



The  
**Manthan**  
Award SOUTH ASIA & ASIA PACIFIC  
DIGITAL INCLUSION FOR DEVELOPMENT



DISTRICT

COLLECTOR *as*

DIGITAL

CHAMPIONS

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“I DREAM OF A DIGITAL INDIA WHERE KNOWLEDGE IS STRENGTH AND EMPOWERS THE PEOPLE” – NARENDRA MODI, PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA

## INTRODUCTION

This is the second year that the Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) has organised the “District Collector Digital Champion Award” under its flagship Manthan Asia Pacific Awards. This particular award seeks to recognise and encourage district level administrators in India who champion the cause of using ICT tools to ensure citizen empowerment and better delivery of government services to citizens in day-to-day governance.

As readers know, the district is the most important administrative division in India when it comes to delivery of G2C and G2B services, implementation of the various social welfare schemes of both Central as well as State governments and planning and implementation of nearly all governmental socio-economic developmental schemes. Consequently, the District Collector or District Magistrate is one of the most powerful civil servants in the executive branch of India’s rather complex governance structure although these civil servants have only a middle-level ranking in India’s bureaucratic hierarchy headed by the Cabinet Secretary of India. The District Collector is almost always a member of India’s premier administrative civil service the Indian Administrative Service (IAS).

The level or extent of e-governance that has been implemented in any district of India crucially depends on the District Collector and how much of a digital champion he or she is. The districts that have the highest levels of e-governance are those that have experienced rule by District Collectors who have also been digital champions and evangelists of ICT practices. The District Collector Digital Champion Awards have, therefore, sought to identify, honour and encourage those who comprise the vanguard of transforming India into an information-rich knowledge society. A society that constantly tries to empower citizens by increasing usage of digital tools and ICT infrastructure and spread of digital literacy and digital culture in the structure of governance as well as among citizens to bring about greater transparency, accountability and effectiveness in the delivery of government services to the people at large.

This book seeks to document the views and achievements of 11 such District Collectors or District Magistrates who were thrown up in the rigorous Manthan process of identifying and recognising digital champions among district administrators. The process involves seeking nominations and then subjecting these nominations to a strict screening and judging

process to shortlist finalists and ultimately identifying winners. This book documents the responses of the 11 finalists to various questions that the award organisers asked during the process of seeking nominations. The names of the winners will be announced during the Manthan Awards gala on December 4, 2014.

A scrutiny of the responses shows that one of the key hindrances to the spread of e-governance in India is resistance to change, primarily among all kinds of government officers and employees and also among citizens to some extent. Only when District Collectors have succeeded in getting a buy-in by the staff under his or her supervision as well as citizens, has there been any progress made in implementing digital tools and ICT practices. Apart from the usual resistance that any kind of change generates in any government organisation due to fears that existing powers would be eroded or that existing jobs may be endangered, the most important reason for resistance was found to be ignorance on the part of both government staff as well as citizens regarding the use of ICT tools on the one hand and the benefits that can be reaped by both government staff and citizens from the use of such tools on the other. Whenever District Collectors have managed to spread digital literacy among staff and citizens, communicate the benefits of digitisation well and have been able to make staff as well as citizens “own” the project in one way or another, implementation has been possible and successful.

This key insight underscores the importance of the work that DEF has been tirelessly doing over the last 12 years as an evangelist of digitisation and digital inclusion. The reader will note that in every case that has been documented in this book, digitisation and greater use of ICT practices have benefited both citizens and governments immensely and in various ways. The most important benefit always has been savings in terms of costs, time and effort for both citizens and governments due to digitisation. We are sure if economists were to quantify the total monetary and economic value of these

benefits, they would be able to show the massive positive impact that greater digitisation has on overall economic growth and the nation’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Alongside this direct positive economic impact of greater digitisation in governance there are other indirect socio-economic benefits that also ultimately translate into positive economic gains. For example, the transparency, accountability and efficiency that increasing use of ICT practices bring about in delivery of government services help to bring about qualitative changes in the business and investment climate and in the basic socio-economic conditions of the people at large. In fact, it becomes clear that greater use of ICT tools is a sine qua non for inclusive development – you just cannot have inclusive development without greater use of digitisation.

Finally, it is also necessary to point out that the reader will find out from going through this book that greater digitisation in governance always leads to strengthening of the entire fabric of democracy at the grassroots level through greater participation of citizens in the governance process, giving citizens more opportunities to voice their views about their rights, entitlements and quality of governance and most importantly by building trust between citizens and the government.

We at DEF are sure that this book will not only enable sharing of information about ICT initiatives in governance among all levels of public servants but also encourage more civil servants to take the lead in proactively implementing digitisation in the operations of the government machinery and in delivery of services to citizens.

We will also consider our efforts at publishing this document well rewarded if the book also serves the cause of making available in the public domain knowledge about the benefits of greater use of ICT practices in governance, spreading of digital literacy and deepening of digital inclusion.

“DIGITAL INDIA IS AN AMBITIOUS PROJECT OF OUR PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI. THE COUNTRY HAS NOW REALISED THE IMPORTANCE OF ICT AS AN IMPORTANT TOOL FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.”

## **P. Balakiran, Kannur District, Kerala**

### **WHAT ARE YOUR CORE DUTIES? DO YOU INCLUDE DIGITAL TOOLS IN YOUR PROJECT PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATIONS? HOW?**

As the Head of the District Administration, District Collector has to manage and supervise the entire developmental activities of the district. The broad roles and responsibilities include:

- Overall development of the district
- Citizen welfare
- Implementation of effective G2G, G2B and G2C services
- Planning, Management and Monitoring of the district activities
- Disaster Management mitigation & prevention planning
- Implementation and supervision of Plans/ Schemes taken up by all the government departments in the district
- Coordination of the inter departmental activities in the District
- Central and State level project , execution and monitoring
- District level Project Planning, proposal, implementation, and management

Wherever found suitable, the District administration is expected to adopt ICT Solutions to improve the services to the citizen. Customized digital tools as

part of the various e-governance solutions are being used by the District Administration for planning and implementation of various projects. Various ICT enabled solutions are provided to the districts at the national, state and district levels. These solutions also include monitoring, planning and management tools embedded in the system. The examples include the MNREGS at the national level, e-District at the state level and RTPerMS at the district level.

### **DO YOU FEEL INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) CAN BE USED AS A PRIMARY TOOL TO MAKE AN INFORMATION-RICH NATION? HOW?**

Digital India is an ambitious project of our Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The country has now realised the importance of ICT as an important tool for national development. The information is scattered across the country and the accurate and timely availability of these information is not possible without the use of ICT. We need to establish National Data Centres where the digitized information could be placed and made available. Data warehouses are required to contain enormous data volume spread across the country at a single point. The Data Mining tools could be provided to those with authorised credentials. In the present

scenario, our country has a large volume of information stored locally in digital and non-digital form. This data needs to be consolidated and made available for the policy and decision makers. By the use of ICT tools, this distributed information could be gathered and made available for dissemination.

#### **LIST VARIOUS PROJECTS INITIATED/HANDLED BY YOU IN YOUR SERVICE TENURE AT VARIOUS DISTRICTS.**

1. ICT usage during the Lok Sabha Elections 2014 as District Electoral Officer, Kannur
2. eDistrict
3. Services through Common Service Centre (CSC)/ Akshaya
4. Road Trenching Permit Management system (RTPerMS)
5. eSAND/ Nirman @ Kannur for normalised distribution of River Sand and protection of River/ River banks.
6. District eGovernance Society

#### **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 District Centre is located in the District Collector's office itself. District Informatics Officer (NIC) with his associates works in close coordination with the district administration. The project requirements are discussed with NIC and the proposal submitted by NIC are taken up for implementation. Depending on the feasibility, the projects were taken up by NIC, NICS or the line

department directly with the technical consultancy of NIC. The eOffice is proposed to be implemented in the District Collectorate and the back ground work is in progress. The Revenue Court Case module is in the process of roll out under eDistrict project. The software is developed by NIC

#### **ARE YOU DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH THE OFFICIAL DISTRICT WEBSITE? HOW DO YOU CONTRIBUTE TO KEEP IT UPDATED?**

The content owner of the official website of the district is District Collector. The relevant information to the public were updated in the web site regularly. The information regarding Nirman @ Kannur/ sand, Voter/ Polling station related information, etc are a few regularly updated events. The website is designed and hosted by National Informatics Centre. The information to be published over the website is communicated to the District Informatics Officer (NIC) and such information is published by NIC at district level. The current website is a static site which requires revamping. The revamping process has been initiated and a dynamic website of the district administration should be in place within 3 months.

#### **HOW DO YOU RATE YOUR OFFICIAL DISTRICT WEBSITE ON A SCALE OF 10?**

The site may be rated average (5). <http://kannur.gov.in>

The website is in the process of being revamped. A new website with dynamic content will be launched in due course.

“THROUGH ICT WE CAN EDUCATE THE CITIZENS HOW TO HELP GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS TO SERVE THEIR PRIME MOTIVE OF PUBLIC WELFARE.”

## Umesh Pratap Singh, Kanpur Nagar Nigam, Uttar Pradesh

### WHAT IS YOUR VISION ON A DIGITALLY LITERATE SOCIETY & ICT IMPLEMENTATIONS AT LARGE?

To make user friendly software and social media tools for the citizens to reach government facilities and register their grievances.

### WHAT ARE YOUR CORE DUTIES? DO YOU INCLUDE DIGITAL TOOLS IN YOUR PROJECT PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATIONS? HOW?

I have the responsibility of managing the complete activities of Kanpur Nagar Nigam, which includes disposal of garbage, facility of drinking water, maintaining and constructing roads, sanitation and proper infrastructure facility.

### DO YOU FEEL INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) CAN BE USED AS A PRIMARY TOOL TO MAKE AN INFORMATION-RICH NATION? HOW?

Through ICT we can educate citizens as to how they can help government organizations to serve their prime motive of public welfare. These tools are very useful in promoting the various schemes and services which organization's like ours can use as effective modes of communication. Organizations

having linkage to the public can have their job of interaction done with these tools as they can provide access to specific officers and grievance redressal can be taken to a new level. ICT will simplify the payment of various government dues by citizens and will thus save precious time of the citizens of Kanpur Nagar Nigam. The participation of citizens as observers of our schemes and programs will be quite easy and effective through ICT.

### WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS OF GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTED ICT PROJECTS? DO YOU FEEL THAT PROCESS REENGINEERING IS REQUIRED?

It is seen that education of how to use such ICT is generally limited amongst the citizens. ICT projects are often lacking practical features which hampers proper public participation.

### WHAT ARE THE CORE DIFFICULTY AREAS YOU FEEL SHOULD BE ADDRESSED IN YOUR DISTRICT & HOW DIGITAL TOOLS CAN HELP AS A PRIMARY TOOL?

The core difficulty faced by the district people are registering their complains with different departments of the Nagar Nigam. ICT can act as a bridge between the citizens and the Nagar Nigam.



**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 to submit our proposal to the NIC office and after their approval they interact with us and develop the tool. We are trying to get MYCITY initiative to be developed by NIC.

**ARE YOU DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH THE OFFICIAL DISTRICT WEBSITE? HOW DO YOU CONTRIBUTE TO KEEP IT UPDATED?**

We keep giving our feedback and points for improvement in the website content and services offered for online transactions. NIC on our behalf does the required changes.

**HOW DO YOU RATE YOUR OFFICIAL DISTRICT WEBSITE ON A SCALE OF 10?**

My rating is 9. The website URL is [www.kmc.up.nic.in](http://www.kmc.up.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 ICT PROJECTS?**

At least 5 years.

**WHAT ARE THE MAJOR DIGITAL TOOLS YOU THINK ARE A MUST TO MAKE DISTRICT ACHIEVE GOOD GOVERNANCE AT DISTRICT LEVEL?**

- Mobile APP for registering and monitoring e-grievances by citizens.
- E-governance system

**MENTION IF THERE IS ANY IMPLEMENTED SOFTWARE IN YOUR DISTRICT THAT YOU CAN**

**USE TO MANAGE THE INFORMATION SYSTEM AMONG VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS OF DISTRICT?**

On our website [www.kmc.up.nic.in](http://www.kmc.up.nic.in) we are hosting the following services:

1. Online registration for receiving birth and death certificates.
2. Online payment of taxes.
3. Online registration of public grievances.
4. Online works management.
5. E-tendering portal.
6. Online booking of Nagar Nigam halls/parks.
7. Online PIS Payroll.
8. Inventory management system.
9. Legal case monitoring system.
10. Assest management system.
11. Estate management system.

**LIST WHAT CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHILE IMPLEMENTING ANY ICT PROJECTS. HOW DO YOU OVERCOME THEM?**

Most important element is to make the ICT tool practically useful for citizens so that it serves its original purpose.

**HOW DO THE DISTRICT RESIDENTS ACCESS INFORMATION ABOUT GOVERNMENT'S DIFFERENT SCHEMES AVAILABLE?**

Through our website [www.kmc.up.nic.in](http://www.kmc.up.nic.in)

**HOW ARE THE CITIZENS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES INVOLVED IN ANY ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT OR GOVERNANCE PROJECT IDEATION, PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION?**

We are open to any type of proposal from citizens regarding use of ICT for development.

**WHICH DISTRICT IN INDIA, YOU FEEL IS THE BEST ICT EMPOWERED DISTRICT IN ALL ASPECTS?**

New Delhi.

“CERTAINLY FEEL THE NEED FOR ICT AS A PRIMARY TOOL SINCE THE TECHNOLOGY GIVES FAR REACHING IMPACT ON THE RURAL MASSES, WHO ARE GENERALLY CUT AWAY FROM THE DEVELOPED URBAN AREAS, WHERE CITIZENS ARE USUALLY MORE INFORMED.”

## S. Jayandhi, Karur District, Tamil Nadu

### WHAT IS YOUR VISION ON A DIGITALLY LITERATE SOCIETY & ICT IMPLEMENTATIONS AT LARGE?

- It creates backwardness and digital divide in the region.
- Need to arrange computer oriented training programs through NGOs and other Governmental Agencies.
- Employment opportunities have been created for digitally illiterate society by providing opportunity with proper basic training.
- The shortest and most efficient way of providing digital literacy is to provide job opportunity and to provide on the job training which will create livelihoods as well provide exposure and training.

### WHAT ARE YOUR CORE DUTIES? DO YOU INCLUDE DIGITAL TOOLS IN YOUR PROJECT PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATIONS? HOW?

- Formulate policies and make decisions
- Identify areas of need and potentiality
- Mobilize ICT resources for facilitation
- Mobilize or prepare necessary customized software tools
- Prepare necessary digital presentation for conducting meetings and trainings

- Collect feedback and reports through digital media about implementation
- Conduct videoconference for monitoring

### DO YOU FEEL INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) CAN BE USED AS A PRIMARY TOOL TO MAKE AN INFORMATION-RICH NATION? HOW?

Certainly feel the need for ICT as a primary tool since the technology gives far reaching impact on the rural masses, who are generally cut away from the developed urban areas, where citizens are usually more informed. Now-a-days, farmers in rural areas catch up with the latest information through internet about weather forecasts, seasons and new technologies and tools being used in agriculture.

### LIST VARIOUS PROJECTS INITIATED/HANDLED BY YOU IN YOUR SERVICE TENURE AT VARIOUS DISTRICTS.

- E-District
- Service through common service centres
- In 8 Months as Chairman of the e-Governance Society processed more than 32,000 applications and issued more than 28,000 certificates. People spend a very short time in CSCs and never visit the concerned office or

officer for getting their certificates. they receive information through SMS about the readiness of the certificate.

### **WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS OF GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTED ICT PROJECTS? DO YOU FEEL THAT PROCESS REENGINEERING IS REQUIRED?**

The limitation could be on spending as every project would be governed by tight budget limitations since it involves public spending. The projects being implemented are either for Government or through Government employing Government manpower resources, which may not be up-to-date since in Government, the scope for recycling employees (as in corporate) is limited and there is a need to periodically train the existing man power whenever there is change in methodology or technology and this needs considerable time. Hence, projects may be subjected to delays.

### **WHAT ARE THE CORE DIFFICULTY AREAS YOU FEEL SHOULD BE ADDRESSED IN YOUR DISTRICT & HOW DIGITAL TOOLS CAN HELP AS A PRIMARY TOOL?**

The first and foremost are of difficulty, I would say, are the rural areas in the district which need inclusive development. These are places where private schools with modern equipment are missing and all education is through government schools. As head of the district administration, I would like to introduce Interactive White Boards and Network to have visual teaching methods and virtual class rooms, which will effectively bridge the gap between rural and urban areas.

### **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?**

I coordinate with NIC for implementation of various ICT projects from the formulation of the concept till implementation and training. NIC is part of the district e-governance society. NIC is being effectively used for data porting and migration from standalone systems and from Client/Server application to web enabled platform. NIC is used to effectively during general elections for data management, web streaming and poll monitoring through SMS. NIC provides periodical training to government offices on various implementations and also regularly.

### **ARE YOU DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH THE OFFICIAL DISTRICT WEBSITE? HOW DO YOU CONTRIBUTE TO KEEP IT UPDATED?**

- Indirectly involved.
- I regularly conduct review meetings on the upkeep of the websites with all department heads for providing up-to-date information about their departments which are needed for the public.
- The NIC team in the district designs and maintains the website with information feed from the departments and other sources.
- Apart from reviews, regular interaction is made with the NIC officials for upkeep of the website.

### **HOW DO YOU RATE YOUR OFFICIAL DISTRICT WEBSITE ON A SCALE OF 10?**

- I will give a rating of 7 to our official district website on a scale of 10.
- The reason for giving 7 for the website is that it contains many useful information about the district on various parameters, the department details and projects, tourism and a very useful Helpdesk.
- The reason for not giving it a higher grade is that it contains mostly static contents.
- The website URL is [www.karur.nic.in](http://www.karur.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 ICT PROJECTS?**

A tenure of at least 3 years is needed to create awareness among the public regarding all government schemes. A longer tenure will certainly help in developing necessary infrastructure and planning. Moreover, any District Collector needs to win the confidence of the people through their action which will effectively ease administration and ensure transparency. Apart from leading from the front, the District Collector also needs a second level leader to exclusively focus on ICT projects.

### **WHAT ARE THE MAJOR DIGITAL TOOLS YOU THINK ARE A MUST TO MAKE DISTRICT ACHIEVE GOOD GOVERNANCE AT DISTRICT LEVEL?**

- Good and efficient backbone intra network connectivity throughout the state and to the Internet
- Campus Wi-Fi connectivity
- Desktop VC equipment with higher officials and at remote locations
- Interactive White Board and training tools
- Abundant availability of systems

### **MENTION IF THERE IS ANY IMPLEMENTED SOFTWARE IN YOUR DISTRICT THAT YOU CAN USE TO MANAGE THE INFORMATION SYSTEM AMONG VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS OF DISTRICT?**

As per the policy of the government, all the developments are brought under e-district framework and all the discrete developments has been put on hold. These development works are being undertaken by either NIC or other channel partners as per government decisions.

### **LIST WHAT CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHILE IMPLEMENTING ANY ICT PROJECTS. HOW DO YOU OVERCOME THEM?**

The trickiest part of any ICT project is its implementation in very remote pockets of the districts where connectivity is either absent or weak. Since all the ICT projects are web-enabled and under e-district framework, connectivity is of paramount importance for any successful implementation of such projects. A study has been conducted to with a view to providing the best possible connectivity using the available resources.

### **HOW ARE THE CITIZENS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES INVOLVED IN ANY ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT OR GOVERNANCE PROJECT IDEATION, PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION?**

- For ideation, planning and implementation we involved unemployed rural youth, who are willing to learn and perform.
- For this, using the scheme implemented by the government for empowering rural masses, particularly the youth, the district coordinator has been made a member of the e-governance society.
- The agency pools out interested persons from the villages and trains them on various skills.
- They are being provided with employment opportunities in their own villages using facilities like Common Service Centres.

### **WHICH DISTRICT IN INDIA, YOU FEEL IS THE BEST ICT EMPOWERED DISTRICT IN ALL ASPECTS?**

Karur District in Tamil Nadu, India, because ours is one of the pioneer districts in e-Governance implementation with a wide range of structured connectivity and provision for capacity addition. Every department in Karur is thoroughly connected

through a dedicated LAN at the District Head Quarters and at tier 2 and tier 3 locations. Karur district has a very active e-Governance Society for effective implementation of e-services. Karur district has been identified as pilot implementation location for Social assistance program, Treasury computerization and for Land records computerization.

**PLEASE FURNISH ANY OTHER PROJECT RELATED USEFUL INFORMATION THAT YOU HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO PROVIDE IN THE OTHER ANSWERS.**

- Backward Scholarship being distributed to more than 10,000 students every year. The students are provided with a unique ID for knowing the status.

- Visa extension, exit permit and foreigner tracking is effectively done through a web enabled system.
- On an average of more than 20,000 petitions are being received through online system every year and an acknowledgment is issued instantly. The petitioner can view the status update at any time.
- Some 16 different schemes are online for providing pension to 25000 odd pensioners under social security schemes.
- Adi Dravidar Scholarship is being distributed to more than 7700 students with transparency for students to know their status.

“YES, I STRONGLY BELIEVE AND AM COMMITTED TO THE BEST USE OF ICT FOR EMPOWERING THE RURAL MASSES, ESPECIALLY THOSE LIVING IN REMOTE VILLAGES.”

## Dhulaj Appaso Balappa, Kolhapur district, Maharashtra

### WHAT IS YOUR VISION ON A DIGITALLY LITERATE SOCIETY & ICT IMPLEMENTATIONS AT LARGE?

Transforming complex age old practices into simpler systems, to achieve good governance by establishing proper and effective communication and trust between citizens and government offices through IT-enabled services.

### WHAT ARE YOUR CORE DUTIES? DO YOU INCLUDE DIGITAL TOOLS IN YOUR PROJECT PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATIONS? HOW?

- Land management
- General administration
- Conduct of elections
- PDS management
- Recovery of government taxes

### YES, I INCLUDE DIGITAL TOOLS IN PROJECT PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION. WE ARE USING:

- Web-based and mobile-based management information systems
- We have developed a module called COLIS - Collector Information System - for land dispute

management and other activities.

### DO YOU FEEL INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) CAN BE USED AS A PRIMARY TOOL TO MAKE AN INFORMATION-RICH NATION? HOW?

Yes, I strongly believe and am committed to the best use of ICT for empowering the rural masses, especially those living in remote villages. People in rural areas are still far away from using the web, emails and SMS for communication with government offices. To overcome this we are:

- Developing convenient modules for the people
- Introducing transparency
- Focusing on simple and achievable modules
- Removing unwanted stages in processing
- Focusing on change management and capacity building of employees
- Ensuring citizen participation in decision making
- Making continuous improvements through frequent consultation with the primary stakeholders
- Offering awards and incentives to the best workers
- Focusing on proactive disclosure of all information to the public

- Going for social audit by putting all information in the public domain

### LIST VARIOUS PROJECTS INITIATED/HANDLED BY YOU IN YOUR SERVICE TENURE AT VARIOUS DISTRICTS.

#### **Project 1: e-Setu in Latur district to provide online various certificates and licences to citizens**

**Duration of the project:** 2 years

**Your role:** Project head

**Current status:** Completed and successfully implemented

**Impact on end users:** 18 lakh certificates distributed so far from the year 2007 onwards. It is people friendly and citizens are informed through mobile SMS.

#### **Project 2: e-District for Latur district**

Established CFC centres all across the district to enable online delivery of various certificates to citizen at the village level. At present 97 types of certificates are issued from various counters in Latur district. I was the coordinator. This has been successfully implemented in the district without any hassles.

#### **Project 3: Website development and uploading of information**

I was the administrative head with the technical support of NIC. Published all the relevant information and made it public for their information. All the judgments and orders are uploaded on the district portal and communicated to the litigants and advocates.

#### **Project 4: Vision document for Latur district in 2008**

The vision document for Latur district was prepared in consultation with officers, experts, NGOs and people's representatives. The document was unveiled on January 8, 2008 by the then President of India Pratibha Patil and the then Chief Minister of Maharashtra Vilasrao Deshmukh. The project duration was 8 months. I was the head of the vision drafting committee. Vision 2032 has been prepared and uploaded on the district website. At present, it

is being used as a guiding tool for the development of the district.

### WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS OF GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTED ICT PROJECTS? DO YOU FEEL THAT PROCESS REENGINEERING IS REQUIRED?

- Software is not completely integrated at all levels
- Prepared without consulting all stakeholders
- No effective monitoring and control
- Scope is not properly defined
- Lack of capacity building and change management
- Lack of user friendliness
- No accountability
- No bottom up policy, only top level management decision
- No convergence of the schemes, funds
- Some top level bureaucrats do not take interest and motivate the field staff
- No proper coordination between the departments at the higher levels.

### YES, PROCESS RE-ENGINEERING IS ABSOLUTELY REQUIRED WITH RESPECT TO THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

- Removal of unnecessary steps
- Decentralization of power
- Correct citizen's charter
- Correct process flow chart
- Timely and speedy disposal
- Paperless approach
- Pro-active disclosure
- Third party assessment, accountability
- Scope analysis, stakeholders consultation, quality analysis in terms of cost, time are not properly done in government departments
- Multiplicity of software in many districts.
- No proper procedure of data digitization and preparation of the repository of the huge data.
- Retrieval of the data especially past scanned data is must.
- Delegation of powers of decision making is needed for speedy decisions.
- Awards and incentives should be given to the



best employees.

- Standard operating procedures and standardisation of the formats need to be done.
- Uniformity in terms of certificates which are applicable to all states such as nationality, age, domicile, residence, Income certificates to be done at central level.
- Outdated procedures, laws and Acts should be revised and simplified and published in local languages also.

### **WHAT ARE THE CORE DIFFICULTY AREAS YOU FEEL SHOULD BE ADDRESSED IN YOUR DISTRICT & HOW DIGITAL TOOLS CAN HELP AS A PRIMARY TOOL?**

- Laying internet networking to connect remotely placed villages
- Standardisation of the certificates to be issued
- Vernacular language based software
- Holistic approach – all departments on a single portal
- Convergence of schemes and state and central funds
- e-literacy among the people
- Farmers community should be involved in use of digital tools
- Software should be Marathi compliant
- Mobile based management should be made possible in public distribution system, election roll information, beneficiary scheme information and revenue case management
- Web publication brings tremendous change in building trust - SMS, Web publications, e-mails should be used extensively,
- Internet-enabled information kiosks should be set up at all levels especially at taluka and village offices for citizen access.

### **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?**

- First we explain the concept and idea of the project
- Scope charter is prepared
- What is deliverable to the end users is identified

- Flow chart is prepared in consultation with NIC and other stakeholders
- Technical committee headed by DIO, NIC and Project committee headed by additional collector are established
- Weekly review meeting are held to resolve all issues
- Pilot trial of the software is conducted
- New applications are launched all across the district

### **ARE YOU DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH THE OFFICIAL DISTRICT WEBSITE? HOW DO YOU CONTRIBUTE TO KEEP IT UPDATED?**

Yes, I am directly involved in developing website called COLIS – Collector Information System. URL is [www.collectorkolhapur.gov.in](http://www.collectorkolhapur.gov.in).

- Daily monitoring is done
- 359 users login provided
- each desk is provided with independent login and password
- Almost all the revenue courts are working on this site
- Pro- active disclosure of all information in public domain
- Data/server at NIC, new Delhi
- Security audit got done
- Team of officers headed by DIO, NIC is formed to update and maintain the system properly
- Dashboard – displays the use of website and employee user progress profile
- One officer from each desk is a member, who is entrusted to update the site

### **HOW DO YOU RATE YOUR OFFICIAL DISTRICT WEBSITE ON A SCALE OF 10?**

I will rate the website 9 out of 10 because it is successfully running since October 2011, has been developed with the help of local NIC officers in vernacular language, stakeholders and farmers community are using it widely for revenue cases, using both web-based and mobile-based information management, FAQs are provided in Marathi, simple, familiar icons are being used to provide easy access to information, an e-library comprising 168 Acts scanned and uploaded is helpful for all, DSC is used on all documents, dashboard for monitoring,



1,94,000 visits vectored since 1 April 2013 and all the information and guidelines of GIGW is being followed properly.

### **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 ICT PROJECTS?**

The duration of the collector, if he is involved in ICT, should be made 4 years. The preparation of software, trials, actual implementation, results, impact assessment etc. requires much time. If transferred successors generally do not take interest in the predecessor's work. For example: I was additional collector from 4/7/2011. I had developed the COLIS module implemented till 22/1/2014, but suddenly I was transferred to Nagpur. Now it is difficult to take it ahead. Some sub-modules have not been fine tuned yet since the collector is an expert with his ideas, he knows the scope, deliverables to the end users, feedback mechanism and improvement, quality analysis etc. All this requires time. Therefore, tenure of 4 years is the proper tenure for a district collector.

### **WHAT ARE THE MAJOR DIGITAL TOOLS YOU THINK ARE A MUST TO MAKE DISTRICT ACHIEVE GOOD GOVERNANCE AT DISTRICT LEVEL?**

- Mobile-based management
- Scope analysis
- Time and cost analysis
- Quality analysis
- Impact assessment
- Feedback analysis
- Web-based management
- Dashboards for monitoring
- User friendly analysis
- Language analysis
- Link with social media
- Employee efficiency analysis.

### **MENTION IF THERE IS ANY IMPLEMENTED SOFTWARE IN YOUR DISTRICT THAT YOU CAN USE TO MANAGE THE INFORMATION SYSTEM AMONG VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS OF DISTRICT?**

'COLIS' – collector's information system [www.collectorkolhapur.gov.in](http://www.collectorkolhapur.gov.in)

### **LIST WHAT CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHILE IMPLEMENTING ANY ICT PROJECTS. HOW DO YOU OVERCOME THEM?**

Challenges faced include:

- Resistance from staff, advocates, litigants
- Non-cooperation from senior officers due to lack of identity and power loss
- Press briefing the usefulness to farmers
- Holding meetings with staff and convincing them about user friendliness
- Consultation with bar council members and demonstration of the system to overcome resistance
- Lack of support from immediate boss, then took this issue to hon'ble chief secretary, Maharashtra, who supported, then everything went smooth
- Trained staff after preparing training module
- legal, administration compliance

### **HOW ARE THE CITIZENS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES INVOLVED IN ANY ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT OR GOVERNANCE PROJECT IDEATION, PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION?**

- Initially citizens were reluctant since it was integrated with UID.
- Explained how this gives speedier, cost affordable services. Involved social activists and NGOs to create awareness about the usefulness of this module.
- Selected some progressive and literate farmers – for demonstration
- Consultation committees were formed to remove difficulties
- Independent telephone number was given for feedback
- Many suggestion came from citizens

### **WHICH DISTRICT IN INDIA, YOU FEEL IS THE BEST ICT EMPOWERED DISTRICT IN ALL ASPECTS?**

Latur district of Maharashtra.

“A TREMENDOUS OUTCOME WILL BE NOTICED IF THE SOCIETY IS DIGITALLY LITERATE. GREATER AWARENESS OF CITIZENS WILL LEAD TO THEIR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE AND PEOPLE WILL BE ABLE TO GRASP NOT ONLY GLOBAL CHANGES BUT ALSO THOSE HAPPENING IN OUR OWN COUNTRY.”

## Sunil Kumar Srivastava, Maharajganj district, Uttar Pradesh

### WHAT IS YOUR VISION ON A DIGITALLY LITERATE SOCIETY & ICT IMPLEMENTATIONS AT LARGE?

A tremendous outcome will be noticed if the society is digitally literate. Greater awareness of citizens will lead to their active participation in governance and people will be able to grasp not only global changes but also those happening in our own country. This is possible only with spread of digital literacy among the people.

### WHAT ARE YOUR CORE DUTIES? DO YOU INCLUDE DIGITAL TOOLS IN YOUR PROJECT PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATIONS? HOW?

Yes, I do implement all digital tools and technical resources available to me.

### DO YOU FEEL INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) CAN BE USED AS A PRIMARY TOOL TO MAKE AN INFORMATION-RICH NATION? HOW?

Yes because ICT is the easiest method to spread knowledge among the people of the nation.

### LIST VARIOUS PROJECTS INITIATED/HANDLED BY YOU IN YOUR SERVICE TENURE AT VARIOUS DISTRICTS.

e-District project for Ballia district. I have been President of the committee for updating the district website for the last 6 months.

### WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS OF GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTED ICT PROJECTS? DO YOU FEEL THAT PROCESS REENGINEERING IS REQUIRED?

The limitations are:

- Limited implementation area
- Limited Resources
- No specific budgets for implementing technology projects.

### WHAT ARE THE CORE DIFFICULTY AREAS YOU FEEL SHOULD BE ADDRESSED IN YOUR DISTRICT & HOW DIGITAL TOOLS CAN HELP AS A PRIMARY TOOL?

There is a lack of knowledge in ICT. Digital tools can provide better knowledge of ICT.

**ARE YOU DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH THE OFFICIAL DISTRICT WEBSITE? HOW DO YOU CONTRIBUTE TO KEEP IT UPDATED?**

Yes, I have constituted a committee for keeping the district website updated and I am the president of the committee. We evaluate the work progress periodically.

**HOW DO YOU RATE YOUR OFFICIAL DISTRICT WEBSITE ON A SCALE OF 10?**

I rate our district website [www.maharajganj.nic](http://www.maharajganj.nic) in 7 out of 10 because we are trying to provide all the information (schemes and also beneficiaries) through this district portal.

**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 ICT PROJECTS?**

Minimum 2 years so that planning, development, implementation, execution and then the progress can be monitored to ensure proper implementation. Only then can the results become noticeable.

**WHAT ARE THE MAJOR DIGITAL TOOLS YOU THINK ARE A MUST TO MAKE DISTRICT ACHIEVE GOOD GOVERNANCE AT DISTRICT LEVEL?**

Technical staff is a big issue in the present scenario. We have got the equipment to digitize but to make significant progress we need a good technical team.

**LIST WHAT CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHILE IMPLEMENTING ANY ICT PROJECTS. HOW DO YOU OVERCOME THEM?**

The only challenge is lack of knowledge of ICT and digital tools can provide better knowledge.

“THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION IS A REALITY AND HAS BEEN KNOCKING ON OUR DOORS SINCE SOME YEARS NOW. IT HAS CHANGED THE WAY WE THINK ABOUT SERVICE DELIVERY AND COMMUNICATION WITH PEOPLE. AS A DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATOR I SEE IT AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO EMPOWER PEOPLE AND PROVIDE SERVICES TO THEM IN A MORE EFFECTIVE AND TRANSPARENT MANNER.”

#### WHAT IS YOUR VISION ON A DIGITALLY LITERATE SOCIETY & ICT IMPLEMENTATIONS AT LARGE?

The Digital Revolution is a reality and has been knocking on our doors since some years now. It has changed the way we think about service delivery and communication with people. As a development administrator I see it as an opportunity to empower people and provide services to them in a more effective and transparent manner. However, there are limitations in using the technology because of digital illiteracy, lack of awareness and requisite infrastructure to provide services. Still there is widespread acceptance and appreciation of the solutions. I work in a poor backward district where functional literacy is a challenge. Still I force a big role for digitally delivered services through information kiosks or facilitation centres. This will increase the common people's access to services and will remove the secrecy and restrictions of the traditional way of service delivery. Proactive disclosure of information and its access by people will also help in quick dissemination of information and remove many obstacles in access to information. Not only service delivery but monitoring, review, comparison and analysis of service delivery and implementation of various schemes can also be ensured with the right kind

## Rajesh Prabhakar Patil, Mayurbhanj, Odisha

of ICT intervention. The applications should be need-based, relevant and technologically feasible. Our vision in this regard is to use ICT for improving service delivery, better supervision, monitoring and analysis of delivery and implementation. To provide digital solutions which are simple, transparent, user friendly and accessible.

#### WHAT ARE YOUR CORE DUTIES? DO YOU INCLUDE DIGITAL TOOLS IN YOUR PROJECT PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATIONS? HOW?

- To deliver basic services with respect to various certificates, permissions, NOCs, social security schemes.
- Monitoring, planning & implementation of MGNREGA, IAY & other rural development schemes of Govt. of India & Govt. of Odisha in the district.

Yes, we have included digital tools like MINA, e-District tools in our project plan.

- Under the e-District project, all the services availed of by citizens from the District Administration are being delivered in digital form through Common Service Centres(CSC).
- Under the MINA project, we have developed an android based mobile application namely – MINA (Mayurbhanj Indira Awas & MGNREGA

App) which is used by Gram Rozgar Sevaks (GRS) at panchayat level for implementation & monitoring the MGNREGA and IAY work. Every GRS has been provided with an Android smart phone with the customized application using which he or she can record observations during daily visits to project sites.

- MINA works offline and even in remote places users can record their inspections and observations. These reports are synchronized over mobile GPRS. The Server used in backend produce readable PDF format reports with images and GPS information embedded in them

### **DO YOU FEEL INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) CAN BE USED AS A PRIMARY TOOL TO MAKE AN INFORMATION-RICH NATION? HOW?**

Yes, voluntary disclosure of information and delivery of services through Common Service Centres at decentralized locations itself ensures empowerment of people in terms of availability of information, tracking of the status of service delivery (in terms of Govt to Citizen, Business to Citizen, Citizen to Citizen) and knowledge about various aspects of delivery. Similarly, by using ICT in government works, a valuable repository of project documentation on a daily basis can be maintained. This also serves as a proof of delivery in case assets created are transient. In MINA project, the mobile channel is utilised to capture status of works, labour engaged, IAY house status, social audit reports etc. This is an important step and it is similar in function to the minutes of meetings in the corporate world. All information is recorded in PDF format. The same report is also available in the public domain immediately. So users can scrutinise the documents in real time after a meeting to ensure correctness. This brings out the real value of schemes.

### **LIST VARIOUS PROJECTS INITIATED/HANDLED BY YOU IN YOUR SERVICE TENURE AT VARIOUS DISTRICTS.**

1. e-District Project: The e-District project is an initiative of e-Governance where interaction between citizens and government through electronic media is the basic objective. So efforts are being made to modernise

government functioning through e-District by using technological tools like Internet, public kiosks/facilitation centres etc. To make it streamlines some complementary projects are added with e-District, to make the entire e-Governance scheme successful like – CSC, e-Municipality, e-Registration, NOFN (National Optical Fibre Network), and OSWAN (Odisha State Wide Area Network). The e-District portal ([www.edistrictodisha.gov.in](http://www.edistrictodisha.gov.in)) involves integrated and seamless delivery of citizen services by district administration through backlog digitization, integration and process redesigning across participating sections/departments for providing services in a most efficient manner to the citizens. This project was started in Mayurbhanj since 15th December 2011 and implemented successfully all over the district through PFCs (Public Facilitation Centres) / CSC (Common Service Centres) in online mode for citizens to avail services at doorstep in less time. The project has been running for the last three years and my role has been to supervise and implement the project throughout the district. The current status is that the project has been successfully implemented and is running smoothly. Till 20th October 2014, we have delivered services to 503,257 citizens through 306 functional CSCs. Citizens are availing the services in time bound manner at their door step without running here and there among various offices and spending time on queues. Maximum that a citizen has to travel is to move to his/her Gram Panchyat level CSC for the service.

2. MINA Project: Mayurbhanj is the largest district in Odisha state as far as the geographical area is concerned and is host to 53 tribes with average literacy rate of 63.17. It is adorned with the Similipal National Park. However, in this geographical area the major concern is monitoring and supervision of Government schemes/programmes. To maintain transparency in the system and ensure proper monitoring, time bound reporting is the most important factor. MGNREGA is one of the flagship programmes which is running smoothly since the past few years in the district. For monitoring

of this programme and to get updates of daily labour engagement we have developed a mobile based application. We purchased 6 mobile phones and then downloaded this application and handed over the phones to 6 Gram Rojgar Sevaks in Baripada block to know the labour engagement under the MGNREGA and reporting in time on pilot basis. Then we spread it to 119 GPs of 8 blocks. Duration of the project is 6 months and ongoing (started from April 2014). My role is overall supervision as Team head of this project in the district. Current status is the project is ongoing in 8 blocks in the district out of district out of 26 blocks. Impact on end users: Easy to monitor the labour engagement and check the status of IAY houses.

3. Whatsapp groups: We are using the “Whatapp” to form two groups for quick two-way communication of audio/video/photos with my subordinates on a day to day basis for various projects. The two groups are: 1. Team Mayurbhanj (all 26 Block Development Officers and district level officers are participants) and 2. Tahasildars MBJ (all Tehasildars and district level officers are participants). The duration of Team Mayurbhanj is 1 year (created on 10/10/2013) and Tahasildars MBJ is 4 months (created on 26/6/2014). My role is I am the Group head and in charge of overall supervision. The current status is both the groups are ongoing. Impact on end users: Sharing of information among team members has created an encouraging, time-bound and informative work culture.
4. Google spreadsheet: We are also using Google spreadsheets to capture data from all 26 blocks in the district in a timely manner.

### **WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS OF GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTED ICT PROJECTS? DO YOU FEEL THAT PROCESS REENGINEERING IS REQUIRED?**

Following are few limitations of the government implemented ICT projects:

1. Many times the projects are designed in isolation without considering the suitability, acceptance and relevance of the projects.
2. Sometimes logistic infrastructure in terms of

system availability as well as trained manpower to handle the system is not available.

3. It is also seen that the statutory issues involved in the delivery of services are not addressed which create problem about the credibility of the services
4. The system developed are not found to be dynamic due to which they become irrelevant after few years.

### **WHAT ARE THE CORE DIFFICULTY AREAS YOU FEEL SHOULD BE ADDRESSED IN YOUR DISTRICT & HOW DIGITAL TOOLS CAN HELP AS A PRIMARY TOOL?**

For example, in a big district like Mayurbhanj if a common person needs some financial loan or a retired person wants to apply for pension/ certificates, s/he would have to travel a long distance and visit many organizations to get his/ her right. Which at times make the citizen tired and frustrated due to various reasons. But through our e-District project citizens are able to apply for the same through CSCs (at their GP level) without physically going to the required office, district/block head quarter. In various government schemes, data multiplicity should be reduced. Master data should be shared with other departments so that duplication of effort and cost is avoided. MINA does this across NREGA, IAY and SSA.

### **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 always go with a prototype and launch it in the field as a pilot to ascertain real world issues. We work equally with NIC through the bidding process.

### **ARE YOU DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH THE OFFICIAL DISTRICT WEBSITE? HOW DO YOU CONTRIBUTE TO KEEP IT UPDATED?**

A website in general tends to get stagnant after a while. For the e-District portal, I have my user ID and password, which I use to monitor official activities like the issue of certificates pending, applications filed and update duration, status report

etc. We also use a lot of social media integration like Facebook, Whats app, Google Spreadsheet to keep conversations alive. Like on Facebook, we have opened group pages for the such as "Mu Bi Padhibi - SSA" & "Mayurbhanj Mgnrega". These are basically updated, maintained and moderated by DRDA officials which keep the public updated on ongoing activities/blogs. Apart from that, with regard to our district official website, I ensure updates as per requirement of district administration under my supervision.

#### **HOW DO YOU RATE YOUR OFFICIAL DISTRICT WEBSITE ON A SCALE OF 10?**

My rating is 7 and the website URL is [www.mayurbhanj.nic.in](http://www.mayurbhanj.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 ICT PROJECTS?**

Yes, frequent transfers do affect the status of ICT projects since new officials need to go through the basics of the initiatives. Since these are inevitable changes, a good documented approach must be adopted in project.

#### **WHAT ARE THE MAJOR DIGITAL TOOLS YOU THINK ARE A MUST TO MAKE DISTRICT ACHIEVE GOOD GOVERNANCE AT DISTRICT LEVEL?**

- Digital signature certificates
- Internet connectivity through optical fibre network up to village level
- Mobile-based inspection of government projects
- m-Governance (mobile apps to be used for governance)
- Public domain portal with view of all data/reports
- Secure sharing of data using web services
- Making a master data base of all departments' data at district level for triangulation purpose.

#### **MENTION IF THERE IS ANY IMPLEMENTED SOFTWARE IN YOUR DISTRICT THAT YOU CAN USE TO MANAGE THE INFORMATION SYSTEM AMONG VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS OF DISTRICT?**

Yes, MINA was designed ground up to work across SSA, NREGA and IAY projects. No need of username and password to view data. MGNREGA inspection form, IAY inspection form etc. available on [www.mina-online.in](http://www.mina-online.in). MGNREGA grid view page and PDF report card also available at [www.mina-online.in](http://www.mina-online.in). GPS tracking of labour and asset screen has been created.

#### **LIST WHAT CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHILE IMPLEMENTING ANY ICT PROJECTS. HOW DO YOU OVERCOME THEM?**

In general most ICT projects if not planned well, end up becoming glorified websites with stale data. Therefore, any ICT project must be planned at a data level, rather than the user interface level. Again, if the ICT directly links the citizen like in the case of our e-District project, then awareness among citizens is a big challenge, so is lack of internet connections at the Gram Panchyat levels. Also responsibilities of updation, moderation and regular maintenance must be fixed. In general, buy in and participation of all officials must be tried. Moreover, quick expectation of big changes shouldn't be there for any technical ICT innovation as it takes time for results to pick up.

#### **HOW ARE THE CITIZENS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES INVOLVED IN ANY ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT OR GOVERNANCE PROJECT IDEATION, PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION?**

Citizens and the local community have a bigger role in the implementation of ICT initiatives as they are the main stakeholders. If the project is designed as per needs of the people, the grounding becomes easy. Many a time dissemination of information about the project is also a motivating factor for the acceptance of the community. Thus, there has to be a conscious effort to make people aware, get their feedback and involve them for the success of the project.



“DIGITAL INDIA NEEDS CONNECTIVITY AND DIGITAL LITERACY TO ENSURE INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT. REACHING HIGH SPEED INTERNET TO ALL VILLAGES OF INDIA IS A PREREQUISITE FOR A DIGITALLY LITERATE SOCIETY.”

## **M. Nagarajan, Sabarkantha district, Gujarat**

### **WHAT IS YOUR VISION ON A DIGITALLY LITERATE SOCIETY & ICT IMPLEMENTATIONS AT LARGE.**

Digital India needs connectivity and digital literacy to ensure inclusive development. Reaching high speed Internet to all villages of India is a prerequisite for a digitally literate society. Localisation of relevant content is a challenge.

ICT can help in achieving development goals when it is merged with the development process and related to the culture. Technology is an enabler. But the value of innovation is derived from its context. It is not the technology but the impact that matters.

Deploying an IT solution is the easiest thing to do. It cannot generate enough impact unless Government Process Reengineering (GPR) is also carried out. Change management and a commitment to use technology to deliver services better and improve the quality of governance can enable the creation of a digitally enabled society.

Bridging Rural-Urban divide and the Digital Divide must go hand in hand with ICT implementations. Governments must avoid silos and build interoperability and data interchange principles in ICT implementation.

Systems must be designed to automate workflow

and collect data automatically. There is a need to move from statistical analysis and reporting to data analysis. This involves single point of capture for any data point and reuse through standardisation and interoperability. Data should be captured as close to the source as possible. Multiple data entry of same data which is so rampant in government must be avoided.

### **WHAT ARE YOUR CORE DUTIES? DO YOU INCLUDE DIGITAL TOOLS IN YOUR PROJECT PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATIONS? HOW?**

Core duties involve rural development and implementation of Panchayati Raj schemes. We use digital tools in most aspects of government work.

Whatsapp is used extensively for quick communication for teams, quick sharing of photos, documents and data. All instructions are passed on.

### **DO YOU FEEL INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) CAN BE USED AS A PRIMARY TOOL TO MAKE AN INFORMATION-RICH NATION? HOW?**

Creation of a knowledge society requires free information flow. ICT can transform any activity by making information available anytime anywhere.



Information converts to knowledge which empowers individuals to realize their potential.

Google and Wikipedia transformed the way we search and access information. Information informs, entertains, educates and empowers. ICT can help in making information available across any channel anywhere in the world.

ICT works across devices, technologies and geographies to deliver information. Massive Open Online Course platforms like Coursera and Udemu have helped spread information across continents, which was hitherto not possible.

ICT empowers governments to inform and engage with the public. Maximum Governance and Minimum Government is possible only when information and choice is available to all citizens without any barriers.

Governance information dissemination has evolved from Official Secrets Act to Right to Information Act to Open Data. ICT has enabled government to approach developmental challenges by involving stakeholders in policy making and policy feedback.

#### **LIST VARIOUS PROJECTS INITIATED/HANDLED BY YOU IN YOUR SERVICE TENURE AT VARIOUS DISTRICTS.**

During the Election for the Gujarat State Assembly - 2012 a Voter awareness campaign using New Media and outreach was carried out. The project name was My Vote My Right.

#### **WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS OF GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTED ICT PROJECTS? DO YOU FEEL THAT PROCESS REENGINEERING IS REQUIRED?**

It's not the technology but the impact that matters. ICT is an enabler to Governance functions. Limitations of Government implemented ICT Projects include but not limited to:

- Government ICT projects are more vendor driven rather than requirements driven
- Scope creep is an essential part of Government

projects

- Government Officers lack capacity to create project scope effectively
- Lack of inter-departmental coordination leads to duplicate projects
- There is no plan for inter-operability or exchange of information
- Most ICT projects focus on getting reports only
- Very little thought is given to process re-engineering
- Project scope is expanded or narrowed as per budget and not the functional requirements
- When the project champion leaves, the project dies a slow death.

#### **WHAT ARE THE CORE DIFFICULTY AREAS YOU FEEL SHOULD BE ADDRESSED IN YOUR DISTRICT & HOW DIGITAL TOOLS CAN HELP AS A PRIMARY TOOL?**

- Project monitoring - mobile inspection tools can help in progress and status tracking
- Team Communication - Though tools like email and Whatsapp are used there is a need to build a dedicated communication and collaboration platform for the government.
- Focus on statistics rather than data - All existing paper reports are focussed on statistical analysis. The data collection and analysis capabilities of an ICT based system is not utilised leading to less than optimal usage of IT systems.
- Work and File Status tracking - It takes a lot of time just to track who is holding the file. Work flow automation tools and online work management solutions like eOffice can help in file tracking and paperless office. It also helps in easy tracking of progress.
- Digital Engagement - There is no systematic plan or tools to manage interactions with citizens. It will be helpful to use Bulk SMS and CRM like tools to track and respond to citizen queries. This can also be helpful when using social media to engage with citizens.

**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 at the district level is severely under staffed. Except for the District Information Officer other staff are on contract basis and lack good experience or knowledge. Due to implementation of many state government and central government ICT projects the NIC officer has very less time to work on district level application. Hence the dependence on NIC as a software development resource is reduced. Except for minor projects related to reporting or data collection, big projects are not undertaken. Vendors are preferred in such cases. During December 2012 we developed an SMS receiving system which received pledges from voters and displayed it on a website. We received 3300 SMS pledges to vote in a span of 25 days. The SMSes can be viewed at [www.MyVoteMyRight.com](http://www.MyVoteMyRight.com)

**ARE YOU DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH THE OFFICIAL DISTRICT WEBSITE? HOW DO YOU CONTRIBUTE TO KEEP IT UPDATED?**

We update our district panchayat office website. The agency appointed for website maintenance can be contacted over email and phone. Except for mandatory reports and data there is no other information uploaded on the site. It takes at least a week to get the site updated. Direct update rights are not available as these websites lack a content management system.

**HOW DO YOU RATE YOUR OFFICIAL DISTRICT WEBSITE ON A SCALE OF 10?**

My rating is 6 out of 10. The interface has not been changed for more than six years. The district authority does not have the rights to change the design or edit the content. Most content are old and updating is time consuming.

**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 ICT PROJECTS?**

The duration of DC should at least be two years. It is imperative to start one high impact process re-engineering project within three months of taking charge. It takes at least 3 months to make a plan. One year to develop and implement across the district. Another six months to stabilise and institutionalise. Meanwhile, if the project wins an award the acceptability of the project among stakeholders increases manifold. Then the sustainability of the project gets a boost. Finishing a project within one's own tenure helps in completing a full life cycle and establish sustainability and satisfaction to the officer.

**WHAT ARE THE MAJOR DIGITAL TOOLS YOU THINK ARE A MUST TO MAKE DISTRICT ACHIEVE GOOD GOVERNANCE AT DISTRICT LEVEL?**

1. Digital Work flow and file tracking
2. Collaboration and reporting suite
3. Citizen engagement platform
4. Mobile tools for internal purpose
5. Mobile tools for field level monitoring and reporting.

**MENTION IF THERE IS ANY IMPLEMENTED SOFTWARE IN YOUR DISTRICT THAT YOU CAN USE TO MANAGE THE INFORMATION SYSTEM AMONG VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS OF DISTRICT?**

<http://dfs.skdp.in/visit> provides information of rural development works carried out in each village covering 740 village panchayats and 1300 villages across 13 blocks. So far more than 30000 works have been inspected. The information is viewable without login id.

**LIST WHAT CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHILE IMPLEMENTING ANY ICT PROJECTS. HOW DO YOU OVERCOME THEM?**

The biggest challenge in any ICT project is establishing the need for the project and getting the stakeholders to share the vision. Even a junior clerk will not put up a file without adequately explaining and convincing them. Next comes the challenge of funding the project. The more the project is innovative the more difficult to convince for approval of funds. Finding a vendor who can share the vision is the next obstacle. After that field implementation needs a sensitive and knowledgeable staff to support the testing and implementation. But all these challenges can be overcome by defining the project scope clearly and communicating often and persuading the stakeholders. They have to be given time and some actual examples to get convinced on the utility of the project. Once they see that others recognize the results, participation and ownership increases.

**HOW ARE THE CITIZENS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES INVOLVED IN ANY ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT OR GOVERNANCE PROJECT IDEATION, PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION?**

Local communities are involved in analysing the requirements for a project. They provide problem scoping inputs so as to target the outputs from the project accordingly. The citizens help in pilot testing and feedback to constantly improve and fine tune the project.

**WHICH DISTRICT IN INDIA, YOU FEEL IS THE BEST ICT EMPOWERED DISTRICT IN ALL ASPECTS?**

Most districts do well in one or two aspects. In my view there is no ideal or model district that has been created from ICT point of view.

**PLEASE FURNISH ANY OTHER PROJECT RELATED USEFUL INFORMATION THAT YOU HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO PROVIDE IN THE OTHER ANSWERS.**

Headed a task force on revamping Public Health ICT system in Gujarat appointed by Commissioner of Health, Government of Gujarat.

“IN A DIGITALLY LITERATE SOCIETY, CITIZENS SHOULD NOT MERELY OWN COST-EFFECTIVE GADGETS WHICH ARE BASED ON ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY, BUT SHOULD USE THEM CONSTRUCTIVELY FOR THE BETTERMENT OF SOCIETY. DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY SHOULD FACILITATE CITIZENS IN LOCATING, UNDERSTANDING, EVALUATING AND ANALYSING INFORMATION.”

#### WHAT IS YOUR VISION ON A DIGITALLY LITERATE SOCIETY & ICT IMPLEMENTATIONS AT LARGE.

ICT is the technology of today and of the future. Therefore, sooner or later, our society needs to transform itself into a digitally literate society. In a digitally literate society, citizens should not merely own cost-effective gadgets which are based on advanced technology, but should use them constructively for the betterment of society. Digital technology should facilitate citizens in locating, understanding, evaluating and analysing information. Digital tools should help citizens and Government to enhance knowledge and skills. Digital divide should be bridged by inclusion of all sections in ICT services. ICT should become a tool of empowerment. It should bring transparency and promptness in the actions of administration. ICT should be a tool to take administration closer to people. It should be an enabler for people.

#### WHAT ARE YOUR CORE DUTIES? DO YOU INCLUDE DIGITAL TOOLS IN YOUR PROJECT PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATIONS? HOW?

As the Collector and District Magistrate, I have to supervise the functioning of the entire District Administration machinery. Functions include

## Deependra Singh Kushwah, Sangli district, Maharashtra

a wide variety of activities in such areas as development, regulation, implementation of schemes, monitoring, land revenue collection and maintaining law and order. More importantly, Revenue and Magistracy form the core of my duties. I promote the use of digital tools in planning and implementation of projects in order to bring transparency and promptness in the actions of the administration. Digital tools can be used to collect inputs from various stakeholders at the time of inception of an initiative. Further, during the period of implementation, digital technology can be an excellent tool for real time monitoring. After completion, digital devices can again be used to evaluate the impact of the project, and for continuous improvement in it.

#### DO YOU FEEL INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) CAN BE USED AS A PRIMARY TOOL TO MAKE AN INFORMATION-RICH NATION? HOW?

Information and Communication Technology can definitely be a potent tool to make the nation information rich. ICT will carry out the vital function of taking information to each and every citizen of the nation, without any kind of discrimination. ICT will be a neutral, impersonal way of reaching out

to all the sections of the nation. ICT will play its role not only in spread of information but also in processing and analysis of available information. This way, information will be converted into knowledge and further into skills. This knowledge and skills will help in development of the nation. Information becomes empowering if it is of high quality and if it is available at the time when it is required. ICT will help to ensure both quality and real time availability of information. This will truly make the nation information-rich in every sense.

#### **LIST VARIOUS PROJECTS INITIATED/HANDLED BY YOU IN YOUR SERVICE TENURE AT VARIOUS DISTRICTS.**

1. e-Office: Manual processing of files takes a lot of time and also leads to inconvenience to citizens. E-Office system consists of electronic movement of files with digital signatures, resulting in prompt decision making and reduction of red-tapism. This project has been actively pursued by me.
2. e-Chawadi: The traditional method of maintaining land records at village level has many shortcomings. This initiative is to computerize the land revenue related forms at village level so as to create a digital library of all the records. This has caused clarity in records and better work culture at the ground level. I am looking after this project as head of Revenue Administration at the district level.
3. e-Setu: This project includes Integrated Citizen Service Centres. Here, online processing of applications by citizens, online movement

of application to the authority and issuing of digitally signed certificates is done. This saves time and efforts of citizens and also improves work efficiency of officials. This initiative was specially promoted by me.

#### **Other initiatives:**

**Biometric PDS** - Smart devices to bring transparency in PDS

**Parakh** - Online platform for grievance redressal  
**Minor Mineral Monitoring System** - Using ICT to track Minor Minerals

**Tanker monitoring system** - GPS based system to track water supply tankers

**Website** - A platform for citizens to communicate with Government

#### **WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS OF GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTED ICT PROJECTS? DO YOU FEEL THAT PROCESS REENGINEERING IS REQUIRED?**

1. Not all the office procedures are streamlined in alignment with e-governance standards.
2. Clerical staff is not aware of most of the advanced tools.
3. There is no uniformity in ICT projects across districts or departments.
4. Availability of high speed internet at all places is not yet achieved.
5. Some procedures in ICT projects are more time consuming and tedious than manual ones.

#### **WHAT ARE THE CORE DIFFICULTY AREAS YOU FEEL SHOULD BE ADDRESSED IN YOUR DISTRICT & HOW DIGITAL TOOLS CAN HELP AS A PRIMARY TOOL?**

1. Natural resource management by keeping track of the usage of resources using digital tools.
2. Improving delivery of public services by ensuring that the right beneficiary gets the right entitlement using ICT.

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?

Personally and through the District Informatics Officer. NIC technical team has been working on e-Office project.

**ARE YOU DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH THE OFFICIAL DISTRICT WEBSITE? HOW DO YOU CONTRIBUTE TO KEEP IT UPDATED?**

Yes, directly involved. I keep on briefing the NIC team and e-District project manager in meetings about the updates on the website. Recently a link has been introduced where citizens can share their vision of development.

**HOW DO YOU RATE YOUR OFFICIAL DISTRICT WEBSITE ON A SCALE OF 10?**

My rating is 9 out of 10. The website is covering all the issues related to citizens and is an effective interface. Improvements can be done by diversifying the information shared and linking more services.

**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 ICT PROJECTS?**

Tenure of three years should be enough to implement ICT projects right from the preliminary survey to inception, development, implementation and improvements.

**WHAT ARE THE MAJOR DIGITAL TOOLS YOU THINK ARE A MUST TO MAKE DISTRICT ACHIEVE GOOD GOVERNANCE AT DISTRICT LEVEL?**

1. e-Office.
2. Biometric monitoring schemes where beneficiary identification is an issue.
3. Web-based feedback and grievance redressal system.
4. GPS based tracking systems to prevent pilferage.

**LIST WHAT CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHILE IMPLEMENTING ANY ICT PROJECTS. HOW DO YOU OVERCOME THEM?**

1. No basic ICT skills with users. Overcome by training of stakeholders.
2. Procedures not streamlined for ICT projects. Overcome by Process Reengineering.
3. Cost for set-up. Overcome by using frugal approach.

**HOW ARE THE CITIZENS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES INVOLVED IN ANY ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT OR GOVERNANCE PROJECT IDEATION, PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION?**

Citizens are encouraged to give their inputs and feedback with regard to the Vision Document on the District Collectorate website.

**WHICH DISTRICT IN INDIA, YOU FEEL IS THE BEST ICT EMPOWERED DISTRICT IN ALL ASPECTS?**

Sindhudurg, Sangli

**PLEASE FURNISH ANY OTHER PROJECT RELATED USEFUL INFORMATION THAT YOU HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO PROVIDE IN THE OTHER ANSWERS.**

The e-Office system started in Sangli was solely the initiative of the District Administration, as compared to other eSetu which are handled by dedicated teams from NIC. Sangli eSetu project has very little input costs. The system is customized as per local requirements. As a result, the implementation of this project has been a success story for the district administration.

“ICT TOOLS COLLECT ASSEMBLE AND DISSEMINATE INFORMATION WHICH IS USEFUL. THE USE OF ICT TOOLS TRANSFORMS RAW DATA INTO VALUABLE INFORMATION; IF WE USE ICT IN VARIOUS SECTIONS OF SOCIETY, WE CAN UNDERSTAND AND MAKE CORRELATION AMONG THESE SECTIONS.”

## **Dr. Ashok Kumar Bhargava, Shahdol district, Madhya Pradesh**

### **WHAT IS YOUR VISION ON A DIGITALLY LITERATE SOCIETY & ICT IMPLEMENTATIONS AT LARGE.**

Digital literacy is more than knowing how to send a text or watch a music video. It means having the knowledge and ability to use a range of technology tools for varied purposes. Digital Literacy does not replace traditional forms of literacy. It builds upon the foundation of traditional forms of literacy. Digital literacy is one component of being a digital citizen - a person who is responsible for how to utilize technology to interact with the world around us. Digital technology allows people to interact and communicate with family and friends on a regular basis despite the “busy constraints” of today’s world. Not only do white-collar workers require digital literacy in the use of media to present, record and analyze data, but so do blue-collar workers who are looking for ways to increase productivity and analyze market trends, along with increase in job safety. At present, digital literacy is also required at the village level. Day by day increasing use of ICT in government projects and day to day working requires working knowledge of digital tools.

### **WHAT ARE YOUR CORE DUTIES? DO YOU INCLUDE DIGITAL TOOLS IN YOUR PROJECT PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATIONS? HOW?**

I think my functions and duties can be divided into four categories — as a collector, as a district administrator, as a district magistrate and as a district development officer.

### **DO YOU FEEL INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) CAN BE USED AS A PRIMARY TOOL TO MAKE AN INFORMATION-RICH NATION? HOW?**

ICT tools collect assemble and disseminate information which is useful. The use of ICT tools transforms raw data into valuable information; if we use ICT in various sections of society, we can understand and make correlation among these sections.

### **LIST VARIOUS PROJECTS INITIATED/HANDLED BY YOU IN YOUR SERVICE TENURE AT VARIOUS DISTRICTS.**

1. Website at janpad level - This website provides all information about janpad Burhar and beneficiaries can access any government scheme and relevant information about it. A redress grievance mechanism is unique feature of the website whereby the complainant gets SMS about his/her complaint and its current status. The name of project is www.



janpadburhar.com. The project has been fully functional for the last 6 months. I am the initiator of the project and it is working under my leadership and my supervision.

2. Niruj - The Cure, HMIS aims to provide timely and accurate information leading to better healthcare planning, improved diagnosis and increased patient access to health services. The project is Hospital Management And Information System which is working for last 6 months under my leadership and guidance. At present it is proving to be beneficial for the patients as well as staff of the hospital.

### **WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS OF GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTED ICT PROJECTS? DO YOU FEEL THAT PROCESS REENGINEERING IS REQUIRED?**

Government Implemented projects lacks will power of the implementer in addition to various constraints in manpower and infrastructure. To address this issue, process re-engineering is required which can help us to generate an effective and efficient manpower pool and use existing infrastructure in a more efficient manner.

### **WHAT ARE THE CORE DIFFICULTY AREAS YOU FEEL SHOULD BE ADDRESSED IN YOUR DISTRICT & HOW DIGITAL TOOLS CAN HELP AS A PRIMARY TOOL?**

Shahdol is placed under Integrated Action Plan (IAP) districts by Government Of India and it is mostly tribal dominated district and has the potential to be affected by Naxal activities. I think the following are core difficult areas which can be addressed through digital tools:

- Health, Education and Employment. All these three sectors are interrelated and at greater level can be addressed through digital tool.
- Management Information System can be used in hospitals to make them patient friendly and improve the service delivery. Lack of trained people to manage and update the MIS is a concern in implementing the MIS.
- To improve the education sector, we envision a digital library with access to multitudes of free study materials and online courses so that students get a better exposure and get fair

opportunity in this competitive world.

- To increase the employment opportunities, local crafts and handmade artifacts can be provided with digital platform to better showcase the indigenous products so that they can get good value in the world market.
- This will lead to transparency, empowerment and betterment of tribal people, especially empowerment of women. Hence, it will lead to good governance in the district.

### **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?**

District Informatics Officer (DIO), NIC is contacted based on identified needs and necessary projects are developed based on wide consultations with the stakeholders. Various levels of consultations take place during different phases of project development and execution. Once the project is fully developed, the DIO imparts necessary training to the staff members who will implement the project. Various new projects are in the development phase. These are:

- e-Office - To facilitate all administrative work digitally
- Android app for public grievances system - A step ahead for m-Governance.

### **ARE YOU DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH THE OFFICIAL DISTRICT WEBSITE? HOW DO YOU CONTRIBUTE TO KEEP IT UPDATED?**

As District Collector, I regularly visit all the government websites and give feedback and inputs to the technical team based on my interactions with the last mile beneficiaries, ground level staff and other concerned officials of various departments.

### **HOW DO YOU RATE YOUR OFFICIAL DISTRICT WEBSITE ON A SCALE OF 10?**

My rating is 8 out of 10 for the website [www.shahdol.nic.in](http://www.shahdol.nic.in). My district website is very user friendly where people can find all relevant information about the district at just one click.

My website also provides additional information about basic information about the district, primary livelihood activities, indigenous arts and crafts, information on tribal life etc.

### **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 ICT PROJECTS?**

At least 3 years is needed for a District Collector to plan, design, roll out, evaluate and redesign any project in a district. Any plan made for a district is based on field visits and feedback from the human resources available at different levels of administration. To collect this information, process it, identify issues and come up with plans and solutions through discussions and development of appropriate plans and technology needs time and resources. The project also has to go through a lot of paper work within the system. The sustainability of such a project on the transfer of the person, who initiated it, is possible only when the project has gone through an implementation cycle and has undergone reengineering. And this needs at least 3 years time, which will also help in the evaluation of the project.

### **WHAT ARE THE MAJOR DIGITAL TOOLS YOU THINK ARE A MUST TO MAKE DISTRICT ACHIEVE GOOD GOVERNANCE AT DISTRICT LEVEL?**

1. Voice based SMS for ground level staff.
2. Cloud based IT technologies.
3. Mobile based ICT & Android based applications.
4. MS excel based MIS
5. Web-based information dissemination system.

### **MENTION IF THERE IS ANY IMPLEMENTED SOFTWARE IN YOUR DISTRICT THAT YOU CAN USE TO MANAGE THE INFORMATION SYSTEM AMONG VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS OF DISTRICT?**

1. Niruj - The Cure, HMIS aims to provide timely and accurate information leading to better healthcare planning, improved diagnosis and

increased patient access to health services.

2. Website at janpad level - [www.janpadburhar.com](http://www.janpadburhar.com): This website provides all information about janpad Burhar and beneficiaries can access any government scheme and relevant information about it.

### **LIST WHAT CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHILE IMPLEMENTING ANY ICT PROJECTS. HOW DO YOU OVERCOME THEM?**

1. Connectivity: We adopted rural friendly technologies like mobile phones since most of the villagers own one. So we started sending voice based SMS to deliver messages to village level workers like secretary ASHA, ANM etc.
2. Electricity: We are focusing on renewable energy to address this issue and have been investing on it through various schemes.
3. e-literacy: Since district is planning to make information available through IT, e-literacy programmes especially for Gram Rojgar Sevak etc were provided. A training centre has been set up at the district level where all the government functionaries from village, block and district levels are trained in new ICT tools.

### **HOW ARE THE CITIZENS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES INVOLVED IN ANY ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT OR GOVERNANCE PROJECT IDEATION, PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION?**

As this is a backward and tribal district, people are less aware about the ICT programmes but still District Administration through its website i.e. [www.shahdol.nic.in](http://www.shahdol.nic.in) try to empower people to get their valuable feedback and suggestions for the difficulties faced by them.

### **WHICH DISTRICT IN INDIA, YOU FEEL IS THE BEST ICT EMPOWERED DISTRICT IN ALL ASPECTS?**

Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh

**PLEASE FURNISH ANY OTHER PROJECT RELATED USEFUL INFORMATION THAT YOU HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO PROVIDE IN THE OTHER ANSWERS.**

Hospital MIS: The project objective is to improve the management of health facilities and to that end develop a user friendly HMIS to collect reliable information on all activities, and to produce the reports needed by the hospital and district administration. The HMIS aims to provide timely and accurate information leading to better healthcare planning, improved diagnosis and increased patient access to health services. In this regard software for better health delivery to common people was developed and implemented in district Shahdol. The software is not only a MIS but it also provides transparency and accountability to hospital staff. This software has different modules at different user level. The software handles critical areas like drugs supply chain, drug availability projection, blood availability, bed availability etc. The main objective of HMIS are follows:

- Get better access to patient information
- Be able to spend more time on patients
- Be able to spend less time on administration.

**IT IS EXPECTED THAT PATIENTS WILL ALSO BENEFIT, AS THEY WILL:**

- Spend less time in the hospital
- Get better access to medicines due to better inventory keeping
- Get better quality control

**IMPACT ANALYSIS:**

- Increase in revenues: Due to proper registration of patients, it is found that there is significant increase in collection of patient registration fees.
- Better logistics and drugs management through use of an effective HMIS to minimize wastage.
- Due to use of computers enabling a faster registration process there is a lot of time saving for patients and hospital staff.

“ICT HAS BECOME A PART OF THE GLOBAL WORLD AND IS VERY USEFUL IN ALMOST ALL ACTIVITIES IN EVERY SECTOR. FOR THIS REASON, DIGITAL LITERACY HAS A DIRECT IMPACT ON A COUNTRY’S ACTIVITIES AS WELL AS ECONOMY.”

## **Mr Nikhil Chandra Shukla, District Magistrate, Shravasti district, Uttar Pradesh**

### **WHAT IS YOUR VISION ON A DIGITALLY LITERATE SOCIETY & ICT IMPLEMENTATIONS AT LARGE.**

Digital literacy has led to a great increase in information that can be conveniently and quickly accessed and has facilitated the sharing of knowledge. ICT has become a part of the global world and is very useful in almost all activities in every sector. For this reason, digital literacy has a direct impact on a country’s activities as well as economy. In my vision a digitally literate society and ICT implementations at large will change the scenario of traditional working procedure which will be beneficial for public, Government and other stakeholders. People will be capable of accessing information and knowledge that will create a reliable, transparent, safe and speedy medium for delivery of public services to the common man. This will be helpful in creating and maintaining good governance.

### **WHAT ARE YOUR CORE DUTIES? DO YOU INCLUDE DIGITAL TOOLS IN YOUR PROJECT PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATIONS? HOW?**

My core duties include district administration and proper implementation of government Acts and policies for maintaining good governance and proper development.

Yes, we have fixed the responsibility of concerned departments to use ICT Tools in their project planning and Implementation in a time bound manner.

### **DO YOU FEEL INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) CAN BE USED AS A PRIMARY TOOL TO MAKE AN INFORMATION-RICH NATION? HOW?**

Yes, it is indeed true that with the help of ICT, knowledge is no more limited to some people. One can know about anything from the Internet. It is the power of ICT that has enabled us to make literate so many people with virtual classes and make them not only literate but knowledgeable.

### **LIST VARIOUS PROJECTS INITIATED/HANDLED BY YOU IN YOUR SERVICE TENURE AT VARIOUS DISTRICTS.**

There is a huge count of applicants in the office of DM, SP, tehsils and in police station as well. Most of the complaints relate to disputes of property and land. With the help of village Lekhpal and beat constables, we have compiled a list of such disputes village-wise. The disputes which have come officially to the knowledge of DM, SP, tehsils, police station have been listed. Thus a district directory of all

disputes has been prepared. Then a joint team of revenue and police officials were formed and dispatched on a fixed date and time to concerned villages with prior information to parties related with disputes.

This project is called the Bhumi Vivad Nistaran Yojna. It has been in operation for the last six months. My role has been to ensure overall monitoring of the project and achieve on the spot disposal. Till date 677 cases have been solved in 228 villages. The disputes were settled by the team on the basis of revenue records mostly with the consent of the parties in a transparent manner on the spot. The drive has brought great relief to the public at large and has been appreciated by society. It has also improved the maintenance of law and order in the district and crime rate has gone down substantially.

#### **WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS OF GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTED ICT PROJECTS? DO YOU FEEL THAT PROCESS REENGINEERING IS REQUIRED?**

In rural areas a large number of peoples are illiterate and because of that they have little faith in the online system. We can earn their faith by giving quality and timely services. In rural areas, some of the villages are not connected to the Internet. Due to this, online service is not available at their doorstep.

#### **WHAT ARE THE CORE DIFFICULTY AREAS YOU FEEL SHOULD BE ADDRESSED IN YOUR DISTRICT & HOW DIGITAL TOOLS CAN HELP AS A PRIMARY TOOL?**

Shravasti is a backward and border district. Many villages do not have Internet connectivity. Being a remote area transportation is poor. It takes one long day for a remote area villager to come to the district headquarters to get their work done. ICT has enabled them to apply for various government schemes online straight from their village through Lokvani/Common Service Centers.

#### **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?**

As NIC office is situated at the collectorate, there is great coordination between the district administration and the NIC. NIC is helping out District Administration in all e-Governance Projects being implemented in the District. NIC has uploaded all reports of Bhumi Vivad Nistaran on the district website. A dedicated section has been added on the district website for the Bhumi Vivad Nistaran Scheme.

#### **ARE YOU DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH THE OFFICIAL DISTRICT WEBSITE? HOW DO YOU CONTRIBUTE TO KEEP IT UPDATED?**

Yes. I regularly visit the district website, especially the Bhumi Vivad Nistaran section and the District Election Officer Portal. Regular feedback is sent by me to concerned departments to update their information on the website.

#### **HOW DO YOU RATE YOUR OFFICIAL DISTRICT WEBSITE ON A SCALE OF 10?**

My rating is 9 out of 10 for the website [www.shravasti.nic.in](http://www.shravasti.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 ICT PROJECTS?**

At least one year.

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

Lokvani and Common Service Centres play important role in successful implementation of ICT G2C Projects.

“ALL GOOD ICTS SHOULD WHEN IMPLEMENTED REDUCE THE COST OVERRUN AS WELL AS TIME OVERRUN. THEY INCREASE THE TRANSPARENCY TO A GREAT EXTENT AND INCREASE THE ACCOUNTABILITY TOWARDS CITIZENS. THEIR USE ENABLES GOVERNANCE TO TAKE PREDOMINANCE OVER GOVERNMENT AND PRODUCE RESULTS QUICKER WITH LESS OR NO CORRUPTION.”

## Velrasu Periyasamy, Thane district, Maharashtra

### WHAT IS YOUR VISION ON A DIGITALLY LITERATE SOCIETY & ICT IMPLEMENTATIONS AT LARGE.

A digitally literate society plays a crucial role in nation-building by being receptive to the ICT initiatives. A well developed digital society needs to be proactive in identifying the citizen centric digital initiatives and able to transfer information among the members with high fidelity. ICT implementation alone can control rent seeking activities which are the bane of this great nation. ICT initiatives can go a long distance by reducing scope for rent seeking activities simply by increasing transparency. The ICT initiatives should help to improve drastically the Govt-Business relations and Govt-Citizen relations. All good ICTs should when implemented reduce the cost overrun as well as time overrun. They increase the transparency to a great extent and increase the accountability towards citizens. Their use enables governance to take predominance over government and produce results quicker with less or no corruption. The overall effect of these changes will be that the prestige and standing of the nation in the eyes of the international community will go up in a big way.

### WHAT ARE YOUR CORE DUTIES? DO YOU INCLUDE DIGITAL TOOLS IN YOUR PROJECT

### PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATIONS? HOW?

As district collector, the core functions are discharging the statutory functions entrusted under different acts, disaster management, land revenue collection, mining permits issue, grant of land use conversion permissions, planning the district funds under the district planning council and presiding over 150 different committees and conduct of elections and census operations. We incorporate digital tools in different aspects of planning. In the collector's office, the various files and all correspondence are bar coded and made available to the public on the Internet. The mining vehicles movement are monitored through QRC scan systems. Various websites have been developed for implementation of different schemes. For example, the land use conversion permissions are given through [www.thanenaonline.com](http://www.thanenaonline.com) similarly election related information is made available in [www.thaneelection.com](http://www.thaneelection.com). There are about ten certificates which are totally made available online without paper applications.

### DO YOU FEEL INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) CAN BE USED AS A PRIMARY TOOL TO MAKE AN INFORMATION-RICH NATION? HOW?

Yes. ICT tools can help any nation in becoming a better nation. In case of developing nations the relevance and significance of ICT tools are much higher. ICT tools can increase the transparency quotient of the nation and can be a great booster of the nation in its efforts to break free from poverty. By making information available in the public domain alone, corruption levels can be brought down in a big way. Information dissemination by using various ICT tools will reduce the information gap and Governments will work more effectively. The quality of society improves tremendously. Accountability expectations of well informed societies are much higher and less forgiving. In such information-rich nations with less forgiving societies, Governments will be more accountable and less corrupt. In developing countries the major reasons for corruption are less transparent procedures and poor information available in the public domain. In such dark scenario, the ease of conducting business becomes difficult, and cost of business also increases with time overrun as well. Huge delays in less transparent systems are common because there is no proper system to make available information in the public domain. These opaque systems make it difficult to fix responsibility in case of delays. By use of ICT tools the difficulty of doing business goes down, the cost overruns and also time overruns drastically come down. When the environment for doing business becomes favourable, the different economic indicators of the nation will also become healthy and efficient. Even in predominantly agricultural nations, ICT tools can play a great role by providing, weather conditions, area information, agricultural practices information and market information to a vast number of farmers and hence help in reducing the value of the middle man. Many agriculturally developed states in India have benefited enormously by use of ICT tools.

#### **LIST VARIOUS PROJECTS INITIATED/HANDLED BY YOU IN YOUR SERVICE TENURE AT VARIOUS DISTRICTS.**

1. Quality of Education: Monitoring using students' marks data base in Parbhani district to monitor the relation between teaching quality and students' performance in about 2500 zilla parishad schools. The software was developed

by me and various reports were generated which helped both teachers and students.

2. In the World Bank Jalswarjya project, real time monitoring of drinking water supply schemes in 3000 villages using 180 parameters was done by developing a data analysis software. Software developed by me was used for the project till the closure. The software helped in real time interventions and effective project management.
3. Developed an online software in Nashik District for giving permission for conversion of land from agriculture use to non-agriculture use. All land developers benefitted from the software and I was awarded the best collector award by the state government of Maharashtra.
4. Implemented online software for issuing of certificates online without paper application in Nashik.
5. Implemented file movement monitoring system and making the information available to the public through [www.thanpravah.com](http://www.thanpravah.com) on the Internet. The information is made available through 75 touch screen kiosks as well.

#### **WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS OF GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTED ICT PROJECTS? DO YOU FEEL THAT PROCESS REENGINEERING IS REQUIRED?**

Government implemented ICT projects do not take into account the diversity available in the field. Even though the software are written with more security features, the operation gets affected because of lack of flexibility. The process engineering is not studied properly because of the time target and once rolled out they are not adopted full heartedly by the field people. Any software which does not account for the field variation will be dead sooner or later. Second limitation is that the adaptation of software based on the field feedback is not seen. After roll out the feedback from field people are not given weightage and field people are asked to adapt to the software. Thirdly, the general roll out of software by the Government kills the local talent and local software tools which are more efficient to meet the local requirements. District specific software which are developed over a period of time using field



feedback are killed by the general software rolled out by the government.

### **WHAT ARE THE CORE DIFFICULTY AREAS YOU FEEL SHOULD BE ADDRESSED IN YOUR DISTRICT & HOW DIGITAL TOOLS CAN HELP AS A PRIMARY TOOL?**

Thane district has six municipal corporations and two municipal councils. There are 90 lakh people living in different urban locations. There is a need to have common transport systems across these urban areas which is known as Mumbai Metropolitan region. The urban transport systems should have common parameters across the municipal corporations. Now the transport systems are highly localised and not uniform. Even the metro planned for Navi Mumbai is not considering the possibility of expansion within the MMR. So the local approach is hurting the region which can be overcome in a big way by going for common solutions for the MMR region. Similarly the solid waste management proposals are highly localised whereas the problems are highly universal across MMR. The common MMR demographic statistics are not available. The tax collection systems are local in nature and there is not even a single travel card which can facilitate travel in different travel modes. There can be lots of improvement in these areas if information technology tools are used. The population growth rates are very high across MMR and the infrastructure planning should use the maximum ICT tools possible.

### **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 officers and other officers of the collector's office have weekly meetings with the collector about the performance of various projects against the targets set. New concepts are discussed, brainstormed and refined and given specific timeline for different stages of the projects. The weekly review also helps to redraw the time targets realistically based on the feedback from the software developers and also the staff. The testing stage software are tested in a limited scale in the

branches and based on feedback they are refined and launched. At all stages of projects, the NIC team and other officials are made to sit together so that they understand and appreciate the requirements of each other team. Continuous periodical monitoring and review with essential directions is the key to success. NIC is currently developing software for scheduling of revenue court hearing cases and it is in the conceptualisation stage. The software available with other districts does not capture the complexity of Thane district and hence we have decided to create our own software for this purpose.

### **ARE YOU DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH THE OFFICIAL DISTRICT WEBSITE? HOW DO YOU CONTRIBUTE TO KEEP IT UPDATED?**

In 2013, the district website was fully reconstructed and revamped. The earlier website was not meeting the expectations and was not updated properly. There was a core committee formed under the leadership of a deputy collector who were expected to do a thorough analysis of the requirements of the website, content of the website and design of the website. The review on the website was taken in the weekly ICT meetings by the collector. The committee could successfully reduce in writing the major content requirements for the website. We have written letters to all the relevant offices to get the content from them and after lots of persuasion, we could get all the content requirement for the website. The design component was done in such a way to reflect the culture and importance of Thane district in a very simple and elegant format. In about three months' time the basic version of the website was ready. After testing for a month the final version of the website was launched. There are standing instructions to all departments to send a copy of all important correspondence to the NIC centre to update the website. It is being followed very successfully.

### **HOW DO YOU RATE YOUR OFFICIAL DISTRICT WEBSITE ON A SCALE OF 10?**

My rating is 8 out of 10 for the [www.thane.nic.in](http://www.thane.nic.in) website.

The strengths are:

- Very easy to navigate and elegant design.



- It has all the important sections of the collector's office and important information related to the districts.
- Reflects the different specialities of Thane in the tourism section
- It has what is new section which provides the latest information to the public.
- It has linkages to other important websites of the district.

The weaknesses are:

- Some departments have not given the detailed maps which can be more useful to the public.
- A visitor counter should be added.

### **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 ICT PROJECTS?**

The Minimum duration for a collector to make an impact in the district will be at least two years. First six months will be required to understand the collector's office and the district and to prioritise the problems at hand which are to be tackled. The second six months will be required to sit with the staff and discuss things and brainstorming and taking ideas from them. Conceptualisation of ideas in the areas of improvement from the officers and staff of organisation is an important activity. The third six months will go in sitting with both the software team and also with the officers and staff to convert the ideas into a well functioning ICT tool. This requires many number of sittings, review, course corrections, going through the preliminary versions of the software. This stage is very crucial and any neglect in this stage becomes difficult to correct at a later stage. Feedback taking from the officers and staff is very crucial and only if done thoroughly, the later final version of the ICT software will come out perfectly. The fourth six months will be needed for launching of the website, taking feedback from the public and doing the essential changes in the ICT tools.

### **WHAT ARE THE MAJOR DIGITAL TOOLS YOU THINK ARE A MUST TO MAKE DISTRICT ACHIEVE GOOD GOVERNANCE AT DISTRICT LEVEL?**

The major digital tools required are:

- Common digital platforms across the sectors like transport sector, demography sector and taxation sector where the software can speak to each other and gives portability of information
- Massive servers in the regional data centre which can store the huge data of the region
- Transparent procedure oriented websites of different departments where the business with the departments can be transacted online
- e- office tools where the offices are made paperless and the file movements are done in the computer itself not only within the office and also among different offices
- Advanced ICT tools where the building permissions and other similar permissions can be given online.

In brief any ICT tool which reduces the one to one human interaction between the citizen and the government will be useful in achieving good governance. The information flow has to be not only from the website but also through SMS gateways, mobile applications and also through the payment gateways.

### **MENTION IF THERE IS ANY IMPLEMENTED SOFTWARE IN YOUR DISTRICT THAT YOU CAN USE TO MANAGE THE INFORMATION SYSTEM AMONG VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS OF DISTRICT\*?**

Yes. The website [www.thanepratibimb.com](http://www.thanepratibimb.com) is a software project where in all the important websites related to Thane district and also some of the important portals of the state government which are of much relevance to the district are also hosted in the website. The website was given wide publicity among the public of Thane also by giving huge advertisements in all regional dailies of Thane district. The website name is very well popularised among the public of Thane district.

The departments covered are:

1. Land records department
2. Land registration department
3. File and letter movement in Thane collector's office
4. Non-agricultural permission given in Thane collector's office

5. Official website of the district of Thane
6. Official election website of Thane district
7. Government of Maharashtra website
8. Agriculture department website
9. Chief electoral office website

The website is made available in 75 touch screen kiosks across the district.

### **LIST WHAT CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHILE IMPLEMENTING ANY ICT PROJECTS. HOW DO YOU OVERCOME THEM?**

The major challenge while implementing any major ICT project is the resistance to change from within the organisation. Change hurts and majority of the officers and staff in any organisation fear change. Only some of them are very proactive and desire change in a positive direction. The real challenge to any collector will be to identify such pro-changers and as a team try to convince the rest of the organisation that the change will benefit all. There is need for good interaction with the staff members and their anxiety should be properly addressed. They should be asked to solve the problems and it should be made to look like they have solved the problems even if you have the solution on day one. The sense that they have resolved the issues gives them a sense of ownership which helps in proper implementation of the software in the long run. It becomes part of the system once accepted by the majority of the members in the organisation. For making the organisation to accept the change, we have to be very interactive and intervene at proper time and guide the project in the proper direction. The organisation should have a sense of ownership of the ICT project developed and that can happen only by inculcating that the project is theirs and not the collector's alone.

### **HOW ARE THE CITIZENS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES INVOLVED IN ANY ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT OR GOVERNANCE PROJECT IDEATION, PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION?**

Citizens and local communities are an important aspect of any project. But unfortunately they are not given adequate importance which is due to them. All ICT initiatives necessarily need to be citizen centric and at the various stages of ICT tool development they should be considered as stakeholders and accordingly they should be duly consulted. Any ICT project will have the stages like need identification, stakeholder consultation, reducing the consultation into project requirements, project development, project trial and project launch and maintenance. The citizens and the local communities can play a very crucial and critical role in each and every stage of the project by giving valuable inputs.

Another major use of the citizens and local communities is the third person perspective and seeing the major picture which otherwise is missed by persons who are in the middle of the situation. If due consultative processes are adopted then they also have ownership feeling towards the project and help in success of the project. If they are not consulted or not involved then they immediately become critics of the project which may kill the project, if the criticism mounts. So the citizens are essentially stakeholders in any ICT project development.

### **WHICH DISTRICT IN INDIA, YOU FEEL IS THE BEST ICT EMPOWERED DISTRICT IN ALL ASPECTS?**

Most districts in Andhra Pradesh have been better empowered in ICT tools because of the administrative culture inculcated over a period of time by the executive as well as the political executive.





DISTRICT  
COLLECTOR *as*  
DIGITAL  
CHAMPIONS

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