Uttar Pradesh: Focusing on Rural e-Governance

Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state accounting for about 17 percent of the country's population. It is the fourth largest state in terms of size covering nearly 9 percent of the country's geographical area. With 72 districts and nearly 1 lakh villages the state is also larger than many countries of the world. However, it is a little known fact that UP was one of the first states to kick start ICT initiatives in eGovernance. UP already has a fully automated treasury system; the land records information is available on internet, land registry, transport, rural development, industry and many other sectors are already at advanced stages of computerization. UP is also leading in implementation of a number of NeGP projects such as eDistrict & SWAN.

ANSHU ROHATGI
Regional Editor,
NIC UP
anshu.rohatgi@nic.in

UTTAR PRADESH AT A GLANCE	
Area	**2,40,928 sq Kms**
Population ('01 census)	**16.62 Crore**
Districts	**72**
Cities	**689**
Nagar Nigams	**11**
Tehsils / Sub-divisions	**312**
Development Blocks	**820**
Panchayat	**52,000+**
Villages	**97,000+**
Literacy	**56.3 %**
MLAs (Vidhan Sabha)	**404**
MLCs (Vidhan Parishad)	**100**
MPs (Lok Sabha)	**80**
MPs (Rajya Sabha)	**31**

Source: http://infotech.up.nic.in/egov-hindi.pdf

DRIVEN by an aim to develop the state by empowering the masses, Uttar Pradesh has rolled-out a number of initiatives using Information and Communications Technology (ICT). These eGovernance projects are not only making the lives of the citizen easier by taking government services to their doorsteps, but have also made the administration quick, responsive, transparent, hassle-free, and easily accessible.

The e-Governance projects cover the entire spectrum of interfaces - G2G, G2C, G2B, G2E & G2S. Majority of these initiatives are aimed at bridging the digital divide and to extend the potential benefits of ICT to people residing in remote and far flung areas of the state, in particular, to improve their social, economic and cultural well being.

eDistrict - 'service at the doorstep of citizen'

eDistrict is the key initiative under the National e-governance Plan (NeGP) of Ministry of Communications & IT. Based on the fact that districts are the primary delivery channel for government administration and delivery of

bulk of citizen centric services, the main objective of e-district is to radically improve the way districts work and provide services to citizens. This entails re-designing of the existing processes and delivery mechanisms, back-end computerization of the government departments and district administration to enable efficient delivery of government services and simple user interfaces to ensure easy and hassle free access to information and services to the citizen's right at their doorstep through a single window system. The front-ends are built in form of eDistrict Centre at district, Tehsil Computer Centre & Lokvani Centre at tehsil and block, while the village-level front-ends are being established through Common Services Centres (CSCs).

The eDistrict project had a tremendous impact for the citizens who otherwise have to run to different officials for getting their work done. The project also helps in facilitating district administration to efficiently monitor the functioning of various departments and help in generating efficient MIS for better decision making at all levels.

e-Scholarship & e-Pension - 'social empowerment'

'eScholarship' is a first of its kind project in the country to have used IT based initiative for electronic transfer of scholarships to the beneficiaries and was initiated as a project of hope for children belonging to the weaker sections of the society and uphold their right-to-education. The project was aimed to reach the right and deserving candidates within time frame and without leakages, increase transparency in distribution of scholarships to the students and build a comprehensive MIS for the Government & devise a tool for proper monitoring, control & planning for the state government. It is a web based

SH. S.B. SINGH
Dy. Director General & State Informatics Officer, NIC, UP

NIC, Uttar Pradesh is committed to use IT for the betterment of people across the state. Our aim is to design and build efficient, robust, scalable and secure IT systems for the rollout of eGovernance in state and help the state government in acquiring IT leadership in country.

solution which allows direct transfer of the scholarship to the bank account of the beneficiary. It has already benefited more than 4.2 crore students of the state. The project has also helped the government in saving more than 700 crore by minimizing frauds and misappropriations.

The **old-age pension scheme** is aimed to benefit more than 40 lakh senior citizens of our society through online dissemination of information and direct transfer of pension to their bank accounts. The project has had a positive impact on all stake holders. Existing processes have been simplified which makes it easier and convenient for the pensioners. While the government too has benefitted in terms of savings on finance & manpower, less strenuous work, higher productivity and fewer errors in computation & calculations.

The **Uttar Pradesh Mukhya Mantri Mahamaya Gharib Arthik Madad Yojna** is a scheme for the people of weaker section of the society. The aim of the scheme is to provide financial

e-District

Uttar Pradesh is the first state in the country to roll-out eDistrict in six pilot districts -Sultanpur, Raebarelli, Sitapur, Gorakhpur, Ghaziabad & Gautam Budh Nagar. More than 23 services pertaining to Certificates, Pension, Public Distribution System, Revenue Court, Employment, Grievances etc., from eight line departments have been covered for complete automation and delivery. Implemented in December 2008, more than 15 lakh digitally signed certificates/services have already been delivered through the system both from urban and rural areas.

Some of the unique features of e-District, Uttar Pradesh are -
- The 100% electronic workflow ensures single point of interaction for the citizen for filing of application and delivery of service.
- Improved service levels due to verification of citizen details based on digitized data (typically, one-third time required now).
- Digitally signed certificates issued on pre-printed stationery with photographs.
- Online status tracking of application by the citizen and government officials.
- Verification of authenticity of certificates over NET based on unique identification numbers printed on the certificate.
- SMS alerts sent at the time of receipt of application and once the certificate is ready.
- MIS reports at every level to monitor the workflow.
- The complete automated process has made it paperless & reduced the infrastructural requirements for physical movement of documents.

The success of the pilot project has prompted the State Government to initiate the process of extending the project in remaining 66 districts of the state. While, Government of India, has decided to roll out eDistrict in all the 500+ districts of the country.
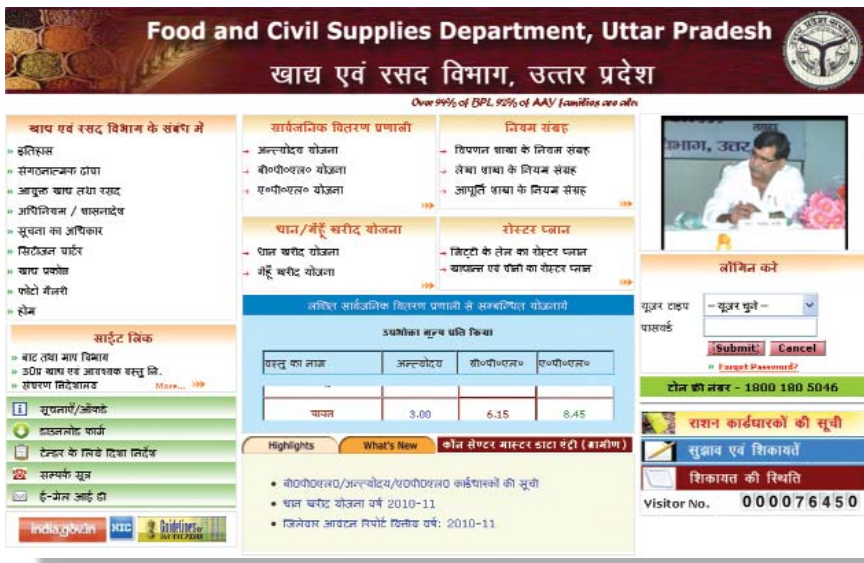
assistance to people, particularly women, who could not be covered under any other government benefit scheme. The target group is around 30 lakh beneficiaries. Under the project a massive survey has been done at Gram Panchayat level to identify the genuine beneficiaries. The computerization of the scheme is underway and the project will be completed by October 2010.

Food & Civil Supplies

The Department of Food & Civil Supplies is implementing a comprehensive IT based plan to computerize the complete food grain supply chain in Uttar Pradesh right from paddy procurement from farmers, its storage, milling and distribution of rice and other commodities to 4.5 crore ration card holders through its 72000+ Fair Price Shops (FPS). As a part of this project, 3742 Paddy procurement centres, 7000+ storage centres or godowns and all district offices are being computerized. Plans have also been made to extend this computerization to the block level. Many technological innovations have been incorporated and transparency is being insured by information sharing with the citizen directly through website and SMS system.

A major task of digitization of 4.5 crore card holders has already been accomplished which is one of the largest in the country. This data is available on the website http://fcs.up.nic.in . The SMS system informs the citizen as soon as the ration of his/her area is lifted from the godown by the Fair Price Shop Owner. A pilot project for SMART card based Ration Card System has also been completed in district Sitapur and very soon the system will be rolled out for the entire state. Online Complaint Registration System and a call centre based helpline system are some other features that have increased transparency and improved the citizen and department interaction.

eProcurement - 'enhancing transparency'

eProcurement is one of the key mission mode projects defined under NeGP. The e-Procurement portal designed

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ONLINE SYSTEMS

Many online systems have also been deployed by different government departments of the state. Some projects that are unique in their concept, and are benefitting citizens immensely include -

VYAS (VanijYakar Automation System) - is a web-based solution designed to automate almost all the activities related to VAT system. It is a unique user-id/password based single window system to cater to the needs of the traders. The entire activity wise work flow is being captured through front office and back office modules of the system such as Receipt, Registry, Return, Challan, Help-desk, Assessment, Administration. The application allows eReturn filing, online tax payment through NET Banking, online generation of Transit Declaration Form (TDF)/'Bahati' to facilitate the traders and business community.

Nivesh Mitra (Investment Friend) - is a single window system for entrepreneurs willing to setup industry in the state. The portal has facility for online submission and updation of all forms by the applicants desirous of setting up an enterprise in UP and facilitates faster and time-bound issuance of various approvals by the government. The project was launched by the Chief Secretary, GoUP on 6th July 2009.

Online Counseling & Result dissemination - UP was the first state after IIT and IEEE to conduct the online counseling for admission to various Medical Colleges, Engineering, Management, Pharma & Architecture Institutes of the state and in B.Ed courses conducted by different Universities. The application caters to the requirements of more than 1 lakh candidates seeking admission in about 200 Institutes, Medical Colleges & Universities in different streams. The UP Result Portal benefits more than 50 lakh students every year by publishing online results of various examinations. This has really helped the students of remote areas in getting their results in a short time.

There are many other online services such as eSuvidha in Lucknow for house tax & other utility bill payments, online submission of applications for UP Public Service Commission etc.

and implemented by UP allows qualified and registered users to look for buyers and sellers of goods and services. It integrates the components of computerized supply chain management and the entire life cycle of the procurement process has been computerized. The main modules implemented include Registration, Tender Management, Bid Opening & Bid Evaluation and Award of contract. Till now more than 1000 tenders have been published through the eProcurement system.

Tehsil Divas & Lokvani – 'exemplary examples of good governance' -

Both these projects are aimed to simplify the grievances redressal mechanism with kiosks being setup in remote areas and automated monitoring mechanism to track the complaint till their redressal. This pioneering work has set an example of rural eGovernance in the country and has also generated local employment in the rural areas.

Of course, there are challenges to be met, as Uttar Pradesh is the most populous and one of the largest states in the county. It faces temporary impediments in the present circumstances with fast changing technology and high implementation costs involved in rolling out applications in the entire state. Yet e-Governance implementations in the state have had a successful signaling effect for the outside world. It has effectively showcased how modern-day UP is progressing, how new infrastructure that is being added complements the existing resource base, and how ICT is being harnessed for implementing some of the best initiatives of good governance.

For further information

State Informatics Officer
National Informatics Centre
6th Floor, Yojana Bhawan,
9, Sarojni Naidu Marg,
Lucknow 226 001
Ph: 0522-2238415
sio-up@nic.in

SH. CHANDRA PRAKASH
IAS
Principal Secretary, IT & Electronics, GoUP

What is your vision of e-Governance for the State?
Government of Uttar Pradesh is committed to leverage IT to build citizen-centric, inclusive and development oriented information society by transforming its functioning to provide services to the common man in a cost-effective, transparent and easily accessible manner. This will allow citizen-government transactions at any convenient time or place throughout the day or year & most government services will be available 24 hours of the day.

How is IT in UP different from other states?
Unlike other states where ICT applications primarily have an urban-centric focus, Uttar Pradesh has ensured the delivery of Government services to reach its farmers and the predominantly rural population. The unprecedented popularity of projects like eDistrict, Lokvani and Tehsil Diwas in the state amply demonstrate the acceptability of eGovernance initiatives among the rural masses. It also shows how such rural-centric applications are in line with the overall eGovernance and ICT strategy of the state.

What is the status of IT infrastructure in the state?
The state is faring very well on the infrastructure development front too - UPSWAN is already in place which will work as a network backbone for egovernance projects, more than 5000 CSCs out of planned 17000+ have already being established which will work as front-end for government service delivery in the villages. Work on State Data Centre (SDC), SSDG & State Portal is in advanced stage which will provide a secure stable infrastructure for delivery of services.

Uttar Pradesh also has four Software Technology Parks at Noida, Allahabad, Kanpur and Lucknow. The export of IT related services through STPI in 2009-10 was about Rs.13545.94 crores (4th most preferred destination), while the estimated increase in 2010-11 exports is 20% and the figures will touch Rs.17000 crore.

What are the key focus areas of e-Governance?
Efficient service delivery to the people is our key focus and our attempt is to reach even the remotest villages of the state. Agriculture, social services, education, health and grievance redressal are some of the key areas where we are using ICT tools in a major way. Up-gradation of projects like eDistrict, Jan Suvidha Kendra & State Web portal is also planned.