

E-GOVERNANCE: AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE IN RAJASTHAN

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ABSTRACT

Information & Communication Technology (ICT) is constantly changing the manner in which information flows to citizens. It is a need of the hour that good governance harnesses the energy of ICT and puts in place tools that allow improved delivery of service and bridge the digital divide. This is vision for Digital Rajasthan. The three pillars of modern governance - transparency, efficiency and ease of access for a better quality of life - are also the prime objectives of the Rajasthan e-Governance road map. However, this can only be ensured if all organs of the government undertake coordinated efforts to IT-enable all processes of governance and service delivery. IT enablement of departments has to ensure linkages between various databases and avoid duplication of efforts. Thus, it is incumbent upon all departments to use standard IT solutions developed in the State. This results in saving of considerable time and resources & leads to ease of operations for all departments.

KEYWORDS: e-Governance, e-Mitra, Raj Comp, G2G, G2C, G2B, e-Sanchar, ICT.

Introduction

“The Government of Rajasthan would leverage Information Technology not only as a tool for improving governance and employment opportunities, but also more significantly as a means to enhance the quality of life and bridging the socio-economic divide in the state ensuring that skew in the development in society is minimized and the underprivileged sections of the society are brought at par with the more privileged sections.”

Vision statement of e-Government in IT policy 2006-08

Rajasthan is a state in the north western region of India. The state covers an area of 342,239 square kilometers (132,139 sq mi) or 10.4 percent of the total geographical area of India. It is the largest Indian state by area and the seventh largest by population. The main industries are mineral based, agriculture based, and textile based. Rajasthan is the second largest producer of polyester fiber in India. Several prominent chemical and engineering companies are located in the city of Kota, in southern Rajasthan. Rajasthan is pre-eminent in quarrying and mining in India. The state is the second largest source of cement in India. It has rich salt deposits at Sambhar, copper mines at Khetri, Jhunjhunu, and zinc mines at Dariba, Zawar mines and Rampura Agucha (opencast) near Bhilwara. Jodhpur leads in Handicraft and Guar Gum industry.¹ The State gets 39% of the DMIC, with major districts of Jaipur, Alwar, Kota and Bhilwara benefiting².

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¹ "Business Opportunities". Government of Rajasthan. Archived from the original on 10 February, 2014. Retrieved 11 February, 2014.

² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajasthan>

e-Governance is a way for governments to leverage the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to provide people with convenient access and better quality of government information and services and to provide greater opportunities to participate in democratic institutions and processes. Governments around the world are using ICT to reach to the citizens and businesses and provide them services through various channels at the time and place of their convenience. Use of technology is not only requirement of changing time but it is also an effective tool for speedy and effective delivery of services and execution of work. We are sitting in an era of time where we can talk easily about globalization of economies and business activities. Internet is revolutionary discovery of present time. This is not only opened way for international business but also global practice of businesses can be adopt easily by Indian business houses like accounting, taxation etc.

Prior to 2006 when the Government of India formally launched its National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) some Departments of Government of India as well as State Governments had initiated steps to adopt e-Governance. In this context it would be useful to highlight some of the important e-Governance initiatives implemented by the Union and State Governments in assess their strengths and weaknesses and identify the lessons learnt from them. These initiatives are discussed under the following categories:

- Government to Citizen (G2C) initiatives.
- Government to Business (G2B) initiatives.
- Government to Government (G2G) initiatives.

The Government of Rajasthan has identified IT and ITeS as a major thrust area for the growth and development of the state. The State Government is taking all possible measures for spreading e-Governance throughout the state, covering all the sectors with a view to provide hassle free, transparent and efficient service to the common man (both in urban and rural areas). In year 1987 state government of Rajasthan started Computer Directorate in Rajasthan to provide well arranged, planned and fair directions to information technology projects. After that in 1997 the name of department is changed to Information Technology Department. Again in year 2002 state government changed the name of department to Department of Information Technology and Communication - DoIT&C. State government started Raj Comp in 1989 to provide IT training and consultation to state departments. In 2010 the form of Raj Comp is also changed to Raj Comp Info Services Limited. State government accordingly changed work procedures and rules as follows¹:

- DOIT&C department is working in Rajasthan as a nodal agency for computerization. It promotes use of computer, telecommunication and modern office equipment In government departments and organizations.
- It acts in state to develop use of information technology and telecommunication by issue directions, guidelines, framing and monitoring policies, availability of bandwidth and quality of bandwidth etc.
- It plays an important role in coordination between reinforcement and creation of strong information technology and telecommunication infrastructure by all government departments.
- Promotion of allocation by using following :
 - To prepare a device for promotion activities of allocation in information technology and telecommunication field.
 - Promotion of information technology and telecommunication industry in Rajasthan.
 - Development of new sectors for computerization.
 - Development of new technology to improve life style.
 - Promotion of powerful services related to information technology.

Department of Information Technology and Communication - DoIT&C started startup of e-governance by including followings²:

- Coordination and overall design of e-governance in Rajasthan.
- Promotion of citizen interface in all information technology and telecommunication projects.
- Investigation of execution of e-governance project in Rajasthan.

¹ <http://rajasthan.gov.in/>

² http://doitc.rajasthan.gov.in/_layouts/15/Doitc/User/index.aspx?LangID=English

- Co-ordination of development of indicative standard words of data collection, consolidation and processing.
- Promotion of e-commerce and Internet in state.
- To provide technical consultancy to state agencies to prepare feasibility report.
- To provide technical consultancy for selection, earning, establishment and execution of user friendly and standard computer hardware, usable software communication device/protocol.
- Execution of office automation in various government department.
- Review of progress of information technology projects executed by various government departments/ aided agencies, B.O.O.T or B.O.O projects.
- Monitoring of use of information technology and telecommunication in governments departments in daily administration work.

Department of Information Technology and Communication: DoIT&C also done establishment of information technology and telecommunication infrastructure by using following:

- Establishment of information technology institution in Rajasthan.
- Easy installation of broadband digital communication up to village level.
- Co-ordination between D.O.T./V.S.N.L./B.S.N.L. or other public/private sector agencies for improvement in telecommunication infrastructure.
- Identification of appropriate communication/network technology and application of the same in Government/Industry/Public sectors specifically in rural areas.
- Promotion of high quality computer education.
- Arrangement and co-ordination of refresher course/Seminars/workshops/ training for awareness and use of computer and internet.
- Coordination of all information technology and telecommunication organizations like N.I.C., Electronic Software Project Council, NasCom with information technology and communication departments of Indian Government.
- Recruitment and cadre management of Computer and Communication increment under the control of department.
- Controlling of cadre system and appointment of computer experts in role of administration department.

Following Two Agencies Falls under this Department

- **Raj Comp Info Services Limited:** In year 1989 Rajasthan Government established RajComp as a society for Rajasthan State Computer Services. The main objective of RajComp was training in the field of information technology and communication sector, technical consultancy to departments of Rajasthan Government and execution of State Government schemes of Information Technology and communications. Information technology and communication department and RajComp execute information technology and communication schemes of state government. In year 2010 structure of RajComp was changed in the form of company and RajComp Info Services Limited was established.
- **Rajasthan Knowledge Corporation Limited:** Rajasthan Knowledge Corporation was established to provide information technology education in urban and remote rural village to remove digital divide. RS-CIT is a course of R.K.C.L. which is recognized by Rajasthan State Government. After approval of State Government order for fee repayment is passed for state government employees.

Policy Initiative

UID – Under Aadhar Project of Indian Government a unique Aadhar number of twelve digits is provided to all Indian citizens. By using this UID Number all benefits and profits of various government schemes can be provided to Indian citizens. Information technology and communication department is state registrar for Aadhar project. 6.70 Crore citizens of state are registered under Aadhar Project.

Rajasthan Startup

Rajasthan has done leading work to promote start ups in state in last one year. Rajasthan State Government has activated a free plug and play facility in Jaipur as an incubation centre named Istart News. This activity is additional to i-Start, challenge for change and Rajasthan Stake are the projects.

Important Projects of Information Technology Department

Rajasthan Sampark: This is an integrated platform for complaints and suggestions of general public. This portal is an inclusion of public hearing, Chief Minister Travels and other possible public contact medium. Rajasthan Sampark portal is executed by the web link www.sampark.rajasthan.gov.in. A new number 181 is started for CM helpline. According to latest data available total 18.11 lacs grievances was registered in by this line and total 16.32 lacs was disposed in year 2017-18.

Citizen Contact Centre: This medium is developed to provide details related to all government departments by using toll free number 1800-180-6127. Under Rajasthan Sampark citizens can register their complaint and can get details. This center is working everyday by 8AM to 8PM. Call centers of electricity, water, JDA, medical, MANREGA, Commercial Tax and Agriculture are integrated by this citizen contact centre. Apart from that matters related from women and child development, transportation, labour, social justice and empowerment, industry, registration and stamp, Rajasthan Public Service Commission, Food-Citizen Supply and Consumer matters, Information Technology Communication Department, Employment service and matters related to minority are also connected with this centre. Daily 8000 calls are receiving by using this CCC service. Reality Check Campaign at village panchayat wise is also organizing for important facility of State Government like water, electricity, roads etc.

RAJASTHAN V.C.: Rajasthan Sampark I.T. Centers are activated at village panchayat level and Atal service centers to promote public grievances solution facility by Rajasthan V.C. facility.

RAJNET: RAJNET is extension of SECLAN Project of State Secretariat which is connecting government buildings by establishing network at village panchayat level. This facility is started on 10000 plus panchayats under this scheme. Apart from this IP phone is established at all 33 District headquarters and selected blocks. To established information system in government department's approx 200 plus (58 police headquarters) are connected to SECLAN to use internet technology with each other. Total nodes are 5500+ out of that 12 nodes with BSNL and 84 Nodes are connected with Vodafone.

Wi-Fi Hotspots: to facilitate senior officers of Secretariat and daily visitors of secretariat who are coming for government works by internet facility, wi-fi hotspots are made available for them. This facility is available at Secretariat, Jawahar Kala Kendra, 7 Divisions, and Video wall and on all government offices.

Facility of Video Conferencing: Video conferencing facility which was earlier available at district headquarter level is extended to village panchayat level. Video conferencing facility is activated at 9000 places till 2017-18.

GIS Platform: A common GIS platform is developed for the state for 3D modelling of historical places and Memorials. GIS interface work is completed in various department of government.

e-Mitra: approx 48000 plus e-Mitra centres are activate in state. By December, 2017 total 66.48 lacs transactions are executed and revenue of Rs. 712 crore is collected by using this platform. Using e-Mitra kiosk people have access of approx 350 government and private sector services which are provided them by electronic medium. Apart from this the facility of payment of electricity, water and mobile bills are also provided by developing mobile application. Anyone can make application here for verification of Aadhar, Bhamashah, PAN card, Passport and other related.

Rajasthan Payment Gateway (e-Mitra): Rajasthan payment gateway connects to bank, mobile wallet, credit card, debit card, UPI and Bharat QR for easy mobile and e-payments. It provides two way payment's electronic facility for state government departments and organisations. Residents can pay tax, utility bills, and duties etc. to all departments from a common place. In a similar way this gateway provides facility of uninterrupted and integrated benefit transfer to beneficiaries.

Digital Certified Certificates: The system of providing digitally certified certificates by using internet/single window/Kiosk is developed in the state. By using this system mainly Original Resident, Cast, Income, Net worth certificates etc are issue after digitally certification. Every month approx 1.59 Lacs digitally certified certificated are issued in state. In future this facility will extend for digital certification of any other certificate, notification etc.

State Portal: This is an only source of information related to government services/information for all users like citizens, government users, business mans and foreigners. All government web portals are connected to this facility. Transaction details of various schemes are also available on this web portal.

Integrated Government Portal: All government portals are standardised for easy availability and responsibility of website/web portal/web applications. All government portals will be active on all instruments and mobile application will be available for all portals. Under this scheme websites of all districts, DIPR, portal of energy department, portal of industry department, environment portal, urban portal (15 UIET, 7 Municipal corporations, 34 Municipal councils, 147 Municipalities), transportation portal, PHED water portal, R.I.C., R.S.C.W, S.F.C.,R.S.H.R.C, State information commission, women commission, State finance commission and minority are developed.

e-Sanchar and i-Fact: Using this application notification related to any scheme of any department can be send through SMS/Voice message to applicant/ beneficiary and government employee. I-Fact application is used for reality check under Rajasthan Sampark.

Rajasthan Master Centralized Data Hub: This hub provides master data as required by applications of various departments. Under this Hub all kind of data like geographical classification etc which are used in a departmental application are available.

Human Resource Development by Department of Information Technology and Communication: DoIT&C for promotion and implementation of e-Governance in Rajasthan State:

Capacity Building in Government Offices: to ensure success of computerisation done in various government departments it is required to develop human resource simultaneously for successfully implementation of the modern technology and communication system. Up to year 2017-18 department of computer technology and communication has trained approx. 20000 government officers/employees. Rajasthan Government has issued directions and order to government departments for development of information technology by reimbursement of course fee of MCA, BCA from IGNOU after successfully completion of these courses.

Innovative Experiments by Department

- **3D Modelling:** for memorials and historical buildings of Rajasthan by developing GIS Platform. GIS interfaces are adopted by various departments successfully.
- **E-Mitra Plus:** This is a surprising initiative which is connected to citizens of state by technology. These kiosks provide video conferencing facility which has ensured connectivity in state over 40000 places. Citizens can also pay utility bills etc. by cash, credit card or biometric payment system. All required certificates like birth certificates/ Death Certificates can be print on government stationary through these kiosks. People can also file complain to government employees by connecting them with live session.
- **Hindi e-mail:** State government is started Hindi email facility in 2017 during Digi Fest in Kota to safeguard public from language problem of English. This facility is developed for maximum possible participation of public with administration to solve problems. This facility may be extending for regional languages. Rajasthan is the only state which provides Hindi email ID facility to its citizens.
- **Raj BIO Scope:** This is video sharing portal of state which is used for sharing of videos by using internet. Citizens of states can upload video on the portal. They can also submit their comment, feedback, rating, choice as per usefulness of content. This portal is works for government as a very useful channel. This provides right to citizens and governments for sharing information related to government.
- **Rajasthan Recruitment Portal:** Citizens of state can apply for exams of various posts in Rajasthan, India or internationally by using this portal.
- **Single Sign On:** This facility is provided for single sign on of all departments. This facility is specifically provided to senior citizens, e-Mitra operators, investors and citizens. Single window facility is also available with this facility by using that approx. 70 Lacs SSO ID is made available till now. A user name and password is required to avail facility of various departments which is available on single site on portal of Rajasthan state government.

- **Raj e-Vault:** this facility is provided to citizens of Rajasthan to secure their important document paper less and in electronic mode. This facility is called in the name of e-vault. Every citizen can store their documents in e-vault by scanning documents to this vault. At the time of application in government services they can share these documents by sharing only vault number in application. Storage capacity of e-vault of every citizen is 1 GB. Consolidation of this project with Bhamashah identification and e-Mitra project is under execution.
- **Raj e-Sign:** to certify documents stored in Raj e-Vault by Aadhar/ Bhamashah this facility can be used.
- **Mobile Application Development Centre:** this is established for development, execution and management of mobile application. Till today 22 applications are developed under these centres.
- **Data Analytics and Big Data Cluster:** by using this facility department can collect their non-arranged data. This data can be used for analysis and graphical presentation.

Conclusion

e-Governance in Rajasthan has steadily evolved from computerization of Government departments to fragmented initiatives aimed at speeding up e-Governance implementation across the various arms of the Government at the State and local levels. These fragmented initiatives are being unified into a common vision and strategy under the Rajasthan e-Governance Framework leveraging the Rajasthan e-Governance Architecture. Rajasthan takes a holistic view of e-Governance initiatives across the State and departments, integrating them into a collective vision and a shared cause. Around this idea, a magnanimous State-wide infrastructure reaching down to the remotest of villages is evolving, and large-scale e-Governance initiatives are taking place to enable easy, reliable access of people to the Government the e-Way. Over the last few decades, evolutions in the Information Technology & Electronics (ITE) arena have emerged as the most significant enablers for improving efficiency & effectiveness of the Government & non-government organisations. Rajasthan recognizes the enormous potential of Electronics and Information technology and has made significant efforts to ensure that the benefits of these sectors percolate to its citizens. Rajasthan's multicultural population of 6.86 crore lives and works on a land area of 342239 square kilometres, and has learned to combine skills and diligence with education and technology to sustain the momentum of economic growth. There is recognition that information technology is needed to leverage Rajasthan's intellectual capital for the State to be the leader and benchmark for e-Governance. A concerted effort to harness computer power began in the early 1980s, and in a manner that has become a state formula, the Government has taken the leadership reins of the race.

e-Governance is seen as a key element of the Rajasthan's governance and administrative reform agenda. The Rajasthan e-Governance Framework and Architecture has the potential to enable huge savings in costs through the sharing of core and support infrastructure, enabling interoperability through standards, and of presenting a seamless view of Government to citizens. The ultimate objective is to bring public services closer to citizens. Rajasthan emphasises that creating digital opportunities in the 21st century is not something that happens after addressing "core" development challenges, but it is rather a key component of addressing those challenges. There are three key challenges in stepping up e-Governance: investments in and access to ICTs, capacity building to utilize e-Governance services, and promoting people's participation in e-democracy. It is hoped that improved access to information and services will provide economic and social development opportunities, facilitate participation and communication in policy and decision-making processes, and promote the empowerment of the marginalised groups.

In its continuing endeavour of development, the Rajasthan e-Governance, IT & ITES Policy 2015 envisages promoting citizen access to ICTs for encouraging their participation in e-Governance. The Policy is for the people, by the people. Though the 33 districts of Rajasthan are at various stages of development, the Policy attempts to highlight the possibilities for other districts that are similar to capital in levels of development. To promote the IT / ITES Industry in the city, this Policy attempts to develop a more modern and vibrant ecosystem for Electronics and IT industry to support electronic governance initiatives of the Government of India and attract investment and talent to such industries in Rajasthan. Key focus areas of the policy include pioneering e-Governance initiatives, research & development in Electronic System Design and manufacturing, support of the Micro Small & Medium Enterprises and promotion of entrepreneurship that harnesses the huge talent pool of the people of Rajasthan, and ensuring inclusive growth – for one and for all.

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