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From the Desk of Director General, NIC

From the Editor's Desk

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NIC at Elitex 2002

From M.Moni & Sunanda Banerjee, NIC HQ

Department of Information Technology (DIT), Ministry of Communications & IT has been funding research and development projects in the areas of electronics and information technology at various institutions. To disseminate information on Technologies and Products developed among the users and the industry, the Ministry organises ELITEX every year which generates a lot of interest and gives commercial boost. This year, ELITEX-2002, the seminar cum exhibition was organised at New Delhi during April 29-30, 2002 and the event saw an active participation from National Informatics Centre.

● Enhancing e-readiness

The theme of ELITEX'2002 this year focussed on "Enhancing e-readiness" covering e-infrastructure, IT for Masses / People, Domestic Productivity through e-initiatives, e-Learning, e-Commerce & Security, Application in Emerging Areas, Innovation in IT Industry, e-Governance/e-Citizen, including bridging digital divide and e-medicine. The event was inaugurated by Sh. Pramod Mahajan, Hon'ble Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Communications & Information Technology. Dr.N.Vijayaditya, Director General, NIC presented an overview of National Informatics Centre's activities and also apprised the audience about 'AGMARKNET' - Agricultural Marketing Information System Project of NIC, for the benefit of Producers, Consumers, Traders and Policy Makers. The project is aimed at covering 100 agricultural commodities, all the 7000 principal markets and 34000 rural markets in the country. The NIC Stall at the ELITEX exhibition depicted a colourful display of the various e-governance projects and services being provided by NIC in its endeavour to facilitate informatics development programmes in Government at the national, state and district level. The visitors to the stall could gain a valuable insight into the various services of NIC through multimedia kiosks with the touch screen facility specially set-up for the exhibition. Besides, a large number of posters and brochures, including a special information docket were published for the occasion which provided details of the various software and services on display. The key visitors to NIC's stall included Sh. Pramod Mahajan, Hon'ble Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Communications & Information Technology, Sh. Rajeev Ratna Shah, Secretary (DIT), and renowned scientist and policy maker Prof. MGK Menon.

A highlight of the event was the launch of CollabCAD software of NIC by Sh. Pramod Mahajan. CollabCAD is a CAD/CAM software which could prove very effective and useful for Land Records Computerization. Another highlight was the demonstration of live video-conferencing sessions going on in Chhattisgarh and Bihar using NIC's VC facilities. The various Projects and Services displayed at the NIC Stall during ELITEX 2002 included ...

- National Hazardous Waste Information System (NHWIS)
- Sales Tax Administration Management Information Network Aid (STAMINA)
- Central Civil Pension Accounting and Retrieval System
- Rural Bazar
- Payroll and Accounts Officers 2000
- OfficeSoft
- Composite Payroll System

- Kerala Treasuries Online
- Land Records Online
- DACNET
- Wired Villages - WARANA
- ICT tools facilitating public justice (Bihar)
- Video Conferencing
- WWW Services
- Panchayati Raj Institutions Accounting Software (PriaSoft)
- IT Services at Haldia Dock Complex Haryana Registration Information System (HARIS)
- Rural Soft 2000
- Community Information Centres (CICs) in Northeastern States
- Lokmitra - Govt Citizen Interface (HP)
- IT in Indian Judiciary
- Central Passport System
- IT Solutions for e-governance in Andhra Pradesh
- NAI DISHA (Distt level Integrated Services of Haryana)
- Offerings (Knowledge Management)
- CollabCAD (CAD/CAM Software System)
- IT Training Services of NIC
- Web Enabled Electoral Rolls (Chandigarh)
- Web Enabled Tender System (Chandigarh)
- Public Grievance Redressal System (Chhattisgarh)
- WebCITI/DialCITI
- Property Registration Information System
- Module (PRISM)-Punjab
- Collectorate 2000 (Hyderabad)
- Package for Effective Administration of Registration Laws (PEARL) (Kerala)
- NICSI Services

■ Glimpses



India Habitat Centre the venue for Elitex-2002



Dr. N Vijayaditya, DG-NIC in conversation with Sh. Pramod Mahajan, Hon'ble Minister for Communications and Information Technology



Sh Pramod Mahajan, Hon'ble Minister of Communications & IT glancing through the brochures carrying info on various NIC Projects. Also in the pic (from L to R): Sh M Moni, DDG (NIC) ; Dr R G Gupta, Director (DIT); Dr. N Vijayaditya, DG(NIC) and Sh Rajeev Ratna Shah, Secretary (DIT)



Sh.M.Moni, Deputy Director General (NIC) demonstrating the services on display to Sh Rajeev Ratna Shah, Secretary (DIT) as DG (NIC) looks on



Dr. N Vijayaditya, DG-NIC addressing the gathering at a session during ELITEX-2002



Prof MGK Menon (centre), visiting the NIC stall. Also in the pic (L to R) : Dr.S Banerjee, Sh S N Zindal, Sh Y D Sharma and Sh M Moni



Dr. Y K Sharma, DDG (NIC) and Sh M Moni DDG (NIC) in conversation at ELITEX-2002



NIC Team with the VSAT set up outside the venue of ELITEX-2002



The proud team of NICians who participated in ELITEX-2002



The colourful display at NIC stall during the exhibition at ELITEX-2002

"A great pleasure to see the way NIC has developed: from the vision of a quarter of century ago to wideranging applications of great social significance, giving us hope that technology can play an important role in leap frogging into the future. Keep it up. All the Best...."



Prof. MGK Menon

E - Governance Initiatives

Passport Computerization

From MEA Informatics Division, NIC HQ

External Affairs is a sensitive area of a Country's administration and it is vital to ensure efficiency in all its related work areas. As a part of its endeavor to effectively implement Information Technology in all areas of Government functioning, NIC through its MEA Informatics Division, has been providing active IT support to the Ministry of External Affairs. One of the most important Projects in this regard has been the computerization of Passport Offices located all over India

• Indian Passport- The Background

Prior to World War-I, the Indian Passport as a travel document was not in existence. It was during World War-I that the Government of India enacted the Defence of India Act, 1914 and promulgated rules thereunder, which made it obligatory for a person to possess a Passport for entry into or exit from India. In 1920, the Government enacted the Indian Passports Act, based on the earlier statutory provisions. The Government of India promulgated the present Passports Act in 1967.

• Issuance of Passport

In 1954, Regional Passport Offices at five cities namely Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi, Chennai and Nagpur were set up for the issue of passports. The Consular, Passport and Visa division looks after implementation of the provisions of the Passport Act, Passport Rules, and Policy matters relating to passports and administrative functions of the passport offices.

• Perspective

The computerization of passport offices at RPO Delhi was entrusted to NIC as a pilot project during 1989. It has been extended to various other passport offices over the subsequent years. Presently all the 28 passport offices all over India have been computerized.

The computerization of the individual passport office may be divided into various phases including basic computerization, Index card image capturing, Online Index checking and passport printing.

In addition, the computerization of passport application collection centres, provision for authenticated e-mail services, communication between the passport offices and district offices through authenticated e-mail, electronic storage and retrieval of documents furnished by the applicants are in full swing.

Apart from this, public facilitation services such as web enquiry, tele-enquiry, touch screen kiosks, SMS services, online registration are also in progress.

• Application Areas

Basic Computerization: The Passport Control Issuance System (PCIS) has been designed, developed and implemented by NIC, MEA Informatics Division. The specific tasks include:

- :: Acceptance of application forms
- :: Submission of Supplementary documents
- :: Revenue management
- :: Police verification
- :: PAC checking
- :: Objection letters
- :: Granting of passports
- :: Passport Allotment
- :: Passport Printing
- :: Passport booklet accounting
- :: Despatch of passports
- :: Management of undelivered passports
- :: MIS/Statistical Reports
- :: E-mail /Internet services
- :: Across the counter Enquiry
- :: Telephone/Web enquiry

• **Index card Image Capturing**

NIC has monitored this project to provide an online index checking through creation of an Index data bank and a project to scan index cards at Passport offices has been undertaken. The scanning has been completed in all the 28 passport offices. It will assist in the simultaneous processing of the applications by different sections of passport offices with the availability of scanned images on computers.

• **Machine Readable Passport**

NIC has suggested passport printing, in order to improve the security features and the passport booklet has now been designed to make it machine readable. Its new features



Former Minister of State for External Affairs Sh Ajit Kr Panja releasing the "machine written-readable pasports"

bring it in line with ICAO standards and the Machine Readable Zone (MRZ) introduced on the passport booklet will make it easier for our passport holders to clear immigration checks where Passport readers are in use. In Machine Readable Passport, the principal passport details including the name, date of birth, sex, Passport number, date of expiry are captured in two lines which are incorporated in the Machine Readable Zone (MRZ) by a special printer.

MRZ is printed as per the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards and is compatible with any ICAO standard reader at International Immigration counters.

• **Online Index Checking (PIRS)**

NIC MEA division has developed this project and at present the project has been implemented in almost 25 passport offices. This will facilitate index checking using a phonetic search to match the photograph and check for duplicate passports. The entire process of computerized passport index checking starts with the loading of data into the master table of the online database server. Checking the data against the existing index database by matching the soundex codes has been carried out for online index checking. The soundex code combination is made in a cyclic fashion.

• **The figures speak for themselves.**

The number of applicants for passports has been steadily growing. In 1999, 25.8 lakh passports were issued compared to 22.22 lakh in 1998, 22.25 lakh in 1997 and 19.13 lakh in 1996. In the year 2000, the number of passport applications received was 25.88 lakh. In the first six months of 2001, the number of passport applications grew by 17% as compared to the first six months of 2000. In future, as the process of globalization and economic development picks up momentum, the demand for passports is expected to increase. Apart from issuing new passports, the other services include renewal, issue of new booklet, correction of entries, change of maiden name to married name etc. It is estimated that for every 100 passports issued, 10 passports require these services.

• **On the Cards..**

A scheme of providing information regarding the status of passport application on a cellular phone and a touch screen system is on the cards at various passport offices.

:: **Move towards paperless office:** NIC has taken the project of full passport file scanning for the passport offices and the pilot project is on the way at Hyderabad, Chennai and Guwahati Passport offices.

:: **Online Registration:** The applicants can fill up their name and other details and register on the web. They will be allotted a reference number. They can submit their original application, documents and fee from 3rd to 7th working day at passport offices, by quoting this reference number. Then applicants will be allotted the usual file reference number after acceptance of their application.

:: **Decentralization** of the functions of receipt and scrutiny of passport applications to the district level :- The distribution and sale of passport application forms has already been decentralized.



Director General Police, Hyderabad releasing the computerprinted passports at RPO hyderabad

■ **New Services (available in selected RPOs only)**

Single Window Counter for Tatkaal cases wherein the applicant can meet the PRO directly on the first visit and obtain the passport on the second or third day on payment of prescribed "Tatkaal fee".

A special counter for the graduates has been opened to cater to the needs of students and professionals who are unable to visit the office in the morning session. These counters function from 2.30 PM to 3.30 PM.

Help counter has been opened to guide the applicants.

Special Counters have been opened for old passport holders, government servants with NOC, minors and senior citizens. The applications received in these counters are processed speedily and passports issued within a short period.

The Media Says.....

Times of India, Kolkata, Thursday, August 9,2001.

According to the Regional Passport Officer, Kolkata " The passport office plans to go online. This will be implemented in four different stages-online verification of applications, online application, online processing of applications and online scanning of necessary documents", adding that National Informatics centre would be entrusted the job of completing the technical aspect of the project.

The Hindu, Friday, July 14,2000

The Union Minister of State for External Affairs Mr. Ajit Kumar Panja released the first lot of "Machine Written-Readable passports" at the Regional Passport Office, New Delhi. Mr.Panja said "20 of the 28 passport offices in the country had already been computerized by the National Informatics Centre. To further streamline the passport processing procedures at Passport offices, a detailed computerization programme had been approved at an estimated cost of Rs.30 crores. NIC would help the Ministry in this project as well"

Newstime Saturday 10 November 2001

NIC's Technical Director, Dr. B.N.Shetty, explained to newsmen that though a pilot scheme was already introduced in Delhi passport office, Hyderabad passport office became the first passport office in the country to have officially introduced full-fledged machine printed passports. Dr. Shetty said that "with networking of passport offices, issuance of duplicate passports could be completely avoided".

On the WWW.....

Check out the procedures involved in getting an Indian Passport and download the required application forms from <http://passport.nic.in>

For further information, please contact
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New Delhi-110003 :Tel No. 91-11-4362753
Email : bnshetty@nic.in

State in focus

KERALA: God's Own Country

On the Path to Progress

From Dr. S. Raman & Peter Francis, NIC Kerala

Kerala, God's Own Country, the 100% literate state in India, with its rich greenery and backwaters provides a very pleasant working ambience. Kerala is silently making a revolution in the field of IT, like the waves of the ocean on a 'new moon' day. Comprising 14 districts spread across a long shoreline, with internationally renowned beaches, historic monuments, backwater stretches and a rich cultural heritage, Kerala has the unique distinction of having 0% growth rate in population for more than 10 years. On the contrary, growth in the IT sector is increasing year by year ever since the inception of National Informatics Centre in the State.

Major Projects for State Government.

- NIC, identified as one of the 'Total solution providers' for the Kerala State Government effectively assists the state government functionaries for timely decision-making through the implementation of various e-governance projects. The citizen-oriented projects includes civil supplies (TETRA-PDS), registration (PEARL), treasury banking and also office maintenance tools like budget monitoring system, MIS for animal husbandry , water billing system for Kerala Water Authority, computerization of housing board, AGMARKNET, online election system and others..

- **Treasury Online**

The benefit of IT revolution has reached the common man by the computerization of treasuries. The system is designed to automate entire operations of treasuries from the counter stage to the accounting stage.

"Kerala will be the first state in the country where Treasury computerization has gone beyond mere account keeping".

Shri E.K. Nayanar the then Hon'ble Chief Minister during inaugural ceremony

"The Treasury project was designed to launch the Department of Treasuries as a modern vehicle to provide banking and financial services to the people of Kerala. The Treasury online System has now been very successfully implemented in all the 30 pilot sites in Kerala "

Dr K.M. Abraham, IAS, Secretary-Finance



Salary calculation, pension processing, SB & FD transactions and all other payment and receipt transactions are made online. Pay order cheque system, teller system and 'any bill any counter' system are also implemented.

■ **Budget Computerization**

The Secretariat cell of NIC is playing a major role in extending an IT tool for the formulation of the State Budget every year. This includes all the consolidated fund, contingency fund and the public accounts. The Secretariat cell provides IPA connectivity at Secretariat to browse the Internet and use the e-mail facility.

■ **PEARL (Package for Effective Administration of Registration Laws)**

A tool, providing a transparent, efficient and vibrant public interface, bringing in efficiency at the Sub Registry Office level by doing away with the dreary manual routine of filing, searching, accounting, reporting etc. thereby enabling SRO to provide prompt and reliable response to the General Public. The main emphasis is on the issue of Encumbrance certificates, Registration of all categories of documents and issue of certified copies.

"I was thrilled and delighted to see the excellent work done in this Registration office"

Shri N Vittal I.A.S Central Vigilance Commissioner



PEARL has been successfully implemented in 54 of the total 308 Sub Registrar offices of Kerala. The rest of the SROs will be computerized by the end of this financial year.

■ **Computerization of SSLC and Plus 2 Exam Related Activities**

: Pre Examination and post examination activities of SSLC (10 th) and Higher Secondary are successfully computerized in Kerala. The software takes care of issue of admission tickets, tabulation work and result preparation, printing of mark-sheets, certificates and statistical reports.

■ **Computerisation of Housing Board**

About 20 branches and the head office of the State Housing board have been computerized to handle :

- * Cash loan accounting (Disbursement and repayment)
- * Estate accounting and monitoring System
- * Cash Counter management system
- * Payroll and Personnel Information System

■ **Projects for Revenue Department**

1. Land Records Computerisation
2. Land Lease Management System
3. Land Survey Database Management System
4. Revenue arrears monitoring system

All the Block Panchayats are provided with the computer system and through modem connected with the respective district NIC centres for effective mail transactions between their offices.

■ **Kerala Water Authority**

The Billing, Revenue Collection and Accounting System of the Kerala Water Authority has been introduced in Trivandrum, Kochi and Calicut divisions of Kerala Water Authority, covering three corporations areas of Kerala State. The average transaction time per consumer has been reduced from 10 minutes down to only two minutes. The systems are being introduced in another 13 locations. The system can analyze the collection patterns and defaulters are identified. The monthly total revenue collection has touched Rs.10 crores after the computerization, compared to just Rs. 2.5 crores before computerization.

■ **TETRA-PDS**

The Targeted Efficient Transparent Rationing Allocation (TETRA) software is a total solution to the management of Public Distribution System (PDS). The Public Distribution System has been totally automated by the introduction of this bilingual software. The software is based on a multi-tier architecture. The bottom layer supporting the functions at the Taluk Supply Office / City Rationing Office level and is the core part of the software. The software has many modules like, Ration Card Management, ration allocation, preparation of automatic indents and authority lists, collection of various fee, calculation of differential costs, licenses and permits, etc. Along with the Ration Card Renewal process, a statewide database of 67 lakhs families and 3.2 crores family members has been successfully created and the new computerized ration cards are being issued. TETRA-PDS has been fully tested and successfully introduced in one of the city rationing offices. The complete roll-out of TETRA-PDS will be by the end of July.



Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala Sri. A.K. Antony distributing the new ration card to an Aadhivasi Family.

■ **AGMARKNET**

There are 7 markets selected in the first phase of this project and 14 more Markets have been identified for the implementation of the Project. The AGMARKNET portal is updated on Daily basis from these 7 markets.

■ **Animal Husbandry Department Computerisation**

The software related to various activities of Animal Husbandry department has been developed and includes Cattle Breeding Information System, Animal Products Price Monitoring System, Rearing of Calves Scheme, Live Stock Census, MIS for Animal Health Administration, Farm Information System and Budget Monitoring System with various reports modules.

■ **NIC-CM Cell at Secretariat**

A separate NIC cell has been established in the Chief Minister cell of the secretariat to cater to the needs of the cell and is effectively involved in

- Petition Monitoring System
- File Movement Information System
- Tapal Monitoring System
- Notes Monitoring System
- Plan Scheme Monitoring System

■ **Elections**

All the 14 district centers provide assistance during the election right from the filing of nominations by the candidates and staff allocation to result declaration. In a unique way in all prominent places of cities, a huge LCD display system is being connected with the NIC server so that the results are displayed whenever the data is updated. This is made possible by connecting all the RO's office and the CEO office.

■ **National Level Projects**

High Court and District Court Computerization

IT Support is given to the High Court and District Courts of Kerala. The Application areas covered under DCIS software are case file monitoring, notices generation, certified copies, report generation, pay roll accounting system, personnel information system, JUDIS(Judgement information system), Library information system and e-mail connectivity.

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- **Passport office computerization at Trivandrum, Kochi and Calicut.**
- **Central Excise and Customs Computerisation in all the Nine Divisions in the state.**
- **DGFT project at Kochi**

- **District Centres**

Kerala State is having 14 districts and all of them are actively involved in the e- governance activities for the district administration.

All the district NIC centers are effectively involved in the computerization of

- Revenue Recovery details related to Demand Collection and Balance
- Land Acquisition - Pay roll Preparation
- Tapal Section Information system
- Natural Calamity Monitoring System
- Social Beneficiary schemes (OAP, NFBS, NMBS etc.)
- Arms Licensing
- Guest House reservation system
- MIS on Electrical Inspectorate
- Information System for the Total Literacy Programme.
- Haj Applications Info. System
- Public Grievance Monitoring system
- Seniority List of Revenue Staff
- National Savings Scheme information system

■ **Training**

Training is provided for all state government and central government officials at the Training center of the state unit. More than 300 participants benefited during the last year apart from large number of hands-on training being given by the district centers.

■ **E-Governance Projects Under Way..** **Transport Department**

All the Regional Transport Offices of Kerala are being modernized. Comprehensive software is under finetuning stage catering to the Registration of Vehicles, Issue of licenses, Permits & Collection of Taxes. Good network connectivity among all the RTO offices is also proposed.

■ **KRISHIKER**

A MoU has been signed with the Department of agriculture for computerization down to the grass-root level (up to Krishi Bhawans) for global database development. The 6 Krishi Bhawans under the Chengal Block of the Trivandrum district has been taken up for pilot phase and the work is expected to be completed within 8 months. The total cost of the project is Rs.1.5 crores for the Trivandrum District.

■ **Employment Exchange Computerisation:**

Software has been developed for computerizing employment exchanges of the state. As a pilot phase, the employment exchanges at Trivandrum are to be taken up for computerization initially.

■ **NIC Kerala State Web Site**

A comprehensive dynamic website with Knowledge base is under development for the Kerala State and is expected to be launched shortly. The website for the Kerala Water Billing system is also under development. It is heartening to see how well NIC-Kerala State Unit is integrated with the state government in its e-governance initiatives. 'God's Own Country' is sure to blossom with many more citizen oriented programmes with the help of Information Technology.

Words of IT Secretary, Mrs Aruna Sundararajan I.A.S.

"NIC, Kerala State Unit has been closely associated with the IT Department for implementing various projects for the State. Many of the IT projects undertaken by NIC have been successfully implemented and development work is underway in a number of new projects as well. Some of the projects include Treasury Computerization, RD-NET 2000, Computerization of Registration Department [PEARL], MIS for Animal Husbandry etc. In this context I would like to place on record the excellent work done by NIC in the State. I hope that NIC would continue to extend similar assistance and support in future as well."

NIC KERALA STATE at a glance

- NICNET VSAT Connectivity with State and District headquarters
- NIC Centres in all the 14 Districts
- Video Conferencing facility at State Centre.
- Internet and e-mail facility in all Districts.
- NITPU Centre at Cochin
- NIC Cell at Secretariat
- NIC-DPC Cell for the Finance and Treasury Department Computerization.

For further information, please contact

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NIC, Kerala State Unit ,**

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IT in the Emerald Islands Andaman & Nicobar

From Anubha Goyal & Gautam Gupta, NIC Andaman & Nicobar Islands

The NIC, Andaman & Nicobar Islands UT unit was setup in the year 1988. This UT unit provides total informatics services to Andaman & Nicobar Administration, Central Government Departments and other organisations. NIC Port Blair has taken up various projects in different Departments. The nature of projects vary from designing simple Personnel Information system for Personnel Wing of Secretariat to complex projects like computerizing the entire Budgetary and Work Allocation System for APWD. Apart from developing software, services are also extended to interested departments for providing training to Government officials so that they can effectively use computers in carrying out their official work. In addition to email and Internet service, videoconferencing facility is also provided to the administration.

■ The Background

The beautiful Islands of Andaman & Nicobar islands are located at Bay of Bengal in an area of 8,249 sq.kms and at a distance of around 1200 kms from Calcutta, Visakapatnam and Chennai.

This Union Territory has two Districts namely Andaman and Nicobar. Andaman District has Two Sub-Divisions and Six Tehsils and Nicobar District has Two Sib-Divisions and Three Tehsils.

Since pre-historic times, these islands were the home of aboriginal tribes. But the first settlement by the British took place in 1789, which was later abandoned in 1796. The second settlement was basically a penal settlement, taken up in 1858, after the First War of Independence, followed by the settlement of convicts, Moplahs, some criminal tribes from Central and United Provinces, refugees from erstwhile East Pakistan and Sri Lanka as well as ex-servicemen.

■ Major Projects

1. Seat Allotment System for A & N Administration (Education)
2. Accounts & Budget System for Pay & Accounts Office
3. Budget & Works Monitoring System for Andaman Public Works Department
4. Public Distribution System for Civil Supplies
5. Court Cases Monitoring System for All Departments of A & N Administration
6. Govt. Guest House Allotment System for Tourism Department

■ Seat Allotment System Implementation for Directorate of Education

Since Union Territory of Andaman & Nicobar Islands does not have any Engineering/Medical Colleges and lacks facilities for training in some specific fields of technical education, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (Department of Education) reserves seats in Professional/Technical/Non-Technical Courses at the level of degree and diploma in the institutions approved by All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) for Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

The Andaman & Nicobar Administration allocates these reserved seats to the candidates who have studied in Andaman & Nicobar Islands. To make the seat allocation more efficient and effective and to avoid the complaints of dissatisfaction from the public, the administration has introduced the computerization for the allocation of seats and institutions. National Informatics Centre, Andaman & Nicobar Unit has developed the software system which meets the requirements of the

administration to make the allotment process transparent to the students as well as parents in order to avoid any duplication and malpractice.

This software has been successfully running from 1992 onwards. Allotment process has been made transparent. The Lt. Governor lauded this project by saying

"The software package developed by NIC Port Blair for allotment of seats to various medical and engineering and other technical institutions was instrumental in completing the complicated seat allotment process in time, in a transparent manner"

■ **Training Programmes**

National Informatics Centre, A & N UT Unit has been conducting training programmes for the officials of administration as well as central government departments. NIC is providing training for the purpose of developing computer awareness and to spread information technology culture in government departments.

Training for central Govt. & administration are held round the year as described in training calendar, on computer awareness & introduction to Information Technology, Office Tools, E-mail & Networking etc

Special Training programmes on request from departments have been taken up for the

- **Panchayat Secretaries**

- **Police personnel**

- **ANIIDCO & ANFPDC personnel**

All the courses are being offered free of cost. The course material is also provided. The course contents have been carefully designed to meet the emerging needs of the users in order to make optimum use of computing facilities.

At the end of each training programme, strengths and weaknesses of the course are discussed and participants' feedback is taken. Improvements based on their feedback are incorporated in the subsequent courses. NIC is conducting tests and issuing certificates.

■ **IT Culture in Panchayats**

As per the 73rd Amendment of constitution, 67 Gram Panchayats, 7 Panchayat Samities and 1 Zilla Parishad started functioning from Oct. 1995. Two five-day training programmes in computer awareness and office automation were conducted for 67 Panchayat Secretaries. The knowledge of computers imbibed by Panchayat Secretaries during the training programme would contribute towards computerization of Gram Panchayat in all the islands of Andaman & Nicobar. The participants, came from panchayats starting from the northern most tip of Andaman i.e. Diglipur to the southernmost tip of Nicobar i.e. Campbell Bay. The training programme was widely appreciated. The Panchayat Secretaries are the key functionaries of the Panchayat because they can guide the people of the area about networking with the outside world. The role of computers and connectivity is more important to these islands because of their remoteness and the shortage of transport and communication facilities.

Payroll software has been implemented in the Directorate of Panchayat and Zilla Parishad. Budget and Expenditure Monitoring System has been implemented in the Directorate of Panchayat and Zilla Parishad. The data of total 75 PRIs i.e. 67 Gram Panchayats, 7 Panchayat Samities and 1 Zilla Parishad is being maintained. This interlinking of Panchayati Raj Institutions would be a major step to spread Information Technology culture in the islands, which is one of the main objectives of NIC.

■ **Video Conferencing in A & N islands**

A major land mark was achieved by the A & N Islands UT Unit of NIC when the Lt. Governor, A & N Islands launched the Video Conferencing Setup for the Andaman & Nicobar Administration on 25th July, 2001. He had a talk with Director

