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Bureaucratic Corruption And Service Delivery In Nigeria: The 21st Century Dilemma Of The Nigerian Public Service

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Abstract:

The fundamental raison d'être of the public service is efficient service delivery to the people. Recent trends portray an unprecedented pressure translating into increased demand for services that are specific in nature and strictly designed to meet both individual and collective desires. The success of government globally depends on the performance of the public service to provide satisfactory services that lead to trust and confidence building as corresponding responsiveness on the part of the citizenry and government respectively. Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) Reinikka,[1] and the Quantitative Service Delivery Survey (QSDS) Chaudhury and Hammer,[2] have established the place of institutional weaknesses in the promotion of corruption in the public service. The paper uses a documentary (non-empirical) method. Based on the method adopted, it concludes that tragically, the escalating level of public sector corruption in Nigeria has succeeded in crippling service delivery. This has metamorphosed into a wide vacuum of trust deficit, heightened crises of confidence for the bureaucrats, the service itself, and the corporate existence of the nation. Drawing on this, we recommend for a holistic and integrated internal institutional control mechanism to stamp out corruption in the entire public sector, thereby accelerating effective service delivery that aptly meets the yearnings and aspirations of all Nigerians in the 21st century.

Key words: Bureaucratic Corruption, Service delivery, Efficiency, Nigerian Public Service

1. Introduction

The traditional role of the public service is the maintenance of law and order and the provision of basic rudimentary social goods and services such as roads, water and education. However, the global focus on the public service in the 21st century has expanded this traditional role to a more broad term of service delivery to cover effective and efficient service delivery from the perspectives of quality, accessibility, affordability and even safety. This is aimed at aptly meeting the ever increasingly, fast changing, enlightened and multiple-choice demand- driven clients. These have all cumulatively pressed on the public service to deliver and deliver most appropriately and fairly. Besides the service beneficiaries perspective for enhanced service delivery (which of course is their basic right), today's service delivery is explicitly anchored globally on performance measurement for all public service actions. Hence, public services be it in the United States, Canada, Western Europe, New Zealand, Australia and in countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, have made Service Measurement (SM) a core component of public service delivery- putting the public service on its toes. (Heinrich, 2004).

Invariably, the public service serves as the canal through which public funds are channelled for public purposes by the government. According to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework UNIDAF, [4], the public sector is referred to as largely the main source of investment for most nations especially developing nations like Nigeria. Therefore for it to effectively meet and even surpass this saddled responsibility, the fountain is anchored on the provision of these cardinal factors that includes expertise, adequate working resources and enormous funding on a scale that by far exceeds what governments now provide. The reality is that no government has ever adequately funded its public service. As Olaopa [5], puts it, most public organisations are specifically faced with the dearth of proper and adequate funding to carry out the task of governance. Sequel to the stiff competitions which the public sector organisations have to put up with amidst other government departments and activities for the allocation of funds, it therefore implies that the "little" resources at their disposal require a critical mass of prudent management. Besides, stealing public funds through

official corruption which ultimately affects the public purposes for which these funds are meant, has assumed a monumental dimension. The major concern here is how we are yet to explore and effectively implement an institutional control framework for dealing with lapses in the use of public resources.

Ironically, public sector corruption in Nigeria is no longer seen as a peccadillo or a transit trend that will soon come to pass. Nevertheless, from a more pragmatic perspective, this reveals weak management controls in public sector institutions. In Nigeria, like other countries, corruption control efforts have concentrated at the strategic policy level of passing laws and creating anti-corruption institutions. This window-dressing approach produces largely symbolic actions that have little effect on everyday graft and corruption affecting the public sector, especially if no one appears to be harmed by it. Potential users are expected to complement and support strategic efforts.

In an effort to come to grips with the nature of corruption, much of the early anti-corruption activity produced research data, multilateral agreements, model laws, frameworks and strategies for prevention ultimately producing the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention and the United Nations Convention against Corruption. With these instruments now firmly in place and their implementation are being systematically monitored, it is tempting to think that the remaining challenges for those of us engaged in anti-corruption efforts around the world are all about implementation. But, there are continued gaps in our knowledge about how and why corruption happens and consequently how best to prevent it. This might be regarded as a diagnostic challenge and the research of the last decade suggests that there is much more to be learned about the causes and dynamics of corruption that will help us to improve the effectiveness of prevention interventions. The paper therefore discerned studies like active [6], on corruption and its negative effect on national development, Kaufmann et.al [7] that links the pervasiveness of corruption and its devastating effects on administrative inefficiency-ineffectiveness among others. This necessitates the need to x-ray the public service with a view to identifying loopholes therein. To ascertain the nature and magnitude of these loopholes vis a vis defined public service legal institutional framework, attitudinal values of public officials and the ecological factors must be considered as essentially sensitive.

1.1.Statement Of Problem

Too often, the public service is seen by citizens as plodding, inefficient, bureaucratic, change-resistant, incompetent, unresponsive and worst of it corrupt. Citizens often complain that the public service provides services that are inadequate, inappropriate, inferior, or too costly for their hard-earned tax payments. Again, people see government officials too as acting in their own interests rather than responding to the needs of the citizens. Therefore, citizens are now calling for public institutions especially in states that are democratic like Nigeria, to be efficient in the use of public funds, effective in delivering public services. Government resources earmarked for particular uses flow within legally defined institutional frameworks, often passing through several layers of government bureaucracy through a well codified financial/accounting system down to the end point of service delivered. But information on actual public spending at all levels of the public service, especially at the frontline level is seldom available in Nigeria public service creating room for lack of transparency, and of accountability among others.

In Nigeria, public spending tends to yield poor outcomes and has limited impact on economic and social conditions. In the annual budget, so much emphasis is placed on inputs and less on outputs and the quality of spending. The quality of spending has been so low in terms of efficiency and effectiveness, that the resources spent annually are grossly disproportionate to the limited outputs realized. Partly accounting for this is corruption, which is endemic. The World Bank [8] concludes that the real problem with Nigeria's public sector is the low efficiency of budget spending, not inadequate funding. Indicators of low public spending efficiency include the poor state of the services – health, education, roads, power, etc, and the country's high Incremental Capital Output Ratio (ICOR) (12.7 in 1975 2004 and 10.4 in 1994 2004) etc. Thus, the major improvement in public service delivery to meet 21st century demands of the citizenry should come from much better utilization of the existing allocations.

1.2.Research Questions

The following are to be considered as basic research questions:

- Are public expenditures carried out in line with public institutional legal-financial control frameworks?
- How effective and efficient are these public expenditure financial-control mechanisms in terms of curbing corruption in the public sector?
- Can the Nigeria public expenditure control measures be said to be at par with international best public expenditure practices?
- Is there any link between public sector corruption and public service delivery?
- What other additional control measures can be institutionalized to curtail filtering of public expenditure?

1.3.Objectives Of The Research

- To identify if public expenditures are carried out in line with requisite institutional legal financial control framework.
- To ascertain the effectiveness and efficiency of public expenditure financial control mechanisms in terms of international best public expenditure practices.
- To critically assess Nigeria's public expenditure control mechanisms visa-vis international best practices
- To establish the links between public service corruption and service delivery.
- To harness additional institutional control measures to curtailed public sector corruption.

2. Review Of Literature And Discussion Of Issues

In an attempt to do justice to the point of focus, we intend to use complex method review where both concepts and issues will be streamlined and undertaken concomitantly thus:

2.1. The Public Service: Conceptual Clarification

The Public Service is a very sensitive “subsystem” that operates within a much larger “system”, which we commonly refer to as the “public sector”. Thus, the public service is by nature complex. At the centre of the public service is the Civil Service which reflects the pulse of government. Civil servants administer government policy and to a large extent, determine the success of government administration of programmes. A well functioning public service is driven by a well functioning civil service. Before now the public service is reminded that they are a service with no competition. Therefore the public has no choice because there is no alternative. Some have suggested that this has led to public sector complacency. The importance of the public service was vividly captured by Phillips, [9], as that entity from which all the other institutions obtain various types of approvals, licenses, permits, etc. which are critical to their existence and operation. Also, government allocations of resources pass through this entity to all other areas of the society, directly or indirectly. Therefore, all other institutions perform (essentially) has to deal with the Civil Service at one point or the other in their existence and operations”

According to Rutgers [10], in the mid-19th century, a section of social reality which we now call ‘public administration’ became an encompassing concept ‘used to shape society: to picture, organize and legitimize the interaction between government and society, politician and civil servant, state and citizen. Furthermore, for Pollitt and Bouckaert [11], the realm of public management constricts this social reality to denote specifically ‘the activity of public servants and politicians. Or it may be used to refer to the structures and processes of executive government...’. As a social reality, the Public Service is expected to mean public services through public expenditure.

2.2. Public Sector Expenditure

It has become increasingly clear that a budget allocation is the main source of public sector funding through which public service delivery is achieved. Therefore, can the budget be used as indicator of the supply of public services? Critically, the budget is a poor predictor of the actual quantity and quality of public service delivery, especially in countries with poor accountability and weak institutions. At least four breaks in the chain can be distinguished between spending—meant to address efficiency and equity concerns—and its transformation into services (Devarajan and Reinikka [12]). The first is governments may spend on the wrong goods or the wrong people. A large portion of public spending on health and education especially in developing countries is devoted to recurrent costs (Hammer, Nabi, and Cercone [13]). Furthermore, most studies of the incidence of public spending in these sectors show that benefits accrue largely to the rich and middle-class; the share going to the poorest is almost always less than 20 percent (Castro-Leal and others [14]).

Second, even when governments spend on the right goods or the right people, the money may fail to reach the frontline service provider. A study of Uganda in the mid-1990s, using a Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) —the central theme of this work—showed that only 13 percent of nonwage recurrent expenditures for primary education actually reached the primary school (Reinikka, [1]. The considerable variation in grants received across schools was determined more by the political economy than by efficiency and equity considerations. Larger schools and schools with wealthier parents received a larger share of the intended funds (per student), while schools with a higher share of unqualified teachers and poorer parents received less (Reinikka and Svensson [15]).

Third, even when the money reaches the primary school or health clinic, the incentives to provide the service may be weak. Service providers in the public sector may be poorly paid, hardly ever monitored, and given few incentives from the central government bureaucracy, which is mostly concerned with inputs rather than outputs. The result can be a high absenteeism rate among frontline workers. The Quantitative Service Delivery Survey (QSDS) —the other instrument featured in this work is a useful tool for getting at these issues. A survey in Bangladesh, described later, showed that the absenteeism rate was 74 percent for doctors in primary health care centres (Chaudhury and Hammer [2]).

Fourth, even if the services are effectively provided, there is always a mismatch between what is provided and what the beneficiaries² desire (Devarajan and Reinikka [12]. For economic and other reasons, parents pull their children out of school or fail to take them to the clinic. These demand-side failures often interact with the supply side failures to generate a low level of public services and human development outcomes among the poor.

2.3. The Menace Of Public Service Corruption

The starting point indeed should be a common definition of the concepts “**public sector corruption**” and “**service delivery**” which are in my view two terms sitting at the opposite ends of the spectrum. In its simplest form, “Corruption” is defined broadly as “the abuse of public power for private gain”. Research on corruption is always a herculean task to undertake; as the act is shrouded in lots of activities, reactions and behaviours that are by their very nature secretive and illegal. It is tough and sometimes impossible; to have an honest, detailed and reliable account on corrupt practices, usually you get facts from one side (the aggrieved) while the other side becomes economical with the truth. When a public sector dimension is introduced in the issue of corruption, it becomes all the more problematic to identify or to establish. Nevertheless, the approach adopted in this study and which design is heavily influenced by a number of previous efforts (e.g., Kaufmann et al [7], Otive [6]; Olaopa [5], facilitates the problematization and appraisal of the magnitude of corruption. According to the World Bank [16], **corruption** is “the abuse of public office for private gain. Public office is

abused for private gain when an official accepts, solicits, or extorts a bribe. It is also abused when private agents actively offer bribes to circumvent public policies and processes for competitive advantage and profit. Public office can also be abused for personal benefit even if no bribery occurs, through patronage and nepotism, the theft of state assets, or the diversion of state revenues." This definition is broad enough to encompass all types of corruption one encounters with reality. It also places the public sector at the centre of the phenomena of corruption. This research work uses this definition of corruption.

2.4. Dimensions Of Public Service Corruption

In order to develop a Public Service Anti-corruption Strategy it is important to understand the various forms in which corruption manifests itself in the Public Service and elsewhere. The following examples illustrate the various manifestations (Petter, [17]):

(a). Bribery: Bribery involves the promise, offering or giving of a benefit that improperly affects the actions or decisions of a public servant. This benefit may accrue to the public servant, another person or an entity. A variation of this manifestation occurs where a political party or government is offered, promised or given a benefit that improperly affects the actions or decisions of the political party or government. In its most extreme manifestation this is referred to as State Capture, or the sale of Parliamentary votes, Presidential decrees, criminal court decisions and commercial decisions. Example: A traffic officer accepts a cash payment in order not to issue a speed fine.

(b). Embezzlement: This involves theft of resources by persons entrusted with the authority and control of such resources. Example: Hospital staff that steals medicines and in turn sells these to private pharmacists.

(c). Fraud: This involves actions or behaviours by a public servant, other person or entity that fool others into providing a benefit that would not normally accrue to the public servant, other persons or entity. Example: A public servant that registers a fictitious employee in order to collect the salary of that fictitious employee (the ghost worker syndrome).

(d). Extortion: This involves coercing a person or entity to provide a benefit to a public servant, another person or an entity in exchange for acting (or failing to act) in a particular manner. Example: A lecturer threatens to fail a student on the basis of extortion or sexual desire unless the student meets up with the lecturer demand.

(e). Abuse Of Power: This involves a public servant using his/her vested authority to improperly benefit another public servant, the person or entity (or using the vested authority to improperly discriminate against another public servant, a person or entity). Example: During a tender process but before the actual selection of a successful contractor, the head of department expresses his/her wish to see the contract awarded to a specific person.

(f). Conflict Of Interest: This involves a public servant acting or failing to act on a matter where the public servant has an interest or another person or entity that stands in a relationship with the public servant has an interest. Example: A public servant considers tenders for a contract and awards the tender to a company of which his/her partner is a director.

(g). Insider Trading/ Abuse Of Privileged Information: This involves the use of privileged information and knowledge that a public servant possesses as a result of his/her office to provide an unfair advantage to another person or entity to obtain a benefit, or to accrue a benefit himself/herself. Example: A local government official has, as a result of his/her particular office, knowledge of residential areas that are to be rezoned as business areas. He/She informs friends and family to acquire the residential properties with a view to selling these as business properties at a premium.

(h). Favouritism: This involves the provision of services or resources according to personal affiliations (for example ethnic, religious, party political affiliations, etc.) of a public servant. Example: A regional manager in a particular area ensures that only persons from the same tribe are successful in tenders for the supply of foods in the manager's geographic area of responsibility.

(i). Nepotism: This involves a public servant ensuring that family members are appointed to public service positions or that family members receive contracts from State resources. This manifestation is similar to a conflict of interests and favouritism. Example: A head of department appoints his/her sister's child to a position even when more suitable candidates have applied for the position.

The above illustration of the manifestations of corruption is by no means complete or exhaustive. Corruption appears in permutations and in degrees of intensity. Degrees of intensity vary from the occasional acceptance of bribes to systemic corruption where bribery is the accepted way of "doing business" and large-scale looting of a country's resources takes place. Thus corruption also manifests as personal and political corruption. Corruption increases if left unattended to and once this has culminated in systemic corruption it further creates a bigger challenge to address.

Socioeconomic conditions, the political-institutional infrastructure, cultural heritage and other factors influence the way in which corruption is perceived and addressed. Whilst corruption seems easily identifiable, the varying perspectives make it particularly difficult to define corruption and develop appropriate remedies. Such perspectives vary from the Moralistic-Normative perspective (corruption is inherently bad), the Functionalist perspective (corruption is ever present in society and not always unwanted), the Public Office-Legalistic perspective (legal institutions independent from government are required to combat corruption), the Public Interest-Institutionalist perspective (institutions shape individual corrupt behaviour), the Interest-maximizing perspective (a market-centred perspective that accuses officials of converting political resources into goods needed to initiate and maintain corrupt relations) and the Political Economy perspective (State is the mechanism for the accumulation of wealth, especially where indigenous people lack independent access to the economy outside of the State).

Understanding the dimensions of corruption entails also understanding what corruption is. Corruption is often described interchangeably with maladministration, incapacity and inefficiency, especially because public resources are being used.

2.5. Nigerian Public Sector Anti-Corruption Efforts

In speaking on the topic of this conference, one must look at the problem alongside the role of governance and the government in curbing this menace. In the words of Rt. Hon. Hilary Benn, a former British Secretary of State for International Development, "Only developing countries led by their own people and their own government can ultimately make the decisive changes that are needed to fight poverty.....Corruption is both a cause and a consequence of poor and outright bad governance". He further stated that "State building cannot be imposed nor can there be simply a transfer of models from rich to poor countries". It is therefore noteworthy to list some of the efforts made by both past and present Nigerian Governments to curb corruption. These include:

- The "Corrupt Practices Decree" of 1975 promulgated by the regime of Murtala/Obasanjo.
- War against Indiscipline by Buhari/Idiagbon regime.
- Code of Conduct Bureau of 1990.
- Advance Fee Fraud & Other Related Offences Decree of 1995 by the Abacha regime which was later re-enacted as the Advance Fee Fraud and Other Related Offences Act, 2006 by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo administration.
- Corrupt Practices and Money Laundering Act, 2004
- The Economic & Financial Crimes Commission (Establishment) Act, 2004.
- The Procurement Act, 2007.

These have come alongside the establishment of Anti-Corruption agencies such as:

- The Nigerian Extractive Industrial Transparency Initiative (NEIT)
- The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC)
- The Technical Unit on Governance & Anti-Corruption Reforms (TUGAR)
- The Economic & Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)
- Budget monitoring and price intelligence unit (BMPIU) which later transformed into the Bureau for Public Procurement (CLEEN Foundation) [18]

These development shortfalls may be attributed analytically to three underlying causes:

(i) Stunted economic development, with higher economic growth since 2004 failing to achieve sustained improvements in productivity, incomes or employment. This situation persists even as the population continues to grow rapidly at 3.2% per annum, youth unemployment remains high (at an estimated 34% in 2005) and capacity utilisation in industry stagnates at around 45%. A combination of factors explains this situation: the 'crowding out' of non-oil sectors and the related failure to develop agriculture and link it with industry, high regulatory costs and inadequate property rights. These are compounded by major infrastructure shortfalls, most acutely in power generation, skills shortages and limited access to capital by SMEs.

(ii) The poor state of social service delivery, arising from insufficient financing, poor infrastructure and significant capacity constraints, especially at the level expected to plan, finance and manage provision, that is, local governments. As a result, the coverage and quality of services remains a major challenge. The latest estimates show, for example, that there has hardly been any progress in access to safe water and sanitation since 1990.

(iii) Insecurity and conflict, notably the low capacity and perceived integrity of law enforcement and judicial systems, the potential for conflict in various parts of the country around issues of faith, politics and resources, and the persistence of crisis in the Niger Delta.

These underlying causes and the accompanying development deficits can be traced back to a structural problem: poor governance arising from elite competition and control over a narrow but lucrative revenue base derived from oil and gas. This has led to loss of capacity in what was once a skilled civil service, limited transparency and accountability in governance, evident in continuing 'leakage' of public funds, and institutional deterioration, all of which have combined to diminish Nigeria's development prospects. A practical consequence has been to substantially lower returns from public expenditure, particularly spending at the State and local level which accounts for over half (52%) of the national total. This matters hugely as the government is still the main source of investment in the country. Many if not all of the development deficits confronting Nigeria today arise from an inability to use public investment to achieve sustainable and equitable development outcomes.

2.6. Global Approach At Stemming Corruption In The Public Service

It is worth emphasizing that the right to development is one of the rights enshrined in the African Charter for Human and People's Rights. Beyond adopting Public Service Charter, Charter for Public Service in Africa and Customer Service Charters, countries have specified other alternative approach besides setting up anti-graft agencies. Namibia for instance had concretised the charters between civil servants and service recipients through a comprehensive media campaign, South Africa and Zimbabwe have successfully established Citizens Charters to regularly assess the performance public services.

In a mixed approach for instance in Uganda, a Leadership Code of Conduct and a number of new institutions were created to provide overall guidance and set standards in public service ethics and integrity whereas in South Africa the Code of Conduct has been supplemented by training in the public service, and most public administration educational programmes include components on ethics. Similarly, public servants in Senegal are briefed about the ethical standards by which they are bound during their pre-recruitment induction training UN, [20].

The OECD, the European Council, the United Nations and especially the European Union have realised this danger. The European Union has created OLAF, an institution specifically designed to combat any form of corruption within the organization of the European Union. OLAF appears to very effective. Furthermore, the impact of economic interventionism of States on rates of high-level corruption is significant. State intervention in the private sector, that is, the extent to which the State interferes in economic

interactions within the private domain, comes in many forms, one of which is the Controlling Organized Crime and Corruption in the Public Sector 19 granting of government subsidies to private companies. High levels of corruption are associated with high distortions and abuse of discretion in the granting of state subsidies to the private sector. Procurement has been recognized as a high-risk area, since it frequently involves huge sums of public monies flowing to the private sector based on decisions by public officials. In some cases, corrupt transactions are the norm as a result of common institutional failures that could be avoided, an assumption that was tested by running correlations between perception indicators on procurement opened to foreign bidders and the index of high-level corruption, which proved to be significantly strong. More discretion exercised by public officials is also associated with higher levels of corruption in procurement.

Another government sector usually characterized as corruption-prone is customs. The association was examined between the spread of corruption in this area and two variables measuring whether the “customs bureaucracy hinders the efficient transit of goods” and “efficiency of customs”. Statistics showed a negative correlation between corruption and the quality of the customs bureaucracy and their efficiency, measured in terms of procedural complexity and abuse of discretion exercised by customs officials in the exercise of their duties. In short, high-quality customs are associated with lower levels of corruption.

Regulation is one of many key areas where the interests of business people and regulators stand in sharp contrast and many opportunities and justifications for corruption arise. Since the great number of required procedures not only increases the chances for public officials to initiate or respond to corrupt transactions (opportunity factor/supply side) but also “forces” businessmen to adopt such corrupt practices in order to “jump the queues” (demand side), the study examined the association between corruption prevalence and red tape, represented by the number of procedures required in order to start a new business. The statistical link between the increased red tape and higher corruption proves to be positive and very strong.

Impeccable policies in Nigeria often suffer failure at the implementation stage. Ebigo, [21] observed Nigeria is replete with impeccable policies, but lacks in their implementation. Corruption makes a mess of implementation of even faultless policies in Nigeria and put to waste resources employed in producing them.

A PETS —frequently carried out as part of a public expenditure review—tracks the flow of resources through these strata to determine how much of the originally allocated resources reaches each level. It is therefore useful as a device for locating and quantifying political and bureaucratic capture, leakage of funds, and problems in the deployment of human and in-kind resources, such as staff, textbooks, and drugs. It can also be used to evaluate impediments to the reverse flow of information to account for actual expenditures. Over the years, policy advocates and policymakers, scholars alike, development partners, activists, politicians, international organizations, public affairs commentators and members of the public have continued to focus on the recurring problem of corruption and its attendant effects on the public service in general and public service delivery in particular. The problem is not new to humankind even though it has reached unprecedented proportions in recent times. It is as old as society itself and cuts across all nations both advanced and developing, cultures, races, faiths and classes of people. It has been argued that one of the major obstacles to the development of poor countries is corruption. Corruption is undoubtedly one of the greatest challenges of our time, a challenge that not only leads to diversion of public funds for private parochial purposes but also threatens the very essence of service delivery and all therein contained.

2.7. Offences And Punishments In Major Anti Corruption Acts

Several laws were enacted to prevent, investigate and punish corrupt acts of public officers as well as members of the general public who engage in corrupt practices. These include among others, the Code of Conduct Bureau Act Cap 56 LFN 1990, the EFCC Establishment Act, 2004 and the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act, 2000. This review will be limited to only these three institutions and the provisions of their establishment acts.

(a). Code of conduct bureau

The Code of Conduct Bureau was established to ensure a high standard of morality in the conduct of government business. Also established, although autonomous, is the Code of Conduct Tribunal which has the responsibility of adjudicating on cases sent to it by the Code of Conduct Bureau.

The Bureau specifically has the mandate to implement Section 3, Part 1 of the Fifth Schedule of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic. It receives and investigates declarations of public officers regarding the asset acquisition and prosecute officials discovered to have made a false declaration of assets or fails to declare assets. It also sets standard regarding the code of conduct for public servants. These relate to issues of divided loyalty and receiving income for activities that are adjudged immoral. These activities include, seeking and collecting bribe, gratification and gifts for or before performing one’s duties as a public servant or receiving remunerations from different sources and in a manner considered unfair or improper.

The law establishing the Code of Conduct Bureau also makes it a serious offence for public officers who fail to complete and submit to the bureau the assets declaration form on a timely basis.

The punishment for breaching the provisions of the Code of Conduct Bureau Act range from removal of the officer from office, disqualification from holding public office for not less than ten years, to seizure and forfeiture to the state of any property acquired in abuse or corruption of office. This is however, without prejudice to the penalties that may be imposed by any law where the conduct is also a criminal offence.

(b). The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission

The EFCC is an institution established by the EFCC Act, 2002 and EFCC (Establishment) Act, 2004 as the designated Financial Intelligence Unit in Nigeria with the responsibility of coordinating the various institutions involved in the fight against money

laundering and investigation and enforcement of all laws dealing with economic and financial crimes in Nigeria. In addition to the powers conferred on the Commission by the Act, it has responsibility for enforcing the provisions of the Money Laundering Act 2004; 2003 No. 7; and 1995 No. 13, the Advance Fee Fraud and Related Offences Act, 1995, the Failed Banks (Recovery of Debts) and Financial Malpractices in Banks Act, The Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act, 1991 as amended, Miscellaneous Offences Act; and any other law or regulation relating to economic and financial crimes, including Criminal Code and Penal Code.

(c). The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission

The ICPC Act 2000 was enacted to prohibit and prescribe punishment for corrupt practices and other related offences. It established the Commission and vested it with the responsibility for investigation and prosecution of offenders for the offences committed with effect from June 13, 2000. The offences and punishments covered in the Act include Strengthening Institutional Capacity. Perhaps the single most important challenge facing governments in the 21st century will be how to strengthen the institutional capacity of public, private, and civic sectors to meet the needs of citizens and the requirements of an international economy. Institutional capacity-building is the process through which individuals and organizations in any country strengthen their abilities to mobilize the resources needed to overcome economic and social problems and to achieve a better standard of living as generally defined in that society. Institutions include both sustainable organizations and widely accepted rules of behaviour in both the public and private sectors.

2.8. The 21st Century Public Service

Collectively, political leaders and government officials know that doing things the “old way” no longer meets the demands of a more complex and interconnected international economy or the needs of a more globally-linked and politically-aware citizenry. Therefore, 21st century governments will need to adapt and continuously evolve to create value. They need to stay relevant by being responsive to rapidly changing conditions and citizens’ expectations, and build capacity to operate effectively in complex, interdependent networks of organizations and systems across the public, private and non-profit sectors to co-produce public value. As recommended in this report, what is needed today is flatter, agile, streamlined and tech-enabled (FAST) government.

2.9. Current Trends In Nigeria’S Efforts In The Fight Against Corruption

The Nigerian Government has begun to achieve a measure of improvement in its appearance both domestically and internationally. This has to do with the attention it pays especially where instituted litigations are transparently evident. The following are presented as pointers to such efforts as contained in the Nigerian media thus:

EFCC Docks Abubakar Musa For N9m Visa Scam
 N503m Scam : EFCC Re- Arraigns Ikuforiji, Aide
 \$1.69bn fraud: EFCC faults ajudua’s bid to quash charges
 EFCC Arraigns Suspected Pipeline Vandals
 EFCC Arraigns Man For N4.5m Fraud
 N25bn Scam: EFCC Closes Case against Igbenedion September 23
 EFCC Arrests 2 Undergraduates, six others over Internet Scam
 \$3,420 fraud: court sentences man to 3 months imprisonment
 EFCC Arrests Suspected Land Racketeers
 Nigeria 2011: EFCC Forwards list of corrupt politicians to Parties
 EFCC Intensifies Trial Of Top Corruption Cases

From the list indicated above, it can be deduced that top corruption cases on the prosecution list of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), would be expeditiously prosecuted this month, according to the anti-corruption agency.

The list of cases for April, which was made exclusively available to The Guardian, indicates that most of the cases, including the alleged N4.56b Head of Service Pension Office and the N32.8 billion Police Pension Office scams have been slated for trial this month.

Also, the N10b loan scam against former Speaker, Dimeji Bankole, and the case of abuse of office by former Minister of FCT Mallam Nasir el-Rufai, are on the list for accelerated trial.

The prosecution timetable also indicates that the Commission is to hit the ground running from Tuesday April 3, with the N32.8 billion alleged corruption case against a Permanent Secretary, Atiku Abubakar Kigo, who is being charged on 16-count along with five others.

The charges border on conspiracy and criminal breach of trust; and others charged with him are Esai Dangabar, Ahmed Inuwa Wada, John Yakubu Yusufu, Mrs. Veronica Ulonma Onyebula and Sani Habila Zira.

3. Methodology

Considering the nature of the issue at stake and coupled with the non-empirical orientation of the paper, we have adopted documentary (use of available data) methods. Here, we rely solely on existing publications and related literature on the basis of which our conclusion rests.

4. Conclusion

From the reviewed literature, it is worth concluding that corruption in Nigeria is widespread as represented by a series of facts and figures from national and international sources. According to the Executive Director, Office of Drugs and Crime at the United

Nations, Dr. Antonio Maria Costa, about US \$400 billion was stolen from Nigeria and stashed away in foreign banks by past corrupt leaders before the return to democratic rule in 1999 [6]. While the former Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, Nigeria's previous leaders stole about 64 trillion naira (about US \$507 billion) from public coffers. When benchmarked against the 2008 proposed budget of N2.456 trillion naira, this translates into 26 years budget. These are funds expected to be used to provide over 160 million Nigerians with the basic necessities of life. By diverting scarce resources intended for development, Anan [22] asserts that corruption also makes it harder to meet fundamental needs such as those for food, health and education. This ultimately, creates discrimination between different groups in society, feeds inequality and injustice, discourages foreign investment and aids, and hinders growth. It is therefore a major obstacle to political stability and to successful social and economic development.

In addition, Public sector corruption leads to misallocation of resources and thereby triggering a drastic fall in both the quantity and quality of services provided. Therefore creates a loss of trust in the legitimacy of political system which seriously undermining its acceptance by the citizens. This obviously escalates the deficit trust between the government and its citizenry. In conclusion, the paper though realized that there are clearly no sure formula for success in the fight against public sector corruption hence suggesting that public sector corruption must be curtailed at all cost in order for Nigeria to get its lost glory regained. To right the wrong, the loopholes in the Nigerian public service should be sealed and reformed in such a way that it will not continue to be an avenue for colossal fraud and corruptions.

5. Recommendations

On the basis of the foregoing, the following are forwarded as recommendations thus:

If there exist well defined institutional frameworks that codify all financial/accounting transactions in the public service and that also ensure prudent management of resources to control the escalating rate of public sector corruptions, Nigeria will be able to redefine its appearance both domestically and internationally.

The hallmark is that the existing financial/accounting control mechanisms put in place to checkmate public sector resources do not effectively ensure prudent management of such resources or are deliberately been compromised. Therefore, there is the need for public sector financial control fine-tuning and re fine-tuning to meet up with international best practices. In a bid to devising an effective financial control mechanism that explicitly explains how public funds and other forms of resources are not only deployed but also are prudently managed, greater emphasis must be placed on improving spending efficiency.

A PETS- which represents a process that is frequently carried out as part of a public expenditure review to track the flow of resources throughout all strata of public governance to determine how much of the originally allocated resources reach each level and quantify leakage of public funds- is suggested. This also implies that financial control/health of the nations does a lot in safeguarding the procurement process (by compelling adherence to quality control/specifications and best practices) thereby ensuring citizenries' satisfaction vis-à-vis services so delivered by the government with ultimate positive implications for responsibility and loyalty on the parts of government and citizens respectively.

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