

Service Quality

Journal

Volume 4

Number 1

April 2011

INFORMATION FOR SUBSCRIBERS

Journal is published twice in a year.

Price Rs. 80/-

Service Quality is published
half yearly by

TQM Cell
Lal Bahadur Shastri National
Academy of Administration
Mussoorie, India

JOURNAL CUSTOMER SERVICES

For ordering information,
claims and any enquiry
please contact :
shkhan@lbsnaa.ernet.in
tqmcell@lbsnaa.ernet.in
Tel. : +91 (0) 135 2632489, 2632405
2632236, 2632374

Service Quality



Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie

Editorial Team

Chairman
Padamvir Singh
Director, LBSNAA

Advisor
Dr. V.K. Agnihotri, IAS (Retd.)
Secretary General, Rajya Sabha

Member
N. Ramanathan
President, ISQ, New Delhi

Managing Editor
Dr. S.H. Khan
Deputy Director (Sr.), LBSNAA

Introduction (LBSNAA)

The Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, India, is the apex training institution in the country for the members of the senior civil services. It imparts training to members of all the category I civil services in a common Foundation Course and professional training to regular recruits of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). The Academy also conducts in-service training programmes for middle to senior level members of the IAS and induction level training to officers promoted to the IAS from the state civil services. In addition, it offers a range of specialized programmes for a diverse clientele, which includes individuals, non-government organizations, the corporate sector, and governments both within India and abroad.

Total Quality Management Cell

Created through a project sponsored by the Government of India, this Cell partners with some of the leading quality institutions like the Confederation of Indian Industry to enable administrators to introduce TQM in their organisations. It also facilitates implementation of TQM in the Academy.

Copyright and Photocopying

© 2010 Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior permission in writing from the copyright holder. Authorization to photocopy items for internal and personal use is granted by the copyright holder. The consent does not extend to other kinds of copying such as copying for general distribution, for advertising or promotional purposes, for creating new collective works or for resale.

Disclaimer

The views expressed and facts stated in the articles contained in this volume are of the individual authors and are in no way those of either the Editors or of the Publisher.

Printer : Print Vision, Dehradun

For submission requests, subscriptions and all other information contact :

tqmccll@lbsnaa.ernet.in, shkhan@lbsnaa.ernet.in

Website : www.lbsnaa.ernet.in

Information for Contributors

About the Journal

Service Quality is a half yearly journal focusing on best practices and quality innovations in various government departments as well as the private sector. It receives articles from ministries, departments, public sector organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector. Contributors are requested to send quality related experiences to shkhan@lbsnaa.ernet.in or tqmccll@lbsnaa.ernet.in in the following format :

- **The Context** : Brief details of the institution and its activities
- **Opportunity/problem** : Pre-initiative status of the area/ domain in which quality initiative was undertaken; reason(s) for taking the decision to start a quality initiative; persons involved in the decision-making process etc.
- **Aim, Goal(s) and Objective(s)** : What was the initiative all about? What did it set out to achieve?
- **Setting the Scene** : Pre-initiative activities, e.g. engaging a consultant, training of personnel, constitution of quality teams/ task forces, deciding quality/ success measures and instruments etc.
- **The Experience** : How did the institution go about it? What did it actually do?
- **Outcome and Impact** : What was the result? How did it affect/improve the area of activity chosen for improvement?
- **Lessons Learnt** : Do's and don'ts. Conceptualisation of good practices and pitfalls to be avoided.
- **Future Plans** : How are the lessons learnt going to be taken care of in the future?

Service Quality

Journal

Volume 4

Number 1

April 2011

Assessment of Parliaments: A Total Quality Management Approach Vivek Kumar Agnihotri	001
Asraya : A Programme for Community Based Social Security Sarada Muraleedharan	017
The Unreserved Ticketing System: An Indian Railways IT Initiative Dr. R. Badri Narayan	029
Integrating E-Governance into Right To Information for Improving Public Service Delivery: A Case Study of E-Soochna and RTI Centres of Himachal Pradesh Abhishek Jain	040
From Regulation to Facilitation: CBEC Experience H.K. Sharan, Manish Saxena	054
Aayakar Seva Kendra A Model of Excellence in Public Service Delivery Mechanism Nilimesh Baruah	068
Citizen Centric Quality Management Systems in Public Service Delivery Prabhas Kumar Jha	082

Assessment of Parliaments: A Total Quality Management Approach[#]

Vivek Kumar Agnihotri

SUMMARY

This paper attempts to raise a discussion on developing a framework for assessment of Parliaments based on principles of Total Quality Management (TQM). It examines the current methodologies in use to assess the performance of Parliaments and to establish a case for adoption of TQM approach to improving their performance. A broad framework of a TQM model for assessment of Parliaments is outlined. The paper concludes with suggestions for future course of action to develop a full-fledged Parliament Excellence Model.

Keywords

Parliament, Assessment, Quality, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Inter-Parliamentary Union.

ASSESSING PARLIAMENT

Parliament occupies an esteemed position in a democracy. A vibrant legislature is the hall mark of a healthy democracy. The main functions of Parliament of today are legislation, oversight of the executive, and providing a forum for ventilating public grievances and expectations.

[#]Another version of this paper has been published in The Parliamentarian, 2010 (Issue One, XCI)

Concerns, however, have been expressed about the efficacy and efficiency of the parliamentary system, in general, and the functioning of modern parliaments, in particular. The dwindling number of sitting of the House, disruption of its proceedings, especially the Question Hour, absence of a large number of Members from the House and/or their non-participation in the proceedings even when present, delays in submission of reports of Committees as well as unethical practices, such as manipulation of Committee proceedings, cash-for-query, mis-utilisation of funds and entitlements etc. have invited adverse comments from various sections of society.

Parliaments across the world, therefore, have been making sincere efforts to identify ways and means to strengthen parliamentary institutions. In this process, self-assessment has emerged as a viable way of ensuring efficacy of Parliaments. At a time when there is a growing cynicism across democracies about the effectiveness of Parliament and the parliamentarians, evolving fairly acceptable parameters of assessment is imperative to enhance the image of the Parliament and the parliamentarians in the estimation of the people. Though parameters and criteria used to assess the efficiency of Parliament may vary from one country to another, the very exercise would certainly generate new ideas and innovative ways of dealing with emerging issues.

Assessing the vast range of functions of Parliament in quantitative terms is certainly a daunting task. A greater challenge is to assess the quality of its functions since there is no universal benchmark for quality assessment of Parliament work and output. However, efforts have been made to evolve some parameters of self-assessment, both in terms of quality and quantity.

CURRENT ASSESSMENT SCENARIO

As Parliaments have come under greater scrutiny of citizens and civil society organizations, a need for greater transparency in the functioning of Parliaments and their subsidiary institutions has been felt over time. This has, in turn, led to evolution of what can be

termed as a system of self-assessment. Parliaments routinely publish data regarding number of sittings held, actual hours of sitting, time lost, number of questions listed and actually answered orally, number of Bills introduced and/or passed, number of Reports laid on the Table, number and topics of discussions held etc. This data lends itself to evaluation of performance of Parliaments by civil society organisations.

Against this backdrop, a conscious effort has been made by certain institutions to develop models of self-assessment of Parliament. Important among these are:

- The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Model;
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Model;
- National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) Survey; and
- Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF) Evaluation Method.

IPU SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL KIT

The IPU Self-Assessment Tool Kit has been developed to assist Parliaments in a systematic analysis of their performance, leading to the identification of strengths and weaknesses, and the formulation of recommendations for reform and development. Although the Tool Kit is organised as a series of questions, it is not intended as a questionnaire to create rankings or 'league tables' of Parliaments through external evaluation by international experts. The Tool Kit provides a framework for discussion among Members of Parliament and other stakeholders in order to develop agreement on priorities for change and improvement. It has the potential to be an immensely powerful tool for change.

The IPU Self-assessment framework comprises six sections, namely:

- The representativeness of Parliament;
- Parliamentary oversight over the Executive;
- Parliament's legislative capacity;

- The transparency and accessibility of Parliament;
- The accountability of Parliament; and
- Parliament's involvement in international policy.

Each section has a set of questions to elicit value judgments on a five-point scale ranging from 'very high / good' to 'very low / poor'. There is also provision for incorporating additional questions. There are three other questions seeking judgmental responses. Main participants in most self-assessments will be parliamentarians, preferably in the form of a committee.

The IPU Tool Kit has been used in the Parliaments of Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Cambodia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Algeria, South Africa, Ireland and Andorra.

CPA BENCHMARKS

This comprises a list of primarily prescriptive statements organized under the following broad sections:-

- General;
- Organisation of the Legislature;
- Functions of the Legislature; and
- Values of the Legislature.

It is designed to assist Parliaments and legislatures to undertake their own self-assessment based on a Commonwealth standard developed by Members and parliamentary officials. The benchmarks reflect the current state of good Commonwealth parliamentary practices. It comprises 87 standards. The Assessment Panel may comprise Members of Parliament as well as officials and other civil society representatives. This self-assessment is expected to lead to discussion and debate, both inside and outside of Parliaments, and can thus provide a basis for measuring parliamentary effectiveness and to help leverage reforms. The CPA, however, recognizes that no single Parliament is a source of 'best practice' in all areas. Furthermore, the Parliamentary system is a dynamic one and, therefore, 'best practice' today will be surpassed tomorrow.

The benchmark assessment has been conducted by Australia, Canada, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, and Vanuatu among others.

NDISURVEY

As the title suggests, this pertains to a survey conducted by NDI in Colombia, Guatemala, Peru and Serbia and is not an evaluation per se. It sought to generate a perspective on parliamentary powers and their use in practice across different aspects of Parliamentary work, such as representation, law making, oversight, budget review and institutional capacity. A sample of the survey form is given below:

Table: Sample Survey Form

No.	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
14 a	Formal Power Legally, only the legislature may determine and approve the budget of the legislature				
14 b	Practice In practice, only the legislature determines and approves its own budget				

The gap between the power and practice is the starting point of discussion and debate as well as for drawing up of the charter for future action. The Survey has been used as a diagnostic tool. Its data has been useful in advocacy as well as in providing a basis for dialogue between Members of Parliament and civil society organisations.

APF EVALUATION METHOD

APF brings together 77 Parliaments and parliamentary organisations. With a view to develop and strengthen democracy, in collaboration with UNDP and based on a comparative study of the Standing Orders of several Parliaments in the Francophone world, APF has developed criteria for evaluating the democratic reality of Parliaments. The evaluation method is divided into four parts, namely:

- Election and the status of the parliamentarians;
- Rights and duties of parliament;
- Organisations of parliaments; and
- Parliament and communications.

The criteria so developed provide benchmarks which all Parliaments should aspire to achieve.

Some of the other methodologies of assessment of Parliament, at different stages of implementation, are South African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF), Democracy Assessment Methodology of International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), Parliamentary Powers Index (PPI), Congressional Capabilities Index (IDB) et al.

AN EVALUATION OF CURRENT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGIES

The highlights of the assessment methodologies mention above could be summarised as follows:-

- Of the four main methodologies, the IPU model is perhaps the most advanced, precise as well as comprehensive, while the NDI model is a survey tool and the APF method is a work in progress.
- The CPA benchmarks and NDI Standards are standards-based assessment tools that concentrate on multiple dimensions of democratic legislatures. The IPU toolkit, on the other hand, is mainly informed by core democratic values.
- Even though assessment is to be primarily undertaken by the Members of Parliament, participation by officials and

representatives of civil society is possible and, in some cases, even encouraged.

- All the models, explicitly or implicitly, proclaim to be self-assessment tools and perhaps rightly so in view of the legitimate concern for the autonomy of Parliaments and legislatures. However, the need for an external facilitator has been by and large recognized in order to develop a shared understanding of the issues involved, particularly in situations where there is a high degree of political polarisation.
- The spectrum of evaluation criteria is not confined to evaluating only the business of Parliament. It pans out to evaluate the quality of democratic system and institutions in the country. Thus, while, on one hand, the electoral process and the representativeness of the Parliament is sought to be assessed, at the other end of the spectrum lie ethical governance and international policy.
- Responses to the questionnaire, benchmarks etc. have been typically sought in qualitative terms ranging from 'very high' to 'very low' or 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' etc. However, there is scope for 'yes' and 'no' responses as far as CPA benchmarks are concerned. Furthermore, in the IPU Tool Kit numeric values have been implicitly assigned, in the range of five to one, in respect of the responses 'very high' to 'very low'.

THE ARGUMENT

There is an aphorism in the assessors' community: 'What cannot be measured cannot be improved'. The legitimate concerns for the autonomy of Parliament and the apprehensions relating to creation of 'league tables' notwithstanding, it cannot be anybody's case that Parliaments need no improvement.

As already noted, in the qualitative and descriptive evaluation of Parliaments advocated by the IPU and CPA models, quantitative reasoning is implicit. The qualitative responses, namely 'very high' 'high' etc., on the one hand, and 'strongly agree', 'disagree' etc. on the other could easily be converted into numerical data following

standard quantitative techniques. Binary responses in the nature of 'yes' and 'no', to the extent solicited by the CPA model, also lend themselves to quantification.

Even though third party evaluation may not be acceptable in the context of the fiercely advocated autonomy of Parliament, still the IPU model perceives a role for an external facilitator, who could be provided by IPU or other organisations. Similarly, even though creation of 'league tables' is not desirable, it would do a Parliament no harm if, through an assessment procedure, it is made to realize where it stands on an appropriately calibrated scale.

As a matter of fact, in the right-to-information regime if a Parliament makes public as much data as possible about its responsibilities, functions, targets and achievements, civil society organizations could easily prepare a report card on its performance. PRS Legislative Research brings out statistical analysis of each Session of Indian Parliament based on the end-of-the-Session press releases issued by the two Houses of Parliament. It has a section dealing with 'Plan vs. Performance' and another one entitled 'Vital Stats' providing quantitative analysis of the sessional performance of Parliament. Another Non-Governmental Organisation has done an evaluation of parliamentary Committees. However, a Parliament on its own could do this job much better with professional assistance.

It is again to be noted that in the IPU and CPA models various questions and benchmarks cover a wide gamut of issues. These could easily be categorized into 'facilitative' and 'output' factors. The facilitative factors are, for example, representativeness of Parliament, election law, transparency, ethical concerns, infrastructure etc. The output factors undoubtedly pertain to oversight and legislative functions.

TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT (TQM) FRAMEWORK

In the face of cut-throat competition in the manufacturing sector, quality assurance came to occupy pride of place at an early stage. In the initial phase, it took the form of a 'selection or rejection' routine. In due course, as quality certification procedures were developed,

quality standards and benchmarks came to be delineated for different types of manufacturing activities. As service industry made rapid progress, quality standards to meet its specific requirements also came to be established.

Evolution of quality concepts took a quantum leap with the arrival of Total Quality Management (TQM) as a holistic approach to quality management and assessment. Over the years, TQM principles have been fine-tuned and refined to assess quality not only of manufacturing and service industries but also of public and not-for-profit institutions. The broad features of the TQM system can be deduced from a brief description of the following widely adopted models:-

- European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model;
- Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award;
- Deming Prize; and
- Florida Governor's Sterling Award.

EFQM EXCELLENCE MODEL

The EFQM Excellence Model is a structure for the organisation's management system. It can be used as a part of a self-assessment as

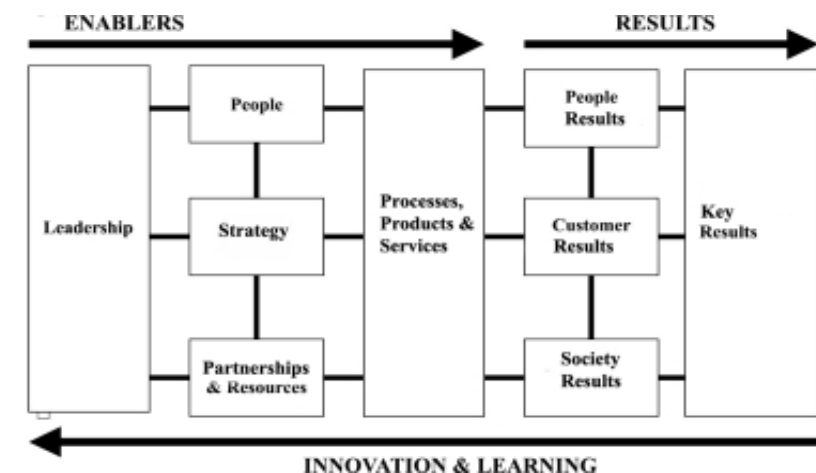


Figure 1:EFQM Excellence Model

well as a framework for comparison with other organisations. It also helps in identifying areas for improvement. It is a non-prescriptive framework based on nine criteria. Five of these are 'Enablers' and four are 'Results'. The 'Enablers' criteria cover what an organisation does and how it does it. The 'Result' criteria cover what an organisation achieves. 'Results' are caused by 'Enablers' and 'Enablers' are improved using feedback from 'Results'. The model is more appropriately depicted in the form of the diagram.

MALCOLM BALDRIGE NATIONAL QUALITY AWARD

Instituted in the wake of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Improvement Act, 1987, this annual award recognises U.S. organisations in business, health care, education and non-profit sectors for performance excellence in a manner somewhat similar to the EFQM Excellence model. The Malcolm Baldrige Award prescribes the following seven categories of the Criteria for Performance Excellence:-

- Leadership;
- Strategic Planning;
- Customer Focus;
- Measurement, Analysis and Knowledge Management;
- Workforce Focus;
- Process Management; and
- Results.

The main uses of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence are education and organisational self-assessment and self-improvement. They provide organisations with an integrated approach to management of organisational performance to achieve improvement in the delivery of value to customers and stakeholders, overall organisational effectiveness and capabilities and organisational and personal learning.

DEMING PRIZE

The Deming Prize, instituted by the Union of Japanese Scientists and Engineers (JUSE), is one of the highest awards on TQM in the world.

It defines TQM as a set of systematic activities carried out by the entire organisation to effectively and efficiently achieve company objectives so as to provide products and services with a level of quality that satisfies customers, at the appropriate time and price.

The Deming Prize Committee does not specify what issues the applicants must address rather applicants themselves are responsible for identifying and addressing such issues. The examination process is an opportunity for 'mutual development', rather than 'examination'. Thus, organisation's self-development comes from the examination process itself.

FLORIDA GOVERNOR'S STERLING AWARD

The Florida Governor's Sterling Award is based on the National Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. It seeks to assist organizations in utilizing proven standards of excellence as a guide to making improvements that generate better options, customer value and overall results. The Sterling Management System is represented through the following diagram:-



Figure 2: Sterling Management System

AN EVALUATION OF QUALITY ASSESSMENT MODELS

The salient features of the quality assessment models discussed above may be summarised as follows:-

- These are mature models, with rigorous assessment procedures, and have been in vogue for considerable period of time.
- They are focused on ensuring delivery of value to customers and other stakeholders through a set of specific criteria for organisational effectiveness.
- They tend to promote self-assessment and development/improvement through that process itself. Thus the primary objective of self-assessment is continuous improvement.
- Facilitation is an important concomitant of the evaluation procedure.

There are many similarities in the conceptualisation of parliamentary self-assessment models in vogue and the quality assessment models discussed above. In both, primary emphasis is on improvement through self-assessment.

TQM MODEL FOR ASSESSMENT OF PARLIAMENT

Assessing quality of Parliament against TQM parameters is indeed a daunting task. Prima facie, Parliament is not in the business of manufacturing. It also does not ostensibly deliver any specific services as understood in common parlance. How then do we superimpose the TQM framework on the business of Parliament?

From the assessment models discussed earlier, however, a few things are obvious. Primarily, there are concerns for efficiency and effectiveness of Parliament. Moreover, the assessment of Parliament is obviously based on some criteria. Putting these two facts together there is considerable scope for attempting a TQM approach to assessing Parliament.

The following assessment criteria emerge from the parliamentary assessment models aforementioned:-

- Representativeness;
- Oversight of the Executive;

- Legislation;
- Transparency;
- Accessibility;
- Accountability;
- Institutional Capacity;
- Infrastructure;
- Integrity; and
- Involvement in International Policy.

One approach to developing Quality Assessment Model for Parliament would be to categorise these criteria into 'facilitative' and 'output' factors. The output of Parliament would largely be in terms of legislation, oversight of the Executive, accountability and involvement in international policy. Most of the other factors could be regarded as facilitative, in so far as their presence makes Parliament a truly democratic institution.

A more focused approach would be to categorise the criteria into those contributing to efficiency and to effectiveness of Parliament. The efficiency parameters would encompass legislation, oversight of the Executive, institutional capacity, infrastructure and involvement in international policy. The other criteria largely pertain to ensuring effectiveness of Parliament.

A totally different approach to Quality Assessment could be described as Human Development Index (HDI) strategy. It would require identifying some critical yet simple indices (such as legislation, oversight of the Executive and deliberation) to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the parliamentary system of a country. From yet another point of view, the impact of the output of Parliament on the quality of life of the people could also provide a framework for assessment.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

Self-assessment primarily by parliamentarians is, no doubt, currently the most acceptable process. However, the procedures and practice evolved in various Parliaments of the world, which have adopted different assessment models discussed earlier, would suggest greater

involvement of the civil society organisations in the process of assessment. As suggested earlier, publication of data pertaining to the functioning of Parliament as well as providing access to its proceedings, in plenary as well as committee sittings, would greatly facilitate its assessment by civil service organisations. Furthermore, an evaluation exercise based on quality parameters or an indexation model is primarily a voluntary one and in a self-assessment mode. Submission to third party assessment and creation of so-called 'league tables' are often mandated by donor agencies.

Even in case the Parliament decides to do the self-assessment entirely on its own initiative and only with the involvement of the Members of Parliament, either in an ad hoc manner or through a permanent committee system, the need for a competent facilitator, at least in the initial stages, cannot be over-emphasised. For an assessment to be objective, an impartial assessor is absolutely essential. In any case, working out the details of the assessment procedure on the lines either of the TQM or ISO specifications would necessitate involvement of experts as direct participants or as witnesses. In due course, of course, facilitation capabilities could be developed among serving and / or retired Members of Parliament.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Quality Assessment of an organisation is only a discreet event in its continuous journey on the road to improvement. As a matter of fact, in discussing the Quality Assessment Model, we are, in effect, holding the stick at the wrong end.

First and foremost, a decision at an appropriate level would need to be taken whether the Parliament wishes to take specific and concrete steps for improvement in the quality of its inputs and outputs in order to make its functioning more effective and efficient. It could be broad-based or confined, at least initially, to more measurable activities, including administrative functions and procedures.

The quality initiative has to be demand driven. First among the drivers of quality is leadership, without which any quality initiative is

a non-starter. The implementation of TQM in Parliament has to begin by first identifying reasons, if any, for bringing about change. This would need to be followed by drawing up a road map, preferably through the instrumentality of a 'Visioning Workshop', of the journey to improve the quality of the functions of Parliament. A Quality Improvement Committee would need to be set up for this purpose as well as for monitoring the inputs, outputs and outcomes. Documentation and standardisation, along with benchmarking exercises, would thus be of the essence. Assessment or evaluation would be the culmination of the entire process.

In order to kick-start this process, a projectised initiative by the Inter-Parliamentary Union or Commonwealth Parliamentary Association or any other organization authorised by them would be in order. A consensus among the member states would need to be evolved in order to take up pilot projects to develop and formalize the TQM Model for Parliament. It is indeed an idea whose time has come ...

REFERENCES

- ¹ASGP (2009): Evaluating parliament - objectives, methods, results and impact, Geneva, Switzerland.
- ²Inter-Parliamentary Union (2008): Evaluating Parliament a self-assessment toolkit for Parliaments, SRO-Kundig, Geneva, Switzerland.
- ³CPA/World Bank Institute (2006), "Recommend benchmarks for democratic legislatures", A Study Group Report Published by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.
- ⁴Bhatnagar, Melissa; Tanja Kuechen; Jill Shirey and Aslihan Tuncer (2009), "An integrated approach to parliamentary assessment", *The Parliamentarian*, Vol. XC, Issue Three, pp.252-254.
- ⁵Luta, Hon. Taomati (2009), "Not a foolish exercise: assess your own Parliament as an effective democratic legislature", *The Parliamentarian*, Vol. XC, Issue Three, pp. 246-247.

⁶PRS Legislative Research (2009), "Parliament Session Wrap - Winter Session (November 19 to December 22, 2009)", Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi.

⁷Jha, Rajesh K. (2009), "Evaluating parliamentary committees and committee system: changing contours of governance and policy", Social Watch India, New Delhi.

⁸<http://ww1.efqm.org/en/Home>

⁹http://www.baldrige.nist.gov/Business_Criteria.htm (Criteria for Performance Excellence)

¹⁰<http://deming.org> (Deming Prize Prize Information)

¹¹<http://www.floridasterling.com>

¹²Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) (2005): Quality Management Systems - Requirements for Service Quality by Public Service Organisations (ICS 03.120.10), BIS, New Delhi.

¹³Agnihotri, V.K. (2003): Quality Management in Government Theory and Practice, Allied Publishers Private Ltd., New Delhi.

Vivek Kumar Agnihotri
Secretary General
Rajya Sabha
Govt. of India
New Delhi

Asraya - A Programme for Community Based Social Security

Sarada Muraleedharan

SUMMARY

The Kudumbashree programme of the Kerala government spans an inclusive and empowered Community Based Organization working in partnership with local governments to plan and implement a participatory poverty reduction programme. The Asraya project seeks to use the inherent strength of the networked organization of the poor for a community based initiative in liaison with local governments to accord social security to the poorest of the poor. The care package includes land, housing, food, health, education, social security pensions and livelihood support. As on date, 904 of the 1057 local governments, both rural and urban have taken up Asraya projects covering 70,591 destitute families at a cost of Rs. 401.61 crores.

Keywords

Local Governments, Social Security, Community Action, Destitute rehabilitation

BACKGROUND

Kerala's development achievement is often hailed for its equity and cited as an example where mass mobilization achieved a lot through interaction with responsive democratic governments. The State achieved excellent coverage of basic minimum services. Its universal Public Distribution System provides reasonable food security; social

security systems in the form of pensions to nearly 14.33 lakh persons belonging to vulnerable groups and welfare funds for various groups of labourers both organized and unorganized. The State performed better in comparison with other States in tackling the problem of poverty, both in entitlement and capabilities views.

Kerala's recent initiatives in democratic decentralization have thrown up several good development practices, the best of which is 'Kudumbashree'. Through this programme, implemented by Local Governments with proactive facilitation by the State Poverty Eradication Mission, every family below poverty line is organized, with each family being represented by a woman, into a Neighbourhood Group (NHG) at the local level with 10 to 20 families which is federated into an Area Development Society (ADS) at the level of the Village Panchayat/Municipal Ward, which are further networked into a registered society called Community Development Society (CDS) at the level of the Local Government. Thus an inclusive and empowered Community Based Organization works in partnership with the Village Panchayat or Municipality to plan and implement a participatory poverty reduction programme. As of now there are 2.03 lakh NHGs, covering 37.37 lakh families, 17033 ADSs and 1061 CDSs in the State.

Kudumbashree sprouted during the IXth Five Year Plan and penetrated firm roots in the Xth Five Year Plan. Although the performance of local governments in IXth Plan under People's Plan resulted in allocations to the poor and expenditure on schemes related to provision of minimum needs infrastructure went up substantially, it was felt that an integrated approach to poverty reduction could have achieved more. It was found, that there were some outliers who had not benefited from the anti-poverty projects of Local Governments - the poorest of the poor, the destitutes. Based on this assessment, it was decided to introduce the concept of Anti-poverty Sub Plan in all Local Governments under which a participatory micro-level planning would be done by the three-tier Community Based Organization (CBO) of Kudumbashree. It was also decided that the social strength of the CBO could be utilised to

extend social security in its widest sense to the ultra poor - this gave birth to 'Asraya' a project of hope for the excluded as a distinct component of the Anti-Poverty Sub Plan.

DESTITUTION

The destitutes are the poorest of the poor. They live at the margins of the economy, society and polity. They are not a constituency or vote bank. Severity of destitution is intensified by unfavourable physical, gender or caste status.

STRATEGY FOLLOWED

Asraya has a holistic understanding of poverty in all its manifestations, both causes and effects, and the ratchet effect of one factor on the other. It seeks to use the inherent strength of the networked organization of the poor, especially its democratic character, transparent functioning, culture of care and concern, ownership by the poor and excellent outreach and feedback capabilities. Thus it is a community based initiative to accord social security to the poorest of the poor.

The strategy of bringing synergy between elected Local Governments and the organization of the poor is fundamental to Asraya. Asraya follows the principle of focus on the poorest of the poor. This can be achieved through a process of continuous hand-holding and care.

THE ASRAYA PROCESS

Environment-creation for buy-in by Local Governments

Asraya started off with a demand based approach. Initially elected heads of Village Panchayats were sensitised on issues affecting the ultra-poor. Panchayats willing to take up the difficult and sensitive task of improving the livelihoods of such people, to accept continuous responsibility and to meet at least 75% of the cost of the project, were identified for piloting the project.

Transparent identification of destitutes

In order to introduce transparency and community ownership, simple and socially acceptable criteria were determined through an elaborate process of consultation with experts, elected leaders and the poor. The criteria are used in two-stages. Initially the following nine categories are utilized.

Table 1 - Criteria for identification of destitutes

1	No Land / Less than 10 cents of land
2	No House/ Living in dilapidated house
3	No drinking water facilities within 300 metres
4	No Sanitary Toilet
5	No employment to any person in the family (For less than 10 days a month)
6	Women headed family / widow / abandoned women / presence of unwed mother in the family
7	Presence of physically/Mentally challenged/chronically ill member in the family
8	Family belonging to SC/ST
9	Presence of an adult illiterate member

Families attracting seven or more indicators are subject to another list of five special indicators for rural areas and for urban areas. If a family attracts at least one of these special indicators in addition to the seven or more from the first set, it is classified as a destitute family.

Special indicators for Rural areas

- Having no landed property to set up a dwelling place (living in poramboke land, forest land, side bunds of canals and paddy fields etc.)
- Spending the night time in public places, streets or in the verandas of shops for sleeping.
- Having no healthy member to win bread for the family

- Resorting to beggary as a vocation
- Having women subjected to atrocities
- Having children below the age of 14 who work to earn money for the family

Special Indicators for urban areas

- Spending the night-time in public places, streets or in verandas of shops for sleeping.
- Having children below the age of 14 who work to earn money for the family
- Resorting to beggary as vocation
- Having Commercial Sex Workers
- Having no healthy member to win bread for the family, below the age of 60
- Having women members who live in Abala Mandiram
- Having women subjected to atrocities
- Living in Slums
- Having street children / children in juvenile home or poor home

Capacity-building for planning

A three-stage training programme at the State, District and local levels is organized covering elected leaders, officials, resource persons and CDS volunteers.

Preparation of rehabilitation plans

Thereafter utilizing the network of the poor families, preliminary identification of probable destitute families is done by the Kudumbashree network. The short-listed households are visited by these teams and their multiple needs - namely, survival needs (food, health, pension, education etc.) infrastructure needs (land for house, new house, shelter up-gradation, sanitary latrine, drinking water, electrification etc.) development needs (awareness creation for employment, skill development, accessing employment

opportunities, livelihood for sustenance etc.) and psychological needs (building of confidence, social inclusion, safety, etc.) of each family are identified.

After the needs identification, the Asraya plan is developed with the individual family as the building block. The plan of each family which includes benchmark description, photograph and cost of different required components is linked together to develop the Local Government Asraya Plan.

Convergence of resources

Resources required for funding different components of the plan are mobilized, as much as possible, from existing schemes and programmes including PDS. After identifying available resources in this manner the gap is filled up by the untied resources transferred to Local Governments for development purposes. As an incentive to Local Governments to take up Asraya, the state government has committed to provide 40% of the project cost subject to a maximum of Rs.15 lakh as special grant.

Since Asraya has tremendous social appeal some of the enterprising Panchayats have managed to mobilize additional resources by way of donations from philanthropic individuals, sponsorships from institutions, service commitments from hospitals and so on.

Implementation

The evaluation committee of the CDS, a forum where elected and official leadership of the LSG and the community organisation interface, is responsible for overall supervision of the project, and ensures convergence of resources. Support especially for food and medical services including palliative care is meticulously reviewed.

PROGRESS OF ASRAYA PROJECTS

The first Asraya projects commenced in 2002-03. As on date, 904 of

the 1057 local governments both rural and urban have taken up Asraya projects addressing the multiple deprivations of 70591 destitute families. The total cost of these projects amounts to Rs.401.61 crore. The progress of inclusion of Village Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies is as follows:

Table 2 - Year-wise progress of Asraya projects in LSG

Year	Number of LSG covered	Number of families covered
2003-04	173	13569
2004-05	156	11541
2005-06	261	21642
2006-07	19	1450
2007-08	97	6744
2008-09	47	3695
2009-10	129	9744
2010-11	22	2206
Total	904	70591

FAMILY-LEVEL AND LSG-LEVEL PLANNING

The Asraya Plans are significant in processes and minute detailing. The following plans from Eruthempathy Village Panchayat in Palakkad district illustrate the comprehensiveness of the plans.

Family Plan prepared by Eruthempathy Village Panchayat, Palakkad District

Eruthempathy Village Panchayat

Project Number for the Unwed mothers, Widows, Abandoned & Unmarried women

2.10

Name Shelvi

Address Mariamuthar Colony

Ward No.2, Eruthempathy

Family Background

Shelvi, aged 45 residing along with her son is a widow and there is no one to look after her. She earns meagre income from occasional agriculture labour. They do not have any landed property, dwelling house and ability to earn two square meals a day. Her son is a school drop-out.

Problems faced	Solutions	Funds required
No Food	Antyodaya Anna Yojana through PDS	15,000
Chronic illness	Treatment	10,000
No land	To provide land	19,500
No House	Construction of house	30,000
No Drinking water	Pipe line extension	1,500
No sanitation facility	Construction of Latrine	2,000
No Livelihood Option	Self employment	3,000
No Income	Widow Pension	7,200
No Clothes	Providing Clothes	3,000
School Drop out	Educational Assistance	5,000
Total		96,200

Consolidated Village Panchayat Plan, Eruthempathy Village Panchayat, Palakkad District

Particulars	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	Total
Land	78,000	6,63,000					7,41,000
House	6,72,617	9,72,383	6,30,000				22,75,000
House Repairing	75,000	75,000					1,50,000
Drinking Water	74,383	1,44,617	1,50,000				3,69,000
Sanitation		1,68,000					1,68,000
Food	48,650	3,84,300	2,41,800	2,41,800	2,41,800	2,21,650	13,80,000
Wheel Chair	14,000						14,000
Treatment	7,800	93,600	93,600	93,600	93,600	85,800	4,68,000
Dress	6,217	74,600	74,600	74,600	74,600	68,383	3,73,000

Education	3,717	44,600	44,600	44,600	44,600	40,883	2,23,000
Rehabilitation of Individual destitute	5,500	66,000	66,000	66,000	66,000	60,500	3,30,000
Employment		14,400					14,400
Pension for handicapped	1,920	24,907	26,240	26,240	26,240	24,053	1,29,600
Pension for old aged	3,293	42,787	45,120	45,120	45,120	41,360	2,22,800
Pension for widows	3,480	45,493	48,160	48,160	48,160	44,147	2,37,600
Pension for destitutes	600	7,200	7,200	7,200	7,200	6,600	36,000
Pension for agricultural labourers	240	2,880	2,880	2,880	2,880	2,640	14,400
Total	9,95,417	29,53,367	14,30,200	6,50,200	6,50,200	5,96,016	72,75,400

ANALYSIS OF PROJECTS

- The destitute families are less than 2% of the total families in the panchayats and municipalities.
- 10% of the total allocation is earmarked exclusively for procuring food.
- Majority of the families identified have no land to set up dwelling house
- 44% of the identified families have no house
- Majority of the families identified are suffering from chronic illness such as TB, cancer etc.
- There is a high presence of mentally and physically challenged persons
- Families headed by unwed mothers / widows/divorcees are common.
- School dropouts are also present.

The key components of the Projects are:-

- Food & Supplementary nutrition
- Health - treatment for chronic illness like cancer, TB etc
- Pensions - Widow pension, Destitute pension, Disabled pension etc
- Welfare assistance for household furniture, social functions etc.

- Education - re-admittance of drop out children, special coaching, books and educational materials, providing additional nutritious food etc
- Land for dwelling purpose
- Construction of house
- Provision for drinking water
- Providing safe sanitation and electricity
- Skill development and providing livelihood options
- Providing simple furniture, cloth, assistance for marriage etc

It has been noticed that in many cases, the Asraya families have to cope with a severely ill or disabled person in the household. The programme has integrated with the community palliative care initiative that provides auxiliary nurse support and house visits, under the supervision of local governments. Other forms of convergence have been to organize ration cards and foodgrains under the Antyodaya programme, arrange regular food supply to the household in extreme cases of disability, provide health cards and follow up, including bystander support, coordinate sanction and receipt of social security pensions, inclusion in neighbourhood groups and livelihood support as in animal husbandry and collective farming interventions.

The component-wise details of Asraya projects are shown in Figure 1.

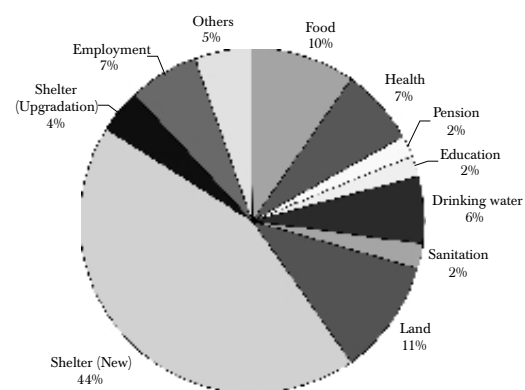


Figure-1: Component-wise details of the Asraya projects of Gama Panchayats & Urban Local Bodies (Total 904)

CONTINUOUS EVALUATION

Asraya being a complex project for convergence, requires constant monitoring and evaluation. A revisit to all Asraya projects has been conducted, and areas where requisite convergence has not been fully met on account of factors like budgetary constraint, operational difficulties experienced in service delivery, have been identified and addressed. Care packages have been revamped for Asraya beneficiaries whose needs have not been fully met. Comprehensive guidelines touching every facet of implementation have been developed through a process of intensive field consultations, and then disseminated through training to official and CDS networks. Tribal Asraya projects focusing on tribal families needing special attention have also been developed. The check lists for Asraya ensure that families from marginalised communities have been identified.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The major achievements of the project are listed below.

- All-round acceptance of the identification process and willingness to provide higher degree of assistance to the identified families.
- The gradual and progressive empowerment of the targeted families who begin to access entitlements starting with food security through the public distribution system, moving on to health security, social security in the form of pension and then reaching out to human development aspects like skill upgradation.
- Visible transformation in the attitudes and approaches of officials and elected representatives involved in the project

OUTCOMES

For any project with challenging objectives it is too early to measure the outcomes. However there is a visible social inclusion element and clear upgradation of living standards of the poorest of the poor. It has

certainly enhanced social capital by getting the community to take care of fellow human beings in acute distress. More significantly it has thrown up possibilities of community based social security under the leadership of local governments.

Asraya is probably the first project in the country to comprehensively target the excluded poor. It has now attained status of a national best practice in social security and has reached the stage of replicability. Asraya was conferred the Prime Minister's Award for Best Practices in Public Administration in 2008.

Sarada Muraleedharan, paper presented through
QCI (India)
kudumbashree1@gmail.com

The Unreserved Ticketing System An Indian Railways IT Initiative

Dr. R. Badri Narayan

SUMMARY

This paper traces the evolution of a sustainable IT application to cater to a large clientele spread across the length and breadth of the country. The Indian Railways carries nearly 20million passengers daily of which only about a million travel on reserved tickets. The rest buy an unreserved ticket that authorizes them to board nominated trains or coaches in trains, with no guarantee of a seat. For decades, the Indian Railways relied on a complex manual process of dispensing printed card tickets at each station. This paper outlines the innovations, the best practices and the lessons learnt from the implementation of an IT based ticketing solution.

Keywords

Railway Ticketing System, IT Enabled Services, Sustainable IT applications

INTRODUCTION

Indian Railways attracts attention for catering to a large number of passengers. In one year it carries the equivalent of the world's population and on a single day nearly twenty million passengers on an average. In terms of passenger traffic Indian Railways is second only to Japan. The rail traveler in India comprises of the elite passenger who travels in the reserved coaches, the commuter

traveling to work and a large number of travelers who use train services to reach urban or semi urban centers or agricultural hubs for employment as wage labourers. The traveler with a reserved seat on a train accounts for a little more than 5% of the total passenger traffic. The rest of the travelers are unreserved passengers. The focus of this paper is on this category - providing a ticketing system to the unreserved traveler.

For the reserved journey, Indian Railways introduced computerized ticketing in 1985 form of Passenger Reservation System (PRS). Since then it became more and more user friendly and today more than 30% of the reserved passengers are catered through the internet. The PRS system thus took care of the elite passengers within the Railways and this had an immense beneficial impact on the passenger's perception of railway services. India is a fairly large sub-continent and long distance travel is common as citizens seek employment across the length and breadth of the country. In recent years as airfares became more affordable some of the increased demand for long distance travel has shifted to air travel. Despite this, it is a growing market and there is constant pressure to provide greater and better services - with ticketing being an important component of the service package.

The unreserved traveler is quite different from the reserved traveler. The focus of the reserved traveler is to obtain an assured seat or berth and travel in comfort. Typically reservations are done in advance in view of excess demand. The unreserved traveler on the other hand focuses on getting from point A to point B, somehow. The regular suburban commuter, in Mumbai for example is committed to a particular train service (like the 7:43 express service from his station) and boards the train routinely to reach his/her workplace. A season ticket helps in such cases of regular travel between two points. There are others who would use the suburban services to move from one part of the city to another during the course of the day. These passengers would like to purchase a ticket with ease each time they travel. About 6 million of the total 19 million daily passengers are accounted for by Mumbai's suburban traffic alone. Then there is the countryside traveler - the rural passenger traveling to the district

headquarters or the nearest medical center or some such errand. These are similar to the urban commuter in the sense that their travel is short lead. Apart from this there are the labourers and their families who travel longer distances to urban centers or to areas where agriculture demands such labour. All these travelers have one thing in common - they just want to reach their destination, safely. The ticketing need of these passengers is different from the reserved traveler. They reach the ticket counter just before the train arrives at the station, and want to get the ticket quickly so that they can board the train before it leaves.

THE MANUAL SYSTEM OF TICKETING

Imagine a few ticket counters at a station crowded with passengers waiting to purchase a ticket to a station nearest to their village. The passengers have to travel a distance of 500 kilometers or more and the public announcement system announces the arrival of a train that would take them home. In fifteen minutes the train will be on its way out and all these passengers have to get their ticket, rush to the platform with their little ones and their modest belongings and somehow squeeze themselves into the overcrowded unreserved coaches. The counter clerk understands the pressures and quickly dispenses card tickets which he pulls out of a ticket tube - different ticket tubes for each destination. The clerk collects the fare, punches the ticket, dispenses the change and delivers the ticket to the passenger. Just then a passenger demands a ticket for a destination and the clerk finds that the ticket tube has run out of tickets. A likely scenario in the manual system, this would lead to chaos and confusion as the counter clerk would try to generate a special receipt for this passenger.

There were many challenges in the manual system which relied on what were called Printed Card Tickets (PCTs). These tickets were as the name indicates pre-printed with the name of the destination station, the fare and the class. The stations had to ensure adequate stock of such tickets. The process of indenting and stocking such tickets was time consuming and stations would often maintain stocks

enough for 10 months to a year. But each ticket is a money value item and had to be protected not only from pilferage but also from being eaten into by termites or rodents. The system worked reasonably well when traffic levels were somewhat steady or growing slowly. Stations could somehow keep pace with the traffic levels. But as traffic levels began to grow faster, the ticket stocks could no longer be maintained at adequate levels at all times. The way out was to issue special tickets called paper tickets but these were fraught with problems of overcharging by the clerks.

The manual system came with many other limitations. Each time there was a fare change, the changes had to be manually corrected - a process prone to errors and malpractices. The accounting processes were elaborate and time consuming. Each shift change meant stock taking of tickets sold/remaining and counters would close causing inconvenience to passengers.

Increasing levels of traffic coupled with numerous complaints of unavailability of printed card tickets, overcharging and forced ticketless travel led to a search for some quick solutions. The problem of stocking pre-printed tickets was seen as the major culprit at that stage in the early nineties. The solution therefore came in the form of microprocessor based Self Printing Ticket Machines (SPTMs) introduced at a few stations. These were stand alone devices which issued tickets and then transferred the transaction records at the end of the day to a PC kept at each station. This solved the problem of stocking pre-printed tickets but also highlighted other issues that were important to creating a good quality full-fledged computerized solution. It became evident that any computerized solution with on demand printing of tickets would eliminate the need for printed card tickets. It also became apparent that some basic security features could be added that made it difficult to make fake tickets or re-use tickets. Also for the first time, counters could cater to traffic in different directions and not limited to the ticket tubes at the counter.

More importantly the SPTMs experiment highlighted what was needed for a sustainable IT based solution. Some of the lessons learnt from this for a sustainable high quality IT solution are given below:

- It cannot rely on locally administered business logic and databases.
- High levels of efforts are required to keep ticketing machines at the stations updated and in sync with other machines.
- The IT system should be flexible and should allow for booking and cancellations across counters.
- Full accountal of all sales proceeds is an important element.
- Hardware systems have to be highly resilient and architected with sufficient redundancy to cater to a 24x7 market.
- The ticketing needs of the growing traffic can only be met through adoption of IT based solutions.
- The solution has to be uniform across the Zonal Railways and should be provided by a single agency.

In keeping with these lessons learnt from the SPTM experience, the Railway Board assigned the task to its IT arm, the Centre for Railway Information Systems (CRIS). The project was entrusted formally to CRIS in March 2002.

THE UNRESERVED TICKETING SYSTEM

CRIS reviewed the arrangements and discovered that the solution required reliance on a robust, reliable and high quality data communication network. However, such connectivity was not readily available at that point of time. CRIS therefore designed and created an exclusive ticketing network based on the state-of-the-art practice TCP/IP protocol suite, with a highly scalable routing domain using OSPF - an international standard protocol. The partial mesh topology of the network provided appropriate redundancies to avoid single point of failures. Every station was to be connected through two communication channels - one leased from the public sector telecom corporations MTNL/BSNL and the other from the railways internal communication network. The solution involved a central server with ticketing terminals connected to this server. However, complete reliance on connectivity to a central repository was a bit risky.

Earlier we talked about the discontinuity in ticketing because the counter clerk ran out of tickets for a particular destination. A computerized solution got rid of this problem by providing tickets printed on demand. But what if connectivity to the central repository failed? We would be back to the earlier problem of dispensing special paper tickets. It is this prime concern for business continuity that has marked the project. In fact business continuity has been the defining quality benchmark at every stage. Ultimately it led to a unique solution. We will talk about that a little later. In the interim, a precursor to this unique solution came in the form of a hybrid system - a solution that relied on a mixed architecture of centralized and distributed servers. The less important stations where disruption in service could be handled with a fall back on the manual system, were connected directly to a central server. However, at the more important stations with high traffic levels an additional cushion was provided with local station servers which were in turn connected to the central server. When connectivity failed the station servers would work in a standalone mode and synchronize with the central servers when connectivity was restored. This was the first step towards ensuring business continuity and to emphasize the importance of zero disruptions 100% redundancy was provided in the hardware configuration both at the station level and the central level. Thus the hybrid system was the initial solution to the problem of maintaining business continuity without relying entirely on unbroken network connectivity. The general lesson is that when the objective is clearly identified, the approach should be to find a solution that fits the reality best. A purely centralized system may have been a more elegant solution but would have relied on certain elements that were outside the control of CRIS and the Railways. Therefore the hybrid system covered these risks adequately while ensuring business continuity.

The network risks were covered with this approach but another risk opened up - in hardware maintenance. It soon became evident that the hybrid design imposed greater challenges in maintenance since booking offices at railway stations in India are not really equipped to be data centers. The weaknesses of the hybrid design

began to outweigh its advantages and a policy decision was taken to move towards a purely centralized system. But again the key quality element of the solution could not be compromised on, i.e., business continuity. The question was how to provide business continuity in an environment where network connectivity could not be fully relied upon and a hybrid system of decentralized servers came at high costs.

A SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION

CRIS began to debate various solutions to the problem. The obvious solution of providing a PC was examined only to be rejected quickly. A PC could work like the station servers and would be easier to maintain. However, they could be tampered with and UTS being a commercial application generating earnings, it could be quite risky and lead to leakage of revenues. The solution then veered towards thin clients or diskless PCs. The limitation was that their memory resided on a chip and was of limited size. Also until this time, there was no evidence of any other organization running a real time application like UTS using thin clients.

CRIS then worked in close collaboration with the software industry to customize the operating system Linux, as well as the Relational Database Management System (RDBMS), Sybase's ASA to create a trimmed version that could be accommodated on a thin client chip. The UTS software was also modified to suit a diskless PC. This thin client based solution was superior to the station server solution. Similar to the station servers, they were now capable of transacting tickets when there was no connectivity and synchronize later. But unlike the station servers, they did not pose major maintenance problems. Thus the bigger boxes were replaced by these sleek boxes in an out of the box solution to the problem.

Again it is worth emphasizing that the key objective that led to this innovative and sustainable solution was the overriding objective of business continuity, 24 hours of the day, and seven days of the week. Thin clients based ticketing became the norm for further proliferation of the unreserved ticketing system to smaller stations. Smaller stations were more prone to connectivity failures.

Connectivity is not so critical for unreserved ticketing since unlike reserved ticketing it is not context specific. In reserved ticketing, connectivity is key to ensuring that no seat or berth is booked twice. By definition unreserved ticketing does not face this problem. Ticketing can take place smoothly in an unconnected mode since no reservations have to be made - no validation with the central server is required for selling the ticket. Connectivity is however required for complete accounting of all ticket sales at a booking counter. Thin clients had to synchronize every once in a while so that the sales recorded on that machine were stored in the central server. The trade off was between ensuring business continuity and full account of sale proceeds. Currently, a three day period is stipulated by which time if the thin client does not come back online, ticketing is disabled on that terminal. This creates pressure on the network to be restored and ensures administrative control on the sales from each terminal.

THE IMPACT

The thin client innovation has helped Indian Railways proliferate the computerized systems to over 4000 stations as on date. Already about 90% of the unreserved segment is catered to by UTS and by the end of the current financial year it is expected to be a near 100%. One of the lessons from the SPTM experience was that the business logic and the databases should not be locally administered at the station level. The thin client solution resembles the SPTM in the fact that the databases and logic rested locally. But the difference is these are administered centrally. It is the responsibility of the data center to ensure that all these machines are constantly updated with the latest. This is a major overhead of a solution that cannot fully rely on 100% connectivity. Thin clients are constantly monitored through various software utilities to ensure that they have the latest business logic and database to work with. As UTS expands to smaller stations, power availability is another constraint that reduces the efficacy of the system. CRIS and Indian Railways are exploring newer options to ensure adequate power back up for these terminals.

Apart from connectivity, there could be failures at the server level. As mentioned earlier the philosophy has been to provide for 100% redundancy in the hardware configuration at the central level. In the future the system will have greater resilience through Virtualization technologies and efforts in this direction have already begun. Business continuity remains the guiding principle in all these efforts.

The constant emphasis on business continuity has been the defining character of this project. Quality of service in unreserved ticketing is about being able to sell tickets quickly at all times. Given the passengers' proclivity to reach the station just before the train's departure this became the guiding factor. The outcome of this has been a computerized ticketing system at even the most remote locations of the network. At large stations, all the booking counters cater to every passenger thus reducing the queues. The application has value added features that allow the counter clerk to print popular destination tickets quickly. The longer distance passenger, often illiterate and almost always poor, is able to transact with ease. Counter clerks have to only log off the system as part of handing over to the next shift. The paperwork has been reduced to the minimum for accounting of sale proceeds.

The clarity on the overriding objective of business continuity also helped the vendors and service providers in their efforts. Unlike projects driven purely by commercial considerations the bottom line here was different. In the initial stages, the IT industry was uncomfortable with the idea of mixed strategies. A question often raised then and even now is why the strategy was not more focused towards creating a highly reliable network. Network reliability has been an important element in the design and implementation. However, the business requirement of being able to dispense computerized ticketing when most required has guided the overall design of the project. At times of crunch, ticketing cannot fail. Even ninety nine percent network uptime is not sufficient to meet this business objective. If that one percent of the failures occurs on

occasions when passengers were crowding the counters, the project would not have succeeded. The important lesson from this is what may work well on an average was not sufficient to ensure quality. It had to work at the right time at the right place.

CONCLUSION

The UTS project could be considered as another ticketing system. What makes it special is the unique environment this ticketing system works in. It caters to a clientele spread across the length and breadth of the country. The numbers being dealt with are large by any standards. The transactions are across the counter transactions and not through the internet. Ticketing has to be available when required and this could be any hour of the day, on any day of the week, at any counter, of any station. The clientele is largely illiterate. A system that caters successfully to these requirements is what makes it special. The success of the project was due to a clear recognition and acknowledgement of what will count as good quality service. A strong adherence to this definition of quality through the implementation of the project has led to this happy situation. Quality is about being able to serve the customer at the time the customer needs the service. It is not about only creating high tech systems that are available most of the time rather it chooses appropriate technologies that meet the objectives, given the realities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT(S)

This paper draws mainly from an article by Mr. Vikram Chopra, currently Director (Operations), CRIS. He wrote on the Unreserved Ticketing System of Indian Railways when the UTS team was awarded the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Delivery Systems under his leadership. I would like to thank Mr. Chopra for giving me this opportunity to discuss the project in my capacity as the current leader of the project. I would also like to thank Ms. Monica Malhotra, Chief Systems Manager (UTS) for her help with the technical information.

REFERENCES

- Chopra, Vikram A. (2009), "Best Practice - Unreserved Ticketing System of Indian Railways" *Journal of Administrative Reforms - Management in Government*, Vol. XXXXI No. 2, July-September, 2009, pp 75-84.

Dr. R. Badri Narayan
General Manager (Unreserved Ticketing System)
Centre for Railway Information Systems, Ministry of Railways, India
narayan.r@cris.org.in

Integrating E-Governance into Right To Information For Improving Public Service Delivery:

Case Study of E-Soochna and RTI Centres of Himachal Pradesh

Abhishek Jain*

SUMMARY

Right to Information (RTI) has been hailed as one of the most powerful tools to improve transparency, accountability and public service delivery in India. The reach and utility of RTI can be drastically enhanced by integrating E-Governance into it as both complement each other. The quality, quantity and access to useful and timely public information is a *sine qua non* for good governance especially at the cutting edge levels because information is power. This paper describes how with effective mechanisms like Total Quality Management, stakeholders' participation, Kaizen, customer focus and procedure standardization; and by innovative and multi-dimensional usage of E-Governance and M-Governance; the quality of information regime has been improved in various parts of Himachal Pradesh by taking public information pro-actively at the doorsteps of the customers through systematic information management. The initiatives include setting up of 'E-Soochna' Centres, Right to Information Centres, Web-enabled G2C RTI interface, E-Court and Integrated Case Filing & Monitoring Systems, SMS Gateways, e-RTI Directory, e-RTI Registers etc. The initiatives have been sustained and replicated at the district, block and village units taking into account the citizens' information requirements at various levels benefiting thousands of citizens. The above efforts have led to quality improvements in availability and access to information, information warehousing, information dissemination,

*The ideas expressed are the personal opinion of the author.

decentralized governance and ultimately public service delivery at grassroots levels.

Keywords

Right to information, E-Governance, Public service delivery, E-Soochna, Right to Information Centres.

RIGHT TO INFORMATION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

Public service delivery is one of the most significant and critical aspects of good governance because it affects the lives of millions of people. India is a developing country and it is through better public service delivery that inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development can be achieved. The bureaucracy has contributed positively to the functioning of our vibrant democracy, plural society and growing economy.

Right to Information is considered a fundamental human right. Every citizen of a nation has a right to be informed of the important aspects of governance affecting his life. The litmus test of the advancement of a nation is what, when, how and how much information about various governance related issues, having a direct or indirect bearing on the lives of the citizens, is actually shared with them. The enactment of the Right to Information Act, 2005 has been hailed as one of the most significant, useful and path-breaking administrative reforms in the post-Independence era of public administration in our country. Thereby India has joined a select league of nations who have passed this kind of 'modern' legislation¹. Right to Information Act heralds a new era of open, transparent and accountable governance system in India. It marks the beginning of a new set of relationships between the government and the various segments of the society².

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Across the world Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have ushered in an era of information exchange changing

political, economic and social structures forever. Modern ICTs permit the sharing of information, knowledge, and hence power, as was never possible before. In this realm, governments possess a duty not just to provide services as efficiently as possible, but also to make the government operations transparent and civil servants accountable to those they serve³. Information and Communication Technologies are becoming as important as roads and access to new technology must be viewed as a basic right, like electricity and water. Knowledge is power and information is the vehicle that conveys knowledge. Control the flow of information and you limit what people are able to know and, therefore, do⁴.

RIGHT TO INFORMATION AND E-GOVERNANCE

E-governance is about a process of reform in the way governments work, share information, and deliver services to internal and external clients⁵. E-governance can be classified under a variety of models depending upon the nature of interaction and agencies involved in the interaction. These are Government to Citizens (G2C), Citizens to Government (C2G), Government to Government (G2G), Government to Business (G2B), Government to NGO (G2N)⁶. The aim of E-Governance is to make the interaction of the citizens with the government offices hassle free and to share information freely. Studies point out that ICT could make civil servants responsive and accountable with the free flow of information regarding administration and policy⁷. There is an imperative correlation between E-Governance and the Right to Information as neither can run successfully without the other. The efficacy of RTI can be enhanced drastically with the optimum use of Information Technology. Quoting Wajahat Habibullah, Chief Information Commissioner, "E-governance is never going to be really effective, unless it is tied very closely with the right to information. On the other hand, RTI is not going to be very successful and in fact, a failure, if it is not tied with the concept of E-Governance."⁸

The RTI Act is an important accelerator to take the E-Governance movement forward in India. E-Governance depends on

various factors to work effectively and successfully - one such tool is RTI. The role of IT in enabling the RTI Act is vital and basic. Undoubtedly, the RTI Act would prove to be a boon for various e-Government initiatives in the country when implemented fully. The Right to Information Act is India's first law that obligates governments to take up E-Governance. It is the only law in the world, which has this kind of provision. Thus Section 4 of the Act itself provides a mutual linkage between Right to Information and E-Governance.

PRESENT INFORMATION FLOW TO CITIZENS

The success of public administration depends on the quality of the civil service and its accountability. The initial capacity of India's civil

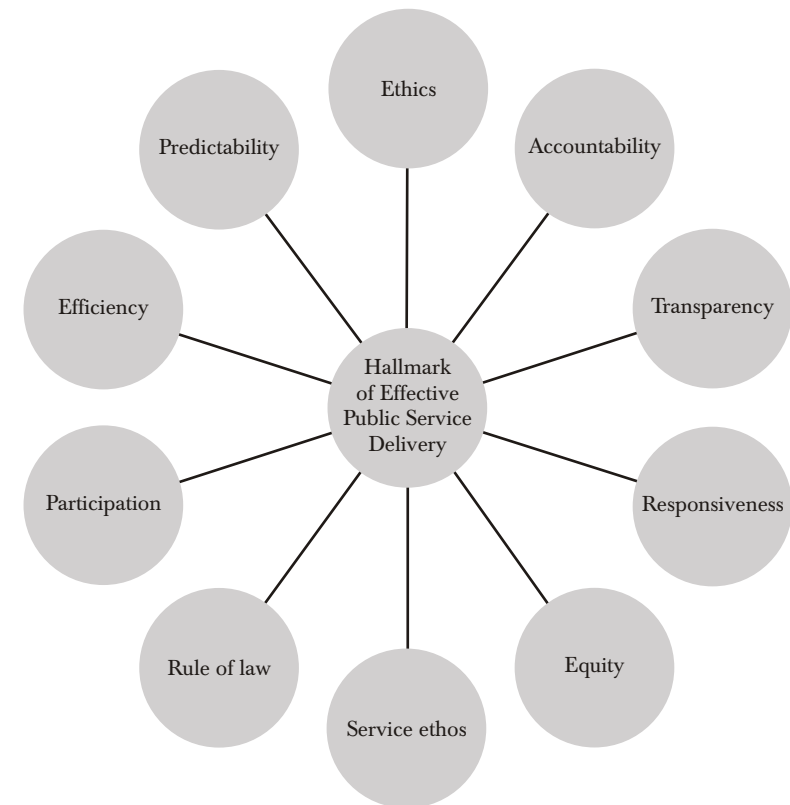


Figure 1 - Hallmarks of Effective Public Service Delivery

service is among the highest in the world, with meritocratic and fair recruitment. Yet India's civil services, the principal "face" of the government to the public and responsible for implementing government programs, must shoulder some of the responsibility for dissatisfaction with government's performance in providing a sound business environment, curbing corruption, and providing public services. We must introspect and recognize that there is a great deal of public dissatisfaction with the functioning of Government, at all levels of Government. Government is perceived to be very inefficient, ineffective and non-responsive to the information needs of the citizens. There are complex procedures and hierarchy and long queues are observed everywhere. Therefore, there is great imperative to reform the existing systems.

Now a new way of interacting with the government without having to go to any government office as is shown in Figures 2.

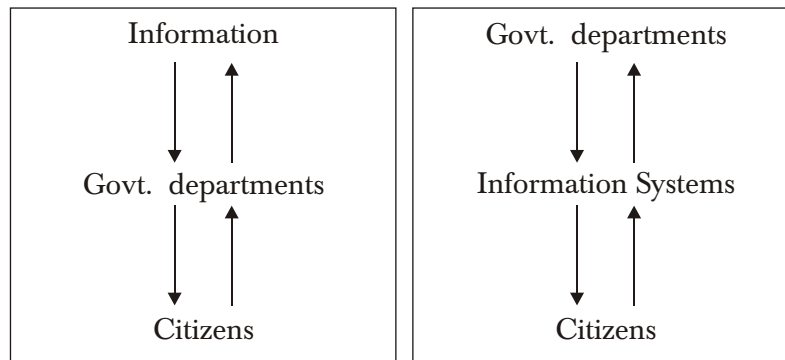


Figure 2: Information system before (left) and after (right) Total Quality Management implementation

Objectives of the initiatives taken in Himachal Pradesh

- Reduce physical G2C interface
- Improve G2C nterface
- Reduction in effective cost to users
- Equal access of information to everybody
- G2C services on 24x7 basis
- Citizen Centric Process Re-engineering

Initiatives taken in Himachal Pradesh to integrate E-governance into Right to Information

While efforts have been made at the national and state levels to implement RTI in conjunction with E-Governance, it is the cutting edge levels of governance which are most critical for ensuring the success of RTI. Certain initiatives were taken by the author as a Public Information Officer (PIO), posted as Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) at Palampur (H.P.). **SDM Office Palampur became the First Sub-divisional RTI Centre of H.P.** The strategy for implementing RTI was through E-Governance (Figure 3). The ultimate aim was to improve the information regime and information retrieval system for easier access to the citizens.

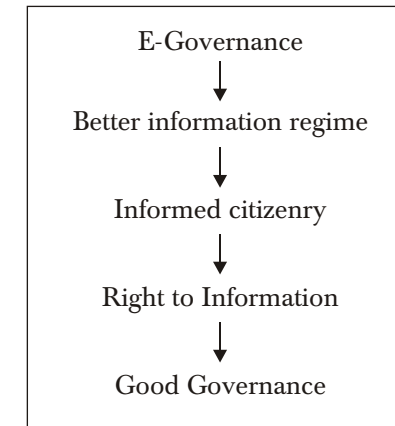


Figure 3: RTI Strategy

The initiatives were further replicated at the district level when RTI Centre and E-Soochna centre was set-up at district Collectorate office, Kullu.

RTI INITIATIVES IN DISTRICT HAMIRPUR

Hamirpur district has taken various initiatives to promote Right to Information in the district with the ultimate objective of improving the public service delivery. Here Information Technology and E-Governance has been used to propogate the Right to Information in various ways -

- Manual or physical form
- Touch Screen Kiosks
- Web-enabled G2C RTI services
- m-enabled RTI usage through SMS gateway

The following initiatives have been taken in the district -

'e-SOOCHNA' Kiosks

Hamirpur becomes the first district of the state where 'e-Soochna' kiosks have been set up at the Sub-divisional levels. Bhoranj SDM office became the first SDM office in the Himachal Pradesh to establish a Sub-divisional e-Soochna kiosk when it was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Education Minister, H.P.

'e-Soochna' seeks to provide various kinds of useful and important information to the citizens through a user friendly Touch Screen Kiosk. The kiosk can be visited by the citizens on any working day to obtain useful information about a multitude of government schemes, programmes, progress and other important information. The various information which can be accessed are main statistical data of Hamirpur district, various development schemes of Government of H.P. and Govt. of India, information about Right to Information Act, waiting list of Indira Awas Yojana etc. *An important feature of 'e-Soochna' kiosk is that uptodate status of implementation of various development schemes in every panchayat can also be seen alongwith its head, sanctioned amount, present status etc.* Information reg. PIOs, APIOs, Appellate Authorities, Voluntary disclosure documents, RTI application forms etc. can also be accessed through the kiosk. e-Soochna kiosks is also web-enabled. Information is available in both English and Hindi.

Systems have been kept in place for continous updation of data every 15 days. A dedicated IT employee has been kept for doing the same, under the overall supervision of District Informatics Officer. Feedback mechanisms have also been kept for getting knowledge from the citizens about what further kinds of information they would like to have.

RTI Centers

- RTI Centers have been set up at all levels of the administrative machinery in the district from top (district) to bottom (village).
- The RTI Centers are self-contained centers of information providing information to the citizens about almost every government activity done through that level. Additionally, they possess RTI Act, Rules & Regulations (both English & Hindi), RTI forms, Directory of PIOs, APIOs and Appellate Authorities, RTI user handbooks both for public and government staff.
- Computerised DISPLAY BOARDS have been put up mentioning the procedure, formalities, fees etc. for every public service and government activity from the district to the sub-divisional to the tehsil and panchayat level.
- District RTI Center
- Sub-divisional RTI Center done in all 4 subdivisions
- Tehsil RTI Center done in all 7 Tehsils/Sub-Tehsils
- Block RTI Center done in all 6 Blocks
- Panchayat RTI Center done in all 229 Panchayats
- Village RTI Center set up in all 198 revenue village offices. It contains pro-active disclosure of all relevant information to public procedures for getting work done from Patwarkhanas, fees schedule, details about revenue works etc; compilation of RTI Act, Rules & Regulations; RTI Forms; Directory of PIOs, APIOs & Appellate Authorities; RTI User Handbooks etc.

As panchayat level & village level offices are being computerised, soon Village RTI Centers would also be computerized.

RTI Directory of district Hamirpur

A Directory of PIOs, APIOs and Appellate Authorities both State government and Central government - compiled and published which was ***released by Hon'ble Chief Minister of HP in the august presence of Chief Secretary HP on 12.10.2009.*** The Directory contains phone numbers also of the various public authorities. The e-RTI Directory put on website, and also on the E-Soochna kiosks. The

RTI Directory kept in all government offices, Panchayatghars, Patwarkhanas etc. of the district.

e-RTI Register

The RTI Register for Appellate Authority made web-enabled. Complete details of the various RTI cases/appeals put in the Register including the current status of the cases. The Register being maintained both manually and electronically.

m-RTI

m-Governance is being utilized for providing information to the applicants about the status of their applications/appeal, and information about the readiness of the information is provided to the applicants through SMS gateway on their mobiles.

- Special thrust on pro-active disclosures.
- Various kinds of user groups prepared.
- Push SMSs being sent as soon as information is ready or the applicant is to be informed about date of hearings or addl. Fees etc.
- Latest updates sent through Group user groups.

Online RTI access

The RTI implementation in Hamirpur district has been made web-enabled as various kinds of information including the status of RTI appeals, RTI Directory, RTI Act/Rules, list of PIOs etc. and the pro-active disclosure documents all have been made online.

RTI Boards in all Panchayats and Patwarkhanas

Display Boards giving information about RTI Act and the PIOs, APIOs and Appellate Authorities have been put up in all the 229 Panchayat offices and 197 Patwarkhanas of the district alongwith the telephone numbers. Ensured the setting up of Display Boards of RTI in 100% offices of the district.

E-Court and Integrated Case filing & Monitoring System: Implemented at District and all 4 Sub-divisional levels.

Audit of Pro-Active disclosures done in all the government departments of the district.

Compilation of RTI Act, Rules & Regulations - Book containing the RTI Act, amended Rules and Regulations both in English and Hindi - has been published and circulated among all the government offices, Panchayat offices and Patwar khanas of the district.

Public Awareness Generation

Public awareness on RTI is being generated through various workshops, capacity building programmes etc. Debate/Declamation contests were organized in various colleges and schools. RADIO TALKS were delivered by DC Hamirpur to increase awareness on RTI among the rural masses. Capacity building, awareness generation, multi-stakeholders consultations etc. done for having more stakeholders participation.

Management Techniques Used in the above initiatives

In order to focus on quality and customer satisfaction, we implemented TQM and Kaizen as our key strategies to improve public service delivery at the grassroot level. The existing procedures and mechanisms were reviewed and scrutinized and the bottlenecks removed through the technique of Kaizen. Workplace improvement was done with more transparent and accountable style of functioning. We implemented the 5S strategy and institutionalized the entire system of governmental functioning especially in key areas involving direct public interaction. Moreover, stakeholders' participation was also resorted to. The objective of all these quality management exercises was -

- Citizen services closer to people
- Multiple information under one roof
- System driven delivery of services
- Least physical interface with the government staff

- Transparency in delivery of services
- Value for time and money
- Department staff can focus on core functions
- Higher levels of citizen satisfaction

Outcome and Impact of the above initiatives

The above initiatives have led to easy and hassle-free access to vital and useful information to the citizens, enhanced transparency and efficiency in administration at the cutting edge, saving in time of citizens and of office staff, better monitoring of development schemes etc. *The E-Soochna kiosk at Kullu has been accessed by around 25,000 citizens in two years period since its launch. The initiatives have been chosen as one of the few 'Best Practices in implementation of the Right to Information Act (National & International), in 'A Compilation for the Sub-Committee constituted by the Central Chief Information Commissioner', August 2009, Centre for Good Governance, Hyderabad which states: "E-Soochna' and Right to Information Centre will at as a one-stop-solution not only for providing important information to the common public in respect of various works done from government offices but also of the important development activities and their progress."*

Certain other outcomes include -

- Easy and hassle-free access to vital and useful information to the citizens.
- Enhanced transparency
- Enhanced efficiency in administration at the cutting edge levels of governance
- Saving in time of citizens and of office staff
- Check over corruption
- Better monitoring of development schemes.
- No compulsion for the citizens to come to district/tehsil headquarters.
- Creation of trust & confidence about administration among the public.

- At Kullu, the E-Soochna kiosk was accessed by around 15,000 citizens in one year period since its launch for various purposes. This is a good figure considering the population of Kullu town as per Census 2001 is 18306.

Some Quality Improvements of above initiatives

The above initiatives have also resulted into quality improvements of various kinds which all put together are highly useful in improving the public service delivery and overall governance systems. Some of the quality improvements are -

- Quality of **availability and access to information** with citizens enhanced
- Quality of **information warehousing** & storage improved
- Quality of **information dissemination** improved
- Quality of **pro-active disclosures** improved
- Quality of decentralised governance improved
- Quality of **public participation** in decentralised governance improved
- Quality of **public service delivery** enhanced through E-Governance and M-Governance.
- Role of intermediaries reduced.
- Levels of **sustainability and replicability** increased in the State.
- Quality of **transparency and accountability** levels in the government enhanced at cutting edge levels of administration

"While meso level initiatives pave the way, micro level initiatives through district level officials follow suit, as is evidenced in the case of a district office in Kullu, Himachal Pradesh."⁹

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Right to Information and E-Governance are complementary and supplementary to each other. The real efficacy of the Right to Information can be drastically enhanced through the use of Information Technology. The vast opportunities created by the Right

to Information regime to the common citizens can be better exploited through the development and implementation of appropriate information systems and the automation of government operations¹⁰. Incorporating new processes with effective use of ICTs, both at the government end and at the community end, is absolutely essential for this purpose. The government must arrive at ways and methods by which citizens can effectively access and use RTI to take advantage of information resources.¹¹

RTI a very potent and effective tool for improving public service delivery. Initiatives have been taken in different districts of Himachal Pradesh at cutting edge levels of administration using almost all kinds of technological tools. Better information delivery mechanism has been ensured from district level to village level taking into consideration the information requirements at all levels. Sustainability and replicability has enhanced from one district to another and from district to sub-division to Panchayat to village level.

Integrating E-governance into Right to Information involves both challenges and opportunities. Challenges include changing the mindset of government functionaries and the sustainability of the initiatives. However, we have to involve both the information-providers and information-seekers to usher in a win-win situation. We will have to convert challenges into opportunities and opportunities into gains. The sooner it is done, the better it is.

REFERENCES

- ¹Abhishek Jain, "Right to Information Challenge or Opportunity", *Pravasi Today*, New Delhi, Volume 4, No.5, May, 2009, p.32.
- ²Abhishek Jain and Aarushi Jain, "Optimising the Utility of Right to Information through E-Governance", *Management in Government*, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Government of India, New Delhi, Vol. XXXX No. 4, January-March, 2009, p.66.
- ³Narayan, Jayaprakash. (2006). Ensuring right to information through the use of ICTs. *Digital Opportunity Channel*, April 18.

- ⁴Williamson, Andy. (2006). Balancing the inequalities of information access, *egov*, August, p. 27.
- ⁵Sangita, S.N. and Dash, Bikash Chandra. (2008). Information Communication and Technology, Governance and Service Delivery in India: A Critical Review, *The Indian Journal of Public Administration*, January-March, Vol. LIV, No. 1, p.141.
- ⁶Sachdeva, Sameer. (2003). E-Governance Strategy in India, *Management in Government*, xxxiv, (4): 35-53.
- ⁷Mukhopadhyaya, Ashok. (2000). IT and Administrative Culture, *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, xlv (3): 293-299.
- ⁸Habibullah, Wajahat. (2006). op.cit., p.21.
- ⁹"Best Practices in implementation of the Right to Information Act (National & International), Final Report, A Compilation for the sub-committee constituted by the Central Chief Information Commissioner, August, 2009, Centre for Good Governance, Hyderabad.
- ¹⁰Jain, Abhishek, op.cit., p.100.
- ¹¹Ramanathan, Ramesh. (2004). Right to Information or disclosure?, www.indiatogether.org.

Abhishek Jain
flyingfinger@yahoo.com, paper presented through
ISQ (India)

From Regulation to Facilitation: CBEC Experience

H K Sharan, Manish Saxena

SUMMARY

Central Board of Excise & Customs (CBEC) is the nodal agency implementing indirect tax laws across India collecting \$55 B yearly. It has taken a multi-path approach towards citizen centric tax administration reorienting from regulation to facilitation.

CBEC has benchmarked its services and their delivery is facilitated through different paths: Citizens' Charter creating transparency and accountability, use of technology creating easy access to services and grievance redress, dedicated Centers providing single window facility and information and Quality Certificates building confidence of citizens.

Overall CBEC has taken a dynamic approach towards quality delivery through business processes re-engineering.

Keywords

Citizen centric, DMAIC methodology, Benchmark, Cause and effect analysis

BACKGROUND

A Tax-Payer-Service system is an important pillar for an efficient revenue administration. The system serves the premise that certainty of applicable tax and procedures flows into citizens' voluntary tax compliance. The voluntary compliance lowers the 'cost of collection'

with fewer resources allocated to control tax evasion, leading to an efficient revenue administration.

With CBEC (also used as 'Board' henceforth) as nodal agency implementing indirect tax laws across India collecting \$55 B in taxes in a year, a resilient Tax-Payer-Service system is important. As a systematic approach for Tax-Payer-Services, CBEC is implementing 'Sevottam' project to deliver excellence in service delivery. Presently this is being rolled out as a scalable model at four pilots covering each indirect tax revenue stream of Customs, Central Excise and Service tax. This shall be extended to all other formations building upon the experience gained and building -in localized citizens' needs.

DEFINE WHAT CITIZENS WANT

Sevottam is a Service Delivery Excellence Model which provides an assessment-improvement framework to bring about excellence in public service delivery. The model works as an evaluation mechanism to assess the quality of internal processes and their impact on the quality of service delivery.

Sevottam targets to understand and address citizens' stated needs as well as implied needs. The stated needs focused upon are:

- Timeliness: time norms for specific services most valued by citizens need to be set
- Effectiveness: a single window system for service deliverables to cut down on citizens' shuttling from one desk to another to get services.
- Responsiveness: a robust grievances redress system and feedback system to listen to citizens as well as to redress grievances timely.

The implied needs focused upon are:

- Courteous behaviour: norm for behaviour especially in citizen-facing positions.
- Information: facilitation centers and help centers to meet citizens' needs of information.
- Empathy: public grievance officers to listen to citizens in their time of need.

The voice of citizens' has been captured through meaningful dialogue with different industry associations representing diverse citizen segments. A set of specific services has been chosen as the one of high value to citizens. Norms have been set for these services and published. List of services for each revenue stream is covered in table 1 in appendix. These services and norms shall be reviewed periodically to continually track changing citizens' requirements.

SET SERVICE QUALITY POLICY AND OBJECTIVES TO DELIVER WHAT CITIZENS WANT

To systematically address citizens' needs, a service quality policy has been established. The policy commits CBEC to encourage, facilitate and assist citizens to voluntarily discharge their tax obligations. The policy also commits to continually improve the standards of services and the effectiveness of the service quality management system to enhance citizen satisfaction. The service quality policy is enumerated in table 2 in appendix.

Further measurable objectives have been set to measure, analyze and monitor the implementation of the service quality policy. These objectives are:

- To meet and improve services delivered in terms of timeliness and single window facility
- Provide and improve accessible facilitation centers for availability of information and guidance to customer for voluntary tax compliance
- Improve customer perception of service quality delivered
- Improve effectiveness of grievance redress through policy initiatives
- To meet grievance resolution time of 30 working days

BENCHMARKS HAVE BEEN SET FOR EACH OBJECTIVE

We have set benchmarks for each objective to measure performance:

- To meet and improve services delivered in terms of timeliness, a Citizens' Charter has been published. The charter is benchmarked to meet IS 15700: 2005 requirements

(Bureau of Indian Standards' IS 15700: 2005 Quality Management Systems - requirements for service quality by public service organizations). The charter provides list of key services offered, measurable service standards for the services and remedies available for non-compliance to the standards.

- To meet and improve services delivered in terms of single window facility, service deliverables available at one place have been benchmarked through dedicated centers and e-commerce web-portal.
- To provide and improve accessible facilitation centers for availability of information and guidance to customer for voluntary tax compliance, an all India phone and email helpline has been benchmarked along with local centers of information dissemination.
- To improve effectiveness of grievance redress through policy initiatives and to meet grievance resolution time of 30 working days, the grievance redress system is benchmarked to Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG) grievance redress system with time-bound acknowledgement and redress of grievance. DARPG is the nodal agency in government of India in respect of policy initiatives on public grievances redress mechanism and citizen-centric initiatives.

Further to sustain delivery of objectives, sensitization of field formations towards capacity building is targeted to create top management commitment towards change in officers' mind set from administration to public service which is identified as a big challenge in developing service delivery capability. Further a documented service quality management system is targeted to control quality and make continuous improvement.

CONCRETE STEPS TOWARDS SEVOTTAM WITH RESULTS ACHIEVED

We have taken concrete steps towards Sevottam with continuous measurement and monitoring at top level to assess, identify gaps and make improvements. Accordingly we have:

- **Revised Citizens' Charter:** we have revised our Charter as per input from key stakeholders to make it 'Citizen Aligned' as per voice of customer. We have demarcated our vision, "To provide an efficient and transparent mechanism for collection of indirect taxes and enforcement of cross border controls with a view to encourage voluntary compliance". We have defined our regulatory and service functions. We have also redefined our service standards and norms as per input and requirements of different industry segments. Minimum 80% compliance norm has been set. The revised Charter has been approved in December 2008 and is prominently displayed at field formations as well as at CBEC website for citizens.
- **Implemented CPGRAMS as robust grievance redress:** we have adopted CPGRAMS (Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System) web based system, developed by DARPG, at all India level. This is monitored at Chief Commissioner/Director General level at field formation. This is also monitored at Board level. Public Grievance Officers have been nominated at field formations. Norms of acknowledging complaints within 48 hours of receipt and attempting to provide final replies within 30 working days have been set in Citizens' Charter to handle public grievance.
- **Tested service delivery capability in pilots:** we have chosen four pilots to measure Sevottam conformance and develop as dedicated centers for delivery capability. First pilot is office of the Director General of Inspection which is the apex office handling design issues in Sevottam implementation. Second pilot office is Delhi Customs (Import & General) as an outlet handling Customs delivery issues. Third pilot office is Delhi - I Central Excise as an outlet handling Central Excise delivery issues. And fourth pilot office is Delhi Service Tax as an outlet handling Service Tax delivery issues.

Key performance indicators for improved service delivery have been identified as timeliness, single window service deliverables, information cum facilitation centers and pro-active citizen feedback. All the pilots are tracking Sevottam

conformance since November, 2009 and are at advanced stages of sustained delivery capability.

Indian Customs Electronic data interchange (ICES) and Automated Central Excise and Service Tax (ACES) systems have been in operation providing e-commerce portal access to services in Customs, Central Excise and Service Tax.

- **Provided for All India helpline:** Board has approved to have an all India helpline to harness technology for citizen information and facilitation. The helpline aims to provide information to citizen via email channel as well as phone channel. The financial modalities of implementation are being worked out. The helpline shall provide information via telephone through a single toll free number from any network, 8AM to 10PM seven days a week, or via e-mail and SMS query aimed at creating a cost effective medium for citizens to obtain information from anywhere in India.
- **Sensitized field formations:** Change in officer's mind set from administration to public service has been identified as a big challenge in developing service delivery capability. To address this, a mini team under the leadership of Director General of Inspection has conducted workshops at Mumbai, Bangalore, Delhi, Shillong, Chandigarh, Bhopal, Kolkata, Patna, Lucknow, Bhubaneswar and Chennai to appraise senior officers on CPGRAMS and Sevottam. Further NACEN (National Academy of Customs Excise & Narcotics) has conducted a 'Training of Trainers' course based on M/s Tata Consultancy Services, BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards) and DARPG input for officers of the four pilots. Other courses on IS 15700 have been conducted through BIS academy. Plans have been put in place to replicate these trainings in other field formations.

CONTINUOUS ANALYSIS TO IDENTIFY AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

We have continuously measured on timeliness of service deliverables. The performance on meeting the time norms from November '09 to June '10 shows a high degree of timely service. The minimum

benchmark of 80% compliance has been consistently met. The performance is covered in figures 1 to 7 in appendix.

The grievances received per quarter have doubled in second half of 2009 from ~80 to 160. The number of grievances resolved within 30 working days is continuously increasing. The performance is covered in figure 8 in appendix.

Based on analysis of the data, improvements have been made like to give unique identification number to each acknowledgement, to issue postal acknowledgements, to prevent audit within 15 days of intimation, to mandatory return non-relied upon documents, and to create grievance sub-categories to focus on timely disposal of time sensitive issue. Further visual appeal to citizens is improved via better architecture of citizen interface area.

SERVICE QUALITY SYSTEM CREATED FOR BETTER CONTROL ON SERVICE DELIVERY

A documented Service Quality Manual has been established as CBEC service quality management system. This manual incorporates the key learning at pilots on how to deliver and sustain quality in services. The manual has built on IS 15700 requirements to capture latest research and best practices in the field of service delivery. A service quality policy along with quality objectives and complaint handling objectives has been laid out in the manual to fulfill our commitments to citizens in the Citizens' Charter.

Our Citizens shall use the manual to understand CBEC Citizens' Charter, Service Quality Policy and key service deliverables. The Charter contains key services that CBEC is committed to offer to citizens in a time bound manner and CBEC's expectation from citizens. The service quality policy lists CBEC commitment to enhance citizen satisfaction. The service deliverables are defined so citizen knows what to expect. Further the citizens can use the manual to know CBEC's organizational structure to approach the right officer to take decisions and to implement policies. For sustained service delivery CBEC has put in systems for Citizen Grievance Redress and Information & Feedback.

Further the manual lists documents, procedures and ownership that need to be put in place at field level to implement the CBEC service quality commitments and objectives. A stepwise guide is included for easy implementation and enhancing consistency in operations.

Controlled copies of the manual are being circulated to cover more dedicated centers of service delivery in phases.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT - CERTIFICATION TO BUILD CITIZEN CONFIDENCE AND THE ROAD AHEAD

Our Sevottam implementation activities at the four pilots are in their last phase with IS 15700 certification process underway. As per the mandate of the Board in Results Framework Document we shall expand Sevottam to more Commissionerates for IS 15700 certifications in the phase II.

Further Sevottam needs top level commitment, training courses are planned and organized through NACEN (National Academy of Customs Excise & Narcotics) and BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards) academy. A training plan to train 4-5 officers from each field formation is in place with more than 200 officers trained already.

Finally continuous improvement is essential for sustained quality delivery. As such we plan to review our Citizens' Charter to dynamically incorporate new citizen expectations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT(S)

1. Quality Council of India for input in revising Citizens' Charter
2. M/s Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) helping as CBEC Sevottam consultant
3. Bureau of Indian Standards for organizing training of CBEC officers on IS 15700:2005

REFERENCES

1. Bureau of Indian Standards' IS 15700: 2005 Quality Management Systems - requirements for service quality by public service organizations

APPENDIX

Figure 1: Performance of service deliverable 1

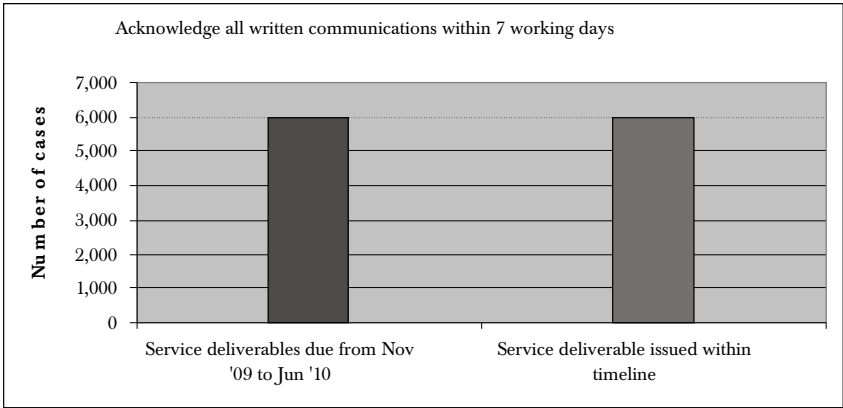


Figure 2: Performance of service deliverable 2

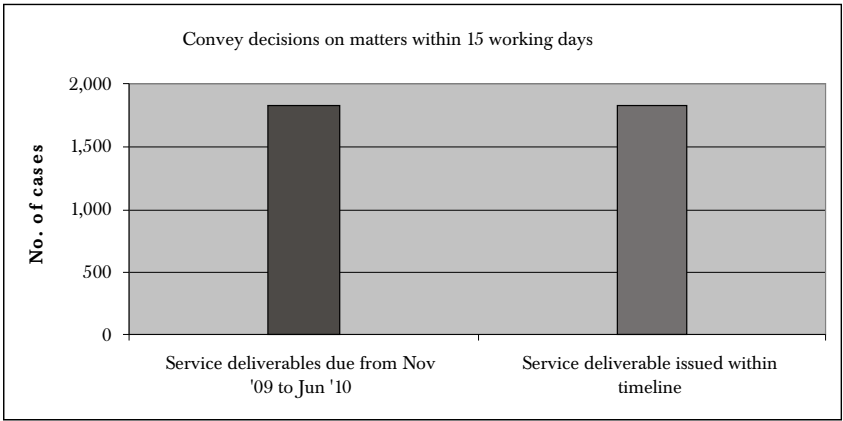


Figure 3: Performance of service deliverable 3

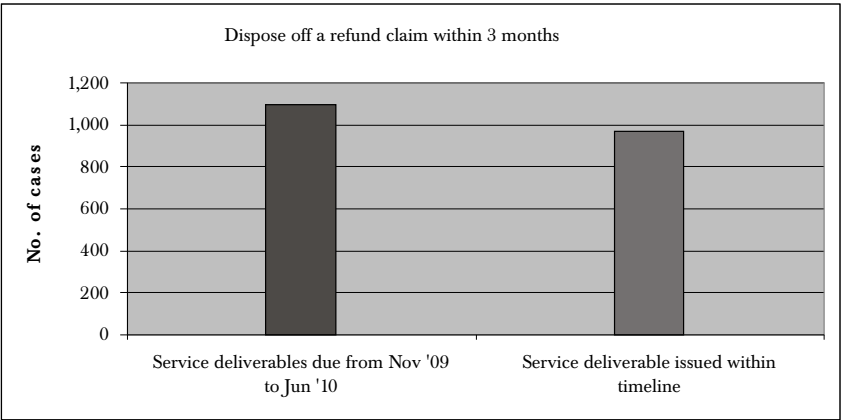


Figure 4: Performance of service deliverable 4

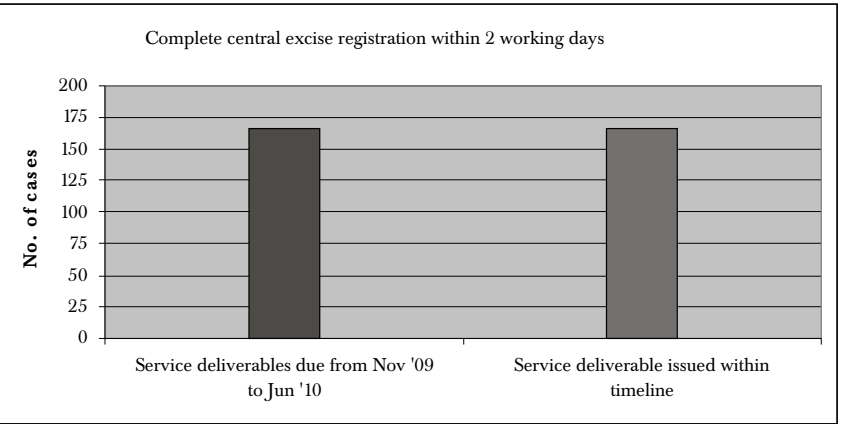


Figure 5: Performance of service deliverable 5

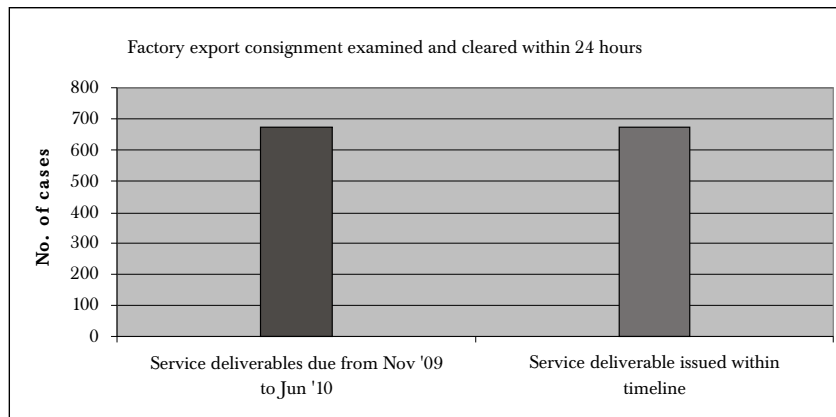


Figure 7: Performance of service deliverable 7

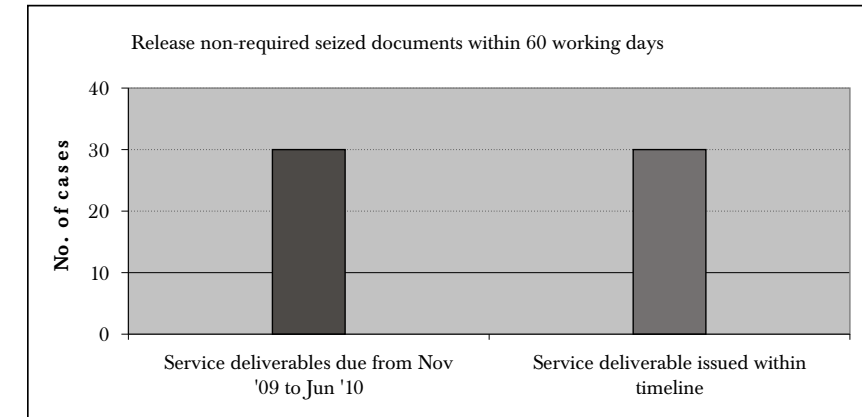


Figure 6: Performance of service deliverable 6

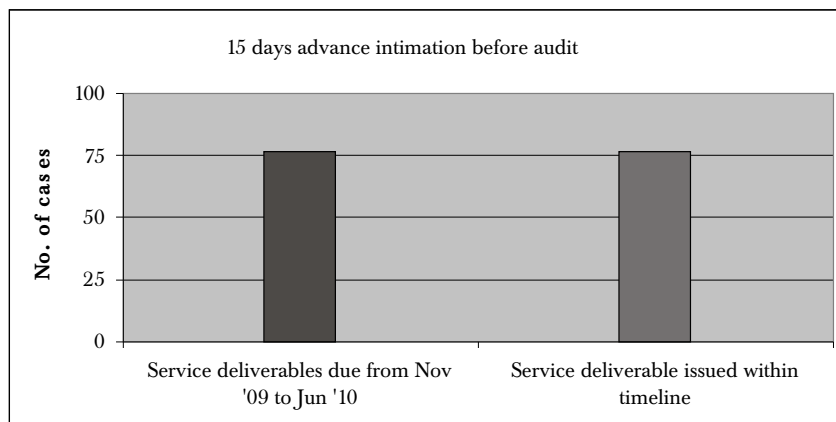


Figure 8: Performance of service deliverable 8

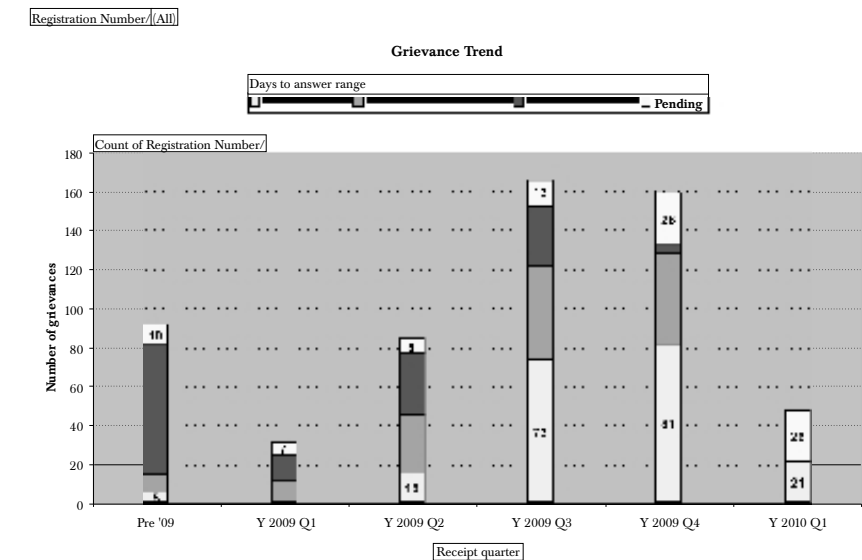


Table-1: Defined services in each stream with norms

Central Excise	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acknowledge all written communications within 7 working days. 2. Convey decision on matters within 15 working days. 3. Dispose of a refund claim within 3 months. 4. Complete Central Excise registration within 2 working days. 5. Complete examination and clearance of export consignment at factory premises within 24 hours. 6. Give 15 days advance intimation before undertaking the audit of assessees' records. 7. Release of seized documents within 60 working days if not required. 8. Acknowledge complaints within 48 hours and attempt to provide final replies within 30 working days.
Customs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acknowledge all written communications within 7 working days. 2. Convey decision on matters within 15 working days. 3. Remit drawback within 7 working days 4. Clear the import goods within 48 hours of filing of declaration 5. Clear the export goods within 24 hours of filing of declaration 6. Release of seized documents within 60 working days if not required. 7. Acknowledge complaints within 48 hours and attempt to provide final replies within 30 working days.
Service Tax	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acknowledge all written communications within 7 working days. 2. Convey decision on matters within 15 working days. 3. Dispose of a refund claim within 3 months. 4. Give 15 days advance intimation before undertaking the audit of assessees' records. 5. Release of seized documents within 60 working days if not required. 6. Acknowledge complaints within 48 hours and attempt to provide final replies within 30 working days.

Table-2: Service Quality Policy

Central Board of Excise & Customs is committed to encourage, facilitate and assist its existing and potential assessees to voluntarily discharge their tax obligations and to provide them services necessary in meeting these obligations. CBEC is also committed to discharge all its functions in a fair, impartial, transparent and consistent manner.

This will be achieved through constant monitoring of service delivery channels, customer feedback, motivation and training of personnel, continually improving reliability levels of internal processes, and identifying opportunities for improvement.

CBEC is committed to meet the requirements of IS 15700 and to review its quality policy and quality objectives to continually improve the standards of services and the effectiveness of the service quality management system with the objective of enhancing customer satisfaction.

H K Sharan
(hsharan@hotmail.com)
Government of India, Ministry of Finance

Manish Saxena
(msaxena@gmail.com)
Government of India, Ministry of Finance

Aayakar Seva Kendra

A Model of Excellence in Public Service delivery Mechanism

Nilimesh Baruah

SUMMARY

Aayakar Seva Kendra

A model of excellence in public service delivery mechanism

ASK, the acronym for the Aayakar Seva Kendra, is a multi-faceted mechanism for achieving excellence in public service delivery reflecting the new **Quality policy** of the Income Tax Department. It provides a single point of contact for the taxpayers where taxpayer request for services are registered and acknowledged through unique identifier for tracking the request throughout its life cycle. ASK is guided by **Sevottam**, a service quality management framework for government organizations, and reflects a change in mindset of the Income Tax Department from an exclusive enforcement agency to that of a service provider. **ASK** represents a new integrated problem solving approach in the realm of citizen-centric service delivery.

Sevottam is a quality management framework which lays down seven steps for achieving excellence in service delivery which include defining services, identifying clients, setting standards for services, developing capacity, performing and monitoring leading to continuous improvement.

The Department's pioneering journey towards excellence in service delivery started with the announcement of its Citizens' Charter 2007 which enumerated 16 services offered to the taxpayers within specific time lines. A prototype of ASK was developed and made fully functional at 3 outlets leading to certification under IS:

15700 for Central Board of Direct Taxes and one of the outlets at Pune. This certification was the pioneer to be awarded to a regulatory body in India.

For ensuring continuous improvement in service delivery standards, the 2007 Citizen's Charter was reviewed after extensive consultation with all the stakeholders across the country and the new Citizen's Charter 2010 was released by the Finance Minister of India on 24th July 2010 during celebration of 150 years of Income Tax in India. ASK is being rolled out to all the offices of the department in a phased manner.

Keywords

Aayakar Seva Kendra

Sevottam

Service Quality Manual

Citizen's Charter

IS: 15700

“SEVOTTAM”: EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY

The concept of “Sevottam”, an integrated model for excellence in public service delivery by the Government Departments in India, was initiated by the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DAR&PG) in 2006. A road map for the implementation of the project was prepared by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). The Income tax Department was one of the ten departments chosen for fast track implementation of “Sevottam”.

ESSENCE OF SEVOTTAM

The quality management framework of Sevottam lays down the following seven steps for achieving excellence in service delivery:

- Define services and identify clients
- Set standards and norms for each service by way of a Citizen's Charter

- Develop capability to meet the set standards
- Perform to achieve standards
- Monitor performance against the set standards and put in place a robust grievance redressal mechanism
- Evaluate impact through independent mechanism
- Continuous improvement based on monitoring and evaluation

Sevottam framework outlines three modules : Framing of a Citizen's Charter, A Grievance Redressal mechanism and Capacity building for implementation of the Charter. Once an institutional and effective mechanism for implementing Sevottam is put in place, a department would qualify to obtain certification under IS: 15700:2005 in recognition of its putting in place a mechanism of delivering quality services to the customers.

ASK FOR IMPLEMENTING SEVOTTAM

While the broad framework of Sevottam was outlined by the DAR&PG, it was left to the individual departments to come up with their own institutional mechanism for achieving excellence in public service delivery. The Income Tax Department (ITD) adopted the mechanism of Aaykar Seva Kendra (ASK) to implement the framework of quality management system of Sevottam.

CHANGING ROLE PERCEPTION

The Income Tax Department which performs the sovereign function by collecting Direct Taxes for the Government inherently possesses the attributes of an enforcement agency. To adopt Sevottam by the Department meant a changing role perception even within the department from an exclusive enforcement agency to that of a service provider as well. Here lies the challenge and hence the opportunity for a great makeover for the Income Tax Department. The challenge was to put a system in place that would help the Department to treat the taxpayers with respect and serve them as valued customers facilitating voluntary compliance. The Department has already taken a set of e-governance initiatives such

as providing facility for e-filing of tax returns, online payment of taxes, refund banker's scheme and preparation of online credit tax statements. ASK is yet another step towards facilitating voluntary compliance by providing certain key services to be provided in a time bound manner.

ASK INITIATION

The quest for developing a robust system of public service delivery mechanism in the Department started with a detailed analysis of the salient features of the existing system in 2006. A Core Group was set up on 05.10.2006 to work out an Action Plan for the implementation of "Sevottam" with Member (Revenue), Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) as the chairperson and Director of Income Tax, Organization & Management Services, (DIT O&MS) as the co-coordinating agency for implementation. The following deficiencies were observed by the Core Group requiring immediate attention:

- Absence of comprehensive service standards reflecting expectations of taxpayers
- Absence of an effective computerized system for registration of all taxpayer applications and paper returns received in the Department resulting in delays in processing
- Absence of a monitoring mechanism for tracking applications resulting in non-accountability
- Absence of effective mechanism for issuance of system generated acknowledgements to cope with the rush during the return filing season when bulk of the paper returns are filed during the last few days before the statutory last date of filing returns
- Absence of an effective complaint handling mechanism

It was realized that these deficiencies put together adversely affect the level of voluntary compliance. Income Tax Department (ITD) which strategically relies on voluntary compliance could no longer ignore the importance of citizen centric governance. Accordingly, a very high priority was accorded to the initiative of enhancing the service delivery mechanism for providing quality taxpayer services.

The 'Blueprint' prepared by the Core Group recommended as a very first step the review and re-writing of the existing 1998 Citizen's Charter on the basis of a dip stick survey to ascertain the gaps in the key services offered to the taxpayers by the Department. A Working Group for revision of 1998 Citizen's Charter was constituted on 20.02.2007. The revised Citizen's Charter with sixteen key services along with specific timelines for delivery of these services was prepared after consultation with all the stakeholders and the same was approved in a special meeting of CBDT on 30.03.2007 and subsequently by the Finance Minister in July 2007.

The 'Blueprint' also proposed setting up of **Aayakar Seva Kendra (ASK)** in each building of the Income-tax Department for receipt, distribution and monitoring of taxpayer applications and paper returns with the help of software to ensure compliance with the service standards laid down in the Citizen's Charter. The software was to incorporate the functionality for a robust public grievance redressal mechanism.

FUNCTIONAL FEATURES OF ASK

The pilot run of ASK commenced at two locations on 15th October, 2007. A critical evaluation of the same was done after analyzing the functioning of the two pilot stations for a year in November 2008. The evaluation paved the way for revamping of the existing mechanism with a number of new features added to the service delivery mechanism by incorporating lessons learnt from the initial experience. The revamped design of ASK with the following features was implemented at Pune (with effect from 18-05-09), Kochi (w.e.f 27th July 2009) and Chandigarh (w.e.f. 2nd December 2009) as the first phase of roll out:

- ASK is a single window face to face contact point for all the taxpayers to communicate with all the tax authorities housed in a building in respect of all the key services listed in the Citizen's Charter
- The entire building is taken as a unit for setting up ASK so that the single window system operates for all the offices housed in the building

- A new process document outlining the entire work flow in ASK was prepared. (Workflow is given in Annexure I)
- For each application submitted at ASK that relates to the services specified in the Citizen's Charter with specific timelines for resolving the cause of action arising out of it, system-generated unique acknowledgement number is generated which is used for monitoring the status of the application through its life cycle
- A receipt with the details of acknowledgement number and other details is generated through the system in duplicate for sticking on to the original application as well as on the copy returned to the taxpayer
- On receipt of applications, resolution dates are automatically generated through the system for each of the services and the same can be viewed by the tax authorities at all levels through the section diary.
- The Return Receipt module of ASK software facilitates generation of Return Receipt Register for each Assessing Officer indicating separate bundle numbers for refund and non-refund returns. Other details such as returned income are also captured by the system
- Software has a module for receiving bulk returns so that during the rush hours, queue could be effectively managed
- A new software for processing application for grant of registration of charitable institutions under section 80G/12A of the Income Tax Act installed at the Commissioner's office with link to the ASK front desk for facilitating quick decision on these applications
- Sevottam software rides on the departmental intranet "i-taxnet" which maintains hierarchy for all tax authorities housed in separate buildings across the country providing a drill down facility for supervisors at any level to monitor the status of applications received at the center
- To inculcate a culture of quoting PAN for deciding the correct jurisdiction of an application, quoting of PAN is insisted at the time of receipt of applications and the same is verified online

instantaneously from the PAN database housed at the Primary data center at New Delhi through the national computer network

- Apart from face to face interaction, ASK provides a drop box facility for the convenience of the taxpayers and applications received through the drop box and by post are entered in the system subsequently.
- Apart from the collection center, ASK also provides for Facilitation Center to help taxpayers to understand their legal obligations better and seek clarifications on tax related issues
- All departmental publications and forms are made available at ASK
- A state-of-the art lounge is available for the taxpayers with basic facilities for drinking water, LCD screen for viewing departmental schemes and programs
- Detailed MIS relating to the functioning of the Ask can be generated and performance at each of ASK center could be viewed with the drill-down facility to go down from the level of Chief Commissioner to the level of an Assessing Officer.
- Service level agreements with vendors prescribed the required checks, the service and delivery standards and quality requirements for the new taxpayer service delivery process. The output and quality are monitored through daily reports, periodic reviews through personal meetings and escalation matrix

ADOPTING SERVICE QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Delivering excellent services to the taxpayers at the front end requires clear cut policy directives, building capacity at the backend, improved infrastructure in terms of developing skilled manpower & use of enabling technology and other physical infrastructure. Preparation of a Service Quality Manual of the Income Tax Department was the first logical step towards quality certification process under IS: 15700. The manual contains scope of service quality management system, service quality policy, service quality objectives, complaint handling objectives, responsibility & authority

of personnel at relevant levels and documented procedures required by the standard. Further, it also contains the Citizen's Charter, Complaint handling procedure, the process document of ASK and the customer feedback form. In the manual, the Department declares its commitment to all the clauses of the Service Quality Management System and its customer focus. Service Quality Policy of the Income Tax Department announced on 12-03-10 as a part of the Service Quality Manual reads as under:

CBDT'S SERVICE QUALITY POLICY

The Income Tax Department is committed to promote voluntary compliance with Direct Tax Laws through quality taxpayer service and firm administration. The Department endeavors to be transparent and fair in its processes. It consistently strives for providing efficient services and assisting the taxpayers to discharge their tax obligations. It aspires for continual improvement in its service delivery mechanism by upgrading the infrastructure and skill sets of its employees for ensuring the desired level of taxpayers' satisfaction. The Department is resolute in complying with the requirements of IS 15700:2005 and continually improving the effectiveness of the Service Quality Management System.

Sd/
(S. S. N. Moorthy)
Chairman

12.3.2010

Central Board of Direct Taxes

CROSS-FUNCTIONAL PROBLEM SOLVING APPROACH

The structure of the Core group overseeing implementation of ASK was suitably expanded to include representatives from all functional areas of the Department. At the apex level, the Core Group for implementation of the project was re-constituted with Member

(Revenue) as Chairperson, Director General (Systems) as the National Convener, with Director (Business Process Re-engineering), Director (Systems), and Director (Public Relations) as members. This reflects Cross-functional problem-solving approach adopted by the Department for resolving issues relating to taxpayer services.

Sevottam model essentially being a Parent & Outlet model, the implementation of the service quality policy at the outlet level assumes great significance. Hence, in order to revamp the management at the outlet level, importance of the local Chief Commissioner was reiterated. Local Core implementation committees have been formed for setting up ASK with a management review committee headed by the local Chief Commissioner for supervising the functioning of the center and for resolving operational issues at the local level.

At the apex level, a management review committee has also been formed with Chairman, CBDT as the head, with Member (Revenue), Member (Computerization), Director General (Systems) as members of the committee with Director (Organization & Management Services) as Member Secretary for reviewing various strategic and operational issues that need to be resolved at the apex level.

ASK ENTERS ACTION PLAN OF CBDT

The following announcement was made by the Finance Minister in his 2010 Budget Speech to extend Sevottam to 4 more cities during the current financial year, giving a policy direction for setting up ASK in the Department:

“As a part of Government's initiative to move towards citizen centric governance, the income tax department has introduced “Sevottam”, a pilot project at Pune, Kochi and Chandigarh through Aayakar Seva Kendras. These provide a single window system for registration of all applications including those for redressal of grievances as well as paper returns. This year the scheme will be extended to four more cities”.

Following the policy directive, opening of ASK at 11 new Chief Commissioner Charges, has been made part of the Action Plan for the current financial year 2010-11. A team of 26 Officers and Staff have been trained as Internal Auditors to facilitate the IS: 15700 certification process. An extensive training program for the Officers and Staff are also being organized in on Sevottam in collaboration with Bureau of Indian Standards under a scheme under the eleventh 5 year plan.

MOVING TOWARDS THREE-TIER ARCHITECTURE

The software used for the pilot locations was in client-server architecture, basically relying on the local server for housing the applications. The Department has a network of offices housed over 758 buildings spread over 500 cities and towns. Since all the buildings are networked with a three-tier architecture supporting the network, the software of ASK has to be made compatible with this architecture, keeping in mind the future expansion of ASK across the country. The new ASK software has now been developed which is to be housed in the central server of the Department (Primary Data Center) and the same is to be deployed at all new ASK locations. This would have the advantage of centralized system support and eventually connectivity with the main Assessment applications for linking this taxpayer service module with the main ITD applications of the Department. The establishment of this backend support is going to make expansion of ASK at other locations faster and easier. The Central Processing Center at Bangalore is fully operational to process all the e-filed returns. The new 2010 Citizen's Charter has now made a new timeline of 6 months for issuing refund in respect of e-filed returns compared to the timeline of 9 month for issuing refund in case of paper returns.

ESTABLISHING BRAND IDENTITY FOR ASK

The branding of taxpayer service delivery mechanism has also been carefully planned with a logo for all the ASK centers. The logo would help in creating a recall value of service quality offered at ASK

locations. To provide standardized services, apart from standardized processes, standardized design of ASK across all outlets was considered to be of importance for branding of taxpayer services. Accordingly, a prototype of ASK was centrally designed with a set of standard functionalities, certain common amenities and a similar color scheme that goes with the logo, for replicating across all outlets. Brand identity of ASK reflecting service quality objectives of the Department is sought to be established through the designing.

ACCREDITATION OF CBDT TO IS: 15700

The service delivery mechanism through ASK conforms to IS: 15700:2005 standards as the Bureau of Indian Standards has accorded accreditation to CBDT and the ASK outlet at Pune after extensive audit of the system. IS:15700 is awarded to public service delivery organizations for demonstrating their ability to consistently provide effective and efficient services which meets customer and applicable legal, statutory and regulatory requirements, to enhance customer satisfaction and for continual improvement in their services and service delivery processes. This standard provides emphasis on 'citizen focus' and includes the following three key elements:

- Formulation of a realistic Citizens' Charter through a consultative process
- Identification of services rendered, service delivery processes, their control and delivery requirements
- An effective process of complaint handling

IMPROVEMENT IN MEASURABLE INDICATORS

The following indicators bring out the turnaround in the delivery system as a result of the new initiative.

- (a) Return receipt register is ready on real time basis.
- (b) Registration of applications, timely resolution of these applications and their monitoring radically improved.

- (c) The procedure for processing of applications for registration of Charitable Institutions streamlined. Database of all charitable organization in a Commissioner charge is now readily available where ASK is functioning.
- (d) Bulk receipt of returns is helping to avoid rush hour problem. The queue management system at ASK has also helped in managing rush hour problems.
- (e) All appellate orders from the Appellate Commissioners are routed through the ASK to get the date of receipt entered through the system so that appeal effect, a hitherto neglected area and cause of major taxpayer grievances, is taken care of.
- (f) Information regarding status of applications are made available to the applicants at the ASK
- (g) Grievances are effectively registered, monitored and timely redressed

STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION AND NEW CITIZEN'S CHARTER

The Department is committed to evaluate the service standards at a regular interval to fine tune the standards aiming at continuous improvement of the delivery mechanism by incorporating views of all the stakeholders. The new Citizen's Charter 2010 has just been released on 24th July 2010 during the celebration of 150 years of Income Tax in India by the Finance Minister of India. This has been prepared after extensive consultations with various Stakeholders across the country incorporating their expectations from the Income Tax Department. The 2010 Citizen's Charter is available at Department website www.incometaxindia.gov.in

SUSTAINABILITY OF THE INITIATIVE

The taxpayer service has entered the mainstream activity of the Income Tax Department with complete support from the top management with clear cut policy directives. 11 Chief Commissioner Regions have already been identified for roll out during the current financial year. In the coming months, the Department expects to

make these ASKs functional and conforming to IS: 15700 standards, thereby taking the taxpayer service delivery mechanism of the department to a different orbit and creating brand identity of its own.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

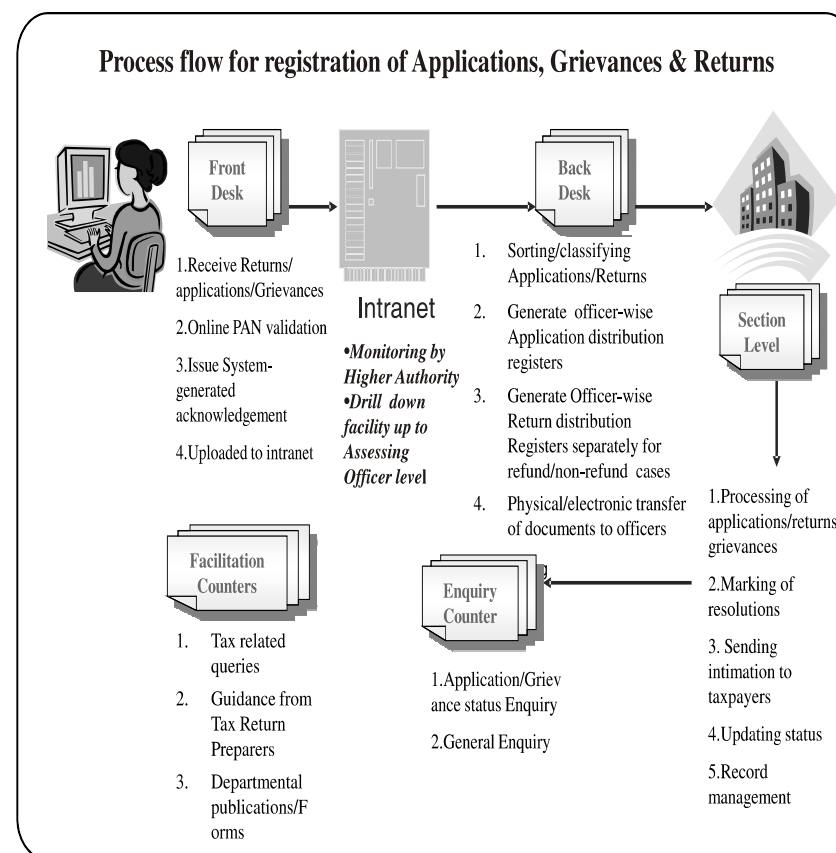
- Mr. S.S.N. Moorthy, Chairman, CBDT
- Mr. Durgesh Shankar, Member (Revenue), CBDT
- Ms. Lakshmi Prasad, Director General of Income Tax (Systems)
- Mr. S.L. Dhawan, Deputy Director, Directorate of Organization & Management Services, CBDT

REFERENCES

- Twelfth Report, Second Administrative Reforms Commission, Citizen Centric Administration (February 2009) : The Heart of Governance
- Aayakar Seva Kendra, Let us Share Vol - III, (2010): A Compilation of Best Practices and Orders

Nilimesh Baruah
Director of Income Tax
Central Board of Direct Taxes
(Income Tax Department)
India
nilimesh@yahoo.com

Annexure I



Aayakar Seva Kendra

Citizen Centric Quality Management Systems in Public Service Delivery

Integrated Child Development Services in seven Anganwadi Centres in two villages of Badanaguppe in Chamrajnagar district and Mudlapura in Raichur district of the State of Karnataka in South India

Prabhas Kumar Jha

SUMMARY

Social Sector Research shows a strong and positive correlation between efficient and equitable service delivery to the poor and overall poverty reduction. Equitable service delivery needs to be quality based, efficient and yet simple to understand and use. This Paper narrates the story of Government of India's efforts at introducing Citizen Centric Quality Management System framework in service delivery in pro-poor social sector of Integrated Child Development Services at the village level. The narrative is about the difference made to improve services through quality standards given in Citizen's Charter that secure beneficial results of quality based change for the recipients. (100 words)

Keywords

Integrated Child Development Services, ICDS, Government of India, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), Department of Woman and Child Development (DWCD), Government of Karnataka, District Chamrajnagar, District Raichur,

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) of Government of India

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) is one of the most

comprehensive and multi-dimensional developmental initiative that is sponsored by Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India but is being implemented through State Governments. It is a unique programme for early childhood care and development encompassing integrated services for development of children below six years, expectant and nursing mothers and adolescent girls living in the most backward, rural, urban and tribal areas. It takes its inspiration from the Article 45 of the Constitution of India, which stipulates that "The State shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children, until they complete the age of 6 years" The ICDS Programme was launched on 2 October, 1975 in 33 blocks (projects) and later extended to other blocks.

In 2001, the Supreme Court ordered that the ICDS be universalized, and gave the following targets in terms of norms to be applied:-

- Each child up to 6 years of age to get 300 calories and 8-10 grams of protein
- Each adolescent girl to get 500 calories and 20-25 grams of protein
- Each pregnant woman and each nursing mother to get 500 calories & 20-25 grams of protein
- Each malnourished child to get 600 calories and 16-20 grams of protein
- Have a disbursement centre (Anganwadi centre) in every settlement

Thereafter, the ICDS has gradually expanded to 6118 projects across the country of which 5659 projects are operational.

The objectives of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) are:-

- To improve the nutritional and health status of children below the age of six years
- To lay the foundation for proper psychological, physical and social development of the child

- To reduce the incidence of mortality, morbidity and malnutrition and school drop out
- To achieve effective coordination of policy and implementation among various departments to promote child development and
- To enhance the capability of the mother and family to look after health, development and nutritional needs of the child through proper nutrition and health education
- ICDS offers 6 major and 3 other services to attain its objectives offered to 5 key beneficiary categories.

These objectives are converted in to the following services under ICDS service delivery initiative:-

- Supplementary Nutrition
- Immunization
- Health Check up
- Referral Service for severely malnourished child
- Nutrition and Health
- Non-formal education of mothers in child care
- Non-formal pre-school learning for children in the Anganwadi Centres (AWC)

Monitoring of service delivery under ICDS is done on basis of the criteria of (a) Growth (b) Skill Development of the child, (c) IFA supplements and (d) De-worming interventions.

Norms also exist for establishment of Anganwadi Centres in rural and urban areas. In rural areas in one block of 1,00,000 population there is to be one project. Under this there is to be one AWC for every settlement of 500 to 1500 persons, and one mini AWC for population from 150 to 500. Norms for AWC in tribal areas include one project in one block of 35,000 population, one AWC for 300 to 1500 persons and one mini AWC for 150 to 300 persons. In urban slums with an assumed population of 1,00,000 the norm is for establishment of one AWC for every 500-1500 persons. Institutional mechanism and norms for service delivery from the national level to the village level have been formulated and are well documented.

Role of Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances

The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) Government of India, under took the implementation of this pilot project on Service Quality Management System (QMS) in pro-poor public services under its citizen centric reform initiative on Capacity Building for Poverty Reduction (CBPR). The CBPR plan projects receive part funding from the Department for International Cooperation (DFID) Government of United Kingdom channeled through the Planning Commission. Government of Karnataka decided on the department in which the QMS pilot project was to be implemented and it selected the ICDS chain of service delivery in the Department of Woman and Child Development. In a nutshell, the DARPG has provided the QMS framework, the consultancy support and monitoring for this citizen centric initiative of Government of India from the State Department level to the village level.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for the pilot project is an amalgam of the Quality Management System framework developed by the DARPG, that is backed by an Indian Standard called IS 15700:2005 notified by the Bureau of Indian Standards, New Delhi, and the Performance Improvement Through Benefits Management (PITBM) of PriceWaterHouse Coopers Private Limited, Bangalore, who provided the consultancy support for this project. The merging of two quality management systems for a project make this project a case study of reform initiative through Public Private Partnership.

The QMS framework used for the pilot project in Government of Karnataka, is a simple one comprising of three main modules of:

- Citizen's Charter wherein the quality standards and timeline for each service delivery are stated,
- the Grievance Redress Mechanism that is involved if the quality standards are not met, and
- the capacity building of the organization for ensuring service delivery

Each module has nine criteria and eleven elements. As such the framework has a total of 33 elements on which the public service delivery organizations can create, monitor and assess their service delivery. The framework has been developed specially for bringing quality based improvements and excellence in service delivery in pro-poor sector by government organizations.

In this three module based framework of QMS the methodology and analytical framework of PriceWaterHouse Coopers (PWC) Private Limited, Bangalore, called the Performance Improvement Through Benefits Management (PITBM) was incorporated to create an integrated methodology that constitutes the invisible threads with which the fabric of the QMS project is woven. The PITBM is a 'four phase' based comprehensive methodology for social sector projects. The methodology has four broad phases of

- Assess the As-Is situation,
- Design an appropriate service delivery system,
- Construct a strategy and action plan for implementation of the design constructed, and
- Implement systematically to ensure that the quality based benefits from improved service delivery are actually received by those for whom they are meant.

It focuses on the whole life cycle approach to obtain beneficial results on change initiative investments. The framework seeks to secure the benefits of realization processes as an integral component of the complete life cycle of the service delivery and the change management project. In sum, the methodology for this project is an effective blending of two Quality Management Systems, one each from the public sector and the private sector, in order to create and implement all the processes involved in the service delivery system in a manner that it is able to bring about improvements on a continuous basis, till excellence is achieved in a given time span. This factor makes this pro-poor project a good case study of the functioning of the Public Private Partnership model being tried out in Government of India under its Good Governance mode.

The threads of methodology adopted and the processes of creation, implementation and monitoring of the project have resulted in a structure that can be developed through the seven steps of the seven deliverables that have documented the processes as follows:

Deliverable Structure

PHASE I Assess

D1: Inception Report for understanding and disseminating the QMS methodology and project requirements at the top level to confirm the 'buy-in' for trying out the service delivery based on quality standards.

D2: Report on As-Is situation to map all the pre-QMS project service delivery processes for the purpose identifying the citizens 'pain areas' in the existing system of service delivery

PHASE II Design

D3: Discussion note for Stakeholder workshop at all the three or four levels of the service delivery chain to obtain inputs for creation of service standards for the Citizen's Charter. Inputs are also obtained for creation of a grievance redress system in case the service standards are not met. Both are to be made a part of the Citizen's Charter

D4: Note highlighting the key issues in the design and implementing a Quality Management System on basis of the processes mapping and data collected in the 'As-Is Situation Report' in Phase I

Phase III Construct

D5: Paper on the converting the design of the QMS in to a methodology strategy and plan for implementation within a timeframe of about six months.

Phase IV Implement

D6: Notes providing insights into the implementation process for each entity of the service delivery vertical Chain. These are prepared

on basis of experience of hand holding the implementation for six months.

D7: User's Manual for implementing QMS is the final deliverable that incorporates the learning from the entire pilot project from its inception to the conclusion of the handholding phase. It is created with a view that it can be used independently by responsibility levels in other units for similar service delivery. It can also be used as a training tool for extending the QMS in other departments / units. The training in the QMS service delivery framework is imparted by the State ATI whose capacity has been built simultaneously by associating a team of faculty members for hand-on training of all phases of implementation from the initiation meeting onwards.

My paper will walk the Talk through the learning from this social sector project in these seven steps. The main aspects involved in each step will be discussed and learning noted. I also propose to focus on the tools that have been developed to cover the entire life cycle of service delivery for implementing the Integrated Child Development Services and its support processes as they constitute the fruits of the efforts and have a use in future. These include tools for: -

- Conducting the Citizens' Survey before and after the implementation of QMS,
- Conducting the Infrastructure Assessment Survey
- Organizing the stakeholders' workshop to obtain inputs for development of quality based service standards
- preparing and reviewing of Citizen's Charter for making the service standards known to the service recipients and placing the service standards in the public domain
- Creating and implementing a Grievance Redress Mechanism to redress grievance in cases where service standards declared in the Citizen's Charter are not met.
- Monitoring and review of quality of service delivery and grievance redress mechanism for bringing improvements on a continuous basis.

- An Action Plan for Training for extending the Quality Management System of pro-poor service delivery to all other departments in the Government of Karnataka and simultaneous Training for Trainers at the time of implementing the pilot project.

All these tools created for the seven pilot Angandwadi Centres (AWC) in two villages of Badanaguppe in Chamrajnagar district and Mudlapura in Raichur district of Karnataka have been accepted by Government of Karnataka for rolling out in all the AWCs in all the districts of the State.

THE LOCATION OF THE PROJECT

Locating the pilot project in its geographical placement as well as the overall context of other schemes for women, children and the girl child will help to bring out the significance and the efforts made for this citizen centric reform initiative of introducing quality standards in pro-poor service delivery.

The Geographical location of the seven pilot Anganwadi Centres in two villages

The major Social Sector Schemes of Government of India relating to women, children and girl child to locate the ICDS in the overall context:

- ***Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDS):*** The ICDS is targeted at children below 6 years, pregnant women and nursing mothers belonging to socially and economically disadvantaged families living in backward rural and tribal areas, urban slums and places where SC/ST/minority populations are concentrated. The six services provided under the ICDS are - supplementary nutrition, nutrition and health education for women, immunization, health check up, referral services and non-formal preschool education.
- ***Bhagya Lakshmi:*** The first girl child born to a BPL family after March 2006 will have Rs.10000 deposited in her name in a fixed deposit. The amount, along with interest, will be paid to the beneficiary on her attainment of 18 years. In order to be eligible

for the maturity amount, it is compulsory that the beneficiary completes 8th standard and she should not have been married off before she reaches the age of 18. This scheme has been launched by the state government in an effort to counter the declining child sex ratio and help girls in achieving financial independence. During the year 2006-07 Rs.234 crores had been earmarked to cover 2.30 lakh beneficiaries under the scheme

- **National Child Labour Project (NCLP):** The NCLP aims to achieve progressive elimination of childlabour and integrate general welfare programmes for the benefit of families of child workers. These projects were launched by the GoI in 1998-99. The activities taken up include - stepping up of enforcement of child labour laws, non-formal education, adult education, income and employment generation, special schools, raising public awareness and survey and evaluation. In the special schools, non-formal and vocational education are imparted along with provision of supplementary nutrition and health care services. In addition, stipend is paid to children withdrawn from employment.
- **The Kishori Shakti scheme** is extended to all the 185 Child development programmes in the state. Under this programme, every year 180 adolescent girls will be provided 5 days residential training from the Indian Govt.'s grants and 2 adolescent in each Anganwadi centre will be given supplementary nutritious food. The trainers at the taluk level will impart 5 days residential training to adolescent girls.
- **The adolescent girl's nutrition programme** is a central scheme. Under this scheme, adolescent girls who are below poverty line are provided special nutritious food. On an experimental basis 3 backward districts viz. Chikkaballapura, Kolar and Gulbarga districts have been selected for implementing this scheme. Adolescent girls who are less than 30 Kgs in the 11 to 15 age group and those who are less than 35 Kgs in the 16 to 19 age group are identified and will be distributed 6 Kgs of rice every month through Fair price shops

- **Stree Shakti:** This programme was launched in 2000-01 with the objective of empowering rural women and making them self reliant through the habit of savings and proper utilization of financial resources. Anganwadi workers and supervisors are instrumental in organizing rural women in SHGs. About 15 to 20 women who belong to BPL families, landless agricultural labourers, SC/ST's join together to form one SHG. To help SHGs to take up income generating activities, the government contributes Rs.5000 as revolving fund to add to the corpus of each group which is used for taking up income generating 2006-07, 17.80 lakh women have been organised into 1.20 lakh groups.
- **Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBV):** Under this scheme, residential schools with boarding facilities are provided for out of school girls aged 11 to 14 years, belonging predominantly to SC, ST, OBC and minorities in backward areas. 58 KGBV schools were sanctioned in the 58 Educationally Backward Blocks of the state in 2004. 3941 eligible girls have been admitted to KGBV schools. The cost approved for 2005-06 was Rs.1127.29 lakhs while the expenditure was Rs.924.59 lakhs. The entire grant, in the ratio of 75:25, was received from both Central and State governments respectively.
- **Karnataka Mahila Abhivrudhi Yojane (KMAY):** This scheme is to earmark one third of resources for women in individual beneficiary oriented schemes and labour intensive schemes of various departments. The KMAY was launched in 1995-96. During 2006-07, 25 departments had identified 208 schemes. Out of the total outlay of Rs.2320 crores one third allocation for women is Rs.1058 crores, of which an amount of Rs.1034 crores had been incurred as at the end of February 2007.

PART TWO: THE PROJECT

Preliminary

Research Social Sector has shown that a strong and positive correlation exists between efficient and equitable service delivery to

the poor and the overall poverty reduction. This has put into focus the quality of public service delivery in the overall strategies for poverty reduction. 'Removal of abject forms of poverty' is one of the UN Millennium Goals, to which Government of India is committed. In this context, one of the major challenges the Government is facing today is "the challenge of an ever-shifting goalpost!" in which the performance level for public service delivery continually gets pushed higher and higher due to increased "aspirations of the people and their exposure to international service standards"¹. The traditional tools, techniques and methods of public service delivery are no longer adequate in world fuelled by the ICT that almost demands the use of technology "to better people's lives" is of ensuring quality based service delivery². Government of India is meeting this challenge by increasingly linking its pro-poor service delivery in the social sector to Quality Management Systems (QMS) so that the outputs and the outcomes could be measured and assessed, both by the citizens as well as by the governments. The crux of the challenge here is developing strategies for reduction of poverty within a given timeframe.

Quality based service delivery is not generally associated with government related service delivery in the social sector. This is partly because historically quality as a concept has developed in the privately owned manufacturing sector and got associated with the service delivery by the private sector only. However, this situation is fast changing as governments are pooling their efforts and resources to bring the quality of public service delivery at par with that by the private sector. Government of Singapore has already shown that the public sector can be placed ahead of the private sector³. In Government of India also, attempts are afoot to write success stories in the pro-poor social sector in particular.

¹BYOB Bringing Your Own Bytes by Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Conceptualization, Compilation, Editing and Coordination by Rajni Razdan, Secretary, Dhruv Vijai Singh, Additional Secretary, and Lekha Kumar Director, Published by Penguin Books India, 2009, Pages 232, Price Rs 499 Foreword by Cabinet Secretary, page vii.

²BYOB Bringing Your Own Bytes cover flap.

³BYOB Bringing Your Own Bytes page

The 'User Manual' that emerged as the final output of the project includes many user friendly tools such as the Service Quality Assessment Tool, Tool for Citizen Survey on Sector Standards in ICDS, Tool for stakeholder consultations on Sector Standards, Tool for Citizen Satisfaction Survey, Beneficiary complaint and feedback form, Infrastructure Assessment Tool, Child Progress Card, and Action Plan for Service Delivery Improvement Implementation Activities. All these are useful not only for implementing QMS in all service outlets of DW&CD, but also for service delivery by all other departments in the State Government. Thus the final output is sector specific as well as generic for use in a wider context.

Its utility for the wider context has been made possible through the simultaneous capacity building of a faculty team from the State Administrative Training Institute, Mysore. Here, a Special Training Cell has also been established with assured funding for a period of five years for conducting QMS related training courses of personnel from all other departments of the State Government. In addition, the Administrative Reforms Department, Government of Karnataka, has been facilitated to finalize a road map for implementation of QMS in all departments of the State Government through an 'Action Plan for Implementation Training'.

STEP ONE: THE INITIATION

A major problem faced by governments that take up the challenge of making public service delivery Quality based is that very few among the cutting edge of the service delivery chain understand what quality is? They tend to view it as something very expensive and invisible and therefore not applicable in the context of service delivery by government agencies. With this mindset they resist trying to understand the need for quality in public service delivery and particularly its need in pro-poor services. So the real challenge in implementing the Quality Management Systems in the public service delivery is to clearly communicate the what, the why, and the how of quality management system and to establish a buy-in for it by the service providers and the service recipients.

The initiation of the project from December 2008 was preceded by some foundation laying activities by DARPG in November 2008. While the contract with the consultants was under finalization, Director in charge of the project in DARPG visited the DWCD in Bangaluru. This meeting was with the Principal Secretary and all senior officers of DWCD in the form of a buy-in for the pilot project. They were not only sensitized about the Quality Management Systems Framework developed by DARPG and proposed to be implemented, but were also given introductory documents and prescribed format for close monitoring by DWCD. The Request for Proposals and the general conditions of the contract documents of the consultancy support were also shared with DWCD. This interaction enabled the DWCD confirmed the buy-in of the State Government and made clarified their role vis-à-vis the consultant and the project. The fact that the DWCD responded promptly once the project was started in December 2008 speaks volumes of their foresight in seeing the benefits of the QMS initiative. It is also an evidence of their continuous cooperation and serious commitment for obtaining the optimal returns from the pilot project.

As the buy-in by DWCD was secured by DARPG and the consultancy support was of a high quality, it was hoped that the time bound QMS pilot project would be implemented successfully and timely. Next, the DARPG ensured close monitoring on a monthly basis including asking for information on advance planning for activities for the next month. This was done through monthly reports covering the following aspects:-

- Listing of key activities carried out during the month including their description and names of officials associated with the activity
- Listing the data / documents collected during the activity
- Indicating the place where the activity was undertaken
- Dates of significant events during the month, such as visit to the pilot locations

- Activities proposed to be under taken in the subsequent month along with locations

Thus, the monthly reports were developed and used as the first tool for the project. As copies were simultaneously sent to all stakeholders through email, the reports also served as monthly plans for coordinating the next step activities and indicating the role and requirements of each level of participants. As this proved to be very useful tool an illustrative extract is given below to re-enforce the theoretical claim made above.

In the first month of this twelve month pilot project the initiation of the project involved the following activities:-

- Project initiation meeting with senior officers of the Department for making them aware of the objectives of the project and the QMS frameworks involved.
- Nominations of coordinators for the project
- Nomination of faculty team from the State Administrative Training Institute (ATI) for simultaneous capacity building for imparting training to extend the Quality Management System in other departments and units of the State Government
- Mapping of functions of the service delivery processes and levels
- Identification of pilot locations
- Initial field visit to the two districts of Chamrajnagar and Raichur by the consultant team accompanied by the faculty member(s) from the ATI. In this the district and taluka / block (the next sub-division in a district) officers were made aware of the QMS project objectives and their role in the pilot project.
- Collection and listing of key data, reports and informatory documents by the consultant
- Planning of key activities for second month

An extract from the report for the 1st month sent by the consultant as given in Table 1 will illustrate the requirement as the process needs to be undertaken methodically to eliminate delays and creation of new bottlenecks in the process of implementation.

Table-1:Extracts from monthly report Month1of 12

Description	Remarks
Project initiation meeting at DWCD office on 19 th December 2008 with senior officers of the Department (Headquarters)	Presentation and briefing on the project to the DWCD team at the Headquarters to make them aware of the project objectives. Names of Attendees: 1. 2.
Nomination of coordinators from ATI Mysore, letter received on 12 th December 2008	Discussion with DG, ATI, in Mysore. ATI has nominated two faculty members and one coordinator for the projected work along with DWCD and PWC team. The coordinator is an employee of DWCD and has more than 25 years experience with ICDS
Mapping ICDS functions at HQ meeting held on 9 th January 2009	Meeting with JD-ICDS, DD-ICDS, and 4 officials of ICDS in Bangalore to make them aware of the project objective and obtain broad understanding of key ICDS functions. Names of attendees:
Identification of pilot locations, units, and officials as Chamrajanagar and Raichur districts	Director JD-ICDS in consultation with district in-charge has facilitated the finalization of the pilot locations, units and officials as per letter dated 9 th January 2009. Pilot location 1 : Three Anganwadi centres (AWC) in Mudlapura village, Manvi ICDS Project Block, Raichur District Pilot location 2: Four AWC in Badanaguppe village, Chamrajanagar ICDS Project Block, Chamrajanagar District.
Key project activities to be carried out during Month2	
Finalization of draft tools, instruments for the As-Is assessment	The tools / instruments are being designed and will be discussed with the DWCD team shortly
Revision of Timelines/ priorities in the Work Plan	To be discussed for feedback and change
Meeting with Principal Secretary (WCD)	To apprise him of the project and seek a date for inception meeting
Detailed field visits to project pilots	The tools will be implemented to do the As-Is Assessment

Here, it is worth noting that in the above plan for Month 2, the tools to be used for assessing the As-Is situation were discussed with the DWCD and their feedback taken by the consultants. It is this in-depth interaction between the controlling department and the consultants that went a long way in meeting the objectives of the Quality Management System.

STEP TWO: AS-IS DOCUMENTATION

Here it is essential to discuss the geographical location and population profile of the two districts of Chamrajanagar and Raichur and the pilot villages of Mudlapura under Manvi ICDS Project Block, in Raichur District and Badanaguppe village, in Chamrajanagar ICDS Project Block, in Chamrajanagar District. This will facilitate clarity in the geographical and social variations of the seven pilot Anganwadi Centres (AWC) where the service recipients avail the service delivery.

Map of the two districts with description to be brought here.

After collecting detailed data through documents and interactions both with the ICDS service providers and service recipients, 15 business processes were identified. A common structure to be followed for each was developed as follows:-

- A brief description of key guidelines and directives concerning the business process, if any
- Complete process map of the process at two levels of process chain description and process description with details of process activities.
- Stakeholders / functionary role in the process
- Performance indicators used to track the process
- Key issues, constraints and challenges for that business process.

An illustrative extract of process mapping is given in Table 2

Similarly other processes of tender initiation for supplies, tender receipt, financial evaluation of tenders, preparation of bills and approval etc are mapped for procurement of supplies for the AWC and other related activities. For the ICDS at the AWC level 11 such maps of business processes were created.

Key issues, constraints and challenges in efficient service delivery were also recorded for each level of responsibility in the service delivery chain processes that had been mapped above. The cycle of mapping activity was carried out for each element of the service delivery component if ICDS, namely the Supplementary Nutrition

Table-2: Process and Activity Mapping

Process code	Process	Process Description
A1.1	Village survey and identification of beneficiaries of ICDS	AWW conducts village survey during the month of January – February. It is sometimes conducted twice a year. The survey is conducted to identify the total number of children below 1 year, pregnant women and lactating mothers, children from 1 to 6 years of age, and adolescent girls from the community.
A1.2 A1.3 A1.4 and A1.5	Beneficiary identification throughout the year for Supplementary Nutrition Package (SNP)	Beneficiaries of SNP are identified throughout the year through the following possible ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - women becomes pregnant and therefore eligible to received SNP - Woman delivers and starts feeding the child and therefore eligible for SNP - Child attains 6 months in age and therefore, eligible to receive SNP - Beneficiary moves from one place to another and therefore eligible to receive SNP in the new AWC.
A 1.6	Identification and registration of beneficiaries	The AWW registers the child beneficiary in the child enrolment register The AWW registers the woman beneficiary in the PLM enrolment register.

Package, Immunization, Health check up, Non-formal Pre-school education, Health Referral, Nutrition and Health Education for mothers. In addition mapping was done for Financial Planning and Budgeting, Recruitment of AWC workers and their training and Human Resource Management processes for each level of responsibility.

This case study is the story of the successful implementation of a QMS pilot project by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), Government of India in the Department of Women and Child Development (DW&CD), Government of Karnataka. It narrates the ground realities of the obstructions faced, from the Department to the village level, including a three month delay due to General Elections, 2009, and how these were met through the understanding and cooperation of several officials at all levels, to ensure its timely implementation.

Prabhas Kumar Jha
pk.jha@nic.in
Paper presented through QCI (India)