



E-Governance And Fight Against Corruption In Nigeria: The Issues And Challenges

Obike, Christopher Agaodi

**Department of Public Administration and Local Government
University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria
Email: okechukwu.eme @unn.edu.ng & okechukwunnent@gmail.com**

ABSTRACT

This paper provides a critical examination of e-governance model employed in tackling corruption in Nigerian public sector. Corruption is the major vice militating against good governance and societal development in Nigeria. Several solutions have been advanced in the fight against corruption in Nigeria but none have been able to nip in the bud or even remotely check the menace of corruption and its resulting consequences. The failure of traditional governance model such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) to provide solution to the contemporary challenges in the public sector has elicited the advent of sophisticated technological response that provides a placid environment for digitalizing public administration across the world. The development of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) therefore bring transformation in the way and manner of governing the citizens in Africa and the global community. The transition from governance to e-governance has been considered as a veritable instrument in ensuring transparency, accountability and effective service delivery in the public sector. Using documentary sources of information, the paper observed that the potency of ICTs as a supporting tool in curbing the pervasiveness of institutional corruption in Nigeria is acknowledged. Globally, Nigeria is recognized as one of the most corrupt countries in the world, corruption has been a major problem setting-back the advancement of the country. In taming the obnoxious trend, the recent public sector reform championed by the Nigerian government aimed at providing sanctity in the management and utilization of public resources with the application of ICTs geared toward combating corruption has gained momentum. These institutional reforms provide a platform for e-governance in managing public resources for the benefit of the citizenry.

Keywords: Corruption, anti-corruption, e-governance, transparency and Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Corruption is the abuse of public office for private gain. Corruption may occur at any levels of government – local, state and national. It can also manifest at the legislative, executive and judicial arms of governments. By and large, corruption exists in every sphere of life, be it public or private establishments. Irrespective of where it occurs, it tends to have a massive impact in the general lives of the citizenry especially on the provision of the basic and essential services.

Before the introduction of e-governance system, a vast number of Nigerian public employees at the local, state and federal levels acknowledged to be terrifically corrupt. The employees in the public sector are recognized to be shrewd in inflating government contracts and procurements; the system was moribund with ghost workers' syndrome in which the names of non-existing public officials were used to pay fraudulent salaries. The perpetrators of such offense initiated a system that bypass banking measure in the payment of salary. In such an environment, they pay public personnel by cash through their ministries cashiers. A huge amount of funds was diverted to the pocket of perpetrators through this channel. Several regimes have contended with this challenge through the inauguration of special staff audit committees,

the committee introduced "Table Payment" which requires physical presence of staff. However, this measure was unable to rule out the corrupt elements in the public sector.

Consequently, the diversion of government revenue and foreign aid into the individual personal purse within the public sector has contributed to the deprivation of some basic social services. It has been estimated that approximately 400 billion Naira was stolen from Nigerian public treasury from 1960 to 1999, between 2005 and 2004, the sum of \$182 billion was diverted from the public accounts via illegitimate financial flows. The stolen common wealth meant for educational development, health sector and general infrastructural development was diverted by public office holders for personal aggrandizement [Hoffman and Patel, 2017]. The culture of corruption entrenched in Nigerian public sector has a great impact in the life of the citizens. Its effect on infrastructural development has been acknowledged and its corollary has been experienced by the citizens in their daily engagement.

For a long time, local and international anti corruption crusaders ranked Nigeria one of the most corrupt nations in the world. There is no tacit agreement between analysts on when the deadly virus set into the soul of the nation. Some piqued corruption rolled in immediately after the lowering of the Union Jack on 1st October 1960 while a horde of others believed it started when the military crossed the borderline of their constitutionally and traditionally given responsibility of defence of territorial integrity of the nation into politics. In the whole attempts of discussing the issue of corruption in Nigeria, there is always an attempt to scale regimes based on perceptions not necessarily judgments of reputable global and local anti graft agencies.

The two military regimes of Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha were seen as the most corrupt in the history of the nation yet during their combined 14yrs reign bodies like Transparency International did not rank them the most corrupt people in the world (www.transparency.org 1999-2007). In view of this, the regime of former Chief Olusegun Obasanjo resolved from the onset of his administration to make war against corruption a major agenda of his administration but Nigeria got the worst ranking in the history of the nation. Throughout his Eight (8) years reign from 1999-2007 Nigeria was atop the chat and never left the first five most corrupt nations in the world. One impeccable realism and feature of Nigeria is that, the more the revenue a regime has at its disposal the more the scale of corruption. It is on record that the revenue that accrued to the nation's coffers between 29th may 1999 to 29th may 2007 surpassed what accrued to Nigeria from 1st October 1960 to the day Chief Obasanjo took over.

From 1st October to date Nigeria had civilians and military regimes, and virtually all their coup speeches and inaugural addresses, the fight against corruption was promised as a cardinal principle or advanced as a reason for toppling a regime. The tough talk against corruption is followed by setting up of special committees or bodies to combat or investigate corruption charges. In 1975 Gen. Murtala Mohammed's regime set up an investigative panel which indicted all the twelve military governors that served under Gen. Yakubu Gowon (Akinola, 2002). Gen. Muhammadu Buhari toppled the regime of Alh. Shehu Shagari and set up special tribunals that investigated political office holders in the Second Republic. The kleptocratic regime of Gen. Sani Abacha that was viewed one of the most corrupt in the history of the nation as not left out in attempts to cleansing the system of corruption by establishing the Failed Banks Tribunal that investigated unethical practices in the country's banking sector.

The regime of Chief Obasanjo stretched the war on corruption farther than its predecessors. He established two bodies viz Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) to purge the system of corruption. These bodies were given broad powers to arrest and prosecute suspects and partner with foreign bodies in hunting down trans-national fraudsters. These bodies were showered with local and international supports bordering financial assistance, training of personnel in modern crime detection and fighting, prosecution knowhow etc. Despite much ado and great expectations, the virus of corruption kept spreading like bush fire and the nation recorded one of the worst scenarios where public official was caught in foreign countries on money laundering and other related offences (EFCC ACT 2004/ICPC ACT2000, Danfulani, 2013).

The nexus between e-governance and anti-corruption war has been globally pronounced by a number of scholars [Ojo,2014 Anderson, 2009, Shim and Eom, Mauro,1995 and Garcia-Murillo and Ortega}. Information Communication Technology is considered as a fundamental instrument that can be employed

to tame the ugly trend of corruption. ICT is capable of mitigating corruption by promoting good governance, monitoring the activities of government and the governed. The use of electronic measure in the daily governmental business has a great impact in the fight against corruption among other measures put in place by the government in many developing nations of the world [Lupu and Lazăr, 2015]

In order to address this, experts such as Adepetun {2015} Eme, et.al{2017}, Amenaghawon & Ilo{2016}, among others have urged President Muhammadu Buhari to give e-government priority in his administration as a strategic measure to check leakages in spending and exposure of officials to public funds.

These scholars and other experts' thesis support the views of the participants, who met in Abuja in 2015 at the conclusion of a two-day "2015 E-Government Summit", based their submission on the recent disclosure by President Buhari that an estimated \$150 billion had been stolen from the country and stashed abroad in the last 10 years by some unscrupulous government officials and other Nigerians. According to them, adoption of e-government will, to a larger extent, help in curbing cases of financial fraud in government circles.

Speaking as the Special Guest of Honour at the summit, Governor of Anambra State, Willie Obiano, maintained that the adoption of e-government in Anambra, especially in the area of tax collection, has raised the Internally-Generated Revenue (IGR) of the state from less than N1 billion to its current N1.1 billion monthly, with the ultimate objective to increase the IGR target to N3 billion monthly. "In Anambra, our aggressive pursuit of a vision and mission strategies through an efficient use of ICT has attracted an inflow of investment to the tune of N2.4 billion to Anambra State in the past one year". "The whole idea is to use government machinery to channel private sector interest for the advantages of the citizens by making the environment conducive through efficient use of ICT," Obiano said. Also speaking at the forum, Deputy Governor (Operations) of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Alhaji Suleiman Barau, said the CBN's introduction of electronic transaction policies was meant to ensure efficiency in financial transactions and curb corruption in the system. He noted that while the Federal Government and its parastatals have also embraced a number of ICT-related initiatives in recent past in their services, with resultant cost-saving and ability to plug the leakages in its financial dealings, "there is an urgent need to popularise wider and holistic embrace of e-government." Barau said that with the passage of three major bills relating to electronic transactions in Nigeria by the sixth National Assembly, the road is now clear for e-payment landscape in the country to achieve increased sanity.

The event was organised by E-Payment Providers Association of Nigeria (E-PPAN), in collaboration with the Financial Services Strategy (FSS) 2020 and the CBN.

The Head, Programme Office, FSS2020, Oluwatoyin Joko, explained that the collaboration with E-PPAN was considered critical as it allows FSS2020 Office to see how it can better re-organise the major financial markets, insurance, pension and mortgage as well as agriculture and the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) using e-government as a strategy.

Conceptualizing of Terms- ICT:

Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) is one of the means of Public service delivery in the Nigerian federal civil service. Indeed, ICTs usage is as old as the Nigerian federal civil service. ICT has therefore, been applied over the years in the Nigerian civil service as a means of public service delivery. The only difference now has to do with the sophistication of ICTs in use in the federal civil service vis-à-vis the ones that were used in the early days of the service. ICT is a digital way of engaging transaction with customers and clients. It refers to any artefact, technique or knowledge used to create, store, manage and disseminate information (Hewitt de Alcantra, 2001:8). The World Bank (cited in Nweke, 2007a:175) defines ICT as a set of activities that facilitate the capturing, storage, processing, transmission and display of information by electronic means. For Akunyili (2010), ICT is an umbrella term that covers all technical means for processing and communicating information. ICTs include telegraph, telecommunications, radio, television, computers, internet services and wireless technologies. ICT is therefore, a broad subject that is concerned with technology and other aspects of managing and processing large-scale information. This is what is regarded as e-government and e-governance in Public

Administration. In this study, we used the concept of ICTs interchangeably with digital technology, electronic government (e-government), electronic governance (e-governance), and digital government. The practices and applications of electronic technology in the civil service in both the developed and developing countries show that it is a powerful means of delivering better quality services, reducing waiting time, red tape, raising productivity and improving transparency and accountability. The extant literature is indeed replete with the great potentials of ICT tools and applications for operational efficiency, cost reduction, improved quality of services, convenience, innovation and learning in the public sector. ICT is therefore, believed to offer considerable potential for sustainable service delivery (Ndou, 2004; Eme et al 2007; Nweke, 2007a; Nweke, 2007b). Our concern in this paper is how it can be used as an instrument for fighting graft.

Electronic Governance

According to UN e-government survey of 2004, 2005, and 2008 e-government is the use of internet technology as a means of exchanging information, providing services and transacting with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government.

E-government has four primary delivery tracks namely: Government-to-Citizen or Government-to-Customer (G2C); Government-to-Business (G2B); Government-to-Government (G2G); and Government-to-Employee (G2E) (Adeyemo, 2010).

E-governance came as a result of revolution in Information and Communication Technology which finds expression in digital technologies like personal Computers, the internet, mobile telephony, and different electronic applications. A confluence of these technologies eased the flow of information, its accessibility and delivery. This came with numerous advantages because citizens were connected with government, government became more efficient and robust, cost of governance and transaction were scaled down, and transparency was enhanced.

Nigeria boarded the ship of e-governance like any other developing nation as in the middle of the last decade, and since then, virtually all facets of life have experienced unprecedented transformation. At the initial stage of e-activities in Africa, Nigeria was assessed low compared to countries like Kenya, South Africa, Egypt and the rest. With the deregulation of the sub-sector and direct capital investment by foreign firms, the country experienced a quantum leap and overtook all other countries in the continent principally because of the largeness of the population which is roughly put at about 170 million people and the share wealth of the nation which gave a sizeable number of the citizens and governments at the three tiers of authorities the capacity to buy Personal Computers, Smartphones, and other internet related appliances and run internet programmes that integrated governmental ministries and departments (Akunyili, 2010). Because of this massive growth in communication and the virginity of the market in Nigeria has become a preferred destination of international telecommunication investors from Asia, Middle East, South Africa and Europe (Adeyemo,2010). E-Governance is the use of Information and Communications Technology in public service delivery. It involves the use of ICT in administrative functions, including human resource management, finance, budget, programme and project management, health, education, welfare services, infrastructure, policy making, among others. Lending credence to the above, (Ojo J.S. 2019) stressed that the transition from governance to e-governance has been considered as a veritable tool in ensuring transparency, accountability and effective service delivery in the public sector. In addition, it is the application of ICT to the processes of government function in order to achieve simple, moral, accountable, responsive, and transparent governance (Onah, 2021). Also it was noted that an explosion of digital information is being shared in a multitude of ways in order to create value, and a proliferation of communication networks allows interaction that spans the globe regardless of time or location (Dawes, 2010). This means that the world has become a global village through ICT.

ICT also refers to technologies that provide access to information through telecommunications. It includes the internet, intranet, cell phones and computers, etc, that enable access to, storage of, and transmission of information. (Coleman, 2008) cited in (Eme, et. al, 2007) posited that E-governance entails the digitised coding, processing, storage and distribution of data relating to three key aspects of

governing societies: the representation and regulation of social actors, the delivery of public service; and the generation of and circulation of official information. This reinforces the importance of e-governance. Further insight is provided by (Bacus, 2001) cited in (Ojo J.S., 2013) when he opined that e-governance is defined as the application of electronic means in the interaction between government and citizens and government and businesses, as well as internal government operations to simplify and improve democratic government and business aspects of government. This interaction becomes more cogent if the fight against corruption is to be sustained as citizens, businesses, and even international community would have access to relevant information.

It is also defined as delivery of government services and information to the public using electronic channels (Baidyabati, 2012). (Crowley, 2008) cited in (Ojo, 2013) lends his voice to the fact that e-governance is the use of ICT for the planning, implementation, and monitoring of government's programmes, projects, and activities. There is unanimity among the authors about the necessity of e-governance and ICT. Each of the definitions provided added insight and significance of ICT to e-governance. The goals and objectives of e-governance are highlighted below-

The goals of e-governance include the following:

- Development of policy framework for managing information;
- Enhancing public services delivery;
- Improving the quality and cost-effectiveness of government operations;
- Engaging citizens in a democratic process;
- Creating administrative and institutional reforms, standards, best practices in accounting, auditing, etc.

The objectives of E-Governance include the following:

- To improve Government processes;
- To connect the citizens;
- To build external relations
- To ensure service delivery and transform governance;
- To ensure transparency in governance;
- To ensure greater efficiency, productivity, accountability and speed in providing information;
- To provide qualitative cost-effective service;
- To build an informed society;
- To encourage citizen participation;
- To provide friendly, speedier and efficient interface;
- To eliminate the middleman (Amujiri, 2021).

If the goals and objectives of E-Governance as listed above are achieved, the fight against corruption would be successful, and corruption would be reduced to the barest minimum. Having analysed e-governance, focus would now be shifted to corruption, its menace, and how e-governance can help in its fight.

Corruption:

The Dictionary defines corruption as “the act of corrupting or impairing integrity, virtue, or moral principle, the state of being corrupted or debased, loss of purity. It went further to describe it as ‘the seeking of bribe, departure from what is pure/correct, destruction of data by manipulation of parts of it. To add to the Dictionary description of corruption, embezzlement, pilferage, theft, fraud, commercial crime, etc are all family members of corruption. It is the abuse of public office for personal gain. It permeates the entire spectrum of the society - public, private, corporate and individuals.

Nigeria is known to be one of the most corrupt countries in the world. Corruption has been a clog in the wheel of progress in the country. The menacing effect of corruption is evident, not only in Nigeria, but globally. It is the bane of underdevelopment of many countries, as monies meant for development and infrastructure provision are stolen by state actors and corporate managers and allies. It is cancerous to the national economies. In taming the obnoxious trend, the recent public sector reform embarked upon by the

Nigerian Government aimed at providing sanctity in the management and utilisation of public resources with the application of ICTs geared towards combating corruption has gained momentum. (Ojo, 2019). The capacity of ICTs as supporting tools in curbing the pervasiveness of institutional corruption is well known world over. Its conscious and sustained application in Nigeria would strengthen the fight against corruption. As part of efforts to curtail corruption, the Nigeria Government set up the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in 2003, as a crime combating agency. The EFCC, in its first report, noted that corruption is so pervasive in Nigeria that it has turned public service for many into a kind of criminal enterprise. Graft has fuelled political violence, denied millions of Nigerians access to even the most basic health and education services, and reinforced police abuses and other widespread patterns of human rights violations. In addition, Nigerian Government also created the Independence Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and the Code of Conduct Bureau, all in the fight against corruption. Yet, corruption remained unabated.

Method of Data Collection and Analysis

The reliability and validity of our data for this study lie in the use of observational techniques and documentations as our major method of data collection. This implies that, in the course of this research, data shall be gathered through secondary sources like materials from the internet, relevant textbooks, magazines, newspapers, conference papers, seminar papers, and statements of commentators as concerns the issue at hand. Equally, government documents, white papers, reports of panels of enquiry would also be of importance to this research. This method of data collection as adopted in this research would enable us to understand the comparative opinions of scholars and commentators with regard to the anti-corruption reforms in Nigeria. This is because the use of documents allows the researcher access to information on areas where he cannot have access to respondents and could not study the issues concerned with decisions and dispositions among government officials. Another justification is that this method would assist to collect data stored in files, government archives, libraries, bookshops and other international document.

The nature of this study makes the use of qualitative descriptive analysis quite imperative.

The Issues:

Transparency in the Conduct of Government Business:

As indicated above, one of the objectives of e-governance is the entrenchment of transparency in the administrative processes and service delivery. This will plug the holes through which corrupt practices are perpetrated. It would eliminate the manual process which allowed much room for manipulation. The system would throw up any error(s) whether deliberate or accidental, and trigger investigation and corrective action. E-governance would stem the denials by government officials of receipts of monies. For example, local government officials used to deny receipt of allocations from the Federal Government. When Mrs Ngozi Okonjo-Iwuala assumed office as Nigeria's Finance Minister, she began to publish allocations to Local Governments in both print and electronic media. That denial stopped. That is one of the ways e-governance can help check corrupt practices. Public officials divert monies received on behalf of government into their private pockets and falsify documents to cover it up. E-governance provides systems of collection and accountability, as well as platforms which assist in tracking malpractices. Davies and Fumega, cited in (Ojo, 2019) gave the following recipe for fighting corruption through e-governance:

- (i) Online Services: Platforms to offer public self-services that citizens can explore;
- (ii) Transparency Portals: These platforms provide periodic government publication of important documents which are accessible to the citizens online;
- (iii) Open Data Portals: These platforms offer access to data in machine-readable formats.
- (iv) Crowd Sources Reporting: This entails the citizens to report grievances regarding the activities of government;
- (v) Online Corruption Reporting: The platforms that enable citizens to report cases of corruption;

- (vi) Online Right-to-Information Requests: Platforms that allow citizens to file right to information requests;
- (vii) Issues Reporting: Platforms that allow citizens to report problems with public service;
- (viii) Service Automation: Platforms that replace discretionary decision-making by public official with auditable software processes.

In addition to the measures listed above, it is necessary to acknowledge the other policies of the Federal Government, aimed at fighting corruption in the public service through the instrumentality of e-governance. They include Treasury Single Account (TSA), Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS), Central Bank of Nigeria's Cashless Policy, Bank Verification Number (BVN), National Identification Number (NIN), eNaira, among others. Also, the SERVICOM and Freedom of Information Acts are among the legal instruments designed to assist expose corruption in the public service.

Policy Framework

Development of policy framework for managing information and service delivery, formulation and implementation of appropriate e-governance policies that ensure that public service delivery is driven by ICT, guarantees to some extent, a degree of standards in public service delivery. Strong e-governance policies are essential for the development, procurement and sustenance of e-governance infrastructure. It requires political will and huge financial commitment to transform from analogue/manual process to ICT driven processes. Once this transformation is achieved, there will be little or no room for corruption to thrive. For instance, the National Immigration Service (NIS) launched its e-service in June 2021. Since then, all international passport seekers were to visit the NIS website, fill out the required personal data and other information, pay the appropriate fee, which goes straight to the NIS account, and after a week, their passport would be delivered to them. Exploitation of passport applicants by NIS staff has been eliminated through this e-governance system. In addition, introduction of e-service has also reduced significantly, wastages associated with printing of application forms, inks, toners, among others, thereby ensuring efficiency and effectiveness of the process. This is yet another way e-governance helps in the fight against corruption because public officials present bogus budgets every year for consumables and obtain approvals, but most of the funds are diverted to their pockets.

The Issue of Middlemen

The activities of middlemen in public service delivery fuels corruption. The exploitation of the public in the course of delivering services is evident, and public service is made inaccessible without patronising them. Going through them to access service makes the cost of public services more expensive. They cannot be ignored as they have the capacity and intent to frustrate anybody who attempts to by-pass them. E-governance would eliminate the middlemen, and thus reduce significantly, the cost of service delivery to the public. Services could be accessed online through computers, laptops, phones, tablets, etc, thus, stemming the nefarious activities of middlemen in the process.

Engaging Citizens in a Democratic Process:

E-governance has the potential of increasing participation by citizens in government policy formulation, decision making, democratic processes, feedback mechanism, and other interactive activities between government and citizens. Opinion polls, e-registration, e-voting, e-transmission of electoral results increase public confidence in the electoral process and thus, increase the urge by citizens to participate in such activities.

The Challenges & Recommendations

High Cost of ICT Infrastructure

In spite of the apparent necessity and benefits of e-governance, the high cost of ICT infrastructure poses a huge challenge to its procurement, maintenance and sustenance. This is partly due to the fact that all ICT items are imported and the exchange rate of the Nigerian currency (Naira) is so weak. Government is

faced with infrastructural deficit in critical areas like health, education, road, power and environment. Procurement of ICT infrastructure is therefore an added responsibility which government is grappling with. It is therefore, recommended that government may consider Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangement to provide the needed financial, technical and professional intervention required to procure, manage and sustain ICT infrastructure, which is critical in the fight against corruption.

Non-coverage of Remote Areas

E-governance faces another severe challenge in the area of internet coverage of remote areas in Nigeria. Most remote areas do not have internet access. It is impossible for e-governance to work in such areas. The citizens or those living in such areas are cut off, their participation in anything ICT is ruled out. For the objectives of e-governance to be realised, the entire spectrum of the society should be provided with internet accessibility and empowered to procure the needed gadgets and internet access. This would help in the fight against corruption.

Inadequate Computer Literacy

There is a huge gap between computer literates and illiterates amongst the citizens. The number of ICT professionals in the public- sector is grossly inadequate. This poses a great challenge to e-governance and ICT penetration in the country. Knowledge of computer and ICT is non-existent in most rural communities in the country. Attainment of the objectives of e-governance in such areas is therefore, unrealistic. The Nigerian government is tackling this challenge through the establishment of Digital Bridge Institute (DBI) in the six geo-political zones of the country. The DBI is mandated to bridge the gap as much as possible to deepen computer literacy in the respective zones. Computer literacy is essential among the citizens to understand the issues of e-governance, participate in, and be able to check and provide information that could assist in fighting corruption in the system.

Insufficient Electricity Power

Insufficiency of power supply is a problem bedeviling development in Nigeria. Epileptic power supply is a daily occurrence in the country. ICT equipment are powered by electricity power, they therefore, depend on electricity power for optimal performance. There is a huge gap between power requirement in the country and power supply. If power infrastructure is not adequately addressed, government's efforts towards transition to e-governance would not be achievable, and by extension, the fight against corruption may not succeed. It is therefore, essential for power infrastructure to be put in place to power the fight against corruption.

CONCLUSION

E-governance has proved to be a dependable instrument to combat corruption in the developed countries. Its efficacy is also evident in developing countries that embraced e-governance earlier in their developmental process. Nigeria has commenced transition to e-governance and has already adopted some measures as indicated above to fight corruption. A step in the right direction. If penetration of e-governance is deepened to cover all strata of government, citizens empowered to participate in governance, ICT infrastructure improved, power supply improved and computer literacy heightened, corruption would be reduced to the barest minimum, if not eliminated, through e-governance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

What is needed most in Nigeria is the political will to execute the war on corruption not minding whose ox is gored. The usual ways of providing soft landing to political cronies through influencing sentences delivered by the judiciary must end for the good of the country and its citizenry. Those caught in the act must be made to face the full wrath of the law which will serve as a deterrent to others. Stealing from the public treasury would no longer be lucrative criminal enterprise. In this war, the judiciary must live up to its billing by shedding off technicalities that often set criminals free due to some simple procedures not observed by the prosecuting teams. Substances of cases before them should form pillars of their consideration and judgment not technicalities. By doing this they will help in the overall war on corruption. The judiciary is also another branch of government that e-procedures are not enshrined in court or tribunal proceedings. Judges are still taking minutes like secretaries instead of using modern

recorders that will transcribe spoken words into written words in a matter of seconds. This procedure is defeating one of their very adages that “justice delayed is justice denied”. Their anachronistic style is delaying and denying justice for the accused and prosecutors. But hope is on the way as some states like Lagos has taken the lead.

Government needs to invest in ICT infrastructure such as hardware, software, capacity building, and electricity power, among others.

REFERENCES

- Akunyili, D. (2010). “ICT and E-government in Nigeria: Opportunities and Challenges”, An Address by the Minister of Information and Communications, Prof. Dora Akunyili, at the World Congress on Information Technology, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 25th – 27th May
- Anderson. A {2009}, e-Government as an anti-corruption strategy. *Information Economics and Policy*, 21:201-21
- Danfulani J. {2013}, e-Governance: A Weapon for the Fight Against Corruption in Nigeria. *Sahara Reporter*, 2013
- Davies, F{2014}, Mixed Incentives: Adopting ICT Innovations for Transparency, Accountability, and Anti-Corruption. Norway: Chr. Michelsen Institute (U4 Issue 2014:4).
- Eme, O. I., Dialoke, I. and Emereole, B. (2007). "E-Government in Nigeria: Benefits, Problems and Future Prospects", *Nigerian Journal of Public Administration and Local Government*, XIII(1), 127 - 133.
- Garcia-Murillo M, Ortega R. {2010}, Do e-government initiatives reduce corruption? Available at: SSRN 2012470.
- Hewitt de Alcantra, C. (2001). *The Development Divide in a Digital Age*, Geneva: Technology, Business and Society Programme Paper.
- Hoffman L, Patel R. {2017}, Collective Action on Corruption in Nigeria: A Social Norms Approach to Connecting Society and Institutions, Chatam House Report. Royal Institute of International Affairs.
- Mauro P. Corruption and growth {1995}, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 110(3):681-712
- Ndou, D. V. (2004). "E-government for Developing countries: Opportunities and Challenges," *The Electronic Journal on Information Systems in Developing Countries*, 18(1), 1-24.
- Nweke, E. N. (2007a). “Re-inventing Administrative Governance in Nigeria: Can Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) make a Difference?”, *African Journal of Political and Administrative Studies*, 3(1), 171- 194.
- Nweke, E. N. (2007b). "Electronic Service Delivery as a Model of Public Sector Reform in Nigeria: A Study of E-Governance Application in Public Service Delivery", in Obi, E. A. and Dalhatu, M. Y. (eds.), *Current Practices and Problems of Nigerian Public Administration*, Onitsha: Book Point Educational Limited.
- Nweke, E. N. (2011). “Stimulating Civil Engagement in Public Service Delivery in Nigeria: The Call for Digital Governance”, in Nwachukwu, L. C. et al (eds.) *Readings on the Nigerian Public Service*, Onitsha: Book Point Educational Limited.
- Lupu D, Lazăr CG. Influence of e-government on the level of corruption in some EU and non-EU states. *Procedia Economics and Finance*. 2015;20:365-371.
- Ojo JS. {2014}, e-Governance: An imperative for sustainable grass root development in Nigeria. *Journal of Public Administration and Policy Research*, 6(4):77-89.
- Shim DC, Eom TH. {2008}, e-Government and anti-corruption: Empirical analysis of international data. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 31(3):298-316.
- UN {2014} e-Government Survey, Washington, DC. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs