**chapter onE**

1. **Background to the study**

The business of government in Nigeria has been hounded by numerous inefficiencies relating to service delivery such as bureaucratic bottlenecks (red-tapism, rigidity, centralization, and excessive bureaucratic layers), poor filing and retrieval of documents and general poor conditions of service (Nduo, 2004, p. 32). The world has become a global village where every nation is striving to attain a high level of electronic governance, which revolves around the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to deliver government services (Muhammad, 2010, p. 9). Moreover, states are now beginning to display increasing tendencies towards e-governance because e-governance greatly simplifies information accumulation process; empower people to gather information regarding any department of government and get involved in the process of decision making; strengthens the very fabric of democracy by ensuring greater citizen participation at all levels of government; ensure that information regarding every work of public welfare is easily available to all citizens, eliminating corruption; revolutionizes the way governments function, ensuring much more transparency in their functioning; make every government department responsible as they know that every action of theirs is closely monitored, offer better delivery of services to citizens, improved interactions with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information, better management, greater convenience, revenue growth, cost reductions etc., and brings governments closer to its citizens (Mohammed, 2013, p. 17).

Furthermore, e-governance is a widely celebrated concept today. The reasons for it are not far-fetched. It can be applied in all governments' reforms and activities. The fusion of various information and communications technologies (ICTs) has offered faster and reliable communication, efficient and economical storage, retrieval and processing of data and exchange of utilization of information to its users, be they individuals, groups, businesses, organizations and governments. Most importantly, many governments too, have realized the benefits of computerization, internet connectivity and web enablement, and have ventured into process re-engineering, promising services to citizens and business anytime, anywhere (Moon, 2002).

Unarguably, e-governance lubricates the engine of democracy by bringing government closer to people and ensuring transparency and accountability. Democracy, as the world has come to know it, has, even though it is far from being a perfect form of government, become very attractive. According to Effiong Bob, the reason for its attractiveness is its tendency towards freedom, rule of law, civil liberty, transparency, accountability, and promotion of good governance (Bob, 2012, p. 78). However, emerging states, particularly Nigeria have struggled to grapple with the vicissitudes of Western style democracy bequeathed to them by the colonialist. Evidently, the socio-political configuration of emerging states, most often than not, produces several challenges that can delay progress towards realizing the promise of e-government. The variety and complexity of e-government initiatives implies the existence of a wide range of challenges and barriers to its implementation and management. These problems or challenges includes lack of standard ICT infrastructure, privacy problems, security of information, policy and regulation issues, lack of qualified personnel and training, lack of partnership and collaboration, digital divide, cultural barriers, lack of effective leadership (Ashehri et al, 2010).

According to the United Nations E-Governance Survey Report (2014) Nigeria ranks 162 position out of 193 countries in terms of its e-governance status. The survey also revealed that Nigeria is among those countries with lower middle income and it had 0.2929 as its e-governance development index figure. According to Adah (2018), problems accounting for these low ranking by the international community can only be understood if the various parameters of assessing the status and nature of e-governance are analyzed in the Nigerian context. These indices include; online service delivery, telecommunication infrastructure and human capacity development. It is against these backdrops that this research work provides information from different studies of e-government implementation; illustrating the advantages of implementing e-government systems and the most important challenges that affect the implementation and operation in Ebonyi state government.

* 1. **Statement of the problem**

The effectiveness of electronic government (e-government.) depends on the sound, reliable and well-articulated electronic governance. (E-governance is the tool for effective e-government (Duru & Anigbata, 2015). Nigeria public sector has not had it so well with this current trend in governance. In the recent past, various government information, communication, business and activities were still in the analogue system. The development has hampered the efficacy, effectiveness, efficiency and fast tracking of business of governance (Ndubuisi, 2000). Vital information which would have been placed at the disposal of citizenry via the electronic gadgets of E-governance are hindered and thus causing what Obi (2008) called “Total black out in government activities.

Although, the Nigerian government have begun to adopt the e-governance policy option as the panacea for the backwardness and decay that are often seen in the country (Ajayi, 2013). Many programs and projects to that effect have sprung up through the Ministry of Communications which wants to connect all government ministries, agencies, parastatals and departments to the World Wide Web. In doing this, there are lots of challenges; bottlenecks and bureaucratic red-tapism that seem to be in surmountable. Among the problems that has impeded e-governance in Nigeria includes but not limited to the following: lack of adequate funding, institutional weaknesses, digital divide, human resource, legal inadequacies, poverty, local environment, lack of standard ICT infrastructure, cultural barriers, privacy and security problems amongst others (Adeyemo, 2011, p. 16). The question becomes how Ebonyi State government can attain a successful implementation of e-governance in order to realize the enormous advantages embedded therein. It is against these backdrops that this study intends to investigate e-governance in the business of government: issues and challenges in Ebonyi State.

**1.2. Research questions**

i. What is the nature of E- governance in Ebonyi State

ii. What are the importance of E-governance in modern democracy

iii. What are the challenges faced by E-governance in Ebonyi State

**1.3. Objectives of the study**

i. To evaluate the nature of E-governance in Ebonyi State.

ii. To explain the importance of E-governance in modern democracy.

iii. To explore the challenges faced by E-governance in Ebonyi State.

**1.4. Significance of the study**

This research work is essential because it unites the business of government in Nigeria for service delivery and moving to the efficient ways. The results obtained from this research study will be helpful for government officials to know the contribution of e-government towards good governance. The information obtained from the research will provide useful guidance for Nigeria civil service in improving efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of services to the people. Consequently, the knowledge obtained from the outcome of this research can be used in future e-government initiatives by the government.

Moreover, this research work is significant because e-governance can directly connect individuals with officials in the government and decision-makers. The impact of e-governance is immediate and puts greater access and control over governance mechanism in the hands of individuals. The current ICTs, especially the Internet and web technologies facilitate to enhance access, transparency efficiency and quality of public administration. This process will make the government more responsible and accountable to its citizens and ultimately enhance good governance. Moreover, the goal of any research work is to add to the existing body of knowledge. Hence, this work will contribute to extant research findings and also widen knowledge.

**1.5. Scope of the study**

The study is e-governance in the business of government: issues and challenges in Ebonyi State. Hence, the nature, issues and challenges of e-governance in Ebonyi State constitute the scope of this study. In other words this research is to illuminate on the issues, challenges and promise of e-government in Ebonyi State government. The research has focused on the involvement of e-government tools in enhancing the efficiency of Ebonyi State civil service and its implication among citizens through e-service delivery that lead to improved and good governance.