LEARNINGS ABOUT LEARNING

“The children in my village are not able to progress as far as they could because of a lack of quality education,” Narendra says. “Parents and children must get involved and make sure that poor kids can access quality schooling.” Narendra Kumar is a 14-year-old boy hailing from Pure Gosain, Uttar Pradesh. This statement of his was made at the UNICEF junior summit held in Italy last year.

Along with Narendra, 16-year-old Samjukta Pangi from Semiliguda, Orissa and 17-year-old Samuel Venkatesan from Shoolagiri, Tamil Nadu also attended the conference. And all the three had complimenting views about the need for quality education in rural areas.

The pride of Kerala as the first state to achieve total literacy was pricked when a survey revealed that those who claimed to be literate merely made sketches of alphabets – neither wrote nor read comprehensively. Parliamentary Standing Committee on education was informed recently that many states failed to spend the funds released to them for improving elementary education under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA).

The above mentioned situations are proving to be paradoxical because of a vital link that connects the top-down supply-side measures and the demand-driven groundswell for quality education at the villages’ level. Let us not forget that rural Bharat is far larger in number and resources than the urban India. Yet, in the given situation, the challenges for improving the quality of education in the rural areas remain as a tall order because, elementary requirements for schooling such as a school buildings, teachers, and other teaching facilities. None of them can reach the hinterland easily.

On the other hand, NASSCOM, says that each year over 3 million graduates and post-graduates are added to the Indian workforce. However, of these only 25 percent of technical graduates and 10–15 percent of other graduates are considered employable by the rapidly growing IT and ITES segments. Hence, what we have today is a growing skills gap reflecting the slim availability of high-quality college education in India and the galloping pace of the country’s service-driven economy, which is growing faster than most countries in the world.

As in many other cases, ICT can once again come up with the solution through e-Learning. Many companies in the country have successfully demonstrated the impact of e-learning in remote regions. E-Learning modules can be a very useful tool at the hands of the learners – both in content and quality. E-learning is different from distance learning. CSCs can be the ideal “missing link” in the education supply-demand specter with e-learning modules.

Two developments, though occurred separately, were linked in many ways. The state anchors of the NLSA had recently conducted a field visit of the CSCs recently. In an independent exercise, DIT too has sent out a team of officers to visit and assess the CSCs in different states. Both have brought home more or less identical results. That VLEs are willing to wait for G2C services rollout as long as they have good e-Learning modules to offer.
Common Services Centers Scheme

Newsletter

Progress So Far (As on 31 January 2010)

- CSC rolled out - 60,837 (27 States)
- Online Monitoring Tool Installed - 26,488 (23 States)
- Implementation underway - 45,449 CSCs (27 States)

The Latest in CSC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSC ID Created</td>
<td>40,693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCA Withdrawn</td>
<td>3i &amp; Comat Technologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andhra Pradesh rebid in 2 Zones</td>
<td>Zone 2 &amp; 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIC integrated with the CSC Scheme</td>
<td>Sikkim(45), Nagaland(52), Manipur(39)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Electoral Rolls Updation & EPIC Generation through CSCs, Tamil Nadu

With basic support equipment like printer, scanner, UPS, the connectivity as the background and additional equipment for various purposes. The Election Commission of India in response to the proposal of the CEO, West Bengal had accorded in principal approval to provide electoral/ voter services through CSCs.

The electoral services are one of the Government services to be delivered through the CSCs. They are to deliver Government to consumer services at a reasonable cost as determined by the Government. The SCA would be handling applications for inclusion/ modification/ deletion of names in the electoral roll including scanning of photos/ capture of images through digital cameras available at CSCs. They have charged for a service charge of Rs.15 per applicant or a charge as fixed by the elections department for undertaking the job. The service charge would be reimbursed by the Elections Department as may be agreed upon.
Jammu Kashmir Bank has launched the Common Services Centre Scheme in Jammu & Kashmir with the inauguration of seven CSC centres in different Districts of the state in December. The centres named as Kidmat Centres were inaugurated simultaneously in Ganderbal, Bandipore, Pulwama, Budgam, Udhampur. With the inauguration of these centres 100 more centres went online and started offering services.

The centres were inaugurated by Minister for Animal Husbandry and IT, Aga Syed Ruhullah at Bathara and Watervani in Budgam district. The inaugurations at Freistabal and Kadlabal in District Pulwama and Udhampur were done by respective members of Parliament Mirza Mehboob Beigh and Ch.Lal Singh. The Centre at Sumbal in Bandipore District was inaugurated by Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Muhammad Akbar Lone.

While inaugurating the centres in Budgam district, minister for Animal Husbandry and IT appreciated the role of J&K Bank and hoped that people will make full use of these centres for availing the services which have been made available at these centres at present and the ones which are likely to be added in future.

Vice President J&K Bank and Incharge CSC Project Khursheed A Pandit, who was also present at the occasion informed the CSC scheme as a part of the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) which has been formulated with the vision of providing all government services in an integrated manner at the doorstep of the citizen at affordable cost.

He announced that “The number of these centres which is 100 at present, will go up to 300 by the end of this month and all 1109 centres are expected to be rolled by March 2010 which shall directly provide employment to 1100 educated youth of the state”.

With regard to services that shall be available at these centres, Vice president informed that, besides on line services like air ticketing, railway ticketing, banking facilities, mobile services, DTH services, people can also avail services like digital photography, DTP, web surfing, photocopying, form downloads etc from these centres. As and when government takes up the digitization of records Kidmat centres shall offer key government services like issuance of land records, vehicle registration, issuance of certificates, electoral services, payment of utility bills etc.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony in Pulwama district, Member Parliament Mirza Mehboob Beigh appreciated the role of the J&K Bank and its chairman Dr. Haseeb Drabu in implementing this project. He said that, “The state is heading towards information highway wherein lot of services could be made available through these centers to bridge the gap between Government and people, services and people, and also make up for the time lost.” Ch.Lal Singh said about the Kidmat centres that “People should make full use of the facilities being provided at the centre and that these centres will be able to provide the facilities to the common people at their doorstep and people will no longer need to visit the Govt offices and railway counters as all these services will be available at these centres”
MOU for online G2C services between West Bengal Labour Department and WBSRDA, P&RD Department

A MOU has been signed by the Secretary Labour Department, Government of West Bengal and the Principal Secretary, P&RD Department and CEO WBSRDA for extending following online G2C services of Directorate of Employment Exchanges:

1. Registration for New Employment Exchange Card
2. Updation of Employment Exchange Card
3. Renewal of Employment Exchange Card
4. Issue of Duplicate Employment Exchange Card

It is the first G2C Online Service in West Bengal and state is anxiously waiting for its successful implementation. A pilot is going to start in Hooghly district. Extensive training to the VLEs are being organized during 8th to 12th of December. The employment officers of the concerned employment exchanges will be imparting the trainings and the officials from SDA and NLSA will also attend the orientation. SREI Sahaj e-village Limited is requested to deploy some officials during the training for eventually scaling up in other parts of the state immediately after January 2010. The Labour department has been requested for due publicity in the local areas through our network and district administration / Blocs / GPs and CSCs so that majority of the job seekers can take this opportunity of getting the services at their door steps instead of attending the concerned Employment Exchanges. The labour department has been requested also to issue letters to concerned VLEs of CSCs for doing the work on behalf of the department. Now a SLA will be signed between WBSRDA and SREI Sahaj e-village Limited very shortly for delivering the Online G2C Services through the CSCs in the state.
Inauguration of Seva Mitra Kendras (One Stop Window for G2C Services) in Seoni District, Madhya Pradesh

With the active interest of District Collector, Seoni (Jabalpur division, SCA: Reliance), Seva Mitra Kendras are made operational for delivery of district level G2C services. Services were launched by Mr. Harvansh Singh, Dy. Speaker of MP Vidhan Sabha. A few MLAs of the district viz. Mr. Shashi Thakur, Ms. Neeta pateria, Mr. Kamal Marskole, MD, MPSEDC, Mr. Anurag Shrivastava, District Collector, Mr. Manohar Dubey, Officials of District Administration and Reliance communications were present on the occasion.

Presently about 24 Centres are made operational which will increase to 80 shortly. Citizens can now come to Seva Mitra Kendra and apply for Government Services such as Caste Certificate / Income Certificate / Birth Certificate / Death Certificate / BPL Ration Card / Khasra Nakal etc, for which they had to go to Block and District Offices earlier. At present 14 Government Services are delivered through Seva Mitra Kendras.

Government Officers (belonging to various services) were instructed to visit the Seva Mitra Kendra on the days specified by the district administration to collect the hard copies/ supporting documents. Officials were instructed to spend the entire day at the Seva Mitra Kendra and interact with the citizens. Their log-in time and log-out time is recorded on a Bio Metric access device installed at the Seva Mitra Kendra.

This would prove very beneficial to the citizens as people would have easy access to their requirements.
CSC inaugurated in Nagpur

Shri. Sachin Pilot, Honorable Minister of State for Communication and IT visited a Nagpur Urban CSC on the 14th of January 2010 for its inauguration.

The CSC centre inaugurated is:
Shri. Ritesh Mandh (VLE)
Block No. N–13, Kailash Appartments,
Kamptee Road,
Near Indora Chowk, Taluka – Nagpur

Shri. Sachin Pilot, talked to the VLE, RCOM officials and the coordinating team of CSC. He appreciated the way the CSC centres operate. He wanted to know about the availability of connectivity at the CSC centres. He was also interested to know about the business model followed by the VLEs and about the various G2C and B2C services that are available at the CSC centres.

People present there wanted to know from Shri Sachin Pilot about the availability of the G2C services. He informed that the software has been developed by RCOM and is awaiting approval from the district collectors. He expressed his opinion that a uniform software should be developed by the state Government and the districts should follow the approval orders.

Sri. Pilot also expressed his satisfaction over the services offered by the VLE, such as computer training, IRCTS booking etc. which are essential for the sustainability of the CSCs and that they were provided by the VLEs. He asked the people present there to make use of the CSC centres so as to have many other services brought in.