

Proceedings of the Digital Dialogue Meeting held with representatives of Civil Society Organizations committed to issues of transparency and accountability on 31st August 2021 under the chairmanship of Additional Chief Secretary (e-Governance) regarding the Mahiti Kanaja Portal

Attendees: As per list attached in Annexure-A.

Additional Chief Secretary (e-Gov) welcomed all present in the meeting and briefed the attendees about Mahiti Kanaja portal, a web disclosure portal that enables the Government of Karnataka to comply with the Right to Information Act section 4(2). Mahiti Kanaja is an information store which ensure that real time availability of Government data at citizens fingertip which can be accessible from anywhere. Additional Chief Secretary (e-Gov) informed that presently information about 130 services from 37 departments are made available in the portal and this meeting is conducted with an objective to take support and suggestions from the CSOs on how to improve and strengthen the Mahiti Kanaja to enhance the usage of Mahiti Kanaja portal across the globe.

With this background, the following points were discussed, and decisions taken –

1. Institutionalization of engagement with CSOs

The CEG will organize a monthly dialogue with CSOs known as “Digital Dialogues”. The Digital Dialogues will also include representatives of Line Departments whose information is disclosed on the Mahiti Kanaja.

The objective of the Digital Dialogue is for CSOs to identify and suggest the information that ought to be disclosed on the Mahiti Kanaja, and the format in which the Department concerned must share the same on the Mahiti Kanaja

CSOs and CEG will prepare the required formats in which Departments concerned must share information on the Mahiti Kanaja at least one week prior to the Digital Dialogue meeting

2. Porting information from existing portals

Information on the FRUITS Portal, KGIS portal must be reflected on the Mahiti Kanaja as per the formats provided by CSO representatives involved in the Digital Dialogue meetings

3 Expanding the scope of information that should be reflected on the Mahiti Kanaja

The following information must be reflected on the Mahiti Kanaja for all Departments keeping in mind formats suggested by CSO representatives involved in the Digital Dialogue meetings

- Government Orders
- Enquiry Reports
- Inspection Reports
- Job Charts that describe the roles, responsibilities and supervision mechanisms of individual public officials
- Citizens Charters of programmes and Departments
- Work Orders
- Measurement Books

Status of applications submitted by citizens and their status. This will include list of rejected applications, cause of rejection for each, date of rejection of each, designation of official who rejected the application, list of pending applications, cause of pendency of each application, designation of official at whose level the application is pending, cause of pendency, and date since application is pending.

Budgetary allocation and expenditure

Information related to the implementation of Government trusts, societies, corporations, statutory commissions and bodies; legislative assembly should be disclosed on the Mahiti Kanaja. CSO representatives involved in the Digital Dialogue meeting will suggest the formats in which information related to such bodies can be shared

Information related to the ownership, management and governance of common property resources must be reflected on the Mahiti Kanaja. CSO representatives involved in the Digital Dialogue meeting will suggest the formats in which information related to common property resources can be shared.

4 Public sourcing of information

It was suggested that over time, Mahiti Kanaja can also become the repository of publicly sourced information. CSOs and citizen groups that maintain records of information that at present Government does not: such as list of farmers practicing organic farming, list of deaths caused due to pesticide poisoning etc., can be shared by the former. Concerned implementing agencies can verify the information and give it the sanctity of official information that can also be disclosed on the Mahiti Kanaja

5 Improving user interface

There should be special effort made to ensure that the UI for Mahiti Kanaja is disable-friendly. Ravi G, a CSO representative who attended the meeting will support the Mahiti Kanaja team in ensuring the same

6 Role of CSOs

CSO representatives will suggest formats in which information should be sourced from Line Departments and shared on the Mahiti Kanaja. This will be done as per the following.

Kaviti Kurungunti (Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture): Issues related to farming and agriculture

Ravi G (Fourth Wave Foundation): Issues related to disability rights

Akhila Vasan (Janaarogya Chaluvali) and Asha Kilaru (CIVIC): Issues related to public health

Gurumurthy (IT for Change): Issues related to education

D Dhanashekhar (KKNSS & Construction Workers' Union): Issues related to construction workers

Vinay Sreenivasa (Alternative Law Forum): Functioning of statutory commissions and the State legislative assembly

Lakshapathy (Association for Promotion of Social Action): Functioning of Slum Clearance Board, issues related to evictions, issues related to child rights

Brinda Adige (Global Concerns India): Issues related to support and facilitation of women through legal help, crisis support, compensation etc

Veeresh Bellur (Mahiti Hakku Adhyayana Kendra): Work Order, Measurement Book and Procurement related disclosures

R. Manohar (All India Network of NGO's and Individuals Working in National and State Human Rights Institutions (AiNNI): Issues related to common property resources

Sandeep Anirudhan (Citizens' Agenda for Bengaluru): Information required by Ward Committees

A coordination group comprising of Sandeep, Brinda, Kathyayini, Ravi, Kshitij, Manohar, Prabhakar, Dharmaheldur, Leelavathy and Rakshita will be constituted. The coordination group will take responsibility for coordinating amongst CSO representatives who will extend support to the CEG in the strengthening of Mahiti Kanaja, and ensure that the decisions taken in the meetings are adhered to. The Project Director, Mahiti Kanaja will nominate two members of the Mahiti Kanaja team who will form a part of this coordination group.

CEG will involve CSO representatives in trainings being conducted to sensitize public functionaries, panchayat presidents, SHG representatives, community resource persons and others on the Mahiti Kanaja and its significance

7 Time lines

CSO representatives will share formats in which Line Departments are required to share information on the Mahiti Kanaja by 20th September 2021

The next Digital Dialogue will be organized on 27th and 28th September 2021



(Rajeev Chawla)
Additional Chief Secretary
DPAR (e-Governance).