data storage has to stay local to avoid any chance of information abuse by foreign entities.
- Since the app provides a feedback service to both service providers and recipients it requires a well-trained and responsive team to receive feedbacks on its own service to reply and resolve specific issues in its own operation.

Md. Nobir Uddin, Senior System Analyst, ICT Division



My suggestion will be to involve the regulators in key sectors of the app's service categories, like health or education. There should be certain analytical tools or a dashboard using which the regulators can assess and understand the quality of the service of the service providers in their particular sector and also identify any action plan that they can proactively undertake to further improve the services.

Masudur Rahman, Manager – Child Protection and Child Rights Governance, Save the Children in Bangladesh presented overview, learning and challenges of the Kolorob Project.



The Kolorob app started off in 2015 as a service directory, but we have added new components in 2018. With the latest additions, the app will not only offer a stream of service-related information, but the recipients of the services can also engage in a dialogue with the providers of the services.

which can assist Government in monitoring service quality of existing public and private service facilities as third party monitoring tool. Kolorob has an ambitious vision to scale up further, ensure technology improvement to make the app and web version more user friendly, creating own GIS map layer for improved Geodata for data driven decision making, creating GIS based road network and improved routing. Visit Kolorob Website: <http://www.kolorob.info/> Kolorob Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/scib.kolorob/> Download app: <https://cutt.ly/Kolorob> Screenshot from App:



The app now provides service-related information on 8 distinctive categories – Education, Health, Recreational, Government, Legal, Finance, NGO, Shelter. Prospective recipients can not only attain information about these 8 categories of services but can also give feedback in written form or rating the provider within a scale of 1 to 5. Apart from this, service providers can also use the Kolorob app to launch surveys to unearth valuable insights from their customers. For example, a hospital can inquire about their patients regarding the need to hire additional nurses. Or maybe a Ward Commissioner can get to know about the infrastructural developments by launching a survey for that particular Ward's residents. The app has made remarkable progress since 2015 - incorporating 33,000 service providers' information into the app and reaching 24,000 app downloads. We have taken active steps to promote the app in 24 other district-level cities apart from Dhaka and aspire to engage the community in every way possible with the help of Kolorob.

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