

Citizen Catalyst Center
Nagrik Sahayata Kendra

Submitted to
Centre for Civil Society

By
Anni Kumari
Priyank Jain

Working Paper No 211
Summer Research Internship 2009

Centre for Civil Society

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Mission:

To provide a *convenient, easily accessible and service oriented* business structure to facilitate filling of RTI applications and appeals, lodging of complaints in Public Grievances commission (PGC), Consumer Dispute Redressal Commissions, Directorate of Vigilance, Lokayukta and other government departments and bodies. Hence **contributing to the society** by

1. Increased use of these provisions for seeking information and grievance redressal
2. Empowered and informed citizens
3. Transparent and accountable governance

Vision:

To provide an **alternative** and **friendly** mode to individuals, facilitating all the citizen to government transactions wherever there is a possibility of middleman.

Executive summary

Introduction:

Within the Government of India and the Government of Delhi, NCT; there exist several provisions for seeking information and demanding justice for wrongdoing on the part of government officials and public representatives. These include -

- Right to information Act, 2001
- Delhi Right to information Act, 2005
- Consumer Protection Act, 1986
- Consumer Protection (Amendment) Act, 2002
- Grievances cell in each of the departments and autonomous bodies
- Lokayuktas
- Public Grievances commission
- Central information commission
- National Consumers disputes resolution commission
- Delhi state consumer disputes resolution commission
- Vigilance cell in each of the departments
- Directorate of vigilance
- Central vigilance commission

Except for some NGO activists and motivated individuals, awareness and use of these acts and mechanisms to demand information and explanation from the government remains extremely low. However, it also means that once the right set of support structure is effectively in place, it can initiate nothing less than a revolution.

Concept:

The concept of a Citizen Catalyst Center is based on OBSERVATIONS made with respect to the working of the Right to Information Act (RTI), public grievance redressal mechanisms and consumer dispute resolution forums. Through primary research, it was identified that even though the RTI Act seeks to empower citizens and introduce accountability in governance, its success is seriously restricted owing to several **sociological factors**, including the

- a) General public reluctance to approach government officials
- b) Lack of awareness about how and whom to approach
- c) Rampant apathy and insensitivity towards the public by the officials
- d) Public Information Officers get away giving vague information.
- e) Framing the sharp RTI questions requires skill and experience.

In addition, a host of other problems in the **process of filing application and lodging complaints**:

- Difficulties in identifying the competent authority
- Online and telephonic facilities not functional
- Complicated process of depositing application and fees
- Difficulties in identifying necessary supporting documents
- RTI only provides information but not relief
- 60% of the RTI applicants have to go through the cumbersome process of subsequent appeals that take a lot of time and commitment.

Therefore, there is scope for a **for-profit** entity, acting as “middle-men” facilitating the process of collecting, restructuring and dispatching RTI applications, complaints and appeals to the respective government departments/agencies and bodies. The ingenuity of the model lies in employing the existing infrastructure and customer base of Xerox shops/ cyber cafés/ PCO booths as ‘customer help centers’ for greater reach and feasibility. The concept of CCC runs on the lines similar to that of any agents who facilitate the transaction between two entities. For instance, the railway reservation agents used to stand in queue to procure railway tickets for customers against some extra charge.

The sustainability of such a model has been validated through interaction with experts from NGOs, Central Information Commission (CIC), Public Grievances Commission (PGC), Vigilance and Anti-Corruption cell, National Consumer Dispute Resolution Commission (NCDRC) etc. A sample survey has been undertaken in various areas of south Delhi, representing a diverse mix of rich residential colonies of Greater Kalash, middle-income locations like Malviya Nagar and slum clusters in Sheikh Sarai and Munirka.

Inspiration has also been drawn from existing models for easy accessibility to these provisions, such as Lokvani in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar Governments e-governance ‘Jankari’ project, Praja in Maharashtra etc.

Target customers:

All individuals across the different areas of south Delhi.

Marketing and promotional strategy:

On-site marketing will be undertaken at the collection centers, office location and in residential areas, slums and outside the government departments. Through

media partners, promotions on radio, television and the internet. Targeted campaigns and workshops will also be conducted regularly through alliances with NGOs, RWAs, traders and other associations, universities, government bodies etc.

Services:

CCC will act as a **one-stop solution desk** for -

- Assistance in writing RTI applications/appeals
- Assistance in lodging complaints and grievances in grievance cells, vigilance cells of various government departments, PGC, directorate of vigilance, Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC), Delhi State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (DSCDRS), Lokayukta.
- Time bound delivery of above mentioned documents to the respective government departments.

In addition, CCC will offer the following **peripheral** services-

- Counseling with respect to documents, hearings etc for Grievance redressal and consumer dispute forums, vigilance and anti-corruption cells.
- Maintenance of database and tracking of trends.

Operations plan

Opportunity Analysis and Competitive Advantage:

In an interview with us, Shailesh Gandhi, Commissioner, CIC said that number of RTI applications is a measure of vibrant democracy and India is riding on the same wave. The CCC model marks the beginning of a new revolution where the process of seeking information and filing complaints in government departments is no more a nightmare for citizens. It will be now as simpler as any other transactions in the markets and bazaars and available in customer friendly outlets in markets. This makes all individuals a potential customer. And we definitely have the advantage of first move in the market.

Demographics:

South Delhi has a population of 2,258,367 (2001 census), and an area of 250 km², with a population density of 9,034 persons per km². It had a literacy level of 82%. The district includes several rich and ultra posh areas along with slum areas inhabited by individuals who have migrated from neighboring states in search of livelihood options.

Therefore, the range of public grievances is expected to be wide pertaining to matters such as –

Basic amenities: electricity, water, telephone, sanitation

Public issues: roads, cleanliness, transport, police, environment

Social service: pension, schemes for aged, widows etc., rehabilitation and compensation

Detailed description of services

1. Right to Information Act:

The **Right to Information Act** passed by the parliament in 2005 empowers the citizens by entitling them to know the particulars of every public transaction in all government bearings. Citizens can seek information from any department of the governments at different levels.

- Information includes –records, documents, memos, emails, opinions, advices, press releases, circulars, orders, log books, contracts, reports, papers, samples, models and data material in any electronic form

- Includes the right to inspect and to obtain information in the form of print-outs, disks, floppies, tapes, video-cassettes or any other electronic form
- Required information to be provided within 30 days of the receipt of the application excluding the time to post and remittance of fees
- Every Public information Officer (PIO) liable for a fine of Rs. 250 per day up to a maximum of Rs. 25,000 for delay, rejection, incorrect or misleading information

Writing RTI applications is an art in itself. In most of the cases, government officials get away after giving vague and unsatisfactory replies. An RTI application should be comprehensive, self explanatory, should figure out the person responsible, should ask for the action intended by the department against erring officials and should have very sharp questions.

Assistance in writing RTI applications:

A set of standardized RTI forms for different types of queries related to matters, such as delay in issue of ration cards, encroachment and unauthorized construction, water problems etc. For those who want to write the applications themselves can do so by using these forms at the outlets and having telephonic consultation with the executives at the centre. For others, who want our services in drafting the applications can give basic information in any format. This information will then be converted into a sharp RTI application by our executives in coherence with the applicant on phone. For illiterate individuals, outlet owners will fill the form on their behalf. For non-conventional issues information will be taken in any format and application will be drafted at the centre.

2. Public Grievance Redressal:

Complaints about working of various government departments and undertakings for their non-performance, omissions and commissions etc can be filed with the Public Grievance Cells present in all government departments. If that doesn't work out, a complaint can be filed in Public Grievance Commission.

Assistance in lodging complaints and grievances: A form catering to grievances against any of the government departments will be given to the customer at the outlet. Again there will be 2 modes, where he can write the application himself or executives can do, given basic information. Appropriate supporting documents including, an affidavit, letters of reply from the concerned Public information officer etc, will be collected along with the application form.

2. Consumer protection Act:

The act provides for better protection of the interests of consumers by the establishment of consumer councils and other quasi-judicial authorities for the settlement of consumer disputes and other matters. Penalties for non-compliance of the orders for non-compliance have also been provided.

Assistance and support will be provided in filing the complaints to National Consumer Dispute Resolution Commission (NCDRC) and other authorities.

3. Anti Corruption and Vigilance Department:

Complaints involving corrupt practices or having vigilance angle can be filed with the vigilance cells present in all government departments. If that doesn't work out, a complaint can be filed in the Directorate of Vigilance or the Central Vigilance Commission.

Assistance and support will be provided in filing the complaints at all levels.

4. Lokayukta

Complaints against Public Functionaries such as Ministers, MLAs, Municipal Councillors and other elected representatives can be filed with the office of Lokayukta.

Consultation and assistance is required in terms of procuring the required documents and drafting a comprehensive complaint.

5. Extended and peripheral services:

A database with information on numbers for the different categories of applications along with contact details of the applicant will be maintained. Free counseling on several matters like hearings, appeals and dispute resolution will also be provided via telephone to the customers.

Locations and collection centers

As a pilot project, CCC will begin operating in New Delhi. Approximately hundred collection centers will be identified in southern Delhi in areas of GK, Malviya Nagar, Safdarjung Enclave, Munirka, Sheikh Sarai, Hauz Khas etc. These booths or help centers will be selected on the basis of owner's willingness to take up an

additional source of income, literacy level, coupled with an inclination towards social work. To identify the best suitable outlet in a particular locality, we will take help of local NGOs, RWAs, other associations and forums.

The main centre will include a rented office space with basic office equipments, in one of the above mentioned areas.

Advantages of the location:

- A number of NGOs already operating to generate awareness about RTI and other aspects.
- Residents belong to different income groups with wide range of issues and problems.
- Delhi government has shown relatively better implementation compared to other states.



Commercial Outelt



Independent Kiosk

A similar initiative by the administration of Sitapur, U.P.

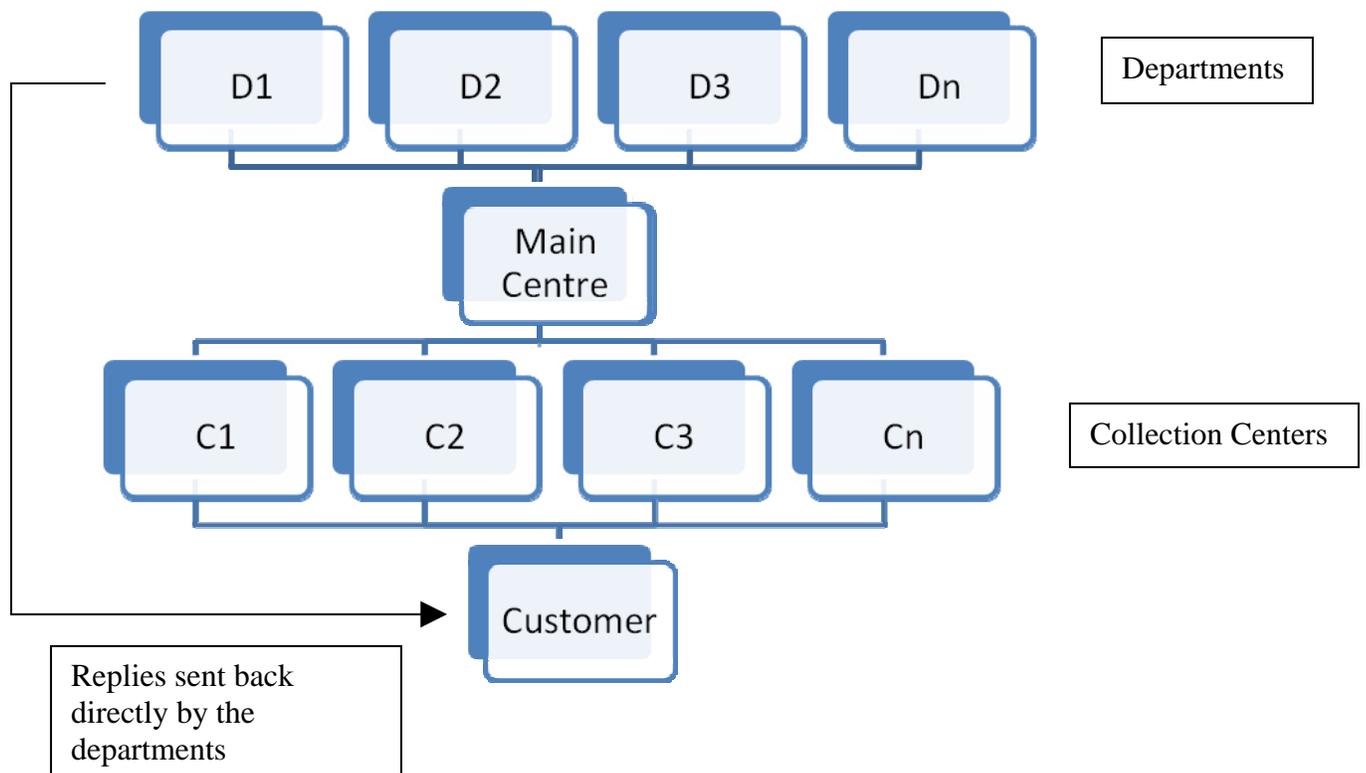
Agents of change:

This model aims to achieve a strong social objective through C2G –citizen to community partnership. Motivated citizens willing to volunteer to facilitate the process of filing RTI applications, appeals, complaints and grievances in various government bodies, will be identified within different wards in south Delhi. This will be proactively undertaken in slums wherein the level of awareness about RTI and other provisions is extremely low due to illiteracy and other reasons. Having a 'face' to the initiative in each community will help in networking and greater

acceptance. Also, students and academicians interested in activities like research and field-work will be called to join the initiative through internship and other opportunities.

Execution Strategy:

All application forms and other documents collected from all the 100+ help centers located across Southern Delhi will be collected on a daily basis and taken to the main centre by the delivery person. These applications will be appropriately fine-tuned, modified and then dispatched to the concerned authorities. The processing time will be done within 5 days.



Movement of the applications:

Standard forms collected along with supporting documents from PCO Booths /Xerox Shops / Independent Kiosks/ CCC agents by delivery men on the day

At the Main centre (approximately 2 executives)

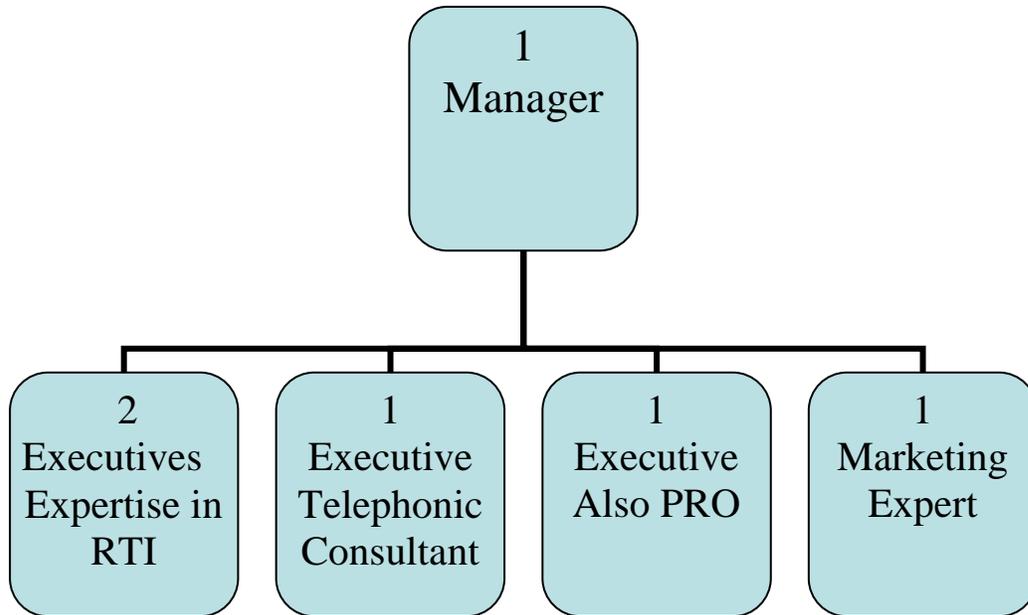
1. Form are sorted into categories - RTI applications, 1st appeals, 2nd appeals, grievances, consumer forum, anti-corruption and vigilance
2. database is maintained along with contact details

1. Forms are read and questions reframed , typed and printed
2. Verify supporting documents
3. Complete application ready for dispatch to various govt. agencies

Delivery person dispatches to various department, collects the receipts and takes them to the main centre

Organizational Structure

At the main center:



Other than this we will have 2 people for collecting the applications from the outlets and delivering the same to the government offices. Other than the above mentioned salaried staff, role of the outlet owners who will have share in the revenues is also very important for the success of the model.

Value addition to various Stakeholders

A. Target customers – individuals of all age groups and income levels based in urban areas of South Delhi.

Advantages	Cost	Positive Outcomes
1. easy and accessible 2. time saving and convenient 3. reliability	Extra money(Rs 15)	1. informed 2. empowered 3. can help others too

B. Collection Outlets (PCO booths /Xerox shops etc) - a feasible option compared to independent kiosk owing to –

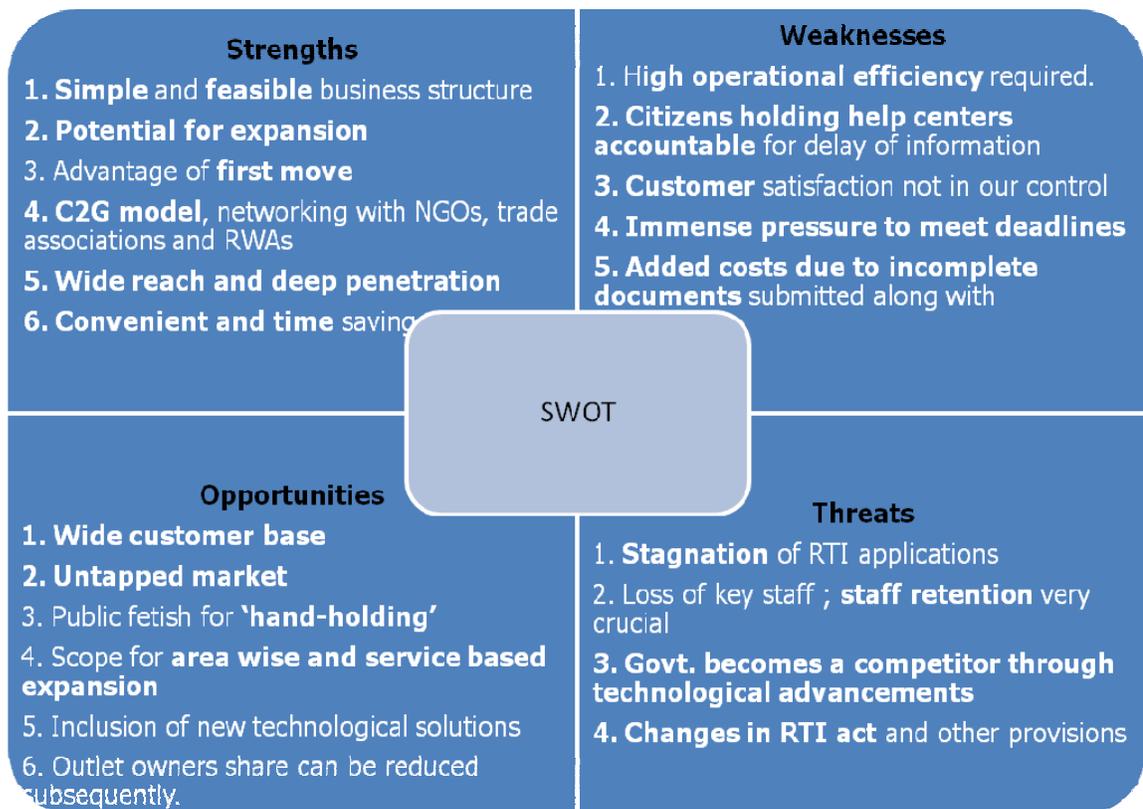
1. Existing infrastructure
2. Existing customer base

Advantages	Cost	Positive Outcomes
1. increased income 2. wider customer base 3. free branding and publicity	1. time 2. little extra effort	1. social contribution 2. may replicate the model

C. Government

Advantages	Cost	Positive Outcomes
1. Increase in RTI applications/complaints /appeals 2. Relevant questions to respective competent authority	NA	1. Greater accountability and transparency 2. Departments forced to comply with section 4 of RTI Act

Business Analysis:



Marketing Plans

Competition and competitive analysis:

Clearly the market is huge and yet untapped. Even RTI as a concept is not used upto its potential. With the help of extensive marketing and awareness campaigns, it's expected that high demand for CCC will be seen.

Our marketing plan includes 3 main components:

On-site marketing:

Banners and hoardings will be used to target existing customer base of about hundred (100) collection outlets located in the identified areas. Campaigns for RTI and drives against corruption will be regularly conducted in various areas through temporary kiosks. A web portal will be created targeting the potential youth customers. These measures will also help in creating CCC a brand name.

Institutional Marketing:

For greater reach CCC will form alliance with the existing local NGOs, Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs), trade associations, youth forums and other institutions. NGOs operating in these areas, particularly in slum clusters have huge customer base and are often looked up by the citizens for help. Similarly RWAs and youth forums act as a platform for discussions and problem solving. Collaborating with them will open a regular revenue stream. Also, since the business model has a prominent social objective, students, academicians, RWA members, members of traders associations and other organizations will be called to become CCC 'agents of change' by acting as collection points within their community.

Mass media:

Media houses (both print and electronic) will be made active partners for promotional activities and sharing database. The information sought through various mechanisms like RTI, anti corruption cells etc. by our customers will be available to these media houses to bring them into light. Such applications having a social cause will be tracked down by our executives. Also CCC will

organize targeted campaigns and workshops for wider penetration of the idea in co-operation with the media houses.

At the same time, CCC will make efforts to get the government involved in the process to accord greater credibility and acceptance. Government already spends a huge amount on awareness campaigns which have small or no results.

Independent growth Drivers:

Civil societies and NGOs are constantly trying to create awareness among people and bring transparency and accountability into the government. Media have also run many campaigns and drives for the same. Even government spends crores per year to increase awareness and eradicate corruption. Especially Delhi government has shown a strong will for this cause. All these factors, though independent from our model will help in its rapid organic growth.

Financial Plans

As a pilot project we will have 100 collection centers and a central office in South Delhi. Each collection center will cater to 40,000 citizens. We expect that at least 5% of the people will come to our services once a year. Financial projections for next 3 years are drawn. An increase in number of services offered is considered in the third year projection.

Price Strategy:

Charges for the services are decided after talking to many activists and are much less than the minimum cost which a citizen has to pay for commuting to the government offices. The outlet owner's share is kept high as they have to spend a significant time with every customer. Also efficiency at their end is very important in terms of procuring a document and maintaining the applications and receipts. Extensive survey with Xerox shops and STD booths was conducted in South Delhi and it was found that the amount is a sufficient incentive for them.

Charges:

Rs. 15 for RTI applications of which Rs. 4 will be given to the outlet owner.
Rs. 25 for other services in which outlet owner's share is Rs. 7.

Establishment cost and source of funding:

An estimated cost of around 4 lakh is required for the establishment and for making it sustainable for the first quarter. The amount can be either obtained from investors or from interested NGOs.

Inflow projections:

	Year 1	Total app	Year 2	Total app	Year 3	Total app
	/outlet/day	total/year	/outlet/day	total/year	/outlet/day	total/year
RTI applications	5	1,80,000	6	2,16,000	6	2,16,000
Others Services	1	36,000	1	36,000	2	72,000
Revenue		3600000		4140000		5040000
Less Outlet's share		2628000		3024000		3672000

Cash flow projections:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Net Sales	3600000	4140000	5040000
Outlet's share	972000	1116000	1368000
Gross Profit	2628000	3024000	3672000
Assets	200000	0	0
Expenses			
Rent	60000	60000	60000
Stationery	50000	50000	50000
Employees (2+4)	480000	480000	480000
Manager	180000	180000	180000
Electricity	30000	30000	30000
Phone+Internet	54000	54000	54000
Travel Expenses	72000	72000	72000
Misc.	60000	60000	60000
Indirect Marketing Expenses	120000	120000	120000
Direct Marketing Expenses	100000	100000	100000
Total expenses	1406000	1206000	1206000
Operating (EBITDA) Profit	1222000	1818000	2466000
EBITDA margin (%)	33.94444	43.9130435	48.9285714
Depreciation	40000	32000	24000
EBITA	1182000	1786000	2442000
EBITA margin	32.83333	43.1400966	48.452381

Future Growth Opportunities

Through inclusive technological solutions the organization can not only expand the range of services but also make significant contribution to overall efficiency and convenience. Some of the extended services can include the following:

- a) Counseling and delivery services related to procurement of licenses and certificates – ration cards, birth certificates, death certificates, domicile certificates, Caste/tribe certificate, Motor vehicle registration, driving license etc.
- b) Information and counseling related to taxes- Taxation & return filing, Income Tax, Corporate Tax, Custom Duty, Sales tax, Property Tax, Road Tax, Company Returns
- c) Online portal with a host of services relating to record maintenance, research and analysis on RTI, Consumer protection Act , grievance redressal mechanisms , which the government bodies and media houses could be interested in

CCC can expand its operations to different locations in Delhi and National Capital Territory (NCR).

Social Impact

“Democracy requires an informed citizenry and transparency of information which are vital to its functioning and also to contain corruption and to hold government and their instrumentalities accountable to the governed”-Right to Information Act, 2005

Direct:

Citizens get the required information which can be further processed to expose corruption or inefficiency of the government bodies and officials. When personal information is seek or grievances are filed they help citizens in a direct manner and also improves accountability.

Indirect:

The more visible and immediate effect comes indirectly. This is because normally, it becomes difficult for the officials to reply to these questions as this would bring their inefficiencies and lapses on record in writing. A reply to these questions also has the effect of fixing of responsibility on particular officials rather than the department in general.

Also there are myriad government schemes and programs designed to uplift India's poor, but too often they simply don't make it to the target population, their resources lost to corruption and inefficiency. The RTI has the potential to change this by helping people understand the opportunities and resources available to them so they can hold government officials accountable for providing those resources.