e-governance: Sitapur shows the way

By: Mohd. Shahabuddin

Sitapur: Sunita Nigam, the ITDP representative of Sitapur, has made it a priority to implement e-governance systems in the district. She has already set the tone for a -governance revolution in Sitapur with her proposed blueprint.

The Sitapur project - an e-governance system for transparent, time-bound, and accountable redressal of public grievances - was launched three months ago. Since then, the project has been implemented across the state, and a decision to scale up this project nationwide has already been taken.

Sitapur, located in the central part of Uttar Pradesh, has already taken the initiative. The district administration has already taken the software from Sitapur and is all set to emulate their success.

Sitapur is the first district in Uttar Pradesh to implement e-governance. The project will be implemented in other districts of the state as well.

The Sitapur project is a model for other districts in the state to follow. The district administration has already set the tone for a -governance revolution in Sitapur with their proposed blueprint.
Contents

1. Introduction
2. How the process of Lokvani was started?
3. Key players in Lokvani
4. Infrastructure requirement
5. Technology used
6. Implementation plan
7. Challenges faced
8. Types of services provided under Lokvani
9. Results achieved
10. Public perception about Lokvani
11. Impact assessment
12. Achievements
13. Sustainability
14. Replicability
15. Conclusion
Introduction

Definitions:
Lokvani is a Hindi word which means "Voice of people". It's a single window E-governance system for providing transparent, accountable and responsive government administration for grievance handling, land record maintenance and Job Opportunity creation, thus giving security and opportunity for accelerated development of citizen. E-Governance is defined as the use of information technology for the purpose of enabling and improving the efficiency with which government services and information are provided to the citizens, employees, businesses, and other government agencies (McClure 2001). Many federal, state and local government agencies have implemented numerous e-government initiatives in order to facilitate the purchase of goods and services, the distribution of information and forms, and the submission of bids and proposals (Trinkle 2001). E-Governance supports good governance, which in turn promotes progress in developing countries. Another key benefit is that the democratic, business and governmental aspects of governance are simplified and improved. This further leads to a reduction in costs with provisions of better services to citizens and businesses. Hence numerous governments are in the process of modeling innovative and efficient models of electronic governance. This also leads to a reduction of multiple and redundant points of contact between government and citizens (Luck & Rubin 1989; Harman 2001; Kulkarni 2001; Thomas 2001).

Kiosk based e-governance

Lokvani, Sitapur is a public-private partnership project started in the district of Sitapur in Uttar Pradesh, India. It is a Kiosk based, self-sustainable e-governance solution providing transparent, accountable and responsive administration for grievance handling, land record management and an eclectic mixture of essential services. The model has been showcased as one of the most successful, popular and influential e-governance solution implemented in India.

The initiative is not only giving a practical shape to the Right to Information Act, but is also creating job opportunities for the educated but unemployed youth of Sitapur. Lokvani is a unique public private partnership program, which gives citizens an opportunity to interact with the government without coming to any government office.

Lokvani: The users' network

It is a outstanding example of a highly cost-efficient, economically self-reliant and user financed community network. This solution in targeted at 3.6 million citizens residing within the district, located in the province of Uttar Pradesh, which is the world’s fifth largest political entity in terms of population. Lokvani has been projected as a commitment to the people in providing them with transparent, credible and accountable systems of governance. This system is grounded in the rule of law, encompassing civil, political as well as economic and social rights underpinned by accountable and efficient public administration for multiphase development of rural people. The primary objective of the IT solution is to bridge the digital divide and "connect" the common man to the strategy makers in a seamless fashion.
How the process of Lokvani was started?

The voice of the people has for decades been unheard in our country. The social and cultural divide, the authoritarian whims of the rulers and the ignorance of the masses have been a few of the many reasons why the governed could not communicate with those who governed. Yet it is known and believed that an efficient government is one which is approachable and sensitive to the needs of the people. And for this both the government and the people need to come forward and communicate. The inaudible voices of the common people need to be raised so that they can no longer be ignored.

Lokvani platform

With the aim to reach out to people and give them a platform to voice their concerns and complaints, the young and dynamic district magistrate of Sitapur, Mr. Amod Kumar embarked on a journey (in 2004) in which he was to be joined in by the entire nation. He initiated an innovative system of grievance redress through an IT enabled project which he named as Lokvani: the voice of the people. It was visualized as a two way exchange of information – of Government programs and documents to the people and of people’s complaints and feedback to the Government. He was assisted in his efforts by Zohra Chatterjee, S.B Singh, Markandey Shahi, A.P. Singh and Devendra Pandey. He commissioned a study of similar initiatives in the districts of Jhalawad (Rajasthan) and Dhar (Madhya Pradesh). The study revealed the strengths and weaknesses of these efforts. Lokvani was accordingly designed to improve upon them and came up with an online resolution and redressal of public grievances, a first of its kind in India.

About Lokvani society

A society by the name Lokvani was registered under Act 21, Society Registration Act 1860 in Uttar Pradesh to implement the project autonomously and to reduce the bureaucratic hassles. The National Informatics Centre (NIC) provided the necessary technical know-how for the project. The format of the program was designed to suit the local demographic profile. 88% of Sitapur’s population resides in the villages. Only 38% of the people are literate. This called for a simple, user friendly programme which was within easy reach of the people both geographically as well as socially.

An e-effort to e-mpower

With this clear cut vision, the District Magistrate Mr. Amod Kumar commissioned the NIC to develop a transparent, efficient and corruption-free program. It was decided that instead of opening new kiosks, existing cyber cafes/computer training institutes should be granted licenses to become Lokvani Centre. This decision was taken to ensure the financial viability and the long-term sustainability of the kiosks. The result was ‘LOKVANI: an
e-fort to empower people’ which has brought a paradigm shift in the fundamentals of governance and government-public relations in Sitapur.

The initiative is not only giving a practical shape to the Right to Information Act, but is also creating job opportunities for the educated but unemployed youth of Sitapur. Lokvani is a unique public private partnership program which gives citizens an opportunity to interact with the government. Today there are 42 geographically uniformly distributed kiosk centres at block and tehsil level at Sitapur.

➢ **Key Players in Lokvani**
   Precisely there are four key players in the Lokvani system:
   1. District Administration
   2. National Informatics Centre
   3. Lokvani Society
   4. Kiosks’ operators

**National Informatics Centre** has its giant network all over the country. It has its district office in every district head quarter headed by District Informatics Officer. NIC has centralized data server in Delhi. Every district unit is connected to Delhi through SCPC PAMA VSAT. District has User ID and Password for accessing the space allocated in server to them. Software development cost of this project is zero as NIC is already working in every district on government expenditure.

There are only two employees from NIC in district, namely District Informatics and Officer Scientific Officer. Eight people are appointed on daily wages basis and have given ID and password for handling work of Lokvani. All the offices in district do not have Computer. These workers do the feeding of the action taken report, target date and DM remarks in Lokvani system for these officers. All the district offices work under the state unit headed by State Informatics Officer (SIO). Similarly State Units are headed by central unit in Delhi. District can ask for help to state office or Country head office for technical assistance. Help can be in area of new technology or in application development.

**District Administration**

District magistrate is administrative and functional head of the Lokvani system. Key points about administration are Implementation of Lokvani e-governance system is more strategic issue then technical. Resistance from administrative officer is extremely high due to change in working system. Lokvani system has been rolled out on a top-down basis and hence it is a challenge to get sustainable acceptance from officers. However, Lokvani has significantly increased accountability of officers and transparency in district administration.

The success of the system in Sitapur is widely believed to be due to the focussed approach of the District Magistrate. The District Magistrate in Sitapur has implemented various processes to ensure the success of the system. One of the key processes is to have a meeting with the relevant officers every Tuesday, to check the total number of complaints arrived and disposed by each officer.

The process does away with the need to send formal notices to the officers and this eliminates the alibi of not receiving the notices on time. Specifically, those officers who have their name in the defaulter list are invited to the meeting. Each officer has assigned unique ID and password for accessing the Lokvani system. Officers think that their all effort for learning the system will of no use when DM will get transferred. Next DM will have different priority therefore he will not give required weight age to Lokvani and e-Governance system. Every officer doesn’t have system. System is on process of full
automation. Paper work is still involved at some level. These points are mentioned in life cycle of complaint.

**Public**

More then 3.6 million population is user of Lokvani system. Lokvani is getting faith of public as it is giving quick and corruption free response to their problems. Public awareness about the system is good but it requires more advertisement effort for taking Lokvani system to every citizen. Grievance system has gain maximum popularity. Other services require more effort to take them equivalent to grievance system. Digital divide is narrowed down by Lokvani system.

**Lokvani society** A society by the name Lokvani was constituted at district level to implement the project autonomously and to reduce the bureaucratic hassles. The National Informatics Centre (NIC) provided the necessary technical know-how for the project. It was decided that instead of opening new kiosks, existing cyber cafes/computer training institutes should be granted licenses to become Lokvani Centres. This decision was taken to ensure the financial viability and the long-term sustainability of the kiosks. Lokvani society signed agreements with kiosk operators after registering them on an annual fee of Rs. 1000/-. The information related to various departments was made available to the kiosks through a website hosted on NIC Delhi web server. The kiosks were given login/passwords to log on to Lokvani website. The Rate List for the services was finalized and care was taken to ensure that the kiosks follow the prescribed pricing.

**Grass root model**

This model of Lokvani worked out quite efficiently up to Tehsil, Block and Town level as there was very negligible set up cost involved. To further spread the growth of Lokvani network to village level, some initial investment in hardware will be involved which government can share. Recurring expenditures can be met from the income generated from various services provided to people from the kiosk. Key is to add sufficient information/services to Lokvani in order to make the kiosk viable. Additionally kiosks can also generate some revenue by providing other private services through their kiosks like computer education, computer typing, digital photography, cyber cafe etc.

Lokvani society role is pivotal in the entire process & operation. The Lokvani society was registered under Act 21, Society Registration Act 1860 in Uttar Pradesh. This step was taken to implement the project autonomously and to reduce the bureaucratic hassles. All the financial work of Lokvani is govern through this society. Monetary financial power of president is limited to INR two Lacs and of secretary is limited to INR Fifty Thousand only.

**Lokvani's key management**
The management committee of this society have following key members,

1. District Magistrate  
   President
2. Chief Development Officer  
   Secretary
3. ADM  
   Vice President
4. Senior Treasury Officer  
   Financial President
5. City Magistrate  
   Member
6. SDM, Sitapur  
   Member
7. Planning Director  
   Member
8. District Manager Telecommunication  
   Member
9. District Informatics Officer  
   Member

**Role and Responsibilities of this society:**

2. Up-gradation of infrastructure, hardware, software and networking, if required.

3. Registration of Private Parties for Lokvani Centres.
   The Lokvani Society will collect the registration charges (ranging from Rs.1000/- to Rs.5000/-) from the Centre operators and will also work out a revenue sharing model for service charges with the Private parties.

   It has also been observed that people do not mind paying for services, as long as they are assured of action on their grievances and complaints, and they get required information at their doorstep, which also saves them lot of time and money wasted in visiting the various government offices time and again for even a small work.

   The Society is valid till September 9, 2009. After this date, renewal of society will be required.

> **Infrastructure requirement**

   Lokvani’s project requirement can be categorized into three parts –
   1. Infrastructure for setting up Lokvani Hub & Information kiosk, which will be provided by the District Administration.
   2. Local Area Networking (LAN) connecting the Lokvani HUB, NIC District Center and the sections of the Collectorate that are offering Services through Lokvani Project.
   3. Computer Hardware & Software, that is necessary for the Lokvani Hub and different sections of the collectorate.

**Hardware & software components**

   Both the Computer Hardware & Software & LAN require specific components which are mentioned below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Server (Intel Pentium Xeon based)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Information Kiosk</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Clients (Intel Pentium IV Based)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Printers Laser</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Printer DMP</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>UPS for Server &amp; Networking Components (Online)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>UPS for Clients</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Software (System Software &amp; Databases)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Networking (Active &amp; Passive Components for LAN)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Touch Screen Kiosk</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>IVRS Card / Software</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cost for setting up new kiosk at Village / Panchayat level with One Time Investment:

1. Computer
2. Printer
3. UPS
4. Generator
5. Solar power support
6. VSAT

**Project Cost**

1. **Hardware: Setup Cost**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Head</th>
<th>Name of Items</th>
<th>Nos. *</th>
<th>Total Estimated Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Hardware</td>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>5 *</td>
<td>2,00,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Printer</td>
<td>2 *</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Online UPS</td>
<td>1 *</td>
<td>1,00,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,00,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Software</td>
<td>Lokvani S/W</td>
<td></td>
<td>75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Application S/Ws</td>
<td></td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>Hub, LAN Cabling</td>
<td></td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Site Preparation</td>
<td>Civil Work</td>
<td></td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Electrical work</td>
<td></td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Air Conditioner</td>
<td></td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>5,50,000</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.N.</td>
<td>Name of Items/Head</td>
<td>Nos. * Rs.</td>
<td>Total Cost</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Operators Salary</td>
<td>5 * 2,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Administrator Salary</td>
<td>1 * 8,000</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Peon salary</td>
<td>2 * 1,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Stationery for printing</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Printer toner / refilling</td>
<td></td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Other stationery</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>28,500</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lokvani society meets its recurring costs from the amount received from registration of kiosks, lifetime and short term Lokvani membership fee and MPLAD / MLALAD funds etc. Initial set up cost for Lokvani was also very negligible as all the hardware/software support was provided by NIC free of cost.

**One Time Expenditure for setting up new kiosk**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Name of Items</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Printer</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Accessories (UPS etc.)</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Digital Camera</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>50,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Recurring (per month) on a Kiosk**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Rent of shop / room</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Electricity/ water/ maintenance expenditure</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Internet expenses</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Stationary &amp; other Consumable items</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Monthly Estimated Income of Kiosks From Lokvani Services:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Nos. X</th>
<th>INR</th>
<th>Cost (INR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Grievance redressal</td>
<td>120 X 25</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Arms</td>
<td>300 X 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Land Records</td>
<td>150 X 10</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Tenders</td>
<td>50 X 20</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Certificates</td>
<td>60 X 10</td>
<td></td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Miscellaneous (future services)</td>
<td>---X ---</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>9,600</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Income from Other Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Cost (Rs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Digital photography</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Net Surfing</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Computer typing</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Monthly Net Income of Kiosks**

\[
= 9600 + 3000 = 12,600 \text{ INR}
\]

**Monthly Saving of Kiosks**

\[
\text{Saving} = \text{Net income-Recurring Expenditure} = 12,600-2500 = 10,100 \text{ INR}
\]

### Expenditure for setting up Lokvani Office/Centre

**One Time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Head</th>
<th>Name of Items</th>
<th>Nos. X Cost</th>
<th>Total Estimated Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Hardware</td>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>5 X 40,000</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Printer</td>
<td>2 X 25,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Online UPS</td>
<td>1 X 1,00,000</td>
<td>1,00,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Software</td>
<td>Lokvani S/W</td>
<td></td>
<td>75,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Application S/Ws</td>
<td></td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>Hub, LAN Cabling</td>
<td></td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Site Preparation</td>
<td>Civil Work</td>
<td></td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Electrical work</td>
<td></td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Air-conditioner</td>
<td></td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>5,50,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Recurring (per month)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Name of Items/Head</th>
<th>Nos. X Rs.</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Operators Salary</td>
<td>5 X 2,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Administrator Salary</td>
<td>1 X 8,000</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Peon salary</td>
<td>2 X 1,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Stationery for printing</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Printer toner / refilling</td>
<td></td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Other stationery</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>28,500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Estimated Income of Lokvani office/centre:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Head</th>
<th>(Rs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Government grants</td>
<td>15,00,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>MP/MLA / Contingencies</td>
<td>10,00,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Kiosk Agreements (40X1000)</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>25,40,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recurring monthly income: (revenue sharing from Kiosks)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>20% of kiosk income * 40 kiosk</th>
<th>Total Cost (Rs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Grievances</td>
<td>600 * 40</td>
<td>24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Arms</td>
<td>300 * 40</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Land Records</td>
<td>300 * 40</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Tenders</td>
<td>200 * 40</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Certificates</td>
<td>120 * 40</td>
<td>4,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>200 * 40</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>68,800</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Net Monthly Income of Lokvani Society = Rs. 68,800 – Rs. 28,500 = Rs. 40,300

**Two types of costs**

There are two types of costs involved in the project – Capital Cost (which is one time investment) and Recurring Expenditure (for the smooth function of the project). The Government just needs to make the capital investment, while the Recurring Expenditure will be met by the Registration / Service Charges collected. Since the backbone of the project is Internet and the density of Lokvani Centres play an important role.

The private participation will not only reduce the burden on the State Government, but will also facilitate faster expansion of the project. The management, operations, expansion & technical up-gradation of the Project & Lokvani Hub will be done by a registered society, which will collect funds through registration and revenue sharing for the services being provided through Lokvani Centre.

➢ **Technology Used**-

Technologically speaking, being a public private partnership based e-Governance program Lokvani is “an e-fort to Empower Citizen”. Briefly ‘Lokvani’ is a service delivery project and utilizes the Service Oriented Architecture like:
1. single windows access to multiple services,
2. use of local language,
3. quality of service,
4. improvement in speed of delivery
5. ease of use

**SQL Server as back end database**
Lokvani is hosted on internet using SQL Server as back end database and ASP is used for writing application. Any client connected to internet can access Lokvani using Browser if he has proper authorization.

Lokvani can be reached at www.sitapur.nic.in/Lokvani. A guest user account is created for demonstration purposes. The user-id and password of guest account is—

User-id - Guest
Password - Guest

Most of these features have already been discussed above. However, the following points will substantiate the claim.

**Multiple services**

The Lokvani centers provide multiple services at the same place. The users may effortlessly do the following using latest technological support. They may:

1. Lodge complaints
2. View the complaint status information
3. Download most of the government forms
4. Browse through various government and private websites etc.

The communication software used in this e-empowerment has been developed by NIC in Hindi, which is the local language of the state.

➢ **Implementation Plan**

As discussed earlier the project will evolve with time & will continuously grow in structure. More and more services and activities will be added from time-to-time. The project will thus be implemented in a phased manner over a period of three years, to encompass the maximum features and services that can be offered to the people.

For smooth functioning of the project the roles and responsibilities of the agencies involved and the structure of committees for monitoring the project have been defined below -

1. **National Informatics Centre**
   a. Application Software development for Lokvani Website, Information Kiosk & different sections of the collectorate offering services through the Lokvani Centre
   b. Design & Establishment LAN within the collectorate
   c. Implementation support for the project at the District
   d. Finalisation of hardware and software specifications

2. **District Administration Lokvani Society**
   a. Provision of infrastructure for setting up of Lokvani Hubs
   b. Procurement of hardware, system software.
   c. Hiring of operational manpower for the project
   d. Coordination between different departments for provision of services at the Collectorate

3. **Lokvani Society**
a. Management & Operations of the Lokvani Hub  
b. Up-gradation of infrastructure, hardware, software & networking, if required  
c. Registration of Private Parties for Lokvani Centres

**About Lokvani Centers**  
First of all, computer kiosks are either set up in every Panchayat or the existing cyber cafes/computer training centers are co-opted into the system. These are designated as ‘Lokvani Centers’ and are equipped with computers, printers, UPS and generators if required. These centres are registered with the District Administration for a fee of Rs.1000. From these Kendras any citizen can file a complaint on payment of a nominal charge of Rs.10 for every complaint. The Kendra staff assists the people in accessing the Lokvani site and typing his complaint. Later on, it also helps the complainant in tracking his complaint and in following it up.

**Software & fees**  
A fee of Rs.5 is charged for follow-ups. The Kendra staff is trained in the use of Lokvani software by NIC. While the Lokvani program can be accessed from anywhere at www.sitapur.nic.in/lokvani (username: guest, password: guest), it is necessary to log in from a kiosk to register a complaint. The kiosk owners are given login/passwords to Lokvani website. A nominal access fee or user charge has been introduced.

**Complaint registration**  
The following screenshots explain one by one the interactive complaint registration, monitoring and feedback system.

| लोकवाणी शिकायत सेवाएँ | निविदा सेवाएं  
|---------------------|-------------------  
| श्रेणी लाईंशेन सेवाएँ | भु अमलेख  
| सेजगार सेवाएँ | योजनाओं की जानकारी/फार्म  
| विभिन्न कार्यों की सूची | कॉटेक्टरे द्वारा श्रावण उपलब्धि की रिपोर्ट  
| एक्सेस सेवा केंद्र |  

**Welcome Menu:**  
Any citizen who files complaint through kiosk centres by using Kiosk ID and Password (generally both ID & password remain the same for the sake of simplicity of the operations), after logging in, the complainant gets the menu, whose screenshot is given at the left. This menu contains the following hyperlinks,  
- Lokvani Grievance services  
- Single window service centre (Not working)  
- Tender services  
- Employment services  
- Land records  
- Information about Schemes/forms  
- List of different works-Return to main menu
**The Grievance Menu:**

It has another set of details. The menu is given as a virtual screenshot. Here each row represents a different hyperlinked section. It has the following major links:
- Filing Complaint
- Status of the complaint
- Officerwise summary of all complaints
- Summary of all Complaints
- Date wise Received Complaints
- Centre wise send complaints
- Date wise marked Complaints
- Date wise modified Complaints
- Date wise disposed Complaints
- Return

**Grievance Registration:**

After logging-in the complainant may file his or her complaint either with the help of the kiosk’s assistant or he/she may enter the data without anyone’s intervention. The grievance registration format is very simple and clear. Here is the screenshot.

The complainant may take a final print out of the report filed for safe keeping, otherwise it’s not required because this process is unstoppable, unchangeable and unalterable at any level. The data once entered can’t be manipulated by any one. The complainant now proceeds to click on ‘register complaint’ for registering his complaint. Briefly the whole process takes the following course:
A flowchart outlining the process of filing and processing grievances through Kiosk centres:

1. Individuals file grievance through Kiosk centres
2. Kiosk owner registers the complaint online and provides the complainant with a unique identifier.
3. The complaint gets stored at the NIC headquarters' SQL server at Delhi (Unmarked complaint)
4. The Personal Assistant of the District Manager (DM) sorts the complaints according to the officers and their departments
5. The DM forwards the complaint with annotations such as the required action and its deadline (Marked complaint)
6. This information is then submitted online and hard copies are marked off to the concerned official and his department (Pending complaint)
7. The officer solves the complaint, submits a report to the DM and then finally files a report on the action taken using his unique ID and password (Disposed complaint)
8. The petitioner can view the status of the complaint and the official action, using the complaint number
9. An unsatisfied complainant can file the complaint again

**Time saver procedures**

The beauty of the program lies in the fact that it completely does away with the need of villagers or citizens to run from pillar to post to either access information or to lodge a simple complaint. As more than 80% of the population lives in the villages and most of them are very poor, it is an extremely convenient method of problem solving for them. The Lokvani kiosks are spread across all the tehsils and blocks of the district. It is very convenient and comfortable for common man to lodge his complaint and get other services from his own local area. His transaction costs and time have been reduced.
considerably. There is absolutely no need to kill time in to and fro communication to contact the district administration.

**Technology driven system**

Being technology driven, the system doesn’t discriminate on grounds of caste, creed, community, religion or gender. It empowers all citizens equally. These poor villagers can get the solution of their problems as well as all the necessary information by spending max. Rs. 25 to 30 in place of traditional expenditure ranging between Rs. 100 to 200. It is a boon for the helpless common man who was earlier caught in the web of injustice, corruption, red-tapism and unnecessary delays.

This system also ensures accountability and reliability because the officer responsible for disposal of the complaint is given a fixed deadline to dispose off the complaint by the collector. Moreover, the complainant is absolutely sure that his complaint would be sorted out since it is going through a proper channel. The program has also given the citizens the freedom to express freely. The system provides full transparency in disposal of complaints. The action taken over the complaint is made available to complainant. This way he can also check the quality of disposal.

**Timebound redressal**

If a person lodges a complaint through this system, he can be assured of getting response in a fixed time. Since the system is working accordingly, it can be called a reliable system. The fact that today nearly 200 complaints are reaching the Collector’s office not only shows the increasing popularity of the program but also bears testimony to the fact that as many people have been saved the unnecessary trouble of travelling to the District headquarters, spending their hard earned incomes and wasting their productive time for solution of their simple grievances.

At present no other system than ‘Lokvani’ can touch the soul of the fundamental right of “Freedom to express” so closely and wonderfully. Since every one is free to tell his opinion and circulating the information around him, he is basically helping the administration to eradicate the social evils also. Also there is a hassle free private sector atmosphere which is saving a daunting giant Govt. offices.

**Enhancements**

Integrated Voice Response System and Short Message Service are added to Lokvani. Officers and Complainant will be able to check complaint status on mobile phone. System has different options for officer and complainant. Citizens will be able to check status of complaint, name of officer to whom complaint is assigned, instruction by District Magistrate, deadline date given to officer for solving complaint on phone. Similarly officers will be able to check number of complaints pending to him. Officer can drill down any complaint for details.

On the other hand, the district offices have become decongested though the quality and pace of redressal of

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**Summary of Lokvani Complaints**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date: Tuesday, October 30, 2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Disposed off complaints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Pending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Defaulter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Unmarked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Pending Complaints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Total Complaints</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
grievances has improved. Monitoring has become more focused and effective, accountability better defined. Paper work has reduced leading to better office-upkeep.

It provides the top management group in district administration an insight into the delivery system of all departments related to public service and analyse the types of problems that people generally face.

- **Public Perception about Lokvani**

  Lokvani has been an excellent experiment in reengineering of governance. Within Government it has reduced discretion and delays and hence has contributed to a significant reduction in corruption and subjectivity. The entire Government system has been thrown open to public viewing and hence introduced an unprecedented transparency in governance.

  **Direct connectivity with masses**

  Generally officers remain isolated with general people. After getting connectivity through Lokvani they got the direct connection with masses. They can easily understand the problems of common people and ground realities. It has lead to a more systematic approach in solving the problems of people and a direct connection with the masses. The senior officers having service length of 20 years plus hesitated initially to learn how to operate a computer, but gradually they got convinced by the advantages of working on computer. They developed interest and at present all officers are computer knowing officers and they are multiplying the number of computer aware people. The use of computer in Govt. departments is increasing day by day and officers are promoting the use to their downline. They can easily understand the problems of common people and ground realities.

  **Newer opportunities**

  For the kiosk owners also Lokvani' has registered private kiosk centers and given them an opportunity for self-employment, and with a very little investment, the kiosk owners are getting handsome returns. Kiosk owners can generate more income by setting up other facilities like Photocopier, PCO, Fax, Digital Photography etc along with ‘Lokvani’ services. Various modes of income are available through ‘Lokvani’ like complaint lodging, printing, viewing the various employment schemes, job vacancies, tender publishing and Forms etc.

  **Win-win situation**

  The NIC has gained by its authorship of this unique program and its sustained association with it through trainings, etc. Thus, Lokvani has been a win-win situation, benefiting every stakeholder. It has exhibited that with a minimal cost the entire system of governance can be brought within the easy reach of the people. It has created tremendous computer awareness and scientific temper in the rural populace as well as government machinery, which has experienced an innovative exposure to modern technology.
Complaint rushing

The complaint once registered is immediately transmitted to the Collector’s office where it is marked to specific officers with fixed time limits for disposal of the complaint.

Tuesday, October 30, 2007 को प्राप्त शिकायतों की सूचि

This is updated on the software and the complainant can see this on computer for follow-up.

The concerned officers collect the complaints related to them or their offices daily from either the District Headquarters or from any Lokvani Kendra. If they have computers in their offices they can access the complaints directly. Thus within 24 hours of registration, the complaint reaches the level at which it has to be addressed.

The office or officer concerned, reports back to the Collector within the fixed time about the action taken on the matter. If for any unavoidable reason, the disposal is not completed within the time frame, the officer may ask for additional time, which may be granted by the Collector. This is immediately entered into the programme for information of the complainant. After the complaint has been redressed, entry is again made in the program.

Monitoring & accounting

All complaints are sorted and arranged in terms of Offices, Officers, types of complaint, date of registration and age. This helps in effective monitoring and accountability. The DM can use these monitoring tools to pinpoint responsibility for delays and take action accordingly against erring officials. The above page has hyperlinks which take user to different pages. This facility is frequently used by District Magistrate in weekly meeting of Lokvani. This page can generate any report needed by executive officer at any given time. No scope of hiding facts!

A complete list of
all the complaints received at Lokvani Sitapur is also readily accessible. This page contains all complaints registered. It has seven columns and gives a brief idea about the journey of a given complaint before it’s disposed off. To examine, analyze and view the pending complaints, several types of formats are being used in the Lokvani. One is general and the other gives an assessment of defaulter officers & departments. The first module gives an idea about those complaints also for which a follow-up action is to be taken. The second one details us about all the complaints which are pending but not crossed deadline to solve the problem.

Another list that may be used to monitor the complaints which have crossed deadline date assigned by the DM. Yet another report is possible to obtain from this system that gives a comprehensive report about the complainant, his or her address, subject of the complaint, the date on which it was registered and the assigned date for the delivery of the solution. This report gives an idea about the total pending complaints as well.

**Transparent system**

Further more these reports can be viewed by any citizen at Lokvani. Here are some screenshots of monitor. The first one show Disposed off complaints, as entered by officer and how the report appears before the officers and the following one is the example of the report of the Disposed off complaints, as entered at Lokvani kiosk visible to the complainant.

Well, the complainant may know exactly who is holding back his or her matter. This enables public to get a reliable feedback about the process and in turn enables the citizens to follow-up their case in case they need a more rapid solution.

**बिविकारी दाय कूल शिकायतो ने सूची**

**अपर विविकारी (विभाग)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>नंबर</th>
<th>पता</th>
<th>फोन</th>
<th>नाम</th>
<th>शिकायत का वटना</th>
<th>शिकायत की कारण</th>
<th>शिकायत की दिन</th>
<th>निरीक्षण की दिन</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>गुफा में आरोपी</td>
<td>फोन के चलते</td>
<td>नाम 1</td>
<td>वरिष्ठ सरकार</td>
<td>निरीक्षण का संकेत</td>
<td>2019/10/04</td>
<td>2020/10/04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>गुफा में आरोपी</td>
<td>फोन के चलते</td>
<td>नाम 2</td>
<td>निरीक्षण का संकेत</td>
<td>2019/10/04</td>
<td>2020/10/04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar lists of all complaints on which action has been taken and report is generated by the officers are accessible to their superior officers as well. The above screenshot belongs to an ADM, similarly all such types of the reports can be generated for each level of officers in the hierarchy.

**The system that never sleeps**

The Lokvani Project allows and evolving a 24x7 services environment. The time for redresses of complaints is fixed. The latest information is available to the common man on a click of a mouse. The information is updated on regular basis through the Lokvani Hub, directly on the web Servers. The Lokvani Centre enters the complaint on behalf of the complainant. The user need not be literate or computer expert to lodge his or her grievance. A copy of the complaint is given to the complainant and the database keeps tracks of all the complaints filed by a particular Lokvani Centre.

**Anywhere-anytime services**

Lokvani project is an attempt to provide efficient, responsive & online services to the common people. It is based on Service Oriented Architecture and seeks to increase transparency and accountability in government procedures, increase the efficiency of manpower at the government departments, accelerate the response time and facilitate anywhere-anytime services to the common citizen. It also aims to provide services in a professional and citizen friendly environment by –
• Saving in time and cost of people visiting District headquarters time and again for getting information, lodging complaints & inquiring their status etc.
• Reducing the response time of the concerned department and increase in their accountability to people.
• Facilitating the growth of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) throughout the district and especially in remote areas.
• Extension of benefits of ICT to farmers, laborers, un-employed youth etc
• Streamlining the functioning of collectorate using the latest tools available with Information & Communication Technology
• Better dissemination of government information at the remotest corner, resulting in better awareness among rural masses about various govt. schemes and bringing in transparency
• Creating awareness in areas of e-administration, e-education, e-health etc among the urban and rural masses
• Reduce duplication of efforts, thereby improving the efficiency and productivity of manpower at the collectorate
• Skill development of collectorate employees

**Help reaching faster**

It is an outstanding example of a highly cost-efficient, economically self-reliant and user financed community network. This solution is targeted at 3.6 million citizens residing within the district. Lokvani has been projected as a commitment to the people in providing them with transparent, credible and accountable systems of governance. The primary objective of the IT solution is to bridge the digital divide and “connect” the common man to the strategy makers in a seamless fashion.

Typically, an aggrieved citizen lodges his complaint/ grievance through personal visits to the Sub Divisional Magistrate's (SDM) office at the Tehsil headquarter, the District Magistrate's (DM) office at the district headquarters or the concerned departments in the districts. Most often to ensure responsiveness, the complainant typically approaches the head of the departments, the SDM or DM. In most cases, follow up on the complaints became difficult due to the large number of people involved, the cumbersome process, the paper work involved, and the sheer administrative load of the officers/staff. Any monitoring of the complaint status by the complainant would mean number of visits to the concerned office, and in cases where no action has been taken or no response has been received, only a reminder could be sent. There are also cases where citizens dissatisfied with the response at the tehsil offices or the district offices would escalate their complaints to the DM's office, overloading the DM. The belief was that redress would be fast, air and effective if the complainant meet the DM in person. A visit to meet the DM would require an investment of at least one business day (including travel to the district headquarters, and waiting in queue to meet the DM).

The Lokvani Society is already running cyber cafes. Several computer centers were given licenses to build and operate Lokvani Kiosks to ensure initial minimum investment from the government. To ensure smooth functioning regular weekly review meeting were organized by the collector. All Officers/ Kiosk owners were properly trained to operate the Kiosks and help common people.

**Toward SMART collectorates**

Lokvani is a step towards SMART Collectorate. It is the beginning of a long journey. It can be understood as an evolving process wherein more and more services will
be added to benefit the citizens as the project goes on further. As of now the immediate future plans include:

1. Installation of touch screen kiosks
2. Introduction of IVRS

Delivery of Authentic copy of Land records at doorstep of customer through courier. The request will be received by kiosk / Lokvani Centre.

➤ **Challenges faced:**

Conceiving any good idea like Lokvani is not easy, but the implementing it was very difficult due to the resistance offered by the old public grievance redress system. With the passage of time we realized that the implementation of Lokvani e-governance system is more strategic issue then technical. During the various phases later we encountered the following challenges:

1. Resistance from administrative officers is extremely high due to change in working system.
2. Lokvani system has been rolled out on a top-down basis and hence it is a challenge to get sustainable acceptance from officers. However, Lokvani has significantly increased accountability of officers and transparency in district administration.
3. The success of the system in Sitapur is widely believed to be due to the focussed approach of the District magistrate.
4. Officers think that their all effort for learning the system will of no use when DM will get transferred. Next DM will have different priority therefore he will not give required weight age to Lokvani and e-Governance system.
5. Every officer doesn’t have computer systems.
6. System is not fully automated. Paper work is still involved at some level, this was the major irritant to the co-operating machinery.

**Challenges disabled, citizens enabled**

Lastly, it would be worthwhile to mention the initial resistance and challenges we encountered at the very onset of the program. These were:

1. Hierarchal and time taking process of getting birth, death, domicile, caste, and income certificate.
2. Government offices were only source of information about various government welfare schemes.
3. Citizen were bound to come to District headquarter/ tehsil for government related work and for getting solution to their grievances.
4. Monitoring of officers action by higher authority was relatively hard.
5. Unnecessary secrecy in land record information had potential to generate Land scam.
6. Computer literacy was not good at officer and public level.
7. District Administration had only 10 computer systems including Linux based treasury system with Oracle 9i database.
8. Collectorate was not enabled with Computer Networking.
9. Citizens had fix time of two hours to interact with DM and for putting up their grievances. Physically meeting to every person was not possible due to time constraint.
7. Officers have large population under their serving area. Without use of Information and Communication Technology, it was relatively hard job to manage services to all citizens.

➢ **Types of Services provided under Lokvani**

The services being offered through the Lokvani Centres fall under the following categories –

- **Information Dissemination** – Details pertaining to land records, different development schemes, scholarship details, pension details etc., status of complaints are provided through these Centres

- **Online transaction Processing** – The other type of services being offered are online lodging of complaints and dissemination of status of complaint and action taken report, requests for Land Records information, Downloading of government prescribed forms etc.

- **Miscellaneous Services**. The various services offered by the Lokvani Centre range from simple distribution of government forms, to distribution of land records data and status of Arm licenses.

The District Administration has also fixed the charges to be levied by the Lokvani Centres for various services being offered to the people.

**Some of the major services envisaged** are:

1. Online submission, monitoring and disposal of Public grievances/ Complaints in stipulated time frame.
2. Birth/ Death Certificate
3. Caste/ Income/ Domicile Certificate
4. Food grain allotment to FPS
5. Funds Allotted to panchayat under different schemes
6. Information of Rural and Social development schemes of different departments such as Minority Welfare, Social Welfare, District Urban Development Agency, SGRY, PMGY etc.
7. Information about developmental work being done in the district
8. Tenders of government/ local bodies
9. Online Results of exams/ competitions/ appointment etc
10. Details of financial expenditure on developmental work
11. Distribution of land-records related information (such as khasra-ki-nakal, etc) to the general public
12. Arms License Application and status information
13. Details of government forms that the citizens need for various purposes e.g. driving license, availing subsidies, ration card etc. These forms can be downloaded directly from the website
14. Student scholarships details under various categories such as physically disabled, blind, deaf & dumb, minority
15. Pension related information for widow, old age, physically handicapped, minority etc.
16. District voters list
17. Directory of District Officials
18. Online application for loans under various schemes run by Social Welfare Department, District Urban Development Agency, UP Backward Class Finance & Development Agency etc
19. Market Rates of vegetables and other items, collected on daily basis from nearby Market.
20. Notice Board featuring important notification and events by the District Administration from time to time.
21. Information about Local Employment opportunities in the district.

Rates of different services on Lokvani
1. Online registration of complaint  Rs. 10/-
2. Printing of any information  Rs. 5/- per page

Future Plans
i. IVRS
ii. Installation of Touch Screen Kiosks

➢ Results Achieved
Lokvani is an evolving project wherein the goals and targets are continuously being revised. However, some of the prime objectives of the project are fulfilled -

1. Service Delivery – More than 33000 Public Grievance Complaints have been lodged since the inception of the project in Dec 2004 through the Lokvani Centres spread across the district. More than 90% of these complaints have already been addressed till August 2005. The common man need not travel to the government offices to lodge these complaints or to know about action taken on his complaint. Now they can go to the nearest Lokvani Centre and file their complaints through the Internet. The status of these complaints is also available on the website.

2. Reducing Response. Time & Increasing Accountability – The District Magistrate himself monitors all the complaints lodged through the web. He fixes strict timelines for redressal of the complaint before being marked to the concerned authority. The status of all complaints is available on the NET, which not only increases transparency but also fixes the accountability.

3. Growth of ISPs – One of the major achievements of the project is that the reach of Internet has been extended to the remotest area of the district. The project which started with a couple of Lokvani Centre has now grown to 42 Centers (covering each Tehsil, Block and Town in the district) and requests for authorization of Cyber Cages / Computer Centres as Lokvani Centres are pouring-in.

4. Extension of benefits of ICT to farmers, laborers & unemployed youth – With the growth of ISPs the unemployed youth are getting benefited, while the Land Records Computerization and its linkage with the Lokvani Project is a welcome boon to the farmers who will have the option of viewing their Land
Records information at the Lokvani Centres. The process is also underway to provide an authentic printed copy of Land Records to the farmers/villagers through couriers right at the doorstep. They will only need to go to the nearest Lokvani Centres to make a request.

5. **Streamlining the functioning of Collectorate** – The hub of the Lokvani project is National Informatics Centre (NIC) office located at the Collectorate. Other services like Arms Licensing, Issuance of Certificates, Pension Details etc are added on the Lokvani, the backend computerization, streamlining of processes and workflow automation is being carried out.

6. **Information dissemination** – Information pertaining to different Government Schemes, government prescribed forms, development works carried out in districts, lists of old age pensioners, lists of scholarship beneficiaries, Funds allotted in various govt schemes, allotment of food grains to kotedars, allotments of funds to gram panchayats etc. are a part of the information provided to the people through Lokvani Centres

7. **Reducing Cost** – The user need not travel from remote areas to the District Collectorate to lodge complaints and follow-up. They can now save both the time and money and go to the nearest Lokvani Centre to lodge their complaint or access information they desire. The government also saves valuable time in monitoring the complaint, which can now be used in more productive work.

8. **Reducing Corruption** – The main concept of the Lokvani Project is to make Government more transparent and accountable to citizens. Since the complaints are now traceable, responsibilities fixed, status of action taken in on website, it all helps in reducing the corruption to a large extent.

9. **The major objective of the Lokvani Project** – “extending the benefits of ICT to the common man” is fulfilled, but the journey does not end here. It is the beginning – as we strive to bring more services under the umbrella of Lokvani.

- **Public Perception about Lokvani**

  Lokvani got unfathomable public support and best media attention made it more credible. The popularity and impact of the project has been so intense that many districts across the state are now vying with each other to implement the project in their district. This has already been implemented in 18 districts of UP. The State Government has also issued Government Order (G.O) on 16th June 2005 to implement the project in all the districts of Uttar Pradesh.

  **Accepted and extensively used by the common man.**
  An average of 150-200 grievances being received daily

- **Key beneficiaries**

  The citizens are obviously the key beneficiaries from the solution as is evident from the number of petitions filed per day and the efficiency with which they are now being resolved. The system has also made government more approachable for the ordinary citizen who had to earlier forego wages to stand in a queue to merely file in a petition. The citizen would then have to follow it up with countless visits to various government offices to find out the status and outcome of the petition that was filed. Clearly, with the Lokvani system, the citizen is able to put his or her time to a more productive use, which definitely adds up to the local GDP.

  Today Citizens can get information from Lokvani Kiosks. These Kiosks are located in every block and in few villages. Citizens are not required to come to district/ tehsil
headquarter. Therefore, citizens save time and money. Lokvani has terminated the public
dependence over Lekhpal for getting land records. Now citizens can file their grievances at
any Lokvani kiosk.

**Help @ Lokvani kiosks**

The facilities provided at Lokvani kiosks have built a massive Citizen support
based for this project.

With the help of Lokvani,

i. Any citizen can receive disposal report and can check status of complaint
   through Kiosk, near to their home.

ii. Citizens can track status of complaint without physically visiting any
government officer.

iii. Integrated Voice Response System and Short Message Service are added to
Lokvani. Officers and Complainant are able to check complaint status on
mobile phones.

iv. Lokvani system has different options for officer and complainant.

v. Citizens will be able to check status of complaint, name of officer to whom
   complaint is assigned, instruction by District Magistrate, deadline date
given to officer for solving complaint on phone.

vi. Similarly officers will be able to check number of complaints pending to
   him. Officer can drill down any complaint for details. Officer get fixed time
of 15 days for solving Complaint. This restriction has increased speed of
work and accountability of officers. 15 days is standard time duration
defined by government for solving a complaint.

➢ **Impact assessment**

Lokvani was launched in December 2004 with a bare minimum cost. Lokvani
services are delivered through kiosks (currently 43). The PPP model was unique as there
were no loans, subsidies or any other assistance provided for setting up kiosks. On the
other hand the existing computer training institutes/ cyber cafes were charged by Lokvani
society to become a Lokvani kiosk. Hence no initial set up cost was involved in kiosks
creation. In a short span of 15 months, over 50,000 grievances have been redressed through
the system. Everyday about 150-200 persons are availing the facilities. This demonstrates
its effectiveness.

**Lokvani’s impact** can be evaluated on the basis of the following indicators.

1. **Reducing Cost** – The user need not travel from remote areas to the District
   Collectorate to lodge complaints and follow-up. They can now save both
time and money and go to the nearest Lokvani Centre to lodge their
complaint or access information they desire. The government also saves
valuable time in monitoring the complaint, which can now be used in more
productive work.

2. **Reducing Corruption** – The main concept of the Lokvani Project is to make
   Government more transparent and accountable to citizens. Since the
   complaints are now traceable, responsibilities fixed, status of action taken in
   on website, it all helps in reducing the corruption to a large extent.

3. In addition, the other major impact of the project has been the ‘ease-of-use’
   to the citizen, Illiterate villagers, people staying in remote areas and our
   senior citizens. They need not run from pillar to post for small tasks, they
are much relieved and no wonder they are asking for more services to be
added to the Lokvani Project. They are a major driving force of this project.
4. **Empowering ordinary citizen** - Previously, Citizens were never officially informed about the result or status of their application. They had to run from pillar to post to know that. Now they get a complaint no. (Just like PNR No. of the railway ticket) generated by website when they register the complaint. Through this number, they can track the status and know the disposal of their complaint. This is a revolutionary change from previous closed system. And indicator of this impact is the huge number of complaints (more than 33000 in just 9 months).

**Plenora of strengths**
This exemplary initiative has been a slap on the face of those who dubbed it as just another ill-planned project. This stands as proof to the fact that success can be achieved in the harshest of environment if there is will power and persistent effort.

Lokvani has a plethora of strengths. It needs minimal resources. It’s simple and user friendly and can be easily adopted by Government Staff and end users. The software having been developed by NIC can be easily accessed without complicated procurement procedures. As and when required it can be modified to suit the local and regional needs.

➢ **Achievements**

The Lokvani core team has been widely feted and felicitated across the globe for their outstanding achievement in the field of e-governance. The public feedback and the media coverage generated by the project have been unbelievable. Eminent newspapers and magazines like India Today, Outlook, The Times of India, The Indian express, Hindustan, Dainik Jagran, Aaj, Swatantra Bharat, etc have from time to time carried reports praising the efforts of the district administration and the benefits of the project. It was one of the few ‘best practices of the country’, which were presented before the Cabinet Secretary, GOI in Vigyan Bhavan, Delhi.

**Global appreciation**

The project has aroused great academic as well and the students of IIM, Lucknow and IIM, Ahmedabad have appreciated the effort after conducting a case study of Lokvani. The presentation of Lokvani before IAS trainees at LBSNA, Mussoorie was rated as best session of phase -2. This extraordinary project has won awards and appreciation galore. The Lokayukt of UP had appreciated the brilliant effort in a personal letter to Mr. Amod Kumar in September 2005. The implementers of the project have received the prestigious ‘Golden Icon Award’ (Kochi, 2006) for outstanding performance in service delivery. It has also won the ‘Manthan-AIF Award 2006’ for India’s best e-content practices and has been a finalist of the ‘Stockholm Challenge Award’ for world’s best ICT projects for social and economical development.

The president of Lokvani has also received the ‘DataQuest E-Gov Champion Award, 2006’. The award was not just an attempt to recognize individuals pushing e-governance, but a salutation to the ‘change leaders’ making a difference in people’s lives through ICT intervention. The project was also nominated by Chief Secretary, Mr. R. Ramani for the PM award in the “Making public delivery systems efficient and corruption free” category.

The success of the program has been such that already 18 districts have implemented it and the UP Government has urged all the states to replicate it through
Government order dated 16th Jan’05. The widespread acceptance and admiration of the project also speaks of its amazing benefits for all parties concerned.

No way back

The success of Lokvani is now fully established. Despite the hindrance of 88% rural population, 38% literacy, 6-7 hours of power supply, poor internet connectivity, lack of IT awareness among people, Lokvani has managed to achieve an overwhelming success. It has also managed to constantly monitor and update the data which requires manpower with technical knowledge. It has withstood the negative attitude of the people who doubted the success of such a program in the prevailing adverse circumstances.

Following are the major achievements of ‘Lokvani’.

1. For Common Man:
   a. Convenience and Comfort: Lokvani kiosks are spread across all the tehsils and blocks of the district. It is very convenient and comfortable for common man to lodge his complaint and get other services from his own local area.
   b. Time Saving: No need to kill time in to and fro to contact the district administration. No time waste anywhere. File your complaint at the push of a button.
   c. Money Saving: As more than 80% population live in the villages and most of them are very poor. These poor villagers can get the solution of their problems as well as all the necessary information by spending max. Rs. 25 to 30 in place of traditional expenditure ranging between Rs.100 to 200.
   d. Accountability: Accountability is the key feature of ‘Lokvani’. The officer to whom the complaint is sent is fully responsible for its disposal in fixed time frame, otherwise he will be treated as a defaulter and necessary action may be initiated against him.
   e. Transparency: The system provides full transparency in disposal of complaints. The action taken over the complaint is made available to complainant. This way he can also check the quality of disposal. Reliability: If a person lodges a complaint through this system, he can be assured of getting response in fixed time. Since the system is working accordingly, it can be said as a reliable system.
   f. Freedom to express Views: At present no other system than ‘Lokvani’ can touch the soul of the fundamental right of “Freedom to express”. Since every one is free to tell his opinion and circulating the information around him, he is basically helping the administration to eradicate the social evils also.
   g. Hassle free private sector atmosphere: saving a dazzling to giant Govt. offices.

2. For Kiosk Owners.
   a. Employment Generation: Lokvani’ has registered private kiosk centres and given them an opportunity for self employment, and with a very little investment, the kiosk owners are getting handsome returns.
   b. Extra Income opportunity: Kiosk owners can generate more income by setting up other facilities like Photocopier, PCO, Fax, Digital Photography etc along with ‘Lokvani’ services.
c. **Income through 'Lokvani':** Various modes of income are available through ‘Lokvani’ like complaint lodging, printing, viewing the various employment schemes, job vacancies, tender publishing and Forms etc. ‘Lokvani’ registers the new kiosk at an annual fee of Rs. 1000/-. The kiosk owners invest initial cost of about Rs. 40-50 thousand in setting up the centre. By this one time investment he is earning approx. Rs. 3,000 to 4,000 per month through ‘Lokvani’ services. Getting inspired by this business model the demand of kiosk is increasing day by day.

3. **Benefits to Officers.** Connected with Masses Generally officers remain isolated with general people. After getting connectivity through Lokvani they got the direct connection with masses. They can easily understand the problems of common people and ground realities.

   a. **Systematic Approach** In practice people used to come to district Hqrs. for their minor problems also. It was not sure that to whom he is going to meet, is available or not or otherwise his problem will be heard or not. But now, the complaint or problem of a common poor villager has got the same weight as the weight of any other influential person. The approach of disposal is same and systematic now.

   b. **Computer Awareness** The senior officers having service length of 20 years plus, hesitated initially to learn the computer, but gradually they got convinced by the advantages of working on computer. They developed interest and at present all officers are computer knowing officers and they are multiplying the number of computer aware people. The use of computer in Govt. departments is increasing day by day and officers are promoting the use to their downline.

- **Sustainability over time-**

  The success of any project is gauged by the extent of which it achieves its pre-defined goals. Going by this metrics, the Lokvani system has proved to be a major success in the field of e-governance. It has not only met the expectations but surpassed them in every imaginable way.

  **Innovative operational model**

  Lokvani is derived from the innovative operational model wherein existing cyber cafes are being leveraged to act as franchisees of the system. Such a strategy avoids upfront investments from the government to set up such kiosks as well as avoids any operational support from the government. This is possible as the system generates its own funds from the citizens and contributes to the earnings of the kiosk operators.

  Another dimension of sustainability is provided by the transparency created by the system which has allowed the press to take up issues related to administrative efficacy. This has created tremendous citizen pressure which will ensure that the system continues to exist even when the champions of the system move out.

  **Streamlining administration**

  The Lokvani system has also helped the administration in streamlining its operations and has also brought in visibility to internal process bottlenecks. It has also helped in workload rationalization as the system is able to show the workload of each officer. It has also helped in putting public pressure on non-performing officers whose lax
response to petitions and grievances is made obvious from the outstanding petitions that the officer has.

Obviously, the kiosk operators have benefited from this system as it has led to enhancement of their income. An unexpected fallout of the system has also been a perceptible shift towards gender equality. This has occurred as women are more computer literate and some of the most efficient kiosks are being run by women. In a place where not only computer literacy but even regular literacy are at abysmal levels, the system has brought forth the economic value added by women. This has also made many of the women kiosk operators economically self-reliant.

The Lokvani project has successfully showcased a paradigm that can be incorporated by other administrative organizations. It has also proved that a low literacy rate and financial constraints is not a barrier for implementing a successful e-Governance project. Sitapur has a negligible computer literacy rate. However this did not prove to be a deterrent to the project as the existing kiosks were used as an interface between the systems and the citizens.

*Change management* was identified as the toughest task for this project. Attitudes of officers towards learning new technology have not been up to the desired levels. Therefore, it is necessary to have a programmatic approach to change management in order to ensure an effective implementation of the system. In order to make the solution robust and scalable, the solution is now being migrated to Oracle 10G.

Lokvani has brought about, a well appreciated transparency to the workings of the administration. People were unaware of their rights as well the possible support provided by the government under various schemes. Widespread awareness as well as a stronger formulated public opinion can go a long way in the fight against corruption.

Lokvani has just added Court Information System in its portal. In future, Online Electoral Rolls, Vehicle Registration, Driving License, Payment of electricity bills, phone bills, Ration cards and allotment to qotedar, Police thana computerization / networking connectivity, Tourist Related information, Daily rates of Fruits/ Vegetables/ Grains, Online pensioners info. / Installation of IVRS – SMS, Parivar register Database (Rural & Urban), All employees Database, University/ College info. (Seat Availability, Admission), Health info. (All Hospitals/ Nursing Homes/ Laboratories), Recovery Certificates (R.C.s), Industries info (Durry exporters etc.), Registry of properties, Banking Services, Drinking Water facilities Database, Development from MP/MLA funds, Khasra and Jamabandi records and SC/ST tracker will be added to Lokvani services.

National Informatics Centre is the technical consultant to the project and the web-based software has been designed and developed by NIC using the latest software tools. The website has been hosted at NIC Delhi Servers and the replication will be carried out by NIC District center in each district.

Sitapur is a backward district of UP with 38.80% literacy and 6-7 hours power availability at tehsil and block headquarter. E-governance culture has also not yet made any inroads in UP. If the project can be popular and successful in just 8-9 months in Sitapur, UP, it can easily be successful and replicable anywhere in India or the world.

*PPP model*

To ensure the financial viability and long-term sustainability the PPP (Public Private Partnership) model was selected as the base model for the Lokvani Project. In addition, certain other steps have been taken for proper management; incorporating technological upgrades and reducing costs, these include –

- A Lokvani Society has been formed with DM as its president, CDO as its Secretary & DIO, NIC as technical member. This Society takes care of the
management, operations, expansion & technical up-gradation of the Project & Lokvani Hub.

- In order to reduce the capital investment it was decided that instead of opening new kiosks, existing cyber cafes/computer training institutes would be granted licenses to become Lokvani Centres on a registration fee basis.
- The Lokvani Society will generate revenues through – registration charges for Lokvani Centres and revenue sharing on the services being offered by the Lokvani centres to the Public.
- There will be both free and charged service provided by the Lokvani Centres. Services, such as registration of complaints, Land Records documents etc will be provided on charge basis. The Lokvani Society has fixed charges for each service.
- The revenue earned by the Lokvani Society will be used for management and upgradation of the Project

➢ Replicability

Lokvani project demonstrated that an e-Governance project could be successfully implemented in adverse conditions such as low literacy rate, poor network and power conditions, negative mindset towards change and inert socio-political atmosphere. After its success in Sitapur district, the government of Uttar Pradesh decided to roll out the project in entire state. More than 20 districts have already adopted Lokvani model. Being a web based solution; the replication is very easy technically.

How to replicate

The only steps a district needs to take to replicate Lokvani are:
1. Creation of Lokvani Society & Lokvani Cell in NIC
2. Identification, training & agreement with kiosks
3. Software installation and data entry of district specific data
4. Publicity and awareness generation

Lokvani is very much relevant in the socio-economic and prevailing political situations of India in general and UP in particular, where entire surroundings are brimming with status-quoists. In a district rampant with severe power shortage, low literacy rate, negligible computer awareness, poor connectivity and above all, negative mindsets and all odds, the overwhelming success of Lokvani tells its own suitability and extreme replicability to the context.

Self-sustainable solution

Lokvani system is a self-sustainable solution that efficiently and effectively caters to the needs of its three key stakeholders that are (a) the citizens, (b) the administration and (c) the kiosks operators/ the IT entrepreneurs. The self-sustainability of Lokvani is derived from the innovative operational model wherein existing cyber cafes are being leveraged to act as franchisees of the system. Such a strategy avoids upfront investments from the government to set up such kiosks as well as avoids any operational support from the government. This is possible as the system generates its own funds from the citizens and contributes to the earnings of the kiosk operators.

If it can succeed in such adverse conditions in Sitapur, UP, it will succeed anywhere in India, that way it has an unimaginable replicability.
Conclusion ...

The citizens are obviously the key beneficiaries from the solution as is evident from the number of petitions filed per day and the efficiency with which they are now being resolved. The system has also made government more approachable for the ordinary citizen who had to earlier forego wages to stand in a queue to merely file in a petition. The citizen would then have to follow it up with countless visits to various government offices to find out the status and outcome of the petition that was filed. Clearly, with the Lokvani system, the citizen is able to put his or her time to a more productive use, which definitely adds up to the local GDP.

The Lokvani project has successfully showcased a paradigm that can be incorporated by other administrative organizations. It has also proved that a low literacy rate and financial constraints is not a barrier for implementing a successful e-Governance project. Sitapur has a negligible computer literacy rate. However this did not prove to be a deterrent to the project as the existing kiosks were used as an interface between the systems and the citizens. A key learning from this solution is that word of mouth is the most effective and efficient mechanism for generating awareness among rural and semi-urban citizens that have low literacy rates.

Lokvani has brought about, a well appreciated transparency to the workings of the administration. People were unaware of their rights as well the possible support provided by the government under various schemes. Widespread awareness as well as a stronger formulated public opinion can go a long way in the fight against corruption.

The success of any project is gauged by the extent of which it achieves its pre-defined goals. Going by this metrics, the Lokvani system has proved to be a major success in the field of e-governance. It has not only met the expectations but also surpassed them in every imaginable way.

It is just hoped that these efforts would be consolidated and improved upon across the country and the government of India will emulate this system of e-governance to establish better rapport with the public and deal more effectively with the people in a country as populated and diverse as ours. It is only with the efforts of every citizen in the country that we can break the age old shackles of corruption and red-tapism and carve out a brilliant future for ourselves.

Let us all work towards creating a world where every voice is heard, anger is calmed, fear is comforted, pain is soothed, question is answered and problem is solved. The time demands that we walk hand in hand because we have a long, long way to go...

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31
Figure 1: Layout of Lokvani Kiosks with Red Dots representing the Kiosk location