

## *Executive Summary*



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### **Delivery of Public Services by Government of Maharashtra**

Citizens avail various public services such as obtaining nationality and domicile certificate, income certificate, caste certificate, birth/death certificate and police clearance certificate from government departments, local bodies and government companies from time to time. Citizens expect a high standard of service and public authorities have recognised this fact. The Government is investing significant amount of time and money for improving delivery of public services and empowering the citizens to demand the public services as a matter of right.

The way services are delivered has also changed considerably with the induction of information and communication technology. The growth in the efforts of the Government and the means for delivery of services to the public necessitates the need to assess the performance of such citizen centric endeavours.

The Government of Maharashtra enacted the Maharashtra Right to Public Service Act, 2015 (MRTPS Act) for transparent, efficient and timely delivery of public services to the citizens and to bring transparency and accountability among the public authorities. The Government of Maharashtra also developed *Aaple Sarkar* Service Portal, maintained by Mahaonline Limited, as a common platform for citizens to apply for services of various departments. The citizens could avail the services through common service centres named “*Aaple Sarkar Seva Kendras*” (ASSKs) located in districts, talukas and villages. The Maharashtra State Commission for Right to Service was constituted under the MRTPS Act to supervise, monitor, regulate and improve the overall delivery of public service by various departments of the State Government.

This Performance audit was conducted to assess whether public services had been provided to the citizens in an effective, efficient and time-bound manner; proper planning and business process re-engineering was done to provide services online; and efficient monitoring and effective grievances redressal mechanism was set up. Audit was conducted for the period 2015-16 to 2020-21. Records in nine out of 31 departments and nine out of 36 districts in the State were test-checked. A joint survey of 200 ASSKs and 500 beneficiaries was done in the selected nine districts.

The first step in the delivery of public service is the identification of services provided and its notification for delivery of the services as a right to the citizen. Audit noticed that a significant number of departments had not identified the services. Moreover, all the services which were identified were not notified under the Act. Therefore, *Government should ensure that a master list of all services to be provided to the citizens are prepared and notified by all departments in a time-bound manner.*

Setting up of adequate infrastructure is the next important step in the service delivery mechanism. Audit noticed that though the State had established a large

number of service centres to provide service to the citizens, 45 per cent of these centres were not providing the notified services. Additionally, 27 per cent of the Municipal Councils and 35 per cent of Gram Panchayats in the State did not have any centres to serve the citizens. The quality assessment of these service centres was not done in majority of test-checked districts. *Government should, therefore, take steps to open more ASSKs in places where there is shortage to improve accessibility of the services to the citizens and ensure that the District Collectors carry out quality assessment of the performance of ASSKs annually for appropriate remedial action.*

The performance in the delivery of timely services was far from satisfactory due to pending applications and delays in the delivery of services within the stipulated time despite the recovery of service charges from the citizens. The awareness among the citizens of their right to services was poor which was further undermined due to lack of information on the websites of the departments. Considering the importance of timely delivery of service, *Government should review the reasons for pending applications and fix responsibility for delays in providing services within the notified time. Moreover, Government should ensure that public awareness campaign is conducted throughout the State and all required information such as fees for the services and the list of ASSKs are available on the website.*

The online portal prepared by the Government for e-enablement of services lacked proper documentation on business process re-engineering and business continuity and disaster recovery planning. A significant number of notified services were not provided through the online system. Audit noticed that for an application submitted through ASSKs, there was no facility in the Portal for filing an appeal either directly by the citizen or through ASSKs. The aggrieved citizen had to file appeal to the concerned appellate authority in offline mode. *Government should review the status of e-enablement of services in each department and prepare a plan for its implementation in a time-bound manner and also ensure that plans for business process re-engineering are documented for all the e-enabled services. Likewise, Government may ensure proper documentation of business continuity and disaster recovery plan and development of audit trail report in the system.*

The responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the Act was with the Commission. Audit noticed that the monitoring of the delivery of services was inadequate due to shortfall in inspection of offices rendering services and lack of information on offline applications received and their disposal. 55 per cent and 78 per cent of the appeals were pending with the first and second appellate authorities respectively. *Government should, therefore, ensure that the appeals are disposed of by the appellate authorities within the stipulated time limit and repeated defaulters identified for appropriate administrative action.*