

INFORMATION KERALA MISSION: A DIGITIZED HUB OF DECENTRALISED GOVERNANCE

A project better known as SLIDE (State Level Informatics System for strengthening the Decentralized Plan Implementation) was conceived in 1997 to focus on creating efficient and responsive mechanisms for governance at the local levels. On 10th February 2014, IKM was registered as an autonomous body under the Travancore - Cochin Literary, Scientific and Charitable Societies Registration Act, 1955. With registering as a Society, all e-governance programs of the Mission Group namely, developing software for efficient and responsive systems for smart governance and improving public service delivery with comprehensive citizen interface covering various activities of the Local Self Governments is carried out by the IKM Society.

Objectives of IKM

- Transform local bodies into effective institutions of self-governance by providing transparent, efficient and responsive mechanisms for governance and citizen service delivery at local bodies in a time bound manner.
- Develop synergies with local ICT institutions to involve them in strengthening such e-governance initiatives.
- To establish a mechanism for automating and monitoring various operations at the local body level like plan monitoring and management, accounting, finance, public services, purchase, works and other e-governance related tasks, thereby making a quantum leap in accountability, transparency and efficiency in public service and considerably strengthening the social security network.
- Improve revenue generation, resource identification and utilization capabilities of local bodies and provide inputs to bring about substantial administrative reforms and modernization of government through re-engineering of business processes.
- To provide continued technical support to ensure network applications are up and running throughout, through district/ state level help desk.

Earlier, the project computerized and established a wide area network connecting the 1,215 local governing bodies throughout the state. The uniqueness of IKM project is the extensive effort taken in systems documentation, the overall emphasis on business process re-engineering and development of an integrated services backend database. The IKM project is an attempt to strengthen local self-governance through ICT applications. It addresses the entire array of issues concerning local body governance, decentralized planning, and local economic development.

Information Kerala Mission is a flagship e-governance project set up by the Government of Kerala. It helps in realizing the computerisation programs of the Local Self Government Institutions. Since 2014, IKM is as an autonomous body under the Travancore-Cochin Literary, Scientific and Charitable Societies Registration Act, 1955. The IKM Society carries out all e-governance programs of the Mission Group namely, developing software for efficient and responsive systems for smart governance and improving public service delivery with comprehensive citizen interface covering various activities of the Local Self Governments. Presently the Mission has developed and launched new software called Integrated Local Governance Management System (ILGMS) which bring in transparency, precision, scrutiny

and promptness in all the services given through local self-government institutions. It will benefit the people by serving them from virtual offices by which physical presence in each office is ceased.

During the first phase, IKM attempted to implement seven applications in all the panchayats. These are: Sulekha (plan monitoring system); Sevana (civil registration - birth/death/marriage and social security schemes); Saankhya (accounting); Soochika (file management); Sanchaya (revenue collection); Sanchita (information repository); and Sthapana (payroll/personnel). However, at each panchayat, the degree of success varies

The state gives top priority to a decentralised government with maximum autonomy to the LSGs. That is why the government gives top priority to IKM in empowering e-governance in the grassroots level administration. The Kerala experiment of participatory democracy and deliberative democracy is the preferred solutions to abate inequalities in a federal state. The more participatory democracy becomes the more level playing field the politics becomes.

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