



Bangladesh Development
Updates on

Building Digital Bangladesh





ICT In Facilitating Last Mile Services

“Digital Bangladesh by 2021” emerged as part of “Charter for Change”—the election manifesto of Bangladesh Awami League for the 9th Parliamentary Election. The declaration was made in December 12, 2008 for the election held in December 29, 2008. Though a date is attached to this agenda, it is interpreted as a long-term vision rather than a target. This forward-looking vision quickly captured people’s imagination and became the buzzword of the entire nation. Now, Bangladesh is moving forward with the idea of digitization and through using the best of ICTs the country is trying to deliver last mile services for the mass.

UISC in Delivering Last Mile Services

UISCD The Awami League Government declared a vision of Digital Bangladesh by 2021 to services at people’s doorsteps. In order to translate the dream of ‘Digital Bangladesh’ into reality a total number of 4501 Union Information & Service Centres (UISCs) have been established on 11th November, 2010. UISC is basically a local knowledge centre.


These hubs of information & services now are at doorsteps of local people to minimize digital ‘divide’ and save the time, energy & money of peripheral class.

ICT in Education

The key objective to use ICT in education is to make the best use of new technologies to build world- class skills in all areas of study especially mathematics, science, and English language. Taking advantage of newer and less costly delivery tools and digital learning contents the aim will be to build the competencies needed to compete in the globalized 21st century world.

ICT for education or e-Education is now trying to deal with providing vocational and ‘lifelong education’ opportunities to the youth and adults in order to retool them and build

Grassroots Voice



“At present, many new students are getting training in my union information centre.”

We come from a remote area where there isn’t any access to computer training centres and no system of getting computer certificate from government. I joined UISC in 2010. With three trainees and one computer, we started the computer training programme. Slowly, I went ahead with this project and gradually my numbers of computers are being raised by 10.

Till now, 200 students have received training from my institution. The trained 200 students from my institution have received government certificate and some are also working in different government and private organizations.

At present, many new students are getting training in my union information centre.

I want to thank A2i and Bangladesh government for making me independent after joining in UISC.

–Ashrafur (Kishorgonj UISC)

newer skills to improve their productivity. The scenario in our education sector is rapidly evolving with the midas touch of internet and communication technologies. To make teaching and learning more enjoyable and participatory, multimedia classrooms are installed in 22,500 secondary schools and 1700 primary schools. A goal has

been set to install multimedia classrooms in every schools of the country within 2016.

Not just the students, IT is being used to develop skills of teachers. 1000 teachers have been trained as 'Master Trainer' who later trained about 20,000 teachers. A portal, www.teachers.gov.bd has been launched to assist the teachers where they can find the digital contents for multimedia classrooms. There are 25,754 members and 15,300 contents in the portal.

Government has made the text books available as e-books on internet now. On <http://www.ebook.gov.bd/> there are 300 textbooks and 100 support texts available for download. These e-books are interactive, containing videos, animations and images.

Results of the public exams have been published through mobile operators from 2009. Results of PSC, JSC, SSC, HSC exams are easily accessible by mobile phones. 53 million subscribers have got their results on mobile phones.

Application for admission in public universities, colleges and medical colleges are available in mobile phones. 5 years ago students have to go to the respective universities to collect and submit the application form. Most of them went to agents who charged double. Now, this lengthy process has come down to 3 text messages. About 3 million students have applied for admission in universities till February, 2014.

ICT in Health Services



To manage the treatment gap in the country with a population of 154.7 million, increasing use of mobile phones has provided a solution. Government has initiated Health Care Service Through Mobile Phone which allows citizens to call any public health care centres and they will have instant services by a duty doctor. Now, 482 government hospitals are being provided with a cell phone to run this service.

Telemedicine is the opportunity where a patient doesn't need to go to a hospital in town or to a specialized doctor. They can have the same service from their UISCs or Community Clinics. People can go there and get the service through Skype. Initially, this service is available at 8 hospitals and 30 UISCs.

ICT in Agriculture



Extension of agriculture and providing correct and necessary information to the farmers are the major keys of agricultural development in Bangladesh. Agricultural Information Through Mobile Phone is playing a huge role in this context. Ministry of agriculture has disseminated 12000 mobile phones to agricultural extension agents. These agents are providing information to the farmers.

Government has launched a website (www.ais.gov.bd) which will provide all the information required for a farmer.

Online Fertilizer Recommendation, an initiative of Soil development Institute, allows our farmers to use the right fertilizer for the right soil. Wrong manures can hinder the productivity which further affects our total production of crops. From more than 200 UISC, farmers are now having advices to use the right fertilizer which resulting in bumper production of crops in last several years.

In terms of sugar production, timely delivery of sugarcane is the most important part for a farmer. Late delivery results in low price of sugarcane and low quality and production of sugar. In 2010, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the official E-Purjee management which allows the farmers to know the right time to deliver their sugarcanes. This initiative has resulted in 13 percent increase in sugarcane production. This service is available in every sugar mill which benefited more than 200,000 farmers.

Infrastructure for Public Service

To eliminate the hazards of getting a public service, Union Information and Service Centres (UISC) have been established in every Union (lowest tier of local government). In 4547 unions, 3.2 million people are getting services every month. These services include birth registration, online registration for prospective migrant workers, mobile banking services, life insurance and Tele-medicine health service. Training for students, youths, women and young entrepreneurs are available in these centres.

The second phase of UISC is to upgrade it to district level. These centres are District E-Service Centre (DESC). From 2011, DESCs have been established in 64 districts of the

Services Rendered through UISCs (e Sheba)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4,516 UISCs operating in 4,545 Union Parishads • 3.19 million citizens visiting UISCs per month • Over 78 thousand 'unbanked' citizens (70% women) gained financial access as a result of mobile banking services, through 3,700 UISCs • 2,768 UISCs offering life insurance opportunities with 30,200 citizens recording a premium of BDT 4.2 million (USD 0.05 million) • Over 35,000 citizens (70% women) availed of telemedicine services • Over 45,000 students and youth (70% women) received computer literacy training • Health services provided to 0.75 million citizens • Over 1.4 million overseas workers registered electronically

country. Over 200 years, District Commissioner (DC) offices have been the hub of government services in urban and rural areas. DC offices usually provide services regarding control and supervision of revenue, maintenance of public order and security, license and certificates, land acquisitions, census, relief and rehabilitation, social welfare, pension matters, education and public examinations, public complaints and enquiries. With the digitalized services, DC offices are now working faster. From 2011, 389,423 land records has been delivered to the citizens against 758,153 applications received which would take 3-4 years more in analog service system. DESCs are providing services within 2-5 days which took 2-3 weeks before 2011.

Information and Utility Services

Paying utility bills was a chaotic task for the citizens, mostly, the city dwellers. They had to stand in the cue for hours to pay electricity, water and gas bills. But now, with the blessings of mobile phone and internet, those days are history. From 2010, people are using their cell phones to pay bills from their home. Till February 2014, .56 million water bills, 1.33 million gas bills and 21.2 million electricity bills are being paid through mobile phone and online services.

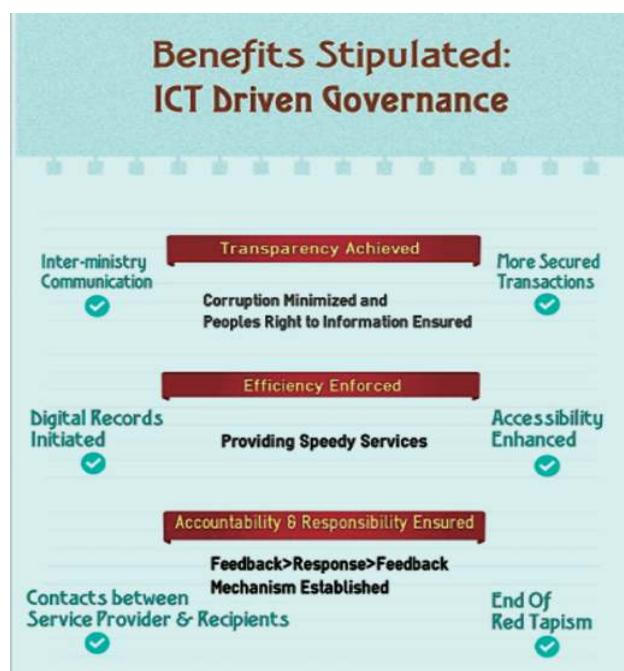
Transferring money was hazardous and insecure before government's initiative of Electronic Money Transfer System (EMTS). Bangladesh Postal Department has initiated the service in 2010 collaborating with A2I. Now consumers can send and receive money within 20 minutes from 2750 post and sub post offices.

In Bangladesh, it was widely believed that getting Police service was full of kettle. But recently Bangladesh Police has initiated online services on trial basis. Primarily people can file general diaries (GD) on non-urgent issues.

Every year a significant number of students and workers are going abroad for better opportunities. But the process of migration was complex and harassment to people was a common experience. But the settings are changing as

government has introduced Machine Readable Passport (MRP) and Visas (MRV) services. This initiative has lessened the time, cost rate of fraud dramatically.

Good Governance and ICT



Good governance refers to participatory, consensus-oriented, equitable, effective and responsive governance system. ICT based governance is bringing the government nearer to stakeholders putting the needless bureaucratic interference aside. The extensive use of ICT in government system is enabling people to oversee the function of the government and responsible authorities. As the current government of Bangladesh has initiated a large number of ICT based services, transparency, efficiency, accountability and responsiveness have been implemented. The opacity in government service process has been reduced by inter-ministry communication. Citizens are now aware of their rights to information. Service providers are now more efficient than ever. Access to communication has been enforced and services are being provided instantly. Bangladesh was lacking in keeping records of lands, births etc. But with the recently initiated services these records are being digitalized. The contact between the service providers and recipients has been ensured and the oppression of red tapism has come to an end. Government has become more accountable to its people.

Government to Citizen

To ensure availability of the public services like tax payment, land records delivery, driving license, birth certificate to people, government has initiated numerous online services.

E-Tax

The previous analog income tax registration system of Bangladesh was complicated generally for the citizens,



especially the senior citizens. It was full of hassles. To address the problem National Board of Revenue (NBR) initiated E-TIN service from July, 2013. According to the revenue board, more than 600,000 tax payers have registered in this service. From 30th June, 2014, tax payers won't be able to pay their taxes without registering in E-TIN.

E-land record system (E-Porcha)

The age old land records system of Bangladesh was dwarfing the citizen's rights to access to public service. Land offices were a place where a citizen never dreamt of getting any easy service. Maintaining analogue and paper-based land records encouraged 'Red Tapism' and made the service inaccessible without having proper channels. To change the scenario, government has initiated an electronic land record system which is developed by Access to Information (A2I) project. Through this system, citizens can apply SA, CS and BRS land records and porcha. People can receive land records now without any complications. Through this system, the inherited age-old family owned personal records related with land are being synchronized with the newly issued digitally accessible documents. The available land records in district record rooms are being digitized by the joint venture of A2I, land ministry and district administration. More than 6 million land records are delivered through online and Union Information and Service Centres.

Online Application for Driving License

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority has initiated to collect applications for driving licenses through online. Previously, the entire process was thwarted by the ill practice of the opportunists who were working at the registration authority. The online application service brought clarity and speed in the whole process. Now interested citizens don't have wait in the cue to collect and submit the applications.

Electronic Birth registration system

Government is delivering birth registration certificates through online from 2013. This service is available for every citizen at all the local government institutions like Union Parishad, Pourashava, City Corporation. Bangladeshi expatriates can also issue their birth certificates as the

government has launched the service in Bangladesh embassies in 36 countries.

National E Service System (NESS)

National E-service System is a central platform for converting existing citizen services to e-services that are provided by various departments and government offices in districts and upazillas. Currently, the implementation of NESS is in progress and it has been established in 250 offices in Jessore district on pilot basis. Initially, 600 government staffs and officers have been trained for this system. Gradually, this will be implemented in various districts and upazillas of Bangladesh.

National E-Tathyakosh

National E Tathyakosh is the one-stop solution and online encyclopedia for providing and sharing livelihood-related information. This online repository is the largest pool of information in Bangla which contains more than 100,000 contents on 10,000 topics in audio, video, text and animation format. It has more than 1 million online users and 11,500 offline users.

Government to Business

Access of information technology in business and investment sector is the necessity of time. Online access in business and investment sector has been introduced through online procurement system, application for new business, trade license. Crimes in business are also being dealt through online.

E-Tendering for Government Procurement

E-tendering has shown that technology can wipe out corruption from the administration of the government. In 2011, Bangladesh Bank has initiated this widely praised initiative to launch a portal for online procurement system. The national E-GP portal has made the bidding process more secured. In 2012 there were 294 contractors affiliated with e-procurement system. By the end of 2013, this number exceeded 6000 and it depicts the orthodox yet widely controversial procurement system has seen its end. With e-tendering system, tenders can no longer be snatched and the bidders can no longer be threatened. More than 114 offices of 7 ministries and 21 organizations are using the national E-GP portal for procurement. 377 branches of 18 scheduled banks are completing security money collection and tender fees through the procurement portal.

E-Registration and License for New Business

Starting a business will not remain a dream as government has launched several online services to encourage new business.

To start a new business, it's important to register the business company at the office of the Register of Joint Stock Companies and Farms. This process was full of



hassles before the online service was initiated. It was full of long queues, dissatisfactions, confusion and harassment by the agents. To overcome the dreadful situation, delivering service through online was initiated. The processes can be completed within 4 hours instead of a month and traveling to office for the registration is no more needed instead of 6 times.

The first and foremost requirement for opening a new business is to collect the trade license without which any kind of trade is illegal. Government has stepped forward to make the procedure for trade license more accessible.

New Investors Portal

Business and investment is not out of the purview of the digital revolution. Government is providing information and forms for the new entrepreneurs and investors in the country and abroad. New investors can register through Board of Investment's online service.

Combating Money Laundering in Banking Sector

United Nations Office of Drug and Crime (UNODC) and government have introduced a widely used intelligence system, goAML client application to combat money laundering. This application is to be used by Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit, the central agency responsible for analyzing Suspicious Transaction Reports, information related to money laundering and financial terrorism.

Government to Government

Digitalization of the decision making process is the first and foremost demand for e-governance. To connect the ministries and government offices of every tiers, Ministry of Post, Telecommunication and ICT's ICT division has initiated numerous projects. Among them Bangla Govnet and Info Sorkar have already been started.

Bangla Govnet

Development of National ICT Infra-network for Bangladesh Government or Bangla Govnet project is aimed to establish a public network backbone in every district and selected upazila, every ministry, governmental department, offices and bureaus. With this project, 130 websites for different ministries and offices have been launched.

Info Sorkar

Info Sorkar is the second phase of Development of National ICT Infra-network for Bangladesh Government. Its aim is to bring 18070 offices under the coverage of a secured network. This project is aimed for an uninterrupted communication with the government officials, to establish National Data Centre, establishing specialized labs in 12 public universities. Already establishing the national data centre is running in full throttle where as installing wifi service at secretariat is almost finished.

Centre for Research and Information (CRI)

House 2, Road 32 (old) 11 (new)
Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi, Dhaka 1209, Bangladesh
Tel: +88029111260, Fax: +88029111319
Email: info@cri.org.bd