Chapter 6

E–Government Services in India:
A Critical Analysis of Aadhaar UID

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ABSTRACT

The study will focus on technological components of the Indian Aadhaar program which tries to give every resident of the country a digital ID. The paper provides the architectural and implementation features of the program. Aadhaar program is only 40% implemented to date as mandated by the Government of India. Aadhaar is mostly based on Free Open Source Software (FOSS) and its processes are International Standards Organization (ISO) compliant. The paper would do a critical analysis of the architectures of the ID programs.

1. INTRODUCTION

There are many registries that a government maintains about its residents. The registry helps to catalog and identify the services being provided to the residents.

Governments have been increasingly adopting these integrated identity management systems with security agencies claiming that it helps to make the tracking of criminal activities much easier. Governments justify them for the access to services

that it can help provide. The total market value of such programs initiated in just 30 countries exceeds $100 billion. The project in India is the largest such program (Gelb & Clark, Center for Global Development, 2012) in the world. These projects at the launch stages involve the creation of a new database of all the current residents. Once the database is created, incremental addition and update of the resident data would not be a huge task, but maintaining the database and keeping it current would always be a complex undertaking, requiring significant infrastructure and spending. The other issue would be the changes that new technologies bring about, which would entail upgrading of the existing card schemes as well as the infrastructure (Rawcliffe, 2006). When these changes happen, it would mean that the programs would need to undergo upgrades. So the challenge would be to keep the program sufficiently forward thinking so that the inevitable upgrades are easily assimilated.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The idea of a National ID card has different intentions when compared to the Passports that one carries. The intent of the passport is to identify an individual as the citizen of a country and becomes necessary to validate the identity of the person in countries other than their own. The emergence of the passport was first as a document of "safe conduct" through foreign lands (Benedictus, 2006). The first of these passports were created by King Henry V in the 1600's (Casciani, 2008) and have been adopted by most countries in the world today. The primary purpose for the passport is to serve as identification documentation in travel outside the home country.

The purpose of a National ID program is very different from that of the Passport. The Identification documents issued by various entities prove participation, employment or registration for service from companies or could be for eligibility per law like the driving license for driving automobiles on public roads. The creation of these databases by various government agencies have led to the call of an integrated database containing the identity detail of the resident. Currently more than 40 countries have National ID programs (Hosein, 1996). Lately, with advances in technology, these ID programs have incorporated biometric features to make the ID more difficult to tamper and have a one to one match to an individual.

The Aadhaar is the brand name of Unique Identification number (UID), an ambitious program of the government of India. It is the first program in the world aiming to create a database containing the biometric data identifying every one of it citizen and currently the largest such program in the world (Gelb & Clark, Center for Global Development, 2012). The government website states its mandate is to "issue every resident a unique identification number linked to the resident's demographic and biometric information, which they can use to identify their selves anywhere in

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