The Role of Libraries in Transparency and Combating Corruption in Nigeria

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Abstract: - **Corruption is an all-pervasive phenomenon, whether as powerful business and political elites, or the petty corruption that acts as a kind of extra tax on the poor. Transparency in various forms offers potential for the combating of corruption through access to knowledge of regulations and laws, as well as revelations of wrong doing. This work will look at the Relevant aspects of transparency which include: open government and public scrutiny of official business; freedom of information laws; protection of public interest, disclosure (whistle blowing; enforcement of good practice in financial accounting and audit; protection of investigative journalism; and civil society campaigning. The implications for archives and records management (the sources of information on transactions that may include corrupt dealing) is obvious; the role of libraries in transparency and combating corruption will also been look at. This paper recommends few ways of how to combat corruption in Nigeria and in our society in general.**

Keywords: **library, Transparency, combating corruption**

I. INTRODUCTION

Corruption is universal. Everyone has at some time been tempted to give or accept an inducement to act in a way that does not conform to ethics and law. Most people have given into that temptation on occasion, even if only very rarely and in small matters. Wherever, there are transactions that offer the opportunity for personal advantage or profit someone, will take advantage of that opportunity. Corruption can be such a part of life that citizens of a badly corrupt country may scarcely imagine that it can be reduced or eliminated. Nevertheless, condemnation of corruption is a universal theme of conversation and political debate worldwide. People long for an honest, predictable, corrupt-free world. (Clay, 2004). On the surface, a representative of a country may consider itself free from corruption against a particularly corrupt country (Doig, 2003). Actually, the subtext is clear in the statements: Britain fears the corrosive effects on trade and international stability of an excessively corrupt regime in countries like Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, etc, but it had hopes that the problem in Nigeria and other countries would be reduced with the election of the new government of President Mwai Kibaki of kenya in 2003 and president Muhammadu Buhari in 2015, on anti corruption manifesto. However, the notorious corruption that pervaded every aspect of life was certainly not eliminated, and probably little reduced. It continues not only to affect the nation's international standing, but to make the lives of individual even more painfully difficult than they need to be.

The idea that the information professions, librarianship in particular, can make significant contribution to a struggle against corruption may seem extremely unlikely. However, in the concept of transparency, and the suggestion that it is the key to eliminating corruption, there is a strong basis for the involvement of the information professions.

II. CORRUPTION

The Corruption of small and ruthless elites clustered around leaders, whether elected or holding power that they have seized illegally. This corruption has not only cheapened public life, but it has fostered an amoral business ethic to the detriment of commercial life. The corruption has not even recycled the money within the national economy. The incidence of petty corruption, including the police, the judiciary, government and local government officials, public utility workers, and health care workers, who are responsible for the delivery of public services. Leff (1964) suggested a view of bribery as a way in which entrepreneurs seek to break through restrictions imposed by a hostile or indifferent mode of governance. Leys (1965), recognizing the high incidence of corruption in developing countries, also asked whether this might not be a response to the inappropriate and unresponsive state structures inherited from former colonial powers. He identified corruption as a cause for concern, but not for moralizing. The concern arises from the way in which corruption can inhibit national development by removing wealth from the economy by those with offshore accounts; lower national morale; divert energy from productive economic activities and discourage outside investors, lenders and donors. Bayley (1966) elaborates this dispassionate approach somewhat further, introducing the notion that corruption was not necessarily a guarantee that development would be inhibited. Although such lines of argument may seem distastefully amoral, they definitely have a value in encouraging us to understand corruption and its effects. Furthermore, the study of history offers lessons to be about the progress of societies that were deeply corrupted towards the elimination of most of the incidences of corruption. (Transparency International, 2003). The point in mentioning the history of British corruption is that it shows a society functioning first through the agency of corruption and then moving towards a more open and fairer system.

III. CORRUPTION AND TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL INDEX IN NIGERIA

Shakirudeen Taiwo (2018). President Muhammadu Buhari is globally acknowledged for his anti-corruption stand, but 5 major corruption cases against officials in his government in 2017 are making people reconsider value attached to the anti-graft fight in Nigeria. The impacts of these corruption cases are grave and may erode popular support of the current government. This is because many people have started questioning its seriousness to really fight the malice in Nigeria. The newly released 2017 corruption perception index by Transparency International also confirmed this fear. Nigeria dropped 12 places from 136 to 148 in the latest CPI ranking. A situation adduced to administration's protective posture towards officials accused of corruption in the government. Looking at 2017, here are 5 corruptions cases that put Buhari's government in a really bad light. According to Shakirudeen Taiwo (2018).

1. Employment scandals in Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) The first major scandal of 2017 was the illegal recruitment of personnel by two major agencies of government - Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS). The lists of new personnel for these agencies were filled with sons, daughters and relatives of major government officials. Considering the anti-corruption posture of the government, the citizens had thought the process would be reversed and civil service rule adhered, but the government graciously ignored it. More so, the news broke at a time President Buhari just stated that his administration won't be recruiting for the year.

2. "Grass Cutting" scandal of ex-secretary to the Federal Government

    The grass cutting contract scam was noted as legendary. This is because the contract sum was far above allocation for needed amenities on these camps. The government is allocating N200 million to cut down bushes around the camp. The main culprit in this case is the Babachir Lawal, who was the Secretary to the Federal Government as at then. Government reluctance to either sack, suspend or investigate the scam made many Nigerians to conclude that there are sacred cows in the government. President Buhari was not bugged despite repeated threat from the Senate and Civil Society organisation (CSOs). However, Babachir was later suspended and sacked seven months after an investigative committee headed by the country's vice president, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, recommended his sack. To many, this is an indication that the government may just be playing with its corruption fight.

3. $24 billion NNPC contract scam

The graveyard silence on the alleged $24 billion contract scam in the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) by the government shows all is not well with the anti-corruption campaign in Nigeria. This accusation was made by the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Dr Ibe Kachikwu, in a letter to the president. Both Group Managing Director of NNPC, Maikanti Baru, and the Chief of Staff to the President, Mr Abba Kyari, were accused in this letter. An internal dispute settlement was done between the parties and the scandal was made non-mentioned.

4. Illegal Recall and promotion of Mr Abdulrasheed Maina

    Nigerians were shocked to learn that the fugitive ex-police pension task force boss and civil servant, Mr Abdulrasheed Maina, has been reinstated and subsequently promoted to the position of an acting director in the federal civil service. The trio of Minister of Interior, Mr Abdulrahman Dambazau, the Attorney General, Abubakar Malami and the COS to the president were accused of crafting this plot. However, none of these officials has been sacked, told to resign or punished for violating the Civil Service Act in the country. Shakirudeen Taiwo (2018).

5. Privatization of Nigerian Police Force by IGP Idris Ibrahim

    Nigeria's Inspector General of Police, Mr Ibrahim Idris, was accused by a serving senator of embezzling police funds to the tune of N10billion monthly. The fund was said to be the money income from security services provided by force to private companies and citizens. Just like previous major accusations against officials in the government, the case was not investigated and all is left to be the way it has always been.

IV. TRANSPARENCY

Uncorrupted politicians and civil society campaigning bodies propose a variety of approaches to the problem of corruption. Institutional reform, powerful legal sanctions, and the creation of regulatory bodies are amongst the types of approach that appear in anti-corruption programmes. Forming an essential part of all of them, is increase transparency. The reason, why transparency is so consistently advocated is that it offers both knowledge of how a corruption-free system should operate and what it should offer, and the capacity to find out about the day-to-day operation of governance and the manipulation of it that is practiced by the corrupt. In some ways the faith in transparency, is naïve. But itself transparency achieves nothing, or very little. What it offers is a basis for effective action based on knowledge and understanding. Transparency is a term that is comparatively little used by the information

professions themselves and yet it encapsulates a great deal of the rationale behind the provision of good information systems, be they libraries, archives, databases, or reporting and monitoring systems. The term is used in conjunction with a range of related and complementary terms such as scrutiny, accountability, audit, disclosure, and it has considerable elements in common with freedom of access to information. Statements on transparency frequently start by citing the same Article 19 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights that can be seen as the basic rationale behind the activities of the information professions. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. The following will be briefly outlined here as an introduction to some of the main elements of public transparency:

- Open government and public scrutiny;
- Protection of public interest disclosure;
- Financial accountability and auditing;
- Investigative journalism;
- Civil sector campaigning.

4.1. Open government

Probably the best starting point is the concept of open government and public scrutiny. It is rooted in an elected legislature, distinct from the executive arm and supported by an independent and impartial judiciary. Parliamentary scrutiny of the executive through the opportunity to question and debate the decisions of ministers in the legislative chamber, and a system of non-partisan specialist review committees are essential. However, open government goes much further than this. Is a system of open government the meetings of not merely the legislature, but the committees that work on specific issues are open to the public. Government financial accounting is full and promptly delivered. Planning documentation, and minutes of decisions are all open to public inspection and consultative forums are called as a matter of course whenever appropriate. (Pope, 2000) Yet open government, as can be seen from this, is much more a culture than it is system. It calls for politicians and officials who will accept the disciplines that it requires rather than seeking to evade or delay. It also relates very closely to other sources of transparency.

4.2. Protection of public interest disclosure

The courage of individuals who are prepared to reveal information that they may be contracted or otherwise obliged to keep confidential is an indispensable complement to formal structures for freedom of information. These are the so-called whistleblowers (Calland and Dehn, 2004). (Burkeman and Norton-Taylor, 2004) She was charged with infringing the UK Official Secrets Act and it was not until a year later that the case against her was dropped. In fact British law does contain one of the world's stronger measures to protect the disclosure of confidential information in the broader public interest. This is the Public Interest Disclosure Act of 1998, but it does not apply to prosecutions under the Officials Secrets Act. Despite this, Katherine Gun's defense that her conscience required her to make the revelation was entirely in the spirit of this act, and the dropping of the case implicitly recognized the justice of this claimed. Thus, in an indirect way, the case shows the significance of public interest disclosure legislation.

4.3. Financial accounting and audit

From another direction, transparent financial reporting is also essential. The whole business structure that depends on limited liability companies exchanges the protection of the personal finances of investors in a company, on the one hand, for full, prompt and accurate public accounting, on the other. This is then subject to audit. Power (1997, p.124) puts it:

The general idea is that the audit process, and related forms of accounting for performance, open up organizations to independent external scrutiny and thereby provide a basis for enhanced control by those parties with the legitimate right to exercise it. The parties he is referring to include shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers and subcontractors, and the regulatory agencies that act on behalf of the public. Auditors look in depth at the internal management control systems and their functioning, which reveals much about the overall financial management of the company. A series of recent scandals, of which the name Enron has become emblematic, shows the extent to which this system struggles to deliver. (Johnson, 2004), nevertheless, audit is the means by which financial dishonesty and mismanagement are eventually made transparent.

4.4. Investigative journalism

A free and independent press is the essential means of bringing to public notice what is revealed by these and other mechanisms. Investigative journalism feeds on what is revealed by open government and laws that facilitate access to information, but ideally it takes matters a step further. (Waisbord, 2001) There is generally an element of detective work when journalists seek to reveal wrongdoing that affects the public interest and methods that in themselves are ethically questionable (deceptive interviewing technique or the used of concealed recorders and cameras) are often used. Unfortunately press pursuit of sleaze, defined as 'The way some politicians have used their power to feed their private desires for money or sexual satisfaction' (Baston, 2000) has reached frenzied levels in some countries. This threatens to undermine the press's important contribution to transparency, as influential sectors of public opinion begin to perceive this as edging over into abuse of legitimate personal privacy, particularly when it involves those outside political life. Despite this, the press remains a crucial instrument of transparency.

4.5. Civil Society campaigning

The last element we will discuss here is the role of campaigning civil society organizations. In a sobering warning, Johnston (1997, p.82) points out that:

Transparent procedures mean little if there is no external monitoring: corrupt states abound in inspectors, commissions of enquiry, and record keeping requirements that create and conceal corruption rather than reveal it, because no one outside the state can demand a meaningful accounting. Without a strong civil society to energize them, even a full set of formally democratic institutions will not produce accountable, responsive government. The point is well made, on the elements outlined above are vulnerable and in need of the support that a whole integrity system can offer. Yet arguably the mix is not completed within, without the contribution of the information professions, including librarianship.

V. THE ROLE OF LIBRARIES

The library has traditionally been there for the personal development of readers. The national systems of schooling provide for the formal education of citizens and the library supports this, and allows citizens to go much further through self education. It is obvious how this contributes to the economic and social development of the nation, libraries when they perform an information role (research and special libraries) contribute directly to the development of the nation. The library also contributes to the democratic process by offering citizens the opportunity to expand their political knowledge beyond what the daily media (newspapers, magazines, radio, and TV) provide. It is in connection with this democratic function of the library, and in the way the library helps build a strong civil society that its transparency function can be identified. However, the precise nature of how this transparency function can be strengthened has seldom been fully explored. Marie Chêne, (2016). In recent years, many countries have enthusiastically embarked on major e-government projects, using new technologies to improve and modernize government processes and make them more efficient. They have also enabled citizens' empowerment by

1) enabling downward flows of information, from government to citizen,
2) creating the possibility of upward flows of information, from citizen to government, essential to informed decision making, and
3) enabling horizontal flows of communication, flattening hierarchies (Bailur and Gigler 2014) in Marie Chêne, (2016).. While many initiatives do not primarily and explicitly aim at addressing corruption challenges, there are many expected anti-corruption benefits associated with e-government (World Bank 2016; Dupuy and Serrat 2014; Zinnbauer 2012) in Marie Chêne, (2016).:

- reducing information asymmetries between office holders and citizens, enabling the latter to assert their rights without corruption interfering
- limiting the discretion of office holders, reducing their opportunities to extract bribes
- streamlining and automating specific processes to reduce interactions between office holders and citizens that can create opportunities for the development of corrupt networks
- removing intermediaries that often facilitate bribery
- reducing red-tape in public bureaucracies and thus remove potential entry points for corruption
- increasing the transparency of transactions with public officials, making them audit-able to deter corrupt behavior
- providing a growing repertoire of collective action tools and platforms for citizens to organise, report and mobilise against corruption
- receiving feedback and reports from service users to regularly track satisfaction, identify problems, report corruption and improve service quality

ICT interventions can be broadly categorised into two different types of interventions:

1) transactional reforms seeking to control and automate government processes, restrict discretion of officials and increase detection of corruption; and
2) transparency reforms that focus on opening up the state and increasing the flow of information from government to citizens, making the actions of the state and its agents more visible to citizens, civil society and the private sector (Davies and Fumega 2014) in Marie Chêne, (2016). (A categorisation of ICT interventions respectively relating to transparency and transactional reforms can be found in the appendix). In their conceptual framework of digital engagement, Peixoto and Fox (2016) in Marie Chêne, (2016). Introduce an additional dimension, linking ICT-enabled opportunities to express voice (citizen uptake) – "yelp" – and the degree to which public service providers respond to expressions of citizen voice – "teeth". There are many examples across the developing world of how ICT interventions have been used as anti-corruption tools to meet these objectives. They can be government or civil society led and be broadly categorised into (Dupuy and Serrat 2014) in Marie Chêne, (2016):

1) transparency portals – platforms that offer timely publication of key government documents online;
2) open data portals – platforms that provide free access to data sets in machine-readable formats;
3) service automation – platforms that replace discretionary decision making by public officials with auditable software processes;

4) online services – platforms that allow citizens to self-serve for public service access;

5) online right to information platforms allowing citizens to file right to information requests;

6) crowd sourced reporting – platforms that allow citizens to report corruption or grievances and publicly share data on reports and trends;

7) online corruption reporting – platforms that allow citizens to report corruption or grievances;

8) issue reporting – platforms that allow citizens to report problems with public services. Except for service automation, most of these interventions relate to transparency reforms. The scope and ambition of public ICT initiatives are extremely broad and varied and have been implemented in many sectors traditionally vulnerable to corruption. While taxes and government contracts are areas where e-government has been seen as a clear and successful solution to corruption problems in many nations (Bertot et al. 2010), in Marie Chêne, (2016). generally, countries have invested less in e-procurement than in more complex budget or treasury systems (World Bank 2016). There are also many opportunities to use ICTs to modernise and improve the quality of human resource (HR) management systems and service delivery and reduce opportunities for abuse.

VI. E-GOVERNMENT

E-governance is gaining popularity as a tool for improved public service delivery and reduced corruption in developing countries. Case studies and statistical analyses indicate that ICTs can help address corruption by automating and streamlining government processes, restricting discretion of officials and the need for citizen interaction with gatekeepers for key services, improving monitoring of public officials and by enhancing the effectiveness of internal and managerial control over corrupt behaviours. This is corroborated by a number of case studies and empirical research that indicate that link ICT development, e-government and reduction of corruption (Shrivastava and Bhattacherjee 2014; Elbahnasawi 2014), in Marie Chêne, (2016). In some cases, even if e-government projects are successfully implemented, they may actually worsen outcomes and provide new opportunities for corruption, as, without proper regulatory safeguards in place, automation can make it easier to perpetrate fraud and corrupt practices, and to erase records or avoid capturing them altogether, thereby eroding transparency mechanisms (World Bank 2016). Digital Dividends World Bank. 2016. World

Development report http://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2016. The report looks at the impact that the significant investments in e-government have had across the world, including strengthening government capability to deliver services and expanding citizen participation. Providing many examples from countries across the world, it concludes that while digital technologies have spread rapidly in much of the world, their broader development benefits have lagged behind. In many instances, digital technologies have boosted growth, expanded opportunities, and improved service delivery, but their aggregate impact has fallen short and is unevenly distributed. Increasing impact requires not only closing the remaining digital divide, especially in internet access but also broader accompanying reforms such as strengthening regulations that ensure competition among businesses, by adapting workers' skills to the demands of the new economy and by ensuring that institutions are accountable.

VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Libraries in most parts of the world and even in countries that have previously been seen as leaders, such as the United Kingdom, there is contraction of the sector and confusion over roles. Electronic delivery of information and recreation challenges the functions of fixed-point, print-based institutions such as the library in ways for which answers have not yet been completely developed. Within the first decade of the 21st century, IFLA has provided forums for the discussion of new or modified roles and the work of its FAIFE Core Activity and Committee has been important. In particular, its work has, in effect, ask the question: Is one way forward for libraries to be better transparency institutions? Only the library sectors of IFLA's member countries can provide an answer to this. Circumstances for libraries are difficult but, as Gramsci put it, pessimism of the intellect needs to be accompanied by optimism of the will. The IFLA Manifesto on Transparency, Good Governance and Freedom from Corruption, with its accompanying Learning Materials provides an important lead, and the example of Serbia shows how that lead can be taken further forward. A further reassessment of the 'The Library and Freedom of Information' might be appropriate after the elapsed of another decade. Corruption has emerged as a serious hindrance to economic development. A number of factors have pushed many countries to consider fighting corruption as a main priority on their agendas. Indeed, recent literature has documented that corruption is associated with fewer development opportunities and has a clear negative impact on income; inflation; public, private, and foreign investment; government revenues; and productivity among others. Corruption is a complex phenomenon pointing to major failures of institutions. The relevance of e-government in curbing corruption lies in its ability to keep people participating and exercising their political and civil rights, improve quality delivering, and the governmental governance. Governments in developing countries have to take the

required actions in order to support e-government applications and increase citizens' participation by training citizens and officials how to use these applications efficiently. Therefore, governments involved in ICT anti-corruption strategies should assess the risk in using these strategies in public administrations, in order to prevent any abuse of ICT. In this regard, governmental bodies and institutions should be created to collect statistics, date and report any abuses, and respond accordingly.

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