

An Exclusive Interview with Sh Sanjay Kumar, IAS, Finance Secretary cum Secretary Information Technology, Chandigarh Administration

i The IT Vision 2010 and the IT Policy of Chandigarh Administration has affirmed the promotion of e-Governance on a massive scale for the benefit of citizens. How much has been achieved in it?

The vision of the Administration is to create a knowledge based society, wherein every citizen of Chandigarh is able to access the benefits of our programmes and services through I.T. and I.T. enabled facilities. e-Governance is the most significant aspect of the I.T. Policy of Chandigarh Administration which is a medium for effective interaction between the Administration and the people so that exchange of information and access to government is convenient, leading to a better quality of life.

To give substance to this vision statement, Chandigarh administration has been taking active interest to roll out e-Governance initiatives namely e-Sampark, e-Jan Sampark and Gram Sampark. Project e-Sampark provides multi-service single window convenience to citizens for extended duration Monday to Saturday, 8AM to 8PM. These centres are connected to the State Data Centre and are offering 23 G2C services including payment of taxes, utility bills, passport application, disbursement of old-age pension and other utility services and 5 B2C services. e-Jan Sampark is another project to disseminate useful non-transactional information services to citizens. Citizens can submit their grievances, RTI applications and also seek appointment for Government

Hospitals at these centres. Stamp papers and adhesive stamps are available in these centres for the citizens. Not to leave the rural citizens behind and create a digital divide, rural knowledge centres namely Gram Sampark centres have also setup in the same fashion in the villages of Chandigarh. The services provided at all these centres are free of cost.

The success of this e-Governance initiative can be gauged by both the revenue collected and the foot falls in these centres. It has been a key revenue mop-up agent as the revenue shot up to Rs 759 crore in 2008-09 from Rs 403 crore in 2007-08 with an average of around 2 lakh transactions per month.

i North of Delhi, Chandigarh is perceived as an ideal IT destination. What factors do you think have contributed towards this?

The pro-active, vibrant sets of policies are being implemented effectively. It is the cleanest and greenest city in country offering pollution free environment and quality life. It has a geographical advantage of being close to National Capital and is well connected with other cities through Rail, Road and Air links. The Administration is very compact and responsive and is implementing a visionary action plan for holistic development of city. It offers the best infrastructure in terms of connectivity, power, water, health and education. There is no dearth of Human resources availability which is further being upgraded by CTOSS and other initiatives. Chandigarh is



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home to many world class institutions like PGI, PEC, CSIO, IMTECH. SEZ status accorded to RGCTP is a big attraction. The international airport that is likely to be operational in near future will further boost the USP of Chandigarh.

i What is the current status of National e-Governance Plan (NeGP), which was drawn by DIT and how far has the envisaged benefit gone? Or is it in line with the expectations?

NeGP implementation has been undertaken on priority. Chandigarh State Wide Area Network (CSWAN) is already operational. There are 7 major PoPs (Points of Presence) and around 125 sites. Connectivity is being further extended to other departments. A state of art data centre is also coming up at a cost of around 75 lakh. Common Service Centres for

rural citizens, Gram Sampark, have already been established and are operational in the villages. SPIC Centre is the nodal agency for Capacity Building programme.

i Chandigarh has consistently been ranked as a leader in National e-Readiness Assessment Reports. What reasons have contributed towards this and how is it being sustained?

The major reason for success (or failure) of any project is the monitoring mechanism and the necessary preventive/corrective approach. In addition to these, the Administration has been very pro-active to implement its policies. On their part the citizens have been very 'supportive as well as demanding'. State of art infrastructure serves as a catalyst in effective implementation. Involvement of stake holders having domain expertise served as an added advantage. And every initiative involved careful planning, gap analysis and business process reengineering before it eventually was rolled out.

i Chandigarh has a wide array of successful e-Governance initiatives to offer which have won national recognition and can be replicated. What has been NIC's role in giving substance to the plans and policies mooted by Chandigarh Administration?

NIC has played a pivotal role in successful implementation of the various e-Governance initiatives. It has been instrumental in bringing in usage of IT as a tool in the day to day working of various departments/offices. Applications like Chandigarh Administration's Intranet Portal are an ideal interface for G2G and G2E communication from where a plethora of applications can be accessed. A network of more than 500 nodes is being maintained without any downtime. Applications developed and deployed for transport, treasury, police, courts, food and supplies etc. are of immense help. Latest initiative to implement e-Procurement in Chandigarh has also been accorded due priority. Most of the departments have their presence on web because of websites developed and maintained by them.

i What initiatives have been undertaken by Administration to attract IT companies in Chandigarh?

Rajiv Gandhi Chandigarh Technology Park (RGCTP) is a major initiative undertaken to attract IT companies to



The Department of I.T. Chandigarh Administration has been awarded National e-Governance Award (Silver Icon) for Best Government Website. This award was presented to Sh. Sanjay Kumar, Finance Secretary cum Secretary IT, UT, Chandigarh, by Sh. A Raja, Hon'ble Union Minister for Communications & IT, Government of India

Chandigarh and usher this region to a new era of economic growth and prosperity. Once fully established, it shall cover a total area of 662 acres, spread across 3 phases. Sufficient infrastructure has been created by Chandigarh Administration for the companies investing in Chandigarh. There is vast manpower availability in the knowledge sector. Union Government has already accorded SEZ status to RGCTP which will help investors avail the benefits of SEZ policy. RGCTP comprises of flexible options for Technology Companies and plots of various sizes have been made available. The Ready to Build Space developed by the leading developer DLF Limited is spread over an area of 12.5 acres and comprises 6 blocks measuring of total of 650,000 Sq.ft. Many IT companies have already begun their operations here. A five star hotel cum convention centre is coming at 4.5 acre site for the convenience of IT companies. An Entrepreneur Development Centre (EDC) is also being set up by the Administration in an area of 1.5 acres at a cost of approximately Rs. 12 crores. This will provide a state-of-the-art research facility and incubation facilities to software and R&D companies. The Administration is providing residential, commercial, community and sports infrastructure for the IT companies to flourish in a manner that is conducive to their growth. It is envisioned that it will bring in an investment of \$600 million and more than 25000 professionals are expected to work here and an annual software export will touch to the tune of Rs.1000 Crores in a year or two.

Interviewed by: Vivek Verma