

Integrated Government (iGov)

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Abstract – Integrated government is a government that unifies various agencies and functions of the government such that they appear as ONE to the citizens. E-government is one such tool to achieve the integration in government. This paper analyzes various components of national e-governance plan (NeGP) of government of India and identifies the various mission mode projects which will lead to the concept of an integrated government. The paper identifies hindrances/ issues related to achievement of integrated government in India via e-government. It briefly identifies the strategy for achievement of integrated government via e-government.

Index Terms – integrated, e-government, India, administrative, reforms, DAR& PG, e-Seva, BangaloreOne, e-Suwidha, e-Samparak, eBiz, MNIC, eProcurement, PPP, e-panchayats, STPI, NISG, NIC, NICS, STQC, Chips, Webel, RTI

I. Introduction

Integrated Government, [1] or iGov is evolving concept wherein an integrated approach to government is achieved. iGov is integration of services across federal, state, local government and various departments leading to a single window for citizens. It is a government which unifies all functions, agencies, levels of government and brings together a one government.

The foundation of integrated government is based on three databases – database for humans (citizens), property (land) and moveable property (vehicles). The three databases can provide integration of all services across the country. Take for example a citizen wants to travel abroad and he approaches government for the passport. It will not be his concern to go to ministry of external affairs, he will just go to an integrated service centre and request for a passport (Note: A separate passport will be necessary as another id for the foreign countries only recognize passport as a valid travel document). The citizen id links the system to the municipal database wherein all the details like date/place of birth of an individual; father's / mother's name etc are retrieved. In order to determine his ECNR / ECR status his education records are retrieved from national university database. The crime database is checked to ensure that there is no criminal case pending against the individual. A real time approval is taken from the state intelligence agency for their input. His latest photograph, finger prints and signatures are taken on the spot and matched with those on his citizen id card. Within ten minutes the passport is issued to the individual. Thereafter the details are immedi-

ately transferred to all Indian missions abroad, immigration check points and all passport issuing authorities where there is a requirement of cross checking of passports.

However in a country like India where the constitution provides the distribution of powers amongst centre, state and local governments, it may be a big challenge to achieve any integration of services. Nevertheless a few states in India have started such initiatives with limited services. E-seva of Andhra Pradesh and Bangalore One of Karnataka are a few examples which have started with limited services and are scaling fast. Another challenge may be that such a massive program cannot be successfully spearheaded through the information technology department. For proper implementation it has to be specifically spearheaded from a unit under the Prime Minister so that it has an authority across all departments at the central government level and parallel units need to be created under the Chief Ministers for better e-governance implementation in states. A complete national consensus needs to be built for the concept. The various levels of integration are as defined:

- Integration of services of central, state and local government
- Integration of goals of governance
- Integration of various agencies of government
- Integration of public and private sector services
- Integration of services of different departments

While Delivering his keynote address at International Conference on e-Governance (ICEG -2003, IIT, Delhi) on December 18, 2003 Hon'ble President of India , Dr. APJ Kalam observed, *"I visualize an election scenario, where a candidate files his nomination from a particular constituency. Immediately the election officer verifies his/her authenticity from the national citizen ID database through multifactor authentication, through a multipurpose Citizen ID card. His/her civic consciousness and citizenship behaviour comes from the police crime record. His property record comes from the registration of land authority across the country. His income and wealth resources come from the income-tax department, and other sources. His education credentials come from the university records. His track record of employment comes from various employers with whom he had worked. His credit history comes from various credit institutions like banks. His legal track records come from the judicial system. All the details arrive at the computer terminal of the election officer within few minutes*

automatically by the act of e-governance software agents which crawls across the various state and central government web services directories through the network and collects the information automatically and presents the facts in real-time with out any bias”

However the vision of Dr. Kalam appears to be a distant dream with each citizen still required to carry multiple ids like the ration card, BPL card, election card, student id, employment id, pan card, health card and many more, [2]. The citizens have to visit multiple websites to find the relevant information. Departments provide the information in the form they have but do not actually consider the needs of citizens. At times citizen is bombarded with information which has little or no value. The citizens have to visit multiple delivery points to get a particular service. Each state has different methods, procedures of record management. Even the birth /death certificates issued by each state are in different format to the extent that no other state can read the records generated by one state lest alone an international agency. Not even citizens’ but businesses also have to visit different departments for getting clearances starting a new venture thereby becoming a disincentive for venture capitalists / foreign investors to invest in India. The integrated approach will help to address the above issues and lead to successful implementation of e-government in India.

II. Issues in integrated government

There are multiple issues behind the context of integrated government. A few of them are listed below:

1. Multiple Goals: Each minister in a government has different political goal and more so in era of coalition governments where each minister is from different political party having different ideology. The ideals of collective responsibility and common standards of government are difficult to achieve when multiple goals co-exists. Take for example one of the minister who may desire to have tea served in earthen pots in trains whereas other ministers may desire metro type rail links across nation.

2. Control Structures: Governments have different levels of controls and in an integrated environment the controls may have to give way to employee empowerment and the same may lead to resistance to change. Say the police currently reports to the bureaucratic heads. However the new environment may desire that police may be independent of any such controls which may be resisted by the bureaucrats.

3. Resources: The sources of funds in a government may be different. The funds may come from the central government, state government, financial institutions, multilateral agencies etc. With multiple sources of funds the goals of each funding agency may be different and therefore the integrated framework may be difficult to achieve. World Bank may be funding a part of a project in one state and

central government the other part of same. Both will desire that their goals may be given priority.

4. Political Ownership: The idea of integrated government or e-government needs to have political acceptance otherwise it may not see the desired results. Many states like Karnataka, AP, Tamil Nadu, Kerala have developed in areas like information technology and e-governance because there is a strong political ownership of those initiatives.

5. Relationships: Different entities in government have different relationship with each other. There exist hierarchies, levels of governance and distribution of function. The institution at the same level may not appreciate directions from subordinate or same level institutions. Say department of revenue may not appreciate department of information technology directing it on how they have to reform land records via e-governance. They may take technical advisories but will follow their own agenda.

6. Accountability: The accountability in integrated environment may get distributed over multiple agencies. This may lead to a situation where no agency is accountable. The national e-governance plan of government of India distributes the accountability of plan over line ministries, DIT, DAR & PG, NIC and many more agencies. This may lead to accountability of none.

7. Virtual State: Sooner or later the integrated government may become a virtual state with no boundaries. The work, goals, decisions may be distributed over various stakeholders, departments and agencies thereby making the whole system boundary less.

8. Public Private Partnership (PPP): In order to integrate the public, private and non government sector a conflict of interest may emerge wherein the government sector may have citizen welfare as its goal where as the private sector will always have profits as its goals. Therefore the twain may be difficult to meet.

9. Hierarchies in government: The new environment will require the hierarchies in government to be replaced by horizontal structure where the communication takes place with any level depending on the need. However the current system may resist the same.

III. Current Integrated Government Initiatives, [3]

The national e-governance plan identifies various projects for implementation as MMP. A few projects like MCA, Banking, Insurance, Commercial taxes, Income Taxes etc are specific to a particular ministry, departments or a sector. However a few projects cut across departments into multiple areas and form the basis of integrated approach in NeGP. A few of those MMPs are listed below:

1. Multipurpose National Identity Cards: The citizens in India today have identities like the voter card, ration card, driving license, PAN card, passport, bank passbooks, gas connection numbers, railways identity card, student identity card, employment identity card, phone/ mobile numbers, land / vehicle registration numbers. There are multiple Acts which govern the multiple ids of citizens which include – Indian Citizenship Act, Election Commission (Article 324 of Constitution), Income Tax Act, The Universities Act, Motor Vehicle Act, Indian Passports Act, Banking Rules & Regulation, Insurance Acts, SEBI Act e.t.c. An effort to have a single multipurpose national identity may require amendments to all above acts and even necessitate a new act like the e-government act or national id act. Integration of various identities is one such agenda of government of India. Currently two such initiatives namely the MNIC project of ministry of home affairs based on census data and the national id project of department of information technology are underway in the pilot stages at various levels. Some state governments like government of Gujarat, Karnataka, AP, and Punjab are also taking steps in that direction. A single unique id for every citizen will be one step towards integration of services in India and eliminating multiplicity of ids. It will also help in checking illegal immigration to India. Lot of redundant data will be removed as the same citizen information can be shared within central, state and local government.

2. Integrated Citizen Service Centres: Many state governments have come up with initiative of integrating multiple citizen services at one counter. The e-Seva project of Government of Andhra Pradesh, Bangalore One of Government of Karnataka, e-Sampark of Union Territory of Chandigarh, e-Suvidha in Punjab etc are just a few examples of such integrated citizen service centres across the country. The key to such citizen service centres is integration of services of central, state, local and private agencies. Such centres are providing services like acceptance of utility bills, sale of various forms, rail / air reservations, applying for various licenses, public utilities, educational services, death/ birth / marriage registration, caste certificate, land record title, registration of documents, collection of taxes etc. These centres provide extended hours of services to citizens and act as single window for various services. The centres are available at multiple locations where a citizen can easily access them. Given that India is now planning to establish 100,000 rural citizen service centres across India which will deliver the integrated services to rural population across India. These centres may become hubs of citizen activity once they are fully operational.

3. India Portal: India portal is integration of all the online services of various governments. The current portal is redesigned from the agency centric approach to the life cycle approach wherein a citizen can take various services based on their life cycle beginning with registration of birth

and ending with registration of death. The services over the life cycle include health services, educational services, employment matters, marriage registration, utility services, obtaining of licenses and utility services, e-business services, banking, insurance, agriculture / industrial inputs, land record / vehicle registration, taxes, foreign travel, passports, informational services etc. The portal will provide range of online services once it is operational. The same will require integration of multiple agencies at the backend.

4. E-Procurement: E-Procurement will be an integrated service that will encompassing all the activities arising out of purchase, quality assurance and payment for various agencies for the Government. Even if the project is implemented by Directorate General of Supplies & Disposals (DGS&D), the same will have a nation wide impact. DGS&D is a nodal purchase organization in the central government, under the Department of Commerce. The rate contracts as decided by DGS&D are taken as benchmark by central & state governments, their ministries/ departments /divisions, public sector undertakings, government funded educational institutions and autonomous bodies. The integrated e-procurement system will facilitate DGS&D in functions like communicating of latest rate contracts on repetitive used items to various stakeholders. The same system may help educating stakeholders on tender notifications, policies, terms & conditions, details of rate contracts, downloadable forms, tender inquiries etc. It will also facilitate vendor registration, indent generation, quality assurance, electronic bids and tendering, placement of orders, payments to suppliers, analysis and statistics maintenance, bulk discounts etc. The integration of some aspects of procurement will benefit all stakeholders in the government whether it is private sector or government. However the integration may be limited because of geographical, functional, administrative and political reach of some government agencies. In an improved system we need to find answers to the same.

5. E-Biz: The e-biz project proposes to establish a single window for government to business (G2B) services of central, state and local governments. It proposes to integrate all services given to businesses by the government. The integration of services will include services from the central government departments like the ministry of company affairs, central board of direct taxes (CBDT), department of industrial promotion and policy (DIPP), director general of foreign trade (DGFT), reserve bank of India and central board of excise and customs (CBEC). As far as state government is concerned the project evasive to integrate the services of sales tax / commercial tax departments, department of industries and labour, municipalities, electricity agencies and pollution control agencies. The various levels of integration of services as above will give businesses an opportunity for single window clearance of services.

6. E-Panchayats: This project aims to integrate all services at the village level and functioning of a village panchayat. The 73rd amendment of Indian constitution provides a three tier status to Panchayati Raj (local self government) in villages across India. The initiative encompasses integration of services of agriculture, animal husbandry, horticulture, land records, irrigation, electricity departments of the state, ministry of social welfare, rural development, ministry, health, education of the centre and state government etc. The initiative ensures the delivery of various schemes of various agencies to the villagers in the states. The e-initiative helps in better implementation of schemes like national rural employment guarantee scheme (NREGS), pradhan mantri gram sadak yojana (PMGSY), swarnjayanti gram swarozgar yojana (SGSY), sampoorna gram in rozgar yojana (SGRY), Indira awaas yojana, mid day meal program etc. Under the electronic panchayat system the various functions of panchayats are integrated and computerized. The services like registration and issue of births/deaths certificates, payment of property tax, utility bills, grievances handling, building approvals, health programs, local planning, agriculture information, house tax assessment/ collections, trade licenses, old age pensions, works monitoring, financial accounting, MIS for panchayat administration, etc. are currently being computerized. Services such as market prices of agriculture produce and agricultural extension advise are also being provided to the citizens of the village from the e-panchayat.

IV. Strategy for Integrated E-government [4], [5]

This section identifies various steps to achieve integrated government via e-government. The process will involve process re-engineering, institutional reforms, legal reforms and many more reforms. A brief steps to achieve integrated government are explained as under:

1. Establish a national e-government council to give strategic directions to e-government in India. A committee headed by Cabinet Secretary is already formed.
2. Appoint a chief e-government administrator like the e-Envoy in UK government who will be the central point of all e-government initiatives in the country. Additional secretary (e-governance) in the department of information technology is the current nodal point of e-governance in India.
3. A permanent administrative reforms commission and a legal reforms commission may be established to facilitate reforms. Currently, a ARC is functioning facilitated by department of administrated reforms, GOI
4. Appoint a Chief Information Officer (CIO) in each state, central government departments and

government agency as nodal officers to look into e-government implementation. Currently IT managers in Central Ministers and IT secretaries are responsible for the above role.

5. A CIO council may be formed in-order to streamline e-government standards, interoperability, GPR, universal accessibility, cyber security, integrated service delivery cooperation etc.
6. E-government fund constituting funds from financial institutions, multilateral agencies, state governments, planning commission, central line ministries, NGOs, private partners may also be established.
7. In order that the funds are utilized properly executing agencies may be identified and constituted. A few central agencies currently in existence are STPI, NISG, NIC, NICS, STQC, MLA etc. Each state has also established a executing agency like Webel in West Bengal, Hartron in Haryana, Chips in Chattisgarh, MAP-IT in Madhya Pradesh, Rajcomp in Rajasthan etc.
8. A national institute of standards may be established with a mission of developing standards, guidelines, and associated methods and techniques for information systems, security and e-government. It may as well periodically assess the effectiveness of standards and guidelines developed and undertake revisions as appropriate.
9. A framework may be evolved to create interoperability between or among public databases managed by multiple agencies using technologies and techniques that facilitate public access. Efforts may also be made to facilitate integration of data elements used in the electronic collection of information within databases without reducing the quality, accessibility, scope, or utility of the information contained in each database.
10. A national information infrastructure (NII) constituting of network of complex technologies and services may be established. It may be needed to transport the vast array of databases, images, conversations, multimedia files, and other electronic signals which will carry our economy forward into the information age. State data centres may be established as part of the NII.
11. Pilot Projects for facilitating integrated collection and management of data may be facilitated. These pilots should reduce information collection burdens by eliminating duplicative data elements within multiple agencies.

12. The projects may be institutionalized instead of being driven by individuals. The National e-governance Plan in India has been institutionalized by setting up of an e-governance Program Management Unit (EGMPU) which is one of the initiative towards institutionalization of e-governance in India. However the states still follow the individualized e-governance and the same needs to be adopted.
13. An annual status report of all initiatives may be brought to ensure that the funds are going in right direction.
14. A time bound plan should be evolved to issue national id's to all citizens.
15. Digital signatures may be made compulsory at least in government departments for better implementation of e-services.
16. A government paperwork elimination drive may also be initiated leading to e-office and less paper across various departments of the government.
17. Agencies should be encouraged to develop performance measures that demonstrate how electronic government enables progress toward agency objectives, strategic goals, and statutory mandates. Areas of performance measurement that agencies should consider include--customer service; agency productivity; and adoption of innovative information technology, including the appropriate use of commercial best practices. Agencies shall link their performance goals, as appropriate, to key groups, including citizens, businesses, and other governments, and to internal government operations. The release of grants by the Central Government to these agencies can be stopped / delayed if the above provisions are not complied with.
18. State governments and central ministries to develop e-government and capacity building roadmaps as strategic documents towards integrated government and work for implementation of the same.
19. The government agency websites should be updated and efforts may be to integrate all websites. The websites may include direct links to descriptions of the mission and statutory authority of the agency. Information declaration under the RTI Act has to be made available to the public on the websites. However the most important declaration under the websites should be the strategic plan of the agency which may be open for review of public all the year around. A national portal should be facilitated at earliest.
20. A government wide repository may be developed and maintained. It should fully integrate, to the maximum extent feasible, information about research and development funded by the government in area of reforms, good governance and e-government. It may be made mandatory for all states, government agencies to share such minimum information with the central repository in a time bound manner.
21. Indian IT services may be created as a separate branch of services on-lines with the Indian administrative services. The cyber police may be drawn on line of IPS from these services. The senior level appointments for the posts of the IITS can be made from the existing IAS and IPS officers who will qualify the Indian IT service exam. Campus recruitment from IIM's and IIT's can also be considered.
22. An IT officer exchange program may also be implemented whereby employee of a government agency may be loaned to a private sector /other State / other organization. Similarly employees of a private sector organization to a government agency may also be facilitated.
23. Agency wide e-procurement system may be established which may facilitate procurement for all government departments at a national level.
24. An interagency group working with private sector experts, state government, local, and tribal governments, commercial and international standards groups, and other interested parties, should be established to facilitate the development of common protocols for the development, acquisition, maintenance, distribution, and application of geographic information.
25. Further the government wide restructuring needs to be carried in order to ensure that the various departments and ministries and subjects allocated to them are according to the vision of collective governance.
26. The allocation of business rules of government of India needs to be redefined thereafter leading to a big bang change in the functioning of government. However a word of caution therein that such introduction may be carried keeping in mind that change is a slow process and may take time to give results.
27. Change management and employee satisfaction will be next areas to be addressed in the process of reforms in governance.
28. Wider changes in government from legal to administrative to structural will necessitate changes in manual of business rules wherein the

role of department of administrative reforms may be of key importance. A comprehensive e-government legislation highlighting all the strategy statements may as well be attempted.

29. The government may even have to have a re-look at its guidelines on IT spending and may have to raise the current limit of 2-3% to a higher percent. Government also needs to re-define the minimum agenda on e-government and ensure the compliance of same by all stakeholders.
30. Government has a duty to appreciate the work of e-champions which may range from individuals, organizations, government departments, NGOs etc in areas of e-government advocacy, content creation, awareness building, project conceptualization, implementation, impact assessment and capacity building. The same has to go beyond e-governance awards..

The above steps are a part of the strategy and more steps may evolve while bringing the next editions of the working paper on iGov. The above steps are neither comprehensive nor in sequential order and may vary with individual perception.

IV. Conclusion:

The integrated approach to e-governance implementation is in terms of service delivery to citizens and in no way affect the federal structure of the country. Each state can discharge its functions on all subjects as entrusted in the constitution independently. However the integrated approach will facilitate in case of e-government / e-governance applications as it will reduce say the number of delivery / service points a citizen has to visit. It will bring down to one the website all Indian citizens have to visit in form of India One. Even the use of standardized software will ensure the interoperability and reduction of total cost of ownership. Not to say a reduction in number of physical IT infrastructure like servers, workstations, software licenses etc. As already mentioned it will reduce the number of ID's of the citizen and provide them single National Id, thereby minimizing the duplication of redundant data.

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