

# Empowering Citizens through e-Services & m-Governance

IT has been on the top of the agenda of the State Government. e-Governance in Bihar has helped in increasing transparency and accountability in the government functioning. This is an exclusive Interview with Dr. S. Siddharth, Secretary, Department of IT and Department of Labor, Govt. of Bihar on how Information technology Department, Govt. of Bihar is leveraging technology for upholding the principles of good governance in the state.



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**NIC: How Information Technology Department, Govt. of Bihar is making inroads for good governance by leveraging technology?**

**IT Secretary:** The Department of Information Technology, since its inception in Bihar in the year 2007, has been making systematic efforts to promote and use IT in various government departments by facilitating programs under the NeGP. IT has been on the top of the agenda of the State Government. e-Governance in Bihar has helped in increasing transparency and accountability in the government functioning. We have carried out Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) for various departments in order to promote e-governance. Almost all the departments are offering their services online. We also have emphasized on computer education in order to provide resources for increased use of information technology in the government.



**Dr. S. SIDDHARTH**  
 Secretary, Information Technology & Labour Resources Department, Govt. of Bihar

**NIC: Who are the main beneficiaries for whom ICT initiatives in Bihar have been made and what is the outcome?**

**IT Secretary:** Primarily, our focus is on Government-to-Citizen (G2C) besides strengthening G2G and G2E services using ICT tools and technology. Every department, district, block and Panchayat has its website functioning



as a point of contact for disseminating information and services. General Administration Department, Govt. of Bihar has implemented the Right to Public Service Act (RTPS) focusing on delivery of citizen-centric services in a time-bound manner.

**NIC: Are you looking forward to strengthen ICT infrastructure in the state for better service delivery?**

**IT Secretary:** In order to deliver electronic services, we have established State Data Centre (SDC), Bihar State Wide Area Network (BSWAN), Brain Data Centre; Bihar Knowledge Centre and many other departments have their own set-up. All the departments, district offices and block offices in the state have their own computer hardware and Internet connectivity. The departments and administrative units are trying their best to implement e-Governance using application software, digitization, mobile messaging app etc. In order to strengthen e-Governance in Bihar, we are working proactively with NIC, Beltron, SeMT and key stakeholders for technology solutions.

**NIC: Please brief us about the network connectivity in Bihar.**

**IT Secretary:** We have achieved connectivity up to the block-level with the Bihar State Wide Area Network (BSWAN). The State Government is in the process of implementing the second generation BSWAN called BSWAN 2.0. It aims to have a reliability of 99.99% connectivity during peak business hours and hope to connect all the offices of the state. Work is in progress to connect all the Gram Panchayats in Bihar through the National Optical Fiber Network (NOFN). We have been able to connect 3011 Panchayats as on date through NOFN. The BSWAN 2.0 hopes to achieve a seamless connectivity between NIC, departments, blocks and the Panchayats. We are also looking forward to integrate BSWAN and NICNET/NKN to build a robust



Right to Service Counters at District Level

network to run various categories of applications like e-Health, e-Education, e-Panchayat, e-PDS etc.

**NIC: What are key initiatives of your department with NIC that you would like to mention?**

**IT Secretary:** A number of ICT led projects have been initiated with NIC like i-BhuGoal and SAMVIDA. i-Bhugoal is a Geomatics Oriented Application Model and envisages establishment of Bihar State Spatial Data Infrastructure for Multi-Layer GIS and SAMVIDA is about "Skill Development and employability" and is popularly known as online contractual recruitment/volunteer services portal.

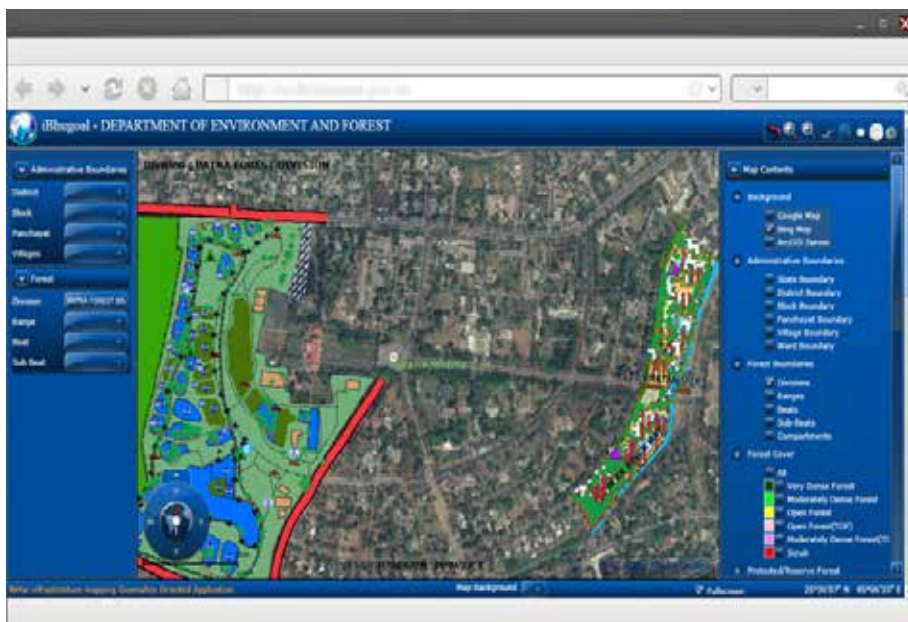
**NIC: What are key initiatives taken in Bihar for m-Governance?**

**IT Secretary:** In Bihar, we have implemented the Mobile Service Delivery Gateway (MSDG). Forest MIS is an Android app for administering and monitoring nurseries, plantations and assets of the Forest Department using e-Nursery, e-Plantation and e-Asset. This application has been integrated with Bihar GIS portal with geo-stamped photographs enabling the administrators to verify the actual site, its progress etc. on Google or Bing

service maps or imageries. Another application is the PHED MIS, which uses the ground truthing reports of the ongoing schemes/projects which is verified through the uploaded latitude/longitude co-ordinates and geo-tagged photographs through Android apps. Building Construction Department is also using Project MIS utilizing Android apps with GIS. Even messaging services are being utilized for communication by various departments up to the Panchayat level.

**NIC: Please tell your experience with NIC and also elaborate on some of the projects/services of NIC that are successfully running in Bihar.**

**IT Secretary:** We have been receiving extensive support from NIC for all our e-governance efforts. We are presently working on projects to ensure better service delivery for important initiatives like e-Office, Biometric Attendance System, e-Visitor etc. Moreover, Vahan & Sarathi have been implemented in all the districts of Bihar. We were the first state to have generated ration cards for the implementation of National Food Security Act. More than 1.50 crore ration cards covering 6.70 crore beneficiaries have been generated with the help of SECC data and distributed to the citizens in a record time. Live



webcasting facilities have been setup at Bihar Legislative Assembly. Question Reply Management System (QRMS) has been implemented for the Assembly. The software provides facilities for online as well as offline submission of questions by MLAs, processing of questions by Vidhan Sabha officials, reply by departments and forwarding them to their field offices. Prison ERP is being implemented in 55 prisons across Bihar. Online Farm Mechanization Software (OFMAS), e-Counseling i.e. online registration of students and thereafter allotment of seats, have been successfully implemented.

**NIC: As a Secretary, Labour Resource Department, how your department is giving importance to Skill Development activities in Bihar?**

**IT Secretary:** The Bihar Skill Development Mission has been playing an important role in coordinating with various departments to achieve its objective. One of the largest training programs has been in the area of training youths in Information Technology. We have a target of training 6.25 lakh youths in the next five years in the area of Information Technology. This will provide us the

resource for all IT initiatives in the state.

**NIC: Bihar e-Governance initiatives have been acknowledged at National level. Will you brief on key awards that have been conferred to Bihar?**

**IT Secretary:** Bihar received - Gold Award for “Skill Development and employability” at the 18th National Award for e-Governance held during 30<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> January 2015 while Project SAMVIDA has received Silver Award in the category - “Innovative use of Technology in e-Governance”. Earlier, I-Bhugol received GOLD Award in the year - 2012-13. Bihar Public Grievance Redressal System also received the Web Ratna Award in 2012. e-Registration project of the Registration Department, Govt. of Bihar received the prestigious Prime Minister Award for Excellence in Public Administration for the year 2007-08. So, our work has been acknowledged at the national platform and we are continuously working towards conceptualizing new ideas to ensure good governance.

**NIC: What are the recent initiatives undertaken for implementation of**

**cloud based/or other applications in Bihar? What challenges you are anticipating in the times to come?**

**IT Secretary:** We have initiated the implementation of projects like e-Visitor system, Biometric Attendance System and e-Office. We are also driving our efforts to integrate G2C services for delivery of services through SSDG portal and CSCs channel. More than 4000 CSCs are operational in Bihar. We are in the process of setting up of the Bihar Cloud at the State Data Centre, which will host all the e-governance applications.

We have the challenge ahead to leverage Aadhaar seeding into government database and UIDAI based e-KYC authentication in the application system, which will transform delivery of government services.

**NIC: How you feel about strengthening of NIC in next generation e-governance services in Bihar?**

**IT Secretary:** Strengthening of NIC is the key for success of e-Governance initiatives in the state. In view of the growing expectation for implementation and support, NIC District Units should be augmented with additional regular 4-5 technical officers with support staff for maintenance & implementation of horizontal applications in various departments in the district. NIC infrastructure also needs to be augmented to cater to the need of citizen centric services at large. Adoption of e-Gov standards and cloud based application development needs to be promoted in the state with active participation of NIC. NIC should change its role to that of a strategic technical advisor to the State Government for e-governance project. NIC should be equipped with latest IT hardware to deliver more mobile-based services.