DATABASE DUPLICITY IN NIGERIA: ANY HOPE FOR HARMONIZATION

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Abstract: Can Nigeria ever come to the point where a centralized database is a reality? Can we come to a point where each agency can relate together in exchange, sharing of various attributes of an element? The premise of this paper is to analyze the various databases that are present in Nigeria with a focus on how they can be harmonized. We would provide an overview of different databases with their limitation and their content. Nigeria is critically facing security challenges because people are not uniquely identified and tagged. The situation has led to insecurity in Nigeria with different trends and dimensions from one geopolitical zone to the other. The harmonization process presented in this paper though simple but if implemented would yield the result outlined. In conclusion, the article suggests a process for the harmonization of the various databases to create a central database that could uniquely identify and tag its citizen.

I. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is a complex society, socially, economically and politically. It is not difficult to note that after 54 years of independence the country has failed time and time again to make any sort of positive progress in terms of creating a central database for its citizens. Lack of enthusiasm, failed leadership, corruption, mismanagement and a lack of dynamism, nationalism and patriotism continues to fail the largest black nation on earth; it is safe to say many black people the world over no longer see Nigeria as a beacon of hope for blacks but one of constant embarrassment and resentment.

Onakoya (2011) defined "a national database is an organized data or numerical environment where every citizen of a nation and the immigrants are uniquely identified and possesses a strong national virtual identity.

Nigeria needs a central database that will contain the necessary information about Nigerians and Nigeria, not multiple collections by many agencies for unknown or even untenable purposes. Presently, the National Identity Management Commission is at it to install a comprehensive data for the country through its National Identification Number (NIN) project. The country has also witnessed data captured by different agencies like FRSC,

INEC, and NCC-through the Telecommunication Industries. The National Population Census is also supposed to be preparing for 2016 Census just as the Bureau of Statistics is also trying to give the impression that they are working. Yet none of these agencies (in the same country) can refer to one another to get single accurate information.

A typical example is the ongoing Police Central Motor Registry (BCMR), which is unnecessary and untenable compared with data capture that FRSC has also introduced. Citing legal backing in Section3(2-6) of Road Traffic Act, Cap548, the Police explain that the digital BCMR will operate on smart card and portable hand-held receiver – a device attaching vehicle owner's unique traits and personal data to their vehicles for proper identification and protection.

However, the Police authorities have failed to convince the public about the edge the new system would have over the database being built by the FRSC virtually for the same purpose.

Therefore, to build a reliable integrated database in Nigeria, all government agencies that deal with collection of one data or the other must work together to complement one another and not to compete with one another.

Nigerians are not the easiest people to govern; passive and willing to allow mediocre leaders they may be, but the activities and conduct of its citizens cannot be easily kept within the law. Desperate citizens and an institutionalized corrupt arm of government means almost every policy fails before it even starts.

A new social engineering order must be established, one that works. Too many failed attempts are no excuse, we need to get it right and keep it that way!

Countless amounts of money spent on planning and consultation only for these plans to become useless and waste. The government pays civil and private organisations to plan the nation's future but due to lack of simple priorities grasp and misappropriation of expertise means people are working aimlessly to achieve nothing.

It is no longer news that many western countries are working round the clock to ensure the largest black nation on earth fails, but why do we allow them the privilege?

The recent census where the Nigerian Government along with some foreign corrupt companies spent millions of dollars (criminally) to count Nigerians with no success was one of such efforts. Nigeria is such a lucrative place to do business for many "white collar" criminal western based companies who continue to flaunt local and international laws to help Nigeria fail in all aspects of it activities.

A failed Nigeria is a large failed section of the black race, one that can be continuously exploited for its natural resources and its people used for cheap labour.

To manage a nation one must first have an enabled society, a society with a road map and a plan that will lead to benefits for the citizens and the nation. It is fair to say despite government claims to have goals and objectives it is not hard to notice that stumbling blocks in the form of corruption, mismanagement, tribalism, religious extremism, ethnic wrangling, mediocre leadership and a failed unpatriotic citizenry continue to be Nigeria s biggest enemies.

What will it take for example to have a database of Nigerian citizens, a database that will help manage the population, one that can be used to assist terrorism prevention, illegal employment and immigration, prevent crime, enable growth, assist planning, collect statistics and help management?

The aim of this research is to help the Nigerian Government to create a single centralized database not that they don't already know so that they can be able to manage the population effectively. If the social security (social welfare) that citizens are clamouring for is to become a reality then our database must be put in place first and until that is done we may not be able to have social security for our citizens as a country. This aim of this research would be achieved with the following objectives:

- By creating a single centralized database for the country
- By harmonization such that all relevant agencies can share from that database.

Birth and death records have to become documented efficiently. Once a child is born it should be immediately entered into the database that means there must be national database on birth registration that is linked to the database that would be created.

II. WHY DOES NIGERIA NEED ONE?

I suppose the question asked by anyone afraid of privacy intrusion and data protection violations due to the use of biometrics are "Can we not record Nigerians without taking finger prints?" The answer is no we cannot; Nigeria is too complex and as such requires the best system for accuracy. Developed countries use both iris and facial recognition database in crime detection

The current state of crime in Nigeria means excesses and uncontrolled issuance of national documents by fraudsters and corrupt government officials requires us to have a system that will prevent double identities, multiple applications and abuse of the services.

Nigeria is badly in need of citizenship identification, recognition and accountability. Nigeria's porous borders, corrupt police, customs and immigration officials mean we cannot control migration and crime effectively.

A lack of credible census figures means revenue is not managed prudently and not dispersed according to demography. A near accurate count will mean better allocation and planning. A biometric database of citizen is automatically a census exercise and one that will be around for a long time.

III. DATABASE DUPLICITY

The inability of Nigeria to secure a central database system continues to be a mounting challenge that the nation has been facing from independence. As such, a lot of the potential benefits that come from such a system continue to elude Nigeria and Nigerians in general. One cannot help to see how there is duplicity of the same data by almost all agencies that require them thereby wasting our nation's resources. The same data is collected by several organizations when they can actually share from a common database. We would look at three of the most important databases in Nigeria and they are INEC, FRSC driving license and international passport. National database is a

dynamic and intelligent data records system. It contains detailed particulars of classified information, resident citizen, the Diaspora and the foreigners including their biometrics and passport photograph. Usually, it is adequately prepared on relational database conceptuality and expansive data administration and management. National database is a centralized system, typically multi-user and distributed information systems based on hypertext with web interfaces to the central database." There is no way we can implement a database without a particular data concept. Data has been described as pertinent tools for development. Data are collected, captured, processed and produced as a finished result. Data may be valuable, quality or quantity. Without data there can be no development. Data is the property of development.

According to Meriam (2015) a database is an organized collection of data. In addition, a centralized database is a database located and maintained in one location, unlike a distributed database. A database is a collection of information organized to provide efficient retrieval. The collected information could be in any number of formats (electronic, printed, graphic, audio, statistical, combinations). Nigeria lacks a real database because of the issue of duplicity; one cannot really say that every citizen of this great country is accounted for by any single database. Presently, Nigeria is critically facing security challenges all because people are not uniquely identified and tagged. In this research I would try to highlight three of the most important databases and discuss how a harmonization can be possible and implemented.

IV. INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION (INEC)

INEC is the body that conducts elections in Nigeria. They have the responsibility to register eligible voters (Citizens of 18years and above). And due to this reason the commission created a database to store all of these information of voters in its voters register (voter's database). Entries in this register include these items basically; state of origin, Local government of origin, home town, address, occupation, gender, finger print, and facial recognition. This database is unique in the sense that it has two basic security fields, the finger print and facial recognition. This makes it a very implicit database and would have been able to serve as a centralized database but unfortunately it has some limitations. It is only for registered voters who are 18years and above. Not everyone registers to be a voter even though they are eligible for various obvious reasons; religious and otherwise, secondly the database is not comprehensive as it does not cover the whole population so those under the eligibility age are not included. Another flaw in this database is that it could be two individuals, that is, a particular entry could have one person's fingerprint and another person's face taken by the facial recognition software.

V. FEDERAL ROAD SAFETY CORPS NATIONAL DRIVER'S LICENCE (FRSC)

The second database is that operated by the FRSC, they are responsible for issuance of driving license for those who are either 18years or above and have been tested in their driving abilities. This again is limited while every person 18years or above could be captured by the INEC database FRSC captures only those who can drive and are 18 years and above. This database is limited as we find out that the number of persons on its register cannot be compared to that of those on INEC register. The entries also are the same with that of INEC.

VI. THE NIGERIA INTERNATIONAL PASSPORT

Nigeria's most secured and effective database is the one that provides its citizens with their international passport. It uses both facial recognition and fingerprint for all fingers and signature. This is the most effective as it has no age limit that means everyone can be registered on it but sadly until a citizen has the intention of going outside the country they do not have need for it and it is not required for any form of access within the country.

VII. THE HARMONIZATION PROCESS

Harmonization of our various databases would be a plus to the nation and reduce cost on the side of government. This is because even the police are not left out as they are also creating database to be able to identify vehicle owners. The solution is to make a policy that stops every other person from creating new independent databases and create a body responsible for the central database. Nigeria is already in that process already – what is called National Identification Management Scheme (NIMS) has been given the responsibility to create a central database, but the government should with that stop all other agencies from registering more people in their databases but rather connect to the NIMS database and collect all that they need. That is if the process and project is sustained and corruption not allowed to creep in. the second issue would be to put honest and patriotic citizens in such a place and ensure foreigners are not put to design or work in the creation and security of the database and the facility that would house it.

How this is possible is for every child born to be immediately registered on the database and as the child begins to attend school he updates and updating should be done each time one changes job or uses the facility in a

hospital. Also every other agency that requires access to the database to have their own interface that links them to the central database and gives them unique access to that entry that they require and only collect the extra information that is not given in that central database. For instance if the police has access to the NIMS database all they need to add is to upload the Vehicle registration and engine number of the vehicle to their own interface which should still reflect on the central database. This new information can be accessed by all security agencies and that makes it easier to curb crimes. The FRSC (Federal road safety commission) would not need any database but just to test that you can drive and issue you your License as they already have your record in the central database all they need is your tracking number to pull out your records from the database. The same thing applies to the issuance of international passport and the independent national electoral commission. If this can be followed Nigeria would have successfully been able to tag every of its citizen and people could be uniquely identified.

VIII.   CONCLUSION

We have been able to look at some of the various databases that collect almost the same kind of data and have reviewed their limitations and contents and we have been able to establish that creating multiple databases is not the solution to the problems. However, with the suggested harmonization process been followed the right result would be seen, as most duplicity would have been stopped and certain crimes could be easier to deal with and access to information better.

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