Pioneering computerization in Tamil Nadu

1972 - Treasuries and Accounts Department is one of the first departments to adopt computerized systems. The computing facilities at Government Data Centre, Chennai were used 1972 for preparing monthly accounts. The data received from all the treasuries were captured using punched cards and processed on IBM 1401 system. It is a commendable pioneering initiative of the department. However, the hardware and software facilities of that time were not suited for effective implementation since the whole data had to be received to a central location at Chennai and entered. Nevertheless, this created awareness on usage of computers among the majority of the employees of the department and introduced systems amenable for computerisation.

Need for computerisation

Need for computerisation arose, as Tamilnadu is the only state, which compiles and renders the monthly accounts to the sub-detailed level to the Accountant General. In respect of other states AG prepares the monthly accounts based on the list of payments / receipts sent by the treasuries. Thus for the limited purpose of
preparation of monthly accounts, preparation of pension statements and watching of budget provision to certain extent the need for computerisation was felt.

In the 1990s with the advent of low cost Personal Computers, the distributed computing became feasible. The developments that followed are:

- Computerization of compilation of accounts in 1991-92
- Pilot compilation in Nandanam and Tambaram Sub Treasuries during 1992-93
- PC-AT/286 systems used at the pilot sites under MSDOS / FoxBASE environments
- Application software developed by National Informatics Centre
- Used as back-office systems for capturing daily receipts and payments details
- AT/386 system installed at Thiruvallur District Treasury and AT/286 systems in all its Sub Treasuries.
- The UNIX / FoxBASE systems at the District Treasury was used for preparing monthly accounts using the daily data received through floppies from the Sub Treasuries.
• Pilot replicated in phases in all the District Treasuries, Sub Treasuries, Pay and Accounts Offices and Pension Pay Office.

• The monthly accounts thus generated submitted to Accountant General, Chennai.

• These systems were in use in all the District Treasuries, Sub Treasuries, PAOs and PPO

• Thanks to the funds from XI-Finance Commission amounting to Rs.3.46 Crores many of the old systems have been replaced by new ones

• **Pilot Electronic Clearing System (ECS) for payment of pension in introduced in the Pension Pay Office, Chennai (PPO) in 1998**

• The Pension Pay Office generates bankwise, branchwise scrolls for making monthly payments to pensioners using the application software provided by NIC.

• The same software is being used in most of the Sub Treasuries.

• The Server Systems at District Treasuries, PAOs and PPO upgraded to Intel Xeon processor based Servers under Linux environment in 2003.

• The systems at Sub Treasuries have been upgraded to Pentium 4 clients in most of the Sub Treasuries.
• All but two sub treasuries have been converted as banking sub treasuries and cheque system introduced
• The tremendous success of ECS for pensioners in PPO led to the extension of ECS to payment of salary for employees in PAO secretariat
• ECS now being implemented in a phased manner in all the PAOs, District Treasuries and all the sub-treasuries
• More than 95% of the Government servants are getting their salary only through ECS throughout the State
• Later in 2005 payment of non-statutory deductions like LIC premium, Cooperative Society payment, Bank payments etc., through ECS were introduced and being implemented in a phased manner
• Subsequently, the payment of non salary items like GPF advances/part-final withdrawals, TA bill, medical bill reimbursements, surrender leave salary etc., through ECS were introduced and being implemented in a phased manner
• Thus handling of huge volume of cash in the name of physical disbursement is totally dispensed with

On Line Bill Passing- a switch over from back office systems to WORKFLOW based system
1999 ushered in a new concept of “On Line Bill Passing” system wherein to begin with a few selective treasury functions in the Pay and Accounts Office (Sectt.) were brought under implementation on trial basis. “On Line Bill Passing” rechristened as “Automated Treasury Bill Passing System” was revived again in 2003 and the pilot project was extended to two more Districts namely Karur and Theni

**Unique features of ATBPS:**

- Unlike in other states the thrust is on real ‘online’ where right from presentation of the bills to compilation of accounts would be “online”.
- The systems implemented so far had been back-office systems for capturing the details from the passed bills for generating required Accounts Statements and Registers.
- Workflow based Systems capturing the data starting from bill submission stage at the counters.
- The officials can process the bills online and take action for passing / rejecting the claim
- The application software developed by NIC is under Windows and ASP.NET environment with SQL Server 2000 as database
- The system provides online environment
• This was taken up for pilot implementation at Karur and Theni District Treasuries and their Sub Treasuries besides PAO Secretariat

*e governance committee for treasuries and accounts department was formed in* G.O.MS.No.86 Fin (T& A II) dated 11.3.2004 for offering expert opinion for the preparation of techno-commercial proposal for the total computerisation & egovernance of the department.

**The committee:**

Tmt. Qudsia Gandhi, IAS, Special Commissioner and Commissioner of Treasuries and Accounts, Chairperson of the Committee

**Members:**

• Thiru T K Ramachandran, IAS, Project Director, Tamil Nadu State Road Sector Project
• Dr. V Sankaranarayanan, Director, Tamil Virtual University
• Dr. K Udayakumar, Professor, Anna University
• Thiru A Mohan, Deputy Director General, NIC
• Dr. V Soundarapandian, General Manager (Retd), BHEL, Tiruchirappalli
• Thiru R Parthiban, Joint Director (GIS), Treasuries and Accounts
• Thiru R Venkatasubramanian, CAO & PA (Treasury Control) to Spl.Commr & CTA

The Committee studied the functional requirements of Treasuries and Accounts Department and also assessed the computerised systems implemented in other States and submitted a detailed report to the Government.

As a part of the study, two Sub Committees consisting of experienced retired officers of the Department looked into the following aspects:

• Revision of forms for use in computerised systems
• Revision of work procedures and maintenance of various registers

Sub committee members did a thorough and complete process re-engineering and the report was submitted to the on 27th August 2004 and also to the e-Governance Committee members.
Recommendations of the e-gov committee so far implemented are:

- Change management involves capacity building, awareness and attitudinal change in the end user as well the agencies/departments and others who interact with T&A dept. on a day to day basis

- Several interactive sessions were conducted with the Drawing and Disbursing Officers, Accountant General, RBI and its agency banks (Nationalized banks) conducting Government transactions through Treasuries, National Informatics Centre, Chennai, ELCOT Ltd., etc.

- Interactive sessions were also conducted in the presence of respective District Collectors throughout the State

- Training: In co-ordination with the Director of Technical Education, reputed Engineering Colleges and Polytechnics in the districts conducted basic computer training for all the treasury personnel right from the level of Additional Treasury Officer to the level of Junior Assistant

- All the Joint Directors and the CAOs have been imparted training by the NIC.
• **Infrastructure:** The pilot sites namely PAO Secretariat, Theni and Karur Treasuries have been provided with modular offices along with requisite hardware and software for the ATBPS

• As recommended by the e gov committee some of the District Treasuries which are relocating themselves in new buildings have been furnished with modular furniture and with computer hardware and software

• Wherever NIC leased line is available District treasuries are being refurbished with modular offices and computer hardware and software

• PAO Madurai, District and sub treasuries of Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Coimbatore, Trichy and Perambalur

**Other initiatives**

• Intranet based system for capture of salary details under Electronic Clearance System implemented at PAOs and all District Treasuries

• Health Fund Scheme Management System developed in-house by the office of T&A

• All India Service Officers Group Insurance Accounting System developed in-house
• Stamp account Management Information System developed by NIC

• ECS Information System developed by NIC through which any employee may access status of salary and non salary bills by entering GPF account no./bank account no./token no.

Some of the critical factors to be taken into account are the following:

❖ Necessary procedural changes in manual operations

❖ Core team from the department to suggest and approve the changes

❖ Project monitoring team at every level

❖ Necessary budget and commitment from the department for sustaining the systems