

Jyotsna Bhatnagar

FROM a laggard in the IT arena, if late bloomer Gujarat has today donned the much-deserved mantle of Smart State, the credit goes largely to the fact that Gujarat chief minister Anandiben Patel has not only nurtured the legacy of her predecessor Narendra Modi but has taken proactive steps to ensure that the e-governance infrastructure in the state continues to build on its impressive foundations. It is not surprising therefore that India's first Wi-Fi enabled tribal taluka Khedbrahma, India's first Wi-Fi enabled urban centre Modasa and India's first digital village Akodara can all be red flagged on Gujarat's map. These path-breaking accomplishments are testimony to the Gujarat government's commitment towards achieving inclusive growth through effective use of modern technology.

Gujarat's e-governance story stands out as distinctive from most other state governments on account of the focused approach adopted by the state government towards bridging the urban-rural divide through e-connectivity. Towards this goal, CM Anandiben Patel has also recently announced a slew of e-governance initiatives including Wi-Fi Sachivalaya, state-wide rollout of Wi-Fi, setting up of IT cadre and e-waste management system. The CM said, "The state government has been increasingly using information and communication technology for making the system more transparent and ensure speedy redressal of people's grievances. Gujarat government also has one of the most citizen-friendly and comprehensive policies of e-governance, IT and electronics, that enables the rise of Digital Gujarat."

Just a few days ago, a game changing decision has been taken to provide wireless internet services at the level of district collector, DDO, municipal commissioner, police commissioner and other nodal government offices. Not only that, even visitors to these offices will have access to these wireless services. To achieve this, plans are afoot to increase the speed of GSWAN (Gujarat State Wide Area Network) from the existing 34 Mbps to 500 Mbps which would give a quantum boost to the e-governance initiative. The aim is to convert GSWAN from a predominant G2G (government-to-government) interface to a G2C (government-to-citizen) interface as well. The key applications being envisaged for this are network broadcast, video

Gujarat goes the e-way

Gujarat is next only to the Central government in terms of use of e-services for governance. The state government has been increasingly using information and communication technologies for making the system more transparent and ensure speedy redressal of people's grievances. Over 500 services are available through e-governance in the state



conferencing, voice and data communication, intranet and internet access.

A comprehensive e-governance policy for 2014-2019 unveiled in November 2014 focusses on providing cost-effective and efficient services through digital inclusion. The key features of this policy include: setting up e-governance campus and IT centres, promoting digital literacy and provision of last mile connectivity, broadening government network scope by implementing state data centres and Wi-Fi campuses, e-connectivity of all government institutions via cloud computing and virtualisation.

Keeping in mind PM Modi's concept of Digital India, Patel's vision document on Digital Gujarat envisages generation

of over 10 lakh job opportunities as well as encourages digital literacy in the state. By 2020 the state aims to attract \$15 billion into the IT sector. Incentives including 100% relief in stamp duty and registration fee to all IT units in first transaction of sale, lease and transfer and 25% subsidy to new units for lease/rental in IT parks. Additionally, the IT policy also offers 100% relief for women employees in Employment Provident Fund (EPF), 75% for

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ANANDIBEN PATEL,
Chief Minister, Gujarat

other employees as well as 30% subsidy in bandwidth charges and simplified labour laws.

It also gives thrust to reaching out to people through social media and encourages research.

Gujarat has been pioneering in implementation of e-governance applications and has stayed committed to setting up of key infrastructure for this including the Gujarat State Wide Network (GSWAN), Satellite Communica-

tion (SATCOM) and Gujarat State Data Centre (GSDC).

Fostering the true spirit of 'Good governance through E-governance' and 'Minimum government, Maximum governance', the state government has been increasingly using information and communication technologies (ICT) for making the system more transparent and ensure speedy redressal of people's grievances.

The success of Gujarat's SWAGAT Online programme has been phenomenal. The online grievance redressal system has been instrumental in helping common people to seek speedy redressal of their pending issues. SWAGAT relies on ICT infrastructure, particularly

GSWAN. Taluka, district and state level are linked on a single platform through simple intranet-based application that helps to administer and manage people's grievances. These grievances are then reviewed by the CM herself.

In addition, the state has adopted a policy-driven framework in implementing e-governance projects across the state. The state has made a mark in connecting IT with agriculture through various projects such as i-Kisan portal and soil health cards. The state tops in facilitating internet connections to all the villages under 'e-Gram Vishwagram' project. Among the notable successes in Gujarat's impressive list of e-governance projects are e-Procurement, Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), e-Dhara, e-Jameen, Apno Taluka Vibrant Taluka (ATVT), Online Job Application System (OJAS), e-Guj-Cop and e-Nagar.

That Gujarat has covered much lost ground compared to states which reaped the early bird advantage is evident from the fact that in the last 13 years, the state has bagged as many as 174 national awards in e-governance in sectors including public services, hospital management, Sarvashiksha Abhiyaan, Gram Vikas. The state has also emerged as a leading state across India in reflecting e-transactions. In less than two years, the state has crossed 100 crore e-transactions for public services—a first for the country insofar as use of technology for registration of births and deaths, land, and other such activities are concerned.

According to 'eTaal'—electronic transaction aggregation and analysis layer—a Central government portal that disseminates e-transaction statistics, Gujarat accounts for 27% of the total 373 crore e-transactions recorded in the services provided by all state government services in the past two years. From land record registration to registering a new birth to getting an affidavit for income, Gujaratis do it all the e-way. According to eTaal, public distribution system, land revenue and utility and bill payments are the top three services which record the maximum use, comprising of more than 63% of e-transactions in Gujarat.

Gujarat is next to only the Central government in terms of use of e-services for governance. Over 500 services are available through e-governance in Gujarat. The government has also begun implementing 'mobile governance' across the state as an extended arm of e-governance. Clearly, for Gujarat, the e-way is the road to development.

Managing public grievances through social media

Kanpur district administration is using a social media-based grievances redressal system for quick disposal of public grievances

Mohd Ujaley

HASEEN Ahmed who lives at Parade Chowk in Kanpur, had been running from pillar to post in government offices to register complaints about frequent digging of roads and improper sanitation and garbage disposal in his area since last one year without any success. One of his acquaintances suggested to him to file the complaint through social media site Facebook. He was surprised to get a complaint number instantly, followed by swift action within three days. "I filed the complaint through MyCity-Kanpur Facebook page and got the complaint number instantly and within three days, there was action on the ground. I never thought that an online system could be effective in a place like Kanpur," said Ahmed.

"MyCity—Mera Shahar Meri Dekh Rekh Me", a social media-based grievances redressal system to address the basic citizen-centric issues, launched by the district administration of Kanpur in July 2014 has ensured quick disposal of reasonable grievances and has also established a public evaluation system of civic utilities. According to district informatics officer (DIO), Kanpur, SK Bajpai, about 4,000 complaints have been received since the launched of social media page.

Basically, the district administration with the help of National Informatics Centre (NIC) has developed a management information system (MIS) application which has been integrated to Facebook page as an app. With the help of this app, citizens are able to lodge a complaint quite easily. The app allows one to express views, upload related photographs or documents and interestingly, a complainant can also provide feedback on the final outcome of the grievances, whether he is satisfied or not.

Presently, eight major civic amenities—sanitation & garbage disposal, electricity, streetlights, water supply & sewerage, traffic, roads construction, digging of roads, encroachment—are part of the social media-based grievances redressal system; according to officials, more

amenities are likely to be added very soon. For every sector, nodal officers from concerned departments have been nominated and they are responsible to reply to the complaints received on their sectors. District administration monitors the overall redressal process and issues instructions whenever needed.

"As soon as a complaint is lodged using the app, an SMS alert stating the complaint number is sent to the complainant and to the concerned departmental nodal officer. The nodal officer is responsible for redressal of this complaint. The officer can take appropriate action using the administrative module, separately developed for this purpose. The action taken history is available and visible to the complainant as well as to the MyCity admin (District administration)," district magistrate, Kanpur, Roshan Jacob told FE.

The good thing about this project is that it uses a hybrid platform—social media & MIS. Being on a social media platform, a complainant need not create a new user name on this application; existing Facebook credentials are used for authentication purpose. At the same time, with the help of MIS application, information is stored in discrete format in a database, which enables the system to generate various types of reports depending on requirements such as status of total pendency against different officer and number of unattended complaints etc.

We noticed that there was a large number of written complaints related to encroachment, so we included it in our online module and that has led to substantial number of written complaints going down across different civic bodies in the Kanpur City area," said Jacob.

On the question of how different is this initiative from what other districts are doing across the country, she said, "Being different is not important, but it is crucial to solve the day to day issues of the people."

More than anything else, this project has opened a direct line of communication between the public and concerned government authority.

WHAT was once a visionary notion is now the new normal: technology is really as essential as core infrastructure such as water, gas, and electricity. The government's vision of smart cities is to drive urban transformation to enable better living for citizens and drive economic growth. According to Dinesh Malkani, president, Cisco India & SAARC, the future of smart cities will involve cities and communities digitising themselves by focusing on a combination of economically, socially or environmental sustainability. "We firmly believe that India has the potential to lead in the new era of digitisation. Digitising India is a once in a lifetime opportunity," he tells Sudhir Chowdhary in a recent interaction. Excerpts:

How do you see digitisation impacting governance and citizen services?

Innovation is at the heart of the digital era and the digital disruption is transforming every industry, from healthcare to education, banking and financial institutions and more. Our government leaders have made it clear that broadband highways are as important as national highways. Digital infrastructure is being adopted five times faster than electricity and telephony. A digitised nation will help India leapfrog and be at the forefront of innovation and job creation. Today we can buy a book, plan a vacation, or choose a movie from any number of devices and from any location. By embracing digital business transformation, traditional banks are providing the kinds of mobile, personalised, and convenient services that customers are used to receiving elsewhere. Cisco has helped enable SBI InTouch which offers automated kiosks that deliver instant banking services through high definition video conferencing. Cisco is innovating with the government across cities to deliver governance and services to citizens digitally.

What do you see the role of smart cities in the digitisation of India?

What was once a visionary notion is now the new normal: technology is as essential as core infrastructure such as water, gas, and electricity. The government's vision of smart cities is to drive urban transformation to enable better living for citizens and drive economic growth. Cisco's Bengaluru campus is designed as a campus-as-a-city for thousands of Cisco

INTERVIEW: DINESH MALKANI

PRESIDENT, CISCO INDIA & SAARC

We are innovating for India's digitisation

employees to work and is spectacular showcase of what the digitisation of a country means for the future of work, education, healthcare and the digital delivery of citizen services.

At Cisco we believe that intelligent networks will enable digitally empowered citizens through the availability of government services in real time, online and on mobile platforms. Services such as healthcare, citizen services, retail or banking can be delivered through a superior, on demand video collaboration experience. Cities, companies and educational institutions can use connected learning solutions

to improve access to education beyond local resources.

Government has announced 98 new smart cities in India. Where does Cisco see itself in this broad strategy in India?

In India the future of smart cities will involve cities and communities digitising themselves by focusing on a combination of economically, socially or environmental sustainability. We are working with the Jaipur Development Authority to set up digital infrastructure to offer citizens amenities and help manage the city with greater efficiency and effectiveness. We have deployed a smart physical safety and surveillance system in Navi Mumbai and a remote FIR kiosk in association with the Bengaluru City Police. We have created a connected learning experience at BITS Pilani by connecting campuses in Pilani, Dubai, Goa and Hyderabad and allowing global experts and guest lectures across campuses. Through 198 Cisco Network academies nationwide an approximately 100,000 Indian students have been trained since its inception. We will continue to work with cities as they look to digitise their operations such as traffic management or smart street lighting and citizen services such as healthcare and education.

Cisco executive chairman John Chambers has commented that India will be an example for the world in digitisation. How do you see the progress of digital India/smart cities?

We firmly believe that India has the potential to lead in the new era of digitisation. Digitising India is a 'once in a lifetime' opportunity for our cities, companies and citizens to be a part of India's journey to complete digitisation and we are thrilled to see that hundreds of enterprises and gov-

ernment departments have already embarked on the journey. We believe innovation is at the heart of the digital era and are working with the industry and government to enable digitisation and help drive economic growth and improve the standard of living for everyone. For example, we have worked with Mahindra and Mahindra, on the Chakan facility north of Pune in Maharashtra, to deploy a Connected Factory of the future. Through the Prime Minister's Digital India vision, the Internet of Everything will enable the creation of large-scale digital infrastructure, digitally-enabled government services and increased digital literacy among our citizens.

What are the pilot projects Cisco is working on and what are your learnings from it?

Cities are increasingly moving to digitise more and more of their operations, from smart street lighting and parking to traffic lights. Our technology and solutions for smart cities have been implemented around the world helping offer better services, foster innovation and generate more jobs. In India we are working with cities and communities on creating new business models and delivering cloud-based services in skills, education, healthcare and public services.

In the ideal smart city, all aspects of the community are wired, including healthcare, homes, offices and entertainment venues. That will require a lot of innovations on-ground, are we ready for it?

The pace of technology change is accelerating. It took radio 38 years to attract 50 million listeners. TV took 13 years. Facebook took just one year, Twitter took 9 months while Angry Birds took 35 days. We are seeing the rapid convergence of mobile, social, data and cloud which is in turn enabling India to enter the digital era. The future of competition will be between cities and as someone observed, cities are the new laboratories of the 21st century.

Cities should encourage startups and local innovation that focus on solving urban challenges like traffic, healthcare, energy conservation, etc. by leveraging technology. With continued support and investment, from the government and industry, the flourishing startup ecosystem in the country has the potential to bring about many more opportunities for India to compete on the global stage. Cisco's investments of \$240 million in the startup ecosystem in India is to help catalyse and accelerate the potential of India's startups.

