The potential of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in general and telecentres in particular in combating poverty, illiteracy, lack of adequate medical facilities, low agricultural productivity, etc., have been extolled across the world. Despite multiple efforts aimed at making ICT a productive tool for socio-economic development for the rural and underprivileged masses, only limited success has been achieved.

A key component of implementing this programme and scaling up, is sensitization and capacity building that help to build the necessary skills and capacities in grassroots organizations to use ICTs for community development. Towards this end, DIT has undertaken a significant step through DOEACC for training of Village Level Enterpreneurs (VLEs) across the country. The programme was launched in Mizoram and soon Tripura followed suit where the first batch received its training in September. It is expected that in next 4-6 months all VLEs shall receive the training and certification from DOEACC. In addition, the training of VLEs for digitization of the National Population Register (NPR) is expected to begin soon. The state governments also are making special efforts to integrate CSCs in their public service delivery process and offering them special training – as happened in Himachal Pradesh recently.

All these trainings enable VLEs to not only upgrade their own skills but will also enable them to substantially increase their revenue by offering new services such as e-Learning courses, DOEACC or IGNOU accredited courses and other ICT enabled services. In addition, such skill upgradation plays a key role in the VLEs ability to exploit opportunities such as RBI’s guidelines enabling VLEs to become BCs or conducting work under NPR.

At the core of these or for that any other initiative is the VLE’s ability to create and maintain his/her relevance in the village community. Just as the choupal used to be the heart of all village activities, VLE must ensure that CSCs are the new choupal – place to exchange information, learn new skills and celebrate festivals.

Here’s wishing all a very Happy Deepawali !!
Progress So Far (As on 30th September 2010)

• CSC rolled out - 84,830

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Status/ States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online Tool Installation Completed</td>
<td>47721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VLE Training conducted</td>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VLE Training conducted</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
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OMT Installation Training – Tripura

A 1 day training programme was conducted in Tripura on the 16th of September 2010 for the Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs) of the Common Service Centers (CSCs). The main objective was to make the VLEs aware of the Online Monitoring Tool, its utility and also to train them on the installation process so as to avoid problems that generally occur during tool installation. This programme was organised with the help of the SCA-Bhartiya Samriddhi Finance Limited. Around 25–30 VLEs were trained across both the Districts of Tripura (West and South).
West Bengal is one of the leading States in terms of implementation of the CSC Scheme. The CSC Scheme was launched in the State soon after its inception and was the first State to sign the contract with the Service Centre Agencies (SREI Sahaj and Reliance Communications) for setting up of 6797 CSCs. This is the only state that has appointed the Department of Panchayats and Rural Development as the nodal agency to manage the CSCs.

Various innovative steps have been taken by the State Government to deliver citizen centric services through the CSCs and to make the CSCs viable. West Bengal Rural Development Agency (WBSRDA) on behalf of Department of Panchayats & Rural Development, Government of West Bengal, has developed a dedicated web-based module for the assistance to bidders intending to perform activities related to e-Procurement through a CSC. WBSRDA has shortlisted VLEs from each district and conducted residential trainings. The training was followed by evaluation procedures, through offline and online test on live service delivery and a total thirty-two VLEs were selected for extending the G2C services for this pilot across eighteen districts. The P&RD Department, Government of West Bengal has issued Government Order in this regard for enabling CSCs to offer assistances to the prospective bidders on activities related to the e-Procurement through the citizen-centric portal of WBSRDA viz. http://www.wbsrda.org/egov.

SDA has already signed MoU with Dept. of Post, West Bengal Circle, under MIT, GoI regarding extension of basis postal services through CSC. Initiative is now been taken to rollout the service on pilot basis in North 24 Pgs, South 24 Pgs, Howrah, Hooghly and Nadia. List of prospective VLEs have been prepared from delivering Speed Post and RPLI services to start with.

SDA is also in the process of developing a comprehensive mechanism for training of VLEs for different G2C services through a decentralized machinery and possibility of funding the activities are being explored from different sources. The said activity would be an important prerequisite for scaling up G2C services on Employment under Labour Department Government of West Bengal which is expected to cover around one and a half thousand VLEs spread over ten districts.

For the purpose of uniform delivery of service through CSCs across the state irrespective of rural and urban areas, SDA has started locating CSCs at Municipalities, Sub Divisional Head Quarters, Zilla Parishads and also at State Head Quarters. Such a model CSC has been set-up at the very own office of SDA at ground floor of Jessop Building, being operated by an SHG member.

In order to facilitate online transaction through the citizen-centric portal of WBSRDA, a payment gateway is proposed to be introduced and the technical options are currently being explored by SDA in this regard.

Various Services offered:
BSNL Bill collection, Electricity Bill collection of West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (WBSEDCL), Issuing of duplicate receipts, Doing new registrations, CSCs used for e-tendering process, Railway ticket reservation done.
NICT is appointed as the Service Centre Agency for implementing Common Service Center Project in 2158 locations in Indore and Ujjain division of Madhya Pradesh in association with Government of India and Government of Madhya Pradesh. Presently NICT has set up centers in Madhya Pradesh. NICT is utilizing the digital opportunity through the CSC Project launched by Government of India for rural development and power eradication.

The major services that are run in most of the kiosks are Banking, Micro Insurance, Micro Loans, Telecom Recharge, Dish TV and Tata Sky Sale and recharge, Sale of Agro Input material etc.

NICT has also implemented automated Gram Panchayat Software individually at each Gram Panchayat CSC Centre and started providing Birth Certificate, Death Certificate, basic MIS of Gram Panchayat, documentation of Gram Panchayat and providing MIS in soft copy to Tehsil and Collectorate.

NICT presently has started delivering several high value services through the Common Services Centers focusing more on the sustainability and viability of the VLEs operating those kiosks. The VLEs now act as the Business Correspondents (BCs) and Business Facilitators (BFs) with State Bank of India.

The VLEs are now making very good business acting as BC and BF and their average earnings per month is now Rs.15000/- to Rs.17000/-.

Various Services offered through CSCs in Madhya Pradesh:

Offering Banking Services. VLEs operating as Business Correspondents (BC) and Business Facilitators (BF) of State Bank of India.

Electricity Bill payment and collection in the entire Indore and Ujjain division

Issuing of NAREGA job cards

Dilip Agarwal, a resident of Badwani District in Madhya Pradesh opened CSC Pati 1 year back. He was earlier a bus conductor and also had a small computer centre. CSC Pati is 22 kms away from SBI branch. It is mandatory to have a kiosk banking centre within 25 kms from any SBI branch. Presently he is having around 1700 savings accounts with transactions of Rs.34,38,080 from his CSC centre. He is also trying to open bank accounts for prisoners so that they can deposit their wages against the work done and withdraw the same at the time they are relieved.

Akhilesh Jaiswal, a graduate by degree had a CSC centre where he only did MPEB electricity bill collection and other MP Online services. He had to deposit the collected amount in the bank on a daily basis. He found the process very slow. On contacting NICT he started kiosk banking services from his CSC centre. He started initially by opening 16 savings bank accounts and now he is having 2100 savings account with a transaction amount of Rs.19,18,223 from his kiosk centre. He is now very much enjoying operating the banking services from his own village.
Wi-Max Service launched (Tripura)

Telecom player BSNL Tripura SSA launched WIMAX Phase 1 across four districts of Tripura. This phase of WIMAX would cover 22 locations across 37 out of 40 blocks of the State. Being present at the launching occasion, BSNL General Manager reiterated the fact that the telecom major is going to cover 60% of all the CSC locations covering Phase I of WIMAX. He also stated that the remaining locations of CSCs would be covered in the next phase of WIMAX II starting January 2011. Honorable Chief Minister of the State, Shri Manik Sarkar urged BSNL to provide WIMAX to the CSCs across States so as to enable G2C services to start soon in the State. This would benefit a significant section of the society in improving the socio economic strata. Currently, this service is largely post-paid but BSNL is soon to start the pre-paid service in the State. The present charges for the connection are Rs.999 and Rs.1999 for individuals and business respectively.

DOEACC Training (Tripura)

RIELIT, Agartala conducted a 2 day contact programme for the Village Level Enterpreneurs (VLEs) pertaining to the training of Common Service Centre (CSC) on DOEACC Course on Computer Concepts (CCC) in e-Learning mode. In total there were 27 candidates who have undergone the first phase of training on the 9th and 10th of September 2010 at RIELIT, Agartala. Tripura is second in line to have DOEACC training after Mizoram.
Akshaya – IGNOU a unique bonding (Kerala)

Akshaya, a child of innovation and creativity always considered the ‘impossible’ as the inevitable. It played on the edges of limits and took intelligent risks and traveled where no one had gone and left a trail of excellence. Akshaya which started in 2002 as a project of Kerala state IT Mission has moved leaps and bounds to set new standards in citizen service.

There was a time when Kerala surpassed all spheres of growth except in the area of ICT and the Akshaya brought the revolution by launching e-literacy program. It was a highly successful venture by declaring 8 districts of Kerala as 100% e-literate. When many institutions came up in this line Akshaya expanded its circle by providing ICT based G2C services.

Akshaya’s Vision to provide world-class services; led Akshaya to join hands with Indira Gandhi Open University (IGNOU). IGNOU is the World’s largest University in Student enrollment on Internet. In “Top Universities Ranking Guide” by Wikipedia, IGNOU tops the list of 61 universities with the strength of over 30 lakh learners enrolled in 338 programs. High quality, self-instructional multimedia and online materials, well designed learner support system are the few attractive features of IGNOU. Akshaya has become the largest partner of IGNOU by admitting over 2500 students for various academic courses.

The reason for success lies in the fact that the mission for both Akshaya and IGNOU is more of less the same i.e. bridge the knowledge divide and empower the citizens through information dissemination. But both their paths are different. IGNOU’s tool is education whereas Akshaya imparts ICT based learning courses and G2C services to the citizens. The advantage is that since Akshaya has centers in every nook and corner of Kerala, it is easy for the citizen to access and thus could spread IGNOU Courses into the remotest area. More over friendly face of Akshaya Entrepreneurs helped rural populace to take up the IGNOU Courses and benefit out of it. Akshaya is focused on reaching the needy, the deprived, the differently enabled and the unreachable to make a difference to their lives.

Bipin Kumar of Kadanchira village of Kottayam District while doing a Degree Course in nursing had a fatal accident and lost both his hands and could not complete the course. But his strong will power and Self confidence made him to find a way out from his utter dilemma. Even though life played a fatal game with him, he never lost his hope. Surprisingly Akshaya and IGNOU came to his aid and became the reason for his smile. Bipin joined the 10 days e-literacy program of Akshaya and since Akshaya Centre was the only study centre of IGNOU, Bipin had taken up a 3 months CLP course and completed successfully. This inspired him to join an advance course in web designing. Now he is waiting to join BCA course of IGNOU.

Akshaya is also privileged to spread a noble mission of bringing visually challenged into the world of IT. The teachers of the Assissi Blind School, Kottayam are the master trainers by Akshaya to provide computer training to the visually challenged youngsters. These teachers not only wished to be self sufficient in all the modes of life, but also expected to be a part of a mission to support their fellow beings. But they never expected that the day is not so far when visually challenged also will be able to explore the benefits of Information Technology.

INSIGHT is a ICT based training course launched by Govt of Kerala and implemented through IT Mission and Akshaya with the aim of uplifting visually challenged into the world of Information Technology. The software of INSIGHT is developed in LINUX– The Training will be imparted to the visually challenged who falls under the age of 15–40.

With the satisfaction of being a part of this team, the teachers of Assissi School say: “This software would definitely remove the stumbling blocks in the path of visually challenges to reach their ultimatum and we are thankful to all those who are behind this great venture”.

Innovation is the Manthra for exploring new frontiers for opportunities in ever changing requirements of society. Akshaya–IGNOU partnership has been a complete win–win and an unparalleled success.
Inauguration of Basic IT Training (Sikkim)

The vision of Government of Sikkim is to make all its citizens e-literate. The other aim is capacity building of IT skills of the unemployed youth in order to enhance their employability skills. In order to achieve the objective, IL&FS Education and Technology Services Limited has collaborated with Sikkim Armed Police (SAP) for providing basic IT training to SAP personnel and unemployed youth through Common Service Centre (CSC), Sikkim. This programme was held only at Pangthan. The programme was formally inaugurated by H’ble Chief Minister of Sikkim, Mr. Pawan Chamling on the 28th of September 2010 at Pangthan CSC. The programme was graced by Chief Secretary, GoS, Principal Director, DIT, Sikkim, IG, Sikkim Police, Principal Secretary, DOPART and other dignitaries.

G2C Training by State Designated Agency (Himachal Pradesh)

Himachal Government is diligently working towards enabling information and Government Services to rural citizens. The public services are made available through CSCs which include e-Samadhan, Electricity bill payment and collection, application submission for various vacancies of Himachal Pradesh Public Services Commission (HPPSC), facility to apply online for Senior citizens and Disability card, voter registration and modification, expert advisory services for farmers and various forms for forest, agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry and fisheries department.

To build in confidence amongst VLEs, G2C training workshop was organized in all the districts of Himachal Pradesh. These G2C training workshops acted as platform for encouraging District Administration to support LMKs and ensure a hands-on learning opportunity to VLEs in extending Government services to rural areas through LMKS.
**Skoch Award**

NICT and Madhya Pradesh Paschim Kshetra Vidyut Vitaran Company Ltd. Has been awarded by Skoch ICT for India Bridging Bharat and India Award 2010 for Computerized Bill collection and Online Remittance system. The award was given to NICT on Digital Innovation on the 22nd of September 2010 at New Delhi.

**e-Nagarik Seva**

All applications for Caste, Income, Residence are processed through the e-Nagarik Seva Software. Presently more than 400 CSCs are delivering the service. The Birth and Death Certificates have not been included as the Registrar of Registration proposed an Online Application and processing system. As that would take some time, the e-Nagarik Seva had been made mandatory in Jharkhand for receipt and issue of all certificates. District Collector of Deoghar had approved the issue of Birth and Death certificates in e-Nagarik Seva. The service was launched in Sarwan Block of Deoghar district on the 28th of September 2010 and certificates were distributed to the applicants by the District Collector. These certificates are to be issued within a minimum of 8 days from the day of application. It is expected that this service will not only enhance public convenience but will also motivate people to register all births and deaths promptly.
प्रजा केंद्र से ग्रामीणों की परेशानी कम होगी

लेखक, सन्निधि: उनके पंजीयन में संयुक्त सेवा केंद्र से प्रमाण पत्र करने की परेशानी कम होगी। उन्होंने पंजीयन निवडितकों को ध्यान में रखना से प्रमाण पत्र से प्रशासक को प्रभावित करने से दूर रखना चाहिए। उनके पंजीयन के नियमों में यदि रखा जाए तो यह प्रक्रिया सही रहेगी।

इस दिशा में संयुक्त सेवा केंद्र प्रशासक के प्रयासों के साथ संयुक्त तौर से निष्ठा की होगी।