

DNA for sustainable transformation through IT

Ravi Saxena, additional Chief Secretary, Government of Gujarat spoke about how the state managed to leverage its IT infrastructure, thereby providing citizens with superior services

In the session on Devices Networks and Applications (DNA) convergence for sustainable transformation, Ravi Saxena, Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Gujarat pointed out the challenges in affording technology due to the high costs that were involved. He asserted that the costs of not merely procurement but also factors such as deployment and maintenance make it difficult for the government to provide updated e-governance services in Gujarat.



“The government's job is not to sell things but to provide benefits to the common man,” he said. He went on to add that, while the digital divide was still prevalent, Gujarat had decided to roll out services that met the end objectives and at the same time were affordable. The urban population of Gujarat stood at around 25%, while the remainder was rural.

“There is no affordable technology, which can be used by the vast majority of people,” said Saxena. Gujarat he said, was continuously working on offering citizen based service as per convenient location with an initiative to improve the reach, make services more transparent and reduce response time and costs. “We have embraced open source technologies to meet our objectives of providing local language support, security and converged devices,” said Saxena.

The Gujarat state government, apart from a state portal, has connected seven districts on 8 Mbps and 18 districts on 4 Mbps links to the State Data Center at Gandhinagar using leased circuits provided by BSNL, Reliance and Tata Teleservices. Further, 225 Talukas and 26 district headquarters have been connected by means of leased circuits.

Also, departmental offices at district locations and offices at talukas have been connected to the GSWAN and over 3,600 district and taluka level GoG offices have been connected. Recently, the CM, Narendra Modi launched an IP-based video conferencing system between various GoG offices. Due to the technological initiatives, the state has succeeded in bringing corruption under check and consequently increasing its tax revenues through the effective usage of computers and other electronic devices at ten remote interstate border check posts.

Saxena spoke about the state’s educational initiatives. Through the Bisag satellite, the CM addresses the Distance Teachers' Training program for elementary school teachers through satellite. Over 1,94,000 Teachers from 4,000 centers participated in the interactive training program.

The state's plans include the digitization of databases and existing information, back-end integration between various interdepartmental process modules and compliance with UADAI.

Saxena said that the government had floated a new RFP in the area of healthcare asking the vendor to choose the radio frequency channel to deliver these services.

Moreover, plans exist to disseminate information on commodity prices in real time to farmers in their local languages.