

GSTN ensured 'Business as Usual' for GST Helpdesk amid Lockdown

- **GST Helpdesk fully operational with regular hours 9-to-9 in all 12 serviced Languages**
- **Helpdesk transition from Office to Homes done in a secured manner**

New Delhi, 1st May 2020: During lockdown, the GST Helpdesk was fully operational and running smoothly through its Toll-free number from **9AM to 9PM** serving in **12 languages**. The Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) with its Helpdesk service partner TechM created a secured virtual environment through next generation and robust technology for their Helpdesk employees resolving GST queries. More than **65%** GST helpdesk agents out of total capacity worked from their homes.

In this catastrophic situation while almost every other helpdesk services were either completely nonfunctional or were running on Interactive Voice Responses (IVRs), it was imperative to find out a solution to ensure the services are provided to GST system taxpayers seamlessly. It was an exigent task to transition the entire helpdesk resources working within office facilities, using fixed logistics to work from their homes. GSTN directed TechM to plan for the transition way before the Lockdown was announced. The helpdesk and support teams went through a series of hurdles including custom clearances, manually tagging the machines, transferring the machines to agent's homes and conducting multiple rounds of testing, etc. A timely and effective planning ensured that the GST Helpdesk services were not affected even for a single day making the helpdesk 'Work From Home' (WFH) precedent operating just like 'Business As Usual' (BAU).

Mr. Prakash Kumar, CEO-GSTN, underlining its significance expressed, "*Generally Helpdesk or Call Centre is synonymous with a large number of people seated in a room providing information to callers. The required communication tools to manage the calls, route them to agents who speak a particular language or deal with a particular business segment are the backbone of a Call Centre.*"

"The entire model turned on its head by COVID-19 lockdown. Agents had to work from home, calls had to be routed to them at their phone. All this had to be done in a secured manner. This was not a small job, but necessity made GSTN and its tech partner TechM to do this. Today a good number of associates are providing Helpdesk support to GST stakeholders. We would continue to work ensuring 360-degree safety of people and process to combat the situation."

GSTN today shared the Data on GST Helpdesk services. Over **56,690** Taxpayer issues were handled during the first month of lockdown from 25th March till 24th April, 2020. The data also showed that more than **19552** tickets raised by taxpayers were resolved during this period. The highest number of tickets handled in a day was **2766** and highest number of calls handled was **1776**. However, due to the lock down, there is a steep dip experienced in the call and ticket volume trend at GST helpdesk. The total received transactions (Inflow of calls and GRP Tickets) are approximately 20% of the usual volume trend. Before the lockdown, GST help desk would receive average around 8000 to 10,000 calls every day while around 2,000 tickets were raised on GRP portal on a daily basis.

Ms. Karuna Chandila, VP Customer Services, GSTN told that, "*We have tried to create a perfect balance between Employee safety and Business Continuity during Covid19 epidemic. We have been able to close over **10904** tickets at first level (L1) and resolved more than **8648** tickets at L2 which works on more complex technical issues. Extraordinary time calls for extraordinary measures, the team stood up to the challenge, devised out of the box solution and got implemented.*"



Mr. Sujit Bakshi, Cluster Head, TechM said, *"We are privileged to serve the largest tax reform initiative globally. I wish to record my special appreciation for GSTN who swiftly allowed us to work from home, even before the lockdown was formally announced and continue supporting tax payers during this unprecedented emergency. Lock down is not able to superimpose our passion to reach and support the taxpayers. This is evident through our maintained First Call Resolution (FCR) score of **99.99%** just like during regular business days."*

Out of the twelve languages GST Helpdesk provides services to, the **Hindi** Helpdesk services received the highest number of calls comprising **61.66%** of the total call volume followed by **English** language with **14.80%** volume. Marathi at 4.75% received third highest number of calls, closely followed by Gujarati 3.65%, Telugu 3.00%, Bengali 2.93% and Tamil 2.86%. The other languages are Kannada, Punjabi, Oriya, Malayalam and Assamese which registered lesser call volume respectively.

For GST Portal, the issues are reported through voice calls and the GRP portal. While most of the calls have general queries for which on-call resolution is provided, however there are few technical queries for which a ticket is raised either by the helpdesk agent or directly by the user on the Grievance Redressal Self-help facility available at the GST Portal.

About GSTN:

Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) is a Section 8 (under new companies Act, not for profit companies are governed under section 8), non-government, private limited company. Instituted in March 2013, the Company has been set up primarily to provide IT infrastructure and services to the Central and State Governments, tax payers and other stakeholders for implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST).
