

Significant E-Governance Projects in Indian States

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Abstract - India is developing country with a number of projects of e-Governance being implemented. It is a major challenge before the Government to successfully deploy them successfully due to existing problems such as lack of awareness, low literacy, poverty, low network bandwidth issues and political scenario. This paper describes the significant projects implemented in India. It also provides the suggestions for developing effective e-Governance projects, and concludes with a discussion of the most significant benefits of implementing such projects.

Index Terms- e-Governance, India, Significant, SMART

I. Introduction

E-Governance is broadly defined as an “application of Information technology to the functioning of the Government”. The fundamental motivation for the implementation of e-Governance in the India was to provide SMART Government. SMART means Simple, Moral, Accountable and Responsive Transparent Government. In the past years, a great deal of focus has shifted to this concept that has varying meanings and significance. Initially, the term was a little more than a general recognition of a confluence of information technology developments and application and use of these technologies by Governmental entities. With the passage of time however, the term is being used as a reference to both current applications of Information Technology to Government operations and a goal of realizing more efficient and transparent performance of the Government’s functionalities[1]. E-Governance involves access to Government information and services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in a way that is focused on the needs of the citizens. E-governance relies heavily on the effective use of Internet and other emerging technologies to receive and deliver information and services easily, quickly, efficiently and inexpensively[8][9].

II. Significant Projects in different States

A. Punjab State

A1. Suwidha (Single User Window Disposal Help Line for Application) - This project was started in March 2004 with an objective of providing a

centrapoint for the receipt and delivery of various applications related to different branches of Deputy Commissioner’s Office. For this Suwidha Centers have been setup at the district and tehsil levels. After the commencement of this project all the procedures have become too fast resulting in saving of precious time and money of the people. Due to this project the all types of information has become transparent leading to its speedy retrieval with accuracy. Therefore, the whole environment has become more conducive and corruption free. After this project the prevailing malpractices of issuing duplicate and invalid certificates has been totally stopped.. This project has provided different types of services to the citizens such as registration of marriage certificate, issuing of ration cards, driving licenses, passports, registration certificates of the vehicles, arms licenses, category certificates, birth certificates etc. [Figure 1]. It is based on the Single entry point, defining a specified delivery date depending upon the type of service and accepting cash at the counter itself.

SUWIDHA Services in all DC offices

S No	Name of the application	SNo	Name of the application
1	Web based Information Dissemination System for the Public	12	Certificate Issuance to Handicapped Persons
2	Freedom Fighter Information-Issuance of Bus Passes	13	Permission for Loud Speaker, Rallies, Conference
3	Counter Signing of Certificate for NRI	14	Prohibitory Order regarding Liquor, Meat Shop, Processions, Imposition of Sec 144, Curfew etc.
4	Arms Licences	15	Issuance of Rural Area Certificate
5	Character verification for New Recruitment	16	Issuance of Caste/ & Income Certificate
6	Financial Assistant Schemes (Social Security Schemes) of the State Govt.	17	Issuance of Domicile/ Residence Certificate
7	Issuance of Death & Birth Certificate	18	Issuance of Encumbrance Certificate
8	Public Grievance Branch	19	File Movement System for all the Branches of DC Office
9	Issuance of Licences to Cinema Halls, Video Parlors & Guest house	20	Record & Copying Branch
10	Marriage-ability Certificate	21	Succession Certificate for Legal Heirs
11	Peshi Branch of Deputy Commissioner	22	Passport Application

Figure 1. Source : e-Governance Strategy- Government of Punjab

A.2 TISP (Treasury Information System of Punjab)- This Software has been deployed at the district level to manage the district treasury. It has facilitated issuing receipts on the payment the bills, printing of cheques. Further, it has usage of this data at main centre, for archival purpose and further use. It has also the capabilities to indicate the financial position of the state.

A.3 EEMS (Employment Exchange Management System) - This software has been used in district level employment exchange for the registration of the unemployed youth. It has a facility to provide the

seniority list against the available vacancies. This project has the capabilities to print different type of reports like number of unemployed persons, total enrolled persons and also a category wise list etc.

A.4 PAWAN (Punjab wide area network)-This Project has acted as the vehicle for effective implementation of e-Governance. It has been aimed at serving the requirements of all state departmental applications and also enabled access to central Government applications through interconnectivity via NICNet [Figure 2]. It has provided the reliable, vertical and horizontal connectivity within the State administration so as to make it more effective and productive.

B. Andhra Pradesh

B.1 CARD (Computer-Aided Administration of Registration Department) – This project included the complete computerization of the land registration process in the state. It is being used to record the sale and purchase of properties, power of attorney etc. Within three years of the launch of this project, nearly 90% of all registrations have been performed electronically in AP. It has been well received by the citizens because it has helped them in saving their time and providing accurate and effective results [2].

B.2 E-Seva - This project has been based on single location for the citizens by allowing them to make payments for using Governmental utility services. Through this service common citizens can now avail these services by walking into one of the centre across the cities or using the Internet at their residence. Online payments have been facilitated by means of payment gateways for which the state government has already tied up with several banks. It is being used for the payment of water, electricity, telephones bills, municipal taxes, and issuing of certificates for birth and death registration, passport applications and providing the transport department services.

B.3 E-Procurement- E-Procurement means automation of the procurement transactions, which reduces human errors, enhances the integrity of the data and brings in transparency in the procurement processes. It has been used for linking of marketplace, government departments, agencies and local bodies with the vendors. The main objectives of the e-Procurement initiative has been to reduce the time and cost of doing business for both vendors and Government. It has provided an equal opportunity to all vendors and Government resulting in more transparency and ultimately reducing corruption.

C. Kerala

The major initiatives of the State Government of Kerala are:

C.1 FRIENDS- This project has been used to provide benefits of Information Technology to the day to day transactions of common man[3]. It is a “Single Window Scheme” in which the consumer can pay for the utility services rendered to him by the various Government departments/ agencies, under a single roof.

C.2 Akshaya – The thrust of the project has been on the development of the state through effectively using the tools of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for addressing major issues like, creation of ICT access points up to village level through public participation, providing the skill sets necessary to the population to refine their skills and to use ICT in their daily life. It has also provided ample content in local language relevant and understandable to citizens, and delivery of a variety of services and applications. The project involved setting up of thousands multi-purpose community technology centers called Akshaya e- kendras across Kerala. These are being managed by private entrepreneurs with each e-kendra set up working within a periphery of 2-3 kilometers of every household. It caters to the requirements of around 3000 families harnessing the power of networking and connectivity and reaching to the common man. It is a social and economic project focusing on the various facets of e-learning, e-transaction, e-Governance, information and communication.

D. Gujrat

D.1 Mahiti Shakti-It operates like a single window through which the citizens can access information related to all aspects of the government’s functioning, various schemes and services ranging from obtaining ration cards to getting sanction for old age pension. Citizens are required to submit the necessary documents at the Info Kiosk and fill the required form online to obtain desired service.

D.2 SWAGAT (State Wide Attention on Public Grievances by Application of Technology)- It has been a e-Governance project that has established a facility of direct communication between the citizens and the chief minister. In this project grievances are logged online, transmitted and made available online to the officers concerned who have to reply them within 3 to 4 hours. The departments concerned have been made accountable and they need to be ready with their replies, when the Chief Minister holds video conferences with all the districts concerned. Applicants are called one by one and the Chief Minister examines each complaint in detail.

The information sent by the department is also reviewed online in the presence of the complainant and the officials concerned. Attempts are being made to offer a fair and acceptable solution on the same day. The record is then preserved in the ‘SWAGAT’ database and a separate log is being maintained for each case for future usage.

E. Rajasthan

E.1 e-Mitra- This Project has integrated the JanMitra (shown in Figure 3) and the LokMitra initiatives providing a single umbrella to bring together all the departments under a single roof. Jan Mitra has provided an integrated e-platform through which rural population of Rajasthan can get desired information and avail services related to various Government departments at kiosks near their doorsteps by digital

means. LokMitra was an urban centric e-Governance project to provide the government services online.

F. Himachal Pradesh

F.1 HIMRIS-Himachal Registration Information System-This software includes complete computerization of the land records. The system has been designed to offer efficient and transparent services to people, uniform enforcement of changes, tapping of leakages in revenue, spot registration and a single window service. The system has been implemented at different districts and tehsils. It includes standardized of registration process, which reduces the registration cost and process is completed in a stipulated period of time.

F.2 ePension (Pension Disbursement System)- It has been a complete renewal of the manual system of pension disbursement and has resulted in direct benefits to both the state Government and to the pensioners. It includes Pension processing at district level treasury only and its disbursement through bank accounts only. Besides, the main advantage to the Government is ensuring that the pension is credited to the pensioner's account on due date. The pension detail is also available on the internet. All the pensioners are required to fill their PPO (pension payment order) number, month of pension to check the detail of pension on the internet. If there is any doubt pensioners are free to write district treasury officer.

F. Chandigarh

F.1 e-Sampark - Project E-Sampark has been initiated to bring together all the services offered by the government departments under one single umbrella and give citizens of Chandigarh a “multi-service” - “single-window” experience. The objectives of this project are:-

- Provide hassle free one-step solution to the citizens.
- Provide Transparency in delivery of services.
- Provide better turn around time in receipt, processing and issue of services
- Provide accuracy and efficient results.

F.2. Gram Sampark-Rural Knowledge Centre-E-Gram Sampark Centres have been setup at the village level.. Through this the villagers are able to use services of theGovernment, which are presently available at the Sampark Centres situated in the urban areas. Since these Centres are providing the citizens residing in rural areas an opportunity to have an access to the huge amount of information by using broadband connectivity, these Centres have emerged as Rural Knowledge Centres for the rural population.

G. Madhya Pradesh

G.1 Gyandoot-The Gyandoot project has been initiated in January 2000 by a committed group of civil servants in consultation with various gram panchayats in the Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh. Gyandoot is a low cost, self-sustainable, and community-owned rural Intranet system. These are managed by rural youth

selected and trained from amongst the unemployed educated youth of the village.

H. Uttarakhand

H.1 Centralized Utility Approval System (CUAS)- It has been an e-Governance initiative for the Uttarakhand Power Corporation Ltd (UPCL) to automate the service delivery mechanism for the release of new electricity connections to its consumers, in a centralized, simplified and transparent manner [Figure 4]. It is consumer-friendly single window based system.

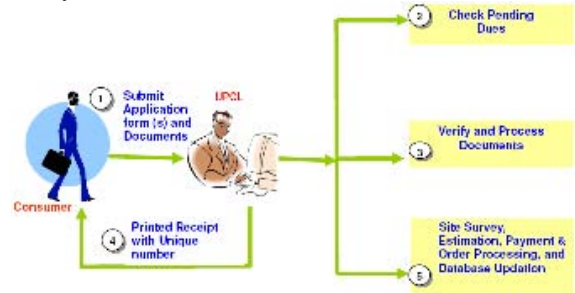


Figure 4 Simplified Workflow of Centralized Utility Approval System (CUAS)

Source: Consumer-centric approach to E-Governance in Electrical Utilities: UPCL Case Study

III. Suggestions for Developing Effective E-Governance Projects

Indian government has started recognizing the need of e-Governance [4]. As of now, e-Governance projects are being run only in certain departments in different states. This approach will gradually be extended to all departments in all states. NCAER (National Council for Applied Economic Research) E-Readiness Report 2004 shows the status of IT initiatives in different states [Figure 5][6][7] of India



(Source: NCAER E-Readiness Report 2004)

Figure 5 : E-Readiness- Indian States

In the age of Information Technology, the e-Governance can be used as a strategic tool for transforming governance and improving the quality of services provided by the government to its citizens. So there are following suggestions to develop effective e-Governance projects [5].

- One of the most promising aspects of e-Governance is its ability to bring citizens to their Government. For rural empowerment setting up of

kiosks in the proximity of the villages for easy and convenient accessibility should be an integral part of the plan in developing e-Governance projects.

- There is need of greater participation of common citizens in the decision making process in-order to ensure more transparency and efficiency for effective development of e-Governance projects.
- In-order to make the project more understandable and effective the availability of services in the regional language should be emphasized.
- In-order to avail these e-Governance services the exhaustive list of various supporting documents and annexure needed must be made a part of the service via Internet. This is important for facilitating convenience, saving user's time and providing hassle free service.
- It is suggested that internal operations of government should be well integrated with developed e-Governance projects in-order to speed up the existing processes.
- It will be better if more accountability and time of processing features be added while developing e-Governance projects.
- More user participation is required in these projects for making them interactive. For this purpose a two-way communication process should be established. It is possible if the developers post their ideas on the website while developing the project that are evaluated by the citizens and they respond through their queries and suggestions..
- It is suggested that long term benefits are to be kept in mind while developing e-governance projects
- There is a shortfall of emphasis on Government-to-Government (G2G). More e-governance projects should be developed for improving internal operations of the Governmental departments.

IV Conclusion

India is developing country currently launching major e-governance projects aiming to improved availability of government services and transparency with participation of citizens. Most significant benefit of all e-governance projects is time bound service delivery without any mediator. It is high time that the state Governments should have clear target oriented plans before choosing a particular e-Governance project after understanding the benefits of its implementation to the common citizens. Besides, it is necessary to create more awareness among the common man for effective implementation of e-Governance projects.

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