

CHAPTER – VII

General Services

7.1 *E-Governance*

The Information Technology (IT) revolution has catalysed growth and innovation across the world in a manner which has few parallels in modern history. This has enormous implications on culture, way of life and governance. The Government of Sikkim has placed IT high on its agenda. The IT Policy had been formulated to put IT on a firm footing in the State. The Government of Sikkim vide Gazette Notification dated 15 July 2006 issued a policy on IT for the State of Sikkim with the following objectives and mission statements:

- Empowering citizens and making life easier for them through E-Governance;
- Facilitating income and employment generation in the private sector;
- Improving productivity in the Government departments through computerisation;
- Use of information tools in the administration to improve governance;
- Making Sikkim a totally computer literate State;
- Reducing the digital divide;
- Using Information Technology to map the resources of the State; and
- Using Information Technology to bring succor to the disabled.

7.1.1 *Computerisation in the Departments*

National Informatics Centre (NIC), a GOI agency had setup a District Informatics Centre (DIC) at District Headquarter to support the District Administration in promoting awareness about the use of IT in various departments. The DIC had undertaken and implemented 12 projects in various offices in the South district.

All the e-governance projects were physically verified in Audit (October-November 2011) and it was seen that in case of projects of AGMARKNET installed in Horticulture Office during 2004 and COMFONET installed in Consumer Forum Office during 2007, though the hardware were provided, due to non-providing of internet connectivity, these were not being used for the purpose for which these were provided and computers were being used as stand-alone computers.

While accepting the facts, the NIC, Namchi stated (February 2012) that above projects could not be implemented due to problem in providing internet connections.

7.1.2 Gram Suchana Kendras (GSKs)

Creating awareness among the elected representatives and Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) functionaries about the general issues related to local self-governance and Panchayati Raj and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a tool for good governance is an important aspect for introducing e-governance in PRIs. Capacity building in the area of ICT usage and e-governance could be taken up as a part of capacity building. Capacity building should be provided to all PRIs functionaries and elected representatives such as all District (Zilla) Panchayat and Gram Panchayat members and functionaries.

The main objective of establishing the GSKs in all the ZPs and GPs were:

- To bridge the e-gap between the villages and the towns by providing urban amenities in the rural areas;
- To demonstrate the effective use of information technology infrastructure in the accelerated e-governance development in the rural areas of the State by setting up the Common Service Centre at all Zilla and Gram Panchayat level;
- Speedy dissemination of information to Panchayati Raj Institutions; and
- Providing the world wide information to PRIs.

Accordingly, the GOI approved a proposal through the Rural Management and Development Department for establishment of GSKs in all the ZPs and GPUs of Sikkim and released ₹ 5.04 crore during 2005-06 (₹ 3.04 crore in January 2006 and ₹ 2 crore in March 2006).

Scrutiny of records (August 2010 and November 2011) revealed that the Department assigned (June 2006) the job of establishment of GSKs to the State Trading Corporation of Sikkim (STCS), a State Government undertaking, without any time frame for the establishment of GSKs throughout Sikkim. The Department paid advances of ₹ 5.02 crore during August 2006 to March 2007 to the STCS, which engaged two private firms for establishment of GSKs in 157 GPUs and 4 ZPs which *inter alia* included 45 GPUs and 1 ZP in South district.

Physical verification (August – September 2010) in all the selected 14 GPUs and one ZP with departmental officials revealed that the requisite software was not installed in any of the computers in these GSKs and above all no internet connectivity was found in place in any of the GSKs. The audit team visited and physically verified all the GSKs again in November 2011 but it was found that the position of previous year had not changed and GSKs were not functioning as it should be due to non-installation of required software and internet connection. Further, it was seen that the hardware supplied to the GSKs were very old and obsolete with very poor configuration which also needs to be upgraded or replaced. The computer hardware were simply being utilised for office use for typing and taking printouts of some official documents only.

Thus, due to non-establishment of GSKs the very objective of bridging the e-gap between villages and towns and providing speedy information to the PRIs, etc. could not be achieved despite spending ₹ 1.43 crore in South district alone in 2006-07, i.e. even after more than four

years.

7.1.3 Conclusion

As regards the e-governance activities, all the departments and other services had not been covered and in some cases provided facilities could not be put to use. GSKs have neither been installed with required software nor internet facility been provided.

7.1.4 Recommendation

- *All departments/offices may be covered under e-governance and where facilities were provided but could not be put to use, the same may be put to use immediately.*
- *Required software may be installed in all the GSKs and may be provided with internet facility.*

7.2 Waste Management

Waste management includes collection, transport, recovery and disposal of waste, including supervision of such operations and after-care of disposal sites. Municipal solid waste, hazardous wastes and biomedical wastes were the most common wastes generated in the towns in South district. The responsibility of waste management was assigned to UDHD. A review of the processes involved in solid waste management in the district revealed the following:

7.2.1 Delay in Setting up of Solid Waste Treatment Plant

The UDHD formulated and submitted the proposal to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) through Sikkim State Pollution Control Board (SSPCB) with an aim to set up model facilities for demonstration of management of urban solid waste in the cluster towns of the South and West districts on the cost sharing basis of 90:10 (Centre and State). The project was approved by the CPCB in January 2006 with an estimated cost of ₹ 2.50 crore. Accordingly, the CPCB sanctioned and released its first instalment of ₹ 60 lakh in February 2006 for commencement of the project. The project was to be completed within 36 months after the date of receipt of 1st instalment from the CPCB, i.e. by February 2009.

Scrutiny revealed that the civil work was awarded (June 2007) to a contractor with a tender value of ₹ 1.52 crore. On physical verification of the project site in November 2011, it was found that the work was far from completion even after spending a sum of ₹ 2.64 crore (₹ 91.74 lakh spent on machine and equipment, ₹ 98.96 lakh on payment to contractor and ₹ 73.56 lakh on acquisition of land not forming part of approved project cost). The progress of work was hampered due to non-availability of funds. Further analysis revealed that the delay in release of 2nd instalment of the funds from CPCB was due to non-release of State share of 10 *per cent* in time and only in May 2008 the State released its share of ₹ 25 lakh. This in turn, delayed submission of utilisation certificate by the Department to the CPCB. However, the 2nd instalment of ₹ 110.83 lakh was released by the CPCB in April 2010. Thus, due to delay in completion of the project in time and in the absence of any dumping site, the whole garbage of

the towns were being dumped in an open space at the project site near the banks of river Rangeet as could be seen from the following photographs:

Image – 7.1



Untreated Garbage being dumped on the banks of river Rangeet near Shipchu site

Image – 7.2



Incomplete work of Solid Waste Management at Shipchu (work was started four years back)

While accepting the facts, the Department stated (February 2012) that the project could not be completed due to non-release of last instalment of funds by CPCB.

7.2.2 Transportation

According to Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Rules, wastes shall be transported in covered vehicles to prevent exposure to open environment and scattering. In the South district (ten towns) a total of 120 MT of garbage was generated every day. Till date, the Department does not have any solid waste plant to convert this garbage into compost. The garbage was being transported in open tippers and trucks to recently started project site at the bank of river which can be seen from the photograph below:

Image – 7.3



Garbage being transported in open trucks by UDHD at Jorethang

Image – 7.4



Image – 7.5

*Garbage being transported in open truck by UDHD at Namchi*

Further, it was also noticed that treatment plant at Shipchu was situated at a distance ranging from 4 km (Jorethang) to 96 km (Yangang) as detailed in the table below. The transportation of garbage from these long distances every day was not feasible as the Department was having only two trucks and three Tata 407 trucks for this purpose and it did not seem possible to transport 120 tons of garbage daily to the treatment site from various distances of ten towns.

Table-7.1

Distance (in Kms) of towns from the Sipchu treatment plant

Namchi	Jorethang	Melli	Mazitaar	Temi	Rava ngla	Namthang	Damthang	Yangang	Kewzing
24	4	33	14	50	50	48	37	96	58

Further, the State Government had made a regulation that throwing of garbage here and there was a punishable offence. Garbage would be collected from each and every household in the morning by the tippers of the UDHD. Despite this, it was seen that in the market areas garbage was being thrown by the public here and there creating health hazards for the public on which the UDHD did not have any control as could be seen from the photographs below:

Image – 7.6

*Garbage being thrown in front of lower Side main gate of District Hospital, Namchi*

Image – 7.7

*Garbage being thrown on the road side in Kazitar at district headquarter, Namchi*

7.2.3 Segregation of Waste

MSW Rules 2000 (Management and Handling) require separation of waste into bio-degradable and non-biodegradable categories right from the point of generation itself by putting them in green and blue containers respectively. While the bio-degradable waste was to be converted to compost, the non-biodegradable waste was to be thrown at landfill sites and thereby decrease the volume of waste to be thrown into landfill sites and improve the environment. Physical verification by Audit with departmental officers revealed that segregation of waste as prescribed was not being adopted by the Department either at the point of generation or during treatment as can be seen in the photographs below:



Dumping of untreated waste in open space near river side was indicative of callous approach of the Department and would also be an environmental hazard which needs to be attended.

7.2.4 Conclusion

The UDHD in the South district did not have an integrated waste management plan for collection, storage, segregation, transportation, processing and disposal of municipal solid waste thereby exposing the public to the dangers of untreated waste and pollution.

7.2.5 Recommendations

- *Solid waste treatment plant should be completed immediately to avoid exposing the public to the dangers of untreated waste and pollution.*
- *Waste management plans also needs to be developed in an integrated manner to ensure proper management of disposal of municipal solid waste.*

7.3 Civil Amenities

7.3.1 Increase in Crime Rate

The GOI introduced the scheme of Modernisation of Police Force (MOPF) to augment the operational efficiency of the State police so as to face the emerging challenges to internal

security. Audit scrutiny of records of Superintendent of Police, South district revealed that during the years 2006 to 2010, 1172 crime cases were reported in the district. Major crime cases were against bodily offences and property offences. Further, increase/decrease in incidence of crime indicate the performance of police force. However, crime rate in the district for the last five years had been fluctuating as shown below:

Table-7.2

Year	No. of Indian Penal Code crimes	No. of Special Local Laws crimes	Total no. of crimes	Percentage of increase with previous year
2006	198	16	214	-
2007	182	19	201	(-) 6.07
2008	200	21	221	9.95
2009	235	32	267	20.81
2010	201	68	269	0.75

Source: Departmental figures

Compared to the base year 2006, the rate of crime had decreased by 6 per cent during 2007. However, in the subsequent years the gain could not be sustained as there was again an increase of 9.95 per cent in 2008, 20.81 per cent in 2009 and 0.75 per cent in 2010.

7.3.2 Computerisation of Police Force

Common Integrated Police Application (CIPA) was one of the important components of Modernisation of Police Force which was designed and developed to maintain the details pertaining to all the activities of the Police Station (PS) relating to crime and criminals. Accordingly, the GOI directed the State Government to cover all PSs with CIPA in a phased manner commencing from 2004-05 and to complete it by 2007-08. Though the State Government provided one computer each to six PSs of South district, none of the six PSs of South district could be connected with CIPA and the computers were being used as stand-alone computers. Hence, the State Government had not brought any PSs under CIPA and the State Government was in the process of implementation of Crime and Criminal Tracing Network and Systems (CCTNS) by replacing CIPA by transferring of hardware provided under CIPA to CCTNS. The fact however, remained that as of November 2011, CIPA could not be implemented and none of the PSs in the district could be connected with networking.

7.3.3 Very High Suicide Rate

The statistics concerning the rates of suicidal death in the district as compared to national rates during 2006 to 2010 showed that it was significantly very high as detailed below:

Table-7.3

Year	No. of suicide cases in the district	Rate of suicide per lakh population in the district	National rate of suicide per lakh population
2006	128	90.34	10.5
2007	122	86.10	10.8
2008	125	88.22	10.8
2009	165	116.45	10.9
2010	165	116.45	11.4

Source: Departmental figures and book 'Accidental deaths and suicides in India 2010'

It could be seen from the above that during 2006 rate of suicidal death in the district was 90.34 per lakh as compared to national rate of 10.50 per lakh. Similarly during 2008 and 2010, rates of suicidal death in the district were 88.22 and 116.45 per lakh as compared to national rates of 10.80 and 11.40 per lakh respectively, which were highest of any State in the country during the years. Further, the rates of suicidal death have been fluctuating during the years 2006 to 2010 between 86.10 and 116.45 per lakh which were about 9 to 10 times more than the national rates. Reasons for such significantly high rates of suicidal death in the district were stated (August 2010) to be due to socio-economic changes and disintegration of joint families into nuclear families.

7.3.4 Position of Disposal of Civil and Criminal Cases

Information furnished by the District and Session Judge, South District indicated the following regarding disposal of civil and criminal cases:

Table-7.4

Year	Opening balance		Cases instituted during the year		Total cases		Disposed during the year		Closing balance		Percentage of disposal	
	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal
2006-07	28	27	139	144	167	171	112	121	55	50	67	71
2007-08	55	50	117	100	172	150	79	89	93	61	46	59
2008-09	93	61	124	132	217	192	138	111	79	82	64	58
2009-10	79	82	162	251	241	333	107	188	134	145	44	56
2010-11	134	145	145	274	279	419	155	269	124	150	56	64

Source: Information furnished by the District and Session Judge, South District, Namchi

From the above statement it could be seen that 44 to 71 per cent cases only were disposed of during 2006-11 leaving huge number of cases pending. Reasons for their pendency were not stated. However, considering the low rate of crime in the district, these pending cases appeared to be very high for the district.

7.3.5 Availability of Banking Facilities

The GOI decided to provide essential financial services like savings, credit, micro-insurance and remittance to all villages with population over 2000 by March 2012. The objective of the scheme was to deliver financial services at an affordable cost to vast sections of the low-income groups.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) started its operation in the State of Sikkim very recently and hence, Audit tried to collect information from the branches of various commercial banks available in the district as well as from the State Bank of India working as the lead bank. From the information received from all bank branches of the district, it was gathered that all bank branches are termed as rural branches and all investors are termed as rural investors. In the district, six commercial banks were having 16 branches at various places in which as of March 2011, 62273 savings accounts with investment of ₹ 119.40 crore, 523 current accounts with investment of ₹ 19.45 crore and 7801 fixed deposit accounts with investment of ₹ 113.45 crore were available as per following details:

Table-7.5

(₹ in crore)

Sl. No.	Name of the bank	No. of branches available in the district	Savings accounts		Current accounts		Fixed deposit accounts	
			No. of accounts	Amount invested	No. of accounts	Amount invested	No. of accounts	Amount invested
1	State Bank of India	10	39964	82.66	310	6.44	6244	85.26
2	Sikkim State Co-operative Bank Limited	2	11984	10.25	20	0.12	348	1.47
3	Axis Bank	1	2504	6.66	31	5.29	52	3.38
4	Union Bank of India	1	3247	4.68	79	0.19	299	7.80
5	Central Bank of India	1	2254	5.92	20	5.79	513	3.76
6	United Bank of India	1	2320	9.23	63	1.62	345	11.78
	Total	16	62273	119.40	523	19.45	7801	113.45

Source: Data supplied by various banks

Further, State Bank of Sikkim (SBS) functions as State's Banker having its branches all over the State which operate State Government accounts as well as deposits made by individuals. From the information received from all branches of the SBS in the district, it was gathered that all branches are termed as rural branches and all investors are termed as rural investors. In the district, six branches of SBS were operating at various places in which as of March 2011, 26261 savings accounts with investment of ₹ 51.38 crore, 570 current accounts with investment of ₹ 4.53 crore and 2970 fixed deposit accounts with investment of ₹ 16.88 crore were available.

While comparing the statistics of investors and investments with previous years during last five years, it was seen that investors and investments in various bank branches in the district had increased considerably. Though the coverage of the district under financial inclusion by 2012 was to be fulfilled, most of the villages in remote areas still remained uncovered with banking facilities.