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ABSTRACT

This study focus on corruption and economic crimes in the public sector with a particular reference to ministry of finance, Lagos state. The study identified the major causes of corruption and economic crimes and these were numerous ranging from bad government to societal values in public. In the course of the study, it was discovered that checks and balances in ministry result to the effectiveness and utilization of public funds.

Having made the analysis, recommendations are proffered as to the measures the government, law enforcement agencies, ministry and the public will adopt in fighting the menace.

The entire work is divided into five chapters. In chapter one, an introduction to the study was made. A review of literature was carried out in chapter two research methodology, data presentation and Analysis and summary of findings, recommendation and conclusion were made in chapter 3, 4, and 5 respectively.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Economic crimes has been described as the manifestation of a criminal act done either solely or in an organized manner with or without associates or groups, with an intent to earn wealth through illegal means, carrying out of illicit activities which violate the laws of the land and other regulating statutory provisions governing the economic activities of the government and its administration. It can erode the confidence in the system of a country; threaten the integrity of government, its programmes and institutions, thereby undermining national security, law and order. On the whole, the overwhelming presence of economic crimes can make such a country unattractive to investors (Okolie 2006).

Irrespective of the sophistication of the methods adopted by criminals, the

common characteristics of the crime include cheating, lying and stealing. Corruption is a menace in the public sector, although is a global malaise, the extent of its reach in the public sector was tragically stupendous. All indicators showed that the spread of this cancer had become frightening.

The menace of corruption leads to slow movement of files in offices, police extortion at toll gates and slow traffics on the highways, port congestion, queues at passport offices and gas stations, ghost workers syndrome, election irregularities, among others. Even the mad people on the street recognize the havoc caused by corruption – the funds allocated for their welfare disappear into the thin air.

Corruption is endemic in all governments, and that it is not peculiar to any continent, region and ethnic group. Corruption is found in democratic and dictatorial politics; feudal, capitalist and socialist economies. Corruption practices did not begin today; the history is as old as the world. Ancient civilizations have traces of widespread illegality and corruption. (Lipset and Lenz 2000).

The price of corruption has been extremely high. The economic, political, social and moral bases of the country have been severely eroded and degraded. It has brought us near the brink and almost rendered us helpless and hopeless. It became imperative that something drastic had to be done to arrest the rot. This impelled the commitment of the president to tackle corruption head – on. (ICPCACT 2000).

1.2 STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

Due to government insincerity in fighting corruption and economic crimes in the public sector, civil servants in the ministry of finance take advantage of looting the treasury. The civil servants perpetrate these acts because they are connected to the top government functionary and thereby they were spared from being punished.

Interference in the duties of the anti – graft agencies such as independent and corrupt practices commission and economic financial crimes commission in combating the scourge. The anti – graft agencies are being used to witch – hunt any civil servants that do not dance to their tune by the government in power. The independence of the anti – graft agencies to punish corrupt civil servants in the ministry has been distorted.

Inefficiency and underutilization of public funds surface as a result of corruption and economic crimes. Due to corruption and economic crimes in the public sector, the

ministry have not be able to perform efficiently and proper utilization of the resources that have been assigned to their ministry.

Collusion by officials in the public sector with foreigners to perpetrate corruption and found safe refuge and acceptance abroad. The officials in the public sector have engaged in this act now. This has caused the resources provided to the public sector to be mis – spent and misplaced.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Corruption and economic crimes have hitherto hindered the efficiency and growth of the public sector in rendering their services. It is in this stead, the study is aimed at:

- (1) To evaluate measures by government in curbing corruption and economic crimes in the public sector.
- (2) To determine the role played by anti – graft agencies.
- (3) To evaluate the effectiveness and utilization of public funds by ministry.
- (4) To evaluate the checks and balances in ministry on public funds.

1.4 STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESIS

The following hypotheses are formulated for testing in the course of this research.

(1) Null Hypothesis (H_0) – The measures by government and anti – graft agencies in curbing corruption and economic crimes does not eliminate crimes in the public sector.

Alternative Hypotheses (H_1) – The measures by government and anti – graft agencies in curbing corruption and economic crimes eliminate crimes in the public sector.

(2) H_0 – The checks and balances in ministry does not result to the effectiveness and utilization of public funds.

H_1 – The checks and balances in ministry result to effectiveness and utilization of public funds.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The research work focus on corruption and economic crimes, its possible effect in the public sector. The time frame covers from 1991 to 2008 using ministry of finance and to know the possible effect of corruption and economic crimes in there. This is necessary because it takes an equal amount of time from the last years of military regime and an equal amount of time from the first few years of the present democratic the economic and financial crimes commission and independent corrupt practices commission were established.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Corruption and economic crimes have eaten into the fabrics of the public sector and it has been taken as business as usual. These deadly acts had been perpetrated without any regret, since these crimes started

from the top. It is in this light the study is carried out to find a means of drastically reducing the ugly menace called corruption and economic crimes.

This study will be beneficial to civil servants in the public sector, relevant to law enforcement agencies, public office holders, researchers, bankers, accountants and the general public. This will help to unfold perpetrators of such crimes and how these crimes are perpetrated.

This study will also serve as a basis for putting into place various procedures and policies, which will help, curb this dreaded monster (corruption and economic crimes). This development would help to bring sanctity and sanity in the public sector and re-introduce confidence in the public sector.

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