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E-governance clicks with Chennaiites

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CHENNAI: Given that internet penetration is picking up in Tamil Nadu, thanks to the large number of colleges and the impact of the IT sector on the common man, the state government has decided to put this to good effect. And, its e-governance initiative has had a good response in Chennai.

Gone are the days when people thronged the Chennai Corporation's zonal offices with lists of complaints. Since its launch in January, the corporation's integrated online public grievance redressal (PGR) system has been flooded with complaints. Non-burning of street lights, irregular garbage clearance, want of stormwater drains, mosquito menace, problem of stray animals, the list is endless.

The PGR involves the registering of complaints and tracking their redressal. Under the system, consumers can make complaints, ensure that they are sent to the departmental heads concerned and also enable the administration to analyse the problems. "We want the local body to be abreast of the technical advancements. Moreover, the system brings in accountability in the redressal of grievances," mayor

Subramanaian told TOI.

Almost all the 155 wards in the corporation have received online complaints under the PGR. A majority of the complaints have been filed by residents in Velachery, Tiruvanmiyur, Virugambakkam, Villivakkam, Anna Nagar, Kolathur, all extended areas, where the [civic](#) amenities are at its low. Besides, a good number of complaints have also come in from residents of areas such as Adyar, T Nagar and Nungambakkam, where civic activism is at its best.

"In fact, complaints on garbage and street lights are normally resolved in a day or two," says V Gopalakrishnan of Fifth Pillar, a non-governmental organisation. Under the PGR system, if a complaint is not resolved in a specific time frame, it is automatically escalated' and comes to the notice of higher-ups in the department concerned. Finally, it could end up with the Commissioner. "This helps the complainant know where his complaint is being processed," corporation commissioner Rajesh Lakhoni said.

There is a flip side too. Very few complaints coming from the residents of a particular ward does not mean the situation there is satisfactory. Dr Radhakrishnan Nagar, Tondiarpet, Seven Wells, Kondithope, Pulianthope, Old Washermanpet and Korukkupet have been plagued by unsanitary conditions for long but the complaint chart under the PGR does not reflect the same. The residents may be waiting at the local corporation offices or at [Ripon](#) Buildings with paper in hand, says Fathiraj Jain of Mint Street.

On the plus side, as many as 24 persons are said to have managed to get TV sets via the PGR; 33 succeeded in getting elector's photo identity cards while one person got Rs 15,000 under the Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar marriage assistance scheme. In all, 6,113 people benefited in the last eight months.