

e-Government The Science of the Possible

1. Introduction

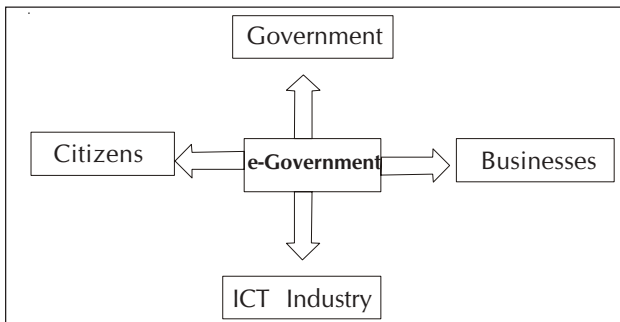
This book has been divided into 12 chapters looking at the interlinking of topics on e-Governance. These topics include (among others) —

- i) The introduction to e-Government,
- ii) Vision of e-governance,
- iii) Architecture or e-governance infrastructure of different countries and a special reference to the AP portal,
- iv) The PPT, PPP and e-Government readiness, technology and standards,
- v) Security for e-government, the digital divide, e-government and cyberlaw.

e-government refers to the delivery of government services and information to the public, using electronic means to transform the way it serves its constituents. In this case, in general, citizens are seen as passive recipients of the digital information and services. But the trend has been changing drastically and citizens are now demanding more user-friendly programs. However, most importantly, e-government must be on governance and not just IT; on citizens and their needs and not just on computers; on transforming the process not on translating the process; and on software not on just hardware and focus on people but not on systems. Thus, e-government is not just 'e' but about facilitating the system by 'e' and getting it to work for citizens to benefit them in their daily activities of practical life.

2. Benefits of e-Government

The main stakeholders of e-Government are—government, citizens, businesses and the ICT industry. The citizens are benefited in a great way because they cannot meet the necessary government employees every time. There is no transparency (often deliberate) as withholding of information becomes a powerful tool to assert power and authority. For these reasons getting a simple transaction done often becomes a problem of major proportions. This results not only in the monetary cost to the citizen but both the psychic and time costs. The same applies in an even more relevant manner to the businesses where getting the information related to



Source: Book: Figure 1.2. e-Government Benefits to Stakeholder

* Deepak Kumar, Associate Consultant, The ICFAI University Press.

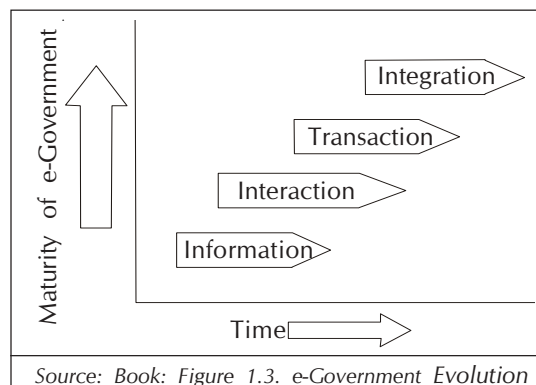
the excise regulations, custom duties, filing the returns etc., becomes very important. ICT industries are benefited in that the establishment of e-government needs the backup supports and helps in employing many persons. The government is surely benefited in that it creates an environment of simplicity, accountability and responsibility and helps in creating the user-friendly environment.

About the Author

J Satyanarayana is an IAS of the batch of 1977, and the CEO of National Institute for Smart Government (NISG), Hyderabad, and has been the pioneer in the implementation of projects like e-Seva, CARD and e-procurement.

3. e-Government Evolution

e-Government has four stages of the development i.e., i) Information ii) Interactive iii) Transaction and iv) Integration. None of the countries in the world has reached the integration stage of e-government and majority of the countries are still at the information stage of e-government, where the government is mainly utilizing the electronic means for providing information.



4. Pillars of e-Government

There are four important pillars of e-government: People, process, technology and resources. However, it is the process of interaction among people, process and technology which basically helps in integrating the system, and for better utilization of the available resources. Process is basically a set of defined actions, which involves the steps like validation, computation, approvals, interpretation, searches regarding the modes of transaction aimed to provide better services etc.

5. PPP in e-Government

The concept of Public Private Participation (PPP) is the new cliché of today. This has the capacity, if executed effectively, to make the system efficient, cost-effective and customer centric. Private sector is generally very sensitive to its customer needs and so it comes up with the new technologies to meet their rapidly changing demands of service. So, while the government wants to deliver better services to its citizens, the private sector helps it in providing better technologies to implement the projects in the stipulated time. This increases the accountability of the government to its citizens. However, in certain cases, there is lack of transparency and political will on part of the respective governments, which restricts the public participation. Thus there is need to have a big change in the architecture to improve the image of the state, in the eyes of the public. PPP model in e-government can be basically in G2B, G2C and information infrastructure projects. A few models related to PPP in e-government are as follows:

JV Model — In this case, a special purpose vehicle is formed, which can be either led by the government or the private party. A JV is preferred where,

- i) Delivery of services are basic and permanent,
- ii) Setting up of infrastructure is for steady ROI in the long term,
- iii) The information is sensitive, and
- iv) Where the government wants to hold the control for various reasons.

The selection of the partner is carried out based on an open competitive process depending on suitable and clearly defined pre-qualification criteria.

BOO Model (Build , Operate and Own): In this case, the selected partner designs, develops, operates and owns the system for a predetermined period of time, often at his own cost. The revenue model for this project is generally through transaction charges, with or without suitable contribution from the government.

BOOT Model (Build, Operate, Own and Transfer): In this model, the asset created by the private party is transferred to the government after a pre-specified time, and such models are adopted where the technology is time-tested and assets are expected to outlast the concession period.

ASP Model (Application Service Provider): The government contracts with the private party whereby the private party delivers the service for a specified time, based on commercial terms and conditions. This is a win-win situation to both private and public sectors, because the government does not have to look into the operations very closely. It is only concerned with the quality and quantity of the service. The ICT infrastructure and the skills of the private personnel are leveraged and the government optimizes the cost by using already available infrastructure.

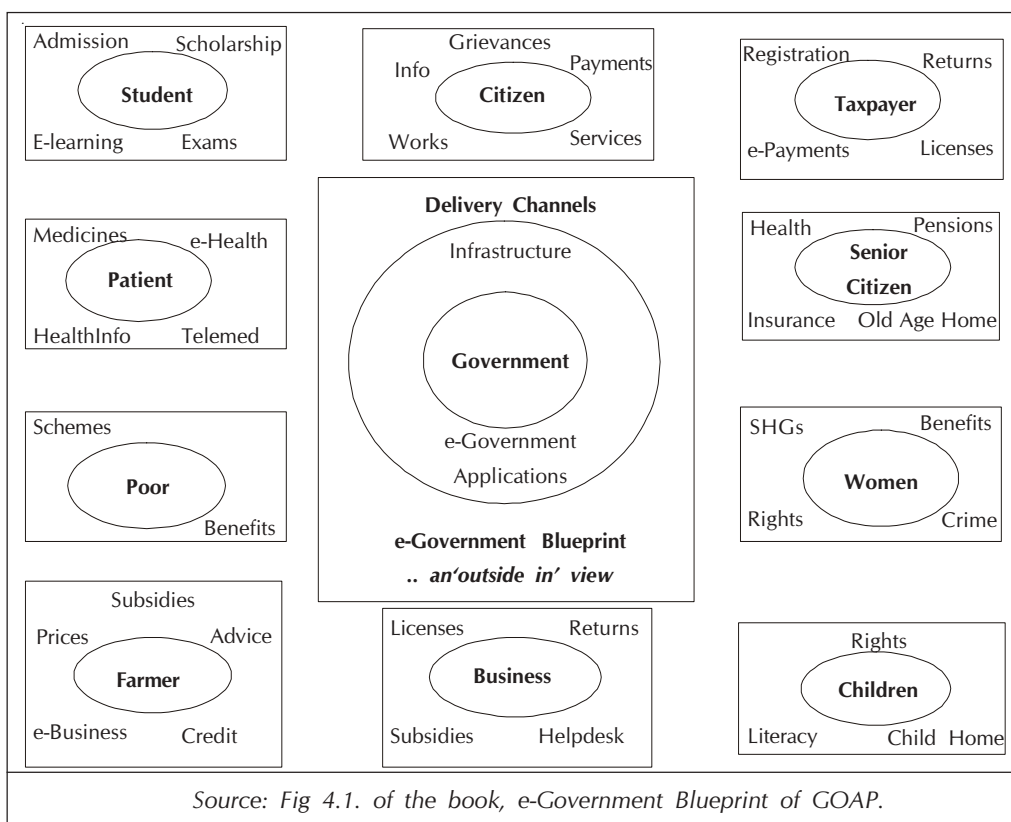
6. e-Government Blueprint of Government of Andhra Pradesh

The Government of Andhra Pradesh has been really successful in providing the services to its citizens by implementing the ICT technologies in the projects like CARD, e-Seva, Smart gov, FAST, and APonline portal. The figure 4.1. in the book has shown the blueprint of Government of Andhra Pradesh, after a critical survey of 50 departments, which will, in reality, help in providing better services to the citizens. A critical analysis of the figure 4.1. reveals how different state governments can be interlinked by using the e-government applications and infrastructure. This blueprint aims to provide transparency and optimization of the costs, better delivery of services and thus reducing the psychic costs of the citizens. For example, if a farmer wants the single-window solutions for the latest prices of various produce, credit facilities available, and advice related to enhancement of farm yields, it can be made available at one place. This helps him to escape from demerits of arbitrage in prices and to increase agricultural output through application of scientific methods of farming.

e-Seva

e-Seva is another good example of good governance. Most of the urban utility transactions are handled by this method such as payment of Electricity and Telephone bills etc. The contracts have been given out to the eligible service providers who run the show, subject to the periodic supervision of the government. Generally speaking, such data is not very sensitive or confidential beyond the point, which a normal service provider would be able to give.

A PPP model was found most suitable and a group of ICT companies were selected to implement this project. The work consisted of setting up the hardware, software and networking

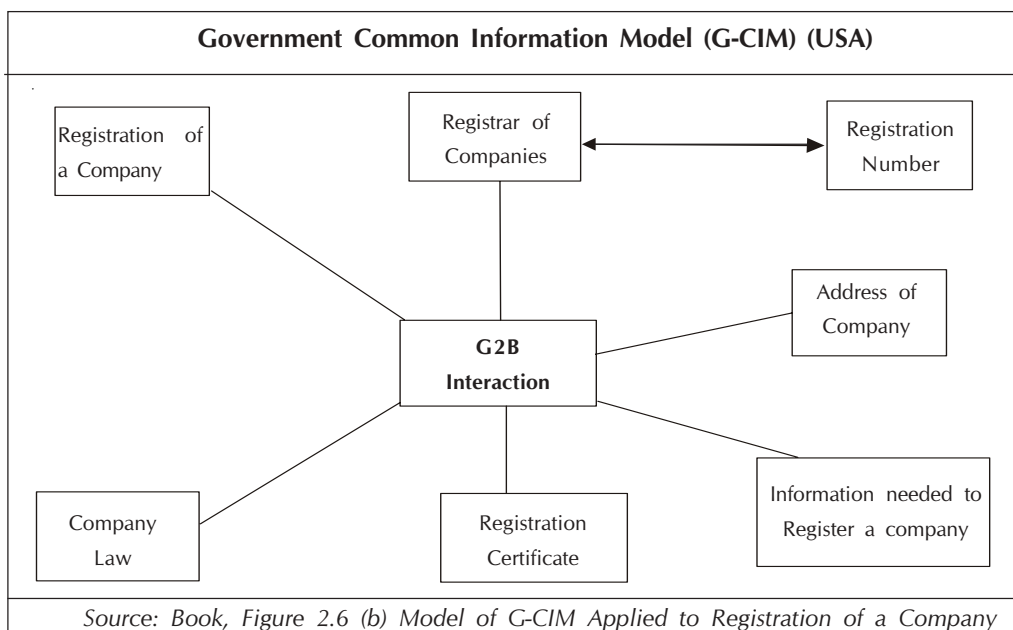


at 18 centers (called delivery points) where the citizen could avail the services of 18 different types of transactions such as bill payments, registration of vehicles, issuance of learning and driving licences etc. The ICT companies were made responsible for all the operations over here. Thus the look and feel of the delivery points have totally been transformed.

7. International Models

There are three main global e-government leaders—the US, the UK and Singapore. These countries have not only identified the core services to be delivered to their citizens, but have been upgrading the technology, business and relevant architecture of the personnel required, in tune to the demands of the changing times. In case of the US, the strategy of e-government focuses on Government to Citizen (G2C), Government to Business (G2B), Government to Government (G2G) and Internal Efficiency and Effectiveness (IEE). The same model has been adopted in most of the countries but USA has been more successful in the above e-government models. The structure of service component reference model of FEA in USA is only an indicative of how USA has developed with regard to e-government (See the above diagram).

- This is a typical model with reference to the registration of a company.
- It helps in describing the business elements related to the change of the name or address of the company and other core particulars related to the business.
- Also helps in providing the related company law and other information related to register this type of company.



- G-CIM also helps in providing basic registration documents and certificates, electronically.

This is a very advanced model, but may contain several features which India may like to adopt and progress steadily towards a model such as this. This is more feasible than trying to adopt such an advanced model straightaway.

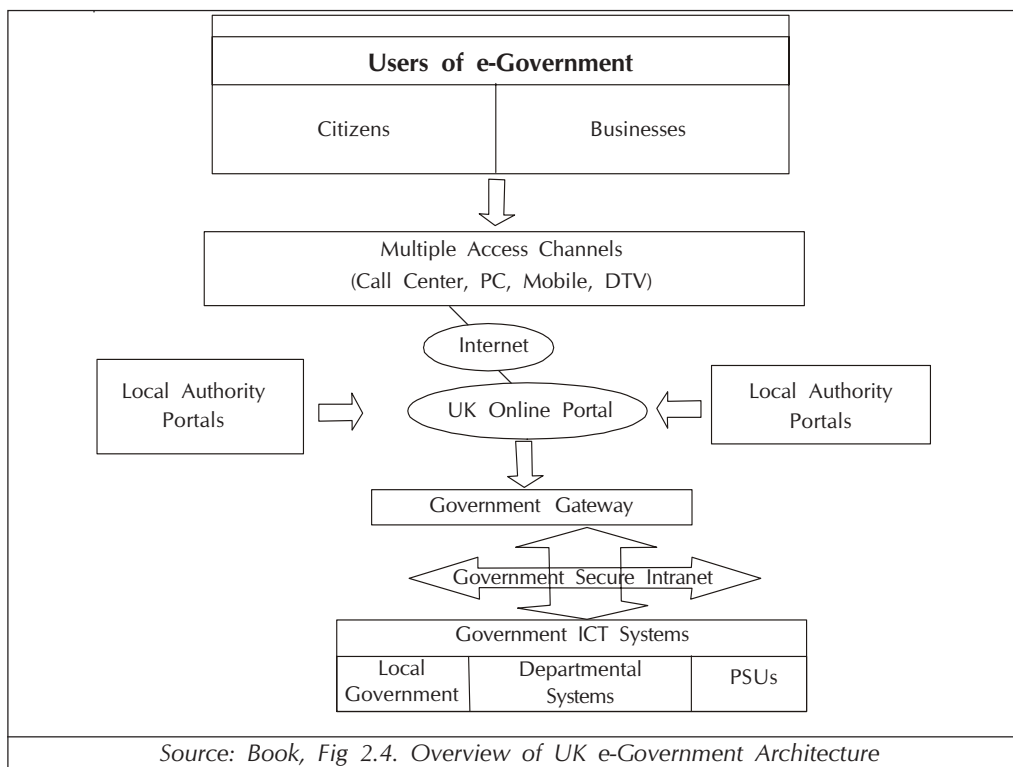
UK Model

UK e-Government architecture can be a benchmark in the Indian case. As many of the systems have been copied from the British, this architecture can be helpful in providing the better service delivery, which is backed up by the ICT systems of the Government. In this system, each UK online portal is connected to the Internet as it can be accessed by all the citizens through multiple access channels like Call centers, PC, mobile and DTV etc. E-Government gateway basically includes all the facilitators like original service providers, transaction service providers, enforcement service providers, repository, payment and support service providers. To build up the confidence of the citizens and to encourage the citizen participation, the portal provides government's secure Intranet so that any online transaction, like payment of telephone bills, electricity bills, railway ticket booking etc., can be done.

Other Aspects Related to e-Government

The presence of various service operators and the improvement of the delivery points would lead to a greater usage of these e-governance tools. There would also be various revenue models, thus reducing the burden on the government.

Technology, security of data, and enforcement of Cyber laws are also other very important issues, while discussing e-governance. Much of the data is highly sensitive and has to be managed most carefully and confidentially. Other data may not be so sensitive but cannot be subject to alteration (such as land records and date of birth). The book, then, has further



gone on to elaborate various security and technical standards which would interest the serious reader. The book has also discussed different case studies such as UK online, e-Seva, CARD etc., which have worked in their respective environments.

8. Conclusion

This is a book which has been written by a practitioner who has been one of the pioneers in implementing some form of e-governance in a difficult country like India, where both computer literacy and computer penetration is low. Remember, the author talks here about the needs and requirements of the average citizen. This means that the users should have the capability to increasingly understand and use the services which are meant for the common man. Therefore any government first starts with only an information portal and then gradually moves forward to the more user-friendly models, increasing stages of awareness.

The gains from reading this book are many, both for the superficial reader (who just wants to know what e-governance is all about) as well as the more professional readers who wish to find some solutions to the task on hand. Both types of readers and those in between will find some gain from reading this book. 📖

Reference # 27J-2005-03-09-03