

# E-Governance Initiatives of Telangana State: A Study

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## Introduction:

E-Governance is use of ICT with the aim to empower citizens through citizen participation in decision making and make Government more accountable, transparent and responsive. It is a move towards SMART governance. Owing to e-governance there is improvement in the internal organizational processes of Government, increased openness in government's functioning; and enhanced political credibility & accountability in governance. Democratic practices through public participation & consultation are also facilitated through e-governance.

E-governance is a conceptually wider connotation than e-Government though most of the times they are used as synonym only. E-Government is the modernization of processes & function of Government using the tools of ICT so as to transform the way it serves its constituents. E-governance on the other hand goes beyond the service delivery aspects and is seen as a decisional process. It is about the use of ICTs in the system of governance i.e. using ICT to involve multi-stockholders in decision making and in making governments more open & accountable. Reinventing Government has been a dominant theme since 1990, wherein governments World over are attempting to improve the system of public service delivery.

Rapid strides made in the field of ICT have facilitated the reinvention of governments. It is with this concern that the concept of e-governance became prominent. Democracies in the world share a vision of the day when e-governance becomes a way of life. E-Governance means SMART Governance

## SMART Governance:

Technology intervention improves the efficiency of functioning of the different departments.

Simple- Simplification of rules regulations and processes of government through the use of ICTs and thereby providing for a user- friendly government. Moral- Connoting emergence of an entirely new system of ethical values in the political and administrative machinery. Technology intervention improve the efficiency of different departments. Accountable- Facilitating design development and implementation of effective Management Information System and performance measurement mechanisms and thereby it ensures the accountability of public service functionaries. Responsive- Streamlining the processes to speed up service delivery and make system more responsive. Transparent :- Bringing information hitherto confined in the government documents to the public

domain and making processes and functions transparent, which in turn would bring equity and rule of law in responses of the administrative agencies.

### **E Governance Initiatives of Telangana State -Mee Seva**

Initially Government service delivery systems were manual and opaque. Citizens faced several hardships in accessing Government offices and awaiting for longer times. The citizens had a negative opinion on the functioning of the public functionaries due to larger delays in addressing their issues.

Government of Andhra Pradesh had initiated e Seva in 2001 with the intention to provide convenience to citizens incorporating IT driven systematic changes in government procedures. e-Seva was started to provide bill payment services for various Government Departments and Private organizations in urban parts of the State. Though e-Seva paved the way for ease way of bill payments, it was still serving like a 'post-office'; accepting applications, sending by post to the concerned office, receiving back and then handing over to the citizens without any integrated service delivery model.

Subsequently Common Service Centers (CSCs) were established to extend similar benefits to the rural Citizens of the State as part of the National e-Governance Project (NeGP) of Government of India. The process of metamorphosis of e-Seva to Mee Seva started with this backdrop

### **Electronic Services Delivery (ESD)**

This is also known as MeeSeva & eSeva". Mee-Seva" is a technology rich e-governance initiative utilizing the synergies of State IT infrastructure such as Telangana State Wide area network, Telangana State Data Center, State Service Delivery Gateway and digital signatures. The initiatives involves, participating departments to make available digitally signed data at a central location which forms a key stone in public service delivery. Detailed work flow is also built into the system to process and monitor the citizen requests from application filing to service delivery.

Mee-Seva has been conceptualized and planned with the objective to provide universal and non-discriminatory delivery of all Government services using Information & Communications Technology entailing transparent government-citizen interface at all levels of governance. It's an integrated one Stop Solution for 90 Million Citizens to approach Government for all their pressing needs.

The objective of Mee-Seva is to provide smart, citizen centric, ethical, efficient and effective governance facilitated by technology. This initiative involves universal and non-discriminatory delivery of all government services to citizens & businessmen of all strata and improved efficiency, transparency and accountability for the government.

The initiative features transformed government-citizen interface at all levels of administration along with a shared governance model.

Mee Seva adopts the concept of central pooling of all Land records, Registration records and records of Socio-economic survey, digitally signing them with the digital signature certificates of the authorized officer, storing them in the database and rendering them using a web-service. All the documents rendered are digitally signed and electronically verifiable making them tamper proof. The project brings in strict adherence to citizen charter time limits and ushers in a whole new paradigm of across the counter services to ostensibly work flow services through massive porting and bulk signing of databases.

The kiosks are run by self-employed youth in the remote corners of the state who besides eking their livelihood provide a decentralized self-governance backbone to the administrative system. Multiple service delivery points run by citizens competing with each other redefine governance and bring in strict adherence to citizen charter time limits.

Mee-Seva also ended the 'tyranny of ink signatures'. Most of the functionaries ranging from Tahsildars to Police SHOs to municipal commissioners have been using the digital signatures to clear Mee-Seva requests, making it the country's largest such system. The process of aligning with Mee-Seva has become a guiding philosophy of governance in the state which has come in as a silent wave and with its sweep revamped many moribund processes and approaches. Its effectiveness can be measured in the satisfied eyes of the citizens strengthening the democratic foundations of our country and bringing citizen centricity to the forefront. With Mee Seva in place, the stage is all set to implement and monitor the impending Right to Services Act in its true letter and spirit.

Mee-Seva has revamped the service delivery mechanism across the departments, making it more citizen centric and time bound. Further the massive State ICT Infrastructure is being utilized to provide Mee Seva services to the citizens at the nearest doorstep. Mee-Seva has really made service delivery very convenient for the citizen. Prior to the launch of Mee-Seva project, applicants used to visit the respective departments multiple times to avail services. After the implementation of Mee Seva, 37% of the applicants are able to get their certificates within one visit, in most cases across the counter in 15 minutes. In other cases, applicants need to visit the Mee-Seva Center only two times to avail the services

### **Unique features of Mee Seva**

- i. Single sign-on: Mee Seva provides single sign-on facility to enable departmental users to move seamlessly between departmental and Mee Seva applications.
- ii. Mass digitisation, mass porting and bulk-signing: While adding new departmental services, the relevant databases/records existing in digital form are cleaned and ported to the central database server co-located at the SDC; where databases/records are still in manual form, they are digitised. Authorised officials provided with Class

3 digital signature certificates do bulk signing of records ported to the central database. The bulk-signing mechanism helps increase the pace of digitisation; it is tamper-proof and has audit trail for all transactions.

iii. SMS alerts at each stage of application processing: Mee Seva has integrated SMS alert support for tracking the progress of service requests by citizens.

iv. Secured stationery: Mee Seva certificates are issued in secured stationery that employs 11 security features, which make duplication difficult, create public confidence and minimise fraudulent and malafide practices. All certificates issued by Mee Seva are stored in the State Electronic Certificate repository to enable their online verifications by any authority.

v. Automatic Payment Gateway: The payment collected from the applicant at the kiosk is distributed online to the various stakeholders in real-time. This solves the problem of reconciliations, late-payments and embezzlements.

Thus Traditionally the interaction between a citizen or business and a government agency took place in a government office which was time-consuming and non-transparent. With emerging information and communication technologies the services are delivered through the service centres closer to the citizens.

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