

# **Social Interventions for e-Governance, Decentralized Democracy, Panchayati Raj and Sustainable Development : Challenges and Opportunities**

DR. DAMODARAN SIVAKUMAR,  
M.S.W., J.D., Ph.D.(Paper presented at 3rd Annual Conference of AMIC - India on  
"Digital Democracy : reinventing Government through e-Governance", New Delhi,  
24th and 25th November 2000)

Research Investigator Special Grade and Research Guide in Social Work  
Population Research Centre, University of Kerala, Kariavattom. P.O.,  
Thiruvananthapuram - 695581, Kerala State, India  
(Telephone 0472 640304  
Fax 0471 307158  
e-mail: [dsivakumar@India.com](mailto:dsivakumar@India.com))

Comprehensive sustainable social development (CSSD) is the current objective of nation states. "Thiruvonam" of Kerala, India is the supreme visualization on the oldest form of Social Development, found in the India literature. The ideals and culture enshrined in Thiruvonam are the foundations for the most transparent form of social administration. The current sustainable social development is modeled in the United Nations and specialized agencies of U.N. with the starting of U.N. Development decades. Only digital democracy can lead to sustainable form of social development in all countries of the world. When we think of a happy life for the future generations, these processes are extremely essential. In a digital democracy reinventing decentralized administration by electronic governance through speedy, correct and truthful Information Technology applications is the main process. The Present renaissance in Information Technology has brought the following features. (1) The world has narrowed into a neighbourhood in a global village, (2) Universalization of trade and commerce, (3) Breaking away of geographical and cultural barriers to social development, (4) Technology upgradation, (5) Cost reduction in Information technology applications, (6) Increase in the processing of data for governmental administration, (7) A vision and mission for universal brotherhood for mankind, (8) Increase in social work and journalism interventions for Technology transfer and technology utilization, (9) Increase in social work and counseling services in health and human development, (10) Development of multi professional, multi sectoral and multi disciplinary team work in policy analysis, planning, administration and in the delivery of services. Further upgradation of the above factors is a challenge but opportunities are there for transparency in governance and speedy dissemination of information to all citizens. When Information Technology application is higher there is the likelihood of more and more social and economic integration or inclusion of social factors in the economy. Development of agriculture, industry and services should give enough space for balancing the environment at different levels and for

environment protection as well as environmental beautification.

There should be enough scope for enhancement of social functioning of individuals, groups, families and communities for which social work practice has to be developed along with information technology applications. This is enshrined in HUSITA - Human Service Information Technology Applications. In other words information technologists and social workers should work together imbibing skills from one another. We should be very particular to provide computer literacy to all so as to progressively cover all the public/beneficiaries under the umbrella of information technology and e-governance.

In India the Ministry of Information Technology (MIT) as well as state departments or ministries of information technology are taking progressive measures aimed at development of e-governance. It is better to have Information Technology Ministries in all states in India.

In many of the states training programmes on Information Technology applications and e-governance are going on. The yardsticks are revenue maximization and public convenience. The Mantralay Office Information System (MOIS) of Maharashtra Government provide information to the public through PC at Home or through one of the Cyber Koisks and needed information on his application for a house loan or a disability grant in aid.

E-mail, web publications and internet development should become accessible to the common public. Here there is a problem of haves and have nots in Information Technology. There should be local level field work by competent social workers to cover the have nots of IT to provide them access to information technology applications.

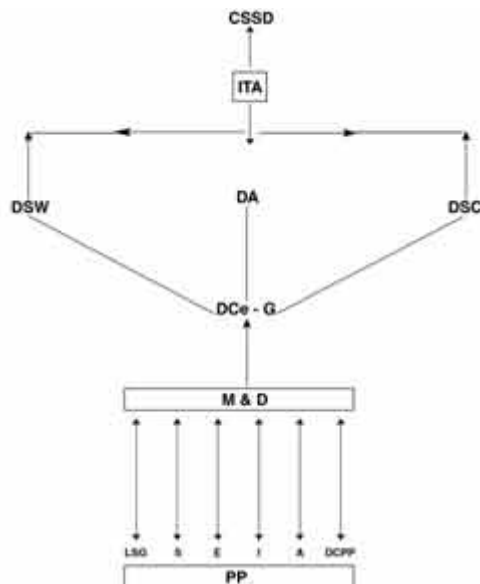
High lighting the need for the Information Technology Bill in the parliament the Hon'ble Minister for Information Technology Shri. Pramod Mahajan said, "The basic ethos of the Bill was to provide legal sanction to e-governance so that the country can move on to fourth generation digital communication : (Reported in Digital Age Vol. 1. No. 21. May 27, 2000). With the advent of electronic governance the various social processes become more and more development, directed to achieve the objective of comprehensive sustainable social development. In journalism the new branch of Development support communication, in social work the Developmental social work practice, in administration the Development administration, in health care the Developmental Health care, in Family Planning the Developmental Family Welfare, in Economics, Social and Development Economics, in Politics Social Politics, in data collection, processing and dissemination the Development Statistics, in Banking. Development Banking, in advertising the Development advertising etc. will incorporate e-governance and information technology applications.

When considering major social interventions for e-governance, the following three interventions viz., Developmental Social Work Practice, Development Administration and Development Support Communication have a co-ordinating role. The following is a model of social intervention. When considering major social interventions for e-governance, the following three interventions viz., Developmental Social Work Practice, Development Administration and Development Support

Communication have a co-ordinating role. The following is a model of social intervention.

Social Interventions for e-governance , decentralized democracy, Panchayat Raj and sustainable development

A multidimensional model



- CSSD = Comprehensive Sustainable Social Development
- ITA = Information Technology Application
- DSW = Development Social Work Practice
- DA = Development Administration
- DSC = Development Support Communication
- DCe-G = Decentralized Electronic Governance
- M&D = Ministries and Developments, Corporations, Boards, Authorities, Missions
- LSG = Local Self Government - Panchayati Raj
- S = Service
- E = Environment
- I = Industry
- A = Agriculture
- PP = People's Participation, Socio Cultural Complexes, Cooperatives

The Objective of the model is Comprehensive Sustainable Social Development. It can be achieved through Developmental Social Work Practice, Development Administration and Development Support Communications by the application of Information Technology. The processes are directed towards decentralized electronic governance through local self governments and decentralized peoples planning in the four important sectors like services, environment, industry and agriculture through peoples participation. The ultimate objective is improving the quality of live of the populations through digital democracy and e-governance. In decentralized democracy

and Panchayat Raj the important IT applications are the following.

- (1) Resource mapping of Grama Panchayats, Block Panchayats, District Panchayats and Nagarapalikas at the micro, macro and meso levels.
- (2) Seminars aided by internet at the Panchayat level, Block level, District level and Nagarapalika level on pooling of resources and effective utilization of resources, based on social justice and social development oriented priority.
- (3) Electronic conferencing at every level of policy analysis, project preparation, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, project/plan modification, and referrals and consultation.
- (4) Teaching and training at various levels through internet, web publishing, and e-mail.
- (5) Promoting digital research.
- (6) Using electronics and Information Technology in Agriculture, social services and industry for higher productivity and efficiency and empowerment of the above sectors through e-governance.
- (7) Improving Human Service Information Technology Applications (HUSITA) through e-governance.
- (8) Enhancement of the capabilities of individuals, groups, families, and communities and empowering them through digital democracy.
- (9) Participation of local residents' associations in electronic governance.
- (10) Empowerment of socio-cultural complexes like Arts clubs, Sports clubs, Youth clubs, Mothers clubs, Mahila Mandals, Mahila Swasth Sanghs, ICDS Anganwadis, PHCs, Subcentres, Cooperatives, Libraries etc. through Information Technology and e-governance. They should be given important place in digital democracy.

Health care and Developmental Family Welfare is an important area for e-governance.

The following is the health and family welfare scene in India.

<u>Name of facility</u>	<u>Number</u>
Primary Health Centre	22962

Community Health Centre	2708
Subcentres	135815
Health and Family Welfare Training Centres	17
ANM Training Schools (District level)	513
Lady Health Visitor Training Centre	45
Multi Purpose Workers (Male) Basic Training	61
Schools	
Population Research Centres	18

All the above institutions have to be covered by internet, e-mail, and electronic conferencing. The service care delivery should be made easily accessible to the beneficiaries through Information Technology Applications.

Electronic data bases have to be prepared and maintained on the following topics in respect of Health and Family Welfare.

- (1) Eligible Couple register under each Primary Health Centre (PHC)
- (2) Child health register
- (3) Pregnant care register
- (4) Follow up register
- (5) Health and family welfare education and training register
- (6) Websites on reproductive and child health, adolescent health, family welfare, family planning, geriatrics and gerontology, sexually transmitted infections, reproductive treat infections, HIV/AIDS
- (7) Website on health and family welfare research
- (8) Medical stores information network
- (9) Health and family welfare education and research network
- (10) Electronic suggestion boxes
- (11) Electronic health and family welfare conferencing

Publicity, awareness campaigns, advertising, visualizations etc. should become more and more developmental. There should be messages through creative literature and creative media. There should be columns in the media for have nots in Information Technology and their redressal. Information technology has been modifying professional social work education for the last two decades in the advanced countries. Professional social work education in India has also to be geared to achieve the objectives of digital democracy. In India the professional social workers working as Medical Social Workers Colleges and National Institutes of Health; as Psychiatric Social Worker in Mental Health Clinics, Mental Health Centres and District mental Health Programmes; Medical Social Worker in the Reproductive Tract Infection Clinic, Sexually Transmitted Infection Clinic, HIV/AIDS Clinic, Child Guidance, Clinic, Department of Community Medicine, Family Planning Clinic, MTP Clinic, and the Anganwadi Worker, the Supervisor/Project Officer, at the Integrated Child Development Service, Development of Women and Child in Rural Areas, Intergrated Rural Development Programme, Nehru Yuva Kendra, National Service Scheme, and as Local Authority Social Worker under Panchayati Raj and Nagarapalika. The professional social worker irrespective of his employment should become well versed

in digital democracy and e-governance to provide Information Technology assistance to beneficiaries and citizens in addition to social work practice in their respective fields of work. As the social worker has more rapport with the beneficiaries as well as care providers their entry into the Information Technology field will lead to faster accomplishment of digital democracy and e-governance. In Industry the Personnel Manager, the Human Resources Development Officer, the Labour Welfare Officer etc. have to be made catalysts in Information Technology Applications. The media personnel and teachers can also speed up the Information Technology revolution along with doctors, social scientists, engineers, and all the professionals, scientists and technologists, and persons from the fields of art, sport, literature and humanities. The profession of e-governance is both a science as well as an art and it is an effective tool of management in the field of social security also e-governance has an important role especially in the administration of insurance, social assistance, destitute, disability and illness pensions, labour welfare fund assistance, aged pension and other important functions of social welfare, welfare of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, backward communities, tribal welfare, fishermen welfare etc. Information technology can also limit the occurrence of accidents and crime. e-governance is also directed towards poverty alleviation, and disaster management. Here extensive field work by professional social workers supported by information technology professionals will be a good proposition for sustainable social development. Let transparency is not lost in governance. Let us aspire for a model of comprehensive sustainable social development through digital democracy and e-governance.

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(Proceedings of the seminars on "e-Governance & Democracy in the Millennium: Challenges & Opportunities" held at Radha Park Inn International, Chennai on December 11-12, 2000 as a national conference of AMIC-INDIA.)Source:

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