

# **Wired Village Project, National Informatics Centre, Pune, Maharashtra, India**

## ***Introduction***

### ***Description of case Study***

The National Informatics Centre (NIC) is a premier Information Technology organisation in India which is committed to providing state-of-the-art solutions for the IT needs of the Government of India at all levels. NIC carries the distinction of being the largest IT organisation in the country. It has set up a satellite-based nationwide computer communication network, called NICNET, with over 1400 nodes connecting the national capital, the state capitals and the district headquarters with one another. The IT services of NIC range from Consultancy, Software Design & Development, Office Automation and Networking Services to Training, Video Conferencing, CAD, EDI, Multimedia and Internet Services, including Web Site Development and Hosting. NIC has a nationwide presence, with offices spread all across the country, from Leh to Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

The Warana Co-operative Complex is famous as one of the forerunners of successful integrated rural development resulting from a co-operative movement. The sugar factory in Warana village which was established in 1955 led to the movement, resulting in the formation of 25 co-operative societies for milk production, sugar, women's co-operative credit societies and education, to name a few. The education department of this co-operative movement called Warana Vibhag Shikshan Mandal was instrumental in co-ordinating with the government for this project.

The Warana project is jointly carried out by the National Informatics Centre (NIC), Government of Maharashtra (GoM) and the Warana Vibhag Shikshan Mandal (the Education Department).

### ***Aim of Project***

To create appropriate Information Technology infrastructure in a cluster of contiguous villages. The objective of the project is to demonstrate the use of IT infrastructure in the accelerated socio-economic development.

### ***Role of ICTS***

Each telecentre will have 8 to 10 computers, and will be provided with Receive Only Very Small Aperture Terminals (VSAT) (DirecPC), along with dial-up link. The computer will be installed in a room of 20'x 20'. The centre will provide the following facilities: -

- Tele-education
- Computer-based education.
- Open University access (Indira Gandhi National Open University)
- Imaging (one of the centres)

### ***Sources of Funding***

Funding Agencies: NIC, Maharashtra State Government, and the Warana Vibhag Shikshan Mandal

Budget of Rs. 25 million (US\$ 600,000) that was borne jointly by the three agencies in a ratio of 50:40:10.

## ***Project process***

Initiated by Mr. Vinay Kore, the son of Mr. Tahasaheb Kore and the present Chairman of the Warana Co-operative Society. It was launched by the IT Task Force of the Prime Minister's Office in 1998 to demonstrate the use of IT infrastructure to accelerate socio-economic development of a cluster of 70 villages around Warana in the Kolhapur and Sangli districts of Maharashtra State in April 1998.

The project is jointly implemented by Government of India through National Informatics Centre (NIC), Government of Maharashtra and Warana Co-operative Society with the share of financial support being in the ratio of 50:40:10. The manpower and maintenance cost is borne by the Warana Co-operative Society itself. This society includes a total of twenty-five cooperative societies, with an annual turnover of Rs. 6 billion (US\$ 134 million), for the production of sugar and dairy products, poultry and building construction.

This project has been initiated to serve the information needs on different crop cultivation practices of major crops, sugarcane cultivation practices, pest and disease control, marketing information, dairy and sugarcane processing information etc. to the farmers, right up to their village level.

Performance review was initially carried out through NIC Pune site visits to ensure everything was going smoothly but now Warana Co-operatives ensures the smooth functioning of the project.

## ***Points of Interest***

The project has already increased the efficiency of the sugar cane growing and harvesting process, both in terms of time saved by the farmers on administrative transactions as well as in terms of monetary gains. Before computerisation, it used to take two or three days for farmers to find out how much they had spent and how much they had earned during the harvest, while now all it takes is a visit to the village kiosk. And as a result of computerisation, fertiliser stocks are now smaller and better managed, which is said to have brought savings of about US\$750,000 to the cooperative.

A current problem is the non-participation of local villagers in the creation of additional content, more specifically of women. At present there is very little content available for women. Therefore the project is considering inviting participation from the villagers, especially the women.

People are not literate so there is no way they can use the services on their own. They have to rely on the booth operator's help.