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## e-governance plan gets off the ground

Girish Menon

*All norms will have to be revamped*

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*Cell will report to panel headed by Chief Secretary Many rules have to be simplified or abolished*

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Thiruvananthapuram: The State government has launched one of the most complicated phases of its e-governance initiative, seeking to revamp the entire gamut of laws, rules, regulations, instructions, codes and manuals related to government functioning. The complicated phase, known as Business Process Re-engineering, will be implemented under the aegis of a special cell constituted by the government.

The State government announced the names of the members of the special cell, which has been given full powers to handle all changes that departments will have to make as part of their e-governance initiatives. The Principal Secretaries of Finance and Personnel and Administrative Reforms, the Law Secretary, a representative of the National Informatics Centre, and secretaries of various administrative departments are members of the Business Process Re-engineering Cell (BPRC). The Information Technology secretary will be its convener. The BPRC will report directly to the State Level Empowered Committee, headed by the Chief

Secretary.

The decision to set up the BPRC is a follow-up of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) recommendations on promoting e-governance. The commission had suggested identification of rules, codes and manuals and redesigning government forms and processes that can be adapted for e-governance, backed by procedural, institutional and legal changes.

The entire process, according to top government sources, is complicated. The State already was in the process of implementing the National e-governance programme. But e-governance initiatives cannot go forward unless there is a proper analysis of procedures and statutes and identification of decision points, not to mention political approval.

Member of the Second ARC V. Ramachandran had earlier said that the State and Central governments needed to initiate this process urgently to facilitate good governance and to improve service delivery in a transparent manner.

There are several rules and statutes that had to be simplified or done away with while implementing e-governance, he had pointed out.

The final revamp will need Cabinet approval.

The State Level Empowered Committee will submit the recommendations on the basis of the BPRC report for Cabinet approval. Sources said that the BPRC would have to address issues related to staff training, computerisation of land records, not to mention the Unique National Identity Number programme.

The State government has also made it clear that it will not fund Information Technology proposals of departments till the re-engineering process and training and capacity building programmes are completed.

## Role of cell

The 11th report of the Second ARC had recommended elaborate steps to bring in these administrative changes and is a veritable guide for the BPRC.

The government will soon have to define the role of the cell in terms of its objectives, functionality, targets and timelines.

This, according to sources, would require high wire coordination between departments.