

E-GOVERNANCE IS GOOD GOVERNANCE

Governance defines the terms in which the legal and policy framework operates to achieve the goals and objectives of an organisation. It is not a premise of governments alone anymore. With the advent of Information Communication Technologies (ICT), governance has entered into the new sphere of globalisation. Once traditional government challenges such as freedom of expression, security, legislation, universal access, infrastructure and citizen rights are now directly linked to ICT. Previously online and offline governance were treated as two different spheres but with the emergence of ICT, this distinction has been blurred. Even though this overlap seems too retain the independence of both these spheres which face distinct challenges, this paper argues that there will be a prospective merger, where e-governance shall overshadow the other. In an effort to enforce solutions at a mass-scale, active government participation is integral. The E-Government initiative of Pakistan is setup to bring solutions to these challenges. Even commercial and non-profit organisations are all using ICT to be more effective and efficient, but the question remains if this resource is being regulated under a workable legislative and policy framework to maximise socio-economic benefits? But what happens when ICT falls in the private domain, should there be control mechanisms in place for its governance or should it be discretionary? Finally, this paper attempts to present a case for E-Governance in Pakistan to clarify the blur and present workable recommendations.

INTRODUCTION TO GOVERNANCE

The concept of good governance picked up in the last 15 years on the insistence of financial institutions such as World Bank and International Monetary Fund to introduce a transparent and accountable process. Governance is defined in terms of processes rather than ends. The concept is defined more in terms of authority and control of public (social, political, economic and technological) resources and responsible institutional management to allocate them effectively.

*Good governance has 8 major characteristics. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making.*¹

This concept has widened to include electronic government as a key component. The purpose of e-governance is actually good governance using any means of ensuring stakeholder participation in public administration.

Increasingly good governance requires access of government services to the public through participation and privatization. This process is crippled by rather bureaucratic, arduous and lengthy processes which are cumbersome for an ordinary citizen or entity. Decentralization of services is one of the aspects of devolution of power from central to local and municipal administration. Participation of people from the basic level can improve issues that have haunted the *good governance* approach.

GOVERNANCE IN RETROSPECT

Pakistan has inherited the Local Government System from the British Empire which was further re-organised under the Basic Democracies Ordinance 1959 to form a countrywide local government system. However, the newly elected government of 1970s promulgated a new law: 'People's Local Government Ordinance of 1975', under which there was never an election following a martial law. The military government then, introduced some amendments in 1979 which were effective till August 2001. The system was divided into rural and urban administration under the provinces. Yet, again in 2001 there was a military coup and finally in 2005 local elections were held. Local government now was divided at three levels: District, Tehsils and Union Council with the objectives of devolution of political power, decentralisation of administrative authority and of management functions, diffusion of the power and authority nexus, finally, distribution of resources at various tiers.²

As evident, countries like Pakistan who have suffered through political turmoil, the dispensation of quality services to the masses have been compromised by ineffective plans and inconsistent policies. Reinventing good governance in Pakistan would require the Local Government System to be an independent process of delivering services by giving it a certain degree of autonomy and automation while adopting E-Governance.

¹ Citizens as Partners - Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy-Making (OECD, 2001)

² <http://www.uckoral.com/>

GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNANCE: THE 'E' BLUR

In order to ascertain how the processes would enjoin to form comprehensive electronic public administration regime, there is a need to classify various stakeholders involved. E-Government has been sorted according to Bélanger and Hiller (2005)³ into six categories:

- *Government Delivering Services to Individuals (G2IS)*
- *Government to Non-Profit Organisations (G2N)*
- *Government to Business in the Marketplace (G2BMKT)*
- *Government to Business as a Citizen (G2BC)*
- *Government to Employees (G2E)*
- *Government to Government (G2G).*

Certainly to give access to everyone without prejudice, by minimising the impact of rural and urban divide providing ubiquitous yet uniform services throughout is a challenge, which even the most advanced countries with successful 'e-governance' models must encounter.

Interestingly, while explaining good governance, the term 'government' and 'governance' are used quite frequently. At this point it is important to clarify that these two terms are different in their characteristics. *Government* is defined as:

*"the complex of political institutions, laws, and customs through which the function of governing is carried out."*⁴

While *Governance* is defined as:

*"relations between the state and other institutions, including private business and civil society. It represents the relationship between the government and the governed, encompassing issues of accountability and empowerment, particularly of those normally marginalised"*⁵

Clearly, the situation in Pakistan is plagued by inadequate yet poor governance rather than an absence of democratic government, given the chaotic political background. Therefore, while adoption of E-Government is necessary, it is far more essential to consider E-Governance as an intrinsic and indispensable value.

Consequently, the difference of politics and government enters the electronic domain as well. There is a common assumption of e-government as the automation of government services yet there is much more to e-government.⁶ According to a working definition of e-government, which conforms to the earlier classification, is defined as:

³ Bélanger, F. & Hiller, J. (2005) A Framework for e-government: Privacy implications. *Business Process Management Journal*, 11, (in press).

⁴ Merriam-Webster (2006) See: <http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary?book=Dictionary&va=government>

⁵ Participatory Urban Governance Edgar Pierterse, Urban Management Programme, UNCHS document

⁶ Often synonymously used term "internet governance" also covers the same dimensions; a United Nations Working Group defined it as: "The development and application by Governments, the private sector and civil society, in their respective roles, of shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures, and programmes that shape the evolution and use of the Internet."

See: WGIG Report: <http://www.wgig.org/docs/WGIGREPORT.pdf>

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“the use of information technology to support government operations, engage citizens, and provide government services”⁷

This approach considers that cyberspace which once used to be the idle playground for individuals, entities and research is now being reshaped by the internet communication technologies into a regulated sphere where the real world merges with the cyber world. The creation of this new cyber regime must incorporate good e-governance to deliver effectively and efficiently to citizens.⁸

It raises inquisition whether governance and e-governance are different concepts as they exist in different realms. The answer would be that the concept is the same with the only difference which is the use paraphernalia comprising of internet communications technologies.

According to Digital Government Initiative, E-Governance is defined as:

“..governance processes in which Information and Communications Technology (ICT) play a significant role. The role played by ICT could be wide-ranging: in delivery and standards of governance services, to how people access such services and the participation of people in the governance sphere”⁹

This definition gives a very broad view of e-governance which is often confused for mere automation of government services. This view makes it inevitable to delineate the status of e-government, to comprehend that status of e-governance in Pakistan.

E-GOVERNANCE IN PAKISTAN

E-Government is a relatively new concept in Pakistan. The dawn of new millennium bought the inception of Information Technology Policy called the *IT Policy and Action Plan 2000*, formally launched on August 18, 2000. This was the first time when Government of Pakistan embraced the importance of Technology as an important resource to the economy. Technology was attributed as an important tool for sustainable development. The core strategies identified were as follows¹⁰:

- **Human Resource Development:** for academically and technically skilled professionals
- **Infrastructure Development:** to modernise backbone and local loop access
- **Software Industry Development:** to develop local content and quality software to cater to local and international market
- **Hardware Industry Development:** to reduce cost of raw materials and input costs
- **Internet:** to enable wider access of broadband internet technology and provide universal internet access
- **Incentives:** to develop fiscal incentives for the industry by encouraging venture capitalists, banks and financial institutions.

⁷ Dawes, Sharon. (2003). The Future of E-Government. *Centre for Technology in Government, Albany University*, Chapter 2. See: http://www.ctg.albany.edu/publications/reports/future_of_egov/future_of_egov.pdf

⁸ Mardle, Earle. E-Governance in the Nation State: A Great Opportunity, or The Last Chance. *9th Online Issue on E-Governance*: http://www.bytesforall.org/Egovernance/html/egov_lastchance.htm

⁹ <http://digitalgovernance.org/artman/publish/concept.shtml>

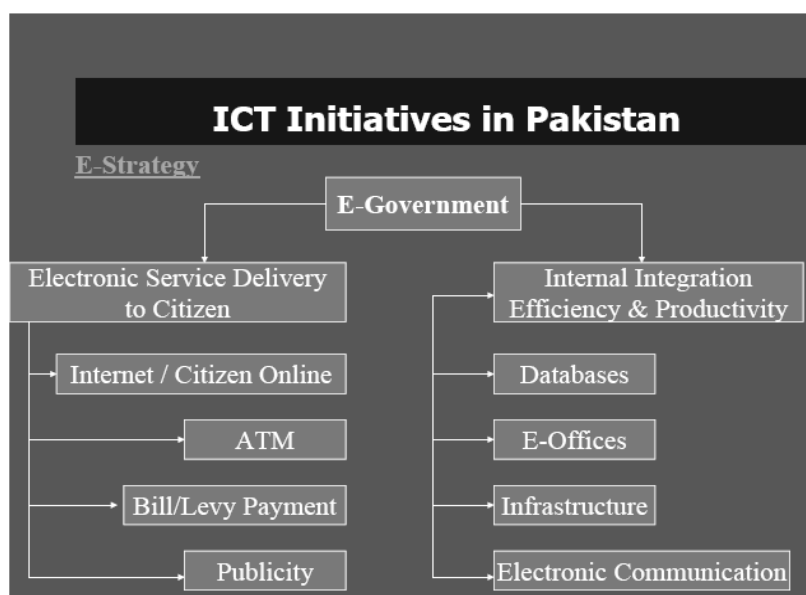
¹⁰ National IT Policy and Action Plan 2000. The Government of Pakistan.

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- **IT Promotion & Awareness:** by massive campaigning of IT resources to local and international market
- **IT Usage:** by involving government in adoption of technology by increasing efficiency and effectiveness. Initiatives include Government Online, Electronic Governance Project and E-Commerce Network
- **Legislation:** to protect consumers, providers and facilitators by introducing legislation such as Digital Signature Act, Intellectual Property & Copyright Act and the Consumer Protection Act.
- **Regulations:** to introduce full competition by providing a fair play for all businesses and investors.

The comprehensive policy paved way for an enabling environment to institute electronic governance.

Shahazada Alam Malik, Chairman Pakistan Telecommunications Authority laid out the ICT initiatives for Pakistan¹¹, which outlined the E-Government¹² Structure in Pakistan:



Since then government made mandatory for its departments to achieve a certain degree of online presence. The completed initiatives are as follows:

- Online Recruitment System for Federal Public Service Commission (www.fpsc.gov.pk)
- Online Access to Statutory and Case Laws at District Bar Associations.¹³
- Citizen Online – includes almost all government websites to deliver services to citizens.
- Salary Disbursement through ATMs: for consumer convenience and cost minimisation to banks

¹¹ <http://unpan1.un.org/>

¹² Malik, Alam Shahzada .2001. 'Country Report of Pakistan on Initiatives of Information Society'. PTA, 21.

See: <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/APCITY/UNPAN006168.pdf>

¹³ <http://pakistan.gov.pk/e-government-directorate/projects/barinfo.pdf>

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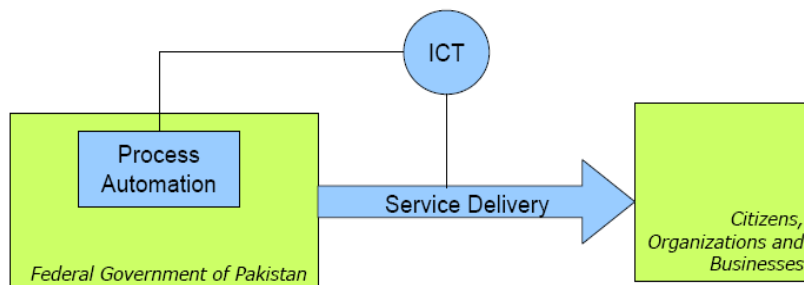
- IT Skills Training programme for Probationary Government Officers
- Process Mapping for improving efficiency at Ministry of Science & Technology: includes: internal communications and movement of files, finance, planning & budgeting, human resource management, procurement
- Survey of Federal Divisions for LAN & Hardware Requirements: Formation of a Central Data Centre.
- Technical Support to IT Departments of Provinces & Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)

IT Policy and Action Plan was formally approved by the Government of Pakistan in 2000. The then IT Commission on Information Technology of 2000 was dissolved to form Electronic Government Directorate (EGD) in 2002, to pursue the action plan, as a cell in the Ministry of Information and Technology. The functions of EGD were as follows:

- *Implementation of different projects related to the Electronic Government (E-Govt) Programme.*
- *Provide technical advice & guidelines for implementation of E-government projects at the Federal, Provincial and District levels;*
- *Plan and prepare Electronic government projects*
- *Provide standards for software and infrastructure in the field of Electronic Government; and*
- *To undertake any other assignment matter that the government may direct.*¹⁴

EGD was given financial and operational autonomy under the patronage of IT Ministry, in order to ensure smooth inter-operability of e-government functions

The Government strategy and 5 year action plan is outlined in the following figure:¹⁵



This structure gives a very simplistic view of government services to the stakeholders, while to achieve turnkey results, it is imperative that the stakeholder be given a reversible interest in the automation and delivery of services, which would enable quality-laden, result-oriented and autonomous e-government. However, it is fair to utter that this was one of the first steps to determine the use of ICT within the offline government sphere. Efforts such as Tele-Med Pak and Pakissan.com are the Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) working towards improvement of health services and providing access to new methods of harvesting, respectively. These organisations will operate to provide support

¹⁴ Terms of Reference of EGD as per Ministry of IT's Notification No 3-16/2001/coord dated October 19,2002, also see: <http://www.e-government.gov.pk/>

¹⁵ http://pakistan.gov.pk/e-government-directorate/presentations/briefing_for_focalPersons13102005Final.pdf, 5

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to better governance mechanisms to un-served and underserved areas. They will also work towards identifying shortcomings of adequate services to the citizen.

Essentially the government seeks an opportunity to reinvent and restructure its operations through the use of e-government by introducing: better efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and cost-effective speedy delivery of services and establishing the practical concept of e-citizen. The strategy to deploy the program was through capacity building, training, awareness of rules and regulations. The ongoing training and learning process would involve benchmarking with best international practice in e-government procedures to ensure substantive governance. This practice was meant to equip each block of the administration. The five year roll-out plan will be effective in 2010, to actually reap the benefits of absorbing ICT within the government machinery. This was established under the ownership of the top-level management that is the Prime Minister of Pakistan, by establishing National Electronic Government Council (NGEC) in 2005.

Five-Year Plan for Implementation of E-Government Strategy																				
	FY2005/06				FY2006/07				FY2007/08				FY2008/09				FY2009/10			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Basic Infrastructure																				
Phase I (PCs, etc., at Divisions)	X																			
Phase II (Inter-Ministerial Data Center)	X	X	X	X																
Common Applications																				
Phase I (Implementation at MOIT)	X	X	X																	
Phase II (Replication at other Divisions)					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Agency-Specific Applications & e-Services for Citizens																				
Phase I (Identify high-impact applications)	X	X																		
Phase II (Implement)			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Standards																				
Phase I (Define EGD Framework)	X																			
Phase II (Deploy, Ensure Compliance)		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Enabling Environment																				
Federal Government																				
Top Leadership (NEGC Reviews)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Legislation, Rules & Regulations (Recommendations for change)		X	X		X	X			X	X			X	X			X	X		
Agency																				
Change Management	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Awareness & Training	X	X	X	X																
EGD																				
Autonomy (Dept Status)	X	X																		
Capacity (Turnkey, etc.)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Source: E-Government: Strategy and 5-Year Plan¹⁶

Bélanger and Hiller's (2005)¹⁷ six categories was translated into the mechanism of co-existence of offline and online presence. The following figure¹⁸ presents a clear picture:

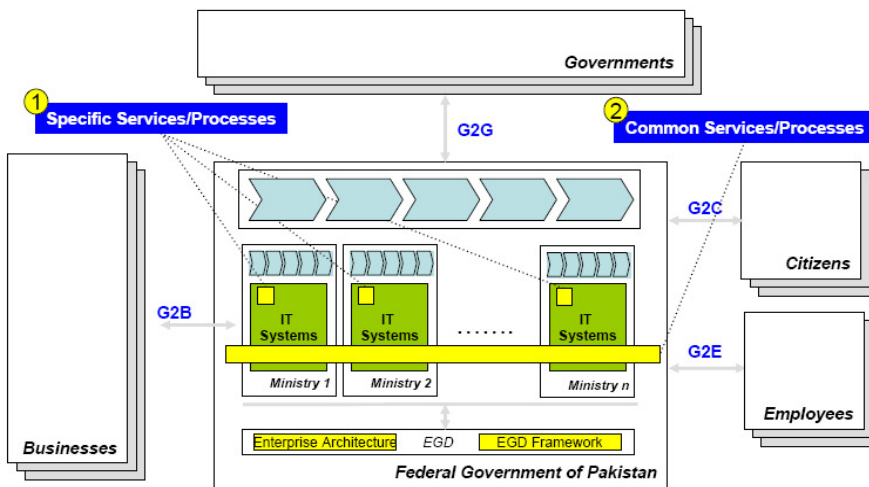
¹⁶ Ibid, 9

¹⁷ Supra no.3

¹⁸ http://pakistan.gov.pk/e-government-directorate/presentations/briefing_for_focalPersons13102005Final.pdf, 13

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Common Applications can be replicated throughout the Government of Pakistan with little to no customization



The above contention that these services must be reversible has been represented in this demonstration. However, whether the stakes are given partnership in terms of equity and wide-scale interests is yet of concern for an ordinary citizen¹⁹? This raises apprehension for the case of good and responsible e-governance!

The co-existence of the two spheres is through mutual cooperation by constant communication with the common purpose of supporting each other's functions. Each department is assessed by its ability to prioritise its performance and impact on citizen in both financial and economic terms. Again the data is 'centralised'; with in the control of Federal Government, sharing rights with various divisions of which 90% are present online. Pakistan's National Database & Registration Authority (NADRA):²⁰ is a data warehouse centre that has databases of driving licences, tracking of vehicles, computerised national identity cards as well as records of the latest biometric enabled machine readable passports that has given the advantage of authenticating data for myriad of security procedures, essentially under the approval of the state.²¹

Not enough emphasis is laid on citizen participation however government departments are required to submit performance indicators to the Directorate on regular basis. Infrastructural challenge is a major stumbling block in acquisition and mixture of two systems, in any commercial or social project and the opportunity to meet this challenge, is met by successful employment of ICT applications.

¹⁹ Citizen is used in a broad sense which includes businesses, civil society and people.

²⁰ <http://nadra.gov.pk>. Recently, NADRA won a project for the development of high security electronic driver's license programme for Bangladesh, on the basis of its cutting edge system integration technology which stands among the best top 50 in the world.

²¹ <http://www.egov4dev.org/nadra.htm>: The "E-Government for Development Information Exchange" project is coordinated by the University of Manchester's Institute for Development Policy and Management. The project is funded and managed by the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation as part of the UK Department for International Development's "Building Digital Opportunities" programme.

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Since the inception of IT Policy till 2005-06, Rs. 995 million has been spent to deliver e-government projects.²² Partnership in the E-Government Strategy is often viewed on being at the receiver end where funds and resourceful knowledge is shared between the private and public sector, not much emphasis is laid on taking a lead and being on the donating end, which essentially should be the purpose of success-oriented and citizen-centric administration.

The case of good e-governance requires stakeholder participation at all levels,²³ as discussed earlier on the participation of local governments. To enable e-governance there is now a plethora of government websites from local, district, provincial to federal level, which makes it possible for individuals and entities to be informed about the performance of government albeit there is little or no interactivity of these websites, which would empower the stakeholders to have their valid concerns addressed. For instance, a very ordinary feature such as Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), is missing from many websites. Amidst of all this there is a north star, Pakistan Telecommunication Authority; telecom regulator's website, which is performing at a far better standard and has been rated the best website in terms of stakeholder awareness and dissemination of information within the Asia-Pacific Region, this was a survey conducted by LIRNEasia and International Development Research Centre (IDRC).²⁴

A major difference in the approach of e-government in Pakistan is the development of agencies, which has the risk of consenting to bureaucratic hierarchical decision making which has the potential to make this system seem less transparent. Although the goal to do such is to increase efficiency and effectiveness, this effort nonetheless has the possibility of being mired with political influence. India also faces the same issues to an extent.²⁵ Singapore and Korea²⁶ have advanced in the implementation of G2G, G2C, G2B and G2E services, however, only USA has fully implemented the 'six category model'; which gives marketplace an equal stake in e-government, where the vision vociferously excludes bureaucracy or agency interference.²⁷ The common disadvantage of not implementing G2MKT is 'security', that is the lack of proper, effective and thriving e-commerce oriented economy, which cannot operate in the ever so vulnerable cyberspace, without having adequate control and understanding of the security features and an enabling financial, social and legal environment to tackle it's issues.²⁸

CAPSULE 'E' FOR BETTER GOVERNANCE

The legislative environment is the shell which protects the interests of the vulnerable and precious societal systems. Absence of effective legislation is the absence of effective governance, such a system would be no less than a façade; unable to sustain itself. In pursuance of such an enabling framework the E-Government strategy suggested the following legislations:

²² E-Government Strategy 2005. Also see: http://pakistan.gov.pk/e-government-directorate/standards/EGD.Assets/e-gov_strategy-version206_16.05.2005_.pdf

²³ Zinnbauer, Dieter. (2005) Internet Governance Priorities and Practices: Pakistan. *UNDP-APDIP*, 15.

See: http://igov.apdip.net/resources/Pakistan_Report.pdf

²⁴ Annual Report 2006, PTA, see: <http://www.pta.gov.pk>

²⁵ <http://www.ap-it.com>: Public Sector Technology & Management (March/April 2005)

²⁶ <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/APCITY/UNPAN016387.pdf>.

For Singapore see: <http://www.egov.gov.sg>

²⁷ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/inforeg>

²⁸ Supra n.23, p. 18

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- **Electronic Transactions Ordinance (ETO):**²⁹ Promulgated in 2002 covers information and communication transactions. This applies to electronic signatures and protection of official/commercial documents in pursuance of United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) Model Law on e-Commerce of 1996 and the Model Law on e-Signatures (2001). It extends to protect the owner's privacy of hardware and/ or content within, which although meekly formulated covers 'spam' and 'virus attacks' such as Denial of Service (DoS). It extensively covers the authority of certification council over the use and abuse of certificates that may be used in electronic exchanges. Interestingly it does not cover the issue of digital services broadening the scope of the term 'electronic' which is often left open to interpretation. Although this ordinance apparently was introduced for promotion of ecommerce issues, however, it lacks provisions that would enable any commercial interest to understand the legal operative environment. Furthermore, this ordinance does not apply to sale, purchase or hire of real estate, power of attorney, wills, trusts as well negotiable instruments. Moreover, Electronic Transactions Dispute Resolution is also missing from the Ordinance. This attempt is rather inadequately crafted which puts up a good show for a legal instrument but does not reach out to stakeholders, holistically.³⁰
- **Electronic Crimes Act (ECA):**³¹ Promulgated in 2004, covers crimes in the electronic domain and interestingly covers the aspect of extraterritorial impact of local and international law, which is only pragmatic considering the nature of e-crimes. Sections 36 and 37 of ETO are officially omitted after enactment of the law. This Act is more extensive in nature, covering cyber-terrorism, corporation liability, e-fraud (financial or otherwise), e-forgery, spoofing, spamming and pornography. Although defamation is covered under Section 499 of the Pakistan Penal code (XLV of 1860), there still remains the concern of its application in the electronic sphere understanding the nature of crimes such as online discussions forums for example blogs. This Act nonetheless is a step towards better e-governance that protects the interest of all stakeholders.
- **Data Protection Act (DPA):**³² Promulgated in 2005, defines *data* holistically. More so since the main repository of e-government 'the data centre' needed to be regulated, to protect the interests of various government departments as well as the interests of citizens. It deals with the aspects of dissemination and disclosure of data and defines punitive measures for breach of *sensitive data*. It also lays onus of proof on the owner of the data for adequately securing the system to protect information. However, recourse can be found based on reasonable grounds and good faith principle. It also deals with mediation and dispute resolution pertaining to the nature of the case. No doubt, this Act protects the lifeblood of electronic systems which is vital and indispensable while implementing effective governance mechanisms.
- **Internet Banking/E-Commerce:** Promulgated Payment Systems and Electronic Funds Transfer Act (PSEFTA) 2005. This is a comprehensive financial payment and transfer of funds legislation presented by the Central Bank: State Bank of

²⁹ <http://www.privacyinternational.org/countries/pakistan/e-transactions-2002.pdf>

³⁰ Jamil, Zahid U. 2004. E-Commerce Law in Pakistan. *Jamil & Jamil Advocates*.

See: http://www.jamilandjamil.com/publications/pub_reports/IBP%20Paper%20151004.pdf

³¹ <http://www.tremu.gov.pk/tremu1/workinggroups/pdf/ProposedE-CrimeAct.pdf>

³² http://www.pseb.org.pk/UserFiles/documents/Data_ProtectionAct_Draft_2ndWorkshop.pdf

Pakistan.³³ It confers liability of fraudulent transfer of electronic money on the financial institution and imposes governance mechanisms of these institutions in accordance with the standards and requirement laid out by the Central Bank. This Act considers ETO as the precedent legislation for definitions of transactions. It delineates the payments systems; their operations and instruments ensuring their security and regulating any third party involvement. Clearing of funds by the Central Bank is subjected to various provisions, interestingly; electronic money institutions have also been regulated. Transfers need to be documented and errors must be duly reported, reserving the rights of the consumer and knowledge of Central Bank: the supervisory authority.

The use of e-banking and ecommerce came late to the consumer market in Pakistan inform of the widespread Tele-banking. ATM became functional for the first time post 2000 after announcement of IT Policy. First Electronic Payment Gateway in form of Internet Merchant's Account was launched by Citibank, and recently received the Global Finance 2006 Award for "World's Best Internet Banks in Asia".³⁴ Central Bank started promoting e-banking in 2002, which enabled banks to agree on One-Link mechanism which reduced transactions costs phenomenally for the banks. Nearly 90% of all banks have automated services, at present there are 1000 ATMs in Pakistan making transactions of Rs. 3 million per month.³⁵ The Clearing House in Pakistan has also reached agreement with Central Bank to use electronic services to reduce transaction costs and enable e-payment systems.³⁶ The fairly newly implemented e-banking and ecommerce legislation will promote better governance mechanism for the new entrants in this fairly nascent e-market of Pakistan,³⁷ although full effects of these are yet to be seen.

- **Consumer Protection:** Promulgated in 2006, the Telecom Consumer Protection Regulations laid out various provisions protecting consumers from unfair practices on part of the operators providing them recourse under law. To ensure that the consumers' get the most stake' within the private and public commercial avenues it is inevitable that effective implementation of such laws is assured to effectively pursue the cause of good governance. Thus, all e-laws must be implemented in a way that does not inappropriately affect the rights of stakeholders especially the 'citizens'.

Recently Tax e-filing system has been launched whereby citizens have to register with the local office first to access forms and submit them. As of now, E-Government in Pakistan is following a "Minimalist Approach",³⁸ whereby very few transactions are being offered online, with complete services. Even the proposed legislations on e-transactions maintain the same approach, whereby it was ranked in the Minimal Category of E-Gov Capacity³⁹

³³ http://www.sbp.org.pk/lcd/PS_EFT_Act_2005.pdf

³⁴ <http://www.citigroup.com/citigroup/press/2006/060905f.htm>

³⁵ Ahmad, Ali. 2006. Policies & Regulations for Expanding e-banking to the Poor. *The First Microfinance Bank Ltd, Pakistan*, p.5. See: <http://www.bwtp.org/arcn/documents/PoliciesRegulationfore-Bank.pdf>

³⁶ <http://www.pakworld.com/2005/15-05-2005/automation/page51.htm>

³⁷ Hayat, Muhammad Aslam. 2002. E-Commerce Legal Framework: Pakistan's Experience. See: http://r0.unctad.org/ecommerce/event_docs/bangkok/hayat.pdf

³⁸ TUAC. (2003) TUAC Initial Statement on the Review of the OECD Principles of Corporate Governance. *Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development*. See: <http://www.gurn.info/topic/corpgov/kptuac03.pdf>

³⁹ UN-DPEPA. (2001) Benchmarking eGovernment: A Global Perspective: Assessing the Progress of the UN Member States. *United Nations Division for Public Economics and Public Administration*.

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with an index of 1.04. The minimal category's maximum index stood at 1.26 whereas Asia stood at 1.38. Recently the Economic Intelligence Unit released a report on E-Readiness, according to which Pakistan scored a mere 2.93 out of 10 in 2005, which has picked up last year to 3.03, yet again ending up in the Minimal Category,⁴⁰ whereas Asia stood cumulatively at 5.77 in 2006.

The "Two-Tier" approach⁴¹ would suit better than either 'minimalist' or 'prescriptive' for convergence of ICT into the offline governance sphere. This involves taking in consideration various stakes including the political, legal, social and technological environment.

Convergence of ICT is the answer to a more efficient and effective governance mechanism however the key to achieving it lays in the solid foundation of good governance, which would require support of both tangible and intangible factors. This fragile yet significant relationship is central to achieving a thriving and sustainable E-Government. The essential factors for success of E-Governance in any country, especially in Pakistan rest in the following recommended factors:

WORKABLE E-GOVERNANCE:

Build Trust: The integral component to sustainable governance of e-government rests in the ability of the citizen to entrust the government, with their rights in the ever so vulnerable cyberspace. Any sustainable relationship requires trust which can only be achieved through maximum interaction. Frequent attempts on part of the online sphere to rate the trustworthiness of their efforts would work towards breaking the ice and increase the responsiveness of the citizen thereby incorporating them into their governance mechanism. Although the legislative capsule does work toward healing the affected, this is only prescriptive and thus various heedful proactive interactions can work towards creating a harmonious relationship while merging the online and offline sphere. If trust is established it will not only strengthen the institutional and commercial stakeholders but also the ordinary citizen, essentially providing a fertile breeding ground for the new economy.

Ensure Accountability: The 'connected citizen' now has the option to communicate with the government to monitor its performance at local level and immediately respond to the effectiveness of their services, rather than wait for the electoral process to indicate its performance. Thus enhanced accountability and transparency that are keys to good governance are ensured through electronic interaction. Yet an absence of pure interactivity which permits stakes to utilise their rights is somewhat absent in minimalist governance and thus Pakistan needs to consider the two-tier and/or multi-tier approach, whereby performance in the offline sphere is directly measurable through online accountability. Periodic release of public information and feedback mechanism on the effectiveness of private and public projects would work towards achieving decent transparency.

See: <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UN/UNPAN021547.pdf>

⁴⁰ Economic Intelligence Unit .The 2006 E-Readiness Rankings: A White Paper.

See: http://graphics.eiu.com/files/ad_pdfs/2006Ereadiness_Ranking_WP.pdf

⁴¹ EU Presidency Statement. (2004) Working Group on Internet Governance.

See: <http://www.wgig.org/docs/european-union.pdf>

E-GOVERNANCE IS GOOD GOVERNANCE

Create Participation: Successful e-governance mechanism can only operate through strong private and public participation. Trust and accountability will play a vital role in converting the potential to reality. Awareness is pivotal to create such participation, yet literacy plays an important role in obtaining it. ICT will provide that enabling environment. The participatory approach must be translated within each process of e-government institution be it at the local or state level through horizontal and vertical integration. This participation would follow the earlier model where business citizen, individual, marketplace, employees and institutions have direct access to government services, maximising interaction through online transactions. One way of achieving such is through mandatory adaptation of offline financial services in a secure online framework thereby minimising the cost to government. Participation must occur through electoral process as well as e-voting mechanism, ensuring democratic e-governance.

Minimise Divide: **Pro-Poor** Governance is the need of the hour. Urban and rural divide can now be minimised through application of ICT services, bridging the gap. However, governance is often quoted for urban/metropolitan areas, whether that governance reaches across the void, is where innovation of governance mechanisms can be manipulated. Globalisation has further diffused that division and now there is unlimited potential through which rural areas can achieve sustainable, self reliant, localised economy. Participation of private and public actors will stimulate the process of governance while trust and accountability factors will harness ICT empowered stakeholders. Such is only possible if weaker side of the equation is given adequate resources (water, power, land, sanitation) and is provided with standardised services across board. Barriers to minimising the divide would lay largely with agency and bureaucracy intervention as well as capitalist corporate gains through unfair means. Ethical and good e-governance is the only sustainable solution in an ICT enabled urban and rural environment.

CONCLUSION:

Governance is a mechanism by which citizens: individuals, institutions, employees, consumers and commercial entities can be empowered to participate in the government processes. E-Government is suited for a well-informed, educated citizen and such a resource needs to be deployed across the urban and rural divide to reach out to the aforementioned stakeholders through awareness. The legislative environment is embedded in the 'e' capsule which acts as a stimulant to provide better services in a secure and effective manner thereby cultivating trust. Online presence in the global world is inevitable to utilise the potential of emerging e-economy at both local and state level. Trust creation through reversible participation can work to build bridges by implementing ICT in an offline sphere for sustainable e-governance. In case of Pakistan the two spheres co-exist, whether or not this co-existence is durable is yet to be seen. The way forward must be transferring to a new system by deployment of resources to minimise costs and maximise benefits through ICT. Thus *E-Governance* is the new *Good Governance*.

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Filename: Paperhina
Directory: C:\Documents and Settings\Hina\My Documents\EGOV
Template: C:\Documents and Settings\Hina\Application
Data\Microsoft\Templates\Normal.dot
Title: E-Government is a relatively new concept in Pakistan
Subject:
Author: Hina
Keywords:
Comments:
Creation Date: 11/12/2006 1:44 PM
Change Number: 396
Last Saved On: 10/01/2007 7:21 PM
Last Saved By: Hina
Total Editing Time: 3,140 Minutes
Last Printed On: 10/01/2007 7:21 PM
As of Last Complete Printing
Number of Pages: 16
Number of Words: 6,119 (approx.)
Number of Characters: 34,880 (approx.)