

Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances

Speech of V.Srinivas, IAS Secretary DARPG at the National Workshop on e-Office and Launch of NeSDA 2021 at CSOI, New Delhi dated June 13, 2022

Respected Dr. Jitendra Singh ji, Hon'ble MOS PP

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Senior Officials from Ministries/ Departments, Attached, Subordinate and Autonomous Bodies of Government of India,

At the outset let me thank Dr. Jitendra Singh ji for his leadership role in propagation of e-Office in the Central Secretariat, the State Secretariats, Attached, Subordinate and Autonomous Bodies across the Country. Dr. Jitendra Singh ji addressed the National Workshop on e-Office on February 7, 2022, chaired a meeting of Chief Ministers of NE States on adoption of e-Office, sanctioned projects for adoption of e-Office on Jammu & Kashmir, propagated the adoption of e-Office in the Good Governance Day address on December 25, 2021, and the Civil Service Day address on April 21, 2022.

Dr. Jitendra Singh ji approved policy amendments in the Central Secretariat Manual of Office Procedure 2019 which made it possible to issue virtual private networks to Deputy Secretaries of Government of India and Digital Signature Certificates upto Section Officers in Central Secretariat. Under his leadership, DARPG received the Jury Category award in Digital India Awards 2021 for e-Office implementation conferred by the Rashtrapti ji on December 31, 2021. The implementation of e-Office ver 7.0 is part of the Government's Initiative for Increasing Efficiency in the Central Secretariat as part of the 4-pronged initiative for

enabling the creation of a digital central secretariat. Under this initiative, all Ministries/ Departments have migrated from e-Office ver 5.6 to e-Office ver 6.0 and 28 Ministries/ Departments have migrated to e-Office ver 7.0. This National Workshop seeks to lay down the roadmap for adoption of e-Office ver 7.0 in Central Secretariat.

e-Office version 7.0 along with digitization of the central registration units enabled creation of paperless secretariats where receipts move online, files move online and correspondence moves online. No longer is the adage that files meander aimlessly in the Central Secretariat valid. In 2022, Central Secretariat files move with purposeful decision-making objectives within clearly demarcated channels of submission and delegation of authority. The limited file movement with 4 levels of submission and adoption of desk officer system has ensured that non-performing officials can no longer hide of file.

E-Office makes it impossible for non-performers to hide on file. The Central Secretariat was built on the notion that submission notes on files for decisions at Ministerial level/ Cabinet Secretary level would be initiated by Additional Secretaries/ Joint Secretaries, submission notes for Secretary level would be initiated by Directors/ Deputy Secretary level officers. E-Office makes it easy to identify the number of submission notes/ interventions made on each file by any Secretary/ Additional Secretary/ Joint Secretary/ Director/ Deputy Secretary/ Under Secretary and their effective contribution to decision making. Further drafts can be corrected online, reducing the timelines of despatch in fair typed DO letters, office memorandums, letters to State Governments and issue of Orders/ Financial Sanctions in Government. Provision of e-HRMS on e-Office is a value addition to monitor leave and travel details.

DARPG currently monitors adoption of e-Office on its dashboard on a daily basis on its dashboard, submits progress reports on e-Office implementation in its monthly DO letters to the Cabinet Secretary and circulates information to the Council

of Ministers. Further DARPG had instituted certificates of recognition to institutions that achieve 90 percent of e-Office digitalization. The significant increase in number of instances and users under e-Office was possible because of these untiring efforts.

Let me mention a few success stories:

- **The uninterrupted functioning of the Central Secretariat in the pandemic and lockdown was possible because of e-Office.** Deputy Secretaries, Joint Secretaries, Additional Secretaries and Secretaries had access to Virtual Private Network and could take policy decisions on e-files during this period. Further 25 percent Under Secretaries were issued laptops to ensure steady file movement. The adoption of Digital Signature Certificate upto Section Officer level brought credibility to the e-file system. Since 2018, I have witnessed the linear expansion in number of files on e-Office from 4,00,000 e-files to 26,36,116 e-files in 2022. The fortnightly increase in e-files in June 2022 is 27,694.
- **The operationalization of 2 Secretariats in Jammu & Kashmir was possible because of e-Office.** In 2019, Dr. Jitendra Singh ji had asked me to lead a delegation from the Ministry of Personnel, PG and Pensions to Srinagar a few days after the abrogation of Article 370. One of the issues for collaboration posed by the Government of Jammu & Kashmir was the operationalization of 2 Secretariats in Srinagar and Jammu and the Darbar movement carrying over 280 truckloads of files between the 2 capitals. The DARPG collaborated with Government of Jammu & Kashmir to implement e-Office in both the Secretariats digitalizing several crores of file pages in a short period of time using heavy duty scanners. The adoption of e-Office has enabled the simultaneous operationalization of both Jammu & Srinagar Secretariats simultaneously and was one of the biggest reforms that stopped Darbar movement.
- **The adoption of e-Office in DRDO, represented a milestone as it demonstrated that Departments with multiple field offices could use e-**

Office for real time transfer of files. In 2022, DRDO collaborated with DARPG in propagation of the use of e-Office in DRDO and all field offices of DRDO and the Headquarters. This effectively shattered the notion that field offices with heavy project files could not handle paper on e-file system.

- **e-Office has enabled the seamless movement of files to IFD and Department of Expenditure.** E-Office ver 7.0 is a significant advancement on e-Office ver 6.0 with a number of new features, enabling references to external offices. This has enabled seamless movement of files to IFD and Dept of Expenditure.

The timely adoption of e-Office ver 7.0 is a stated objective of Government of India. All Ministries/ Departments must take up timebound implementation. The NIC has indicated specific dates for migration of each Ministry/ Department to e-Office. The DARPG seeks your support to realise the laid down objectives of a paperless Central Secretariat in near future except for classified files.

On this occasion Dr. Jitendra Singh ji would be launching the National e-Services Delivery Assessment 2021. Benchmarking governance has been an integral part of DARPG's mandate. The NeSDA 2021 follows the long list of publications – GGI 2019 and GGI 2021, NeSDA 2019 and NeSDA 2021, DGGI in J&K, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, CSMOP 2019. As an input based index, NeSDA took 16 months of coordination effort with all State IT Secretaries, select Central Ministries/ Departments. I thank all the Single Points of Contact who have attended over 70 rounds of meetings with DARPG in making the assessment possible.

In assessment of State portals, Kerala remains a front runner and the progress made by Tamil Nadu, Jammu & Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh in NeSDA 2021 is commendable. In Service portals, Rajasthan, Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir and Meghalaya has topped the rankings. All States/ UT's have shown improvements in the promotion of integrated service portals and the number of services being offered

on their State portals. India's e-Governance policies have shown improvements and citizen satisfaction levels have risen. In many ways Technology has succeeded in Bringing Government and Citizens closer.

I am grateful to Dr. Jitendra Singh ji for launching this seminal publication. A copy of the publication will be sent to all Ministries/ Departments and all States/ UT's.

Jai Hind.

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