

MUCH ADO-ABOUT THE IDEA OF E-GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA'S DEMOCRACY: MYTH OR REALITY!

By

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Abstract

More scholars and researchers on contemporary political analysis seem to be resolved on the consensus that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has drastically changed the process of democratic governance in the world for the better, consequently, countries which have totally embraced and implemented the e-governance technology platform have not only ensured sustainable development, they have also directly ensured effective and efficient service delivery which invariably enhances citizens' participation in all spheres of government. In view of this, recent scholars are alarmed by the fact that a country like Nigeria has for decades since independence, continued to score very poorly on the global e-Government Development Index (EGDI), amidst her fast growing and most lucrative telecommunications, and Information & Communications Technology (ICT) market in Africa - her vast wealth in both human and material resources notwithstanding. As a Reconstructionist study, the paper adopts the traditional methods of critical and rational analysis of ideas and arguments in philosophy with a view to offer conceptual and contextual analysis of various literature, texts, and library materials addressing the subject matter of e-governance. The study identifies the cancerous nature of corruption inherent among the elite class as one of the major factors militating against the full implementation of the e-governance platform, since its adoption will largely check the excesses known to exist among government officials. Government is therefore strongly advised to endorse and pass into law, the full implementation and use of the e-governance platform in all spheres of government. Its adoption and implementation should also be considered as a fundamental human right to all citizens in the country.

Key Words: Citizens' Participation, Democratic Governance, E-Governance Technology, (ICT), Sustainable development,

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Backgrounds to the study

While most developing nations of the world continue to gain on the global e-Government development index (EGDI), the reports released from the United Nations e-Government survey in 2012 indicated that Nigeria had dropped drastically from the scale of 0.2687 in 2010 to 0.2676 in the year 2012. This report represents a decrease in the degree of acceptance by government and private individuals in the country. The report place Nigeria's ranking at number 163 out of 192 countries of the world that was ranked that year. The e-participation evaluation for the same period stood at 0.1842 which represents a ranking of 75 out of 153 countries of the world considered for the survey. A comparative analysis of the index and ranking recorded between 2010 and 2012 indicated that:

E-Governance (2012 EGDI: 0.2676)

2012 Rank	163
2010 Ranking	150
Change	+13

E-Participation (2012EPART0.1842)

2012 Rank	75
2010 Rank	157
Change	-82

The report of the survey centered mostly on ascertaining the rate of e-government development in large populated nations of the world. To this end, the report revealed that though Nigeria - as at 2012 had a population of 158 million - was the least developing country among 11 other most populated countries of the world. This is with regards to the usage and application of e-governance by the citizens and the government of a country. The Nigerian Vanguard in the same report notes that:

countries like Japan and Mexico with lesser populations of 127 million and 113 million advanced from 0.7152 per cent in 2010 to 0.8019 per cent in 2012 and 0.5150 per cent in 2010 to 0.6240 per cent in 2012 respectively, while countries like China and India with higher populations of 1,341 billion and 1,225 billion people, also advanced from 0.4700 per cent in 2010 to 0.5359 and 0.3567 per cent in 2010 to 0.3829 per cent in 2012, respectively (Elebeke, 2013:1).

A comparison of the EGDI & EPART Index and Ranking respectively for 2012/ 2010 indicate the changes in Index / Ranking (+12index and a -82 Ranking) for the years under review.

A more recent report from EGDI & EPART Index & Ranking for 2014 indicate that the United Nations global e-government survey places Nigeria at 0.2929 index, with a development index ranking which placed Nigeria at Number 141 of the 193 nations considered for the survey. The e-participation index for Nigeria in the same year stood at 0.3333, with a cumulative index ranking which placed her at numbers 97 out of 193 countries considered for the survey. A comparative analysis of the scores for the previous year (2012) indicates that:

E-Governance (2014EGDI:0.2929)

2014 Rank	141
2012 Rank	163
Change	-22

E-Participation (2014 EPART: 03.333)

2014 Rank	97
2012 Rank	75
Change	+22

A summary of the e-governance survey report on Nigeria show that while the ranking of participants among citizens in Nigeria have generally increased to the tone +22 as indicated from the survey reports, the ranking of e-government activities continues to drop. The survey report captures a total score of -22, indicating a continuous decline in the rate of e-government activities which takes place in Nigeria. This continues decline in the ranking of e-government activities is the reason for embarking on this study

1.2. The Problem

Much is currently being said (UNCSD, 2012), (UNEGS, 2014) about how Information Communication Technology (ICT) has the potential to bring about effective, transparent and accountable institutions of development envisioned by world leaders at Rio de Janeiro in June 2012, as key to establishing sustainable development. It has therefore been strongly accreted that the entrenchment of E-governance in any country holds tremendous potentials to improving the way that government delivers public service. Invariably, “the entrenchment of E-governance facilitates enhances the achievement of broad public participation in decision making, enhancing access to information and removing barriers to public service” (Hongbo, 2014:5).

While the review of literature on e-governance (Ojo 2014), UNCSD (2012), UNEGS, (2014), Hongbo (2014) in this century continues to reveal that its adoption in any country optimizes the opportunity for borderlessness, interconnectedness and a de-territorialization of government policies and programmes which essentially instills sustainable development, promotes participatory, transparent, responsive and inclusive grassroots development; Global reports on e-governance however, continues to indicates that Nigeria, due to obvious reasons of corruption and other reasons which will be discussed latter in this paper, have continued to score very poorly among other nations of the world anticipated to have begun to enjoy the benefits of e-governance, especially when taken into consideration the vast populations and outstanding human and natural resources which the nations has at its disposal.

This paper will thus argue that the poor global scores which Nigeria continues to record today (Elebeke, 2013:1) is more as a result of a deliberate an calculated effort to prevent the full implementation of e-government systems by majority of the elite class members of the state who will be disadvantaged by the adoption and full implementation e-government platforms in every sector of the government. Consequently, the elite classes of citizens continued to discourage the formulations and implementation of policies and the provision of resources which are often geared towards making available, the adequate IT infrastructures and the skilled personnel to actualize and ensure the full implementation of the e-governance platforms. This is why some writers and commentators on e-governance in Nigeria have wondered whether the quest to fully implement the e-government platform mains a myth or reality.

1.3. Methodology of Research

As a reconstructionist' study, the work adopts the traditional method of philosophy which involves rational critical analysis, conceptual clarification and a reconstruction of ideas, arguments and related texts and materials on e-governance. A conceptual and contextual analysis of various library materials and literature concerning the subject matter shall also be carried out with the view to achieve the objectives of the paper.

1.4. Preliminary Findings

Recent commentators and scholars (Olufemi, 2012), Elebeke (2013), Adeyemo, (2011) are resolved on the fact that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have changed the process of governance in the world for the better. Countries which have embraced the e-governance

technology platform are more able to manage government affairs for the benefits of citizens and the government as well. Nigeria, a nation perceived by other nations as the giant of Africa, continues to pose a paradox to the international community in terms of the economic potential and vast human resources which she is disposed to. Researchers therefore can't phantom why such a country with all her fast growing and most lucrative Telecommunications, and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) market in Africa, have continued to rank very poorly on the global e-government ranking index. Preliminary studies conducted for this study, identifies among other factors, a high level of corruption among the elite class, as one of the factors responsible for the low ranking recorded in the EGDI for the country.

2. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

2.1. Governance

Current studies in political science and government tends to reveal that students confuse the term government with governance. This is why we want to start this section with a clarification of the distinguishing features between governance and government. The term government is a recognized body empowered with the power to make resolutions in a given political system. In this case the governance procedure, which comprises all the actors involved in manipulating the decision-making process (such as lobbies, parties, medias), is centered on the relevant "governing body". Whether the association is a geopolitical body (nation-state), a corporation (a business or organization incorporated as a legal entity), a socio-political entity (chiefdom, tribe, family, etc.), or an informal one, its governance is the way the rules, norms and actions are produced, sustained, regulated and held accountable. The degree of formality depends on the internal rules of a given organization.

Governance in this study shall therefore refer to "all processes of governing, whether undertaken by a government, market or network, whether over a family, tribe, formal or informal organization or territory and whether through laws, norms, power or language (Bevir, 2013). The term in this study shall also relate to "the processes of interaction and decision-making among the actors involved in a collective problem that lead to the creation, reinforcement, or reproduction of social norms and institutions (Hufty, 2011:403–424). The World Bank on the other hand has defined governance as the manner in which power is exercised in the

management of a country's economic and social resources for development (World Bank, 1991:1).

2.2. E-Governance

E-government (also conceived as *electronic government*, digital government, online government, connected government, or Internet government) comprises of the digital relations amongst citizens and their government (C2G), amongst governments and government organizations (G2G), amongst government and citizens (G2C), amongst government and employees (G2E), and amongst government and businesses/commerce (G2B). These conceptions of E-governance have been summed up by (Jeong, 2007) and (Adeyemo, 2010), as an essential model of E-governance:

- i. G2G (government to governments)
- ii. G2C (government to citizens)
- iii. G2E (government to employees)
- iv. G2B (government to businesses).

In a report by United Nations, they conceive *E-governance strategies (or digital government)* as "The employment of the Internet and the world-wide-web for delivering government information and services to the citizens" (United Nations, 2006; AOEMA, 2005). More broadly stated, e-government can be referred to as the use and application of information technologies in public administration to streamline and integrate workflows and processes, to effectively manage data and information, enhance public service delivery, as well as expand communication channels for engagement and empowerment of people (UNEGS, 2014). From the above, we can conclude that electronic government (or *e-government*) basically denotes "The utilization of Information Technology (IT), Information and Communication Technologies (ICT s), and other web-based telecommunication technologies to improve and/or enhance on the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery in the public sector" (Jeong, 2007). From the public administration perspective, E-governance is largely conceived as a global trend in public administration which allows for the adoption of web-based technologies to deliver and conduct government services (Gasco, 2003).

2.3. Democracy

The idea of democracy in the recent past is perceived as the platform which evolved from certain standoff or compromise among political contenders for power, in which no one group can claim

sufficient strength to control outcomes by itself (Wogu, et al. 2015:553). Wogu goes ahead to note that the earnest human desire for peace, equality and dignity among all the classes of citizens in the society has been noted as one of the driving force which makes citizens crave for democracy as a modus of operation in any government. The case is different for authoritarian governments who for obvious reasons, prefer to suppress demands for democratic participation. Wogu et al again corroborates this position when he noted that:

Historically, powerful groups have often opposed democratization because the fear that democracy will threaten their privileges. Disadvantaged groups have also been known to oppose the democratic process because they see it as unresponsive to their deeply felt grievances. As a result, reversals of democratic regimes and restorations of authoritarian rule have occurred in the past and will doubtlessly occur in the future (Wogu, et al. 2015:553).

It means that despite the powerful nature of the idea of democracy, not all countries all over the world strive to adopt or preserve democratic institutions.

The Ancient Greeks who first proposed the idea of democracy thought it was proper that the ordinary people be directly involved with matters concerning how the state is ruled or governed. This is because they believed that a life deprived of direct involvement in the government of the day is without merit. Without the individual's exercise of sovereignty, the purpose of life – in the Greek world view - would have been defeated. In essence therefore, “Democracy means the adherence to the principle of equality in the sense of occupying offices through lot, rotation and short tenure, and the rule of law as against the sit-tight policy for African political leaders” (James, 2010). A few of the themes emanating from the Greek conception of democracy will suffice for this study:

- a. A democratic system encourages the scenario where the people govern themselves via regular and periodic elections which manifest in either direct or representative democracy.
- b. Democracy is about instilling a system that grants exclusive rights of vote to the citizens of the state at and as when due.
- c. Democracies all over the world need to foster and promote certain rights: The rights to run for office, the rights to organize political parties and the right to have once vote count equally with that of the affluent in the society.

2.4. Democratization

Democratization as an political ideology, is largely conceived as the end product or process arising from efforts made to transits from one democratic system of government to another system of government considered to be more democratic than the previous system of government (Przeworski, et al, 2000). Thus, when there is a transition from an authoritarian system of government to a democratic system of Government or when the transition is from a semi authoritarian system of Government to a democratic political system of government, it is inferred that the democratization process exists in the named political system of government (Traversa, 2014). This conception of democratization is itself influenced by many factors such as the kind of civic society put in place, economic development factors and the history of the polity in question. The esteemed result from the democratization process is to ensure that the electorates have a voice in the political system and that this voice can transform into a vote which could largely influence his decision in the matters concerning the day to day running of the state. The whole idea of e-governance is supposed to make easier the democratization process from one imperfect system to a better system of democracy

2.5. Corruption

Some working definition of the idea and meaning of corruption will suffice at this stage. A few writers: Obayelu (2007); Amuwo (2005) perceive corruption as the exploitation of public position, resources and power for private gain. For Ogundiya (2009:5) & Fjeldstad & Isaksen (2008:3), they conceive of corruption as “the betrayal of public trust for individual or sectional gain.” In addition to these definitions, Obayelu noted further that corruption had to do with the kind of “efforts made to secure wealth or power through illegal means for private gain at public expense; or a misuse of power for private benefit.” By the above definitions, it is clear that the term corruption is used to denote a wide range of activities such as

1. Embezzlement (misappropriation of corporate or public funds),
2. Bribery (payments made in order to gain an advantage or to avoid a disadvantage),
3. Fraud (theft through misrepresentation).

We shall basically be considering the part which corruption has played in instituting the e-governance platform.

3. E-GOVERNANCE AND THE NIGERIA'S DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS:

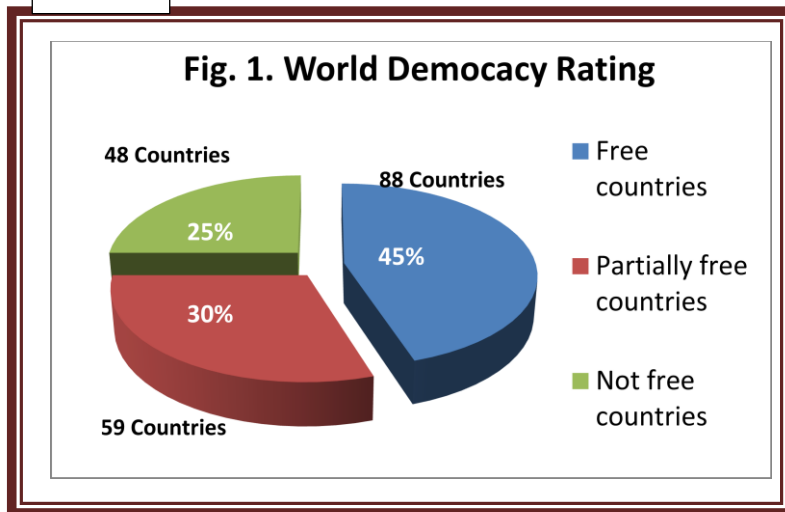
3.1. Democratic Index Report of Countries in The World

Wogu et. al, (2015:550) in a study investigating the political behaviour and the democratization process existing between Ghana and Nigeria, they noted that “one of the most important and outstanding political development in recent years has been the rapid spread of democracy as a political idea throughout most parts of the world”. Indeed, recent studies point to the fact that there is now more than before, an overwhelming acceptance of the idea of democracy as a political system of thought which is more viable a system of political government. This accession tends to corroborate the propositions put up by Mark, Krieger & William which postulates that “the claim by citizens that they should, in some ways, exercise substantial control over the decision made by their state or government should mark the real essence of a democracy” (Mark, Krieger & William, 2007:17). In 1973, a United State based organization known as Freedom House conducted a study where they noted that:

There were 43 countries that could be considered “free” (or democratic), 38 that were “partly free” and 69 that could be classified as “not free.” By 2004, the count was 89 free, 54 partly free and 49 not free. In terms of populations, in 1973, 35 percent of the world people lived in “free” countries, 18 percent in “partially free” and 47 percent were citizens of countries ranked as “not free.” In 2004 however, the percentage was 44 percent free, 21 percent partly free, and 35 percent not free (Freedom House, 2005).

From the above study, it is clear that some countries of the world are now inclining to adopting democratic practices and principles as their system of government. However, while the practice of democracy is not uniformly practiced in all the counties of the world, Amartya had from a series of studies conducted noted that “democratic governance has now achieved the status of being taken to be generally right” (Sen, 1999:3-17).

Fig. 1



In 2014, a similar report from Freedom House annual report. it was yet noted that there has been more decline after eight consecutive years of study. The 2014 report revealed that 45% of the world's population representing 88 countries of the world is "free". 30% of the world's population representing

59 countries of the world is "partially free". On the other hand, 25% of the world representing 48 countries is not free. Particularly notable were developments in Egypt, which endured across-the-board reversals in its democratic institutions following a military coup. There were also serious setbacks to democratic rights in other large, politically influential countries, including Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Venezuela, and Indonesia (Freedom House, 2014). Some of the major finding of the 41 edition of the Freedom report on democracy and human rights, include:

- Fifty-four countries showed overall declines in political rights and civil liberties, compared with 40 that showed gains.
- For the eighth consecutive year, *Freedom in the World* recorded more declines in democracy worldwide than gains.
- Some leaders effectively relied on "modern authoritarianism," crippling their political opposition without annihilating it, and flouting the rule of law while maintaining a veneer of order, legitimacy, and prosperity.
- Central to modern authoritarians is the capture of institutions that undergird political pluralism. They seek to dominate not only the executive and legislative branches, but also the media, judiciary, civil society, economy, and security forces. (Freedom House, 2014)

There was however some positive reports that was recorded in the years gone by. They include:

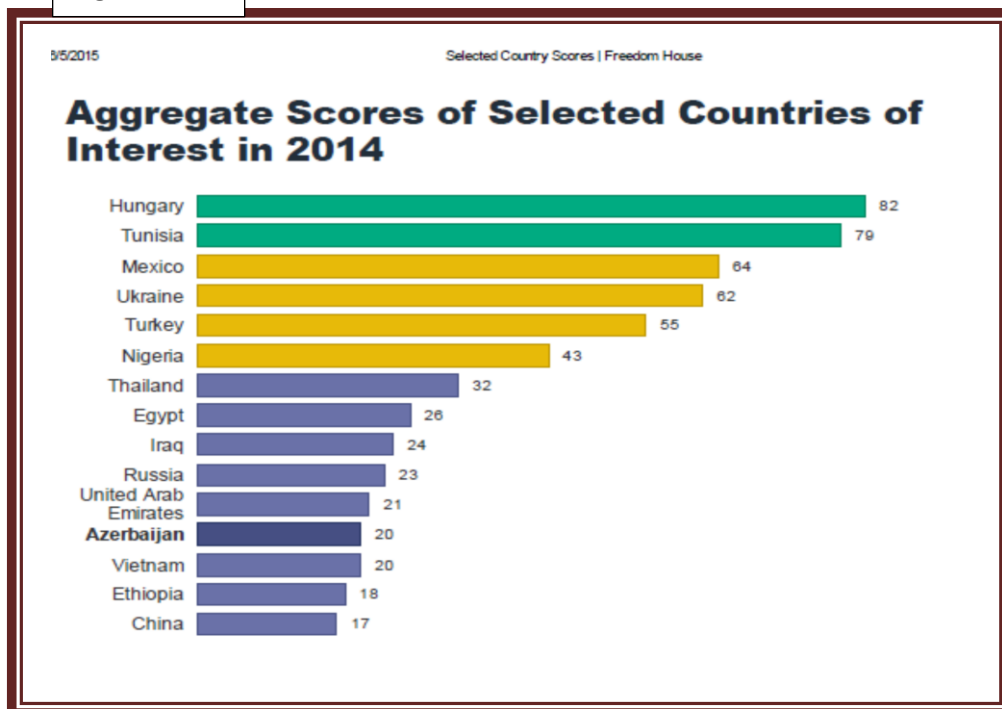
- Civil liberties improved in Tunisia, the most promising of the Arab Spring countries.
- Pakistan showed gains due to successful elections and an orderly rotation of power.
- In Africa, gains occurred in Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Madagascar, Rwanda, Togo, and Zimbabwe.
- The addition of Honduras, Kenya, Nepal, and Pakistan raised the number of electoral democracies to 122 (Freedom House, 2014)

While anticipating better democratic rating reports in 2015, recent reports coming from freedom house annual report on the state of worldwide political rights and civil liberties signify that more violent strategies by authoritarian governments is reason for the disturbing decline in the quest for nations seeking freedom for nine years running. Indeed, the report provided indicated that “the acceptance of Democracy as the world’s dominant form of Government – and of an international system built on democratic ideals - is under grate threat than any point in the last 25 years (Freedom House, 2015). The report further notes:

The lack of democratic gains around the world was conspicuous. The one notable exception was Tunisia, which became the first Arab country to achieve the status of Free since Lebanon was gripped by civil war 40 years ago. By contrast, a troubling number of large, economically powerful, or regionally influential countries moved backward: Russia, Venezuela, Egypt, Turkey, Thailand, Nigeria, Kenya, and Azerbaijan. Hungary, a European Union member state, also saw a sharp slide in its democratic standards as part of a process that began in 2010 (Freedom House, 2015).

Some democratic indices that was used as the basis for assessing democratic countries include: The existence of civil societies, the existence of freedom of expression, and an effective proof on the existence of the rule of law; among other things. The countries that lost grounds did so because they had laws which restricted the use of social media and the use of the internet for

Fig. 2



communication and state laws which permitted surveillance and other kinds of restrictions. these moves by all standards curbed personal autonomy— including the freedom of individuals to make private

choices about schooling and occupation and the capability to move freely. In 2014, Nigeria's score on the Index rating was 43% indicating that she was among those partly free on the freedom scale.

3.2. Democratic Index Report for Nigeria

The year 2013 in Nigeria witnessed a worsen case of Islamic militancy in the Northern parts of the country. tion was more worsen by the rampant wave of kidnappings in the south, and pockets of ethnic and communal clashes in Kaduna and Plateau states respectively. A report by (Freedom House, 2015) captures it thus...

The situation in northeastern states continues to defy remedy, as the militant Islamist group Boko Haram (or "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad") increased its deadly attacks on civilians and government targets; Boko Haram was the second most deadly terrorist group in the world in 2013. Moreover, an October 15 report by Amnesty International revealed that security forces involved in the counterterrorist offensive against Boko Haram committed gross human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary mass arrests, illegal detentions, and torture against citizens living in the affected areas. According to the report, over 950 people died in military custody in the first six months of 2013. Meanwhile, in November, the International Criminal Court (ICC) classified the crisis involving Boko Haram and the Nigerian security forces as a non-international armed conflict. At year's end, the ICC also continued its investigations into whether Boko Haram has committed crimes against humanity.

From another perspective, internal divisions had rocked the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP). It was reported that a group of Seven Governors and some other high ranking officers had as a result of some internal rancor, created a new party from the old party with the New Name "New PDP". While that was going on, that National Assembly occupied themselves with the need for amendments in the 1999 constitution. Among the serious issues tabled to be address was the issue of guaranteeing equal rights to minorities in the country. Soon after this, the president set up an advisory committee that was to look into the major problems militating against the political and economic stability of the country.

Amides all these, Nigeria's economy continues to grow at the rate of 6 percent every year, a growth analyst say is dominated by the production of oil. However, a report by London-based think tank Chatham House revealed that for the first six months of 2013, over 100,000 barrels were stolen each day from oil facilities through elaborate networks involving Nigerian officials

and international actors. Be that as it may, Many factors are responsible for the near inclusion of Nigeria into the “Not Free Class” class rating of countries under the siege of authoritarian rule or government. Examples of countries in the “note free class” include: Thailand, Egypt, Iraq, Russia, United Arab Emirate, Vietnam, Ethiopia and China as indicated in Fig. 3 below. The diagram shows that Nigeria barely escaped falling into that Class. The data collected on Nigeria’s rating is indicative and a confirmation of the Nine years consecutive decline in the democratic rating of countries all over the world (Freedom House, 2015). Some of these factors responsible for this decline include:

Table 1.

S/N	Descriptions	Rating For Nigeria in 2014.	Rating for Nigeria in 2015
1.	Freedom Rating	4.5	4.0
2.	Political Rights	4	4
3.	Civil Rights	5	4.0
Scale = on the scale of 1 – 7 (“1” = Best While “7” = Worst)			

Freedom In The World Rating for Nigeria, 2014 & 2015 (Freedom House, 2015)

1. The Political Rights and Civil Liberties of Members of the Country

Under this factor, here are other criteria which are also serves as measures for determining and analyzing the political activities of countries, which also constitute the yardstick for measuring and determining the rating of member states. Below are some of the ratings that where acquired during the year under study, (2013-2015).

Table. 2

<i>1. Political Rights</i>		
S/N	Description	Rating
1	How the electoral process is being conducted	(6/12)
2	Political Pluralism and Participation	(9/16)
3	The functioning of Government	(5/12)

Table. 3

<i>2. Civil Liberties of Members</i>		
S/N	Description	Rating
1	Freedom of Expression and Belief	(9/16)
2	Association and Organization of Rights	(7/12)
3	Rule of Law	(4/16)
4	Personal Authority and Individual Rights	(6/16)

The individual rating scored on the various variables explains why Nigeria barely got away with a Partial Free rating as indicate in Figs. 1, 2, & 3.

3.3. The Problem of Corruption & The Democratization Process

For this section study, we shall review some literature by the likes of Agbor (2012); *Leadership behaviour and the crises of state failure in Nigeria* and a couple of other related works: (Uwujaren, 2012) & (Ike, 2010). These texts shall be instrumental in bringing to the fore, some of the silent points we wish to make about the adverse influence of corruption on leadership, governance and the proposed subject of the paper (e-governance) can militate against any country.

Agbor, (2012) for instance, highlights a list of some high profile cases of corruption charges against notable leaders in the fourth republic. He noted that the rate of corruption in Nigeria had made headlines all over the world. Nigeria's present corruption ranking stands at number 143 out of 182 list of corrupt countries captured by Transparency International's 2011 Corruption Perception Index. The present global corruption Index for 2014 ranked Nigeria as Number 136th most corrupts country in the world out of 174 countries of the world (Ejike, 2014:1). Further in his report, Ejike noted that:

The measurement is based on a scale of 0 to 100 with a score of 0 perceived as "highly corrupt" and 100 "very clean". Nigeria was ranked 136th with an index score of 27. This record is Nigeria best ranking on Transparency International's corruption perception index (CPI) under President Goodluck Jonathan. Nigeria was ranked 144th in 2013, 139th in 2012 and 143rd in 2011 with the 2014 position bettering that of 2013 by eight places. According to Transparency International's report on corruption perception index for 2014, Denmark is the least corrupt country in the world as it ranked 1 of 175 nations surveyed, with Somalia and North Korea as the most corrupt nations of the world. (Ejike, 2014:5).

Going by the current Transparency International Index Report, Denmark came ranked number one in 2014, with a score of 92, while Nigeria scored 27, with North Korea and Somalia sharing the last position as the most corrupt nations of the world.

A review of literature on the issues of corruption and corrupt practices among government officials and leaders of government in Nigeria have now become what Agbor (2012:9) called “a national pastime”. A high light of some of the cases captured in his is indicative of the high-profile corrupt leaders in Nigeria who are involved with corruption. The reports chronicled the arraignment of a one past governor of Kogi State by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for embezzling and defrauding the state to the tune of N4 Billion. The same reports captured how in September 2006, the EFCC had placed 31 state governors in Nigeria out of the 36 state governors under investigation for corruption (BBC, 2006). Due to the high level of corruption among the law enforcement agencies and the judiciary, nothing really came out of these close investigations.

Other reports included in his report I are cases of;

1. A one-time female Senator from Ogun State was interrogated by EFCC for receiving as much as \$100,000 stolen from the Ministry of Health as bribe to look the other way and allow business continue as usual.
2. The same minister and her deputy was also questioned for stealing over N30 million from the Ministry’s unspent funds from the previous year budget.
3. The oil subsidy and the police pension scam were other reports which made headlines depicting the wonton attitudinal recklessness at which leadership in Nigeria, especially in these sectors, had deteriorated. Uwujaren’s (2012)

The report also noted how the EFCC captured 20 federal officers who swindled the federation account via the fuel subsidy funds. some of the cases brought to light include:

1. Ogunbambo, Theck and Fargo who swindled the federal government of over N976 million for fuel they did not supply.
2. Taylor, Nasaman and Ali who were involved in N4.4billion fraud,
3. One Alao too has been apprehended for a N2.6 billion scam.
4. Tukur, Ochonogo and External Oil, collectively defrauded the state to the sum of N1.899 billion.
5. Nadabo, Peters and Abalaka and Pacific Silver stole the sum of N1.464billion.

6. Watgbasoma, Ugo-Ngadi, Ebenezer, Ejidele and Ontario Oil defrauded the Federal Government of Nigeria to the tune of N1.959 billion (Uwujaren, 2012).
7. His report also captured the prosecution of some highly placed state officials: Esai Dangaba, Atiku Kigo, Ahmed Inuwa Wada, John Yusufu, Veronica Ulonma, and Zani Zira, who defrauded the government of funds from the police pension scheme to the sum of N32.8billion (Uwujaren, 2012).

In another exclusive report by Ike (2010), it was estimated that by 1999 past Nigerian leaders had stolen or misused about \$407 billion or 225 billion pounds. The said amount is known to be equal in sum of the amount some countries in the continent of west Africa got as aid from the West and OICD. Another report by Ike revealed that 5 of the list of 21 heavy looters from the World Bank were Nigerians whose equivalent loot summed up to about 150 Billion USD. In concluding Ike's report, he noted that a comparative analysis of the amount of loot and corruption carried out by past leaders in the 1st and the 2nd republics cannot be compared to the astronomic record of looting in Billions of USD which has taken place in the 3rd and 4th republic. Unfortunately, those who have been entrusted with the caring and protection of the citizens in the country are the once defrauding them. Not too long ago, reports and allegations of how the Yar Adua and Jonathan squandered as much as 10.6 Trillion Naira during the life time of President Yar Adua (Edike, & Uzoh, 2013). Another report implicated President Goodluck Jonathan with the Trillion Naira Oil Subsidy Scandal that is still very fresh in our memories (Banwo, 2015) The news of Ngozi Okonjor Iweala unresolved Missing Trillion Naira is still creating ripples in the government today (Soludo, 2015:13).

This study notes that the wonton and indiscriminate manner in which corruption continues to thrive unabated in the country is largely as a result of the privileges which the democratic system of government tolerates in the polity. The elite members of the society takes advantage of this opportunity to work against any system or policy by government to introduce new ideas and platforms that will either change or enhance the way the government is run. Any policy that does not favour these elitist group or those are at the helm of affairs will be frustrated and not supported. Democratic institutions have been known to tolerate and encourage a certain degree of liberty and freedom, which becomes a platform for corrupt individual to thrives unlike the scenarios you find in authoritarians. A lot therefore is expected of the governments in democratic

institution to curb the degree of corrupt practices in the state without which meaningful progress or governance of any sort can take place.

4. THE REALITY OF E-GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

4.1 E-governance in Nigeria

As earlier emphasized, e-governance is conceived as the process where “a government uses information and communication technology to enhance its access to, and the delivery of government services for the benefit of all its citizens (Akunyili, 2010). It is therefore the art of using the tools provided by ICT for advancing the numerous facets of the process of governance, with the sole aim of attaining accountability, transparency, efficiency in a manner that is responsiveness and fair in her dealings with the citizens in the state.

E-governance in Nigeria came as a response in to revolutionary trends in the field of ICT known to find expression through the use of modern day high tech gadgets for communication such as Mobile phone, Android tabs and devices, Personal computers, other electronic appliances, bandwidth for internet activities, etc. No doubt, the proliferation of these advances in ICT and in technology, invariably have eased and enhanced the free and faster flow of knowledge and information among citizens and the government. It has been inferred that:

The confluence of these technologies eased the flow of information, its accessibility and delivery. This came with numerous advantages because citizens were connected with government, government became more efficient and robust, cost of governance and transaction were scaled down, and transparency was enhanced (Danfulani, 2013:5).

How true this assertion is remains a subject of discussion among political analysts. The emergence of this new wave of technology and coupled with the deregulation of the sector responsible for championing these services, a move that paved the way for international investors from around the world. Some leading international telecommunication investors/giants to first cash into this supposed virgin territory in Nigeria include: South Africa, Asia, Europe, The Middle East (Adeyemo, 2010). The report by Akunynili corroborates this position:

the deregulation of the sub-sector and direct capital investment by foreign firms in the area of ICT and modern day Technology, has caused the country to experience a quantum leap there by overtaking all other countries in the continent principally because of the largeness of the population which is roughly put at about 170

million people and the share wealth of the nation which gave a sizeable number of the citizens and governments at the three tiers of authorities, the capacity to buy Personal computers, Smartphone, and other internet related appliances and run internet programmes that integrated governmental ministries and departments (Akunyili,2010).

In addition to the steps taken above in Akunyili’s remarks, the federal Government of Nigeria is known to have endorsed a national policy on ICT which is geared towards extending its effect into the Agricultural, Health and Educational sector. To substantiate this moves, the federal government in 2003, lunched a research satellite into space in keeping with her goals and aspirations in bringing e-government drives to the very grass roots. In the opinion of Danfulani, the steps taken above and “other sundry policies rolling in the pipe line have indeed set Nigeria on the path of countries exploiting ICT for governance” (Danfulani, 2013:6). As real as Danfulani’s opinion may sound, I shall with the aid of some dater/evidence, show that all what Nigeria has done so far in the area of e- governance has not placed her or earned her any reasonable ranking of the World, Regional or National E-Governance Development Index (EGDI) ranking. See Fig. (3 & 4).

Fig.3 2014 Regional Average of E-governance

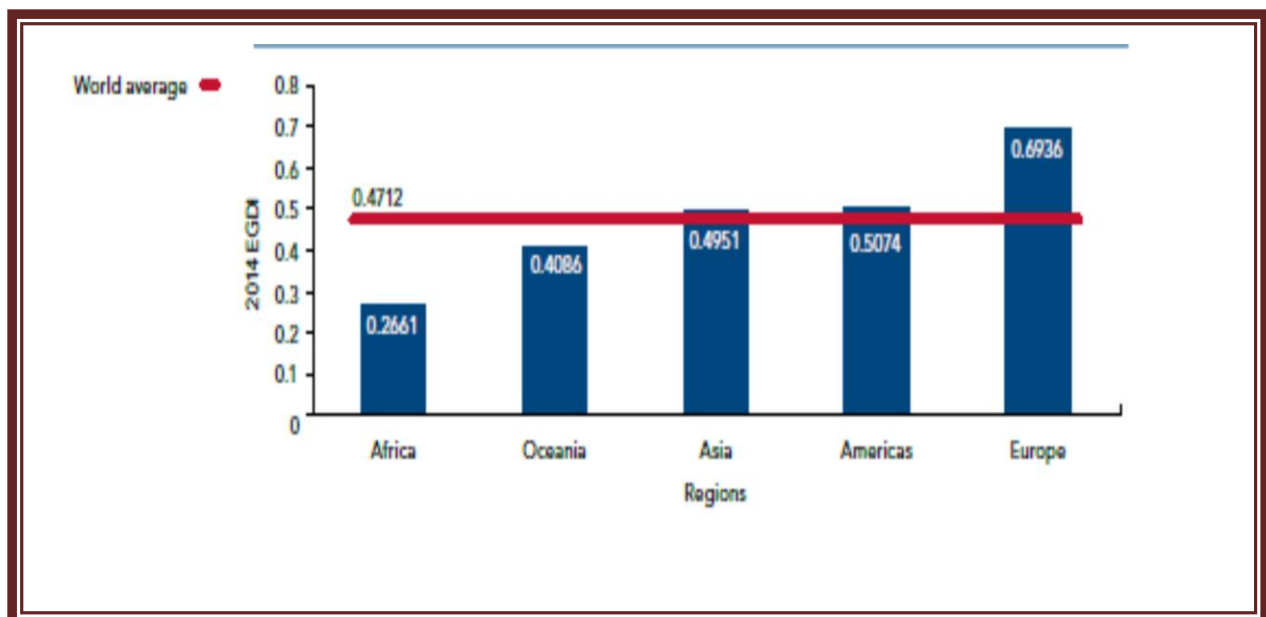


Fig. 4. Top 20 Countries In Africa (WEGR)

Country	Level of Income	EGDI	2014 Rank	2012 Rank	Change in Rank
High EGDI					
Tunisia	Upper Middle	0.5390	75	103	↑ 28
Mauritius	Upper Middle	0.5338	76	93	↑ 17
Egypt	Lower Middle	0.5129	80	107	↑ 27
Seychelles	Upper Middle	0.5113	81	84	↑ 3
Morocco	Lower Middle	0.5060	82	120	↑ 38
Middle EGDI					
South Africa	Upper Middle	0.4869	93	101	↑ 8
Botswana	Upper Middle	0.4198	112	121	↑ 9
Namibia	Upper Middle	0.3880	117	123	↑ 6
Kenya	Low	0.3805	119	119	-
Libya	Upper Middle	0.3753	121	191	↑ 70
Ghana	Lower Middle	0.3735	123	145	↑ 22
Rwanda	Low	0.3589	125	140	↑ 15
Zimbabwe	Low	0.3585	126	133	↑ 7
Cape Verde	Lower Middle	0.3551	127	118	↓ 9
Gabon	Upper Middle	0.3294	131	129	↓ 2
Algeria	Upper Middle	0.3106	136	132	↓ 4
Swaziland	Lower Middle	0.3056	138	144	↑ 6
Angola	Upper Middle	0.2970	140	142	↑ 2
Nigeria	Lower Middle	0.2929	141	162	↑ 21
Cameroon	Lower Middle	0.2782	144	147	↑ 3
Regional Average		0.2661			
World Average		0.4712			

An analysis of the data contained in the charts in figure 3. & figure 4 reveals some information that may be helpful in substantiating these points.

When we considering the data analysis in figure 3 for instance, it is discovered that the results of the chart illustrates the regional averages as compared to the world median of 0.4712 in 2014. “In 2014, Europe (0.6936) continues to lead with the highest regional EGDI, followed by the Americas (0.5074), Asia (0.4951), Oceania (0.4086) and finally Africa (0.2661). Examining previous trends, there has been no change in regional positions since 2003”. (UNEGS, 2014:20). From the data provided in the chart in it clear that Africa’s current ranking as at 2014 is averagely way below the world ranking index:

Progress in Africa remains relatively slow and uneven. The regional EGDI average in Africa is 0.2661. Six countries (Tunisia, Mauritius, Egypt, Seychelles, Morocco and South Africa) have EGDI values above the world average of 0.4712, placing them among the top 50 per cent of the world. On the other hand, about 30

per cent (16 countries) of the 54 African countries are at the bottom 10 per cent of the world ranking... Tunisia and Mauritius are the two highest-ranked countries in Africa, with Egypt, Seychelles, Morocco and South Africa following closely behind and showing progress as compared with the 2012 *Survey*. However, Africa as a whole exhibits a regional digital divide with most Internet activity and infrastructure concentrated in South Africa, Morocco, Egypt, Mauritius and Seychelles (UNEGS, 2014:21).

It is further sad to note from the data analysis in figure 4 which captures in some detail, the ranking of top 20 countries in Africa, Nigeria's ranking is placed at number 19th (second to the last position in Africa) with 0.0929, ranked at number 141st among the league of Nations in the world. This ranking signifies a upward gain difference of about 21 points compared to the world ranking of 2012 which was placed at 162nd position in the world ranking. To reverse and improve this poor trend of results for African countries, the United Nations Survey report suggests that:

Countries in the region need to focus on building human capital, including ICT literacy and on bridging infrastructure gaps to provide an enabling environment for e-government development. Visionary strategies and practical implementation plans should follow for effective deployment of sustainable online services. (UNEGS, 2014:21).

4.2.Participation: The key to Democratization and Governance

“Governments have a duty to uphold the peoples’ right to participate in public governance. At the national level, the right to political and civic participation is often guaranteed in the constitution” (UNEGS, 2014:81). The United Nations Public Administration Country Studies, including a *Survey* of the constitutions of all United Nations Member States, found that more than 150 countries enshrine the right of citizens to participate in one form or another” (UNPACS, 2013).

Government tends to benefit more when there seem to be the greatest number of participants in a state. By participants we mean engaging both the citizens and none state actors within a state to partake in the decision making process with regards to issues relating to public policy and public service delivery. This high level of interaction is made possible today because government all over the world is aided by Modern ICT gadgets that in so many ways, have transformed the interface and the relationship which the government is now able to have with its citizens.

ICTs are enabling governments to increase their outreach to citizens and communities for determining their needs and preferences in public policies and

services. Conversely, ICTs are empowering citizens to access public institutions and have their voices heard (UNGS, 2014:81).

The idea of E-participation for this study shall therefore be conceived as “the process of engaging citizens through ICTs in policy and decision-making in order to make public administration participatory, inclusive, collaborative and deliberative for intrinsic and instrumental ends” (UNGS, 2014:81).

While accepting that e-participations is basically the avenue through which the government can reach out and meaningfully engage with the citizens *vis a vis*, in a given state via electronic medium, this platform should not in any way replace the traditional forms and medium through which the people communicate and communing on a face to face basis with the citizens of the state. Government, in the light of this development, should rather seek out best ways of reaching the several social groups within its society. (UNGS, 2014:81) suggests that government should “deploying the optimal mix of online and offline modalities within their jurisdictions” (UNGS, 2014:81). By this we mean finding a proper mix of on-line and off-line (face to face) based channels such as telephone calls, paper-based communications, physical bulletin boards, among other offline modalities. Government should therefore encourage participations and movements which often takes place at the grass root levels which usually is one of the medium that ensures the largest participation among citizens.

The E-participation ranking and rating for Nigeria in the light of the advancements in ICT and modern IT gadgets as discussed in the previous pages is nothing to write home about even though the data in table 4 below seem to show that there has been an increase in the percentage of persons participating between 2012 and 2014. While encouraging the increase in participation, this study notes that this percentage increase is so insignificant since the increase still places Nigeria way below the ladder of ranking and expectations of countries with the kind of endowments and exposures which Nigeria is privileged to enjoy currently. We had earlier raised the alarm at the trend of the ranking and index report in the introductory part of this paper when we observed the currents e-participations and the e-governance index ranking for Nigeria among the League of Nations.

Table 5. E-Governance/E-Participation Ranking/Index For 2012/2014

S/N	Descriptions	2010 Ranking	2012 Ranking	2014 Ranking	Change in Ranking/Index 2012/2014
1	E- Governance Ranking	150	163	141	-22
2	E-Governance Development Index (EGDI)		(2012EGDI:0.267)	(2014EGDI:0.2929)	(EGDI:0.0259)
3	E-Participation Ranking	156	75	97	+22
4	E-Participation Development Index (EPDI)		(2012EPART:0.1842)	(2014EPART:03.333)	

The statistics and data gathered from the just concluded 2015 Nigeria's general elections for conducted my INEC offer a fair representation of the poor level on individual participation displayed in a National activity of this caliber. The data in Table 6 for instance captures a summary of the votes cast for the 2015 Nigeria's Presidential Elections held in March 2015.

Table 6. Summary of Votes Collected for 2015 Nigeria's Presidential Elections

S/N	Description	Number of Votes/ Participants
1	Total Number of Registered Voters	67,422,005
2	Total Number of Accredited Voters	31,746,490
3	Total Number of Valid Votes	28,587,564
4	Total Number of Rejected Votes	844,513
5	Total Number of Votes Cast	29,432,043

(INEC, 2015) <http://www.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/summary-of-results.pdf>

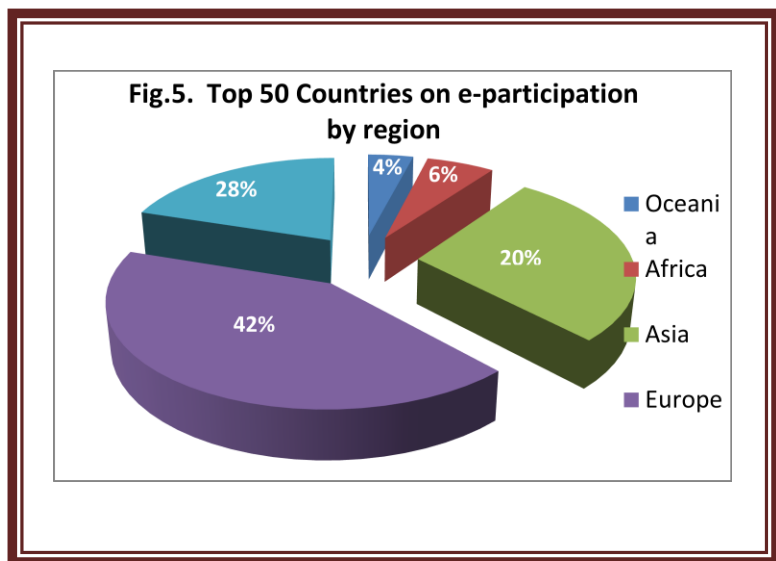
An analysis of the above results in table 6 indicates that for a country country estimated to have “a total populations of about 183,227,308 Million people with a median age range of about 17.8 years and about 51% of the population in urban centers (91,834,051 people in 2014)” (UNPD, 2015), only 67,422,005 persons, representing () % of the entire population of the country actually attempted to participate in the elections for that year. This data means that about 115,805,303 persons in the country did not or could not participate in an activity/event (an election) as important as this as a direct consequence of not being able to initially register for the elections.

An analysis of the number of those who initially registered for the elections in the year under review (**67,422,005 Participants**) and the number of individuals whose votes where considered as the only valid votes accounted during the elections (**28,587,564 Participants**), the votes of (**38,854,441 Participants**) could not be used or counted as a result of irregularities ranging mainly from a poor education of the electorates (The Participants from the rural areas who made improper thumb prints) etc. In summation, it means that for an election of this magnitude, of the 183,227,308 Million possible Participants for the 2015 Nigerian presidential, only the votes of (**28,587,564 Participants**) decided who became the president of Nigeria. The percentage of participants represented in the number of those who could not vote but desired to vote as captured in the chart in figure 6 and the percent of participants (**electorates**) who were not captured in the entire voting process, go a long way to showing that either INEC or the Nigerian government did not adequately make provision for the better part of the population to meaningfully participate in the 2015 Nigerian election.

Since we had adopted the idea of governance to mean the implementation of all processes of governing the citizens of a named society for goal attainment (Bevir, 2013), it becomes difficult to accept that meaningful governance of the wishes and aspirations of the grater populace of the citizens (Participants) of Nigeria, who wanted but could not meaningfully participate in the just concluded 2015 presidential elections, where left out of the few who experienced any form of government. From the results obtained from INEC’s 2015 Nigeria’s Presidential Elections, it is evident that the Nigerian government will need to need to do more than she is presently doing to administer effective governance and service delivery through qualitative participation of its citizens.

5. Conclusions & Recommendations

Fig. 5. Show a chart diagram indicating top 50 countries on e-participation by region. Notice that Africa's e-participation ranking is just 6% of the entire ranking that has been recorded in the world as at 2014. One could easily infer what the rating for Nigeria would be in the present circumstance, considering the ranking she go on the global ranking she was able to



score on the world platform on the e-governance index platform. Figure 5. Illustrates the regional representation of the top 50 countries on e-participation. There are 21 countries from Europe, 14 from Asia, 10 from Americas, 3 from Africa and 2 from Oceania. Morocco, Kenya and Tunisia are the African countries in the top 50. it will interest you to know that Nigeria did not even make the first 20 country list on e-participation. If comparing only the top 20 ranking (involving 21 countries in 2014 with some with the same ranking), the most represented regions are tied among the Americas, Asia and Europe with six countries each.

The fact remains that many developing countries are now realizing the need for e-governance in order to provide customer-focused, cost effective, and easy to use services for citizens and businesses and to improve the internal workings of government (Pathak, et al, 2008). The benefits of e-governance come in different forms. Some relate to the provision of fast, inexpensive services to the population (Heeks, 2001) and for socioeconomic development and political reformations for developing countries (Lfinedo, 2005; Ifinedo & Uwadia, 2005). We may not be able to exhaust the list of the benefits of e-governance in this study. but as we begin to wrap up this study, it is important to ask very pertinent questions about Nigeria's readiness to really take-on such initiatives in full scale, via the main channels/ features (Finance, Social welfare, Environment, Health, Labour). For (UNGS, 2014:73) they believe that:

A possible assessment framework could define what is measured and consider political/ administrative, social and technical perspectives. The administrative side may be represented by legal/organizational frameworks, modalities/channels and outreach plans. The social dimension should consider e-participation levels such as e-information, e-consultation and e-decision-making. The technical perspective of e-participation considers specific citizen engagement technologies present in the field of open government/ data, social media, mobile/wireless communications and dedicated web sites/ portals. The assessment should include how e-participation provisions link with traditional offline channels, both complementing these and extending their overall reach and impact.

Formal and informal institutions of e-participation must therefore work together effectively to reach the above goals. where these factors have been carefully considered, then they way would have been paved for entrenching a viable e-governance platform that will bring about all the promised advantages

As we conclude our study in this paper, this study notes that there is the need to look closely to the direction of improving the e-participation features by adopting the following recommendations:

- Setup legal and institutional frameworks to enable freedom of information, privacy and data protection in order to secure a safe environment for e-participation
- Empower people through capacity development for digital media literacy to educate citizens and foster the development of skills, transfer of knowledge and outreach initiated by the public
- Build on existing e-government initiatives, platforms and channels already used by citizens to create visibility, a stronger relationship and trust with the public at low cost
- Promote the use of ICTs, digital and social media tools to enhance the spread of information and citizen engagement
- Ensure the integration of offline and online communication tools for an inclusive policy-making and service enhancements.

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