

CHAPTER 1
Introduction

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1.1 Enabling provisions for Service Delivery

Citizens avail various public services such as obtaining nationality and domicile certificate, income certificate, caste certificate, birth/death certificate and police clearance certificate from government departments, local bodies and government companies from time to time. Citizens expect a high standard of service and public authorities have recognised this fact. The way services are delivered has changed considerably with the advent of information and communication technology. The Government of Maharashtra (GoM) has introduced the following initiatives with the aim of improving the delivery of public services:

- The Maharashtra Government Servants Regulation of Transfers and Prevention of Delay in Discharge of Official Duties Act, 2005, which requires every office or department to prepare and publish citizens charter listing out facilities or services rendered by the office or department, along with the time limit for providing such facility or services to the public.
- e-Governance Policy, 2011 to enable citizens to avail of various services online without having to visit government offices or at a place near their home, at minimum possible cost.
- The Maharashtra Right to Public Services Act, 2015 (MRTPS Act) to provide for delivery of public services in a transparent, efficient and timely manner to the eligible persons in Maharashtra and to bring transparency and accountability in the departments and agencies of the government and other public authorities which provide public services to the eligible persons.

For implementing the MRTPS Act, GoM constituted (March 2017) the Maharashtra State Commission for Right to Service (Commission) to supervise, monitor, regulate and improve the overall delivery of public services by various departments of the State government. The Directorate of Information Technology, GoM (DIT) also developed (September 2015) *Aaple Sarkar* Service Portal, a common platform for citizens to apply for services of various departments. This portal is managed by DIT and maintained by Mahaonline Limited¹ (Mahaonline) and Maharashtra IT Corporation Limited. The citizens also could avail the services through 33,359 common service centres named '*Aaple Sarkar Seva Kendras*' (ASSKs) located in districts, talukas and villages.

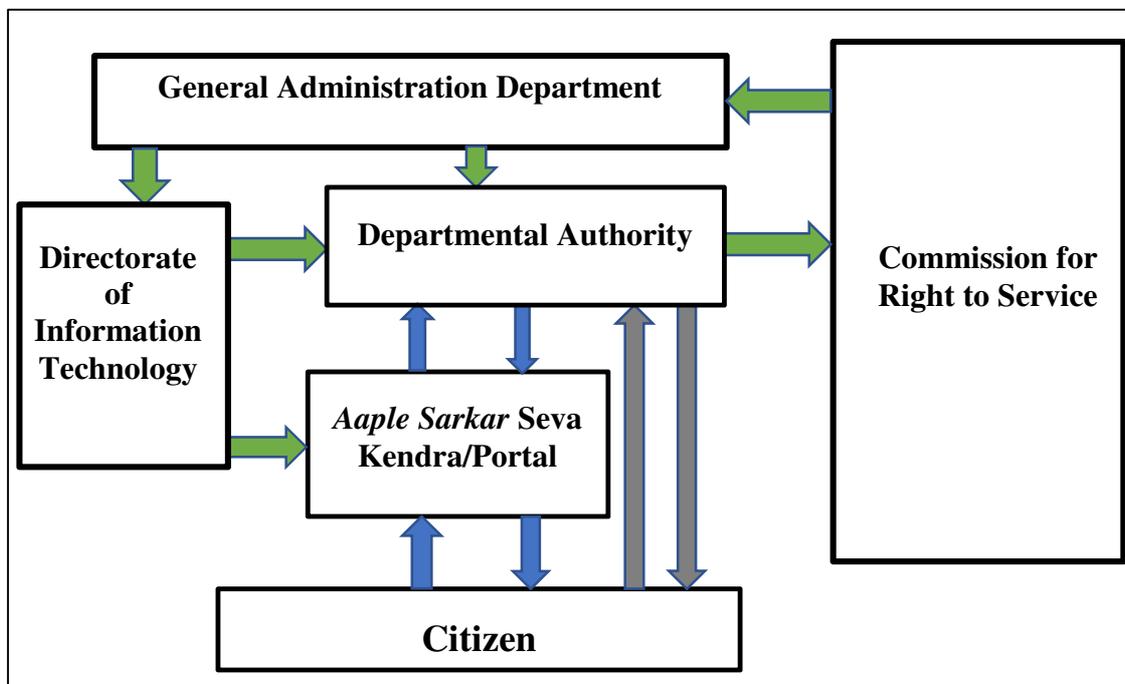
1.2 Organisational set-up

The General Administration Department (GAD), GoM headed by the Principal Secretary is the administrative department overseeing the delivery of public services to the citizens. The Maharashtra State Commission for Right to Service headed by the Chief Commissioner, supervises, monitors and regulates the

¹ Mahaonline Limited is a joint venture between Tata Consultancy Services and the Government of Maharashtra

overall delivery of public services and make suggestions to the State Government to ensure better delivery of public services. The Directorate of Information Technology headed by the Director coordinates the implementation of the online system for public services. The organisational set-up for delivery of public services is depicted in **Chart 1.1**.

Chart 1.1: Organisational set-up for delivery of public services



1.3 Audit objectives

The Performance Audit was conducted to assess whether:

- services have been provided to the citizens in an effective, efficient and time-bound manner;
- proper planning and business process re-engineering was done to provide public services online;
- monitoring was done to ensure proper implementation of the MRTPS Act; and
- grievance redressal mechanism was effective.

1.4 Audit criteria

Audit criteria were adopted from the following:

- The Maharashtra Right to Public Services (MRTPS) Act, 2015;
- The Maharashtra Right to Public Services Rules, 2016;
- Maharashtra Government Servants Regulation of Transfers and Prevention of Delay in Discharge of Official Duties Act, 2005;
- e-Governance policy of Maharashtra, 2011;
- Orders/guidelines issued by GoM from time to time; and
- Notifications on public services issued by test-checked departments.

1.5 Audit scope and methodology

The Performance Audit was conducted between June 2021 and November 2021 covering the period 2015-16 to 2020-21. Audit test checked records at the General Administration Department, GoM, the Directorate of Information Technology and the Maharashtra State Commission for Right to Service. Besides, nine² out of 31 departments were selected on stratified sampling basis for test-check of records. Nine³ out of 36 districts were selected on stratified sampling basis to check the records of the District Collectors and nine test-checked departments. A joint survey along with the officials of the District Collectorates was carried out in 200 *Aaple Sarkar Seva Kendras* and among 500 beneficiaries in the nine test-checked districts.

Audit was provided with access to dashboard data available in the *Aaple Sarkar* Service Portal and also access to backend data of the *Aaple Sarkar* Service Portal. The data was analysed using Computer-assisted Audit Techniques (CAAT).

An entry conference was held on 20 July 2021 with the Secretary, GAD, GoM wherein the audit objectives, criteria, scope and methodology were discussed. The audit findings were discussed with Additional Chief Secretary, GAD, GoM in an exit conference held on 27 July 2022 and the responses of the department have been incorporated appropriately in the Report.

1.6 Acknowledgement

Audit acknowledges the cooperation and assistance extended by the General Administration Department, GoM, the Directorate of Information Technology, the Maharashtra State Commission for Right to Service and all the test-checked offices in test-checked districts in providing records, information and clarifications from time to time for the smooth conduct of audit, despite the constraints imposed by COVID-19 pandemic.

² (1) Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Department, (2) Revenue and Forest Department, (3) Home Department, (4) Medical Education and Drugs Department, (5) Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department, (6) School Education and Sports Department, (7) Social Justice and Special Assistance Department, (8) Urban Development Department and (9) Women and Child Development Department

³ (1) Akola, (2) Aurangabad, (3) Bhandara, (4) Kolhapur, (5) Mumbai City, (6) Nagpur, (7) Nanded, (8) Pune and (9) Thane

