

Session 13 - Reviving the Economy - Secretaries Perspective

Friday, October 22, 2021

1420 – 1520 Hrs

Panel



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Government of India

I did B.Tech. in Computer Science from IIT, Delhi (1983-87), before drifting to IAS (Indian Administrative Service) in 1989. In IIT, my B.Tech. Thesis was on Natural Language Understanding, and my main interests were Algorithms and Artificial Intelligence.

During Field postings (1991-1998) after joining IAS, did a few small IT projects for better transparency and better delivery of services. But advent of Internet in Government offices starting around Y2K changed things. During my stint at Election Commission of India, New Delhi (2003-2007), I developed lot of fuzzy matching techniques to dedupe the voter lists, worked with large databases (700 million voters and 500 million photographs) in more than a dozen Indian Languages, executed Photo Rolls project (now you see your photograph printed in the Voter List), and convinced Delimitation Commission to make new Assembly and Parliament boundaries using GIS Maps from Census of India.

Thereafter, from 2007-2009, I managed Internet Exchange of India, where we dramatically decreased Domestic Internet traffic packets going outside the country, and increased .IN domain names considerably, and introduced forward looking policies in both the fields.

Back to State Government in 2009, during my two week additional charge of Social Justice department, we could issue Government orders regarding scholarship money to kids going into their Bank Account directly. Thereafter, during a short stint as Secretary Accounts & Treasuries, my focus was on making treasuries cheque-less, going totally electronic on Receipts and Payment sides.

Thereafter, as IT Secretary of Maharashtra from June 2011 to January 2015, I deeply focussed on IT Fundamentals, and the name eGov 0.0 comes out of the philosophy that we should focus on fundamentals of Governance and IT rather than creating hype about eGovernance.

My tenure as CIO of the State saw Maharashtra rising to the top of eGovernance ecosystem in the country. It is now #1 in Aadhaar, number of CSCs, and electronic payments and receipts in the country, and very strong in eTendering, eOffice, use of Cloud, IPv6 etc. These eGov initiatives have bagged more than 300 National and International Awards.

I have written more than six dozen judgments as Adjudicating Officer under IT Act, which have got wide coverage in media. I have also been lucky to get Aadhaar innovations Award from Hon' Prime Minister, get Indian Express IT Award, DataQuest Editor's Choice for CIO, C-Change Digital Crusader Award by CIOL, and in 2014 I was chosen among Global 100 CIOs by Computerworld USA.

In January 2015, I moved back to Delhi in Government of India as Joint Secretary (Financial Services), and Mission Director of Flagship Initiative of Financial Inclusion (Prime Minister Jan Dhan Yojana). Then I worked as Joint Secretary (Tribal Affairs) in Government of India, where my visits to deepest and remote parts of the country showed me how sometimes Technology can empower people and sometimes dis-empower them. Thereafter I was Additional Secretary and Director General Training in Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, holding additional charge of DG (Niesbud). Since January 2020, I am Additional Secretary and Financial Advisor for the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, and also for the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India.