



Call for Papers
International Journal for Public Administration (IJPA) Special Issue

Collaborative Governance and Digital Transformations in the Global South: Evidence and Insights from India

Background

Collaborative Governance (CG) refers to ‘the processes and structures of public policy decision making and management that engage people across the boundaries of public agencies, levels of government and/ or the public, private and civic spheres to carry out a public purpose that could not otherwise be accomplished’ (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015b, p. 18). According to Benz et al. (2021, p. 2) Multi-Level Governance (MLG) describes the differentiation and coordination of political authority across scales of jurisdiction. Similarly, Digital Transformation (DT), according to Dąbrowska et al. (2022) refers to “a socioeconomic change across individuals, organizations, ecosystems, and societies that are shaped by the adoption and utilization of digital technologies.” Research on co-production (Bandola-Gill et al., 2022), co-creation, and other such related concepts are integral to the practices of collaborative governance. While conceptually different, all these concepts reflect practices that broadly refer to the ways in which both public and private actors (including civil society actors) aggregate dispersed competencies across functional areas and levels of government to advance a common public purpose.

In the twenty-first century, India is a leader among the emerging democracies of the global South in embracing collaborative governance to enable digital transformations (Sharma, 2021). India is bigger than Europe in its population, and with federate administrative structure, public administration in India poses similar scale of challenges given the complexities of its many languages, social stratifications, geography, infrastructure, and the range of collaborative actors. Public administrators are required to devise and implement policy solutions under political and socio-economic uncertainty and “...navigate unstable situations, identify patterns for problem solving, and use sophisticated representations to develop and communicate their ideas” (Manoharan et al., 2020). While there is a considerable body of scholarship on collaborative governance and digital transformations, this Call for Papers (CFP) aims to advance common and shared knowledge through contributions from, and about the practices of public administration in India.

However, research on India from a public administration perspective is scarce (Roberts, 2017), due to weak linkages between universities and other knowledge generating organizations such as think tanks, civil society organizations with the public policy processes, and so on. Mitigating this gap in knowledge generation is necessary because, India is at the forefront of the democracies in the global South in systematically advancing public sector digitalization through its National e-Governance Program (NeGP) and the Digital India initiatives. The lessons from the Indian context have relevance to other developing countries of the global South given the similarity of the opportunities and challenges. They can also indirectly contribute to the knowledge about collaborative governance and feedback into the policy processes of the countries in the global South.

Research on collaborative governance and digital transformations in India can offer unique theoretical insights about these unfolding practices and identify how mechanisms of institutionalization and democratic accountability can be evolved through cross-pollination of best practices globally. In doing so, the goal of this special issue CFP is to contribute to the improvement of theory and practices of public administration and public policy.

As outlined above, this call for papers covers three major themes:

1. **Collaborative governance:** The scope includes collaborative governance regimes (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015a), practices of collaborative governance (Ansell & Gash, 2007; Emerson et al., 2012), the behaviors of collaborative actors (Kumar et al., 2007), decision-making (Mosley & Wong, 2020), blind spots in collaborative innovation (Wegrich, 2019), and related topics.
2. **Digital transformations:** The scope includes types of collaboration that enable digital transformations (Rackwitz et al., 2021), barriers to digital transformations (Manny et al., 2021), contextual drivers of digital transformation (Gabryelczyk, 2020), sectoral impacts of digital transformations (Larsson & Teigland, 2019), public value creation through digital transformations (Scupola & Mergel, 2021), and expert insights into collaboration in digital transformation settings (Mergel et al., 2019)
3. **Frontline collaborations for delivery:** While public-private partnerships are now widespread, they rely on individuals and local organizations for implementing a range of activities including improving public services access, health care, education, etc. They often function as the face of government activities at the grassroots and form the first line of public accountability. Within the scope of above two topics i.e., collaborative governance and digital transformations, we particularly welcome research on collaborative arrangements for frontline delivery of goods and services.

We invite original contributions from social sciences scholars and practitioners to advance knowledge about collaborative governance and digital transformations in India.

While we accept manuscripts that may also partially focus on the outcomes of collaborative governance and digital transformations, the substantive focus of this special issue is on the unique challenges of realizing collaborative governance and digital transformations in the public sector context, as well as the approaches to overcome them, and the limitations thereof.

Submit your paper proposal

We are looking for manuscripts that reflect the vast diversity of the Indian context. We elicit manuscripts about not just collaborative actors within the government, but also those who are part of such efforts from private sector, NGOs, and civil society. The submitted abstract should be no more than 500 words (including references) and should briefly identify the following:

- The relevance of the paper to one or more of the major themes
- The significance of the research – why it is distinctive and its contribution to the field
- The research question(s) and method – the theoretical/conceptual foundations for the research
- The results to be reported

Key dates

The key dates are listed below:

#	Key event	Date
1	Proposal due	August 15, 2022
2	Decisions/ Feedback on the proposal	September 15, 2022
3	Full paper due/ Zoom workshop	January 15, 2023
4	Revised paper for journal peer review	March 15, 2023

All manuscripts will be subject to peer-review by relevant subject-matter experts. Because IJPA is a global journal, authors are encouraged to engage with the prior academic scholarship on collaborative governance and digital transformations, and contribute to knowledge from an Indian perspective.

Authors of accepted abstracts will be invited to draft papers and present them for discussion and critique by the editorial team and participating authors at a Zoom workshop at the end of January 15, 2023. Draft papers accepted post-workshop by March 15, 2023, by the editors for further revision will undergo blind review, with publication scheduled for the September 2023 issue of IJPA. Please note that acceptance of an abstract does not guarantee final publication.

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About International Journal of Public Administration (IJPA)

Founded in 1979, IJPA is a truly international journal. Starting March 2022, the Journal is under a new editorial team with Dr. Elaine Yi Lu as the Editor-in-Chief as well as a global editorial board. Its goal is to expand the footprint of IJPA in the field of public administration and policy research, theory, and practice. The three-pronged approach consists of **scholarship, collegiality, and impact**.

- We seek scholarship that is both theoretically sound and empirically rigorous.
- We value collegiality and interact collaboratively with authors, reviewers, and readers.
- We assess impacts that include but are not limited to: citations, social media engagement, and theory-practice dialogue.

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