



15th National Conference on e-Governance : An Overview

In recent years the word ‘Governance’ has become buzzword. Partly because of globalization and democratization, ‘Governance’ has now become a keyword in the vocabulary of policymakers, industry leaders, activists and scholars. The increasing integration of markets and states that marks globalization, together with the growing empowerment of citizens has helped to spread the gospel of governance.

With the increasing awareness among citizens about their rights, government today is expected to be transparent in its dealing, accountable for its activities and quicker in responses. This has made the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) imperative in any agenda drawn towards achieving good governance. e-Governance is the logical next step in the use of ICT systems in order to ensure wider participation and deeper involvement of citizens, institutions, civil society groups and the private sector in the decision making process of governance. e-Governance however also presents challenges and opportunities to transform both the mechanics of government and the nature of governance itself. In this context the goals of e-Governance is defined as follows:

1. Better service delivery to citizens

2. Ushering in transparency and accountability
3. Empowering people through information
4. Improved efficiency within Governments
5. Improve interface with business and industry

The Indian Government has been amongst the frontrunners when it comes to initiatives towards adoption of best practices and integrated delivery of information and services to achieve ICT led development in the country. Today, almost every government department is trying to leverage upon the benefits of ICT to provide better services to the common citizen. A number of e-Governance initiatives have been undertaken by the government departments at Central and State levels. Some of the e-Governance projects are already running successfully in different parts of the country.

With a view to provide a platform to e-Governance initiatives across the length and breadth of the country that can serve as beacons of excellence, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Government of India along with Department of Information Technology, Government of India organizes

India's premier event on e-Governance, the National Conference on e-Governance every year. The conference provides a sharing and learning platform for effective interaction of policy makers, practitioners, industry leaders and academicians to deliberate, interact, identify priorities and recommend an actionable strategy for good governance and to improve the standard of citizen centric services rendered to the common man through use of Information Technology. The conference provides a forum for exchange of ideas, experiences, best practices and showcase, recognize, promote excellence in various e-Governance initiatives taken by the Central and State Governments.

This year for the second time Odisha was the proud host of the 15th National Conference on e-Governance which was held at KIIT Convention Centre in the KIIT University Campus at Bhubaneswar on 9th and 10th February 2012. For this year's Conference, the theme was 'Towards Effective Electronic Service Delivery' and the focus sector was 'Local Government'. Around 1500 delegates from across the country participated in the Conference.

Inaugurating the Conference Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik said transparency and accountability are major requirements of good governance and e-Governance helps achieve it. Describing it as a major game changer in empowering the common man's access to information and services, he appreciated the endeavour of Odisha Computer Application Centre (OCAC) for dedicated and diverse application of e-Governance through out the State successfully.

Attending the Conference Union Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office Shri V.Narayanasamy said the country needs to

invest heavily in the hardware sector to stay ahead in the Information Technology.

In his opening address Union Minister of State for Communications and IT, Shri Sachin Pilot said the Government proposes to ensure Broadband Connection to 160 million households by 2020 to make the dream of e-Governance a reality.

State Chief Secretary Shri B.K. Patnaik delivered the welcome address listing out the successful implementation of the e-Governance initiatives in the State, which include e-Dharani, Bhulekh, e-District, e-Municipality, Integrated Odisha Treasury Management system and Students Academics Management system.

The two-day long event went through a thorough deliberation on some key e-Governance issues by eminent policy makers, industry representatives, practitioners, academicians and all stakeholders in the e-Governance domain. Panel discussions were held on the theme of the conference, which are "Towards Effective Electronic Service Delivery, Democratization of Information, Social Audit and Local Government." The Panelists for different sessions were Shri R. Chandrasekhar, Secretary, Department of Information Technology, Government of India, Shri Rajendra Singh Power, Chairman NAASCOM, Shri R.C. Mishra, Secretary, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Government of India, Shri Satyananda Mishra, Chief Information Commissioner, India, Shri Jugal Kishore Mohapatra, Principal Secretary, Finance, Government of Odisha, Shri Aurobinda Behera, Member, Board of Revenue, Odisha, Dr. M.N. Ray, Addl. Chief Secretary, West Bengal, Shri S.N. Tripathy, Principal Secretary, Rural Development, Government of Odisha and Shri

Madhusudan Padhi, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare, Government of Odisha.

Attending the valedictory session His Excellency the Governor Shri Murlidhar Chandrakant Bhandare said, today the number of mobile phone subscribers in India stood over 811 million whereas the number of internet users in India is more than 121 million. Keeping the huge reach of mobile phones in the country, mobile technology can be used to conduct social audit of Government schemes. Eradication of poverty and illiteracy from this vast country should also be the aim of e-Governance, His Excellency the Governor further opined.

His Excellency the Governor gave away National e-Governance awards for exemplary e-Governance initiatives by various organisations. The awards were given in seven categories as follows :

- Category-1 : Excellence in Government Process Re-engineering
- Category-2 : Exemplary Re-use of ICT based solutions.
- Category-3 : Outstanding performance in citizen centric service delivery.
- Category-4 : Innovative use of technology in e-Governance.
- Category-5 : Innovative use of ICT by PSUs for customers benefit.
- Category-6 : Best Government Portal.
- Category-7 : Specific Sectoral Award - Focus Sector - Local Government

Odisha bagged two awards in the best Government Portal category. While Integrated Odisha Treasury Management System (IOTMS), Directorate of Treasuries and Inspection, Department of Finance, Government of Odisha

bagged the Gold, Silver award was given to State RTI Central Monitoring Mechanism implemented by Information and Public Relations Department. Shri Nikunja K. Sundaray, Principal Secretary in the Information and Public Relations Department received the award along with Director, Information and Public Relations, Shri B.P. Mohanty and team members including Shri Ganeswar Jena, Deputy Secretary and Shri Bibekananda Biswal, Chief Monitoring Officer, RTI, I & P.R. Department at the valedictory function. The selection for the award was made after a three-round screening process including field visit and presentation before jury members in New Delhi.

The National e-Governance Programme theme song penned by eminent Hindi Poet Gulzar was launched by Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik on the inaugural day. An Exhibition was organised for various sponsors and participating State Governments at the venue. The stalls showcased their services, products and achievements in the field of e-Governance.

Commissioner-cum-Secretary in I.T. Department, Shri P.K. Jena, the key person in organising this mega event proposed the Vote of Thanks on both the days.

The conference successfully organised by the host State Odisha seeks to usher in a transparent, efficient and effective Government that is better equipped to deliver citizen centric services through use of Information Technology and pave the way for enhancing the quality of life for ordinary people.

Sucheta Priyadarsini, Assistant Information Officer, Information & Public Relations Department, Bhubaneswar.

Adivasi Mela -2012 : True Culmination of Adivasi Art, Artefacts and Culture of Odisha

The Spectacular annual event of ST & SC Development Deptt. in the Adivasi Ground of the Capital City of Bhubaneswar – Adivasi Mela – 2012 started with a big bang on 26th January, evening. The Mela was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Odisha, Shri Naveen Patnaik in the distinguished company of Shri Santosh Kumar Sarangi, Commissioner-cum-Secretary of the Department, Shri S.K. Popli, Director, Shri B.K.Nayak, Member Secretary, ATLC & other senior officers.



The Adivasi Mela was hosted by the ST & SC Development Department to highlight the tribal life, tradition and culture of the State that has as many as 62 tribal & 13 primitive tribal groups. The theme of this year's Mela was "Better livelihood and Happy Life"

In this years' Mela there were 156 stalls and the Mela was divided into seven segments while one segment replicated tribal villages, which was most attractive wherein huts of 29 ST Communities were constructed by 21 ITDA, 8 Micro Projects. In the tribal villages, we find the unique lifestyle of tribals, culture and the like. Another segment was selling tribal products and the fourth had to showcase the tribal food. The rest two were tribal Art and Crafts and various

self sustenance works that tribals have undertaken for their welfare. The seventh segment was the cultural programme of the evening. The rich and unique tribal culture gets a platform at Adivasi Mela. The tribal artistes perform various dance forms like Kathi Nata, Dongria Kondh, Santal, Ho Munda, Ghumura Oraon, Lodha Chhau, Mankiridia, Bathudi dance, drama by the Department and other tribal dance.

The urban denizens get a glimpse of tribal life from close quarters in this Mela. The glittering function hosted by ST/SC Development Department ended on 5th February with His Excellency the Governor Shri M.C. Bhandare gracing the valedictory ceremony.



On the Valedictory day eminent personalities on various spheres were felicitated by His Excellency the Governor of Odisha. They were, Kshamanidhi Bhoj (creative writing), Piyush Munda (Ethno Medicine), Jayadev Nayak (Performing Art), Harish Ch. Pradhan (Creative Writing), Sridhar Singh (Creative writing), Dr. Damayanti Besra (Creative Writing), Miss Laxmipriya Majhi (Athletics), Pramila Kirsani (Sports), Tashil Toppo (Ethno Medicine), and Sudan Kanhar (Social Service). In the Mela 'Santal' House of ITDA, Rairangpur got first prize whereas ITDA, Gunupur depicting "Lanjia Saura" house bagged second Prize and ITDA, Kuchinda depicting "Kisan" house received third prize. Amongst the Micro Project's Stalls, Chukutia Bhunjia Development Agency, Sunabeda, Bonda Development Agency, Mudulipada, Paudi

Bhuinya Development Agency, Rugudakudar received first, second and third prizes respectively. Amongst the Government stalls Directorate of Horticulture was in the first position, Minor Irrigation Department, Mahila Vikash Samabaya Nigam got second and third prize respectively. Besides the theme pavilion O.T.E.L.P. received special Jury Prize for their outstanding presentation on 'Better Livelihood and Happy Life.'

Basically, in the Advasi Mela the SHG members and tribal artisans/farmers were selling various Handicrafts, Handlooms, Agricultural products and the Mela generated transactions nearly two crores. The popular Mela in the Capital City, the Adivasi Mela is being organized every year since 1951. The organization of the Mela by the ST & SC Development Department, Govt. of Odisha is a great step in reflecting tribal architecture, lifestyle, dance, music, handicrafts, handlooms and providing them a marketing platform.

Dr. Jyotirmati Samantaray, Assistant Information Officer, Information & Public Relations Department, Bhubaneswar.

Gram Swaraj to Panchayati Raj - A Journey in search of an Institution

The celebration of Panchayati Raj Diwas on 5th March and casting vote in the recently completed Three-tier Panchayati Election 2012 in the State, it is fact that, it is just an attempt to highlight the long journey of Indian Political System making traditional Panchayats to constitutionalised Panchayats under the auspices of Gandhiji's slogan of Gram Swaraj.

Gandhiji had aptly said, India lies in villages; 'if villages perishes, India will certainly perish. India will be no longer India.' His statement carries the social, economic as well as political perspective of rural India which is valid till date. The Gandhian economy on nation building of free India was based on Gram Swaraj. Regarding his dream of Gram Swaraj, he had narrated, the Village Swaraj must be a complete Republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital want and yet inter-dependent for many things in which dependence is necessary.

Gandhiji's dream of Swaraj was however to some extent modified version of traditional Panchayats which were existed since vedic ages. It was the modern form of the later and was an emphasis of individual freedom and perfect democracy. The traditional panchayats were only meant for protection of the community and materializing the conflict between them. Giving the example of existence of Panchayats Sir Charles Trevellyn puts it that the Village Republics flourished during Hindu, Muslim and Peshwa (Marhata) Governments. The system collapsed

with the advent of East India Company when they used the Panchayats or the Pancha heads to collect revenues. Apart from this, when there was British-India Government in India, the centralization of all executive and judicial powers in the hands of the British bureaucrats also deprived the village functionaries of their age-old tradition of powers and influence.

Keeping a vigil on freedom from bottom to apex, Gandhiji rightly propounded the theory of Gram Swaraj and advocated to bring down the state closer to the people, and to incorporate it in the Indian Constitution. Ironically, his strong advocacy went for a loss in the Constituent Assembly. The concept of Panchayat was deleted in the first draft. However an amendment moved by K. Sauthanam was accepted which later on got incorporated in the Constitution of India through Article-40 of the Directive Principles of State Policy part-IV of the Constitution.

The post Independent period followed on the principle of the Constitution neither accorded rightful status to the Panchayats nor provided adequate teeth to it to function as a local Government and development machinery. In the 2nd five year plan, when new administrative community development blocks were set up with the introduction of C.D. programmes and national extension services in October, 1952, emphasis was given on village level as a vehicle for NES and CD programme. But that was not effective and Panchayats acted as only counters to the above programme at Block level.

Then a study committee headed by Balwantray was ordered to study the impact of the community development and National Extension Programme in all aspects and assess the extent to which these have succeeded in utilizing local institutions. The Mehta Committee team observed that the development cannot progress without responsibility and power. The committee reported, community development can only be a reality when the community understands its problems, realizes its responsibilities, exercises the necessary powers through its chosen representatives and maintains a constant and intelligent vigilance on local administration. It was from this stand point that the Mehta team recommended establishment of popular administration in terms of statutory elective local bodies at village levels and empowering them with the necessary resources, power and authority.

Thus, the implementation of Balwantray Mehta Study Team in the year of 1957 for the democratic decentralization of development administration created a three tier structure of Panchayats which was given the name of Panchayati Raj. It included Gram Sabha, Gram Panchayat at village level and the Panchayat Samiti at the block level and Zilla Parishad at the district level.

Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, inaugurated independent India's first Panchayati Raj at Nagpur of Rajasthan and second one at Shadnagar, Andhra Pradesh. On that historic event, Nehru had quoted that Panchayats are the most revolutionary and historical step in the context of new India. A study team in 1962 indicated that the devolution of power at local level has improved the service delivery at grassroots but there was neither election to the Panchayats nor was adequate funds available with them. That was the result of further study of Ashok Meheta Committee and Singvi Committee.

But Meheta Committee recommendations were the basis of re-structuring of Panchayati Raj

into an institution. In response to the recommendations of Balwantray Mehta Committee in each district the three-tier structure of local self-Government bodies starting from village panchayats at the bottom, Panchayat Samities in the middle and Zilla Parishads at the apex was established. The Panchayats being the grass root organisations were expected to play a vital role in the community development programme.

In fact, Mehta Committee recommendation is a landmark in the process of decentralization of democratic set up which paved for Constitutional Amendment. Thinkers and researchers provided platform for the 73rd Amendment of Constitution of India in the year 1992 that conferred constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

The important features of 73rd Amendment are :

1. Uniform three tier structure of Panchayats at the village, block and district level in all the states except those having a population of more than 20 lakh.
2. One third reservation of women.
3. Reservation for the SCs and STs in proportion to their share of the population.
4. Five year tenure and fresh election within six months in case of their dissolution.
5. State Election Commission for fair election.
6. State Finance Commission for ensuring resources.
7. The 11th schedule having 29 items which may be devolved by the State Legislation on Panchayats for making and implementing plans of economic development and social justice so that they could become institutions of self Government. 29 subjects suggested for transfer to the Panchayats are 1. Agriculture including Agricultural Extension, 2. Land improvement,

implementation of Land Reforms, Land Consolidation and Soil Conservation, 3. Minor Irrigation, Water Management and Watershed Development, 4. Animal Husbandry, Dairy and Poultry, 5. Fisheries, 6. Social Forestry and Farm forestry, 7. Minor forest produce, 8. Small scale industries, including food processing industries, 9. Khadi village and cottage industries, 10. Rural Housing, 11. Drinking water, 12. Fuel and Fodder, 13. Roads, culverts, bridges, ferries, water ways and other means of communication, 14. Rural Electrification, including distribution of electricity, 15. Non-conventional energy source, 16. Poverty alleviation programme, 17. Education including primary and secondary schools, 18. Technical Training and Vocational Education, 19. Adult and non-Formal education, 20. Librarian, 21. Cultural activities, 22. Market and Farm, 23. Health and Sanitation, including hospitals, PHCs and dispensary, 24. Family welfare, 25. Women and child development, 26. Social welfare, including welfare of the handicapped and mentally challenged, 27. Welfare of the weaker section and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, 28. PDS and 29. Maintenance of community assets.

Coming to the context of Odisha, legendary Biju Pattnaik again revived Panchayati Raj in 1992. In early sixties under his Chief Ministership Panchayati Raj flourished in Odisha. On the recommendation of Mehta Committee Govt. of Odisha enacted the Odisha Zilla Parishad Act 1959 making provision for establishment of Panchayat Samities and ZPs. In 1961 the name of the Act was changed to Odisha Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad Act 1959.

As per provisions of the 1959 Act all the 314 CD Blocks were converted into PR blocks each having a Panchayat Samiti consisting of officials and non-officials as its members again in an attempt to reform the P.R. system and the Government of Odisha in 1991 passed 3 important Acts, namely Odisha G.P. Amendment Act, 1991, Odisha Panchayat Samiti

(Amendment) Act 1991 and Odisha Zilla Parishad Act 1991.

While centre was deliberating the 1/3rd reservation for women (including SC/ST groups) Biju Babu implemented 33% reservation of seats for women category. Apart from this, the provision of Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas Act aim at empowering PRIs in Scheduled Areas for economic development and social justice. Needless to say, in the year 2002, for the first time the Odisha Government conducted three-tier PRIs election in conformity with 73rd amendment and PESA thereby empowering tribal people as envisaged under PESA.

Visionary Biju Babu also made provisions for women for the post of Vice-Chairman at all level. After Biju Babu, his ideology for empowering women starting right from grass root level is being followed in many other states in the country, which expressed reluctance to reserve 50% positions for women in PRIs. Our government has made this provision and the Panchayat Election conducted with 50% reservation for women category and also declared to train them in the line of 11th schedule of Constitution of India.

After over a five decades, Gandhiji's dream has come into reality. The Constitution have provided rights for people's participation in the local level planning and implementation. The Gram Sabha, a body consisting of electors of a Panchayat to which a Gram Panchayat is accountable for its every action and inaction. Endowed with so many powers and responsibilities, the elected representatives of PRIs should come forward in reducing poverty, illiteracy and other social backwardness. They need to exercise their power, execute policies, take decisions in planning process for themselves as well as for the betterment of their society.

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