

CHALLENGES OF ASSETS DECLARATION POLICY AND ANTICORRUPTION STRATEGY IN ANAMBRA STATE PUBLIC SERVICE, 2015-2023

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Abstract

This study is motivated by reports of failure of many public officers in Nigeria to declare their assets and liabilities as required by law and the concerns about the danger which corruption and illicit acquisition of wealth poses to the country and the need to ensure integrity, transparency and accountability in governance. This study therefore, interrogated challenges of assets declaration policy and anticorruption strategy in Anambra state public service from 2015 to 2023 as contained in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (amended) in the fifth Schedule, part 1, section 3(B) which makes it compulsory for public officials to declare their Assets and liabilities regularly to the Code of Conduct Bureau. The hypothesis focused on the operational procedures of the Code of Conduct Bureau in using assets declaration as anti-corruption strategy in Anambra state public service, 2015 and 2023. This study employed mixed design to shape the study. Being a research conducted focusing on Anambra state, the study utilized mixed method involving survey questionnaire and interview method as method of data collection. The population was 476 while sample size was 400 using Camry and Lee method, while the questionnaire recovered were 353. This was subjected to both validity and reliability test using face and cronbach Alpha respectively. Deductive method of data analysis was used focusing on available data available for research. The study adopted Structural functionalism as the theoretical framework for the study. The study observed that it is not enough to establish institutions, but that they will remain mere symbolism if they are not equipped and given the right atmosphere to work. The study therefore, recommends that CB anticorruption strategy should be strengthened in encouraging Assets declaration among public servants in Anambra State.

Keywords: Anti Corruption, Assets declaration, Policy, Code of Conduct Bureau, Public Service

Introduction

In recent times, there has been growing interest on the use of assets declaration by many governments in the world as a serious tool to curb corrupt practices in public service management. This is because corruption and corrupt practices constitute serious danger to development to the world, if unchecked. Corruption is a major consequence of poor governance and has been defined as the abuse of public office for private gain – a definition widely applied by the World Bank among others (World Bank, 2007). This definition involves various classes of interactions commonly noticeable among public servants and other agents. Money is always the epicenter, as in the case of bribery or kickbacks for public procurement contracts. In other extreme cases, the private gain can be in the patronage or nepotism (Blundo & Olivier de Sardan 2006; Chabae & Daloz, 1999; Oliver de Sardan, 1999). The definition also covers acts not actually involving interactions with external agents or external agents are not explicitly implicated, such as the embezzlement of government funds, or the sale or misuse of government property (assets).

Corruption can equally be found among private sector stakeholders, firms and individuals (Iqbal, 2010). Hence, Transparency International (TI) defined corruption as the misuse of entrusted power for private gain

(Rahman, 2023). The TI thus includes private-private Corruption (PPC). The dangers of corruption to national development cannot be over emphasized. Corruption attacks the foundation of democratic institutions by distorting electoral processes, perverting the rule of law and creating bureaucratic quagmires whose cardinal purpose for existing is soliciting of bribes (Igiebor, 2019). Similarly, socio-economic development is stunted because foreign direct investment is discouraged, small scale businesses initiatives destroyed, unemployed created via carting away of national resources for investment and high poverty rate and inequality entrenched and decline in human capital development (Okenna, 2020). Corruption may also reduce private sector efficiency and hence hamper national development (Fagbemi et al., 2023). The underlying description of corrupt and corrupt practice illustrates clearly the negative impact of corruption on the society. Because of the emphasis given to the fight against corruption globally, the United Nations has declared the 9th day of the month of December as International Anti-Corruption Day (Vorontsova, 2016).

The dilemma of how to curb the recurring issue of corruption and primitive acquisition by public officers raised high hope when a comprehensive Code of Conduct regime in Nigeria was eventually encapsulated as the Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal Act, giving the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) the power to establish, maintain and sustain public morality in the Conduct of government businesses and to make sure that the behaviour of public officers also complies to the highest quality of public morality and accountability (Adelana, 2021). The Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) is an anti-corruption agency in Nigeria. Its mandate, among others, includes i) receive declaration by public officers, ii) retain custody of such declaration, iii) investigate breach of the Code of Conduct for public officers, iv) refer defaulters to the Code of Conduct Tribunal for adjudication, etc. However, not much was heard about the Bureau over the years on the issue of corruption and assets declaration policy as a tool in the anti-corruption initiative even when it has offices in each state of the federation, including FCT.

Assets declaration, declaration of interests, and financial disclosures are becoming a fundamental tool for anti-corruption agencies and/ or governments to fight corruption throughout the world and Nigerian in particular (Nwosu, 2018). The roots of those instruments lay in efforts at addressing concerns by citizens about the honesty of their public servants and political office holder in Nigeria (Ogbonnaya, 2018). As such, this study interrogates challenges of assets declaration policy and anticorruption strategy in Anambra state public service.

Concept of Corruption

The World Bank defines corruption as the abuse of public office or trust for private gain. Accordingly, it includes giving or taking bribe to circumvent government and public policies and processes to favour a chosen or predetermined participant or outcome. Egbgbulem (2012) defines corruption as the abuse of public power for private benefit. The author also made a distinction between bribes and gifts since most times they are mistaken to mean the same thing.

Bribes are distinguished as gifts. It has also been defined as the act of corrupting or state of being corrupt, moral pervasion of integrity, dishonesty proceedings and bribery among others. In Section 2 of the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences commission at 2000, it is defined to include gratification in return or exchange for undue advantage over other competitor or participant. Bribery, fraud, and similar offences, which mean accepting money or any form of favour, theft of state assets and diversion of government revenue and resources in to private pockets are amongst the most crippling types of corruption. Conceptually, there are varied and different aspects of corruption that makes it difficult to define (Igwe, 2010). The easiest way to explain the reality on corruption in any society or system is perhaps to study and analyze the degrees of manifestation and recurrences. Corruption attacks the foundation of democratic institutions by distorting electoral processes, perverting the rule of law and creating bureaucratic challenges whose only reason for existing is soliciting bribes. Economic because of the discouragement of foreign direct investment, and small businesses within the country often could not overcome the start-up costs required because of corruption.

Sen (1999) and Atlas (1986) understand it from the sociological point of view as the violation of established rules for individual gains and profit. It is a system within a state characterized by bribery, extortion and

nepotism. For Kunhiyop (2008) corruption is becoming morally corrupt by indulging in bribery, extortion, fraud, nepotism, outright theft, match-fixing, examination fraud, kick-backs, illegal of contracts among others. On the political view point, corruption occurs in vote rigging, the purchase and sale of votes, and the falsification of election results. All these forms of corruption are found in Nigeria's public service.

Several authors including Olugbenga (2007).Odojin and Omojiuwa (2007), Ajibewa (2006); Faloor (2012); Igbuzor (2008), Egwemi (2021) have all agreed that the concept of corruption is too comprehensive, that it lacks the possibility of a single sentence definition. Again, Adrij and Fjelstad (2001) concluded that corruption is complex and multifaceted in approach with multiple causes and effects, as it takes on various forms and contexts.

Concept of Assets Declaration

Assets declaration, declaration of interests, and financial disclosure are quickly becoming fundamental tool for anti-corruption agencies and/or governments to fight corruption throughout the world. The root of these instruments lay in efforts at addressing concerns by citizens about the honesty of their public servants and political officeholders in several countries. By the middle of the twentieth century many of the more developed countries had some form of disclosure requirements for public officials (Adsera, Carles & Paine, 2003). The use of disclosures freed over the past decade and they have been embodied as a worldwide standard in the first global anti-corruption agreement, the UN convention against corruption (UNCAC, 2003)

A transparent and verifiable assets declaration system is a way to deepen the issue of ethnics and integrity in the political class, more so, because politicians and civil servants hold substantial power over the allocation of resources in their countries and the citizens who elect them, and who in effect pay their emoluments through tax contribution. As part of an overall anti-corruption strategy, they help ensure that scarce resources are spent honestly and wisely. In that way, the citizens set the healthcare, the education, the roads and the quality of life they have paid for and deserve. This attention to good governance acts as a reinforcing foundation for prosperity and stability.

Challenges to Asset Declaration in Nigeria and Anambra state

This section reviews some of the challenges to assets declaration implementation. It is necessary to point out that a growing number of countries including Nigeria have adopted ethical codes and anti-corruption laws that require public officials to declare their assets and income and, increasingly, the assets and incomes of their spouses and dependent children. The officials who are required to declare, and the amount of detail required, vary significantly from country to country. While the requirement to declare income and assets generally is imposed by anti-corruption laws, these laws generally do not require that all the declared information be made public and indeed some laws only require disclosure to a public agency (Djankovetal,2016).Across many nations of the world, one of the most challenging barriers to the public disclosure of declared assets is the alleged encroachment of the rights to privacy and data protection (Messick, 2009).

In the case of Nigeria, merely mandating assets declaration by law is no guarantee that the public will obtain the information. Despite the passage of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act in2011, and after two decades of democratic governance in Nigeria, the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) has not performed optimally and has underperformed in exerting its capacity to verify conclusively and expeditiously the claims made in the assets' declaration forms of public officials and has continued to obstruct Nigerians who seek access to this information in order to verify the claims made in them. By this action, the CCB abdicates its constitutional responsibility which mandates it to receive, examine, retain in its custody and allow for public access to those asset declaration forms (SERAP, 2017)

The Transparency International Report (2014) has also identified and summarized the challenges of asset declaration regime as follows: even though an assets declaration regime has great potential for fighting the abuse of power and corruption by public office holders, its impact can be limited by shortcomings of the regulatory framework, major flaws in legislation are likely to threaten the effectiveness of assets declaration as a mechanism for fighting corruption. They include: the lack of clarity about what assets, liabilities and

interest public office holders are required to disclose; the absence of a legal requirement for the verification of assets declarations; lack of effective sanctions and clarity over the prosecution of offences; lack of public access to officials' assets declaration; the poor design of the assets declaration form; lack of political will in supporting the assets declaration regime; lack of technical, financial and human resources required to implement the scheme, the implementing bodies may not have adequate power to carry out their tasks in relation to collecting and verifying declaration, iv)the absence of appropriate autonomy of implementing bodies. This can make them vulnerable to illegitimate pressure, particularly where verification of declaration can potentially hurt high level public officials, underdeveloped institutional context. Insufficient co-operation may exist between state bodies and hence limit effectiveness of the system where the anti-corruption agencies tend to turn into lone fighters with no support, lack of support/or awareness among officials. In the early stages of implementing declaration systems, a major difficulty in making public officials aware of new requirements and achieving due respect for the need to accept them properly, lack of interest and/or support by the broader public. If the broader public has little interest in the disclosed information about public officials' income, asset and interests, the potential of declaration to enhance the public interest of accountability of officials remains underexploited, ineffective taxation system and private individual can hide assets and make their resources unverifiable.

Problems and Challenges of the Code of Conduct Bureau in Nigeria

As observed by Baike (2000), there is apparent lack of personnel skilled in the operations that are specific to the mandate of the Bureau such as investigation, monitoring, assets verification and administration, advertisement and communication arts, information technology among others. Sakyi and Bawole (2009) using a focus group study of senior and middle-level public managers in five Anglophone West African countries (Ghana, Nigeria, Gambia, Liberia and Sierra Leone)identified the obstacles to effective practice of Code of Conduct in the public service of these countries. The interviewees identified the following as responsible for the poor implementation of the CCB: General weakness in leadership, the syndrome of leniency, lack of knowledge, ignorance about the code; weak enforcement; outdated and old codes; difficulty of comprehending and applying the language of codes; codes were too idealistic and did not address daily moral issues confronting public servants; ineffective reward and punishment system; poor public service organizational culture, weak supervision and monitoring and undue societal pressure on bureaucrats.

In Anambra state, it is obvious that the establishment of the Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal has not yielded the desired result primarily because the bureau lacks the power to verify assets of public officers (Umar & Umar, 2016). As learnt from the Nigerian experience, merely mandating assets declaration by law is no guarantee that the public will obtain this information. The Bureau has failed and has continued to obstruct Nigerians who seek access to this information in order to verify the claims made in them. By this action, the CCB abdicates its constitutional responsibility which mandates it to receive, examine, retain in its custody and allow for public access to these asset declaration forms.

The inactions of the Bureau in refusing to provide the assets declaration forms of the political leaders by virtue of Section 12(1) (a) (v), 14(1)(b) and 15(1)(a) of the FOI Act, demonstrates that it is institutionally complicit in the plunder of Nigeria's resources by corrupt public officials and their evasion of accountability (SERAP). To buttress the claims as presented above – in *Legal Defence & Assistance Pryeef (Cite) Ltd: (LEDAD) V. Clerk of the National Assembly in Nigeria*, LEDAP had on 6 July 2011 applied to the National Assembly (NASS) for information “On details of salaries, emolument, and allowances paid to the Honourable Members of Representatives and Distinguished Senators, both of the 6th Assembly, from June 2007 to May 2011”. The NASS did not respond to the request, prompting LEDAP to bring suit in the Federal High Court. The NASS argued primarily that the applicant did not file within the time limit set in section 200 of the FOI Act, that I would be “prejudicial” to pending cases to grant LEDAP's request, and that the information constituted personal information that was exempted under Section 14 of the Act. The attitude of the CCB is illogical and reprehensible having regards to the rulings of the Federal High Court in a litany of decided cases.

Despite the stiff resistance by the CCB towards public access to declared assets, experience across the globe shows that it is often journalists, non-governmental organizations and concerned citizens who scrutinize published assets declarations and trigger investigations by questioning implausible data (Hoppe, 2014).

Otherwise, most of the cases where impropriety was uncovered would probably never be investigated if the declarations were not accessible.

It is incontrovertible that the refusal of the CCB to make available the assets declaration by public officials and government functionaries in consonance with the opportunity provide by the FOI Act, among several other nominative instruments, is a major obstacle in the fight for transparency and accountability in Nigeria, making Nigeria to lag behind the best global standard of best practice.

Structural and Technical Challenges affecting CCB in the Anti-corruption Strategy

The pervasive nature of political corruption in Nigeria as it negatively affects the growth of the Nigerian society as well as its image in the international community of nations has necessitated the far-reaching measures instituted by successive administrations to curb the problem of corruption, including the setting up of anti-corruption agencies (Olujobi, 2017). This is similarly observed by Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012) as they note that several anti-corruption agencies have been established, both public and private, all aimed at fighting against corruption and establishing better governance in Nigeria. A number of agencies, like the CCB/CCT, ICPC, EFCC, were established to address the problem of corruption in the country. Obuah (2010) also notes the perceived ineffectiveness of existing anti-corruption agencies prior to the EFCC which led to the creation of the commission.

In this case, although the establishment of the agency was marked by much optimism, its achievement has remained a subject of much controversy. Idris (2011) reveals inter alia that the activities of the institutions, especially the EFCC, were severely constrained by undue political interference and particularly shows that the anti-corruption institutions were ineffective in fighting corruption in the Federal Public Service. In agreement with this position, it can be argued that all the anticorruption agencies in the country have not been able to perform optimally simply because of paucity of funds and lack of relevant logistics. Alumona (2013) particularly examines the Obasanjo administration's anti-graft crusade against internationally accepted checklists – setting up of anti-corruption agencies, impartiality; non-conflict of interests; competitive and objective recruitment and promotion of anti-corruption operatives; and public access to information regarding the activities of governments and government officials – and concludes that the administration only tried in setting up anti-corruption agencies but failed in all other areas. For instance, in his interrogation of the nature of intergovernmental relations in Nigeria's federal system focusing on Obasanjo administration, Obiyan (2013) contends that the central government has been excessive and overbearing, hence subverting the core principles of federalism as notable in the central government's gross abuse of anti-corruption institutions like the EFCC which was used as a tool for forcing executive leadership changes in most states in the country, thus undermining the core federalist values. Corroborating the foregoing argument, Ojo (2016) observes that the anti-corruption institution, EFCC, has received a lot of criticisms among the general populace in Nigeria as it has been accused of politicization, selective operation, lack of transparency, and as an instrument in the hands of politicians in facilitating further looting and persecution of political opposition. The role of the Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal has been noted as ensuring probity and accountability in Nigeria, but despite the determination of the CCB to carry out its responsibilities, it is handicapped in terms of funding and enforcement. In agreement with this assertion, Ojiakor, Anisiuba and Nnam (2017) have argued that the efforts of anti-corruption agencies established to help curb corruption and financial crimes in Nigeria by government regime prior to the Obasanjo Administration did not yield much positive results thereby, leading to the establishment of anti-graft agencies such as the EFCC and ICPC. However, in examining the activities of the EFCC in the fight against corruption in Nigeria (2007-2017), Nwoba and Nwokwu (2018) reveal among other things that the commission has continued to contend with outdated criminal and penal codes which are out of tune with present criminal realities in the country and that it has remained a tool in the hands of successive regimes to witch-hunt their perceived and imagined enemies. Shiyabade, Diekola and Wahab (2017) have also indicated that corrupt practices in Nigeria are outcomes of institutional weaknesses and system failure as a result of government interference in the day-to-day activities of the established anti-corruption institutions. This is why it has become necessary to look into the institutional capacity of the established anticorruption

institutions, especially the CCB in order to determine their continuous relevance to the fight against corruption in Nigeria.

Although it may be difficult to find local or international anti-corruption agency that can claim to have enough resources to fight corruption, anti-corruption institutions are expected to do their best within the limited resources. But it was seemingly difficult for the CCB to contribute meaningfully to the fight against corruption in the country with its limited resources. In support of this view, Umar & Adamu (2016) claimed thus: "For the Code of Conduct Bureau and for many years hitherto, there has been gross inadequate resources compare to other anticorruption agencies in the country." For instance, it was revealed that the resources at the Bureau's disposal at the moment were not enough to do local travelling for verification exercise, let alone going to foreign countries to verify assets and this was viewed as a serious institutional set back. The staff strength was also seen as not enough according to the findings. For instance, there were over 4 million public officers in the country whose assets should be subjected to verification compared to the staff strength of the Bureau that was not up to 1,000. That is, ratio 1,000 to over 4,000,000. It was revealed by Umar & Adamu (2016) who explained: "We have over 900 staff all over the federation. In some states, we have less than 10 staff, and some states have over 20 local governments. So, this number of staff strength needs to be doubled for effective institutional capacity and responsibility." It shows that this number of staff strength is inadequate for effective institutional capacity and responsibility. Lack of institutional capacity based on relative reasons was revealed by different authors, including Idris (2011) and Mahmoud and Adamu (2016) who further attribute this to the Bureau's ineffectiveness to fight corruption in the country. The Bureau cannot boast of enough institutional capacity to fight corruption in the country at the moment. This negates the essence of institutional theory which suggests strong institutional structures, processes and capacities as relevant to an institution of this nature for it to perform creditably.

It was revealed that the Bureau seemed to have performed poorly in its anti-corruption efforts in Nigeria. It was indicated by Umar & Adamu (2016) that "the Bureau has been facing varying challenges, including lack of suitable and adequate institutional capacity to prosecute." For instance, as found out, the Bureau did not have a permanent or secluded building structure of its own. It was either sharing building with other MDAs or operating in rented apartments in all the states of the federation, including the Federal Capital Territory. Among the many challenges found out, the issues of inadequate funding, limited staff strength, inadequate government support, and lack of permanent offices were depicted as prominent challenges militating against the performance of the Bureau. The findings showed that these challenges among others impacted negatively on the critical functions of the Bureau, specifically its functions of assets declaration administration, verification of assets exercise, monitoring to ascertain compliance, and investigation of cases relating to a breach of the code of conduct or corruption cases. It is indicative from the foregoing discussion that some challenges facing the Bureau were capable of undermining its operational activities and statutory functions. Some of these challenges have also been identified in past studies, especially in relation to other anti-corruption agencies in the country (Idris, 2011; Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012; Mahmoud & Adamu, 2016; Shiyabade, Bello, Diekola & Wahab, 2017; Page, 2021). The institutional capacity of the CCB's sister agency, the Tribunal was also viewed by respondents as not institutionally adequate. This was explained from the perspectives of resources, manpower and capacity. In an interview conducted, Mahmoud & Adamu, (2016) stated that: "The law stipulates 1 chairman and 2 members and maintains that 2 members are enough to form quorum. That is, 1 chairman and 1 member. Right now we just have 1 chairman and 1 member, including just 1 court i.e. Tribunal to attend to cases all over the federation and all these have impeded the institutional functions of the Tribunal." In relation to the Tribunal, it was however argued by an interviewee identified as CCT07, Mahmoud & Adamu, (2016) stated that there was still a lot to be done, because the Tribunal was still a small organization. According to Mahmoud & Adamu, (2016), "In my candid opinion, the Tribunal is not entirely equipped to handle the level of corruption in this country. They do not have the capacity at the moment. No independence. For example, they are not yet separated from the presidency."

Although it was shown that the Bureau, based on its institutional capacity, had not been effective in curbing corruption in the country, it is obvious that the Bureau could be strengthened for enhanced performance and

success in the ongoing anti-corruption efforts in Nigeria. Mahmoud & Adamu, (2016) noted that: “The institutional structures are all over and they are okay. It is believed if given the necessary resources, the structures will perform. For instance, at the Bureau headquarters here, there are ten(10)various departments which are good enough.” This is where the applicability of institutional theory becomes germane as it advocates the overall restructuring of a weak institution for a result-oriented performance. It depicted that the public were not convinced that the Bureau, in its own capacity as an anti-corruption agency, had been contributing effectively to anti-corruption efforts in Nigeria. For instance, the Bureau had not been able to prevent corruption in the country and this was understandable from its weak institutional capacity. In sum, the study revealed that the Bureau could become a formidable anti-corruption institution and contribute effectively to the ongoing anti- corruption efforts in the country, provided appropriate strategies are put in place to strengthen it. As such, the study therefore depicted strategies such as adequate funding and infrastructure, commitment of political leaders and absolute neutrality of the Bureau as relevant for the enhancement of the Bureau’s performance.

Methodology and Theory

The study employed mixed design to shape the study. Being a research conducted focusing on Anambra state, the study utilized mixed method involving survey questionnaire and interview method as method of data collection. The population was 476 while sample size was 400 using Camry and Lee method, while the questionnaire recovered were 353. This was subjected to both validity and reliability test using face and cronbach Alpha respectively. Deductive method of data analysis was used focusing on available data available for research. The study adopted structural functionalism as the framework of analysis. One of the basic assumptions or premises of this theory is that we can best understand the purpose of any organizations or institutions by examining what it does as it relates to its functions and roles. The focus of attention is therefore the structures and functions. In structural-functionalism, one identifies the important structures and in this case Code of Conduct Bureau and the Code of Conduct Tribunal and then seeks to discover their functions. This is because the political and social systems in structural-functionalism are systemic wholes that influence and are influenced by their environment.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Respondents on the challenges affecting asset declaration as anticorruption strategy in Anambra State Public Service, 2015 and 2023

| S/N | Mean rating of respondents on the Challenges to Asset Declaration by Public Servants as anti-corruption strategy in Anambra State public service between 2015 and 2023. | SA | A | D | SD | N | Mean | Remark |
|-----|---|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|--------|----------|
| 1 | Inadequate of knowledge of the legal demands for asset declaration | 115 | 186 | 35 | 17 | 353 | 3.1303 | Agreed |
| 2 | Inadequate of knowledge on the procedures for asset declaration | 121 | 211 | 21 | 0 | 353 | 3.2833 | Agreed |
| 3 | Public servants are not compelled enough by the CCB officers to declare their assets | 74 | 258 | 19 | 2 | 353 | 3.1445 | Agreed |
| 4 | Political Office holders are not compelled enough by the CCB officers to declare their assets | 16 | 3 | 89 | 245 | 353 | 3.1530 | Rejected |
| 5 | The CCB codes do not address daily moral issues in the society | 86 | 249 | 3 | 15 | 353 | 3.1501 | Agreed |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|-----|--------|--------|
| 6 | There are very little or no public enlightenment on the issues of CCB | 0 | 3 | 112 | 238 | 353 | 3.3088 | Agreed |
|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|-----|--------|--------|

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Discussion of the Result Hypothesis

Going by the trajectory of responses above, it revealed the challenges affecting asset declaration as anticorruption strategy in Anambra State public service, 2015 to 2023. Based on the above responses, it shows that dynamics of problem affecting the operations of CCB in ensuring that public servants comply with their rules of engagement. From the responses above, majority of the respondents are of the view that there many challenges that affect the operations of CCB in their enforcement of their assets declaration which is a strategy of waging war against corruption. The implication is that challenges such as corruption, unnecessary bureaucratic delay in the execution of justice and negligence on the part of the public servants. This goes to show every action has consequences. When the workers are not properly and regularly trained, their morals tend to lower. In other words, not giving fitting the worker into their normal fold will definitely deride their level of commitment to their various jobs. It is in line with the above that **Respondent 1, 4, 6 and 9** stated some of the challenges include the Institutional challenges. The respondent opined that state government especially politically exposed public officers view CCB as an institution which the Federal Authorities use to witch hunt state government that are not in the same party with ruling party at the centre. Also, many public officers do not see the need for them to declare their Asset because they feel that their salary is not enough to meet their basic needs and that attention should be focused on the political elite. Again, structural challenges – Many well-informed Anti-corruption crusader are of the opinion that with the kind of political class we have in Nigeria, CCB will never be made to work. This is because an effective and strong CCB will be a nightmare to corrupt politicians. This is why they do everything to make sure that CCB remain ineffective. structural challenges – Many well-informed Anti-corruption crusader are of the opinion that with the kind of political class we have in Nigeria, CCB will never be made to work. This is because an effective and strong CCB will be a nightmare to corrupt politicians. This is why they do everything to make sure that CCB remain ineffective. lack of Fund – The CCB is poorly funded. In fact, it receives least funds among the Anti-corruption Agencies. lack of accommodation and equipment – it is supposed to have offices in all states of the Federation including FCT but in most cases it goes cap in hand begging State Government who they are supposed to monitor, for office equipment and accommodation. It may interest you to note that CCB office in Anambra State is accommodated in Anambra state Government Secretariat. **Respondent 4** noted that there are other challenges to effective operation of CCB in Anambra state. To the respondent, other challenges – poor staff remuneration. CCB staff poorly paid compared to other Anti-corruption Agencies. Poor Staff moral and lack of incentive institutional arrangement where the President appoints CCB Chairman and Board members even if they have to be approved by the Senate does not guarantee the non-appointment of politicians as members of the Board. Even when section 153 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (a amended) stipulated that Board members should be persons of unimpeachable integrity, some politically active persons have been appointed into the Board thereby calling to question the neutrality of the Bureau on issues of politics and true Anti-corruption strategy. **Respondent 9** said that these challenges have some far reaching effects on the system and performance of the bureau and where nothing is done to arrest the problem, more harm will be done on public servants and the institution.. Finally, it is germane to note that several factors both institutional and structural are responsible for the relative inefficiency of CCB in the execution of their duties of ensuring compliance by public servants towards assets declaration in the state.

Summary and Conclusion

Finally, the hypothesis focused on the challenges affecting asset declaration as anticorruption strategy in Anambra State public service, 2015 and 2023. From the study six (6) instruments were generated to test the hypothesis under Table 4.9. Finding revealed that it is on the basis of the above that the study stated that the challenges affecting asset declaration as anticorruption strategy in Anambra State public service. This has

resulted in poor commitment to the delivery of public goods involving assets declaration, irregular conduct and behaviours of public officers, abuse of protocol, social indiscipline, etc. These have to a large extent affected Operations and strategies of CCB in ensuring that public servants comply to the dictates of assets declaration in Anambra state. Giving more clarity to this, **Respondent 1, 11 and 12** stated that

“the most frustrating is the failure of the internal mechanism to enforce policy demands of the bureau. This they attribute to the CCT that has in most cases delayed the smooth execution of issues regarding assets declaration in Anambra state and Nigeria at large due largely to the concentration of the body in only Abuja. Atimes one is tempted to think that the intention to keep only CCT at the centre rather than create more officers for CCT was born out of the fact that government at the centre keeps profiting from the weaknesses of the workload heaped on CCT to escape justice”.

In sum, the implication is that Corruption and lack of accountability are challenges affecting assets declaration as anticorruption strategy in Anambra state public service. As such, this study is germane to the extent that it exposed the poor level of assets declaration in the public service not only in Anambra State but in Nigeria as a whole. It showed that weaknesses of government towards ensuring compliance. Finally, it brought to view the multiple challenges limiting the performances of CCB of which CCT is equally a major contributor.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations:

1. The CCB anticorruption strategy should be strengthened in encouraging Assets declaration among public servants in Anambra State. This can be done by encouraging the setting up of IN-SITU COMMITTEE in each Ministry, Department and Agencies (MDAs) and charged with the responsibility of identifying public officers who exhibit high level of integrity in the discharge of their official duties for special award and recognition in different category with various monetary or other incentives attached. Through that process, workers compliance will be enhanced, increased and corrupt practices reduced.
2. Another point to consider is the legal and constitutional legal framework which tends to put the issue of anti-corruption initiative solely the responsibility of the Federal government. This is because all Anti – corruption agencies, apart from Kano Anti - corruption commission, are all Federal government of Nigeria set up and institutions. This is not appropriate in federal system like Nigeria because the issue of corruption bothers on good governance and transparency which should be the responsibility and concern of all tiers of government.
3. The Judicial arm which is the Code of Conduct Tribunal should be restructured to create more zones to handle cases referred to it by the Code of Conduct Bureau. This will help to reduce the work load and bottle neck seen in the operations of CCT. The Code of conduct Tribunal membership should be increased to a sufficient number so that they should be able to sit simultaneously in each of the six (6) geo-political zones of the country so that cases from the CCB would no longer be delayed and the anticorruption initiative would be more effective.

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