

Citizen Service Bureaus: Making Governance Accessible

1. Introduction

Extensive work and innumerable efforts have been taken by the Delhi Government in the field of e-governance. As per the roadmap of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policy of Delhi, the government has been successful in taking ICT across all its departments, local government, autonomous bodies and to the public. Today, the Delhi Government has 81 websites for its various departments. However, the question of how many of them are actually functional and helpful will be answered later in the chapter. More citizen-centric projects are in the pipeline. The state has developed a portal from which one can access individual departments.

In 2003 the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) launched a Citizen Service Bureau (CSB) titled '*Samajik Suvidha Sangam*', a one-stop kiosk to avail all the services offered by the government. Other projects include online registration for 11 kinds of certificates in the Deputy Commissioner offices and for registration of societies, online registration of vehicles, etc.

Several such initiatives have been taken in various states under the ICT Policy of Delhi. Various nomenclatures e.g. Common Services Centre, ICT Kiosk, Community Information Centre, e-Community Centre, Rural Service Delivery Points, Village/Rural Knowledge Centre, etc. currently exist in the country for such Integrated Service Delivery Centres, providing similar services to citizens.

2. Introduction of the Citizen Service Bureaus (CSBs)

MCD, its jurisdiction covering 97% of the Delhi population, started this unique IT initiative to deliver electronically its services to citizens of Delhi through a Citizen Service Bureau setup in each zone. These CSBs are run by a consortium of IT companies namely ECIL & Sark Systems Ltd. All these 12 Citizen Service Bureaus, one in each zone and one at Town Hall, are connected through radio frequency (RF) network with ISDN lines as a backup. Further it is planned to open 272 CSBs (one in each ward).

The concept behind establishing a CSB is to provide all municipal services under one roof in air-conditioned comfort on payment of a

very small transaction fee. The transaction fee that is charged for all municipal services, other than payment of property tax, depends on the value of the transaction. The table indicating transaction fee and the value of transaction is given below:

Value of Transaction (in Rs.)	Transaction Fee (in Rs.)
1-500	5/-
501-1,00,000	10/-
Over 1,00,000	100/-

MCD also proposes to connect senior officers, about 250 of them, and provide them e-mail through the same RF network. This will enable all citizens to get in touch with senior officers for any complaints that they may have about the municipal services.

The services that have been offered are as follows:

a. At Citizen Service Bureaus

- i. Registration of births and deaths and issue of certificates
- ii. Accepting applications for issue of all kinds of licenses and issue of licenses once the approval is received from the concerned office
- iii. Booking of parks for holding private functions. For holding public functions, one has to go to the Zonal Deputy Director of Horticulture to obtain permission.
- iv. Renewal of licenses
- v. Receiving all kinds of payments

b. Over the Internet

- i. Registration of information relating to births and deaths
- ii. Applying for issue of licenses
- iii. Booking of parks
- iv. Registration of complaints and their status
- v. Accepting payment of municipal dues through use of credit cards over secure payment gateways

c. At Crematoriums

- i. For citizens' convenience, arrangements have been made to register deaths in computerized system at six crematoriums in the first phase. These crematoriums are:

- ii. Nigamboth Ghat, Kashmere Gate (MCD also issues death certificates for deaths that are registered at that particular cremation ground.)
- iii. Electric Crematorium, Bela Road
- iv. Crematorium, Panchkuian Road
- v. Crematorium, Punjabi Bagh
- vi. Crematorium, Subhash Nagar
- vii. Crematorium, Sat Nagar

The criterion for deciding the location of the CSBs is the zones at present. Each zone must have one CSB and in future, MCD has planned to construct 272 CSBs, one in each ward. On calculating the population and the number of such Bureaus, it was found that at present, for every 10,65,423 people in Delhi, there is one CSB. Even as per the roadmap of MCD, with 272 CSBs, there will be one CSB for every 50, 920 people, which may be insufficient.

Also, the criterion for selecting the location needs a re-thought. As of now the number of colonies in each zone varies greatly, with 185 in south zone to 199 in North zone to 87 in Central zone. Hence assuming that one CSB per zone as sufficient can not be rational. The same continues in every ward too, with high variability. The following table shows the number of colonies in each zone, showing the amount of variability:

Name of Zone	Number of Colonies
City Zone	87
Central Zone	190
South Zone	185
Karol Bagh Zone	71
Sadar pahar ganj	59
West Zone	278
Civil Lines Zone	192
Sh. South Zone	269
Sh. North Zone	199
Narela Zone	167
Najafgarh Zone	445
Rohini Zone	187
Unclassified	5

Table 1: Variance in the number of colonies in different zones of Delhi

If MCD is supplying citizens with CSBs, then the demand of that area must be taken into account. An analysis of the kind and the number of people living in each area is a vital issue that MCD has ignored, and assuming evenness in areas by allocating one CSB in each ward/zone is highly irrational.

Co-ordination with Local Groups like Residents' Welfare Associations (RWAs)

At present, RWAs have not been involved at all for efficient operations of the CSBs. On one hand where they could have been a vital resource for the MCD to actually make their bureaus efficient and meaningful for the purpose for which they were set, that is bringing services to the citizen's doorsteps. On one hand, where the RWAs could have been a valuable asset for the MCD to actually make these CSBs efficient and driving them down to each citizen, the MCD has ignored the role of RWAs in better governance through these CSBs.

Role of Private Sector

The CSBs under the MCD are outsourced to private players under the Build-Own-Operate model. There are various forms of public-private partnerships that the government has to choose from while outsourcing the work to a private player, of which the main ones are enlisted below:

- **Build-Own-Operate-Transfer (BOOT):** The service provider is responsible for design and construction, finance, operations, maintenance and commercial risks associated with the project. It owns the project throughout the concession period. The asset is transferred back to the government at the end of the term, often at no cost.
- **Build-Own-Operate (BOO):** Operates similarly to a BOOT project, except that the private sector owns the facility in perpetuity. The developer may be subject to regulatory constraints on operations and, in some cases, pricing. The long-term right to operate the facility provides the developer with significant financial incentive for the capital investment in the facility
- **Build-Own-Transfer (BOT):** Operates similarly to a BOOT project, except that the private sector does not operate the facility after building the same
- **Build-Own-Maintain (BOM):** Involves the private sector developer building, owning and maintaining a facility. The government leases the facility and operates it using public sector staff

Presently these Bureaus are run by a consortium of IT companies namely ECIL & Sark Systems Ltd. under the BOO model.

3. Common Service Centres

The Delhi government has taken up an ambitious e-governance initiative with the project '*Jeevan*'/ '*Sarkar Aapke Dwar*' which seeks to redefine public service delivery. *Jeevan*'s focus is on significantly enhancing the quality of services available to the citizen and to enhance the ability of the citizens to interact with the government on a regular basis with speed, convenience, transparency, certainty and accountability. All services are intended to be provided through a 'One-Stop-Shop' concept with 'Any-Time-Any-Where' facility.

The Government has identified Citizen Service Centers (CSCs) (Single window service delivery channel for government services) for enabling the citizens and businesses to avail all the government services at one place. This would be achieved through the deployment of approximately 500 centers and kiosks, where appropriate, throughout Delhi in all the wards.

Government of India (GoI) has approved the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) that seeks to lay the foundation for the long-term growth of e-governance in the country. NeGP is aimed at improving the quality, accessibility and effectiveness of government services to citizens and businesses with the help of ICT. Considering the nature and scale of the e-governance initiatives planned under NeGP, the role of the state governments in managing these initiatives is seen as critical.

The key project stakeholders include the IT Secretary – Delhi Government, other participating departments of the government, implementation partners including the official bankers selected to provide citizen services, business houses offering their services and finally citizens of the Delhi.

The key services currently provided under *Jeevan* project include:

- Payment of water bills, electricity bills, telephone bills etc. as well as receipt of applications for new connections related to such services.
- Payment of holding tax
- Issue of birth/death certificates
- Filing of grievances
- Issue/renewal of driving licenses

- Booking of railway and airline tickets
- Payment of telephone bills
- Other Business-to-Consumer services

Implementation

The Jeevan project is being implemented on a BOOT model. In this BOOT model, the Implementing Agency (IA) obtains exclusive rights to finance, build, operate, maintain, manage and collect transaction fees for a period of six years to recover its investment. At the end of six years, the title to all the equipment of the *Jeevan* Project, purchased, installed and operated by the IA including the hardware/software will transfer to the Delhi Government.

The components of *Jeevan* projects are - *Jeevan* Portal, CSCs and *Jeevan* Data Center. These are interdependent on each other for achieving the overall integrated service delivery objectives. In addition, the project components are required to inter-operate with the NIC State Unit to extend the services of the information systems hosted in Data Center to the Citizen Service Centers and other service delivery channels.

The CSCs are categorized into three types. Type I and Type II centers having a minimum of twelve and five counters respectively. Type III CSCs will have a minimum of one counter. The Type III CSCs are to be operated in a franchisee-based model. A three-phase strategy is adopted to implement the *Jeevan* project. Phase I includes implementing 45 services from 16 departments within the first 16 departments, setting up of *Jeevan* Data center and operationalising the *Jeevan* Portal. Phase II includes adding of 59 services from rest of the departments and further business-to-consumer services after Project Management Unit approval. This phase includes adding 5 services every month based on the requirement.

The CSCs will offer the services all through the year from 8 am to 8 pm. Citizens can access any service from any center. The citizen centers are designed to handle redundancy, additional load, offline services and disaster recovery. Citizens and business entities can pay in cash or through card/cheque/demand draft. Queues are managed electronically in every center, which has seating space for visitors.

The Delhi Government selected M/s 3i Infotech as the Implementing Agency through a tender process.

4.. Mission Convergence: Samajik Suvidha Sangam (SSS)

With the aim to improve the quality of life of its citizens especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged sections of the society, the Delhi Government has initiated Mission Convergence called '*Samajik Suvidha Sangam*' to converge various welfare entitlement schemes and services with the objective of making entitlements reach the poor through a single window system in a hassle-free manner. SSS will be the interface between departments, Dy. Commissioner's Office and nodal agencies and NGOs. To fulfill the objective, SSS is engaging NGOs and Community Based Organisations in a partnership mode.

The mandate of the Mission is to bring together to a common platform the plethora of schemes to eliminate duplications, error records and strengthen the implementation mechanism by use of IT enabled system, rationalization of administration, and incorporation of partnerships with civil society organisations for more effective delivery. The long-term objective of this project is to package useful social sector welfare schemes focusing on empowerment of the vulnerable population together at delivery level thereby maximizing their impact and efficiently utilizing scarce financial resources through active involvement of community in a concerted and focused manner.

The Mission strives to enhance the visibility of schemes to all targeted communities; enhance the control of the community over the welfare schemes; strengthen the organisations (Gender Resource Centre/NGOs/government line departments) and its processes related to prompt service delivery; and incentivise and reinforce appropriate mechanisms for providing services.

Access Routes to Citizens under Mission Convergence

a. *Samajik Suvidha Sangam*

The *Samajik Suvidha Sangam* is registered as an autonomous society and is the main facilitating agency for the Mission Convergence for the different departments which currently operate various entitlement schemes. SSS will be the interface between departments, district collector's office, nodal agencies and field NGOs.

The objectives of *Samajik Suvidha Sangam* are:

- i. Establish, manage, operate, maintain and facilitate the welfare programmes in the NCT of Delhi for providing welfare services in an integrated manner to the under-privileged citizens in an efficient, transparent, convenient, friendly and cost effective manner.

- ii. Identify and recommend the welfare services which can be provided in consultation and coordination with the converging departments.
- iii. Workout and implement the action plan for the welfare schemes in the NCT of Delhi in collaboration with the private sector, NGOs, or through Public Private Partnership (PPP) or other innovative methods as per the requirements of the specific areas.
- iv. Rationalize and streamline the implementation of the schemes related with social services.
- v. Generate awareness on the welfare schemes and programmes amongst masses.
- vi. Facilitate and promote public-private partnerships and community ownership in efficient service delivery of social services.
- vii. Improve access of the poor to get the maximum benefits of the welfare schemes.
- viii. Promote women empowerment.

b. District Resource Centres (DRCs)

District Resource Centres are district-level structures of Mission Convergence or *Samajik Suvidha Sangam based* at the office of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of each district as 'front office' of the DC office, and act as a single window for the community for welfare schemes. These will be lead interfaces between the community and the government departments, through the DC and district nodal officers of the concerned departments, in consultation with Gender Resource Centre - *Suvidha Kendras* and DC office, and would give the beneficiaries a platform to discuss their grievances and seek immediate redressal.

These structures will also act as a database of knowledge and information on services, schemes and programmes of the government and update it at regular intervals, disseminate information on various schemes and benefits through outreach and community mobilization. The DRCs will be responsible for review and submission of completed forms with the help of GRC-*Suvidha Kendras* of their respective districts; for verification of the completed forms through the GRC-*Suvidha Kendras*; provide access to benefits of the schemes of different departments through single E-entitlement card.

These DRCs would also monitor and collate the district-level report for the performance of community-based structures of *Samajik Suvidha Kendras* of their respective districts.

c. Gender Resource Centres (GRCs)

The Mission Convergence incorporates the previous Gender Resource Centres, which function much nearer to the community, in its implementation structure and has added a *Suvidha Kendra* to each GRC, redefining the scope of a GRC viz. not only its name.

Essentially the GRCs were formed to take care of all dimensions related to women empowerment in a holistic manner, and were envisaged as an instrument to bring social, economic, and legal empowerment of women particularly those belonging to the under privileged sections of society. The activities of the GRCs are to encompass social empowerment, legal rights, economic initiatives (comprising of skill building, micro-enterprise and entrepreneurship development), health aspects, information sharing and networking aspects, and non-formal functional literacy and women empowerment.

With Mission Convergence, the Delhi government has decided to enhance the role of the GRCs so that it becomes a truly robust instrument of community outreach, with the *Samajik Suvidha Kendra* (SSK) at each GRC becoming the first interface for the people of the community.

With the integration of SSS the scope of work as well as the responsibilities of the GRCs have increased. The GRC-*Suvidha Kendras* have to look after the needs of the whole family, children, adolescents, youth, senior citizens, differently-abled, etc, besides women who are already covered under GRCs. There has to be special emphasis on the most vulnerable people like the homeless, women and children-headed families, families involved in certain trades like rag pickers, sex workers etc. NGOs' role will include direct intervention through the existing GRC components like health, nutrition, non-formal education training, formation of self-help groups, nutritional awareness etc. and facilitation like creating awareness about government entitlements and empowering them to come to SSKs to avail the benefits.

5. Recommendations

There are a few immediate steps that the government can take to improve the situation:

- a. More number of comprehensive centres with rationalized supply. Not only should the number of centres be increased, but also the services they offer should be more comprehensive, inclusive and more facilitating for better governance. Also, there is no point increasing the supply, if the demand is not

considered. So centres should be placed in areas with maximum demand, which can be found out after a detailed research.

- b. Advertise. Like the way a corporation advertises its new products in the market to get a customer base, the government needs to advertise the facilities and such centres which are available to the people in a very efficient manner. For the same, outsourcing it to an advertisement company is the best option. If marketing language is to be used, these centres need to be “sold” to the public for whom they are setup.
- c. Certain areas, services and centres are overlapping. Studies should be made to analyse where they can merge and where they need to converge.
- d. Regular maintenance of the centres is highly recommended, with functional air-conditioners, fans and lights, to ask for the least.

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CSB Vasant Vihar; shut only for 2 months but seems it was never functional

