CHALLENGES OF EGOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTATION IN THE NIGERIAN PUBLIC SERVICE

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A B S T R A C T

E-government is one of the tools aimed at reforming the public service to becoming more effective and efficient in service delivery. This is based on the assumption that the efficient application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the daily activities of government will lead to a goal-oriented service delivery. Nevertheless, there are numerous challenges that militate against the effective application of e-government in Nigerian public service. Accordingly, this article is geared towards identifying some of the challenges to e-government implementation in Nigerian public service. No detailed statistical analysis is employed as this conceptual paper mainly based on archived information on important literature of the subject matter and inferences drawn from it. Sequel to its findings, it is then concluded that e-government is the most reliable tool in facilitating and institutionalising efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability in public service.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The relevance and effect of e-government on public service delivery cannot be over-stated. It is unarguable that Nigeria's public service has benefitted immensely from e-government. E-government in Nigeria is traceable to the formulation of the Nigerian National Information Technology (NNIT) policy in the year 2000. The rationale behind the policy was to revolutionize Information Technology (IT) in Nigeria and to make Nigeria a key player in the information society and also use IT to create jobs; eradicate poverty; enhance education; creation of wealth, agriculture; governance; health; (NITP, 2000).

Notwithstanding the great ideas and aims of the policy, the public service appears not to do very well in the implementation of e-government in their service delivery as a result of some challenges, which if left unchecked will make the adoption of e-government a mere dream. Among the challenges so far identified are inadequate IT infrastructure; unstable power/electricity supply; short supply of trained and qualified IT personnel, unwillingness to embrace change by most public

servants etc (Gberevbie; Ayo; Iyoha; Duruji & Abasilim, 2015; Olaopa, 2014; Bansode & Patil, 2011; Okwueze, 2010; Abdel-Fattah & Galal-Edeen, 2008; Ayo & Ekong, 2008 and Dode, 2007).

Against this background, this paper is on a mission to identify the challenges facing e-government implementation in Nigeria's public service and suggest possible solutions to the identified challenges. To achieve the above-stated objective, this paper is sub-divided into four sections. The first section focuses on a brief background of the emergence of e-government. The second section tackles the conceptual clarification of e-government and public service. The third section identifies the challenges to e-government implementation in Nigeria's public service while the fourth section dwells on conclusion and recommendations.

2. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

2.1 Understanding E-Government

The e-government concept has been largely defined, particularly, as it relates to the public sector. Honestly, researchers differ in their definitions of the concept, consequently presenting different definitions of what e-government stands for (Shilubane, 2001; Budhiraja, 2003; Ojo, 2014). According to Shilubane (2001), e-government is simply the use of information communication technologies (ICTs) to carry out public services. Put differently, the use of the internet to make sure that services are delivered in a much more convenient, customer-oriented and cost effective manner. Budhiraja (2003) defines e-government as the application of Information Technology to the process of government functioning in order to achieve a Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsive and Transparent (SMART) Governance.

Similarly, Ojo (2014, p. 79) also sees e-government as "the application of information communication technology (ICT) by the government to enhance accountability, create awareness and ensure transparency in the management of governmental business." He further stated that e-governance is a political strategy of government through which their activities can be showcased to the public. Ayo (2014, p. 76) defined e-government as "the governing of a nation using ICT." This means that, e-government is the application of ICT in carrying out government businesses. From the above definitions, it can be seen that e-government is the use of ICTs in the operations of government businesses. Put differently, it is the radical departure from the traditional method of executing government businesses, which is usually hierarchical, linear, and one-way to the use of internet, which facilitates easy access to information by the public at their own convenience without having to visit public offices in person.

E-government is primarily aimed at improving government processes (e-administration), connecting citizens (e-citizens and e-services) and building external interactions (e-society) (Heeks, 2001). Notwithstanding the above-mentioned objectives, Godse & Garg (2009) emphasized that there are many factors to put into consideration in e-government implementation. According to them, "making and implementing decisions, proper leadership, putting in place organizational arrangements, ensuring resources and funding, establishing accountability and measuring success, telecommunications network, internal agency systems, cross-government systems, service delivery network access points, internet access and skilled staff, better delivery of government services to citizens, improved interactions with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to

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information and more efficient government management" are the factors that must be taken into consideration for the success of e-governance implementation (Godse & Garg, 2009, p. 15).

It is imperative to note that e-government "is not only the computerization of a government system, but a belief in the ability of technology to achieve high levels of improvement in various areas of government, thus transforming the nature of politics and the relations between governments and citizens" (Dada, 2006, p. 1). E-government has been seen to have four primary delivery tracks namely: Government-to-Citizen or Government-to-Customer (G2C), Government-to-Business (G2B), Government-to-Government (G2G), Government-to-Employee (G2E) (Adeyemo, 2011). These delivery tracks are also known as the models of e-government, which refer to the interaction that exist between and among government, citizens, business, employees and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) respectively (Ayo, 2009 and Rabaiah & Vandijct, 2011). The e-government concept depends on the application of information technology to achieve its aims and objectives with a view to ensuring effective, efficient, transparent, accountable service delivery among others from government establishment or the public service.

2.2   DEFINITION OF PUBLIC SERVICE

Public service differs from country to country, but in this case, the focus is on what it means in Nigeria. Section 318 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended states that public service is "the service of the Federation in any capacity in respect of the Government of the Federation" and includes Service as:

- Clerk or other Staff of the National Assembly or of each House of the National Assembly;

- Member of Staff of the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal, the Federal High Court, the High Court of the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, the Sharia Court of Appeal of FCT, the Customary Court of Appeal of FCT or other courts established for the Federation by this Constitution and by Act of the National Assembly;

- Member or Staff of any Commission or authority established for the Federation by this Constitution or by an Act of the National Assembly;

- Staff of any area Council;

- Staff of any Statutory Corporation established by an Act of the National Assembly;

- Staff of any educational institution established or financed principally by the Government of the Federation;

- Staff of any company or enterprises in which the Government of the Federation or its agency owns controlling shares or interest;

- Members or officers of the armed forces of the Federation or the Nigeria Police Force or other government security agencies established by law.

Agba, Ochimana and Abubakar (2013, p. 113) defined public service as "the activities of government employees and institutions aimed at formulating and implementing governmental policies and programmes for the interests of the masses (public)." However, the concepts of public service and civil service are often used interchangeably but the truth is that they are two unique concepts, though with some similarities. According to Adamolekun (2002, pp. 17–18) cited in Ibietan (2013:56), public service "usually indicates a wider scope than the civil service (and)... means the

totality of services that are organized under public (i.e. government) authority." It covers ministries, departments and agencies of the central government, its field administration, local government, the military, other security forces and the judiciary. This is a broader conceptualization and it is in agreement with the constitutional definition of the terms and the difference between them. Civil Service refers to "the body of permanent officials appointed to assist the political executive in formulating and implementing government policies" (Ibietan, 2013, p. 56). The similarities they have in common is that they are machineries of government charged with the responsibility of executing governmental policies, that is carrying out the daily activities that public administration demands (Adebayo, 2000). It is pertinent to opine that civil service is embedded in public service. In other words, public service is broader than civil service. Public service is associated with the totality of services that are organized under government (Ezeani, 2006).

2.3 MODELS OF THE STAGES OF E-GOVERNMENT: AN EVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE

A brief history of e-government indicates that, since the early 1990s, many governments around the world have adopted e-government solutions, ranging from a simple web-based presence and one-way communication to two-way communication and transactions with different stakeholders such as citizens and businesses (Al-Shehry et al., 2006; Weerakkody et al., 2006). This government transition phase moved on to a more integrated web presence and e-democracy (Moon, 2002; Layne and Lee, 2001). Many researchers have tried to understand the e-government phenomenon from an evolutionary point of view by dividing the e-government development process into many stages (e.g. Moon, 2002; Deloitte and Touche, 2001; Layne and Lee, 2001).

These and several other researchers exemplify that to develop and implement a vigorous e-government infrastructure requires a staged approach, where the development focus moves from the immature to the mature – these terms are often used to characterize the state of a given level in a continuous process (Irani et al., 2006; Anderson and Henriksen, 2006; Ebrahim and Irani, 2005). The latter offers full integration with public administration and will have required the underlying re-think and change of government and its constituents (Irani et al. 2006). Traunmuller and Lenk, (2002) accentuate that the concept of e-government represents a fertile anthology of organizational and technological issues.

Incorporating the conception of maturity or immaturity does not reinforce the ontology of the e-government concept. In addition, Andersen and Henriksen, (2006) highlight that certain qualitative and/or quantitative measures to ascertain what distinguishes different degrees of maturity are indispensable. Irani et al., (2006) states that the benefit of having a staged approach is the ability to generate momentum that can then be maintained. The reason is that it may allow the public sector (including local government organizations) to attract an increasing number of citizens to using electronic services.

The e-government implementation process passes through different stages until it reaches its highest potential stage, i.e. the integration of government information and services in different departments, for different functions and at different levels of the government system, thus enabling citizens to obtain government services and information online from a single point of access (Gupta and Jana, 2003; Layne and Lee, 2001).

Literature on e-government disciplines illustrates that many researchers (either from individual academia researchers to institutions) have developed and proposed e - government stage models, including Howard's Three-Stage Model (Howard, 2001); Chandler and Emanuels' Four-Stage Model (Chandler and Emanuels, 2002); Layne and Lee's Four-Stage Model (Layne and Lee, 2001), Murphy's Four-Stage Model (Murphy, 2005), Gartner's Four-Stage Model (Baum and Di Maio, 2000), UN's Five-Stage Model (United Nations and American Society for Public Administration,2001), Deloitte's Six-Stage Model (Deloitte and Touche, 2001) and Hiller and Bélanger Five-Stage Model (2001).

Besides these e-government stage models, several other proponents of e-government discipline agree that these different stages in e-government provision are vital (McDonagh, 2002; Moon, 2002; Bonham et al., 2001; Baum and Di Maio, 2000). Having studied several e - government stage models, it is rather perceptible that there remains a lack of harmony regarding how many stages of maturity an e-government system goes through. As mentioned earlier, some researchers believe that only three stages are necessary, others believe that four, five or even six stages are required.

In summarizing the aforementioned e-government implementation stage models, the author opines that there is no mutual conformity among the different scholars and academicians on the number of stages that e -government should pass through during its life cycle and the requirements for moving from one to another. Some models emphasize that e -government should pass through all of the preceding stages to move on to the next one. Others argue that public organisations might decide to skip certain stages or to offer different services at varying stages of maturity. In the light of these arguments, comprehending e-government evolutionary stages provide the implementer with a clear understanding of the issues that should be taken into consideration. However, these stage models represent a number of motivational reasons that influence decision-makers from the public sector to adopt e-government services.

2.4 MOTIVATIONS FOR E-GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTATION

E-government is an increasingly global phenomenon that portrays a highly beneficial endeavor and has consumed the attention of many governments (including policy makers, politicians and citizens) around the world. Several governments have been motivated to make and to continue to make substantial financial and political commitments to establishing e -government as a promising vehicle for improving the services nation-states provide to their citizens and businesses, as well as to other governments both within their borders and beyond (Gupta et al., 2008; Accenture, 2004; Sharma and Gupta, 2002). The motivational drive to implement e-government at such levels has resulted in the implementation of numerous e-government visions and strategic agenda (Accenture, 2004).

Numerous motivational reasons for e-government implementation can be found theorized in the normative literature (Ebrahim and Irani, 2005; Tung and Rieck, 2005; Gupta and Jana, 2003; Jaeger, 2003; Relyea, 2002; Fairwe ather and Rogerson 2002; Moon, 2002; Layne and Lee, 2001), but it is Al-Shehry et al., (2006) who presented a classification for these motivational forces. These are:

(a) Political,

(b) Economic,

(c) Social,

(d) Technological and

(e) Managerial reasons.

These authors supply the following instances:

Political Forces: E-government can increase citizen participation in political processes (i.e. electronic participation [e-participation]); building trust between citizens and their government by improving the government's image and perhaps facilitating democratic elements by enabling voting online. Although there are many theoretical discussions involving participation, e.g., participatory management, e-participation is usually associated with some form of political deliberation or policy decision-making process (Macintosh,2004). Participation can take place within the formal political process or outside it (Saebo et al., 2008; Macintosh, 2004). Several research studies focus on political participation in the policy-making sense, and cover participation both within and outside the formal political system. The electronic) in e - Participation has a clear association with earlier e-areas (e.g. e -business, e-commerce, e-government) and refers to the use of new ICT, with the implication that technology has the ability to transform citizen participation in the policy-making process (Saebo et al., 2008).

Economic Forces: Motivations include cost reductions for both the government itself and the adopter of e-government services. According to a report for the National Electronic Commerce Coordinating Council (NECCC, 2000), government agencies can save up to 70 percent of their costs by moving their services online (UN, 2001). It has also been recognized as a new way of debating and deciding policy (Basu, 2004). Gupta et al., (2008) argues that e-government provides potential benefits including reduced cost and time for providing services to the public, enhanced communication and coordination between government organizations, reduced bureaucracy, expounding citizens' participation and increased efficiency and effectiveness of the government agencies.

Social Forces: Benefits of e-government implementation are related to end-to-end service delivery by making learning and education available for citizens and offering citizen empowerment through access to information. Moreover, services can be more readily brought to all citizens across the country, particularly those with special needs and the elderly by enabling citizens to obtain government information through a single portal at any time and from any location equipped with internet access. E-government has been compared to an "endless wire" or a new method of "threading together" citizens, businesses and governments within a nation (Jaeger, 2003). E-government, as it continues to progress in development and deployment, may re -define the relationship between government and the public (Committee on Governmental Affairs, 2001).

Technological Forces: Research related to technological forces (in the context of e-government) illustrates that ICT provides new possibilities for governments to be more transparent to citizens and businesses, giving access to a greater range of information collected and generated by governments (Gupta et al.,2008; Lambrinoudakis et al., 2003). It also creates opportunities for partnership and collaboration among different government institutions (Allen et al., 2001). E-government is touted as the mechanism by which governments can reduce communication and information costs, increase speed, broaden their reach and eradicate distance (Jaeger and Thompson, 2003). Quite simply, because e-government is primarily based on ICT, it provides the necessary infrastructure for seamless

communication and flow of information within government and its stakeholders. Moreover, studies related to this theme of research investigate the influence of ICT-design features on individuals' acceptance and use of e-government applications. For example, several researchers have highlighted that data security, accessibility and perceived confidentiality significantly influence individuals' adoption of e-government services (Jaeger, 2003; Lee and Rao, 2003; Warkentin et al., 2002).

Managerial Forces: Research related to managerial reasons that influence e - government implementation aims at the identification and/or measurement of specific managerial strategies and behaviors that are considered to significantly affect e-government adoption and use (Titah and Barki, 2006). For example, within such reasoning, a managerial practice that has received significant research attention and is posited as having a vital effect on e -government implementation, is process reengineering. Literature highlights several empirical research studies on cases and simulations indicating that the absence of a comprehensible and well-executed process reengineering strategy significantly impedes e-government implementation and success (Kawalek and Wastall, 2005; Golden et al., 2003; Thong et al., 2000). In addition, another motivational force is the influence of management support (Ke and Wei, 2004; Homburg and Bekkers, 2002). For example, Thong et al., (2000) in their case study on the Singapore Housing and Development Board, found that the presence of management support was a significant factor that influenced e -government implementation and acceptance. Likewise, the establishment and implementation of a formal governance formation, as well as the insight of impartiality with regards to this structure, were also found to be major enabling factors of e-government adoption and usage (Thong et al., 2000).

Despite the claims for these motivational reasons (or forces) for e-government implementation, mainly aiming towards improving government performance and their service delivery, a number of studies have argued that e -government has not   yet fulfilled its promise. For example, Holden and Fletcher, (2001) argue that there are virtually no systematic research results justifying a rapid transition. Indeed, there is a significant body of literature that suggests bureaucracies of government will prove resistant to such change. Fountain, (2001) describes the state of government agencies embedded in institutional arrangements that frustrate attempts to exploit IT, particularly where such IT is multi-agency and aimed at a united government.

Furthermore, according to the UN Global e -government Survey, (2003), the average government reaches a level of only 25.5% on the index score of the highest ranking governments, with only seven governments reaching 75% and above (UN, 2003). Moreover, in a study conducted by Accenture, (2005) on e - government initiatives in 22 countries, the average e-government's maturity was 48%, with only two countries reaching 60% or above. Other researchers point out that the provision of e-government services is still far from reaching full effectiveness (Reddick, 2004; Moon, 2002) whilst a number of researchers argue that many issues, such as privacy and security, remain as barriers for e-government implementation (Wilford, 2004). Some argue that e-government is worthy of support, but many issues must be addressed with its implementation. For instance, Rogerson, (1997) specifies a number of principles for electronic services in the UK that will ensure social responsibility in e-government implementation, i.e. the principles of choice, confidence of clean data, accessibility to allow all citizens to obtain the services, and public funds protection.

Despite several aforementioned conceptions on e-government implementation, the motivational

themes described above are largely influenced by a plethora of benefits.

3. CHALLENGES TO E-GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTATION IN THE NIGERIAN PUBLIC SERVICE

The benefits of the implementation of e-government in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized. Scholars have highlighted that the implementation of e-government will facilitate accountability, awareness and transparency in the management of governmental business (Ojo, 2014, p. 79). Budhiraja (2003) is of the view that the implementation will lead to Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsive and Transparent (SMART) governance. Besides, it is believed that it will also bring about an efficient, speedy and transparent process of information dissemination to the public and other agencies enhance the performance of administrative activities both internally and externally and also enhance good governance (UNESCO, 2007). Regrettably, this is not the case in Nigeria. However, the tendencies of any challenge that will be peculiar to any policy of government is not being ruled out but it is pertinent to note that there are fundamental things that have to be addressed before one can expect any benefits from the policy of e-government in Nigeria public service. This also confirms the assertion of Dode (2007, p. 382) thus: The e-government practice is bound to meet with strong opposition from the bureaucratic quarters of the policy. By this, we mean the over-bloated public service whose members will analyse this practice as a deliberate attempt by the government to throw majority of their members out of their jobs. Majority of the public servants are thus, likely to use their positions to frustrate the effective application of e-government in Nigeria. They will definitely dislike a system that will reduce to the minimum, face-to-face contact between citizens and government service providers.

By logical extension however, the implementation of e-government in the Nigerian public service is fraught with many challenges. According to Abdel-Fattah and Galal-Edeen (2008), the main challenge of e-government in the Nigerian public service is lack of trained and qualified personnel to handle and operate its infrastructures. They further opined that due to the high cost associated with the procurement and training of public servants with ICT skills, government sometimes develop cold feet in the real implementation of e-governance in the public service. In the same vein, Ayo & Ekong (2008) also emphasized the lack of skilled workers to handle various ICT services and their applications in achieving the successful implementation of e-governance in the government organisations. They also observed that the absence of government regulatory policy is a critical issue that needs urgent attention if e-governance is to be a reality in public sector. To them, for e-government to be effective and successfully implemented, experts would be needed to coordinate and operate the ICT-related infrastructures as the absence of competent personnel to handle IT infrastructure, will render the procurement of such infrastructures useless (Ayo & Ekong, 2008).

Another challenge is associated with the state of electricity supply in Nigeria, which is unstable and irregular. This has constituted a major obstacle to achieving the purpose of e-governance in Nigeria. Okwueze (2010) also opined that sufficient and stable power supply is crucial to the effective implementation of e-government in the country's public sector. In juxtaposition to what is obtainable in the public sector, most government agencies rely on generators for power supply and most times the generators do not have the required capacity to power the ICT facilities. Similar to this view,

Gberevbie; Ayo; Iyoha; Duruji & Abasilim (2015) observed that it is absolutely necessary for the government to make provision for the needed infrastructure in electricity power supply, internet connectivity, telecommunications and computer hardware, optical fiber cables, among others for the successful implementation of e-government. This implies that the successful implementation of e-government in the Nigerian public service is no small measure dependent on solving the erratic power supply problem, among others.

For Bansode & Patil (2011, p. 58) the digital divide is another obstacle to effective implementation of e-government in Nigeria's public sector. This simply means "the gap between those with regular, effective access to digital and information technology and those lacking this access". Keniston (2003) simply sees digital divide as the widening gap of ICT knowledge between the rich and powerful who constitute part of the information age and the poor and powerless who do not. He further observed that digital divide is not only limited to the level of ICT knowledge between the rich and the poor but also associated with linguistic. To him, this divide accounts for the separation of those who can speak English from those who cannot. Another characteristic of this digital divide is manifested in the widening digital gap between the rich and poor nations and also the digital divide between a new elite group, which he called the "digerati", that is, those who benefit from the enormous successful information technology industry and other knowledge based sectors of the economy such as biotechnology and pharmacology. The implication of this is that, the challenge of digital divide encompasses the access to technology hardware physically and the required skills and resources needed for the judicious application of its use. However, there are factors that are known to have contributed to this digital divide. For instance, factors like physical disability, physical access, access to the contents and lack of ICT skills contribute to the digital divide (Bansode & Patil, 2011).

However, Olaopa (2014, p. 5) succinctly itemized "inadequate funds allocated to the e-governance projects, difficulty associated with streamlining various silos of e-Government projects already existing or being implemented prior to the creation of the Ministry of Communication Technology, disparity between urban and rural dwellers or those with low literacy levels in accessing the internet, potential to erode the privacy of the citizenry, perceived lack of value for money when the huge cost of deploying e-governance projects is compared to the actual value to the people, false sense of transparency as the challenges to the adoption and delivery of e-governance in Nigeria.

Additionally, the following are also considered as factors impeding the effective implementation of e-governance in Nigeria's public service:

Lack of ICT Infrastructure: This is another crucial challenge to the implementation of e-governance in Nigeria's public service. As it has been explained in the definition of e-governance above, it is the application of ICTs in the operations of government business. The Nigeria's public service is still lacking in basic ICT infrastructure. For instance, some of the offices still lack common computers let alone the common skills for its operation. What you see in their daily activities is the traditional way of doing things. That is, they are still known for doing a lot of paper work, which if e-governance were embraced fully would have reduced. In a better case, you will see the combination of both the traditional way of doing things alongside the digital approach. There are still no access to internet network in most public sector offices, no regular power supply and so on. All these pose challenge to the implementation of e-governance in Nigeria's public service (ITU, 2006; Adeyemo,

2011).

Attitude or Resistance to Change: This is also a challenge in the public sector. Most of them are still used to the old way of carrying out government activities. That is, they are still known to be working with many papers, carrying of files from one desk to the other or from one office to the other. Their resistance to e-governance implementation in their services is what has culminated to the poor rating of the implementation of e-governance in the public service. Some of the reasons for this, is that most of the public servants are not computer literate, not qualified, have little or no training in the installation, maintenance, designing and implementation of ICT infrastructure.

Lack of harmonised e-Government Interoperability Framework: The MDAs still face mountainous challenges because they operate in silos rather than having a coordinating body that would ensure that the implementation among them is interconnected, as it is being done in developed climes. The idea of harmonisation, according is to offer a seamless e-Government operation within the entire governance process, knowing that Information Technology, IT projects cannot be executed in silos.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is necessary at this point to proffer lasting solutions to the challenges   facing successful e-government implementation in Nigeria's public service. Because of the issues highlighted as the main challenges to e-government implementation in Nigeria's public service, the following solutions are hereby recommended:

The federal government should have the political will to embrace and implement e-government in Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies and should conduct the training required to ensure that public servants adopt e-government in their daily activities. Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies, should constitute E-government implementation committees saddled with the responsibility of working out modalities for effective implementation of the concept with feedback mechanism to ascertain implementation effectiveness. The ICT Ministry should collaborate with the implementation committees at different ministries/agencies including state ministries/agencies for performance evaluation as well as feedback generation to ensure effective e-government implementation. The government should formulate ICT policies that will make computer literacy a condition for employment and promotion of public or civil servant both at the local, state and federal levels. The National Orientation Agency should create ICT awareness among public servants. With the above achieved, the challenges will be reduced to the barest minimum.

Nigeria's public service (Ministries, Departments and Agencies) must demonstrate a high level of e-government readiness in their activities. All that is needed must be put in place by the government, particularly that which is within their capacity.

The government must ensure the availability of the necessary infrastructure that will facilitate the successful implementation of e-government 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-government implementation in the public service has to be taken care of. This means that the success of e-government implementation in the public service is tied to the availability of electricity supply. Another factor to be considered is the Human factor. This is relevant because no technology can drive itself; it is the human element that will drive the

technology. Against this background, government should carefully address the issue of human factor which often manifests in resistance to change, nonchalant attitudes and the likes which are responsible for underutilization of most of the ICT facilities put in place by government especially in offices or departments that tend to embrace e-government in their operations, thereby sabotaging the good effort of the government.

In addition, it is necessary for the government to come up with a regulatory policy, in particular, on the framework through legislation of e-government and other ICT-related issues as it pertains to the operations strategies among the tiers of government. By so doing, the public service will be aware on the areas that needs to be worked on, in order to actualize effective implementation of e-government in Nigeria's public service.

The National Information Technology Development Agency, NITDA and other stakeholders should strategise on how to harmonise the e-Government Interoperability Framework, tagged Ne-GIF. The idea of harmonisation, will offer a seamless e-Government operation within the entire governance process, knowing that Information Technology, IT projects cannot be executed in silos. If adopted, Nigeria can have a workable document that creates a seamless synergy across all sectors of the economy.

Another idea behind the framework is to ascertain if agencies wanting to implement IT projects have the capacity to implement such projects in order to have value for money, considering that Nigeria is already lagging behind in e-Government index. Before seeking this harmonised framework, NITDA should make it mandatory for all MDAs to seek its clearance before embarking on any implementation of any IT project, considering that e-Government is very important and Nigeria is lagging behind in it.

The framework is about integrating IT projects in Ministries, Departments and Agencies, knowing that IT projects cannot be executed in silos. There is need to come up with a framework. Many nations have their own framework, but in Nigeria we are yet to have one. It is better late than never.

The proposed framework when adopted would make e-Governance more practical in Nigeria because too many of e-government projects are being implemented in isolation.

The challenges identified, it is believed that government and stakeholders in the ICT sector will, without, further delay find lasting solutions to them. To ensure lasting solutions to the challenges, the above recommendations should be embraced. I, therefore, submit that e-government remains the best and most powerful tool to facilitate efficient and effective service delivery that will bring about efficiency, transparency, accountability and effectiveness in government transactions and operations for Nigeria's public service.

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