



## Case Study

### Digital interventions in FSSM in Berhampur, Odisha

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# 1. Background

Since 2000, a priority area of administrative reform by the Government of Odisha is to transition towards e-governance platforms. This is currently facilitated by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology's **National e-Governance Plan (NeGP)** at the national level and **Odisha e-Governance strategy** at the state level, with an intent to promote the following characteristics as represented in figure 1:

Odisha's e-governance strategy aims to enable information access, expand access and transactions, facilitate citizen centric process re-design and enable a knowledge based government. The services offered ease inter-departmental coordination and improve government service delivery to customers (G2C), businesses (G2B), employees (G2E) and the government (G2G). Following the state government's track, the municipal corporation of Berhampur (BeMC) has undertaken administrative reforms at the corporation level by initiating the implementation of an e-governance platform. The citizen centric initiative resolves challenges specifically pertaining to grievance redressal.



# 2. The challenge

Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC) is implementing various central and state government initiatives, which aim to improve the lives of citizens. The National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM), National Urban Health Mission (NUHM), Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), Fecal Sludge and Septage Management (FSSM) are some of the initiatives under various states of implementation. With increased coverage of access to improved urban services, the challenges presented to the municipality are presented below:

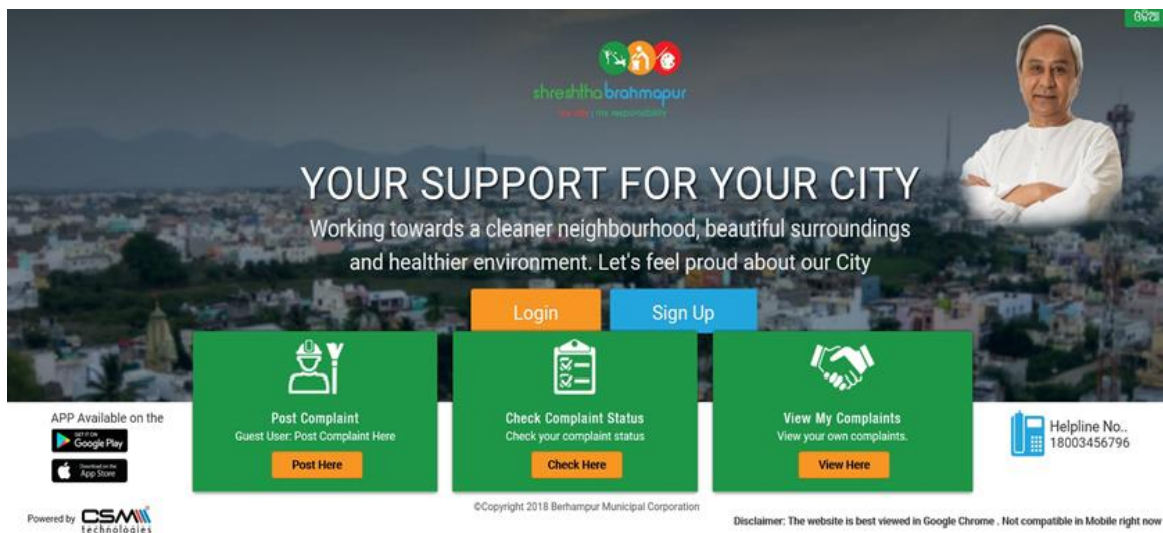
- ▶ Streamlining the process to effectively manage urban service delivery
- ▶ Increased turnaround time for resolution of citizen grievances
- ▶ Engage and collaborate municipality departments for faster delivery of services

Evident implications in the absence of an intervention are administrative inefficiencies, apathetic departments to take necessary action to resolve citizen queries thereby increasing turnaround times of grievance redressal. With the growing urban population, the municipality recognized that intervening to address administrative inefficiencies was key.

# 3. The intervention

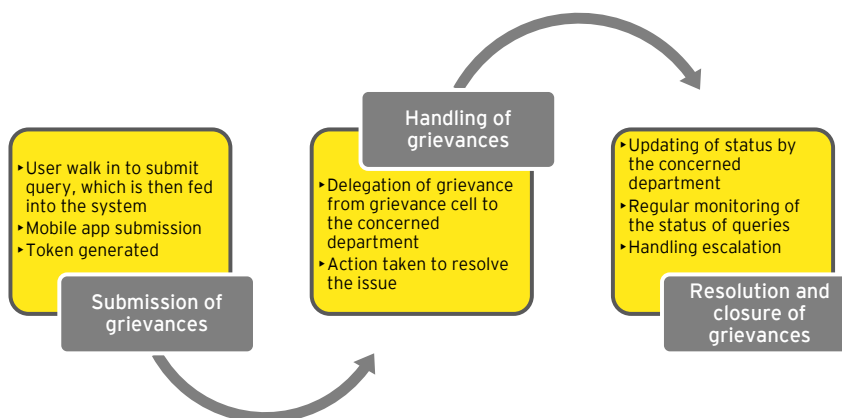
To improve delivery of citizen services and streamline the grievance redressal procedures, BeMC identified technology as a tool to promote good governance. A single window e-governance grievance redressal platform called the e-Subidha was developed and launched. The web based platform currently integrates services of nine key departments of the corporation. The platform is

citizen centric that provides citizens a one stop platform to avail municipal services and lodge complaints. As a step further, a council resolution to comply with the provisions of the Odisha Right to Public Service Act, makes it mandatory for departments to provide timely delivery of services requested.



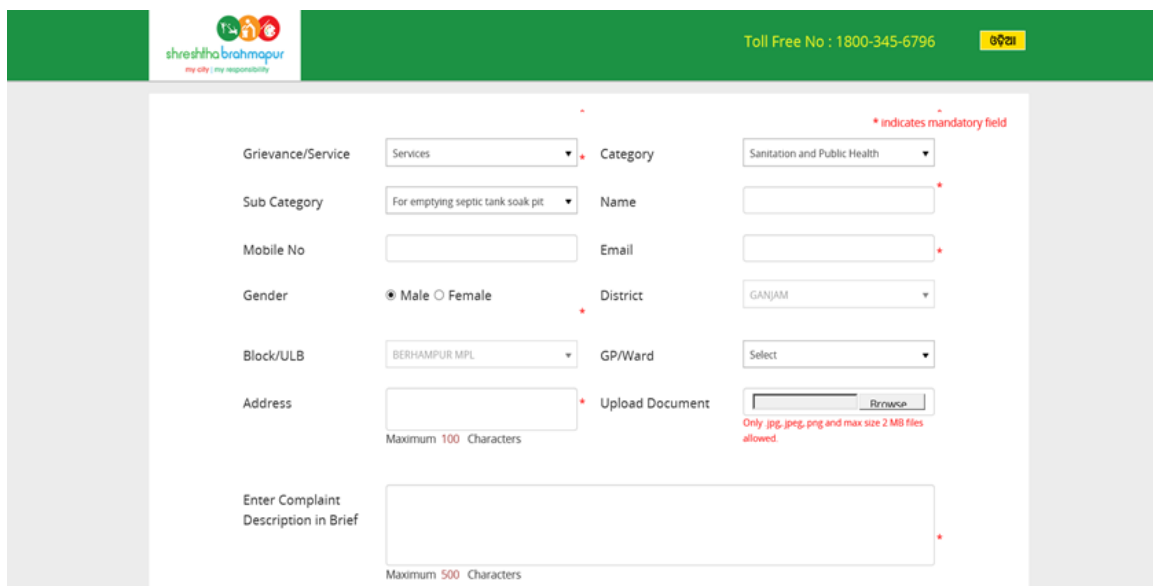
The two procedural aspects are outlined below:

- ▶ **Grievance cell:** The grievance cell is an e-management cell for BeMC, which is responsible for both front end and back end (web platform query management). The staff in the grievance cell have been capacitated to undertake the activities. The front end support entails interacting directly with the users to accept complaints and feed them into the digital platform. The back end support entails re-directing the queries to the concerned department and tracking the status of the queries. The grievance cell also ensures that the queries raised are addressed by the concerned department within the designated time.
- ▶ **Grievance submission:** The portal currently acts as a grievance file management system that manages every query submitted from start to closure. Citizens with access to smartphones have the provision to raise complaints through the mobile based BeMC application. Citizens without access to smartphones can walk in and submit grievances/ complaints to the grievance cell, which will be updated online by the e-management staff. Through the portal, grievances/complaints can be logged on sanitation and public health, civic infrastructure, street lights, enforcements, holding tax, trade licenses, parking, social security and social welfare.



### 3.1. Integration of sanitation services

Berhampur is one of the designated 9 towns in Odisha under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT). Initiatives to improve sewage and spetage management practices through FSSM are currently underway in the municipal corporation. In efforts to offer sanitation service delivery services at reach, BeMC has integrated cesspool service delivery services in the e-Subhidha platform. Citizens can now request to avail cesspool services online and track the status of the request through the platform.



### 4. Recommendation

The e-Subhidha platform in Berhampur is currently in its early stages of implementation. Citizen complaints and grievances are accepted both online and offline. However, the platform currently has limited functionality that aids administrative processes pertaining to service delivery. As opportunities to scale and integrate additional services in the e-governance platforms emerge, the platform would require a comprehensive approach to e-governance. Presented in the figure are five key characteristics that ensure sustainability of any e-governance platform in the long term.



In order for BeMC to ensure the sustainability of this successful transformation, incorporating a robust change management program is vital. Such an approach will ensure the presence of centrally coordinated communication and integration tools to help governing entities. The five essential components of such a mechanism is outlined below:



**Policy:** Adopting a policy framework that clearly outlines the mission, vision and municipal government priorities towards its transition to e-governance platforms is key. A well-defined policy is key as a policy also acts as a guiding document for implementing agencies with clearly outlines roles, responsibilities of responsible entities.



**Infrastructure:** A robust IT infrastructure facilitates the implementation of a multitude of e-governance initiatives. It is also vital for the municipality to scale up the existing platforms and incorporate new features into the platform.



**Finance:** The current platform has limited functionality, wherein the financing is borne by the municipality. From the sustainability viewpoint, in order to the municipality to expand the breadth of online service delivery, provisions that allocate a percentage of funds will guarantee adequate funds will facilitate such innovative practices when the need arises.




**Governance:** While the current platform is nascent, establishing a permanent nodal agency in the corporation for governance the platform is crucial. This established entity is responsible to create an enabling environment to frame policy guidelines, create core infrastructure, provide technical advisory support and handle feedbacks, grievances/complaints.



**Capacity building:** Undertaking various government led capacity building workshops to train government officials to successfully transition to effectively use the deployed e-governance platforms is also vital. For example, the Government of Odisha's e-governance vision has proposed to undertake various capacity building workshops to train personnel in order to successfully transition towards e-Governance. A similar mechanism can be employed by BeMC to capacitate and improve the skills of associated municipal officials.

## 5. Conclusion

The digital platform is a win-win situation for both citizen the government improving service delivery and promoting good governance. Fitting in other best practices will aid BeMC to pioneer in making feasible such innovations at a municipal corporation level.

A busy street scene in India, likely a market or a crowded urban area. In the foreground, a woman wearing a vibrant pink and purple floral sari is riding a motorcycle. To her right, a man in a white shirt is also riding a motorcycle. The background is filled with other people, some on bicycles and others walking, creating a sense of a bustling, everyday life. The overall atmosphere is one of activity and movement.

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