

E-Governance and Service Delivery in the Nigeria Civil Service

Obi Helen Obiageli, Uzor Obiora Anthony, Chukwurah Daniel Chi Junior

Abstract— The advent of information communication technology has made the activities of government more accessible to the governed while the traditional barrier of distance becomes tractable through the modern approach of communication. Application of e-governance has been a potent instrument in easy spreading of information, consultation, and enhancing citizen's participation, sending feedback to the citizens, monitoring and evaluating government projects and making government accountable and transparent in its total political engagements. This paper is therefore an attempt at determining the extent e-governance implementation has enhanced administrative efficiency in the Nigeria Civil Service and to ascertain whether the implementation of e-governance has helped to reduce corruption in the Nigeria Civil Service. The paper relied on modernization theory and qualitative research method as data that formed major part of the study were generated from secondary sources. Findings reveal that e-governance has made service delivery easier which is evident in the ways and manner the old methods have been transformed and researchers recommend for Nigeria's public service to show high level of e-readiness in their operations on one part and government adequate provision of necessary infrastructure; enact Information and Communication Technology for successful implementation on the other part.

Index Terms— E-Governance, ICT, Implementation, Challenges, Service Delivery, Nigerian Civil Service.

I. INTRODUCTION

The beginning 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 prompted 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), argues 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. Moreover, 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 introduced some public sector reforms which are yet to bring the expected changes in government business. Today in Nigeria there is practically no public sector organization that has not undergone one form of reform or the other. 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

Obi Helen Obiageli PhD, Public and Private Department, Faculty of Law, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka - Nigeria

Uzor Obiora Anthony, Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam - Nigeria

Chukwurah Daniel Chi Junior PhD, Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam - Nigeria

Electronic-governance. The objective of this paper therefore is to examine the challenges and prospects of implementing e-governance in Nigeria for service delivery. The importance and impact of e-governance on public service delivery cannot be over emphasized, nor can it be down played. In fact, the benefit of e-governance to the operation of Nigeria's public service is not in doubt. E-governance in Nigeria can be traced to the formulation of the Nigerian National Information Technology (NNIT) policy in the year 2000. The essence of the policy was to make Nigeria an Information Technology (IT) capable country in Africa and a key player in the information society and also use IT for education; creation of wealth; poverty eradication; job creation; governance; health; agriculture (NITP, 2000).

Despite the lofty ideas and aims of the policy which were geared towards ensuring that public sector organisations provide an expanded range of services to citizens in a manner that is systematic and cost effective leveraging on the adoption of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in its day to day activities.

II. HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses have been stated to guide the study:

- i. There is tremendous improvement in the level of e-governance application in the Nigeria Civil Service.
- ii. E-governance has brought about smooth and efficient operations in the Nigeria Civil Service.
- iii. E-governance has inculcated some level of quality assurance in the Nigeria Civil Service.

III. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

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 (Ojo, 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. Backus (2001), argued that 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.

Service Delivery

Service delivery simply means the extent to which an individual, unit or department of an organization discharge their assigned or statutory responsibilities. It is also a means by which an organization evaluates an individual employee or unit input and output level especially in the area of attaining set goals or task assigned. In the view of Byars and Rue (2006), service delivery is the degree to which an employee accomplished the tasks that made his or her job.

El-Rufai (2006), summarizes service delivery as the degree of an organization and/or employee performance, output and productivity in the discharge of their responsibilities within the available time, money and other resources, towards the achievement of overall goals, of the organization. The spate of service delivery is determined by the performance of employees in achieving, organizational goals and satisfying the public. However, for purpose of this study, the researcher views service delivery as the achievement of targets (performance/output/ productivity) of the tasks assigned to organizations or employees' within particular period of time. It involves the execution of duties and responsibilities assigned by constituted authorities which one have promised to do, so as to achieve set goals of an organization. Therefore, the degree to which an organization or employees performs its duties and functions towards achieving set goals determines the spate of service delivery-whether it is efficient or inefficient, effective or ineffective, economical or not economical, productive or not productive (Ezekwesili, 2010). Conclusively, Richardo (2001), contends that employee performance is the successful completion of tasks by a selected individual or individual, as set and measured by a supervisor or organization, to predefined acceptable standards while efficiently and effectively utilizing available resources within changing objectives. Thus, ensuring high employee job performance will lead to achieving organizational goals and objectives, which is organizational performance.

E-Governance Implementation 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). 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).

The Opportunities of ICTs as a means of Public Service Delivery in the Nigeria Civil Service

Information and Communication Technologies no doubt offer great opportunities for Nigeria and indeed all developing countries vis-à-vis public service delivery, and citizen's satisfaction. This accounts for the link between

ICTs applications, optimization of government operations and achievement of important social development goals which is even a very convincing argument for the continued utilization of ICTs in the country's civil service. This is why Gupta and Jana (2003), argued that the application of ICTs in government is no longer seen as an option but as a necessity for all countries aiming at having better and efficient governance. This shows that there is a strong linkage between ICTs application and efficient service delivery. In a study carried out in 2003, the European Commission observed that ICTs application enables the public sector to maintain and strengthen good governance in the knowledge society, create a public sector that is open and transparent, governments that are understandable and accountable to the citizens and open to democratic involvement and scrutiny. It also ensures that the public sector is at the service of all, promotes a productive public sector that delivers maximum value for tax payers' money, less time is wasted standing in queues, errors are drastically reduced, more ties are available for professional face-to-face service and the jobs of the civil servants becomes rewarding in the process (Nweke, 2007a; 2007b).

Indeed, extant literature is replete with the great opportunities of ICTs as an efficient and effective means of public service delivery. ICTs innovation and revolution has no doubt brought considerable potential to initiatives aimed at fighting corruption and increasing the participation of citizens in the institutions of government. To be specific, ICTs have opened a new e-governance space or route that has huge potential for improving opportunities for the participation of citizens in governmental affairs. This type of setting enhances equity, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, responsibility, effectiveness and efficiency in the manifold transactions that link service suppliers and service recipients (Muchie, 2011). It has also been argued that the application of ICTs in the civil service can lead to the following outcomes: saving costs while improving quality, response times and access to services (ADB, 2003); improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration (Pacific Council, 2002); increasing transparency in administration, reducing

corruption and increasing political participation (Seifert and Bonham, 2003), and; making governments more competitive (OECD 2003).

Below, we examine in details the foregoing opportunities or benefits of ICTs application. We decided to summarize them under five headings.

a. Reduced Cost of Administration

The implementation of ICTs in the Federal Civil Service allows for a significant reduction in information handling cost. This process enables faster sharing of information thereby reducing the frequency with which data is collected when it is handled manually. Obviously, data collected manually costs more due to travel costs and other allowances and expenses.

According to Ndou (2004), if developing countries appropriately apply e-government initiatives, it will reduce the number of inefficiencies in processes by allowing file and data sharing across government departments, thereby contributing to the elimination of mistakes from manual procedures and reducing the required time for transactions. It is painful to observe that the cost of running governmental affairs in Nigeria has been on the rise hence the application of e-initiatives in the Federal Civil Service has the capacity of providing cheaper administrative cost due to the digitalization of public service delivery. By this practice according to Nweke (2007b:166), ICTs application in public service delivery reforms public administrative process by streamlining internal processes which enables faster, speedy and more informed decision making and transaction process. Nigeria is a nation of about 150 million people distributed over a territory of 923,768 square kilometres (Akunyili, 2010). It is therefore easy to imagine the logistic challenge and cost that goes with service provisioning by the Federal Civil Service in the country. The use of ICTs solutions by the service has enabled and will continue to enable it to render public services with greater efficiency and less cost to the ministry and the recipients.

b. Improved, Fast and Accurate Service Delivery

The traditional style of service delivery in the Federal Civil Service is time consuming because of the bureaucratic nature of the Nigerian civil service. ICTs application therefore, helps to reduce waiting time and red-tapism, thereby bringing about fast and accurate service delivery. Public sector organizations in Nigeria like the

National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), Abuja Geographical Information System (AGIS) and a host of others have made service delivery to the citizens more convenient, faster and accurate through the digitalization of their operations and services. For example, JAMB utilizes e-initiatives now to conduct national matriculation examination for admission into Nigerian higher institutions of learning.

This yearly examinations that usually involve over one million candidates see scripts computer-marked, and the results released and up-loaded to the website within seven working days. All over the country, what it now takes for candidates to know their results is to visit the internet site of the examination body. The revolutionary dimensions of this ICT-enhanced service can only be appreciated when

compared with the former system where the examination results were anxiously awaited by the candidates for close to eight weeks. When eventually released, the notifications were sent by surface mail service through the post office. This created all sorts of mix-ups as some notifications got lost in transit partly because some candidates' addresses would have changed in the interval. Very importantly, manually marked scripts were more prone to errors than computer marked ones. One can therefore see from the JAMB example that ICT enhances improved, fast and accurate public service delivery. ICT eliminates time-wasting, loss of documents, delay in responding to requests, and kickbacks normally associated with traditional style of service delivery. Even the idea of repeated visits to offices from a far distance, which normally takes a toll on resources, is usually reduced through ICT usage. ICTs also allows for service delivery outside normal office hours. Arguing in this direction, Ndou (2004), avers that e-government initiatives put government services online thereby reducing bureaucratic bottlenecks, offers round the clock accessibility, fast and convenient transactions and obviously enhances the quality of services. Similarly, intergovernmental and international communication relations with other public and private organisations are made faster and convenient. This can be seen on the dominance of e-mails, which have taken over surface mails. In addition, e-government initiatives such as electronic chatting, e-conferencing/video conferencing, etc, are making the public service smarter with reduced risks of travel. These initiatives also enable both the government and the private agencies to have discussions at a distance and at the same time run their respective offices.

c. Creates Access to Transparent, Accountable and Participatory Governance

E-government initiatives have already demonstrated significant capacity for citizens to have greater access to information from public authorities in Nigeria. Public service delivery improves citizens' participation in public sector management, which is enhanced through ICTs. The opportunity generated in this perspective helps increase the transparency of decisions as citizens and the public servants interact through e-governance process. The citizens and other service recipients are allowed to contribute and exchange ideas and suggestions through electronic forum and websites. ICTs reform which is presently been experienced through e-government initiatives in Nigeria's public administration has created opportunity for public servants and citizens to have access to official information and transaction which were previously classified. This invariably enables the Federal Civil Service to harvest more data from operational systems through increment in the quality of feedback. It is therefore, obvious that government to citizens type of relationships enabled by ICTs application, which before now created suspicion are now reduced as more information are made available through different kinds of on-line communication between the Federal Civil Service and her service recipients. ICTs usage in the Federal Civil Service therefore, enhances transparency, accountability and participatory governance. It also reduces corrupt practices.

d. Enhances Networking and Inter Governmental Relations

ICTs provide and enhance networking of relationships among governments, customers, businesses, employees and other organisations. The successful use and diffusion of ICTs in the public sector involves a collective, multi-disciplinary and dynamic learning process (Mansell and Wehn, 1998). This is the case of such Nigerian public agencies like NYSC, JAMB, AGIS, NOUN, WAEC, NECO, etc, that have fully embraced e-initiatives in the delivery of public services.

According to Ndou (2004), the very nature and function of e-governments require network approach to put together skills, technologies, information and knowledge that span the boundaries of different governmental agencies. The application of e-government therefore, enhances the practice of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), which is an integrated business system that ties all the various functions of an enterprise like finance, human resource management, etc, into a cohesive system on a common database. In the views of Wescot (cited in Nweke, 2007b:168), ERP system may be integrated with the internet and workflow. ERP presents opportunities to the civil service in the areas of financial management, human resources management, records management, material management, etc. The establishment of integrated online network in the civil service therefore, enhances data sharing that facilitates feedback. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) argues along this line when it notes that strengthening relationship between the government and the citizens could improve the quality of services by allowing government tap wider sources of information, perspectives and solution to meet the challenges of policy making under conditions of increased complexity (OECD, 2001).

In addition to the foregoing, services like attachment mails, online delivery of scanned files, etc, speed up bureaucratic transactions in the Federal Civil Service. The innovations that come with e-initiatives are reducing red-tap and similar lapses that come with traditional means of service delivery. Above all, e-government initiatives in the Federal Civil Service enable civil servants to interact, transact and communicate electronically with business, citizens and other stakeholders. It is therefore necessary to mandate the use of ICT tools and applications for the development of new forms of citizens' participation in the Federal Civil Service.

e. Boosts Competitive and Responsive Service Delivery

The digitalization of operations and services in the public sector in Nigeria means that the public sector is in a healthy competition with the private sector in delivering qualitative and productive services to the citizens. ICTs application in the Federal Civil Service therefore, boosts competitive and responsive service delivery in the country. This development is heart-warming and commendable especially when one recalls that the private sector was on top in the use of ICTs in the country prior to the digitalization of operations and services in the public sector. According to Nweke (2007b:168-169), the Automated Custom Data, Electronic Immigration Passport/Visa Application, Nipost Post Cash, and other similar initiatives are examples of e-government potentials in reforming public administration for increased

productivity and competitiveness. In the view of Mansell and Wehn (1998), e-government plays a vital role, not only in facilitating market led initiatives but also in initiating the process of capacity building and in coordinating the actions of a large number of interested stakeholders.

In addition, ICTs usage in the civil service provides structure of opportunities mediating between the citizens and the service using digital information and communication technologies by the government and the citizens. It therefore, implies that ICTs application in the Federal Civil Service brings about citizens that are active, connected and informed. ICTs also help to stimulate exchange of information in which citizens and government relate interactively thereby enhancing productive and responsive service delivery. This also helps to bridge the gap between the citizens and the government.

E-Governance Implementation and its Administrative Efficiency in the Nigeria Civil Service.

Though, erstwhile to the colonial rule, diverse ethnic groups and societies constituting Nigeria today lived in empires, kingdoms and clans with their various set of traditional administrative institutions through which policies and programmes were implemented (Edosa & Azelama, 1995; Oni & Joshua, 2010; Ogunrotifa, 2012) modern public service in the country is, however, an evolution of the British colonial rule (Okotoni, 2003). By 1906 British government had stretched its authority over most of Nigeria and began to establish its instruments of law and order such as Police, Prison, Public Works Judiciary, Department and the Departments of Customs, Ports and Telegraph (Oduwobi, 2011). In this regards, the Nigerian public service was the establishment of the British colonial government to support the colonial administration in its exploitation and exploration of the resources of the country (Barkan and Gboyega, 2001).

It is imperative to state that the structure of the entire machinery of government and the Civil Service in Nigeria at this time, was configured necessarily to make easy for the British administrators to report performance to their home government and not to the indigenous people (Ogunrotifa, 2012). This perhaps laid the foundation of irresponsible governance in Nigeria. It is also imperative to note that under colonial administration, administrative, professional, managerial and technical posts of the Nigerian Public/Civil Service were occupied by Europeans while Nigerians were restricted to posts in the clerical, semi-skilled and unskilled manipulative grades (Olaopa, 2008). The post-independence Nigeria public service was indigenized following the perceived scarcity of local skilled manpower that could take over most of the workplaces left behind by the departed foreign personnel (Ogunrotifa, 2012).

As a result, Nigerian governments were not only challenged with the need to create a whole machinery of government that would promote accountability, transparency, predictability, participation, and efficiency and effectiveness but to change the emphasis of civil service from colonial legacy of tax collection to the role of community service delivery, infrastructural development and nation building capable of supporting the new government to plan and hasten the pace of Nigeria's socio-economic development (Okotoni, 2001).

At independence on 1st October, 1960, the powers of the Nigerian civil service were rooted in the constitution of Nigeria to accomplish the function of appointments, advancement and discipline in the public service, predominantly as government business were planned under the departmental establishments such as Public Works Department, Health Department, Treasury Department, Forestry Department, the Nigerian Railways, the Electricity Board, the Telecommunication Board and the Nigerian Harbour (Olowu, 1999). While years of military rule and authoritarian regimes in Nigeria have impacted negative administrative culture on the character and philosophy of the Nigeria Public Service, its roles in national development cannot be undervalued (Ayodele and Bolaji, 2007). That is why a repositioning and restructuring of the Nigeria public service to be in tune with democratic values of effective and efficient service delivery has become highly imperative (Ogunrotifa, 2012).

E-Governance Implementation and Training of Skilled Manpower

This is a particular problem in developing countries, where the constant lack of qualified staff and inadequate human resources training has been a problem for years (UNPA&ASPA, 2001). The availability of appropriate skills is essential for successful e-government implementation. E-government requires human capacities: technological, commercial and management. Technical skills for implementation, maintenance, designing and installation of ICT infrastructure, as well as skills for using and managing online processes, functions and customers, are compulsory. To address human capital development issues, knowledge management initiatives are required focusing on staff training in order to create and develop the basic skills for e-government usage.

According to Abdel-Fattah and Galal-Edeen (2008), the major challenge of e-governance in the Nigerian public service is lack of trained and qualified personnel to handle and operate its infrastructures. They further state that due to the high cost associated with the procurement and training of public servants with ICT skills, government sometimes feel reluctant in the actual implementation of e-governance in the public service. Similarly, Ayo & Ekong (2008), also stress the absence of skilled workers to handle various ICT services and their applications in bringing about the successful implementation of e-governance in the public sector. They also noted that the lack of government regulatory policy is a major issue that needs to be addressed if e-governance is to be a reality in government organisations. To them, the effective and successful implementation of e-governance requires experts to coordinate and operate the ICT-related infrastructures, because where there are no competent personnel to handle it infrastructure, it will be useless to procure the infrastructures (Ayo & Ekong, 2008).

E-Governance Implementation and Reduction of Corruption in Nigeria

For a long period of time, many anti-corruption agencies ranked Nigeria as one of the most corrupt nations in the world. According to Okonjo-Iweala (2012), at the onset of the

second Obasanjo's administration in 2003, Nigeria had one of the worst Transparency International (TI) corruption perception index scores, ranking of 132 out of 133 countries assessed. There is no agreement among analysts when this cancer crept into our national life, some pins it to immediately after independence in 1960, while others points at the public service purge of the Murtala/Obasanjo administration in 1975. Although the two military regimes of Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha were regarded as the most corrupt in the history of Nigeria, incidentally, bodies like Transparency International did not rank the country as the most corrupt nation but ironically, the administration of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo that made anticorruption a policy thrust of his administration got the worst ranking throughout his eight years on the leadership saddle. Between 1999-2007, Nigeria was on top of the corruption perception index chart and never left the first five most corrupt nations in the world. Commenting on this, Danfulani (2013) said, one impeccable realism and feature of Nigeria is that the more the revenues a regime has at its disposal, the more the scale of corruption. Speaking further, he said that it's on record that that the revenue that accrued to the nation's coffers between 29th May 1999 to 29th May 2007 surpasses what accrued to Nigeria from 1st October 1960 to the day Chief Obasanjo took over. From the administration of Alhaji Tafawa Balewa to that of General Abdulsalami Abubakar, no administration tackled corruption headlong like that of Chief Obasanjo. He established two anti-graft agencies the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). These bodies were given broad powers to arrest and prosecute suspects and collaborate with international partners to track-down trans-border fraudsters. These bodies got local and international support in the areas of finance, training of personnel in modern crime detection and fighting etc. All these notwithstanding, the fight did not achieve much for according to Okonjo-Iweala (2013), in 2010, Nigeria's score was 2.4, with a ranking of 134 out of 178 countries assessed. Though, there have been some improvements, Nigeria was still in the wrong neighbourhood as far as the rankings are concerned. This led to the search for a more efficient approach in the fight against corruption in Nigeria's public service, hence the adoption and deployment of e-government.

IV. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

This paper is essentially anchored on modernization theory. The leading exponents of modernization theory are W.W. Rostow (1953). Roxborough (1979). Modernization theory is a description and explanation of the processes of transformation from traditional or underdeveloped societies to modern societies.

Modernization theory is used to explain the process of modernization within societies. Modernization refers to a model of a progressive transition from a 'pre-modern' or 'traditional' to a 'modern' society. The theory looks at the internal factors of a country while assuming that, with assistance, "traditional" countries can be brought to development in the same manner more developed countries have. Modernization theory attempts to identify the social

variables that contribute to social progress and development of societies, and seeks to explain the process of social evolution. Modernization theory is subject to criticism originating among socialist and free-market ideologies, world-systems theorists, globalization theorists and dependency theorists among others. Modernization theory not only stresses the process of change, but also the responses to that change. It also looks at internal dynamics while referring to social and cultural structures and the adaptation of new technologies.

Modernization theory maintains that traditional societies will develop as they adopt more modern practices. Proponents of modernization theory claim that modern states are wealthier and more powerful, and that their citizens are freer to enjoy a higher standard of living.

A fundamental question about modernization theory concerns its assumptions on the basic causes of underdevelopment and poverty. Modernization theorists argue that poverty results primarily from inadequate economic growth and 'traditional' social structures. Modernization theorists also posit that modernization of the economy is required for wealth creation and poverty will then reduce as benefits 'trickle down' through society.

This theory is appropriate because it truly illustrates the basic causes of underdevelopment and poverty and also taking into consideration that it is a description or explanations of the processes of transformation from traditional or underdeveloped societies to modern societies. It calls for a model of a progressive transition from a 'pre-modern' or 'traditional' to a 'modern' society which per say "e-governance is part and parcel of that transformation in providing effective service to the people".

At a wider level, the modernization theory is related and best explains this paper since it recognizes the need to bridge the gap between macro policies and micro realities, placing particular emphasis on the macro level activities that are

normally the responsibility of the state government. It recognizes that e-governance will be more effective when it is 'demand-led' and incorporated into plans for improving the effectiveness of government.

V. METHODOLOGY

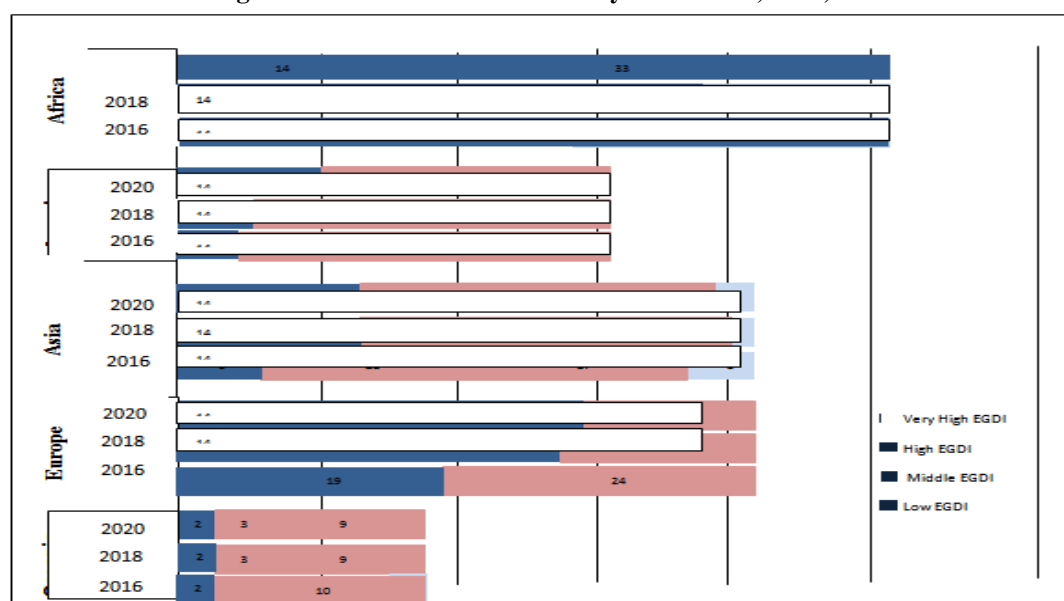
The paper relied on qualitative method based on logical deduction and analysis of documents. Qualitative method is considered appropriate for this study because the method is well-suited for contextual analysis particularly when the task is to glean, illuminate, interpret and extract valuable information to draw inference from the available evidence so as to reach a conclusion. Accordingly, the study employed secondary sources of data. Data will be drawn from institutional and official documents sourced from the internet, journal articles and conference materials. The mass qualitative data generated in the course of this study will be analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis. The method requires some creativity, for the challenge is to place the raw data into logical, meaningful categories; to examine them in a holistic fashion; and to find a way to communicate this interpretation to others.

Analysis of E-Governance Data and Discussion on Findings

Regional Trends

All regions are making progress in e-government development, as evidenced by their higher average E-government Development Index (EGDI) values. Europe remains the leader, with the highest proportion of countries in the very high EGDI group (58 percent), followed by Asia (26 percent), the Americans (12 percent), and Oceania (4 percent).

Table 1: Regional distribution of countries by EGDI level, 2016, 2018 and 2020.

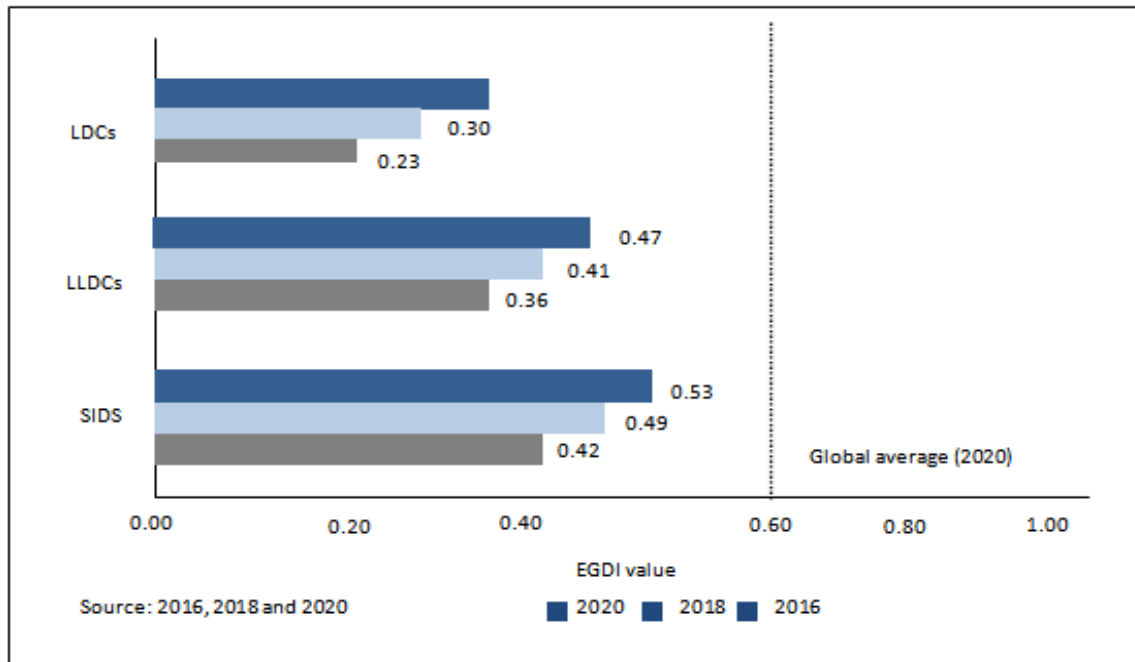


Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations E-Government Survey/Development Index 2020

In Africa, even though countries continue to lag other regions, there are positive signs of accelerated advancement. Africa

has the largest share of countries that have moved to a higher EGDI group (15 countries, or 28 percent). However, persistent gaps in infrastructure and human capital development have prevented many countries in this region from moving to the higher EGDI levels. Asia has become the second most advanced region in e-government development, with its average EGDI value increasing from 0.58 in 2018 to 0.64 in 2020. Asia also has the greatest number of countries (8) that improved their (EGDI) ranking by more than 15 positions.

Table 2: Average EGDI values for countries in special situations, 2020.



Sources: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations E-Government Survey/Development Index 2020

Income countries group, which advanced by more than 15 percent, with average EGDI scores growing from 0.43 in 2018 to 0.50 in 2020. Close to 80 percent of Member States offer specific digital services for youth, women, older people, persons with disabilities, migrants and/or those in poverty, contributing to efforts aimed at leaving no one

behind. Similarly, in line with the SDG 16 principles of greater transparency and accountability, more Governments are using online platforms for public procurement and for the recruitment of civil servants. Since 2018, there has been a 30 percent increase in the number of countries publishing government vacancies online, with 80 percent of Member States now offering this feature.

Table 3: Federal Government is using many forms of E-Governance to deliver services

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongy Agree	Neutral	Agree%	Disagree %	Total
My office has an official email address.	229	243	533	991	29	1524 76%	472 26%	2025
All employees are expected to have official email address.	138	234	649	1004	0	1653 81.6%	372 18.4%	2,025
My office has a website address.	173	100	549	1201	2	1750 86.5%	273 13.5%	2,025
My boss frequently sends me mail	765	998	154	108	0	262 12.9%	1763 87.1%	2,025
Govt. Staff can receive email from citizens seeking information	374	527	668	450	6	1118 55.4%	901 44.6%	2,025
Citizens can apply for jobs via online application	676	488	553	308	0	861 42.5%	1164 57.5%	2,025

Citizen pay utilities bills on-line	157	173	984	708	3	1692 84.7%	330 16.3%	2,025
Citizens can file complaints on-line	66	595	769	595	0	1364 67.4%	661 32.6%	2,025
Citizens can search govt. databases online	60	277	1286	396	6	1682 83.3%	337 16.7%	2,025
Government use technology for education, and improve neighborhood safety	150	471	886	510	8	1396 69.2%	621 30.8%	2,025

Sources: Dibia and Quadri (2018)

Table 1 shows how the Federal Government of Nigeria is using e-government to provide public services to citizens within and outside the country. Questionnaire items 6 to 16 were utilized in the analysis of the type of services that the Federal Government of Nigeria has been using e-government to provide. Table 1 reveals that of 66% of the listed e-government platforms were effectively used by the government. The questionnaire respondents indicated that most effective e-government platforms are websites (86.5%), the use of IT to pay bills (84.7%), citizens' access to checking government database online (83.3%), government staff use of email to communicate with citizens (81.6%) and Federal governments ministries have email address (76%). Table 1 also show that 34% of the questionnaire respondents however indicated that digital democracy through electronic voter registration, public opinion polling, and communication among elected representative and citizens of their respective constituencies are not yet available in Nigeria. Only 87% percent of the respondents stated that they could receive email from their boss about work related issues. It is interesting to note that 57.5% indicated that they still cannot use the internet platform to access government services without going to offices or contacting their staff by telephone. Another 57.5% of the questionnaire respondents stated that they could not apply for Federal Government jobs online or by filling out application online. Most Federal Government ministries only post information on their websites directing interested job applicants to make payments to a specified commercial Bank account as well as collect government application forms from the bank.

Findings and Conclusion

One can see from the above data presentation and analyses that e-governance has made service delivery easier which is evident in the ways and manner the old methods have been transformed. Even though Africa unlike her European counterpart, has persistent gaps in infrastructure and human capital development that have prevented many countries in this region from moving to the higher e-government development Index (EGDI) levels, the application of e-governance is on the increase as more Governments are using online platforms for public procurement and for the recruitment of civil servants.

For instance, the official e-mail addresses keep the staff abreast with the necessary information concerning the work place thereby bringing about smooth administration of the civil services in Nigeria. E-governance has been able to reduce the work loads

on the employees of the Nigeria civil services. When the citizens pay bills and utilities online, the time and energy that should have been expended on serving the public are conserved for other important activities.

It has also been found that e-governance is applied in the civil services in Nigeria as government staff are trained to easily use electronic gadgets provided so as to effectively and efficiently serve the public in the best possible paradigms and hence causing positive increase in the quality of service delivery in the Nigeria Civil Service.

To round up, e-governance promotes participatory democracy, provides adequate information about political process and enhances faster social service delivery at the grassroots level. The adoption of information communication technology makes governance inclusive, efficient, responsive, transparent, accountable and more participatory which embodies the elements of good governance at local level. Application of modern technologies may facilitate the current struggle against corruption at the local government level; the government becomes more institutionalized and transparent in its local political rendezvous. This could be easily achieved through the adoption and application of information communication technology (ICT) at the local level. The various programmes of government such as vaccination, waste management, registration and some other services rendered by the local government become more circulated among the local dwellers; therefore, e-governance has been a political strategy to ameliorate people's predicaments through the modern technological facilities at the grassroots level.

Recommendations

It is imperative at this juncture to suggest what can be done to achieve a successful implementation of e-governance in Nigeria's civil service. Based on the issues identified, the following recommendations are advanced:

- Nigeria's public service (Ministries, Departments and Agencies) must show a high level of e-readiness in their operations. All that is needed must be put in place by the government, especially that which is within their capacity. For instance, ensure that all office is equipped with functional computers, employ highly skilled personnel in ICT, provision of continuous training of the personnel to keep them informed on how best to utilize e-governance in engendering effective service delivery among

others.

- b. The government must provide the necessary infrastructure that will aid the successful implementation of e-governance in Nigeria's public service. For instance, robust broadband services, required internet network and the availability of power supply, which has been identified as one of the major challenges to e-governance implementation in the public service has to be taken care of.

This means that the success of e-governance implementation in the public service is tied to the availability of power supply and in this case electricity. Government offices must also be internet connected with trained and qualified staff. Another factor to be considered is the Human element. This is important because no technology can drive itself, it is the human element that will drive the technology so their willingness is critical to whether e-governance implementation in Nigeria's public service will succeed or not, and this is because they have the capacity to truncate whatever innovation and benefits e-governance promises to bring to bear. So on this note, government needs to carefully address the issue of human factor which often manifest in resistance to change, nonchalant attitudes and the likes which is responsible for underutilization of most of the ICT facilities put in place by government especially in offices or departments that tends to embrace e-governance in their operations, thereby sabotaging the good effort of the government.

- c. The government should also enact Information and Communication Technology (ICT) laws that will make computer literacy a compulsory aspect for every public or civil servant both at the local, state and federal levels. Such policies should also involve the adoption of effective ICT awareness with computer-related literacy training programmes introduced in our primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. With this implemented, the challenges will be reduced as well as putting the country into the world map of ICT/e- governance high ranking list.

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