
Public-Private Partnership for E-Governance Implementation in India

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Growth of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has been a landmark for our country. In one way, this sunshine sector has been instrumental in GDP growth of our country while at other end it has glorified the image of our country in the whole world. ICT has radically transformed every sphere of human living. Internet, e-Banking, e-Commerce have become part & parcel of our daily life.

Governments have also embraced ICT in the form of E-Governance for better service delivery and information dissemination to citizens (G-2-C) and for intra government transactions (G-2-G). It is a strategic opportunity for the governments to harness Information Technology to provide service excellence by increasing the efficiency of service and information delivery to citizens; build and strengthen the links and cooperation between government; its citizens and stakeholders; realize operational and financial efficiencies; assist in community building and outreach; and build an environment which encourages innovation. (Scott Nowlan, 2003)

1. E-Governance: An Overview-

Application of ICT for improving the quality of traditional governance is a new area of innovation and experimentation in India. Though practiced only at the fringes and usually by enthusiastic young officials, a quiet revolution in public services is in the offing (Mittra & Gupta, 2003). E-Governance possess the potential to bridge the gulf between the urban 'technology haves' and rural 'have nots', within and among the countries. (Annan, 2002)

World over, E-Governance is the outgrowth of the efforts made by the governments to improve relations with their citizens. With its ingrained transparency and openness, given the principles of Internet, E-Governance brings governments more close to their citizens. Therefore, E-Governance has a

larger social angle, as it ensures a more wide and representative democracy. (Holmes, 2003)

According to International Centre for E-Governance, UK – "*E-Governance implies Electronic Governance, which is the application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), to the process of government functioning to bring about Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsive, and Transparent (SMART) government*".

The World Bank view of E-Governance is comprehensive and extends to the use of Information Technology that has the ability to transform relations with citizens, business, and other arms of the government. Better delivery of citizen services, improved interaction with business and industry-citizen empowerment through access to information. Reduced corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth and/or cost reduction are the resulting benefits.

2. Literature Review: According to Devi (1999), Governments must establish broad partnerships with the private sector, local communities, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations. Due to spurt in the information revolution, the government role is changing, often shrinking, but not disappearing.

Sharma (2001) presented the conflicting views of government and business with the aim of having an effective and win-win mode of partnership for IT implementation. He recommended that the *government must provide efficient infrastructure and*

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transparency for sharing information throughout the country.

In India, large gaps exist in access to and quality of education, according to social class, location and gender. Effective partnership between government and the private sector is the key to reaping the full educational benefits of IT. Solution of real community problems lies in the collaboration between sectors including education, finance and telecommunication and a clear role of government for profit and non-profit actors. (Sarkar, 2003)

In the opinion of Shourie (2004) government policies must be responsive and there must be a concrete partnership between the public and private sectors.

Biersteker (2004) presented detailed picture of the growing influence and emergence of private authority in global governance. In his view, this phenomenon is illustrative of the changing, diminishing and transformational roles of the State, rather than the erosion of State sovereignty. He also discussed the implications of emergence of private authority.

Sreekumar (2004) asserts that government may benefit by imbibing the best practices of the private sector players in the service industry.

3. E-Governance in India: Important Milestones: E-Governance is still in its infancy stage in India. Some of the leading factors which are instrumental for the growth of E-Governance are mentioned below:

- 3.1 Process of economic reforms started in year 1991 by former finance minister Dr. Manmohan Singh during P. V. Narsimha Rao government, gave rise to the boom of computer industry in India.
- 3.2 NASSCOM played significant role towards the growth of IT industry, computerisation in government departments and in the formulation of IT Policies at Central and State levels.
- 3.3 Y2K problem provided worldwide employment opportunity to Indian software professionals and therefore India was accepted as a software giant at global level.
- 3.4 Setting up of Ministry of Information Technology

(MIT) in October 1999, in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government proved to be a landmark event in proliferation of IT sector and E-Governance. Formation of separate ministry has resulted in an open skies policy, fostering growth in all spheres of life.

MIT has constituted a task force, 'Information for Masses' to ensure that the benefits of ICT in the form of E-Governance are available in rural areas for the common man. Ministry adopted ICT for promoting literacy, improving quality of education, producing thousands of qualified professionals for direction of and supply of IT and IT enabled jobs for Indians.

- 3.5 Parliament passed '*Information Technology Act*' in the year 2000, which legitimises all electronic form of communications and transactions in India. With this, electronic storage in floppies, CDs and file transfer via e-mail got legal sanction. Electronic contract has been recognized to be legal and binding.
- 3.6 Hon'ble President of India *Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Azad* identified the potential of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to transform India into developed country. Therefore ICT sector has been included in the five major projects, which, according to Dr. Azad, shall be instrumental in the development of our country. The Project has been named as "India Millennium 2020".
- 3.7 In the year 2002, Indian government was fourth largest vertical spender on E-Governance and IT infrastructure in the world, with approximate spending of \$ 1.008 Billion.
- 3.8 In the 10th five-year plan; the target is set to allocate three to four percent of every department budget on Information Technology spending.
- 3.9 Planning Commission has also highlighted the need to conduct atleast 25 percent of every department's operations through computers.
- 3.10 Microsoft chairman Bill Gates visit to India in the year 2002 was a breakthrough event in the Indian history. Hon'ble President APJ Abdul Kalam, the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, IT minister Promod Mahajan and chief ministers of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Gujrat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttaranchal and few other States; and Industry members met Mr. Gates. These eminent people discussed the E-Governance position and problems of India and sought Microsoft's

participation in these initiatives.

3.11 Passage of '*Freedom of Information Bill 2002*' has been an important milestone in the history of Indian democracy, which grants statutory right to the citizens to access information from the government authorities. With the passage of this bill, India is now among the top 20 countries to have legislated measure, which is in the direction of providing transparency, openness and accountability in governmental functioning. Few states like Rajasthan, Goa, Karnataka and Delhi have already enacted legislation for 'right to information'.

4. Central Government Role for E-Governance Proliferation:

E-Governance initiatives at national level were started in the year 1981 with establishment of National Informatics Center (NIC) at all the district headquarters in our country. Since then, NIC has made significant strides towards computerizations in government departments, brought awareness among government employees and general masses to bridge the digital divide in our country.

Under Planning Commission, NIC made valuable contributions towards IT introduction and its penetration in our country. Growth of software and IT enabled services (ITES) at one end has increased foreign currency reserves of our country while on other end has generated noteworthy employment to Indian talents. Due to these reasons, under the progressive top leadership of the Governance 'Ministry of Information Technology (MIT)' was formed. A separate department under MICT; 'Department of Information Technology (DIT)' has also been set-up with the objectives of creation of wealth, employment generation and IT led economic growth.

Recently, DIT has made talks with the World Bank to raise funds for its National Action Plan on e-Governance 2003-2007. Around 22 E-Governance projects are covered under this plan including eight projects at the central level, nine at the State level and five in the integrated area.

To ensure that the benefits of an IT based economy reach the masses, MIT undertook a two

pronged strategy. On one hand many steps are taken to ensure growth of Indian IT industry at a fast pace following the international trends, while on the other hand, numerous measures have been adopted to ensure that benefits of technology reach the common man residing in the remotest part of the country.

Continuing on the similar lines, in May 2000, government constituted a working group on 'Information Technology for Masses'. Its objective was to formulate a set of policy initiatives to be implemented by various departments of central government, industry and entrepreneurs to achieve widespread applications of IT in all possible areas in the shortest possible time. All the recommendations made by this working group were accepted by parliament in the year 2001. On 26th April 2001 a National IT Mission (NITM) was setup in order to oversee its implementation.

Further, in an initiative to promote procedural simplicity, speed, convenience and to facilitate E-Governance, Department of Information Technology (DIT) has constituted a special cell '**Center for E-Governance**' at its head office in New Delhi.

Setting up of Centre for E-Governance :
Centre for E-Governance was setup on 15th August 2000 to accelerate the usage of IT in all spheres of governance and examines the practical implications of IT related issues with the objective of improving services to the citizens. The ultimate goal is to reach beyond current efforts and 'reinvent government' by identifying 'break-through' strategies that rethink the core value of key government services, improve service delivery, reduce costs and redefine administrative processes. The agencies demonstrating their applications at the Centre are C-DAC, CMC, NIC, Microsoft, Oracle and Comvision. In future, more agencies are expected to participate. Centre also proposes to arrange for guided tours of the IT Ministers of various states, Parliamentarians, Legislators and decision makers on a regular basis.

In order to support various State level E-Governance initiatives, Department of Information Technology (DIT), along with National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM) has floated National Institute of Smart Governance (NISG)

for consultation on E-Governance projects.

According to its Chief Executive Officer J. Satyanarayana, "NISG has been formed, based on public-private partnership model, so that government can draw resources, and synergies can be attained between both the sectors.

DIT, under the multi-donor grant programme of World Bank named 'Information for Development Programme (InfoDev)', has done the assessment of e-Readiness of each State, Union Territory, Central Ministries and Departments. Its mission is to promote the application of these technologies and the sharing of best ICT practices for socio-economic development with a special emphasis on the needs of the poor in developing economies.

In year 2001, Government approved the policy of allocation of 2 to 3 percent of the budget for IT. The Planning Commission of Government of India has also recommended the government to earmark Rs. 3000 crore (US \$587 million) in addition to the 3 percent plan outlay of each ministry for E-Governance and convergence of projects during the 10th Five Year Plan (2002-2007).

Further in an effort to empower the villages of India and make them a part of the Knowledge Society, the Technology Information Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC), an autonomous body under the Ministry of Science and Technology (MST),

has developed a Rs.700 crore integrated rural connectivity and linkage plan called 'Rural Prosperity Through Connectivity' (RTPC)..

In the year 2003, the central government proposed a total outlay of Rs. 2550 crore (\$ 560 million) for the national plan of E-Governance. According to Gartner estimates, the Indian government has spent around \$1 billion on IT in year 2002. This includes the expenditure of the state and central governments on hardware, software, telecom equipments and services.

5. E-Governance Initiatives of various State Governments

Though the status of E-Governance is still in infancy in India, various State governments have started some E-Governance initiatives in their efforts to bring efficiency and transparency in the government functioning. Around 20 States and Union Territories already have an IT policy in place. An analysis of NASSCOM's E-Governance implementation undertaken in 10 key States mentions that the southern States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu are leading in terms of E-Governance initiatives, while States like Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and West Bengal are rapidly following them. Major E-Governance initiatives of some of the States are mentioned below:

Table 1: Major E-Governance Projects at State Governments Level

State	Major E-Governance Projects
Andhra Pradesh	Twins Project (E-Seva), E-Cops Project, Card, Fast
Kerala	FRIENDS, Smart Ration Card Project, E-Shringla, Ernakulam Panchayat Project, The Akshaya Project , N – Logue Rural Connectivity Project
Karnataka	Bhoomi Project, Bellandur Panchayat's Project
Madhya Pradesh	Gyandoot Project, Head Start Project, General Information Access System (GIAS), E-Agriculture Marketing Scheme
Gujarat	Panchamahals Project, Dairy Information Services Kiosk (DISK) Project, Gujarat Road Transport Department's Computerized Check Post Project
Himachal Pradesh	Lokmitra Project
Haryana	Sampark Project
West Bengal	WBSWAN
Rajasthan	Lok Mitra, Jan Mitra, E-Mitra, Aarakshi, RajCREST

6. Private Players' Contribution: In the implementation of E-Governance, government alone cannot perform all the required tasks. It is due to the fact that while explosive development of ICT is becoming a potent tool of empowerment, billions of people in the world remain untouched by these developments. Therefore in order to make truly global, inclusive and human development oriented information society, stakeholders like government, private sector, civil society need to combine their efforts. (Annan, 2002) In India, these Non-state actors i.e. hardware manufacturers, software companies, consultancy organizations, NGOs and trade associations have been playing a significant role. Some of these initiatives are given below:

6.1 Department of Information Technology (DIT), in collaboration with leading research organizations, **National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER)** and **Indian Market Research Bureau (IMRB)**, has done the e-Readiness assessment of States and Central Ministries/ Departments. This was done through six broad criteria. These are IT Preparedness, IT Policy, IT Infrastructure, People, Processes and IT Benefits.

6.2 Computer Society of India (CSI), in its ongoing activities towards computer proliferation, since the year 2000 has instituted a series of Awards for recognizing significant contributors in the field of E-Governance. Among these, one award is 'The Best e-Governed State'; four awards for 'the best E-Governance Projects' implemented by any of the government department. These are the 'Best Citizen Centric E-Governance Project', 'Best Web Site Project', 'Best Project in improving internal office efficiency' and 'Best Project in the area of Revenue improvement including plugging the leakages'. From year 2003, these awards have been modified in terms of 'Best e-Governed state – advanced', 'Best e-Governed state – young', 'Best Technical Company in E-Governance' and 'Best E-Governance Project by PSU, NGOs etc'.

In the year 2003, CSI organized its 38th national convention on the theme 'ICT for prosperity of Mankind'. Out of the many sub-themes, two sub-themes were 'E-Governance' and 'e-Services for Rural Masses'.

6.3 TARA Kendra – Digital Hope for

Rural India: Niwari village of Tikamgarh District(MP), with a population of around 25000 is witnessing a digital revolution that is slowly spreading all over the Indian countryside. At the center of this change are the cyber kiosk and information booth named as TARA Kendra, which offers a range of services and facilities to the villagers. Citizens come to TARA Kendra and can apply online for government certificates, grievances redressal, can get knowledge for a better life, training for job skills, get access to necessary information to create a livelihood. According to Dr. Ashok Khosla, president, Development Alternatives, promoter of TARAhaat, this setup has created vast opportunities for sustainable livelihoods, both in the TARA kendras themselves as well as outside, using its facilities to provide information and marketing channels that can empower young entrepreneurs to setup rural industries.

Recently with the help of digital technology leader, Samsung, Development Alternatives is creating a 'Hope Incubator Fund', designed to help young first time entrepreneurs successfully run their own business, a Tara Kendra. This project is supported by Samsung, as part of its 'DigitAll Hope' initiative. This is the company's largest regional social programme, being implemented in eight Asian countries simultaneously with the objective of helping the youth bridge the digital divide.

6.4 Conferences: India has witnessed many seminars & conferences on E-Governance. Some of them are cited here.

6.4.1 A two-day international conference was organised by the *Mahatma Gandhi State Institute of Public Administration, Punjab* in partnership with the *British Council* and supported by the *Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology*. Conference titled "Building effective E-Governance" focused on key areas in E-Governance including citizens and e-Service deliver, infrastructure requirements for E-Governance, legal aspects of privacy and security issues in E-Governance.

6.4.2 Media Company **Indiatimes** organized a seminar '**E-Governance in the Digital Age & E-Business Strategies for the Public Sector**' on 27th 29th and 30th May 2003 in New Delhi, Bangalore and Hyderabad respectively. Key Note Speaker of these

seminars was Global E-Governance Guru Mr. Douglas Holmes. Principal Secretary-IT of Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Goa were among the other prominent speakers of this event.

6.4.3 Punjab State IAS Officers Organisation, in partnership with **Cisco systems and IBM** organized a day seminar on "*Governance in the 21st century – challenges before the civil servants*". This seminar aimed at focusing the IAS officers of Chandigarh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab on E-Governance and how technology can be leveraged to make the life of citizens easier.

6.4.4 Administrative Staff Development College of India (ASCI), along with **Andhra Pradesh Government, Software Technology Park Hyderabad and Computer Society of India (CSI)** organized a One-Day workshop on "IT Policies and their Implementation" in October 2001 to share the IT policies at all the levels. Mr. Rajeev Ratan Shah, IAS, Secretary Ministry of IT was the key speaker of the workshop. Leading IT organizations of India like WIPRO, TCS, Infosys, Satyam; public sector organizations like NIC, CMC along with professional bodies like NASSCOM, CII, IETE and CSI took part in this workshop.

6.5 IBM has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with National Institute of Smart Governance (NISG), under this agreement IBM will help NISG in setting up a open source competence laboratory in India. IBM will also provide its e-Governance framework standards, project management skills and help NISG in building software applications using open source software platforms.

6.6 Microsoft has inked an MOU after the meeting of its Chairman, Bill Gates and Chief Minister of Uttaranchal Shri N. D. Tiwari. According to the MOU, Microsoft has forged a strategic partnership with the State government to setup the first Hindi IT lab of the country in Dehradun, Microsoft would also setup two centres of excellence for E-Governance in Uttaranchal, based on its technologies. Microsoft will also support the State government's projects Arohi and Haridwar. Arohi aims at making 3,80,000 students across the higher secondary and intermediate schools and colleges, computer literate over three years and building of 1500 master trainers. Project Haridwar is

focused on developing applications for pilgrims.

6.7 TATA Consultancy Services (TCS), has signed an agreement with Japanese hardware maker NEC to collaborate in four areas. Out of these, one area is E-Governance also.

6.8 Role of NASSCOM: National Association of Software Companies is the apex association of software companies in India, which provides valuable suggestions to government on each and every aspect of IT, i.e. hardware, software, training, entry of foreign MNC's in India, export of Indian products or government usage of computers. Efforts for E-Governance implementation in India, were started under the stewardship of its founder president, late Shri Dewang Mehta and reached at its peak under the direction of current president of NASSCOM, Shri Kiran Kamik.

NASSCOM has identified e-Governance and banking as the two big opportunities within the domestic market, and projects revenues of Rs. 25,000 crore for the E-Governance market by year 2007. (Neri, 2001)

NASSCOM has launched the "India: IT Users Awards" in order to promote IT usage among organizations. This award will help in highlighting the best practices in the domestic industry and aims to recognize the organizations that are making the most efficient use of Information Technology in India.

NASSCOM has demanded complete exemption of excise and customs duty to encourage the manufacturers of cheaper computers, a 100 percent annual depreciation on PCs, exemption of all duties on sale of computers to Gram Panchayats and local governments in addition to educational institutes.

In the year 2003, **NASSCOM** recommended some measures for effective implementation of E-Governance which may lead to saving of Rs. 500 crores in transaction process cost per year. These measures may also be helpful in increase of revenue by Rs. 2000 crores through better tax enhancement annually. These Recommendations are given below.

Phase I: By the end of 2003

- IT training should be mandatory for all class I

government personnel.

- Tendering and bid evaluation procedure should be rewritten.
- National Institute of Smart Governance (NISG) must be fully operational.

● Role of NIC should be clearly defined

Phase II: By the end of 2004

- State wise area network must be created in entire country.

- All the government departments must maintain the PC:Personnel Ratio of 1:4.

- All the core national projects must be identified that need to be automated.

- All the citizens must be provided with national citizen ID cards.

- Computerisation of land records must be completed in all the states.

- State funding from Centre should be linked to E-Governance spending.

Phase II: By the end of 2005

- Majority of citizen services must be offered online in all states.

- 50 percent of all Government procurement should be online.

- More focus should be given on developing applications for primary health, disaster management and education

- Public-Private Partnership must be accelerated.

6.9 Unique Experiment done by **NIIT Computers** shows that everybody has the potential to learn computer. This project named 'Hole-In-The-Wall' has debunked many myths and assumptions about learning process. Under this project, a computer, keyboard and a mouse were placed in a hole created in the wall of NIIT's South Delhi office. The machine was left without instructions to anybody and a camera continuously tracked its use. The experiment showed that children from a nearby slum area regardless of their lack of proficiency in English and the absence of any direct instruction became highly proficient at using the graphic interface, and in surfing the web.

6.10 **ITC's e-Choupal** launched in June 2000, has been specially designed to tackle the challenges posed by the unique features of Indian agriculture characterised by fragmented farms, weak infrastructure and the involvement of numerous intermediaries. e-Choupal leverages the information technology to virtually link the cluster of the value chain

participants. This model covers 21000 villages of six States Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan through 4100 kiosks and reaches 2 million farmers.

6.11 In Delhi, **Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD)** has engaged **ICICI InfoTech** for consultancy and project management services.

6.12 **Karnataka Government, along with Azim Premji Foundation**, has setup Community Learning Centers (CLC) in state run schools to enhance learning among rural children through use of computers. In the first phase in 2001, 35 CLCs were launched in Bangalore, Kolar and Mandya districts. In the second phase beginning November 2002, another 55 CLCs have been setup across 11 talukas. By June another 135 CLCs were setup in 27 talukas. These CLCs are managed by youth from the local community – Young India Fellows (YIFs) after getting training from Azim Premji Foundation.

6.13 IT major **Hewlett-Packard**, with the aim to bring IT to underserved communities, has started an E-Governance project named '**I-Community**' in the Kuppam constituency in the south-western corner of Andhra Pradesh. Applications made by HP, makes it easier for those living in villages to access information regarding government services, health, education and traditional medicines.

6.14 **State government of Pondicherry** has sought technical assistance from many software companies and consultants on the kind of architecture for its E-Governance initiatives. **Andhra Pradesh government** has appointed **HCL Comnet** to conduct audit of its E-Governance practice. Integration of all the e-Governance projects of Andhra Pradesh has been done by **TATA Consultancy Services (TCS)**. Its portal www.aponline.gov.in is already operational since last few months.

6.15 The famous Gujarat based trade unions of Women, **Self Help Women Association (SEWA)**, has also started harnessing satellite technology for efficient operations. Around 5,30,000 women members of 11 districts of Gujarat use Satellite Communication (SatCom), in combination with other media such as video for mobilization, information sharing, rural networking and training of grassroots women

members in their projects related to earthquake reconstruction, insurance, Panchayat Raj and forestry.

6.16 Initiative made by social organizations **Udaan and Jiva Institute** based at Uttar Pradesh; **Katha, Deepalaya, Datamation Foundation** based at Delhi also proves that the role of private (non-state) actors has been very significant in the proliferation of IT among the masses.

6.17 **E-Cube Project:** With the grant of Rs. 4.5 crore provided by **World Bank, Vidya Institute of Information Technology (VIIT)** has kicked off a major e-education drive in Baramati near Pune. Under this programme, VIIT uses IT for education, commerce and governance. IT education is imparted to almost 5000 school children through mobile vans equipped with 20 high-speed computers, backup generator and two IT instructors each.

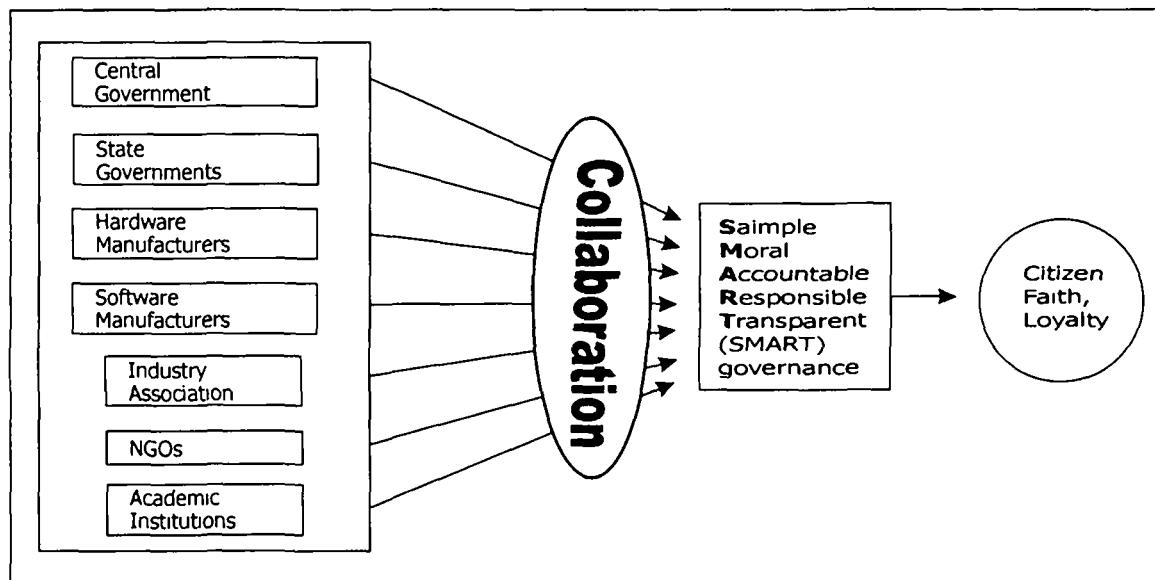
6.18 The **Electronic Commerce Network of India (ecomnetIndia)**, an association of professionals from both IT and non-IT companies, is whole-heartedly targeting at the 'information deprived' in remote areas. Under this drive, ecomnetIndia hold E-Governance seminar in Lucknow (UP) in collaboration with the **Uttar Pradesh government** and come out with '**Lucknow Declaration**'. Under this declaration, government plans to launch IT and Internet awareness drive among all tiers of

government, by conducting follow up workshops in different districts and regional centers. Later on, similar seminar was conducted by ecomnetIndia in Assam also, in collaboration with the State government.

Conclusion: In India, both center & various State governments have started harnessing the technology for the transformation of processes and for speedier and more proactive decision making. The technology firm Gartner Inc. sees government evolving into a "real time enterprise", by using up-to-date information to progressively remove delays in the management and execution of critical administrative processes.

While independently every projects offers wide scope for the development of society, these projects lack uniformity and national perspective. Today, the big challenge for India is to coordinate the activity of these islands and create an overall E-Governance Package. (Holmes, 2003) This needs lot of financial & non-financial commitment. Therefore role of non-state actors becomes very crucial. This can be explained using following model. Effective coordination & unification of public-private efforts can definitely be instrumental in realising the vision of SMART government in India.

Public-Private Partnership for SMART Government



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