Hyderabad Workshop

November 5-6, 2012

No of Participants: 57

No of states: 5 (Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala)

Summary of Main Points of Discussion

November 5, 2012: Municipal Finance, Service Delivery, Reforms

The Chief Minister Shri Kiran Kumar Reddy emphasised on the need for decongestion of the cities of Andhra Pradesh. The upcoming metro project, the first phase of which is going to be completed in 2014, can partially solve the problem. The issue of pollution in these cities is also a matter of concern. The state of Andhra Pradesh as a whole is in the process of identifying measures to improve the efficiency in service delivery in the cities through application of ICT and various other methods. Universal access to these services and increase in the coverage ratio are some of the major concerns of the state as with many other states in India. Rajiv Awas Yojana is one measure which is enabling the state to tackle the problem of housing. Employability in these cities are also discussed.

Professor Srinivas Chary of ASCI emphasized on the role of application of ICT in cutting down costs of service delivery and increasing efficiency was emphasized. The good practices on ICT applications can be studied from different parts of the state and can be customized and followed according to the needs of the cities. He also mentioned that ASCI is in the process of collecting and continuously updating information on the good practices in ICT applications in the country which have brought in savings in cost and have increased efficiency in urban service delivery.

Ms. Anita Ramachandran, MEPMA, Andhra Pradesh

1. She gave a presentation on service delivery to Urban Poor in Andhra Pradesh. Issues related to social, economic and infrastructure vulnerabilities in the cities of Andhra Pradesh were discussed where the role of self help groups (SHGs) was emphasized. The formation of groups at the slum levels and their role in provision of health and nutrition services, insurance and pension schemes, scholarships, bank loans and various other benefits were discussed.

2. She mentioned that Municipal Administration & Urban Development Department supports the following Organizations for improving service delivery to the Urban

Poor in the state: Mission for Elimination of Poverty in Municipal Areas (MEMPA), Andhra Pradesh Urban Finance and Infrastructure Development Corporation, Andhra Pradesh State Housing Corporation Limited

3. As far as social vulnerability is concerned the main activities can be categorized under Institutional Building which includes Formation of Community Based Organisations (SHGs, Slum Level Federations, Town Level Federations), Strengthening and Capacity Building, Community Health & Nutrition; and Social Security which includes Social Security pensions, Abhaya Hastham (Pension linked Insurance scheme), Janasree Bhima Yojana.

4. Main activities in Service Delivery to tackle Economic Vulnerability include Access to credit, Bank Linkage to SHGs (Rs.7633 Crores), Total Financial Inclusion, Interest subsidy (Rs.332.50 Crores releases to Urban SHGs), Sthreenidhi (Women Co-operative Society), Regulation of private Micro Finance Institutions (A.P. Micro Finance Institutions – Regulations of Money Lending Act, 2011), Establishment of Micro Enterprises (individual and group).

5. Service Delivery to Tackle Occupational Vulnerability includes three main components: Rajiv Yuva Kiranalu (Placement linked skill, trainings), Self Employment trainings, Direct Placements / Job melas

6. Service Delivery to Tackle Housing & Infrastructure Vulnerability has three main components. Provision of basic services to the Urban poor, Affordable Housing, Sanitation, Water Supply.

Mr. R. B. Bambale, Deputy Municipal Commissioner, Greater Mumbai, Maharashtra

1. He made a presentation on water reforms in Mumbai. After giving a General overview of Mumbai, he discussed issues on Tariffs and Charges, Transition from Intermittent to 24 X 7 Water Supply, Demand Side Management Source Augmentation, and - Long Term Plan Supply Side initiatives.

2. Details of the basin wise water supply sources and distribution system were discussed. Individual household water supply is made available in planned developments. In slums group water connections for five members are given. Single connection to each building and not each household is provided with Taps in general washing places. Municipal Corporation does not provide Public taps in

slums. Water supply by gravity is not possible to Slum Colonies in elevated areas. In elevated slums the general policy is the following: Ground storage tank, Pumping system and pumped delivery main have to be constructed by the corporation at its cost, installation to be handed over to the association of slum dwellers for O & M. The Association is also responsible for payment of water charges bill. Water Charges, Sewerage Charges are there in the form of Water Tax, Sewerage Tax , Water Benefit Tax ,Sewerage Benefit Tax ; in the main city it is integrated with property tax. Cetegory-wise differential water charges are also discussed for slums, residences, hospitals, commercial establishments, industries, hotels which ranges between Rs3 (slums) to Rs 60 per 1000 litres (star hotels). There is no recycling so far.

3. 3400 MLD of water is supplied in the city of Mumbai in the following way: 800 MLD to the 'Island city', 1200 MLD to the Eastern suburbs and 1400 MLD to the Western suburbs. There is no billing of water consumption in the island city, and 20% of the 3400 MLD supplied is the Non-Revenue water. Of the remaining supply of 2720 MLD, the supply of 260 MLD of water is chargeable from commercial and industrial establishments; 2160 MLD of water is supplied to residential areas at 172 litres per capita per day (lpcd).

4. The Water Resources Regulatory Authority Act was passed in 2005 led to regulate water resources within the state of Maharashtra. The full potential of the legislation not tapped fully as the Regulator has not assumed fully responsibilities.

5. Reforms in Andhra Pradesh in GHMC, one component of which gives connections to slums at Rs 200 per household was pointed out by Mr. M. T. Krishna Babu, Commissioner, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation.

6. The integrated tariff structure of water with property tax in the main city was the point of discussion. It came out in the discussion that the issue of cost recovery through charges needs to be analysed properly for which the user charges on each service need to be treated separately. Recycling is also one measure by which cost can be minimized which is not done in Mumbai.

7. Dr Ahluwalia pointed out that keeping in mind the differences in measures and practices between the main city and the suburbs, an attempt can be made to compare the central city and the suburbs in our research project. Keeping in mind the loss and leakages and Unaccounted for Water, a major policy question would be to chalk out reforms for preservation of water.

Mr. Thiru S. Rajamanickam, Commissioner, Puducherry

1. He made a presentation on Solid Waste Management in Puducherry. The per capita generation of solid waste in the state is 562 gms. Source segregation and door to door collections is done in only 2 out of 79 wards.

2. Tractors and lorries are being used for primary collection. Concrete dust bins, of 0.75 diameter each, are being used. There is 100% collection efficiency of garbage. Coverage of collection area is 100% with Door to door collection and Dust bin collection. Street sweeping and Side drain cleaning and silt removal are done. There is night cleaning of approach roads. Absence of landfill sites and proper disposal is reflected in the presentation.

3. Dr Ahluwalia pointed out the need for a need of segregation at source and systematic disposal of solid waste. At present the state does not have policies in place. Major reform initiatives are required. Proper segregation and scientific ways of disposal are the needs of the hour.

Dr. Radhakrishnan Kurup, Joint Director, Urban Affairs, Kerala

1. He gave a comprehensive presentation on the Municipal Finances in Kerala. After giving an overview of the urban sector in Kerala, he analysed in detail the sources of municipal finances. The recommendations of SFCs in the state and their implementation have made the ULBs more self reliant as far as resource generation is concerned. Own sources consist mainly of Property tax, Profession tax, Entertainment tax, Show tax, Advertisement tax, Assigned taxes consist of Plan Fund (Development Fund), Maintenance Fund, General purpose Fund. Non tax mainly consists of Rent on land &buildings, Fees under various enactments &services.

2. Prior to 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, ULGs of Kerala were receiving non-plan, non-statutory grants that were shared and assigned taxes and non-plan, non-statutory grants which comprised more than 20 different types of grants. This is with considerable discretion and with very little objective criteria for allocation.

3. Besides the existing practice of devolving the surcharge on duty of transfer of property, basic tax and a portion of motor vehicles tax, SFC-I recommended for the creation of Urban and Rural Pools and for providing 1% of State's own tax revenue (SOTR) as non-plan grant devolution

4. SFC II Recommendations key features include General purpose fund, largely to meet the traditional civic- functions, Maintenance funds (Road & Non Road) for the maintenance of buildings & roads, (The two being fixed at 3.5% of the state tax revenue), Plan grants of 5.5% of the State tax revenue.

5. A decrease in the rate of entertainment tax has resulted in a considerable loss of revenue which was pointed out by the speaker. The importance of professions tax and the power to impose and collect this tax is an important concern in India as we have different arrangements across states. Mr. M. T. Krishna Babu, Commissioner, GHMC, mentioned that AP has professions tax and GHMC collects 3500 crores INR in the latest financial year. However in Karnataka the state collects professions tax.

Mr. K. R. Niranjan, Special Commissioner, BBMP, Karnataka

1. He gave a presentation and showed a video on GIS-based Unique Property Identification (PID) System in Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagar Palike.

2. The application of GIS mapping in restructuring the property tax assessment and collection procedure was discussed in detail. The physical verification of properties took 2 years, and the process of assigning PIDs started with numbering of all the streets.

3. The property tax rates are revised once every 3 years, and the properties were numbered as per the registration number in 2008-09. The self-assessment of property tax with 5% rebate to early tax payers has resulted in tax revenue to increase from Rs 448 crore in 2007-08 to Rs 1030 crore as of October 2012. The future projects relating this database with service delivery and other management operations were also discussed.

Mrs. Anita Praveen, Managing Director, TNUIFSL, Tamil Nadu

1. She gave a comprehensive presentation on Financial Sector Innovations for Urban Development in Tamil Nadu. The speaker gave a general introduction of the urban sector in Tamil Nadu and elaborated on the activities and initiatives of TNUIFSL which is an exemplary PPP model to raise and manage finances for the ULBs in Tamil Nadu. The issues related to institutional arrangements in market borrowing and grants, resource mobilization in the market and lessons learnt are discussed in detail.

2. Dr Ahluwalia pointed out that the experience of Tamil Nadu has set a benchmark for a good example in financial sector reforms in the local governments in India. The speaker emphasized on the right timing for accessing the market which is a key factor behind the success of all market oriented funding options. It is the lesser dependence on grants and more importance given to the loan component which is very crucial.

3. Mr Anand Sahasranaman raised the issue of the role of markets in mobilizing resources for ULBs and making them more self reliant. He pointed out that the business as usual is not enough at this point and the ULBs should be able to finance their debt from their own resources. The question on whether JNNURM has created an incentive for the ULBs to become more self-reliant was raised by Dr Ahluwalia. In this connection the question on whether the devolution of grants should be linked to reforms or not was also discussed. It came up in the course of discussions that while some states think that JNNURM might induce an element of dis-incentive in creating the right attitude in generating own revenues from different alternatives by innovations, others think that JNNURM has been extremely helpful in municipal management issues. The contribution of JNNURM in creating infrastructure and governance quality was pointed out. It was also pointed out that the extent of efficacy of reforms would depend on the attitude of the states in utilizing the reforms and the grants to get the desired results and also the state of development in the state.

4. The issue of transfer of the eighteen functions in the 12th schedule of the 74th CAA was also raised by Dr Ahluwalia and it was found that most of the states have transferred the functions except for Fire and Transport services to the local bodies. The issue on staffing and existence of municipal cadre was also discussed which points to the fact that there is no uniform pattern across all the states. While for some states like Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu there is a cadre only for Municipal Councils, Karnataka has a cadre for Municipal Councils and Corporations. In Kerala, there is a cadre for Municipal services and a separate cadre for Municipal Commissioners (locally called Municipal Secretaries). Andhra Pradesh has a cadre for engineering, public health and town planning in the Municipal Corporations (Vizag, Hyderabad and Vijayawada) and also a cadre for local governments (including a cadre for town planning).

5. Dr Ahluwalia also raised the issue of the presence of a regulator for the local bodies. Maharashtra has a Local Funds Auditor and a Regulator for Water services. Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Karnataka have Local Funds Auditor, and

Kerala and Andhra Pradesh also have a Property Tax Board. Karnataka also has a Local Body Ombudsman.

6. There was a discussion on the Acts which govern the ULBs in different states in India which was initiated by Dr Ahluwalia. In Maharashtra there are more than 100 Acts which are in place. In most of states, there are different Acts for Municipal Councils, Corporations and Town Panchayats. Apart from these Acts, there are laws, by-laws and other regulations for ULBs.

7. The issue on proper utilization of the value of land was also raised. It was pointed out that the potential rent collected from digging land to implant optic fibre cables could bring huge amount of resources to the city governments.

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November 6, 2012: E Governance

The applicability of e-governance measures in Indian cities were discussed in detail. Better e-governance can improve coverage and efficiency of different urban services. Even after hardware is in place, the main problems faced to implement good e governance measures are resources and manpower. A good IT application base at the local level is also needed. There was consensus that the need for a high e readiness quotient in a state is a pre-requisite for e governance reforms in a state.

Mr. Sam Bob, Principal Secretary, UD, Andhra Pradesh in his address stressed on the importance of urban sector in the growth of the economy as a whole. In this connection he mentioned the importance of urban services. E governance can play a pivotal role in raising the efficiency of the ULBs in service delivery. The mechanism of complaints redressal and status updation can be made smother by proper implementation of e governance. The main constraints of resources and manpower can have a solution in the proper usage of IT applications which can reduce costs in the long run and also can result in considerable savings.

Ms. Minnie Mathew , Chief Secretary, Kerala, emphasized on the maintenance of assets which was also pointed out in the HPEC 2011 Report under the chairmanship of Dr Isher Judge Ahluwalia. She emphasized on the issue of decongestion of cities. She also mentioned about the state's preparedness to provide urban services in rural areas. The contribution of the urban sector in generation of income and growth is also is more than that of the rural sector. Around 8000 cities contribute 60 per cent of the income of India; only 100 cities would account for bulk of the GDP. Better earning, employability, education facilities are in the big cities. E governance can help the smaller cities to grow faster and achieve efficiency in service delivery. Recent initiatives like E seva, Mee

Seva in the state are also mentioned which are replicable in other states of India. The initiative in the state of replacement of manual water reading which has increased revenues to a considerable extent was mentioned. The application of OSRT in GHMC for garbage collection, street lighting and tax collection was also pointed out. The issue of mobile grievance redressal was also touched upon. She also spoke on computerized works module and metro operation in PPP mode for public transport which would help the state solve some of the problems in the urban sector.

Different phases of e governance were discussed to evolve into a smart city. Early phases focused on "IT for Computerization", followed by integration as adaptive and intelligent cities using "ICT for e-Governance", a mature phase would look at "ICT with Emerging Technologies for building Smart Cities"(ICT, Electronics and Sensor based, GIS, GPS based, Real-time Systems, Mobile, Analytics based). A good and effective e-governance through intelligent use of ICT can affect service delivery and revenue management in a city and can have considerable cost reductions. Usage of censor technology for better management was also proposed for Indian cities.

Prof Srinivas Chary, Professor, ASCI made a presentation on Leveraging the Power of ICT for Good Urban Management. ICT can be used for Effective City Management which is Imperative to promote ICT for cost efficiency and service delivery improvement. ASCI in partnership with Ministry of Urban Development, GoI and technology thought leaders is promoting ICT innovations in City Management, Efficiency improvement, Transparency , Cost reduction.

ICT development works in Service delivery (Water Management, Sewerage, SWM, Lighting, traffic and Transportation) to internal processes (Personnel Information System, Revenue Management, Projects/Works Management, Accounts, Health Management, Town Planning, General Administration) to citizen interface (Grievance Management system, Town planning, Information through web portal). There has been partial progress in ICT development in service delivery, limited progress in internal processes and significant progress in citizen interface.

Smart cities are built around six dimensions integrating all aspects of Urban Management: Smart Governance, smart people, smart economy, smart environment, smart living and smart mobility,

Some smart initiatives include Smart mobility – HTRIMS in Hyderabad (the three stakeholders being the Government of Andhra Pradesh, GHMC and the traffic department); Bangalore, Bicycle sharing program, Trivandrum, Bus information system over mobile, Water efficiency through SCADA – Pimpri Chinchward; Building approval system – Automatic Development Control Regulations (AUTO DCR) in about 30 cities; Integration of services and governance – Hyderabad, Smart toilets – sensor-based

auto-flush community toilets in Trivandrum; Automatic water meter reading in Mumbai and Hyderabad; Solid waste monitoring system through GPS/GPRS by Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation(GHMC).

Andhra Pradesh initiative on Mee Seva was also discussed. Mee Seva is a single-entry portal for the entire range of services, paperless to the extent possible which has central pooling of all records, digitally signing, storing them in the database and rendering them using a web-service. All the documents rendered are electronically verifiable. Ensuring privacy and security of the system and have multiple delivery channels. The system can serve in 45 services, another 48 services to be included in near future.

Mr Anoop Singh, Special Secretary, Department of IT & Communications, Andhra Pradesh

1. He gave a presentation on Integrated Service Delivery Model - *Mee Seva*. Citizen approaches Government offices for delivery of services. Government records lying in paper form need physical verification. Multiple visits may be required. There is a lack of transparency and monitoring. This may lead to undesirable practices, touts, agents etc. Integrated Service Delivery Model – Mee Seva, literally means, 'At your service'. This is a single-entry portal for the entire range of services, Seamless & Paperless to the extent possible.It includes central pooling of all records, digitally signing, storing them in the database and rendering them using a web-service.

2. All the documents rendered are electronically verifiable. Privacy and security of the system is ensured and there are multiple delivery channels – CSCs. Features of Mee seva include Categorization of G2C services, Web Based Land Records Management System, Digitally signed certificates, Secured Stationery, Seamless transfer of transaction charges, Real time Monitoring of transactions. SMS alerts to citizen, SECR – Certificate Verification, Mee Seva Payment Gateway. Discussion forums, Suggestion Forums, PMU and Help desk **(?)**. Citizens can call a toll free number '1100' to register complaints. MRTS – Mee Seva Request Tracking System are some of the new features.2300 officers and 2000 Kiosks are using Digital Signatures. There are 7 security features in the electronically printed certificate with digital signatures. The IT department is generating awareness among state officials to identify authentic certificates and accept them without attestation from relevant authorities. Over the next 5 years, there will be one Mee Seva centre for 6 Gram Panchayats

3. The experience of GHMC and their initiatives in e governance was also shared. 19 services are covered through IT applications. Redevelopment of applications with redesigned processes with cross flow of information between applications will be in place by end of December 2012.

C.Vijayaraj Kumar, Additional Commissioner (R&F), Corporation of Chennai

1. He gave a presentation on e governance initiatives in Chennai. The speaker focused on the key improvements which include proper registration, monitoring, disposal and feedback mechanism, all possible modes of collections with real time reconciliation, real time budget control and updation on every transactions, automatic update on time bound cases and reminders, abstract estimate using the single master SOR automatically.

2. **The e-governance experiences of Coimbatore and Hosur in Tamil Nadu** were also shared. While Coimbatore has diversified, Hosur concentrates on grievance redressal through e-governance. 11 services are offered through website. Internet Payment Gateway, Payroll Management System, Handheld Meter Reading Device , e-Tendering, Biometrics, Waste Truck Monitoring System using Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), Auto DCR and BPAMS, e-Auction, Asset Management System, Financial Accounting System, Unified Communication System, Computerization of 70 MLD Sewage Treatment Plant at Ukkadam, Coimbatore are the other services which are also provided. Initiative to improve the existing system of Grievance redressal in Hosur Municipality and to provide better service to the citizen, it was decided to computerise the grievance redressal system. Citizens can avail all Services of Municipality in a Single Counter. Timely disposal of petitions and redressal of Grievances are ensured. Time limit has been prescribed for each and every service so that Citizens need not come to Office frequently. Computer generated receipt is given to the Citizens specifying the date of readiness / delivery of Certificates. Work efficiency of the employees has increased, as all staffs are linked with Computer network. Computerisation makes the supervision easy for the head of the departments and Municipal Commissioner. File tracking becomes possible.

Ramnath Sonawane, Commissioner, Kalyan Dombivli Municipal Corporation, Maharashtra

1. He gave a comprehensive presentation on E Governance in Maharashtra which focuses on the KDMC model. The KDMC model in Maharashtra has been cited as an example which includes more than 100 e-services. A holistic approach is followed where all departments of Corporation and all civic services were to be covered together rather than selective approach. To inculcate IT culture, administrative reforms were introduced to motivate employees to use ICT. Understanding the legal framework of the various processes and review all the processes of the transactions and their simplification wherever necessary to make them amenable to automation is called for.

2. Revisit to over 400 processes was carried out (with focus of streamlining, standardization & objectivity) with the broader process of 'Administrative Reforms'. Business Process Re-engineering was done along with organization re-alignment, keeping in mind the convenience of the people and the location. BPR was undertaken under the expert guidance of the expert committee and several processes were changed in order to make hem suitable for carrying out electronic transaction processing.

3. Benefits of the Project include empowerment to the citizens, transparency & accountability in administration (over 5.5 lakh citizen services with 98% adherence to the citizen charter), convenience due to single touch point services (average touch points reduced from over 3 to 1), objectivity in decision making, easy & transparent mechanism for lodging citizen grievances.

4. Benefits to KDMC include 25 % increase in revenue in first year (100% ROI in one year!), additional revenue earned through replication, enhanced productivity and thus better utilisation of existing manpower, accurate forecasting and effective planning due to misimproved liquidity throughout the year. 11 out of the 16 e-governance modules under phase I are being replicated in 231 ULBs of Maharashtra (9 Municipal Corporation, 15 Class A Councils, 61 Class B Councils and 146 Class C Councils).

5. Cost savings of an order of more than 5 crore and reduction of capital expenditures over a plan period of 10 years are some of the advantages gained from the application of the model. Also, savings in terms of time and labor cost are realized. Considerable revenue increase of 25 per cent was also observed after the implementation of KDMC model. KDMC has also implemented biometric attendance for its officials.

Mr. C. G. Suprasanna, Joint Director, Directorate of Municipal Administration, Bangalore

1. He gave an elaborate presentation on Urban E Governance Initiatives in Karnataka State. The Urban Development Department, Government of Karnataka through the Directorate of Municipal Administration launched Municipal Reforms in the year 2004. Financial assistance came from Asian Development Bank for 104 ULBs, World Bank 322 ULBs.

2. Municipal Reforms Cell is an exclusive cell created under DMA in the year 2005 which is managed by IT professionals hired directly from the market. The cell houses a Data Center with centralized database architecture. It is responsible for development, implementation and monitoring the usage of e-Governance tools and applications, operations and maintenance of database of ULBs and provides in house online training for ULB staff, DUDC and DMA officials. The property tax wing of the MRC started functioning with the pilot city of Bangalore.

3. Reforms in Service Delivery include: Aasthi, a GIS-based Property Tax Information system (PTIS), Public Grievance and Redressal (PGR), Birth and Death Registration and Certification (BDC), Fund Based Double Entry Accrual Accounting System (FBDEAAS), ULB websites, TULANA, the online application tool for benchmarking urban service delivery in Karnataka has set the standard for other states to track performance of their ULBs. After the successful implementation of Karnataka Service Level Benchmark, KARSLB, Government of India SLB was initiated by the Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India.

4. Aasthi application is implemented in 59 ULBs of Karnataka, and forms one of the layers on the GIS database. Penalty of 2 per cent per month for non-payment of property tax is automatically generated in the taxpayers' online accounts. The receipt for payment of property tax is not generated electronically but over-the-counter at the respective ULB offices.

5. The Municipal Reforms Cell (MRC) is also in the process of implementing "JalaNidhi", an online application to capture property and water tap connection details of citizens across the 190 ULBs of Karnataka excluding ULBs for which water supply is maintained by Karnataka Urban Water Supply and Drainage Board (KUWSDB). This will help MRC levy water tariffs based on the user category (residential, commercial, industrial or public buildings)

6. The Municipal Reforms Cell is also processing the implementation of digital signatures on the certificates issued by it, e.g. birth and death, building plan application forms etc.

7. Karnataka Guarantee of Services to Citizens Act (Sakala) was passed in 2011 to guarantee services to the citizens within the stipulated time limit. Since April 2011, Sakala has been able to dispose of nearly 516,000 applications, providing 97.34% "in-time service". Sakala includes services of 41 government departments.

C.Radhakrishna Kurup, Joint Director of Urban Affairs, Kerala

1. He gave a presentation on E-Govenance in ULGs of Kerala. Information Kerala Mission, IKM, established.in 1998 is responsible for computerization of the functioning of Local Self Governments (LSGs). NIC developed a software called Service and Payroll Administrative Repository for Kerala (SPARK) which is an Integrated Personnel, Payroll and Accounts information system of all government employees. All LSGs have a front end office, and all have websites.

2. Major Initiatives in e governance include computerization of accounts, computerization of property database, computerization of issue of marriage, birth and death certificates, single window payment of utility bills, E-modules introduced in Cities. Eleven softwares are developed to facilitate the process.

3. Dr Isher Ahluwalia initiated a discussion on the issue on whether to have a common server for the municipal reforms cell. At present the state data centres act as a back-up device while the ULBs have their own data servers. Multiplicity of agents in service delivery (like water boards and other parastatals) can have multiple data centres. A centralised data centre for city applications was proposed which can integrate the databases of all the concerned departments or parastatals providing electricity, water, sewerage.

4. It was pointed out that while that is technically feasible, the existing legal framework in India would not be able to accommodate such an endeavor. Cost effectiveness in this kind of integration was also discussed. Application of SAP and related technologies were also discussed in this context. In Maharashtra they have a centralised servor where data which is one day old can be accessed whereas the ULB server has the most recent data. The concept of a paperless

office is also discussed. The officials of Maharashtra are preparing for a paperless office in response to a GR circulated in January in the state. A paperless office in the true sense can save a lot of space and can generate resources by disposing off the old files and paper not required any more.

5. The discussion ended with Dr Ahluwalia's suggestion to study minutely the good practices in e governance in the states of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Chandigarh and Gujarat and see the possibilities of replication of these in other states.