

## SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA: THE ROLE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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### Abstract

*Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is one of the innovations in the human race that has brought about tremendous advancement in science and technology. It has provided a way in several facets of life that has helped man to checkmate several challenges, mitigate others and improved man's way of life. The advancement in science and technology has also brought with it, some attendant challenges amongst which are insecurity in the society manifesting in diverse forms. This is a hydra-headed challenge that is giving the entire globe sleepless nights; such insecurity challenges as political and governance based violence, terrorism, ethno-religious conflicts and such like. Information and Communication Technology as an innovative technology has great potentials in checkmating if not completely eliminating this menace in the Nigerian society. Some of the ways of checkmating insecurity challenges amongst others are; use of Closed Circuit Television cameras in strategic places such as banks, government establishments, public schools and places, use of biometric capturing machines for registrations and identifications in national issues.*

*Key words: Security, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Terrorism, Ethno-religious conflict, Strategic places, Detective devices.*

### Introduction

Nigeria in recent times has witnessed an uncommon level of security challenges. This has made national security a threat to be a major issue for the government and has prompted vast allocation of the national budget to security. In order to ameliorate the incidence of crime, the federal government has embarked on criminalization of terrorism by passing the Anti-Terrorism Act in 2011, installation of Computer-based Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras in some parts of the country, enhancement of surveillance as well as investigation of criminal related offences, heightening of physical security measures around the country aimed at deterring or disrupting potential attacks, strengthening of security agencies through the provision of security facilities and the development and broadcast of security tips in mass media (Azazi, 2011). Despite these efforts, the level of insecurity in the country is still high, in addition, Nigeria has consistently ranked low in the Global Peace Index (GPI, 2018), signifying a worsened state of insecurity in the country. Uhumwuango and Epelle (2011) are of the view that the efforts of government have not yielded enough positive result. According to Beland (2005) insecurity is a state of fear or anxiety due to absence or lack of protection.

Security challenges can be traced to the early years of military rule when large quantities of arms were imported into the country for the use of the military during and after the Nigerian civil war, some of which got into the hands of the civilians which made its disarmament and destruction (Jacob, Jonathan and Danjuma, 2019). Soon after the civil war, these arms were used by civilians and ex-military men for mischievous purposes such as armed robbery. There was also the army of unemployed youths some of whom lost their jobs during the civil war. The level of insecurity assumed dangerous dimensions in the prolonged years of military rule beginning from 1970 during which people procure arms and light weapons for personal defense. Some of these arms and light weapons got into the hands of unemployed youths who used them for deviant purposes (Abdullahi, 2015).

Information Communication Technology (ICT) has a great potential to checkmate Nigeria's security challenges is a welcome development. The term ICT is basically information handling tools that

refers to technological devices and resources used to collect, communicate, disseminate, store and manage information, which encompasses, radio, television, mobile phones, hardware and software, computer network and satellite system. The impact of ICT in everyday activities has shown a remarkable development in politics, education, health and all other socio-economic factors in Nigeria and this indicated the ability of ICT to respond to natural and human-caused disaster like the current insurgency in the country. Although, ICT cannot completely guarantee national security so does security agencies, but can greatly support to fight against threats, with the aid of modern ICT facilities such as biometric data collection, CCTV such as surveillance cameras, detective devices and so many other devices. ICT is a very wide umbrella that includes any communication device which encompasses radio, phones, computer, satellite, networking, location and any other internet application such as video conferencing and so on (Chika, 2008).

### **Conceptual Clarification of Terms**

For a proper and clear understanding, we shall take a dose look at the terms security and ICT respectively;

#### **Security**

Security could be seen as a state of freedom from fear, resistance to, or protection from harm to any valuable asset such as persons, dwelling places, organizations, communities, or nations. It is a state of being free from threat, danger or potentials that can cause fear (Oxford online dictionary, (N.d) and Merriam Webster online dictionary (N.d), defined it as the quality or state of being secure. It is a state of being safe and secure; that is free from fear, danger, anxiety, and certainties, It involves anything done to make people, place or object safe. Umana (2019) see security as strategies put in place to mitigate violent conflicts, threats and danger.

Security therefore means a state or condition that is conducive such that individuals are free from any form of fear or threat, be it physical, mental, emotional, economical, financial or what have you. Security- as a concept involves different aspects; it could be seen as measures put in place to guard or protect against crime, attacks, sabotage or escape. It could also be seen as a pledge taken to ensure the fulfilment of an agreement or obligation. Van-Buuren, (2010), sees security as a commodity and power as the means of achieving it.

Security is a very important and essential aspect of life to both the individual and to the society at large. This is because there can be no meaningful development of any kind in a place where there is no security. It is fundamental to peace, cohesion and national development for a nation. There have been various interpretations of security In general; security has been understood to be synonymous with the accumulation of power.

#### **Information Communication Technology (ICT)**

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) is a generic name for such technology as computer, cell phones, television, radio, internet, hard wares and soft wares which are used for effective communication to meet human needs and purposes. They are electronic technologies used for information storage and retrieval- They are used in processing, storage, retrieval and transfer of information using electronic media (Ifueko, 2011), To Garba and Shagari (2019) ICT is a technology that incorporates both humans and electronic devices for the effective handling information.

ICT is one powerful tool that has transformed every aspect of doing things across every field of human endeavor. Development is partly determined by the ability to effectively incorporate technological innovations and human activities. The rapid rate at which ICT have evolved since the mid-20th century, the convergence and pervasiveness of ICTs, give them a strong role in development and globalization. ICT as electronic technologies used for information storage and retrieval.

#### **Impact of ICT in the Society**

In the past few decades there has been a revolution in Information and Communications management, and all indications are that technological progress and use of information technology will continue at a rapid pace. The following sectors will be looked at as the impact of ICT in our society.

In the area of education ICT has transformed the education process in an amazing manner. Advancement in ICT has influenced the art of teaching by complementing traditional classroom instruction. The greatest potential for ICT has been in improving the productivity of time spent outside the classroom. E-learning has offered a lot of alternatives and convenience to learners. Although distance learning has existed for some time (Adesanya and Olori, 2019), the internet makes possible a large expansion in coverage and better delivery of instruction. Learners are reached at a distance using online learning system. It has made room for text learning materials being combined with audio/video, and learners can interact in real time via e-mail and discussion groups. These improvements in education delivery has created beautiful platform for retraining and up-skilling by those who, due to work and family demands, could not attend traditional classroom learning programmes. E-learning now complements the efforts of the regular education programmes (Garba and Shagari, 2019). Innovations due to the rapid technological advancement in industries have made continual upgrading of professional skills a necessity. The introduction of ICT into the scheme of things has made lifelong learning and life wide learning a possibility. This is now reinforcing and adapting existing systems of learning, both in public and private sectors to achieve better results. The demands of education and training for the present day dispensation demands the full range of modern technology. Information technologies are uniquely capable of providing ways to meet this demand E-learning modes range from self-study courses to complete electronic classrooms. These modes of learning provide flexibility in learning and acquisition skills and are more affordable and relevant than more traditional learning modes (Adesanya and (Mori, 2019).

In the area of information storage and retrieval, development is partly determined by the ability to effectively apply technology to create technological innovation that will enhance human life and values. According to World Health Organization (WHO), the use of ICTs in health is not merely about technology, but a means to reach a series of desired outcomes, such as, health workers making better treatment decisions, hospitals providing higher quality and safer care, people making informed choices about their own health, governments becoming more responsive to health needs, national and local information systems supporting the development of effective, efficient, and equitable health systems, policy makers and the public becoming more aware of health risks; and people having better access to the information and knowledge they need for better health.

ICT also play very important role in agriculture in every form of farming operations; ranging from soil testing using 3D printers to farming activities, and food processing and preservation ([www.fao.org/e-agriculture/stub](http://www.fao.org/e-agriculture/stub). 2017). Through Ac information received they choose what to plant, which inputs to use and how, when to plant the seed, harvest, how much to keep for consumption in the household and how much to sell to raise cash, or how much to store. ICTs play very crucial role in passing critical information and knowledge to farmers for effective farm management and optimal yields (<https://www.gnucoop.com/i>, 2017).

The impact of ICT can also be felt on business and market structure, which is mainly seen in the aspect of reducing geographical distance between the work place and home. Many industries like the software industry make use of this to overcome local market competition for Engineers in software, low wages by the use for employees in countries like India or other places where their wages are lower. Firms can equally outsource for investment from other countries with better infrastructures and use information technology like telecommunication and the internet to manage the marketing process. Information technology brings about the ease of product awareness, choice, and a more interactive and professional way of marketing products which can be tailored to customer's needs and services in both the country of production and other country as a marketing strategy (<https://sokodirectory.com/2017>, 2 and <https://www.gnucoop.com/i>. 2017).

### **State of Insecurity in Nigeria**

Nigeria ranks among the poorest countries in the world (World bank, 2018 and International Monetary fund. 2018 in Khras, Hamel and Hofer, 2018), also ranks low in all socio economic indicators such as life expectancy, death rate, access to water., poverty rate, mortality rate, and crime rate ([worldpopulationreview.com](http://worldpopulationreview.com)>Nigeria,2019 and <https://www.worldlife-expecncy.com>>... 2019), and still

wears the tag of a developing economy (Ogedebe and Jacob,2012). Nigeria is a poor country in the midst of abundant human and natural resources, and this situation has contributed to the security challenges that have bedevilled the country since independence till date, with grave consequences for socio-economic development in the country. Nigeria is blessed with abundant human, and natural resources to guarantee the attainment of sustainable developmental goals. It can be very obvious that a country can achieve little or nothing when there is insecurity. The increasing challenge of insecurity in Nigeria has also been linked to failure of leadership to deliver good governance, and secure the welfare of persons on the principles of freedom, equality, and justice (Umana, 2019). For instance, it is on record that over fifty attacks were launched on the Nigeria security' agencies and individuals between January and August of 2011, like the attack of Boko Haran on police headquarters and the United Nations building at Abuja (Ogedebe and Jacob, 2012). There is no investor whether local or foreign that will be motivated to invest in an unsafe and insecure environment. The alarming level of insecurity in Nigeria has made the economy unattractive to foreign investors. This situation has impacted negatively on economic growth and development of the nation. Specifically, its impact has been seen in the following areas;

### **Politics and Governance Based Violence**

Nigeria has a long history of politically based violence since the collapse of the first republic on January 14, 1966, and the incursion of the military into governance that same date. The electoral politics in Nigeria right from 1960s till date have been characterized with violent conflicts, political thuggery, assassinations, and arson. Politicians in Nigerian do not accommodate dialogue, negotiation and consensus (Eme and Onyishi, 2011). Political contests are characterized by desperation, and violent-struggle for political power among politicians. Recurring political violence in Nigeria could be attributed to over-zealousness and desperation of political gladiators to win elections or remain in office at all cost These misadventures have often been catastrophic leading to decimation of innocent lives, disruption of economic activities, and the destruction of properties among others. For instance in 2002 during the then ruling party local primaries in Plateau state, the clash between the indigenes and the settlers because of their support for different candidate lead to the death of several person and of properties worth millions of naira. There have also been reported cases of incessant violence in different states due to politics and poor governance like in Bayelsa, Rivers, Kwara, Enugu. Kogi amongst others (Human Right Watch, 2019). According to this report 80% of all states had election related violence in 2019.

### **Terrorism**

It is a known fact that terrorism is the most fundamental source of insecurity in Nigeria today as was stated by United States of America in 2010 (Ogedebe and Jacob, 2012), Sampson and Onuoha (2011) defined terrorism as the premeditated use of threat or violence by an individual or group to cause fear, destruction or death, especially against unarmed targets, property or infrastructure in a state, intended to compel those in authority to respond to the demands and expectations of the individual or group behind such violent acts. The activities of terrorist attacks have heightened since 2009. In January 2012 more than 935 people were killed and thousands wounded in 164 attacks by Boko Haram sect (Solomon, 2012). Today in Nigeria the terrorist activities has extended to every state in the north including Abuja the federal capital territory. In spite of the measures adopted by the government, the terror and violence is on the increase. This made President Jonathan to lament that the mayhem caused is more than what was witnessed during the civil war. The current challenge of terrorism to security is threatening the unity, peace and socio-economic activities in Nigeria society on all fronts.

### **Unemployment/Poverty**

Records have it that the unemployment rate and poverty in Nigeria is high, as a result individuals especially the youths, are given to violent crimes emigration, militancy, and insurgency amongst others- The unemployment rate in Nigeria as stated by Carsten (2018) is;

2014	21.24%
2015	14.78%

2016	48.61%
2017	30.56%
2018	23.10%

Nwagbosa (2012) argued that the failure of successive administrations in Nigeria to address challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequitable distribution of wealth among ethnic nationalities is one of the major causes of insecurity in the country. In addition to this Kufour (2012) identified some factors that has given rise to insecurity in Nigeria as political tussle for power and unbalanced development and distribution of amenities.

### **Ethno-religious conflicts**

Ethno-religious conflict is defined as a situation where the relationship between ethnic and or religious groups in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society is characterized by suspicion, fear, lack of cordial relationship and peaceful coexistence, and a tendency towards violent confrontation. In Nigeria, there are two dominant religions; Christianity and Islam. Frequent and persistent clashes between these two dominant religions are a major challenge to security in Nigeria. Ibrahim and Igbuzor (2002), Hazen and Horner, (2007), Salawu (2010) and Igbuzor, (2011) identified ethno-religious conflict as a major source of insecurity in Nigeria. This is due to lack of trust and suspicion among the worshippers of these major religions in the country and the ethnic groups. In all parts of Nigeria, there exist ethno-religious conflicts. According to the authors the political class has used this factor as a tool for divide and rule to keep themselves continually in power. The tussle to remain in power so as to have control over national resources has given rise to wanton killings and violence between ethnic and religious groups. The authors also identified claim over land, chieftaincy stools, and mineral resources and causes of conflicts amongst ethnic groups. For instance, there are cases of incessant and wanton killings in Plateau State between the natives and the strangers, (Uhunmwangho and Epelle, 2011), and between religious groups in Northwest and the middle belt (Canci and Odukoya, 2016).

### **Weak Security system**

Weak security structure in Nigeria is due to inadequate equipment for the security arm of government, both in training and weaponry. This has brought about lack of the expertise and equipment to handle the security challenges they are faced with It has caused attitudinal and behavioral disposition of the *security* personnel to be very poor such that they lack the morale to face to tackle their duties effectively. To heighten these issues, some of these personnel get entangled with the issues of ethnic-religious sentiments, hence beclouding their sense of responsibility to the people, and the nation. Thus, instead of being national watch dogs and defending national interest and values, and protecting people from harm by criminals, they become saboteurs of government effort, by supporting and fuelling insecurity through either leaking vital security information or aiding and abetting criminals to acquire weapons or to escape the long arm of the law.

### **Porous Borders**

Nigeria is a country with vast land mass resulting in very wide borders. Unfortunately Nigeria does not have the where withal to monitor movement across her borders due to weak security system. This has become a very serious security challenge as persons move in and out of the country with out being checked. This has serious security implications for the country; easy entry to weapons from neighboring countries resulting to weapon proliferation, availability of these weapons to individuals, criminals and militant groups (Hazen and Homer, (2007). It is on record that Nigeria is estimated to host over 70 % of illegal weapons in West Africa (Edeko, 2011). Again, the porosity of Nigerian borders has created room for uncontrolled influx of migrants' from neighbouring countries like Benin Republic, Niger, Chad and others (Adeola and Oluyeroi, 2012). These migrants which are mostly youths no doubt have questionable characters and so contribute to the crime rate in Nigeria.

## **Potentials of ICT Militating Security Challenges**

The potentials of Information and Communication Technology in mitigating security challenges cannot be overemphasized. This could be achieved through various ICT devices and processes such as:

### **Information Sharing**

The need for information sharing by security agencies in national security cannot be overemphasized. Information sharing and open dialogue between security agencies using ICT facilities to facilitate and authenticate such information is *my* crucial for effective security. One of the most frequent barriers to effective emergency management generally is lack of communication and information sharing between security agencies. Information must be shared among security agencies on best practices on how to tackle security issues and offering open solutions to the needs of the society on security issues. The government must encourage information sharing and open dialogue between all the security agencies in the society using ICT facilities. This will require all security personnel having email addresses and social media platforms, where they could subscribe to discussion groups to chat and share information and ideas real time online.

### **Global Positioning System Technology**

Global Positioning System (GPS) are ICT devices that can give signals when activated. With such devices individuals who own them can send signal for help to relevant agencies when in danger or need help. For example cell phones with Rave Guardian Software, can activate a timer on their device when they need surveillance from the police. If the timer is not deactivated within a given time frame, authorities can use GPS technology to track the individual's location especially when in distress.

### **Emergency Communication Management Systems**

Emergency communication management systems involve the integration of ICT and emergency management systems to access, manage, and respond to fast security challenges. Such devices use ICT facilities to manage information and communication. With such devices emergency messages could be sent to individual cell phones via text messages, e-mail accounts, instant message accounts, or voicemail systems. With such devices security agencies could alert within minutes on emergency situations and quick responses to distress call from citizens. Sirens, alarm systems, digital signage, notification systems and automatic messaging are examples of emergency communication systems.

### **Detecting Devices**

Detecting devices are facilities that are capable detecting strange and harmful objects or substances in an environment, in Nigeria some of these devices are hand held detecting machine used in public places like airports, supermarkets, schools and worship places. They are also used on doors and gates at public places such as banks, public premises and other sensitive and security cautious centers. Information from a device circuit like Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) card is a movable circuit board found in modern cellular phone that carries the network information and can these devices can automatically receive, store and send these information to the network owner data centers and regulatory bodies like Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) and National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA). With such information security agencies can trace and collate information about individuals based on suspected attacks.

### **Social Networking Tools**

Social Networking Tools are ICT software applications that create opportunities for individuals to share information about issues. Through these platforms individuals on the platform could be reached in no time about issues especially as it relates to security. Using these medium security agencies could share information with citizens on security matters, especially on the area of community policing in sharing news and strategies for community security. Such social networking sites like whatsapp, face-

book and MySpace allow citizens to create pages that store information about security *plans*, emergency procedures, and community events. YouTube and iTunes can create opportunities for security agencies to educate through quick, entertaining videos and podcasts which can easily be shared and stored. The beauty of this is that handheld devices are now commonly used even amongst non-literate members of the society. And so, it could be very useful in security management.

#### **Virtual Emergency Operation Centers (VEOC)**

This involves establishing physical emergency operation centers to supplement virtual locations where information and security issues are collated, processed and made available to residents in such locations through various channels.

#### **Intelligent Monitoring**

This involves using biometric and speech-recognition software to track and keep record of individuals using intelligent video and swipe-card access in building.

#### **Data Mining and Database Tracking**

This involves sharing databases among institutions and agencies about track records of individuals with questionable and suspicious character and assailants.

#### **Strategies for Combating Security Challenges using ICT in Nigeria**

Aside traditional means of fighting insecurity in Nigeria, ICT has brought the use of modern technology in combating criminalities beyond information dissemination, involving detection, analyzing and identification of citizens' activities, interaction and movement with aid of different ICT facilities, like in tracking of vehicles, use of CCTV cam some areas. With the recent introduction of ICT tools in carrying out national duties such as Automated Fingerprint Information System (AFIS) in electronic election process, mobile banking system and global system for mobile communication in almost all parts of the country, Nigeria has shown its readiness in tackling insecurity with ICT. There is still need to do more as records show that crime rate is still very high and peace index is low. The nation still remains the poorest in the world even in the midst of abundant human and natural resources and with the global capital development index rating 152<sup>nd</sup> out of 157 nations in the world (World Bank, 2018 and International Monetary fund. 2018 in Khras. Hamel and Hofer. 2018). some of the things that need to be done in this direction are;

#### **Use of Close Circuit Television (CCTV)**

CCTV cameras are now used widely in developed countries such as United Kingdom and United States amongst others. Though developing nations like Nigeria are now taking clues from them, there is need to intensify such efforts. The CCTV is used to capture the activities of individuals within its coverage areas. It will therefore help to capture and identify persons who commit any crime within that area. Other related surveillance mechanisms are the wireless technology Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), which is used to develop access control system and Geographical Positioning System (GPS). These will be used to identify precise location of a vehicle, person and other assets that can be used in carrying out criminal attacks. The recorded data location is either stored within the tracking unit or sent to a designated database for review. It is important that this technology be used all over the country in designated places to monitor the activities of individuals.

#### **Automated Personal Data Bank (APDB)**

This is the use of detective devices and databases to collect and store personal information about citizens and immigrants. This allows the security agencies like Department of State Security Service (DSSS) and Security Intelligence Department (SID) to track individual information within a particular location. The APDB records contain digital images, fingerprint, insurance details and vehicle registration of the citizens and so can help checkmate activities of individuals thereby ensuring security. This could

also require the use of National identity card. It can also be used to control and know the number of people living in a particular location where each and every member of the society have to uniquely be identified and can be tracked with National Identity card which is GPS enabled.

### **Social Networking Platform**

Social networking platforms such as facebook, instagram, imo, and whatsapp amongst others are social devices used across the cloud on daily basis. They are used to share information among members of a group in good time. They have made information sharing and dissemination easy, to the beck and call of every citizen. Whenever any individual spread information over the social networking platforms, the information can be analyzed and verified to ensure its integrity and credibility. This way information could be monitored and potential threat arrested in good time.

### **Conclusion**

The rate of insecurity in Nigeria is alarming and worrisome. It has led to loss of lives and properties especially in areas where the activities of Boko Haram, Niger Delta Avengers, Headsmen and cattle Rustlers are pronounced. With the latest technological advancement and applications all over the world, a lot can be achieved and monitored using ICT devices such as CCTV to monitor movement and see what is going on in a certain location, use of social media platforms, databases and information sharing devices amongst others. All relevant stakeholders and security agencies should also be trained on the use of the ICT devices to manage security issues in the country. The issue of security should not be politicized There should be the political will and commitment on the part of the Government to tackle security challenges in the country. Therefore, Nigeria must include national security' as one of her priorities as to create enabling environment for economic, political, and social activities to thrive.

### **Recommendations**

In the light of the identified security challenges in Nigeria, the following recommendations are made to be able to use ICT to confront the security challenges in Nigeria:

- The government should provide the ICT facilities needed for security management in Nigeria
- There should be proper policy formulation on best practices on the use of ICT in security management and such policies should be implemented to the later.
- There should be continuous training and retraining of security staff on the modern ICT tools. This will lead to capacity building for law enforcement agencies on the application of ICT facilities for security management. Security agencies should be grounded in the use of modern electronic surveillance technologies.
- Recruitment of ICT skilled personnel into the various arms of the security agencies
- There should be viable databases for all residents in Nigeria, both for citizens and foreigners to monitor activities of individuals.
- ICT surveillance devices should be placed in strategic locations to record activities of individuals. There should be enlightenment programmes to educate the citizens on the use of social media platforms for security management and not just for socializing with friends and family members

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