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# CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF IMPLEMENTING E- GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

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## **Abstract**

By the turn of the 21st century, the world moved towards a new era called the Information Age. This was occasioned by the upsurge, endeavour in most countries of the world, in the use of information and communications technology in virtually all facets of human. From basic activities like acquiring knowledge and conducting research to mailing of letters to friends, carrying out business transactions, among others, the use of the internet and other related electronic devices has become the dominant means through which an individual, or a firm can reach out to one person, or a group of persons, or the entire globe, just by a push of a button. Many government organizations have since keyed into this phenomenon. This gave rise to the use of such prefix as "E-", which implies "Electronic", to complement governance in governmental organizations that have adopted its use. Some states and government parastatals in Nigeria for example, Lagos State has since embraced the concept. This paper therefore examines the challenges its implementation in Nigeria would pose. It takes a cursory look at the processes involved and relating it with Nigerian environment and concludes that for success to be achieved, the following should be in place; a purposeful leader willing to embrace e-governance as a matter of government policy, creating more and effective cyber laws and cafes, making deliberate and concerted plans for training on the effective use of machineries and equipments necessary for e-Governance ,provision of adequate funds for hard wares and soft wares, establishing of community e-centers, and

providing easily accessible websites of government and non governmental agencies among others.

Keywords: Information age, Information technology, community e- centers, e-governance, government organizations.

## **Introduction**

The primary function of Government anywhere in the world is to provide welfare services and protect the lives of the citizens. Unfortunately, these have remained a far cry. For this reason, many governments have similarly, following the introduction of modern technology worldwide, there is practically no sector or segment of the society where the influence of Information and Communications technology (ICT) has not penetrated. In this new age -the Information Age, where multitude of transactions are completed with utmost efficiency brought through by the use of the internet or the world wide web, no organization can afford to be behind in upgrading its mode of conducting business to incorporate the use of ICTs. Any organization that intends to continue keeping afloat and progress in its operations must join the bandwagon in the New Age of ICT. Businesses and Organizations that fail to continuously apply the latest ICTs may not be able to contend with the ever - competitive business world.

Most of the reforms that have swept through the public sector in Nigeria include liberalization, deregulation, downsizing, right-sizing, commercialization, monetization, privatization, etc. These reforms are geared towards blurring the line of differences between the public and private sectors, thereby making public service delivery look more business-like. Despite this, public service delivery and accountability are still a far cry.

In making the public service efficient, flexible, profitable and competitive, many countries have embraced e-governance in their activities. The application of the

internet, web and telecommunications services in the administration of public services is referred to as e- Governance or Electronic-governance. The objective of this paper therefore is to examine the challenges and prospects of implementing e-governance in Nigeria for service delivery. After the introduction, the paper makes some conceptual clarifications and delves into some models of e-governance, and there after took a cursory look at the challenges of implementing e-governance in Nigeria before making some recommendations.

## **Conceptual Clarifications**

### **The Concept of E-Governance**

E-governance can be referred to as the application of information communication technology by the government to enhance accountability, create awareness and ensure transparency in the management of government business. It is a political strategy through which the activities of government are made known through the adoption of modern communication technology (Oj o, 2014).

According to Estevez and Janowski (2013), Electronic Governance is the application of technology by government to transform itself and its interactions with customers, in order to create an impact on the society. Fatile (2012) defines E-governance as the use of information technologies (such as the internet, the World Wide Web, and mobile computing) by government agencies that can transform their relationship with citizens, business, different areas of government, and other government.

UNESCO, in Hassan and Siyanbola (2010) defines E-governance as "the public sector's use of information and communication technologies with the aim of improving information and service delivery, encouraging citizen participation in the decision — making process and making government more accountable, transparent and effective. Gant (2008) defines E-governance as the centre piece of information system — support

reforms to digitize the delivery of services and the process of governance occurring across all levels of government. E-governance utilizes the internet and the World Wide Web for both service delivery and information dissemination. According to the OECD E-governance Project in Savic (2006), E-governance is "the use of information and communication technologies and particularly the internet, as a tool to achieve better government."

Okot-Uma (2004) conceives E-governance as the processes and structures for harnessing the potentialities of information and communication technologies (ICTs) at various levels of government and the public sector and beyond, for the purpose for enhancing good governance.

According to Backus (2001), E-governance, is the application of electronic means in (1) the interaction between government and citizens and government and businesses, as well as (2) in internal government operations to simplify and improve democratic government and business aspects of governance. From the foregoing, the following can be deduced as the features of E-governance:

- It is combination of processes and structures.
- It involves the use of various types of ICTs ranging from the internet to the World Wide Web to mobile internet.
- It is aimed at making government to function and operate more efficiently, effectively, transparently and accountability.
- It is utilized in the relationship between government organizations and the citizens, or business firms, or other government agencies and tiers of government.
- It ensures that the citizens and clients of government obtain maximum satisfaction in their dealing with government.

- It is a revolutionary tool in governance that guarantees timeliness and accountability
- It applies hardware, software, internet and other ICTs to governance.
- It is a political strategy employed through the use of the latest ICTs to showcase the activities of government.
- It is a public sector reform aimed at digitizing public service delivery and government processes at all level.
- It is a tool aimed at improving the way government carries out its business, that is, good governance.
- It encourages citizens to participate in the making of decisions in the government, thereby ensuring accountability, transparency and effectiveness.
- It involves an interaction between government and citizens or government and businesses.

### **Rationale for eGovernance**

This simply refers to the reason for the adoption of e-governance in the provision and delivery of public goods and services. Though governments, the world over, adopt E-governance for various reasons, the general conception is to ensure that utmost efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and transparency are achieved in the interactions between government and the citizens or its other clients. As today's world has become a flux, a continuously changing environment, government agencies cannot afford to lag behind in the old ways on communicating and interacting. Therefore, continuous reforms, especially in improving the information management system in government becomes a necessity for making the process achieve a higher degree of transparency and accountability (Gant, 2008).



The need to keep abreast with the ever-dynamic environment of communications and information systems is the sole reason why government agencies, at all levels, integrate various modes of ICTs in their activities. The essence of the continuous improvement in ICTs is to come up with more cost-effective and efficient ways of transmitting and disseminating information. And adopting ICT in governance provides the framework for cost reduction in the provision of information and services to the public (Gant, 2008).

### **Objectives of eGovernance**

The primary aim of governance is to regulate and protect the state and its citizens. It also has the mandate of managing the affairs of the state on behalf of the citizens. The use of electronic medium in governance, that is E-governance, is to facilitate the easy flow of interactions between the government and the citizens or its clients. Thus, e-governance enhances the efficiency and flexibility of providing public goods and services.

Backus (2001) noted that there are two main objectives of E-governance, namely:

- To provide citizens access to information and knowledge about the political process, about services and about choices available
- To make possible the transition from passive information access to active citizen participation by:
  - v Informing the citizen
  - v Representing the citizen
  - v Encouraging the citizen
  - v Consulting the citizen
  - v Involving the citizen

The OECD listed out the following as the major objectives of e-governance:

- Online data collection to reduce data entry costs and automate error checking;
- Reduce the communication costs with citizens;
- Greater sharing of data within government and between the governments and other such stakeholders as NGOs, international agencies, and private sector firms,
- Greater re-use of data,
- Reduce government publication and distribution costs through online publication (Gant, 2008)

In the same vein, Nkwe (2012) listed out the objectives of E-governance, to include:

- Cost reduction and efficiency gains;
- Quality of service delivery to businesses and customers;
- Transparency, anticorruption, accountability;
- Increase in the capacity of government;
- Network and community creation;
- Improve the quality of decision-making;
- Promote use of ICT in other sectors of the society.

### **Scope of EGovernance**

This covers the areas or sections which E-governance is sub-divided into. According to Ojo (2014) there are three broad scopes of E-governance, namely:

1. E-Administration: This is the application of ICT in the processes of government or the public sector organization.

2. E-Services: This is the use of the Internet, the web and mobile technology to improve upon the delivery of government or public services.
3. E-Democracy: This is the application of ICTs in a view to enhancing greater involvement of citizens in the decision making processes of democratic institutions in the country.

Likewise, Svic (2006) stated out the scope of E-governance to include:

1. E-Democracy: This refers to the use of electronic mediums in between democratic institutions and processes to build links or relationship between the elected and the electorates. Thus, it includes:

- Creating access between the elected and the electorates;
- Opening discussion forum via the web, that is, e-participation;
- Providing access to public meetings and documentations arising from them;
- Registering voters, and online voting, also known as e-voting.

2. E-Government: This refers to the creation, allocation and execution of the policies, laws and regulations that provide legal backing to the use of ICTs in governance (Savic, 2006). E government is a two pronged concept which includes:

- Disseminating information through the use of ICTs, and
- Delivering public goods and services through the improved processes of governance occasioned by the application of the internet, the web and mobile technology.

3. E-Business: This can be referred to as the institutions and activities that outline interactions between the public sector and the private sector (Savic 2006). This involves the Government-to-Business model or type of e-governance that deals with the interactions between the government and private sector businesses, entrepreneurs,

firms, etc (The Models of E-government would be exhaustively discussed in a separate sub-heading).

eGovernance versus eGovernment In most literature, the terms "e-governance" and "e-government" are used interchangeably. However, they do not mean the same thing. Though, they both involve the application of ICTs to meet the demands of an ever-changing world of information dissemination and communication transmissions in the public sector, the two terms are not interchangeable or synonymous. Ojo (2014) points out that e-government centre on "constituencies and stakeholders" which can include government or public sector organizations at all levels, be it, local, state, federal or international. E-government refers to government establishments (local, state or federal) as they provide services utilizing, web-based formats or ICTs in general

On the other hand, e-governance refers to the "administration and management" of government activities and service deliveries through the application of ICTs (Ojo, 2014). It covers the online business of the government and how information technology and mobile internet are utilized and executed in line with the policies and programmes of government (Finger and Pecoud, 2003).

### **Models of eGovernance**

By this we mean the various forms or patterns of interactions with E-governance. It has to do with the forms of exchanging and disseminating information and services, connecting communities and businesses locally and globally and the actors therein.

These forms or models of E-governance can be classified into four (4) broad categories, namely:

- Government to Citizens (G2C);
- Government to Government (G2G);

- Government to Employees (G2E); and
- Government to Business (G2B) (Nkwe, 2012; Yadau and Singh, 2012; Sameer, 2002; and Backus, 2001).
- Government to Citizens

(G2C): This type of e-governance is geared towards creating links and communication channels between the government and the citizens. G2C aims at establishing an efficient, free flow of interaction between the government and the citizens which is the whole essence of adopting e-governance (Nkwe, 2012).

This model of e-governance, which creates a bond between government and its citizens include the following services:

- Payment of utility bills online;
- Making online registrations and applications;
- Filing of complaints via government websites that addresses grievances and infringements;
- Sourcing for any government information that educates and enlightens the public (Yadav and Singh 2012).

The G2C model of e-governance is citizen-centered because it focuses on providing internet services which revolve around meeting the demands of the public. Thus, the G2C model is supported by concepts like e-democracy, e-voting, e-transport, e-Medicare, and e-citizen which is geared towards establishing "integrated service centres" which are visible outlets for delivering all forms of government ICT services (Sameer 2002).

Government-to-government (G2G): This model aims at providing internet services among government organizations at various levels of inter-governmental relations (Gant, 2008). The G2G model is said to be the fulcrum of e-governance. This is because

government agencies across the federal, state and local levels are expected to upgrade and modernize their internal mediums, and network and processes to a higher internet-compliant standard before they can use them to interact with the citizens and businesses of the outside world (Nkwe, 2012). The G2G model of e-governance ensures that governments and public organizations adopt the latest ICTs in networking and interacting with one another. It is, therefore, an internal type of e-governance that centre on updating the inter-government agencies at all levels - Government to Employees (G2E): This model of e-governance seeks to improve on the transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the interactions between the government and its employees through the application of ICTs. Just like the G2G, the G2C is an internal innovation on the use of the internet and mobile communications with a view to improving internal operations and cost- effectiveness (Gant, 2008). Yadav and Singh (2012) outlined the following as the type of information shared under the G2E model: - All kind of data submission/attendance record and employee record; - Documentations of complaints and dissatisfaction; - Rules, regulations and information about work; - Payment timetable and work records; - Working forms. - Government to Business (G2B): This model employs the procurement and/or delivery of goods and services between the government and the private sector via the use of ICT (Nkwe, 2012). The G2B type of e-governance is the linkage between the public and private sectors through the medium of the internet, the web and mobile communications technology. Because of the large volume of goods and services that are delivered between the government and the private sector, the government puts in place internet based processes of procurement, also known as e-procurement (Gant, 2008).

### **Evolution of eGovernance**

The dawn of the digital age on the global scale which brought about radical movements towards the increased use of ICTs in the business world as well as the personal lives of

people necessitated world governments to join the bandwagon. The dotcom era, which dominated the 90s, saw the heavy reliance on the World Wide Web and the internet by private sector businesses in their daily business transactions. The high rate of efficiency and accountability which the use of ICTs brought into the private sector became a ray of hope for the public sector to redeem their tainted image of inefficiency, lack of transparency and accountability. Thus the adoption of e-governance became an inevitable reform that was bound to be implemented in the provision of public goods and services.

Ojo (2014) opines that the concept of e-governance originated from India in the 1970s. He argues that the idea was born out of the intention of the Indian government to establish internal government applications in sectors such as defense, economic planning and supervision, and information management system relating to elections, census, tax administration, etc.

Dawes (2008) points out that the e-governance drive was given a big boost in the early 1990s following the "reinventing government" movement in America. This movement advocated for a paradigm shift from a government dogged with red-tape to a more innovative government that was "enterprising, catalytic, mission and customer driven and result-oriented".

Thus, the digitalization of governance received rapid acceptance worldwide in the 1990s. E-governance, which stands for electronic governance became the new focus of modern day governments which is all about using ICTs to support and enhance the delivery of public goods and services.

### **Phases of eGovernance**

Apparently, there are numerous applications and uses of e-governance, the world over, due to the various goals, resources and competencies of different governments. Thus,

the phase of e-governance varies depending on the level of technological developments and ICT functions adopted by the government of the day (Gant, 2008). When it comes to the phases of e-governance, the step-by-step approach towards the adoption and application of ICTs in governance, there are no universally applicable sequences or steps. In other words, the phases of e-governance range and differ from one author to another. However, a detailed, streamlined classification of the phases of e-governance is provided here by combining the views of various authors. They include: Information Phase, Interaction Phase, Transaction Phase, and Transportation Phase (Backus, 2001; Savic, 2006; and Gant, 2008)

### **Phase One: Information**

This is the beginning stage of e-governance which simply entails making the presence of the government felt on the World Wide Web, through the creation of websites and posting of information on the net for public consumption and use (Backus, 2001). This stage is very crucial in the development of e-governance because it creates public awareness that the government organization or agency involved has gone digital and could be easily reached through the click of a button. Thus, this phase brings to the forefront the goals and aspirations of the government in electronic form.

The format of such government websites should be user-friendly to the public. It should be identical to that of a government leaflet or a brochure, and must not be complex with too much links so that it can easily be accessed (Savic 2006). As mentioned earlier the whole essence of this phase is to make information available to the public.

### **- Phase Two: Interaction**

After the first phase is completed, and a communication link is created between the government and the public/ clients, the next phase is forming a relationship between the two entities via interactions. This involves the use of various outlets or mediums such



as the e-mail, search-engines, or filter search options, and downloadable resources (Backus, 2001).

The above interactive media pertain to government relations with the public or the business world. However, interactions do occur between the government and its employees (G2E) or intergovernmental levels (G2G). Hence, the use of Local Area Network (LAN) and intranets as ideal forms of interactions at these instances (Savic, 2006).

### **- Phase Three: Transaction**

This phase is the transaction phase. Government has put its information on the web, interactions have taken place between the government and its customers; hence, the next phase in the process of e-governance is to conduct or carry out business efficiently and effectively. This is what the transaction phase is all about. With the use of ICTs in governance, customers do not need to be physically present in any government establishment to conduct any business or transaction with the government. With just a click of the mouse button, customers can carry out businesses with the government such as "filing income tax, filing property tax, extending or renewal of licenses, visa and passport, and online voting" among others (Savic, 2006).

In this phase, the real action of e-governance takes place. The government employs ICT in the process from providing a vast range of goods and services to its customers

### **- Phase Four: Transformation**

Once activities are being carried out via the internet and transactions are made, there is the likelihood to experience some problems or setbacks along the process. This might draw some negative feedbacks and complaints from the customers over issues bordering on payment, services, delivery dates, e.t.c. The transformation phase ensures

that these problems are brought to the forefront and treated. This phase would guarantee major cultural change, re-engineering of processes, and redefinition of responsibilities within the government institutions (Savic, 2006).

Also, the transformation phase ensures that all data are integrated into a large database by which the public or other clients can easily gain access through a single portal.

Backus (2001), notes that the primary objective of e-governance at this level is to create a single portal for all government services by synchronizing all databases. Therefore, the transformation phase intends to achieve the following:

- Create a single point of contact for all government information by linking all government databases;
- Present computer-based framework of government agencies where complaints of poor services are reduced to the barest minimum;
- Strengthen collaborative efforts of government to government, or government to employees relations through LANs and intranet to allow for an uninterrupted flow of information.

## **eGovernance Implementation in Nigeria**

### **Antecedents of E-governance Emergence in Nigeria**

Though e-governance implementation in Nigeria varies from level to level of government as well as agency to agency, there was actually an attempt at providing a unified, national framework of ICT adoption in governance. According to Olatokun and Adebayo (2012), the federal government of Nigeria, in 2001, announced ICT as a policy of national importance. This further culminated in the creation of a policy on information technology in the same year.

The need for adopting ICT in governance, that is, e-governance, came as an awareness that no country or its government can function properly in the information or digital age without the use of the web and other mobile Internet technologies. Seeing the importance of ICT in governance, the Nigerian Federal Government deemed it necessary for the country to have a national policy on ICT. Hence, in 2007, the enabling Act - the National Information Technology Development Act - was enacted by the National Assembly with an Agency established along with the Act, which was empowered to "plan, develop and promote the use of information technology in Nigeria" (Olatokun and Adebayo, 2012).

With the enabling act, various government agencies embarked on the implementation of ICTs in their operations. However, in 2011, the Federal Government created a new Ministry called the Ministry of Communications Technology which was saddled with the mandate of streamlining ICT development and progress in line with the nation's plan for e-governance (Omerie and Omeire, 2014).

In 2012, a National ICT draft policy was presented by the ministerial committee on ICT policy harmonization which included several policy recommendations and reports. The following are the policy thrust of the National ICT draft policy of 2012, as it pertains to e-governance:

- To facilitate the implementation of e-government initiatives;
- To develop frameworks and guidelines, including interoperability and e-government framework for the enhanced development and use of ICT in the government;
- To develop and implement ICT training programs for public sector employees, in connection with introduction of e-government and other digital functions within government offices;
- To coordinate the integration of national e-government network infrastructure and services; and

- To promote e-government and other e-services that would foster broadband usages (National ICT Policy, 2012).

The Nigerian legal framework covering the use of ICT in governance is not based on an integrated system but on various policies. They include: the Information Policy, which is supervised by the National Media Commission); the Telecommunications Policy, which is regulated by the National Communications Commission (NCC); and the ICT policy which is overseen by NITDA which stands for the National Information Technology Development Agency (Fraser-Moleketi, G., and Senghor, D, 2011).

The private sector was not left out of the drive for implementing ICTs in the business of governance in Nigeria. In 2007, the National Information Technology Development Act also provided for the avenue of public-private partnership in the adoption and management of ICTs in Nigeria by establishing the National e-Government Strategies limited (NeGST) (Fatile, 2012).

The NeGST was more or less a tripartite joint venture, that is, a platform involving three parties, namely the government (which is represented by NITDA), private and financial investors, and technology partners, for which their share ownership in the joint venture is 5%, 15% and 80% respectively (Omeire and Omeire, 2014).

The essence of this strategic three-partner alliance called the NeGST was to create a viable unified national framework for the adoption and implementation of ICTs in and across government agencies and their customers. As stated in the website of NeGST the purpose of its creation is "to facilitate drive, and implement the Nigerian e-government programme under a public-private partnership model" (NeGST, [www.negst.com.ng/index/php/about-us](http://www.negst.com.ng/index/php/about-us)).

Following the creation of the NeGST in 2007, there was an initiative to establish an online database for teachers in Nigeria via e-registration (Omeire and Omerie, 2014). In

addition, the NeGST instituted and projected other e- governance initiative in Nigeria such as:

- E-readiness: A programme designed to prepare the Nigeria civil service for e- governance;
- E-parliament: This is an initiative to bridge the gap between the citizens and lawmakers via web, and mobile telecommunication channels;
- E-passport: This ensures that the process for the preparation and issuance of international passports is done electronically;
- E-NYSC: This is involved with the administration and the management of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) through the use of ICTs.
- E-LGA: This is in line with making local government areas (LGA) live up to their responsibility of being closest to the people via the application of ICTs (Fraser Moleketi, G., and Senghor, D, 2011).

There is no doubt that e-governance has become an integral part of modern day government. This is primarily because e-governance ensures that service delivery is cost-effective, and provides easy accessibility to the public (Ojo, 2014).

### **Challenges of eGovernance in Nigeria**

The challenges of e-governance in Nigeria are the same as with many other developing countries of the world. There appears to be a consensus among authors that the number one problem of e-governance implementation in Nigeria is poor Internet and telecommunications infrastructures. Fatile (2012) aptly captures the situation when he said that the enabling technological frameworks of e-governance, for instance telecommunications facilities are still insufficient or substandard.

Coleman (2005) identifies the three major barriers which African countries like Nigeria must avoid or overcome in adopting e-governance so that the exercise does not end up in failure. They include:

- Adopting technologies without developing human skills and capacities to manage, integrate and sustain them;
- Centralizing the use of technologies by national government departments, without devolving the benefits of technology to intermediary institutions such as local government, parliament, parties, civil society organization and the independent media;
- Failing to link better governance to broader and more inclusive democracy which gives voice to those who cannot afford technologies but have needs and ideas to express.

Omeire and Omeire (2014) gave a detailed analysis of the challenges of e-governance implementation in Nigeria. They include:

- Low ICT literacy rate: The low usage of ICTs by the Nigerian public serves as an impediment to the implementation of e-governance in Nigeria. Most Nigerians see the use of computers and the internet as very complex for them. Even among the educated class, ICT compliance is not high.
- Lack of necessary regulatory/ legal framework: In spite of the various legislations and policies put forward to promote e-governance in Nigeria, the implementation has always been below expectations. Some of the ICT services from the government are not properly regulated, for instance, sending and receiving e-mails.
- Poor ICT infrastructure: Internet service and telecommunications structure are still in their embryonic state in Nigeria. In addition, internet and telecommunication services are very expensive, thus, a large section of

Nigerians who cannot afford these services are alienated from participating in e-governance.

- Corruption: The implementation of e-governance in Nigeria is not spared from the tentacles of the hydra—headed monster called corruption. Just as it is with a typical government policy in Nigeria, e-governance has had most of its execution stalled because of the pervasiveness of corruption. Since e-governance has the capability of reducing corruption, the forces of corruption in government establishments will oppose and do everything they can to ensure its failure.
- Lack of committed leadership: Since the idea of e-governance implementation and the national ICT policy was conceived in 2001, neither the previous and present governments have demonstrated the strong political will and commitment to see to its success. The interests of the leadership over the time have been anything but passive. The policy is not given the adequate attention it requires for its success.
- Epileptic power supply: The perennial problem of unstable electricity has further compounded the accessibility of the web in Nigeria by the public. Likewise, the situation has made internet services costly because of the use of "generators" to power cyber cafes.
- Bureaucratic Bottlenecks: Red-tape is a huge impediment to the flexibility which e-governance proposes. With the insistence on adhering to unneeded due processes, rules and regulations, most of which are duplicated, the purpose for e-governance is defeated. This is because e-governance, when implemented, ensures a very speedy, flexible system that gets rid of time wasting and all forms inefficiency. Thus, the continued practice of bureaucratic bottlenecks becomes counter-productive to e-governance.

Every two years, the United Nations carries out an e-government survey among the 193 member countries based on some criteria called the E-Government Development Index (EGDI). The EGDI is based on three (3) factors namely:

- i. Online Service Index
- ii. Telecommunication Infrastructure Index
- iii. Human Capital Index

(Source: United Nations E-government Development Database, [www.un-pan.org/e-government](http://www.un-pan.org/e-government)).

According to the 2014 e-government survey, Nigeria scored 0.2929 on the EGDI, thereby ranking 141st out of 193 countries in the survey and 19th out of the top twenty African countries. With an EGDI of 0.2929, Nigeria was classed among countries with a lower-middle EGDI, while countries like Ghana and South Africa recorded higher EGDI of 0.3735 and 0.4869 respectively, and ranked far above Nigeria in the e-government survey (United Nations E-government Survey, 2014). Prospects and the Way Forward for eGovernance in Nigeria

The prospects for the application of e-governance in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. E-government provides a lot of benefits which includes:

- A freer flow of information between departments, agencies and layers within government;
- More professional administrators, supported by standardized, electronically-embedded decision-making system;
- The routine provision of service according to impersonal rules, as opposed to clientelist arrangements;



- Transparency, particularly in relations to the procurement of government services;
- Opportunities to work in partnership with the private sector in modernizing government processes;
- A freer flow of information between government and citizens;
- The strengthening of intermediary democratic institutions, such as parliaments, local government, civil society organizations and independent media;
- Opportunities for citizens to participate more directly in policy development;
- Opportunities to combine traditional and modern methods of accountability (Coleman, 2005)

To overcome the challenges of e-governance in Nigeria, the following recommendations are necessary for implementation:

- There should be purposeful leadership for e-governance to excel. The political leader should demonstrate enough commitment to the course of upgrading governance to meet with the demands of the time through the adoption of ICTs in government business. Regardless of leadership changes, the ICT policy should be constant and must not change along with the government.
- There should be training programs put in place to train government employees even before ICT is implemented in government agencies. This will ensure that they get equipped in terms of the knowledge, skills and efficiency. It is of paramount importance that human resources are first developed before applying ICTs on the organizations.
- Funds are no doubt one of the most important resources in an organization. Making funds readily available and in sufficient amount is another prerequisite to have a smooth implementation of e-governance in Nigeria. E-governance is a very capital-intensive program because it requires the purchases of hardware, the installation of software, regular maintenance,

training of personnel, e.t.c. Providing the right amount of funds at the right time will ensure that the demands of e-governance projects are met on time.

- ICT education is a foundation for any nation to achieve a high, acceptable rate of computer literacy. It should be an integral part of the curriculum of education at all levels. Once, there is high percentage of computer literates in the society, it will become a catalyst for the adoption of ICTs in governance.
- Creating more cyber laws and cafes, establishment of community e-governance centers and providing easily accessible websites of government and non-governmental agencies will also go a long way in enhancing the success of its implementation in Nigeria.
- There should also be a more practicable approach to the planning of ICT policies in Nigeria. Planning should be consistent and ongoing because of the speed at which newer innovations of ICTs are released. Thus, planning should be short term so as to cater for changes in the ways and means by which human beings communicate and interact through the internet and mobile devices.
- There is the need to improve on electrical power supply so that the public can easily access the web. Once power supply becomes stable, the cost of providing internet services would become cheaper, thereby allowing more accessibility to the internet, including online services and interaction with the government.
- Corruption remains a big cog in the wheel of progress for any government policy, including ICT policies. Thus, the government must tackle corruption and display the political will necessary for winning the fight against corruption. In doing this, the government must make it clear to public servants that e-governance is a policy framework for making their work much lighter and thereby increase their efficiency and effectiveness. This is a sure way to carry the public servants along in the progress because they, being the implementers of any government policy, have the wherewithal to make and mar the implementation of e-governance.
- In designing e-governance projects, a great deal must be done to include local content and local initiatives in the exercise. Thus, the policy must be home-grown and not be a brainchild of a foreign body. This will ensure that whatever problems that may arise in the implementation process can easily be tackled locally without sourcing for external assistance.
- Finally, e-governance projects should not be seen as an end but a means to an end which is to make governance more efficient, effective, transparent,

accountable, responsive and inclusive. The processes do not matter more than arriving at the end result. A policy, no matter how much effort and resources were put into it or how painstakingly it was formulated, if it does not meet its desired objectives, then that policy is a failure. Therefore, policy makers as well as implementers should not lose sight of the ultimate aim of drafting ICT policies for e-governance in Nigeria which is to deliver qualitative public goods and services to the public.

## **Conclusion**

With the constant innovations in ICTs, the world has become a virtual global village. By this, the globe appears to be a small community where one person from one end of the world can communicate with another person at the other end of the world by simply clicking buttons. The speed at which such interactions take place has made the world of ICT an ever-changing world in which one cannot afford to lag behind by failing to be in constant touch with the latest in ICT innovations.

Governments across the globe have realized that ICT is a necessity in the art of public service delivery in the sense that it has the potentials for eradicating the perennial complaints of inefficiency and ineffectiveness that has become associated with government agencies. The Nigerian government is not left out in the bandwagon as it has put various policies and measures in place to see that the public receives the benefits of implementing e-governance in Nigeria.

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