AN ANTI-CORRUPTION PSYCHOLOGY APPROACH: THE NEED FOR NIGERIA TO HAVE A CORRUPTION AUTOMATED CLEARANCE CARD (CACC) FOR POTENTIAL OFFICE HOLDERS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE, SECURITY AND OTHER GOVERNMENT SETTINGS

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ABSTRACT

Corruption in Nigeria has emerged as one of the greatest challenges to strengthening institutional and national governance and rebuilding a transparent and accountable system of public services. One way that corrupt actors in Nigeria have spread corrupt practices is through poor identification and monitoring process. Currently, Nigeria has no specific mechanism or system to fully identify corruption offenders, and such offender's databank could generally serve as awareness tool to assist the public and government establishments in terms of background check for employment, selection, and appointment purposes.

KEYWORDS: Corruption, Registry, Clearance, Card, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Corruption is realistically a global problem and undeniably pervades the daily lives of the people of Nigeria (Page, 2018). The government of a democracy is answerable to the people and it should be accountable through its occupiers in a trustful and honest manner.

In a functional society or economy, good governance cannot and does not exist where corruption is present; but this is the unintended way that corruption grows daily in a massive, drastic, or petty form knowingly or unknowingly across the society. By way of social and psychological lens, corruption is a dishonest behavior by those in positions of authority, control, and influence such as government officials. Psychologically, corruption is a process that perverts the fundamental nature of an individual or group from a purer state to a less pure state.

When a person acts corruptly, they tend to show a deliberate intent, incorrect purpose, or motivation, and may involve acts such as: deliberately failing to execute the functions of office properly and exert power or duty for an improper purpose. Corruption is essentially a multi-level phenomenon. It can operate at individual, group, institutional, professional, organizational, and corporate level. In the process, steady democratic, institutional, organizational, economic governance and development is

negatively affected. In fact, governance, accountability, and security are impeded greatly. This is where my concerns sit.

The Nigerian police have come under a lot of scrutiny in recent times due to poor performances and lingering structural problems compared to other security and law enforcement apparatus like the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) with less stigma.

Therefore, I am recommending that Nigeria develops what I call corruption offender central registry (Mallyar, 2020; Thomas, 2007). To be fully instituted and permanent under the two Anti-Corruption Institutions in Nigeria: The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC). These two institutions are more focused and specialized law enforcement bodies and should work closely with law enforcement and paramilitary body like the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) present nationwide.

A person with a convicted or pending corruption offense must register in the state were convicted or arrested and in any state in which the offender later lives. Identifying information about a person convicted or arrested for specified corruption offenses will then be provided to States and Local EFCC and ICPC departments.

Corruption offenders will be required to register with a local NSCDC office where an NSCDC officer will do the registration, or directly with EFCC or ICPC's local office if present.

Corruption offender that must be registered into the automation-electronic databases should typically include: name and aliases, residence, work, and school addresses, palm prints and fingerprints, a physical description, including any identifying features, descriptions and date of the crime of conviction or arrest jurisdiction in which the person was convicted or arrested, a current photograph, a copy of a driver's license, license number plate, and description of all vehicles owned, including boats and aircraft, a copy of National Identification Card, the person's national identification number and date of birth, every email addresses, online screen name, social network handle or any other cyber related identity used, and copy of the offender's passport or immigration papers.

The digitized information will be readily available to all law enforcement agencies or the public nationwide. These databases will be available to employers like Banking and Finance industries, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), legislative, judicial, security, law enforcement, educational, professional, higher education admission, healthcare settings, etc.

As an eligibility criterion, corruption offenders with pending cases in court cannot be employed or run for office until the case is fully over in court. If convicted, the corruption offender will be automatically banned from these sensitive work settings, and their pictures should be shown on the State/federal corruption offender registry website with complete case history, pictures, and personal particulars.

The issuance of Corruption Automated Clearance Card (CACC) issued by EFCC/ICPC will be mandated for engagement purposes in various employment and appointment related jobs and other indicated offices and settings.

CONCLUSION

Nigeria should adopt this indicated novel approach for corruption offender data base to matters of public trust - executive, legislature, and judiciary; financial, educational, and political systems. The Corruption Offenders Databank would generally serve as a deterrent measure in sending a clear-cut message in the war against corruption.

The database will serve as an essential awareness tool to assist the public and establishments in assisting in the due diligence process concerning employment, contracting, and appointment of employees - with a focus on civil servants, corporate persons, politicians, self-employed persons, etc. It is hoped that with this approach, nearly half of our systems will become less plagued by inefficiency, distrust and corruption, and lead to a deeper form of democratic culture marked with strong governance and economic growth. New or stronger legislation to support the corruption offender registry will go far in terms of solutions to anti-corruption efforts.

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