

Intent Inside

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inston Churchill once famously said, “attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference”. The Gujarati attitude of seeing possibilities where others might see difficulties and single-minded focus on the task at hand are best exemplified by two of the greatest sons of India – one who played the leading role in galvanising the nation against foreign rule and another who helped convert the centuries-old cultural unity

of India into a politically feasible, modern nation-state. The Gujarati’s ever-present willingness to turn a challenge into opportunity has thrown up entrepreneurs par excellence, and the Gujarati entrepreneur has been a true standard bearer of the message of *vasudhaiva kutumbakam* espoused in the *Hitopadesha*. To the Gujarati, the whole world has been the *karmabhoomi*, and hardly any outpost of the world has remained untouched by the spirit of Gujarat.

Mahatma Gandhi prescribed a simple test to resolve a dilemma – he advised that when faced with such a situation, we think of the *antodaya* and the likely impact of our actions on such people. Set up with this ideal, the Public Distribution System was visualised as a vital social security mechanism for the poor of the country. Unfortunately, the PDS has become notorious for leakages and corruption. It has become a mechanism for cheating the poor cheated out of their entitlements, meagre as they are. Gujarat has adopted ICT in a bid to reform the PDS and our model has been commended for emulation across India by the Hon’ble Supreme Court. The eGram project, as Additional Chief Secretary (Panchayats and Rural Housing), R M Patel says in one of the interviews, has the potential to realise Gandhi’s vision of *Gram Swaraj*. The 108 EMRI service has successfully handled 16,500 deliveries inside the ambulances and over 6,000 on-site, and has facilitated scores of institutional deliveries. eMamta has been such a success that it is now being replicated as the Mother and Child Tracking System, nationally. The CMO initiative SWAGAT – using ICT to address citizen grievances in a time-bound manner, has now been rolled out from the village level onwards. In primary education, state-of-the-art facilities at BISAG are used for transmitting quality programmes for school children over the ku-band.

Gujarat has shown that the power of technology can be harnessed to act as a force multiplier and help the state surmount limitations of resources, infrastructure and manpower. Imbued with the same can-do spirit as the average citizen of this extraordinary state, the Government of Gujarat has emerged as one of the leading practitioners of e-governance, globally. The state has shown how modern tools of information and communication technology can help bridge the many divides that plague Indian society and provide governance that is citizen-oriented, responsive and full of empathy.

As Voltaire once said, God has given us the gift of life, but it is up to us to give ourselves the gift of living well. In a large, populous and geographically difficult state, governance would always be challenging. By forging an alliance with technology, and by doing so in a well-thought-out and strategic manner, the state administration is trying to secure the gift of a good life to all residents of Gujarat.

Having recently celebrated the Golden Jubilee of our statehood, we are now gradually building up a crescendo that would peak at Vibrant Gujarat 2013. As part of this buildup, it is our pleasure to host eIndia 2011 – India’s largest ICT event showcasing the power of technology for development. With the hope that the Conclave helps further the cause of citizen-centric governance, I present this Special Commemorative Issue to you.



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