

UN-ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR AND THE CHALLENGE OF THE TWENTY- FIRST CENTUARY PUBLIC SERVICE IN NIGERI

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ABSTRACT

The issue of ethics and unethical behaviour in public administration is a major phenomenal problem to leaders especially in Latin America, Africa and the continent of Asia. This situation has posed serious concern to good governance and thus engaged attention of scholars, donor agencies and public servants. This, concern for ethics in the public service has become significant as the reputation and success of government depend upon the conduct of public functionaries and what the public believes about the conduct of officials. These experiences over the years have severely diluted, politicized and undermined the credibility and integrity of the public service thus making it weak. Using secondary data/ content analysis, the paper examine some of these unethical behaviours in the Nigerian public service, which has forced it to deviate from its tradition of excellence in performing its duties, why people behaved unethically, Public interest in the behaviour of public officials, ethical dilemmas facing public servants, reasons behind public interest in the behaviour of public officials and strategies adopted to promote ethical behaviour in the public service. Method for data presentation is purely content analysis and Materials drawn largely from secondary data. It is recommended that for Nigeria and other developing to get it right, there is the need for true Leadership hinged on action and to ensure continuity of Government Policies and Programs under succeeding administration.

KEY WORDS: PUBLIC SERVICE, ETHICS, UN-ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

Introduction

The issue of ethics and unethical behaviour in public administration has become a major phenomenal problem to leaders especially in Latin America, Africa and the continent of Asia. This situation has posed serious concern to good governance and thus engaged the attention of scholars, donor agencies and public servants. This concern for ethics in the public service has become a significant issue for several reasons. First, the reputation and success of a government depend upon the conduct of public functionaries and what the public believes about the conduct of the officials. It is, therefore, of fundamental importance for public officials to act justly and fairly to all, not only paying lip service to justice and fairness, but also ensuring that these are manifestly and undoubtedly seen to be done. It is imperative that each public official, upon accepting public employment, take cognizance of the fact that he has a special duty to be fair and impartial in his dealings with the public. The personal self-interest of officials should in all circumstances be subordinate to the public interest, especially if circumstances arise where the possibility of a conflict of interest may become an ethical dilemma. The private activities of public officials ought to be of such high standards that they should not bring discredit to their posts and disrepute to the government (Chapman, 1993; Rohr, 1978; Kernaghan, 1980).

More importantly however, an ethical public service is an important component of good governance, in other words, for more effective and efficient public service institutions and use of public resources, service delivery and the promotion of national integrity is paramount and crucial.

It should be noted however, that in the developed and developing countries, the public perception of widespread unethical behaviour has helped to undermine public trust and public confidence in governments. As a response to this widespread concern on unethical behaviour, governments all over have designed mechanisms aimed at promoting and preserving ethical conduct by public officials. (Dwivedi, 1987; Caiden 1981)

It is against this background that the paper examines some of the major challenge that has downplay the public service, why people behaved unethically, public interest in the behaviour of public officials, ethical dilemmas facing public servants, reasons behind public interest in the behaviour of public officials and strategies adopted to promote ethical behaviour in the public service. The last part is the recommendations.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Ethics

The term ethics generally refer to the basic principles of right action, rules of conduct, honesty or professionalism. (Chapman,1993). Thus, an administrator, or an administrative system, is said to be either ethical or unethical when they depart from the norms and value system of the organization, (Rohr, 1978).

What is interesting however, is the way an individual administrator or an official conduct himself to be ethical within a system whose operational mechanics are unethical. This is one important single source of ethical dilemmas of public officials in both the developed and developing countries.

Another conceptual issue that needs consideration in relation to ethics is that of rectitude and responsibility. Rectitude here refers to individual honesty and administrative behaviour, which public officials subject themselves to and not for private gain. Implied in the reliance on rectitude is the fact that ethics-as-rectitude defined the boundaries of the traditional comparative corruption literature and generally provides the context for debates about the scope, content and general appropriateness of codes of ethics. (Heidenheimer, 1970; Klitgaard, 1988)

However, administrative rectitude is not a problem that readily lends itself to systematic analysis. This is so because as Lippman puts it, that we can never study corruption itself, but only the

exposure of corruption. (Lippman 1930) Ethics as a responsibility refers to the question of to whom and/or to what the administrator looks for moral guidance in making, for example, complex policy choices or in exercising administrative directions. Given the wide differences across systems and cultures in this dimension, it is far more difficult to devise clear ethical standards that encompass responsibility than it is to rely on rectitude. This is so because once we leave the tidy world of administrative and social justice, ambiguity reigns. (Ajuogu, 1983: 287)

Ethics has a macro or comprehensive meaning which could be always applied to all cultures, but it also has a micro or restrictive meaning related to a specific society or societal group. The macro view pertains to good or evil, right or wrong, while the micro view refers to how good or evil, right or wrong are interpreted by a specific society, societal group or even an individual. (Dwivedi, 1978)

To this paper, ethics here refer to the character and conduct of morals of human being as a public employee. Regarding the conduct of public affairs by public officials, it refers to whether the public business was conducted rightly or wrongly and whether the public official behaviour was good or bad when he/she executed his/her official duties. Ethics evaluates conduct against some supposedly absolute criteria and imposes negative or positive values upon it. These criteria can be in writing (legislation) or merely the interpretation by an individual of what is acceptable and what is not. (Chapman, 1993)

Unethical Behaviour

Unethical behaviour as a concept is defined as one that is not morally honourable or one that is prohibited by the law. Many Behaviours fall under this classification including corruption, fraud, discrimination and harassment, improper use of government assets, bribery and kickbacks, lack of compliance to procedures, un-ethical relations with others, illegal businesses and patent infringement (Barrcus & Near, 1991).

Today, the most common un-ethical behaviour in Nigerian public service includes false communication, collusion, conflicts of interest, gifts and kickbacks, unfair practices, discrimination and harassment, and embezzlement.

Why People Behave Unethically

Dedicated employees, who are usually honest, sometimes behave unethically because of the following: that no one will ever find out, that the behaviour is not illegal, that it is in the best interest of the organization, and that the organization will protect them. The costs include low wages,

unemployment, and poverty. If top management wants to improve organizational performance, they must stand firm that ethical methods are encouraged in doing government business.

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Public interest in the behaviour of public officials

Since public officials occupy positions of trust, it is only natural that the public should be interested in their behaviour and official conduct. It is, however, also true that the interest of the public waxes upon whether there is a greater or lesser occurrence of misconduct by public officials and the information released to the public by the media. It seldom happens that the public itself actively probe into the official behaviours of appointed public officials. When it becomes general knowledge that a public official has acted unethically, for example, in the utilization of state moneys, there is usually an outcry for matters to be rectified, but the time the outcry subsides and only sporadic references to the misconduct are made. (Chapman 1993; Kamto, 1997)

Ethical behaviour and professional competence cannot be divorced. Adhering to higher ethical standards of behaviour, but conducting the public business in an incompetent manner, will not satisfy the public or promote the general welfare, and could prove to be just as disastrous as unethical conduct. (Caiden, 1981)

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Ethical dilemmas facing public servants

To advance the public good, the actions of public servants both elected and appointed should always be in the public interest. That is, their official conduct should always be good, right and positive. It should, however, be kept in mind that an incompatibility may exist between ethical prescriptions, legal and regulatory prescriptions. Public servants are expected to always adhere to the rules, and within the public service, ethical conduct is always subject to formal prescriptions based on the public service rules and regulations, as expressed in terms of law. If public officials do not adhere to the rules, which entail acting in accordance with the formal prescriptions of the law, it could happen that conflicting actions may develop into ethical dilemmas. Some of the most common ethical dilemmas with which public servants are confronted, revolve around the following: Administrative discretion; Corruption; Nepotism; Conformity; Administrative secrecy; Information leaks; Values; Public accountability; Policy dilemmas; The relationship between appointed officials and elected political office holders; The influence of pressure groups on the ethical conduct of public administration; The political activities of appointed public officials;

The interest revealed by the public in the behaviour of public officials. (Hanekon, 1986).

Administrative discretion

Public officials are not merely executors of public policy. They make decisions pertaining to the lives of people. In doing so they exercise discretion. The question is then how decisions are to be made to avoid ethical dilemmas. In other words, the promotion of the general welfare depends largely on the use or abuse of administrative discretion. (Rohr, 1978:399) Furthermore, he who has the state of another in his hands ought never to think of himself, (Machiavelli, 1958: 129), but ought to put the promotion of the general welfare above his/her own interest. It is true that within the rules and regulations laid down by legislation and within the prescribed procedures, there is ample opportunity for public officials to use their discretion. When faced with alternatives, the choice of the public official poses an ethical problem: the choice may be acceptable to only a small section of society. The problem is that the selection of one path of action from among several alternatives is often made based on personal preference, political or other affiliations, or even personal aggrandizement, thereby disregarding the possibility of rational decision-making. It could well be that all the prescribed rules, regulations and procedures are adhered to but that the discretionary choice may be viewed as unethical or even corrupt. (Kernaghan, 1980, Henekon, 1986)

Corruption

In most developed countries, disclosures of unethical conduct by public officials are made from time to time. Majority of officials are required to uphold high standards required by public office and to devote themselves in promoting general welfare. The ethical standards of public officials are, however directly related to society. If the public accepts that to secure an expeditious response from a public official some pecuniary or other incentive is necessary and the official accepts the incentive, then the standards of ethical conduct of officials and the public are in fact in harmony from the point of view of the public. However, this may not necessarily be the case as viewed by officialdom. (Klitgaard, 1988; Heidenheimer, 1989)

Administrative secrecy

An area that lends itself to the creation of situations and actions that could prove to become major ethical dilemmas is the secret conduct of public business. This is especially so because secrecy can provide an opportunity to cover up unethical conduct. Secrecy is an ally of corruption, and corruption is always practised in secrecy. It is generally accepted that in a democracy the people have a right to know what the government intends to do, and it would be in the interest of the public for the administration of public affairs to be conducted openly. (Rowat, 1982)

Nepotism

The practice of nepotism (the appointment of relations and/or friends to public positions, thereby ignoring the merit principle) may lead to the downgrading of the quality of the public service in Africa, disrupting the esprit de corps and trust and resulting in corrupt administration, owing to the ability of a select few to impair control measures on account of their personal relationship with the policy-maker, and by reason of their not being easily dismissed or replaced by others. In other words, those who are appointed with the view that they will conform to the standards and views of their appointing authority could prove to be problematic. The preferential treatment of one individual over another, without considering the relative merit of the respective individuals, represents nothing but victimization of an individual or individuals. The snowball effect of victimization could impair the esprit de corps and quality of public administration. (Chapman, 1993; Kamto, 1997).

Information leaks

Official information is often of such a sensitive nature that its disclosure can lead to chaos, corrupt practice and improper gains. Leaking official information at a date prior to the public announcement thereof is a violation of procedural prescriptions and can be an ethical dilemma: the official's personal conception of what is in the public interest may vie with his official obligations. Personal views of the public good may be directly opposed to judgements on the public interest based on a democratic view. The result is that public officials may conclude that official obligations require them to act against their conscience. (Rowat 1982; Rohr, 1978).

Values

The human being is the only living creature that can distinguish between good and bad, and right and wrong. The word values, therefore, refer to the human being's idea of what is acceptable or unacceptable, virtuous or without virtue. Values thus indicate the importance allocated by the individual to activities, experiences or phenomena, and provide the individual with a guideline for his personal conduct. (Dwivedi, 1978).

The fallibility of man can undermine the effective personal performance of the official duties of the public official and could have a spillover effect in that the absence of moral leadership and public accountability could serve as an example to other groups and/or individuals also to indulge in unethical practices. (Waldo, 1994).

Owing to the presence of different cultures in a country, conflicting value judgements can be made which could affect the political activities of the government and the opposition and directly influence the quality of the administration of public affairs. Like anyone else, public officials are affected by value judgements and generally sympathize with the values held by groups and/or individuals in society. The obligation faced by the official who may cause a dilemma is then not to substitute his personal values for societal or community values, but rather to put the values, that will benefit the society and/or community at large as his priority.

It is important to bear in mind that public officials either hold or aspire to leadership positions in their respective institutions and because they freely choose to become public officials, the values of the regime are normative for them and are therefore also the starting point of their ethical reflections. Because of their different personal judgements, individual public officials may have different interpretations of the same societal value. This should not prove to be an embarrassment or an indication of unethical behaviour but should rather stress the point that it is important that public officials should endeavour to understand societal values through an interpretation of and reflection on their values. (Rohr, 1978: 75).

Public accountability

It is worth noting by all public office holders to understand that it is incumbent on them to exhibit high qualities that are considered good. This is because they can neither be entirely possessed nor observed, it is therefore necessary for them to be sufficiently prudent to know how to avoid the reproach of those vices (Machiavelli, 1958: 84) Since public officials are the implementers of public policies, they ought to be accountable for their official actions to their superiors, the courts and the public. It is, nevertheless, possible for them to hide behind prescribed procedures, the cloak of professionalism and even political officeholders.

CHALLENGES OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY

Generally, States and Governments of all countries, whether developed or developing, face contradictions of diverse nature and scope contradictions between full inclusion of some in the new global order and the exclusion of a larger number of others.

The problems, which most developing countries and Nigeria have had to contend with since independence, have very largely, been the product of its history. In carrying out its mandate, the public service must deal with manifold complex and interrelated challenges. These include:

- * Internal staffing and capacity including supervision and management.
- * Streamlining processes for effective, efficient, and equitable delivery.
- * Interacting and coordinating with other institution, including citizenry; and
- * Responding to the complex contemporary challenges that have been shaped by the Colonialist.

The public service must be responsive to development challenges while cognisant of the context and environment that it functions in. It must account for both relations of inter-dependence and intra-dependence in the form of co-operative and integrated governance respectively. Without co-operation and integration, strategic planning and delivery intervention tend to be constructed in isolation from broader development plans and could lead to duplication and wastage. In addition, a lack of co-operation and integration between public service departments could well see the public service that do not meet citizen needs or nationally defined norms and standards. At its core, however, the role, function and mandate of the public service is broadly defined by the Constitution. In essence, the Constitution states, “there is a public service for the Republic which must function and be structured in terms of national legislation, and which must loyally execute the lawful policies of the government of the day.” In addition, the public administration of the public service must be governed by the following basic values:

- * A high standard of professional ethics.
- * Efficient economic and effective use of resources.
- * Public administration must be development oriented.
- * Services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias.
- * People’s needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policymaking.
- * Public administration must be accountable.
- * Transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information.
- * Good human resource management and career-development practices to maximise human potential; and
- * Public administration must be broadly representative of the Nigerian people with employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness and the need to redress the imbalance of the past to achieve broad representation.

³ INSTITUTIONAL AND OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

Government efforts to enhance the public service are constrained by a range of factors including:

- * Institutional weaknesses.
- * Poor human resource management: lack of planning and development.
- * Widespread gaps in the quality and relevance of training and institutions.
- * Poor linkages and partnerships between government and training providers.
- * ¹⁸ An inadequate focus on norms, values, attitudes and orientation of public officials; and ³ public service delivery in a Democratic, Developmental State
- * ³ A lack of credible data and limited capacity for basic analysis and planning.

Human resource management in the public service is complex. It is often simplified and characterised as being either about personnel administration or about strategy. It encompasses both. Building HR capacity in the public service needs to take a balanced approach in which the administrative and strategic elements are both appreciated and developed, since without the one the other is rendered ineffective. One of the original public service reforms involved the decentralization of the human resources framework. This was seen as a progressive step away from the centralised control and was intended to empower managers/Administrators to take the critical decisions that would lead to efficiency and effectiveness by unlocking the rule-bound bureaucratic culture that was inherited and moving towards a more results driven orientation.

³ Virtually all citizens' experiences of the public service are through public institutions such as schools etc. ³ These service points are "often run down, visibly dirty, have shortages of staff, equipment and vehicles, have no proper signage and seating areas for citizens, have no rest areas or other facilities for staff, struggle to provide clean reliable water and other basic services, and are poorly managed and unsupported by other senior echelons in the management hierarchy. (It is also most frequently the point at which citizens experience corrupt or inept officials or public servants who simply do not want what they are supposed to). It is quite clear that the public service has not fully internalised the critical role that service points play in the service delivery value chain, and as the 'moments of truth' as far as citizens are concerned serves to undermine and render irrelevant everything that may be otherwise soundly managed and executed".

³ To citizens, everything done by government, departments of Public Service and Administration, is irrelevant unless they experience service points differently from the way described. A major

problem in the public service is that there tends to be no clear standard for the quality of service that is rendered, and where there are standards; there are often no consequences for the failure to achieve those standards. Should this become a culture, it would become difficult to change.

Cultures however are created, promoted and sustained through a dialectic between structure (defined processes and systems) and agency through the kind of people recruited, and promoted, and how those people and the organisation itself, relate to each other, how the individuals and the institution treat and account to stakeholders, and how they define themselves in relation to the rest of society.

This is not to suggest therefore, that the misdirection, corruption and incompetence of some of our leaders cannot not be blamed on our political leaders downplaying the public service. For instance, other operational challenges of Nigeria's recurrent public service in the decades of the century are to be found in the period of the last thirty-five years of military and civilian rule.

Second, the strained relationship between politics-administration interface" is a major setback as it often affects government activities. In many instances, these relationships are often characterized by tension, which has made conflicting issues interesting among scholars and public domain.

Other factors affecting the efficiency of public civil service due to advent of democracy in particular, as Ajayi, (1998) notes the following: Over staffing and poor remuneration of employees, poor assessment of manpower needs and the use of wrong criteria to appraise staff performance, lack of qualified technical support as opposed to the abundant staff in the country, failure to carry out periodic assessment of manpower needs leading not only to inequitable systems of compensation but also to inadequate job description and poor physical working conditions. These problems have led to poor recruitment procedures, inadequate training and ineffective supervision; there has also been considerable political interference in the process of personnel administration, leading to improper delegation of power, ineffective supervision and corruption. In addition to the above, four other major impediments that have hampered greatly the effectiveness of the public Service in Nigeria includes among others; the common problem of salary erosion in the public service that

results in many civil servants in the junior and intermediate levels earning less than 'living wages'. Most cases of what is called "petty corruption" are traced to this problem.

Unfortunately, because of the persistent poor performance of the economies, effort made to tackle the problem has not been effective. The second problem relates to corruption at the level of higher civil servants, most often in collusion with politicians, and sometimes it is a tripartite collusion with businessmen/women as third parties. These corrupt practices are usually related to contract awards. The third problem is the outright looting of government treasuries dominated by politicians, sometimes involving higher civil servants. There is also an international dimension in the form of public officials who slashed away proceeds of looted funds in foreign banks, resulting in the service being regarded as corrupt, poorly trained and poorly attuned to the needs of the poor.

Another operational challenge of Democracy is the issue of abuse of appointment in the public service. This situation in Nigeria and many parts of Africa remain a thorny issue for post-colonial government and by extension, for those countries that have taken steps towards Development. Pertinent question to ask here are: How are such appointments made: Are they based on relevant regulatory, transparent and accountable frameworks that justify such appointments? While this paper does not intend to answer those questions, the issue is that the pervasiveness of such appointment in the public service, without a regulatory framework to justify them, creates space for abuse, corruption and maladministration.

Political appointment as used here implies the practice whereby members of a ruling party or party cadres are appointed to public/civil service positions even when they do not qualify for such positions. This abuse of formal human resource management in the recruitment and appointment process takes place to a greater or lesser degree in many African countries. As Aucoin (1997), notes citizens have a right to impartiality in the administration of law, the implementation of public policy

and the delivery of public service; and a right to expect that positions in the public service be staffed on the basis of merit, without prejudice to any partisan-political affiliation or lack of the same.”

4 However, one is not arguing against the appointment of political appointees per se, as incoming political representatives are entitled to appoint staff whom they can trust, especially their private personnel 4 and with whom they must report to. But these are usually very few, and the processes relating to their appointment must also be clearly outlined in policy and legislation; likewise, their tenure is usually linked to that of the (Political) office bearer to whom they report. The advent of globalisation today is a signal that should remind Nigerian and 4 Africans of the advantages of a meritocracy as a means of ensuring an efficient and effective public administration.

2 Strategies for promoting/ensuring ethical behaviour in the twenty first century

2 The responsibility for maintaining standards and minimizing unethical behaviour within the public service falls on the public service itself. If properly conceived, regulations governing conflicts of interest in the public service are directed towards erecting and maintaining an administrative and management system to protect the public decision-making process. Rather than detecting and punishing the wrongdoer after the fact, such a system reduces the risk of unethical behaviour occurring in the first place. In a well-managed administrative system, the incidence of unethical behaviour would be minimized and, where it did occur, swift disciplinary action would be the norm. Focus should, therefore, be placed on reforming public service procedures and systems to make them more accountable to the public interest. In other words, in an environment of unethical behaviour, significant public service reform will prove elusive if unethical practices are ignored.

Several measures or strategies have been adopted today to fight unethical behaviour. As discussed in the following subtopics:

Ethics codes

One of the most important ways of ensuring positive ethical behaviour is the establishment of a public sector ethics code. The code sets out the ethos that should guide those in managerial/ leadership positions. It reminds public servants of their responsibilities to the public and requires declarations of assets and income. Yet, the codes have not met with great success, mainly because of

lack of enforcement. (Dwivedi, 1978; Caiden, 1981, Ayee, 1997) Establishing and maintaining ethics codes depends on several critical conditions:

- The ethical environment must be accepted by a broad segment of the public sector.
- The deviations must be dealt with equally and consistently across the public sector; and
- The ethical environment requires political commitment and leadership, as well as broad support by civil society. (Stapenhurst and Langseth, 1997)

Improved remuneration

The inadequacy of public sector salaries contributes greatly to unethical behaviour. Ensuring living wages is crucial to public sector efficiency and effectiveness. It is essential, of course, for public servants and the public at large to understand fully the rationale behind any major public sector pay raises, and for them to appreciate that, together with the benefit of higher pay, comes the responsibility of enhanced accountability. Raising pay with no increases in oversight could simply result in prospective job candidates paying for the privilege of obtaining a government job.

Administrative reform

Organizational change within the public service can help minimize the opportunities for unethical behaviour and practices. Such measures include:

- Improving work methods and procedures to reduce delay.
- Increasing the effectiveness of supervision to enable superior officers to check and control the work of their staff.
- Carrying out surprise checks on the work of officers.
- Instituting in-service training for public servants at all levels, together with the formulation and dissemination of clearly defined ethical guidelines and rules of conduct.
- Developing internal financial management systems that ensure adequate and effective controls over the use of resources.
- Providing channels for complaints to enable junior officials to complain about their superior's unethical behaviour.
- Rewarding achievement, recognizing good behaviour and acclaiming role models.
- Making the necessary security arrangements to prevent unauthorized persons from having access to a department's premises; and

- Reviewing the measures taken to prevent unethical behaviour once in three to five years with the aim of introducing further improvements. (Stapenhurst and Langseth, 1997)

A discretionary element in decision-making contains the potential for abuse. Eliminating discretionary decisions altogether, while resolving the dilemma, would be impossible and impractical. Instead, in those areas where discretion must be maintained, it would be more realistic to reduce the monopoly power of bureaucracy by providing rival sources of supply. For example, citizens may apply for a driver's license at any motor vehicle office. In short, it is possible to limit the scope for abuse more systematically by keeping the areas for discretion narrowly defined and by providing clear, public guidelines for the exercise of this discretion.

Improved procurement procedures

Public service procurement procedures can be improved in the following ways:

- Procurement should be economical. It should result in the best quality of goods/services for the price paid, or the lowest price for the stipulated/acceptable quality of goods/ services; this does not necessarily mean procurement of the lowest priced or best quality goods available, but the best combination of these factors to meet the needs.
- Contract-award decisions should be fair and impartial. Public funds should not be used to provide favours. Standards/specifications must be non-discriminatory. suppliers/ contractors should be selected based on their qualifications and the merit of their offers. There should be equal treatment of all in terms of deadlines and confidentiality.
- The process should be transparent. Procurement requirements, rules and decision-making criteria should be readily accessible to potential suppliers/contractors, preferably announced as part of the invitation to bid/make an offer. Opening of bids should be public, and all decisions should be fully recorded.
- A sound and consistent framework is required to establish the basic principles and practices to be observed in public procurement. This can take many forms, but there is increasing awareness of the advantages of a unified Procurement Code setting out the fundamentals and supplemented by more detailed rules and regulations of the implementing agencies. A

number of countries are consolidating existing laws that may have developed in haphazard fashion over many years, into such a code. (Stapenhurst and Langseth, 1997)

Watchdog agencies

A country serious about fighting unethical practices may need to establish new public institutions to carry out functions to prevent unethical behaviour. In recent years, governments have sought to bolster detection efforts by introducing independent agencies or commissions to combat unethical behaviour, such as the office of the Ombudsman and supreme audit institutions.

Anti-corruption agencies

Given that prevention is more efficient and effective than prosecution, a small investigation and monitoring unit with appropriate authority perhaps reporting directly to the legislative body may be much better placed to ensure that effective preventative steps are identified and taken. To operate successfully, such an agency should possess the following:

- Committed political backing at the highest levels of government.
- Political and operational independence to investigate even the highest levels of government.
- Adequate powers of access to documentation and to question witnesses; and
- Leadership, which is publicly perceived as being of the highest integrity.

From the outset, the shape and independence of a commission may well be determined by how the officeholder is appointed or removed. If the appointing mechanism ensures consensus support for an appointee through parliament, rather than government, and an accountability mechanism exists outside government (for example, a parliamentary selection committee on which all major parties are represented, such as a Public Accounts Committee), the space for abuse for non-partisan activities can be minimized. (Dwivedi, 1978).

It is important that the agency has the power to freeze those assets it reasonably suspects may be held on behalf of people under investigation. It may be desirable for the agency to do so prior to getting a court order when speed is of the essence. Without this power, funds can simply be transferred electronically in a matter of minutes. This presupposes the need for a vital tool a well thought-out and effective system for monitoring assets, income, liabilities and lifestyles of decision-makers and public service officials. (Caiden, 1981).

It is usual for an agency to have the power to seize and impound travel documents to prevent a person from fleeing the country, particularly as its power of arrest arises only when there is reasonable cause to believe that an offence has been committed. It is also customary for the agency to have the power to protect informers. In some cases, informers may be junior government officials who complain about the corrupt activities of their supervisors. If an extravagant lifestyle is only corroborative evidence in support of a charge of actual corruption, it will not be of much use. Where a public servant in a position of profit personally is enjoying a lifestyle wholly out of line with his or her known income, it is thought in some countries not to be unreasonable for the individual to be required to provide an acceptable explanation for his or her wealth, as is the case, for example, in Hong Kong. (Stapenhurst and Langseth, 1997)

8 Conclusion

Today, there is a tremendous loss of confidence in corporate conduct and there is an urgent need to work towards restoring it. Although ethics education seems to produce limited evidence of changing behaviour, the commitment of management to monitor annual ethics education for all employees will not produce the desired favourable results. There should be clear communication to the employees of what are honourable and expected behaviour in the organization

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This paper has shown that those who are employed in the public service are supposed to devote their attention to the promotion of the general welfare and not to their personal aggrandizement. Their official activities are supposed to be always good, right and positive, which means they should steer clear of the abuse of administrative discretion and unethical conduct, such as the practice of corruption, nepotism or conformity to enhance their own positions. Because there is a public trust, public officials should not leak official information, but rather practice administrative secrecy not for the sake of secrecy or to cover up maladministration, but in the interest of the State

To this end therefore, public officials are requested to **1** recognize the values of society and its communities and not substitute their own value choices for those of the society.

Recommendations

Having examined what constitutes an un-ethical behaviour, the following have been recommended:

There should be.

- (a) The Need for True Leadership

Leadership hinged on action, to improve a lot of the society, the hallmark of a real leader, after all is not only that he or she knows what should be done, but also that he or she does the correct thing.

- (b) Continuity of Government Policies and Programs: All government policies and program if not fully completed under a particular administration should continue under a succeeding administration. Governments and administrations may change and will indeed continue to change but the will of the people remains the same. Thus, it may only change in perspective, but the source remains the people. Indeed, discontinuity of government projects brings disequilibrium in development projects, consequently, at the end of the day we end up with lackey development, not satisfying the people and leaving a gap in their quest for growth and sustainable development

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