

Enhancing Inter-Institutional Collaboration for Successful E-Governance in Pakistan: An Analysis of Future Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

E-Governance is a way to approach the coming era of public administration in contemporary ways while keeping the public involved in policy development. The biggest barrier, however, is effective inter-institutional coordination. This paper examines the current status of e-governance in Pakistan and what it is doing, along with issues, opportunities, and success stories. It goes on to examine future pathways for boosting inter-institutional interaction and incorporating state-of-the-art innovations like big data analytics, blockchain, and artificial intelligence. The report suggests policy, legal, and technological amendments to ensure cooperation and improve e-governance. This study can be the key to realizing the full potential of e-governance in Pakistan for the betterment of stakeholders and policymakers.

Keywords: E-Governance , Inter-Institutional Collaboration, Pakistan, Digital Governance, Public Administration, Information Communication Technology (ICT), Policy Implementation, Governance Framework

INTRODUCTION

E-governance initiatives have played a vital role in public administration reform and in delivering better services to citizens over the past decades. An effective, transparent and participatory way can be achieved if e-government is employed. It is described as delivery of services and information by the government using electronic devices and systems (United Nations, 2022). Now more than ever it is felt necessary for modernization and development, that availability of e-government in Pakistan is on the rise. However, there are still many challenges that need to be addressed before we actually put effective e-government plans into practice.

To ensure effective rollout and functionality of e-government in Pakistan, this research studies possible future avenues for enhancing inter-institutional collaboration. Interagency collaboration is vital for the success of e-government initiatives because it allows sharing of information and enables coordinated implementation of policies across government organizations (Chadwick, 2021). Collaboration among organizations ensures effective utilization of resources and uniform implementation of policies so that there is no duplication and inconsistency. However, for

successful collaboration it is imperative to break bureaucratic barriers, promote culture of collaboration and develop strong governance structures (Ahmad and Waheed, 2023).

The purpose of this research is to analyze the existing level of e-governance initiatives inter institutional cooperation in Pakistan and to propose ways of enhancing such a relationship for future programs. National and sub-national public sector institutions are implementing numerous projects throughout the e-government landscape in Pakistan; however, because such initiatives function in isolation from each other, disjointed service is provided (Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication, 2023). E-government implementation, therefore, is about more than making such unrelated initiatives compatible with each other. Such an initiative requires adoption of an overall plan that encourages cooperative initiative among a plethora of organizations. This needs technology integration but also integration of shared responsibilities, standard processes, and strategic objectives (World Bank, 2022). This paper looks at the potentials and hindrances of such integration with a hope for workable solutions that must be specific to the political and other social realities of Pakistan. Significant e-governance inter institutional cooperation is now of paramount importance as technology develops rapidly, and demand for better governance grows. Citizens' demands will be enhanced by their digital literacy (OECD, 2023). The future of e-government initiatives in Pakistan will operate in this changing digital landscape, meaning such solutions will be integrated with big data analysis, block-chain, and artificial intelligence. Although these technologies offer huge potentials to enhance cooperation and service delivery, their successful adoption will need a cooperative approach (ITU, 2022). The aim of this study is to provide a critical review of how the e-governance landscape in Pakistan could benefit from exploitation of these technical developments to foster inter institutional cooperation. Lastly the success of inter institutional collaboration is intrinsically linked to the success of e-governance in Pakistan. This paper seeks to contribute to the debate on how Pakistan can exploit digital government to enhance governance of public happiness and service delivery by offering critical analysis of the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. It would be imperative to understand and enhance inter institutional coordination as Pakistan endeavors to digitize its public administration through e-government to ensure sustained growth by addressing present challenges (Hasnain& Gazdar,2022).This narrative has provided the foundation for a critical analysis of the frameworks and strategies that could be employed to foster such cooperation ensuring that e-governance initiatives in Pakistan are effective but also sustainable and able to address future impediments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In developing countries like Pakistan, e-government initiatives have become a key tool for the much-needed public administration modernization and service delivery (Alahmari et al., 2021). But effective inter-institutional collaboration among multiple government agencies is a vital prerequisite to the success of such initiatives (Gupta & Jana, 2021). Encouraging collaboration among multiple government agencies is highly relevant in Pakistan where departmentalization and

fragmented governance prevail (Shafiq et al, 2020). Consequently, it is imperative to indicate that the technical infrastructure can be effective in ensuring that cooperation with other institutions serves as an efficient tool for e-government. The authors presented in the most recent research suggest that the uptake of sophisticated ICT facilities is critical in facilitating appropriate information exchange and inter-institutional (Javed et al. 2023). However, if implemented effectively will enhance collaboration; besides, integrating other advanced technologies like blockchain and artificial intelligence will add value to the objectives of guaranteeing data security and process optimization. In addition to the key enablers of cooperation which are associated with the technology aspect of e-government, the leadership and organization climate can be also named as significant influences in this regard. As per the study, collaboration is present to the best in the government organizations where the organizational climate is founded on transparency, trust, and sharing of information as stated by Khan et al. in 2021. Furthermore, to enhance the link between institutional goals and achieve realistic institutional collaboration, it is essential to focus on the political and administrative leadership (Alahmari et al., 2021). There are a few recommendations aimed at minimizing resistance to change, and increasing the cooperation of the stakeholders. Such strategies include formation of cross departmental teams, offering of monetary incentives to the staff members (Gupta & Jana, 2021). Out of all the case studies, this demonstrates the legislative and regulatory environment's influence on encouraging inter-institutional collaboration on e-government efforts. It is thus extremely important for there to be clear and coherent rules and regulations in regard to the flow of data, privacy issues, and inter-institutional interoperability within the study. The regulatory bodies overseeing the e-government projects must ensure compliance with international standards and best practices to ensure cross-boundary collaboration and sharing of information in the e-government. Capacity building and development of human resources could not be overemphasized in order to facilitate inter-institutional collaboration for e-government. Training and capacity-building programs are vital for equipping the government employees with the required digital literacy and competencies for participating in the collaborative decision-making processes (Tiwari & Bhatt, 2022). Cultures of continuous learning and sharing could enhance organizational readiness for enacting collaborative e-government projects. This refers to organizational learnability. . . ." (Khan et al., 2021)

All of the above sources indicated that collaboration between institutions is an issue. The researchers hence thought of taking this issue to be investigated in later periods.

This means that, for e-governance to be effective in Pakistan, a holistic approach that includes all the aspects of inter-institutional cooperation—technological, organizational, legal, and human resource—should be taken. In order to fully exploit the potential of e-government for improving service delivery, transparency, and citizen engagement, Pakistani authorities need to use the most up-to-date ICT infrastructure, foster a culture of collaboration in organizations, establish supportive legislative frameworks, and invest in capacity building.

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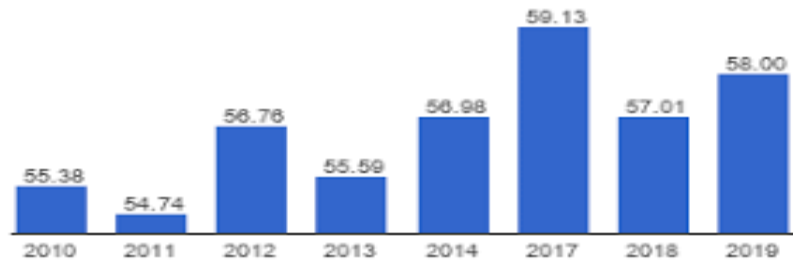
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present research was designed to examine the enhancement of inter institutional collaboration for the success of e governance Pakistan. For collecting responses from a large number of samples a field survey methodology is employed. To improve the validity of data, survey technique was applied. For quantitative research, the survey is a good method for checking the relationship among the observed variables, and surveys are commonly used in the social sciences (Zhuang & Lederer, 2003) . A research conducted by Nadir Abbas in Pakistan, involved a survey with 820 households around the country (Abbas, M. H., & Ahmed, V. (2014).. The study consisted of interviews and focus group discussions. The findings of the research revealed that the respondents were aware of the basic services but they did not receive those services due to lack of weak integration among the institutions . The study found that approximately 54.5 % of total respondents identified that lack of coherence for example if some people are using Benazir income support program card to get money through ATM machine service while using ATM card mostly they didn't receive money and even banker don't know the exact date of money deposit and people come and go without any relief this is happen due to no interaction between bank and benazir income project this was just one exemple you can find many other poor services that decrease the quality of delivery serves that is the major issue that affects the society of Pakistan. Furthermore, 53.3% of the respondents identified unemployment as the major issue while 36.8 % responded that law and order situation of the country is the main problem because if we impose e governance in police sectors or custom this will hurt the interest of black ship that dont want e governance in institutions , while out of total 800 households, 28.9% indicated that e governance will reduce corruption and those peoples are the obstacle in the way of transparency there for collectively institutions are against the e governance is the major issue that negatively affects the society of Pakistan that is waiting for E-governance is at its early stage in the developing world and facing challenges mainly at the implementation phase.

In this regard, despite overall development of ICT and Pro-ICT agendas of the GoP, Pakistan is still facing challenges for example, poor literacy rate because people are unaware about the worth of e governance even in government organization people still use manual tools due to lack of illiteracy in the society therefore researcher analyzed this factor as well. Figure 1 shows how the literacy rate in Pakistan has changed over time from 1951 to 2019

According to the same report, some countries in the SA region such as Afghanistan and Bhutan are standing with significant improvements while Sri Lanka reported the highest improvement ahead of all other countries of the region.

Figure.1. Literacy rate in Pakistan (1951-2019)



**Literacy Rate in Pakistan
age 10 year and older (%)**

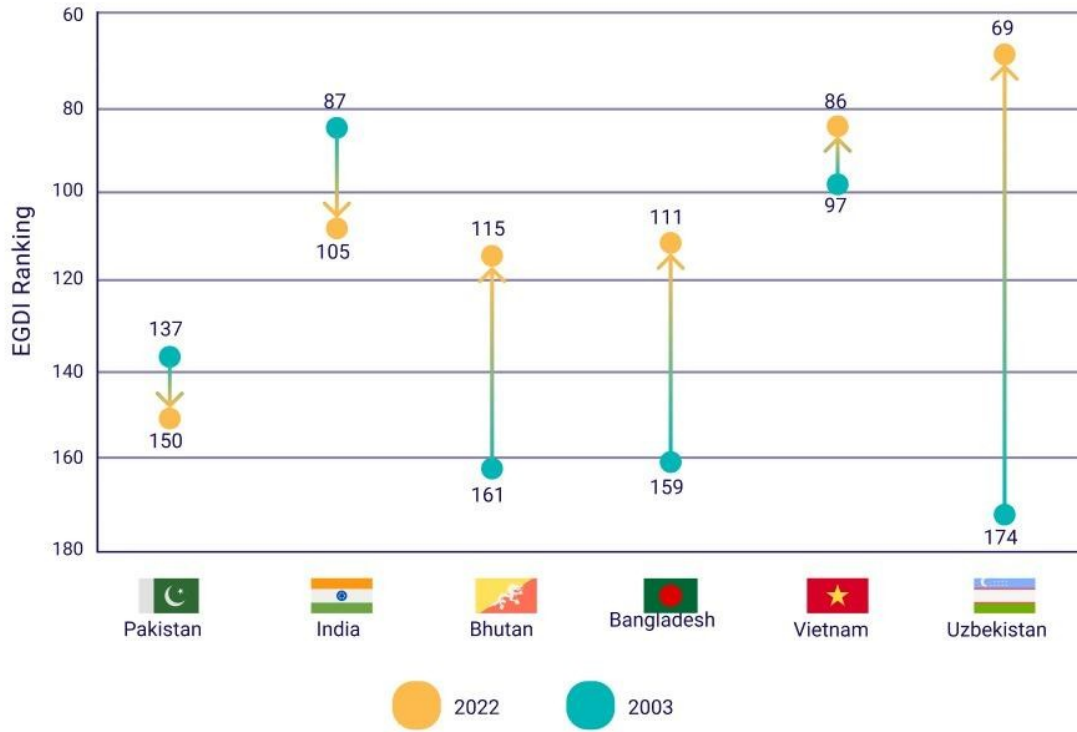
Province	Male	Female	Total
Pakistan	73.4	51.9	62.8
Punjab	74.2	58.4	66.3
Sindh	72.9	49.7	61.8
KP	72.8	37.4	55.1
Balochistan	69.4	36.8	54.5

Source: Pakistan Economic Survey 2022-23, Finance Division, Islamabad

A survey on e-government conducted by the United Nations (UN) in 2022 revealed that Pakistan's EGDI score is 31% lower than the global average. This ranks Pakistan at 150 out of 193 countries in the index, 2022 as shown in Table 1.

Table1. United Nation's E-Government Development Index (EGDI)

Pakistan ranks lower in 2022 than it did in 2003



4. Analysis and Discussion

This study proposes an e-Governance implementation model for government agencies to achieve better collaboration among the government institutions.



It involves leadership, strategy of change management, visionary and charismatic leadership, raising awareness about e-Governance initiatives, and approaches to e-Governance. A good leader should be the one who understands the reason behind the collaboration of e-Governance, has a keen interest, has access to resources, and believes that it is under their executive ownership. Counterpart identification of the bottlenecks or barriers should adopt the strategies of change management, considering a lack of human resources, poor ICT infrastructure, and people's resistance to change. It involves convincing people by motivation and mobilizing them through different tiers of governments by visionary and charismatic leadership, which is aware of its cost and benefit. Awareness programs at the top level of management, government officials, academia, and amongst the public should be carried out to make them aware of the objectives, benefits, and opportunities that the e-Governance initiative brings. Three possible alternatives for e-Governance management are centralized, decentralized, and hybrid. Large-scale e-Governance initiatives must be policy-driven and come from the wisdom of the policymakers. For developing nations like Pakistan, problems for e-Governance initiatives mostly arise from a lack of top-level political commitment, ill definition of goals, and poor alignment of actions toward the goals. favoring Centralised e-Governance with a collaborative approach for easier management and alignment is done. Be small and un-ambitious; after all, e-Governance portals may not reach a critical mass of citizens. Adopt a citizen-centric approach wherein the socio-organizational-institutional factors, rather than the tools, be the concern for governments. Learn from past experiences of other government organizations so as not to make mistakes and bad practices while framing strategies. The policies and guidelines should be linked with the goals and means since normally the case is

that e-Governance initiatives are destined to fail due to poor goal definition and fitting of actions to goals. Best practices should examine the link between information management and organizational performance in government agencies in the process of globalization, and governmental agencies ought to learn from it. Hence, ICT policy revision and policy innovation with clear objectives is necessitated for the e-Governance process in Pakistan. The policy making process should consider the consequences of reverting to old policies. The path dependency must be dealt with to avoid failures in the policy making process. The governments have to break the structural barriers such as rigid recruitment and bureaucratic procedures to make the adoptions of e-Governance easier. After that, there should be building of technological and human capacity in e-Governance. In Pakistan, a 'cooling-off period' should be set in order to develop infrastructure and human capacity before reverting back to application systems. The various partnerships with private organizations bring in expertise and technology unavailable in the government agencies. Any e-Governance initiative needs strong R&D capability. Government agencies have to collaborate with all stakeholders in R&D. Investment in national R&D resources and funding schemes will attract interest from Academy and Industry. Environmental scanning becomes a very important aspect of the e-Governance process since it helps in formulating strategic and regulatory frameworks, human capacity building, technology, and infrastructures.

Conclusion The present research offers recommendations to enhance the inter-institutional cooperation that is much needed for Pakistan's e-governance. Key areas in which cooperation from the government and non-governmental agencies can benefit the e-government projects are in the domains of communication, capacity improvement, technology integration, stakeholder involvement, and legislation enactment. The approach will bring more cohesion and oneness within the governmental structure and pave the way toward digital futures for all citizens of the state. A culture of cooperation among the different units and agencies in government has to be fostered in order to overcome bureaucratic slowness, budget constraints, and lack of technology. AI, Blockchain, and Big Data are frontier technologies that offer a promise for enhanced transparency, efficiency, and citizens' participation. All players must, however, be properly upskilled in the use of such technologies. Cross-cutting and multidisciplinary teams, training programs, and seminars can be arranged to bridge the knowledge gaps and promote a tech-savvy government workforce. Another very important component of the enabling policy environment is full e-government laws that clearly and precisely establish issues of privacy, protection of data, and interoperability. This will demand periodic review and update of said policies to keep pace with the fast-changing technology environment and the threat landscape. Public-private partnerships can be built to leverage knowledge, tools, and funding required for e-governance projects.

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