DIGITAL CHAMPIONS OF DISTRICTS IN INDIA
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District as the next development fulcrum of change

Introduction

“Inhibitors do not necessarily prevent the implementation of ICT projects...”

Dr. Roshan Jacob

“Digital Society is an organic ecosystem that believes governance, culture and commerce are inseparable.”

Vivek Kumar Porwal

“Work force of NIC Jhabua is helpful in providing technical assistance to all the departments.”

Jaishri Kiyawat

“A digitally literate society would be one where majority of individuals are able to access public services at any place through various digital media.”

Rajat Aggarwal

“Citizen satisfaction measurement is a key focus for public service delivery”

Rajkumar Beniwal

“To make it simple, transparent and cost effective technological changes, we need public awareness and involvement at a grassroot level.”

J.B. Vora

“The ability to work with ICT is becoming as essential to education, life and workplace.”

J.K. Jain
“Digital Literacy builds upon the foundation of traditional forms of literacy.”

Dr. Ashok Kumar Bhargava 45

“The emphasis should be on building both a functional as well as a digitally literate society.”

Dr. J. Ganesan 49

“A digitally literate society means each and every citizen should be able to operate, as well as access internet facilities.”

Dr. N. Subbaiyan 55
District Administration in India is a legacy of the British Raj. Warren Hastings introduced the office of the District Collector in India in 1772. District Collectors were members of the Indian Civil Service, and were charged with supervising general administration in the district. The district continued to be the unit of administration after India gained independence in 1947. The role of the District Collector remained largely unchanged, except for separation of most judicial powers to judicial officers of the district. In the current era, while the actual extent of the responsibilities varies in each state, they generally involve: as Collector, as District Magistrate, as Crisis Administrator and as Development Officer. As the development and governance administrators in a district, District Collectors have to respond to the demands, grievances and expectations of people at the bottom. They have to be responsive and accountable to the local people. They perform in a very responsible manner in implementing development policies in a pro-people direction.

The changed policy of deregulation, liberalisation and competition has suggested a new role for the civil services, emphasising the strategic management of the economy in less prescriptive and more market-driven approaches. The changes in the economic and thereby in social structures have raised new demands related to control and accountability of the civil services as

“India is known for its sobriety and wisdom, balanced and sensible thinking. We need strong institutions and we need good governance in the country,” former President of India Pratibha Patil once said.
well as new definitions of professional obligations. In this scenario, role of
District Collector in India has evolved and will continue to evolve to be reliant
on new techniques, methods and tools of administering functions. The role of
digital technology then becomes pertinent to address issues in political and
governance processes.

In this era of accountability and performance measurement, government will
face increasing pressure to make the services more accessible to their citizens.
The citizens now a day are not using government services in isolation, but are
simultaneously making transactions and interacting with the corporate world. In
addition to this direct or indirect pressure, governments must themselves study
and realise the cost saving techniques. With this rise in demand for services, it is
a mandatory requirement for government that the efficiency enhancement and
cost saving potential of providing services and information be facilitated by ICT
tools and platform.

In our interaction with District Collectors, we found that main barriers
witnessed for ICT adoption in districts are: Power availability, ICT
infrastructure, ICT illiteracy, relevant content, and standardisation, integration
of services, advisory services, and localisation. In view of this many ICT projects
are lagging progress at grass roots level.

The advent of globalisation presents a new series of challenges to the
administration. Activated by technological improvements, a new inter-national
relationship of our interests across issues and boundaries has come into being.
Technical incompetency of government officials during the implementation of
ICT projects at departmental level, the technological incompetence of the
officials surfaced as a challenge. Most officials had limited working knowledge
about technology and its application. In order to overcome this gap, NIC
organized training sessions and workshops at the grassroots level for every
stake holder to create a conducive environment for the effective and efficient
operationalization of the projects.

We also found that penetrating into the traditional bureaucratic apparatus of
the departments is a major roadblock that confronted the implementation
agencies. The resistance to change greatly stifled the pace of NIC’s activities and
their effective fulfillment. The Administrative Reforms Commission has
emphasised the selection of ‘the right person for the right job’ in public
administration and providing them with security of tenure so that they can
deliver results in the jobs entrusted to them. We also found that for any project to be implemented in a district, the tenure of District Collectors should be minimum 2 to 3 years.

The aim and purpose of organising the ‘District collector Digital Champions’ is to recognise, and encourage the further disseminate ICT practices and implement ICT at large to break the traditional mode of public delivery mechanisms in day-to-day governance. ‘District collector Digital champions’ is trying to achieve this objective by identifying the champions of ICT in India from all the districts.

The purpose is to recognise champions in district collectors of India who are using ICT practices to empower citizens and serving public services clients and strengthening participation of citizens in information society decision-making. In this booklet, we have tried to capture the experiences of district administration action heroes that have influenced and changed governance scenario around us.
What is your vision on a digitally literate society and ICT implementations at large?

• Digital literacy involves more than the mere ability to use software or operate a digital device. It includes a large variety of complex cognitive, motor, sociological and emotional skills, which users need in order to function effectively in digital environment.

• E-governance is about more than streamlining processes and improving services. It is about transforming Governments and renovating the way citizens participate in democracy.

• For success of an e-governance project and superior service delivery, it is imperative that the government agency focusses on whole citizen experience.

“Inhibitors do not necessarily prevent the implementation of ICT projects...”

The government agency needs to integrate information across all points of citizen interaction.
• The government agency needs to integrate information across all points of citizen interaction.
• In this era of accountability and performance measurement, government will face increasing pressure to make the services more accessible to their citizens. The citizens nowadays are not using government services in isolation, but are simultaneously making transactions and interacting with the corporate world.
• Open Government is an evolving concept broadly aimed at providing access rights to citizens to government activities, in order to allow for greater accountability. Efficient and effective information provision and service delivery to the public are key elements in improving accountability and trust in government.
• In keeping with the evolving philosophy of open governance, we explore the possibilities of using CSCs (Common service Centres) to create entitlement rights for the citizens seeking certain specific type of services in the social service sector.

What are your core duties?
We have several duties at district level. For example:
• As Collector land assessment/acquisition, revenue/tax collection.
• As District Magistrate: maintenance of law and order, hearing revenue cases and cases under the preventive section of the Criminal Procedure Code.
• As Crisis Administrator: Disaster management during natural calamities such as floods, famines or epidemics.
• As Development Officer: Ex-officio chairman of the District Rural Development Agency, which carries out various developmental activities.

Do you feel Information & Communication Technology (ICT) can be used as a primary tool to make an information-rich nation? How?
• ICT is driving national development efforts worldwide and a number of countries in both the developed and developing world are exploring ways of facilitating their development process through ICTs within their economies and societies.
• Emergence of ICTs on the national agenda and the announcement of ICTs.
• Policies by various state governments have recognised the “Convergence of Core Technologies and e-Governance” as the tool for sustainable development and globalisation of economy.
• The Internet, which allows intangible information and ideas to be traded and exchanged instantly, across any distance, is the most recognisable symbol of today’s global, knowledge-driven economy.
List various projects initiated by you in your service tenure at various districts.

- **EASYGAS (Online LPG Booking System):** EASYGAS is a B2C application designed to induce accessibility into the company consumer interface. Gas booking becomes possible 24x7 at CSC/Lokvani centres.

- **KISAN (Krishak Information System and Network):** Under the project the farmers were registered with the Jan Sewa Kendra (JSK) across the district. The complete details of the farmers including his land, fertiliser requirement, seeds, pesticides, agricultural implements used by him, saving account number, Kisan Credit Card were registered and a receipt was handed over to the farmer.

**What are the limitations of Government implemented projects? Do you feel that process reengineering is required?**

The limitations are:

- Poor understanding of user requirement;
- Finance;
- Infrastructure;
- Poor data systems and lack of compatibility;
- Lack of skilled personnel;
- Leadership styles, culture, and bureaucracy;
- Attitudes.

Inhibitors do not necessarily prevent the implementation of ICT projects but they do prevent advancement and restrict successful implementation and sustainability. Some of these factors for failure are -

- User needs
- Technology
- Coordination
- ICT policy
- Short tenure of tech-savvy officers

Implementation of e-Governance is a highly complex process requiring provisioning of process re-engineering and change management. The basic idea behind
such re-engineering is to avail the opportunity provided by ICT in transforming governmental processes and not just in modifying them.

What are the core difficulty areas you feel should be addressed in your district & how digital tools can help as a primary tool?

- Lack of literacy and awareness among the people;
- Vested interests is another major factor that continues to keep the district backward and under-developed;
- Absence of basic infrastructure;
- Lack of quality human resources;
- Local economy still relies heavily on agriculture; the district, barring a few sugar mills, is practically industry-less. This comes with high unemployment and disguised unemployment.

Digital tools can help in overcoming some, if not all, of these issues being faced in the district.

- Though illiteracy can’t be tackled overnight, information and services are provided bilingually (in Hindi as well as English).
- Audio-visual resources can also be used to counter illiteracy and lack of awareness.
- A sufficiently long chain of IT-enabled CSCs and Lokvani centres can counter lack of basic infrastructure such as roads which dissuades or even prevents citizens from demanding services, as they now need not come to the district or Tehsil headquarters even once. This also acts as a connecting tool in this expansive district.
- Providing services through ICT ushers in transparency and time-bound delivery.

How do you coordinate with NIC office and its technical team to have applications developed for various projects? Is there any new application you are getting developed through NIC?

NIC has been working closely with district administration and other associated functionaries in promoting and implementing various ICT projects. NIC has contributed stupendously in the various e-governance initiatives. The KISAN and EASYGAS applications have been developed by NIC district unit and new modules are being developed for above applications. The web based MIS being developed for monitoring works of different departments.

Are you directly or indirectly involved with the official district website? How do you contribute to keep it updated?
Yes. I take active interest in regular updating content and presentation of official district website. All departments were asked to upload respective information. I have also nominated nodal officers for each department who are responsible for the updation.

*How do you rate your official district website on a scale of 10? Please mention the name of website.*
9 out of 10. www.gonda.nic.in

*What do you think should be the duration of tenure of a district collector in a district for making an impact through the implemented projects?*
Minimum 3 years.

*What are the major digital tools you think are a must to make district achieve good governance?*
• Robust backbone of connectivity (LAN/SWAN)
• High penetration of consumer internet (broadband/mobile)
• Basic computer and digital literacy
• E-mail

*List what challenges you face while implementing any ICT projects.*
• Power unavailability
• Poor ICT infrastructure
• Digital illiteracy
• Relevant content, and standardisation
• ICT projects are lagging progress at grassroots levels.
• Technical incompetency of government officials
• A rigid administrative apparatus
• Integrating large number of stakeholders.

*Which district in India, you feel is the best ICT empowered district in all aspects?*
Districts of Kerala

Implementation of e-Governance is a highly complex process requiring provisioning of process re-engineering and change management.
How do the district residents access information about government’s different schemes available?
The residents access information about government’s different schemes through:
• Official website;
• Awareness programmes;
• Regular press releases/media;
• Weekly review meetings and field tours;
• Flex/hoardings display, advertisements and publicity;
• Publications, magazines.
What is your vision on a digitally literate society and ICT implementations at large?

- Digital Society is an organic ecosystem that believes governance, culture and commerce are inseparable.
- In such situation, the primary role of government is to improve market efficiency and equipped citizen with better information with better access system.
- In a digital society, technology solutions are preferable to regulatory solutions.
- People’s privacy and the integrity of their personal data in the digital world is a fundamental right.
- The challenges in digital society can be managing multiple identities, uncontrollable replication, theft of identity and content.
- Bridging the economic and developmental divides is in large measure a matter of increasing digital

People’s privacy and the integrity of their personal data in the digital world is a fundamental right.
literacy and access for peoples who have been left out of the information and communications technology (ICT) revolutions.

- The interface where society and technology meets poses extraordinary challenges in implementation of ICT projects.

**How do you include digital tools in your project implementations?**

We use digital tools in the following projects:

- Effective delivery of public services, general management of district, law and order.
- Digital signatures, biometric identification are key tools in complete computerisation of revenue courts project.

**Do you feel Information & Communication Technology (ICT) can be used as a primary tool to make an information-rich nation? How?**

Yes. The explosive potential of digital world lies in the fact that any form of information—be it data, voice or video—can be converted into series of 0’s and 1’s which can be processed to a variety of applications for business and government.

- ICT has to be used in socially sustainable manner as to maximise its impact.
- ICT process should not be just digital replication of existing paper processes.
- Unreformed Process + ICT = Expensive Process
- ICT process should replace a paper process. The ICT process should replace manual otherwise it becomes duplicity of work.

**What are the limitations of projects implemented by Government?**

The limitations are:

- Absence of failure management system.
- Slow pace of decision making.
- There is no incentive for process reforms.
- Failure in analysis of business needs.
- Suppliers commonly bid low on the original specification to get the opportunity to make profits on the subsequent changes.
- Lack of top customer management involvement and lack of high level skills, training or experience in planning, procurement or implementation.

**What are the core difficulty areas you feel should be addressed in your district and how digital tools can help as a primary tool?**

The core difficulty areas are:

- Timely payment to beneficiaries: This can be addressed with the help of mobile applications.
• Internet facility in rural areas: One has to develop online as well as offline modes of applications as we are doing for “E-Uparjan Plus”.
• Bank at doorstep of villagers.
• Unskilled resources.
I believe that every district should have a data centre for hosting of projects. There should be inclusion of digital tools in disaster recovery mechanism.

*How do you coordinate with NIC office and its technical team to have applications developed for various projects? Is there any new application you are getting developed through NIC?*

• File monitoring system for the Office of Collector, Jabalpur.
• District local level committee, set up by the board of the national trust for the welfare of persons with autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and other disabilities.
• For monitoring the status of the cases registered in various revenue courts, Revenue Court Cases Monitoring System has been developed by NIC Jabalpur.
• “Samadhan Ek Diwas” was launched by Collector Jabalpur with an objective to simplify the public delivery system.

Are you directly or indirectly involved with the official district website?
District administration is directly involved with official district website.

How do you rate your official district website on a scale of 10? Please mention the website address.
9 out of 10. www.jabalpur.nic.in

What do you think should be the duration of the tenure of a district collector in a district for making an impact through the implemented projects?
To make any project stable and well implemented, at least 2 to 3 years.
What are the major digital tools you think are a must to make district achieve good governance?
System automation, ERP and digital signatures are key tools to bring good governance.

Mention if there is any implemented software in the department you use to manage the information system among various departments of district?
- Marriage registration & court marriage application (e-MaCMA);
- Revenue court cases monitoring system;
- BPL ration card in one day;
- Time limit paper monitoring;
- Arms license monitoring system;
- Caste certificate verification system.

List what challenges you face while implementing any ICT projects. How do you overcome them?
Proper Awareness among staff and mind set to utilise ICT tools.

How do the District residents access information about government’s different schemes available?
- Electronic/Print media
- Publicity campaigns
- Hoardings
- Internet
Jaishri Kiyawat
DISTRICT COLLECTOR
Jhabua, Madhya Pradesh

“Work force of NIC Jhabua is helpful in providing technical assistance to all the departments.”

What is your vision on a digitally literate society & ICT implementations at large?
• To deliver e-Governance services and Social Inclusion with cost effective ICT implementation approach.
• To use ICT effectively in improving governance practices in Jhabua.
• To bridge rural-urban digital divide and improve connectivity with cost effective technology.
• State wide area networks (SWAN) must continue to run smoothly with better understanding.

How do you include digital tools in your project implementations?
• We use digital tools in formulizing our core duties like: Land assessment, land acquisitions,
Do you feel Information & Communication Technology (ICT) can be used as a primary tool to make an information-rich nation? How?

• ICT can empower our society and people to develop their literacy, creativity, problem solving ability, better communication, and healthy living standards by making public-private partnership.
• ICT can provide transparency in government functioning.

List various projects initiated/handled by you in your service tenure at various districts.

• State wide area networks (SWAN) in Jhabua;
• Digitisation of revenue records like: E-Khasra, Khatoni, E-Naksa;
• GPS system in home department;
• E-Panchayat in Jhabua.
• E-Kissan classroom.
• E-Kissan Pathsaala.
• E-Uparjan Project.
• E-Schooling.
• E-Health.

What are the limitations of projects implemented by Government?

• Poor Internet connectivity in rural areas.
• Lack of IT skilled resources in block offices.
• Not effective operation tools.
• Running cost of project. Unstable ICT resources.

Do you feel that process reengineering is required in projects implementation?
Yes.

What is the core difficulty areas you feel should be addressed in your district?
Scattered population, illiteracy in Jhabua, language and orthodox thinking, migration for jobs.

How digital tools can help as a primary tool?

• Educating students in E-Pathasala concept.
• E-Kissan Pathsaala for educating farmers in new technologies in agriculture.
• E-Health class for medical work force.
How do you coordinate with NIC office and its technical team to have applications developed for various projects?

- Work force of NIC Jhabua is helpful in providing technical assistance to all the departments.
- They provide training session to make ICT awareness between employees.
- NIC has developed Registration Slip generation system for health camps.
- Regular maintenance of NIC website and network management.

Are you directly or indirectly involved with the official district website? How do you contribute to keep it updated?

- Jhabua district website is maintained by NIC officials.
- Any department which requires publishing their data on Jhabua website, they directly contact with NIC team.
- They also coordinate with state level NIC team to understand new project.

How do you rate your official district website on a scale of 10?
6 out of 10.

What do you think should be the duration of the tenure of a district collector in a district for making an impact through the implemented projects?
2 to 3 years.

List what challenges you face while implementing any ICT projects. How do you overcome them?
- Poor IT infrastructure. Lack of IT skills in the project team.
- Training sessions must be organised for skill enhancement. A team of eGov experts should monitor SWAN network.
How do the District residents access information about Government’s different schemes available?
District residents access information about government’s different schemes available by Jhabua websites, social media website and public relationship officer URL.

Which district in India, you feel is the best ICT empowered district in all aspects?
Bangalore.
Rajat Aggarwal
DISTRICT COLLECTOR
Ludhiana, Punjab

“A digitally literate society would be one where majority of individuals are able to access public services at any place through various digital media.”

What is your vision on a digitally literate society and ICT implementations at large?

- In the contemporary times, the concept of literacy goes beyond simply being able to read or write. Being literate also includes digitally literacy i.e. being able to locate, organise, understand, evaluate and analyse information using various digital technologies.
- A digitally literate society would be one where majority of individuals are able to access public services at any place through various digital media.
- This includes two fold efforts: a) Investing in development of ICT infrastructure and computing hardware. b) Investing in individuals’ digital skills.

In Ludhiana, digital tools are being used currently in revenue administration.
What are your core duties? Do you include digital tools in your project implementations? How?
We have several duties at district level. For example:

a) Revenue Administration
b) Law and Order
c) Effective Public Service Delivery
d) Development

In Ludhiana, digital tools are being used currently in revenue administration for instance in checking the status of mutations, issuing computerised copies of land records to public.

• For effective public service delivery, SUWIDHA or Single Window Service delivery mechanism is being used where front end is fully computerised and back-end computerisation is underway.
• A public grievance redressal portal is functional where public can register complaints online.

Do you feel Information & Communication Technology (ICT) can be used as a primary tool to make an information-rich nation? How?
Various tools of ICT are extremely important to create an information rich nation.

What are the limitations of projects implemented by Government? Do you feel that process reengineering is required?

• Procedural bottlenecks which includes redundant stages through which a project has to pass and where it gets stuck often.
• Slow movement of files.
• Lack of motivation of officials as they are not the direct stakeholders.

Process re-engineering is required which would include single window clearance of all approvals required.

What are the core difficulty areas you feel should be addressed in your district and how digital tools can help as a primary tool?

• High Density of population and resultant issues like traffic congestion, digital tools can help in mapping of critical areas.
• E-challans can help check traffic violations.

How do you coordinate with NIC office and its technical team to have applications developed for various projects? Is there any new application you are getting developed through NIC?

The NIC office is situated right near the DC office where the District Information
Officer looks after the various projects in consultation with the DC. A new application for introducing DAK Monitoring in the office is currently being developed by the NIC. Dak Monitoring System is web based workflow solution for management of dak at Deputy Commissioner’s office.

Are you directly or indirectly involved with the official district website? How do you contribute to keep it updated?
Yes, the various public related information are displayed on the website from time to time.

How do you rate your official district website on a scale of 10? Please mention the name of website.
8 out of 10. www.ludhiana.nic.in ; www.ldhsuwidha.com

What do you think should be the duration of the tenure of a district collector in a district for making an impact through the implemented projects?
To make any project stable and well implemented, at least 3 years.

What are the major digital tools you think are must to make district achieve good governance?
Internet, official website of district, LED display boards, Information Kiosks.

List what challenges you face while implementing any ICT projects. How do you overcome them?
• Managing change: Status quo in mindset of staff;
• Digital illiteracy among human resources;
• Lack of effective dissemination of information regarding new tools to public;
• Lack of investment in such projects.

Procedural bottlenecks which includes redundant stages through which a project has to pass and where it gets stuck often.
How do the District residents access information about government’s different schemes available?
Through district portal, newspapers, cable TV, display boards.

Which district in India, you feel is the best ICT empowered district in all aspects?
Chandigarh
Citizen satisfaction measurement is a key focus for public service delivery.

What is your vision on a digitally literate society and ICT implementations at large?
Citizen satisfaction measurement is a key focus for public service delivery and should be incorporated in an ongoing journey for continuous service improvement.

How do you include digital tools in your core duties?
We use digital tools in increasing effectiveness and efficiency in governance delivery.

Do you feel Information & Communication Technology (ICT) can be used as a primary tool to make an information-rich nation? How?
Information and Communication Technologies for development refers to the use of ICT in the fields of...
socio-economic development, international development and human rights. ICTs enable societies to produce, access, adapt and apply information in greater amounts, more rapidly and at reduced costs and offer enormous opportunities for enhancing business and economic viability.

List various projects initiated/handled by you in your service tenure at various districts.

- District Grievance Management System (DGMS): A unified tool to manage all grievances.
- received at collector office Mehsana.
- Employee Work Management System (EWMS): It is a comprehensive tool for monitoring work efficiency of employees working in collector office Mehsana.

What are the limitations of Government implemented projects?

- Reliability
- Flexibility
- Availability
- Integration
- Response time

How do you coordinate with NIC office and its technical team to have applications developed for various projects?

NIC provides the following services for applications:

- Technical Consultancy
- Software development & Maintenance
- Technical support for Implementation
- Web hosting
- Training

Are you directly or indirectly involved with the official district website? How do you contribute to keep it updated?

Yes, we are involved with the official district website in updation and change in content through feedback and email.

How do you rate your official district website on a scale of 10? Please mention the URL of website.

8 out of 10, http://mehsana.gujarat.gov.in

What do you think should be the duration of the tenure of a district collector in
a district for making an impact through the implemented projects?

At least 2 years.

What are the major digital tools you think are a must to make district achieve good governance?

- Hardware
- Networking
- Connectivity
- Training of employee

Mention if there is any implemented software in the department you use to manage the information system among various departments of district?

- District Grievance Management System (DGMS): It is an unified tool to manage all grievances received at Collector office Mehsana.
- Employee Work Management System (EWMS): It is a comprehensive tool for monitoring work efficiency of employees working in collector office Mehsana.

List what challenges you face while implementing any ICT projects.

- Still, people are not ready to accept digital tools.
- No awareness about system.

How do the District residents access information about government’s different schemes available?

Apna Taluka Vibrant Taluka (which aims to decentralise more powers to Taluka) scheme website/collector website.
“To make it simple, transparent and cost effective technological changes, we need public awareness and involvement at a grassroot level.”

What is your vision on a digitally literate society and ICT implementations at large?
- The onset of the information age in India is associated with the digital revolution. Our nation has various types of ideology, methodology and implementation process of public oriented activity.
- To make it simple, transparent and cost effective technological changes, we need public awareness and involvement at a grassroots level.

What are your core duties? Do you include digital tools in your project implementations?
We have several duties at district level. For example: Land and revenue related activities, Law and order, coordination between different departments, Public grievance redressal.

We should increase public participation at grassroots level.
Yes. We include digital tools in our project implementations.

Do you feel Information & Communication Technology (ICT) can be used as a primary tool to make an information-rich nation? How?
Yes and here is how:
• ICT can be used as primary tool.
• Make education system robust with all means.
• Appreciation of innovative group or individual.
• Categorization of our implementation strategy.
• Simplification of domain for public purposes.
• Cost effectiveness in hardware and tools used for expansion of activity.

List various projects initiated/handled by you in your service tenure at various districts.
• In Banaskantha District – Water harvesting and utilisation of drip irrigation and sprinkler irrigation system implemented at a larger scale;
• Surat- to make city vigilant, CCTV used in the city;
• In Patan – Re-survey of land parcels of all the land holders and preparation of updated and digital records like village form No -7 with map is the benefit to the ultimate land holder.

What are the limitations of Government implemented projects? Do you feel that process reengineering is required?
• Project should be well aware to the society.
• We should increase public participation at grassroots level.
• Simplification of process and quick public responsive mechanism should be developed.

What are the core difficulty areas you feel should be addressed in your district & how digital tools can help as a primary tool?
• Awareness of various government projects to the end users – vigorous field activity with ICT.
• Temptations given in government projects – people should be convinced by logic, so it would have some more impact of the project.
• Compulsion on public to use at some level.

Are you directly or indirectly involved with the official district website? How do you contribute to keep it updated?
Yes, directly updation is done periodically and responsibility given to Chitnis to Collector.
How do you rate your official district website on a scale of 10? Please mention the name of website.
7 out of 10. www.patan.gujarat.gov.in

What do you think should be the duration of the tenure of a district collector in a district for making an impact through the implemented projects?
To make any project stable and well implemented, at least 3 to 4 years.

What are the major digital tools you think are a must to make district achieve good governance?
• There is a room to invite all the applications online.
• Single Window system and well defined process time of an application.
• Integration of various departments and responsibility for online disposal of cases.

Mention if there is any implemented software in the department you use to manage the information system among various departments of district?
In registry application.

List what challenges you face while implementing any ICT projects. How do you overcome them?
Lack of awareness among staff and mindset to utilise ICT tools.

How do the district residents access information about government’s different schemes available?
There is Gujarat State Wide Area Network (GSWAN) common roof to see the different scheme available.
"The ability to work with ICT is becoming as essential to education, life and workplace."

What is your vision on a digitally literate society and ICT implementations at large?
• The ability to work with ICT is becoming as essential to education, life and workplace.
• In order to keep pace with the developing world and also to excel in one’s job, everyone needs a basic understanding of ICT and how to make productive use of it.
• People should be taught to be competent basic users of digital tools, so that they can be successfully participate in modern technical society.

What are your core duties?
It includes: coordination with different departments in the district for efficient and transparent communication.

People should be taught to be competent basic users of digital tools.
Do you include digital tools in your project implementations? How?
Yes. By making e-payment of employees salary, labour beneficiaries and vendor; e-scholarships to students.

Do you feel Information & Communication Technology (ICT) can be used as a primary tool to make an information-rich nation? How?
Yes and here is how:
• ICT has ensured solution to many problems.
• Any policy or message can reach to any block, panchayat or village easily through this technology.
• ICT ensures transparency in day-to-day working especially in respect of making payments to the genuine beneficiaries.

What are the limitations of projects implemented by Government? Do you feel that process reengineering is required?
• In Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and other labour oriented projects get delayed due to non-core banking of post offices and co-operative banks.
• For easy and efficient beneficiary payment, all post office and CCB must be core banking enabled.

What are the core difficulty areas you feel should be addressed in your district?
• Internet facilitated connectivity must be provided government departments.
• Government employees must have ICT digital skills.

How do you coordinate with NIC office and its technical team to have applications developed for various projects? Is there any new application you are getting developed through NIC?
We have developed “Jansunwai” software through NIC as per our local district requirement where public is directly interacting with district collector and administration and we are redressing their grievances.

Are you directly or indirectly involved with the official district website?
Yes, we are directly involved with district website and contents provided by us and maintained and updated by NIC.

How do you rate your official district website on a scale of 10? Please mention the name of website.
9 out of 10. http://raisen.nic.in
What do you think should be the duration of the tenure of a district collector in a district for making an impact through the implemented projects? At least 3 to 4 years.

What are the major digital tools you think are a must to make district achieve good governance?
- Video conferencing
- Digital signature
- State wide area network (SWAN)

Mention if there is any implemented software in the department you use to manage the information system among various departments of district?
- e-FMS: An electronic fund management system) for NREGA labourers;
- e-Uparjan: Computerisation of foodgrain and procurement system.

How do the district residents access information about government’s different schemes available? There is Gujarat State Wide Area Network (GSWAN) common roof to see the different scheme available.

List what challenges you face while implementing any ICT projects. How do you overcome them? In labour payment through e-FMS, most of the branch post offices and co-operative banks are non-core banking and made delayed payment.

How do the District residents access information about government’s different schemes available? Through Lok Sewa Kendra.
Digital Champions of Districts of India

Dr. Ashok Kumar Bhargava
District Collector
Shahdol, Madhya Pradesh

“Digital Literacy builds upon the foundation of traditional forms of literacy.”

What is your vision on a digitally literate society and ICT implementations at large?

- Digital literacy is the ability to effectively and critically navigate, evaluate and create information using a range of digital technologies.
- It requires one "to recognise and use that power to manipulate and transform media to distribute pervasively and to easily adapt them to new forms ".
- Digital literacy does not replace traditional forms of literacy. It builds upon the foundation of traditional forms of literacy.

What are your core duties? Do you include digital tools in your project implementations?

I see my functions and duties can be divided into four categories — as a collector, as a district administrator, ICT tools will be of no use without proper connectivity.
as a district magistrate and as a district development officer. We have to address different problems of common people so that he can feel good governance. For which inclusion of digital tool in the general administration is required.

Do you feel Information & Communication Technology (ICT) can be used as a primary tool to make an information-rich nation? How?
Yes and here is how:
• ICT tools will be of no use without proper connectivity. Information in isolated form is of no use.
• By collecting, analysing each isolated data with fast connectivity, from across all the sectors can help to design a holistic development picture of a society or a country.
• To strengthen ICT sector, reach of communication, innovative practices must be spread to distant and remote areas of the country not only at herein district and block level.
• The main hindrance is lack of connectivity at the village level. If we use ICT tools at the ground level, there should be bidirectional flow of information and hence the connectivity at ground level is important.
• We need to focus our energy and resources towards ensuring infrastructural as well as human skills at ground level to address the connectivity issue so that information flow is smooth and easily accessible to all.

List various projects initiated/handled by you in your service tenure at various districts.
• e-FMS
• e-IMS
• Voice based SMS
• SSA MIS
• Forest Alert SMS
• e-sanchar

What are the limitations of projects implemented by Government?
• Illiteracy
• Tribal population
• Lack of awareness of ICT

What are the core difficulty areas you feel should be addressed in your district & how digital tools can help as a primary tool?
The district is basically a tribal district; hence livelihood of tribal is dependent
on largely wages earned by labor in MGNREGS and other developmental schemes.

- Illiteracy made the situation more challenging.
- Lack of awareness and hostility among residents for adopting new practices.
- To combat with illiteracy, we have launched a massive movement by SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan) and attempted to provide education for all. Next attempt was made to reach to the nearest proximity of local people with helping hand so, a confidence of trust was made between common people and administration.

How do you coordinate with NIC office and its technical team to have applications developed for various projects? Is there any new application you are getting developed through NIC?

In NIC, the DIO (District Informatics Officer) is contacted frequently and with his assistance, applications are developed and implemented. The training is also imparted periodically to technical staff.

- E-Janseva: SMS based public grievances monitoring system;
- E-Budget-MIS software for keeping expenditure monitoring for budget allotted for various department;
- E-PDS-Monitoring supply of public distribution system using GPS.

Are you directly or indirectly involved with the official district website? How do you contribute to keep it updated?

Yes, as a Collector I regularly monitor the website and make arrangements for updating of the content on it.

- All the departments are directed to furnish essential and updated information to DIO on weekly basis in each time-limit meeting held on every Monday.
• Circulars of GAD (general administration department), gazette notification, studies and analysis etc. are uploaded in the official district website.
• Officials of various departments motivated and encouraged in meetings and in the field visit awareness is created to use important information in day to day work.

How do you rate your official district website on a scale of 10? Please mention name of the website.
9.5 (www.nrega.nic.in)
8 (www.shahdol.nic.in)

What do you think should be the duration of the tenure of a district collector in a district for making an impact through the implemented projects?
To make any project stable and well implemented, at least 3 years.

What are the major digital tools you think are a must to make district achieve good governance?
• Voice based SMS for ground level staff
• Cloud based IT technologies
• Mobile based ICT & applications
• MS excel based MIS
• Web based Information dissemination system

List what challenges you face while implementing any ICT projects. How do you overcome them*?
• Connectivity
• Electricity
• E-literacy
• Illiteracy

How do the District residents access information about government’s different schemes available?
With http://shahdol.nic.in/ and Madhya Pradesh Government’s social audit website.
What is your vision on a digitally literate society and ICT implementations at large?

- A digital, literate society is the way forward for the world at large. The dynamics of how we communicate and work have changed the people to being classified as digitally literate / digitally illiterate.
- However, two issues, viz., “the digital divide between the urban and the rural areas” and the “issue of functional literacy” need to be addressed simultaneously.
- The emphasis should be on building both a functional as well as a digitally literate society. The digital tools introduced at the rural areas must be in sync with their present levels of understanding and must endeavour to improve them in a phased manner.
• By enhancing the digital literacy skills of the youth, it is possible to increase the employment opportunities and active engagement in the digital world.

What are your core duties? Do you include digital tools in your project implementations? How?

My duties at district level are:
• Head of the revenue administration for the following projects:
  a. HARIS (Haryana Registration Information System)
  b. HALRIS (Haryana Land Records Information System)

• Custodian of land records for the following projects:
  NLRMP – The National Land Record Modernisation Programme
  Executive Chairman of District Rural Development Agency
  Public Grievance Redressal: Harsamadhan portal

Do you feel Information & Communication Technology (ICT) can be used as a primary tool to make an information-rich nation? How?

Yes and here is how:
• The real power of digitisation lies in its ability to disseminate information at your given moment of time, ability to store date, create and share information at a click of the finger other than being portable.
• This ability makes it the fastest information highway and one of the safest methods to reach out to people. In a progressive world, where information is the king, we cannot afford to see people at grassroots not touched by it.
• The biggest challenge is to take the ICT to the rural populace and use it to their advantage. With close to 70% population belonging to the rural areas, and accessing education through government schools, these schools would be the right platform for introducing technology to the rural society.
• With the adoption of digital aids for teaching and accessing information, not only are we pushing the stakeholders (government, teachers and students) to adopt technology, but also helping them to adopt technology in their lives.

List various projects initiated/handled by you in your service tenure at various districts.
• Establishment of micro e-Libraries to encourage functional and digital literacy in villages of Sirsa;
• ‘Gyan Abhiyan’: e-Library in Rural Areas of Sirsa;
• Establishing Technology enabled Class Rooms in Government Schools of Sirsa;
• “Digital Learning” – An initiative by Deputy Commissioner, Sirsa For Establishing Technology Enabled Class Rooms in Government Schools in Sirsa;
• Micro E-Libraries in villages: The micro e-libraries are hosted in selected Rajiv Gandhi Sewa Kendras in the identified villages.

What are the limitations of Government implemented projects? Do you feel that process reengineering is required?
• The inertia amongst the government staff in adopting new technology.
• There is a perception of “losing power” with introduction of technology.
• The lack of adequate training and capacity building.
• Lack of ownership and updation in government implemented projects.
• A uniform and single project does not always help. The need is different from one part of the country to another.

What are the core difficulty areas you feel should be addressed in your district and how digital tools can help as a primary tool?
• To ensure public satisfaction, which come only when there is a timely and transparent delivery of services.
• The introduction of the “Advanced queue management system” in the e-disha Kendra at Sirsa took out the discretion available with the clerks and data entry operators and ensured smooth flow of transactions.
• Another area of difficulty is to make people adopt technology by removing their unfounded fears. The digital classrooms introduced in the government schools were looked upon as an additional burden by the teachers.
How do you coordinate with NIC office and its technical team to have applications developed for various projects? Is there any new application you are getting developed through NIC?

- The NIC office headed by the DIO and supported by the ADIO and the technical team serves as a support team in developing various applications.
- The NIC coordinates all activities of the e-disha kendras present throughout the district.
- The district IT lab provides a platform for training of various field staff in training of various digital tools. The prestigious land record modernisation programme is being carried out with the close coordination of the revenue staff, the NIC team and the HARSAC.

Are you directly or indirectly involved with the official district website? How do you contribute to keep it updated?

The NIC is involved with maintaining the district website and as the district head; it is my responsibility to monitor it. The new initiatives part on the website was recently put up, on which photographs and short write-ups of all the major initiatives of the district were hosted.

Updation is a major challenge and this is done only through constant review and persuasion.

How do you rate your official district website on a scale of 10? Please mention the name of website.

7 out of 10, www.sirsa.gov.in

What do you think should be the duration of the tenure of a district collector in a district for making an impact through the implemented projects?

At least 2 years.

What are the major digital tools you think are a must to make district achieve good governance?

- Record management tools
- Data management tools
- Improved tools for efficient delivery of services

List what challenges you face while implementing any ICT projects. How do you overcome them?

Gyan Abhiyan Programmes: The major challenge was to identify space, funding and personnel for management of the libraries.
Digital Learning in government schools in Sirsa District:
The project has three main challenges
• Funding – how to fund the project?
• Content provider – what kind of content to provide?
• Sustainability – manpower, monitoring.

How do the District residents access information about government’s different schemes available?
• Through the official district website
  www.sirsa.gov.in.
• Essential services delivery is accessed through
  Jansahayak portal.
• Grievance redressed is accessed through Harsamadhan portal

Which district in India, you feel is the best ICT empowered district in all aspects?
Palakkad, Kerala
Dr. N. Subbaiyan  
DISTRICT COLLECTOR  
Thanjayur, Tamilnadu

“A digitally literate society means each and every citizen should be able to operate, as well as access internet facilities.”

What is your vision on a digitally literate society and ICT implementations at large?

• A digitally literate society means a society in which every citizen has access to all information through internet. He should be able to submit applications, track them and receive back online. Each and every citizen should be able to operate, as well as access internet facilities.

• All the ICT implementations should be user-friendly and effective. It should give space for a customer's feedback and proper monitoring. Timely updation should be done. A digitally literate society will bring more transparency and accountability to the service delivery mechanism, apart from increasing the efficiency and ease of processing. Thus, a digitally
literate society creates an empowered citizen, whose powerful tool will be information.

**What are your core duties? How digital tools are helpful in your duties?**

We have several duties at district level. For example:

- As District Collector: land assessment/acquisition and revenue/tax collection;
- As District Magistrate: maintaining law and order; hearing revenue cases and cases under the preventive section of the Criminal Procedure Code;
- As Crisis Administrator: Disaster management during natural calamities such as floods, famines or epidemics;
- As Development Officer: Ex-officio chairman of the district rural development agency, which carries out various developmental activities.

I strongly feel that digital tools help in better conceiving of various projects that we have on ground. Among others, following are the ways digital tools help.

- It facilitates better project appraisal and in calculating the Internal Rate of Return (IRR) and Net Present Value (NPV).
- It helps in better designing and planning of the project.
- Digital tools are helpful in daily review and timely completion of the project.

**Do you feel Information & Communication Technology (ICT) can be used as a primary tool to make an information-rich nation? How?**

Yes and here is how:

- ICT can be used as primary tool;
- Make education system robust with all means;
- Appreciation of innovative group or individual;
- Categorisation of our implementation strategy;
- Simplification of domains of services for public purposes;
- Cost effectiveness in hardware and tools used for expansion of activities.

**List various projects initiated/handled by you in your service tenure at various districts.**

- **Online milk card renewal:** Tamil Nadu Milk Producers’ Co-operative Federation Limited (Aavin) launched the facility to renew monthly milk cards online. Consumers can register their details, including address and milk depot number, at www.aavinmilk.com.
- **Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board (TWAD):** It is a public agency formed by the Government of Tamil Nadu, assigned with task of providing water supply and sewerage facilities to the citizens.
What are the limitations of projects implemented by government? Do you feel that process reengineering is required?
The major limitation of a government implemented project is that it is highly individual-centric. As soon as the individual exits, the project collapses. Other limitations are:
- There is no fixed tenure for the officers implementing the project. This hampers the timely completion of the project;
- Procedural delays are halting many projects;
- Lack of digitally skilled employees is a major challenge;
- Lack of efficiency and enthusiasm among the subordinates.

What are the core difficulty areas you feel should be addressed in your district & how digital tools can help as a primary tool?
My district is predominantly agrarian. Hence, a large chunk of my time is being eaten up by the review of the agricultural production and irrigation facilities. Since we are dependent on the canal irrigation, I have to monitor the water coming from the main reservoir, as well as the outflow through various canal systems. Following are some of the areas where digital tools could be very helpful:
- Monitoring of election work is also very important;
- Reviewing the number of Pattas issued and the pendency;
- Reviewing the progress of various works in progress;
- Digital tools can be effectively used for these purposes.

How do you coordinate with NIC office and its technical team to have applications developed for various projects? Is there any new application you are getting developed through NIC?
We have been supported by the NIC team in a successful government program called 'Fast Track
Patta Transfer'. Moreover, they are being involved in the upgradation of district website.

*How do you rate your official district website on a scale of 10? Please mention the name of website.*
7 out of 10, http://www.thanjavur.tn.nic.in

*What do you think should be the duration of the tenure of a district collector in a district for making an impact through the implemented projects?*
Two to three years will be an ample time for making an impact through the implemented project.

*What are the major digital tools you think are a must to make district achieve good governance?*
- District website - It is like a mirror of the district administration.
- Digital Certificates – Digital Certificates can be devised for issuing certificates like the birth/ death certificates.
- Micro-chip Enabled Ration Cards - This can store the amount of food items allotted to a particular card and other details.
- E-mail - All the officials in district administration should try to communicate through e-mails.

*List what challenges you face while implementing any ICT projects.*
- Identifying the right persons to implement it. For that, I tie up with the NIC and the ELCOT (Electronics Corporation of Tamil Nadu).
- Equipping my staff. For that, I try to organize training classes in association with the NIC and ELCOT.
- Connectivity and power backups. I am constantly monitoring this problem and we are trying to upgrade the capacity of all the servers and optical cables.

*How do the District residents access information about government’s different schemes available?*
- Newspapers and news channels.
- Publicity during the weekly grievance Day meetings and through AMMATHIT-TAM (where all the Officials commute to a village to receive petitions and sort it then and there itself).
- We also publicise them in various government functions and advertisements.