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Amod Kumar

Amod Kumar implemented a kiosk-based system to handle public grievances.

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What He Did: Implemented a kiosk-based system to handle public grievances.

For Amod Kumar, currently DG, Mid-day Meal Authority, Uttar Pradesh, a degree in computer engineering from IIT-Kanpur has come in very handy. As the district magistrate of Sitapur, he had heard of the unsuccessful e-governance programmes in Dhar, Madhya Pradesh, and Jhalwara, Rajasthan, which could have helped to usher in transparency. The scheme involved giving loans and subsidies to the kiosk owners but

had not been executed well.

Kumar had an idea. He adapted this programme as a PPP initiative, establishing a society called Lokvani which signed contracts with kiosk owners, registering them as franchisee owners. The programme was called Lokvani too. Though the registration amount was nominal, the kiosk owner had invested in the business and the onus of making it work lay on him. Today, the number of kiosks in Sitapur which are owned by individuals stand at 125. Kumar also burned the midnight oil to come up with improved software to make lodging of complaints easy. The complaint is now uploaded on the Lokvani website and a password allows the accessor to monitor the movement of his application. "If the complainant is not happy with the final result, he can approach the DM," he says.

"I was deeply concerned over the poor functioning of the state apparatus, which was responsible for massive delays in delivery. Bribery was another factor," says the 41-year-old Kumar. Lokvani, he believes, is a tool for empowerment of the rural masses and a bridge between the IT-enabled government and the IT-illiterate citizens. The project has also proved that low literacy is no barrier for the successful implementation of e-governance. One click of the mouse and the complainant can find the exact spot of delay. Kumar has got the Lokvani connected to the roots of governance, from the Public Distribution System to the land records system and the village school.

> *"Amod Kumar is one of the best officers in Uttar Pradesh. He has used technology intelligently to ensure relief for the common man."*
> **V.N. Garg, Industrial Development Commissioner**

Lokvani has been recognised at home with an e-

125 Lokvani kiosks exist in

governance award and internationally with the Stockholm Challenge, awarded for the best Information and Communication Technology application. Orissa and Madhya Pradesh too have

adopted it, though under different names. The number of hits on its website has reached 1.5 lakh since its launch in 2004. The rising public awareness has created the fear of accountability among the officials. This is what Kumar, a 1995 batch IAS officer, had hoped for.

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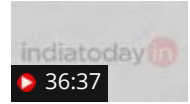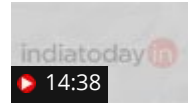Sonia Gandhi advises Congress CMs to negate Centre's farm laws using Article 254 (2)
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