

Influence of Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission on Female Civil Servants in Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of ICPC's ACTUs on female civil servants (FCS) in Oyo state, Nigeria. Corruption has been observed to be the bane of development to many nations of the world. Reports had it that civil servants contribute to corruption in t public offices through corrupt practices. To curb the menace, Nigerian government established ICPC Act, (2000) to educate and enlighten the public on the negative effect of corruption to national development. ICPC then instituted ACTUs in the civil service to monitor activities of civil servants, given the fact that corruption is said to be prevalent among female civil servants. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The purposive and proportional sampling techniques were adopted to select one thousand, one hundred and seventy six (1,176) respondents selected from the 22 core ministries and departments for the study. Data were analysed using percentage, pearson product moment correlation, multiple regression and content analyses. Findings revealed that, there is significant influence of ICPC's ACTUs on the practice of accountability among female civil servants. Significant relationship existed between ICPC's ACTUs and the practice of social responsiveness among female civil servants and also, a significant relationship existed between ICPC's ACTUs and the respect for rule of law among female civil servants. From these findings, it is recommended that more ACTUs should be instituted in the MDAs. Civil servant, mostly female, should be accountable in the delivery of government services. There should be effective monitoring of ICPC's ACTUs in the MDAs. Freedom of Information Act should be effectively put to practice. And the rule of law should be well respected.

Keywords: Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission, Corruption, Anti-corruption and Transparency Units, Female Civil Servants, Good Governance.

Introduction

Corruption has been the bane of development in many countries of the world especially in the developing countries like Nigeria. Corruption has negative socio-economic impact on national development. Unemployment, inflation, low standard of living and low per capita income characterized nations suffering from this endemic called corruption. The issue of corruption has led to loss of confidence in Nigeria by its citizens at home and abroad due to the activities of fraudsters, corrupt public officials and bad governance (Aibieyi, 2007).

After various attempts to curb the monster called corruption failed by previous governments, former president, Obasanjo with the ICPC Act, (2000) established ICPC with the aim of curbing corruption and corrupt practices in the civil service. ICPC creates awareness and sensitize the public on government opposition to corruption for the general populace to yield the dividend of democracy (ICPC Act, 2000). ICPC then instituted Anti-corruption and Transparency Units (ACTUs) in Oyo state ministries and departments to curb corruption and put the monster at zero level within the civil service. According to the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) Act 2000,(Section 2,) corruption includes vices like bribery, fraud abuse or misuse of power, privileges or position of trust for personal or group benefits (monetary or otherwise)(p.7).

In the year 2002, Nigeria was ranked as the most corrupt country in the world by Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index though the report was contested (Adeoye, 2010). Also, Olukile(2010) asserted that corruption in public service is so rampant in Nigeria that hardly will anyone entrusted with public fund be able to exclude himself or herself from it and that, if anti-corruption laws are adequately applied; some are perpetrated deliberately in defiance to the laws while some are ignorant of the law.

Pantemi (2012) noted concerning the civil servants that:

they are architects of corruption that designs for political appointees and executive officers how to loot resources. They are the quantity surveyors of corruption; they quantify the amount to be looted..., they illegally, but professionally guide them on how to save their ill-gotten money without being traced or intercepted by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission EFCC and Independent Corrupt

Practices and other related Offences Commission ICPC or any other commission locally and/ or internationally. Pg. 1

Ruzindana (1999) in Oyinola (2011) asserts that corruption in African countries is a problem of routine deviation from established standards and norms by public officials and parties with whom they do interact. Hence, the fight against corruption has become a major battle involving all successful national governments and international organizations (Mungiu-Pippidi 2006; Medard, 2002; Anna, Rothstein & Theorell, 2010). Swamy, Knack, Lee and As far (2010) in Terwase, (2010) argued that, women are less involved in bribery and are less likely to condone bribe taking. From their findings, a policy conclusion was made that, if women's presence in public life is increased, it can reduce corruption level. Also, as an accountability measure, the World Bank (2001) evolved a policy statement which supports greater absorption of women into public life. Klitgaard (1988) reported that if civil servants are left to be autonomous in making decisions without being accountable, it will result to corruption. The United Nation's Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (2009) also established that good governance is a product of eight essential ingredients which include; participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It is from this report that this study finds out whether the practice of accountability, social responsiveness and the respect of rule of law as good governance variables have impacted on female civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Several reports have records of male civil servants found guilty of corruption but of recent, reports are evident that some women referred to as nation molders are also guilty of corruption. As Sampson (2010) asserted, gender does not possess identical and universal characteristics; socio-economic, cultural and other factors do contribute to explaining the pathology of gender's response to corruption and corrupt opportunities. A female deputy director was reported to have stashed N2 billion cash in her house along with un-specified amount in foreign currencies. The Lagos state police command recently dismissed two police officers (female corporals) caught on a tape receiving one hundred (N100) naira bribe from a commercial bus driver (Premium Times, 2013). Their letters of dismissal emphasized that their appointments were terminated for despicable acts and corrupt practices.

Statement of the Problem

The practice of accountability and openness among civil servants was reported to be poor. Exhibiting transparency in dealings with the general public was said to have dropped to abysmal level making it difficult for the public to enjoy the dividends of democracy and the values of good governance. What then is the impact of ACTUs in the ministries and departments to curb the menace? Are the ACTUs in the ministries and departments having any effect in the civil service, especially among the female sex? It is against this background that the study establish the impact of ICPC's ACTUs on the female civil servants in Oyo state, Nigeria as there seems not to be any empirical evidence to validate the impact of ICPC on female civil servants as a remedy in knowledge gap.

Research Objectives

The general objective of the study is to assess the impact of ICPC's ACTUs on female civil servants in Oyo state, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- i) ascertain the effect of the ICPC's ACTUs (corruption prevention strategy) on the practice of accountability among female civil servants in Oyo state, Nigeria;
- ii) establish the effect of ICPC's ACTUs (corruption prevention strategy) and the practice of social responsiveness among female civil servants in Oyo state, Nigeria; and
- iii) find out the effect of ICPC's ACTUs (corruption prevention strategy) and the respect for rule of law among female civil servants in Oyo state, Nigeria;

Research Question

Arising from the above it was questioned that;

To what extent do the ICPC's Anti-corruption and Transparency Units (ACTUs) impacted on good governance dispositions of female civil servants in Oyo state, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

- Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between ICPC's ACTU (corruption prevention strategy) and the practice of accountability among female civil servants.
- Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between ICPC's ACTU (corruption prevention strategy) and the practice of social responsiveness among female civil servants.
- Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between ICPC's ACTU (corruption prevention strategy) and respect for the rule of law among female civil servants.

Methodology

Research Design

The descriptive survey research of “ex- post- facto” was adopted for this study to elicit information on impact of the ICPC’s ACTUs on female civil servants in Oyo state, Nigeria.

Population of the Study

The population for the study comprised female civil servants from twenty-two (22) core ministries and departments in Oyo state, Nigeria. Total enumeration technique was used for the population of the female civil servants, in Oyo state, Nigeria estimated at 1808.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Purposive and proportionate sampling techniques were used to select sixty five percent representing (1176) of female civil servants in selected ministries and departments for the study.

Instrumentation

The instruments for the study were structured questionnaire tagged “Female Civil Servants Anti- Corruption Campaign Awareness Questionnaire (FCSACCAQ), “Female Civil Servants Work Disposition Scale (FCSWDS)“and” Good Governance Inventory (GGI).” A modified four point likert rating format was adopted for the respondents’ responses.

Validity of the Study

Validity is a very important attribute of the research procedure as it questions the desirability of the data in meeting the purpose for which they were gathered. The items of ins the questionnaire were prepared to meet the objectives of the study. Experts in community development, social work and sociology were consulted. The items in the questionnaire measured the variables that were related to the objectives of the study.

Reliability of the Study

The reliability of the instruments was determined using the test- retest reliability method. This involved the conduct of a pilot study with a sample of 50 respondents randomly selected from ministries, departments and agencies selected from Ogun state. The reliability and internal consistency of the FCSACCAQ and GGI for the female civil servants were treated to computer analysis using the Pearson’s product moment correlation coefficient. The reliability co-efficient were; FCSACCAQ, $r = 0.92$, FCSWDS, $r=0.73$, and GGI, $r = 0.93$ at 0.05 level of significance respectfully indicating the reliability of the instruments to be high.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using the percentage, multiple regressions and Pearson’s product moment correlation and content analyses

Results and Discussions

Age Distribution of Respondents

Fig. 1 Age Distribution of Respondents

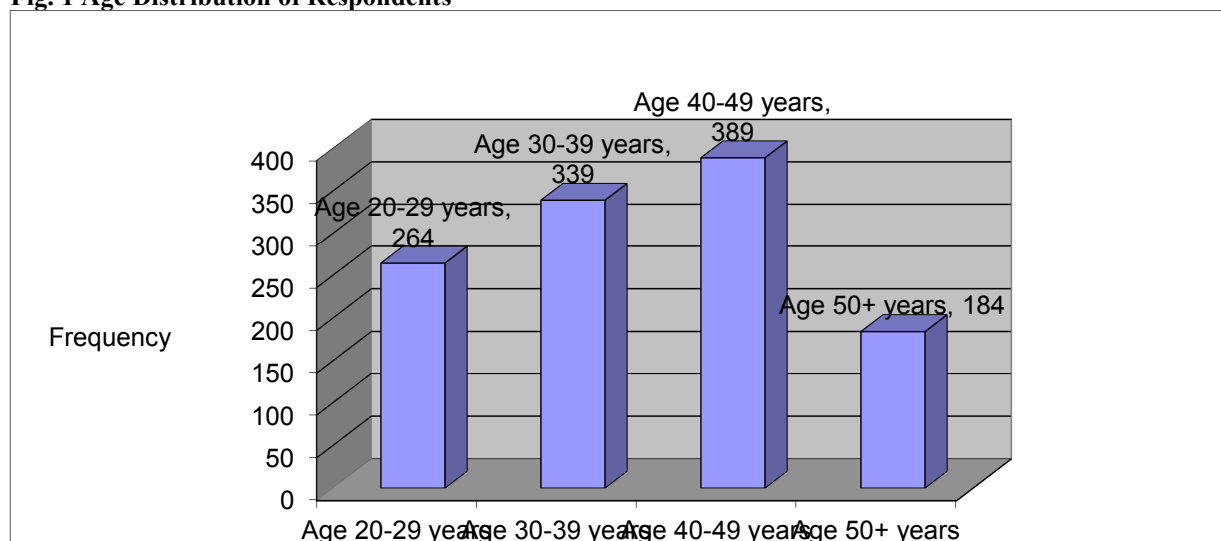


Fig. 1 revealed that 264 (22.4%) of the respondents were within the age range of 20-29 years, 339(28.8%) respondents were within age range 30-39 years, 389(33.1%) of the female civil servants (respondents) were within the age range 40-49 years, while 184(15.6%) of the respondents were above 50 years. The categories of the respondents for the study cut across the age group of between 20 years to 50 years and above.

Fig. 2: Bar Chart on Distribution of the Respondents Marital Status

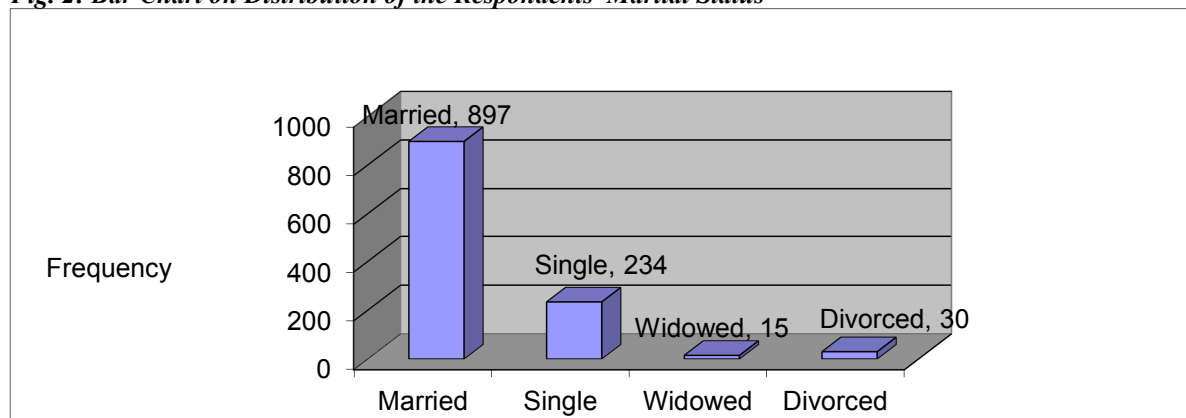


Fig. 2 shows that 897(76.3%) of the respondents were married, 234 (19.9%) of the respondents were single, 15 (1.3%) of the respondents as widowed, while 30 (2.6%) of the respondents as divorced. It is important to note that a larger percentage of female civil servants (respondents) were married. This outcome agrees with the assertion of the World Bank (2001) with a policy statement that supports greater absorption of women into public life for assurance of accountability and transparency in public service.

Fig. 3: Bar Chart showing the Distribution of the Respondents by Religious Affiliation

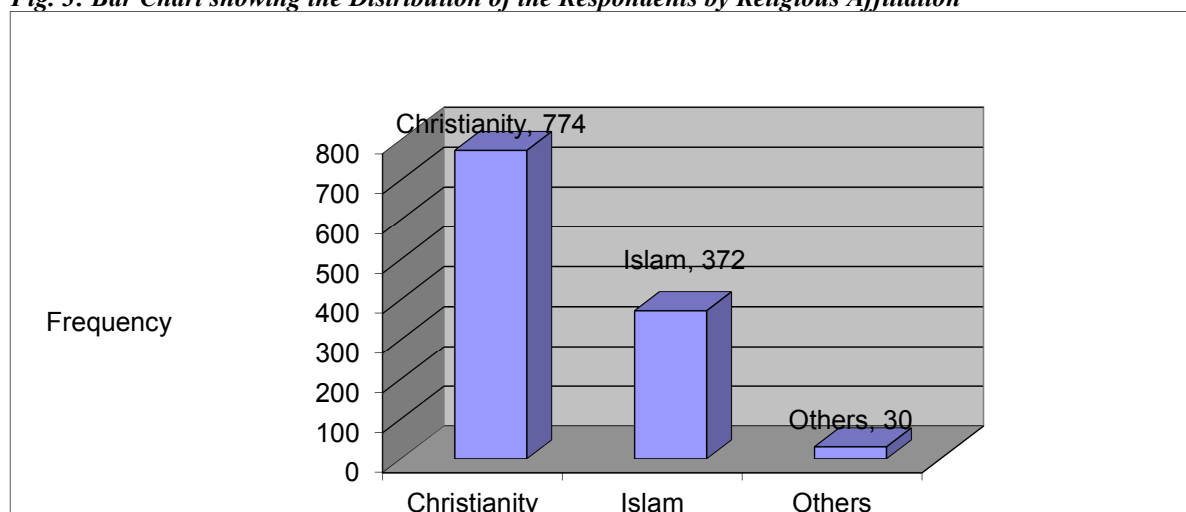
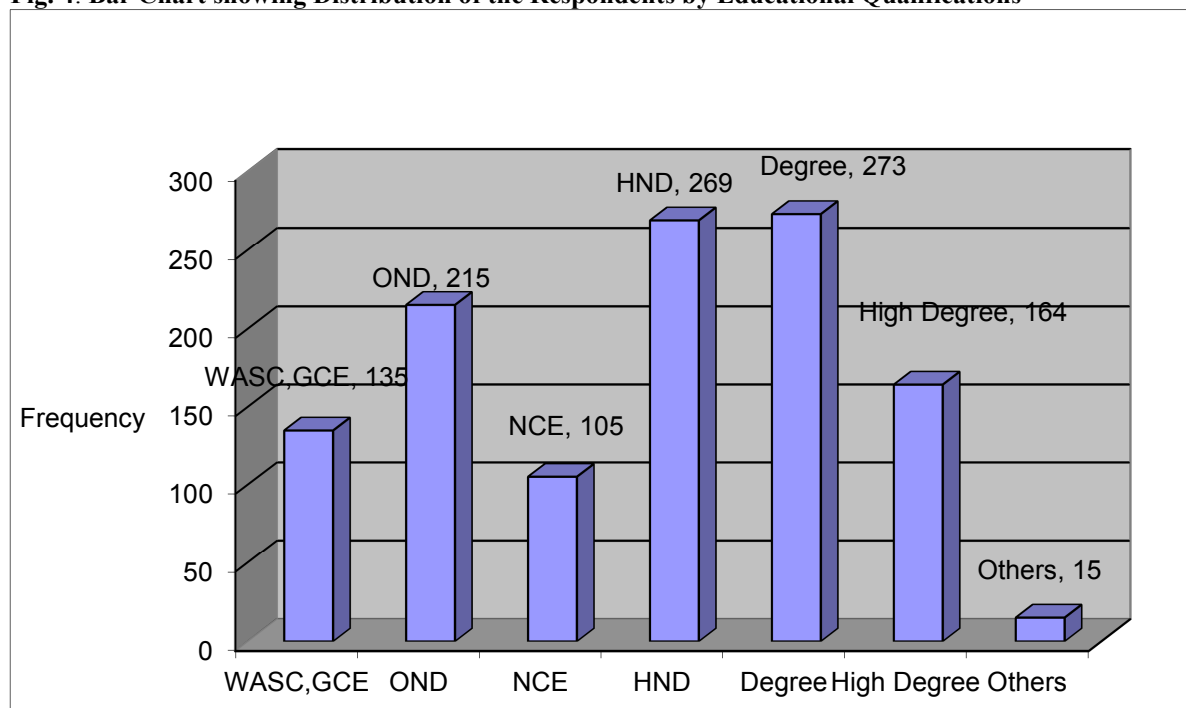


Fig. 3 revealed that 774(65.8%) of the respondents were Christians, 372 (31.6%) were Muslim adherents, while 30(2.6%) respondents belong to other religions not disclosed in the study. This reveals that larger percentage of female civil servants in the study were Christians followed by the percentage that were from Islamic faith while the lowest percentage was recorded for respondents from other religions different from Christianity and Islamic faiths.

Fig. 4: Bar Chart showing Distribution of the Respondents by Educational Qualifications



Academic Qualification of Respondents

Fig. 4 showed 135 (11.5%) of the respondents had secondary school leaving certificates, 215 (18.3%) respondents had OND certificates, 105(8.9%) of the respondents had NCE certificates, 269 (22.9%) respondents were HND holders, 273 (23.2%) respondents had First degree certificates, 164 (13.9%) respondents were Higher Degree holders, while 15(1.3%) had other certificates which was not disclosed in the study. The largest number of qualification represented in the study by the respondents is the first Degree followed by the Higher Degree holders. The Higher National Diploma holders were followed by Ordinary National Diploma holders. Holders of West Africa School Certificate Holders preceded the number of Nigerian Certificate in Education holders while other certificates not mentioned in this study had the lowest number of respondents. This supports the finding of Savage, (2001) that more women are now involved in development activities and in Nigeria, we have more women in executive positions and are actively participating in development activities.

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between ICPC’s ACTU and the practice of accountability among female civil servants in Oyo state, Nigeria.

Table 1: Showing Relationship Between ICPC’s ACTU and Practice of Accountability Among Female Civil Servants.

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
ICPC’s ACTU (corruption prevention strategy)	38.0179	4.3330	1176	.445**	.000	Sig.
The practice of accountability among female civil servants in Oyo state, Nigeria.	15.6607	2.6128				

** Sig. at.01 level

It is shown in the above table 1 that there is significant relationship between ICPC’s ACTU (corruption prevention strategy) and the practice of accountability among female civil servants ($r = .445^{**}$, $N= 1176$, $P < .01$). This finding conforms with Klitgaard, (1988) who observed that if civil servants are left to be autonomous in making decisions without being accountable will result to corruption. In the civil service, there is bureaucracy which curbs civil servants from making hasty decisions.

ICPC’s ACTUs (corruption prevention strategy) had influenced the practice of accountability among female civil Servants in Oyo state, Nigeria. This corroborates the comment by ICPC former chairman, Ayoola (2010);

“Assets declaration by public servants reduces and checkmates the tendency for corrupt practices and also encourages transparency and integrity among public officials”

ICPC’s new chairman, Nta supported the ICPC former chairman’s view

“We are encouraged by the initiatives of state governments to open their systems to

scrutiny and accountability and in the process giving their citizens better infrastructures and improved living standards.
 UNESCO, 2013 established that without the practice of accountability, governance may not be actualized

Hence, the finding established that ICPC's ACTU has influenced the female civil servants in the practice of accountability in the MDAs. Good governance could be achieved if civil servants are accountable and transparent in their dealings with the public and in handling other public duties. The finding corroborates United Nation's Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (2009) report which established that good governance is a product of eight essential ingredients which include; participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. The finding also established the UNDP (2005) report that good governance depends on people's participation, transparency and accountability

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between ICPC's ACTU and the practice of social responsiveness among female civil servants in Oyo state, Nigeria.

Table 2: Relationship Between ICPC's ACTU and The Practice of Social Responsiveness Among Female Civil Servants in Oyo state, Nigeria.

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
ICPC's ACTU (corruption prevention strategy)	38.0179	4.3330	1176	.420**	.000	Sig.
The practice of social responsiveness among female civil servants in Oyo state, Nigeria.	12.6922	2.5433				

** Sig. at .01 level

It is shown in the above table 2 that there was significant relationship between ICPC's ACTU (corruption prevention strategy) and the practice of social responsiveness among female civil servants in Oyo state, Nigeria. ($r = .420^{**}$, $N = 1176$, $P < .01$). Hence, ICPC's ACTUs (corruption prevention strategy) had influenced the practice of social responsiveness among female civil servants in Oyo state, Nigeria. This finding corroborates with UNESCO (2013) that good governance requires that institutions responsible for discharging government services do so to the stakeholders concerned within the required timeframe. This reveals the awareness generation moved by the ICPC by instituting ACTUs in the MDAs through education of the civil servants and the public on anti-corruption campaign awareness programmes in the conduct of government business at all levels so as to reduce the incidence of corruption. This necessitates the establishment of ACTUs to respond and serve as watchdogs in monitoring issues concerning corruption among civil servants. (ICPC Act, 2000)

Ho₃: There is no significant difference between ICPC's ACTU and respect for the rule of law among female civil servants in Oyo state, Nigeria.

Table 3: Relationship Between ICPC's ACTU and The Respect for the Rule of Law among Female Civil Servants.

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
ICPC's ACTU (corruption prevention strategy)	38.0179	4.3330	1176	.530**	.000	Sig.
The practice of rule of law	15.9116	2.3091				

** Sig. at .01 level

It is shown in the above table that there was significant relationship between ICPC's ACTU (corruption prevention strategy) and the practice of rule of law among female civil servants in Oyo state, Nigeria. ($r = .530^{**}$, $N = 1176$, $P < .01$). This finding corroborates the ICPC Act (2000) that corruption tend to thrive in organizations that do not have a wide range of regulation, rules and policies binding the organization as corruption perverts the rule of law. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) protocol on the fight against corruption (2001) obliges member states to promote the norms of separation of powers, respect for the rule of law and due process...and freedom of the press, as some safeguards against corruption and bad governance. Every organization especially the civil service must have rules, regulations and policies that guide employees and management as appropriate conduct and acceptable behavior within the organization.

Hence, ICPC's ACTUs (corruption prevention strategy) had influenced the practice of rule of law among female civil servants in Oyo state, Nigeria. This justifies the ICPC Act, (2000) that asserts that, every organization, private or public must have rules, regulations and policies that guide employees and management as regards appropriate conduct and acceptable within the organization...corruption perverts the rule of law.

Discussions

The findings of this study established that there are ICPC's ACTUs in MDAs with the purpose of educating the civil servants on corruption and anti-corruption posture of the government. ACTUs in the MDAs monitor issues of corruption and corrupt practices within the civil service. Corrupt officials are identified through whistle blowing/ blowers. Female civil servants are expected to be embodiment of integrity, transparency, openness, being accountable, showing respect to the rule of law and responsive to the need of the public. The study restricted itself to some of the indices of good governance which characterizes the mandate of ICPC; accountability, social responsiveness and the respect for the rule of law. ICPC former chairman, Ayoola (2010) emphasized that asset declaration by public servants reduces and checkmates the tendency for corrupt practices. The result in the research hypothesis one indicated that there was significant relationship between the ICPC's ACTU and the practice of accountability among the female civil servants for the study. The result in hypothesis two established that there are significant relationship between ICPC's ACTUS and the practice of social responsiveness among female civil servants. The result in the research hypothesis three established that there is significant relationship between ICPC's ACTUs and the respect for the rule of law. This supports the report of the World Bank (2001) establishing the fact that governments are deeply interested in curbing corruption. The ICPC Act 2000 asserts that every organization, private or public must have rules, regulations and policies that guide employees and management as regards appropriate conduct and acceptable within the organization. Civil servants are expected to be open in their service delivery to be accountable. The United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) is known with prohibiting all forms of corruption. This could be done through preventive measures, code of conduct for law enforcement officials, international code of conduct for public officials, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA, 2009). African Union (AU) convention on preventing and combating corruption (2003) laid emphasis on the establishment of anti-corruption agencies, the development of accountability and use of public education and awareness to introduce zero tolerance for corruption. Nations of the world including Nigeria now supports the anti-corruption policy of participating governments including Nigeria.

Contribution to Knowledge

The findings of this study implied that ICPC's ACTUs instituted in MDAs are having impact on female civil servants. If encouraged, female civil servants will contribute to the national network in the civil service with their male counterparts to bring about sustainable national development devoid of corruption. With the practice of accountability, social responsiveness and the respect for the rule of law and other indices of good governance, female civil servants would contribute more to the development and preservation of national resources. ICPC should institute more ACTUs in MDAs to achieve the mandate that established it.

ICPC's ACTUs in the ministries and departments should be more functional in the delivery of their services, particularly through enlightenment campaign, seminar presentation among others. Educational institutions and other government parastatals would find ICPC's ACTU relevant in educating and encouragement of whistle-blowing in work places especially in the civil service.

This study established the need for the female civil servants to understand their gender role more as nation builders and life molders that should contribute positively to enhance community development. The findings also established that the task of monitoring the various activities of the civil servants should be of great concern to policy planners, decision makers at various leadership positions to support the anti-corruption policy of government. The findings established the need for political will to secure the conviction of corrupt officials whenever they are found wanting.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

- a. ICPC institute more ACTUs in the ministries, departments and agencies of government.
- b. ICPC should sensitize the civil servants more of the need to shun corruption in public offices for our nation to develop.
- c. Education and enlightenment programmes should be more encouraged through ICPC's ACTUs instituted in the MDAs.
- d. Whistle-blowing should be more encouraged with adequate sensitization among civil servants by the ICPC to protect the nation's resources from the greedy ones among civil servants.
- e. Freedom of Information Act (FOI) should be practiced and well actualized in the civil service. This will encourage the public office holders to grant information that may be needful to the public for collective benefits which community development portrays.
- f. It is also recommended that ICPC should awake to their responsibilities by not covering any misconduct through the practice of accountability which good governance portrays.
- g. Government should be responsive in discharging result oriented services to the public by identifying

- first the targeted need of the community.
- h. For the government to sustain anti-corruption campaign agencies, utmost attention should be put on the prevention against corruption rather than the law against it.
 - i. Anti-corruption laws should be enforced. The Act that put ICPC in place should be revisited as the existing punishment for offenders have been antagonized by the general public with cases abound.
 - j. Social transformation is needful to reform, re-orientate the minds and hearts of female civil servants through political education. Through political education, more women would be better informed that corruption is a hindering factor to national development,
 - k. There should be respect for the rule of law to enhance national development. Civil servants should be paid desirable wages that would make them compatible with their counterparts in other economies.

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