

Bringing people to government

It's all part of the increased thrust on e-Governance. Tamil Nadu's IT department is setting up an e-Governance directorate exclusively to work on the policy and planning of Information & Communication Technology initiatives of the government, and also to augment the e-Governance initiatives and projects of the Government of Tamil Nadu.

As the first initiative, an e-Governance cell at the Electronics Corporation of Tamil Nadu (ELCOT), called the "TN e-Gov Mission", has been formed.

From its inception, the Mission has been scouting around for the best e-Gov practices the world over for adoption in its initiatives to provide electronic delivery of services to the citizen at a reasonable cost. The other reason is improvement of the Government - citizen interface. And this is how they, to some extent, impact the lives of people.

Video Conferencing

A video conferencing network linking the ministers, all secretaries, all district collectors, superintendents of police and other senior government officials has been installed.

Called SECLAN (Secretariat Local Area Network support systems), it ensures that the nerve center of administration does not lag behind in access to information for crucial decision making.

RASI (Rural Access to Services through Internet)

This one bridges the digital divide on citizens services. A pilot project was launched in Madurai District to build up the necessary rural infrastructure, and after the successful implementation of this pilot, the Government scaled up the project as e-Governance delivery centers throughout the state.

Continuously evolving to provide information and services to outlying areas at their nearest location. Rural Internet Kiosks are actually being used by people who had no hope of access to the digital way of life. They can contact the Chief Minister directly, and also contact district officials. And they can apply online for birth, death, income, community and nativity certificates. The rural internet revolution now covers about 600 RASI centers and this will be extended to all the villages.

TAMILNILAM - (Tamil Nadu Info-system for Land Administration and Management)

This project was introduced with the objective of computerising land records data for the benefit of the public in terms of better information availability for administrative and development purposes.

Now, the 'patta' copies are available across the counter in 206 Taluks in Tamil Nadu for a nominal payment of less than 50 cents. For a fee of one-tenth of that, all landowners can view the data relating to their land!

E-Administration

This is a paperless File Management System implemented at ELCOT as an empowerment tool for speedy disposal of files. The workflow management helps in creation, movement, monitoring and approval of files electronically resulting in better utilization of manpower, thereby avoiding delays, leading to better governance. As the system is web-enabled, it facilitates operating anywhere at any time.



In an ancient land, the old traditions have blended with new technology in a seamless synergy to make life better for everyone

E-governance in civic bodies.

E-governance initiatives in the Madurai, Trichy and Coimbatore municipal Corporations have been implemented, facilitating collection of various taxes through this system.

The public can also post grievances directly through the website and are informed of the status by e-mail whenever an action is taken on their grievance by the official. Grievances received through the phone are also entered into the system enabling better tracking and monitoring.

Drug Distribution Management Systems

The Tamil Nadu Medical Services Corporation (TNMSC) has implemented a computerised drug distribution management system (DDMS) that is considered to be the pioneer model and the backbone for the drug logistics system in the state. This has resulted in considerable savings in the drug budget, ultimately benefiting the poorest of the poor.

Transport

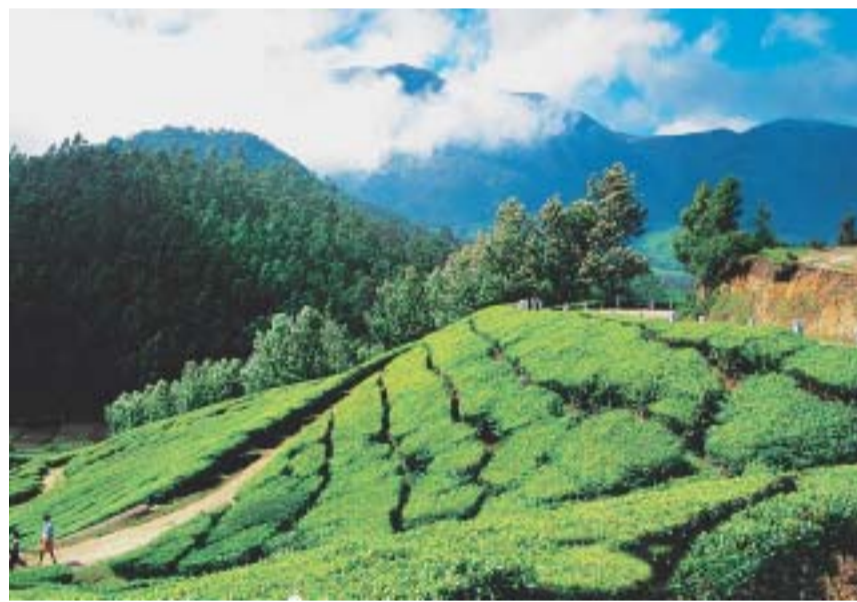
In all the 86 Regional Transport Offices (RTO)/Unit Offices, driving licences are being issued electronically. The State Transport Authority has computerised 17 RTO/Unit Offices and all the transactions are done through computer.

Computerisation of Agriculture Marketing

The Agriculture Department is providing a rich harvest of benefits. Nine agriculture regulated markets are computerised to provide price information of agricultural products for farmers online and continuously. This will enhance their ability to get the best price for their produce and obtain valuable inputs for planning future agricultural operations.

ETAS (Electronic Tea Auction System)

Here the government has taken a lead in redefining the existing tea auction system into a completely electronic one. It comprises of the computerization of the pre-auction,



Even tea-gardens dreaming on hillsides have been brought into the scope of IT, with online auctions eliminating middlemen

and post-auction processes of the primary marketing of tea and aims at providing fair, transparent and better price discovery mechanism with reduced transaction cost and time. You cut out the middleman and ensure anonymity for the bidder. Incidentally, this is the first electronic tea auction system in the world.

Public grievances redressal

For redressing the grievances of the public in the chief minister's office, a computer software for the entire state has been installed and the district units are connected with the State Computer System. The complaints received through various sources are entered and monitored till the grievances are redressed.

Computer Literacy for government schools...

This is an ambitious programme to impart computer literacy and

Technology in the use of administration is a Mission in Chief Minister J Jayalithaa's government. From paying taxes to applying for a birth certificate, you do it online in Tamil Nadu

education in all the government Higher Secondary schools. The total number of students who will leave fully IT literate is about 92,500 per annum.

...and for colleges as well

All 76 government Arts and Science, Law and Medical Colleges have been covered for the IT education programme, benefiting 14,000 Students per year.

Knowledge Data Center (KDC) at Anna University

An MOU was signed in March last year between the Government of Tamil Nadu, Anna University and Sun Microsystems for establishing a Knowledge Data Center at Anna University. The KDC thus created at Anna University will be a technology resource center for the student community, connected to all the engineering colleges affiliated with it and later to all government, polytechnics, medical, law, arts and science colleges, as well as Higher Secondary schools under single network with suitable connectivity. The KDC will serve mainly in promoting research and disseminating knowledge, and fostering cooperation between academic and industrial communities. Services like e-education, online learning, distance learning, digital library, common messaging and collaboration infrastructure, HR management, IT management etc. will be provided in KDC.

Bio-resources find a home at Tichel Park



Tichel Park

A state that has a rich diversity of geographical terrain and plant resource, Tamil Nadu is a natural for the comparatively new biotechnology trend. The state has a large coastline with abundant growth of corals, oysters, sponges and other marine species in the calm waters of the Gulf of Mannar. There are about 5,000 species of flowering plants and the forest cover spreads over 22,500 sq kms.

With its combination of excellent education infrastructure and research in biotechnology, the state is a strong draw for scientists, engineers and technicians in life sciences who are the linchpins for growth in the biotech industry. The government has already recognized it as a driver for economic development in the new millennium.

Tamil Nadu's Tichel Park has been built at a cost of \$12.5 million by the government according to design and technical parameters provided by Cornell University. Located in Taramani, Chennai's "knowledge corridor", the park is now operational, providing a platform for transforming biotech research into commercial technologies.



IT has powered the transformation of Tamil Nadu into a modern economy, clearly making it India's eastern gateway to the world, not just South Asia. It also has the finest IT human resources with world class technical skills and capabilities. Besides, this work force is disciplined and dedicated.

The largest paper mill in India, certified under the quality assurance scheme of ISO 9001, was conceptualized to meet two objectives. First, to conserve fast-depleting forest resources. Second to promote the use of annually renewable raw material.

When the Tamil Nadu Newsprint and Papers Limited was commissioned in 1985, it had an installed capacity of 90,000 tpa. Later, the World Bank extended loan assistance of \$100 million to finance a major part of the project cost. Then in 1993, the TNPL embarked upon an ambitious

secure this commendation from the world body.

Implementation has been mostly trouble free and the project has been completed essentially on schedule and close to the original budget. TNPL's project team was strongly committed to completing the project at the earliest possible time. Financial management has been completely satisfactory.

The mill uses bagasse as its main fibre source. This is a material usually wasted or burnt as fuel in sugar mills. What the TNPL has done in a unique

Paper trail

The world's largest bagasse-based paper mill is owned by the Tamil Nadu government



TNPL Headquarters

programme of expansion to double its capacity. Once again the World Bank came to its aid with another \$75 million.

And it is a matter of pride for the state government that, in a country plagued by cost over-runs, it was able to

barter arrangement is exchange bagasse for steam that the sugar mills require, and arrange for collection of the material from sugar mills all over the state. This is a natural raw material unlikely to run out, nor is there a run on scarce forests. The result is export-quality newsprint, used by the biggest publishing houses in the country, including The Times of India, The Hindu, The Indian Express and Anand Bazar Patrika, as well as writing paper.

Exports are also steadily building up, from 18,760 tons in 1999-2000, to 30,098 in 2003-2004, going out to more than 25 countries. Projection for the coming year is 40,000 tons.

This is because capacity build up has also been steady and is now in the region of 2,30,000 tpa. Last year, to enhance its capacity, TNPL rebuilt its paper machines.

R&D facilities are available on-site, mainly working on improving the preservation quality of bagasse and its pulp.

Happiness for All

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When you came back to power for the second time in 2001, it was with a huge majority. What do you consider are your biggest achievements since then?

The singular and most distinctive achievement of my Government since May 2001 has been to bring real and tangible development to the center stage along with good governance.

I have always been known for my commitment to maintaining law and order. Tamil Nadu is number one in the country in maintaining peace and tranquility. This is the guarantee for bustling economic activity.

The new reforms that I have launched have enabled a historic fiscal and economic turnaround of the State. Tamil Nadu has become one of the top destinations in India for foreign direct investment.

We have got over the debilitating effects of successive droughts and this year the economy is poised to register more than 8% growth.

Tamil Nadu has been ranked as a "leader" state in e-readiness and e-governance.

In every sphere, be it manufacturing, IT, farm productivity, social sector indices such as infant mortality rate, crude birth rate, education, Tamil Nadu is among the top States. I am glad that we are registering all round development.

Tamil Nadu is well on the way to becoming the numero uno State in the country. We are fighting hard to reach that position and I am glad we are getting there fast.

In a recent interview, you described yourself as a multi-faceted individual. How has this translated into policy for the State?

When I talked of my having a multi-faceted personality, what I meant was that I am constantly evolving. I am not what I was 10 years back. The world

around has also changed. The IT revolution, globalisation and new technologies are making us react in an evolutionary manner - the last decade can perhaps be considered the equivalent of a millennium by itself. It has most certainly changed the way I think and plan my actions and policies. Life is a great teacher. You learn constantly about trust, confidence, self esteem, taking the rough with the smooth, good times and bad. It is good that I listen avidly to new ideas. I am certainly keen to know more about opportunities to secure a better life for our people.

You were a topper in school, a linguist who speaks nine languages fluently, an artist who reached the hearts of millions. How has this part of your personality impacted your political vision for the State?

It has enabled me to react intuitively to the issues on hand.

I speak six languages and understand a seventh one. Being a topper in school has probably made me a perfectionist. I know I am a bit driven to reach goals that I have set. I do set hard goals benchmarked against the best. This sets a furious pace. But where is the time and space to be laid back when there is a trust with destiny for Tamil Nadu to keep? In terms of my political vision this drive towards development goals is often at conflict with the personal goals of many others. My earlier career as an artist has enabled me to get through various shenanigans with aplomb.

Some people say I am mercurial - I would say I have a low tolerance of incompetence. I am not too troubled as I do believe that if you are totally dedicated, honest and determined the people will be with you. I have always striven to go to the people straight with issues. I have won most times handsomely. Sometimes my message has not found favour.

I have then as a true democrat accepted the vox populi and refashioned my approach.