

The Roles of Integrative Systems in Fighting Corruption in Alamata Woreda, Tigray Regional State

Gosa Setu

Assistant Professor, College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Department of Civics and Ethical Studies, Arsi University, Ethiopia

Abstract

Anti-corruption education is an essential tool for fighting corruption, but it is not adequate means of fighting it. The roles of the integrative efforts of different sectors and actors are imperative means of fighting corruption but its roles have not been far studied. Therefore, the objective of this study is to assess the roles of integrative systems in fighting corruption in Alamata Woreda. The data collected through key informants and focused group discussions, as well as secondary sources, were critically analyzed. As a result, the integrative roles of police officers, courts and prosecutors have also contributed very crucial roles to fight corruption in the woreda. Tigray Regional State General Auditor also plays a great role in accounting, financial and material management. In addition to this, strict follow up of higher and middle-level leaders, and follow up of a budget by standing committee from federal parliament and Tigray regional state council have also contributed a great role in fighting corruption. Interim-Audit also plays a vital role to fight corruption in the woreda. In addition to this, the advisor roles of internal auditors are also performing vital activities in fighting corruption. Besides, the managers of the Alamata woreda are strengthening the procurement units with hiring qualified and experienced procurement specialists and implementing accountability mechanisms through enhanced internal auditing capabilities. The business communities of Alamata Woreda in collaboration with the woreda administration and community elders are also contributing their respective roles in fighting corruption in all its forms. It also makes businesses stronger and more ethical. Besides, awareness creation through manuals, directives, rules, and regulations of the government bodies at different levels are also helping the woreda as working tool in fighting corruption. Further, to fight corruption, anti-corruption policies, strategies, and mechanisms must be dynamic, integrated and holistic.

Keywords: Integrative Systems, Fighting, Corruption

I. Introduction

Corruption intensifies political, economic and social costs of society. Development, democracy, and peace are difficult to achieve in countries where corruption prevails. It is a serious problem which is undermining the legitimacy of the governments and weakening their structures, reducing efficiency, aggravating poverty, marginalizing the poor, and finally speeding up social unrest and injustices (Tefaye, 2007). It also involves the abuse of public power in favor of special interests in order to attain personal benefits (Arsema, 2010; Altamirano, 2007; Amundsen, 1999). The anti-corruption operation cannot be triumphant with a government endeavor alone (Kpundeh 1998 cited in Shimelis, 2005). 'Even putting the most determined enemies of corruption into top leadership positions is not enough if they lack political backing and the 'space' required to oppose corruption actively' (ibid). Anti-corruption actions necessarily require public backup in which both government and a non-government organization has a key role to play (Aumann, and Jacques, 2005). Thus, hosting integrative systems including business enterprises are critical in realizing integrity.

The survey conducted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in the year 2004 for 28 African countries indicated that Ethiopia's performance in promoting good governance to be far below the expectation (Reporter, 2004). The 'overall index of Ethiopia is 36% while the average for the 28 countries is 53 %' (ibid). This implies that corruption negatively affects the growth and living standards of the citizens in particular and the development journey of the Ethiopia in general. Besides, the surveys compiled by Transparency International in 2005 ranked Ethiopia 137 out of nations surveyed, alongside countries such as Cameron, Liberia, Iraq, Azerbaijan, and Indonesia (Werve and Global Integrity, 2006). This means that Ethiopia is among the worst countries in corruption in the world. In 2007, Ethiopia's ranking in Transparency International Corruption Perception Index was unchanged, 138th out of 179 countries compared to 130th out of 163 countries in 2006 (ADB, 2007).

Due to the seriousness of the problems it causes, corruption still needs to be fought. As a result, Ethiopia is taking different measures and means to reduce the prevalence of corruption. For instance, introducing the systems of custom administration, pursuing procurement and budget reforms, auditing and accounting, the inspections and internal control systems have been implemented in fighting corruption in particular, and enhancing good governance in the country in general. In this regard, the anti-corruption actions at different levels involve a wide range of strategies and all-inclusive stakeholders to reduce the chance of occurrence of corruption (Shimellis, 2005; Koen and Tewodros, 2011). Moreover, expanding ethics and anti-corruption

education are crucial as a tool of fighting corruption (Tesfaye, 2007). Besides, numerous regulations and reforms have been introduced by legislators at different levels to fight procurement related corruption and solve problems regarding financial management (ibid). Thus, it is needful to clearly assess the roles of the integrative efforts of different government sectors and business enterprises on the ground due to the rationale that the efforts of strong integrity systems are not exhaustively studied and identified so far in the literature.

II. Methodology

Methodologically, this study used qualitative research approach to explore views, explanations, experiences, and personal opinions on the issues under the research. Participants in the qualitative inquiry selected using convenience and purposive sampling methods based on their merits of a position they occupy and knowledge of the issue under the study. The data collected largely from primary and secondary sources. In order to obtain primary sources, participant observation, focused group discussion and key informants interview conducted while secondary sources are collected from books, journal articles, and research reports and newspaper.

Accordingly, a semi-structured interview was conducted with officials and experts who are working at Finance and Economic Development of the Alamata woreda as well as officials who represented Tigray People's Liberation Front in the woreda. The police officers of the woreda, vice commissioner and investigator at Tigray Ethics and the anti-corruption commission also involved in the study as key informant participants and in turn they asked questions pertinent to the roles of integrative systems in fighting corruption in Alamata woreda. Auditor at woreda and experts from Auditor General of the Regional State also participated in the interview as key informants. In addition to this, business enterprises which frequently participated in different bids are also involved in the study as focused group discussion participants. The data collected through different means are transcribed, described, and critically analyzed.

III. The Roles of Integrative Systems in Fighting Corruption in Alamata Woreda

There are integrative systems that have been helped the Alamata woreda to fight against corruption. Tigray Regional State's Ethics and Anti-corruption Commission, General Auditors, top management of the woreda and police officers were involved in the integrative actions to tackle the problem. The results of the key informants' interview also indicated that the integrative roles of police officers, courts, and prosecutors have also contributed very crucial roles to fight corruption in the woreda in particular and in the region in general. Besides, there is a manual which helps police officers and prosecutors to fight corruption in the woreda. This manual emanates from the procurement directive, developed by Tigray Regional State General Auditor plays a great role in accounting, financial and material management. The key informants in finance and economic development sector argue that strict follow up of higher and middle-level leaders, and following up of the budget by standing committee from federal parliament and Tigray regional state council has also been contributed a high role in this regard.

Interim-Audit through which sensitive and susceptible areas are audited twice a year and this, in turn, has contributed a vital role to fight corruption early before it is adversely affecting the public resources. The key informants in finance and economic development sector also argue that in 2011/12 Ethiopian federal auditors were staying in the woreda for fifteen days. They also added that, previously Tigray Regional State general auditors were coming once a year but after 2011 they come twice in a year for requesting and examining the six-month report. In this regard, the key informants argue that the comments of Tigray Regional State and Federal Government general auditors were similar, which were working gaps in the implementation of rules/laws. In addition to this, internal auditors are also performing vital activities in fighting corruption. They make sudden visit or audit and even they are orienting top management of the woreda.

Key informants in finance and economic development sector of the Alamata woreda argue that auditors have been working as an advisor for the experts of the finance and economic development sector. They also argue that there is weekly communication/meeting among auditors, other junior and senior experts as well as officials as experience sharing and problem-solving stage in the woreda. Besides, the internal auditor of the woreda argues that the top management of the Alamata woreda is strengthening the procurement units with the hiring of qualified and experienced procurement specialists as well as introducing accountability mechanisms, through enhanced internal auditing capabilities. Moreover, the top management of the woreda is also working with external-internal linkages. In this regard, the command of the cabinet has been played an appreciating role in fighting against corruption via the strict support and follow up of the governing issues and public resources. In addition to this, police officers of the woreda stated that the commitment of local people has been very high to fight corruption in Alamata woreda.

At woreda level, regular meeting and supervision almost in all sector offices have been undertaking. Moreover, operational tasks such as planning, supervision, and financial management have been consolidated via monthly reports and actual performance on service delivery targets. Enhancing financial transparency has been evaluated from time to time.

All the interviewed police officers argue that they are fighting against corruption through the gathering of information regarding corruption from different actors. As to them, a variety of sources of information can trigger corruption investigation. Besides, they also argue that fighting corruption through awareness creation methods has been strongly continued in collaborated with Tigray Ethics and Anti-corruption Commission. From this, one can understand that reports from citizens are useful for all who have the objective to fight corruption. In addition to this, all most, all police officers argue that inter-sectors co-operation and co-ordination as well as the pro-active engagement of many actors through the organization of joint meetings and listening to their governance concerns in the woreda. Inter-sector task forces/investigating teams of police officers with other stakeholders are established as effective tools to investigate and fight corruption.

In addition to this, key informants from Tigray Ethics and Anti- Ethics Commission argue that skills and personal qualification of anti-corruption efforts helped police officers, investigators and prosecutors to conduct successful and impartial anti-corruption investigations in the woreda. Moreover, reputation, dedication, ethical and moral values of leaders, experts and business owners have been played a vital role in fighting corruption (Langseth, 1999).

The collective action of business enterprises and community has been considered as the essential tools for fighting corruption in business areas and government offices in the woreda. The response of key informants indicates that business community in the woreda is tried to involve in anti-corruption campaign by the local community and woreda top management to reduce the cost of doing business for both public and business owners as well as to attract investments and to improve public trust in business due to the fact that 'healthful business is a requirement for sustainable development and effective markets' (PACI, 2015).

The results of focused group discussion depicted that the business communities of Alamata Woreda in collaboration with the woreda administration and country elders have contributed their respective roles in fighting corruption in all its forms. This has been believed in advancing the development and well-being of society and making businesses stronger and more ethical. In addition to this, all the business communities involved in focused group discussion argue that corruption is leading both socially destructive and political crisis in its nature. The society and business community would be benefited when corruption is challenged and where fair business on the merits of goods and services is insured (TI, 2009; TI, 2007; Bamidele, 2000).

The police officers argue that there is collective action to enhance anti-corruption practices and efforts in Alamata Woreda. One of the collective action indicators in the Woreda is those police officers in collaboration with the Tigray Regional State Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission have been involving business enterprises of the woreda in particular and society in general in anti-corruption struggles via awareness creation regarding the costs of corruption on the national economy and political system. Besides, it is obvious that corruption undermines development and modernization of a given country. It also aggravates a complex phenomenon for social, political, economic and administrative repercussion.

Both police officers and business community argue that there are different anti-corruption practices and efforts, including collective action, in a variety of ways at Alamata Woreda. With the continuing and growing attention on corruption from the society, police officers, Ethics and anti-corruption commission and other stakeholders are well advised to be proactive rather than passive in fighting corruption in any administrative units. The collective action increases an individual business enterprises' impact by making fair business practices and it is a way to effectively resist corruption and corruptors by both police and community.

The key informants from the Woreda administration, auditor, and experts from Finance and Economic Development of the Alamata woreda implied that before 2010/11, education sector, civil service sector and microfinance and small enterprise sector have only been considered as the "Front" of the woreda, which means the top agenda. However, due to the existence of the problem of good governance, which is highly manifested in woreda particularly, in areas of urban land occupation and ownership, revenue and tax, the administration of the woreda has been giving the most attention to the good governance as the fourth front next to education, civil service and microfinance and small enterprise sectors after 2010/11. They also added that lack of good governance in Alamata woreda was mainly emanated from poor implementation of finance, land administration, revenue and tax reforms.

The responses of the key informants reveal that through collective action efforts including awareness creation, 'shaming and naming' strategy by the public, promoting accountability and responsibility by many actors have been increasing the income of the woreda in 2011/12. They also added that the income is doubled when compared with before 2011/12 years. For instance, the response of the key informants discloses that in 2009/10 around nine million birr collected in woreda despite low infrastructural developments. But in 2011/12 around 18 million birr is collected as incomes of the woreda.

In addition to this, the existence of strong evaluation and follow up mechanisms helped different sectors to fight against corruption in the Woreda. From this, anyone can argue that transparency and accountability are essential in promoting improved service delivery in both private and public sectors. Quality service delivery is tried to improve in Woreda through an institutionalized system for transparency and accountability. It is socially

comprehensive and responsive to the local needs for ensuring better services by improving the ways services are managed and delivered (Williams, 1987; Williams, 1999; Senior, 2006).

Besides, the participants of focused group discussion believed that awareness creation on manuals, directives, rules, regulations and the implementation of different reforms particularly, citizen's charter and Business Processing Reengineering by the Woreda management and experts have also been contributing a lot to fight corruption in the Alamata Woreda.

IV. Conclusion and Recommendation

Corruption is affecting the economic growth of the country. It exacerbates the economic, social and political problems of public and private integrity. Consequently, there is no single tool of fighting corruption. Expanding ethics and anti-corruption education among the public is one of the tools of preventing corruption offenses. In this regard, the Ethics and Anti-corruption Commission at federal and regional level governments are launching wide-ranging awareness raising activities. It also took the creditable step in assets declaration and registration in combating corruption, as well as, promoting a public culture of transparency and accountability.

New sanctions must be imposed on business owners that use bribes to win contracts. The business communities that are found to have used bribes to contract winner should be excluded from local and national contracts for several years. In addition to this, to reduce corruption leaders found at different levels should be committed, accountable and responsible as well as, a role model for others. Ethics officers should also be functional and ethical in the office they have assigned. For more awareness creation conference/workshop should be launched to the public so as to fight corruption and exposes corruptors to the legal and administrative measures.

Government leaders, policymakers, and administrators should also apply policies, strategies, mechanisms, and actions to prevent, control and eradicate corruption, as well as, rent-seeking in their respective areas in particular and in their country in general. Anti-corruption policies should also reflect the realistic methods of fighting corruption and involve all stakeholders in effective implementation mechanisms of fighting corruption and promote political support. Further, anti-corruption policies, strategies, and mechanisms must be dynamic and comprehensive.

V. References

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