

**THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF
E-GOVERNANCE IN ETHIOPIA
THE CASE OF TOLL FREE 888 CALL CENTER**

BY

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SUPERVIZED BY

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**MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY**

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**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT OF THE
MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION OF
INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY**

OCTOBER, 2013

STATEMENT OF DECLARATION

I, Mr. Assefa Alemayehu, declare that the thesis entitled **THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF E-GOVERNANCE IN ETHIOPIA: THE CASE OF TOLL FREE 888 CALL CENTER** is the result of my own efforts. I have conducted the thesis independently with the guidance and support of the research advisor Mr. Elias Berhanu. The study has not been submitted for the award of any degree in any other university. It is submitted to IGNOU for the partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Degree of Master of Arts in Public Administration.

Name: _____

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STATEMENT OF CERTIFICATION

Certified that the Dissertation entitled **THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF E-GOVERNANCE IN ETHIOPIA: THE CASE OF TOLL FREE 888 CALL CENTER** submitted by **ASSEFA ALEMAYEHU HAILE**, Enrolment No. **ID1219183** is his own work and has been done under my supervision. It is recommended that this Dissertation be placed before the examiner for evaluation.

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Abstract

E-governance in Ethiopia has had a significant impact on public administration, changing the environment in which the public service operates, adding new concepts and methods to its operations and changing the relative weight and relationships among established elements of public administration. Perhaps the single most powerful concept inherent in e-government is citizen-centered service delivery. In this view, government services should be designed from the starting point of meeting citizens' needs or of helping citizens to meet their civic obligations.

In Ethiopian electronic environment, citizen capacity is a key factor as well as citizen's need and public administration is pulled to present itself where the public is located, physically and on-line. One of the integral parts of the citizen-centered work is self-service, in which the customer assumes many of the administrative tasks performed by the service provider. In this context, toll-free 888 Call-Centre services in Ethiopia can perform on twenty-four hours in a week basis.

Ethiopia has started e-government services as a mechanism to raise changes in its governance systems for achieving the growth and transformation plan (GTP) goals and to ensure better service delivery to citizens. This ensures improved public sector efficiency, accountability and responsiveness.

This paper argues that a successful adoption of call centre has the potential to provide better service delivery at reduced costs, increase public sector efficiency, minimise corruption and improve the accountability, transparency and responsiveness of the public sector. Nevertheless, it is however; acknowledged that initiatives in 888 call centre in Ethiopia is fraught with numerous challenges that include lack of infrastructure, low tele-density, bureaucratic inefficiency and administrative corruption. Hence, this research will show the shortcomings and will recommend important issues to address those problems.

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ACRONYMS

ACDs	Automatic call distributors
ACE	Access Channel for Employees
BSNL	Broadband Unlimited Internet
EICTDA	Ethiopian ICT Development Agency
ETA	Ethiopian Telecommunication Agency
ETHERNET	Ethiopian Educational and Research Network
FAQs	Frequently Asked Questions
FRIENDS	Fast Reliable Instant Efficient Network for Disbursement of Services
G2B	Government-to-Business
G2C	Government-to-Citizen
G2E	Government-to-Employee
G2G	Government-to-Government
HRD	Human Resource Development
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
IVR	Interactive voice response
NOC	Network Operation Center
PASDEP	Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development Program
PKI	Public Key Infrastructure
R&D	Research and Development
SchoolNet	Ethiopian Networked educational system
TIGA	Technology in Government in Africa award
UPS	Uninterrupted Power Supply
VoIP	Voice over Internet Protocol
WoredaNet	Ethiopian Networked Districts

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND:

Call centers are mechanisms for interaction between public authorities and citizens. The purpose of this paper relates to the notification regarding the call centers as part of a broader process of e-governance that aims to improve the performance of public services in order to optimize both their quality and to reduce the expenses. The paper aims at describing the connection between call centers and building of trust in government based on efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, responsiveness etc.

The paper focuses on progress and achievements made related to call centers using the Ethiopian government toll free call centers that open paths toward national and global perspective of administrative simplification. Such perspectives shall affect enhancing the user satisfaction, decision-making, the sustainability in public administration, increasing the efficiency and effectiveness, lowering administrative burden, etc.

The importance of this paper is related to the relevance of Ethiopian government toll free 888-call center towards the reform of public administration as a revolutionary measure and the role of e-government as a main engine in this process.

Call centers enable effective exchanges of information, transforming the methods of communication with citizens, institutions and civil society groups. The shortcomings and deficits of traditional methods of government firmly entrenched in the old legal framework of prohibitions, commands and enforcement tools have given way to other deeply interconnected e-government systems, mechanisms and instruments that have become one of the hallmarks of our times.

Call centers are seen as one of key elements of government's modernization initiatives and programs that facilitate the simplification process of public administration. In this regard, implementation of call center enables simplification of goals, carrying a variety of developmental advantages. Therefore, the Ethiopian e-government toll free call center finds new grounds, instruments, systems and vision for cooperation and interaction between citizens and administration that lead toward the efficient and effectiveness of administrative procedures.

In this regard, the toll free 888 call center, which is a paradigm shift over Ethiopian traditional approaches in Public Administration, means rendering of government services and information to the public using electronic means. This new paradigm has brought about a revolution in the

quality of service delivered to the citizens. It has ushered in transparency in the governing process; saving of time due to provision of services; simplification of procedures; better office and record management; reduction in corruption; and improved attitude, behavior and job handling capacity of the dealing personnel. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to examine the challenges encountered in e-government call centers. The method on this paper is presenting a detailed examination of Ethiopian government e-government endeavors and strategy together with a review of other relevant literatures.

The findings and implications of this research reveals Ethiopian government toll free 888 call center is still lagging behind in utilizing information and communication technologies for delivering government services online. In this case, an understanding of the status of toll free 888 call center in Ethiopia can help policy makers in the country pursue development of the public sector organizations on the one hand, and would be of importance for Ethiopian economic future success on the other. This is believed to be up-to-date and comprehensive analysis of Ethiopia's government toll free 888-call center assessment of its level of readiness for delivery of e-government services.

The study will look at the current state of interaction levels on toll free Ethiopian Government 888 call center for the delivery of government e-services. Additionally, it will look at the barriers and experiences of integrating more interaction on the call centers & websites for the delivery of e-services.

Based on the information provided above on the status of the 888 call center services today and the need to provide more direct interaction with the service provider, ethio telecom, and the users of e-services the following frame of reference illustrates the departure theory frame of the study.

The following guiding questions aim to identify that what types of interactions the 888-call center is using in providing e-services. Additionally, it will investigate the level of understanding of the citizens providing these services. And how can the status of interactive E-Government services from the direct service provider for the delivery of e-services be described?

The findings and implications of this research reveals the call center & e-gov portal of Ethiopia is still lagging behind in utilizing information and communication technologies for delivering government services online.

An understanding of the status of call center & e-government portal in Ethiopia can help policy makers in the country pursue development of the public sector organizations on the one hand,

and would be of importance for Ethiopian economic future success on the other. This is believed to be up-to-date and comprehensive analysis of Ethiopia's government call center and assessment of its level of readiness for delivery of e-government services.

Ethiopia has started using e-government services as a mechanism to raise changes in its governance systems for achieving development goals and to ensure better service delivery to citizens. It also tries to ensure improved public sector efficiency, accountability and responsiveness. Therefore, the toll-free 888 Call Centre has been used in recent years as an e-governance tool.

Hence, this research argues that a successful adoption of 888 Call Centre in Ethiopia has the potential to provide better service delivery at reduced costs, increase public sector efficiency, minimise corruption and improve the accountability, transparency and responsiveness of the public sector, it is acknowledged that the initiative of 888-call centre is fraught with numerous challenges. Thus, this research will show the shortcomings and will recommend important issues to address the problems.

In this case, the research project will look at the current state of interaction levels on 888-Call Center for the delivery of government e-services. The status of the Call-Center today and the need to provide direct interaction with the service provider and the users of e-services are the frame of reference departure of this research. Then, it will also investigate how the Call-Center service can be described. These guiding notions aim to identify that what types of interactions the 888-toll free call center in Ethiopia is using in providing e-services.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study will look at the current state of interaction levels on toll free Ethiopian Government 888 call center for the delivery of government e-services. Additionally, it will look at the barriers and experiences of integrating more interaction on the call centers & websites for the delivery of e-services.

Based on the information provided above on the status of the 888 call center services today and the need to provide more direct interaction with the service provider, ethio telecom, and the users of e-services the following frame of reference illustrates the departure theory frame of the study.

The following guiding questions aim to identify that what types of interactions the 888-call center is using in providing e-services. Additionally, it will investigate the level of understanding of the citizens providing these services. Moreover, how can the status of interactive E-

Government services from the direct service provider for the delivery of e-services are described? Therefore, the findings and implications of this study reveals the call center & e-government portal of Ethiopia is still lagging behind in utilizing information and communication technologies for delivering government services online.

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1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will add value and knowledge as to the significance of how to better direct contact with Call-Center users and the service providers. The study will also add value how to better improve the delivery of Call-Center and what the users of e-services desire. Additionally, this research will provide a deeper understanding in the field of providing e-services with better

interactive Call Centers & Ethiopian Government Portal for the delivery of the electronic services.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This paper promotes the inclusion of Call-Centers in a strategic framework of e-government programs in Ethiopia in order to realize the benefits of citizens. Hence, the objectives of this study are:

- to address E-Government services offered by Ethiopian government to citizens, businesses, and other agencies.
- to show the challenges and opportunities of Ethiopia's e-government efforts, in particular, the challenges encountered in a toll free 888 call-center and web portals implementation, which is the target objective of this dissertation, will deeply analyzed and specific recommendations will be developed.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study is bounded in the Ethiopian Government toll free 888-call center. With regard to Ethiopia, there have been some studies related to the E-Government initiatives. While a small number of studies has been addressed e-government issues in general such as strategies towards interoperability in e-government and different e-government frameworks. However, none has discussed the e-government readiness ranking and therefore the challenges encountered in e-government implementation, E-Government portals and the toll free 888-call center in particular. This is where my contribution fits. My study is believed to be up-to-date and comprehensive analysis of Ethiopian government toll free call center challenges and assessment of its level of readiness for delivery of e-government services. Hence, it comes in to fill a gap concerning e-government call-center implementation challenges.

1.6 LIMITATIONS

No full-fledged study has been done so far in Ethiopian Government toll free 888-call center. Therefore, this dissertation work is limited in two main ways. Firstly, narrowness of the interviews across ICT professionals and stakeholder groups limits my ability to provide breadth research in terms of an extensive number of interviews in each Federal Government Office. Secondly, my samples are consisting of three Directorates from the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology namely Directorate of E-Government, Directorate of ICT Capacity

Building, and Directorate of Private Sector. Therefore, this research should be explored by other methodologies with a larger number of observations such as survey research.

1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

To present a comprehensive and coherent research, this dissertation adopts the following structures. Chapter One provides a brief back ground, description of problem statement, significance, objectives, scope, limitations, and structure of the dissertation. Chapter Two is the body of the research, which covers a detailed review of the available literatures on call centers and E-Government services. It helps to provide the reader an extensive knowledge on call-center services. Chapter Three describes the research methodology. Chapter Four goes to enlighten the reader on the findings and analysis of the dissertation. Chapter Five follows by a conclusion and recommendations on the subject matter.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. CALL CENTERS AS AN E-GOVERNANCE TOOL

The use of call centers by the business community has already become a common phenomenon in both developed and developing countries. In recent years, the call centre industry has experienced a phenomenal growth worldwide (As-Saber, et al., 2004). Call centers provide fast, efficient and relatively cheaper business solutions to business enterprises in managing their day-to-day activities. Similarly, governments need to provide various services to their citizens and other stakeholders.

In this connection, there appears to be a reasonable prospect of implementing call centre as an e-governance tool in delivering better services including the dissemination of important information to citizens and other stakeholders. From this perspective, e-governance could be defined as the application of information and communication technology in establishing interaction between the different levels of government, business, and the citizenry' (ADBI, 2007pp1).

Bhatnagar (2004:pp19) acknowledges that any kind of use of information and communication technology in delivering service to, and communicating with citizens and other stakeholders could fall within the realm of e-governance. ICT, however, encompasses a wide range of technology applications such as computing systems; digital broadcasting networks; telecommunications technologies including telephony; and electronic information resources including the internet (Selwyn, 2002).

ICT being the nucleus of e-governance is also the key resource and driver of setting up call centers. Call centers carefully utilize some of these ICT components. In a call centre, employees receive inbound and make outbound calls using automatic call distributors (ACDs) or predictive dialing systems (Taylor and Bain, 1999).

Call centers are increasingly using the VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) network to combine both the voice network (traditional telephone network) and data network into one integrated network for all communication needs (The Contact, 2005).

As call centre activities range from mere response to a simple query or information dissemination to the delivery of a complex business solution, the operators may also need to rely on the live portals of the organization including intranet with specialized access to classified information on key service areas of the organization. It often complements e-mail

communication, web portals and various web-based service provisions. From a citizen's perspective, it adds some human involvement that reassures citizens of the authenticity and effectiveness of the web-based service provisions. Considering such potentials, government of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has already started using toll-free 888-call centre as an e-governance tool.

Discussion of this dissertation focuses with a Call-Center as an e-governance tool. It will be followed by a discussion on the role and necessity of e-governance and its extent of adoption in various organizations. From government perspective, it will then examine if any pattern is emerging with respect to the use of Ethiopian toll-free 888-call centre in e-governance activities. In light of this deliberation, a tentative framework will be proposed. A discussion of associated limitations of the proposed framework will follow together with some of its implications for citizens and government.

2.2 EVOLUTION AND PROSPECTS OF CALL CENTERS

The Union Research Centre on Organization and Technology (URCOT 2000:1) of Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in its report adopted the definition of the call centre as 'an operation that uses telephone and computer technology to deliver services to customers'. The report primarily emphasized inbound or outbound telephone traffic handled by call centre employees. However, (Taylor and Bain, 1999) described the customer service oriented functions of call centre employees through the concurrent use of telephones and computers.

Starting with the minimum requirement of using telephones, call centre activities may extend to include the use of the Internet in the era of technological advancement primarily through the use of e-mail and VoIP. Call centers, as communication networking hubs of business, cover functions ranging from telemarketing in an outbound context to acting as help desks in an inbound context (Kinder, 2001). Butler (2004) kept the notion of call centre 'as customer contact centers, customer support centers, helpdesks, and derogatorily, as cost centers', without distinguishing between the inbound and outbound contexts of call centers.

From a government's perspective, it can be considered as a device to create awareness about, or surveying, the households in terms of their opinions about specific government policy measures and service provisions on the one hand; and to respond to specific queries and provide limited service offerings to its citizens on the other. In a survey conducted by Noetica in 2002, call centers were predicted to be an integral part of e-government (Noetica, 2002).

In terms of business administration, management and marketing, the call centre is a relatively new phenomenon (As-Saber et al., 2004). However, since its emergence in 1980s, the call centre industry has expanded rapidly across the continents. Almost two-thirds of worldwide customer contacts are carried out by call centers (Day, 2000).

Successful call centers are focused on efficient operation, and customers' and shareholders' value creation and optimization. The efficiency, in this regard, lies not only in effective and prompt responses to customer calls, but also on originality, high skills and precision in setting up and implementation of organizational goals and strategies

One of the main forces behind the wide adoption of call centers is the flexible nature of their operation. Its use has evolved from internal business re-organization which is adaptable to both public and private sector operations, in both market and non-market activities (Burgess & Connell, 2004). ICT could be seen as an enabler to create such flexibility and significantly improve the public sector performance with better citizen access to public services and improved quality of service delivery (Yong et al, 2003).

Stahl (2005) opined that government might be the largest user of ICT and has the major power in regulating the technology. From this perspective, it could be assumed that the use of ICT in call centers by the government would be relatively less complex in terms of regulation and convenience. Moreover, customer-centric use of call centers by private businesses could be considered analogous to the citizen-centric approach of any government's e-governance project. Call centers increase the efficiency and profitability of business. With a similar use of such centers in an e-governance project, government also has the opportunity to increase efficiency in its overall governance process and make its commercial activities more viable. To serve the needs of local companies the location either might be within the firm's domestic jurisdiction or companies based in one country could use the services of call centers based in another country. Businesses, however, could choose the locations of their call centers depending on their business advantages and strategic directions.

The question might arise whether government departments and enterprises have a similar focus on call centers. The location advantage factor of call centre outsourcing might not be observed as an important factor for government call centers as the related theories of international business that are prevailing at this moment are focused on call centre operations of private

businesses (As Saber et. al., 2004). For that reason, it may be argued that a line should be drawn between public and private call centers.

2.3 CALL CENTERS AND E-GOVERNANCE

Although e-governance and e-government are used interchangeably in most of the literatures, Saxena (2005) argues that an important distinction exists between e-governance and e-government, as government is the institution itself, whereas governance is a broader concept describing forms of governing which are not necessarily in the hands of the formal government. This dissertation deliberates on the role of Ethiopian Government toll-free 888-call centre within the scope of governance, with a primary focus on e-governance.

Holmes (2001) argues that a special and improved public service delivery that assists the economic development of a country might require a movement for e-governance. E-governance of a government focuses on services covering the term e-business or e-commerce, which is broader than the usual e-commerce as it not only comprises the business to citizen (B2C) link but also government to citizen (G2C), government to business (G2B), government to government (G2G) and business to business (B2B) links.

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs has put emphasis on creating public value through e-governance, which is focused on providing services, passing laws and regulations and taking necessary actions as per citizen's preferences. Creation of public value does not depend entirely on measuring the performance of policies and public institutions or making decisions related to resource allocation. Selecting the proper method of delivery is one of the decisive factors in the successful creation of public value (UNDESA, 2003).

Call centers together with other service delivery channels could be consequently considered as an important e-governance tool, which could complement widespread dependence on Internet-based operations. In this connection, Bhatnagar (2004:19) acknowledged that e-governance could be used in a loose manner to describe the legacy of any kind of use of information and communication technology. Telephony and associated technologies used in call centers, therefore, forms parts of e-governance.

Call Centers in Ethiopia have the potential to facilitate better service provisions. Thus, Federal Minister Offices and enterprises are increasingly becoming interested in using Call Centers as an e-governance tool. It could provide them with opportunities to deliver better services to citizens as well as engage them in policy making and implementation dialogues. However,

many factors play a role in both the governance and technology-readiness of a country where a suggestion for a call centre as an e-governance tool might be viewed as ambitious and ambiguous.

The following examples indicate the potential contributions of Call Centers to the e-governance practices and processes. They also signify the possible benefits of using call centers for governments, businesses and individuals from a developing country context. It could be argued, therefore, that call centers have the ability to streamline and enhance the e-governance process and aid to achieve better governance.

The use and benefit of Call Centre as an e-governance component can justify the framework mentioned by Ho (2002) that shows the shifting from the bureaucratic paradigm to an e-government paradigm. Call Centers can assist the shifting process as bureaucratic red tape could be minimized through open and flexible Call Centre operations. In this connection, based on a systematic content analysis of web sites in Ethiopia provide a theoretical framework that makes a distinction between the business reform and civil reform in governance mechanism where technology is used. Based on this distinction, further argue that technology driven reform processes could be based on entrepreneurial good management or participatory good democracy models of governance structure.

The role of Call Centers within the governance structure is different to the role of web sites as Call Centers provide direct telephone contacts between citizens and the public service provider. In Ethiopia, Although, the use of Call Centers within the public sector is still in its embryonic stage and fraught with significant challenges, Call Centers have the potential to provide a better option that is more democratic compared to web-based information sharing and service delivery systems.

As Call Centre activities within the Ethiopian e-governance network are likely to ensure better service delivery, improved access to information, and enhanced two-way communication through citizen's participation in the decision making process. It could be argued that using Call Centre for e-governance follows neither a complete business reform nor a civil reform; rather it follows a hybrid comprising ingredients from both.

Heeks does not agree that e-government should only have the involvement of Internet related applications, which some argue as prerequisites of e-governance. E-governance consists of three different domains namely (a) e-administration, (b) e-society, and (c) e-citizens and e-

services (Heeks, 2008). According to Heeks, it is important that all of these domains be taken into consideration while charting for improvement in government processes, building external interactions and connecting citizens. He further argues that both talking and listening to citizens remains as important segments of the process with respect to informing citizens of public sector activities and incorporating valuable inputs from them while preparing policies of public interest. While Internet does not entirely provide this opportunity, Call Centers can play a significant e-governance role in this regard.

Siew and Leng (2003) argued that simply the addition of the letter 'e' with governance, linking technology use with governance is not the fundamental goal of the term e-governance. They consider that the basic goal of e-government should be to rethink all aspects of governance and the service delivery. To see how it can take advantage of technology and new business models to improve the efficiency of internal processes as well as change the nature of government interactions with both individuals and businesses in order to facilitate the vision of "Many agencies, One Government" (Siew & Leng, 2003:20-21).

2.4 GENERAL OVERVIEW OF E-GOVERNMENT

The term E-Government emerged by late 1990s associated with the term E-Commerce during the internet booming era. Definitions of e-government range from the use of information technology to free movement of information to overcome the physical bounds of traditional paper and physical based systems to the use of technology to enhance the access to and delivery of government services to benefit citizens, business partners and employees(Grönlund, 2002).

The common theme behind these definitions is that e-government involves the automation or computerization of existing paper-based procedures that will prompt new styles of leadership, new ways of debating and deciding strategies, new ways of transacting business, new ways of listening to citizens and communities, and new ways of organizing and delivering information. Ultimately, e-government aims to enhance access to and delivery of government services to benefit citizens. More important, it aims to help strengthen government's drive toward effective governance and increased transparency to better manage a country's social and economic resources for development.

"E-government can include virtually all information and communication technology platforms and applications in use by the public sector. In addition, e-government refers to utilizing the internet and the world-wide-web for delivering government information and services to citizens.

Additionally, e-government can be defined as the use of ICTs to promote more efficient and effective government, facilitate access to government services, allow greater public access to information, and make governments more accountable to citizens.

However, each definition relies based on national strategies of those governments to achieve superiority based on internet and web technology. Nevertheless, the most common goals among those definitions are to transform and improve the relationship between governments and publics; promote citizens' empowerment; strengthen accountability and transparency; facilitate communication and improve the coordination of authorities at different levels of department within organizations and even at the departmental level (UN Report, 2008).

Furthermore, e-government provides new or improved, more accessible and responsive services based on businesses' needs and expectations and enhances the momentum and efficiency of operations by streamlining processes, lowering costs, improving research capabilities and improving documentation and record-keeping. However, the real benefit of e-government lies not in the use of technology by itself, but in its application to processes of transformation (Gunter, 2006).

E-governance, which is a paradigm shift over the traditional approaches in Public Administration, means rendering of government services and information to the public using electronic means. This new paradigm has brought about a revolution in the quality of service delivered to citizens. It has ushered in transparency in the governing process; saving of time due to provision of services through single window; simplification of procedures; better office and record management; reduction in corruption; and improved attitude, behavior and job handling capacity of the dealing personnel.

Coleman, (2006) has defined e-government as the combination of electronic information-based services (e-administration) with the reinforcement of participatory elements (e-democracy) to achieve the objective of balanced e-government.

E-government is the delivery of government information and services online through the internet or other digital means. E-Government has also been defined as the delivery of improved services to citizens, businesses, and other members of the society through drastically changing the way governments manage information. E-Government can be defined as the electronic interaction (transaction and information exchange) between the government, the public (citizens and businesses) and employees.

World Bank, (2001) E-Government is the government owned or operated systems of information and communication technologies that transform relations with citizens, the private sector and/or other government agencies so as to promote citizens' empowerment, improve service delivery, strengthen accountability, increase transparency, or improve government efficiency.

Fraga, (2002) E-Government is the transformation of public sector internal and external relationships through net-enabled operations, IT and Communications, in order to improve government service delivery, constituency, and participation of the society.

E-Government is an Internet-worked government which links new technology with legal systems internally and in turn links such government information infrastructure externally with everything digital and with everybody the tax payer, suppliers, business customers, voters and every other institution in the society.

E-Governance is the public sector's use of the most innovative information and communication technologies, like the Internet to deliver to all citizens improved services, reliable information and greater knowledge in order to facilitate access to the governing process and encourage deeper citizen participation (Ndou, 2004).

To elaborate some experiences of Government Portals it is essential mentioning the Singapore's e-citizen portal. Singaporeans are able to access about 1,600 e-services pertaining to business, health, education, recreation, employment, and family. Of this, 1,300 e-services are completely transacted by citizens with government online. The e-citizen portal is divided into categories based on the real-life needs of every individual, with every single ministry and statutory board providing e-services through the same portal. Singaporeans thus have one-stop access to government services; they are spared having to navigate through the bureaucratic jungle. A few of the popular e-services offered are: submitting application forms for purchase of apartments, searching for school information, employment search, career development, and voter registration. (<http://www.ecitizen.gov.sg>)

G2B transactions include various services exchanged between government and the business community, including dissemination of policies, memos, rules and regulations. Business services offered include obtaining current business information, downloading application forms, renewing licenses, registering businesses, obtaining permits, and payment of taxes. The services offered through G2B transactions also assist in business development, specifically the development of small and medium enterprises.

On a higher level, G2B services include e-procurement, an online government-supplier exchange for the purchase of goods and services by government. Typically, e-procurement web sites allow qualified and registered users to look for buyers or sellers of goods and services. Depending on the approach, buyers or sellers may specify prices or invite bids. E-procurement makes the bidding process transparent and enables smaller businesses to bid for big government procurement projects. The system also helps government generate bigger savings, as costs from intermediaries are shaved off and purchasing agents' overhead is reduced.

In China, the Golden Customs Project was proposed to create an integrated data communications system connecting foreign trade companies, banks, and the customs and tax authorities. The system aims to speed up customs clearance and strengthen the authorities' ability to collect tax and duty payments. The Golden Customs Project allows companies to submit import and export declarations to customs authorities, calculate duty payments, and check import and export statistics. This electronic data tracking system allows customs departments to verify a range of data through networks to facilitate customs management and prevent illegal activities, one of the initial conceptual attractions of the project. G2E services encompass G2C services as well as specialized services that cover only government employees, such as the provision of human resource training and development that improve the bureaucracy's day-to-day functions and dealings with citizens.

G2G services take place at two levels: at the local or domestic level and at the international level. G2G services are transactions between the central/national and local governments, and between department-level and attached agencies and bureaus. At the same time, G2G services are transactions between governments, and can be used as an instrument of international relations and diplomacy.

The inherently transnational nature of the Internet has not only seen the transformation of legitimate business activities, but also provided new opportunities for illicit business. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the sophistication of organized crime and illegal trafficking activities, encouraged by the anonymity provided by the Internet. To combat this growing trend, 124 heads of government has been signed the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime. In putting the convention into effect, the UN designed the "Global Program on Transnational Organized Crime" to improve information sharing and further enhance international cooperation. (<http://www.uncjin.org/CICP/cicp.html>)

The Philippine Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) has introduced an electronic payment confirmation scheme using SMS (short messaging system on mobile phones) to guard against fixers who issue fake receipts to taxpayers. Called E-broadcasting, the system provides taxpayers with direct confirmation within 38 hours that their payment has been received by the BIR's authorized agent banks. The system proved successful as a pilot project. (ibid)

Developing countries aiming to use ICTs for good governance should opt for intelligent intermediaries in the early phases of e-government. "Intelligent intermediaries" are e-government models that incorporate human beings as intermediaries between citizens and the information infrastructure in order to provide the public with the widest possible points of access to government services. Realistic e-government projects will use such intermediaries at the onset, given limitations in the physical infrastructure of developing countries and the lack of access points for the general public to acquire government services. These intermediaries may come in the form of existing professionals (e.g., accountants for online tax systems, notaries for online registration systems), public servants (e.g., call centers or one-stop shop government offices), and NGOs or community-based organizations (e.g., staffed community tele-centers) bringing together a combination of these various ICT channels to effectively deliver e-government." (<http://www.uncjin.org/CICP/cicp.html>)

2.5 CALL CENTERS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

During the first decade of call centre emergence, most call centers were operated within the rich industrialized countries. The relocation of call centers to countries with relatively cheap but skilled labor forces has become a trend since the mid-1990s (Burgess and Connell, 2004). Together with the relocations, new call centers mushroomed in certain parts of the developing world to cater to the increasing demand of call center services from major multinational corporations. The multinational corporations worldwide had found it easier and cheaper to outsource call centre services to developing countries. However, only a handful of developing countries were able to benefit from this demand as countries required a large pool of educated people with necessary technical, social and language skills.

Advancement of ICT is one of the main features of those developing countries where call centers were mainly outsourced. Social and language skills and the personality of call center employees are also treated as valued and important requirements by employers. As a result, among all developing countries, India has become the most popular destination for call center

outsourcing by multinational corporations because of the availability of cheap and qualified people with knowledge of ICT and proficiency in English (As-Saber et al., 2004). Other than India, countries such as the Philippines, Malaysia, South Korea and China are other major call center hubs in Asia. (ibid)

It is argued that even if Internet-based transactions are cheaper, consumers in general have greater access to the telephone and thus Internet use in these areas is criticized as intensifying social exclusion. This is an important factor for developing countries where social exclusion already exists largely. Telephone usage could therefore be argued as a more viable option than the Internet, hence justifying the use of call centers by the public sector rather than adopting the online mode of e-governance.

Based on the level of ICT infrastructure, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA, 2003) has come up with an e-governance readiness index. It suggests that most developing countries are lagging behind their developed counterparts in e-governance readiness. However, a few developing countries such as Korea and Malaysia are doing reasonably well in this regard.

The index reveals an interesting trend over the last few years a significant move has taken place towards cellular phone ownership. In both developed and developing countries including Ethiopia, mobile phone ownership is currently much higher than the ownership of fixed telephone lines. In developing countries, in particular, where fixed line phones and internet (including broadband) connections are not so common, the cellular phone networks could be used to deliver call center services.

As government could not argue against creating a technology-driven better government, the adoption of call centers as an elementary means of e-governance cannot be ruled out. Butler (2004:126) argues that the call center's main focus is about the people working there and the people being served, not the technology. The focus of e-governance is also to serve citizens through efficient public services. Cellular telephone technologies should be adopted as viable and crucial means of e-governance that might be linked to public sector call centers.

The labor-intensive nature of the call center as a point to argue for in its adoption by public administrations in developing countries that is as a generator of significant employment opportunities. Labor-intensive industries are easily adaptable in developing countries due to the availability of cheap labor. Considering the labor costs associated with call center operations

and developing countries' accessibility to cheap labor, it could be argued that using call centers as a means of e-governance in developing countries would not involve huge costs for the government. It would rather increase efficiency and save costs by reducing the need for face-to-face service provisions. Government could deflect the savings for technological advancement of call centers that are involved in e-governance projects.

Call center performance could be enhanced through training, employment security, electronic performance monitoring and a good pay level. The relative ease of implementation and cost savings generated with call centers in developing countries are likely to contribute positively to the performance of e-governance.

In the design, implementation and maintenance processes of call centers, centralization should be an important consideration to ensure service quality and support operations. It is also observed that e-governance often comprises the feature of providing centralized services to citizens through a 'one stop' call center service. Offering a one-stop e-government solution is one of the key success factors of e-governance. As-Saber, et al. (2004) argues in support of one-stop government as a dominant driving vision for global e-governance initiatives.

Corruption is a major concern across the world. The situation in developing countries is, however, much worse compared to their developed country counterparts. The survey by Transparency International (2011) has revealed that the top 25 corrupt countries are from developing world. The question is - can call centers become a catalyst in reducing corruption? Yes! For example in Ethiopia, a rural citizen through a single phone call from a mobile phone to a public sector call center could find information on a government's recent policies. When the call center provides the rural citizen with the information, government is able to increase transparency through the dissemination of government rules. The rural citizen is empowered through accessing the information directly thus reducing the brokerage power of intermediaries. Reduced face-to-face interaction between citizens and business people with public servants due to the use of call centers could reduce administrative corruption and limit the discretionary powers of public officials.

Through the elimination of redundant staff and reduction of costs associated with travel for citizens to interact with government, call centers could assist in achieving e-governance goals of improved civil service performance and more efficient service delivery (As-Saber et al, 2004). One-stop service through call centers could improve government finances as associated

transaction costs for government processes between different agencies reduced due to the deployment of call centers (Bhatnagar, 2004).

There are examples of government initiatives in developing countries, to set up public sector call centers in order to augment government's move to ensure good governance. Malaysia has successfully adopted e-governance initiatives. The overall e-governance project in Malaysia aims to cover G2C linkage through e-services, G2B linkage through e-procurement and G2G linkage through other pilot projects. The electronic channels that are used in e-services range from home or office computers and public kiosks to wireless devices and interactive voice response (IVR) systems (Yong, et al. 2003a). IVR systems facilitate citizens and other stakeholder communication with a call center network. Call centers, therefore, are an integral part of the e-governance process in Malaysia.

Call centers are increasingly using the short messaging service (SMS) to receive queries and feedback and to provide basic information to clients. In many developing countries, SMS is considered as a legal document. The G2B linkage in Malaysia through the e-procurement project allowed for the use of SMS and fax. Inter-agency and intra-agency communications within the government also feature these messaging systems (Yong, et al 2003a). Numerous steps taken by the Malaysian government in its e-government project do not necessarily involve Internet-based applications, though those are prominent, signifying a broad arena of delivery channels for e-governance other than websites. It also indicates that e-governance in its advanced stage in a country would attempt to find better delivery channels. As a consequence, wider use of call centers plays a greater role within the e-governance process and improves the public value dimension of e-governance.

India provides a good example of promoting call centers as an e-governance tool. In association with local bodies and government agencies, the Department of Information Technology of India has established integrated service centers known as FRIENDS (Fast Reliable Instant Efficient Network for Disbursement of Services) (Yong et al, 2003a). Call centers constitute an essential segment of the FRIENDS network. For example, as a part of FRIENDS centers, a citizen call center established at Kerala's capital, Thiruvananthapuram, to provide information related to general citizens' transaction over the telephone. This call center provides information on different government services and informs the procedures to obtain those services quickly and easily. This call center has established a strong G2G linkage across different departments such

as civil supplies, motor vehicles, revenue, state electricity board, state water authority and universities. This citizen call center, which is equipped with work force conversant with rules and regulations, can be accessed from anywhere within the state of Kerala between 9 am and 7 pm of each working day. (ibid)

In a different move to provide enhanced services to citizen, the Indian Railways has taken steps to set up a call center, which would provide the exact position of trains, arrival-departure information, fares, concessions, cancellation and cancellation rules, break journeys, lost ticket rules and journey planning to its customers. (ibid)

The Government of Thailand, in a similar fashion, has implemented a project to set up a one-stop call center linking 20 ministries. After its implementation, calls to the call center increased by more than 65%. The public sector call center in Thailand has successfully established G2G, G2C and G2B linkages. (ibid)

2.6 E-GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES IN ETHIOPIA

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, (FDRE), has a total area of 1.14mil Sq.km consists nine National Regional States and two City Administrations divided into Zones & Woredas (districts with an average population of 100,000). According to the Central Statistics Agency of Ethiopia, the projected figures of the population for the year 2013 become 86,613,986 of which 43,715,971 are males and 42,898,015 are females (CSA, web portal).

Government of Ethiopia has recognized the power of ICT in a national development plan. Thus, it ratifies the National ICT Policy and Strategy. To lead the ICT sector, the government had established the former organizations The Ethiopian ICT Development Agency (EICTDA) and Ethiopian Telecommunication Agency (ETA).

The late Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, noted that “Not long ago, many of us felt that we were too poor to seriously invest in Information and Communication Technology. Now we believe that we are too poor not to invest as much as we can in ICT. We realize that while ICT may be a luxury for the rich, for us-the poor countries-it is a crucial weapon to fight poverty and thus ensure our survival”. The former Minister of Capacity Building, Tefera Waluwa, also declared that “Our vision is to make comprehensive use of ICT to accelerate the democratization and development of the country”. In the same tone, the then Director General of EICTDA, now the Minister for Communication and Information Technology, MCIT, Dr. Debretsion G/Michael emphasized “As our country strives for accelerating its socio-economic development to eradicate

poverty, the role that ICT play is indispensable. Transforming the economy from agriculture based to knowledge-based and making it globally competitive is the question of the day.” (Communication 2010. Vol.4 No.10).

From this high commitment, the Government of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in its efforts to adapt with the international IT revolution launched ICT initiatives to build an information society. The initiatives are aimed providing citizens, businesses, and other governmental bodies with a convenient collection of information and services to utilize the benefits of the new information era to achieve national goals.

To connect the country’s main communication infrastructure, about 10,000kms of fiber optic cable with high-level information transmission capacity was installed and has commenced rendering services. A National Network Operation Center (NOC) that enables the central administration of the network was established and the capacity to control service quality standard and management of service failure information is put in place.

From the foundation of Ethiopian ICT Development Agency up to the formation of the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, MCIT, there has been developed and fully executed many works to facilitate Ethiopia’s renaissance into an Information Society. According to contemporary International Measures, Ethiopia has scored relatively better starting from 2004 until 2013. The improvement in 2013 was far better than the previous years. The major initiatives are divided in infrastructure, application, Standards/Guidelines and human resource development.

The 11th Innovation Africa Digital Summit was opened on Addis Ababa, March 20, 2013 with the theme: “National Broadband Strategies and Agendas: Acceleration and Alignment”. The Summit has brought together ministers, policy makers, regulators, service providers, end users, finance companies and international agencies, among others. The Summit aimed at discussing the need to create sustainable national and international growth and development of the African Telecoms and ICT ecosystem. In this summit, with the title of Deputy Prime Minister of the Finance Cluster, The Communication and Information Technology Minister of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Dr. Debretsion Gebremichael indicated that the government of Ethiopia has recognized the importance of optimizing the use of ICT tools in the poverty reduction efforts. According to the Minister, Ethiopia is among African countries that have successfully developed ICT programs emanating from its policies and strategies. Ensuring the

optimal and innovative use of ICT tools has a decisive bearing on whether or not the implementation of development strategies is a success or failure.

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Regional Office for Africa Director Andrew Rugege said in the summit that Africa has got the least broadband penetration of all continents but ironically, the highest potential for those willing to invest. However, he said, UN Broadband Commission has set different broadband targets by 2015. Thus, Ethiopia is expected to have a broadband plan or strategy and broadband services affordable through adequate regulation and market forces. Therefore, meaningful accessibility and impact-full penetration of broadband in Ethiopia must go hand-in-hand with the availability of local content such as being in the users' own languages.

Ethiopia's government is taking all its efforts to increase the citizens' access to Information and Communication Technology. Ethiopia is hoping to bolster internet access and mobile subscriptions to aid its development and economic growth. ICT is also taking steps to enhance the quality of products and services.

According to Dr. Debrezion Gebremichael, Communication and Information Technology Minister, during the opening of the 2nd Annual Ethiopian ICT Entrepreneurship Conference held at Addis Ababa on 10 December 2012, the country has currently 18 million mobile subscribers, which is 64% of mobile coverage in the county. In addition, 3.4 million users of mobile phone subscription to access the internet. The government is also taking moves towards implementing expansion strategies such as further developments on its ICT infrastructures and installation of fiber optics to increase speed of connection. The government is also undertaking enhancements on the mobile coverage across the country including the wireless network connection as well as the overall internet connectivity, which is already on its way to improving. The minister claims that the wireless network connectivity across the country had increased and currently reached 73%. The ministry is aiming to reach 45 million subscribers by the end of the year 2014.

Ethiopian Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT) accomplished telecom infrastructures such as National Data Center, Regional Data Centers, Woredanet, Schoolnet, Ethernet, Agrinet, etc mainly connectivity through the former Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation. Thus, the Weredanet Project has connected 630+ Woredas. In this case, Ethiopia has won the Technology in Government in Africa Award (TIGA) on public service delivery to citizens. (Communication, Vol. 3 No. 8)

Ethiopia's Government objective of the E-Government initiatives is to provide ICT services such as video conferencing, directory, messaging, and VoIP and Internet at the federal, regional and lowest level of government structure throughout the country. This enables to build a transparent & accountable government system and increased citizen participation in the public administration.

The Schoolnet integrates 756+ high schools into Ethiopia's educational system. This provides quality education for all Ethiopian schools and enables to support the teaching and learning process. In addition, it enables to give similar content to all schools in rural and urban Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian Educational and Research Network (ETHERNET) also connected the public Universities. Thus, MSC and PhD programs through Video Conference with Indian, South African and UK Universities had been given.

High standard equipments are installed in the data center used as a get-way to all connected universities. Video Conference rooms are arranged in the universities. Furthermore, 13 minister offices and 19 agencies are connected to the Woredanet. They have independent servers locally and at national data center and can be used for video conferencing, hosting application, directory service, email, voice over IP, internet service, etc. (Communication, 2009.Vol. 3 No. 9.)

Call Center is another important issue, the specific focus of this dissertation. Although it has some deficiencies, the toll free 888-government call center provides up-to-date and accurate information on government services. It saves customers time and money spent for searching information. The toll free 888 call-center is accessible both from landlines and cell phones.

Federal Institutions such as Transport Authority, Addis Ababa Transport Branch Office, Document Authentication and Registration Office, Social Security Agency, Addis Ababa city Government Land Administration and Building Permit Authority, National Archives and Library Agency, Ministry of Agriculture etc. have web portals. Similarly, regional bureaus like Oromia Supreme Court, Oromia Justice Bureau, Oromia Industry and Urban Development Bureau, Oromia Investment Commission have similar portals. Furthermore, applications done mainly to automate the back-office activities (most are web-based) prioritized and initiated by Ministries and Agencies based on their needs. Government Portal, Justice Information System, Drivers & Vehicles Management Information System, National Records & Library Management Information System, HR Information System, Trade Registry System, Exam & Placement System, etc are among the developed applications. (MCIT Annual Report)

The main objectives of the Ethiopian Government Portal are to provide up-to-date and accurate information on government services, to save customers time and money spent for searching information, and to access through single window.

Currently the Ethiopian Government Portal www.ethiopia.gov.et is hosting at the National Data Center. It is accessible through web any time anywhere. Government Institutions like Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Industry, Social Security Agency etc have web sites.

From the main achievements of the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology of Ethiopia (MCIT), the following could be mentioned primarily. Those are: National ICT Policy, Localization of ICT Terminologies, Keyboard Standard, National Disaster Prevention & Recovery Plan Procedure and Guideline, National ICT HRD Strategy, National ICT R&D Strategy and Guideline, E-Government Strategy, Public Key Infrastructure (PKI), and Enterprise Architecture.

Ethiopian Government initiatives of E-Government, therefore, can be concluded as they give great opportunities. Those opportunities can be put in cost reduction, improve quality of service delivery to citizens, increase transparency, increases accountability and increases citizen's participation in decision-making processes.

The drivers & vehicles management information system is a web-based but currently used as back office application. The National Records & Library Management Information System is also a web-based system. In addition, the Integrated Health Information System, Justice Information System (a combination of voice and video court-case seen through video conference and tracking of the court case through voice); all those efforts make an increase of transparency & accountability by using video conferences in open discussions on issues like new rules, regulations, new policies, tax regulations, etc. It also enhances political discussions between different levels of politicians at different locations. For those reasons, different forms are loaded on the government portals. In sum, all they made less corruption because of the systems.

2.7 E-GOVERNMENT CHALLENGES IN ETHIOPIA

The major E-government challenges in Ethiopia are connectivity, bandwidth, computer penetration, inadequate mobile/landline and computer literacy. They are linked to infrastructure. Lack of qualified professionals to install, commission, run and maintain the infrastructure and

applications is a challenge in implementation of E-Government in Ethiopia. Limited ICT skills in the public sector to use the infrastructure and application, lack of hybrid human capacities, technological, commercial and management, etc are all challenges.

Poor public awareness is also part of the challenges. Another problem is lack of relevant standards, guidelines, and legal issues. For instance, in the absence of interoperability standard, a number of systems that do not talk each other, multiple entries of the same data, multiple sign-on, are too expensive to make interoperable. Low level of working culture, high resistance, weak private sector and low level of collaboration/partnership between private and public sector are among the challenges.

As e-government services are mostly provided using ICT, it is imperative that the understanding of Information Technology adoption should be done. This understanding can further extended to help understand the uptake and adoption of e-government systems.

In the case of Ethiopian Government call center, many challenges and issues need to be address for successful implementation. There are distinct factors that command the adoption of call centers, and these factors depend on the local context. Practically, these barriers can have a significant effect on the development of government organizations' capabilities to provide online services and transactions. The challenges include poor ICT infrastructure and poor language skills. Behaviors of operators and their approaches are other serious technical challenges.

E-governance in Ethiopia is not really the use of IT in governance but as a tool to ensure good governance. E-governance does not mean proliferation of computers and accessories in each organization; it is a political decision that calls for discipline, attitudinal change in managers and employees, and massive government process re-engineering. All implementers and drivers of e-governance initiatives agree that the biggest challenge of deploying e-governance is not technology but change management. Change management is important not only in terms of cultural change but also in terms of changing operations and processes workflow that the automated environment will introduce.

Other obstacles are lack of trained human resources and lack of ICT penetration in remote areas. For instance, good e-governance application will not benefit anybody in remote areas if there is no supporting infrastructure such as electricity, computers and connectivity are not available. Of course, the National Data Centre, which is promoting e-governance in Ethiopia, has established connectivity in all Weredas. There remain however, issues such as standardization, inter-

operability, security, and propriety vs. open source. The other set of challenge lie in extending the reach of E-Governance services to all Ethiopian population that lives in remote areas, zones and weredas. In addition a challenge due to the diversity of the country enforces need to do governance in local languages although ensuring e-Governance in all local languages is a big task to achieve.

Internet is an instrument of call centre operation and as one of the primary e-governance implementation tool. In addition, the framework emphasizes that call centre operations are not without problems. Call centers may face a number of challenges; cost-pressures; lack of long-term vision with indecisiveness in priority-setting; tele-density and deficient infrastructure including the digital divide; a lack of public awareness about the use and benefit of public sector call centers; legal requirements; and bureaucratic red-tape and corruption.

Broad-based public awareness campaigns are required to inform the public of e-governance activities. Citizens and other stakeholders should understand the goals and objectives of public sector call centers, their links to e-governance and the extent of benefit they can achieve from such operations. Call centers and other e-governance initiatives will fail to perform and people will remain skeptical if they are not well organized. Public briefings, community consultations and promotions through the various media outlets could help overcome those problems.

A systematic interplay of these issues, together with the socio-economic, political and cultural environment may influence the implementation of public sector call centers within the e-governance architecture. As a cost-saving mechanism through reduced use of paper documents and for saving the transportation and other related costs of face-to-face service delivery, call centers have the potential to contribute to sustainable development as well. A well thought-out call centre operation may help Ethiopian Government in building a better service for a better future.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 STUDY DESIGN

In this research, questionnaire was designed to collect qualitative data. Dichotomous questions were included. The questionnaire aimed to collect information on citizens' awareness of e-government implementation in Ethiopia and the functions and problems of toll free 888-call center. In addition, challenges faces when interacting with e-government platforms and ways on which citizens perceive e-government should be improved. This was complimented by interviews and rigorous literatures and document reviews. Purposive sampling was utilized to identify and group the participants of the interview.

3.2 TARGET POPULATION

The study had target populations of public servants and the service users of five institutions; Transport Authority, Addis Ababa Transport Branch Office, Document Authentication and Registration Office, Social Security Agency, and Addis Ababa city Government Land Administration and Building Permit Authority.

The public sector institutions were selected purposively because of the magnitude and importance of the institution's call centers in serving citizens and their relation with diverse stakeholders.

The purpose of this research is to identify the problems facing in the toll free 888-call center implementation of Ethiopian government. In this study, I interviewed stakeholders of the 888-toll free call center to elicit their insight on how citizen participation works. The three main stakeholder groups were Ministry of Communication and Information Technology staff members, Ethio-telecom employees and the 888-call center operators. I also interviewed active stakeholder citizens.

MCIT professionals contacted first with the background on the study and its goals. Determination for who should be interviewed depends on availability and willingness to participate in the study. Then, the professionals were asked to participate in the study as a citizen and members of the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology staff.

3.3 SAMPLING DESIGN & PROCEDURES

After the numbers of respondents in each institution is decided, data was gathered through questionnaire and interviews. Then, respondents of service users of each institution have been selected based on convenience sampling (accidental) method. This is due to the nature of the

service users' unavailability in fixed time and place. Thus, those service users were found executing their activities in each institution in different days were made to fill the questionnaire.

3.4 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Data collected through questionnaire was organized, coded and then analyzed by using different tables under separate headings and sub headings in order to facilitate the process of comparison and easy reference, to detect errors and omissions and to describe, explain and analyze the data and information obtained directly from respondents. Based on data analysis conclusion has been drawn and recommendation were made.

Qualitative research is designed to this research. To tackle the problems of the Ethiopian Government toll free call center, it introduced together with a review of relevant literatures particularly Ethiopian e-government service portfolio, Ethiopian e-government readiness ranking, government portals, e-government reports surveys and other publications. Furthermore, it deepens the exploration of e-government portals for better understanding of barriers to call centers in addition to my own observation and data collected from the questionnaire.

A detailed examination and analysis of E-Government opportunities and challenges are presented together with a review of relevant literatures. The general belief of business research is often thought as collecting data, constructing questionnaires and analyzing data. However, it also includes identifying the problems and how to proceed in solving them. To do so, there must be detailed data analysis. Therefore, the data sources are described as the carriers of information. These are two types of data sources analyzed; primary data (field) is collected and analyzed. This is in the form of observations and interviews and the secondary one is collected from academic and nonacademic sources. Since the study of e-government call center will be using the secondary data collection method, sources like books, articles appearing in journals and other publications and sources available in electronic media will be used to collect and analyze the necessary information on the subject under study to arrive at a comprehensive analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS & KEY FINDINGS

4.1 DATA ANALYSIS

Achieving good governance is one of the primary objectives of the Government of The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Various means have long been used to achieve this objective. Thus, the Ministry of Communication & Information Technology, popularly known as MCIT, has now attracted significant attention as a mechanism to offer improved service delivery and attain better E-Governance in the public sector.

The Ethiopian Government toll-free call centre has emerged as an important e-governance tool. From a service-providers' perspective, the call centre is widely recognized as an effective e-governance instrument capable of delivering better services including the dissemination of important information to citizens and other stakeholders. Given the flexible nature of the call centre operation and its potential benefits, the Ministry of Communication & Information Technology is increasingly adopting it as a means to implement e-governance.

Although it has already achieved considerable successes in implementing Ethiopian government toll free call centre activities, it is not always been easy. Such initiatives often face significant challenges that may include lack of infrastructure, low tele-density, bureaucratic inefficiency and administrative corruption.

Strong employee commitment with a well-planned and systematic use of call centres within the e-government framework could help to overcome the challenges. Nonetheless, given the nature and complexity of the issue and to better-understand the important albeit intricate relationships across all factors relevant to public sector call centre activities, it could considered helpful to draw a systematic conceptual framework focusing on call centre operation and performance from an e-governance perspective. Accordingly, this paper attempts to integrate call centres into a broader schematic architecture highlighting the connections across call centres, e-governance and good governance. It also shows the various types of linkages across government, citizens, businesses and other stakeholders. Therefore, this analysis has implications for policy-makers, public service managers and call centre employees. It is likely to provide a recipe for future research on public sector call centers.

As it is mentioned earlier, Ethiopian Government E-governance is not only the use of IT in governance but as a tool to ensure good governance. E-governance does not mean proliferation

of computers and accessories; it is a political decision, which calls for discipline, attitudinal change in managers and employees, and massive government process re-engineering.

A systematic interplay, together with the socio-economic, political and cultural environment may influence the implementation of the call center within the e-governance architecture. As a cost-saving mechanism through reduced use of paper documents and for saving the transportation and other related costs of face-to-face service delivery, call centers have the potential to contribute to sustainable development as well. A well thought-out call centre operation may help in building a better government for a better future.

Meanwhile, many challenges are faced in its efforts to enable ICT sector to play a significant role in the national economy. Indeed, some achievements have been made by Ethiopian government over the last ten years in terms of ICT infrastructure, human capital and telecommunication sector. However, many barriers to e-government implementation are still faced including generic challenges. These barriers to e-governance program in Ethiopia have been listed without further elaboration according to the following categorization:

- ❖ Technical, cultural and economical challenges
- ❖ Reputation of quality of services
- ❖ Inconvenience of delivery mechanisms
- ❖ Computer illiteracy
- ❖ Low internet penetration.

These categories include legal challenges like the lack of E-signature mechanism, security and privacy concerns, social, cultural and economic challenges, E-payment transactions-inconvenience of delivery mechanisms and its effects on reputation of e-services, computer illiteracy and low internet penetration rate, lack of citizens' awareness, bureaucratic challenges inflexibility to modify workflows, and lack of integration and information sharing.

It is not possible to say that call centers in Ethiopia offer 24/7 multilingual and multimedia supported premium services for marketing, sales, customer care, crisis management, and other key business applications. Highly skilled, motivated people are essential if a call centre is to become proactive and successful. It is impossible to establish trust and long-lasting relationships that are essential in selling services by substituting human beings.

The evolution of call centre functions is making the skills and competencies of operators more relevant, but the distribution of operators is still widespread. There is a clear contradiction

between the aims to be pursued and the way people are treated. Accordingly, it is not surprising to find that an overwhelming majority of call center employees cited people as the most critical factor in the success of call centers. Specifically, more than two thirds (67%) of them reported that people were the key critical issue.

Similar indications emerge from a survey of call centre executives. Participants were asked to give their top three management issues: personnel ranked high (42%) followed by customer satisfaction (29%); technology (20%) and finance (9%) were again seen as less important. Such a widely shared view of the problem is rooted in the working conditions in the call centers. Indeed, although a call centre should be a locus of communication and relationship with the customer, and the operator represents the whole organization to its customers, operators conduct the relationship with the customer alone. They do not have a complete view of the process. The data collected from respondents and the analysis shows that only 47% of the operators can quote their call centre objectives.

Although there is a high level of technological equipments, there is a lack of organizational integration and communication between the call centre and other federal offices are usually poor. In addition, operators are in charge of critical processes of communication, information diffusion and gathering, knowledge creation, and sharing. They possess knowledge about citizens, services, processes, organization and technologies. They are young (on average 23-30 years old), hold diplomas and university degrees. However, for most of them, there is no clear path to the future; career development in the call centers has not been made attractive, and often it is unplanned. It is unclear what will happen next. Large-scale horizontal mobility (from one call centre to another new one) conceals the fact that there is little mobility within the organization from the call centre to other departments. Agents have less motivation, which affects the quality of performance. This is due to various reasons including less salary.

Moreover, there are no vocational training programs. Call centre jobs are based on generic education and the perceived image is that of a job that anyone can do. Social and professional recognition is scarce. The names and definitions indicate that social and professional identities are very weak.

People are the key issue in call centers. The issue may be tackled from two angles. It focuses on individuals. Top performers obtain higher financial results, are less likely to change job, are safer and they are less likely to take sick leave, while fewer disability claims, require less training,

produce little or no customer attrition. The practices of top performers identifies the best solutions for dissemination, thereby improving call centre performance, and an analysis of the profiles of top performers builds up a selection process that makes it possible to get the right people both as operator and managers. Such an approach centered on individuals can be successful, but it does not address the aforementioned organizational paradoxes to be found in the call centers.

An alternative approach is to recognize the call center as knowledge-based service organization focused on creating value. Here, the distinction between universal knowledge workers and disposable under-skilled operators lies at the heart of human resource issues. Core knowledge is not restricted to supposedly universal operators. The basic unit is neither the individual front-line position nor the operator-customer pairing or the universal operator. But a knowledge cell where the operator is integrated within a team and shares cognitive artifacts and supporting technologies with colleagues, and even with citizens and customers. The objective is not merely to provide customers with information and assist and support them, but also to acquire and transfer knowledge for the customer and for the organization.

In the knowledge cell, knowledge is accumulated and distributed among people, teams, technologies and customers. The activities of the call center operators are then characterized by knowledge creation and manipulation, and job design is centered on enabling access to, and sharing knowledge with all members of the cell.

4.2 KEY FINDINGS

Citizens have the right to have an access of getting information either directly or through legitimate intermediate institutions to respond the citizen's queries. Such queries are built on freedom of getting information as well as capacities to participate in the electronic governance administration system.

As the data shows, 68.4% of the respondents said "NO" indicating absence of quick responses from call centers. The result showed that call centers are not effectively discharging their responsibilities. Only 32 % of respondents say "YES" to the existence of quick service delivery from call centers. This shows the predicaments in the service providing institutions.

The question on lack of awareness campaigns on the benefits of government call centers showed about (70%) of the respondents indicated they were not aware at all of e-government services;

only 20% said they were moderately and slightly aware and the rest indicated that they were fully aware of e-government services.

65% of the participants identified the following as the inherent challenges. The challenges are: limitation in ICT skills, lack of readily available Internet access, lack of e-government services relevant to the local context, lack of user-friendly e-government platforms, limited ICT skills on the part of the customer and government employees, customers' limited experience in interacting with call centers, non-availability of native languages option on all E-Gov call centers which could help the customer to perform better.

Close to 35% of the respondents indicated that they have the necessary requisite ICT skills to use a computer efficiently to effectively engage in e-government services. However, usage of e-government applications is low. Only 27% of the respondent's access e-government applications; and 50% of the respondents acknowledge the ready availability of Internet connectivity in their offices.

Majority of the participants outlined the challenges that may be acting as barriers to the proliferation of Ethiopian e-government call center. It is logically acceptable to believe that once these challenges are addressed, there is a chance that e-government can thrive in Ethiopia. In an attempt to address the aforementioned challenges, many interventions are being done to facilitate e-government developments.

The staff members were generally similar to one another in their responses. Again, I am able to identify three main points about effective call centers from the perspective of e-government. The dominant theme that came from staff involved defining what it means to be an effective call center. What they meant was before one could define "effective" call center, one must first be able to identify the roles or characteristics of what makes an effective call center. What are the goals of the citizen in the first place? Overall, the staff defined the effective call center as being an educated advocate. The highest number of common responses (86%) came from the idea that most citizens are not able to understand the importance of government call center. They also commented that the behaviors of the operators is a major setback and there is so much going on in the call centers that few people have time, resources or know-how to really review call centers duties and responsibilities.

At the same time, 69% of the respondents from Ethio-telecom felt it was their responsibility to help, inform the general citizenry by provided concise, accurate and timely information to the

public. "A big part of our job is to help citizens understand, in a general sense, how the process works. Another part of our job is educating customers on the viewpoints of the citizen-using toll free call centers. Ethio-telecom generally should see its role as one of a moderator and an information provider."

The increasing volume of calls and less number of agents results in large number of unanswered calls. In fact, the respondents said effective communication and cooperation is the foundation and building block to any successful call center. Respondents (61.5%) stated, "Allowing for two-way communication between call center operators and citizens involves more than just simply explaining why operator's behavior is like they are. It is paramount to dig a bit deeper and communicate to inform and to get feedback."

78% of the call center operators respond that "By establishing more opportunity, citizens will receive more and greater expectations of positive responses from the call centers. As operators, we must not deal with disappointment and dissatisfaction felt by citizens. Establishing efficient and effective communication is a key and it involves more than simply explaining the current call center conditions. We must dig a bit deeper and communicate to inform, educate, and elicit opinion and feedback. It must be an iterative process."

The other theme was an often underlying, but clearly negative tone citizens had when they discussed their experiences with e-government call center. The citizens interviewed also rejected the notion that call center operators actively seek to get input from citizens. It was clear in the interviews that citizens felt they were not given appropriate means to their request for information. The 59.7% of the respondents suggested that operators do not speak in customer's language (if the caller is a farmer or a merchant etc.) Even they do not use easy words, short sentences, and do not give patient listening to understand the local conditions and citizen's situation for the query he/she raises.

66.8% respondents suggested that communication skills are very important. But, call center operators most often do not empathizing with the caller according to respondents. Their listening for content and feeling; exhibiting commitment and interest to convince the caller is very low. They are defensive in conversation. Some of them use unnecessary and complex words and sentences. Therefore, smooth transition in voice; speaking politely and closing the call with greetings are important things said the interviewees.

The focal department on registering queries should be responsible for documenting the daily activities of the call center at various levels on citizens' queries and their resolution; the department should also be responsible for documentation and reporting. The officer in-charge of the department will gather the reports from the call center or response centers and prepare a consolidated statement on citizens' queries and answers along with the resolutions given and report to the Ministry of Communication & Information Technology. All the proceedings of the call center will be documented by each of the department and shared with other call centers for preparing a database and also to prepare Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

Call centers are designed as 'operations in which a managed group of people spends most of their time doing business by phone, usually working in a computer-supported environment. The basic tenet is that work in call centers has to be conceptualized in terms of distributed knowledge. This means that only part of the knowledge needed to carry out any transaction is (or rather has to be) in the mind of the operators, and important knowledge may be distributed among colleagues in the organization, available and accessible cognitive artifacts in the work environment, and clients. However, from the questionnaire respondents (87%), it is possible to understand that operators in the toll free call centers are not knowledge workers, because they did not carry out any activity by manipulating internal and external knowledge. For the question for availability of Subject Matter Specialists, call dropouts and response to the callers, 66% of the respondents are dissatisfied.

Call centers are among the most rapidly growing forms of employment. The crucial point is not the number of people in call centers, but the fact that people are critical to their success. The research alike confirms that human resources form the strategic factor that makes all the difference in managing the customer relationship. The customer-focused culture is the main asset when seeking competitiveness and getting the most out of the customer relation. Technology can support, but never replace, human resources skilled in communications, problem solving and caring.

Although federal minister offices and government agencies are aware of the central role of human resources, they seldom pay the necessary attention to the training, retention and career development of call center operators. This research reveals symptoms of organizational disease including carelessness and impolite approach to call agents. Notwithstanding suggestions for improving human resources management, some paradoxes are apparent.

Call center operators work alone in their relationship with clients, and technology and organization do not adequately support the communication flow. Operators are managed according to the paradigm of the traditional blue-collar industrial worker; moreover, they do not possess an integrated view of the process. 53% of the operators do not even know the main objectives of the call centre they work for. Hence, there is a need to integrate the organizations, performance, jobs and quality of work and for people to be seen as the hub that allows the Ethiopian government call centre to become a learning organization.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY

While many efforts have been made, Ethiopia is still faced by many challenges in its endeavors to implementing e-governance initiatives successfully. This is basically attributed to the conventional problems or obstacles that could restrict growth of any government such as lack of accountability and transparency, and lack of citizen involvement in decision-making processes. In addition, there are e-government implementation challenges due to privacy and security concerns, lack of citizens' awareness and participation, limited IT training, and lack of technical unified standards.

The research paper addressed the toll free call center and presented achievements made by government to enable citizens, businesses, governmental employees and other agencies to benefit from Ethiopian government e-governance tools. Additionally, ICT initiatives in the Ethiopian public sector organizations as well as the important role of ICTs to help Ethiopia fostering the economic and social development are introduced.

An analysis to examine e-government call center services portfolio and e-government readiness ranking was introduced. The challenges confronting e-government program are analyzed. Nevertheless, the research findings indicate that Ethiopia is still lagging far behind some developing countries from utilizing call centers in delivering government services and information online.

The Federal Democratic Republic Government of Ethiopia has launched toll free call centers with a view to leverage the extensive telecom infrastructure to deliver services to citizens. The purpose of the call centers is mainly to respond to issues raised by citizens instantly in the local language Amharic on continuous basis.

A call center consists of a complex of telecommunication infrastructure, computer support and human resources organized to manage effectively and efficiently the queries raised by citizens instantly in the local language. Mainly using telephone and computer, interact with citizens to understand the problem and answer the queries.

This is a functional area within the service provider, Ethio-telecom, where separate facilities exist solely to answer inbound calls or make outbound telephone calls, to resolve the queries of pending calls. Usually it refers to a sophisticated voice operations center that provides a full

range of inbound or outbound call handling services including customer support, direct assistance, and other services.

This is a new dimension in ICT in Ethiopia, which takes account of, and makes full use of on-going information and communication revolution, by optimally utilizing the communication bandwidth to serve the society in remotest areas of the country. This is an important value multiplier for the existing service provision mechanisms, which find it otherwise difficult (in terms of infrastructure) to reach their desired clientele. This will enable establishment of close linkages and seamless communication mechanism among the key stakeholders in the Ethiopian Government toll free call center system.

E-government is the establishment of a long-term organization-wide strategy to constantly improve operations with the end in view of fulfilling citizen needs by transforming internal operations such as staffing, technology, processes and workflow management. Thus, e-governance should result in the efficient and swift delivery of goods and services to citizens, businesses, government employees and agencies. To citizens and businesses, e-governance would mean the simplification of procedures and streamlining of the approval process. To government employees and agencies, it would mean the facilitation of cross-agency coordination and collaboration to ensure appropriate and timely decision-making.

In an Ethiopian e-government system, individuals are able to initiate a request for a particular government service and then receive that government service through call-centers or the Internet or some computerized mechanisms. In some cases, the government service is delivered through one government office, instead of many. In other cases, a government transaction is completed without direct in-person contact with a government employee.

Public call center system requires a paradigm shift from top-down, blanket dissemination of technological packages towards providing citizens with the knowledge and understanding with which they solve their own location-specific problems. Continuous two-way interaction among the citizens and call centers is the most critical component of e-governance. At present, the issues have been addressed by the systems of Ethiopian government call center through various approaches. However, limitations continue to remain a challenge. With the availability of telephone and Internet, it is now possible to bridge this gap to quite a large extent by using an appropriate mix of technologies.

5.2 CONCLUSION

With a drive to develop a knowledge-based economy, call center services through broadband have brought about critical changes particularly in knowledge management and human resources development. Increasing capacity of ICT has further been empowered by the growth of a global network. It has impacted the way business is conducted, facilitated learning and knowledge sharing, generated global information flows, empowered citizens and communities in ways that have redefined governance, and have created significant wealth and economic growth resulting in a global information society.

The gap between those able, and those unable, to participate in the knowledge economy is currently termed as the “digital divide”. This digital divide is evident within nations, and between the developing and the developed world.

Ethiopia is no exception, the situation requires urgent steps to enable Ethiopians participate meaningfully in the knowledge economy. In this regard, awareness is being raised amongst all nation, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia. The dangers posed by the digital divide, and the risk of being excluded further from the knowledge economy and social development has propelled Ethiopian government to put in place a policy framework through which coordinating mechanisms and harmonized strategies are nurtured. Therefore, the ultimate goal of this research on the Ethiopian government call center is a normative one. It is an inherent good to have call centers effectively in a developing democracy of the Ethiopian society. Thus, this public administration research should target ways to understand and advance effective citizen participation on e-governance.

Through this research, I found ineffective citizen participation on the Ethiopian Government call center viewed in a variety of ways, or along different dimensions, depending on the stakeholder position as a service provider, staff member or citizen. There are some areas of general agreement, such as participation in e-governance being meaningful and not symbolic. In other areas, such as how citizen participation is effective directly or indirectly, there are distinct differences.

However, it could be more useful to address Ethiopia's e-government readiness ranking compared with other African countries over the period from 2005 up to 2013, which might reveal some challenges faced by the country in its efforts to implement e-government program. E-Readiness is briefly defined as the degree to which a country is prepared to participate in the

networked world. The e-government readiness ranking is a function of three variables or indices. These are web measurement index (it reflects the content and delivery of e-government services including call centers); the telecommunications' infrastructure index (reflects the degree to which a country is prepared for e-transformation and e-delivery); and the human capital index (reflects the degree to which citizens are prepared to participate in the networked world). Hence, Ethiopia has made efforts to improve its e-government readiness ranking over the last few years. In terms of achievements in communication infrastructures, the connectivity and access have been improved. In addition, broadband connections are currently accessible in main cities. Ethiopia is now the country ranked fourth from Africa and first from Sub-Saharan African countries.

Ethiopia faces some generic challenges in its efforts to harvest e-government opportunities and to modernize e-governance in general and the call center practices in particular. These challenges facing e-government can be broadly categorized into social, economic and technological issues.

The Internet penetration rate is still low. However, some progress has been made in terms of the number of people accessing the internet, but more needs to be done with regard to the low penetration of PCs as well as the high rate of computer illiteracy, which hinders the majority of the people from benefiting from e-governance. Furthermore, Internet remains English language dominated, which results in a particular challenge for Ethiopians. Although, the government has made some achievements with regard to cultural and educational content development, electronic content remains a big challenge as much of it is still developed in English language, which is not adequate for many Ethiopians who have modest English language capability.

The lack of citizen awareness of the potential benefits that might result from the application of e-governance and the less participation in e-governance development on the part of users hinder the successful implementation of Ethiopia's e-government program. Furthermore, citizens currently have very limited idea about what toll free call center is, and how to benefit from it. All this could lead to a challenge for Ethiopia to move ahead in building a successful e-governance.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper suggests that a successful adoption of call centre has the potential to provide better service delivery at reduced costs, increase public sector efficiency, minimise corruption and improve the accountability, transparency and responsiveness of the public sector. It is, however, acknowledged that such initiatives in toll free call centre are fraught with numerous challenges that include lack of infrastructure, low tele-density, bureaucratic inefficiency and administrative corruption. Based on the available evidence, a framework is proposed to encapsulate the nature and operation of call centre as an e-governance tool. The framework also identifies the challenges the call centre may face, the external environment it is influenced by and the role it play in achieving better governance. Therefore, the researcher proposed a group of recommendations to assist the policy makers in developing a coherent strategic vision for the future to overcoming the obstacles in the road for developing a successful Ethiopian government toll-free call center. The recommendations are as follows:

- ❖ The service provider must create a favorite environment that supports the development of toll-free call centers in the regional states capital cities with their local languages.
- ❖ There must be a communication plan and advertizing campaigns using broadcast, print, and e-media where citizens can know and learn about the Ethiopian government toll free call center opportunities and benefits.
- ❖ It should have industrial capabilities for almost all types of customer relations, ranging from travel services, technical support, education, customer care, financial services, and online business-to-customer support, online business to business support. Therefore, Outsourcing is very important.
- ❖ Call centers shall offer 24/7 multilingual and multimedia supported premium services for marketing, sales, customer care, crisis management, and other key business applications. To do so, highly skilled, motivated people are essential if a call centre is to become proactive and successful.
- ❖ The need for vocational training programs is very crucial. Because, call centre jobs are based on generic education and the perceived image is that of a job that anyone can do. Social and professional recognition is scarce. The names and definitions indicate that social and professional identities are very weak.

- ❖ For agencies receiving calls via toll free service, toll free language translation service, LTS, may be accessed by contacting language line services using the call redirection conference and transfer option. The call center agent can utilize a toll free number specific for this purpose. Once the call is terminated in the voice response unit, VRU, the agent is prompted for the language requested. The agent will then be connected with the appropriate translator.
- ❖ Educated and trained professional call agents are necessary to Ethiopia. In addition to partial outsourcing, the need for Subject Matter Specialists will be indispensable. Therefore, highly skilled workforce, with proficiency in English and idioms, helps the country as a top business destination for hundred million dollars business process outsourcing industries.

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APPENDIX

ANNEX ONE.: GENERAL INFORMATION

Thank you for your cooperation. This interview is conducted to gather diverse background information on **THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF E-GOVERNANCE IN ETHIOPIA: THE CASE OF THE TOLL FREE 888 E-GOVERNMENT CALL CENTER.**

I am taking to people believed to have rich information on the subject matter through recommendations and presumptive assumptions. The result of this study will help in better understanding on the service delivery that took place in the call center mean while helping the policy and decision makers planning and evaluating programs aiming at improving the electronic governance services.

The questionnaire could take some minutes. Therefore, I kindly request your cooperation to have great concern on your responses. Furthermore, since not every word you, the interviewee, are going to give me in the discussion shall be missed; I would be recording the discussion that we are going to have. Nevertheless, if you are not comfortable with this, I will not record the discussion.

Thank you!

ANNEX TWO: QUESTIONNAIRES

2.1 Personal Data and Dichotomous questions: Please put ✓ on appropriate box

Age: 20-25 26-40 41 or over Not saying

Marital status: Single Married Divorced Not Saying

1. Have you ever been quested to the toll free 888-call center?

Yes No No Answer

2. Did you get a relevant response from the operators?

Yes No No Answer

3. Has your request escalated since you began calling to 888-toll free call center?

Yes No No Answer

4. Does your communication with other call centers become more frequent?

Yes No No Answer

5. Can getting information from the call center be considered as part of citizens' right?

Yes No No Answer

6. Should call center operators be qualified people with knowledge of ICT and proficient in local and foreign languages?

Yes No No Answer

7. Do you agree that the communication skill of operators in the call center is impressive?

Yes No No Answer

8. Do operators empathize with the callers?

Yes No No Answer

9. Do call agents listen actively for content and feelings of callers?

Yes No No Answer

10. Do operators exhibit commitment and interest to convince the callers?

Yes No No Answer

11. Do call operators use unnecessary and complex words and sentences?

Yes No No Answer

12. Is the operator's voice in transition interesting?

Yes No No Answer

13. Are they speaking politely and finally close the call with greetings?

Yes No No Answer

2.1 Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by placing a ✓ mark in the appropriate box.

Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	1. The 888 toll-free government call center is effective.
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	2. I know that the toll free 888 Ethiopian Government call center relates with good governance and the linkages across government, citizens, businesses and other stakeholders.
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	3. The call center is a catalyst in reducing corruption.
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	4. Citizens have awareness how to use the 888 toll free call center.
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	4. Women operators are better than male operators in hosting customers.
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	5. In comparison to other employees, there are differences in the call center operators' career development.
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	6. The work organization is attractive to call operators.
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	7. There are perceived common health problems such as stress in the call center.
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	8. The call center operators are qualified people with knowledge of ICT and proficient in local and foreign languages.
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	9. There is vocational training for call center employees.

Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	10. The training is relevant to the job of the call center.
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	11. I am satisfying by the mechanisms of surveillance and monitoring system of the call center.
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	12. In relating with other directorates the Industrial relations of the call center is very good.
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	13. I feel like I make a useful contribution at the call center.

2.2 Customer satisfaction survey questions

1. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 represents "Extremely dissatisfied" and 5 represents "Extremely Satisfied," how would you rate your level of overall satisfaction with E-Government toll free 888 call center?

1 2 3 4 5

2. How would you rate the overall quality of customer relationship with E-Government toll free 888 call center?

Excellent Very Good Good Fair Poor

3. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 represents "Extremely dissatisfied" and 5 represents "Extremely Satisfied," how would you rate your level of satisfaction with E-Government toll free 888 call center in regards to all sided customer service?

1 2 3 4 5

4. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 represents "Extremely dissatisfied" and 5 represents "Extremely Satisfied," how would you rate your level of satisfaction with E-Government toll free 888 call center in regards to operator's behavior?

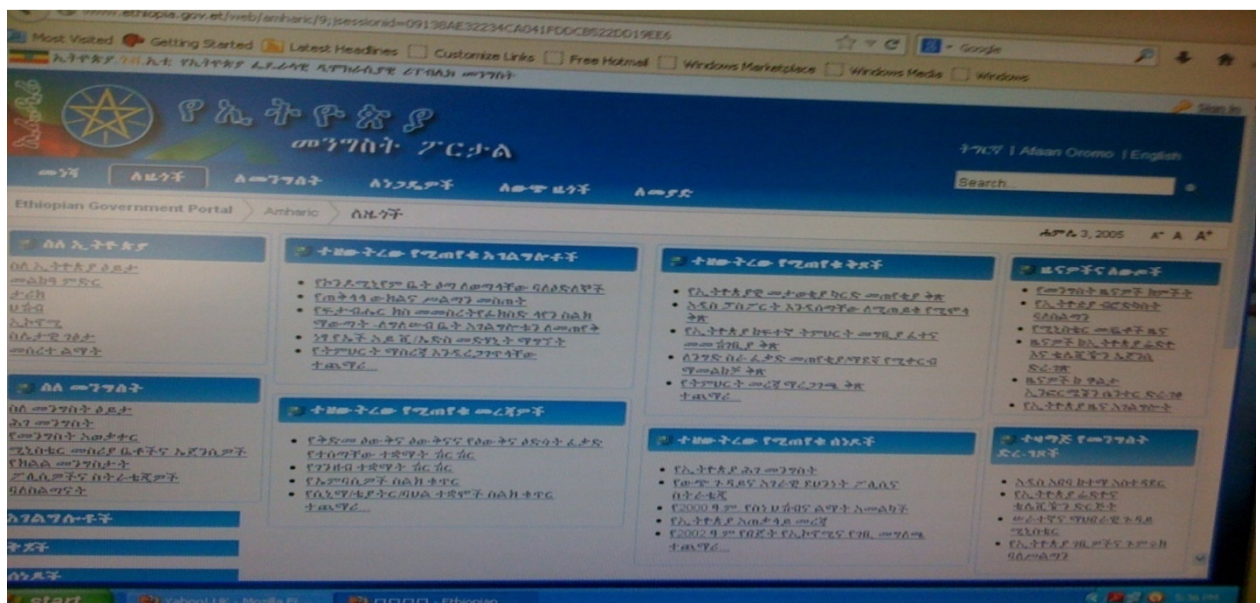
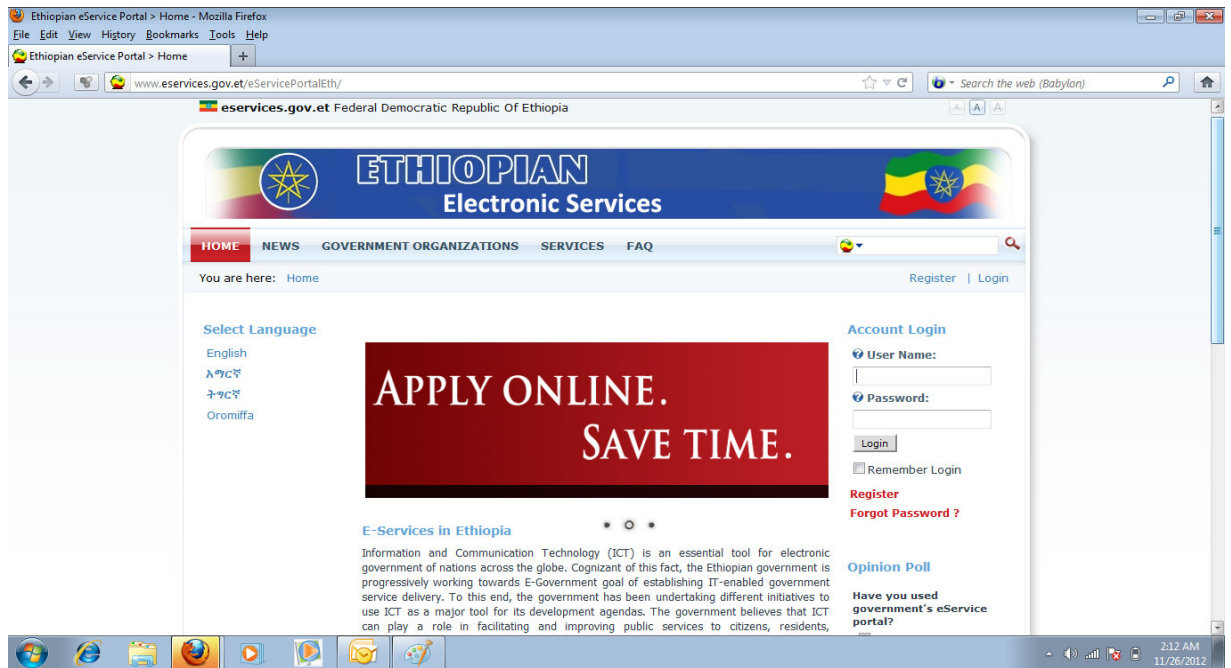
1 2 3 4 5

5. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 represents "Extremely dissatisfied" and 5 represents "Extremely Satisfied," how would you rate your level of satisfaction with E-Government toll free 888 call center in regards to communicational skills and value?

1 2 3 4 5

6. How would you rate the call center operators' overall knowledge of your problem or question?
 Excellent Very Good Good Fair Poor
7. How would you rate the Operator on helpfulness, or a willingness to assist you?
 Excellent Very Good Good Fair Poor

ANNEX THREE. ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT PORTAL



ANNEX FOUR. NUMBER OF DROPOUTS AND ANSWERED CALLS FROM JULY 2002EC-SEP. 2006EC

የጥሪ ብዛትን የሚያሳይ ሠንጠረዥ (ከሐምሌ 2002 ዓ.ም - ሰኔ 2003 ዓ.ም)

ተራ ቁጥር	የመ/ቤቱ ስም	ሐምሌ 2002					ነሐሴ 2002					መስከረም 2003				
		የጥሪዎች ብዛት			አማካኝ ውጤት		የጥሪዎች ብዛት			አማካኝ ውጤት		የጥሪዎች ብዛት			አማካኝ ውጤት	
		የተመለሰ	የልተመለሰ	ድምር	የተመለሰ	የልተመለሰ	የተመለሰ	የልተመለሰ	ድምር	የተመለሰ	የልተመለሰ	የተመለሰ	የልተመለሰ	ድምር	የተመለሰ	የልተመለሰ
1.	የሁነዶች ማረጋገጫና ምዝገባ ጽ/ቤት	3,404	290	3,694	92.14%	7.85%	5,756	421	6,177	93.18%	6.81%	5,247	341	5,588	93.89%	6.10%
2.	የማህበራዊ ዋስትና ኤጀንሲ	4,040	278	4,318	93.56%	6.43%	4,510	213	4,723	95.49%	4.50%	3,622	157	3,779	95.84%	4.15%
3.	የመንገድ ትራንስፖርት ባለስልጣን	3,651	155	3,806	95.92%	4.07%	7,052	287	7,339	96.08%	3.91%	5,457	249	5,706	95.63%	4.06%
4.	የአዲስ አበባ ከተማ አስተዳደር የመሬት አስተዳደር	----	----	----	---	----	25	15	40	62.5%	37.5%	----	----	----	----	----
	ድምር	11,095	723	11,818	93.88%	6.11%	17,343	936	18,279	94.87%	5.12%	14,326	747	15,073	95.04%	4.95%

ተራ ቁጥር	የመ/ቤቱ ስም	ጥቅምት 2003					ህዳር 2003					ታህሳስ 2003				
		የጥሪዎች ብዛት			አማካኝ ውጤት		የጥሪዎች ብዛት			አማካኝ ውጤት		የጥሪዎች ብዛት			አማካኝ ውጤት	
		የተመለሰ	የልተመለሰ	ድምር	የተመለሰ	የልተመለሰ	የተመለሰ	የልተመለሰ	ድምር	የተመለሰ	የልተመለሰ	የተመለሰ	የልተመለሰ	ድምር	የተመለሰ	የልተመለሰ
1.	የሁነዶች ማረጋገጫና ምዝገባ ጽ/ቤት	4,272	243	4,515	94.61%	5.38%	5,986	415	6,401	93.51%	6.48%	5,646	427	6,073	92.9%	7.03%
2.	የማህበራዊ ዋስትና ኤጀንሲ	3,763	153	3,916	96.09%	3.90%	4,813	219	5,032	95.64%	4.35%	5,758	289	6,047	95.22%	4.77%
3.	የመንገድ ትራንስፖርት ባለስልጣን	1,896	149	2,045	92.71%	7.28%	6,720	334	7,054	95.26%	4.73%	7,176	341	7,517	95.46%	4.53%
4.	የአዲስ አበባ ከተማ አስተዳደር የመሬት አስተዳደር	----	----	----	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----
	ድምር	9,931	545	10,476	94.79%	5.20%	17,519	968	18,487	94.76%	5.23%	18,580	1,057	19,637	94.6%	5.38%

Source: MCIT, 2013

ከጥር 2003 - መጋቢት 2003

ተራ ቁጥር	የመ/ቤቱ ስም	ጥር 2003					የካቲት 2003					መጋቢት 2003				
		የጥሪዎች ብዛት			አማካኝ ውጤት		የጥሪዎች ብዛት			አማካኝ ውጤት		የጥሪዎች ብዛት			አማካኝ ውጤት	
		የተመለሰ	የልተመለሰ	ደምር	የተመለሰ	የልተመለሰ	የተመለሰ	የልተመለሰ	ደምር	የተመለሰ	የልተመለሰ	የተመለሰ	የልተመለሰ	ደምር	የተመለሰ	የልተመለሰ
1.	የሠነዶች ማረጋገጫና ምዝገባ ጽ/ቤት	5,204	311	5,515	94.36%	5.63%	5,532	385	5,917	93.49%	6.5%	6,803	581	7,384	92.13%	7.86%
2.	የማህበራዊ ዋስትና ኤጀንሲ	6,323	240	6,563	96.34%	3.65%	14,422	306	14,728	97.9%	2.07%	5,711	471	6,182	92.38%	7.61%
3.	የመንገድ ትራንስፖርት ባለስልጣን	4,760	179	4,939	96.37%	3.62%	6,238	340	6,578	94.83%	5.16%	6,981	622	7,603	91.81%	8.18%
4.	የአዲስ አበባ ከተማ አስተዳደር የመሬት አስተዳደር	6,150	429	6,579	93.47%	6.52%	8,377	393	8,770	95.51%	4.48%	10,905	761	11,666	93.47%	6.52%
	ደምር	22,437	1,159	23,596	95.08%	4.91%	34,569	1,424	35,993	96.04%	3.95%	30,400	2,435	32,835	92.58%	7.41%

Source: MCIT, 2013

ከሚያዝያ 2003 - ሰኔ 2003

ተራ ቁጥር	የመ/ቤቱ ስም	ሚያዝያ 2003					ግንቦት 2003					ሰኔ 2003				
		የጥሪዎች ብዛት			አማካኝ ውጤት		የጥሪዎች ብዛት			አማካኝ ውጤት		የጥሪዎች ብዛት			አማካኝ ውጤት	
		የተመለሰ	የልተመለሰ	ደምር	የተመለሰ	የልተመለሰ	የተመለሰ	የልተመለሰ	ደምር	የተመለሰ	የልተመለሰ	የተመለሰ	የልተመለሰ	ደምር	የተመለሰ	የልተመለሰ
1.	የሠነዶች ማረጋገጫና ምዝገባ ጽ/ቤት	8,272	306	8,578	96.43%	3.56%	2,931	116	3,047	96.19%	3.80%	2,502	189	2,691	92.97%	7.02%
2.	የማህበራዊ ዋስትና ኤጀንሲ	6,282	302	6,584	95.41%	4.58%	2,487	177	2,664	93.35%	6.64%	1,472	94	1,566	93.99%	6%
3.	የመንገድ ትራንስፖርት ባለስልጣን	10,112	435	10,547	95.87%	4.12%	2,745	147	2,892	94.91%	5.08%	2,384	128	2,512	94.90%	5.09%
4.	የአዲስ አበባ ከተማ አስተዳደር የመሬት አስተዳደር	8,957	281	9,238	96.95%	3.04%	2,056	79	2,135	96.29%	3.70%	7,416	710	8,126	91.26%	8.73%
5.	ብሔራዊ ቤተመዘግብትና ቤተመዕረብ፡፡ ኤጀንሲ	---	---	---	---	---	1,208	95	1,303	92.70%	7.29%	1,511	102	1,613	93.67%	6.32%
6.	ግብርና ሚኒስቴር	---	---	---	---	---	1,009	67	1,076	93.77%	6.22%	921	69	990	93.03%	6.96%
7.	አሮሚያ ፍርድ ቤት	---	---	---	---	---	4,433	754	5,187	85.46%	14.53%	4,129	604	4,733	87.23%	12.76%
8.	አሮሚያ ፍትህ ቤር	---	---	---	---	---	1,160	160	1,320	87.87%	12.12%	3,530	607	4,137	85.32%	14.67%
9.	አሮሚያ ኢንዱስትሪ እና ከተማ ልማት ቤር	---	---	---	---	---	3,220	409	3,629	88.72%	11.27%	2,732	368	3,100	88.12%	11.87%
10.	አሮሚያ ኢንቨስትመንት ቤር	---	---	---	---	---	1,754	313	2,067	84.85%	15.14%	1,662	248	1,910	87.01%	12.98%
	ደምር	33,623	1,324	34,947	96.21%	3.78%	23,003	2,317	25,320	90.84%	9.15%	28,259	3,119	31,378	90.05%	9.94%

Source: MCIT, 2013

ANNEX FIVE. WORKING PLAN OF MY DISSERTATION

January, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify dissertation topic ▪ Searching and collecting materials
February, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Survey more literatures and start reading
March, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finalize the dissertation proposal with my advisor ▪ Polish the proposal ▪ Take the supervisors signature on the cover of the proposal ▪ Post a copy to the program coordinator
April, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finalize the proposal in the light of the comments given by the faculty ▪ Keep the copy with comments & suggestions of the faculty in safe custody
May, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collecting data
June, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collecting data
July, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collecting data
August, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analyze the data ▪ Start writing the dissertation
September, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completing the typing work ▪ Check for typing errors & sequencing of pages ▪ Check the appendices
October, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Binding the document ▪ Submit a copy of the dissertation to the Director, SR & E Division ▪ Prepare for TEE

ANNEX SIX. PROJECT PROPOSAL

Candidate's Name: **ASSEFA ALEMAYEHU HAILE**

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Course Code: **MPAP-002**

Enrolment No. **ID1219183**

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ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

Title of Dissertation **OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF E-GOVERNANCE IN ETHIOPIA: THE CASE OF TOLL FREE 888 CALL CENTER**

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

I hereby certify that the proposal for the Dissertation entitled **OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF E-GOVERNANCE IN ETHIOPIA: THE CASE OF TOLL FREE 888 CALL CENTER** by **ASSEFA ALEMAYEHU HAILE** has been prepared after due consideration with me. The proposal has my approval and has, to my knowledge, the potential of developing into a comprehensive Dissertation Project. I also agree to supervise the above mentioned Dissertation till its completion

Signature _____

Name _____

Designation _____

Address _____

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3.4 Method of Data Analysis_____	

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS & KEY FINDINGS

4.1 Data Analysis_____

4.2 Key Findings_____

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary_____

5.2 Conclusion_____

5.3 Recommendations_____

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND:

Call centers are mechanisms for interaction between public authorities and citizens. The purpose of this paper relates to the notification regarding the call centers as part of a broader process of e-governance that aims to improve the performance of public services in order to optimize both their quality and to reduce the expenses. The paper aims at describing the connection between call centers and building of trust in government based on efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, responsiveness etc.

The paper focuses on progress and achievements made related to call centers using the Ethiopian government toll free call centers that open paths toward national and global perspective of administrative simplification. Such perspectives shall affect enhancing the user satisfaction, decision-making, the sustainability in public administration, increasing the efficiency and effectiveness, lowering administrative burden, etc.

The importance of this paper is related to the relevance of Ethiopian government toll free 888-call center towards the reform of public administration as a revolutionary measure and the role of e-government as a main engine in this process.

Call centers enable effective exchanges of information, transforming the methods of communication with citizens, institutions and civil society groups. The shortcomings and deficits of traditional methods of government firmly entrenched in the old legal framework of prohibitions, commands and enforcement tools have given way to other deeply interconnected e-government systems, mechanisms and instruments that have become one of the hallmarks of our times.

Call centers are seen as one of key elements of government's modernization initiatives and programs that facilitate the simplification process of public administration. In this regard, implementation of call center enables simplification of goals, carrying a variety of developmental advantages. Therefore, the Ethiopian e-government toll free call center finds new grounds, instruments, systems and vision for cooperation and interaction between citizens and administration that lead toward the efficient and effectiveness of administrative procedures.

In this regard, the toll free 888 call center, which is a paradigm shift over Ethiopian traditional approaches in Public Administration, means rendering of government services and information to the public using electronic means. This new paradigm has brought about a revolution in the

quality of service delivered to the citizens. It has ushered in transparency in the governing process; saving of time due to provision of services; simplification of procedures; better office and record management; reduction in corruption; and improved attitude, behavior and job handling capacity of the dealing personnel. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to examine the challenges encountered in e-government call centers. The method on this paper is presenting a detailed examination of Ethiopian government e-government endeavors and strategy together with a review of other relevant literatures.

The findings and implications of this research reveals Ethiopian government toll free 888 call center is still lagging behind in utilizing information and communication technologies for delivering government services online. In this case, an understanding of the status of toll free 888 call center in Ethiopia can help policy makers in the country pursue development of the public sector organizations on the one hand, and would be of importance for Ethiopian economic future success on the other. This is believed to be up-to-date and comprehensive analysis of Ethiopia's government toll free 888-call center assessment of its level of readiness for delivery of e-government services.

The study will look at the current state of interaction levels on toll free Ethiopian Government 888 call center for the delivery of government e-services. Additionally, it will look at the barriers and experiences of integrating more interaction on the call centers & websites for the delivery of e-services.

Based on the information provided above on the status of the 888 call center services today and the need to provide more direct interaction with the service provider, ethio telecom, and the users of e-services the following frame of reference illustrates the departure theory frame of the study.

The following guiding questions aim to identify that what types of interactions the 888-call center is using in providing e-services. Additionally, it will investigate the level of understanding of the citizens providing these services. And how can the status of interactive E-Government services from the direct service provider for the delivery of e-services be described?

The findings and implications of this research reveals the call center & e-gov portal of Ethiopia is still lagging behind in utilizing information and communication technologies for delivering government services online.

An understanding of the status of call center & e-government portal in Ethiopia can help policy makers in the country pursue development of the public sector organizations on the one hand,

and would be of importance for Ethiopian economic future success on the other. This is believed to be up-to-date and comprehensive analysis of Ethiopia's government call center and assessment of its level of readiness for delivery of e-government services.

Ethiopia has started using e-government services as a mechanism to raise changes in its governance systems for achieving development goals and to ensure better service delivery to citizens. It also tries to ensure improved public sector efficiency, accountability and responsiveness. Therefore, the toll-free 888 Call Centre has been used in recent years as an e-governance tool.

Hence, this research argues that a successful adoption of 888 Call Centre in Ethiopia has the potential to provide better service delivery at reduced costs, increase public sector efficiency, minimise corruption and improve the accountability, transparency and responsiveness of the public sector, it is acknowledged that the initiative of 888-call centre is fraught with numerous challenges. Thus, this research will show the shortcomings and will recommend important issues to address the problems.

In this case, the research project will look at the current state of interaction levels on 888-Call Center for the delivery of government e-services. The status of the Call-Center today and the need to provide direct interaction with the service provider and the users of e-services are the frame of reference departure of this research. Then, it will also investigate how the Call-Center service can be described. These guiding notions aim to identify that what types of interactions the 888-toll free call center in Ethiopia is using in providing e-services.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study will look at the current state of interaction levels on toll free Ethiopian Government 888 call center for the delivery of government e-services. Additionally, it will look at the barriers and experiences of integrating more interaction on the call centers & websites for the delivery of e-services.

Based on the information provided above on the status of the 888 call center services today and the need to provide more direct interaction with the service provider, ethio telecom, and the users of e-services the following frame of reference illustrates the departure theory frame of the study.

The following guiding questions aim to identify that what types of interactions the 888-call center is using in providing e-services. Additionally, it will investigate the level of understanding of the citizens providing these services. Moreover, how can the status of interactive E-

Government services from the direct service provider for the delivery of e-services are described? Therefore, the findings and implications of this study reveals the call center & e-government portal of Ethiopia is still lagging behind in utilizing information and communication technologies for delivering government services online.

An understanding of the status of call center & e-government portal in Ethiopia can help policy makers in the country pursue development of the public sector organizations on the one hand, and would be of importance for Ethiopian economic future success on the other. Thus, it is believed to be up-to-date and comprehensive analysis of Ethiopia's government call center and assessment of its level of readiness for delivery of e-government services.

Ethiopia has started using e-government services as a mechanism to raise changes in its governance systems for achieving development goals and to ensure better service delivery to citizens. It also tries to ensure improved public sector efficiency, accountability and responsiveness. Thus, the toll-free 888-call centre has been used in recent years as an e-governance tool.

This research argues that a successful adoption of 888 call centre in Ethiopia has the potential to provide better service delivery at reduced costs, increase public sector efficiency, minimise corruption and improve the accountability, transparency and responsiveness of the public sector, it is acknowledged that the initiative of 888-call centre is fraught with numerous challenges. Thus, this research will show the shortcomings and will recommend important issues to address the problems.

In this case, the research project will look at the current state of interaction levels on 888-call center for the delivery of government e-services. The status of the call-center today and the need to provide direct interaction with the service provider and the users of e-services are the frame of reference departure of this research. Then, it will also investigate how the call-center service can be described. These guiding notions aim to identify that what types of interactions the 888-toll free call center in Ethiopia is using in providing e-services.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will add value and knowledge as to the significance of how to better direct contact with Call-Center users and the service providers. The study will also add value how to better improve the delivery of Call-Center and what the users of e-services desire. Additionally, this research will provide a deeper understanding in the field of providing e-services with better

interactive Call Centers & Ethiopian Government Portal for the delivery of the electronic services.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This paper promotes the inclusion of Call-Centers in a strategic framework of e-government programs in Ethiopia in order to realize the benefits of citizens. Hence, the objectives of this study are:

- to address E-Government services offered by Ethiopian government to citizens, businesses, and other agencies.
- to show the challenges and opportunities of Ethiopia's e-government efforts, in particular, the challenges encountered in a toll free 888 call-center and web portals implementation, which is the target objective of this dissertation, will deeply analyzed and specific recommendations will be developed.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study is bounded in the Ethiopian Government toll free 888-call center. With regard to Ethiopia, there have been some studies related to the E-Government initiatives. While a small number of studies has been addressed e-government issues in general such as strategies towards interoperability in e-government and different e-government frameworks. However, none has discussed the e-government readiness ranking and therefore the challenges encountered in e-government implementation, E-Government portals and the toll free 888-call center in particular. This is where my contribution fits. My study is believed to be up-to-date and comprehensive analysis of Ethiopian government toll free call center challenges and assessment of its level of readiness for delivery of e-government services. Hence, it comes in to fill a gap concerning e-government call-center implementation challenges.

1.6 LIMITATIONS

No full-fledged study has been done so far in Ethiopian Government toll free 888-call center. Therefore, this dissertation work is limited in two main ways. Firstly, narrowness of the interviews across ICT professionals and stakeholder groups limits my ability to provide breadth research in terms of an extensive number of interviews in each Federal Government Office. Secondly, my samples are consisting of three Directorates from the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology namely Directorate of E-Government, Directorate of ICT Capacity

Building, and Directorate of Private Sector. Therefore, this research should be explored by other methodologies with a larger number of observations such as survey research.

1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

To present a comprehensive and coherent research, this dissertation adopts the following structures. Chapter One provides a brief back ground, description of problem statement, significance, objectives, scope, limitations, and structure of the dissertation. Chapter Two is the body of the research, which covers a detailed review of the available literatures on call centers and E-Government services. It helps to provide the reader an extensive knowledge on call-center services. Chapter Three describes the research methodology. Chapter Four goes to enlighten the reader on the findings and analysis of the dissertation. Chapter Five follows by a conclusion and recommendations on the subject matter.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. CALL CENTERS AS AN E-GOVERNANCE TOOL

The use of call centers by the business community has already become a common phenomenon in both developed and developing countries. In recent years, the call centre industry has experienced a phenomenal growth worldwide (As-Saber, et al., 2004). Call centers provide fast, efficient and relatively cheaper business solutions to business enterprises in managing their day-to-day activities. Similarly, governments need to provide various services to their citizens and other stakeholders.

In this connection, there appears to be a reasonable prospect of implementing call centre as an e-governance tool in delivering better services including the dissemination of important information to citizens and other stakeholders. From this perspective, e-governance could be defined as the application of information and communication technology (ICT) in establishing interaction between the different levels of government, business, and the citizenry' (ADBI, 2007).

Bhatnagar (2004:19) acknowledges that any kind of use of information and communication technology in delivering service to, and communicating with citizens and other stakeholders could fall within the realm of e-governance. ICT, however, encompasses a wide range of technology applications such as computing systems; digital broadcasting networks; telecommunications technologies including telephony; and electronic information resources including the internet (Selwyn, 2002).

ICT being the nucleus of e-governance is also the key resource and driver of setting up call centers. Call centers carefully utilize some of these ICT components. In a call centre, employees receive inbound and make outbound calls using automatic call distributors (ACDs) or predictive dialing systems (Taylor and Bain, 1999).

Call centers are increasingly using the VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) network to combine both the voice network (traditional telephone network) and data network into one integrated network for all communication needs (The Contact, 2005).

As call centre activities range from mere response to a simple query or information dissemination to the delivery of a complex business solution, the operators may also need to rely on the live portals of the organization including intranet with specialized access to classified information on key service areas of the organization. It often complements e-mail

communication, web portals and various web-based service provisions. From a citizen's perspective, it adds some human involvement that reassures citizens of the authenticity and effectiveness of the web-based service provisions. Considering such potentials, government of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has already started using toll-free 888-call centre as an e-governance tool.

Discussion of this dissertation focuses with a Call-Centers as an e-governance tool. It will be followed by a discussion on the role and necessity of e-governance and its extent of adoption in various organizations. From government perspective, it will then examine if any pattern is emerging with respect to the use of Ethiopian toll-free 888-call centre in e-governance activities. In light of this deliberation, a tentative framework will be proposed. A discussion of associated limitations of the proposed framework will follow together with some of its implications for citizens and government.

2.2 EVOLUTION AND PROSPECTS OF CALL CENTERS

The Union Research Centre on Organization and Technology (URCOT) of Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (2000:1) in its report adopted the definition of the call centre as 'an operation that uses telephone and computer technology to deliver services to customers'. The report primarily emphasized inbound or outbound telephone traffic handled by call centre employees. However, (Taylor and Bain, 1999) described the customer service oriented functions of call centre employees through the concurrent use of telephones and computers.

Starting with the minimum requirement of using telephones, call centre activities may extend to include the use of the Internet in the era of technological advancement primarily through the use of e-mail and VoIP. Call centers, as communication networking hubs of business, cover functions ranging from telemarketing in an outbound context to acting as help desks in an inbound context (Kinder, 2001). Butler (2004) kept the notion of call centre 'as customer contact centers, customer support centers, helpdesks, and derogatorily, as cost centers', without distinguishing between the inbound and outbound contexts of call centers.

From a government's perspective, it can be considered as a device to create awareness about, or surveying, the households in terms of their opinions about specific government policy measures and service provisions on the one hand; and to respond to specific queries and provide limited service offerings to its citizens on the other. In a survey conducted by Noetica in 2002, call centers were predicted to be an integral part of e-government (Noetica, 2002).

In terms of business administration, management and marketing, the call centre is a relatively new phenomenon (As-Saber et al., 2004). However, since its emergence in 1980s, the call centre industry has expanded rapidly across the continents (Taylor and Bain, 2004). Almost two-thirds of worldwide customer contacts are carried out by call centers (Day, 2000).

Successful call centers are focused on efficient operation, and customers' and shareholders' value creation and optimization. The efficiency, in this regard, lies not only in effective and prompt responses to customer calls, but also on originality, high skills and precision in setting up and implementation of organizational goals and strategies (Brown & Maxwell, 2002; Deery & Kinnie, 2002; Holman, 2003).

One of the main forces behind the wide adoption of call centers is the flexible nature of their operation. Its use has evolved from internal business re-organization which is adaptable to both public and private sector operations, in both market and non-market activities (Burgess & Connell, 2004). ICT could be seen as an enabler to create such flexibility and significantly improve the public sector performance with better citizen access to public services and improved quality of service delivery (Yong et al, 2003).

Stahl (2005) opined that government might be the largest user of ICT and has the major power in regulating the technology. From this perspective, it could be assumed that the use of ICT in call centers by the government would be relatively less complex in terms of regulation and convenience. Moreover, customer-centric use of call centers by private businesses could be considered analogous to the citizen-centric approach of any government's e-governance project. Call centers increase the efficiency and profitability of business. With a similar use of such centers in an e-governance project, government also has the opportunity to increase efficiency in its overall governance process and make its commercial activities more viable. To serve the needs of local companies the location either might be within the firm's domestic jurisdiction or companies based in one country could use the services of call centers based in another country. Businesses, however, could choose the locations of their call centers depending on their business advantages and strategic directions.

The question might arise whether government departments and enterprises have a similar focus on call centers. The location advantage factor of call centre outsourcing might not be observed as an important factor for government call centers as the related theories of international business that are prevailing at this moment are focused on call centre operations of private

businesses (As Saber et. al., 2004). For that reason, it may be argued that a line should be drawn between public and private call centers.

2.3 CALL CENTERS AND E-GOVERNANCE

Although e-governance and e-government are used interchangeably in most of the literatures, Saxena (2005) argues that an important distinction exists between e-governance and e-government, as government is the institution itself, whereas governance is a broader concept describing forms of governing which are not necessarily in the hands of the formal government. This dissertation deliberates on the role of Ethiopian Government toll-free 888-call centre within the scope of governance, with a primary focus on e-governance. Holmes (2001) argues that a special and improved public service delivery that assists the economic development of a country might require a movement for e-governance. E-governance of a government focuses on services covering the term e-business or e-commerce, which is broader than the usual e-commerce as it not only comprises the business to citizen (B2C) link but also government to citizen (G2C), government to business (G2B), government to government (G2G) and business to business (B2B) links.

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs has put emphasis on creating public value through e-governance, which is focused on providing services, passing laws and regulations and taking necessary actions as per citizen's preferences. Creation of public value does not depend entirely on measuring the performance of policies and public institutions or making decisions related to resource allocation. Selecting the proper method of delivery is one of the decisive factors in the successful creation of public value (UNDESA, 2003).

Call centers together with other service delivery channels could be consequently considered as an important e-governance tool, which could complement widespread dependence on Internet-based operations. In this connection, Bhatnagar (2004:19) acknowledged that e-governance could be 'used in a loose manner to describe the legacy of any kind of use of information and communication technology. Telephony and associated technologies used in call centers, therefore, forms parts of e-governance.

Call Centers in Ethiopia have the potential to facilitate better service provisions. Thus, Federal Minister Offices and enterprises are increasingly becoming interested in using Call Centers as an e-governance tool. It could provide them with opportunities to deliver better services to citizens as well as engage them in policy making and implementation dialogues. However,

many factors play a role in both the governance and technology-readiness of a country where a suggestion for a call centre as an e-governance tool might be viewed as ambitious and ambiguous.

The following examples indicate the potential contributions of Call Centers to the e-governance practices and processes within the developing world. They also signify the possible benefits of using call centers for governments, businesses and individuals from a developing country context. It could be argued, therefore, that call centers have the ability to streamline and enhance the e-governance process and aid to achieve better governance in developing countries. The use and benefit of Call Centre as an e-governance component can justify the framework mentioned by Ho (2002) that shows the shifting from the bureaucratic paradigm to an e-government paradigm. Call Centers can assist the shifting process as bureaucratic red tape could be minimized through open and flexible Call Centre operations. In this connection, based on a systematic content analysis of web sites in Ethiopia provide a theoretical framework that makes a distinction between the business reform and civil reform in governance mechanism where technology is used. Based on this distinction, further argue that technology driven reform processes could be based on entrepreneurial good management or participatory good democracy models of governance structure.

The role of Call Centers within the governance structure is different to the role of web sites as Call Centers provide direct telephone contacts between citizens and the public service providers. In Ethiopia, Although, the use of Call Centers within the public sector is still in its embryonic stage and fraught with significant challenges, Call Centers have the potential to provide a better option that is more democratic compared to web-based information sharing and service delivery systems.

As Call Centre activities within the Ethiopian e-governance network are likely to ensure better service delivery, improved access to information, and enhanced two-way communication through citizen's participation in the decision making process. It could be argued that using Call Centre for e-governance follows neither a complete business reform nor a civil reform; rather it follows a hybrid comprising ingredients from both.

Heeks does not agree that e-government should only have the involvement of Internet related applications, which some argue as prerequisites of e-governance. E-governance consists of three different domains namely (a) e-administration, (b) e-society, and (c) e-citizens and e-

services (Heeks, 2008). According to Heeks, it is important that all of these domains be taken into consideration while charting for improvement in government processes, building external interactions and connecting citizens. He further argues that both talking and listening to citizens remains as important segments of the process with respect to informing citizens of public sector activities and incorporating valuable inputs from them while preparing policies of public interest. While Internet does not entirely provide this opportunity, Call Centers can play a significant e-governance role in this regard.

While discussing the case of e-governance, Siew and Leng (2003) argued that simply the addition of the letter 'e' with governance, linking technology use with governance, is not the fundamental goal of the term e-governance. They consider that the basic goal of e-government should be to rethink all aspects of governance and the service delivery. To see how it can take advantage of technology and new business models to improve the efficiency of internal processes as well as change the nature of government interactions with both individuals and businesses in order to facilitate the vision of "Many agencies, One Government" (Siew & Leng, 2003:20-21).

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 STUDY DESIGN

In this research, questionnaire was designed to collect qualitative data. Open-ended and closed-ended questions were included. The questionnaire aimed to collect information on citizens' awareness of e-government implementation in Ethiopia and the functions of toll free 888-call center. In addition, challenges faces when interacting with e-government platforms and ways on which citizens perceive e-government should be improved. This was complimented by interviews and rigorous literatures and document reviews. Purposive sampling was utilized to identify and group the participants of the interview.

3.2 TARGET POPULATION

The study had target populations of public servants and the service users of these five institutions; Transport Authority, Addis Ababa Transport Branch Office, Document Authentication and Registration Office, Social Security Agency, and Addis Ababa city Government Land Administration and Building Permit Authority.

The public sector institutions were selected purposively because of the magnitude and importance of the institution's call centers in serving citizens and their relation with diverse stakeholders.

The purpose of this research is to identify the problems facing in the toll free 888-call center implementation of Ethiopian government. In this study, I interviewed stakeholders of the 888-toll free call center to elicit their insight on how citizen participation works. The three main stakeholder groups were Ministry of Communication and Information Technology E-Government Directorate staff members, Ethio-telecom and active stakeholder citizens. I also interviewed the 888-call center operators.

MCIT professionals contacted first with the background on the study and its goals. Determination for who should be interviewed depends on availability and willingness to participate in the study. Then, the professionals were asked to participate in the study as a citizen and members of the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology staff.

3.3 SAMPLING DESIGN & PROCEDURES

After the numbers of respondents in each institution is decided, data was gathered through questionnaire and interviews. Then, respondents of service users of each institution have been selected based on convenience sampling (accidental) method. This is due to the nature of the

service users unavailability in fixed time and place. Thus, those service users were found executing their activities in each institution in different days were made to fill the questionnaire.

3.4 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Data collected through questionnaire were reorganized in to five main categories based on five main e-governance (call center) indicators used in the study and analyzed descriptively. Data collected by using questioners was organized, coded and then analyzed by using different tables under separate headings and sub headings in order to facilitate the process of comparison and easy reference, to detect errors and omissions and to describe, explain and analyze the data and information obtained directly from respondents. Based on data analysis conclusion has been drawn and recommendation were made.

Qualitative research is designed to this research. To tackle the problems of the Ethiopian government toll free 888-call center, it introduced together with a review of relevant literatures particularly Ethiopian e-government service portfolio, Ethiopian e-government readiness ranking, government portals, UN e-government reports and surveys and other publications. Furthermore, it deepens the exploration of e-government portals for better understanding of barriers to call centers in addition to my own observation and data collected from the questionnaire.

A detailed examination and analysis of Ethiopian Government toll free 888 call center opportunities and challenges are presented together with a review of relevant literatures. The general belief of business research is often thought as collecting data, constructing questionnaires and analyzing data. However, it also includes identifying the problems and how to proceed in solving them. To do so, there must be detailed data analysis. Therefore, the data sources are described as the carriers of information. These are two types of data sources analyzed; primary data (field) is collected and analyzed. This is in the form of observations and interviews and the secondary one is collected from academic and nonacademic sources.

Since the study of e-government call center will be using the secondary data collection method, sources like books, articles appearing in journals and other publications and sources available in electronic media will be used to collect and analyze the necessary information on the subject under study to arrive at a comprehensive analysis.

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