Information Technology Landmarks in India

1998
• National Task Force on Information Technology formed

1999
• Task force submits its report in three parts
• Ministry of Information Technology is set up

2000
• Information Technology Act of India is passed by Parliament
• Community Information Centre Project in Northeast is planned
• Working Group on ‘IT for Masses’ formed to strategize access to IT for common people

2001
• Ministry of IT is rechristened as Ministry of Information and Communication Technology to mark the increasing convergence of the two fields
• Pilot phase of CIC project launched in northeast in thirty Blocks

2002
• Tenth Five Year Plan takes up IT as a thrust area for development
• All 487 CICs made fully operational in northeast

2006
• National e-Governance Plan launched

2007
• CIC project given extension of two years after completion of five-year initial term period to explore sustainability strategy

2008
• IT Act amended to include provisions for emerging digital technologies

2009
• Central government support to CIC project withdrawn
Source: Census of India website
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INTERVIEW PROTOCOL & SCHEDULE

(A) Interview Protocol for Village Community Members (non-users of CIC):

- Demography – Gender, age, education, profession, village, clan

- Languages you know to read, write and speak?

- What is the highest educational qualification among your family members?
  What does he/she do now? Where does he/she live? If he/she stays away from
  this place, why?

- How do you communicate with people/family members living away from
  you? Do you have a PCO in your locality?

- How do you get information about important things happening in your locality
  and outside?

- What information would you like to have easy access to? How do you get
  access to them now?

- Do you have a fixed telephone, mobile phone, radio, television, or computer?
  If not do you use them at other places? Where and at what cost? For what
  purpose do you use these communication facilities?

- Are you aware of the functions of a computer? What is a computer used for?
  Have you used one, when, where and for what purpose? How did you feel
  when you used it for the first time?

- Do you want to learn using a computer? How do you think it will help you?
• What is your level of interaction with govt offices? When did you last visit the Panchayat office/block office/district headquarter and why? How was the experience? Was your work done? How many visits were required to get the work done?

• Do you think there is a need to improve the delivery of government services to you? How can it be improved?

• Are you aware of the community information centre at the block office?
  ▪ What services does it provide?
  ▪ How did you come to know about it?
  ▪ How far is it from your home?
  ▪ Have you visited it?
  ▪ Why, when, with whom?

• Would you like to have one at your village? How would it benefit you?

• Have you heard of the computer training provided at the CIC? Have you taken it? Yes/No – why?

• What information if provided at CIC will be helpful for you?

• What are the three most important community (development) related problems in your locality? Do you think the CIC can do anything in this respect? How?

• What resources are lacking in your locality that you would like to have access to? How do you get access to them now?
• Do you have a health centre in your village? How far is the nearest health centre from your home? Are adequate services available at times of emergency? Where do you go in case of critical medical condition?

• Do you have a school in your village? What level of education is available there? Are you satisfied with the education facilities available? Where would you want your children to study and why?

• How would you define a good living condition? What are the resources required to have a good living condition?

• What are the various job opportunities in your locality? Are they sufficiently rewarding? What new employment opportunities can be created and how?

• What are the places in the village where people meet regularly?

• How do you interact/network with your community and why? What networking process operates in your community and who are the members?

• Do you participate in community activities? If yes, what sort of activity? If not, why?

• Do women participate in community activities, if yes, to what extent and how? If no, why?

• Do women have equal access to all social utilities like men? Are there any differences? Yes/no, Why?

• Do women have financial independence? Do they have a say in the financial planning of the family?
• If you become a member of the village panchayet/village council/village development board what would you want to do for your locality? How do you think access to better communication and information facilities can assist you in this task?

(B) Interview Protocol for users of CIC:

• Demography – Gender, age, education, profession, village, clan

• How often do you visit the CIC? How far is it from your home?

• How did you come to know about it?

• What services are provided at the CIC?

• Do other members in your family visit the CIC? Who visits and why? If not, why?

• What services have you used here? Is the operation satisfactory?

• How has the CIC kiosk helped you?

• What other services, apart from those being delivered now, do you want to have at the CIC?

• Do you think that the service is useful? How would you feel if the CICs were to be taken off operation? Will it make any difference to you?

• How were you getting this service prior to the establishment of CIC?
• Have you used (the e-governance service/s delivered in that district)? How has the service delivery changed due to introduction of CIC? Do you think use of computers has improved the delivery of service? If yes, in what way? If no, why?

• Is the service charge at CIC appropriate?

• Would you be willing to pay more if better (faster, easier) services are delivered to you through the CIC? In such case what services would you expect to be delivered to you and at what cost?

• Do you use the computer yourself or take assistance from the operator? Why?

• Did you take training in computer from the CIC or you were already trained? Where were you trained and when?

• How does the CIC operator help you? Does he give enough attention to you during your visit to the CIC?

• Is the content available on CIC website adequate in terms of details, language, accuracy, immediacy, comprehensibility? How can the content be improved?

• Do you think the CIC can provide any help in terms of health and education facilities? How? Would you be willing to pay for such services if available?

• Is the location of the CIC appropriate for you? If no, where would you want it to be located and why?

• Do you think that the CIC can become a viable node for social networking for the community? How?
• What are the existing nodes of social networking for your community? How do they operate? Who initiates the communication and how? How does the networking progress?

• What are the primary issues discussed in such social networks/meetings? Who decides the agenda and how?

• Do you think access to communication technologies like the computer or the internet can help in this process? How?

(C) Interview Protocol for village opinion leader: (Village School Master, Panchayet Member, Progressive Farmer, Member of Village Council, Member of Village Development Unit)

• Comment on the current role of CIC

• Have you used it and motivated others to use it? Why? How?

• Comment on delivery of government services through CIC

• What facilities can be improved and what additional services can be provided to make it more beneficial for the public?

• How can it help in community networking?

• How can it benefit the youth and women?

• If there was to be one CIC located in your village where would you want it to be located and what services can be provided there? Why?
• Would you like to suggest an alternative model for CIC operation? What is it and how is it better?

• Do you think access to communication technologies can improve the social and developmental scenario in your village? Yes, How – No, why not?

• How can these technologies help in the process of ‘communitization’?
  (Nagaland only)

(D) Interview Protocol for CIC operator:

• What is your role as the CIC operator? What is your motivation and incentive for taking up this job?

• Were you provided any training before taking up this job? What training was provided and how did it benefit your service delivery? Do you feel the need for any further training and in what aspect?

• Does your block have a website of its own? Who has designed it and who updates it?

• How is the block website content decided, collected and updated? What has been the feedback about the website from visitors?

• What is the profile of the CIC visitors?

• Does the educational qualification of the user impact their usage of the services? How? What other factors affect usage- age, gender, occupation, social position?
• How many people have you trained in computer application since inception?

• What services do you provide at your CIC and which among these are most popular among the public? Why?

• Was there request for any additional service delivery from the public? What was it about and how has it been addressed?

• How according to you can the CIC benefit the local people? Is it delivering its full potential? Yes/no, why?

• What government services are provided through CICs in this district and what has been the response of public in your block to the e-delivery?

• How has the new system affected the delivery chain of government service? What are the improvements and short-comings and reasons thereof?

• What are the most pertinent development problems of your block? Can it be addressed by the CIC? Does it require up-gradation of the services or can be fulfilled with the existing mechanism? How?

• According to you what other services if provided by the CIC will be beneficial for the public and also provide financial viability for you?

• Have you tried suggesting it to the concerned district/block official? What was their response?

• What are the matters in which you need to have liaison with the block and district office? How frequently do you interact with them?
• What future do you see for the CICs? Do you think that this effort will be sustainable?

• What changes do you foresee with the coming of NeGP and the setting up of CSCs in addition to the CICs now operational?

• Would you consider shifting to a CSC when it becomes operational? Why?

• Do you think the CIC or the forthcoming CSC initiative can be made financially viable in the long run? How? How do you see your role in such a situation? Will it be different from now and in what respect?

• Have you attempted to develop liaison with any civil society organization functioning in your area? What has been the response?

(E) Interview Protocol for District Informatics Officer (NIC person associated with Deputy Commissioner’s office):

• The DIO operates as a connecting node between the centre and state government at the last level of delivery of ICT mediated services. How do you see your role as a central govt functionary operating within the state government administration?

• What G2C services have been launched at your district? How does the administrative mechanism of the district/state facilitate delivery of G2C services?
• How is the responsibility of service delivery shared between your office and DC’s/BDO’s office? How do you collaborate?

• Your position as the DIO entrusts you with the responsibility of looking after the performance of CICs in the entire district. How would you rate the performance of your district as compared to other districts in the state? What is the reason of differential performance of districts in implementing this project?

• What factors affect the delivery and operation of the CIC project at the district level?

• The CICs were launched in 2002 as a five-year centrally sponsored scheme with two broad objectives of providing some G2C services and making the people ICT enabled. How would you rate the success of this scheme on these two parameters at the end of project period in 2007?

• The entire CIC project is conceived riding on the notion of ICT4D. For a state like Assam/Nagaland where primary infrastructure like road, health facilities and employment opportunities are missing, how do you think ICTs can make a difference in the overall development scenario?

• What are the most pertinent development issues in your district? How can ICTs play a role in this regard? Is there a possibility of integrating any such issues into the CIC structure at the district level? How can it be achieved?

• The CICs were mandated to make interventions in the areas of health, education, and ICT training. How far it has been achieved in your district?
• How do you think the CIC project has benefited the public and which section of the public has been benefited?

(F) Interview Protocol for Deputy Commissioner(s):

• Government of India has taken up IT in a big way and is putting consistent emphasis on making the entire nation IT enabled in terms of giving access to e-governance services as well as other web enabled information services. How would you respond to this entire effort and what specific plans do you have for your district?

• The entire CIC project is conceived riding on the notion of ICT4D. For a state like Assam/Nagaland where primary infrastructure like road, health facilities and employment opportunities are missing, how do you think ICTs can make a difference in the overall development scenario?

• What are the most pertinent development issues in your district? How can ICTs play a role in this regard? Is there a possibility of integrating any such issues into the CIC structure at the district level? How can it be achieved?

• What G2C services have been introduced in the district and what has been the response of the public? How would you rate the achievement?

• What problems does the district administration encounter in rolling out G2C services? How have you coped with it?
• What will be your suggestion to make the CICs a financially viable model? Have you conducted any need assessment at your district? If yes, results thereof.

• Do you think with the coming of NeGP and establishment of CSCs service delivery across the country/state will be homogenized and you will lose freedom of deciding your priorities? How do you plan to cope with the situation?

• First it was the CICs and now it is the CSCs with a different plan of operation. It seems too many projects are rolled out without proper evaluation of the field realities and user estimation. Don’t you think such measures will make the public sceptical about the viability and trustworthiness of such ICT mediated service delivery options? What measure would you suggest to draw user attention?

• What is the scope of integrating education and health services into the CIC/CSC structure in your district? Do you have plans of doing so in future? How?

• How according to you can ICTs (in this case the CIC/CSC framework) become an empowering agent for women and other disadvantaged sections?

• What is the scope of delegating the responsibility of managing the CIC/CSC to the local people through process of community ownership? Can that work out as a viable model?
Has any civil society organization approached you for integrating their networking services with the CIC framework? Did you take any initiative to involve them in the process?

(G) Interview Protocol for local NGO, Civil Society Group:

• What is your area of operation and focus of community intervention?

• Are you aware of the CICs in your area and services they deliver? What is your opinion about the utility of these services for the public?

• Would you like to suggest an alternative model for the operation of CICs/CSCs in your locality? What services would be most utilitarian for the public?

• Have you considered making the CIC a node of your operation? Yes, How?/ No, why not?

• Do you think such kiosks can become the hub for community interaction and develop to become viable sources of information and communication? How?

• How can ICT facilities become an empowering agent for women and the disadvantaged in the society?

(H) Interview Protocol for State Informatics Officer:
• The SIO functions as an intermediary between the centre and state government. How do you see your role as a central govt functionary operating within the state government administration?

• What G2C services have been launched in the state? How does the administrative mechanism of the state facilitate delivery of G2C services and how responsibilities are shared between NIC and the state officials?

• Your position as the SIO puts you in charge of all CICs operating in different districts of the state. What factors affect the delivery and operation of the CIC project at the district level? What is the reason for differential performance of districts in implementing this project?

• The CICs were launched in 2002 as a five-year centrally sponsored scheme with two broad objectives of providing some G2C services and making the people ICT enabled. How would you rate the success of this scheme on these two parameters at the end of project period in 2007?

• The entire CIC project is conceived riding on the notion of ICT4D. For a state like Asom/Nagaland where primary infrastructure like road, health facilities and employment opportunities are missing, how do you think ICTs can make a difference in the overall development scenario?

• The CICs were mandated to make interventions in the areas of health, education, and ICT training. How far it has been achieved?

• How do you think the CIC project has benefited the public and which section of the public has been benefited?
• Will the new CSC structure be better equipped to address these issues compared to the CIC? Does the dislodging of the CIC interface indicate failure of the initiative?

• A need assessment study for CICs conducted by NEIDS, Shillong for NIC indicates lack of awareness (80%) about the initiative as the primary reason for non-use. What initiatives were undertaken to create awareness about advantages of ICT usage among grassroots people and did it increase the usage subsequently?

• Do you think that the content developed and hosted over the CIC web network is adequate to serve the information need of the local people? How have you assessed the adequacy?

• What factors handicapped success of the CIC initiative according to you? How could they have been rectified?

• What IEC initiatives have been undertaken to create awareness about advantages of ICT usage among grassroots people in NE? What has been the response thereof?

• What pertinent development issues of the state can possibly be addressed by the upcoming CSC structure? What steps have been initiated towards identification of such issues and developing human and technological resources for the same?
(I) Interview Protocol for State IT Department: IT Commissioner/Director of the state

- Government of India has taken up IT in a big way and is putting consistent emphasis on making the entire nation IT enabled in terms of giving access to e-governance services as well as other web enabled information services. How would you respond to this entire effort and what opportunities do you see for Asom/Nagaland in this regard?

- The CIC project was conceived riding on the notion of ICT4D. For a state like Asom/Nagaland where primary infrastructure like road, health facilities and employment opportunities are missing, how do you think ICTs can make a difference in the overall development scenario?

- Have you identified priority areas and services for IT intervention in the state? What are they and how have you identified them?

- Do you think that the content developed and hosted over the CIC web network is adequate to serve the information need of the local people? How have you assessed the adequacy?

- Very few e-governance services are delivered over the CIC network in the state? Is it due to the inability of the state government to develop the IT interface? What measures have now been taken to initiate the process as the state prepares to launch the CSCs?

- The CSC plan in Assam/Nagaland intends to replace the current CIC initiative of the central government? Does it mark a failure in implementing and
maintaining the ongoing initiative and how do you plan to overcome the same
hurdles in the new initiative?

- What are your plans of involving other community stakeholders like civil
  society groups and local self-governance bodies like panchayets/village
councils into the ICT operational framework?

- The national e-readiness report puts Assam as a below average achiever/
  Nagaland as a least achiever state consistently for three years in a row. Would
  you subscribe to that report and what according to you is the reason for this
  poor performance? What steps have been taken to make the state more adapt
to changes in the IT environment?

- What are the primary administrative hurdles faced in implementing the
digitization of government departments and creating appropriate technical and
human resources?

- What are your plans of integrating health and education services into the IT
domain? Do you have plans of developing an IT interface for delivery of these
services?

- The Assam state human development report indicates substantial degree of
gender disparity in the state. How can the upcoming ICT network in the state
be employed to make interventions in gender empowerment?
(J) Interview Protocol for NIC/DIT official at New Delhi:

- CIC project in northeast was launched with two broad objectives of bridging the digital divide and facilitating e-governance. Were any specific targets set to be achieved within a time frame? How far do you think it has been successful in meeting its goals?

- There are words about scrapping the CIC project and merging it with the proposed CSCs of NeGP. What modalities have been worked out for the merger? Does it not hamper the northeast specific development emphasis which was the underlying purpose of the CIC project?

- How important do you think it is to conduct a need assessment among target citizenry before planning and designing an ICT4D project? Was any such study conducted in NE and what are the findings?

- Some say that e-governance is more about technology and less about governance. Do you think that there is need to restructure our ICT4D policy from being a technology driven initiative to become a need/usage/utility driven initiative?

- E-governance projects across the country have shown differential levels of success and utility. How would you define and assess success or failure of any project and how does the learning experience get consolidated into the planning of new initiatives?
• NeGP has been launched in our country with some ambitious goals. The progress and response across states have been varied. What factors according to you will be significant in deciding the success of the project in northeast?

• What factors affect ICT adoption by a state – the administration and the public? What can be done to boost adoption and maximise benefit in the northeast context?

• How can e-governance initiatives empower the traditional institutions of local self governance in the northeast?