Landholders inMaharashtra get a centralized database system for land records-related information

Introduction

As part of its CSC initiatives within the state of Maharashtra, CMS helped the Government of Maharashtra and the Department of Register and Stamps with system centralisation and removal of junk characters from the data repository of land records in Maharashtra.

The project was kick started to enable the efficient and centralized distribution and management of documents featuring land records and other such important certificates with the citizens in a smooth and efficient manner.

As part of the CSC initiative this project was undertaken as one of many that improved access of Government services to the citizens of close to 13 districts of Maharashtra such as Akola, Amravati, Aurangabad, Beed, Buldhana, Hingoli, Jalna, Latur, Nanded, Osmanabad, Parbhani, Wasim and Yavatamal.

Just like any other implementation though, this one came with its set of challenges.

Critical Challenges

Centralisation of land titles: With Maharashtra being one of the most developed and largest states in India, land records are a critical subject for the state government, citizens and business community. To make the land documentation process smoother for the citizens of Maharashtra, the state government had undertaken a mammoth exercise ofdigitizing more than 2 croresSatbara (7/12) and 8-A extracts. 7/12 and 8/A are thedocumentsthat have the details of land ownership, category and background.

However, the data was only available at local offices ofthe tehsildar (taluk) andthe Register and Stamps Department. There was no centralized database management system and information was not available online. For instance, if a person wanted a copy of 7/12 extracts for his land parcel located in district A he wouldn't be able to access the data from district B where he/she might be temporarily located. It was also a major issue for a large number of landholders in Maharashtra who were living in far away from their home villages.

Lack of transparency: With not having a central database management system for land records, the system of maintaining data was quite opaque and dated. Many legal disputes were also witnessed as 7/12 and 8/A extracts were not accessible online.

No process of authentication: There was no way to authenticate 7/12 certificates because certificates didn't have any verification code.

Junk characters: When CMS started the project, the digital format of 7/12 extracts were replete with junk characters. It was a monstoroustask to clean the errors, as records were in crore in numbers.Migration of

Integration of CSCs with the database: Even Common Service Centres were not integrated \as far as 7/12 and 8/A extracts were concerned. This integration was complicated and required much effort. However, given CMS's experience this process was fairly straightforward and integration was made.

Solutions Utilized

1) Migration from Database-2 to Microsoft SQL for creating a central database system for land records

2) CMS created a search module in the database system, wherein a 7/12 extract can be retrieved by filling key fields such as district, survey number and taluka/village

3) Special software was created for the removal of junk characters.

4) Added barcode on the certificates

5) The database for 7/12 and 8/A extracts was integrated with all CSCs.

Benefits

• Landowners in Maharashtra can access land records and procure land and revenue certificates from any place, any time.

• The central database system was a great respite for government offices and village level entrepreneurs, as the documentation process became more efficient with having search interface in place.

• Earlier, transactions related to land records were unaccounted at CSCs. Today, one can track the number and nature of transactions done at CSCs. Also, the system brought in transparency between landowners and government offices.

• Barcode on land records helped government agencies crack down on the cases of forgery and land-grabbing incidents.

• Removal of junk characters from the database curtailed redundancy in the documentation of land and revenue certificates.