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Fresh push to e-governance in civic bodies

Will the Nagercoil municipality or the Vellore municipal corporation be able to provide its services using mobile applications?

The answer will be in the affirmative once e-governance plans of the municipal administration authorities fructify. And, the days are not far off for various urban local bodies in Tamil Nadu to offer a comprehensive set of services through information technology, says a senior official. About 10 days ago, Municipal Administration and Water Supply (MAWS) Department issued an order, giving the go-ahead for a project to implement a State-level solution for e-governance in all urban local bodies. However, this initiative will not include Chennai Corporation, which has a separate plan.

Pilot basis

On a pilot basis, the project will be carried out in the

Coimbatore municipal corporation and a few municipalities. After studying the outcome, it will be rolled out in the rest of the State. A sum of Rs. 18 crore has been sanctioned.

The proposal originally forms part of the National Mission Mode Project on e-governance, a component of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission that awaits an overhaul under the new BJP government. To carry out the project, the Commissionerate of Municipal Administration has

chosen a systems integrator: Bahwan CyberTek, a global provider of software products and solutions. PwC has been made the project management consultant.

The Comptroller and Auditor-General, in its report for the year ended March 31, 2013, pulled up five municipal corporations for the tardy progress in computerisation during 2005-2013.

The latest project envisages web-based applications and interface with geographical information system (GIS).

Different modules are being developed for a host of functions of the local bodies such as property tax, water supply, building permission, solid waste management and grievance redress. Other modules, for schools management and hospital management systems, will also be formed.

As for the fate of the existing level of computerisation in different urban local bodies, the official says this will be absorbed into the proposed e-governance regime. The main idea is to improve service delivery to the public.

The other objectives include increasing the transparency in the processes; ensuring seamless flow of information across all levels of the local bodies; and increasing their productivity.

On the progress of the project, the official says it is expected to be completed in a year.