

# Citizenship in the age of the internet



Swaziland is one among the places that are under the rule of monarch. The election in Swaziland is different from the ones that are conducted in the other countries. The registered parties contest in the elections. Initially elections were conducted in a normal manner. The technological advancement and improvement has led to a situation where elections are being conducted online. E-voting system is the latest addition to this list. Swaziland adopted this method of e-voting right from the time it came was introduced. Initially there was a fear among the people as to how use the system.

#### Success of E-Voting System

E-voting system gained more popularity among the people of Swaziland. The process of election became easier and the burden of counting the votes was eradicated. This was the major advantage of the e-voting system. Though the people had certain inhibitions in during the initial stages of implementation, they were impressed by the ease of use. This led to the success of e-voting system. Since only registered parties can contest in the elections, it is easier for the government to conduct elections. (Gritzalis, 2003). The entire process of voter registration, vote casting and counting is made in a simpler way. The e-voting system gained popularity within a short period of time due to its faster processing. The election conducted in the year 2008 was a complete success due to the implementation of e-voting system.

There was a drastic increase in the number of voters when compared to the previous elections. People turned out in large numbers and the election took place in a hassle free manner. The reason for the increase in the number of people was due to the installation of e-voting system. This made the job of

voting easier and people exhibited more interest. The pre-election process was also simple since the system contained all the relevant information. The procedures were clearly explained in the system and this reduced the burden of explaining them explicitly. Once the elections were over, the counting of votes began. Generally this is considered to be the toughest part of the election process. This consumes more time and man power when done as a manual process. With the intervention of e-voting system, the votes are counted each time a vote is cast.

The main advantage of e-voting system is, the votes are safe and they are stored in a secured database. In manual method, the votes have to be secured in boxes and the box must be guarded. Instead the centre database in the system would store the votes and they can be retrieved at the time of announcing the election results.

#### Failure of E-voting System

The major drawback of e-voting system is the lack of knowledge regarding the system. Since this system is new, people do not have the previous experience they find it difficult to use. Some of the e-voting systems are designed as touch panel systems and this is more difficult than the normal systems. (Gritzalis, 2003). Though it has helped in the betterment of conducting elections, the lack of experience and knowledge contribute to the failure. The system maintenance also plays a major role, since systems that are not maintained properly will lead to problematic situations. Human error is also an important drawback.

#### Reference

Gritzalis, D., 2003. Secure Electronic Voting.

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