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**PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF THE CYBERAGE SCHEME IN GOA: STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE**

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**ABSTRACT**

Goa is a small and beautiful state on the Western Coast of India. The state has population of about 1.45 million and area of 3702 sq. km. There are two districts viz., North Goa and South Goa in the state and the present study is conducted in North Goa. Focusing on impending plan to give special thrust on computer education in this highly literate state, the Government of Goa, in its 2002-2003 Budget had decided to launch 'Cyberage Student Scheme' for the students of Higher Secondary schools to increase computer dissemination and exposer levels by giving them personal computers at a nominal fee to all students in the eleventh standard in science stream. The scheme which was initially started for Class XIth students of Science Stream was extended to the students of other streams. Since its inception, the Government of Goa spent Rs. 170 crores for Cyberage Student Scheme. In the last three financial years, 59,825 laptops were given to the students of Secondary, Higher Secondary and College and 46,728 E-tablets were given to Primary School students. The performance evaluation of the cyberage scheme was not carried out by the Government of Goa at any stage or any point of time to assess the degree of success and failures of the programme. The scheme was extended to the college students also without getting any feedback from existing beneficiaries. The study focused and revealed that the Government of Goa has done a remarkable achievement so far as fulfilling the budgeted targets but the post implementation of scheme monitoring, maintenance and providing service observed to have failed.

**KEYWORDS**

computer, cyberage, Goa, scheme, student.

**INTRODUCTION****STUDY AREA AT GLANCE**

Goa is a small and beautiful state on the Western Coast of India. The state has population of about 1.45 million and area of 3702 sq. kms. It was given statehood on 30th May 1987 under the Goa, Daman and Diu Reorganization Act 1987. Tourism and mining are the major avenues of revenue. There are two districts viz., North Goa and South Goa in the state and the present study is conducted in North Goa.

**BACK GROUND OF CYBERAGE SCHEMES IN GOA**

As a pilot project the Government of Goa introduced the "Computer Literacy Programme (CLP)" in all the Government and the Government-aided high schools from the financial year 2000-01 for the students of Higher Primary and Secondary Schools, who were studying in the last year, with an aim to achieve 100 per cent computer literacy. After getting a remarkable success in this scheme, the concept made the Government to venture into its impending plan to give special thrust on computer education in this highly literate state. The Finance Minister of the Government of Goa, in his 2002-2003 Budget, announced to launch 'Cyberage Student Scheme' for the students of Higher Secondary Schools to increase computer dissemination and exposer levels by giving them personal computers at a nominal fee to all students in the eleventh standard in science stream. Under this programme, Government supplied one computer to each of the student, consisting of one monitor, multimedia one Computer along with Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) and necessary accessories with requisite software and one modem for internet use was supplied to the students. The scheme which was initially started for Class XIth students of Science Stream was extended to the students of other streams from 2003-04. The Departments of Education and Higher Education together had distributed 28,586 computers by the end of March 2005 on which Rs 77.39 crore was spent during the period 2002-05.

**TABLE NO. 1**

YEAR	SCHOOLS/COLLEGES	TARGET	ACHIEVEMENTS
2002-03	XI Science	2806	2806
2003-04	XI (all streams)	10629	10629
2004-05	Degree and professional	15151	15151
Total No of students		28586	28586

Source: Statistical records of Govt. of Goa.

Since its inception, the Government of Goa spent Rs. 170 crores for Cyberage Student Scheme. In the last three financial years (2011-14), 59,825 laptops were given to the students of Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools and 46,728 E-tablets were given to Primary School students. The scheme was a 100 per cent State Budget Scheme.

**IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHEME**

The guidelines issued by the Government to the educational institutions did not contain any clause to restrict the supply of one computer per family. The Director of Education had supplied 2806 and 10629 computers to students of XIth standard of all streams in the year 2002-03 and 2003-04 respectively. Similarly, the Director of Higher Education had supplied 15,151 computers to the students of 42 colleges in Goa such as Graduates, Diploma Holders, Professionals etc., during 2004-05. The supply of software, Compact Disk (CD), Internet connectivity and training on computers was also envisaged in the scheme, the department did not provide educational CDs as per the Goa Board Curriculum, and connecting to the Internet was also not ensured. Further, modems provided to 25,780 computers at a cost of Rs. 1.28 crore remained idle as Internet connectivity was not ensured. The department stated (September 2005) that under this scheme, the Government had provided basic hardware and software and other requirements like electrical connections and internet connectivity are to be procured by the students at their own cost. The Director of education placed (November 2003) a supply order on the Goa Electronics Ltd GEL for XIth standard at a rate of Rs 18,900 inclusive of all taxes and delivery charges. The State Government extended the Cyberage Students Scheme to students of the aided colleges, polytechnics, engineering colleges, etc., accordingly, the Director of High Education Department has placed a supply order for 15,000 computers to M/s Goa Electronic Ltd i.e. 4500 Pentium IV and 10,500 AMD Athlon on the same terms and conditions as negotiated by the Director of Education for purchases made by them in the year 2003-04. The Department had awarded the maintenance contract of the computers under the scheme to GEL since 2003-04. Scrutiny of the records of the GEL revealed that GEL had not attended promptly the complaints relating to computers lodged by students. It was seen that 1127 complaints registered by 97 Higher Secondary Schools in between April, 2004 to August, 2004 were attended, after a delay ranging from seven days to more than two months. These complaints were of the nature of keyboard not functioning, CPU/monitor/mouse/speakers not working, computers not booting, UPS not functioning and application software not working. Though the Monitoring Cell of the Directorate of Education had attended about 7,100 complaints registered in the cell and about 6,000 in GEL, it was noticed that no returns were prescribed by the Director of Education for GEL and its supplies, to monitor the efficiency and problems in handling of complaints. Further, the monitoring cell which was constituted in January, 2004 in the Department of Education with one officer-in-charge and eight engineers or technicians on contract basis, became non-functional as the services of eight engineers or technicians were terminated in between May, 2005 to June, 2005.



## PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE OF COMPUTERS

The Goa Electronics Ltd. (GEL), state-owned company, was the agency nominated for the procurement and maintenance of the computer systems. The Department stated (September, 2005) that the preventive maintenance from 2004-05 was carried out by GEL. The reply is not tenable as GEL had admitted (September, 2005) that they have not carried out preventive maintenance as they have found the process cumbersome due to non-availability of the students at the location and on account of the large number of installations. The Department has also not initiated any action for such lapses against the GEL.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Since the problem of research is relating to a government scheme in Goa, no ground level study is done so far to report to the government. Hence, no literature is available to support research problem and find out the research gap.

## NEED / IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The evaluation of the cyberage scheme was not carried out by the Government at any stage or any point of time to assess the performance of the Cybergae Students Scheme. The scheme was extended to college students also without getting any feedback from the existing beneficiaries. Hence, it is decided to carry out performance evaluation of the scheme at least at micro level.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Government of Goa introduced with an objective to increase computer dissemination and exposer levels by giving personal computers at a nominal fee to all students. The pilot study revealed that the Government of Goa has done a remarkable achievement so far as to fulfil budgeted targets but the post implementation of scheme monitoring, maintenance and providing service observed to have failed. Hence, the need of the hour is the performance evaluation of the said factors is to be carried out to find out the facts, degree of success and failures of the cyberage scheme introduced by the Government of Goa.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To analyse the profile of cyberage scheme beneficiaries in North Goa district.
2. To analyse the perceptions of cyberage scheme beneficiaries towards the scheme.
3. To find out the degree of success and failure of cyberage scheme.

## HYPOTHESES

After doing pilot study, two hypotheses are recognised and put for test.

1. The degree of performance in terms of achieving the target of the cyberage scheme was very high.
2. The degree of performance in terms of post distribution monitoring, maintenance and providing service was very low.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Present study is based on primary data collected through pre-tested questionnaire, issued to the college students of North Goa district, **only to the beneficiaries who have got the laptops under Cyberage Students Scheme**. The secondary data is collected from news clips and web site of Government of Goa to give introduction to research study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Achievement of Budgeted Target: All records of the government shows budgeted targets is achieved within time specified.
2. Laptop Brands: It is observed that the Government of Goa has distributed only three branded Laptops viz., Acer, HP, and Lenovo.
3. Physical Possession or Ownership: The survey revealed that after receiving laptops many students sold them to their relatives, neighbours, friends, etc., in spite of the Government warnings and possibility of surprise visit by the Govt. authorities. The surveys revealed that four fifth of the beneficiaries still possessing laptops with them and the rest one fifth have given to others.
4. Purposes of the Cyberage Scheme and Actual Fact: The analysis shows that tow third of the students observed to have making use of laptops for academic purpose, an equal number (one tenth) of them have given to their friends and to family members, who are making use of it for academic purpose. None of the respondent told that the laptop is used for their family business or given on rent.
5. Reasons for Break Down: The technicians told several reasons to the students beneficiaries, who had gone to repair. The main reasons of failures are manufacturing defects, low quality parts and handled carelessly.
6. Repairing and Servicing: The consolidated data indicated that 40 per cent of students preferred Government Service Centres because their laptops broken down within warranty period of one year and 60 per cent students visited Private Professions to get their broken down laptop repaired. Survey revealed that 48 per cent of the students, who have taken the benefits of Government Service Centres told that they are happy and rest 20 per cent have expressed their dissatisfaction.
7. Overlapping Beneficiaries: The cyberage scheme is extended to every student in every institution irrespective of private or Government. The consolidated data indicated that 2-3 members from the same family, who are studying in different institutions and many time in the same institution got benefit of scheme. Two fifth of the students revealed that their brothers and sisters also got the benefit of cyberage scheme. The survey revealed that 25 per cent of the beneficiaries already had their own laptops and /or desktops at their homes.

## FINDINGS

1. The statistical records of the Government of Goa shows that the Cyberage Students Scheme achieved its target as budgeted. The Government contractors observed to have ordered and distributed more number of HP Laptops as composed to others Acer and Lenovo brands.
2. One fifth of the total beneficiaries has given their laptops to their family members, relatives, neighbours and Friends. About 20 per cent of girls from arts section have given their Laptops to others as compared to commerce stream. Two third of the students are still using laptop for academic purpose and rest have given to their friends and family members. One tenth of beneficiaries observed to have playing games rather than making use of laptops for academic use.
3. The ratio between working laptops and broken down laptops is 6:4, which is indicated a larger number of the students could not make use of laptops properly, especially when it was in need for academic work.
4. The survey revealed a shocking picture is that one third of the laptops failed, broken down within 6 months; one fourth of the laptops failed within one year and the same number observed to have failed within 2 years from the date of distribution. All together four fifth of the laptops have broken down within 2 years and only the one fifth of the laptops are in working condition without repairing, indicated that a greater failure of the cyberage scheme so for quality and maintenance is concern.
5. The main reasons for the break down were manufacturing defects (42%), low quality parts (46%), and students' carelessness (12%). The ratio between students, who visited Government Service Centre and Private Service Centre for repairs, was 4:6. Out of two third of the students whose laptops were broken down within warrantee period, only two fifth of them had gone to Government Service Centres. The ratio between internet connected laptops and not connected laptops is 3:1.

6. The survey revealed that one third of the students' family, who got the laptops under cyberage scheme, also got another laptop or desktop at their home through other family members. This is some sort of overlapping of cyberage scheme benefits, which has put the pressure on Government exchequer and waste of public money. Moreover, as many as one quarter of the respondents already had laptops and desktops at their homes, which indicated again an overlapping of scheme benefits.

### RECOMMENDATIONS / SUGGESTIONS

1. The students opined that the Government of Goa would have asked what was their brand preference rather than distributing select brands laptop.
2. The student beneficiaries orated that Government should give internet connections under the cyberage scheme at least at their respective institution in the form of Wi-Fi facility.
3. The Government should have taken feedback from the cyberage beneficiaries to find out the degree of success and quantum of failure and implemented with needed modifications in forthcoming phases of distribution.

### CONCLUSIONS

The set hypotheses after doing pilot study, which was put for test proved as:

1. The degree of performance in terms of achieving the target of the cyberage scheme was very high proved positively; and
2. The degree of performance in terms of post distribution monitoring, maintenance and providing service was very low proved negatively.

### LIMITATIONS

1. Since the study is conducted with a limited sample size of student respondents, conclusions arrived based on the data and personal opinions of student respondents, hence, the opinions stated in this study cannot be generalised.
2. Since the student respondents are selected at random and the area covered is limited, the conclusions arrived cannot be considered as the opinions of the entire students community, who have availed the cyberage scheme benefits of the state of Goa.

### SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research can be taken up at state level, which may give concrete conclusions so that the Government of Goa can design new policy decision for Cyberage Student Scheme. The present study given a feedback and revealed that every scheme has its own pros and cons, need to be studied after implementation, based on the feedback received, scheme should be reviewed, modified and introduced with new mechanism.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I acknowledge the cooperation extended by the student respondents and the teaching staff and the staff of the Education Department, while conducting survey and collecting information.

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