

The Initial Hiccups

One of the most challenging tasks IT & C had during the initial days of Mee Seva was to establish Mee Seva as a citizen's **one stop e-governance shop**. The department conducted a baseline study and learned that the initiative would not survive unless they bring all the departments under the ambit of Mee Seva and make it popular among citizens.

As an initial step, IT & C identified the government departments which had high public interfaces, like Revenue, Police, Urban Local Bodies, Health, Education, Social welfare, Rural Development etc., and initiated discussions with them. At the same time they also deployed teams to learn the issues and problems faced by the citizens while accessing information/services/benefits from these departments. The directions to the teams were very simple and clear: learn the ground realities rather than understanding the superficial reasons.

Studies done by the teams revealed that the large demand and lack of transparency had resulted in wide spread corruption and breeding of large number of unauthorized agents and touts. As a result, at many places, these unauthorized touts had created a monopolistic environment and were looting citizens.

Standardization & ESD Rules

To curb these and to ensure that the requests were processed only through authorized channels, IT & C decided to standardize the entire delivery channels across the state. Subsequently, all the authorized/recognized delivery channels, including CSCs, APOnline centers etc, were converted into Mee Seva centers. These centers, both in rural and urban, followed a uniform look and feel, same process models and delivery mechanisms and also were run by self-employed youth. These youths, besides eking their livelihood, provided a decentralized self-governance backbone to the administrative system. These multiple service delivery points, which were run by youths, redefined the governance and brought in strict adherence to citizen charter time limits.

Mee Seva in Telugu means 'At your service', i.e. service to citizens.

In addition to these, the state also came up with ESD rules. Government of Andhra Pradesh issued Andhra Pradesh Information Technology Rules (Electronic Service Delivery), 2011 in order to provide legal sanctity to the digitally signed certificates. It was also made mandatory for Departments to migrate to electronic service delivery within a period of three years. This ensured that departments moved to electronic delivery of services with in a period of time. These initial steps played a vital role in helping the state in stabilizing the initiative right from the beginning.

IT Readiness of Departments

Convincing other departments and bringing them under the Mee Seva parasol was another and perhaps one of the most challenging tasks the team had to undertake. Inter departmental coordination meetings

were arranged regularly with key departments to ensure that they join the bandwagon. When the top level officers concentrated on convincing the department, the rest of the team worked on identifying the level of IT Readiness of each department

The team studied the hardware gaps and necessity and helped the department in establishing Backend hardware, wherever required. This ensured that the hardware available in the department were capable and adequate enough to support high transaction applications..

District eGovernance Societies

Another bold step from the state came in the form of District e-Governance Societies. Such societies were formed, registered and empowered to function as nodal agencies for the implementation of Mee Seva. These DeGSs, too, played a vital role in implementing Mee Seva. With the help of these DeGSs, the central team did many capacity building activities in every districts and mandals and ensured that the IT awareness levels of department officers were enhanced. In the similar manner, training for using digital signatures was also given to the concerned officers.

Architecture

One of the advantages of Mee Seva is it's a centralized architecture. The entire solution was hosted at a state of art State Data Center. The Web Based System, which was deployed at a central location, ensured that the services were easily accessible to all the stakeholders, anytime and anywhere. The n-tier web-based solution, i.e. Web based application, was developed along with PKI Engine and Payment Processing systems. The project worked on an Integrated Service Delivery Model to provide a single entry point for a wide range of services to the citizens. It also brought in a digital PKI enabled integrated architecture through multiple service delivery points by blending various pre-existing state initiatives with the Mission-mode Projects like State Data Center (SDC), State Wide Area Network (SWAN) and Common Service centers (CSCs).

Mee Seva adopted the concept of central pooling of records. The records were digitally signed and stored in the database and were rendered using a web-service. Additionally the fact that citizens/officers can verify the authenticity of such digitally signed electronically made such documents tamper proof.

For processing the service requests pertaining to the departments, the concerned department user had to log in either into the departmental portal or Mee Seva directly with a secure user id, password and digital certificate. The portal would then display all the requests received from the citizens at various centres like APOne/eSeva/CSC etc. The entire process was done through single sign on facility and this allowed seamless operation of various interfaces and systems. Once the department user processed the requests by conducting field verification, he updated the status and remarks accordingly on the Mee Seva portal. Thus the system reduced a lot of manual efforts by consolidating the data and also made the decision-making process an easy task. Besides, it also provided integration between heterogeneous systems cutting across departments.

The project also brought in strict adherence to the citizen charter time limits and ushered in a whole new paradigm of across the counter services concept through massive porting and bulk signing of databases.

The first quarter of the financial year 2012-13 witnessed a dramatic growth pattern. The services were extended to all 23 districts. Mee Seva added 12 more services and additional 2500+ centers to its basket. By June end, the total transactions had reached up to .3 Million. Mee Seva continued adding departments and services to its list and by November 2012, when it became 1 year old, it had around 5000 centers, 53 services and had already crossed 75,00,000 transactions mark.

Success of any initiative lies not only in its usefulness but also in its popularity. Mee Seva, too, utilized that principle. It used various combinations of media platforms, such as: Electronic Media, Television, Print Media, and Display Boards etc., to gain popularity among the citizens. In addition to these, Mee Seva also rewarded the high performance and at the same time penalized the inefficiencies severely. These steps ensured that Mee Seva had not only made an efficient delivery channel for the citizens, but also had made a strong and sound business model for its stake holders. This in return helped Mee Seva and its stakeholders to wipe out its dependencies on Government agencies for budget.

Government Process Re-engineering (GPRs)

Government process re-engineering was done to improvise overall efficiency of Government service delivery. IT&C department had envisioned procedural changes in various government processes to enable faster delivery of services, optimization of operational cost and improvement in quality of service delivery. The GPRs were identified in various departments and implemented in various dimensions including technology, human resources, organization procedures etc. WEBLAND for Revenue Department, ISES certificates (for caste, income and nativity), Centralized CARD for Registration Department and Universal Birth & Death Certificate for Municipality & Panchayats and Centralized CDMA system (Commissioner & Director of Municipal Administration); software applications were created. These eliminated unnecessary sections of traditional departmental processes, incorporating advanced technology for automating the services and redesigning existing workflow to reduce overall efforts.

WEBLAND: Webland system is a web based, centralized land records management system aimed at efficient management of land records and providing quicker and Across-The-Counter services to citizen. It manages 42.5 Million land records belonging to 15 Million Agricultural Land Owners along with Crop details. Entire revenue records were digitized, ported and digitally signed by respective Tahsildars for rendering revenue services across the counter. It has the provision to carryout mutations. Government lands are categorized into 34 categories and are allotted Unique Codes.

Earlier land records in Andhra Pradesh were available in respective 1128 Tahsil Offices in a decentralized mode. Software version control was a problem. It required 1128 Oracle database licenses. There were no tools to monitor to accuracy of the data. No technical persons were available at Mandal level. No

uniform Land codes were adopted by Tahsildars. Data was not reusable and not interoperable with other departments' data.

Integrated Socio-Economic Survey of Students (ISES): As part of the Mee Seva, the Government took a decision to conduct a survey of all students studying in SSC (Class X) and above and create a digitally signed database of their Income, Residence and Integrated (Caste-Nativity-Date of Birth) Certificates. A web based application- ISES, for this purpose, was designed and developed by National Informatics Centre, Hyderabad, to aid the department in the preparation of the digitally signed database of student records so as to enable electronic delivery of the above mentioned certificates across the counter (Category A services) during the high demand admission period.

ISES application became operational since 1st January, 2012. Till date, .15 Million Income Certificates, .15 Million Integrated Certificates, and 0.03 Million Residence Certificates have been issued to the students across the counter from various Mee Seva centers/kiosks.

Centralized CARD Application: Digital document repository of various registration documents was available with Registration Department in respective SRO offices in a decentralized mode since 1983. From August 2012 onwards department had put efforts to convert distributed database into centralized database, which contained 21.1 Million various registration documents till date. Centralized CARD application enabled citizens to avail most of the services across-the-Counter anywhere in a particular jurisdiction.

These progressive reforms led development of innovative business models in Government service delivery; thus removing inconsistencies in the system and enhancing efficiency of SLAs (time, cost, resources etc.). The systems were developed by optimizing, redefining and automating existing Government processes benefitting citizens and various Government departments.

Communication and Dissemination Strategy

IT&C department utilized the power of communication in effective implementation of Mee Seva project and has innovatively devised an exclusive communication strategy utilizing various media platforms such as: Electronic Media, Television, Print Media, and Display Boards etc. along with established PR techniques to connect with various stakeholders of the projects. Mee Seva communication strategy incorporates various key segments where information is required to be communicated to stakeholders such as: capacity building, awareness, stakeholder motivation & enhanced participation, feedback/grievance management, conflict resolution, developing common interactive forums etc.

Mee Seva Portal: Mee Seva Portal is an online mode of communication for Government, citizens and kiosk operators.

Social media tools (e.g., Facebook): Mee Seva face book page was created and managed by Project Management Unit (PMU), where citizens can directly interact with PMU on various issues and participate in cohesive development of the project. Regular updates on news, events, service launch etc. is being done on the page by PMU.

Television Media: IT&C Department had collaborated with MANA TV to impart Mee Seva trainings through television.

Citizen Charter Boards: Citizen Charter Boards providing details such as service name, timelines, service levels, charges etc., was placed in Mee Seva centers. These boards helped citizens to have easy access to information by just going through the citizen charter information.

Mee Seva Award Functions: Mee Seva Award Functions were conducted on achieving key milestones (Completion of 10 Million and 20 Million Mee Seva Transactions) and IT excellence awards were distributed to government department officials and kiosk operators who had performed exceptionally well in implementation of Mee Seva Services.

Discussion Forum: Citizens and Kiosk operators can participate in the online forum by placing their queries, suggestions etc; which were recorded and redirected to Mee Seva Project Management Unit (Mee Seva PMU) for further processing. This forum provides an alternative and valuable mode of communication where citizens can communicate their problem in a public forum and also get a feeling of trust as the problems are immediately addressed by Mee Seva PMU.

1100 (Call Centre): Citizens/kiosk operators can call customer care people where feedback/grievance details were registered detailing the issues and tickets were raised and redirected to concerned agency or government department for problem resolution.

Workshops/Trainings: IT&C Department collaborated with Institute of e Governance (IEG), Hyderabad to organize trainings to kiosk operators and department officials on Mee Seva services. Monthly Training calendar was prepared and communicated to government offices and kiosk operators. 56011 department officials and kiosk operators had been trained till 26th September 2013 by capacity building team of IT&C department

Video Conferencing: State Secretariat to District/Mandal video conferences were conducted to communicate various developments regarding Mee Seva project as well as to discuss various issues pertaining to effective implementation of Mee Seva.