India’s Approach in Constructing One-Stop Solution Towards e-Government

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Abstract. The spinning of time the wheel has seen a lot; but the best gift of mankind to mankind is the discovery of Information and Communication Technologies, the tool that gave birth to the big bang theory of electronic-Governance in the universe of countries and nations. The explosive ingress of technology into every facet of life has changed how people exist, how they work, how companies do business and how governments serve their communities. e-Governance has given new dimensions to the system of governing nations and enhancing citizen services by making the process of governance and public administration much more efficient and effective. e-Government reveals the ultimate visions for public administrations and governments to undergo a huge modernization and reorganization. E-governance has played an essential role in improving governmental processes (e-administration), connecting citizens (e-citizens and e-services) and building external interactions (e-society). With the inclusion of e-governance in governing process came the concept of Single Entry National Portal i.e. One Stop Government which efficiently integrates public services from a citizen’s point of view. Such Portals help the citizens and other stakeholders to have a $24 \times 7 \times 365$ access to public service authorities and the services being provided by them at a single point. The various Government Departments at Central, State and Local level collect, use and manage large volumes of information/services and to ensure effective access to government policymaking and operations as well as to ensure government accountability, the public needs consistent, predictable access to government information. One Stop Government Portals step in here and provide full entrée to its citizens making their lives easy and smooth. This paper discourses the significance of One Stop Government accentuating india.gov.in, The National Portal of India. The National Portal of India is a huge and comprehensive repository of information and data regarding the citizen services available in India. india.gov.in, is a Mission Mode Project under the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP), of the country implemented with an objective to provide a single window access to the information and services of the Indian Government at all levels, from Central to the State Government, from the District Administration and to the village Panchayats, all for the citizens and other stakeholders. The National Portal india.gov.in, acts as a front end to various e-Government initiatives and a gateway to over 6000 websites providing a variety of information and services being provided by different Indian government departments at multiple levels. It is a reservoir of resources and provides in-depth information about the India and its various aspects. india.gov.in plies valuable information to a wide variety of target audience encompassing the citizens, government, business strata and overseas Indians. The National Portal of India is one stop portal for all those who need information on anything related to India, from paying utility bills to accessing information on welfare schemes in different economic sectors, from obtaining licenses/certificates to apply for Indian passport india.gov.in has it all!

1. Introduction

For several years, electronic government (e-Government) has been high on the agenda of modernizing public administrations. Latest technologies, software and
applications are being used by the Government setups and countries worldwide to deliver improved or new services to their citizens. e-Government has the power to create a new mode of public service where all public organisations deliver modernized integrated and seamless service for their citizens. The relationship is no longer just one-way “us-versus-them” proposition; rather, it's about building a partnership between governments and citizens. The concept of one stop government is booming day by day as this module enables the citizens to get everything on one single platform. A very vital factor that scales a good government is its ability to provide anytime, anywhere delivery of government services and information. These services are often provided through a number of different departments working in different sectors of development. Over 6000 websites of the various Indian Government entities including Ministries, Departments, State/UT, District Administrations, Organisations etc. exist in the internet space.

All these websites provide a variety of information and services which are beneficial to the common citizens and other stakeholders. However searching for the right department, tabbing the right document and bookmarking the correct website was a tedious job. Apart from this the citizens also had to visit a large number of websites for different services. All this became more difficult as different websites follow different Technology Standards, Design Lay-outs and Navigation Architecture etc. thus causing them a lot of hassles and therefore voting out the very objective of the various e-Governance initiatives. Keeping all these factors in mind and for making this vast information and services easily accessible in a more convenient and uniform manner, a need to establish a one-stop government source for all the Government Information and Services became the need of the hour. An ideal solution to all these problems lies in having a National Portal to act as a comprehensive one stop source of government information and service delivery. Thus, came in the concept of having a single unified interface, which could prove advantageous as compared to having multiple websites of different departments simply because it saved the citizen from the inconvenience of browsing across a large number of sites, with diverse design and navigation patterns in order to look for the desired information or service which is also available on a 24 x 7 x 365 basis.

With this view, a group of experts from the Government of India recommended the development of the National Portal of India (india.gov.in) as a single window for delivery of Government Information and Services. Under the NeGP, announced by the Prime Minister of India, the Government made its intention clear of executing a comprehensive agenda to make e-Governance effective at all spheres to ensure efficiency, transparency, and accountability at the Government-to-All interface (G2A). The principle objective of the National e-Governance Plan is to create fair governance and thus fortify the correlation between the Government and the citizens of India. india.gov.in was launched in 2005 with the rationale to establish an effective e-Governance structure within the Country. The National Portal of India is developed, operated, managed and supported by National Informatics Centre (NIC), the premier ICT Organisation of the Government which already holds a vast experience of developing and hosting thousands of Indian government websites.

2. Panoptic orbit

india.gov.in is an effort to provide the Indian citizens and other stakeholders with easy online access to government benefits and assistance programs. This mission mode project focuses on reducing the expense and difficulty of conducting business with the government and increasing citizen access to benefit information. Prior to its launch the internet users had no choice but browse through a complicated and confusing maze of web pages for benefit information. No easy-to-use, single source of information previously existed and even people familiar with a particular program could be confused about where to go for additional information.

india.gov.in has a very wide spectrum and promotes Government-to-All interface (G2A) encompassing fundamental interaction between Government to Citizen (G2C), Government to Business (G2B), Government to Employee (G2E) and Government to Government (G2G), thus, playing a very vital role in delivering good governance. india.gov.in has nationwide content coverage in terms of information, news and views apt for its worldwide reach and its target audience and beneficiaries namely the citizens of India of all age groups and demographic backgrounds, the Ministries, Departments and associated offices, State Governments, UTs and District Administrations, Legislative and Judicial Institutions of the Government, Public sector enterprises and organisations, Corporate Sector and Business Establishments, National and International Media Agencies, NRIs and Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) worldwide.
3. Objectives and uniqueness

India.gov.in powerfully looks forward to a promising approach for reducing bureaucracy and increasing the access to quality of services. The basic objective of the National Portal is that a citizen can approach an e-Government Portal on his/her own terms and a computer program will guide him/her through one or more steps, cutting transparently across agencies as needed to provide services. India.gov.in is a powerful tool that not only offers citizen services and information through a central point of access in cyberspace, but also offers downloadable forms, government documents, Legislative Acts/ Rules, services both transactional as well as informative through a unified and logically central portal.

The Portal was developed as a Mission Mode Project under the Country’s National e-Governance Plan and was set with the following objectives:

- The Portal short term objective is to establish a one point source for availability of information about any Government of India constituent, be it the Central Government Ministries, Departments, State/UT Governments, Districts, Panchayats or even organisations and affiliates, for the benefit of the citizens, businesses and other target audience.

- Infrastructure set up under the National Portal Project facilitates launch/ implementation of various e-governance initiatives by the Indian Government at much lower cost.

- After its launch the National Portal of India, emerged as an ideal solution and a comprehensive one stop source of government information and service delivery through a unified interface.

- National Portal Project, defines the standards for publishing the information and electronic delivery of government information and services thus facilitating, unified, seamless and universal access for citizens of India from all walks of life and of various demographic profiles. It has defined the guidelines to Indian Government websites as well as developed the Content Framework.

- Establishing a platform for participation by public in the process of governance is also one of the key ambitions of the Portal. Publication of information and documents on the net and online delivery of citizen services also leads to enhanced transparency, efficiency in service delivery, reduced corruption and increased public participation, which are all the key objectives of good governance. This has been fulfilled in a number of initiatives as in the case of pay revision of government employees, Right to Information Complaint and Appeal etc.
4. Stakeholders of interaction

The National Portal of India interoperates and integrates public services at one platform making it easy for the citizens to get through all information about India. The portal also aims to overcome the existing complexity and structure of the Indian government and enable the citizens and other stakeholders find answers to their queries at one place. india.gov.in endorses Government-to-All interface (G2A) and primarily focuses on four categories of interactions. These are:

4.1. G2C: Government to citizen

Here the primary objective of e-Government is fulfilled as the interaction takes place between the citizen through electronic delivery and exchange of information and services that take place through the Portal. Services available on the Portal have rendered transactions such as obtaining certificates, renewing licenses, paying taxes /bills and applying for benefit schemes less time consuming and convenient. Also facilitated through the portal is the key component of citizen participation in the processes and policy formulation by the government.

4.2. G2B: Government to business

Here interaction through the portal has not only facilitated the transaction and exchange of information between the government and the businesses regarding licenses, taxation and policies issued for various sectors, but has also led to improved and efficient procurement of goods and services by the government from the commercial business entities. The Online Government Tender Information System is an integral part of the Project which has made the entire Govt Tender Procedure extremely simplified, transparent and convenient for the stakeholders. Information is available for the entire lifecycle of business namely starting a business to taxes, incentives to doing business abroad. Business news, updates and Bullion Stock information are also available.

4.3. G2G: Government to government

Here the interaction through the National Portal has led to sharing of data and conduct of electronic exchanges amongst various government departments and other entities. This exchange is both intra and inter agency exchange at the National level as well as information among the national, state and local level agencies.

4.4. G2E: Government to employee

Here the interaction through the National Portal has facilitated information about employment opportunities, work guidelines, rules and regulations, benefits and services. There is a special section in the Portal known as the ‘Employee Corner’ which caters to information needs of the Government Employees.

5. Collaborative endeavour

india.gov.in is India’s one of the most prestigious effort and has been sculpted by one of the premier ICT organisation of Government of India. All facets and aspects of india.gov.in right from the scratch of developing the concept to designing the Portal’s framework from content research to technology development has been aligned flawlessly by the in-house experts of NIC.

These experts have a lot of experience and expertise in (i) Information Architecture, (ii) Design, (iii) Technology, (iv) Quality Assurance. Further, senior level officers have been nominated as National Portal Co-ordinators (NPCs) at the Central as well as State levels who are responsible for preparation/compilation of sector/domain specific content.
6. Methodology adopted

Realizing the vast scope of the Project and after a lot of consultation with various government departments, a four-phase approach was devised for development and implementation of the National Portal project. The four Phase implementation strategy included the following:

– Phase I comprised of laying the foundation stone. This included exercising upon the essentials like formulation of the Portal, designing the blueprint, designing technology architecture etc.

– Phase II dwelt with utilization of the existing infrastructure of NIC to come up with the first version of the Portal primarily comprising the information already existing on the web but repackaged and presented in a rather citizen friendly manner. The first version also had most of the major content in English Language.

– Phase III saw setting up of dedicated infrastructure to facilitate advanced features. This included the launch of Hindi version of the portal.

– Phase IV saw making the Portal Universally Accessible as per W3C recommendations. The Portal has also received Website Quality Certificate STQC Certified.

Extensive personalisation/customisation of the page contents, generating content by using Content Management System (CMS), making the Portal contents easily visible through Mobile/Hand-held is in pipeline. Other future challenges that need to be worked upon include making the Portal in the regional languages of India to rule-out linguistic barriers.

7. Prominent attributes

india.gov.in has distinctive features that are geared up to alleviate improved access, enhanced quality of services and convenient single window access for a variety of Government Information and Services. The project by far has exceeded expectations in terms of accomplishing its intended objectives.

Ever since its launch, the National Portal has had a widespread impact and the same is likely to increase with the growing awareness about the Portal as well as addition of new content and features for the benefits of citizens. The salient features of the Portal are:

7.1. Offers single window service

india.gov.in is a perfect platform to get connected with the various services offered by various government bodies, that are spread over hundreds of websites at various levels of navigation hierarchy, which many times get unnoticed. The target audience may need to only visit the National Portal, rather than a number of websites, for a desired information/service belonging to the government sector and it is available on the Portal in a predictable and consistent manner.

7.2. Wide-ranging content

india.gov.in, is loaded with comprehensive information on all aspects and constituents of the government whether central, state or local bodies. Any information on an individual department’s website or any electronic services for citizens available anywhere in the Country is accessible through the National Portal. The Portal does not belong to just one group or sector of government, its mandate includes complete and comprehensive information from the various entities including Legislature, Judiciary, Executive, Apex Institutions, Local Government Bodies, Public Sector Undertakings, Government Institutions, Organisations, etc.

7.3. Citizen oriented

The National Portal has been built from the ‘users’ or ‘citizens’ perspective, rather than from the perspective of the government. In other words, instead of presenting and categorising the information and services on the basis of government departments, information is presented in a manner citizens would like. This feature is further strengthened with the concepts of personalisation. The Portal has the features of personalization of content which entails providing information suited to specific categories/kinds of target audience classified according to factors such as their Geographical location (urban/rural, specific region of the country), Contexts and scenarios of use (citizen, NRI, foreigner interested in India) etc.

7.4. Reader friendly

With more and more visitors day by day, the portal soon became a citizen’s first point of contact with Government. The well established Principles of Usability, Human Centered Design, easy navigation and consistency in design made the portal friendly in all and
unique ways. The portal also carried out the features of personalising the content. This helped in selecting content suited to specific categories/kinds of target audience classified according to factors such as their Geographical location (urban/rural, specific region of the country). Advance search facility provides the option for a streamlined search for services in the government repository by specifying each minute detail based on its category, service type, search type etc. The facility to Rate the Government Services by the National Portal Users has also been provided for improving the services. india.gov.in is a huge repository and dispenser of information on a variety of subjects and a whole lot of metadata has been defined in a database for easy and efficient management as well as to improve quality of access by its end users. Presently there are 7115 Documents, 4203 Forms, 1498 Online Services, 1357 Acts, 1033 Announcements, 996 Contact Directories, 825 Schemes and 815 Rules published on the Portal.

7.5. Universal accessibility

india.gov.in embraces the Accessibility standards and evaluates the Portal on a regular basis, increasing the opportunity for all citizens to access information over the Internet and is maintained by professionals trained in the area of assistive and information technology. The Portal complies with W3C standards of WCAG 2.0 level A. With this india.gov.in ensures interoperability and uses best technical approach like use of mark-up language cascading style sheet, use of scripting languages etc.

7.6. State-of-art-infrastructure

The Portal is hosted at the National Data Centre of NIC to ensure a 24x7x365 access from anywhere in the world. The portal has a global access across different levels of network connectivity, devices and software. State-of-the-art infrastructure comprising performance tuned network devices, servers and applications along with the latest load balancing techniques are being used to effectively manage the peak load on servers.

The robust infrastructure and technology knowhow to ensure smooth and uninterrupted delivery of information on topics such as results of exams to millions of students, yearly financial budgets issues, election issues, economic surveys, simultaneously on the Net has been leveraged upon by the National Portal team to establish load management strategy for National Portal of India Infrastructure. All the Portal Servers (Web, Application, Database, Directory etc) are connected to High Capacity and Fiber optic based Storage Area Network and enterprise class storage system which ensures high availability of data as well as provision for a fast recovery and access in case of any unforeseen disaster with it’s Disaster Recovery Centre at Hyderabad. As mentioned earlier, NIC has developed a workflow
7.7. Open access tools

The component based content management technology and XML based content repository separates content and its presentation. This separation enables various handheld devices with various display characteristics; access the information using their own presentation styles. The mobile version of the Portal is currently under development. Another major advantage of this feature is that the content in the repository can be shared across large number of websites/Portals using standard interfaces or services.

7.8. Interoperability within government applications

The portal content is sourced from various government agencies such as ministries, departments and state governments. The portal in turn presents the content in easy to access and standardised form. It uses Web Services and SOA to extend the content services to enable them to integrate the content from National Portal. It helps the government departments/organisations to avoid any kind of data redundancy, inconsistency and further enables them to share their content with other departments or organisations.

7.9. User relation management

National Portal is maintained with the philosophy ‘Atithi Devo Bhava’ (Visitor is God). Therefore a powerful User Relationship Management (URM) is put in place to identify, cultivate and maintain relationship with the users. Each and every feedback/suggestion received on the Portal is attended to take care to the best of our resources.

7.10. Distributed content management system

The National Portal is the repository of huge content that is sourced from/maintained by multiple sources and different teams at multiple geographic locations. A comprehensive web based Content Management System (CMS) is designed to efficiently and effectively manage the content contribution through a well defined workflow process.

This CMS also provides the facility for searching across the entire content base, presenting content in multiple formats and facilitating delivery of information through multiple channels.
7.11. Technical system enabling data security, protection, trust, privacy, confidentiality and freedom for information

Security, Scalability and Data Protection has been built in the National Portal both at the Infrastructure and Application (software) level. National Portal is hosted on security audited server infrastructure i.e. all the Web, Database and Application Servers as well as all the software modules of the Portal are periodically audited for security by an independent group. Being the National Data Centre of the Government, multi-tier security infrastructure further strengthens the security cover. The Enterprise class Storage Area Network provides excellent data protection. The Portal is already geared for even disaster recovery from our Disaster Recovery Centre at Hyderabad (India).

8. Multi-level committees

The management structure of the National Portal involves Multi-level Committees that have well defined roles in order to guide the functional teams as well as the NPCs towards fulfilment of the Project objectives and its sustained implementation. The committees are set at both Administrative and Functional level; these include:

8.1. Advisory and administrative committees

- Governing Council
  The Governing Council channelises the main role and constitutes of the senior level representation from the Government, Academia, Industry, International Agencies etc. This council guides on the Overall Vision and Mission of the project and facilitates interaction with Key/Apex institutions in the Government. The Council is being chaired by the Union Communications and IT Minister.

- Apex Committee
  The Apex Committee is chaired by the Cabinet Secretary and briefly monitors the progress of various Mission Mode Projects running under the National E-Governance Plan. Since National Portal of India is a Mission Mode Project, the Apex Committee overseas the Project on a regular basis.

- Project Review and Steering Committee (PRSG)
  This Committee has been established under the chairmanship of Secretary Department of Infor-
The PRSG Committee periodically reviews and monitors the progress of the project and sanctions its financial support. It has representatives from the States, Department of Information Technology (DIT) and NIC.

- **Content Advisory Committee**
  
  This Committee comprises of Senior Officers from different Government Department and State/UTs form this Committee whose mandate is to advise and provide policy level guidance on the content related matters of the National Portal. Guidelines and Frameworks pertaining to the content contri-
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8.2. Core project team

The Core Project Team involves experts from NIC and it is this Committee that handles the overall design, content compilation, packaging, development and implementation of the Project and the promotion of the Portals. All important dimensions of the portal such as Content, Design, Technology and Quality Assurance are handled by the Core Project Team.

The team also focuses on their respective domains collectively work towards the growth of the National Portal and strives to make it accomplish newer heights. A Project Secretariat has been instituted at the National Portal at NIC Headquarters (Delhi) which takes care of the communication, administrative and logistic matters of the Project.

8.3. Content contribution group

– National portal Co-ordinators

National Portal Co-ordinators are Senior level officers have been nominated as National Portal Coordinators (NPCs) at the Central as well as State levels, who are responsible for contributing and vetting the content pertaining to their respective Sector/State before it is published on the National Portal.

– NIC Co-ordinators for National Portal

For each Ministry/Department/State Government, NIC Coordinators for the National Portal (NC-NPs) has been nominated who provide complete technical support in terms of content, technology and liaisoning with the respective National Portal Coordinators.

9. Impact of the project

india.gov.in, has by far exceeded expectations in terms of attaining its intended objectives. Though by virtue of its presence in the vast web space, the National Portal is a global entity catering to everyone across the globe who is interested in knowing about India, yet its main beneficiaries have been citizens of India as well as Non Resident Indians and Persons of Indian Origin worldwide. Ever since its launch, the National Portal has had a widespread impingement. The launch of india.gov.in clearly indicates the need of one stop government by the Indian citizens and their need for
public services with a focus on the internet channel. The impact made by the Portal can be broadly stated as:

The National Portal has provided a single window gateway to over 6000 Indian government websites, an accomplishment that is unique in its own way. Through this portal the citizens can get a wide variety of information on diverse aspects and topics, as well as access a whole lot of online citizen services available across sectors and government departments. Hence the Portal has led to a faster and efficient access to government information and services in a unified manner.

The National Portal has been built with the perspective of the common citizens, rather than the government’s perspective. This has led to a great impact in the sense that convenient and user-friendly access to government information and services through the Portal has led to the common citizens viewing the government to be more responsive and thus leading to an increase in the trust level in the government-citizen relationship.

The Portal has also turned out to be an effective medium for the participation of common citizens in the process of governance since they are encouraged to voice their opinion on a number of national issues, participate in online discussion forums and provide feedback on important matters. The tremendous popularity of the Portal can be gauged from the fact that it receives a large number of hits from all over the globe. Over 27 million hits per month pour in from all corners of the world and the number seems to be growing manifolds with each passing day.

The National Portal has provided a readily available base infrastructure to the government departments/organisations for launching their new e-Governance services for the benefits of citizens, businesses and other stakeholders. It has already been used by many departments.

One of the broad mandates of the National Portal is to come up with Policies and Standards with respect to content, design and technology used in the Indian Government web space. The National Portal team has developed the guidelines for Indian Government websites available at http://web.guidelines.gov.in and defined the Content Framework detailed in http://www.india.gov.in/cfw/. These standards would go a long way in not only ensuring uniformity in access and seamless integration of services for the citizens but would also lead to interoperability and effective information exchange amongst various government websites.

Publication of information and documents over the Net, online delivery of about 1000 citizen services as well as the facility to know the status of applications submitted for various government services has not only led to benefiting the end users or common citizens but also fulfills one of the basic objectives of good governance namely enhancing transparency and accountability in the government functioning.

The Portal has also contributed towards employment generation indirectly. It has also helped in the growth of ICT related business since it has been observed through experience that popular e-governance services such as dissemination of exam results, computerisation of land records etc leads to a growth in the usage of public ICT infrastructure such as cyber cafes, Information Centres/kiosks etc.

The Portal has been receiving an overwhelming feedback through its various sections which actively solicit suggestions and comments from the visitors. A large number of feedback mails are received daily, comprising a mix of appreciation, constructive criticism and suggestions for further improvement of the Portal. This feedback is vital for the Portal development team to ensure constant evolution and improvement in the design, content and technology features of the Portal and also to decide which new sections should be introduced on the Portal.

10. Challenges faced

One of the biggest challenges encountered was the diverse feedback received from different quarters of the world with regards to the presentation of information on the National Portal. India is a huge country full of diversities and the spectrum of stakeholders in the National Portal is quite vast, right from a semi-literate farmer in a rural area to visionaries and scholars and from school children to senior citizens.

Personalisation of the Portal facilitated “My Portal” concept of providing information of need and not overload of information.

Since the content on the National Portal is vital and needs to be always current. This itself is a challenge. This challenge was tackled by nominating – National Portal Co-ordinator (NPC) responsible for updating the portal with vital current information.

Making the National Portal universally accessible facilitation physically challenged people to access the portal was also an important challenge. Making the Portal universally accessible is the latest feather in the Portals’ cap. This initiative was also conceptualised and developed by NIC, thus making strides in helping
Fig. 9. A web analysis graph showing the traffic analysis of india.gov.in on a day in February 2010.

Here are some of the Appreciation Mails received for National Portal

“All I can say “Excellent”. Probably this word is not enough for the work you have done. I was not aware that there are so many services available for the public. Its really a wonderful work you have done.”
Dinesh Reddy
(reddy.dinesh@tcs.com)

“To Whoever has taken this initiative, I think it’s a wonderful effort & the result is dazzling!! I was pleasantly surprised by the contemporary look of the website & the information that it gives out.”
Bhavna Purandare
(bhavnapurandare@rediffmail.com)

“I am completely impressed by this portal. I never knew that we had such an excellent site as a single point contact to almost all departments of the government.”
Binay
(binzone@rediffmail.com)

“Amazing website... Fantastic touch & feel... Cool colour scheme...Inspiring setting... very sophisticated... great content. Wonderful Experience!!”
Vaibhav Mittal
(vaibhav.mittal@hotmail.com)

“Wow... this is superb that we can have so many things under one portal. Great... Congratulations and Best of Luck!!”
Raviraj
(ravirajyermalkar@hotmail.com)

“It is indeed a marvellous attempt on the part of NIC and others to come out with such a comprehensive portal. It is one point source of almost all information to keep one updated. Many many thanks.”
R K SRIVASTAVA
(rksvta@gmail.com)

persons with disabilities to connect with Indian economy and society through e-governance. The techniques deployed in making the Portal universally accessible are based on W3C guidelines.

11. Related works

india.gov.in has been also associated with many other projects and endeavours which have been germinated, operated, managed and supported by National Informatics Centre (NIC). Some of these projects are:

- http://bharat.gov.in/: The hindi version of the National Portal.
- http://business.gov.in/: A bilingual (hindi and english) portal that exclusively caters to every aspect and intricacies related to doing business in India.
- http://www.india.gov.in/cfw/: Guides on the Content Framework to be followed in order ensure uniformity in access and seamless integration of services for the citizens.
- http://results.gov.in/: Single Point Source for results of various Examinations conducted in India and lot of other useful information for students.
- http://tenders.gov.in/: One stop source for Government and Public Sector Procurement / Tenders/ Notifications issued by the Central and State Governments and other public bodies across India for goods, services and works.
12. Lessons learnt and conclusion

National Portal plays a very significant leadership role in promoting best practices within the Indian Government web community and helping make all Indian Government websites meet the standards of excellence. The most important lesson learnt during the entire development cycle of the National Portal Project is the inevitable need for ensuring a certain discipline in the government departments to digitize and publish all content online for public consumption. The ownership of this content should also lie with the concerned department and this content has to be captured and made available online at the source itself, only then an endeavour like the National Portal would be able to provide an effective platform for all this diverse existing content to be made accessible to the citizens through a single window. The Technology Solution for this is already in place. The recently enforced Right to Information Act has proved immensely beneficial in taking this cause forward. The National Portal team constantly strives to package and present this information in such a way that citizens get what they are looking for in a faster and efficient manner without there being an information overload of any kind.

An important lesson learnt during the development of the project was on account of the realization that the existing Indian Government websites follow different standards, protocols, navigations styles, design schemas and all this makes it quite an arduous task for the citizens to understand these differences and look for the desired information. Hence it was extremely significant for the Country to set standards and ensure interoperability in order to facilitate easy information exchange among government departments as well as make it convenient for citizens to visit and use government websites. One of the mandates of the National Portal is to define such standards and arrive at content policies to be followed by all government departments. Content Management Policies have been defined in the National Portal as per which the entire lifecycle of the content is managed.

The diverse feedback received from different quarters across the world with regards to the presentation of information on the National Portal was a very challenging task. India is a huge country full of diversities and the spectrum of stakeholders in the National Portal is quite vast, right from a semi-literate farmer in a rural area to visionaries and scholars and from school children to senior citizens. The lesson learnt here was that it is not possible to have a uniform presentation style and information schema suiting everyone’s needs. Instead, it is critical to leverage upon the latest technologies to introduce the features of personalisation/customisation in the Portal so that all registered users can specify the look and feel as well as information in the Home Page as per their requirements. The National Portal has already incorporated personalisation facility to a certain extent and the same is going to be further enhanced in the near future. One Stop Government Portal is the most effective way to deliver service to the public through cyberspace. india.gov.in has given a new dimension to good governance through ICT. The result of such a vibrant endeavour is that that India is well-gear to make government better day by day and fulfilling the mission of making life easy for the common citizen.

References
