

Challenges in E-Government Development through Information Kiosks: Lessons from Rural Access to Services through Internet (RASI) in Tamil nadu

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E-government can be defined broadly as the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the public sector to improve its operations and delivery of services. It is increasingly being seen as the answer to a plethora of problems that the governments or public agencies in general face in serving their constituencies effectively. The recent development of e-government services has opened up new possibilities to achieve Easy and equitable access to public information and services. For the past decade, much of the attention of policy debates and research has focused on delivering information and services more cost-effectively and conveniently via the World Wide Web. However, access to the Internet and technological opportunities to reach different user groups are also important questions for policymakers and public managers to consider as more public services are delivered electronically. Thus, this paper focuses on the potential challenges in implementing e-government services through an assessment of the development of Information Kiosks in Tamil Nadu to serve the marginalized populace. This paper is an attempt to examine the significance of Kiosk development in the context of e-government policies through a Case Study on RASI Kiosks implemented in Melur District in the State of Tamil Nadu. By placing kiosks in highly trafficked public areas and in remotest areas, the government can achieve the cost-efficiency of electronic services while providing a solution to the supply side of the digital divide problem and convenient access points to different user groups. However, there are significant challenges in these kiosk projects, which often result in project failures and underestimated financial burdens for government agencies. Since many past studies that advocate e-government development do not look into whether and why failures occur, this paper uses a case study approach also to examine the factors that contribute to failures in kiosk projects. Based on the lessons learned, specific recommendations are being made for policymakers and public IT managers on future kiosk-based e-government development projects. Making specific recommendations about the future use of kiosks to provide e-government services draws conclusion.