Curbing Corruption in Nigeria Using Service Innovation

Ekomwenren, I. & Ekuobase, G.
Department of Computer Science
University of Benin
Benin City, Nigeria
iekomwenren@yahoo.com; godpower.ekuobase@uniben.edu

+Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT
Service innovation – the exploitation of ICT to solve peculiar problems or increase the value of an organization or society – enforces automation, transparency, monitoring and anonymity and has become an effective preventive corruption nightmarish. Corruption is a global threat to the peace and comfort of the human species. It has in particular reduced Nigeria, a land apparently flowing with ‘milk and honey’ to ‘a beggar nation’ living in fear and at the verge of extinction. Nigeria on survival instincts has put up punitive fight against corruption only to find her anti-corruption instruments subservient to corruption. This paper, exposed corrupt activities in Nigeria, the devastating effect of corruption on Nigeria’s socio-economic sphere, stimulates and prescribed preventive service innovative measures to curbing corruption in Nigeria.

Keywords: ICT4D, Nigeria, corruption, service innovation and ICT.

1. INTRODUCTION
Corruption is a universal socio-economic disease that manifest in varying forms and degree in every society [14, 26]. Corruption often perceived as the misuse or abuse of public office for private gains, symptomizes as bribery, extortion, fraud, nepotism, grafts, misappropriation, embezzlement, falsification of records, kickbacks, influence peddling, and campaign contributions among others [14, 21, 27, 30]. More often, corruption stems from greed, pride, ego, intimidation, impatience, insecurity, immorality and favouritism [21, 26] resulting in the socio-economic degradation of infected society. This degradation usually result in poverty, poor infrastructure, systems collapse, unemployment, high mortality, epidemic, illiteracy, unskilled labour, social vices, youth restiveness, insecurity, civil disobedience, criminality, social unrest and even war in the society where corruption thrives [3, 18, 24, 27]. It is therefore evident that no nation or organization infested with corruption can attain its full potentials. Nigeria, though one of the richest African nation is infested with corruption and is seriously suffering from these socio-economic degradations [16, 21]. A little wonder, Nigeria has not been able to attain her set socio-economic developmental goals and place of pride in the League of Nations.

The people and successive governments of Nigeria have come to terms with this fact leading to the enactment of legislation and anti-grafts agencies like Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) and special anti-corruption courts like Code of Conduct Tribunal (CCT) [16, 24, 28]. In particular, the Nigerian people strongly aligning themselves to this fact, made corruption the crux of their choice of leadership in the last 2015 general election which saw to the emergence of Mohammadu Buhari whose major campaign thrust was hinged on uprooting corruption in Nigeria as the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It is however unfortunate that these efforts have not been able to abate corruption in Nigeria but rather corruption is on the increase. The most culpable reason for this is implementation caused by corruption itself [24, 28]. Studies also revealed that a huge chunk of Nigerian’s efforts at checking corruption is punitive and not preventive [21, 28]. Preventive means of curbing corruption has been proven more effective [13, 15, 17]. Preventive means of curbing corruption is highly dependent on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as it enforces automation, transparency, monitoring and anonymity [9, 15, 17, 23, 25].

Most countries that have been able to take advantage of these preventive measures using ICT are rated among the least corrupt nations in the world by Transparency International [5]. We however noted that the deployment of ICT towards checking corruption varies among these nations. This is probably due to their varying norms and legislations. Consequently, ICT needs to be uniquely exploited to curb corruption in any organization or nation. The exploitation of ICT to solve peculiar problems or increase the value of an organization or society is termed service innovation [6].
Nigeria has come to appreciate service innovation with the use of ICT in some organizations and parastatals to curb corruption. For example, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) e-registration and e-accreditation of voters, the Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB) e-registration and Computer Based Test (CBT), Telecommunication Biometric SIM registration, amongst others. No doubt these innovations will help reduce corruption but their impact in this regard is yet to be formally measured. This notwithstanding, adopting ICT in every facet of the Nigerian economy to help curb corruption holistically is yet to commence probably due to the uniqueness of the Nigerian people, culture and legislation. This paper exposed and helps stimulate how ICT could be exploited to curb corruption in Nigeria.

2. NIGERIA DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Nigeria, a nation so blessed with immense wealth, diverse natural resources and a large population with all her developmental potentials and strategies is bedeviled by unemployment, insecurity, poverty, inadequate infrastructure, civil disobedience, social unrest, high mortality rate and illiteracy [1, 12]. Nigeria has had a long experience in development planning as successive governments have continued to formulate policies aimed at propelling the nation to a level of socio economic stability [12]; but for corruption among other factors, Nigeria would have since assumed her place of pride in the committee of Nations. Amongst the First Nigerian development planning strategy was the National Development Plan (1962 - 1968) with the objectives: to bring about equal distributions of national income, to speed up the rate of economic growth, to generate savings for investments so as to reduce its dependence on external capital for the development of the nation, to get enough capital for the development of manpower, to increase the standard of living of the masses particularly in respect to food, housing, health and clothing and to develop the infrastructure of the nation.

The Second National Development Plan (1970-1974) had five major national objectives which were to build: a United, strong and self-reliant nation, a just and egalitarian society, a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens and a free and democratic society. The Third National Development Plan (1975 - 1980) had the objectives: to increase the per capital income, to create more even distribution of income, to reduce the level of unemployment, to increase the supply of higher level manpower, diversification of the economy, balanced development and indigenization of economic activities. The Fourth National Development Plan (1981-85) was introduced in 1981 and it was the first Development Plan formulated by the civilian government after the intervention of the military in Nigerian politics in 1966. The plan’s objectives were: increase in the real income of the average citizen, even distribution of income among individuals and socio-economic groups, reduction in the level of unemployment and under employment, increase in the supply of skilled manpower, increased participation by the citizens in the ownership and management of productive enterprises, greater self-reliance that is, increased dependence on local resources in seeking to achieve the various objectives of society, development of technology, increased productivity and promotion of a new national orientation conducive to greater discipline, better attitude to work and cleaner environment.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was signed in the year 2000 by the United Nations with eight main goals or objectives to be achieved by the year 2015 in all its 189 member nations. These goals were: to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, to achieve universal primary education, to promote gender equality and empower women, to reduce child mortality, to improve maternal health, to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, to improve environmental stability, to foster global partnership. As a result of the failures of earlier formulated development planning strategies, Nigeria a member nation of the United Nations, keyed into the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and this gave rise to the introduction of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) at the national level, State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS) at the state level and Local Government Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (LEEDs) at the local government level in 2004. NEEDS, SEEDS and LEEDS were established to give poverty a head-on fight and to provide a framework that is efficient in addressing the lingering economic problems in Nigeria. Saddled with this responsibility, it has four main goals, which were; wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction and value re-orientation.
The seven-point Agenda was again introduced 2007 and aimed at creating or improving Critical Infrastructure, Niger Delta, Food Security, Human Capital Development, Land Tenure and Home Ownership, National Security and Intelligence, Wealth Creation [1, 7]. It is worthy of note that the success recorded by these development planning strategies were modest as a result of poor implementation and corruption [4, 12, 22].

Thereafter the Vision 20:2020 – a long term approach to development planning was conceived. The Vision aims at placing Nigeria among the 20 most developed and largest economies in the world by the year 2020 and to this regard the vision statement has been chosen: “By 2020, Nigeria will have a large, strong, diversified, sustainable and competitive economy that effectively harnesses the talents and energies of its people and responsibly exploits its natural endowments to generate a high standard of living and quality of life to its citizens”. This vision has two broad objectives: to make efficient use of human and natural resources to achieve rapid economic growth and to translate the economic growth into equitable social development for all citizens. These two objectives have been split into strategic aspects of the economy that will be affected individually but will altogether have effect on moving the entire economy towards the desired destination of the vision 20:2020.

The strategic plans are: creating strong, efficient and effective Public Service Institutions, tackling corruption, promoting competitive private sector-led business environment, ensuring national security and improved administration of justice, promoting unity in diversity, national pride and conservation of our cultural heritage, developing sufficient and efficient infrastructure to support sustained economic growth, improving power supply, transportation and ICT, preserving the environment for sustainable socio-economic development, transforming Nigeria’s six geo-political regions into economic growth poles, developing the Niger Delta region. With five years to go in the vision 20:2020, it is easy to appreciate that Nigeria still has a long way to go from becoming what she is capable and dream of becoming. Nigeria may remain in this circle of economic planning and disaster, if corruption is not confronted head-on and holistically too. An important question therefore is can Nigeria ever be able to assume her place of pride in the League of Nations without checking the corrupt activities of Nigerians?

2.1 Corrupt Activities in Nigeria
Corruption is a universal disease but presents itself in varying forms and degrees across the world. Corruption as defined by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the misuse or abuse of public office for private gains and it includes a wide array of illicit behavior e.g. bribery, extortion, fraud, nepotism, grafts, theft, embezzlement, falsification of records, kickbacks, influence peddling, campaign contributions, etc. Corruption involves seeking or extracting of receipt or promise of a gift or any other advantage by a public servant in consideration of his/her performance or omission of an act in violation of the duties required of the office. The act of omission is a common corrupt practice in Nigeria.

Corruption has a pervasive and troubling impact on the poor as it distort public choices in favour of the wealthy and powerful and reduces the state’s capacity to provide social safety nets [29]. Corruption involves the improper and unlawful behavior of public-service officials, both politicians and civil servants, whose positions create opportunities for the diversion of money and assets from government to themselves and their accomplices [13]. It exacerbates poverty, most especially in developing and transitional economies like Nigeria. For corruption, extortion or bribery to take place, there must be a public official with discretionary power followed by a misuse of that power. In the case of bribery, there is also collusion between the dishonest official and one or more public or private officials, and a benefit, in money or in kind, to all parties involved [13]. This is generally practiced by public officials having the direct responsibility to deliver services to the public, apply or enforce specific regulations, or levy fees or taxes.

Corruption distorts resource allocation and government performance. The causes of its development are diverse and vary from one country to country. Policies, programs and activities that are poorly conceived and managed, failing institutions, poverty, income disparities, inadequate civil servants’ remuneration, and a lack of accountability and transparency are among the contributing factors. For any serious progress to be made therefore in an economy, the government must take proactive steps in the fight against corruption identified as the main cause of the crisis rocking the economy at the moment. Highly corrupt nations are always perpetuated with vicious circle of poverty: low rate of saving which leads to low incomes and which in turn leads to low investment and productivity [24]. The negative consequences of the prevalent corruption continue to hamper the growth and development of the economy, causes insecurity of lives and property of the citizenry as evident from several Boko Haram attacks, heightened level of poverty and unemployment.
It is believed by some western diplomats that Nigeria lost between $4 billion and $8 billion per year to corruption during the eight years of Obasanjo’s administration [11]. Also, the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) released by the Transparency International over the years revealed that Nigeria was rated as one of the most corrupt among the countries surveyed. On the scale of 10.0, Nigeria scored 1.6 in 1999; 1.2 in 2000; 1.0 in 2001; 1.6 in 2002; 1.4 in 2003; 1.6 in 2004; 1.9 in 2005; 2.2 in 2006; 2.2 in 2007; and 2.7 in 2008; 2.7 in 2009; 2.4 in 2010; 2.4 in 2011; 2.7 in 2012; 2.5 in 2013; 2.7 in 2014 (Transparency International 2000 - 2014). This of course has become a source of embarrassment to Nigerian officials and non-officials alike travelling outside the country and Nigerian nationals all over the world.

According to Dahida [8] and Ogundiya [20], the Pius Okigbo Report noted that about $12 billion in oil windfall accrued to the nation during the gulf war could not be accounted for, by the military regime of Ibrahim Babangida. They also stated that in 1998, another Panel constituted to facilitate the recovery of funds looted under the Abacha regime (1993-98) also revealed how top military and civilian leaders, including Abacha himself, siphoned billions of dollars in public funds to offshore accounts, while using their positions and public resources to acquire choice properties around the country.

Among other corrupt activities is the misappropriation of public funds in multiple contracts of N628m (US$5 million) for the renovation of the official residence and the purchase of 12 official cars by a speaker of the House of Representative, the inflation of the Abuja street light project to the tune of 173 million naira; authorized payment of 37.2 million naira to furnish a Senate president’s residence, an amount above the approved 25 million and the installation of a 100KVA generating set at the a President’s residence at an inflated price of 15 million naira [20]. In 1999, the Christopher Kolade Panel report indicted the last military regime of General Abdusalami Abubarkah (1998-99), for awarding massively inflated contracts, licenses, awards, etc., to firms in which top echelon of the regime had substantial interests, causing a sharp drop in the country’s external reserves [8]. According to Ogundiya [20], in 1993, 400 million Naira was wasted on the Better Life Project and $200 million was siphoned from the Aluminum Project. It was also evident from the probes on oil petroleum subsidy fraud; fraudulent misappropriation of pension funds, recycling of items in the 2012 Budget among others [24].

Embezzling public fund is another form of corruption that has marred the socio-economic development of the Nigerian State. Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, a former EFCC chairman has maintained that the over $400 billion that had been looted from the common wealth of Nigeria by the leaders is “six times the total value of resources committed to rebuilding Western Europe after the Second World War [28]. The work of Usman [28] also stated that in 2003, Nasir El-Rufai the Minister for the Federal Capital Territory alleged that two senators had demanded a bribe of N54 million (US$418,000) to secure their approval for his appointment. It equally stated that, in 2005 a Minister of Education was fired for allegedly bribing the National Assembly to secure more funds for his ministry and he formally protested that such behavior was common to all levels of government.

Nigeria has been adjudged as one of the very few countries where a man’s source of wealth is of no concern to his neighbours, the public or the government [24]. Wealthy people who are known to be corrupt are regularly courted and honoured by communities, religious bodies, social clubs and other private organizations. Curbing corruption is instrumental to the broader goal of achieving more effective, fair, and efficient government and a developed economy. Due to inadequacies in transparency, accountability, and probity in the use of public resources, the state fails to generate credibility and authority. It is impossible for any society or nation to succeed with Developmental Plans or Strategies or alleviate poverty without first curbing corruption [2, 4, 12, 13, 22].

Langseth [15] posited that it is better to prevent corruption than to allow it occur at all. According to him, the Governance and Anti-Corruption program comprises three principal activity areas:

1. Improving public sector service delivery by focusing on public sector accountability and legal reform in order to re-introduce rule of law
2. Building integrity by promoting governmental accountability and transparency
3. Building a preventive and an anti-corruption capacity of the public sector including parliament, watchdog and enforcement agencies, the judiciary and civil society, particularly by strengthening non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the media.
Building “integrity” which means “using public powers for the public good” is the flip side of fighting corruption. The experience he gained from work with client countries demonstrates that it is preferable to focus on prevention through the building of integrity, which suggests a positive, proactive preventive approach. It is often easier to get various stakeholder groups to support preventive measures through the creation of a system of national integrity rather than specific measures designed to fight corruption. This can be achieved through:

1. Accountability through transparency (access to information)
2. Focus on prevention rather than enforcement
3. Raise awareness and expectations of civil society
4. Focus on results-oriented service to the public
5. Develop the capacity of “Pillars of Integrity” to fight corruption

Studies from Anazodo et al.[2] shows Nigeria needs to adopt a “new style management” bearing in mind her social and economic environment. It also shows that the implementation strategy and monitoring systems of the Civil Service are to be taken seriously so that the Nigerian Civil Service would be service-and-result-oriented geared towards the achievement of the nation’s socio-economic development goal.

2.2 Curbing Corruption using ICT

According to the Anti-Corruption Research Center, studies on the correlation between the usage of ICTs (measured by the UN e-Government readiness index, the UN e-participation index and the level of internet penetration) and the level of corruption (measured by Transparency International’s CPI) has shown that a country’s position on the e-readiness and e-participation indices has an inverse relationship with the levels of corruption which means that a good positioning on the e-readiness and e-participation indices goes together with lower levels of perceived corruption. To effectively curb corruption in Nigeria, the use of ICTs should therefore be combined with administrative reform [10].

Swedish Program for ICT in Developing Regions (Spider) has developed a list of the possible areas in which ICTs can help curb corruption [10]:

1. Automation, which can reduce opportunities for occurrence of corruption in repetitive operations.
2. Transparency, which can help reduce rooms for discretion.
3. Detection in operations, to identify anomalies, outliers and underperformances.
4. Preventive detection, through monitoring of networks and individuals.
5. Awareness raising, to empower the public and inform them of their rights to resist arbitrary treatments.
6. Reporting, to create complaint channels that can lead to concrete action and help punish violators and close loopholes.
7. Deterrence, by disseminating information about reported cases of corruption.
8. Promoting ethical attitudes, through public engagements and online discussions.

ICT provides effective new channels to report administrative abuses and corruption, and facilitates the lodging of complaints. Reporting can be done via websites, hotlines or phone applications that solicit and aggregates citizens’ experience of corruption. One of the most renowned corruption reporting website is the Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy’s ipaidabribe.com. Through this website, reports can be made by citizens on the nature, number, pattern, types, location, frequency and values of actual corrupt acts experienced by them. Between 2010 and 2012, Ipaidabribe.com received almost 22,500 reports, some of which were picked up by the media and resulted in arrests and convictions. Citizens can also report the positive experiences they had with honest officers on the same website. The initiative which started in India has been duplicated in Greece, Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Pakistan and soon, new versions of ipaidabribe.com will be launched in Azerbaijan, South Africa, Ukraine and Tunisia.

Over 50 Advocacy and Legal Advice Centres (ALACs) have been opened by Transparency International since 2000 to receive citizens’ complaints about corruption and to engage in strategic advocacy on people’s behalf. Transparency International Macedonia has launched an online reporting platform called Draw a Red Line. This platform allows individuals who experienced or witnessed corruption to report their cases using ONE (Mobile Operator) by sending SMS from their mobile phones, sending an email, using a web form, or twitter by using the hashtag #korupcijaMK or by reporting over the phone. The reports are then verified by the members of staff of Transparency International Macedonia and forwarded to the appropriate public institutions to solicit follow-up. In 2012, Draw a Red Line received about 200 reports, of which 60 were verified.
A number of global reporting platforms have also been developed in recent years. BRIBElime, a reporting website that is available in 21 languages was initiated by TRACE. BRIBElime collects information, through anonymous complaints, about the bribes which are solicited by certain official or quasi-official bodies – governments, international organizations, security forces, state-owned enterprises, etc. – throughout the world. Legal or investigative action is taken using the information gathered and the aggregated data is made available to the public to raise awareness about specific corruption challenges.

Bribe Market is a similar initiative developed in Romania. It allows citizens to share their experiences of bribery when interacting with public services and the amount of money that they had to pay. Bribe Market received nearly 650 reports of corruption within its first four months of existence. Reports are mapped to help people identify the service providers that are the “cheapest” and the least corrupt. In Uganda, UgandaWatch 2011 is an independent hotline that allows citizens to report problems, fraud and irregularities during the electoral process. The organisations that are involved then analyse the information and publish reports covering issues such as voters’ registration issues, money in politics, as well as violence and intimidations [9].

ICTs have been used increasingly to monitor budgets, projects and government activities, as well as to request official information. OpenSpending.org is an Open Knowledge Foundation initiative that promotes open knowledge and data, particularly with regards to government budgets through a mapping of money flows. The main aim of OpenSpending.org is to help track all government and corporate financial transaction across the world, present it in user-friendly and engaging forms. It is a participative project and has been taken up in several countries. ICT has equally been used in monitoring and creating transparency. Slovakia OpenSpending was launched by Transparency International Slovakia in early 2013, presenting budget and expenditure information from more than 20 cities across Slovakia; the World Bank launched Cameroon Budget Inquirer, in collaboration with OpenSpending.org, to visualise the national investment budget, to provide a sub-national budget transparency index and to allow people to easily explore the country’s financial data.

The Philippines’ Check My School project is a participatory monitoring tool combining ICTs and community monitoring to look into use of public funds by schools. The objective of the project is to enable the Department of Education identify resource gaps. ICTs have also been utilized in the health sector. Transparency International Uganda recently launched a project on “Promoting social accountability in the health sector in the northern Uganda”. The project empowers health users to monitor local health centers through the use of the radio, call center operations, mobile phones and web applications. Guatemala is a country where impunity is a serious problem, partly due to the politicization of the appointment of judges. Guatemala Visible is an online platform, set up and maintained by civil society organizations, that monitors the selection of the Auditor General, the General Prosecutor, the Public Defender, the Ombudsman and other key judiciary officials. Guatemala Visible has so far succeeded in publicizing information about candidates to senior judicial positions, compelling the nomination committees to conduct rigorous background checks and scrutinize unqualified candidates [9].

The use of satellite images/cameras to monitor illegal logging is currently being explored within the context of the initiative for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD). First, REDD takes place in a corruption-prone sector, where corruption is widespread in the form of state looting, elite capture, theft and fraud. Satellite Imaging Technology (Remote Sensing) can be used as a tool for monitoring, assessing, reporting and verifying carbon credit and co-benefits. Such technologies are currently widely tested and suggested as a tool for REDD monitoring, assessment and verification. ICTs are being used by some governments around the world to deliver information and services to citizens, to enhance efficiency and transparency of public administrations and to better interactions with citizens. E-procurement was one of the first applications of ICTs in government activities. E-procurement is the replacement of paper-based procedures with ICTs throughout the procurement processes.
South Korea adopted its Government’s e-Procurement System (GePS) in 2002, providing integrated bidding information as a one-stop shop for customers and enabling the electronic processing of the entire procurement process. The bidding system and procurement information are available through mobile phones. South Korea’s e-procurement system has significantly reduced the risks of corruption, through the enhanced transparency made possible by the digitalization of information, and increased competition [19]. Governments also use ICTs for tax collection and payment, with the objective of making the system more transparent and efficient, and to cut out potential corrupt tax collectors.

E-taxation has been implemented in about 77 countries throughout the world. An increasing number of developing countries, such as Tunisia, Sao Tome and Principe and Cape Verde, have opted for electronic tax collection to accelerate the tax processing time and ease the process of paying taxes [9].

2.4.1 Nigeria’s Efforts at Curbing Corruption using ICT
Nigeria has come to appreciate the importance of ICT in curbing corruption and in recent times has deployed some ICT measures as discussed in the following subsections:

2.4.2 Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS)
The GIFMIS is intended to assist the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) in improving the management, performance and outcomes of Public Financial Management (PFM). With an overall objective to implement a computerized financial management information system for the FGN that is efficient, effective, and user friendly and help her undertake central control and monitoring of expenditure and receipts in the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), increase the ability to access information on financial and operational performance, increase internal controls to prevent and detect potential and actual fraud as well as increase the ability to access information on government cash position (that is, to demonstrate accountability and transparency).

2.4.3 Treasury Single Account
The FGN has directed all MDAs to close all accounts domiciled in commercial banks and transfer them to the Federation’s account domiciled in the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). This initiative is known as the Treasury Single Account (TSA). The directive applies to fully funded organs of government like Ministries, Departments, Agencies and foreign missions, as well as the partially funded ones, like Teaching Hospitals, Medical Centers, Federal Tertiary Institutions and agencies like the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Security and Exchange Commission (SEC), Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), Nigerian Port Authority (NPA), Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA), Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC), Ministry of Mines and Steel Development (MMSD), Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) are inclusive amongst others.

The Independent Revenue e-Collection Scheme implemented under Treasury Single Account (TSA) initiative requires that government revenue collection is put into a single account for proper cash management, this idea was mooted by the Central Bank of Nigeria at the 235th Monetary Policy Committee Meeting in November, 2013. Treasury Single Account enables governments to establish centralized control over its revenue through effective cash management. It also enhances accountability how much the government is accruing on a daily basis. In the case of Nigeria, it is expected that the implementation of TSA will help tame the tide of corruption as the leakages that used to be there in the system where people used money as they want and decide what to return to the government will no more be there (http://www.ohcsf.gov.ng/Circulars).
2.4.4 Bank Verification Number (BVN)

Biometric refers to the identification of an individual based on physiological or behavioral traits such as; fingerprint, signature amongst others. These technologies have been used to analyze human characteristics as an enhanced form of authentication for real-time security processes. Due to the increasing incidents of compromise on conventional security systems (password and PIN), there have been high demand for greater security to accessing sensitive or personal information in the Banking System. The Central Bank of Nigeria through the Bankers’ Committee and in collaboration with all banks in Nigeria on February 14, 2014 therefore launched a centralized biometric identification system for the banking industry tagged Bank Verification Number (BVN).

This identification system, BVN, is not tied to any Bank and particularly gives a unique identity that can be verified across the Nigerian Banking Industry. Customers’ Bank Accounts are protected from unauthorized access, can address issues of identity theft and thus capable of reducing customers exposure to fraud and enhance the Banking Industry chances of being able to fish out blacklisted customers. The Customers unique BVN is accepted as a means of identification across all Nigerian Banks to mention a few (http://www.bvn.com.ng/).

2.4.5 Other ICT Measures

The Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB) has equally been using ICT in the e-Registration process and in administering examination using Computer Based Test (CBT). This can help considerably in the reduction of malpractices such as impersonation during registration and the examination proper. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) also uses the biometric technology in the voters’ registration and accreditation processes. This is believed to have helped to minimize electoral malpractices such as multiple voting and impersonation.

3. CURBING CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA USING SERVICE INNOVATION

In Nigeria, corruption in the civil service can be curbed through the use of service innovation. In the previous section, it was evident that corruption manifest mostly as: Bribery, embezzlement, money laundry, financial misappropriation, falsification of records, non-remittance of tax or money collected, contract inflation, cover-up (omission) and ghost worker syndrome. Others are attendance and time falsification, loitering, computer abuse and impersonation. Corruption has been identified earlier in this work as the main hindrance to achieving the vision 20:2020 which is the latest developmental ambition of the Nigerian people. This section proposes some innovative measures in services using ICT in addition to the existing service innovative measures of the FGN like the issue of BVN and TSA to guide a holistic and sustainable service innovation towards curtailing or inhibiting corruption in Nigeria:

3.1 Access to information

The Nigerian government can use the linked data technology as it is being used in some European countries and the United States of America to make government data available to the public in human readable and machine understandable format. This approach is called Open Government Data (OGD). It will have to be backed up by laws or directives from the presidency to various government bodies to as a matter of national necessity make government data available to the public through this medium. This will go a long way to increase transparency of government and reduce corruption since it may not be easy to change some of the data already made available without arousing suspicion from the public. Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), The Budget Office, Accountant General's Office, Nigerian Judicial Council (NJC), Nigerian law review, Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), National Space Research Center, Nigerian Meteorological Agency, Bureau of Public Enterprise (BPE), Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) to mention a few could be mandated to publish their data online.

3.2 Project monitoring

The government can create a website where details (such as contractor, initiator, duration of completion, current completion level, total amount, amount paid, balance, some pictures of the project, etc.) about every contract awarded, and every ongoing government project all over the country are displayed. This website can be made to be a forum where members of the communities where these projects are located can post observations, comments, pictures, and videos concerning the projects. The government can also make available SMS short codes through which members of the public can send messages about the projects. This will make project monitoring become a public affair and reduce lies from government/political officers and contractors. Even the bidding process for contracts can be put on this website along with the details for each contractor.
3.3 Taxation
To make taxation transparent and make tax money beyond the reach of corrupt officials, government could liaise with mobile telecommunications networks to provide a USSD code with which citizens can load recharge cards and use the USSD codes to signify to the network that the call credit on their mobile line should be used for a particular tax. This will also allow querying of the tax compliance/payment status of a citizen. This medium can also be used for payment of electrical bills, etc. This will no doubt check the activities of touts and “aigbberoos” particularly in some tax collection points like markets and motor parks.

3.4 e-Attendance
Biometric technologies capitalize upon unique, permanent, and scannable human characteristics. All biometric devices take a number of measurements from an individual then digitally process the result of these measurements and save this representation of the individual’s traits into a template. This template is then stored in a database associated with the device or in a smartcard given to the individual. This is called enrolment. The introduction of the “Biometric Time and Attendance” will help regularize the civil service or public sector as this will greatly reduce if not put to an end the falsification of attendance and time of arrival to work, help the government take note of the actual number of staff it has thereby eliminating ghost workers and helping government save huge sums of money that is being paid ghost workers.

It is safe and reliable as it makes use of the fingerprint. The fingerprint of an individual is not shareable or transferable as no two individuals can possibly have the same fingerprints, even if they were identical twins. It is the system whereby public servants sign in and out of their work places or stations using biometric features like their fingerprints instead of the traditional “biro and paper” technique. Every public servant’s fingerprint and bio-data should be captured and stored in a National database. That is to say every Public establishment will be furnished with a central database in which all of her workers bio data and fingerprints would be stored. In return the public servant is given an identity number which could serve as a staff number. On getting to the office every morning, he/she is made to sign in using his/her fingerprint and identity number by simply entering the identity number and swiping a finger against the fingerprint sensor of the ‘Biometric time and attendance system’. The fingerprint is captured and immediately verifies with the one previously stored in the database, if they match, the user is authenticated.

This system makes it difficult if not impossible to falsify attendance registering as the system captures the exact time of swiping which serves as time of arrival. The same thing is done at the close of the day or during break as the case maybe. With this system in place, public servants would be made to report to their duty post daily and in time too and will be there close of day thus increasing productivity and reducing corruption of time and attendance falsification. With biometrics, staff can also be verified by behavioral means; their gait, vocal pitch, signature, and can be used to identify them. This promises an easy and secure method of making accurate verifications of individuals as it eliminates the need to carry badges and other forms of identification, and prevents the use of forged tickets, badges, or passports. Whenever an individual attempts to identify himself by scanning a finger, hand, or eye, the biometric device compares the new scan to all available templates (in a process known as Identification) in order to find a match, or compare the new scan to a known template for the individual (in a process known as Verification). To be verified, a person must first claim an identity using a login name, smart card, or token. As the individual continues to use the technology, the template is continually refined, perfected, and adjusted for slight changes in the employee’s characteristics. In service environments where employees punch in and out of work, return on investment can be increased because biometric devices virtually eliminate the ability of employees to sign in and sign out for their friends. It is almost impossible for employees to defraud a biometric time and attendance system. It could also function as a security access monitor, in this case, the biometric system is used to grant or deny access to restricted areas.
3.5 Office Conduct
The use of Closed Circuit Cameras (CCTV) can be used to monitor the activities of workers in their offices as some workers could be in/on their duty posts but may not actually be doing the job they are being paid to do. These cameras should be placed in strategic places, this will help monitor the activities of public servants as some may be present early at work, leave at the right time but may lazy around throughout their stay. The awareness that they are being watched will compel them to do the job they are paid to do and shun collection of bribes.

3.6 Budget Monitoring
The Nations budgets and budgetary allocations for a year or a particular period should all be stored in a single database where all projects budgeted for are recorded and the amount budgeted made available to the public, this will help make project monitoring easy and improve as well. Also from time to time, the database is updated to show all expenditures, present phase as well as completed phases of the project. This will reduce corruption as many projects exist only on paper presently. When public office holders are aware that their activities are been monitored by the public, they will minimize their corrupt practices.

3.7 Facility Utilization
The use of fire walls to block access to some websites and social media (internet censorship), in such a way that only selected websites needed for running daily activities will be accessed within the office can also go a long way to checking computer abuse and waste of organizations time paid resource.

4. CONCLUSION

Corruption – the abuse or misuse of public office for private gains is a universal socio-economic disease that manifest in varying forms and degrees in every society. Corruption which usually symptomizes as bribery, extortion, fraud, nepotism, grafts, misappropriation, record falsification, kickbacks, influence peddling and campaign contributions; most often stems from greed, pride, ego, intimidation, impatience, insecurity, immorality and favoritism and usually result in the socio-economic degradation of any society where it thrives. Nigeria we exposed is typical of such corruption infested society as evident in her high degree of poverty, poor infrastructure, systems collapse, unemployment, high morality, epidemic, illiteracy, unskilled labour, social vices, youth restiveness, insecurity, civil disobedience, criminality, social unrest and even war; and as such is unable to attain her series of socio-economic developmental goals as well as her place of pride. These series of socio-economic developmental goals were examined and shown to have been thwarted by corruption.

We exposed that Nigeria and its successive government have made effort to curb corruption with virtually all the efforts being punitive and ending up being subservient to corruption. We noted that preventive means of curbing corruption have proved more effective than punitive measures. We examined known preventive means of curbing corruption and noted that it is purely ICT driven and enforces automation, transparency, monitoring and anonymity. From the study, we got inspirations to exploit ICT in curbing Corruption in Nigeria and prescribed the innovations. We do hope that a proper deployment of these and other related service innovations as with the least Corrupt Nations of the world will effectively check corruption in Nigeria and also help Nigeria achieve her developmental goals and assume her place of pride in the League of Nations. We need not fear, as machines have no emotions.
REFERENCES


