

4 Improving Governance and Public Service Delivery

Rajasthan can draw upon a number of strengths in advancing its governance and public management reform agenda. It has a strong tradition of responsiveness to civil society activism, an institutional framework for accountability, and is adopting important measures to enhance transparency and public awareness. Progress in e-governance has been encouraging. The current government has announced a vision for the state focusing on six important ideals, one of which is the need to ensure good governance. Bureaucratic support for introducing reforms is evident in many sectors. In fact, a Center for Good Governance (CGG) has been set up to guide and support the government's reform agenda.

However, there are also challenges that have to be met, as manifested in the state's weak service delivery record. The ability of the civil service to deliver its developmental tasks is hampered by a combination of inappropriate skills mix, absenteeism, fragmentation, and frequent transfers. Although the state's civil service enjoys a reputation for competence, it operates largely in the traditional paradigm of public administration, and is being increasingly challenged by new demands for service delivery that require it to change its roles and develop new capacities. Hence, it is necessary to enhance the effectiveness of the civil

services and to strengthen institutions for accountability and transparency. This will help improve the delivery of services, especially to the poor and marginalized sections of the community. This chapter analyzes cross-cutting issues in strengthening service delivery systems, while the next chapter deals with specific issues in improving education, health, and social protection services.

Weaknesses in Service Delivery

Service delivery mechanisms in Rajasthan appear to be particularly weak, contributing to poor human development outcomes. Though several human development indicators have improved, some key indicators have declined and several others are lagging behind national averages.⁶⁸ There is a substantial need to improve service delivery if Rajasthan is to tackle poverty effectively and meet the MDGs.

Direct evidence for weak service delivery comes from an assessment of user perspectives. A recent citizen's survey assessed the provision of services in the areas of drinking water, health care, the Public Distribution System (PDS), public transport, and primary education along multiple dimensions across Indian states.⁶⁹ Combining data on access, reliability, and user satisfaction,

⁶⁸ See Chapter 1.

⁶⁹ See Paul. et. al. (2004).

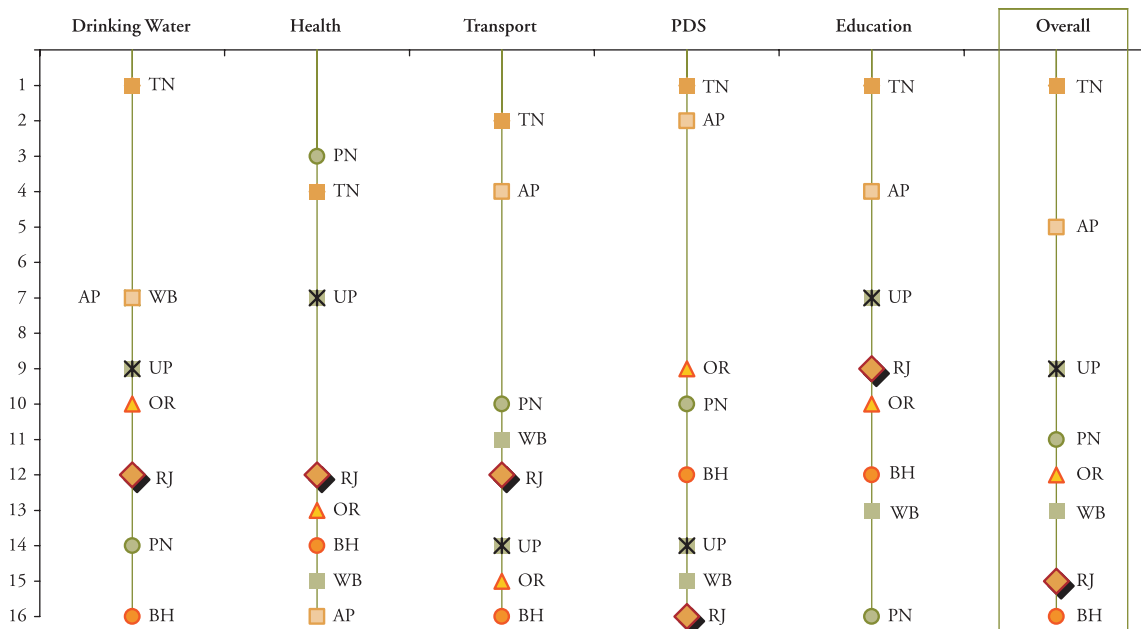
the survey places Rajasthan fifteenth among India's 16 major states in the delivery of these services, just behind Orissa and West Bengal and ahead only of Bihar. An examination of individual perceptions of specific services and dimensions suggests that user satisfaction in Rajasthan is particularly low (Figure 4.1). The results show that Rajasthan ranks fairly low in public service quality owing to factors such as unreliability of services caused largely by absenteeism, poor behavior of service providers like teachers, doctors and para-medical staff, insufficient attention to the maintenance of water supply, school buildings and facilities, and the unavailability of food rations in Fair Price Shops (FPS). This suggests

that there is a substantial need for the civil service to improve its performance in delivering services to citizens.

How can Rajasthan improve its service delivery mechanisms and institutions? The first requirement for doing so will be to make the civil service—which is the key instrument for implementing government policies—more effective. The second important measure will be to reinvigorate local governments. The third requirement is to strengthen the broader institutions of accountability and transparency, including those independent or external institutions that monitor the performance of the civil service and hold it accountable.

Figure 4.1 : Relative Performance of Public Services in Selected Indian States, 2003-04

States are ranked by the perceived quality of their public services, with a lower number indicating a higher rank.



Key perceived causes behind Rajasthan's poor performance

Drinking Water	Health	Transport	PDS	Education
<p>Poor maintenance: 45% and 60% of Rajasthan households report breakdowns in water taps and pumps, compared to 24% and 20% nationally.</p> <p>Inadequate piped water: 9% and 23% of Rajasthan households report full satisfaction with piped water adequacy and quality, compared to 20% and 27% nationally.</p>	<p>Absenteeism: 41% and 27% of Rajasthan households reported that doctors and paramedics were absent, compared to 30% and 17% nationally (and 95% in Gujarat).</p> <p>Bad behavior: Only 5% of Rajasthan households reported full satisfaction with of doctors and paramedics, compared to 14% and 12% nationally.</p>	<p>Unreliable and infrequent service and bad behavior of conductor: 9-10% of Rajasthan households expressed full satisfaction, compared to 20-21% nationally.</p>	<p>Unreliability: 6% of Rajasthan households expressed satisfaction with PDS availability, compared to 23% nationally (and 73% in Tamil Nadu).</p>	<p>Unreliability and poor behavior of teacher: 6% of Rajasthan households expressed satisfaction, compared to 16% nationally (and 38% in Tamil Nadu)</p> <p>Poor quality buildings and toilets: 6% and 2% of Rajasthan households expressed satisfaction, compared to 14% and 6% nationally (and 30% and 8% in Tamil Nadu).</p>

Note: Paul, S., et. al, "The State of India's Public Services", *Economic and Political Weekly* (2004).

Towards a More Effective Civil Service

Enhancing the effectiveness of Rajasthan's civil service broadly depends on two inter-related aspects: (i) improving its composition and skills base, and (ii) increasing the incentives for service delivery. A modern human resource management system that promotes skills, merit, and professionalism, while penalizing indiscipline, absenteeism, and non-performance, will be the main ingredient in such a strategy.

Composition rather than size is the key constraint to the effectiveness of the civil service. With approximately 1.24 civil servants per 100 of the population, Rajasthan's civil service is not particularly overstaffed compared to other states (Table 4.1). Neither is Rajasthan an irresponsible pay master, in that the average salary for a civil servant is substantially lower than in many other states including Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh. In all likelihood, this reflects the disproportionately larger numbers of low-paid unskilled staff in Rajasthan. The main problem, thus, lies in inappropriate skills mix and low productivity. The composition of the civil service is particularly skewed towards the lower tiers—with 90 percent of the civil service in Rajasthan

comprising of non-gazetted employees, and only a small number of senior administrative staff having technical or professional skills. Of the total number of employees in the state public sector enterprises, less than 6 percent have managerial responsibilities. The tasks of many non-gazetted employees have become redundant through devolution of functions to lower levels, privatization, and advances in information technology in Rajasthan. The largest part of the civil service is geared to non-managerial functions. Policy making, financial and economic management, and monitoring and evaluation—all essential for improved service delivery—remain weak.

Although Rajasthan is not an irresponsible paymaster, wage costs continue to constitute a large part of revenue expenditure. The salaries of GoR employees increased by an average of 54 percent following the Pay Commission of 1995. A comparison of expenditures on salaries relative to revenue expenditure (excluding interest payments and pensions) across a number of major Indian states indicates that Rajasthan ranks fairly high at 48 percent—when compared to states like Karnataka, Punjab, and Tamil Nadu. In fact, comparative data from 22 Indian states indicate that Rajasthan has the ninth highest salary expenditure relative to revenue expenditure.⁷⁰

Table 4.1
Comparative Size of the Civil Service in Selected Indian States (per hundred of population)

State	Population	Core Civil Service	Ratio	Total Govt Employees less SOE's	Ratio	Total Public Sector Employment	Ratio
Andhra Pradesh	75,727,541	553,972	0.73	965,892	1.27	1,315,204	1.73
Karnataka	52,733,958	240,969	0.45	530,984	1.00	693,246	1.31
Orissa	36,706,920	480,000	1.30	581,400	1.58	660,928	1.80
Gujarat	50,596,992	206,000	0.40	502,000	0.99	800,000	1.58
Uttar Pradesh	166,052,859	880,000	0.52	1,576,226	0.94	1,730,093	1.04
Punjab	24,289,296	376,222	1.54	431,662	1.77	535,840	2.20
Tamil Nadu	62,110,839	696,700	1.12	1,092,731	1.75	1,317,512	2.12
Rajasthan	56,473,122	529,319	0.93	615,744	1.09	701,362	1.24

Note: Gujarat and Tamil Nadu data pertain to 2002-03 and Rajasthan data pertain to 2003-04. Total public sector employment includes core civil service, work charged and daily wage employees, grant-in-aid institutions, state-owned enterprises and local bodies.

⁷⁰ Source: TFC. The Finance Commission report notes that the data on salary expenditure has been provided by state governments and has not been independently verified.

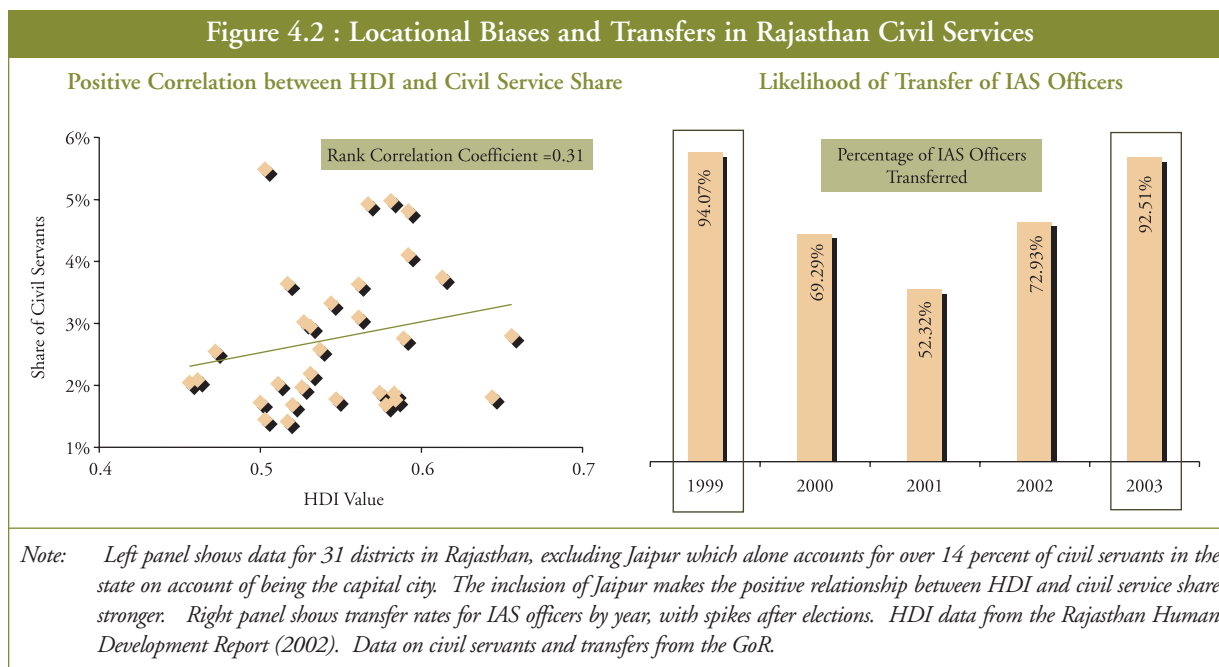
The government's recent decision to rescind the recruitment freeze, which had been instituted to keep civil service numbers down, may help to improve composition but has associated risks. With natural attrition at about 2.7 percent, the expectation was that the government would be able to deal with overstaffing through a halt in recruitment. This approach however, risks freezing existing structures, distorting the age profile of the civil service, and ultimately does not resolve the problem of composition. On the other hand, rescinding the freeze also brings risks of politically motivated future recruitment especially in the non-professional lower grades. This is in spite of the fact that the government has sought to mitigate this risk by providing clear guidelines that allow recruitment into explicitly identified priority areas.

One way to mitigate the risk of excess employment in the future is to implement an active policy of redeploying staff to focus areas, abolishing non-essential positions among the 60,000 vacancies that currently exist, and providing an equitable option for less skilled staff to separate. Given that surplus manpower and around 60,000 vacancies exist alongside critical

shortages of manpower in frontline operations—particularly in health, education, and police services—there is the need to both reduce and restructure the civil service. This can be done by decreasing the number of lower-level staff, restructuring the staffing profile of districts so that surplus staff can be located in needy areas, and changing the profile of the civil service to increase the number of managerial positions to improve policy coordination. The GoR may need to consider providing existing surplus staff an option to separate based on an equitable and well-considered Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) which incorporates a social safety net program.

Improving the composition of the civil service needs to be accompanied by measures to rationalize location. Locating human resources in areas where service delivery is particularly weak is an important consideration for a large and predominantly rural state like Rajasthan. When civil service numbers are disaggregated to the district level, wide variations are seen. In particular, underdeveloped districts as measured by a low Human Development Index (HDI) also have a low share of the total civil service strength in the state (Figure 4.2).⁷¹ The 10 districts

Figure 4.2 : Locational Biases and Transfers in Rajasthan Civil Services



⁷¹ This correlation coefficient is significant at 10 percent.

with the best human development indicators account for 41 percent of the civil service, while the 10 poorest performing districts account for only 23 percent. The Jaipur district which ranks fourth on the HDI has a ratio of 1.15 civil servants per 100 of population, while Barmer, which ranks second from the bottom in terms of human development, has a civil servant per 100 population ratio of only 0.45.⁷² Over 51 percent of the entire civil service is based in the nine districts of Ajmer, Alwar, Bharatpur, Bhilwara, Bikaner, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kota, and Udaipur. The incentives for officers to work in remote areas are limited and Rajasthan should consider how to create such incentives through an appropriately managed system of postings, grade and salary increments, or, as a recent Administrative Reforms Committee recommends, through the setting up of a distinct cadre of rural officers.

Frequent transfers constrain the effectiveness of the civil service. Rajasthan, like most Indian states, faces the problem of frequent transfers of officers at all levels—particularly in service delivery sectors and departments such as Health and Education where rural Rajasthan suffers from a bias towards more desirable urban postings. In addition, transfers also appear to be motivated by election cycles (Figure 4.2). Changes in elected governments in 1999 and 2003 were followed by a huge increase in the transfers of IAS officers. However, the proportion of

IAS officers transferred remained well over 50 percent even during the intervening years. While disaggregated data is not available, most sources would agree that the bulk of postings occur at the lower levels where, sometimes, District Collectors could have tenures of only 3-6 months.

Recognizing the costs entailed by these transfers, the government has taken steps to address this issue. The Shiv Charan Mathur Committee on Administrative Reform, 2002, appointed by the previous government, clearly noted that most of the time and energy of policy makers was wasted on "long and unending" exercises of transfers and postings rather than a concentration on policy formulation—and that this, in turn, led to corruption and harassment of citizens. The Committee recommended the adoption of a model transfer policy backed by law, regulating transfer and postings of all government employees (Box 4.1). Although the Shiv Charan Mathur Committee report was released in 2001-02, there has not been much movement on implementing its recommendations. The present government has established a Cabinet sub-committee to look into the proposed model transfer policy. Finalizing and implementing this policy is an important priority for the government.

*Rajasthan has a major problem of absenteeism compared to other states—particularly in sectors such as health and education, as shown by various surveys.*⁷³

Box 4.1 : Key Recommendations of the Shiv Charan Mathur Committee on Administrative Reform

- ◆ All transfers be restricted to the period between 1st April and 31st May except in specific cases of need;
- ◆ A minimum tenure of three years for all officers;
- ◆ Making posts of teachers and medical staff non-transferable;
- ◆ Lower scale employees and ministerial staff should be retained within districts and divisions;
- ◆ The creation of separate urban and rural cadres with better incentives for rural cadres;
- ◆ Posting requests to be prioritized on the basis of clear criteria with over riding priority given to track record and performance;
- ◆ Delegation of powers to allow for decentralized management of cadres and services and a total ban on interference from higher authorities.

⁷² Data drawn from the Rajasthan Human Development Report (2002) and the Census of Rajasthan State Government Employees (2002), Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Rajasthan.

⁷³ For example, Section A discusses the results of the Public Affairs Center survey.

Recent evidence from a survey of government health facilities and primary schools shows that nearly 46 percent of doctors and 37 percent of general staff (including nurses, health workers and technicians) were absent from the medical facilities they were allocated to, and nearly 24 percent teachers were absent from primary schools.⁷⁴ Given that the largest part of the civil service in Rajasthan comprises of staff in the Health and Education Departments, this would translate into large sections of the civil service not attending work.

Curbing absenteeism could be one of the most important ways of improving service delivery, and the government needs to view absenteeism as a serious disciplinary offence. In the medium term, absenteeism can be checked by making local service providers employees of and accountable to local governments or of the service center in which they serve. Empowering the community to take action against absentee service providers may be the only sustainable solution. In the short term, though, the government can attack absenteeism by streamlining complicated disciplinary procedures, which make it difficult to expeditiously sanction staff for poor performance.

Improving employee performance and productivity is a challenge that Rajasthan, like other Indian states, will have to face. The current system of performance management on the basis of Annual Confidential Reports (ACR) is formalized, document-based, and lacks transparency. Clear job descriptions do not exist against which performance can be measured and there are no systems for providing feedback. Performance management has virtually no role in any human resource function beyond promotions. It has very limited implications for other areas such as transfers, compensation, and career development. A related problem lies in the complicated disciplinary procedures that exist within the civil service which make it difficult to expeditiously sanction staff for malfeasance or poor performance. Although robust statistics are hard to find, preliminary information indicates that only 128 cases were referred to Heads of Department by the Anti-Corruption Bureau

(ACB) in the ten years between 1995 and 2005—yielding an average of about 12 cases a year. Streamlining disciplinary processes within the civil service to allow for swifter deterrent action is a priority for better performance management.

Mechanisms for policy co-ordination are weak and fragmented, and characterized by excessive scrutiny and diffused responsibility. In this, Rajasthan is no different from most Indian states. There are over 50 departments in the GoR, and most senior officials admit that their ability to manage and effectively translate policy into practice is undermined by fragmented and multiple levels of authority and archaic systems of management. The problem is compounded at the district level with multiple agencies, schemes, and programs working in silos. This lack of integration and convergence results in an inefficient use of human and financial resources and fails to tap the potential synergies across sectors. This substantially limits the effectiveness of service delivery.

Improving the overall human resource management system is a critical priority. Ultimately, problems of absenteeism, frequent transfers, and civil service performance and productivity are all linked to the ability of human resource management systems to manage, discipline and motivate civil servants. At present, the human resource management function is fragmented, and the authority for managing personnel is scattered across a number of departments. A multiplicity of cadres exist—with their own set of rules—and this makes it extremely difficult to manage performance, track posts, vacancies, transfers, and forecast future salary liabilities, let alone allow for accurate, real-time information on the size and composition of the civil service. Creating a comprehensive human resource database linked with payroll would be an important first step towards better management of the civil service. Establishing an integrated human resource function placed within the Personnel Department would be a further step in this direction.

⁷⁴ Provider Absence Project Research Team, World Bank, 2004.

Reinvigorating Local Governments

Local governments are likely to be critical for the improvement of public services in Rajasthan, perhaps more than in many other Indian states. Rajasthan's large area and distances, its geographically distinct regions, its dispersed, ethnically diverse, and primarily rural population, and its long tradition of community and NGO activism all help to create conditions for effective decentralization. The weaknesses in traditional civil service delivery mechanisms make the case for decentralization stronger. Recognizing these factors, Rajasthan made an early start in 1959 in introducing local governments long before decentralization became a national agenda when India adopted the 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendments in 1994.

Political decentralization has made considerable progress in Rajasthan. The state legislation mandates a three-tier rural local government structure: the gram panchayat at the village level; the Panchayat Samiti at the block level; and the Zila Parishad at the district level. Besides, for every village, there is a provision for constituting an assembly of all voters called the gram sabha. Seats are also reserved for SC/ST groups, backward classes, and for women at each level of the panchayats. Since 1994, three successful local government/Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) elections have been held, the last in January 2005. About 9,189 PRI governments, 237 block governments, and 32 zila governments are functioning in Rajasthan. In fact, the zila pramukhs and gram pradhans are vested with the administrative authority of Reporting Officer for filling the Annual Performance Appraisal Reports of Chief Executive Officers, Additional Chief Executive Officers, and Block Development Officers in order to make them more accountable to elected local Government representatives.

The potential benefits from decentralization still remain largely unrealized owing to two factors: inadequate fiscal decentralization and the lack of a local government civil service. Despite fiscal awards from two State Finance Commissions, and despite 29 functions and some revenue bases being formally

devolved, fund flows to local governments and their own financial resources are meager. The transferred budgets provided are mostly tied, and do not correspond to the functions devolved to them. The budgets are almost wholly taken up by non-discretionary items such as salaries and wages or other rigidly defined expenditures. Further, because the devolved functions are still imprecise, there is considerable overlap and, de facto, most functions are handled by state departments and agencies with their much larger budgets. Finally, the absence of a reasonably well-trained local government civil service that is accountable to them implies that PRIs lack the means to implement their policies and end up depending on the state civil servants. At present, officials overseeing PRIs are sent on deputation from different government departments but their loyalty essentially remains with the state government. Ultimately, thus, local governments end up largely as an arm of the state civil service.

It is important to strengthen fiscal decentralization through the award of the Third State Finance Commission that will soon be constituted. The Commission needs to urgently address three issues in its new awards. First, the financial position of the local governments could be substantially improved. The First State Finance Commission's recommendation of 2.18 percent of net tax proceeds to be distributed to local bodies as additional devolution was increased by the Second Finance Commission. However, there is evidence to show that PRIs get less, largely due to the fiscally constrained position of the state. Second, grants-in-aid could be increased and made untied and devolved on the basis of a well-balanced formula. Third, remaining conditional grants could be more broadly banded to the devolved functions and not to highly disaggregated line items.

In order to address the lack of a local government civil service, Rajasthan appears ready to introduce an exclusive administrative cadre to serve in self-government institutions: the Rajasthan Vikas Services (RVS). This service will specifically handle matters relating to PRIs or local government institutions. The appointments to RVS would be made only through the Rajasthan Public Service

Commission, and they would not be deputed in any department other than the PRI. The last budget of the state government had announced setting up of such an administrative cadre. After the formation of the RVS, all services relating to local self government issues would come under it, thus reducing interference from other departments. The constitution of the RVS is in the process of cabinet approval.

Strengthening Institutions for Accountability and Transparency

The Right to Information Act

The GoR passed a Right to Information (RTI) Act in 2000 as part of its effort to strengthen good governance, service delivery, and public accountability. Rajasthan's strong civil society has helped to bring about advances in accountability and transparency, with the RTI Act being a significant step forward. The fact that the law was passed reflects both the strength of collective action in forcing governments to be more focused as well as the attitude towards utilizing civil society ideas and initiatives in expanding the debate around public governance. However, service delivery under this Act had not been fully satisfactory. Also, there was insufficient monitoring by departments and agencies of the government.

In 2005, the GoI passed the RTI Act which is much wider in its ambit and scope. The provisions of this Act have come into effect from October. The Act narrowly defines the exclusions with the over-riding proviso that information that cannot be denied to a member of the State legislature shall also not be denied to any person. It prescribes a whole range of *suo motu* disclosures. The power to levy penalties for violating the provisions of the Act has been vested in the independent State Information Commissioner. The Act also contains provision for the propagation of the right to information.

This central legislation applies across the country, and accordingly, the previous state legislation is being repealed. The framework of the central legislation covers all government department and

agencies, and the steps to be taken for its implementation have been spelled out and communicated widely within government. The GoR has already taken several measures to implement this Act. By and large, all public authorities have appointed State (and/or Assistant) Public Information Officers, and there are appropriate Appellate Authorities. All public authorities have been asked to publish information as required under the Act. The State Information Commission is to be constituted shortly, and the process for the appointment of a State Chief Information Commissioner is under active consideration.

The success of this initiative rests now on how far officials embrace the intent of this legislation and, most importantly, on how aware the public become of its provisions. A number of steps in the short run could enhance the effectiveness of the Act.

- ♦ First, an immediate step towards increasing the Act's effectiveness would be to encourage departments and agencies to *suo motu* publish on the web *timely and relevant information* on their operations. Constructive use of publicly available reports on the internet could help to address a number of the accountability and responsibility problems associated with public financial accountability. For example, information on budgeted versus actual cost of administering government programs and operations, periodic accounts, transfer payments to other levels of government, information on the performance of delivery of services to the public (in line with Citizens' Charters that have been promulgated), and performance audit and evaluation reports on lessons learned could be provided on a timely basis. Other relevant information such as the cost of subsidizing power and the related efforts being made to reduce T&D losses could be routinely provided to the public as well. The GoR also needs to issue general instructions for the guidance of staff; impart the necessary training; and promote a culture of transparency in order to change the mindset of bureaucracy so that it recognizes that information is not its monopoly. This will

allow for greater accountability with regard to actions, processes, and results. Regular orientation programs could be held for officers with the specific purposes of training them about better record management; improved access to information; and benefits of transparency and accountability. Widespread publicity must be provided to the new Act.

- ◆ Second, in view of this new Act, the GoR needs to *streamline its records management and information systems using computerization* as required. The initiatives already under way in the areas of E-Mitra, land record computerization, and computerization of service delivery processes in citizen-focused departments such as Commercial Taxes, Excise, Transport, and Stamps and Registration can be expedited and leveraged.
- ◆ Third, the GoR should ensure that *departments adequately monitor the effectiveness of the RTI Act* by providing clear monitoring, tracking, and reporting formats against which information can be provided. Officials would need to be better equipped and empowered to take informed and quick decisions. At the same time, the risk of being perceived as withholding information unnecessarily needs to be minimized.
- ◆ Fourth, there is need to provide *positive incentives to officials to become more open to the public*. Civil servants who proactively promote the objectives of the RTI legislation should be publicly recognized by the government, at least on an annual basis, for their contribution to expanding transparency and accountability in the functioning of state government, public sector undertakings, and local bodies.

Anti-Corruption Institutions

Although Rajasthan's service delivery record is perceived to be poor, the institutional framework for tackling corruption is relatively strong, with one important exception. The ACB has a good reputation and is perceived as reasonably independent of political interference. Information

about progress on cases is made freely available to the Legislative Assembly and the Additional Director General of the Bureau reports to the Home Secretary, who is also the Head of Vigilance. This reporting line makes decision-making and access to funds easier. On the other hand, although Rajasthan had a Lok Ayukta established in the mid-1970s this office is not fully functional, and remains without a head. The institution of the Lok Ayukta has not had any substantial impact because it has limited independent investigative powers, and the report of the Lok Ayukta has only the status of a preliminary inquiry report. Empowering the Lok Ayukta is an important priority and needs political sanction.

The ACB's capacity could also be strengthened. Going by the number of cases brought forward, the ACB has clearly been active. It has, however, been less effective compared to states such as Tamil Nadu or Karnataka, which have lower rates of prosecutions but higher conviction rates. For example, in 2002-03, Tamil Nadu had a conviction rate of just under 85 percent—compared to Rajasthan's rate of under 35 percent. This could imply that the Rajasthan ACB's capacity to prepare cases is weak, or that other states are restricting prosecutions to only the most serious cases, or it could be the result of differences in judicial systems—for instance delays in processing cases which weakens the evidence base—over which the ACB has little control. Either way, increasing the conviction rate remains a challenge for Rajasthan. Further, whether in comparison or in absolute terms, 411 convictions over 10 years is not a large number given the number of civil servants in the state and the perception of corruption. Thus, while the ACB and the Police and Vigilance Departments appear committed to their roles and obligations, there is a need to strengthen these institutions to increase their capacity to enquire into instances of corruption and organize evidence.

Tackling corruption effectively will also require that the caseload be effectively managed within the ACB and the judicial system. These institutions need to be strengthened to enable quick and speedy disposal of cases. At present, a large number of cases remain pending every year with the ACB: for example, in

2004, of the 342 registered cases with the ACB, only 105 cases were relevant to that year. The number of pending civil cases in Rajasthan at the end of 1999 were over 0.3 million and the number of criminal cases were nearly 0.6 million. Recognizing these issues, other Indian states have created new special courts to try cases under the Prevention of Corruption Act. If the government is to focus on resolving anti-corruption cases and sending out a strong message on this issue, the setting up of special courts or benches to deal with anti-corruption cases is essential.

Setting up systems of deterrence and public awareness is necessary to make the anti-corruption function sustainable. Corruption cannot merely be approached through the enforcement framework. Rajasthan will need to invest much more on public awareness and it has a strong advantage in this area, given the nature of civil society. As far as prevention is concerned, the state government needs to examine in greater detail rules, systems and corruption-prone processes in each department in order to judge the systemic causes of corruption and tackle them meaningfully. As a start, the major departments of Transport, Irrigation, PWD, Health and Mines need to be examined through this lens. Some important beginnings have been made by the government by focusing on e-governance as a stated tool to increase transparency and reduce corruption. However in order to institutionalize anti-corruption initiatives at the departmental level, the state needs to strengthen both the institution of the Chief Vigilance Commissioner through legislation that provides for independence of authority and organizational support, and the network of Chief Vigilance Officers in the departments.

E-Governance

Rajasthan has made considerable progress in using information technology (IT) to re-engineer business processes. IT is an important tool for ensuring transparency, simplifying government process and reducing the scope for corruption. The IT Department has a strong vision and a mandate for reform. It is clear that that the benefits of e-

governance should flow to citizens and the government is taking forward a number of innovative programs in support of better service delivery.

Progress in expanding e-governance has been particularly impressive. The state has issued an overarching policy document for e-governance, focusing its activities on supporting public services, and enhancing transparency and accountability in rural and urban services. There has been an 80 percent increase in outlays for e-governance projects during 2004-05, and a high level IT Task force which includes eminent national personalities has been set up. Some of the major e-governance initiatives of the Rajasthan government include:

- ♦ *Lok Mitra*, launched in four cities (Jaipur, Ajmer, Bikaner and Udaipur) in Rajasthan, offers facilities for payment of electricity and water bills, and various other municipal dues, as well on-line bus ticketing, and births and death certificates. A recent review suggests that the success of this initiative can be judged by the fact that the time taken for completing transactions has come down and the trends show that the cost per transaction is also diminishing. Revenues have doubled and the state government has recovered the costs of computerization within six months of the service becoming operational. The state government is now considering expanding the project across Rajasthan.
- ♦ *Jan Mitra*, on the other hand is essentially a rural service delivery system being piloted successfully in Jahlwar and Jaipur through a public private partnership (PPP) model. It has provided direct employment to 350 rural youth and has served around 4.5 million citizens since its inception in 2002. The services offered by *Jan Mitra* include public grievance redressal, on-line submission of application forms for various government services, access to land and revenue records, the BPL list, agricultural information and *mandi* lists among others. This scheme is particularly important given that over 75 percent of Rajasthan's population live in rural areas, and can directly benefit from rural e-governance projects.

Box 4.2 : Making Law More Accessible to the People—Online Case Registration

An important initiative taken by the GoR is the introduction of e-governance into the Police Department. A fundamental point of interaction between citizens and the government is the area of law and justice, and the point of filing a case (called First Information Report, or FIR) in a police station is fraught with opportunities for coercion and corruption. The poor are often denied justice even before they enter the formal justice system.

Rajasthan has introduced an innovative project called *Aarakshi* that aims to improve the efficiency of police procedures and facilitate faster exchange of critical information between various departments and police stations. Citizens can access the applications through the websites of the department and field offices connect through the internet. Each complainant is given a token number to track the application. Once the application is registered and the formalities completed within the department, an FIR registration number is generated and e-mailed to the complainant—if no e-mail address is available, the original token number can be used.

The government plans to extend the system to further enhance interactivity and to computerize back-end operations of police stations through archiving FIRs, maintaining public inventories of theft and criminal data and an online inventory of recovered goods in police stations. For the first time, monitoring and supervision of pending cases and complaints can be carried out systematically.

Recognizing the success of these two models, the IT Department is now designing an ambitious project called E-Mitra. This project seeks to integrate the features of Lok Mitra and Jan Mitra, and will bring together various services offered by different departments and provide a unified e-services platform, minimizing the multiple interaction points for the citizen. Over 60 departmental services will be provided through these counters including Registration and Stamps, and services from the Police, Agriculture, Land and Building Taxes, and Panchayati Raj Departments. Importantly, the District Collectorates will also be brought into the network. E-Mitra counters will enable citizens to submit applications for old age pensions, BPL and ration cards, and copies of land records.

In order to support the process of citizen-friendly governance, the Rajasthan government is also taking forward an ambitious program of back-end computerization, with priority being given to revenue-earning and service delivery departments. These include the Excise Department, where a web-based system links the department with 32 district offices and where 99 percent of documents are generated on-line—including documents related to permits and licenses; wholesale contractor invoicing and dues recovery; the Commercial Tax Department where a sales tax accounting system has been implemented linking all the zonal headquarters which includes registration of dealers and

maintenance of revenue collection registers; and the Registration and Stamps Department which has taken forward an ambitious program of computerization to simplify the registration procedures and reduce leakage of revenues. Further, in line with national policies, Rajasthan has adopted an ambitious program of land records computerization covering all 32 districts and 241 tehsils. A database of Records of Rights (RoR) covering 6.8 million landowners has been completed in all the tehsils. Ledgers entries have been computerized at the tehsil level and copies of records have been given to landowners who are predominantly farmers. A website offers land owners the facility to view their records online. Given the difficulties of the geography and demography of Rajasthan, this is a particularly important measure and, given the success of this initiative, the state government is now planning further computerization at the sub-tehsil level and process re-engineering to enable citizens to access records of rights through the proposed E-Mitra counters. Rajasthan's online First Information Report (FIR) registration program is one of the most innovative examples of using e-governance (Box 4.2).

Moving Forward: Next Steps and Recommendations

Major administrative reforms are difficult to implement even under the best of circumstances.

Rajasthan will need to focus implementation along a number of key dimensions over the short term. These include:

- ◆ **Enhancing the capacity to vision, manage and monitor reform.** This can be done by drawing up a clear road map for reform based on the government's vision for good governance, and widely communicating this reform program. The Shiv Charan Mathur Committee Report on Administrative Reforms provides a substantive forward-looking strategy and can be the basis of this reform plan. This needs to be accompanied by efforts to strengthen the Administrative Reforms Department and the CGG to manage, implement and monitor reforms.
- ◆ **Improving the composition and location of the civil service.** This can be achieved by reducing the number of lower-level staff, restructuring staffing at the district level so that districts with low human development indicators are well staffed, and by changing the profile of the civil service to increase the number of managerial positions as required.
- ◆ **Reducing the frequency of transfers.** This could be accomplished by developing an effective public database to track transfers by cadre, group and department over time, and by finalizing and implementing the recommendations of the Shiv Charan Mathur Committee Report in this regard.
- ◆ **Improving Human Resource Management Information Systems.** This will provide the government with accurate, real-time information on the size and composition of the civil service.
- ◆ **Implementing the central RTI Act of 2005 effectively.** This can be done through publishing timely and relevant information, providing incentives to encourage openness, and close monitoring by concerned departments.
- ◆ **Strengthening anti-corruption institutions.** These include the Lok Ayukta, the Chief Vigilance Commissioner, and other key agencies responsible for enforcement and prevention. At the same time, it is important to expanding public awareness about corruption.
- ◆ **Maintaining the focus on e-governance.** This has emerged as an important tool for re-engineering processes to ensure better accountability.