Role of Information and Communication Technology as a Means of Tackling Corruption in Nigeria

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Abstract—**Information and Communication Technology and citizens plays an increasing role in governance, promoting transparency and accountability to tackle corruption. Access to information concerning governance of the state allows individuals to exercise their political and civil rights in election processes; challenge or influence public policies; monitor the quality of public spending; and demand accountability. Access to information and transparency are thus prerequisites for democracy as well as a key tool in the fight against corruption. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can support democracy and human rights by enabling and expanding citizens' social mobilization. A better informed and active citizenry, who can put pressure on national institutions to be accountable and responsive to citizens' needs and priorities, is a fundamental component of a functioning democracy. This paper seeks to discuss the role of information and communication technology as a means of tackling corruption in Nigeria.**

Keywords— ICT, transparency, governance, corruption, citizens, accountability

I. INTRODUCTION

Corruption exists in all sectors of society. It damages a country's development by undermining faith in public institutions, increase costs for firms and discourage both foreign and domestic investments. According to Transparency International's (2009) report corruption is a growing challenge for the business sector both in the developing and industrialized countries. At the level of the individual firm, it raises transaction costs and introduces reputational risks, as well as opens up for extortion. Regardless of sector and level of transactions, corruption hampers development.

Civil society organizations in developing countries are demanding greater transparency as a key component in fighting corruption and empowering people living in poverty. Increased transparency is often dependent on political will, and civil society around the world is actively challenging their governments to open up systems to public scrutiny. When governments do not have the capacity and/or the will to launch administrative reforms to remove the opportunities for corruption, adding external pressure on officials by increasing

the risk of exposure might be a workable alternative. External pressure involves both a revitalization of mass media and empowerment of private citizens. Robert L. Tignor (1993) in his work examined and discussed extensively political corruption in Nigeria from a historical point of view with heavy concentration on political developments in the country before independence and the activities of Nigerian nationalists in relations with the colonial masters.

This paper focus on possible technological innovative ways to help Nigeria government to leverage corruption in various ministries, agencies, and particularly one of the arms of government i.e. judiciary, It has also been suggested based on the research conducted by the authors that Nigeria should embark on e-government thereby automating the financial transactions to reduce human involvement on governmental transactions for effective auditing and analysis. Using ICT could also facilitate the investigation for financial crimes usually monitored by EFCC and other agencies that engaged in fighting corrupt practices. The studies suggested an integration or linkage of databases of related agencies to allow for quick access and retrieval of bio data of the citizens.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Information communication technology (ICT) is not a magic bullet when it comes to ensuring greater transparency and less corruption; ICT has a significant role to play as a tool in a number of important areas.

- ICT can improve transparency in the public sector by increasing the coordination, dissemination and administrative capacity of the public sectors', as well as improve service delivery by employing user-friendly administrative systems.

- ICT facilitates the collection of digital footprints and complete audit trail which increase the opportunity to hold individuals accountable and ultimately increase the possibility to detect corrupt practices.

- ICT can facilitate the work of civil society organization working towards greater transparency and against

corruption by supporting a mix of methods of campaigning on transparency and educating citizens on what corruption is about and their civil rights.

• ICT can facilitate information sharing and social mobilization and ultimately provide digital platforms where citizens can report incidents anonymously.

A. Positive result of Automation in Nigeria 2015

Nigeria and Nigerians has witnessed a drastic change in the electoral system of the country, the role that card reader played could never be forgotten in the history of Nigeria's democratic system. Without the involvement of technology (automation) the election would not have been such a miraculous. In Delta state governorship election there was inconsistency and unclear disparity between numbers of accredited voter recorded by the card reader to the central data collation system and the records of Delta State INEC office which shows that the number of accredited voters was 1,017,796 In contrast to card reader's record which reported 709,700 which reflect a difference of 30, 8096 ghost accredited voters. Sahara Reporters (2015).

B. Nigerians and use of Internet

According to predicted report generated by internetlivestats an estimation have been made that Nigeria has about 178,516,904 people and 37.59% of the country's population were approximately 67,101,452 internet users as at 2014, according to their report, currently the number of internet users is almost raised to 82,426,117 i.e 46.17% out of 178,516,904 people living in the country which made Nigeria ranked 8th in position in the number of people with internet access in the world. Meanwhile Nigeria has experience a rapid growth in the number of people that uses internet when compared with 78,740 number of internet users as in the year 2000 that is 0.06% of the then population (122,876,727).Internetlivestats (2015)

In a news published online by Vanguard(2015, May 10)The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has officially disclose the number of internet users on the country's telecom networks increased to 83,362,814 as at February 2015. The regulatory body reveal this in its Monthly Internet Subscriber Data.

C. Corruption in Law Enforcement Agencies and other sectors

Corruption had its way to penetrate into law enforcement agencies, which made it hard to crack and demolished by government's effort, it was gathered that higher ranking officers were found guilty of looting public funds. The case of John Yusuf Yakubu for lootingN32.8 billion police pension funds hits the front page of almost every newspaperin Nigeria, precisely on 23rd of January 2013. A.S.M Jimoh (2013) Leaving thousands of police pensioners in starving due to lack of transparency in the board's operation.

Similarly on Tuesday 17th of November, 2015 the office of the presidency orders the arrest of former NSA (rtd) Col Sambo Dasuki and others who were involve in the arms scam, the president took the decision based on the interim report of 13committee members inaugurated to investigate financial transactions for NSA office from 2007 to date. It was gathered that over a billiondollar had been looted in the name of arms

acquisition, for fighting insurgency in the country. All these happen as a result of lack of transparency in financial transaction. Premium Times (2015).

D. Impact of ICT in tackling corruption

The ICT stands for Information and Communication Technologies and is defined as a "Diverse set of Technological tools and resources used to communicate, and to create, disseminate, store and manage information" Blurton, C, (1999). According to Adewoyin (2009) Information communication technology is the new communication and computing technology used for creating, storing, selecting, changing, developing, receiving and displaying many kind of information. ICT classified into three groups namely: (i) those that process information e.g. computer (ii) those that disseminate information e.g. communication i.e. electromagnetic devices and system and (iii) those for presentation of information e.g. multimedia.

In this study ICT does not only mean computers, it has to do with technological tools. These technological tools include computers, the internet, broadcasting technologies (radio and television) and telephone. The new digital ICT is not single technology but combination of hardware, software, multimedia, and delivery systems. Today, ICT in encompasses a great range of rapidly evolving technologies such as desktop, notebook, and handheld computers, digital cameras, local area networking, Bluetooth, the Internet, cloud computing, the World Wide Web and applications such as word processors, spreadsheets, tutorials, email, digital libraries, computer-mediated conferencing, videoconferencing, virtual environment, simulator, emulator etc. It is important to mention that the use of newer ICT is being integrated with use of older technologies, enabling the existing resources and services to be continuous use.

ICT can serve goals other than sustainable economic growth and public welfare: given the primacy of governance in underpinning development effectiveness, one of ICT's most important applications to tackle corruption is in e-government.Fighting Corruption with ICT has great potential to act as democratic media and the use of ICT in e-government is a major focus.

Helpfully, Tim Davies and Silvana Fumega (2013) identify eight kinds of ICT interventions that hold potential for preventing, detecting, analyzing, and addressing corruption:

1) Transparency portals: Platforms that offer timely publication of key government documents online.

2) Open data portals: Platforms that provide free access to data sets in machine-readable formats.

3) Service automation: Platforms that replace discretionary processes.

4) Online services: Platforms that allow citizens to self serve for public service access.

5) Online right-to-information request: A Platforms that allows citizens to file right-to-information request.

6) Crowd sourced reporting: Platforms that allow citizens to report corruption or grievances and publicly share data on reports and trends.

7) Online corruption reporting: Platforms that allow citizens to report corruption or grievances.

8) Issue Reporting: Platforms that allow citizens to report problems with public services.

The first four ICT Interventions are usually government-led (Intervention 1 and 2 seek primarily transparency reforms; intervention 3 and 4 aim at automating transaction with government reforms) The other four are generally civil society-led. (Interventions 5 and 6 seek transparency reforms; interventions 7 and 8 aim at transaction reforms.) Civil society also plays an important role in anticorruption theories of change around many government-led ICT interventions.

E. e-Government

E-government brought the governance services closer to the citizens through the use of technological platforms such as pervasive computing and facilitating access to governmental services and crucial information. Most of the governance initiatives place a barrier between citizen and those officials who intend to extract bribe from them.

Computerized procedures additionally allow tracking decisions and actions and thus serve as an additional deterrent to corruption. Australia, Hong Kong, China; Korea; Malaysia; Pakistan; the Philippines and Singapore have undertaken extensive efforts to implement e-government. In Korea, for instance, citizens can real-time monitor the progress of an application for permits and licenses on-line. In Pakistan, the entire tax department is currently being restructured; and information technology is being introduced with the purpose of reducing contact between tax collectors and taxpayers. In India and the Philippines, documents related to public procurement must now be made available on-line. Cambodia enhanced the use of information technology to provide administrative services. Bansal Arpit (2012).

F. Use of Website to post Financial Status/operations for Transparency

For the first time, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) announces its intention to make its activities duly available on their official website for public scrutiny. A weekly broadcast of issues concerning the cooperation will be posted online, Dr Emmanuel Kachikwu, the Group Managing Director (GMD) added that "contracts will be made open to the public and we will choose the best module that works for us and that helps us save money" published on Leadership newspaper (2015).

In its attempt to make its promises fulfilled on 11th October, 2015 the cooperation posted on its website monthly publication of its provisional financial and operational reports which summarizes all of its activities From January to August 2015. OHI ALEGBE (2015). Similarly Nigeria will move forward when revenue and non-revenue generating institutions engage in posting their activities on their official website at both federal, state and local government level. E.g. Federal Inland Revenue, our Tertiary institutions and others.

III. MATERIAL AND METHOD

Journals, conference papers, reports, Newspapers, textbooks were used as both primary and secondary means for obtaining data that ultimately lead to successful formation of this document. Although unofficial interview were made at random with people of different profession and discipline.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

Base on the research conducted by the authors for the formation of this document, it was gathered that to fight corruption in Nigeria an alignment with telecommunication service providers is highly needed to achieve possible implementation and utilization of tools, machineries or computer system to fight corruption.

Nigeria Communication Commission may enforce a standard for linking (Subscriber Identification Module) SIM Card with National identification card, and Number of SIM card to be acquired by the citizen should be limited at most three (3) SIM cards per single User.

Similarly for reporting corruption to be genuine as anticipated, the use of website has limited security, whereby email address is required as a means of identification to share one's bribe and corruption experiences, to overcome corrupt reporting problems a mobile phone application might be the alternative option which will be designed to allow user to register with his phone-number, so the details about user is accessible by corruption report receiving officers at the other end. For verification, before moving forward to investigate the cause and abuse associated.

CONCLUSION

The preferred spelling of the word "acknowledgment" in America is without an "e" after the "g." Avoid the stilted expression "one of us (R. B. G.) Thanks ..." Instead, try "R. B. G. thanks..." Put sponsor acknowledgments in the unnumbered footnote on the first page.

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