

## E-Service Delivery-A Comparitive Study of SETU, Maha e-Seva Kendra(CSC) and MahaOnline

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### Introduction

Many countries have realized the importance of adopting e-Government as a tool for providing effective and citizen-centric services. E-Government uses ICT for delivering government services, exchange of information and integration of various unconnected systems between governments, employees, citizens and businesses. It helps in the efficient retention, recovery and quick dispersal of information as well as automation of front-end and backend processes at government offices.(Warale,Diwakar,2016).

Country like India is not far behind in implementing such province. Every state government in India is updating, transforming, adopting to these ICT trends in service delivery. Maharashtra is one such state which has come with MahaeSeva Kendra and Mahaonlineportal to deliver services to its citizens at the doorstep. These initiatives envisaged to make government services available to citizens through robust Online infrastructure and better internet connectivity.

Further this paper presents comparative study of three such e-Governance Initiatives(SETU, Maha e-Seva and Mahaonline portal) offering similar kind of services in terms of infrastructure ,technology used, issues, benefits ,efficiency etc.

Finally we review some noteworthy literature on e-service delivery progress across the world.

The paper is structured as follows:- The next presented is the review of relevant literature related to e-Governance Index, e-service delivery, e-parti, followed by comparative study and findings, recommendations conclusion followed by references.

### Literature Review

In this section the current status of e-Governance progress in various regions of the world is presented [UN's e-government survey, 2018]

#### *Region wise comparison of e-Governance progress:*

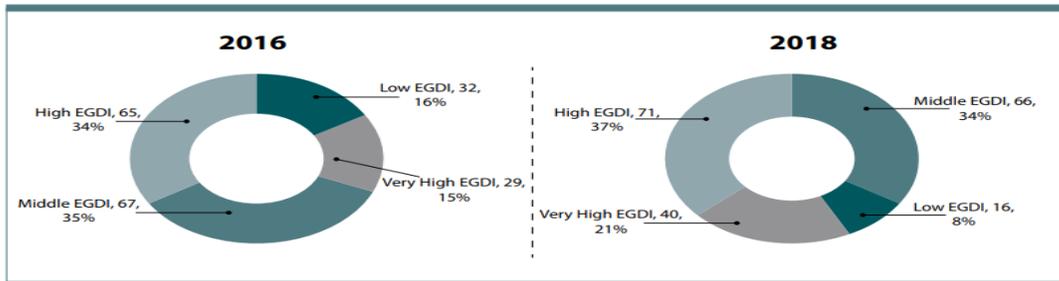
- **Europe**–European countries lead e-government development globally; the Americas and Asia share almost equal standing in high and middle e-government index levels
- **Asia**– Two thirds of countries in Asia (31 out of 47) have above the world average EGDI score of 0.55.
- **America**–Almost half of countries in Americas (15 out of 35) have above the world average EGDI score of 0.55. Uruguay is the only Latin American country with Very-High EGDI scores
- **Africa**– Only 4 countries out of 54 in Africa score higher than the world average EGDI of 0.55, whereas 14 countries have very low EGDI scores below 0.25.
- **Oceania**-The disparity in e-government development level is also rather high among the countries in both Africa and Oceania regions. Australia and New Zealand are the only two countries in Oceania that score as high as 0.9053 and 0.8806 respectively.
- Denmark,Australia,Republic of Korea,Sweden,Finland,Sinagapore,New Zeland, France, Japan have topped e-Government Development Index. All 193 Member States of the United Nations had national portals and back-end systems to automate core administrative tasks, and 140 provide at least one transactional service online.

Up to 176 countries in 2018 provide archived information online compared to 154 in 2016[UN's e-government survey, 2018]

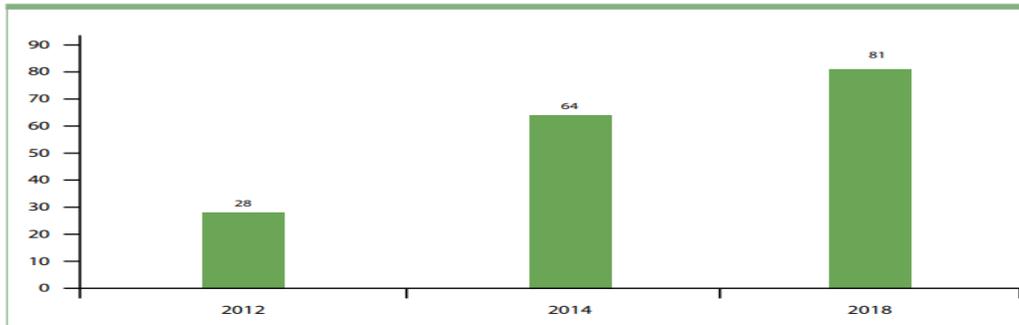
- **EDGI Comparison:** Figure No.1 shows comparison of distribution of counties in Low, Middle, High and very high (EDGI) in 2016 and 2018. It is interesting to know that India falls in the category of high EDGI more than 0.50.

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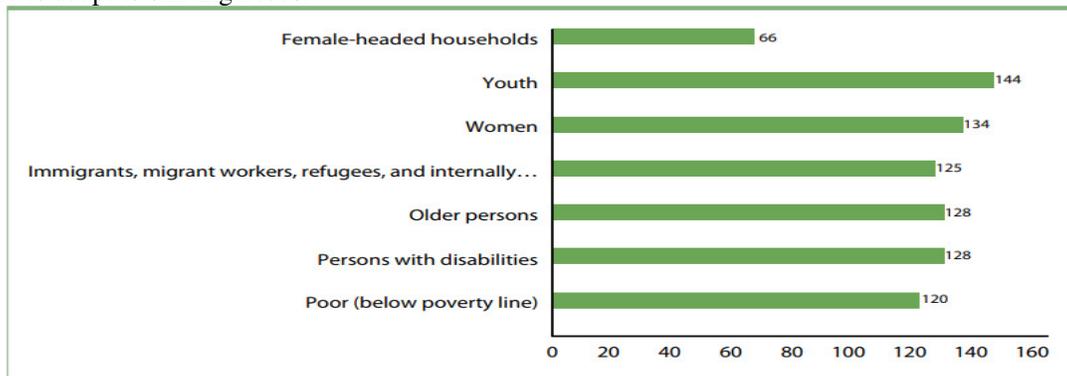


**Figure No.1: Number of countries grouped by E-Government Development Index (EGDI) in 2016 and 2018**

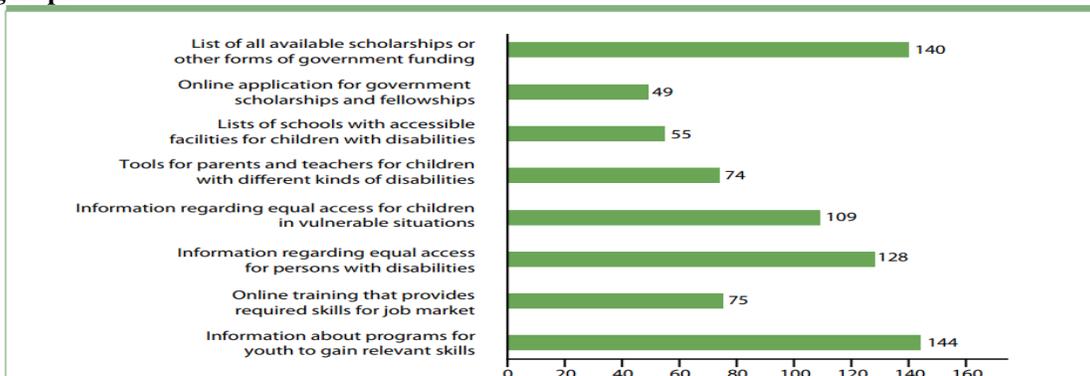


**Figure No. 2: No. of countries with online e-service delivery arrangements**

There has been notable progress recently in e-services aimed at disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. According to the Survey, the number of country websites with information about specific programmes and initiatives to benefit women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, indigenous peoples, people living in poverty, or other vulnerable groups and communities, has been increasing steadily since 2012. Emerging technologies are also enabling governments to improve e-service delivery and to adapt to shifting needs.



**Figure No.3 No. of countries showing specific online government services available to vulnerable groups**



#### **Figure No.4 Educational Access**

Figure No.4 shows number of countries providing online access to students patens regarding scholarships, disabilities, job market etc.

Next section explains the background of SETU, Maha e-Seva Kendra and Mahaonline .

#### **1.\*Background of SETU, Maha e-Seva Kendra and Mahaonline:**

##### **• SETU**

SETU an e-Governanceproject in the state of Maharashtra was started in 2002by the Directorate of Information Technology with anaim to provide greater transparency, accessibility andefficiency to government procedures. SETU or CFC (Citizen Facilitation Center) is a single window system where citizenscome to avail various services such as nationality and domicile certificate, caste certificate etc. [Warale,Diwakar,2016]

***Geographical Spread of the SETU Initiative:*** Spread across all 36 districtsand covers 333 sub districts in Maharashtra.

***\*Details of services offered:*** Total 47 services are offered to citizens such as nationality certificate,domicile certificate, income certificate non creamy layer certificate etc.

##### **• \*COMMON SERVICE CENTERS (“MAHA E SEVAKENDRAS”):**

In 2008, The Government of Maharashtra (GoM) started CommonService Centers (CSCs) scheme under the control of the NeGP. These centers are called “Maha e SevaKendras”. Objective was to provideservices similar to those provided by SETU to all its citizens near their residences.

These centers use a homogeneous web based system operated by residents ofvillages called the Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs) and managed by Service Center Agencies (SCAs). Kendra operators enter the information on behalf of thecitizens and upload the scanned documents. Certificates are then processed by theback office .VLE’s then handover the certificates to citizens. The time of deliverygenerally varies between 7 to 15 days [SCA Performance Assessment & CSC Survey, GoM, May 2014]. This project was initiated in 2008, however its actual implementation startedonly in 2010. Recently, these Kendras were merged with Mahaonline Ltd. The next section discusses Mahaonline.

**• \*MAHAONLINE:**

##### **• \*MAHAONLINE:**

MahaOnline Ltd. is a joint venture formed in 2010 between Government ofMaharashtra and TATA Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS). MahaOnline is now aprime implementer of e-Governance in Maharashtra. It provides support to variousgovernment departments in Maharashtra 2015,October] Retrieved through[https://www.mahaonline.gov.in Molweb/1100 /about us](https://www.mahaonline.gov.in/Molweb/1100/aboutus) .

At present the functioning of all e-Seva Kendra is monitored by MahaOnline.In line with this progress it is worth mentioning that the Government of Maharashtrahas passed the Maharashtra Right to Public Services Act, 2015 on 21st August andcame into existence on 2nd October 2015.

***\*[https://sg.inflibnet.ac.in/Ph. D. Thesis](https://sg.inflibnet.ac.in/Ph.D.Thesis) submitted by Dr.Prajakta Warale to Savitribai Phule Pune University, Topic-“A study of e-Governance Initiative: SETU Project in selected districts of western Maharashtra state”***

Under this act 42 services of differentgovernment departments such as Revenue, Rural development and Panchayat Raj,Forest, IGR skill development, Labor and Water are offered online through the web portal [www.aapalesarkar.mahaonline.gov.in](http://www.aapalesarkar.mahaonline.gov.in). GoM implemented “Maharashtra Right to Public Services Act 2015” to provide forthe delivery of transparent, efficient and timely public services to those eligible inthe State of Maharashtra.

A Citizen can make an application, upload the documents and pay fees onlineby debit or credit card. A Citizen can also track the status of the online application.Under this act delays in providing the services would result in action against theofficer which will be in the form of a fine of an amount between Rs.500 toRs.5000 [MRPSA,2015]. However, this initiative is in the nascent stage, it will take considerable timefor the system to get mature. The researcher has made certain noteworthy suggestions.

Next section presents comparative study of SETU Suvidha Kendra and Maha e-Seva Kendra.

#### **2.Comparative Study Of SETU & Mahae-Seva Kendra:**

Maha e-Seva Kendra which caters the same set of services to citizens and is present inevery ward of the Municipal Corporation. It is to be noted that Maha e-Seva initiativewas introduced after the researcher

chose the topic and the e-seva Kendra has offered services in a very restricted way only for the past two years. In Table given below presents a comparison of both the service delivery centers.

Sr. No.	Parameter	SETU Suvidha Kendra	Maha eSeva Kendra(CSC)
1	Establishment	2002	2008
2	Established by	Govt. of Maharashtra	Govt. of India under aegis NeGP
3	Geographic Reach	36 districts collector offices ,333 sub district places, 5 Municipal Bodies, one Zilla Parishad and some Gram Panchayats	Established in every ward in the sub district, at village level,at the doorstep of citizens (10518 CSC's have been rolled out as of 2013-14)
4	Objectives	To provide to the citizens of the State more and more services & information in an accessible, efficient, transparent and integrated manner on a sustained basis.	Deliver government, private and social sector services to all its citizens near their residences.
5	No. of services offered	47	Ranging from 5 to 20
6	Implementation	Implemented on BOT basis by inviting bid at sub district level	Implemented on BOT basis by inviting application at ward level.
7	BOT Operator	Different for different sub district with different SETU software.	Different at every ward at Panchayat level and sub district (Recently Maha e-Seva taken over by Mahaonline.)
8	Volume of	High	Low

9	Software Interoperability And Integrity	No	Yes
10	Average walk in at center	250	0-20
11	No. of applications received	100-150	10-20
12	No. of certificates daily issued	117	5-10
13	No. of employees working	10-30	Below 5
14	Distance from home	1) 6 - 10 km 2) 11 – 20 km	3 to 6 km.
15	Awareness of service Center	Friends and relatives	Friends and relatives
16	Filling up application form	Citizen fill up application form	VLE fill up online application form.
17	Communication of application status	Notice board	Phone
18	Application rejection	More	Less
19	No of visits required to get the service	3-5 visits	1-3 visits
20	No. of days required to get the service	8-15 days	8-15 days
21	Cost of the service	Rs.20-Rs.40	Rs 65-Rs.100
22	No. of computers	10-14	2
23	No. of printers	6-8	1
24	No. of scanners	1	1
25	No. of Xerox machines	1	1
26	Internet connection	Available	Available
27	Type	Broadband	Broadband
28	Antivirus	Installed	Installed
29	Name of antivirus	Net Protector/Quick heal	Net Protector
30	Backup facility	Available	Available
31	Frequency of	Daily and monthly	Daily {Highly dependent on

	Backup		internet connectivity to headquarter }
32	Categorisation of services and counters arrangement	Yes	No
33	Performance issues	Connectivity problem for hardware and software	Online Connectivity problem for VLE portal Very slow processing
34	Major complaints of citizen	More waiting period Improper guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More waiting period</li> <li>• More service charges</li> <li>• Connectivity problem</li> <li>• Server unavailable due to maintenance downtime during working hours.</li> </ul>
35	Adherence to e-governance policy of GoM	Partial	Partial

**Figure No.5 Comparison Table of SETU and Maha e-Seva Kendra**

- SETU started in the year 2002, in every sub district in the state of Maharashtra initially; it was the only center to deliver 47 types of services to citizens. But there were geographical limitations for citizens visiting SETU and there was a rush at the center during the period of May to July every year because a large number of student citizens were applying for nationality, caste and non creamy layer certificate etc.
- Later in 2008 GoM under aegis of NeGP declared Maha e-Seva Kendra, however its actual implementation started only in 2010-12. Maha e-Seva Kendra started in every ward within the limits of Municipal Corporation and also at the Panchayat level with the objective of catering services to the citizens at their door step.
- Initially the government issued zone wise contracts to CMS for Amravati, Aurangabad, Basix for Nasik, Spanco for Konkan, Pune and Reliance for Nagpur as the service center Agency (SCA). These SCA interns offered franchises of Maha e-Seva Kendra to Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs) who were in essence nothing but residents of these villages. Recently all these Kendras were transferred to Maha Online Ltd.
- Maha e-Seva Kendra basically uses a single homogenous web based system at all the centers. The operators make an online submission of service requests on behalf of the citizens, scan and upload the documents for which the citizens have to visit the nearest Kendra. A survey was carried out by the researcher in the year 2012-13. This system, during the period mentioned was still in the nascent stage, so it could not be considered as the research topic.
- As far as the performance of Maha e-Seva Kendra is concerned, being an online system, VLE's have to completely depend on the network connectivity to upload the service requests. Most of the time, VLE's do not perform to the standards, due to traffic congestion and inadequate maintenance.
- Also, citizens have reported high service charges and long waiting periods. Only limited services are offered by the Kendra. It has also been observed that services like solvency certificate, self employment certificate, and different services required by farmers, financial assistance to freedom fighter's relatives and various types of permits are not offered by Maha e-Seva Kendra.
- Although the government's objectives behind starting the Maha e-Seva Kendra was to offer the services at the doorstep of the citizens, they still queue up in the SETU Suvidha Kendra's for availing the services. The total number of service requests received by the Maha e-Seva Kendra ranges between 10 and 20 requests per day.

Next section reports findings from the comparison of SETU Suvidha Kendra and Maha e-Seva Kendra.

#### **Findings:**

In the last few months, the state of Maharashtra has been very active on the e-Governance front. One of the foremost activities has been the Maha e-Seva Kendras and the introduction of them to every ward with

a focus on accessibility. Being a web-enabled system, the usage of the portal by VLEs is tremendously affected due to frequent issues related to internet connectivity. This in turn has resulted in more citizens selecting the SETU Suvidha Kendra over Maha e-Seva Kendra. Another noteworthy finding of the study is that, Maha e-Seva Kendras do not offer all government services and charge more money than the SETU Suvidha Kendra.

As far as SETU is concerned, it is one of the oldest initiatives, existing for more than a decade. The findings sections clearly indicated 'marginal satisfaction' by the citizens and hence it can be concluded that, there is ample scope for improving SETU in all aspects. Suggestions for improvements are presented next.

#### **Suggestions:**

SETU is a working system and to implement any improvement in such systems requires money and time. As an immediate step, the following suggestion that will incur minimal cost and will not hamper the day-to-day work of SETU is described.

This will definitely cause an instant impact in the functioning of SETU resulting in a reduction in both, service delays and required number of visits.

Government is making rapid progress in rolling out services through Maha e-Seva Kendra. Recently, the monitoring and control of Maha e-Seva Kendra was transferred to Mahaonline. Latest updates revealed that the Government plans to offer all government services through Maha e-Seva Kendra. These centers are becoming highly prominent delivery points for various government services. In the long run, the government plans to roll out more services through Maha e-Seva Kendra. It is worthwhile to mention that the single homogeneous software being used by this initiative helps maintain standards and helps in extensions. Also through [www.aapalesarkar.mahaonline.gov.in](http://www.aapalesarkar.mahaonline.gov.in), online web-enabled services are being made available.

At this juncture, it has become crucial for the researcher to analyze the role of SETU and the course it hopes to follow in the long run. The conclusions arrived at are as given below:-

- Centers like SETU cannot be abolished all of a sudden, since a significant percentage of the rural population still visit SETU centers to avail services. However introducing online services in SETU would require rewriting the software which makes no sense as [www.aapalesarkar.mahaonline.gov.in](http://www.aapalesarkar.mahaonline.gov.in) already operational, though with limited services as of now.
- Till date not all the services are being offered by The Maha e-seva Kendras, hence SETU has to continue to exist.
- Once the Maha e-Seva Kendra becomes more robust and operational, SETU Suvidha Kendra need to be phased out slowly. The main difference being single homogeneous software against multiple softwares usage, which will help the government to do away with multiple vendors and heterogeneity. Hence it has become clear that the Maha e-Seva Kendras will become a vital e-governance service provider, the researcher did an in depth study of the same and has offered suggestions in the next section.

#### **Suggestions for Maha e-Seva Kendra, MahaOnline:**

- Mahaonline Ltd. should resolve the issues of Maha e-Seva Kendra related to server connectivity so that, applications can be uploaded and services can be delivered without causing any delay. Constant network connectivity will help Maha e-Seva Kendra take a daily backup of transactions.
- It is suggested that the size of the application be reduced to one page.
- Service charges must be reduced and must be made uniform for all service categories. At present the charges for services provided by the Maha e-Seva Kendra are more than those of SETU; hence, the charges per service must be reworked or recalculated.
- Citizens should be required to attach only relevant and necessary enclosures to the documents.
- Introduce express delivery service with higher charges, so as to enable faster service delivery in case of exigency.

#### **Verification of documents:**

In the current scenario, it is observed that, some people submit fraudulent documents to, Maha e-Seva Kendra and agents sitting outside the center, make the replica copy/fraud certificate and give it to the citizens. Thus, it is suggested **that a physical verification of documents be carried out, similar to the procedure for passport processing.** Another way to verify the documents is **online verification which, is possible only if the web portal provides connectivity to different government departments.** For e.g. The

verification of birth certificate can be done online by establishing online connectivity with the Municipal Corporation.

- At present, only a few services are offered through the Maha e-Seva Kendra. Services such as financial assistance to freedom fighters relatives, certificates required by farmers, and permits are currently not offered through the Maha e-Seva Kendra. Thus, it is necessary to increase the range of services so that more services are made available to the citizens which, will in turn raise the number of citizens visiting the Maha e-Seva Kendra.

- The study suggested that all Maha e-Seva Kendras are equipped with limited ICT infrastructure such as one computer and one printer. It is suggested that the number of computers and printers be increased so that the Kendra can process more application requests.

- **Suggestions for [www.aapalesarkar.mahaonline.gov.in](http://www.aapalesarkar.mahaonline.gov.in):**

- Newly launched service delivery portal [www.aapalesarkar.mahaonline.gov.in](http://www.aapalesarkar.mahaonline.gov.in) where citizen can submit application form online, pay online and get the service online.

- However, looking into the e-literacy of Maharashtra, rural to urban population ratio, people carrying out online transaction, online payment etc. may impede the growth of effective utilization of services online. Citizens do not know how to register, upload online, moreover the online application form was lengthy. The process of making online application is very time consuming. Hence physical application form submission should always exist at the Maha e-Seva Kendras.

Next suggestions are offered for proving usability and also for improving the service delivery through the web portal [www.aapalesarkar.mahaonline.gov.in](http://www.aapalesarkar.mahaonline.gov.in).

- Demo of how to use online system must be included on the web portal.

- The Web portal must have a FAQs section to address the different queries of the citizens.

- Online complaint system: By providing proper email addresses, complaints or any grievances can also be sent by the citizens.

- It is **recommended that the online verification** of documents be carried out in the future, which would be possible only if the web portal provided connectivity to different government departments. For e.g. the verification of birth certificate can be done online by establishing online connectivity with the Municipal Corporation.

- Only a limited number of the required enclosures must be asked of the citizens. Indeed, the portal must be connected internally to the Digital locker facility of GOI, which will act as central repository of the citizen's enclosures and ensures the easy transfer of documents and proofs to the Maha Online service delivery web portal.

- It must also be noted that it is mandatory to sign the services digitally. Thus connectivity to the e-sign initiative is a very important step at this juncture. This will help in signing the certificates digitally. At the same time safety issues must also be carefully taken care of. Safety can be ensured by conducting a regular IT audit.

- It is further suggested **that more awareness be created and more people must be encouraged to avail the services online.**

The researcher believes that, if the suggestions made above are implemented, it may improve service delivery, the ease of use and results in a very effective e-governance.

The new web enabled system will help in achieving the ultimate goal of bringing governance to the doorstep.

### **Conclusion:**

It is worthwhile to mention that when the researcher selected the topic, SETU was the only oldest e-governance initiative, offering many important services to citizens across all of Maharashtra. In recent years, the Government has become very active and has launched the Maha e-Seva Kendra to offer similar kinds of services using a homogeneous software which is also web based. As these two systems co exist now, the researcher has carried out a study of both the initiatives and reported the findings in this chapter. As SETU continues to exist, the researcher has identified various gaps in SETU and offered some noteworthy suggestions for making immediate improvements. In view of the announcement made by the government a few months back that more services (currently only fifteen services are fully operational) will be rolled out at Maha e-Seva Kendras, the researcher has also discussed the gaps in this system and suggested improvements. It is worthwhile to mention that a midcourse evaluation is also being carried out on Maha e-Seva Kendra along with SETU.

The ultimate aim of any government is to offer services to citizens at Any given time, Anywhere through a single window in an Integrated way ( abbreviated as AAI). At present, the government of India has multiple initiatives at every stage which are functioning independently, alongside the various e-governance initiatives of the central government. To accomplish AAI, it is mandatory to bring in or merge or integrate the currently existing systems under one single umbrella. To achieve this it is important to have a model that will smoothly and systematically assist in the integration process (whether loose or tight integration) of multiple heterogeneous e-governance systems. The introduction of UID, Pan card etc. by the government can also be utilized in totality to achieve this objective.

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