



INTERNET FOR MEN? The Digital Marginalisation of Women in Northern Nigeria

Y.Z. Ya'u and M.A. Aliyu



Centre for Information
Technology and
Development

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OF WOMEN IN NORTHERN NIGERIA**

By Y.Z. Ya'u and M.A. Aliyu

Centre for Information Technology and Development
ISBN: 978-978-54842-2-9
First Published in 2017

Published by
Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD)
3rd Floor, NSITF Building, No. 1A, Social Insurance Road,
behind Trade Fair Complex, Zaria Road, Kano State.
P.O. Box 10210
E-mail: info@citad.org
Website: www.citad.org

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ABBREVIATIONS

1. CITAD – Centre for Information Technology and Development
2. CSOs – Civil Society Organizations
3. ECD - Early Child Development
4. FGDs – Focus Group Discussions
5. FMCT – Federal Ministry of Communication Technology
6. FME – Federal Ministry of Education
7. FRN – Federal Republic of Nigeria
8. GPI – Gender Parity Index
9. ICT – Information and Communications Technology
10. ICTs – Information and Communications Technologies
11. IGF – Internet Governance Forum
12. ISP – Internet Service Providers
13. NBS – National Bureau of Statistics
14. NC – North Central
15. NCC – Nigerian Communications Commission
16. NE – North East
17. NECO- National Examination Council
18. NIRA – Nigeria internet Registration Association
19. NITDA – National Information Technology Development Agency
20. NOA – National Orientation Agency
21. NW – North West
22. SE – South East
23. SS – South South
24. SW – South West
25. USF- Universal Service Fund
26. USPF- Universal Service Provision Fund
27. WAEC - West African Examination Council

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD) will like to thank and acknowledge the support of Association for Progressive Communication (APC) which supported the project with a sub-grant. The research was coordinated by Dr. Mohammed Aminu Aliyu of the Department of Economics, Bayero University, Kano who was assisted by Harira Wakili, Project Assistant (Internet Rights Advocacy), Abdullahi Baria (CITAD Office, Azare) and Dahiru Abubakar Kundi (CITAD Office, Jama'are). We are grateful to them for the effort they put and the outcome from it. We also thank other people who have in various ways contributed in the project particularly Dr. Asabe Sadiya Mohammed of the Bauchi State University and Board Member of CITAD, Hon Mayam Begel of the Bauchi State House of Assembly and Hajiya Altine Abdullahi of VOWAN, Kano. We are also grateful to Malam Ahmad A. Yakasai, Engr. Kamalludeen Umar and Zara M. Abubakar who anchored the training component of the project. We equally thank other members of the advocacy team, especially Halimah Umar Gombi (Bauchi), Ali Sabo (Jigawa) and Huzaiifa Yakuq (Katsina).

We acknowledge the support of other staff of CITAD were very helpful in the implementation particularly in planning the stakeholders forums namely Abubakar Yusuf Auyo, Isah Garba, Abdulrashid Sadiq and Abdullahi B. Yakubu. We appreciate Sufyan Lawal Kabo who did the layout of this book. We are ever grateful to Prof. Kamal Aliyu of the Department of English, Bayero University, Kano for his editorial support.

We thank all those people we interviewed or took part in the various focus group discussions we conducted and those who participated in the stakeholders' forums in Bauchi and Kano, as well as the right and safety training for women. We remain grateful for the ideas and insights they offered us which have resulted in this document. We acknowledge the support of wider CITAD staff.

PREFACE

In recognition of the gender digital divide, the Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD) sought for a subgrant from the Association for Progressive Communication (APC) to implement a project whose main goal was to raise awareness about the factors that inhibit women on use of the Internet, develop strategies on overcoming them and pursue the implementation of these strategies while building their capacity to understand Internet rights and freedoms as well know how to safely use the Internet.

The project consists of three components namely; a research undertaking to understand the factors hindering the effective use of the Internet by women in the region, capacity building for women to undertake advocacy around the issues of Internet rights and a sustained advocacy for gender digital inclusion in the region. The research, as an indicative study was conducted in four communities namely Doganjije and Azare (Bauchi State) and Dakata and Zaura Baba (Kano State).

The book consists of both the research findings and the content of the advocacy strategy document earlier published that was used for the advocacy component of the project. This book benefits from the respondents of the research at the levels of interviews, focus group discussions and the distribution of questionnaires as well as the two stakeholders forums held in both Bauchi and Kano States as well as participants of the two-day training on Internet Rights and Safety that was conducted during the life of the project.

Noting that this is only a pilot, it is our hope that it will spur others to undertake more compressive and deeper investigations of the reality of gender based digital marginalization in not only the northern parts of the country but Nigeria as a whole as part of the effort to understand and overcome the wider problem of digital exclusion in the country.

The publication is useful to gender activists who are working to address the various dimensions of gender-based marginalization to wider civil society in the advocacy for social justice, to organizations that are advocating Internet as a right and to those campaigning for other fundamental rights which can today only be effectively accessed

using the internet. Similarly, it is useful to governments searching for suggestions and ideas on how to address gender-based digital marginalization.

CHAPTER 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to research

The Internet is a tool for the promotion of both collective human capital and individual self-actualization because it is today a key to accessing education. Women, especially in northern Nigeria, are economically and politically marginalized. The keys to overcoming this marginalization are education, political participation and economic empowerment, all of which are possible through the effective use of the Internet. Consequently, we argue that Internet is both a tool to promote personal development and a human right.

Although the right to internet has not been codified into a United Nations rectifiable instrument, the UN does recognize access to it as a right. This recognition is based on a number of compelling arguments, including:

First, education is a right guaranteed in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration for Human Rights. This is further reinforced in Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. This right is today accessible largely through the internet. So, those who have no access to it are at a serious disadvantage. If internet is the tool to access education, then this tool must itself be a right.

Second, Article 21 of the Declaration provides that “Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country”. This is further reaffirmed in Article 3 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Given that political participation cannot be effective without access to information, which can be obtained through the internet, the internet must be critical to actualizing the right to political participation.

Additionally, Article 21(2) of the Declaration provides that “Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country”. As more and more public service migrates online, it means that the only way citizens can assert and access this right is through the internet.

Article 19 provides, among other things, the right to freedom of expression and to receive and impart information. This is further given force in Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political

Rights. Clearly, without access to internet the right to freedom of expression and to receive and impact information would be severely curtailed in the digital era. Making access to internet a right is thus a condition for people to actualize their right to freedom of expression and to receive and impact information.

It is important to note that these rights are also provided for in the African Charter on Peoples and Human Rights, as well as in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

It is these compelling arguments of the internet as a right that has made the UN articulate the campaign – Leave No One Behind, as part of the global agenda for digital inclusion. The objective of the campaign is to ensure that all marginalized groups, such as women, the aged, people living with disability, etc. have access to the use of and benefit of internet. At its core, it aims at bridging all the dimensions of the digital divide. This includes the gender dimension of the divide.

Although in a number of countries the gender dimension of the digital divide has been bridged, this is not so in Nigeria where there is a huge differential between men and women in terms of access to and use of the internet. Research by Phew in 2015 puts the percentage internet users in the country at 39%, with male users at 48% and female at only 29%, far below the national average.

Although there are regional or state level disaggregated data, it is clear that, within the country, it is worse in the states in the northern parts of the country. This is due to a number of factors, including culture, religion, education and attitude. This combination weaves a patriarchal frame through which women rights to expression and visibility online are analyzed. This has serious implications in the ability of women to access and use the internet and to express themselves visibility online. For this reason, the bridging of the gender dimension of the digital divide is more difficult in the north than in the other parts of the country and requires a sustained advocacy to change mindset in addition to other access related issues. Undertaking such an advocacy needs a clear understanding of the factors that shape the discourse of the internet in the society.

In an effort to understand why this is so and to develop appropriate strategies for digital inclusion of women in the region, CITAD

undertook a pilot research aimed to understand the factors that inhibit the effective use of the internet by women in 13 states of Northwest and Northeast Nigeria.

The key challenge is how to make the society understand that women can safely use the internet without falling prey to the adverse effects of the web and, in the process, transform their lives, thus allowing them to become voice bearers for other women that the internet is a critical resource for women to access.

Understanding and promoting solutions to the factors that militate against the effective use of the internet by women will help to drive advocacy and policy making toward making the internet a friendlier and safer place for women to use, thus allowing them to access opportunities that can help to transform their lives.

1.2 Objectives

The broad objective of the project is to investigate and raise awareness about the factors that inhibit women's use of the internet; develop strategies on overcoming them; and pursue the implementation of these strategies to build the capacity of women to understand internet rights and freedoms, as well as know how to safely use the internet. The project, therefore, consists of three components, namely research, action and advocacy.

The research component was undertaken to generate baseline data and determine critical factors. The advocacy component will enhance the public understanding of the factors that inhibit women in northern Nigeria from making effective use of the internet, thus leading to developing appropriate responses to these. It will also raise the awareness of women about the importance of the internet to ending their economic and political marginalization and how they can safely use it in spite of any cultural or religious constraints, to transform their lives. The overall project, when completed, shall develop a core of passionate women internet advocates who can continue to steer advocacy around the gender and women related issues concerning access to and use of the internet and actively participate in policy making around the internet and in the global discussion on internet governance.

Accordingly, the project consists of five specific objectives:

- Understand the factors that hinder the effective use of the internet by women in northern part of Nigeria
- Raise awareness about the digital marginalization of women by bringing out the obstacles that shape women access to the internet in the region
- Provide the basis to develop up a strategic campaign document for the digital inclusion of in the region
- Contribute to the understanding of the persistence of the gender dimension of the digital divide in the country
- Explore through the process of how the marginalized voice of women can be raised on issues about internet governance.

1.3 Methodology

The first part of the project is to undertake a research on understanding the factors that hinder the use of the internet by the women in Northwest and Northeast Nigeria. The research is based on empirical data. There are three segments to it. The first is the general survey using interviewer-administered structured questionnaire; the second is based on open ended interviews, and the third is the interviews based on focus group discussion.

The research was conducted in four communities, comprising two urban and two semi-urban communities in Bauchi (North East) and Kano (North West) states using groups discussion with both women and men, community leaders, key informant interviews and questionnaire administration, There were two validation meetings in Kano and Bauchi where preliminary findings were presented that attracted participants from academia, politicians, students, civil society organisations and several professional bodies.

A total of 300 questionnaires were administered, 200 for women (50 per location) and 100 for men (25 per location). Forty respondents were administered the open-ended interview (10 per location). For the interview and the focus group discussion, the following were specifically targeted: Village Heads or community leaders; Islamic clerics; Businessmen; Women leaders; Ordinary housewives; and Ordinary husband.

The sample selection criteria for the questionnaire was based on a

a purposive and snow-balling sampling technique, with a gender breakdown of 25 male and 75 female respondents in each location, i.e. a total of one hundred questionnaires in each of the four communities. The findings were further subjected to a discussed during the workshop on internet rights n safety for women held on 3rd and 4th December, 2016 in Bauchi. The meeting afforded participants opportunity to further validate the strategies developed in the strategy section and to initiate a process of developing a comprehensive advocacy plan for gender digital inclusion.

Given that the focus of this research was on the digital marginalization of women, our primary respondents were women. Drawing from the argument of M. Mamdani that unless you experience oppression, you cannot struggle to overcome it (Kabeer, 2005), we thought it was important to understand how from the perspectives of women experience and live their digital marginalization and how they struggle or should struggle to overcome it. But from the point of advocacy, it was equally important to understand the mindset of those who feel women should not use the internet so that we develop appropriate counter narratives and arguments to these. This therefore made it imperative for us to both engage both female and male respondents in trying to come terms with the realities of digital marginalization of women in the northern Nigeria.

1.4 Scope

The research is supposed to cover 13 states of Northwest and Northeast Nigeria. However, due to time and resource constraints only two local governments in two states were piloted. Nassarawa and Ungogo local governments in Kano State, Northwest, and Azare and Jamaare in Bauchi state, in the Northeast.

These 13 states are not homogenous. However, they were selected for this research because Muslims constitute a significant percentage of their population.

1.5 Limitations

We have a modest sample. The largest (the structured questionnaire survey) comprised four hundred respondents. This should be compared with several millions potential respondents.

The second limitation is related to the first. A pertinent question in any survey research is how representative of the population is the sample used in a particular research. Only a random sampling technique can be used as a representative of the general population. Since our research was conducted in only two out of 13 states in the Northwest and Northeast Nigeria and given our modest sample, which is based on a snow-balling sample, we cannot generalize our findings. However, our research is the first of its kind and, therefore, our results could provide useful insight for policy and serve as a basis for further research.

1.6 Structure of the Report

The report consists of five substantive chapters following this introductory chapter. Chapter 2 provides the contextual background of the research, reviewing the socio-economic and cultural characteristic of the region, locating the place of women within the complex web of social relations define by patriarchy. It also locates the region within the wider national context in terms of access to education and infrastructure (such as telecommunication and power) as well as the economic status of the region who determines to a large degree the extent of affordability of internet by people, and especially women, in the region.

Chapter 3 presents and discusses the result of the research, largely drawing from the quantitative aspect of the research. In chapter 4, we distilled the key factors and issues that frame the digital marginalization of women as they negotiate the use the internet. Chapter 5 which is an expansion of the strategy document (CITAD, 2016) is our expectations of what each of the critical stakeholders identified should do in order to address the digital marginalization of women in the country in general and the north in particular. The concluding chapter summarizes the broad issues that have to be addressed to overcome gender-based digital exclusion.

CHAPTER 2: THE CONTEXT

2.1. Introduction

The factors that determine the effective use of the internet by individuals include awareness, availability, accessibility and affordability. While both awareness and availability are externally driven to user communities, accessibility and affordability are shaped by both internal and external factors. From the internal side, accessibility is about the capacity of the individual to interface and use the internet, that is, about skills and competences to make use of it. On the other hand, affordability, which is relative, is a function of both the economic status of the user and the economic forces that shape the cost of access and use. The place of economic status can be seen from the fact that, whereas among higher income groups a proportion of internet users in the country was 52%, among lower income groups, it was only 27%. This is why strategies for bridging affordability tend to focus on subsidy provision by governments.

In economically poor communities affordability will be low. But economically poor communities often also have poor educational attainments. In this sense, low affordability and low accessibility tend to co-exist. The states in the north are relatively poorer. They also are behind in terms of educational achievements. It is clear, therefore, that both accessibility and affordability, especially for women are problematic in these states.

The zones have the worse poverty indicators, as shown in table 3.1.

Table 2.1. Zonal incidence of poverty by different poverty measures

Zone	Food Poor	Absolute Poor	Relative Poor	Dollar Per Day
North Central	38.6	59.5	67.5	59.7
North East	51.5	69.0	76.3	69.1
North West	51.8	70.0	77.7	70.4
South East	41.0	58.7	67.0	59.2
South-South	35.5	55.9	63.8	56.1
South west	25.4	49.8	59.1	50.1

Source: National Poverty Profile 2010 (NBS, 2012)

Incidentally, the two zones have also the highest levels of unemployment in the country. It was unemployment that boomeranged in the Boko Haram insurgency in the North East and parts of the North West. Unemployment is a consequence of three factors. First, there is low level educational attainment in the region. Secondly, there is increasing decrease in soil productivity in an area that is largely agrarian, compounded by land hunger due to overpopulation, desertification and other climate change consequences. Finally, the two zones, as shown in Fig 2.1, have highest birthrates in the country. For women in the region, the burden is thus further compounded by frequent births and the attendant high maternal mortality rates in the two zones.

With this level of poverty, there is very little disposable income to afford internet access and use by especially the women majority of

Fig 2.1: Total Fertility Rate by Zone



Source: Lubeck (2013)

2.2. The North within Nigeria

The north or more specifically the north east and the north-west zones of the Nigeria are considered the poorest parts of the country in terms of development indices. This is particularly true of the educational profiles of the states in the region. Education, as noted earlier, is critical

to the ability to use the internet, since basic literacy is a prerequisite to its use. Its importance can be seen from the disaggregated data, which show that in 2015, although the national internet users stood at 39% for the country, the figure for educated people was 53% while for less educated people it was only 9%.

Table 2.2 shows the percentage of out-of-school children by zones. It is seen that the three zones in the region (north east, North west and north central) have the largest percentage. Indeed whereas the percentage at the primary school for the North West (the highest) is 57.04% the corresponding higher zone in the south is only 9.32% for the South East. This similarly reflected at the junior secondary school level.

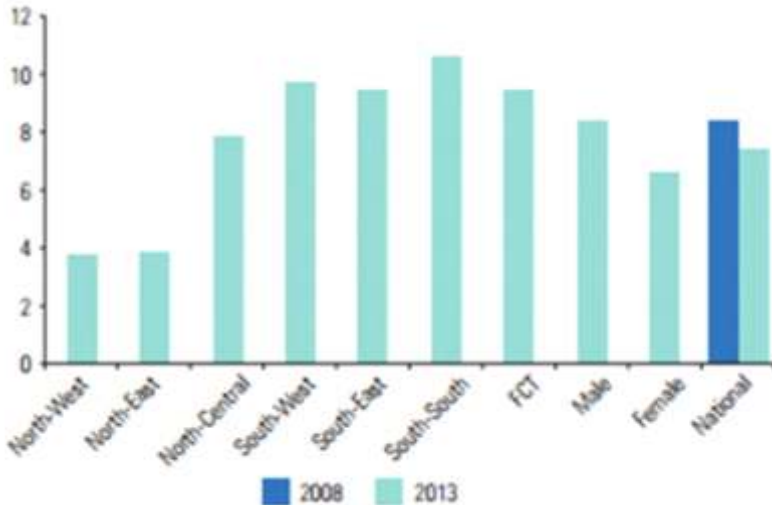
Table 2.2: Percentage of out of school children by zones.

S/N	Zone	Primary school	Junior secondary school
1.	North East	49.71%	49.68%
2.	North Central	23.0%	22,1%
3.	North West	57.04%	56.57%
4.	South east	9.32%	4.44%
5.	South South	8.88%	6.05%
6.	South West	8.05%	6.67%

Source: FME 2015

Figure 2.2 shows the mean years of schooling per zone. Again, the three zones have the lowest mean years of schooling.

Fig 2.2: Mean years of schooling per zone



Source: NBS (2015)

2.2. North: Culture and Religion

Religion is taken very seriously in the region. Twelve out of the 19 states are implementing Islamic Sharia. This means that, in civic matters, the Islamic legal system takes precedence in those states. The two states where this research was conducted are among those where the Sharia is being implemented. Although Islam recognizes the rights of women (Mustapha, 2004), a peculiarly patriarchal interpretation that is culturally nuanced tends to discourage women participation in public life (Hauwa Mahdi, 2006). The extreme level of this is purdah, the practice of seclusion in which married women have not only to be fulltime housewives but also are not to be seen in public functions. This is particularly practiced among the rural rich and the middle and lower urban classes.

The dominance of patriarchal structures is not limited to the adherents of Islam only. It is also prevalent, though in a lesser degree, among the

adherents of Christianity in the region. The only major difference is that, unlike many Muslims adherents, Christian adherents do not discourage their wives from public participation. However, when it comes to political participation, women of both faiths are generally systematically squeezed out.

It is this patriarchal ideology (in both Islam and Christianity) that makes women objects of control by their husbands. This control is exercised through a web of social norms and expectations that determines what a woman should do and should not do. One of those that they should not do is engage in social communications with men other than their husbands or relations. Most men, from both Islam and Christianity backgrounds, see the internet as a platform where women can be exposed to values, norms and practices that are considered negative in their communities.

2.4. Women and Education

The national gender parity index (GPI) at the primary school level was 0.85 in 2010. This means that gender disparity is being gradually closed at that level. However, a large disparity remains at the higher levels of education. This disparity is not uniform across the country but is varied. Table 2.3 shows the GPI for student enrolment in junior secondary school. It is seen that the three zones in the north have the worse GPI. The GPI becomes worse as we move higher up in the education ladder.

Table 2.3: Gender parity index in enrolment.

S/N	Zone	ECD	Primary	Junior sec. school
1.	North East	0.92	0.75	0.35
2.	North Central	0.95	0.71	0.68
3.	North West	0.85	0.89	0.35
4.	South east	0.99	1.00	2.75
5.	South South	1.02	1.01	1.47
6.	South West	1.00	1.03	1.55

Source UBEC, 2010

Access to education for the girl-child in the north in particular is still curtailed. Many girls are denied the chance for education, as they are married off at a very young age. In spite of the various support for girl-child education across the country and regions, girls' enrolment at school is very low. None of the states in both the north-east and the north-west was able to achieve the MDG target of gender parity in primary school enrolment.

Given that many girls missed out on the opportunity to be in school, the literacy rate is comparatively lower for women than for men. Consequently, the shock of women who can competently use the internet is much lower for women in the region than men.

2.5. Women and Political Participation

Women in the region are generally politically marginalized. Very few are able to contest elections for political office or even be appointed to sensitive positions by government. This is not because women do not want to contest elections but because they are systematically disadvantaged by the system (Okome and Zakiya, 2013, Ibrahim and Salihu, 2004). In the 1999 general elections, women only won 2.7% and 3.33% of the legislative seats nationally (the Senate and the House of Representatives, respectively). This was only marginally improved in 2003 when women won 5.28% of the seats in the House of Representatives, but in the 13 states, the figure was only 5 out of 141 seats. In the last elections held in 2015, women even performed worse than in the previous rounds, as nationally they won on 3 out of 141 seats. In the 13 states under reference, they won just.

Table 2.4 shows the position of women in 12 of the 13 states of the northeast and north west. The result is that their voices are hardly present in the key political decision making organs of governance in these states.

Table 3.5: distribution of political offices by gender

N	State	State Legislators		National Legislators		Local Government Chairmen	
		M	F	M	F	M	F
1.	Adamawa	25	2	8	3	20	1
2.	Bauchi	30	1	15	0	20	0
3.	Borno	24	0	23	1	27	0
4.	Jigawa	30	0	14	0	26	0
5.	Kaduna	34	0	22	0	23	0
6.	Gombe	25		8	1	11	0
7.	Katsina	34	0	18	0	34	0
8.	Kano	40	0	28	0	44	0
9.	Taraba	24		9	0	15	1
10.	Zamfara	24	0	10	0	14	0
11.	Sokoto	30	0	14	0	23	0
12.	Yobe	24	0	10	0	17	0
13.	Total	344	3	179	5	274	2

Source: compiled by the researchers

It is thus clear that women in the region are politically marginalized. Their voices are shrill and their presence in decision making rooms tokenistic. This course is the result of both their limited access to educational opportunities and economic marginalization.

2.5. Women and the Economy

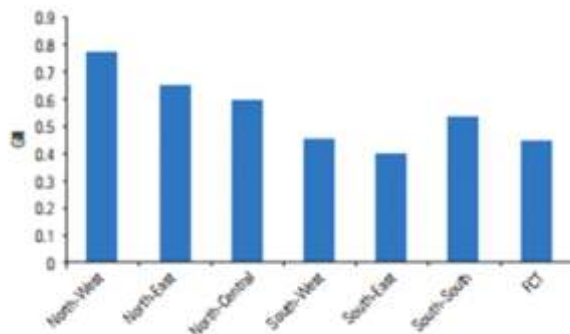
As affordability is a function of economic status, it is important to note that women in general are economically marginalized in the country. A famous study in the 1980s about poverty ended up with the portrait that poverty has a female face, implying that there were more women living in poverty than men. This is worse in the north for three reasons. Firstly, in the majority of women in the region are fulltime house wives.

This means that their labour is unpaid, denying them with the independent means of livelihood. Secondly, there are more women unemployed than men. Third, in even where women are engaged in business, they are mostly crowded in the informal sector that is characterized by hard labour and is very tedious.

Two factors contribute to make it difficult for any woman to go in the economic scale. One is that as they are marginalized and absent at policy decision making places, policies made hardly taking into consideration the perspectives and interests of women. Secondly, as education is critical to personal empowerment, the great majority of women never have the opportunity to rise to the position that could transform them into successful business entrepreneurs. Limited opportunities for access to education means that they do not have the opportunity to acquire the skills needed for the formal sector of the economy. Early marriage also adds to the fact that they are reduced to care givers at home for children and their husbands. Even government youth empowerment programmes tend to unwittingly discriminate against young girls who are married. Youth empowerment programmes are for youth, who are seen as unmarried. Young mothers, although by age are youth, because they have children of their own, are often seen as mothers and passed the youth bracket and, therefore, missed out of these opportunities.

Although nationally women are marginalized, this marginalization is worse in the two zones, as can be seen from the gender inequality index shown in Figure 2.3.

Fig 2.3: Nigeria's Gender Inequality Index (G11) by Geopolitical Zones in 2013



Source: NBS, 2015

CHAPTER 3: THE RESEARCH

3.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

As pointed in the introduction, this research consists of two data collection procedures, close and open-ended interviews. The research was conducted in two states, Kano and Bauchi states of the Northwest and the Northeast, respectively. Four locations were selected in these two states, namely: Azare, Dogon Jeji, Dakata and Zaura dan Baba. This selection represents a mixture or one urban and one semi-urban location in each of the two selected states.

3.2 Structured Questionnaire - Close-ended Interview

The total number of respondents for the structured, close-ended questionnaire was 300, comprising 50 females and 25 males in each of the four locations.

In order to determine level of internet usage, we asked two types of questions. The first uses a narrow definition of internet usage. This is mostly limited to the use of social media. The second is the wider definition, full internet subscription, the use of email and web browser to access online information.

Looking at the social media, 36%, 37% and 4.5% of the female respondents reported that they use Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter respectively. This is compared with 55% for Facebook, 41% WhatsApp and 12% Twitter for males. A total of 27.5% the females use social media only which is higher than the male by 17.5 percentage points (11% of male use social media only).

Table 3.1: Social Media Usage

	Female	Male
Facebook	36%	55%
WhatsApp	37%	41%
Twitter	4.5%	12%
Email	4.5%	28%
Viber	0%	1%
Other Social Media	1%	1%

Source: FME 2015

On the mode of access 73% of female use smart phones/tablets and ordinary phone.

On the wider definition of internet usage and full subscription to internet services, the figures are 11% and 16% for females and males, respectively. Another 3% of the male use a combination of both social media and full internet on their phones, tablets and computers.

Table 3.2: Internet Subscription Type

	Female	Male
Fixed Data	21%	49%
Social Media Only	27.5%	11%
Full Internet subscription	11%	16%
Institutional Subscription	1%	1%
Combination of Subscription	1.5%	3%
Other type of Subscription	1%	1%

So we asked the reasons for the very low internet usage by women, using both narrow and wider definitions of internet usage. There are several reasons. These are highlighted in the introduction. But we need to generate concrete figures.

Table 3.3: Mode of Internet Access

	Female	Male
Computer	6.5%	8%
Smart phone	42%	45%
Ordinary phone	31%	25%
Multitude	4%	15%

First, we observed that 65% of husbands do not allow their wives to access the internet. For unmarried females, it is their fathers who decide whether they could use the internet. Out of the 100 male respondents, 60.7% expressed concern about their daughters using the internet.

But even the females themselves have concerns about using the internet. This is the response of a staggering 81.87% of the female respondents.

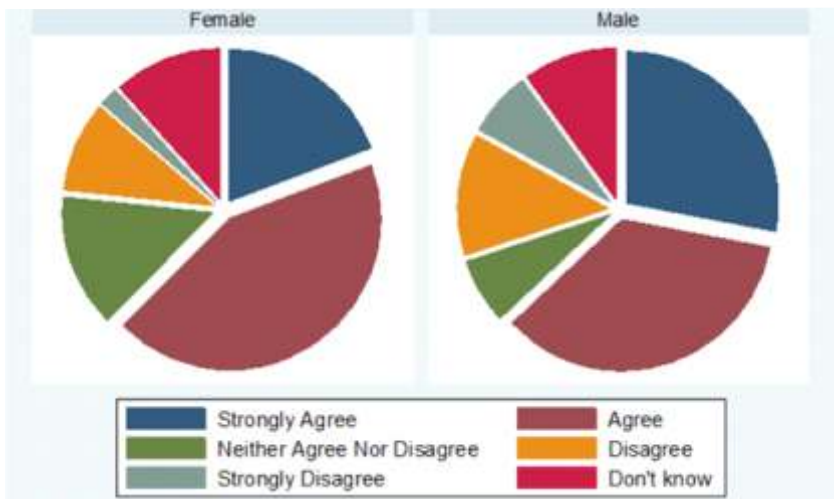
We then attempted to determine the major concerns expressed by both males, both as husbands and fathers, and females, as potential users of the internet. We asked respondents if their concerns about (and in some cases aversion to) internet usage is due to religious concerns. 62.4 of female agree, to a certain degree, that there are religious concerns. A similar figure is reported by male respondents (63%).

If there are religious concerns about the internet by women, how is this concern generated, transmitted and/or propagated? What is the role of religious leaders/clerics and the kind of preaching they do in promoting this line of thinking. About 70% of female and 79% male respondents are aware of clerics who speak against women internet Access. About 59% of female and 64% of male reported that they have actually come across such clerics.

Fig 3.1 There is Religion and Moral Concern

Next, we asked their views on clerics who speak against women internet access. About 51% of females and 62% of males share this line of preaching.

Fig 3.2: View on Clerics who speak against women access.



We were unable to tease out the role of cultural practices in promoting these types of sentiments. A similar issue was raised at one of the validation meetings. Someone asked, why is internet usage by both males and females very high in the Middle East and North African countries, which are predominantly Muslim countries? We have no answer to this question because our research is empirical. We did not specifically ask this question and do not wish to speculate on these reasons.

We then asked about the other factors discouraging female from using the internet. We asked female respondents to choose two most important factors, because there are several of them, depending on the individual and are not mutually exclusive.

Table 3.4: Factors discouraging Female from using Internet?

	Percentage
Unsolicited Messages	20.50
Unwanted Messages	24.00
Indecent Materials	22.50
Lack of Privacy	28.00
Exposure to the Public	15.00
Insecurity	12.00
Other Concerns	0.50

Note: Respondents were asked to choose, two most important factors. Lack of privacy came second as the most important concern on the use of the Internet after religion, as selected by 28.0% of the female respondents. Other concerns in order of importance based on percentage of responses are: unwanted messages 24.0%, indecent materials 22.50%, unsolicited messages 20.5%, exposure to the public 15.00%, insecurity 12.0%, and an omnibus factor or other concerns, 0.5%.

Apart from these concerns, the respondents attributed poor internet use by both males and females in Nigeria to poor internet and telecommunication infrastructure, rural-urban bias and government policy.

Table 3.5: Overall Internet is Useful

	Both	Female	Male
Strongly Agree	52%	51.5%	53%
Agree	38%	39%	36%
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	4%	3%	6%
Disagree	4%	4%	4%
Strongly Disagree	0.7%	1%	-
Don't know	13%	1.5%	1%

In spite of these concerns, both female and male respondents agreed that, on the whole, internet is useful. This view was expressed by a staggering 90% and 89% of females and males, respectively.

Looking at the socioeconomic attributes of our respondents, the overall average age was 30.5 years (34.8 males and 28.4 females). The average income is 9200 for female and 28770 for males. 71.1% of the females have a secondary school qualification or some lower, and compares with 57% of the males, who have post-secondary qualifications. Although our sample is not representative of the population, there is clearly a case for gender balance in education and the internet could have served as to bridge the gap.

3.6: Qualification of respondents

	Female	Male
Non-Formal Education	16.75%	11.11%
Primary School	11.68%	8.08%
Secondary School	42.64%	23.23%
Postsecondary - ND/NCE	23.86%	36.36%
Degree - HND/BSc	3.55%	20.20%
Postgraduate Qualification	1.52%	1.01%

Most of our respondents (76%) are either unemployed, full-time housewives or still in school.

3.7: Respondents' type of job

	Percentage
Unemployed	28.42%
Active schooling	23.97%
Full-time housewife	23.63%
Small and large scale businesses	13.01%
Civil/public servant	1.37%
Teacher/lecturer	4.79%
Law enforcement	0.34%
Nurse and paramedical	3.77%
Professional	0.34%
Other	0.34%

3.3: Unstructured Questionnaire – Open-ended Interview

The open-ended interview was administered on 40 individuals, 10 interviewees per location. The following people were particularly targeted, village heads/community leaders, Islamic clerics, businessmen/businesswomen, women leaders, ordinary housewives, ordinary husbands.

Eighty and forty percent of the urban and rural respondents use the Internet, respectively. From the interviews, the following reasons were advanced by the interviewees for low Internet usage in the Northwest and Northeast Nigeria; lack of formal education, lack of Internet awareness, lack of computer literacy, most software not in the local language, most people don't appreciate the importance of the Internet, poor network and exploitation by Internet service providers, poverty and non-affordability, restrictions placed on females by male guardians - husbands and fathers, and government policy.

On why people use the Internet the following benefits were reported: as a source of information, which saves energy and time; helps students in doing research and assignment, helps in banking activities (e-banking), business opportunities, social networking, health tips, and on-line registration.

We also tested the extent of Internet use. First, we asked respondents how they handled online registrations, which have become diffused among most government and business organisations, for example, admission and registration for entry into

academic institutions, registration for (external) examinations, international passport, vehicle license, etc. We asked respondents how they handled such registration. Only 10% use personal computers, the rest use Internet Café. Twenty five percent have done on-line shopping. Not surprising though, majority of these (70% of the respondents who have done on-line shopping) are in urban areas. We found that all of those who use the Internet in addition to social media also read on-line news and use it to access academic materials.

We discussed extensively on the most important question, why men refuse to allow their wives and children to use the Internet. The response is largely similar to the responses from the close-ended, structured interview. The reasons advanced are: lack of awareness, wrong perception of religion, lack of privacy, indecent materials, unsolicited and unwanted messages from unknown individuals, didn't want daughters and wives to be exposed to the public, insecurity, and poverty. However, there was a consensus that, irrespective of the mode of instruction, Muslims are enjoined to aggressively seek for knowledge.

Female respondents were asked why there is low internet use among them. They adduced this to the following factors: Lack of internet facilities and poverty, illiteracy and lack of awareness, lack of privacy, lack of ICT skills and Internet awareness, lack of interest, and unsolicited messages.

On religion, only 20% reported they have religious concerns on the use of the Internet. About 48% are aware of clerics who speak against the Internet. But only 13% have come across such clerics. None of these interviewees share the sentiments expressed by such clerics who speak against the use of the Internet by women.

3.4: The Outcome of Research Validation Meeting

As earlier mentioned, we organized a validation meeting in Kano and Bauchi. The meetings was attended by many stakeholders from academia, students from Islamic schools and secular institutions and civil society organizations, in each of the two state. The Bauchi meeting was chaired by Maryam Bagel, a member of the Bauchi State House of

Assembly, while in the Kano meeting was chaired by Altine Abdullahi, the Chairperson of Kano State Association of Widows.

Our preliminary research results/findings were presented and discussed at the meeting. It also addressed related issues, such as: the factors that engender low Internet access amongst women, for example, the inability to create time to use the internet in their respective homes (doing domestic chores), a major factor in internet usage by women; why some men restrict their wives from using the Internet; why some clerics preach against women getting access to internet; why women have preferences for certain contents for example why do they use WhatsApp more than Facebook?

The meeting observed following as the major factors responsible for the relatively low internet usage by women. Most software are not in the local language in the presence of low literacy rate amongst women, financial factors, lack of public enlightenment on how to use the computer, lack of internet facilities and restriction by husbands and fathers.

It was further observed that young women are the most affected in poor internet use in the research area. Majority of the women lack internet awareness and lack computer literacy, some women don't even know the meaning of the internet, while language has become the major barrier for some. Another problem is lack of contents that are more relevant to women in this particular society. For the few that use the internet, there were complaints of exploitation by internet service providers and poor IT infrastructure.

CHAPTER 4: ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

4.1. Introduction

The research and stakeholders' meetings confirmed that more men use the internet than women in the region. Both the research and stakeholders meetings, therefore, sought to find out the key factors hindering the effective use of the internet by women in the region. While some of these factors are the same for men and women (such as inadequate infrastructure), there are some specific factors that make fewer women use the internet. Addressing these factors will form the basis for a gender digital inclusion agenda. Although there are a number of programmes, projects and initiatives that do promote greater access to internet in the country, they do not form a coherent inclusivity agenda with clearly defined goals and strategies. Some of these include the National Broadband Plan (FRN, 2013), the *SmartWomanNigeria* of the Federal Ministry of Communication (FMCT, 2014) and the various initiatives by both the Universal Service Provision Fund (USPF) and the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA). Also in this direction are the numerous initiatives in the education sector (FME, 2010).

From the findings, these factors can be grouped into four as follows:

4.2. Education-Related Factors

Education is taken in its broader sense, from awareness to having deeper knowledge and skills to use the internet. Education is critical to the effective use of the internet in three different ways. First, education is a pre-condition for one to be aware about the importance of the internet: what they can use it for and with what benefits. In a region in which the female literacy rate is less than 40%, it means that over 60% of the women are automatically excluded from the effective use of the internet. For those who are literate, lack of awareness about the internet is a key impediment to its use. Unless one is aware of the internet, she cannot be expected to use it. While many have heard about the internet, they do not know what it is and what it can do to them or what benefits they can derive from it. In this sense, they can be

described as those that are unaware about the internet. The majority of the women in the region fall into this category.

Second, is that education is a determinant for people to seek where and how to access and use the internet. Without education, even when it is readily available, citizens may have no motivation to it. The majority of the women who are uneducated have no incentive to want find out where the internet can be accessed.

The final aspect of the education-related factors is digital skills. The use of the internet requires digital literacy but digital literacy itself can only happen when people have basic literacy. Unlike other technology or tools, internet requires a specific skill set for its use. This skill can only be acquired by those who are educated. Since the majority of the women are not educated, they are handicapped in their aspirations to use the internet. The skill for effective use of the internet is a major hindrance to its use by women.

4.3 Access-Related Factors: Although access is generally within the same level of penetration, for both men and women, women face more problems in accessing and using the internet. Access is in particular shaped by:

a. **Physical Access:** access to the internet is limited. Majority of the people access the internet through their smartphones. However not all can afford smartphones or even the airtime. As can be seen, the three zones have limited access to mobile phone, as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Access to mobile phone (2010)

S/N	Region	Access	No Access
1.	North East	48.3	51.7
2.	North Central	74.8	25.2
3.	North West	48.6	51.4
4.	South East	80.2	19.8
5.	South South	69.6	30.4
6.	South West	83.2	16.8
7.	National	63.9	36.1

Source: NBS, Annual Abstract of Statistics, 2011

In terms of the internet access. The data is consisted as shown in table 2.4. It is seen that both northwest has the lowest internet access (0.81%) followed by North East (1.6%).

Table 4.2: Access to Internet (2010)

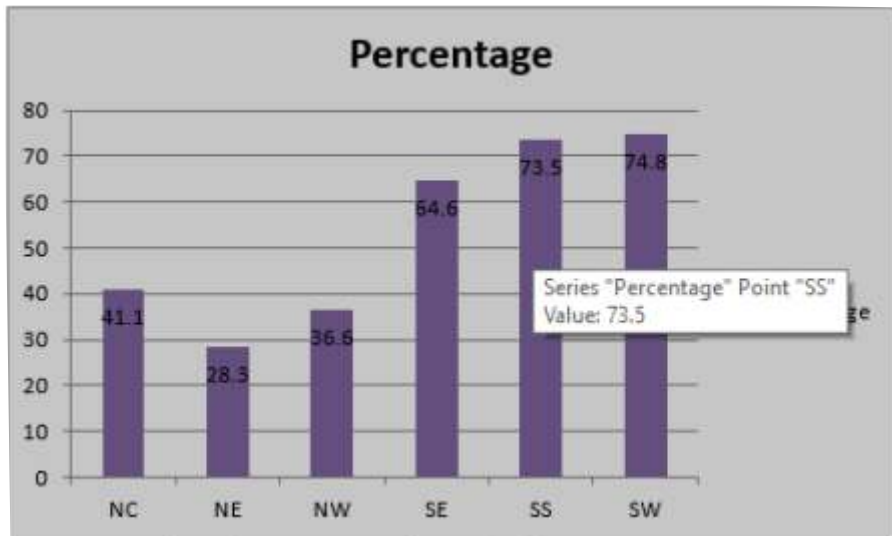
S/N	Region	Access	No Access
1.	North East	1.6	98.4
2.	North Central	4.2	95.8
3.	North West	0.8	99.2
4.	South East	2.6	97.4
5.	South South	4.3	95.7
6.	South West	8.2	91.8
7.	National	3.6	96.4

Source: NBS, Annual Abstract of Statistics, 2011

For many, therefore, they have to go to public cyber-cafes. These cafes, as our respondents pointed out, are not culturally sensitive to either married women or to even women generally. They are usually inhibited by “young boys”. Consequently, most women would rather stay away and get their brothers or sons or even nephews to access and use the internet on their behalf than they going there to do it themselves

- b. **Power:** Lack of electricity, especially in rural communities, is a key impediment to the use of the internet. Like in other aspects, the people in the regions have low access to electricity. This is shown in Fig 4.1.

Fig 4.1: households access to electricity by zone



Source: NBS (2012) LSMS General Household Survey

- c. **Languages:** Many people see a disincentive in the use of the internet, as the content is in a language that they don't speak. Although the educated elites understand and communicate in English, the vast majority either communicate in Hausa or other languages that are spoken in the region. Although a number of people use Hausa as the language of communication in social media, such as twitter and Facebook (Facebook has a Hausa version now), there is very little development content that is on the net in Hausa. Even websites of local organizations and government agencies are in English.
- d. **Content:** Many see inappropriate content that is not relevant to them at best or offering and offering to their cultural sensibilities. This is not surprising given the seriousness with which people in the two regions regard religion and its etiquette of what is right and acceptable and what is not.
- e. **Cost:** The cost of service is a factor to limiting the use of the internet. One indicator of affordability is the comparative

terms women in the north are the poorest of the poor in the country.

- f. **Access points:** household penetration of internet in the country is limited. This is worse for the north east part of the country where the Boko Haram insurgency has substantially destroyed telecommunication infrastructure. This means that the great majority of the people have to access the internet either using smartphones or at public access points which can either be institutional (located in institutions, schools and community centres) and in commercial cybercafés. These public access points are mainly in state capitals and few larger towns with educational institutions. Both commercial cybercafés and institutional internet centres are not only located far from home, which makes them difficult to access by married women but that the designs of these centres do not take into consideration the cultural imperative of providing different sections for women and men, and instead all are crowding them in the same space. Given this strong cultural demand for separate space for women, many women find it difficult to use these access points which are many populated by young boys. In addition, these access points do not have provision for where women with children can keep their children while they use the internet.

4.4. Attitude-related Factors:

By attitude, we mean opinions that people hold due to either cultural or religious perceptions. Here we find that 55 % of men do not want their wives to use the internet even as they themselves are using it. Also, about 61% said they do want their daughters to use the internet. This means that both husbands and fathers discourage, if not ban, their wives and daughters respectively from using the internet. This is how someone puts it in a twitter post:

“If you display your wife to the world, others are going to see her and you cannot control what Satan will do with some hearts. They will like her” - @PenAbdul

This means that women are under intense social pressure not to use the internet. There are stories of women whose marriages had collapsed because of the use of the internet.

A second problem relating to the above is the widespread percent by men and accepted by women that only women of easy virtue use the internet. To drive home the pressure a religious angle is added. Over 60% of the respondents believe there are religious and moral concerns about the use of the internet. Among the female respondents only, the percentage is even higher at over 62%. With respect to religion only, 67.57% of the female respondents think there are religious concerns while for the male it was almost 80%. On whether they personally agree with this concern, 65% of the females' and 65.65% the males' agreed. A number of clerics have been known to have preached against the use of the internet. When respondents were asked if they were aware about these clerics, 69.63% and 78.57% female and male respondents respectively said yes. On whether they had personally come across such clerics, 58.92% and 63.44% again said yes. Perhaps the higher percentage of the male respondents being aware and indeed coming across such clerics has to do with the fact that more men attend religious functions, such as preaching, than women. An important issue was whether they agree with those clerics who preach against the use of the internet. Overall, 54.95% agree that it is wrong for women to use the internet. This percentage is higher for males (62.25%) while for females the corresponding figure is 51.28%. The figure for men is not surprising as majority have said they would not allow their wives or daughters to use the internet. What is surprising is the higher percentage of female respondents who believe with the clerics, who preach against the use of the internet. This means that there is not only the acceptance of this but also its internalization by them. It is instructive that over 90% of the respondents believe that overall the internet is useful.

4.5. Online Issues Factors

A number of online issues that women face tend to reinforce the attitude-related factors. These include:

- a. There is too much of base content, especially in the

social media, which many women find offensive. Fear of indecent materials is cited as the third most important factor that discourages women from using the internet. In both our interviews and the stakeholders' forums, people specifically made references to pornographic content and other sexual related materials that they find offensive to their cultural and religious sensibilities. Both men and women consider this immoral and a corruption and do not want their children, especially female ones, to be exposed to it.

- b. Women feel that being online undermines their privacy. This fear of lack of privacy can be seen from the fact that more women use whatsapp than other social media and the reason they give is that whatsapp is seen as being more protective of their privacy than the others. Among the factors that discourage women from using the internet, lack of privacy came first with 28.00%. When exposure to public (which is also about privacy) is added, the response due lack of privacy is over 43%.
- c. Online harassment: women cite online harassment as one factor that discourages them from going online. Such online harassment includes unsolicited and unwanted messages, sending suggestive messages, outright sexual harassment and fear of blackmail that they had seen had happened to some other women. Unwanted messages came second among the factors that discourage women from using the internet. When unsolicited message (20.50%) and insecurity (12.00%) are added, the figure here rises to over 50%.
- d. Cybercrime: d) Cybercrime: cybercrime which is on the rise in the country is one of the fears that many people have about the internet. A number of people have lost money to either email scam or to other forms of

internet related crimes. Yahoo-yahoo is a common terminology in Nigeria for internet related crime in which young people operating from cybercafés sent out thousands of letters. Personality and identity theft are very rampant in the country which makes people to fear being online.

4.6 Fear of the Internet

The issue of privacy plays out in two different directions. For husbands, they think that for their wives to use the internet, especially social media, means that they would come into contact with other men who are neither their relations nor children. Such contacts are contrary to religious teaching. Here what is at stake is an attempt to transfer the physical intermingling of the sexes to online space, in which social media interactions are seen as the digital analog of the physical version. On the other hand, women feel completely exposed when they are in social media. Their phone number, their email addresses, their pictures, etc. are now public knowledge.

Much of the fears about both privacy and online harassment owe much to the specific use of the internet than the internet as a whole. From our discussion with participants in both internet and focus group discussions, it was easy to see that, because of the popularity of social media, people tend to see it as the internet and the internet as all social media. This way of thinking blocks those limited or not understanding the internet to conceive of other uses of the internet than just as social media. Even when people use internet banking, they are likely to see it as just a banking service, and not an internet application. This was confirmed by the responses of those who filled the questionnaire in which, while many said they use e-banking, a much smaller figure said they use the internet, a contradiction that can only be explained by a lack understanding of what the internet is. It would seem, therefore, that while there is the reality of inappropriate content on the internet and the actual practice of online harassment. There is also the reality of a poor understanding of the internet, which is at the root of much of the resistance against its being accessed by women in this area.

4.7 Internet Rights Campaign

In all the discussions, including the interviews, FGDs and the two stakeholders' forums as well as at the internet Rights and Safety training for women, respondents and participants indicated that they had not thought of access to internet as a right. They thought that it was something you make efforts to get if you were interested. Participants affirmed that they were not aware of the “African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms”. They equally were not aware of previous campaigns to promote access to the internet, especially for women. Internet penetration and use is thus largely driven by commercial imperatives of telecommunications companies and the ubiquitous use of social media by young people. Although awareness about the importance of the internet is rising among young people (and even some parents) in particular due to increasing movement of certain educational processes online, this has not generated a demand for people in the two zones to regard the access to internet as a right.

It is also obvious from these interactions that the majority of the people see internet as mere communication platform. They did not understand or appreciate its use as tool for development. Although they a number of respondents and participants said they use e-banking and have either filled online forms or have their wards filled online applications relating to admission to higher education, they do not understand the extent of the use of the internet in the educational process. Similarly although a number of them do receive regularly SMS messages from advertisers, they do not make the connection between that and the use of internet as commercial tools. What emerges from this is that people, especially women in the region have a limited notion of what the internet is, and can do to their lives.

Although respondents and participants complained against bad and inappropriate context on the internet, they were not aware that they are campaign against these, especially on pornography and child abuse. They were not aware how they could report cases relating to these and also did know how they could contribute to the campaign. Similarly, they did not know they could that it was illegal to for

advertisers to be sending unsolicited text messages or that there was a campaign against this. While they find this detracting, they did not understand it in terms of intrusion to their privacy. They did not know to which they could file their complaints. They were not aware of the responsibility of the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) to protect telecommunication users from unwanted messages.

CHAPTER 5: AN AGENDA FOR GENDER DIGITAL INCLUSION

5.1. Strategic Agenda

a. Preamble

On the basis of the problems and issues identified from the research, we held two strategy sessions with stakeholders on how to respond to these issues and problems in an effort to promote the digital inclusion of women in the region. We also held follow up FGDs and interviews to get the opinions of others who could not be at the stakeholder meetings. What follows here, placed in a broader perspective of bridging the gender digital divide in the north, is the outcome of these consultations and interactions.

b. **Vision**

Universal access to a free, safe, affordable, transfer and secure internet

c. Mission

Undertake sustained advocacy, awareness building efforts and training initiatives to ensure that all the stakeholders key into the strategic commitment to deliver access to a free, safe, affordable, transparent and secure internet digital inclusion of women in northern Nigeria

d. Goal:

The goal is to promote the digital inclusion of women in Nigeria, especially in the northern part where culture, religion and education have combined to create conditions that make the effective use of the internet by women more difficult.

e. Objectives

- i. Enhance public understanding of the importance of the internet to women
- ii. Increase the number of women who access and use the internet in the region
- iii. Contribute to the digital inclusion of women in the country

- iv. Facilitate the mainstreaming of the voice of women in the Internet Governance Forum
- v. Contribute to the articulation of a national digital inclusion agenda

5.2 Strategies

In order to address the various issues identified and lead to the achievement of the objectives set, it is proposed that all the stakeholders be mobilized to collectively and individually implement the action, initiatives, programmes, projects and policies that will be delivered by the following strategies:

- Conducting public enlightenment to educate women about the importance and benefits of the internet
- Implementing appreciation programmes for men to understand that the use of the internet is not the cause of family problems
- Enacting policies that will improve the accessibility and affordability of access to the internet especially for women
- Conducting training for women to know how to make effective use of the internet
- Promoting the achievement of universal digital literacy among women in the country
- Articulating and implementing a national digital inclusion agenda and strategies that will ensure that no one is left behind in harnessing the benefit of the internet
- Encouraging service providers to implement strategies that will respect and protect the privacy of users and ensure their safety and security
- Conducting advocacy to ensure that those holding negative perceptions about the internet are made to understand and support the efforts to deploy its use
- Improving educational infrastructure to position schools and provide all with digital literacy

- Encouraging IT professionals, content providers and other professionals to provide appropriate and relevant content that incentivize going online
- Supporting efforts at protecting children and women online
- Supporting efforts to ensure the effective implementation of the national curriculum on education, which makes computer studies compulsory at the basic level and compulsory and examinable at secondary school.
- Encouraging populating the internet with relevant content in local languages
- Facilitating the emergence of the voices of women, particularly in the north, around internet policy making, including participation at all levels of the internet governance forum
- Deepening the involvement of the grassroots in the internet government process

5.3 Actors, Role and Activities

Actor	Role	Activities
1. National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA)	Federal government agency responsible for the promotion of the development and use of ICT	<p>• Content development on the internet</p> <p>• Local languages in the internet by supporting academia and IT professionals should work to promote greater insertion of our local languages online</p> <p>• Internet-based entrepreneurship to incentivize going online for women</p>

2.	Nigeria Communications Commission (NCC)	The national telecommunication regulator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support initiative that will promote awareness and skills building for women • Develop initiatives that will help to bring out cost of internet • Provide proactive regulatory oversight that will help users to hold providers accountable for poor quality of service
3.	Universal Service Provision Fund (USPF)	National agency for promotion of access to rural and underserved communities funded from profit tax by telecommunication license holders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should step up its bridging initiatives with particular emphasis to reaching rural women • Consider women in general as an underserved category and provide support subsidized rollout for women • Support training rural women on use of ICTs
4.	Ministry of Communication	Federal Government establishment with responsible on communication policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue the aggressive implementation of the National Broadband Plan • Develop and implement policies that will bring down the cost of internet access in the country
5.	Ministry of Education	Establishment with responsible on education policy at all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the effective implementation of the new education curricula that made ICT compulsory from basic level • Support the provision of ICT tools and infrastructure in public institutions, especially in girls' schools

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the implementation of the ministry ICTs in Education Policy • Encouraging states that do not have ICT in Education Policy to develop one and to fully implement it
6.	Federal Ministry of Science and Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support development of local content that can make internet meaningful to women • Support digital inclusion agenda implementation at the national level • Popularize the use of the internet as part of its science and technology popularize programme
7.	Federal Ministry of Information	<p>Establishment with responsibility for governance public information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support publicity to raise the awareness of women about internet • Support advocacy for government agencies to address the impediments to effective access to and use of internet by women • Encourage media agencies under it to join the campaign the campaign for greater access to the internet by women
8.	Federal Ministry for Youth and Women Affairs	<p>Establishment with direct responsibility for mainstreaming of gender issues in governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop agenda, including the digital for the ministry • Support advocacy for increased access to internet by women

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support ICT training, especially for rural women • Support the campaign against gender harassment online • Promote the participation of women in policy making discussion around internet , including the internet governance forum
9.	National Orientation Agency (NOA) A Federal government agency for public enlightenment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in public sensitization on the importance of internet for women and help to address misconceptions among the parent and husbands about the internet • Support CSOs advocacy for promote awareness about internet • Support CSOs advocacy for promote awareness about internet among women • Promote the campaign for local content as well as against harmful content and practice online
10.	State Governments Policy implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education authorities in the states must take steps to ensure that computer studies is fully mainstream in all schools as required by the national curricula for basic and

			<p>secondary schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State governments are urged to ensure that public-owned schools are provided with ICT facilities, including access to internet • Governments should avoid unnecessary taxation that will increase the cost of access and service of internet • Ensure that public-owned schools are provided with ICT facilities, including access to internet
11.	Federal Government	Policy making and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government should articulate and implement a digital inclusion charter that will address all the various dimensions of the digital divide • Should improve the power situation in the country so as to create the right condition for the effective utilization of the Internet • Subsidize access to internet for educational institutions, especially at secondary school level to the tune of ₦0% • Formally endorse the African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms • Ensure that all internet-related laws and policies are clear,

			transparent and in lien with the principles contained in the African Declaration on internet Rights and Freedoms
12.	Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)	Advocacy, awareness rising and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitize women on the importance of the Internet • Popularize Internet safety, security and privacy protection, especially for women • provide training for women on use of ICTs, including internet • Advocacy for greater access to affordable, safe and secure internet • Campaign for government to endorse and implement the African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms
13.	Private Sector		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should assist by building and equipping community internet access centres to facilitate digital inclusion • Should channel significant portion of their social corporate responsibility to the provision of ICT supports and training for women, especially in rural areas
14.	Internet Service Providers (ISPs)	Key internet sector players	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should ensure that they provide transparent quality service agreement that

		<p>their clients can hold them accountable to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should compensate subscribers for poor and undelivered services • Should take active steps to improve speed and reduce cost of access to their services
15.	Media	<p>Both private and public</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internalize and apply the "Respect, Protect and Remedy" framework to fulfill their duties to uphold internet rights in line with African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedom • Provide support for advocacy, public enlighten and education on internet and women issues • Support the campaign for the protection of child online and against and other harmful practice online • Campaign for government to endorse and implement the African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms
16.	Religion Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitize their followers on the importance of internet to both education and economic development of both

		the individual and the community and also drawing attention to how the negative aspects of the internet can be avoided through training and social safe guards
17.	Community Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitize their communities on the importance of the internet and also help in mobilizing community support and resources to set up internet access points for women in their communities to use
18.	Women Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embark on sustained advocacy to impress on all stakeholders the right of women to access and use the internet • Sensitize women on the importance of the internet to their career development • Promote internet skill acquisition among women by establishing and running internet centres • Campaign for government to endorse and implement the African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms

Parents		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support their children, especially female ones to acquire computer skills • Support campaign to make the internet safe for children • Make conscious effort to monitor the use of internet by their children
Husbands		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciate and respect the right of their wives to access and use the internet • Support their wives to learn to use the internet safely • Support the campaign for safe and secure internet
Communities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilize to support providing opportunities for women, especially girls to learn to use the internet • Ensure the effective utilization of internet centres in the communities and especially encourage women and girls to use them

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

Although the digital marginalization of women is evident across the whole country, it is more prominent and obvious in the northern parts of Nigeria. The explanation for this is complex, as has been shown by this report. The report has discussed this under four blocks of factors, namely education-related, access-related, attitudinal and online issues. Each of these is constituted by sub-factors, forming a myriad of problems that are mutually reinforcing and as well as challenging. In an attempt to address these, chapter 5 has identified strategic stakeholders along with their roles and what is expected of them in addressing gender-based digital marginalization in the country.

As an advocacy focused programme, such an approach is useful, as it is clear what specific role each stakeholder is expected to perform. However, if such a role without addressing overarching more generalized problems will not be effective as it will leave the underlying factors and conditions that shape gender-based digital marginalization unaddressed. In this concluding chapter, we bring out some of the key tissues that need to be addressed in order for the campaign to make substantive progress.

6.2 Develop a National Digital Inclusion Agenda

Nigeria does not have an articulated digital inclusion agenda. While the Universal Service Provision Fund (USPF) has responsibility to drive connectivity to rural and under-served urban communities, its programming is not driven by a clear inclusion agenda. The Universal Service Provision Fund (USPF) is a universal access programme established by virtue of section of the Act established the Nigeria Communication Commission which mandated the NCC to collect 2% profit of telecommunication companies to fund the USPF. The USPF operates as a semi-autonomous agency under the supervision of the NCC with the following mandates:

- Contribute to national economic and social development through enhancing the universal accessibility and availability of telecommunications and ICT infrastructures

and services

- Facilitate the provision of access to ICT services within a reasonable distance to all persons in Nigeria
- Facilitate the provision of infrastructural development to rural and underserved areas in a non-discriminatory manner
- Promote technological innovation in ICT services delivery
- Promote competition in ICT services delivery
- Ensure the effective utilization of funds to leverage investments in rural communications
- Support the establishment of efficient, self-sustaining, market-oriented businesses, which will continue to expand access to ICTs on their own initiative, requiring the minimum amounts of short- and long-term Fund support possible.
- Use ICT to promote greater social equity and inclusion for all the people of Nigeria

It can be seen that none of its mandates directly speaks to the issue of digital inclusion. In fact, none of its mandates relates with the many complex factors that hinder the effective utilization of the internet by women among other digitally marginalized groups, such as people living with disabilities. But it can be help to articulate and drive a digital inclusion agenda that will help to end gender-based digital marginalization. In particular, Nigeria has one of the largest USF in Africa (\$160 million by 2016) even as the country has one the lowest tax and fee payments as proportion of mobile revenue: (Magennis, 2016) page 111.

6.3 Address Gender Based Educational Gap

There is no gainsaying repeating that basic literacy is a pre-condition for digital literacy. But we have seen that in the north, majority of adult

women are not literate. This is the result of the fact that many girls missed out schooling in their school going ages. But even now, the situation is still grave with a large proportion of girls of school going age still out of school. The fact that many girls are outside is not so much about the attitude of their parents but also because governments have not taken the appropriate measures, as well as their unwillingness to invest in the provision of education for the poor. As an experience by CITAD reports (CITAD, 2016: 31), the demand for education for children of the poor is “suppressed because policy makers did not understand fully why there was too much reluctance to enroll children in school”. Understanding this is important to ensuring universal access to basic education. Nigeria has a law that commits to ensure all children have access to free and compulsory basic education, which covers six years of primary school and three years of junior secondary school. Yet, this has remained more of a paper provision than an actual programme that governments at all levels are faithfully implementing.

6.4. Programming for Local Digital Content Agenda

The internet is as good as its content. As a platform for development, people should have access to information that that will assist them in their chosen lives as professionals, students, workers, etc. This means that there has to be appropriate content. Many women complained that that the content they see is not relevant to them. Indeed, it undermines their personality and cultural sensibility. At the moment, there is very little of Nigerian content, especially in Nigerian languages. To incentivize the internet, government must work with other stakeholders to develop a local digital content agenda that will populate the cyber-space with relevant Nigerian content. The Nigeria Internet Registration Association (NIRA), the organization responsible for administration and managing Nigeria's domain name, has been promoting the use of the Nigerian top level domain. A parallel campaign to ensure that these websites have relevant content that will appeal to Nigerians, and especially women, can help drive a local digital content agenda.

6.5 National Capacity for ICT Production

Two of the major constraints on accessing and using ICTs in general and the internet in particular are availability and affordability. Both of this can be improved by building national capacity for the local production of ICT goods and services. There is currently no such an agenda. Although there is a Local Content Policy in the country which requires that government ICT procurement must have a threshold of local content, it does not necessarily lead to the greater availability and affordability of ICT goods and services in the country. The local content, define as broadly to encompass hardware, software, digital content, professionals and training programmes, is geared to ensure that some market share is preserved for Nigerian businesses, which could be importers of foreign content. As it is local, content policy is not about digital inclusion but promoting local businesses. In other words, it is concerned with ensuring local businesses benefit and make profit from the ICT sector. In this sense, it does not address the questions of both availability and affordability to promote greater availability and affordability. The country has to move from the status of consumer of ICT goods and service to simultaneous producer and consumer of ICT goods and services. NITDA is responsible for promoting ICT development in the country and must expand its horizon to set sight on loftier vision than it does now.

6.6 Full Implementation of the National Education Curricula

In recognition of the important of ICT, in 2009, the Federal Government introduced a new national curriculum which made computer studies compulsory at both primary and secondary schools. In addition, in 2010, the Federal ministry of Nigeria approved an ICT in Education Policy, which articulated among other things to “facilitate the teaching and learning processes” (Federal Ministry of Education, 2010: xiv). In spite of this, the implementation of the curriculum has remained partial with many public schools not doing so (Dalberg, 2015). State governments who own the bulk of the public schools are unable or not willing to equip the schools to fully implement this provision. Instead, there are very few pilot schools where provide for ICT facilitate is made. The result is that majority of students pass out

with opportunity to learn in schools. In addition, although ICT is made compulsory, it is not examinable in the terminal examinations of secondary schools, such as NECO and WAEC. This means that there is no incentive, as it will not add value to the competitiveness of students to gain admission to higher institutions. For this reason, therefore, state governments are reluctant about the implementation of the curricula and have often requested or deferred the full implementation. The full implementation of the curricula will ensure that, at least, girls who are in school will come out with the relevant and skills and knowledge about internet and thus help in bridging the digital gender divide.

6.7 Launch a Nation Wide ICT-Awareness Programme

As the research shows, there is very low level awareness about the internet, especially among women in the north but also among men. This low level awareness has allowed for the negative perceptions and attitudes to internet to persist. Unfortunately, these negative attitudes derived from the poor understanding of the internet affects women more than men. This can be addressed through a major ICT-awareness programme. Nigeria has never implemented a robust and sustained public awareness programme to enlighten the citizens, especially women, about ICTs in general and the internet in particular. All ICT promotion and awareness programmes tend to target civil servants and mostly the convinced. NITDA can lead in this but, as its mandate reproduced below, does not really give it much weight to do this:

- a. Facilitate the establishment and development of appropriate infrastructure for information technology in Nigeria both for the public and private sectors, urban-rural development, the economy and the government
- b. Encourage and accelerate the use of electronic data interchange and other forms of electronic communication transactions as an alternative to paper-based methods in government, commerce, education, the private and public sectors, labour,

- other fields, where the use of electronic communication may improve the exchange of data and information;
- c. Encourage and accelerate the networking of all government departments, offices, etc
 - d. Develop and monitor guidelines for the certification of digital signatures and e-commerce encryption services;
 - e. Render advisory and service in all information technology matters to the public and private sectors;
 - f. Set up Advisory and Technical Committees as it deems fit to advise it on standards to be set for information technology-related equipment to be used in the country and other related issues;
 - g. Create incentives to promote the use of information technology in all the spheres of life in Nigeria, including the setting up of information technology parks;
 - h. Recommend the introduction of appropriate regulations and legislations by Government to encourage private sector investment in the information technology industry;
 - i. Collaborate with any local government, state government 'company, firm or person in any activity, which, in the opinion of the Agency, is intended to facilitate attainment of the objectives of this Act;
 - j. Encourage, undertake and participate in research and development activities:
 - k. Advise the Government on ways of promoting the development of information technology in Nigeria, including providing appropriate information technology legislation, to enhance the vibrant development and growth of the industry; and 4

- a. Accelerate internet penetration in Nigeria and promote sound internet governance by supervising the management and administration of the country code top level domain (.ng), as set out in the second schedule of this Act”
- b. Perform such other duties, which, in the opinion of the Agency, are necessary or expedient to ensure the efficient performance of the functions of the Agency under this Act.

6.8. Address the Power Problem

Internet in particular and ICTs in general need a stable power supply. The power situation in the country is very bad. Even in urban areas access to a stable power supply has become a mirage. Schools that have been lucky to have ICT have laboratories but abandoned them because they do not have the money to provide the daily consumption of fuel. The result is that even the limited facilities in schools and community centres tend to remain idle and wasted, as there is not electricity to power them. While with nationwide coverage by mobile networks, the internet is potentially available everywhere, lack of cheer electrify has remained a major hindrance to its effective use. A digital inclusion agenda has to enhance the availability of power supply in the country. Such a programme can benefit from the abundant solar energy in the country.

6.9. Deal with Poverty

Affordability is a function of both the state of availability in the country as well as the economic status of the person. There is no universal standard for affordability. It is a relative concept, varying from country to another country and from one community to another community and even from one time to another time. Thus, what was unaffordable last year could be affordable this year or vice versa. Similarly, what is not affordable in country A could be affordable in B. It is this relativity in the concept of affordability that makes countries have differential prices for the same services across different income groups; In the

context of generalized poverty where more than 70% of the population lives below the poverty line, the affordability of internet access is problematic. We have seen that the cost of broadband access is way off the 5% cap li. Given that poverty affects women more than men; it means that addressing digital gender marginalization must address poverty for it to succeed.

APPENDIX

African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedom

Emphasizing that the Internet is an enabling space and resource for the realisation of all human rights, including the right to freedom of expression, the right of access to information, the right of freedom of assembly, the right to freedom of opinion, thought and belief, the right to be free from discrimination in all forms, the right to education, the right to culture and language, and the right of access to socio-economic services;

Emphasizing that the Internet is particularly relevant to social, economic and human development in Africa;

Affirming that in order to fully benefit from its development potential, the Internet must be accessible, available, and affordable for all persons in Africa;

Affirming further that the Internet is essential to the right of all people to participate freely in the governance of their country, and to enjoy equal access to public services;

Recognizing the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of 1981, the Windhoek Declaration on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press of 1991, the African Charter on Broadcasting of 2001, the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa of 2002, and the African Platform on Access to Information Declaration of 2011 and the African Union Convention on Cybersecurity and Personal Data Protection of 2014.

Acknowledging the roles being played by many African and international organisations including the African Union Commission, the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, Regional Economic Communities and UNESCO in promoting the Internet in Africa;

Mindful of the continuing efforts of international organisations and other stakeholders to develop principles that apply human

rights to the Internet, particularly since the Joint Declaration of 2011 concerning Freedom of Expression and the Internet by the four Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression; the United Nations Human Rights Council resolution of 2012 on The promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet; the UN General Assembly resolution of 2013 on The right to privacy in the digital age; and the UN Human Rights Council Resolution of 2014 on The Internet and Human Rights.

Concerned at the continuing inequality in access and use of the Internet, and the increasing use of the Internet by state and non-state actors as a means of violating the individual's rights to privacy and freedom of expression through mass surveillance and related activities;

Recognising the responsibility of States to respect, protect and fulfill human rights of all people, and the responsibility of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) companies and Internet intermediaries to respect the human rights of their users as consistent with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights;

Convinced that it is of critical importance that all African stakeholders invest in creating an enabling and empowering Internet environment that truly serves the needs of Africans through the adoption and implementation of this Declaration.

Herein declare:

KEY PRINCIPLES

1. Openness: Opportunities to share ideas and information on the Internet are integral to promoting freedom of expression, media pluralism and cultural diversity. Therefore, the Internet should have an open and distributed architecture, and should be developed based on open pluralistic standards and application interfaces and interoperability so as to enable a common exchange

of information and knowledge. Social and economic openness, to support innovation and guard against monopolies, should be protected.

2. Internet Access and Affordability: Access to the Internet is essential for the full realization of human development and facilitates the exercise and enjoyment of a number of human rights and freedoms, including the rights to freedom of expression and access to information, peaceful assembly and association. For universal access to the Internet to be assured, the Internet should be widely available and affordable to enable all persons to realise their full potential.

The cutting off or slowing down of access to the Internet, or parts of the Internet, for whole populations or segments of the public can never be justified on any ground, including on public order or national security grounds.

3. Freedom of Expression: Everyone has the right to hold opinions without interference. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression on the Internet; this right includes the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas, regardless of frontiers. The right to freedom of expression on the Internet should not be subject to any restrictions, except those which are provided by law, for a legitimate purpose and necessary and proportionate in a democratic society, as consistent with international human rights standards.
4. Right to Information Everyone has the right to access information on the Internet. The Internet must continue to facilitate the free flow of information.

All information, including scientific and social research, produced with the support of public funds should be freely available to all.

5. Freedom of Assembly and Association on the Internet: Everyone has the right to peaceful assembly and association online, including through social networks and platforms. Organisers and participants of peaceful assemblies have the right to access the Internet and other new technologies at all times, without interference except those which are provided by law, for a legitimate purpose and necessary and proportionate in a democratic society, as consistent with international human rights standards.

6. Cultural and Linguistic Diversity: Individuals and communities have the right to use their own language or any language of their choice to create, share and disseminate information and knowledge through the Internet.

Linguistic and cultural diversity enriches the development of society. Africa's linguistic and cultural diversity, including the presence of all African and minority languages should be protected, respected and promoted, on the Internet.

7. Right to Development: All peoples have a right to development, and the Internet has a vital role to play in helping to achieve the full realisation of nationally and internationally agreed sustainable development goals. It is a vital tool for giving everyone the means to participate in development processes.

8. Privacy: everyone has the right to privacy online including the right to control how their personal data is collected, used, disclosed, retained and disposed of. Everyone has the right to communicate anonymously on the Internet, and to use appropriate technology to ensure secure, private and anonymous communication.

The right to privacy on the Internet should not be subject to any restrictions, except those which are provided by law, for a legitimate purpose and necessary and proportionate in a democratic society, as consistent with international human rights standards.

9. Security on the Internet: Everyone has the right to security on the Internet and to be protected from harassment, stalking, people trafficking, identity theft and misuse of one's digital identity and data.

Everyone has the right to enjoy secure connections to and on the Internet including protection from services and protocols that threaten the technical functioning of the Internet, such as viruses, malware, phishing, and D-Dos attacks.

10. Marginalised Groups: The rights of all people, including minorities and vulnerable groups, to use the Internet as part of their right to dignity, to participate in social and cultural life, and to enhance the exercise and enjoyment of their human rights, should be respected and protected.

11. Right to Due Process: Everyone has the right to due process in relation to any legal claims or violations of the law regarding the Internet. Standards of liability, including defences in civil cases, should take into account the overall public interest in protecting both the expression and the forum in which it is made.

12. Democratic Internet Governance Framework: Everyone has the right to participate in the governance of the Internet. The Internet should be governed in such a way as to uphold and expand human rights to the fullest extent possible. The Internet governance framework must be open, inclusive, accountable, transparent and collaborative.

REALISING THESE PRINCIPLES ON THE INTERNET REQUIRES:

Openness

In accordance with the principle of Net Neutrality, all data on the Internet should be treated in an equal and non-discriminatory manner, and shall not be charged differentially, according to user, content, site, platform, application, type of attached equipment, and modes of communication.

The architecture of the Internet is to be preserved as a vehicle for free, open, equal and nondiscriminatory exchange of information, communication and culture. There should be no special privileges for, or obstacles against, the exchange of information online or any party or content on economic, social, cultural, or political grounds. However, nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as preventing affirmative action aimed at ensuring substantive equality for marginalised peoples or groups.

Access and Affordability

Access and affordability policies and regulations that foster unfettered and non-discriminatory access to the Internet, including fair and transparent market regulation, universal service requirements and licensing agreements, must be adopted.

Direct support to facilitate high-speed Internet access, such as by establishing necessary infrastructure and infrastructure facilities, including access to openly licensed or unlicensed spectrum, electricity supply, community-based ICT centres, libraries,

Internet accessible to and affordable for all. Equally, important is support for the establishment of national and regional Internet Exchange Points.

The sharing of best practices about how to improve Internet access for all sectors of the society should be encouraged among African states. These efforts should be geared towards ensuring the best possible level of Internet connectivity at affordable and reasonable costs for all with particular initiatives for unserved and underserved areas and communities.

Freedom of Expression

Filtering, blocking, removal and other technical or legal limits on access to content constitute serious restrictions on freedom of expression and can only be justified if they strictly comply with international human rights standards relating to limitations and due process requirements.

No one should be held liable for content on the Internet of which they are not the author. Furthermore, the State should not use or force intermediaries to undertake censorship on its behalf and intermediaries should not be required to prevent, hide or block content or disclose information about Internet users, or to remove access to user-generated content, including those that infringe copyright laws, unless they are required to do so by an order of a court.

To the extent that intermediaries operate self-regulatory systems, and/or make judgment calls on content and privacy issues, all such decisions should be made taking into account the need to protect expression that is legitimate under international standards. Processes developed by intermediaries should be transparent and include provisions for appeals.

Professional journalists as well as citizen journalists and others who contribute to shaping public debate and public opinion on the Internet should be recognised as agents of the larger society who enable the formation of opinions, ideas, decision-making and democracy. Attacks on them as a result of their work constitute attacks on the right to freedom of expression. Accordingly, all appropriate steps should to be taken to ensure their protection in terms of both and cultural heritage.

The Right to Development

Developing the competencies of all in media and information literacy is essential in ensuring that consumers of media products have the skills to find, evaluate and engage with various types of information, including those relevant for their social, economic, cultural and political development.

Information and communication technologies should be designed, developed and implemented in a manner that contributes to sustainable human development and empowerment. Accordingly, policies should be adopted to create an environment which enables various actors to pursue initiatives in this regard.

Personal Data Protection

Personal data or information must only be collected and/or processed by States and non-State actors such as access providers, mail providers, hosts and other intermediaries, in compliance with well-established data protection principles, including: first, personal data or information must be processed fairly and lawfully; secondly, personal data or information must be obtained only for one or more specified and lawful purposes; thirdly, personal data or information must not be excessive in relation to the purpose or purposes for which they are processed; fourthly, personal data or information must be deleted when no longer necessary for the purposes for which they were collected.

The collection, use, disclosure and retention of personal data or information must comply with a transparent privacy policy which allows people to find out what is collected about them, to correct inaccurate information, and protect such data or information from disclosure that they have not authorised. The public should be warned about the potential for misuse of data that they supplied. Government bodies and non-state actors collecting, processing or retaining data have a responsibility to notify people when the personal data or information collected about them has been abused, lost, or stolen.

Surveillance

Mass or indiscriminate surveillance of the people and the monitoring of their communications constitutes a disproportionate interference, and thus a violation, of the right to

privacy. Mass surveillance should be prohibited by law.

The collection, interception and retention of communications data amounts to an interference with the right to privacy whether or not those data are subsequently examined or used.

In order to meet the requirements of international human rights governments, civil society organisations, media institutions, relevant technology and Internet companies, should:

- > Formally endorse this Declaration, the African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms

National Governments in Africa should:

- > Ensure that all Internet-related laws and policies are clear, transparent and in line with the principles contained in this Declaration.

- > Ensure that national regulators in the telecommunications and Internet sectors are Well-resourced, transparent and independent in their operations.

Pan-African and African Regional Organisations and Institutions:

- > The Africa Union should recognise and promote TBC as African Internet Rights Day.

- > The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights should establish a mechanism to promote and monitor Internet rights and freedoms in Africa.

- > The Africa Union should take the lead in creating a common African Programme of Action on Internet Governance, which will ensure that the rights of Africans on the Internet are promoted and upheld, and that African concerns are recognised in the global Internet governance regime.

- > Other relevant Pan-African institutions should develop programmes to support national institutions (including national human rights commissions and the judiciary) to understand and protect human rights online.

> The African Telecommunications Union should recognise and promote the access and affordability principle of this Declaration.

International Organisations:

> The United Nations Secretary General and United Nations General Assembly should support the inclusion of principles guaranteeing the public's right to information and government data, as well as access to and affordability of information and communications technology in the post-2015 Development Agenda.

> The UN Human Rights Council should consider the Declaration, which reflects resolutions taken by the Council and recommendations from Special Mandate Holders, and draw on the Declaration within the scope of its work on Internet-related human rights matters.

Law, lawful surveillance of online communications must be governed by clear and transparent laws that, at a minimum, comply with the following basic principles: first, communications surveillance must be both targeted and based on Gender.

Gender

To ensure the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, women and men must have equal access to learn about, define, access, use and shape the Internet. Efforts to increase access must therefore recognise and redress existing gender inequalities. Policies and strategies for women and girls to achieve meaningful access to ICTs need to address cultural religious, social, economic and educational barriers. This includes the need for concerted efforts to ensure that violence against women committed, abetted or aggravated online is adequately sanctioned under the law and vigorously pursued by law enforcement agencies.

The creation and promotion of online content that reflects women's voices and needs, that promotes and supports women's rights - in order to address existing gender inequalities and encourage active participation and empowerment of women via online spaces - should be encouraged.

Processes and mechanisms that enable the full, active and equal participation of women and girls in decision-making about how the Internet is shaped and governed should be developed and strengthened.

Access to Knowledge and Education

Media and information literacy must be promoted to enable all people to access, interpret and make informed judgments as users of information, as well as to create information. Accordingly, media and information literacy programmes should be instituted in schools and in other public institutions. Where practical school children, and other learners, should have access to Internet enabled devices.

Democratic Internet Governance Framework

It is important that multi-stakeholder decision-making and policy formulation are improved at the national level in order to ensure the full participation of all interested parties. Independent, well-resourced, multi-stakeholder bodies should be established to guide Internet policy at the national level. National internet governance mechanisms should serve as a link between local concerns and regional and global governance mechanisms, including on the evolution of the internet governance regime.

CALL TO ACTION

In light of the above, we call on all stakeholders to take action alone and in collaboration towards the realisation of the rights and principles in this Declaration, as outlined below:

All African stakeholders, including regional and sub-regional bodies, national governments, civil society organisations, media institutions, relevant technology and Internet companies, should:

> Formally endorse this Declaration, the African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms.

National Governments in Africa should:

- > Ensure that all Internet-related laws and policies are clear, transparent and in line with the principles contained in this Declaration.
- > Ensure that national regulators in the telecommunications and Internet sectors are Well-resourced, transparent and independent in their operations.

Pan-African and African Regional Organisations and Institutions:

- > The Africa Union should recognise and promote TBC as African Internet Rights Day.
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International Organisations:

- > The United Nations Secretary General and United Nations General Assembly should support the inclusion of principles guaranteeing the public's right to information and government data, as well as access to and affordability of information and communications technology in the post-2015 Development Agenda.
- > The UN Human Rights Council should consider the Declaration, which reflects resolutions taken by the Council and recommendations from Special Mandate Holders, and draw on

the Declaration within the scope of its work on Internet-related human rights matters.

> UNESCO should integrate the Declaration into its "Priority Africa" strategies. UNESCO should promote the advancement of social and cultural rights on the Internet as well as the use of local languages and local content online.

> UNESCO should also develop model laws protecting online freedom of expression and privacy.

> The International Telecommunications Union should recognise and promote the Access and Affordability principle of this Declaration.

Civil Society should:

> Seek to increase public awareness of the importance of the Internet in the realisation of rights.

> Advocate for Internet rights and freedoms; monitor Internet laws and regulations; and highlight abuses, including in their reports to regional and international treaty bodies and other human rights mechanisms.

> Communicate with the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa on measures to uphold freedom of expression in relation to the Internet.

> Encourage and monitor the participation of women and girls in all areas related to Internet development and governance.

Media Organisations should:

> Popularise this Declaration and the principles outlined in it.

> Improve their own understanding of Internet issues and foster awareness about the importance of the Internet to all sectors of the society, particularly among marginalised groups and disadvantaged communities.

Companies operating in Africa should:

> Internalise and apply the "Respect, Protect and Remedy"

framework to fulfill their duties to uphold Internet rights.

- > Respect human rights to the fullest extent possible. For example, where faced with government demands which would violate human rights, companies should interpret government demands as narrowly as possible, seek clarification of the scope and legal foundation for such demands, require a court order before meeting government requests, and communicate transparently with users about risks and compliance with government demands.
- > Invest in online tools, software and applications that enhance local and intercultural content exchange, and simplify the exchange of information across barriers.
- > Publish transparency reports on government requests for user data, content removal, network disruptions, and compliance rates on a regular basis. All company policies on privacy and data protection, including data retention rates and breach notification policies, should be translated to local languages and easily accessible on the company's country-level website.

Technical communities

- > Should actively respect and promote the open standards of Internet in terms of the technical architecture and the design of the Internet.
- > Are encouraged to innovate and develop open source software, open data, and open educational resources relevant to African users.
- > Should engage actively in the multi-stakeholder processes that deal with human rights as well as Internet governance in Africa and provide policy inputs to Internet-related issues.
- > Should ensure Africa participation in the development of open standards.

Academic, research and training institutions in Africa should:

- > Integrate courses on Internet rights and freedoms in their curriculum.

- > Promote and contribute to the development of local content particularly content that fosters the use of the Internet by marginalised groups and communities
- > Proactively engage in the generation of scientific evidence on Internet rights and freedoms in Africa.
- > Promote and participate in the reinforcement of Africa's capacity to contribute content and expertise in global, regional and national Internet development and policy Forums.

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CITAD (www.citad.org) is a capacity building civil society organization whose activities covers research, advocacy, training and publicity in all areas of ICTs. Its vision is; a knowledge-based democratic society free of hunger while its mission is; using ICTs to empower citizens for a just and knowledge-based society that is anchored on sustainable and balanced development.

MAIN OFFICE:

3rd Floor, NSITF Building, No.1A, Social Insurance Road,
behind Trade Fair Complex, Zaria road, Kano.
P.O. Box 10210, Kano, Nigeria.

Tel: +234806 8078282, +234806 5429784

E-mail: info@citad.org

Website: www.citad.org, www.citad4peace.org.ng

Facebook: Centre for Information Technology and Development

Twitter: @ICTAdvocates

JIGAWA OFFICE

Flat B, Aduwa House, behind Old Market, Dutse,
Jigawa State

BAUCHI OFFICE

NUJ Complex, Ahmadu Bello Way, Bauchi,
Bauchi State

AZARE OFFICE

Central Office Building, Emir's Drive, Opposite
Emir's Palace, Azare, Bauchi State

JAMA'ARE OFFICE

Harafai Road, Jama'are, Jama'are LGA,
Bauchi State

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Y.Z. Ya'u, a former academician is the
Executive Director of CITAD

Dr. M.A. Aliyu, a Research Associate of CITAD teaches in the
Department of Economics, Bayero University, Kano



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