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E-Government in Zimbabwe: A Synopsis of Advancement Made and Obstalcles Ahead

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Abstract:
This paper investigated the level of readiness by the Zimbabwe government in utilizing information and communication technologies to improve the scope and value of services delivered to the grassroots; and determined the degree of, and constant enhancement determinations of Zimbabwe leaders towards the realization of connected government. Data for the research was a secondary data utilized from the Internet. The UN global e-government preparedness ranking and the replicas of e-government were downloaded, embraced and used as a yardstick for assessing the web preparedness of the Zimbabwe governments in 2005, 2008, 2010 ,2012 and 2024. It was revealed that the Zimbabwean government has revealed its readiness to apply information and communication technologies (ICTs) in their public administration, nonetheless is at the evolving stages. A serious obstruction which branded e-government preparedness in Zimbabwe is insufficient of knowledge economy and human capital. The repercussions comprise poor delivery of government services and under-performance of ICTs infrastructure in Zimbabwe which may result in the broadening of 'access divide' amongst the privileged and underprivileged.

INTRODUCTION

Zimbabwe is a unique state in Africa with a history of obligation to good governance and e-government associated initiatives.In current years, Zimbabwe's determinations to deliver e-government provisions to the public have been acknowledged. While an e-government program in Zimbabwe is at the early phases, Zimbabwe has advanced comparatively progressive ICT-government provision delivery competences. In adding, the United Nations' e-government readiness reports positioned Zimbabwe at place 123 out of 193 member states. Nonetheless, it appears that the level of e-government expansion in Zimbabwe is relatively low.

DEFINITIONS OF E-GOVERNMENT

Bently (2001) postulates that e-government relates to the utilization by government institutions of information technologies which are mobile computing, the Internet and Wide Area Networks, that have the capacity to alter relations with people, industries and other organs of government.. These information technologies possibly will contribute to: improved provision of government amenities to citizens, enhanced relations with industry and business, citizen empowerment through availability of information, or more competent government supervision. According to Heeks (2001) by the subsequent advantage of e-Government scan will be less corruption, augmented transparency, better convenience and income growth. Usually, the relations between a citizen or business and a government organization occurs in a government agency denoting that the client had to physically present themselves to government agencies in order to carryout business. With evolving information and communication ICTs, it is probable to locate

provision centers closer to the clients.

The previous conversation aids to deduce an operational meaning for e-Government. Kitaw (2006) alludes that e-Government might merely be defined as the use of ICTs to change and improve the relationship of the public sector and its clients through an enhanced range and value of service. That is, e-Government utilizes the capacities of all ranges of ICTs to safeguard that the public sector, governments specifically, are changed to assist their stakeholders and surpass their prospects. Stakeholders may comprise citizens, employees, business and other entities and other government entities. The paper will embrace this standpoint.

E-Government is labelled as a significant move to present vicissitudes that are required to influence the proficiency, efficiency and answerability of the public sector. Yang concludes that e-Government is aimed at refining (a) the running of public funds, human capitals, and service provision, (b) access to and the value of public services, mainly the underprivileged people, (c) investment climate including minimizing regulatory problems and business costs, and (d) the transparency and answerability of governments.

According to Earl (2000) e-Government is not a remedy for all the difficulties of the public sector and numerous issues have been taken into account as the main restrictions of e-Government. For instance, e-Government may result into loss of person to person interaction. The effect is problems in culture where human communication is significant add that e-Government may disturb the organizational structures, mechanisms and control authorities of the public organizations. This outcome is caused by the fact that e-Government does not relate well with traditional top down government hierarchies.Lam stresses that it is a cross-cutting spectacle that necessitates a combined vertical as well as horizontal information movement. Therefore, structural modifications, legal, and development reforms need to be commenced.

E-Government relates to the usage by government organizations of information technologies (including Wide Area Networks, mobile computing and the Internet) that have the aptitude to convert relations with people, businesses, and other organs of government. These technologies can assist to improved provision of government services to people, enhanced interactions with industry, citizen and business empowerment through access to information, or more effective government management.

According to Martin (2009) the subsequent benefits can be reduced corruption, improved transparency, better convenience,revenue development and cost reductions". Comparable to e-commerce, which permits businesses to transact with each other more proficiently (B2B) and conveys customers nearer to businesses (B2C), e-Government intends to create the interaction amongst government and citizens (G2C), government and business corporates (G2B), inter-agency relations (G2G) and Interior Effectiveness and Efficiency (IEE) more responsive, appropriate, transparent, and low-costly (United States 'e-Government Strategy).

"E-Government is just utilizing information technology to supply government amenities straight to the consumer," The consumer might be a resident, a corporate, or even a different governmententity. Laudon and Laudon (2000), defined e-Government as the utilization of technology, particularly Web based applications to augment access to and competently convey government information and amenities. These two classify e-government efforts into three comprehensive classes of Government to Government (G2G), Government to Business (G2B) and Government to Citizen (G2C).Laudon and Laudon (2000) further postulate that one way also comprise two additional classes in this list: Citizen to Citizen (C2C) and Government to Civil Society Organisations (G2CS).

What are the attributes of an effective 'e-government' system? Hoff (2000) postulates that the response is not simple. The pursuit is multi-dimensional across governance, strategy, economic attractiveness,

education,digital citizen provisions, interior government processes and empowering technologies for each facet. The multi-dimensional aspect requires to be realized through the seven e-government indicators: integration, economic growth, intergovernmental, , e-democracy , e-communities, policy environment and next generation internet.

Accessing education, novel methods of listening to citizens and novel methods of establishing and providing information and services. E-Governance can be appreciated as the operation of this governance through the electronic medium in order to enable a capable, swift and transparent procedure of spreading information to the public, and other organizations, and for completing government administration undertakings.

Homels (2001) concludes that e-Governance is normally regarded as a broader notion than e-Government, since it can convey change in the manner how citizens relay to the government and one another. E-Governance can convey forth novel concepts of citizenship, both in terms of citizen necessities and accountabilities. Its goal is to involve, permit and empower the citizen.

METHODOLOGY APPROACHES

Data for this research was secondary data gathered from the internet. The United Nations Global E-Government Reports of 2005, the Appraisal of 2008, 2010 and 2012 were recovered from the internet. The ICT programmes and other connected programmes for Zimbabwe were also modified from documented sources.

E-GOVERNMENT PROVISION MODELS

In order to discover matters that are vital to this study, E-government will be deliberated in line with the subsequentmodels.

Government-to-citizen links (G2C)

Kotter (2013) posits that this model mainly deals with the relationship and interaction between the government and its citizens. He further notes that with this category e-government is responsible for making the government provide citizens with services anytime, anywhere online. Ndou (2015) postulates that citizens would be able to apply for jobs, find information about government oganisations as well as give contributions and their views about the operations of the organization. The major activities of G2C are research and education, information about public policy, health and safety issues and disaster management as well as allow them to participate in decision making and other issues that affect them. G2C seeks to user centered design and a one to service.

Government to Citizen (G2C) is concentrated with the association between government and citizens. E-Government permits government departments to listen, talk, relate and constantly communicate with its people, promoting, in this manner,answerability, democracy and enhancements to public provisions G2C permits clienteles to access government information and services promptly, appropriately, from anywhere, by usage of numerous networks including Web TV, wireless device, PC and mobile phone.

Government –to-business links (G2B)

Government to Business (G2B) emphases on the electronic communications between government departments and private business. This permits e-transaction initiatives including e- procurement and the expansion of an electronic market area for government. The opportunity to do online transactions with government lessens beauracracy and simplifies e-Government functionality among Global North and Global South countries. Most governments universal have websites that meet operations at the Initial level

and the most predominant level are websites with operations at the connected level. 94%of Global North countries websites are at the Initial level compared to 72% for Global South countries. 11% of websites in Global South countries have transactional e-Government structures and 14% with connected e-Government aspects. Global North countries have more than 36% of the same website aspects.

E-GOVERNANCE IS A PRODUCT E-GOVERNMENT

E-Governance extends beyond E-Government as it promotes methods and ways of applying contemporary ICTs to address the aspect of governance including the involvement in the decision procedures of citizens and other players. This suggests organizing efforts in the involvement of all citizens, the access divide and encouraging chances for social empowerment.

Importance on the transformative potentials of e-Government make it vivid that e-governance is the prosperous result of e-Government. The usage of ICTs, particularly the Internet,to embrace a novel notion and attitude of leading and managing where contribution and effectiveness are necessary to all the partners associated in a network. Governments can use e-governance to transform themselves, get nearer to the citizens and create closer coalitions and associations with different populations, within the setting of growth. E-government excluding e-governance is business as normal. As Chakaipa (2010) highlights "Important to utilize the prospects of e-Government in Africa is the real assurance and readiness of governments to persuade transformational designs towards being more citizen-centered."

Uzoka and Seleka (2006) postulate that e-Governance includes novel styles of governance, novel techniques of discussing and determining strategy and investments, novel methods of controlling processes, consequently assisting business to be more competitive. Senyucel (2005), further points that the provision of joined, single-source public services generates prospects for business and government to coordinate collectively for creating a web presence quicker and inexpensive.

Government-to-Business initiatives get an important amount of responsiveness, in part, because of the high interest of the business segment and the probable for decreasing costs through enhanced procurement practices and amplified competition. Large corporations such as Nissan and General Motors utilize the internet to purchase parts. Public organizations, too, are putting important resources into provision and procurement methods for their communications with business. These are cost savings to be created by government in the zone of procurement. The greater expenses being charged to the government by contractors can be minimised by e-Government. Procurement of regular items such as stationary is considerably easier and less-expensive through forwarding orders to suppliers on their website.

The government promotes involvement considered decision-making and is keen and capable to include the society in a two way open engagement. Through communicating structures that include the webcomment form, and innovative online discussion apparatuses,the government dynamically solicits citizens' opinions on public policy,law crafting, and democratic involved decision making.Imbedded in this phase of the model is the assimilation of the public sector departments with full assistance and appreciative of the notion of shared decision-making, partaking democracy and grassroots empowerment as a democratic right .

Government to Employee (G2E) relates to the association among government and its employees. G2E is an operational manner to deliver e- learning, bring workers together and to deliver knowledge sharing among them. It provides employees the opportunity of acquiring appropriate information concerning compensation and social assistance policies,capacity development and learning prospects.

Government –to-government links (G2G)

Martin (2009) stipulates that Government to Government (G2G) relates to the association amongst governmental agencies, for instance central, provincial and local governmental agencies, or with international governmental agencies. Government relies on otherlevels of administration inside the state to successfully provideservices and assign accountabilities. Online interaction and collaboration permits government departments and agencies to share information bases, capitals, group expertise and competences, improving the effectiveness and efficiency of practices.

Chakaipa (2010) supports the views of Martin (2009) noting that Government agencies progressively utilize electronic links amongst each other with the aim to advance service provision. The interchange of information can be inside the government, other levels of government, even governments of other countries might profit by electronic interchange of information. In the circumstance of foreign travel, it might also be possible for the booking or applying a travel document or permit to activate a set of other government –to- government data flows, alternating from customs and immigration checks to addressing security concerns.

The Survey displays that there is a short-coming across each stage of expansion of ICT literacy. This was followed by the Science and Technology Policy of 2002 which targeted to support and promote science and technology for national growth. The National Economic Recovery Programme was implemented in 2003. NERP stressed the necessity for Zimbabwe to utilize the probable of science and technology and expand export market.

Table 1: Summary of ICT initiatives 1999-2024.

ICT Initiative	Brief Description	Year Implemented
National Development Strategy 1	To embrace ICT to attained Upper Middle Income Society	2021-2025
Sustainable Development Goals (S.D.G.s)	To embrace ICT for Socio-Economic Development	2015
National Industry Development Policy	To embrace economic Growth and Industrialization	2012
Vision	To embrace ICT for Sustainable National Development	2020
tional ICT Policy Framework	To provide guidelines for National ICT implementations	2006
le Government-Wide Web Portal	To pull Government information and services to one access point	2005
ɔnal e-Readiness survey	To assess the degree of the country's e-Readiness towards becoming an information society	2005
Zimbabwe Millennium Developed Goals (MDGs)	A report recognizing ICT as a player in meeting UN's MDGs	2005
National Economic Recovery Programme (NERP)	Economic Tumaround Strategy using Science and Technology	2004-2006
Industrialisation Policy	To embrace ICTs in the manufacturing sector to boost export	2004

ce and Technology Policy	To promote and harness Science and technology for National development	2002
ziramasanga education Commission Report	Recommended the introduction of ICT teaching and learning in schools	1999

Source: Ruhonde et al. 2024

The Government of Zimbabwe in partnership with the National Economic Consultative Forum (NECF) and with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) ordered an e-Readiness Survey in 2005. The determination was to measure the country's preparedness to become a knowledge society. The survey highlighted that there was plenty of work to be completed in terms of preparing Zimbabwe for e-business. Out of a score of 4, Zimbabwe scored 1.4 (National e-Readiness Survey). With admiration to e-Government, the survey outcomes specified that Zimbabwe Government holds an enormous potential through its extensive area network and application systems including, civil service payroll, SAP software, pensions processing and national registration system. Most of the online interaction is G2B and G2C, but there is no citizen- to –government (C2G) online interaction. The institutional apparatuses for ICT are not clearly articulated and harmonized and there is no assimilated government policy framework for the growth of e-Government. The outcomes highlights some advancement on ICT centered efforts by the Zimbabwe government. The low score is an outcome of a retrograde ICT infrastructure particularly in telecommunications. It is challenging to implement ICT centered services in rural areas since many do not have power. There is necessity for a distinct e-government policy which should be capable to highlight such limitations. This can result in the central government to allocating financial and other capitals towards infrastructure (UNDP).

A National ICT Policy Framework was developed in Zimbabwe in 2006. The determination was to steer a necessary direction and course to the preparation and application of ICT plans and programmes transversely to all sectors.

ASSESSING PROGRESS IN E-GOVERNMENT IN ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe has been stressed by, social, political and economic hardships in recent years which has had a devastating consequence on its struggling economy. The country has an effective national ICT policy that was implemented in 2005 and that ensures important orientations to the advancement of ICTs. The country also has a vivacious civil society sector that supports ICT for expansion and education, of which organizations such as World Links Zimbabwe has performed a leading role since the late 1990s.

Over the previous few years, the Zimbabwean economy has been affected with calamities categorized by an unmaintainable monetary shortfall, an overrated exchange rate, and widespread inflation (which raised at 1,000% in 2006). Zimbabwe ranks higher on the UNDP Human Development Index than Eritrea, , Rwanda, Angola, Nigeria and Zambia which are all, along with Zimbabwe, categorized as low income countries.

The historical growth of e-Government in Zimbabwe can be drawn back to 1999 (Table 1). The Government of Zimbabwe(GoZ) through its coordination with the National Economic Consultative Forum (NECF) and backing from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), commissioned an e-Readiness Survey whose drive was to evaluate the country's preparedness to become a knowledge society. Results on e-Government growth displayed that (i) the GoZ possessed an enormous prospective for e-Government through its Wide Area Networks (WANs) and application structures including, payroll, national registration system, pensions processing; SAP and software civil service (ii) online interaction

which sustained e-Business replicas such as G2B and G2C.

(iii) Numerous rural areas in Zimbabwe did not have power making it difficult to introduce ICT-based provisions. Ruhondeet al. articulate that the GoZ has promoted WANs that are available to all government departments and ministries. The objective for the launch of the WANs are dual; (i) to utilize Intranet and Internet access to improve public sector wide information access and interchange and (ii) to exploit the profits of government-wide attainment of telecommunications provisions (Table 1).

With this strategy which was drafted in 2011 by the Zimbabwean Government, it was aimed at achieving national sustainable development through the use of science and technology, especially ICTs (Vision 2020 Document 2011). The vision 2020 ensured the promotion of innovative service provisions through ICT infrastructure promoting the use of e-government in public sector organisations in Zimbabwe. The Vision 2020 policy was very vital in supporting ICT service provision investment in the form of e-government services.

Crucial to the historical growth of e-Government was the Solitary Government Wide Web portal which targeted at drawing government services and information to a solitary access point. Whilst there were important indicators to the growth of ICTs in Zimbabwe and precisely initiatives in e-Government growth, there is a massive deficiency of the present status quo of e-Government growth in Zimbabwe. There is also very limited literature which recognizes the speed, prospects, obstacles and problems of ICT growth in government ministries.

Other Ict Initiatives

AVU teacher education project

The African Virtual University (AVU) introduced an ambitious teacher education project including 10 African countries, in corporation with African Development Bank (AfDB) and the NEPAD in 2006. Zimbabwe is one of the 10 countries included.The programme emphases on science and mathematics education and the assimilation of ICTs in and transversely the teaching of the syllabuses in these two subject areas. The purpose is to add to the development of additional and improved value teachers through the utilization of flexible, open, distance, and e-learning (ODeL) approaches at an reasonable expense for diploma, undergraduate,and graduate levels.

The precise goals of the project are to improve the capability of teachers in the utilization of ICTs in education and teaching of science and mathematics, to advance the ability of teachers to convey ICTs as a subject in secondary education, and to upsurge the figure of mathematics and science teachers by increasing access to preparation through ODeL ways. The project has established objectives of creating six ODeL modules by early 2007, the material of which will be accessible in French, English and Portuguese,. The writers are drawn from 12 establishments in the 10 countries that the financing covers. The University of Zimbabweis one of these 12 institutions.

College IT Enhancement Programme (CITEP)

CITEP is a local capacity-building project backed by the Flemish Office for Development Co-operation and Technical Assistance (VVOB) in 10 Zimbabwean colleges. The attention is on expanding capability to uphold and manage ICT equipment and plans for effective usage of ICTs in the colleges. The project concentrated on the subsequent results:

- Clear ICT policies in place in involved colleges and being successfully applied
- Practical and expert skills of college ICT unit staff progressed
- Current ICT infrastructure in involved colleges fully utilized(including the growth of staff expansion

plans for the advancement of ICT-backed by learning and teaching.

Along the east coast of Africa and which comprises Zimbabwe. This scheme is enabled by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) e-Africa Commission in corporation with a group of telecom companies in Africa.

Kubatana trust of zimbabwe

The Kubatana Trust of Zimbabwe, which comprises an NGO network organization called the NGO Network Alliance Project(NNAP), has been recognized to reinforce the usage of Internet and e-mail amongst Zimbabwean civil society organizations and NGOs and to deliver civil liberties and public education information and resources . Kubatana has a system of 240 NGOs and community service organisations which are participating in its advocacy and lobbying campaigns. Kubatana also supports internet space to these organizations through an online directory.

World links Zimbabwe

World Links Zimbabwe is part of the global network of World Links organizations and has traditionally been a key player in the advancement of learning through ICTs. The organization has been lively in Zimbabwe since mid-1999 when 12 ICT centers were created with the assistance of the World Bank and in coordination with the Ministry of Education Sport and Culture. Each of these trial World Links centers were created close to schools so that they can service both the schools and the community. With reference to this perspective World Links Zimbabwe initiated themodel of school-based tele centres.

World Links Zimbabwe is now an autonomous registered trust and has recognized corporations with a group of organizations and institutions comprising Computers for African Schools and School Net Africa, the latter for whose Promotion for 1 Million PCs it currently leads and with whom, in conjunction with the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa, permitted access to open source software in schools as well as backing local PC refurbishment center. It now has 43 tele centres throughout the country of which 35 have dial-up connectivity to the Internet.

A number of obstacles to e-Government adoption in Zimbabwehave been stated through several literature. Literature highlights that some of the main obstacles that affect e- Government schemes are, low ICT literacy rate, insufficiency of funding, inflexible organization structures, inadequate ICT infrastructure, limited Public-Private Partnerships and high human resource turnover.

INFRASTRUCTURE

According to the World Economic Forum's Global InformationTechnology Report, Zimbabwe ranks 105th out of 115 economies in 2005-2006, centered on a networked readiness index, which evaluates the extent of preparedness of a country to partake in and profit from ICT expansions. This ranking is slightly higher than Chad, Ethiopia and Benin,

According to the World Economic Forum's Global report, a main increase to Zimbabwe's ICT infrastructure is the impending launch of the East African Submarine Cable System (EASSy), which is a submarine optical fibre scheme running along the east coast of Africa and which comprises Zimbabwe. This scheme is enabled by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) e-Africa Commission in corporation with a group of telecom corporations in Africa.

National Development Strategy 1 (2021-2025)

Dependable with the shared ambitions and purpose of the citizens of Zimbabwe to attain an Empowered and Prosperous Upper Middle-Income Society by 2030, the Second Republic launched Vision 2030 to map a novel transformative and comprehensive expansion plan. It is the quest of this dream which will

convey wide founded change, new prosperity formation and increasing prospects of economic chances for all Zimbabweans, without no one left behind.Towards reaching the goals of Vision 2030 will be directed by the mediations that the Second Republic is going to commence through the National Development Strategy 1: 2021-2025 (NDS1), as we march in the direction of attaining an upper middle-income society by 2030. The NDS1 is our first 5-year Medium Term Plan intended at realizing the country's Vision 2030, while concurrently addressing the universal ambitions of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Africa Agenda 2063.

OBSTACLES, PLANS AND WAY FORWARD

The literature highlight the significance of government readiness on the expansion of e-Government schemes. Nevertheless, most of the writers highlight on the significance of distinct rudiments concerning government readiness. Several explanations have been recommended to clarify the slow growth of e-Government in the emerging countries.The causes comprise the shortage of sufficient data examination and technological structures. Other explanations are insufficient human capital and abilities and the deficiency of strategic leadership. Nonetheless, emerging countries have dedicated to invest in e-Government. Through, inventiveness and vigilant planning these emerging countries, Zimbabwe involved can still effectively implement e-Government.

- Advance a strategic strategy to shape and form e-Government services;
- Appreciate the necessities of all sections of public to ensure that the e-Government structure honestly assists each citizen to achieve his or her own expansion needs; and, permit citizens to partake in the design of e-Government amenities.
- Utilize well recognized system expansion practices to conduct the day to day undertakings of transforming, realizing and upholding government services.
- Create a learning organization where workers are motivated to partake in managing and developing e-Government services.
- Advance effective ICT governance apparatuses to allocate duties and accountabilities for managing and reaching decisions about e-Government provisions.
- Advance ICT competences concentrating on building an appropriate ICT infrastructure to support long term investment in e-Government, fostering the expansion of human capital within the government to utilize ICTs for e-Government, and enabling the abilities of employees to advance and manage coordination with private sector organizations and other potential partners;
- Support a safe experience for web visitors by advancing an e-Government disaster and security rescue plan.

For third world countries to move forward and agree on the most suitable method to manage the procedure of integrating the e-Government service to suitably meet the necessities of its citizenry.

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