OPEN ACCESS INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

DEVELOPMENTAL IMPACT OF E-GOVERNANCE

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Abstract: **e-Governance is a paradigm shift for government to citizen services. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Development are closely related, and absence of the former can hinder the development process of the country. E-Governance projects are implemented for different Departments across the Country. The question remains as to whether these projects achieved the desired objectives. In this study, an attempt is made to analyze the e-Governance projects in Kolasib District of Mizoram, India. This paper also examined the challenges related to the implementation of e-Governance projects in Kolasib District. Data collections of the study include Observation, Interviews, Government Records, Acts, Orders, Rules, and Regulations. The findings of this study indicated that availability and proper functioning of the projects, e-readiness among the government employees as well as the people will have a positive impact on the development process.**

Keywords – E-Governance, Common Service Centers, Government to Citizen Services, Service Delivery, Digital Divide.

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I INTRODUCTION

Development of technology is altering the way we live, the way we connect, the way we communicate and transact. It ushers in more education and employment opportunities for individuals and businesses. These changes play a key role in the social and economic development of the country.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Development are closely inter-related, and absence of the former can contribute to a significant challenge for economic growth and social development of the country. In this context, this paper has been carried out to examine the developmental impact of e-governance project in Kolasib District, Mizoram, India. Common Service Centers of Kolasib District in Mizoram is mainly used as a base of evaluation.

Kolasib District is one of the eight Districts of Mizoram and it is in the northern part of Mizoram bordered by Cachar District of Assam in the north, to the East and South is the Aizawl District and to the West is the Mamit District. The district occupies an area of 1382.51 square km. Kolasib town is the administrative headquarters of the district. The Deputy Commissioner is the administrative head of the District, who is assisted by various Officers from different Departments under the Government of Mizoram.

According to the 2011 census, Kolasib district has a population of 83,955 of which male and female were 42,918 and 41,037 respectively. The rural population of Kolasib District stood at 37, 077 and urban population stood at 46, 878 respectively. The District has two Rural Development Blocks, Bilkhawthlir and Thingdawl and three sub-divisions namely Kolasib, Kawnpui, and Vairengte. There are 45 villages in Kolasib district and in terms of Literacy, it ranks 4th with 93.5% from the Total Average of 91.3 % in the State. There are 45 (forty-five) Village Councils in Kolasib District.

II OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are:
1. To study e-Governance projects in Kolasib District of Mizoram.
2. To examine the developmental impact of e-Governance

III METHODOLOGY

Observation and interview method form the main tools of the collection of primary data for the present study. Personal Interview and Telephone Interview are conducted among the government employees, Common Service Center Operators and the public. Related Acts, Rules, Regulation, Records/Orders and official documents of the Government of

Mizoram is consulted as well. A considerable amount of time is spent at the concerned Department of Kolasib District to collect materials for the present study to examine the workings, practices, and problems.

IV E-GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE IN MIZORAM

Mizoram State e-Governance Society (MSEGS) was established in 2005 and is registered under the Society Registration Act, XXI of 1860. It facilitated establishment and setting up of major e-Governance projects like the State Data Center (SDC), State Wide Area Network (SWAN) and Common Service Centre (CSC) and various other e-Government projects in the state. Government of India has funded 14 States for implementing e-District pilot project as a State Mission Mode Project (MMPs) under National e-Governance Plan (NeGP), and Mizoram is one State selected among the two North-Eastern states.

V E-GOVERNANCE SOCIETY IN KOLASIB DISTRICT

Kolasib District e-Governance Society of Mizoram was registered under the Mizoram Societies Registration Act, 2005 (Act No. 13 of 2005). It was established on 17th April, 2012 to promote e-Governance in Kolasib District. The objectives of e-Governance Society of Kolasib District are listed as:

a) To ensure a close co-ordination with all the participants and the external agencies involved.
b) To prepare the installation sites and handling them to Implementing Agency.
c) To ensure participation and support from all the associated sections and employees of the district administrations.
d) To identify the staff, who need to undergo training at various levels.
e) To review the installation, commissioning and maintenance of the application software.

f) To take steps to mitigate any such potential risks that might surface during the project.
g) To monitor the overall progress of the project.
h) Handle Change Management.
i) Liaison with the Implementation Partner team and the Consultant Partner.

With the launch of Digital India Week by the Deputy Commissioner of Kolasib District, Jitender Yadav (IAS) inaugurated the e-District Facilitation Center on 2nd July 2015and the District Official Website have been made electronically available through the e-district website portal. To manage and monitor the functioning of the e-Governance society in Kolasib district, District Manager and Support Engineer are appointed on a Regular basis since the year 2013.

VI SERVICE PROVIDED UNDER e-DISTRICT OF KOLASIB

The e-District of Kolasib relies on NeGP core infrastructure like SWAN which served as the backbone for effective communications providing a converged network. Citizen-centric services provided by the e-District of Kolasib are improvised with the help of Common Service Centers (CSC) in Kolasib District. A citizen can file an application for any G2C (Government to Citizen) services in the nearest Community Service Center (CSC) of her locality along with all requisite documents and pay the requisite fees. At present, there are twenty-three CSC Operators in Kolasib District out of which only about fifteen Operators are operating on a regular basis. The e-District of Kolasib is responsible for checking the authenticity of online applications made from the CSC and transmitting the applications made from the CSC to the concerned Offices. The Deputy Commissioners is now able to issue digitally signed certificates for various G2C services.

Table No. VI: 1
Timelines and charges of Community Service Center (CSC)

Sl No	Citizen Services	Office in Which processed	Documents Required	Days within which Services will be Delivered	Govt. Fees	VLE/ e-District Center Fee	Level Of Security required
1.	Residential Certificate	DC,SDO	1.Chairman, Local Council recommendation 2. Voters ID Xerox	3 working days	10	20	Digital Signature
2.	Caste/ Tribal Certificate	DC, SDO	1.Chairman, Local Council recommendation 2. Voters ID Xerox	3 working days	10	20	Digital Signature
3.	Income Certificate	DC, SDO	1.Chairman, Local Council recommendation 2. For Govt. Sector, Employee Salary Slip	3 working days	10	20	Digital Signature

At present, the services provided under e-District include application and issue of a Tribal certificate, Residential certificate, and Income certificate. Tribal Certificate are issued by the e-Governance Section of the Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Kolasib District which can be applied through submission of online application. The timelines and charges of Community Service Center (CSC) by the Government of Mizoram are listed in the following table.

Table No. VI: 2
Timelines and charges for Inner Line Pass:

1.	**Inner Line Permit (Temporary)**	DC, SDO	1.Applicants photo	7 working days	100	50	Digital Signature
2.	**Inner Line Permit (Permanent)**	DC,SDO	1.Applicant's photos 2.Applicant's Voter ID or Panchayat ID 3.Sponsors ID 4.Sponsors photos	7 working days	200	50	Digital Signature

VI. 3 Eligibility to Participate in CSC Scheme:
  a) Applicant should be a local person
  b) Age of Applicant should be minimum 18 years
  c) Applicant should preferably have passed the 10th level examination from a recognized board
  d) Applicant should be fluent in reading and writing the local dialect and should also have basic knowledge of English language
  e) Prior Knowledge in basic computer skills would be advantage

VI. 4 Required CSC Infrastructure needed are as:
  a) Room/Building having place of 100-150 Sq. Ft.
  b) Two PC's with UPS with 5 hours battery back-up or portable generator set. PC with licensed Operating System of Windows XP-SP2 or above.
  c) Two Printers. (Inkjet+ Dot Matrix)
  d) RAM having the minimum storage capacity of 512 MB
  e) Hard Disc Drive of at least 120 GB
  f) Digital Camera/ Web Cam
  g) Wired/ Wireless/V-SAT Connectivity
  h) Biometric/IRIS Authentication Scanner for Banking Services.
  i) CD/DVD Drive

e-District of Kolasib provides backend computerization to enable electronic delivery of services to the citizen at her doorstep. It also provides internet connection to its Line Departments using Optical Fibre Cable through State Wide Area Network (SWAN). It installs computer applications to its Line Departments for 'web-enabled' services such as applications, and payment of bills. The Line Departments include Land Revenue and settlement, Department of Public Health Engineering (PHE), Taxation, Social Welfare, Department of Local Administration Department (LAD), Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Labour and Employment Exchange and Agriculture Department. Regarding training, Application Training Phase I is conducted for the government employees of PHE, LAD, Social Welfare and Deputy Commissioner's (DC) Office.

VII ANALYSIS OF THE WORKING OF E-GOVERNANCE IN KOLASIB DISTRICT

Common Service Centers serves a great purpose for availing government services like application and issue of Certificates in Kolasib district. An increasing number of people in Kolasib district, especially people from Kolasib town area are turning to Common Service Centers (CSC) to avoid the long ques of the government offices. It also saves time, energy and traveling expenses especially for the rural and remote areas of Kolasib District.CSC run on the Public-Private Partnership Model (PPP) wherein local entrepreneurs not only set up the Centers with basic computing infrastructure but are paid for every transaction they undertake. So, it provided an employment opportunity for the local entrepreneurs. Certificates completed under Kolasib District CSC are listed as under:

Table No. VII. 1
Number of Certificates issued under Kolasib District CSC (till 21st March 2017):

Sl. no	Certificate	No. of certificate issued
1.	Income Certificate	4802
2.	Residential Certificate	4141
3.	Tribal Certificate	3401
4.	Permanent Residential Certificate	199

At present, there are twenty-three CSC Operators in Kolasib District, however, only about fifteen Operators are operating/functioning on a regular basis. According to the list of registered CSC and RIK operators, the numbers of CSC Operators in Kolasib district are:

Table No. VII. 2
Number of CSC Operators in Kolasib District

Sr. No	Location	No. of operator
1.	Kolasib	5
2.	Thingdawl	1
3.	Bairabi	2
4.	Vairengte	1
5.	Bilkhawthlir	1
6.	Kawnpui	2
7.	Hortoki	2
8.	Lungdai	1
9.	N.Hlimen	1
10.	Thingthelh	1
11.	Bualpui North	1
12.	Khamrang	1
13.	Zanlawn	1
14.	Saipum	1
15.	Serkhan	1
16.	N.Chhimluang	1

The result of this study indicates that there are several barriers in the implementation of e-Governance projects in Kolasib District. Reliable infrastructure is a major challenge for e-District of Kolasib. Internet Connectivity is providedto the CSC Operators through VSAT, however, it is found that the VSAT connectivity could not work properly in some villages. Most of the villages lack broadband connections that require for networking connectivity. This could be attributed to their remote location and VSAT installation problem. The town area CSC such as Kolasib used their own Datacard for connectivity. Under the absence of alternative internet connectivity in remote parts of the district, some CSC could not function properly. As per record, remote areas of Kolasib district like Hortoki CSC issued only 262 certificates, and Thingthelh issued only 66 certificates.

Unequal access to ICT posed a great challenge especially for those living in the remote areas of the District. Besides infrastructure problem, economic poverty can also be attributed to the cause of digital divide. The general lack of awareness is not confined to the people, but the government employees as well. Awareness can only motivate the people to adapt to this web-enabled change in this governmental process.

Among the core list of services, the services available at the Common Service Centers of Kolasib District include application and issue of Income Certificate, Tribal Certificate, and Residential Certificate. The e-District of Kolasib is networking with certain Line Departments of Kolasib District for G2C services like payment of bills, complaints, applications for the LSC, issue of ration card, water connection etc. However, these services could not 'Go-Live' yet. Lack of awareness, as well as lack of e-readiness among the government employees, play a significant role for the limited services of the e-District.

The participation of citizens in accessing the available services does not reach the desired number yet. The service provided by the Community Service Center are published in the form of advertisements through media and newspapers. However, most people remain in the darkand it is found that those who do not possess computer or technological knowledge especially senior citizens are intimidated by these changes.

VIII CONCLUSION

The e-District of Kolasib is still at the initial stages of introduction and there are many barriers to the successful implementation of e-Governance projects, such as infrastructure problem, reliable connectivity, digital divide against the rural areas, lack of awareness and lack of e-readiness among the people and the government employees. Although a certain number of projects are running across the district, the government is only able to serve the citizen with limited e-Governance services. The Government needs to enhance the e-readiness of its employees to manage the system and conduct as much training as possible. Speedy implementation of e-governance on the part of the government is desirable. In terms of development, availability and proper functioning of e-governance services, enhancing citizen's awareness as well as the government employees will result in the reduction of cost and time on the part of the government and the people, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, and improvement in the performance of government agencies. All this factor will contribute towards the development process of the country.

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