

Challenges and Reforms of Implementation of E-governance in Zambia with special reference to Lusaka City

Chikondiwe Zulu,
MA Public Administration
Department of Government and Public Administration,
Lovely Professional University

ABSTRACT

E-governance can be of benefit to many countries by enhancing economies, increasing health care services, improving bureaucracy and consolidating democracy. In the part of the Sub-Saharan countries of Africa it has experienced a lag in the adoption of this system of communication. There are various reasons for this lag some of them are lack of national resources and also that part of the population is illiterate. Zambia is a democratic country and as such freedom of information is expected to be there but it lacks that too. It is also a country where e-government is only in its starting phase. In this paper will examine the infrastructure of e-governance and also the problems that Zambia is facing in the adoption of e-governance and its implementation.

Keyterms: E-Governance, Adoption, Democratic Information, Communication

INTRODUCTION

With the increase in the practice of Information Communication Technologies (ICT), there is a huge potential of change in the way government organizations should work. The electronic and digital mediums provide a platform for the administration to deliver services to its citizens within the most competent, effective and economical way. Citizens have every right to know what is happening in the country, what kinds of policies are being formulated for the people and how they are going to impact them. This information must be easily accessible.

Over the years there has been paradigm shift in the sense that government and additional autonomous policy/law makers have realized the importance of e-governances a responsive too for the government. In most developed states and developing states maintain an extensive electronic government structure. E-government is mostly an indication in the way ahead for developing countries to boost their speed of growth so as to let greater democratic nations. In the quest to improve the country's economy, boost health care accessibility and other public services, they have since taken the initiative to implement the internet-based tool but in most cases these initiatives frequently lack the desirable financial support, good infrastructure, they also face setbacks such as an uneducated and unfortunate public so that they can perform their intended purpose..

MEANING AND CONCEPT OF ELECTRONIC GOVERNANCE

The usage of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by the government for the implementation or transformation process is called electronic governance .E-Governance strengthens democracy then in turn forms greater citizen participation at all levels of governance. The adoption of electronic governance in Zambia started somewhere around 2004. World Bank, (2012) defines e-government as “The use by government agencies of information technologies (such as Wide Area Networks, the Internet, and mobile computing) that have the ability to transform relationships among citizens, businesses, and other arms of

government". These types of technologies if implemented properly can lead to: better delivery of government services to citizens, also improved interactions with businesses and industries, citizen empowerment and participation through access to information, or more efficient government management. The resulting benefits of these implementations can be less corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth, and/or cost reductions.

RATIONALE FOR ELECTRONIC GOVERNANCE IN ZAMBIA

The rationale of electronic governance is to increase citizen participation through campaigns and also to curb corruption in the country by its implementation. When electronic governance is introduced it helps in bringing the government close to its citizens so much so that in today's time it has become easy and extremely convenient to communicate and get the views of the people. Instead of using traditional methods of managing information, e-governance provides better ways of information management which are more time saving and less costly for the citizens and the government itself. Corruption is an issue if information is not in the hands of the right people or the records. The provision of electronic governance helps reduce it because its on a public platform and records are well kept.

OBEJECTIVES AND GOALS OF E-GOVERNANCE

The aim of E-Governance is to provide a direct provision of information to the public used to improve the internal operating efficiency of all administrative units. It consists of activities which can be traced directly to the information delivering of services to the public with governmental organizations in most cases imply the integration of the services. Other activities involved are: those particular activities that front unswervingly to provide ends user having electronically access to the community service and to all relevant information about them.

The objectives of E-Governance are to provide better services, inclusion and also a better life to the county's citizens. It helps the population to conduct important and complex administrative procedures easily and frequently through government electronically. E-Governance will make it possible for customers to access governmental services at all times and all locations, taking into account special needs, social and economic issues.

Goals of E-Governance are;

- Creating a better business environment for all stakeholders.
- Strengthening good governance and broadening public participation in the country.
- Improving the productivity and efficiency of government agencies
- Efficient gains.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Many developing countries have decided to adopt E-Governance but with the adoption come various problems and challenges like infrastructure, finances, psychological as well as technical. One of the most quality factors is accepting change by the people in that case it is better to adopt good enough ideas to avoid bad user reaction.

Developing countries like Zambia have taken measures to adopt E-Governance and they are facing problems and will still face some more problems in future like.

Here in our research we focused on finding out the relevant problems that developing countries are facing to implement e-governance and make it user friendly. Our study is completely based on Lusaka Zambia.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of the research is to study the issues and challenge which are faced in their implementation of e-Governance in Zambia.

Specific objectives are;

1. To study the nature and extent of the problem of E-Governance implementation
2. To study the various challenges facing Zambia in regards to corruption which lead to failure of e-governance adoption and how it is reducing the chances of completely adopting E-Governance
3. To check the possibilities of E-Governance being fully adopted in Zambia

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research intends to answer the following questions;

1. What are the general problematic issues that hinder the implementation of E-Governance in Zambia?
2. What are the problematic issues that affect the implementation of E-Governance in the business sector in Zambia?
3. Does corruption and lack of local languages on the government platform hinder the full adoption of E-Governance and is it only in Administration sector?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methods used in this research are based on secondary data. The researcher has utilized the secondary data by using various sources of which some are published and unpublished data. The type of published data that was used was from magazines, various publications from the central, some are state are local governments papers, daily mail newspapers, various publications, articles, from various universities. The sources of data that is not published are many; they can be found in things like diaries, letters, unpublished biographies and autobiographies and they also may be available with different scholars and research workers, trade associations maybe included, labor bureaus and other public/ private individuals and organizations that have researched on the same tip or topics that are similar.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

The expected outcome of this research is identifying the possible problems that occur when implementing E-Governance in developing Countries like Zambia as well as identifying various suggestions that can be put in place for the effective implementation.

STUDY AREA

Lusaka is the capital city of Zambia thus this is where the implementing of electronic government is expected to begin. Out of nine provinces that are in Zambia and the main study area will be specifically one province Lusaka, were corruption in different departments of the government keeps increasing and this has been very alarming to the country. On one hand the government has recently introduced new reforms that will help in reduction of this corruption. Technology is one of the tools that is needed for a very successful electronic government its important to recognize that technology helps to spot the various factors that hinder the taking on of e-governance. According to the new census there are 17million people in Zambia and Lusaka has a population of 2.5million and only is using the internet in order to access governmental services.

It has been recorded in a lot of papers in Zambia that the development of this city is hindered by corruption almost all the companies encounter5 Red Tape and bribery in all business operations which include company registration, obtaining a license,

obtaining permits and paying taxes. Corruption under the judicial system is a high risk in Zambia, it has been recorded that the judicial system lacks most of the resources to prosecute cases in a timely manner which results in lengthy waits. Under public services they have recorded moderate to high risks of corruption. Civil service integrity scored 46 under the Africa Integrity Indicators and 49 in transparency. In a report given by Lusaka Times the provincial Minister Bowman Lusambo busted some traffic officers who had created an illegal road block and were charging motorists and had obtained over k2000. The provincial Minister said that there are bad eggs among civil servants and that he will do anything to remove such people from the province. Following this incident the Zambia Revenue Authority made a new policy that everyone that was fined should make the payment at the bank and they have since opened several accounts with different banks which will cater for all the citizens in each province not only Lusaka.

This is a good example on how electronic governance has gained its importance in the city and it's the tool which the government keeps running to mostly to curb corruption in the city. On the 28th of September the government released the Budget in which they have mentioned the implementation of reforms in the Economic Stabilization and the Growth program. The speaker said that the Agriculture sector needs to implement the support program to the electronic voucher system. This contributed to the reduction in manipulation and fraud.

The Zambia Revenue Authority has come up with a project that removes the manual Tax Stamp System and introduced the digital tax system and the aim is to enhance the administration of exercise duty. In an article by **Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA)** it said that Zambia had welcomed the pronouncement that was made by the Minister of justice Given Lubinda at the 2017 Universal Periodic Review that the Access to Information bill is ready and that the government is working on systems that will readily avail the information to the public. The said that the enactment of the Act was long overdue and had been stalling since 2002 when it was presented to the parliament making vain promises. MISA Zambia is hopeful that Zambia, as a beacon of democracy, will emulate other democratic governments in the SADC region that have made strides in enshrinement of principles of transparency and accountability through enactment of the ATI bill, with Malawi being the most recent.

DISSCUSSION AND RESULT

The research that was carried out included surveying of different kinds and fact-finding from different sources also enquiries of different kinds were made. The main purpose of this research was to describe the state of affairs in the country as it exists at present with all its issues of corruption research where the student through the various published papers had to check why the people of Zambia still don't have access to information from the government. Why right to information act does not exist in the country yet. Just like other African countries Zambia has also been working towards the implementation of e-governance in the country and has faced a lot of issues along the way. In this research there were various issues that were identified to be the hindrance of implementation of electronic governance. According to the report of UN 2005 the countries government (Zambia) literally had no e-governance presence. We can look at two ICT projects that were implemented in Zambia one which is the:

Zambia Health Management Information system

Zambia through the Ministry of Health in an effort to reach out to its citizens came up with (HMIS). The (HMIS) is an integrated modern system that was set up so that they can have a flexible data base and a user friendly which can be handled by all types of statistics source. Just like other implementation that were done the implantation of (HMIS) was seen as the exclusive provider to health enhanced services for the patients but that was not the case. Due to financial limitations faced in (ICT) and the places where it was fully accessible the human resource did not have the skills to operate the machinery that was installed. As a result the full potential couldn't be tapped.

In this research it was clear that the position for electronic government adoption in Zambia is very low even though there is a lot of initiative from government side to boost the adoption of e-governance but still a lot must be done. The study exposed that right

to information is an important factor to have good governance and that is one of the things that are lacking in the country Zambia. Government departments have since set up some online existence even though customers don't seem to be interested and that's because the information that is given in most cases is not accurate. This in turn shows that there is very less participation from both the government and the citizens. Zambia at some point had tried to help out the immigration department by introducing:

Zambia Immigration Management System (ZIMS).

This was implemented by the Immigration Authority as a part of its agenda to provide services efficiently therefore contributes a fair amount of tax returns for the country. The whole point of implementing this was to improve the delivery service. This involves reducing the time it takes for them to process permits, visas or clearing people that are entering the country, in line with this the department had setup an online platform where applications can be done and this indeed has proved to be efficient, to access all their information it can be found on this link (<http://www.zambiaimmigration.gov.zm>). ZIMS is an electronic incorporated visa and permit approval structure which also has an element of limit administration inside itself just like those websites. This means the processing of applications for permits and visas is done through ZIMS. ZIMS is an electronic integrated visa and permit approval system which also has a component of border management within just like the website.

E-GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS IN PROCESS

There were various indications that there have been a lot of improvements in the governments Programs in regards with the incorporation of e-governance. A good example is the Zambia Revenue Authority which recently was all over the media with the digital payments. The payments can now be made online. The other government agency that has made major improvements is RTSA they have insisted even the road offenders should make their payments online and not give cash to the officers. This shows a good indication for the revenue collection and also improvement in e-governance development and implementation.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The closing section presents the summing up of the result that were derived from the study and where potholed beside the objectives and the questions of the research. As stated in the previous chapter there is various factors that hinder the development of e-government and there are other factors that promote it as discussed. Despite the fact that there are factors that have been working in favor of the implementing e-governance there is still more which has to be done in the country for the successful growth of e-governance in Zambia. Observing the current status of e-government access in Zambia some suggestion is completed on how to overcome the short comings can be addressed in order to boost up the speed of development. The conceptual e-governance strategic plan is projected as a frame work and is planned as a suggestion replica for plan for e-government strategies that hinge of national centric and electronic governance solutions

Findings and Recommendations

The overall purpose of this study was to find out what factors hinder the growth of e-governance in Zambia. This particular sections looks at the proposed models recommended which includes the initiatives that have been put in place for effective e-government in the case of Zambia. Not sufficient skilled man power in the sector to handle the provided technologies. General lack of safe information channels in the public sector which makes it easy for the third party to easily access it.

Government workers feel threatened that if information is given to the citizens through the internet they might just lose their purpose at work or be replaced with new technologies. This also includes them being exposed of their dirty dealings since everything will be done in the open, with this reason there is some resistance from the government workers. Lack of a well-defined, well documented comprehensive e-government strategy would outline the succinct implementation initiatives aimed at

improving public service management and enhance efficiency, transparency and accountability in the public delivery service to the Zambian citizens. Infrastructure seemed to be one of the major problems that the country is facing. Lack of importance of the different e-government services available. It is important that the provided e-government services should consider the local context such as language as the design the implementations for a country that has 72 languages. Lack of initiative to carry out awareness campaigns for the general public. Fear of change. People are naturally scared of the unknown so when a change happens there seems to be some resistance.

It was found that the numbers of people that are aware of e-government services that are provided by government services are few. Lusaka city council is a very big country and it operates in all parts of Lusaka but it was found that people are unaware of its e-services. The amount of campaigns is also not impressive which indicates that the government is lacking behind in trying hard to encourage people to make use of the e-services provided.

In summary most of the respondents did indicate that they have some skill necessary to use a computer efficiently and have the adequate ICT skills to efficiently access the government websites. Even though this is the case the survey recorded only 27% of the respondents acknowledging that they do use e-government services and the rest absconding.

There was a total of 47% that acknowledged that they were not at all aware of any e-government services in Zambia. The rest of 30% indicated that they were moderately or slightly aware of these services. Further regarding the reliability of information the chart below will show how people responded.

With the above information it is clear that people do not trust the government with their information. This factor is one that is not only found in Zambia but is also found in India. The government in Zambia should put up various guidelines and also security and safety guidelines so that the citizens have enough trust in them to use their services with require filling in their personal information. The other problem that the respondents faced in trying to access the services is the lack of availability of internet, Zambia faces a lot of challenges in network availability due to reasons that are unknown.

Recommendations for effective e-government implementation in Zambia

To harness the challenges that have been given above the following are some of the recommendations that have been given in order to help boost the speed of implementation.

1. **There is need to develop an e-government strategy** that seeks to provide citizen centric services covering all sectors delivered through multiple delivery channels that are accessible to all the citizens.
2. **E-governance must be taught in all schools** so as to promote awareness in the country not just Lusaka. The computer skills are an important part to because the government may provide all the needed technology but the country doesn't have enough skilled people to operate it which become an expense if they have to send abroad for training of the same.
3. **Policy framework** should properly and clearly outline ways in which electronic governance will function in order to institutionalize in public sector. This also gives the public a clear idea about what they are dealing with.
4. **The present e-government policy is so short** it has to be detailed so that it is easily understood and the guide lines are easy to follow.
5. **There is need to tie all the e-governance interventions and initiatives to the national strategic plans and framework** such as the Zambia 2030 vision.

6. **Scope of the application is very important part.** The first part of creating a good application to define its scope very well and everything else comes later. The applications which are provided by e-government their scope must be known in advance for the accurate implementation of e-government services.
7. **Tried and tested technologies.** Everyday there are new Technologies that are being invented and just as fast as they come they seem to get out date fast as well. Our government may not be in the position to buy new Technologies every year so its better to use technologies that are tried and tested for the long run.

It is clear from the analysis that e-government in Zambia still has loop holes that have to be sealed if its implementation is to be a success. An example there is limited accessibility on the side of the government establishment in as far as appropriate development is concerned for technical electronic governance.

CONCLUSION

As the use of information technology is growing fast the Zambian government has been making efforts to provide services to its citizens through e-government. Although the government of Zambia would have to spend a lot more money on the implementation of e-governance is it better because it will help with the reduction of corruption. The projects are still not done in moist areas of the country but Lusaka been the capital city of the country it has more advantage and the people can easily access the information there, as all the embassy are there and all big business is conducted there.

Unawareness in people, local language of the people of a particular area, privacy for personal data etc are main challenges which are responsible for the successful implementation of e-government in Zambia. Government must take some action to make people aware of the activities so that people must take full advantage of these activities and e-government projects can be implemented successful. Not forgetting that the participation of the people and right to information can play a very important role in implementation of e-governance.

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