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## The Implementation of Electronic Governance in Nigeria: Implications and Challenges

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### Abstract

The global transformation of administrative process from manual to electronic means has necessitated the emergence of e-government in order to ensure efficient and effective service delivery to all stakeholders. Through e-government, government services will be made available to citizens in a convenient, efficient and transparent manner. The paper examines the implications and challenges of e-government implementation in Nigeria. The paper also reveals that the implementation of e-government has encouraged effective cost-service delivery and facilitates cross collaboration and co-ordination among organs of government at different levels. It argues that e-government implementation is faced with such challenges like poor infrastructure, change management, connectivity problems, unstable power supply, vandalization of cable and facility, lack of accessibility and low consumer purchasing power. The paper therefore recommends that infrastructure in areas of telecommunication network, regular electricity supply; kiosks that will allow citizens to have access to information should be developed. Also, for sustainability of IT initiative, people should be educated at all levels about the benefits of technology and the advantages of e-government should be communicated to all and sundry in order to ensure popular support for greater accomplishment. In addition, the feasibility of e-government project in terms of capacity building, readiness and financial sustainability should be properly evaluated.

**Keywords:** E-governance; challenges; implications; Nigeria; implementation.

### Introduction

The complex and dynamic nature of the society has necessitated the global transformation of administrative process from manual to electronic means, hence, the emergence of e-government in order to ensure efficient and effective service delivery to all the stakeholders. With the idea of replacing paper based application by the electronic means, it provides an



opportunity to improve governance system. According to Williamson (2009), access to information is vital for transparency, accountability and inclusiveness. Through e-governance, government services will be made available to citizens in a convenient, efficient and transparent manner. Saugata and Masud (2007) defined e-governance as the application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for delivering government services, exchange of information communication transactions, integration of various stand-alone systems and services between government-to-customer (G2C), government-to-business (G2B), government-to-government (G2G) as well as office processes and interactions within the entire government framework.

E-Government is a fairly recent development in most developing countries and especially in Africa and it has become a fundamental tool for enhancing national development. Therefore, every government has made concerted efforts to include it in its mode of operations. Mohammed, Abubakar and Bashir (2009) stated that like all other Internet-enabled applications, such as e-commerce, electronic government has become a global phenomenon and an essential required feature of all governments in both the developed and developing societies. To this end, all governments have mounted initiatives that seek to strengthen their institutional capacities to take full advantage of the emerging global knowledge economy as well as meet the diverse and varying problems and challenges that it poses to their social and economic developments.

The administration of George Bush in 2001 initiated a program towards effective use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) investment. According to the Federal Architecture Program Management Office of the United State of America FAPM (2003), the US government sets up Federal Enterprise Architecture (FEA) as a business-driven framework for government-wide improvement and provides a common framework for improvement in a variety of key areas such as: Budget allocation, Information sharing, Performance measurement, Cross-agency collaboration, E-Government and Component-based architecture. In this reference model, the information held by one agency, if useful to another agency, will be timely transferred to the other agency.

In Africa, most scholars have argued against the African exception in e-governance. According to them, institutions of governance, including the parliament, the executive and the state bureaucracy should adopt modern

information and communication technology in order to transform their operations and make their work more transparent and people-centered. The fourth African Development Forum held in Addis in October 2004 produced a consensus statement declaring that:

E-governance ... is an important innovation for enhancing good governance and strengthening the democratic process and can also facilitate access to information, freedom of expression, greater equity, efficiency, productivity growth and social inclusion. Successful e-government initiatives can have demonstrable and tangible impact on improving citizen participation and quality of life as a result of effective multi-stakeholder partnerships. African governments need to develop appropriate policy frameworks, supported by legislation for e-governance, that are linked to strategic development objectives; enlist high-ranking political e-government champions; focus awareness, outreach and training efforts on the less privileged segment of targeted users, particularly women and neglected rural communities; and promote local content and supports local language development (ADF, 2004).

In the light of such agreed policy intentions, it would be a major error to regard Africa as an exception to the global transition towards e-governance. There are many examples of successful African e-governance projects, often implemented in isolation from broader strategies for sustainable e-governance. Strategic programmes for e-governance have been established recently in countries like Egypt, Kenya, Senegal, Mozambique and South Africa. These strategic initiatives are welcome indications that African e-governance is moving beyond the stage of novel experimentation. As in Europe and North America, African governments are proceeding pragmatically and incrementally towards e-governance, but they are increasingly doing so within a framework of established good practices and strategically-articulated objectives.

Most African countries are faced with ineffective and inefficient governance due to a haphazard execution of e-governance. According to Heeks (2006), 85% of e-government projects in developing or transitional countries are met with partial or total failures. Berman and Tetley (2001) assert that the success rate of introduced information technology systems in African state agencies has been distressingly low, and the capacity-building objectives remain largely unachieved.



Nigerian government has made several attempts at enhancing national development through the integration of e-governance into its modes of operations. Agunloye (2008) stressed that e-governance initiatives in Nigeria were geared towards connecting communities, vital agencies, institutions of government and educational institutions at all levels with ICT currently being pursued by the government.

According to Ekeh (2007), initiatives like National Rural Telephony Projects, the Nigerian Telemedicine Initiative, Public Service Network Initiative, Internet Exchange Point Initiative, State and Local Government ICT facilities, Loan Scheme Initiative and Wire Nigeria Initiative aimed at enabling the rapid development of the Nigerian nation. In addition, and as a matter of necessity, the only skill and tool a nation needs to actualize the initiatives is by making computers affordable and flexible for Nigerians to acquire. There have not been success stories in Nigeria e-governance because most projects are met with partial or total failures. This paper examines e-governance implementation in Nigeria with a view to identify the obstacles that are confronting effective implementation of e-governance and its implications to national development.

This paper is organized into six sections starting with this introductory part. This is followed by conceptual analysis of e-governance. Section three focuses on the need for e-governance while the fourth section addresses implications of implementation of e-governance in Nigeria. The fifth section presents the challenges of e-governance implementation in Nigeria. Finally, section six draws out general conclusion and makes some recommendations.

### **Conceptualizing Electronic Governance**

E-Governance (or Electronic governance) can be defined as the "use of information and communication technologies to offer citizens and businesses the opportunity to interact and conduct business with government by using different electronic media such as telephone, touch pad, fax, smart cards, self-service kiosks, e-mail or internet" (Alimarabeh & AbuAli, 2010: 30). In its simplest form, it is the application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to deliver public services (Holmes, 2001). To this effect, e-governance can be viewed as the administration, rules, regulations and frameworks organized by a government for service

delivery as well as to communicate, co-ordinate and integrate processes within itself (Alimarabeh & AbuAli, 2010).

At the third annual e-government conference held in Lisbon in May 2002, the term 'e-governance' was used in the following way:

E-governance is the application of Information and Communication Technology by government and public sector agencies, and is transforming the way governments interact with their citizens. Its use promises to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of government and radically alter its relationship with the public. Improvements in communication and technology are playing a vital role in raising the living standards and empowering people to understand and gain access to all the initiatives and support systems that are available to them (Peacey, 2002: 52).

Oliver (2012) defines e-governance as the use of information and communication technologies to radically transform how government delivers services to citizens. Narayan (2006) stated that e-governance differs in scope from e-government, which focuses primarily on technology related initiatives in the government domain. E-governance encompasses a broader vision of use of ICT to support good governance and allow citizens to have access to timely information. Electronic governance has rightly noted by Holmes (2001), entails not really the use of IT in governance but as a tool to ensure good governance. E-governance does not mean proliferation of computers and accessories; it is basically a political decision which calls for discipline, attitudinal change in officers and employees, and massive government process re-engineering. As a matter of fact, the governance of ICTs requires most probably a substantial increase in regulation and policy-making capabilities, with all the expertise and opinion-shaping processes along the various social stakeholders of those concerns. Therefore, the perspective of the e-governance is "the use of the technologies that both help governing and have to be governed" (Miller & Walling, 2013).

In another dimension, Agunloye (2008) observed that e-governance is two-way communication protocol. The essence of e-governance is to reach the beneficiary and ensure that the services intended to reach the desired individual has been met with. To him, there should be an auto-response to support the essence of e-governance, whereby the government realizes the efficacy of its governance. Agunloye further stated that E-governance can take the following forms:



**Government to Customer:** The goal of Government to Customer (G2C) e-Governance is to offer a variety of ICT services to citizens in an efficient and economic manner, and to strengthen the relationship between government and citizens using technology. There are several methods of Government to Customer e-Governance. Two-way communication allows citizens to instant message directly with public administrators, and cast remote electronic votes and instant opinion voting. Transactions such as payment of services can be completed online or over the phone. Mundane services such as name or address changes, applying for services or grants, or transferring existing services are more convenient and no longer have to be completed face to face (Lee, 2004).

G2C e-Governance has its limitations because it is not everyone that has internet access and computing skills. This is most common among the rural dwellers and the low income earners. Also, some G2C sites have technology requirements (such as browser requirements and plug-ins) that will not allow people to have access to certain services. Although, in the United States, the Federal Government engages in G2C interaction through the Department of Transportation, Department of Public Safety, United States Department of Health and Human Services, United States Department of Education, and others (Best of the Web, 2012).

**Government-to-Citizen:** This is the communication link between a government and private individuals or residents. Such G2C communication most often refers to that which takes place through Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), but can also include direct mail and media campaigns. G2C can take place at the federal, state, and local levels. G2C stands in contrast to G2B, or Government-to-Business networks (Bertot et al, 2008).

**Government to Employee:** This is one of four main primary interactions in the delivery model of E-Governance. It is the relationship between online tools, sources, and articles that help employees maintain communication with the government and their own companies. Government to employee services also includes software for maintaining personal information and records of employees. It is the online interactions through instantaneous communication tools between government units and their employees (Raghavan, 2001). E-Governance relationship with employees allows new learning technology in one simple place as the computer. Documents can now be stored and shared with other colleagues online (Carter et al, 2012). E-governance makes it

possible for employees to become paperless and send important documents to colleagues all over the world instead of having to print out these records or fax (Dawes, 2012). G2E is an effective way to provide e-learning to the employees and promote knowledge sharing among them (Government to Employee, 2010). It also gives employees the possibility of accessing information in regard to compensation and benefit policies, training and learning opportunities and civil rights laws (Raghavan, 2001; Hafedh, 2006).

**Government to Government:** Governments have now tried to use the efficiencies of their techniques to cut down on waste. E-government is a fairly broad subject matter, but all relate to how services and representation are delivered and how they are now being implemented. Many governments around the world have gradually turned to Internet Technologies (IT) in an effort to keep up with today's demands. Historically, many governments in this sphere have only been retroactive but until recently there has been a more proactive approach in developing comparable services such things as e-commerce and e-business (Moon, 2002).

### **The Need for Electronic Governance**

Two major reasons have been adduced for the idea of e-governance. First is the movement away from centralized, vertical and hierarchical government machines towards polycentric networks of governance based upon horizontal interactions between diverse actors within complex, dynamic and multi-layered societies. Second is the rapid growth of information and communication technologies (ICT) which can transform the generation and delivery of public services, thereby reconfiguring relationships between government and citizens (G2C), governments and businesses (G2B) as well as within and between governments (G2G) (Kooiman, 2002). Oliver (2012) observed that the need for e-governance arises as a result of pressure from customers, the desire to emulate best practices in private sector, the reduction in administrative costs, the quest for efficient and effective service delivery, and the desire to attract overseas investors.

According to United Nations E-Government Survey (2010), e-government can add agility to public service delivery to help governments respond to an expanded set of demands even as revenues fall short. The public trust that is gained through transparency can be further enhanced through the free sharing of government data based on open standards. Wimmer et al (2001) and Tambouris (2001) contend that European e-



government aims at providing an open, extensible and scalable platform for realizing online one-stop government, this platform is deployed and evaluated in three European countries, namely Austria, Greece and Switzerland. The e-government platform allows the public sector to provide citizens, business and other public authorities with information and public services that will be structured around life events and business situations, thus increasing public authorities, effectiveness, efficiency and quality of service. Mutula (2008) observed that e-Government helps in achieving greater efficiency in government performance by raising service performance, and service delivery, by eliminating inefficient processes and reducing bottlenecks and red tape in the service delivery process as much as possible.

Most developed and developing countries emulate other countries that have had success stories of e-governance as a new kind of practice in administration. The National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA, 2007) cited countries like Singapore's e-citizen portal where the citizens are able to access about 1,600 services provided online by their government; China's Golden Customs programme connecting foreign trade companies, banks, customs and tax authorities. E-governance speeds up customs clearance and collection of taxes and duties; Mississippi USAs pay roll information records online; and Philippine's Bureau of internal revenue for electronic payment of taxes, bills, etc.

Prakash Neupane (2013) highlighted the following as reasons for implementing e-Government.

**Efficiency:** Cost reduction is the major driver for ICT use by government. Efficiency can be obtained through the replacement of paper-based application by online applications; greater sharing and networking of data within government which can to eliminate the cost of multiple data reconciliation and checking; reduction in government cost of offset press, print and distribution cost by relying more on online publication, newsletter and improved file management as well as efficient use of scarce resources and workforce.

**Customer focus/Citizen focus:** The adoption of customer focus is the main part of countries' public reform agendas and e-government strategies. Customer focus/citizen focus is about providing citizen with a coherent interface with government which reflects their needs rather than the structure of the government. E-government initiatives that tend towards improving

customer focus include on-line portals which focused on particular topics or groups that bring together relevant information and services; targeting of on-line information to specific groups of citizen so that relevant information can be found more readily and allowing identified users to carry out routine transactions with the government as on-line government services.

**Policy Outcomes:** One of the most success results of adopting e-government in many regions is effective gains and effective delivery of policy outcomes. It has been observed that e-government can help to achieve better outcomes in major policies area like taxation policy - improved collection of taxes through increased sharing of information by agencies; health policy - reduced demand for health services through better use of health information and scarce health resources; fiscal policy - reduced unemployment payments owing to better matching of the unemployed and vacancies; social policy - promoting the use of native languages and awareness of indigenous people; and environmental policy - through better sharing of information between national and sub-national governments.

**Economic Objectives:** E-Government allows for business transparency and this reduces corruption in government services. Therefore, through this reduced corruption, greater openness and increased trust is achieved.

**Public Reform:** Public Reform has been one of the agendas of countries long before e-government emerged. Now e-government is an enabler of the reform. Reform is necessary for e-government to deliver because e-government is not just about digitizing, it is about the use of ICT to transform the process, structure and culture.

**Citizen's Engagement:** Citizen's engagement is necessary to build a trust between citizen and government. For this, e-government enables citizen's engagement in the policy process, prevents corruption, promotes accountability and openness, etc. The different ways of engaging citizen with government are by making consultation and feedback by service users, by engaging citizens' participation in policy matters and by helping individual's voice to be heard.

### **Implications of Implementation of E-Governance in Nigeria**

The growing influence of e-governance especially the use of ICT on various areas of life is significant, and its impact is remarkable on socio-economic and political aspects of human life. According to Pew Center study (2010), mobile connectivity has become a growing feature in all kinds of



communication and information exchanges. Currently, one can access the local or states allocations over the Ministry of Finance website and compare with the estimated values locally (through the in-house package) within the local government and reasons on how and where the expenditure has gone into can be deduced almost instantaneously. However, the increasing growth witnessed in e-governance is yet to impact on Nigeria's internet usage. According to Internet World Stat report (2012), less than 20% of the population in Africa has access to internet. The report further stated that internet penetration in Africa is just 7% of the world internet usage.

E-governance implementation in Nigeria has encouraged effective cost service delivery. For example, the computerization of the payroll of some organizations such as the online checking of West Africa Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination Council (NECO) and Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) results as well as National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) postings are part of real time and cost effective services (Agunloye, 2008).

Another implication of e-governance is that it facilitates cross collaboration and co-ordination amongst organs of government at different levels and ensures easier, faster and appropriate decision making process. NITDA maintained that e-governance reduces waste, saves time and encourages accountable and transparent conduct in the delivery of government services (Mohammed, Abubakar & Bashir, 2013). The United Nations E-Government Survey (2010) observed that e-governance has the ability to handle speed and complexity which give citizens the power to question the actions of regulators and bring systemic issues to the fore. Similarly, e-governance can add agility to public service delivery to help governments respond to an expanded set of demands even as revenues fall short. Governments have made great strides in development of online services, especially in middle-income countries. The costs associated with telecommunication infrastructure and human capital continues to impede e-government development. However, effective strategies and legal frameworks can compensate significantly, even in least developed countries.

In another study, Coleman and Kaposi (2014) opine that implementation of e-governance ensures cheaper and more effective management and processing of information; a freer flow of information between government and citizens, departments, agencies and layers within government; opportunities for citizens to participate more directly in policy

development as well as combining traditional and modern methods of accountability; the strengthening of intermediary democratic institutions, such as parliaments, local government, civil-society organizations (CSOs) and independent media, and transparency in relation to the procurement of government services.

### **Challenges of E-Governance Implementation in Nigeria**

Ndou (2004) and Ebrahim & Irani (2005) have identified infrastructure as the main challenge for effective implementation of e-governance in Nigeria. Infrastructure has constituted a significant barrier to the provision of government services and transaction. Unreliable IT infrastructure will further influence to degrade the e-governance performance of the respective governments (Ebrahim & Irani, 2005). Unfortunately, the digital divide in developing countries makes it difficult to effect the deployment of ICT infrastructures which are appropriate for implementation of e-governance (Adam, 1996; ECA, 2003; Mutula, 2002; Mutula & Ahmadi, 2000; UN, 2002; UN, 2001; Ndou, 2004). Gautama (2014) opinion differed because he believed that the biggest challenge impeding the deployment of e-governance is not technology but change management. Change management is important not only in terms of cultural change but also in terms of changing operations and processes workflow that the automated environment will introduce.

Ajayi (2007) cited the following as challenges facing implementation of e-Governance in Nigeria. These include:

**High cost of funds:** The cost at which IT funds are available in Nigeria is very high indeed, and this is slowing the growth of the nation's economy and adversely affecting the real sector. According to United Nations E-Government Survey (2010), the costs associated with telecommunication infrastructure and human capital continue to impede e-governance development. However, effective strategies and legal frameworks can compensate significantly, even in least developed countries. Ebrahim and Irani (2005: 606) observed that the main source of finance in public sector organizations come from the central government, "making it hard to control, and sometimes comes and goes in cycles of 'east and famine' that makes it difficult to plan sustainable IT initiative such as e-government."



**Unstable power supply:** It is already common knowledge now that planning for ICT base businesses in Nigeria cannot rely on public power supply. Some companies had resorted to "operate on generator, and put public power supply on stand-by" which is very expensive.

**Advance free fraud:** Fraudsters send uniform letters, faxes or emails to several foreigners listed in directories, usually thousands, claiming to be in position to transfer huge sums out of the country and offering the individual huge sums of money in exchange for the use of their accounts.

**Connectivity problems:** These are challenges peculiar to the internet sector. It is sad to note that up till today there is no Internet Exchange Point in Nigeria. Local Internet traffic still has to transit through points in Europe and America at great cost.

**High duty and tax regime:** The duty paid by players in the IT and Telecommunication sector in Nigeria on imported equipment is about 25 per cent. This is quite exorbitant. Tax on company profits in Nigeria is set at about 35 per cent and this is rather high for the IT and telecoms sector.

**Cable and facility vandalization:** Nigeria is one of the countries where private and public facilities are vandalized. This practice, which started as far back as the 80s, with the vandalization of then National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) and Nigerian Telecommunication (NITEL) equipment or cables, is still on though on a lesser scale.

**Relatively low consumer purchasing power:** Enough number of Nigerians cannot afford ICT product or service as a result of the low purchasing power of many Nigerians.

**Accessibility:** Opara and Ituen (2009) stated that the major challenge is that the use of computer, access to internet and other tools of ICT are limited greatly to the urban areas, and the challenges faced by the ICT sector in the country include particularly the fact that people in the rural areas are yet to know how to use the computer. Ajayi (2009) noted that people in the rural areas are key-board-shy. Therefore, rural dwellers are yet to fully utilize the

potentials of the internet. Access is largely limited to the urban areas and there is an urgent need to extend affordable access to the rural areas.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The foregoing has been an attempt to discuss implications and challenges of e-governance implementation in Nigeria. The paper has succinctly made the point that the growing influence of e-governance especially the use of ICT on various areas of life is significant, and its impact is remarkable on socio-economic and political aspects of human life. However, the increasing growth witnessed in e-governance is yet to impact on Nigeria's internet usage. E-governance implementation in Nigeria has encouraged effective cost service delivery and facilitates cross collaboration and co-ordination among organs of government at different levels and ensures easier, faster and appropriate decision making process. The paper maintained that e-governance reduces waste, saves time and encourages accountable and transparent conduct in the delivery of government services.

The paper further looks into the challenges of e-governance implementation and the conclusion is that poor infrastructure, change management, connectivity problems, unstable power supply, vandalisation of cable and facility, lack of accessibility and low consumer purchasing power are barriers to e-governance implementation in Nigeria. It therefore suggested that infrastructure in areas of telecommunication network; regular electricity supply and kiosks that will allow citizens to have access to information should be developed. In other to ensure sustainability of IT initiative, people should be educated at all levels about the benefits of technology and the advantages of e-governance should be communicated to all and sundry in order to ensure popular support for greater accomplishment. One very important issue is the viability of e-governance project. It is only appropriate therefore that the feasibility of the project in terms of capacity building, readiness and financial sustainability should be properly evaluated. Finally, since e-governance is considered to be cheaper, citizens of Nigeria should have access to government information at all times. This implies that the government should be one that is fully available to its citizens.



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## Income Level and Women's Participation in Political Activities in the South West Region of Cameroon

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### Abstract

The study is an investigation of the effects of income level on women's participation in the political activities. Women in the South West Region of Cameroon are seen to be largely excluded from the political processes including decision-making. Using the civic voluntarism theory, this study argues that income level is a major determinant of women's participation in political activities in the region. In a bid to establish the relationship between women's income level and their participation in political activities in the South West region, the study used data from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources of data included the use of Questionnaires and interviews. The sample drawn for the study included 750 women and 2 key informants who were randomly selected for the study. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistical tools, and chi-square test. The study established among others that though there are efforts geared towards the financial empowerment of women in the region, their income level still remains low and this is working against their active participation in both the public/private spheres. The findings further revealed that as women's level of income increases, their active participation in political activities increase. Based on the research findings, the study recommends that the Cameroonian government has to introduce and expand integrated and functional financial institutions in the regions to provide support to existing women's self-help groups so as to meet up with women's financial needs.

**Keywords:** Women, Income, participation, political activities

### Introduction

Available studies on women's political participation have revealed that women make up to half of the population for most nations of the world and are mostly referred to as vulnerable in crisis situations and usually form a very negligible percentage in the decision-making process. Corroborating this position, Olojede (2009) stated that the marginalized position of women in nations of the world has made them vulnerable inhabitants where they find themselves. This position of women in domestic and international politics