Bihar Lok Sevaon ki Guarantee Adhiniyam, 2011
Enhancing transparency and accountability in public service delivery

Aditi Dayal, OneWorld Foundation India
Bihar Lok Sevaon ki Guarantee Adhiniyam, 2011
(Bihar Right to Public Services Act, 2011)

*Enhancing transparency and accountability in public service delivery*

Aditi Dayal, *OneWorld Foundation India*
About the Initiative

This publication is a part of the Capacity Building initiative under the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) by NeGD with an aim to draw out learnings from various projects implemented in various States/ UTs and sharing this knowledge, in the form of case studies, with the decision makers and implementers to benefit them, by way of knowledge creation and skill building, from these experiences during planning and implementation of various projects under NeGP.

Conceptualised and overseen by the National e-Governance Division (NeGD) of Media lab Asia/DeitY these case studies are submitted by e-Governance Practitioners from Government and Industry/Research Institutions. The cases submitted by the authors are vetted by experts from outside and within the Government for learning and reference value, relevance to future project implementers, planners and to those involved in e-governance capacity Building programs before they are recommended for publication. National Institute for Smart Government (NISG), working on behalf of this NeGD provided program management support and interacted with the authors and subject matter experts in bringing out these published case studies. It is hoped that these case studies drawn from successful and failed e-Governance projects would help practitioners to understand the real-time issues involved, typical dilemmas faced by e-Governance project implementers, and possible solutions to resolve them.

Acknowledgment

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1. Abstract

The Bihar Right to Public Services Act – Bihar Lok Sevaon ki Guarantee Adhiniyam - was implemented in Bihar on August 15, 2011, and has made it mandatory for the state government and its agencies to deliver public services to people within a stipulated time frame, failing which government officials are liable for penalization. Under the Act, 52 services from 10 departments have been notified. Bihar has employed an extensive ICT framework for the implementation and monitoring of the Act. This framework includes a monitoring software - Adhikar, an IVRS helpline – Samadhan, a call centre for clarifying the provisions of the Act – Jigyasa, various mechanisms for application tracking by the citizens, and widespread use of technology to generate awareness among the people and build the capacity of government officials. The use of ICT has been done in a phased manner so as to learn from the challenges faced at every level and improvize on the model employed. Applications for service delivery under the Act are made through the RTPS counters set up in block offices and through the web portal. As of now, the success rate of application disposal stands at over 95 percent.

Key words: Public service delivery, Information and Communication Technology, process simplification, accountability, transparency, inclusive governance, Bihar

Note to Practitioners

This documentation is intended to serve as an overview of implementation of the Right to Public Service in Bihar. It presents a framework to unite various components of the ICT infrastructure being utilised in the Act’s implementation and monitoring by the Government of Bihar. It is meant to share the experience of Bihar in implementing the Act since its enactment on August 15, 2011 till present and provide basic operational guidance to practitioners seeking to replicate the approach in their own states or departments.

2. Project Context

In a report capturing Bihar’s approach to inclusive and accelerated growth, the state government takes cognizance of the slow pace of the region’s growth and development. In 2005, the World Bank identified various development challenges plaguing Bihar’s social and economic progress. As per its report on the socio-economy of the region, high poverty rates, low levels of literacy, poor health indicators, a high population growth rate, coupled with weak economic growth and an adverse investment climate, made Bihar lag behind most of the Indian states.

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1 The Department of Planning and Development, Government of Bihar, Bihar Approach to 11 Five Year Plan: The vision for accelerated inclusive growth. 2006
In view of its human development and economic indicators fairing below the national average, the state of Bihar asserted the need to restructure its policies so as to achieve a more inclusive model of growth. It recognised that a major roadblock to its efforts render to the needs of its citizens effectively has been the capacity of the delivering agencies and the ineffective monitoring of outcomes. Traditionally, the state of Bihar has been associated with high level of corruption and exploitation of people at the hands of government officials. Public service delivery in the state, as a result of these trends, had suffered critically. Accountability of officials towards citizens and transparency of government processes have been matters of grave concern. Some of key challenges confronting service delivery in Bihar include poor service delivery capacity, inadequate monitoring of performance, absence of robust arrangements ensuring accountability and a high degree of administrative centralisation.

Against this backdrop, the Bihar Lok Sevaon ka Adhikar Adhiniyam (Bihar Right to Public Services) Act was implemented on August 15, 2011 to build transparency and accountability into the public service delivery system, improve its efficiency and efficacy and improve the overall perception of the state government in the eyes of its citizens. Under the Act, it has been made a citizen’s right to demand time-bound delivery of services notified under the Act, failing the delivery of which measures for penalizing the erring public officials are available. The implementation of the Act in Bihar needs to be seen in conjunction with a similar move in other Indian states to ensure better governance and public service delivery mechanisms. While Madhya Pradesh was the first state in the country to pass such legislation in 2010, Bihar’s RTPS is unique in being the first state to employ a robust ICT framework for the implementation and monitoring of the Act. The Central Government has also initiated the ‘Citizens’ Right to Grievance Redress Bill’ in 2011 to bring about accountability to government functioning at the central as well as state levels.

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3 The Department of Planning and Development, Government of Bihar, Bihar Approach to 11 Five Year Plan: The vision for accelerated inclusive growth. 2006.

4 The World Bank, Helping India’s Bihar State Boost Public Services through Better Management, 2010.
Table 1: Right to Public Service Acts in India; Source: OneWorld Foundation India 2013

While states differ in the mechanisms employed for the implementation of RTPS Acts, there are certain basic legal provisions that remain common among them. These are:

i. Notifying services covered under the Act
ii. Providing services within stipulated time frames
iii. Fixing clear penalties for non-compliance
iv. Nominating an administrative authority responsible for providing each service
v. Outlining provisions for revision/appeal against penalty imposition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title of the Act</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Implementation Date</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Madhya Pradesh Lok Sewaon Ke Pradan Ki Guarantee Adhiniyam</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>The Uttar Pradesh Janhit Guarantee Adhyadesh</td>
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<td>January 13, 2011</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>The Delhi (Right of Citizen to Time Bound Delivery of Services) Act, 2011</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>April 03, 2011</td>
</tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Bihar Right to Public Services Act, 2011</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>August 15, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The Rajasthan Guaranteed Delivery of Public Services Act, 2011</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>September 21, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The Uttarakhand Right to Service Act, 2011</td>
<td>Uttarakhand</td>
<td>October 04, 2011</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>The Punjab Right to Service Act, 2011</td>
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<td>The Jharkhand Right to Service Act, 2011</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>December 12, 2011</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>The Haryana Right to Service Act, 2011</td>
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<td>Passed as administrative order</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>The Odisha Right to Public Services Act, 2012</td>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>September 6, 2012</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>The Citizens Right to Grievance Redress Bill, 2011</td>
<td>Central Government</td>
<td>Proposed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Considering Bihar’s widening urban-rural divide and poor literacy rates, legislation like the RTPS has immense potential to promote comprehensive growth. In 2005, with a change in the government in Bihar, there was a renewed thrust on the need to improve public service delivery. As a result, the **Bihar Prashasanik Sudhar Mission (BPSM)** was launched in 2008 with the overall objective of transforming the governance of the state under the Bihar Governance and Administrative Reforms Programme (BGARP). A number of measures are being taken to introduce ICT and related tools in the delivery of government services to the citizens, with a focus on reaching the most remote and disadvantaged population of the state. The ICT-facilitated Right to Public Service in Bihar has, therefore, worked substantially to promote inclusive governance.

### 3. Project Overview

The Bihar Right to Public Service 2011 is a landmark reform in terms of the extensive use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) adopted for its implementation and monitoring. While the provisions of the Act maintain consistency with similar Acts in other states, ICT tools have been interwoven with these provisions to ensure that human intervention is reduced to the minimum so as to check instances of corruption, administrative processes are modernized, manual work is minimized, and citizens are equipped to assess transparency in public service delivery processes as well as hold government officials accountable.

The Bihar RTPS covers delivery of 52 services within the jurisdiction of 10 state departments (refer Annexure II for complete list of services offered). These include the departments for general administration, commercial tax, transport, home, social welfare, education, food and consumer protection, urban development, registration department, and revenue and land reforms. Services delivered through the RTPS include:

**Salient Features of ICT-facilitated RTPS in Bihar**

- Bihar Right to Public Service Rules, 2011 introduced on August 15, 2011
- Time bound delivery of notified services to citizens as a right
- Receipt for acknowledgement of application
- Individual Designated Public Servants made accountable for delivery of services
- 52 services in 10 departments selected in the first phase
- Provision for first and second appeals, and review in case of delay or denial of service
- Defaulting officials to be penalized INR 500 to 5000; aggrieved official may appeal against penalty
- Adoption of ICT tools for implementation and monitoring of the program: Adhikar software developed in-house
- Field level IT Managers, Assistants and Executive Assistants recruited for managing the IT systems at different levels of administration
- Provision for tracking applications
- Extensive public awareness campaign launched through print and electronic media, radio, websites and hoardings
- *May I Help You* booths set up at district headquarters
- *Jigyas* call centre equipped to cover citizen enquiries under RTPS
income/domicile certificate, ration card, pension, land related services, driving license, and scholarship. The Act is implemented in Bihar through two mechanisms – first, online portal called Adhikar, and, second, offline implementation through RTPS counters established in each of the 534 blocks of the state. They are managed by the Bihar Prashasanik Sudhar Mission. Out of these, the online system for application and delivery of services has proven to be more useful since it prevents the need for citizens to travel to the block level to apply for a service. Particularly with the increasing penetration of Internet facilities through the RTPS counters, the online portal has opened up various possibilities for making public service delivery more time bound, efficient, systematic and transparent.

4. Project Objective

The ICT-facilitated RTPS implementation in Bihar aims to make public service delivery efficient by making time bound delivery of notified government services matters of a citizen’s right and installing adequate checks and balances to ensure transparency and accountability in government operations.

5. Implementation Strategy

In Bihar, the implementation of the RTPS is overseen by the General Administration Department. The implementation is facilitated by the Bihar Prashasanik Sudhar Mission (BPSM), which a Society established under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary, with the Principal Secretary of GAD as the Mission Director. BPSM is a joint venture of the Government of Bihar (GoB) and the UK Department of International Development (DFID). The association between GoB and DFID is set to continue until September 2014. Under the Mission, DFID provides financial resource for the administration of BPSM, to implement administrative reforms, modernise administrative processes, strengthen human resource management and increase accountability under the Bihar Governance and Administrative Reforms Programme (BGARP). RTPS is, accordingly, funded jointly by the GoB and DFID.

The primary stakeholders in the implementation of RTPS include:

- Government of Bihar
- Bihar Prashasanik Sudhar Mission (BPSM) supported by a staff of IT Managers, IT Assistants, Executive Assistants, Public Grievance Officers (PGOs)
- Software Education and Research Private Limited
- Department of International Development (DFID)
- Citizens of Bihar
For the operationalization and monitoring of the RTPS, Bihar has extensively employed ICT tools and mechanisms. Both offline and online delivery of services are currently in operation. While offline delivery of services was started on August 15, 2011 with the implementation of the Act through establishment of RTPS counters and ‘May I Help You?’ booths at all Block level offices, District Collectorates and other offices delivering services that have been notified under the Act, online service delivery was started on December 1, 2011. The RTPS counters are also technology-enabled through provision of computer hardware and a printer.

6. Program Components

The key components of ICT-facilitated RTPS in Bihar are as under:

   i. **Adhikar- Service delivery and monitoring software**

   ii. On line application and on line delivery system

   iii. The exiting Jigyasa call centre has been equipped to manage citizens’ enquiries under RTPS

   iv. Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS)- *Samadhan*- established for making applications, tracking application progress and grievance redressal

   v. Use of print and electronic media for generating awareness regarding RTPS among people

The use of ICT for the implementation and monitoring of the Bihar RTPS has been done in a phased manner. In the first phase was introduced in the month of August, 2011. Herein, computerised entry of application at the front office and generation of acknowledgement cards had been facilitated. Phase two was simultaneously started with the enablement of, the ICT framework to facilitate online applications for services. In December 2011, phase three was introduced with the online delivery of services.

**Adhikar software**

The *Adhikar* software is a web portal that enables the implementation and robust monitoring of the RTPS in Bihar. It was developed by the Software Education and Research Private Limited technical team which actively engages with the Government of Bihar on various ICT projects. The Software Education and Research Private Limited technical team has developed the portal on an honorary basis.

Salient features of the portal are as under:

   i. From the citizens’ end, while the portal was earlier used only for tracking the status of their applications, it now consists of provision for online application for service delivery. It has enabled citizens to apply for income, caste and residence certificates.
online, eliminating the need for them to travel to the office of the Designated Public Servant to submit their applications.

ii. Generation of an acknowledgment receipt along with a Unique ID. The Unique ID is coded in a manner that it facilitates instant recognition of the district, block, department, office and the service for which the application has been filed.

iii. The portal has the capacity to generate monitoring reports for public officials at the block, sub-divisional, district and state level.

iv. The portal provides domain-specific access to public officials. This implies that every Designated Public Servant has access only to data related to his/her level of jurisdiction. For instance, a Block Development Office (BDO) has access to data related to his/her block only. A District Collector (DC) can see data concerning all the blocks within that particular district.

v. There is a provision for tracking the status of the application through the portal by accessing [http://210.212.23.51/RTPS/SearchRTPS.aspx](http://210.212.23.51/RTPS/SearchRTPS.aspx).

vi. The portal makes available the monitoring of applications received, disposed and pending segregated along parameters of department, office level, district, subdivision, block and state.
Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS)

The Bihar Prashasanik Sudhar Mission established a tele-helpline, Jigyasa, in August 2010 to facilitate provision of timely, correct and reliable information to citizens with regard to public services they are entitled to. Jigyasa was made more robust by equipping it with enhanced resources (additional five team members) for handling queries about the provisions and functioning of the Act, providing help in identifying the appropriate DPS for the service sought, assisting in applying for the service, and reaching the Public Grievance Officer in case of a complaint. The helpline operates between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. and is accessible from both mobile and landline phones at 0612-2233333. The caller is charged as per the prevailing local call rates in Bihar.

The process flow of the Jigyasa helpline is detailed in Figure 2.

Application tracking

One of the most significant contributions of the ICT-enabled RTPS in Bihar has been to enable citizens to demand accountability from government officials in delivery of services. As a result, there is a marked increase in the efficiency of the public officials; this is indicated by the rate of disposal of applications received by the 10 departments whose services are covered under the Act. Citizens can track their applications by utilising any of the three provisions for the same.


(b) SMS tracking by sending RTPS <Application ID> to 56677

(c) Call centre tracking by calling up Jigyasa call centre at 0612-2233333 and stating the application UID.
Awareness generation and capacity building exercises
A critical aspect of effective implementation of any government legislation for public welfare is the creation of awareness among citizens as to their rights and guarantees under the Act, mandated processes for utilization of appeal processes provided for in the RTPS Act. Notice boards and hoardings have been put up in all government offices and officials websites of the Bihar state government to educate citizens about the provisions of and processes under the Act. The Bihar RTPS provides for prominent display of notice boards about the right to services, and time limits for service delivery, designated officials and appellate authorities in the government offices delivering services notified under the Act. Simultaneously, an extensive Information Communication and Education (IEC) campaign was organized by the state government to educate people at the grassroots about the RTPS Act.

Since the Act’s implementation and monitoring in Bihar utilizes ICT extensively, it was important to build the capacities of government officials to use the software and other project components effectively. For this, a Training of Trainers was conducted at Patna in August 2011 for 141 Nodal Officers identified from various districts and departments. Public Grievance Officers (PGOs), IT Managers, May I Help You booth operators - numbering 500 - were trained in the provisions of the Act as well as in technical aspects of the programme. IT Assistants were appointed and trained for all the 534 blocks.

Process Flow

Figure 2: Basic process flow for access to public services
Implementation of the RTPS consists of the application stage, the first appeal and the second appeal. At each of these stages, it is possible for the citizen to track the status of his/her application.

7. Application for service delivery under the RTPS

**Offline application for service provision**

Applications under the RTPS can be made by any citizen of Bihar. The first point of contact is the office of the Designated Public Servant (DPS) in case of offline application for service provision. The office of every DPS has been enabled with an IT operator, computer, printer and data card for internet connectivity. The IT operators managing the application registration enter the application in *Adhikar software*, after which the application follows the process as explained in Figure 3. The data collected at every DPS office is synchronised at the end of the working day with the central server housed in BPSM headquarters in Patna. Once the data has been synchronised, concerned officials can log in to the portal with their unique user name and passwords to check the status of the applications.

At the time of application registration at the DPS office, the applicant receives a Unique Identification (UID) Code of 18 digits and an acknowledgment slip generated by the system with complete details of the applicant, service applied for, DPS responsible, due date for service delivery and such like. The UID is coded in such a manner so as to reveal the district, block, department and the service under which the application has been made.

![Figure 3: Process flow for the first stage of application for service delivery under the RTPS](source:Bihar Prashasanik Sudhar Mission and OneWorld Foundation India, 2011)
Online application for service provision
The portal supports online application for three services – caste, income and residence certificates. However, in case of online application for services, the process flow differs from that employed for offline applications. Online applications are made by accessing the ‘Apply Online’ option on Adhikar at http://210.212.23.51/RTPS/OnlineApply/Notice.aspx. This facility was started on December 1, 2011. Every application is automatically directed to the concerned department as per the service requested. Citizens can also access details of officials- in-charge on the online portal. On August 15, 2012, the Chief Minister of Bihar directed that citizens based outside Bihar should be able to obtain certificates from centres closer to their location. As a pilot, the facility has been started by setting up a RTPS counter at the Bihar Bhavan in New Delhi. Concomitantly, at the time of online application, applicants can choose whether they prefer collection of certificates from the block level (Figure 4) or the New Delhi center (Figure 5).
Figure 4: Process flow for online application for services at the block level; 
Source: OneWorld Foundation India, 2012

Figure 5: Process flow for online application for services at the New Delhi centre; 
Source: OneWorld Foundation India, 2012
The applicant can file the First Appeal with the Appellate Authority in case of refusal, delay and failure on part of the DPS to deliver service.

First appeal under the RTPS

![Flowchart of First Appeal Process](image_url)

**Figure 1: Process flow for the first appeal under the Act;**

*Source: Bihar Prashasanik Sudhar Mission and OneWorld Foundation India, 2011*

If the Appellate Authority finds the DPS in question guilty, the latter can be penalised INR 500 to 5,000 that is deducted from his/her remuneration. The particular DPS can apply to the Review Authority for revocation of the penalty. On part of the applicant, if his/her First Appeal is rejected, a Second Appeal can be filed with the Review Authority.

In case the Second Appeal is also rejected, a new application will need to be filed.
Second appeal under the RTPS

![Process flow for the second appeal under the RTPS](image)

**Figure 2:** Process flow for the second appeal under the RTPS;  
*Source: Bihar Prashasanik Sudhar Mission and OneWorld Foundation India, 2011*

## 8. Project Outcomes

**Leveraging technology to streamline service delivery**

The interweaving of ICT tools with reforms in governance processes for the implementation of RTPS in Bihar is providing various possibilities for making public service delivery in the state time bound, efficient, systematic and transparent. The usage of ICT is resulting in the establishment of standardized processes for delivering services, reducing manual work and equipping citizens to assess transparency in public service delivery processes as well as holding the government officials accountable. The increased interaction between government and citizens is creating an atmosphere of participative governance. An ICT aided workflow is lessening the effort and resources spent on provision of services under the RTPS and resulting in providing services to citizens in a convenient hassle free manner. This is evident in the increasing number of online applicants for services in the state.

One of the greatest strengths of creating such an ICT based governance environment is the ability to create an access to information. This ICT facilitated access to public information is
playing a significant role in improving delivery of public services at all levels right from receiving applications, processing them, facilitating monitoring by higher officials and enabling public scrutiny for making the government more accountable. Both citizens and government officials are now in a position to access and avail information for the demand and supply of government services respectively. Equipped with such information, public authorities and as well citizens can actively engage in making inclusive governance a reality in the state.

This robust ICT based system caters holistically to the mandate of the RTPS in Bihar and has considerably speeded the process of implementing the Act in the state by putting in place a uniform accountable system for public service delivery with adequate checks to ensure efficiency at all levels of governance. The presence of such an IT infrastructure can further support the strengthening of other e-governance projects in the state.

**Increasing citizen participation**

The RTPS in Bihar has been in operation for more than a year and has seen tremendous increase in demand for public services by the citizens. Simultaneously, it has also witnessed a marked increase in efficiency of government departments.

![Total number of applications received, disposed and pending under the RTPS; August 15, 2011 - October 15, 2012](image)

The most significant contribution of the project has been to inculcate in citizens a culture of demanding public services from the government, expect to receive them within a predefined time period and holding government officials accountable in instances of service delivery being delayed or refused. As evident from Figure 8, the overall success rate of the project currently stands at over 95 percent. Figure 9 gives a detailed break up of applications received, disposed and pending month wise since August 2011 up till date.
Figure 4: Month wise listing of applications disposed and pending under the RTPS in Bihar; August 15, 2011 - October 15, 2012

Creating responsive governance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Department</th>
<th>Applications received</th>
<th>Applications disposed</th>
<th>Applications pending</th>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>23684236</strong></td>
<td><strong>22712220</strong></td>
<td><strong>972016</strong></td>
<td><strong>95.89</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Number of applications received, disposed and pending by departments; August 15, 2011 – October 15, 2012

Table 2 indicates that most of the state government departments covered under the RTPS have achieved near average success rate for delivery of public services to citizens. While the General Administration Department, departments of Registration, Home, Transport,
Commercial Taxes and Human Resources Development have exceeded the average success rate of 95 percent, the departments of Urban Development and Social Welfare are the two departments where the rate of application disposal is among the lowest.

9. Challenges in implementation

According to the technical team at BPSM, the primary challenge faced during the implementation of the RTPS is the lack of steady and robust internet connectivity at remote and rural locations. Since the Act works to provide time-bound delivery of services, this challenge often proves a hindrance in honoring the time limit defined for the delivery of a particular service.

The RTPS aims at making governance more transparent, accountable and inclusive. A traditional difficulty facing effective governance has been to make it reach the marginalized sections of the population. While IEC campaigns have been organized for awareness generation, reaching people at the grassroots has been a major challenge given the size of state’s population.

For the RTPS to be effective, it is essential for the citizens to be aware of the content of the service they have requested, their eligibility, processes and costs involved in the procurement of the service, the process of approval, delivery and maintenance of service. This is significant to enable citizens to produce adequate and appropriate documents for seeking the service. A ‘guarantee’ for service delivery does not hold true if an applicant is not eligible for receiving a particular service. In such a scenario, the applicant is informed via SMS regarding the rejection of his application. These cases lead to wasteful employment of government resources. Therefore, it is critical to generate targeted awareness about the Act amongst people, particularly at the grassroots.

Provision of public services within a stipulated time limit required ready access to government records and data for preparation of certificates and such like. The RTPS has facilitated application for services, their monitoring and grievance redressal simpler for the citizens. However, its effective implementation has been marred by the lack of digital data for preparation of, for instance, a caste certificate.

Effective implementation of the Act requires not only demand side sensitization but also capacity building of the public officials for strengthening the supply side adequately and equipping them with resources to deliver services as per the Act’s requirements. The implementation of RTPS in Bihar has been manned largely by the IT Executives and Assistants that have been employed at RTPS counters and DPS offices to manage incoming applications and synchronization of data to the central server. This has underscored the sustainability of the project in terms of the resources employed.
10. Key lessons

The RTPS has initiated a highly significant strategy on process simplification for public service delivery and shortening the distance between the government and the citizens. Guaranteed service delivery has shown proven potential to generate citizen demand for government services. Keeping in mind the current ethos in the country to check corruption at every level of government, the RTPS can prove to be a crucial component of that strategy. Its potential for enhancing good governance is supplemented by its prospects for bolstering the implementation of other legislations to bring about transparency and accountability in governance, for instance, the Right to Information.

The effective implementation of RTPS in Bihar will, however, depend on negotiating the challenges and impending threats to the project as well as harnessing the opportunities. While the mechanism for implementation and monitoring is robust, awareness among citizens about the Act remains limited. As discussed in the challenges aforementioned, it is important for the citizens to know a breakdown of the processes and authorities involved in delivery of a service requested. This would help in identifying the exact official and stage at which the application is being delayed or refused. A service lifecycle and process flow for each of the notified services, potentially in the form of separate guidelines, would assist in clarification of service delivery process for both the government and the citizens. Further, particularly in a state like Bihar where local dialects are abundant, it is important to keep the lingual aspect in consideration to increase the outreach of the Act, thereby promoting its inclusiveness.

In terms of inclusiveness, more concentrated efforts need to be made to target remote and rural population. Considering the level of poverty, deprivation and illiteracy in Bihar, the Act’s success would depend heavily on reducing the number of visits undertaken by citizens to public offices and increasing the number of service delivery points. Online application and delivery of services has limited potential to address this challenge. Offline modes of application and delivery of public services need to be made more robust.

Implementation of RTPS in the offline mode is presently carried out through IT Executives, Managers and Assistants employed for the purpose. However, this negates the sustainability of the project. In the long run, this would prove to be a drain on funds and resources. This indicates the urgent need to build the capacity of existing human resources and public officials to manage the ICT mechanisms employed for the Act’s implementation. This would require building the confidence and interest of public officials in better implementation of the Act to prevent any resistance from their end. The RTPS Act provisions include penalization of defaulting government officials. However, a provision for rewarding well-performing officials would prove to be an incentive for officials to deliver services within the stipulated time limit. At the same time, a mechanism would need to be devised to ascertain
the cases where delay or failure in service delivery was owing to reasons outside the officials’ control.

The move towards delivery of Bihar government services from locations outside the state has tremendous potential to enhance the outreach and inclusiveness of the Act. While it is currently being piloted in New Delhi, lessons learned from the experience should be employed to replicate the approach in other states across the country. This would be particularly helpful since Bihar is a state from which out-migration of people to other parts of the country is very high.

11. The Way Forward

According to the technical director of the project, various enhancements are in the planning to make the implementation of RTPS in Bihar more efficient. These include the introduction of a tatkal service for issue of certificates and reduction in the time limit required for delivery of some services through decreasing the human element in the processes involved and enhancing the capacity of the Adhikar software to manage additional work load. Currently, three services are delivered online; the BPSM is working on including more services within the ambit of online delivery.

12. Research Methodology

The Right to Public Service in Bihar has provided an exemplary service delivery and monitoring model. The ICT framework employed offers a replicable approach for the implementation of similar legislations in other Indian states. In order to document the processes involved in the operationalization of ICT-facilitated RTPS in Bihar, the OneWorld research team conducted thorough secondary research on the Act’s provisions and processes to identify a set of unique features of the practice. The primary resources for this included the Government of Bihar websites, the Governance Knowledge Centre case study on the Bihar RTPS, and the presentation made by the Administrative Reforms Secretary of Bihar at the Third Conference of Secretaries (Administrative Reforms) held at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi on September 2, 2011. Based on this information, a set of questions were identified to cover the gaps in information available and to ensure that this documentation contributes significantly to enhancement of available knowledge resources on the practice. Since the practice is ICT-intensive, an interview was conducted with the Managing Director of Software Education and Research Private Limited, based in Patna, who was directly responsible for the development of the software used. To understand the overall working and impact of the practice, the Administrative Officer of the Bihar Prashasanik Sudhar Mission was interviewed.
13. Conclusion

The Bihar RTPS is an exemplary initiative by the state Government of Bihar to make public service delivery processes simplified, enable the citizens to demand public services as a right, provide for penal action against officials failing to provide the services within the stipulated time, and reduce the number of contact points for citizens to procure the notified public services. It has fixed accountability in specific public officials and significantly enhanced transparency in government operations by enabling the citizens as well as higher authorities to monitor the status of applications. With the enhancements planned and some currently under limited operation, the reach of RTPS has tremendous potential to expand and include use by an even larger number of people.
References

Case Fact Sheet

I. **Demographic information:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Bihar</th>
<th>India</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total population</strong></td>
<td>103,804,637</td>
<td>1,210,193,422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>54,185,347</td>
<td>623,724,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>49,619,290</td>
<td>586,469,174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decadal growth in population</strong></td>
<td>25.07</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex ratio</strong></td>
<td>916</td>
<td>940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Density of population</strong></td>
<td>1102</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literacy rate</strong></td>
<td>63.82</td>
<td>74.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>73.39</td>
<td>82.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>53.33</td>
<td>65.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population living below poverty line</strong></td>
<td>42.60</td>
<td>26.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scheduled Caste population</strong></td>
<td>13.05 million</td>
<td>166.64 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scheduled Tribe population</strong></td>
<td>0.76 million</td>
<td>84.33 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Demographic profile of Bihar and its comparison with national level data; Source: Provisional Population Totals. Census of India 2011. Government of India.*

II. **Sector to which the project belongs:** Public service delivery

III. **Stakeholders and beneficiaries:**

i. **Stakeholders** – Government of Bihar, *Bihar Prashasanik Sudhar Mission*; Software Education and Research Private Limited; Department of International Development (DfID); IT Managers, IT Assistants, Executive Assistants, Public Grievance Officers (PGOs)

ii. **Beneficiaries** – Citizens of Bihar

IV. **Calendar of major events:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formulation and gazetting of <em>Sushasan</em>, a 200-points agenda for good governance</td>
<td>December 15, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar Right to Public Services Bill enactment</td>
<td>April 29, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notification of the Bill</td>
<td>May 2, 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notification of Rules</td>
<td>May 3, 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implementation of the Act</td>
<td>August 15, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase II of the project - Online application for service delivery started</td>
<td>December 1, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion of 2 more services for delivery under the Act – <em>Mukhya Mantri Kanya Suraksha Yojana</em> and <em>Samajik Suraksha Pension Yojana</em></td>
<td>August 15, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishment of an RTPS counter at Bihar Bhavan in New Delhi</td>
<td>August 15, 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V. **Funding sources:** Government of Bihar and UK Department for International Development (DfID).

VI. **Services offered:** 52 services under 10 state government departments. Refer to Annexure II for complete list of services offered and the stipulated time limit for their delivery.