Village level online e-Services in Goa: Taking Governance to the grassroots

The e-services from Panchayats through the use of "TalukaSuite Software" via the state Intranet GBBN has made easier and faster as the Talathi directly liaisons with the citizen and Mamlatdar's office. This online eServices at the village level has solved the problem of travelling an average distance of 60 kilometers to visit the South Goa District Administration office to obtain various kinds of certificates.

ARCHANA P. NAGVEKAR
Scientist 'D', NIC Goa
archana.nagvekar@nic.in

N. R. KULKARNI
Scientist 'C' & DIO South Goa
nr.kulkarni@nic.in

The beautiful State of Goa is geographically small compared to many other Indian States. The long Konkan terrain spreading across its many regions and the limited availability of public transportation system makes the travel especially for those from the far-flung villages quite difficult. Citizens had to travel at an average distance of 60 kilometers to visit the South Goa District Administration office for their need to obtain various kinds of Certificates. Multiple visits for accomplishing the same task add to their woes.

Now, there is a great sigh of relief for the citizens as most of these services are provided at their village Panchayat office itself. The South Goa District Collectorate office in collaboration with National Informatics Centre of Goa provides the following seven e-services from Panchayats through the use of 'TalukaSuite Software' via the state Intranet GBBN.

1. Form I & XIV.
2. Residence Certificate.
3. Caste Certificate.
4. Income Certificate.
5. Divergence Certificate.
6. Character Certificate.
7. Freedom Fighter Children Certificate.

These services are made easier and faster as the Talathi directly liaisons

DR. SACHIN SHINDE IAS
Collector & District Magistrate
South Goa

with the citizen and Mamlatdar's office. The citizens' applications are electronically forwarded to the Mamlatdar. Approved applications are made available electronically to the Talathi, who then simply take prints and handover them to the applicant on his or her next visit. The online eServices at the village level were inaugurated on 2nd April, 2014 in the Cola village Panchayat of South Goa district.

Following is the excerpt from interview with the Collector & District Magistrate of South Goa, Dr. Sachin Shinde IAS.

NIC: How have Online Services at the village level benefited the citizen?
Dr. Sachin Shinde: Citizens are provided application, affidavit and self declaration forms in the village

Hon'ble MP of South Goa, Adv. Narendra Sawaikar addressing citizens of Cola village at the inaugural function in Cancona, Goa

panchayats itself. Citizen need not to travel to taluka Mamlatdar/SDO office to avail a service. Application is received by the Talathi, scrutinized and verification report is prepared. It has reduced time delay considerably as compared to earlier procedure. Also, SMS alerts have improved service delivery as application status is intimated to the citizens.

NIC: Right now 7 services are being offered to the citizens. Are there any plans to include more services in the future?

Dr. Sachin Shinde: We will study the work load on Talathis due to these services and subsequently other services such as arms licence renewal, sound permission, mutation, land tax collection can be introduced.

NIC: Since the Talathi is the officer directly in touch with the citizen, can s/he be empowered to issue the requested certificate on the spot? If not what systematic

changes would be required?

Dr. Sachin Shinde: Talathis are empowered to issue Form I & XIV directly on the spot and for other services they have to take approval of the concerned Mamlatdar/SDO to issue a certificate. For rest of the six services, Talathis are forwarding applications online along with documents for approval of the Mamlatdar/SDO and after approval; a certificate is issued to the citizen in village panchayat itself.

NIC: How is the project planned to be sustainable in the long run?

Dr. Sachin Shinde: Project is implemented with the help of NIC South Goa Dist Unit. NIC is taking care of training, technical support for software and database maintenance. Talathis are our own officials to provide services to the citizens, only regular monitoring will be required to sustain project in the long run.

NIC: How can the Cola success story be replicated in other villages?

Dr. Sachin Shinde: Cola & Rachol villages are covered under SAGY (Sansad Aadarash Gram Yogana) and initially these services started in April, 2015 successfully from these two villages. These services are replicated in three talukas Sanguem, Canacona & Dharbandora covering all the village panchayats. These talukas were chosen due to forest & hilly geographical nature. These services are being replicated in other four talukas of South Goa district through Talathi offices at Village Panchayats.