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Gujarat tops in e-transactions for government services

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AHMEDABAD: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Digital India' campaign has got a big boost from his home state with Gujaratis accounting for highest use of e-governance services offered by various state and central government departments. Over 69 crore transactions were made by Gujaratis in 2014, amounting for 32% of the total in the country. These services were used through mobile phones and computers.

According to central government portal e-Taal (Electronic Transaction Aggregation and Analysis Layer), Gujarat was the top state with the highest number of electronic transactions for availing of state and central government services. E-taal portal aggregates e-transactions by citizens for 2,848 central and state organizations and departments including land records, agriculture, education, health and bill payments.

Analysis showed that Gujarat recorded 69.15 crore e-transactions of the total 219 crore transactions in the country. Also, Gujarat accounts for more than 50% of PDS e-transactions, since it has digitized its distribution Public Distribution System (PDS). This includes receiving and issuing coupons after verifying ration cards through barcode readers and biometrics, and sending out PDS SMS alerts. Gujarat offers 233 services (state and central) that can be accessed electronically.

Use of these services does not imply that services are delivered. It is a record that government services are being utilized

electronically by citizens.

Experts believe Gujarat has the early-mover advantage over other states. "Some services like registration of marriage, property, getting drivers' license were digitized well before other states adopted the method," said professor B H Jajoo of Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIM-A).

He also credited the state government and then chief minister Modi for promoting the e-services. "Moreover, internet connectivity in urban and rural Gujarat is far better than other states. This has also prompted people to use civic services through computers," Jajoo said. However, Jajoo stressed the need for better-associated backend services and response mechanisms.