

“We can leverage the expertise of NIC / NICS in implementing turn key ICT projects”

An Exclusive Interview with Sh. Sailesh Kumar Singh, IAS & IT Secretary, Govt of Jharkhand.

i How would you describe the significant role played by the Department of Information Technology (DIT) in the overall progress of the IT sector in Jharkhand?

SKS. The Department of Information Technology, Jharkhand was formed nearly five years ago. During these years we have implemented large number of ICT projects in sectors like Finance (Treasury & GPF), Transport, Jails, Commercial Tax, Registration, Municipal Corporation, Land Records etc. Moreover Jharkhand was among the first in the country to set up SWAN (Jhar-Net). Video Conferencing & IP Telephony facility over Jhar-Net has been successful with high utilization. We have also set up a Data centre at Ranchi where most of the applications are hosted. At present we are working towards strengthening our Data Centre for better management of e-governance projects to provide efficient and timely service. We have also established Jharkhand Space Application Centre (JSAC) to leverage technology in the area of Space Application for the benefit of the people. The state is blessed with abundant natural resources hence the importance of space application technology assumes greater significance.

i How does the DIT foresee the future of Jharkhand and what role



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does it expect from NIC in the next decade. ?

SKS. The future of IT in Jharkhand is bright as well as challenging. The government has established an agency Jharkhand Agency for Promotion of IT (JAPIT) to technically manage various IT projects in the state. Though there are many hurdles but I am hopeful we will overcome them in due course of time. NIC is our partner in most of the projects, which I have mentioned earlier. I personally feel that NIC will play a major role in the coming decade in the state. They have got a very dedicated team of professionals and we see towards them with great expectations to meet the future challenges.

i What is your vision for the IT sector as a whole in the State in the times to come ? What significance

do you attach to the role played by the IT industry in a potential partnership with the government towards the fulfilment of this vision?

SKS. I foresee Jharkhand becoming a major IT hub in the near future. The state is blessed with abundant natural resources and the climate is also conducive for the growth of IT. The people of the state are friendly intelligent and hardworking. The industry has to come forward to establish units for production of various ICT equipments. The government

will provide all the necessary support to them in this regard. The state government has also established a Software Technology Park (STP) at Namkum near Ranchi. The industry can take benefit from the facilities provided at the STP. This will also generate jobs for the youths of the state. We do need few more good technical institutes to train our youths. This will help us to meet the shortage of IT professionals in the state.

i Has there been any initiative taken by the government to welcome IT Companies in Jharkhand? What are the possibilities of employment in this sector?

SKS. We have some excellent IT companies with all India presence which are working with us in the state. I expect more will become inclined to

work in Jharkhand as we move towards our goal of e-governance in every major sector. The state government will be happy to work with the industry in this crucial sector for the benefit of the people. It will obviously lead to more employment opportunities in the state.

i One of the most important initiatives with respect to e-Governance in the country is the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP). Is the Plan in line with the expectations? What would you say about the overall performance and progress of the Plan?

SKS. The National e-governance Plan was formulated to promote e-governance on a massive scale for the benefit of the common man. The goal of NeGP is to make all government services accessible to the common man locally or through CSC's in a transparent, reliable and affordable manner. We have taken NeGP very seriously and are working towards its success. I believe that the plan is in line with our expectations. We are working to achieve the stated goal. It is our determination to achieve them with greater benefits to the masses.

i The DIT has successfully set up Jhar-Net (SWAN) in the state while has taken initiative for strengthening State Data Centre. What role do you see for NIC in this initiative?

SKS. Jhar-Net is one of our major achievements and as various government services rolls out over it, I hope it will become a household word in the days to come. As I said earlier that we consult NIC during every major project and their suggestions are highly regarded. NIC itself has vast experience in Network and Data Centre Management. Being a national level organisation NIC does help us to implement our ICT projects in a much better and strategically cohesive manner. The reach of NICNET is up to the district level and we wish to integrate SWAN with NICNET to create a strategic synergy between them.

i The state has gone for VC set up between all the Courts and Jails through NIC. What is your overall perception and experience of implementing projects with NIC on a turnkey basis?

SKS. NIC has a vast pool of software resources both at the national as well as the state level. The VC between court and Jail has been implemented on a turn key basis by NIC /NICSI. Under trials are produced before the court from the jail campus itself. This takes care of security threats in

case of dreaded criminals and also saves time which has ultimately improved the disposal of cases. We have also implemented software projects developed at the state level like Treasury, Commercial Tax, Land Records etc. More over NIC / NICSI, has implemented some turn key projects in the state like GPF etc. We can leverage the expertise of NIC / NICSI in implementing turn key ICT projects.

i NIC has designed & developed public utility software like e-Nagrik Seva & Samvad for roll out through CSCs in the state. What role do you foresee for CSCs in the state and their usefulness & impact on the public?

SKS. We have established CSC's at many locations in the state, which has provided greater push to e-governance. Most of the CSC's are functioning, though I feel much needs to be done and there is scope for improvement, especially those established in the far flung rural areas. e-Nagrik Seva and Samvad are public utility software developed by NIC, Jharkhand. It has been implemented at many locations in the state through CSC's and I feel it has the potential to really bring ICT at the doorstep of the masses.

i You have some good private companies implementing projects in the state. NIC has also implemented or in some cases are in the process of implementing some major projects in the sector like Commercial Tax(VAT), Treasury, GPF, Transport, Drinking Water & Sanitation, Employment Exchange etc. What is your opinion about NIC and its overall contribution in the state?

SKS. NIC has contributed immensely to the state in the field of Information Technology. NICNET has also been strengthened with dedicated 2 Mbps LL connectivity to every district of the state from NIC Data Centre located at Nepal House, Ranchi. The NIC district centres provide support to the district administration on a day to day basis. The support given by district centres especially in monitoring of NREGA, Treasury, Transport and recently concluded Lok Sabha election etc. are excellent. The performance of most of the private companies engaged in project implementation in the state has also been quite encouraging.

Interviewed by: Prashant Belwariar