

Andhra Pradesh CSC

Citizen Service Centers or CSCs are ICT-enabled retail distribution outlets meant for the delivery of Government, Social as well as Private Sector services in the areas of Telecom, Agriculture, Health, Education, Entertainment, FMCG products, financial services, Utility payments, etc. CSCs are envisioned as the front-end delivery points for Government, private and social sector services to citizens of rural India.

The CSC project was started to develop a platform that can enable Government, private and social sector organizations to align their social and commercial goals for the benefit of the rural population in the remote corners of the country through a combination of IT-based as well as non-IT-based services.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh, Ministry of Communication & Information Technology, embarked upon an ambitious project to establish 8618 Common Service Centers in Andhra Pradesh. This scheme is a bottom up model based on a Public Private Partnership (PPP) to leverage the experience and knowledge of the private sector to deliver G2C and B2C services in a transparent and cost effective manner.

Some of the core objectives of setting up the Andhra Pradesh CSCs were to use it as a change agent to promote rural entrepreneurship, build rural capacities and livelihoods, enable community participation and effective collective action for social change through a bottom-up model that focuses on the rural citizen. In addition to this, CSCs promote rural entrepreneurship and act as a vehicle to enable and track social welfare at a rural node.

Solution

The Andhra Pradesh CSC started its operations in August 2008 and has been implemented in various critical nodes that cover 100% of the Urban and 90% of the rural population in 11 Districts of Andhra Pradesh.

This Project is designed in to allow for quick and efficient integration of new departments/services, while being a single access point for G2C and B2C services/projects. It is the only center to have online print module for land records in Andhra Pradesh. The CSC also provides fully automated financial support to VLEs, which credits VLE shares to the users wallet account periodically. The project is a unique SCA with more than 150 B2C and G2C services including utility Bills, revenue, and registration and land records approved by government authorities. Status tracking Links and SMS alerts for G2C transactions are also made available for citizens convenience.

In addition to this the solution is completely scalable meant to handle huge volumes of transaction with minimal response times. The project has successfully completed more than 90 Lakh transactions till date.

It is the effort of CSC to deliver e-governance services to the rural population of India in 'Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsive Transparent' (SMART) and

most cost-effective manner. Also deployment of Project management office with experienced and trained employees, District Managers at each district to execute, monitor and control the project, Taluka Managers to ensure timely and effective support to the VLEs has made CSC project innovative to a great extent

Challenges

Before the implementation of the CSCs, life as the rural citizens was tough. There were multiple challenges that they faced in terms of getting the right information at the right time. Some of the major challenges faced by citizens can be encapsulated below:

The biggest challenge is to make the CSC project feasible in rural areas. The project has to be financially feasible as well as viable to the VLEs in order to provide adequate income to the VLEs.

CSCs can only work efficiently and seamlessly if they have reliable Internet connectivity. Inconsistent connectivity and Electricity were one of the major challenges that were faced in setting up CSC in rural India.

It is important to ensure that the VLEs undergo training in delivering services to rural customers, at regular intervals. Training included technical as well as operational aspects of the Services to be delivered. Furthermore, VLEs needed to be constantly motivated to proactively build awareness within their community (including local government officials) about the services they offer.

One of the major challenges that CMS faced was to bring off-line applications online. Individual can now collect certificates, affidavits, 7/12 and 8A extracts from anywhere with the help of the CSCs online services.

Benefits

The Andhra Pradesh CSC project was and still is a big success and is an award winning initiative for CMS computers. With over 90 Lakh transactions, over 2649 CSCs covering 11 districts and 12000 villages, the project is till date providing unforeseen benefits to the Urban and Rural citizens of Andhra Pradesh.

It is the first and only SCA through which online VLEs can extract any digitally signed certificate on Income, caste and Residence within 15 minutes from any where in Andhra Pradesh, without visiting Revenue and other Govt. offices, citizens can get all registration, revenue and land records within a limited period. Not only that, but the CSC is a one stop shop for all service sets available to a rural citizen. It is that one window where an individual can get access to government services without the complicated procedures of the past.

Due to the increased depth of the roll out and improved service basket, 5-10 lakh citizens have been utilizing the CSC every month to avail various services. The count is increasing exponentially month on month. In addition to this, the average monthly income of VLEs has reached a sustainable bracket of Rs. 5000 – Rs. 10000. In the last financial year more than 500 VLEs have earned at least Rs. 10,000 a month as commission.

CMS's implementation of the CSC ensured that the project was scalable. Given the rate at which the Indian economy is growing, no solution can really be complete. However, it becomes increasingly important to provision for scale. Servers are deployed & configured in a virtual environment and hence nodes can be added to production environment easily to handle fluctuating demand.