VERSTEHEN
JOURNAL OF SOCIAL RESEARCH
Vol. 1, No. 2, September, 2019; 39 - 54

A Publication of the
Department of Sociology
Plateau State University, Bokkos.

E-GOVERNANCE AS A STRATEGY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: LESSONS FROM INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The urgent need to transform rural areas in order to bring the benefits of development closer to the greater portion of the population has been an engaging issue in the general discourse on governance in developing countries. In Nigeria for example, the imperative of rural transformation is persuaded by the reality that preponderance of the population is domiciled in her vast rural settings. However, this densely populated section of the Nigerian society has been in the pauperised state due majorly to the fact that the evidence of good governance, hardly trickles down to them from the other levels of government. This paper via qualitative approach analysed existing literature that focused on rural development in Nigeria and found inaccessibility to good governance by rural areas in Nigeria which is partly attributable to the inability to tap excellent opportunities inherent in the application of electronic governance which is a vital service delivery outlet that would enable people in the Nigerian rural areas equitable access to social and economic opportunities that will tremendously improve the quality of their life generally than ever before. In view of this finding, the paper recommends the application of electronic governance for the transformation of the rural section of the Nigerian society based on some insights from India,

KEY WORDS:

Electronic, governance, Development, Rural, Nigeria, India

Introduction

Governance has to do with the government's ability to enforce rules and deliver services to the citizens irrespective of the regime type (Fukuyama, 2013). When the governance processes turned out on the positive side, it is good governance, whereas, it is bad governance when the reverse becomes the case. Symptoms of good governance include, but not limited to accountability, responsiveness, transparency, equity and inclusiveness, efficiency and effectiveness, opportunity to participate in the decision-making process and so forth. Achieving these symptoms is not always easy to come by. Consequently, countries across the globe have been searching for enduring measures that could enable them to attain a high level of good governance. Incidentally, countries in developed and

developing countries have settled for the integration of ICT in governance among other measures. The application of ICT in governance is what is known as electronic governance, which is often shortened to e-governance. E-governance has been upheld as an important good governance model because of the inherent benefits as it promotes citizen empowerment, improves service delivery, strengthens accountability, increases transparency and improves government efficiency. In view of the benefits, Nigeria just like every other climes across the globe joined the voyage of e-governance to deliver effective services to her citizens.

Nigeria is located in West Africa with landmass of 910, 770 sq. Km, and an estimated total population of 171 million people (UNICEF, 2013). It shares land borders with the Republic of Benin in the west, Chad and Cameroon in the east, and Niger in the north. It operates a federal system of government. Under this arrangement, there are three tiers of government, namely, the federal, state and local governments. Local government represents the third tier with rural communities under it that are relatively in remote areas. Connectivity has always been a serious problem with these areas and consequently has been barricaded from some essential ingredient of good governance, which should have trickled down to them from the other levels of the government. However, in view of the fact that over 70% of Nigerians are residing in these segments of the society, the Nigerian government has no choice but to cater for their welfare. Therefore, in order to realise sustainable grassroots development, the government of Nigeria has also embraced the application of ICT to the development of her rural areas. Suffice to say that despite the introduction of e-governance as a strategy for the development of her rural areas, it is evident that much has not been achieved.

It is in line with the foregoing that this paper explores the extent of application of e-governance in Nigeria and draws some essential lessons from India for the Nigeria government to emulate towards developing their rural areas. The choice of India was informed by the fact that it is an emerging economy and with regards to the application of e-governance in its rural areas, it has gone ahead of Nigeria. According to the United Nations e-Government Survey 2016, India's rank has improved in the UN e-governance index. The Survey showed India's progress on the e-Government Development Index, with a ranking of 107 out of 193 countries as against 118 in 2014. In e-participation, India's rank has improved to 27 in 2016 as against the rank of 40 in 2014 (UN E-governance Report, 2016). Therefore, it is not out of place to explore some of the best e-governance virtues in her rural areas and draw some lessons for Nigeria.

Methodology

The study conducts a systematic scan of literature to identify studies that inform our understanding of e-governance in rural development. The foregoing relevant

keywords were identified and employed in searches of repository libraries of research materials like books, journal etc. The general approach taken was to collect as much literature as possible that focused on e-governance, rural development as well as e-governance in rural development and analysed them such that the discussion that follows draws on findings from this theoretical research.

Conceptual Review

E-governance: This is a paradigm shift from traditional to technology-driven governance. The strength of this type of governance is based on the muscle of information and Communication Technology (ICT). Similarly, Narayana (2015) defines e-governance as the application of information and communication technology for delivering government services, exchange of information, communication, transactions, integration, various stand-alone systems, and services between government and citizens, government and business as well as back-office processes and interactions within the entire government framework. The ultimate goal of e-governance according to Narayana (2015) is to attract efficiency, transparency, citizen participation, trust-building and accountability, citizen's awareness, and empowerment, citizen's welfare, democracy, nation's economic growth among others. Singh and Sharma (2009) did not mince words when they defined e-governance as the use of information and communication technologies with the aim of improving information and service delivery, encouraging citizen participation in the decision-making process and making government more accountable, transparent and effective. It can also be seen as the ICT-enabled route to achieving good governance (Heeks, 2001). The common theme that runs through most of the definitions is that e-governance involves the automation or computerization of existing paper-based procedures of government business. It integrates people, processes, information and technology in the service of achieving governance objectives. As a matter of fact, e-governance is a sine qua non in developing countries as governance in the developing nations costs too much, delivers too little, and is not sufficiently responsive or accountable.

As a system, e-governance comprises of different types of delivery models such as Government-to-citizen/customer (G2C), Government-to-Business (G2B), Government-to-Government (G2G), and Government-to-Employees (G2E) (Singh and Sharma, 2009, Nkwe, 2012). Government to Government (G2G) model analyses the pattern of relationships which exist between or among governmental organizations and agencies. The emphasis of this model is how to build co-operation between and among governmental structures through the use and application of ICTs. Government to Business (G2B) revolves around a two-way interaction and transaction between government and businesses. The objectives of G2B include giving out business information and advice on

electronic-business operations. G2B helps to provide a conducive environment for business transactions, facilitates the provision of vital information that stimulates the growth of businesses through the application of ICT or internet-based communication in business.

Fang (2002) argued that G2B applications actively drive e-transaction initiatives such as e-procurement and the development of an electronic marketplace for government purchases, and carry out government procurement tenders through electronic means for the exchange of information and goods. Government to Citizens (G2C) revolves around the roles which governments can play in providing the citizens with the opportunity to obtain information and services online. Here citizens inquire about issues relating to government institutions, keep records of income taxes, pay tickets, renew driver's license etc. The government in turn aid in giving out information on the web, provide downloadable forms online, assist citizens in finding employment and providing information about health and safety issues. How to use ICT in providing services skillfully and economically to enhance the relationship between government and citizens is the ultimate aim of G2C. The most serious challenge with this model is that most citizens, especially in developing countries are not computer literate and are also inaccessible to internet services. It is important to acknowledge that the three models are keen to this study. However, the last model appears to be the closest to the issue being addressed as it deals directly with the link between government and the citizens.

Rural Development: Rural Development is concerned with economic growth and social justice, improvement in the living standard of the rural people by providing adequate and quality social services and minimum basic needs (Narayana, 2015). Singh (1999) defines rural development in the same vein as a process that leads to sustainable improvement in the quality of life of poor people residing in rural areas. Gustavo and Kostas (2007) did not mince words as they defined rural development as development that benefits rural populations; where development is understood as the *sustained* improvement of the population's standard of living or welfare. It can also be seen in a similar way as a sustained improvement in the quality of life of the rural people. It implies consistency in approach in which micro and macroeconomic, social, political, cultural and technological variables are engineered, combined and implemented as an organic and dynamic whole for the benefit of thepeople (Nwachukwu and Ezeh, 2007). For some scholars, rural development is synonymous with agricultural development (Nwachukwu and Ezeh, 2007). The argument of this crop of scholars is that there is a strong interrelationship between agriculture and rural development. Impliedly, agriculture is predominantly rural activity and efforts on the rural development impact considerably on farmers who are the focus of agricultural development efforts.

On the other hand, there is a mixed conclusion from another school of thought. For instance, Okafor (1981) argues that reducing rural development to agriculture is myopic and creates an incomplete definition of rural development because rural development has to do with the development of "rural people" than with any isolated sectoral consideration within the society. Notwithstanding that the economic base of the rural area is agriculture, it is wrong to put it at the centre of rural planning. Rural people themselves need food, employment, decent housing, education, health care, electricity, means of communication, entertainment, facilities for social interaction (Chima, 2009). This corroborates the opinion of Mobogunje (1980) who defines rural development as 'a broad-based reorganisation and mobilisation of rural masses so as to enhance their capacity to cope with changes consequent upon this. This presupposes that rural development should not just be zeroed to agricultural development, but the type of development targeted at the improvement of the standard of living of the rural people through transforming the socio, economic and political structures of their economy.

E-governance and Rural Development

Rural development is the structural transformation in all the sectors of the rural economy. These could be political, cultural, socio-economic and behavioural patterns of the people. E-governance in rural development has to do with bringing digital technologies into the mainstream of the aforementioned sectors among others in rural areas. E-governance is very essential in rural development because it serves as the conduit that transmits information and knowledge capable of transforming the citizen-government interaction at all levels through the electronic mode. The importance of e-governance as an instrument for rural revival is no longer debatable. Digital governance creates better connections between {rural} citizens and government and encourages their participation in governance (Sharma, 2013). It helps to strengthen social networks, empowerment and participation, as well as fostering productive processes at the local level through the provision of employment and skills, as well as support services for micro-enterprise activities (Srivastava, 2015). Specifically, it has been admitted that through e-governance, students in rural areas could video conference with educators across the country, and entertainment programmes could be telecast to remote and otherwise unreachable areas along with internet telephony services, using technologies like Voice over Internet Pro-tocol (VoIP). Improved communication could bring remote villages into the mainstream world economy. Information access could speed rural productivity and the faster communication between producers and suppliers would fuel greater demand for rural products (Kalpana, Upena and Rakesh, 2011).

Notwithstanding the promising results of the e-governance system, it is not free from challenges. In line with this statement, Anjali and Misra cited in Chista (2016) noted that though e-governance received the highest level of popularity in

rural life, governments have not done enough to look at how Information Technology can address the needs of the poor in general and poor women in particular, towards economic and social empowerment. Numerous factors are linked to the inability of the government to have done more. E-governance projects according to Kalpana, Upena and Rakesh (2011) are potentially expensive to install and maintain with less than desirable payback in rural areas. Apart from the high installation and maintenance costs, they acknowledged that homes are so sparse in rural areas and these hinder investors from making investments needed to supply rural areas with quality internet services. Other challenges are that e-governance projects are shrouded with outdated ICT infrastructures, lack of youths in rural areas with ICT skill sets and epileptic power supply which consistently lead to network disconnection (Kiran and Ambika, 2016). Lack of awareness about e-governance facilities provided by the government and their use, hesitation to change which is triggered in most cases by high illiteracy rate according to Srivastava (2015) constitute challenges to e-governance as a strategy for rural development.

E-governance and Rural Development in Nigeria

The poor state of rural development in Nigeria has been amplified by many scholars like Ovaga (2009), Ogeide (2003) Omale (2005). Ogbazi cited in Ovaga (2009) acknowledged that about 80 percents of the entire population of Nigeria reside in rural areas. Unfortunately, these people are peasant farmers who are in difficulties to feed and provide the basic necessities of livelihood for their immediate family. Anambra State Government as cited in Ovaga (2009) attributed the ugly and painful state of the rural areas in Nigeria to lack of infrastructure, peasant and subsistence agriculture, a poor network of roads and other infrastructural facilities, low commercial activities, lack of food preservation facilities, and erosion menace. In a similar layer of thought, it was recapitulated that:

> *Since colonial times which began about the 1900s, the life chances of the Nigerian rural majority have remained the same: mass poverty, mass ignorance, mass disease and mass powerlessness. There is no country in Africa in which such a large mass of the rural population has been subjected to so much social deprivation as in Nigeria (Ogeide, 2003).*

Omale (2005) attributed situations that generated the above ugly conditions of rural development to bad governance syndromes as manifest through issues like dearth of experts in the planning and execution of programmes and projects, inconsistency of policies and plans, insufficient commitment among public officers, selfishness and corruption which are avenues for public officers to rob the country for self-satisfaction. It is in response to the growing reality of rural underdevelopment in Nigeria, that the government of Nigeria made it a duty to

search out measures that can improve the mode of service delivery in rural areas. The alternative which is in vogue at the global level is the drift towards the application of ICT in governance which the governments of Nigeria have no choice but to file up in the trend as can be seen in few cases cited in the table below:

Evidence of E-Governance in Rural Development in Nigeria

S/N	E-governance initiative	Objective(s)
1.	Rural Information Technology Centre (RITC) project	Aimed at bringing IT to the doorstep of Nigerians by ensuring that the rural and under-served areas get access to IT infrastructure
2.	Growth Enhancement Support (GES) Scheme	To enable and increase the provision of targeted and subsidized farm inputs directly to farmers for the delivery of seeds and fertilizers via electronic coupons on mobile phones or Electronic wallets (e-wallets).

Source: Authors' Construct, 2018.

The rural information centre project commenced in 2009, and according to NITDA (*2016*) over 395 centres have been established across the federation. NITDA also admitted that RITCs have contributed in boosting internet usage in Nigeria. Regarding the Growth Enhancement Support (GES) scheme, NITDA also submitted that within two years, GES had reached 6 million genuine farmers, which has improved the food security of 30 million persons in rural farm households. However, Sahara Report lamented that rural information centre projects sited across the federation have long been neglected by the government. Citing the case of Rural Information Technology Centers, located in Jahun Local Government Area of Jigawa State, Sahara Report documented thus:

> *That the expensive equipment is gathering dust and becoming rusty, the centre has become a major hideout for miscreants in the area who turned it into a haven for carrying out heinous plans. C-Band Internet facility planted in the centre only functioned on the day it was commissioned. None of the equipment, including the expensive solar power instrument installed in the centre functioned afterward. Within Jigawa State alone, at least, there are two other centres that are not functional, namely, the one abandoned in Aujara town in Jahun LGA and another one in Zareku town in Miga LGA, Sahara Report (2012).*

The above extract is a pointer that rural areas in Nigeria have been underdeveloped. In order to allow benefits of good governance filter down to the rural dwellers, e-governance was embraced as could be seen in the table above.

Unfortunately, the initiatives could not be sustained and by extension much could not be achieved in the area of rural development.

Evidence of E-governance Projects for Rural Development in India

There are many successful ICT initiatives in India oriented towards rural development with a focus to address some specific issues of rural citizens. These initiatives are mostly led by the government administration, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and some are even in private sectors (Misra, 2009). Some of these initiatives are presented in the table below.

Rural Development E-governance Projects in India

S/N	**E-governance Initiative in Rural Development**	**Objectives**	**Citations**
1.	Speech-Based Automated Prices Helplines	To reduce language Barrier	Bhatia and Kiran (2016)
2.	Computerised Rural Information Projects	To enable common man in the rural areas access to information on government portal and government also to monitor the working of government agencies	Bhatia and Kiran (2016)
3.	E-CHOUPAL (Village meeting place)	To link up rural farmers to connect to market	Singh and Sharma (2009) Sharm (2013) Srivastava (2015) Bhatia and Kiran (2016)
4	GYANDOOT	To provide services information in order to bridge digital divides between the rural areas and other sector of the economy.	Sharma (2013) Srivastava (2015) Bhatia and Kiran (2016)
5	Akashganga	Help the milk producers of rural areas by making cooperative societies in procuring milk and assists in maintaining accounts	Sharma (2013) Bhatia and Kiran (2016)

6	JAGRITI E-SEWA	To eliminate the timings and multiple offices that rural citizens have to face to obtain government services.	Singh and Sharma (2009), Bhatia and Kiran (2016)
7	KISSAN CALL CENTRES	Designed to serve the purpose of creating awareness among the farmers.	Sharma (2013), Bhatia and Kiran (2016)
8	TATA KISAN KENDRA (TKK)	provides information regarding socio-economic, administrative and physical set up	Sharma (2013) Bhatia and Kiran (2016)
9	Bhoomi	regular online updating of land records	Srivastava (2015)
10.	E-post	This service tries to bridge the digital divide	Srivastava (2015)
11	E-panchayats	Provides information for the villagers on various products	Srivastava (2015)

Source: Authors' Construct, 2018

Presented in the table above are some of the e-governance initiatives designed for rural development in India. First on the table is the Speech-Based Automated Prices Helplines. India is a country that is made up of people with different languages. Interestingly the rural populace does not have significant recognition for any other language like their native language. However, most of the e-governance projects were written in the English language. The challenge is that most people do not understand English language and thus could hardly use most of the projects. Considering this drawback, a consortium of seven institutions (IIT-M, IIT-K, IIT-B, IIT-G, IIIT-Hyd, TIFR and CDAC-Kol) and coordinated by IITMadras introduced a speech-based automated commodity prices helpline for AGMARKNET in six different Indian languages (Srivastava, 2015). As part of its success story, an automated system was developed via which farmers could inquire about the latest prices of agricultural commodities in their own native languages.

In a similar vein, e-seva was another important e-governance initiative designed to facilitate access of rural people to government services. It was an attempt to have central facilities for payment of taxes, delivery of certificates, bill payments, document clearance, granting of licenses and permits, asset licensing, forms submission, etc. The third e-governance initiative on the list is the E-CHOUPA. In

India, it means a village meeting place. Indian Tobaccos Company (ITC) initiated E-CHOUPAL. As stated in the table, the objective is to create a direct link between the farmers and the market for their agricultural products. In other words, it was initiated to minimize the number of middlemen involved between agricultural commodity producers and final consumers in order to reduce the unreasonable exploitation of the rural farmers. As part of its progress report, Bhatian and Kiran (2016) acknowledged that e-Choupals were set up in about 6500 villages by 2012 and each e-Choupal was equipped with a PC, internet connection, printer and Uninterrupted Power Supplies (UPS). With this development, ITC could fetch cheapest raw materials directly from the farmers and farmers were also able to benefit out of this as there was no intermediary involved. Due to the positive turn up, Indian Tobacco Company Ltd. has added 7 new E-Choupals a day and plans to scale up to 20,000 E-Choupals covering 100,000 villages in 15 states, servicing 15 million farmers by 2020 (Salkute and Kohle, cited in Bhatia and Kiran, 2016).

Another agricultural e-governance related imitative put in place in India was the TATA KISAN KENDRA (TKK) with the objective of providing socio-economic, administrative and physical setup information related to basic areas of farming like soil, groundwater and weather using Geographical Information System (GIS) in the form of digital map about the roads, buildings and rivers. With the help of the satellite, images are being processed which further helps to detect insect attacks throughout the state and get estimates of the crop (Bhatia and Kiran, 2016). Closely related to the foregoing was the GYANDOOT project. It was initiated primarily to provide computing services like prices of agricultural produce at various auction centres in the state; copies of the record of rights to land at a nominal price; online application for revenue, caste or domicile certificates and so forth for rural citizens. As part of its success story, it generated employment for the youths that operated the kiosk as entrepreneurs (Singh and Sharma, 2009).

Another one on the list is what is tagged Bhoomi. This one deals with regular online updating of land records. It was initially operated manually as the Record of Right Tenancy and Cultivation (RTC), which earlier were maintained by 9,000 Village Accountants (VAs or village revenue officials) (Singh and Sharma, 2009). Land related records maintained using RTC include; land transactions, crop loans, other loans and concessions linked to the size of the landholding. Challenges with the operation of RTC manually were exploitation, bribery, manipulation, alteration of records, delays and other corrupt practices. With the introduction of the Bhoomi project, the generation time of the RTC has been reduced from 30 days to five to 15 minutes. Similarly, the mutation process cycle time has decreased from 90-180 days to 30-45 days. Crop record updating has increased from 50-70 percent to 80-100 percent. Around 12 million users have used Bhoomi

since its inception, which has resulted in the collection of Rs 180 million as user charges. Presently, 0.7 million people are using Bhoomi centres every month and monthly user charges collected amount to around Rs. 10 million (Singh and Sharm, 2009).

Among the critical attempts by the government of India to scale up implementation of e-governance projects are the "Common Service Centres" under the auspices of National e-governance Plan (NeGP) and "Telecentres" with the mandate of "Mission 2007". The vision of CSC Is to "make all Government services accessible to the common man in his locality, through common service delivery outlets and ensure efficiency, transparency and reliability of such services at affordable costs to realize the basic needs of the common man.

Despite the bountiful harvest with regards to e-governance at the grass-root level of India, it is not without some challenges. In other words, in India, the e-governance system is still evolving and is not free from failures. These failures are predominant in rural India. One of the major factors responsible for this failure is the lack of electricity. For instance, 72 percent of India's population lives in villages; 55 percent villages do not have electricity in their homes (Misra 2009, Narayana, 2015). The consequence of this scenario is that rural ICTs infrastructure could hardly be put into effective use, and by extension, rural poverty is scaled up in India. The per capita income of Indian villagers for instance, is Rs 12,000, while the national average is Rs 25,000 (Misra, 2009). As part of the challenges to the implementation of e-governance in rural India, Srivastava (2015) identified illiteracy, IT illiteracy, varied languages and hesitant to change. Srivastava (2015) submitted that the literacy rate in rural areas stands at 67.67% with a rural male literacy rate of 77.15% and a rural female literacy rate of 57.93%. Whereas literacy rate in urban areas pegs at 84.11% with urban male literacy rates at 88.76% and urban female literacy at 79.11%. Besides the general illiteracy, the technical knowledge to put the IT infrastructure into use is also lacking. The rural people are the end-users of most the e-governance facilities, but they are not technically literate to use them. Closely related is the language barrier. India is a multi-lingual country. It is a country where people cherish their native languages more than any other language. However, the base language for most of the e-governance projects was English language. Apart from the language barrier, people in rural India were reluctant to adjust to the introduction of e-governance as it requires enough time and effort to change from the manual methods to the computerised method. With regards to E-CHOUPA, Kiran and Ambika (2016) identified outdated ICT infrastructure, lack of financial resources, high operation cost due to multiple services rendered and difficulty in getting technically skilled youth in remote rural areas as the challenges facing the particular e-governance project in India.

Lessons for Nigeria

As can be seen from above, there are many successful e-governance initiatives in India oriented towards rural development with focus to address some specific issues of rural citizens. This movement substantiates the weight of importance attached to rural development. Rural Indians constitute over 72 percent of the entire population just like that of Nigeria, and the country cannot afford to abandon the people wallowing in suffering and ignorance, thus, the introduction of e-governance. Again, it should be recalled that right from the onset, it was acknowledged that not all the initiatives were led by the government of India. Non-governmental organisations, as well as private sectors, were involved. This is contrary to the upheld notion in Nigeria that development should be the sole responsibility of only the government. Therefore, the government should create favourable environments for private sectors to participate in transforming our rural areas.

Furthermore, illiteracy constituted a great challenge to the implementation of e-governance initiatives in rural areas of India just like in Nigeria. India, as noted in the paper, is a country made up of different languages just like Nigeria. Interestingly, people have more likeness for their languages than the English language which was used in writing most of the initiatives. In order to overcome this, a speech-based automated system was developed which helped the rural dwellers to learn about e-governance initiatives in their own languages. Since Nigeria shares similar characteristics with a high level of illiteracy in rural areas, this idea can be helpful.

In addition, the mainstay of rural households in Nigeria is agriculture just like in India. India in their wisdom used e-governance to encourage the rural farmers to put more of their efforts and resources into agricultural production. This was partly achieved via creating web-based direct link known as E-CHOUPAL (village meeting place) between rural farmers and the market. Embedded advantages in this arrangement include the elimination of middlemen and which invariably reduces the exploitation of commodity producers and the final consumers. Therefore, if a similar project can be established in several villages in Nigeria, it will have tremendous impact on the incentive to produce on the part of the farmers.

The establishment of Rural Information Technology Centres (RITCs) is a step in the right direction to bring knowledge of ICT to the doorstep of the rural people in Nigeria. However, the arrangement was too broad in approach. What the government and other private sectors did in India was to make their initiatives oriented towards rural development with a focus on addressing specific citizens felt-needs. Their initiatives were not too broad in nature. Some were meant to

enable rural farmers to have ideas about the prevailing price of their commodities in the market, how to pay taxes, obtain birth certificate among others. The bottom line is that it is not just enough to have ICT knowledge, but having it to solve what problem.

Interestingly, it should be acknowledged that youth unemployment is a major hindrance to rural development in Nigeria. This was not different in the case of India. India used e-governance as the mode of service delivery to reduce drastically the youth unemployment. Most of the initiatives were operated in the of form kiosks in different centres in different villages. These kiosks were manned by the unemployed youth. Incidentally, they became sources of income for the youths. Apart from being a source of employment, it was generating income for the government through user charges collected.

A central facility like e-seva as obtained in India is also very vital for a country like Nigeria with wide landmass and population. If this type of centre is put in place in Nigeria for people to pay taxes, obtain certificates, licenses, permits and host of other functions, then social and economic costs that would be incurred by the rural dwellers might be eliminated. For instance, the cost of moving from the rural setting to the local government and state headquarters will be get rid of. Another catastrophe such as accidents as a result of the bad roads and robbery/herdsmen attacks can be avoided as well.

Again, the like of TATA KISSAN KENDRA (TKK) should be established in Nigeria. This particular initiative is operated using a Geographical Information System (GIS) to detect insect attacks on farm products. The outbreak of insects usually takes farmers unaware in Nigeria. With this initiative in place, this problem can be controlled.

Conclusion

The fact that e-governance is capable of adding values to rural areas of countries across the globe is no longer debatable. The available e-governance initiatives in India coupled with their achievement demonstrate that the application of information and communication technology has a lot to contribute to the rural development of countries across the globe. Nigeria as a developing country has not done much in this area. Therefore, the study recommends that Nigeria governments should, as a matter of fact, make e-governance a priority for rural development and imbibe some ideas from India to transform rural development in Nigeria. In an attempt to do this, the governments should initiate specific e-governance projects that can be used to tap available raw materials in Nigeria and not necessarily transferring technological ideas not compatible with resources obtainable in rural areas of Nigeria.

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