

## **An Appraisal Of The Deployment Of E-Governance In The Fight Against Corruption In Nigeria's Public Service, 1999-2017**

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**Abstract:** Corruption has been the bane of Nigeria's public service since after the nation's independence in 1960. This became worse with the incursion of the military into Nigeria's politics, especially with the Public service purge under the Generals Murtala/Obasanjo regime in 1975. This exercise went against the civil service principle of permanence, as civil servants were arbitrarily dismissed from service. This changed the mentality of those that survived the purge for the worse, making them resort to bribery and corruption in order to save for the rainy day. Over time, corruption became entrenched and intractable in Nigeria's public service. Successive governments- both military and civilian, deployed several measures and strategies in the past to tackle this monster, to no avail. This paper is aimed at appraising the deployment of e-governance in the fight against corruption in Nigeria's public service for a period of 1999-2017. The paper adopted content analysis as its methodology, where it examined several literatures on the subject matter and drew conclusion based on the findings. It concluded that the deployment of e-government in the fight against corruption in the public service has really yielded positive results and has succeeded more than any other measure deployed by the government in the fight against corruption in the past.

**Key words:** *e-Governance, Anti-corruption, Public Sector, TSA, IPPIS.*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The advent of e-government in the 21st century, is a conscious effort to cause a paradigm shift in modern public administration and governance. It is poised to change the narrative and interrogate the efficacy of traditional public administration to bring in a regime of efficiency in service delivery and tackle corruption, which has been the bane of efficient service delivery in developing countries, Nigeria inclusive.

Contributing on the origin of the public service in Nigeria, Maduabum (2006) stated that the Nigerian public service of today has its remote origin in the amalgamation of the colony and protectorates of the Southern and Northern Nigeria in 1914. The appointment of Sir Frederick Lugard as the governor-general of the amalgamated territories on that date that compelled the institution of a central bureaucracy to assist him in the administration of the whole territory, yet it was to Sir Hugh Clifford who succeeded Lugard as Governor-General in 1922 that takes the glory of instituting a structured and purposeful central administration for the new nation in those early days. Nicholson (1968), it was Clifford and his helper, Cameron, not Lugard who had the herculean task of cleaning out an Augean stable of administrative chaos, after eight years of one-man rule without any proper central administrative machinery of government. The emergent administration called the Nigerian Public Service was small in size and simple in structure, in consonance with the limited responsibility of government, essentially the maintenance of law and order for the purpose of promoting progress.

Okigbo (1986), argued that the Nigerian colonial public service was not modeled on the British home public service, that it could not have been so, since the British Public Service was not colonial by nature.. According to him, the overseas public service had to be created and fashioned out to suit the peculiar circumstances of ruling subject peoples often held in contempt by the ruling power and considered valuable only for what they have to contribute to the metropolitan country. Continuing, he stated that to govern Nigeria, far away from home and in an age of slow communication, a country large, populous and garrulous, it was necessary to create two forces on the spot- a military force to hold down the subjects in order and in fear and a small cadre of dedicated loyal servants to maintain that order and fear of the British power.

According to Lord Frederick Lugard, the British colonial government has a dual mandate in its colonies in Africa- the exploitation of the resources of the colonies for the interest of Britain and the development of the colonies. This mandate was achieved through the colonial public service which was well disciplined and dedicated to service. This tradition of efficiency and dedication continued immediately after

independence, it was during this period that massive socio-economic and infrastructural growth and development took place in the various regions across the country, making Nigeria at par with several economic and industrial giants of today like Singapore, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, just to mention a few, with the public service as the backbone behind this progress. In reference to the super role of the civil service during this period, the *New Nigerian* issue of September 20 1978, quoted in Adebayo (1981) said, “ For far too long, civil servants, especially in the upper reaches of the service, have had things their way. Not only were they involved in the normal execution of policy, they were to a considerable degree, the actual formulators of policy. This is of course, contrary to their traditional role. In the process, some of them became so powerful...”

This period was known as the golden era of civil service in Nigeria, the civil servants were actively involved in the running of the country and were disciplined and dedicated. But this scenario was brought to an end with the public service purge of Gen Murtala’s administration in 1975. According to Adebayo (1981), it was estimated that about 10,000 public officers were dismissed from service. The reasons adduced for the exercise were alleged inefficiency, old age, declining productivity and doubtful probity. This exercise destroyed their spirit de corps and broke down group cohesion. Each was left suspicious of the other and everyone uncertain of the future. The will to struggle and distinguish oneself disappeared. Adebayo posited that by the manner of its execution, the exercise the good were thrown out with the bad, a good many honest and efficient officers were removed and their places were taken by relatively inexperienced and/ incompetent officers. Again, the exercise produced a general feeling of dismay and frustration which led many able officers to leave the public service.

The overall impact of this hurricane, this unprecedented purge in the civil service was that it caused a serious attitudinal change among the public servants, it made public servants realize that their permanence of the career is no longer guaranteed as was the case in the past and also in consonance with public service rules. They decided to save for the rainy day as the unforeseen could happen any day without notice, thereby introducing ten percent, cost inflation, bribery and other corrupt practices aimed at enriching themselves and saving for the rainy day since their tenure is no longer permanent as exemplified by the public service purge of 1975.

Since then, corruption has been the culture in Nigeria’s public service, this paper intends to appraise how successive governments since the return to civil rule in 1999 has deployed E-government or Information Communication Technology (ICT) to tackle this monster and how far it has fared.

## **Conceptual framework**

### **The Concept of e-Government**

E-government is a relatively new phenomenon in administration and at that, its definition has been a bit problematic, due to the interests around it, considering the influx of technologies around it. Mohammed (2015), defined it as the application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by government agencies to improve efficiency and effectiveness, create transparency and accountability of information and transactional exchanges within government, between government and government agencies at national, state and local levels. Several authors have used varied terminologies to describe e-government, some of which includes: Electronic government, Electronic Governance, Digital Government, Online Government, e-Gov etc. Gronlund (2004), cited in Mohammed and Steve (2010) opined that there are many definitions for the e-Government and differences reflect the priorities in the government strategies.

E- Government focuses on straightening the machinery of government as embodied in public service of countries through use and advancing the course of information an communication technology to government business. The definition of e-government ranges from the use of information technology to free movement of information to overcome the physical bounds of traditional paper and physical based systems, to the use of technology to enhance the access to and delivery of government services to benefit citizens, business partners and employees (Mohammed, 2015).

Fang (2002), defined e-government as a way for government to use the most innovative information and communication technologies, particularly, web based internet applications to provide citizens and businesses with more convenient access to government information and services and to provide greater opportunities to participate in democratic institutions and processes. It entails the free movement of information to overcome the physical bounds of traditional paper and physical based systems, to the use of technology to enhance the access to and delivery of government services to benefit citizens, business partners and employees. The common theme behind these definitions is that, e- government involves the automation or computerization of existing paper-based procedures that will prompt new styles of leadership, new ways of debating and deciding strategies, new ways of transacting business, new ways of listening to citizens and communities and new ways of organizing and delivering information.

Oyadiran (2017), posits that e-government is about transforming government to be more citizen-centred. Technology is a tool in this effort. E-government successes require how government works, how it deals with information, how officials view their jobs and interact with the public. E government splits up into different sectoral areas such as e-health, e-education, Small and Medium Enterprises and local content. Achieving e-government success also entails active partnerships between government, citizens and the private

sector. The e-government process needs continuous input and feedback from the “customers”- the public, businesses and officials who use e-government services. Their voices and ideas are essential to making e-government work. E-government, when implemented well, is a participatory process

E-government and ICT are seen as part of government’s comprehensive modernization programme. It is the thinking of experts that simply adding computers or modems will not improve government, nor will only automating the same old procedures and practices. Making unhelpful procedures more efficient is not productive. Focusing only on the computers will not make officials more service-oriented toward government’s ‘customers’ and partners. Leaders should be occupied with how to harness technology to achieve objectives for reform. ICT is an instrument to enable and empower government reform.

E-government is designed to provide services to different sectors or areas and its role is multi-faceted in dimension. E-government may provide services in different dimensions which includes:

E-governance services from Government to Citizens (G2C): This has to do with the services provided by the government to the citizens, it makes for a strong interaction between government and citizens. The main objective is to enable the citizens to take benefits from efficient delivery of a large range of public services and to make government citizens friendly. In this, citizens can interact with government anytime, anyplace and with suitable multifarious medium like internet, fax, telephone, e-mail etc.

E-government Services from Government to Government (G2G): This is equally known as e-administration. In this type, services are being shared between many government agencies and institutions. Information is shared among various government agencies, organizations and departments. Examples include E-Secretariat, E-Police, E-Court etc.

E-government Services from Government to Employees (G2E): This model increases a transparent connection between government and its employee. Employees can monitor the functioning of the government and government can also check the working and efficiency of the employees. With the help of this model, employees can be aware of their benefits and responsibilities. G2E enhances the strengths and accessibility of the employees in governmental organization, it shares important information like attendance record, employee record, complaints, employee salary, working record and all kind of rules-regulations etc.

E-government Services from Government to Business (G2B): This makes connection between government and the privates sector possible. Here, government and business organizations exchange important information like collection of taxes, payment of bills and penalty, sharing or rules and data. In G2B model, business organizations achieve many services from government like getting licenses, payment of bills and taxes, complaints, rejection and approval of patents etc.

Conclusively, Oyediran (2017), averred that e- government is the application of information and communication technology (ICT) for delivering government services, exchange of information, communication transactions, integration of various stand-alone systems and services between government to customer (G2C), government to business (G2B), government to government (G2G), as well as back office processes and interactions within the entire government framework. Through e-government, government services are made available to citizens in a convenient, efficient and transparent manner.

### **The Concept of Corruption**

Defining the concept of corruption precisely is a bit difficult, not because it is not really understood, but because its prevalence and ubiquity. Abba (2006) defined it as an unethical behavior, which runs counters to the accepted social norms and moral values. It is a behavioural pattern, which seriously hurt public morality and leaves the society worse for it. Corruption is an act involving dishonesty, illegality and non-conformity with accepted standard of behaviour. Amuka (2006), opines that corruption is an act or state of being corrupt, moral perversion, depravity and pervasion of integrity.

On the other hand, The Corrupt Offenses and other related Acts (2005) explains corruption to include bribery, fraud and other related offences while Transparency International (TI), defined it as the misuse of entrusted power for private gains.

Otite (1986), quoted in Katuka (2013), identified five types of corruption in the society and they include:

Political Corruption: This manifests in manipulation of election, people and institutions in order to gain or retain power and/ or office.

Economic Corruption: This has to do with business men cutting corners, circumventing rules to increase their profit margin.

Bureaucratic Corruption: Involves buying favours from public servants or bureaucrats who formulate policies and administer government economic and political policies, using their enormous power to delay and force people to bribe them.

Judicial Corruption; This plays on the relative position of buyers in the social structure and use of wealth to secure police attention and bails and even to prevent the administration of justice.

Moral Corruption: The anonymity in urban centres have worsened or crated conditions which favour moral depravity, eg, the desire to secure employment, the wish to show wealth through the acquisition of women, flamboyant demonstration of materialism in the midst of poverty.

On his own part, Waterburg (1976), identified three forms of corruption which includes:

Endemic Corruption: This has to do with the abuse of office by bureaucrats who take advantage of others by banning people from getting services until they have paid for them.

Planned Corruption: This is an instruction of control over the short medium term by discriminating in distribution of public goods.

Development Corruption: This occurs where there are numerous development projects guided by the state and the wielders of such power are given the opportunity to determine the form, place and cost of such projects, thereby using it to acquire wealth as quickly as possible.

Abia (2006), in trying to unmask what corruption is listed various ways in which corruption manifests, which according to him includes:

- i. Bribery, including fictitious names in salary vouchers and proceeds converted to personal use, kick-backs, political pay-offs, extortions and demanding/receiving all kinds of gratifications
- ii. Unlawful payments for contracts, either not executed or poorly executed because the pay officers have been induced.
- iii. Collaboration with contactors to inflate costs of contract value.
- iv. The 'Ghost workers' syndrome.
- v. 'Sorting out' teachers/lecturers and examiners for better grades.
- vi. Illegal enrichment of oneself using one's official position at the expense of the public.
- vii. Alteration of official documents to derive personal benefits at the expense of the public.
- viii. Demanding, offering and acceptance of any form of gratification to obtain unmerited favours or advantages. Such gratification could be material or monetary.
- ix. Using one's official position to influence policies and decisions or offering wrong advice for the purpose of personal advantage or for some other person's advantage at expense of the larger public interest.
- x. Aiding and abetting examination malpractices or other related offences.
- xi. Aiding and abetting tax evasion at the expense of the larger public interest.
- xii. Condoning indiscipline and other unwholesome behavior like drug use, violation of ethics governing certain business operations because the official has compromised his position.
- xiii. Any reciprocal behavior or transaction where both the office holder and some other party, respectively initiate some form of inducement or another, by any kind of rewards, in order to grant or receive illegal or unmerited preferential treatment at the public expense.

## **II. EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW**

For a long period of time, many anti-corruption agencies ranked Nigeria as one of the most corrupt nations in the world. According to Okonjo-Iweala (2012), at the onset of the second Obasanjo's administration in 2003, Nigeria had one of the worst Transparency International (TI) corruption perception index scores, ranking of 132 out of 133 countries assessed. There is no agreement among analysts when this cancer crept into our national life, some pins it to immediately after independence in 1960, while others points at the public service purge of the Murtala/Obasanjo administration in 1975.

Although the two military regimes of Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha were regarded as the most corrupt in the history of Nigeria, incidentally, bodies like Transparency International did not rank the country as the most corrupt nation but ironically, the administration of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo that made anti-corruption a policy thrust of his administration got the worst ranking throughout his eight years on the leadership saddle. Between 199-2007, Nigeria was on top of the corruption perception index chart and never left the first five most corrupt nations in the world. Commenting on this, Danfulani (2013) said, one impeccable realism and feature of Nigeria is that the more the revenues a regime has at its disposal, the more the scale of corruption. Speaking further, he said that it's on record that that the revenue that accrued to the nation's coffers between 29th May 1999 to 29th May 2007 surpasses what accrued to Nigeria from 1<sup>st</sup> October 1960 to the day Chief Obasanjo took over.

From the administration of Alhaji Tafawa Balew to that of General Abdulsalami Abubakar, no administration tackled corruption headlong like that of Chief Obasanjo. He established two anti-graft agencies-the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). These bodies were given broad powers to arrest and prosecute suspects and collaborate with international partners to track-down trans-border fraudsters. These bodies got local and international support in the areas of finance, training of personnel in modern crime detection and fighting etc. All these notwithstanding, the fight did not achieve much for according to Okonjo-Iweala (2013), in 2010, Nigeria's score was 2.4, with a ranking of 134 out of 178 countries assessed. Though, there have been some improvements, Nigeria was still in

the wrong neighbourhood as far as the rankings are concerned. This led to the search for a more efficient approach in the fight against corruption in Nigeria's public service, hence the adoption and deployment of e-government.

E-governance has gained popularity in recent years, with many countries resorting to Information Communication Technology (ICTs) to modernize government, increase efficiency and improve public service delivery. 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).

E-governance came as a result of revolution in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) which finds expression in digital technologies like personal computers, the internet, mobile telephony and different electronic applications. A confluence of these technologies reduced the flow of information, its accessibility and delivery. This came with numerous advantages because citizens were connected with government, government became more efficient and robust, cost of governance and transaction were scaled and transparency enhanced.

Nigeria like most other developing countries joined the e-governance league in the middle of the last decade and ever since then, all areas of life of the nation has experience transformation. At the beginning of e-activities in Africa, Nigeria was assessed low, compared to countries like Kenya, South Africa, Egypt and the rest. With the deregulation of the sub-sector and direct capital investment by foreign firms, the country experienced a quantum leap and overtook all other countries in the continent principally because of the largeness of the population which is roughly put at about 170 million people and the share wealth of the nation which gave a sizeable number of the citizens and government at the three tiers of authorities the capacity to buy personal computers, smartphone and other internet related appliances and run internet programmes that integrated government ministries and departments (Akunyili, 2010 in Danfulani 2013).

Danfulani again posited that in response to this growing reality and to move along with the global drift the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) adopted a national policy on Information technologies and is prepared to integrate Agriculture, health, education etc. Federal Government of Nigeria launched data and research satellite in 2003. These and other sundry policies rolling in the pipe have indeed set Nigeria on the path of countries exploiting ICT for governance. And more government parastatals, ministries and departments are communicating within and outside their organisations using e-channels of communications.

In the last few years all federal government Ministries, Departments and Parastatals have opened websites with full details of their mission, programmes, staff strength, and activities within and outside the country. No single sector is left out in this transformation. The State and Local Governments have since followed suit by linking their ministries, departments and parastatals to the web. This has given them a clear understanding and easy communication channels within and outside their States or Local governments.

### **Deployment of e-Governance in the Fight Against Corruption in Nigeria**

One of the problems of generating revenue in government before the advent of e-governance is the problem of remitting collected revenue to the treasury. Many government agencies operate illegal accounts in many commercial banks and use it as conduit pipe to defraud the government but the Nigerian government decided to plug this loophole with the introduction of Treasury Single Account (TSA) in 2012. Treasury Single Account according to Dikwa (2016) is a bank account or set of linked accounts through which the government transacts all its receipts and payments electronically. TSA is a form of e-government as all payments are done through a dedicated electronic government portal. It is part of the Public Financial Management reform initiatives under the Economic Reforms and Governance Project (ERGP) policy of the Federal government. The Federal government of Nigeria commenced implementation of Treasury Single Account (TSA) in April 2012, with the e-Payment component. The e-collection component of TSA commenced in January 2015. The first Treasury Circular on e-collection was issued on the 19th of March 2015, a presidential directive aimed at ensuring full compliance of the TSA and e-collection initiative was issued on the 17th August 2015 vide a circular by the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation. These guidelines provide MDAs and other stakeholders on the practical implementation of the operations of the Federal Government of Nigeria Treasury Single Account/e-Collection initiative. Dikwa (2016) listed some of the challenges experienced in the service before the introduction of Treasury Single Account as:

- i. Some MDAs maintain and operate hidden commercial bank accounts, eg, domiciliary accounts.
- ii. Incessant transfer of funds from TSA to commercial bank accounts in the name of counterpart funding/associated project accounts by MDAs.
- iii. Diversion of tax revenue into personal bank accounts by some fraudulent MDA staff.
- iv. Inability to determine cash position at any point in time.
- v. Unlimited commercial bank accounts maintained by MDAs.
- vi. Idle cash balance/unspent balances in MDA accounts.
- vii. Over 70 billion naira lost in failed commercial banks
- viii. Inability to track government expenditure.

With the introduction of TSA, most of these challenges were eliminated and improved government receipts. This was why the government of President Mohammed Buhari from 2015 was still able to discharge its financial obligations despite the fact that the price of crude oil (the major foreign revenue earner of Nigeria) fell below 50 dollars in the oil market for close to two years. TSA helped in plugging the holes, through which corrupt government officials embezzle government funds.

Before the advent of e-governance in Nigeria, understanding the actual number of the workforce in the public service in the three tiers of government (Federal, State, and Local) was a herculean task. Administrative staff in collaboration with their colleagues in Finance inflate the number of staff in MDAs with ghost workers, running into hundreds of thousands. Perpetrators of such fraud created a system where most staff are not paid in the banks using workers functioning accounts, they pay cash using their ministries cashiers. The amount of money flowing through this channel into the pockets of these fraudsters surpasses the real salary bills government pay to workers. Successive governments battled with this menace through setting up special staff audit committees and what they called "TABLE PAYMENT" and physical appearance of staff without getting to the root of the matter, (Danfulani, 2013). This method did not resolve the menace as the committee members many at times were part of the perpetrators of the fraud and cannot indict themselves.

This problem lingered until the introduction of Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) by the three tiers of governments across the nation. Recently, the Federal Government made further discovery of ghost workers after scrutinising 215 Ministries, Departments and Agencies. About 45,000 ghost workers were uncovered making the Federal government to save 100b in salaries of the said workers alone. Similar scenarios unfolded at state and Local Government levels, many told stories of how the introduction of Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System saved them billions in salaries only ([www.cnknigeria.com](http://www.cnknigeria.com) 14/2/2013).

Introduction of e-governance and transaction in financial transactions like e-mail, e-verification of payment, e-transfers etc, eliminated corrupt practices bordering on following of files and cheques from one desk to the other and from one accounting officer to another. It has been established that the unfortunate culture of physical following of files and other contract papers is a recipe for corrupt practices between the contractors, internal monitors, and the banks. E-measures ended some of those practices and brought some measure of sanity and level of decency. ([www.negst.com.php](http://www.negst.com.php)). Public officers were left with working on papers and pushing their assessments without knowing owners or seeing them. The pace of files and assessment papers movement instilled confidence in the heart of owners, thereby making them resist temptation of seeking of avenues to bribe their ways through.

Another electronic measure deployed by the government in tackling the monster of corruption in the public service was the Bank Verification Number (BVN). Though the policy was targeted at the whole economy, it ended up playing a vital role in the fight against corruption in the public service. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) in February 2014 launched the Bank Verification Number in Nigeria, the initiative was conceived by the Nigerian Bankers Committee in collaboration with Deposit Money Bank (DMB) and CBN following high demand by banks customers to ensure greater security and identification of banks account holders. In recent times, the biometric technologies have been used to analyze human characteristics as an enhanced form of authentication for real-time security processes. One of the benefits of the BVN is identifying and verifying all individuals that have account(s) in Nigerian banks, a unique ID number (BVN) is issued to every bank customer at enrolment and linked to every account that the customer has in all the Nigerian banks.

With this measure, there was no hiding place for corrupt government officials to hide their stolen money as all their accounts are now linked. This makes it easy for the anti-corruption agencies like the Independent Corrupt Practice Commission (ICPC) and most especially, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to trace and prosecute corrupt government officials, once they discover large amount of money in their linked accounts in various commercial banks.

Many states' Boards of Internal Revenue have developed functional data base of monitoring individuals and corporate taxes by knowing when they are due for payment. Corrupt ways of declaring profit and loss at the end of each financial year just to evade taxes or get complete tax holidays have been reduced to the barest minimum. Recklessness associated with revenue collectors whose trademark was stealing of public monies due to improper records, has made way for a more transparent collection and remittance procedure. Chief Accounting officers of states now tied most of the revenue accounts with alerts showing payments and withdrawals from such accounts. Currently, they can with a simple pressing of a computer key, stop illegal withdrawals or query unauthorized withdrawals from key signatories to such accounts.

Apart from increasing the revenue base of governments, this has drastically reduced the level of corruption in the system. Some State's Governors developed a syndicate accounting system that linked accounts of all states ministries, departments and agencies to single alarm system that tell them withdrawals and deposit of monies. This trap has made fraudsters within the public service especially, staff of the Accounts Department desist from the usual style of open robbery of the treasury in collaboration with top ranking officials in the public service. Fraudsters now have to think twice before attempting to steal government funds, as the

possibility of being caught is very high, as a result of deployment of e-government in the fight against corruption.

### **III. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

In view of the reviewed literature, it was discovered that the deployment of e-governance in the fight against corruption in the public service is really yielding result. It has really blocked several loopholes through which public servants have been using to defraud the government in the past.

For instance, the introduction of Treasury Single Account (TSA) has made some revelations. Some agencies that have been receiving subventions from government all these while, through the introduction of TSA have shown that they are capable of generating revenues which have been going into the personal purse of government officials in the past. A good example is the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), which is the body saddled with organizing matriculation examinations into institutions of higher learning in Nigeria but last year, it remitted about 8 billion naira into the government coffers. This has never happened in the organization since its establishment in 1978. Same goes for many other agencies which hitherto, were generating revenues that were unaccounted for and have been going into individual accounts while the government still sustains it with subventions. Since the era of TSA, which mandates that all funds are paid into a centralized account electronically, this shortchange of the government has been reduced drastically if not eliminated. This has made more money available which the government has deployed to other sectors of the economy like railways, power and other critical infrastructure.

Again, this research showed that the deployment of e-governance has really wrestled the incidence of ghost workers in the public service with its attendant waste of public funds to the ground. Before the introduction of Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS), government has been losing billions of naira annually as it is not easy to ascertain the actual number of personnel in the public service at the federal, state and local government. To stop this was a herculean task because the perpetrators of this crime were top officials in the public service. This continued for years and defied every measure until the deployment of IPPIS, which is a form of e-government. Since then, the menace of ghost workers and the billions of naira being wasted in their payments annually has come to an end as all genuine staff are expected to have a verifiable bank account after biometric capturing. Again, this intractable menace has been taken care of with the introduction of e-government in the public service.

The introduction of Bank Verification Number (BVN) is another deployment of electronic government which has in a long way helped in tackling corruption among officials in the public service. This exercise linked all the different accounts of every individual in all the various commercial banks. By this measure, no public service official can hide any account number again as all are linked and could be easily monitored by the anti-corruption agencies. To avoid being arrested and prosecuted, public service officials are now wary about the amount of money they have in their various bank accounts as all will be traced to one person, since they are all linked through the Bank Verification Number. This has greatly reduced corruption among public service officials in the country as the anti-corruption agencies are working in collaboration with commercial banks and could swoop down on any account, the source of the funds could not be easily explained, unlike before the advent of BVN, where an individual could operate as many accounts as possible, using pseudo unlinked names with various amounts shared among them. BVN made that impossible now since the account owners are captured biometrically.

### **IV. METHODOLOGY**

This research work employed content analysis as its methodology and therefore relies on the existing literature germane to the discussion on the deployment of electronic governance in the fight against corruption in the public service, from where the researcher drew conclusions.

### **V. CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings above, one can conclude that the deployment of e-governance in the fight against corruption in the public service has really yielded positive results. Though corruption is very intractable and has defied several measures by successive governments in the past to bring it under control, the fight has been taken a notch higher with the deployment of electronic government. This has blocked several loopholes through which government's funds were being siphoned in the past by unscrupulous and corrupt public officials. It has equally brought the menace of ghost workers syndrome to an end and made more money available to government for investment in other critical sectors of the economy. Without any fear of equivocation, one can conclude that deploying e-governance in the fight against corruption was a step in the right direction and about the only way to tackle the menace and its debilitating effect on the nation's economy.

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