

Title: The Nigerian e-Government Strategies (NeGST): A Strategic Approach to Poverty Eradication in Nigeria.

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Abstract: Nigeria has made frantic efforts towards achieving the millennium development goals (MDGs) as spelt out in the United Nations' Agenda for the world. A critical assessment of the e-Government strategies in Nigeria is important being responsible for 20% of the population of the entire African continent. This paper presents a review of the e-Government strategies in Nigeria; the human capital development initiatives; the information and communications technology (ICT) diffusion and e-Inclusion. The global and continental ranking of the country is presented as well as recommendations to accelerate developments towards achieving the MDGs.

Findings revealed that there are ongoing efforts in Nigeria to address the issue of poverty. The various initiatives of government include: the National/State Economic Empowerment Strategies (NEEDS/SEEDS), the Vision 2020, the National e-Government Strategy (NeGST) and a well-formulated National IT policy to mention a few. The little hindrance encountered in the research is that the available data was only up to the year 2005 and 2006 in some cases.

However, based on the human capital development indices such as: economic empowerment and poverty reduction, education, health, employment generation, etc, it was observed that the adult literacy level of 64.2% is satisfactory and better results are expected before 2015. The life expectancy level is constant (54 years) from 2002 to 2007, which is the one of the lowest in Africa. On school enrolment, the major problem is access and poverty. It was observed that only 25% of primary school leavers made it to the secondary school level, while about 14% of the students at this level made it to the tertiary level. Similarly, the average percentage of female enrolment in schools is 45%. The health facilities are under-funded and are grossly inadequate both in quality and quantity. There is an average of 1,700 persons per hospital bed and the ratio of physicians to the populace is about 1:6000. This calls for a state of emergency in this sector.

One major sector of the economy that is experiencing a boost is the ICT and Telecoms. The sector had brought about a teledensity growth of 0.73 to 37.05 from 2001 to 2007. Consequently, Nigeria has been named the fastest growing Telecoms nation in Africa and the third in the world, with a number of direct and indirect jobs created. Similarly, the rate of Internet diffusion is encouraging bearing in mind that the level was almost non-existent in 1999. It is obvious that Nigeria would be able to bridge the divide by 2015.

Generally, there are some meaningful developments in the country arising from the various poverty eradication schemes but the resultant effect has not imparted positively on unemployment. This is the opinion of the populace and hence the need for government to re-strategize, otherwise, fulfilling MDGs by 2015 may not be realistic.