

IMPACT OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) IN COMBATING CORRUPTION IN ADAMAWA STATE

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Abstract

The use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has fundamentally changed the practices and procedures of nearly all forms of endeavor within governance and security. In fighting corruption, (ICT) has begun to have a presence but the impact has not been as extensive as in other fields of endeavor. The role of (ICT) in eradication of corruption to become more important and this importance will continue to grow and develop in the 21st century. With (ICT), government plays an increasing role in governance, promoting transparency and accountability to combat corruption. The study adopted a survey research design; it discusses the concepts of corruption, problems associated with and some possible solutions. It also discussed how corruption could be combated through (ICT) to identify report and monitoring corruption attempts. It discovered that fight against corruption in Adamawa produce needed result. the study recommend Government to improve Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities in Ministries, departments and other agencies to serve as a strategy in combating corruption in the state.

Keywords: ICT, Corruption, Transparency, Internet, Public Service.

Introduction

Today, corruption is one of the greatest challenges and threats to any country's long-term economic health. It's a global problem, but it persists especially strongly in Africa and other developing nations. Corruption can reduce a country's wealth because it discourages investment and trade, as stated by the World Bank (1999). To be corrupt is to seek to acquire wealth or power dishonestly for personal gain at the expense of the public good or to abuse one's position of public trust for private gain. Similar to the ubiquity of cockroaches in human society, corruption has persisted for a long time and continues to be a major issue in many of the world's developing economies. One of the biggest problems slowing down Nigeria's economic development is corruption (Nageri, Umar, and Abdul, 2013).

Corruption exists in all sectors of society, it damages a country's development by undermining faith in public institutions, increase costs for firms and discourage both foreign and domestic investments. According to Transparency International's (2009) report corruption is a growing challenge for the business sector both in the developing and industrialized countries. At the level of the individual firm, it raises transaction costs and introduces reputational risks, as well as opens up for extortion.

Regardless of sector and level of transactions, corruption hampers development. Civil society organizations in developing countries are demanding greater transparency as a key component in

fighting corruption and empowering people living in poverty. Increased transparency is often dependent on political will, and civil societies around the world are actively challenging their governments to open up systems to public scrutiny.

External pressure involves both a revitalization of mass media and empowerment of private citizens. Robert (2021) in his work examined and discussed extensively political corruption in Nigeria from a historical point of view with heavy concentration on political developments in the country before independence and the activities of Nigerian nationalists in relations with the colonial masters. Weak legal system can be a source of corruption and a consequence of corruption at the same time. Ineffective legal system, complex and ambiguous regulations that allow multiple interpretations may encourage the use of position for personal gain, and consequently reduce the effectiveness of the laws and their enforcers through political appointments or through reducing and allocating resources (Ijewereme, 2021).

In Nigeria hardly does an hour pass either during the day or night when Information and Communication Technology (ICT) does not obtrude into our lives. Its presence in Nigeria has pretty much revolutionized the way information is communicated from one point to another. Presently, the number of sectors adopting the use of (ICT) keep increasing due to its efficacy, accuracy and accountability. Its wide spread in the 21st century can be noticed in different sectors such as; banking, education, business, government, among others (Danfulani, 2013).

The fact remains that the introduction of (ICT) has massively downsized the level of corrupt practices in business activities in the country. Indices have shown that there is remarkable improvement in the cleansing processes in the system. Local and international anti-graft watch dogs accords the introduction of (ICT) through e-governance much of the credit in the fight against corruption in Nigeria. (Adewale, 2011).

These are laws that impose a prevailing value judgment in cases to which that judgment should not apply (for instance, where the corresponding behaviour causes no harm to anyone). Sanctions, too, may turn out to be counterproductive although they are likely to inhibit people from acting in a way that attracts a particular punishment, they may also weaken the moral authority of the rules that prescribe the punishment. If a sanction is removed, people may still continue to behave in the way they consider to be morally right. Thus, sanctions are likely to yield positive effects only when they persuade people that the prohibited act or course of action is immoral (Mulder et al., 2009).

Statement of the Problem

The state of corruption in Nigeria has been categorized as endemic. Corruption has also been identified as one major obstacle to national growth and development of the Nigerian economy. Research has shown that corrupt practices have been perpetrated in governance, public and private places since the pre-colonial era to the colonial period and through independence to present. Achebe (1988) wrote that

“The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to their responsibility, to the challenge of personal example, which is the hallmark of true leadership”.

In the same vein, Storey (1953) wrote that “before independence, there have been cases of official misuse of resources for personal enrichment”. Despite the establishment of anti-graft agencies, such as Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) in 2000, and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in 2003, the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF) etc. Nigeria amongst the twenty three non-cooperative countries frustrating the effort of international community to fight money laundering (Waziri, 2010).

According to Obasanjo in 2009, corruption has been to be blamed for the failure of each new republic's government. Since then, every military takeover has claimed to be fighting corruption. In Nigeria, the issue of corruption is even more worrisome. It has assumed the level of a pandemic. It has permeated every aspect of our national life including the private sectors. The public service which is the government's agency for any transformational efforts has been systematically corrupted with the attendant effects on good governance and overall national development. Indeed, the short and long term effect of a corrupt public service is incalculable to the socio-economic living conditions of the citizenry (Kayode, 2019).

In consonance with the above statement, the goals of this study are to investigate the impact of (ICT) in combating corruption in Adamawa State with a particular focus on North Local Government Area. The study and investigate the steps government has taken to combat corruption in the state. It also focus on possible technological innovative ways to help Adamawa State government to leverage corruption in various ministries, agencies, thereby automating the financial transactions to reduce human involvement on governmental transactions for effective auditing and analysis. Using (ICT) could also facilitate the investigation for financial crimes usually monitored by EFCC and other agencies that engaged in fighting corrupt practices.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to analyze the impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in combating corruption in Yola North Local Government Area of Adamawa State and the following are the specific objectives.

- i. To examine the impact of (ICT) in combating corruption in Yola North Local Government Area.
- ii. To identify ways by which (ICT) can contribute in reducing corruption in Yola North Local Government Area.
- iii. To determine the factors limiting the use of (ICT) in mitigating corruption in Yola North Local Government Area.

Research Questions

- i. What is the impact of (ICT) in combating corruption in Yola North Local Government Area?

- ii. What are the ways by which (ICT) can contribute to reduce corruption in Yola North local Government Area?
- iii. What are the factors limiting the use of (ICT) in mitigating Corruption Yola North Local Government Area?

Concept of ICT, Corruption and National Development

The term Information and Communication Technology (ICT) itself pertains to a myriad of standalone media, including telephone and mobile telephony, radio, television, video, text message, voice information systems and fax, as well as computer mediated networks that link a personal computer to the internet. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) refers to technologies that provide access to information through telecommunications. This includes the Internet, wireless networks, cell phones, and other communication mediums (Bello and Aderibigbe 2014).

Gossart (2014) opined that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) include both hardware and software. It covers all forms of computer & communications equipment and software used to create, design, store, transmit, interpret and manipulate information in its various formats. Personal computers, laptops, tablets, mobile phones, transport systems, televisions, and network technologies are just some examples of the diverse array of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) tools.

It generally facilitates the processing, transmission and display of information through digital devices. This includes radio, television, mobile phones and computers, as well as network technology the most important example being the internet (Charoensukmongkol and Moqbel 2014). Information and communication technology (ICT) is not a magic bullet when it comes to ensuring greater transparency and less corruption; Information and Communication and Technology (ICT) has a significant role to play as a tool in a number of important areas.

- i. Information Communication and Technology (ICT) can improve transparency in the public sector by increasing the coordination, dissemination and administrative capacity of the public sectors', as well as improve service delivery by employing user-friendly administrative systems.
- ii. Information Communication and Technology (ICT) facilitates the collection of digital footprints and complete audit trail which increase the opportunity to hold individuals accountable and ultimately increase the possibility to detect corrupt practices.
- iii. Information Communication and Technology (ICT) can facilitate the work of civil society organization working towards greater transparency and against corruption by supporting a mix of methods of campaigning on transparency and educating citizens on what corruption is about and their civil rights.
- iv. Information Communication and Technology (ICT) can facilitate information sharing and social mobilization and ultimately provide digital platforms where citizens can report incidents anonymously.

Corruption refers to dishonest behavior in any aspect of society, including the economy, government, society, or culture. Regardless of the specific industry in which corruption is embedded, it can be assessed on the basis of the pervasive orientation in a given society that dictates how people ought to act in relation to other people and the economy, politics, and culture. According to these definitions, political corruption is any form of dishonesty that undermines the established political order (Ajao, Dada and Olaoye, 2013).

Corruption in Nigeria is not only found in the government circles, its presence can be noticed both in the public and private sectors of the economy and among many individuals in the country. Embezzling money meant for the country or masses is not the only term for corruption. Items given to some set of people to share and were not shared as expected is also an act of corruption (Monday, 2013).

One of such corrupt practices ravaging the development in Nigeria is the probe of the allegation that Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) paid top officials scholarship grants at a time when hundreds of deserving scholarship beneficiaries had not been paid for years and were stranded in different countries. Additionally is the fraud of Billions of Naira that was earmarked for COVID-19 relief funds (Premium Times, 2020).

Corruption Cases in Adamawa State Public Service

The EFCC had accused Nyako, his son, Abdulaziz, his two aides: Zulfikk Abba and Abubakar Aliyu, of money laundering, to the tune of N29 billion. Others are Crust Energy Ltd, Blue Opal Ltd, Sebore Farms and Extension Ltd, Pagoda Fortunes Ltd and Tower Assets Management Ltd. But after the EFCC concluded its case with 21 witnesses and several bank and contract documents before the court in March 2020, Nyako's counsel, Kanu Agabi (SAN) filed a no-case submission, asking the court to quash the charges against him for want of prima facie evidence.

Certainly, on July 19, Justice Okon Abang dismissed the application and ordered the former governor to open his defence in the matter on October 5, 6 and 7. Adamawa State Governor-elect, Ahmadu Fintiri a former Speaker of the Adamawa State House of Assembly became the acting governor of the state following the impeachment of Governor Murtala Nyako and the alleged resignation of his deputy, Bala James Ngilari. Fintiri acted briefly before the court ruled that Ngilari did not resign properly and was restored as the governor of the state.

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission filed a money laundering charge involving N1.9bn against Fintiri. The anti-corruption agency arraigned him along with Mayim Constructions and Properties Limited (as the second defendant). In the charges numbered FHC/ABJ/CR/131/2016, and filed on June 16, 2016, the EFCC alleged that the accused committed the money laundering offences involving an aggregate sum of about N1.9bn between October 2, 2014 and July 2015. Fintiri is not expected to be troubled by this case or any other for now as he settles down to the business of governance after May 29 (ICPC, 2018).

Adamawa set to Implement State Anti-Corruption Strategy

The Adamawa State Governor has inaugurated the State Steering Committee for the implementation of the Adamawa State Anti-Corruption Strategy (ADSACS). The strategy was developed with support from the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC) Programme and adopted in January 2018. The aim is to strengthen the effectiveness, efficiency, and synergy of the institutions, laws, and measures designed by the state to prevent and combat corruption, as well as to engage the public more actively in the process (Chris, 2022).

To implement the strategy, the Governor appointed the following representatives as members of the committee: four Commissioners, the Adamawa State Head of Civil Service, a member of the House of Assembly, and a representative of the Office of the Secretary to the State Government. The committee was officially inaugurated in April 2022 and is headed by the Adamawa State Head of Civil Service. Its functions include:

- Conducting public engagements to sensitized and create awareness on ADSACS activities
- Organizing a conference for all ADSACS Implementing Units (IUs) to review the activities of the previous year and map out strategies for improved performance
- Establishing reward and sanctions system
- Approving all action/implementation plans, budgets and proposals of ministries departments and agencies
- Establishing a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) committee.

ICPC Recovered 120 Million Naira in Adamawa

Adamawa State Governor, Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri, has disclosed that the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) assisted the state government to recover the sum of N120 million from the state's Commercial Farmers Loans Scheme. The governor disclosed this at the commissioning of the new Adamawa State Office complex of the ICPC. Spokesperson, ICPC, Azuka Ogugua in a statement said *"Fintiri who was represented by Deputy Governor of the State, Chief Crowther Seth, commended the commission's contributions to the promotion of integrity, transparency and accountability in the State"*.

According to him, the introduction of various governance reforms, especially the establishment of Anti-Corruption and Transparency Units in MDAs, have been playing pivotal roles in ensuring that public officials observe due process in the conduct of government affairs. The Governor underscored the partnership between the State and the commission, which he said had contributed in no small measure to the realization of the objectives of the State Government's programmes and project.

He called on Independent Corrupt Practice Commission (ICPC) to consider building the capacity of Adamawa State government officials, especially members of the Anti-corruption Units in MDAs to, not only resist the temptation of being corrupt but also have a full grasp of the anti-corruption laws and extant regulations to guide their daily official and private transactions (TVC, 2022).

Earlier, ICPC Chairman Bolaji Owasanoye (SAN), expressed his gratitude to the Governor and people of Adamawa State for the generous support towards the Commission. He stated that ICPC was

empowered by law to set up offices in the 36 states of the Federation, adding that the Adamawa State Office was the third prototype-built office structure to be commissioned after Oyo and Sokoto States offices.

The ICPC chairman also revealed that the Adamawa State Office was among the second set of the State Offices that were established by ICPC in 2007 with a few members of Staff in a rented apartment. According to him, the new office building *“is in fulfillment of ICPC’S dream to own its offices in all the States of the Federation.”*

Also speaking at the event, the Chairman Senate Committee on Anti-Corruption and Financial Crimes, Senator Suleiman Abdu Kwari, who was represented by Senator Binos Dauda Yaro, thanked the chairman and the board for the bold steps of proper utilization of the Commission’s finances and promised to support the Commission in its effort through appropriation and legislative interventions (Sadiq, 2021).

Impact of ICT in Tackling Corruption

The (ICT) stands for Information and Communication Technologies and is defined as a “Diverse set of Technological tools and resources used to communicate, and to create, disseminate, store and manage information” Blurton, C, (1999). According to Adewoyin (2009) Information communication technology is the new communication and computing technology used for creating, storing, selecting, changing, developing, receiving and displaying many kind of information. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) classified into three groups namely:

- i. Those that process information e.g. computer
- ii. Those that disseminate information e.g. communication i.e. electromagnetic devices and system and
- iii. Those for presentation of information e.g. multimedia.

In this study (ICT) does not only mean computers, it has to do with technological tools. These technological tools include computers, the internet, broadcasting technologies (radio and television) and telephone. The new digital Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is not single technology but combination of hardware, software, multimedia, and delivery systems. Today, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in encompasses a great range of rapidly evolving technologies such as desktop, notebook, and handheld computers, digital cameras, local area networking, Bluetooth,

the Internet, cloud computing, the World Wide Web and applications such as word processors, spreadsheets, tutorials, email, digital libraries, computer-mediated conferencing, videoconferencing, virtual environment, simulator, emulator etc.

It is important to mention that the use of newer Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is being integrated with use of older technologies, enabling the existing resources and services to be continuous use. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can serve goals other than sustainable economic growth and public welfare: given the primacy of governance in underpinning

development effectiveness, one its most important applications to tackle corruption is in e-government. Fighting

Corruption with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has great potential to act as democratic media and the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in e-government is a major focus.

Helpfully, Tim Davies and Silvana Fumega (2013) identify eight kinds of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) interventions that hold potential for preventing, detecting, analyzing, and addressing corruption:

- i) Transparency portals: Platforms that offer timely publication of key government documents online.
- ii) Open data portals: Platforms that provide free access to data sets in machine-readable formats.
- iii) Service automation: Platforms that replace discretionary processes.
- iv) Online services: Platforms that allow citizens to self-serve for public service access.
- v) Online right-to-information request: A Platforms that allows citizens to file right-to-information request.
- vi) Crowd sourced reporting: Platforms that allow citizens to report corruption or grievances and publicly share data on reports and trends.
- vii) Online corruption reporting: Platforms that allow citizens to report corruption or grievances.
- viii) Issue Reporting: Platforms that allow citizens to report problems with public services.

The first four Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Interventions are usually government-led (Intervention 1 and 2 seek primarily transparency reforms; intervention 3 and 4 aim at automating transaction with government reforms) the other four are generally civil society-led.(Interventions 5 and 6 seek transparency reforms; interventions 7 and 8 aim at transaction reforms.) Civil society also plays an important role in anticorruption theories of change around many government-led ICT interventions (Bansal, 2012).

Research Methodology

The Survey design was adopted for the study to analyze the impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in combating corruption in Adamawa State. The study entailed the use of a structured questionnaire and personal interviews to obtain relevant data from the respondents. Considering the inherent advantages of non-probability sampling procedure, the procedures were adopted for this study. Non-probability sampling technique is adopted because of its advantage to reach a target sample quickly.

Purposive sampling technique is adopted to select participant for interview and provide relevant information to the questionnaire. The choice of the purposive sampling technique for the study is premised on the fact that, the primary data require for the study can only be provided by respective

respondents. The essence of this instrument is to discover and record crucial issues concerning corruption in the public sector.

Discussion of Findings

The study shows that majority of the respondents are male. Certainly, majority of them affirmed the impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in combating corruption in Yola North Local Government Area. Out of the one hundred respondents thirty seven of them disclose that bribery practice prevalent in Yola North Local Government Area. Then sixty two of the respondents agreed that corruption has an impact in Yola South Local Government Area, while thirty eight of them disagree that corruption has impact in Yola South Local Government Area. However, forty eight of the respondents indicate that extortion practice in the council. While fifteen of them affirmed the practice of nepotism in the council. Most of the respondents state that fight against corruption in Adamawa produce needed result.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the use of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) improve transparency in the public sector by increasing the coordination, dissemination and administrative capacity of the public sectors', as well as improve service delivery by employing user-friendly administrative systems. All the respondents indicate that fight against corruption in Adamawa produce needed result. Sixty two percent of the respondents agreed that corruption has an impact in Yola South Local Government Area, while thirty eight said corruption does not has impact in Yola South Local Government Area. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) plays a significant role in combating corruption in Adamawa State.

Recommendation

Base on the research conducted by the researcher the following recommendations were offered.

- i. Adamawa State Government Should partner with the technologically advanced countries to get adequate modern facilities in combating corruption in the public sector.
- ii. Government should improve Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities in Ministries, departments and other agencies to serve as a strategy in combating corruption in the state.
- iii. Substantial of resources should be channeled for researchers in the state for detection, control and combat corruption in the public sector.
- iv. To combat corruption in Adamawa State government should judiciously reduce the gap between the rich and the poor through distributive justice.
- v. The government should review its policy on tackling of corruption to achieve a wider and better result by way of using ICT to combat corruption in Adamawa State.

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