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Anti-corruption Confidential Reporting: where are Nigeria's Whistleblowers?

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Abstract

For nine years now (2016-2025) Nigeria has operated a whistleblowing policy in its unending fight against corruption. The policy was celebrated by the citizens at the outset as they consentingly participated in the nation's bid to redeem itself from endemic corruption and successes were recorded. However, having of late observed significant lull in whistleblowing in the nation, this paper is driven by the objective to identify the hurdles against the act of whistleblowing with intent on proffering pathways towards sustaining the policy for the good of the nation. It is founded on the Utilitarian Ethical Theory as it sees whistleblowing as actions taken in public interest. Deploying the desk research methodology, the paper discovers that whistleblowing continues though in a relatively very low ebb in the nation as evidenced in the FCTA land misallocation disclosure in 2025 inter alia. The paper highlights instances of whistleblowers' persecution to drive home repercussions citizens suffer on acts of patriotism. It identifies lack of decisiveness in government's handling of revealed cases, an overriding sense of betrayal in whistleblowers' continued exposure to retribution and the nation's opaque information management system in the face of the FOI Law, as the bane of whistleblowing in Nigeria. The paper strongly recommends among others, the immediate enactment of a standalone whistleblower law and unfettered application of the tenets of the Freedom of Information Law as veritable means of sustaining whistleblowing in the nation to maximize its benefits.

Keywords: Whistleblowing, Confidential Reporting, Corruption, Whistleblower protection, Public Interest

Introduction

Going by global economic standard, Asia, Latin, America and Africa host the poorest countries in the world (Awopeju, 2022). In Africa, much of the poverty experienced to date is attributed to colonialism and exploitation as well as unfavourable global economic policies. However, the new awakening in Nigeria particularly is that notwithstanding the factors mention above, Nigeria is old enough as a sovereign nation to be able to extricate itself from poverty and stop passing the buck on colonialism and exploitation. Holders of this position believe that instead, Nigeria is held down by corruption manifesting in vices such as political instability occasioned by electoral fraud and godfatherism as well as economic challenges including poor resource management and avarice. Nigeria's corruption ranking by Transparency International in 2024 was that it was the 145th out of 180 countries (Athena Perspectives, 2025). Corruption is adjudged responsible for debt overhaul, constraints to credible elections and has been obstacle to free flow of foreign direct investments. (Hussaini & Kabuga, 2025). In spite of the various natural resources and the teeming population that should attract investment across the globe. The fallout of this situation could be referred to as "penury in wealth" going by reports from the CNN that despite being the largest oil producer in Africa, Nigeria has to struggle to translate its resource wealth into rising living standards (Eames, 2018) in 2018, following data released by world poverty clock collected by the Brooklyn Institute, Nigeria was announced to have overtaking India to reach the top of global poverty ranking (Eames, 2018). To date, there are no available records indicating that the situation has been reversed or another country has succeeded Nigeria in the ranking. Earlier in 2016, Nigeria earned the appellation of being "fantastically corrupt" in UK prime Minister's speech, on the eve of an anti-corruption summit in London in the same year (Amenaghawon & Ilo, 2016). These and many other instances underscore the depth of corruption in the Nigeria system.

It is a given that corruption is foster of when answerability and observability are ignored in the management of a public office. It follows therefore that the antidote of corruption is transparency and accountability. The concept

of accountability denotes that government officials must be accountable for the execution of their duties and decisions and actions taken in their areas of responsibility (Kuhn & Sherman, 2014). Similarly, the idea of transparency demands that public officials and civil servants as well as their counterparts in the private sector have a duty to act visibly predictably and understandably to promote participation and allow third parties to easily perceive what actions are being performed (Transparency International, 2021). Though, both accountability and transparency are embedded in the various good governance-oriented policies, neither is encouraged and thus, the polity is fraught with egregious underhand dealings that have robbed the citizenry of its right to better living standards. Notably, government has established agencies in the fight against corruption including The Corrupt Practices and Related Offences Commission (ICPC) 2000), The Economic and financial crimes commission (EFCC) 2002, Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit (NMPIU) 2003 and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) 2003) (Awopeju, 2022). They all have to work with information from informed sources no other than those at the helm of affairs who double as perpetrators of corruption. Sadly, such public servants allow only information that would not be injurious to their self-seeking interest to the public. This explains why a kind of confidential reporting in the form of whistleblowing comes in handy in the anti-corruption fight. However, there are indications that whistleblowing acts by citizen has experienced a downturn in the polity today.

Theoretical Foundation

This study is founded on the Utilitarian ethical theory of the 19th century. It is attributed to the works of Jeremy Betham and John Stuart Mill and espouses that the rightness or wrongness of an action is a function of the impact (positive or negative) it has on recipients (West, 2025). The central idea of the theory is that the well-being of all or majority of individuals affected by an action should guide decision making in that it justifies or condemns the action. In other words, an action is right if it maximizes overall well-being or benefits for a majority of individuals and vice versa (West, 2025).

Utilitarianism as a social theory is an offshoot of consequentialism which emphasizes that consequences form the bases for any valid moral judgement about an action and the theory has been applied severally for individual choices as well as to social, political and economic policies for the good of society (Tardi, 2025). It projects public interest and downplays an individual's self-gratifying tendencies in the capacity in which he deals with others.

Public interest represents an individual's positive disposition towards the public that informs the position he takes on issues pertaining to the community. Actions taken in public interest connect with dissuading anti-public acts and raising concerns about wrongdoing that would affect the people as individuals or groups manipulate public offices self-seekingly (Public interest disclosure act (PIDA) 1998). Such actions no doubt, connect with the idea of whistleblowing which is a recognized form of raising concerns in public interest (Children's Court Guardian Agency, 2025) by citizens who notice anti-public intrigues of public servants. Whistleblowing could therefore be seen as a utilitarian act against the wiles of individuals, groups etc. to shortchange the citizens.

Methodology

The desk research methodology was adopted in this study as data were collected from existing literature pertinent to the study. The work relied on copious search for data in books and journal articles obtained from both the physical and virtual libraries.

Conceptual Clarifications

Whistleblowing: The idea of whistleblowing represents a situation where an individual decides to disclose an act of wrongdoing that would shortchange the public in the handling of a public office. The individual does so in order to forestall possible acts of corruption or to call the attention of the authorities to bring to book perpetrators of such acts. The whistle is often blown against people in authority hence the whistleblower risks his own safety and wellbeing in public interest.

Confidential reporting: Confidential reporting is situation where an informant offers information to someone with capacity to make resultful use of it but decides to remain unacknowledged because of obvious consequences he would suffer if identified as the source. It is akin to the concept of anonymity in news reporting in journalism context.

Public interest: Public interests is another expression for the idea of public good. It represents a situation where the good of the majority if not all, is given prominence in the decisions and actions people take in society as individuals or groups. It is advocated by governments and right thinking individuals as the means to equity and national development in society.

Citizens Participation in Anti-Corruption Drive

Every nation is populated by two categories of people. They are the citizens and the aliens. By aliens, we do not mean creatures from outer space that are extraterrestrial but mere resident foreigners in the nation. They have an

obligation to abide by the rules and regulation's operative in the nation in which they are foreigners. Citizens on the other hand, are participatory members of a political community who have rights to exercise and obligations to fulfill (Center for Study of Citizenship, nd.) such rights include the right to vote and contribute to governance as well as access to the fundamental human rights. Citizens have an obligation that society does not plunge into chaos or disintegrate on account of their activities severally or collectively. Instead, they are expected to ensure stability of the polity in whatever they do. These expectations lead us to the concept of citizenship. It represents a legal status and relations between an individual and state that entails specific legal rights and duties of individuals, attached to nationality under domestic law (Center for Citizenship, nd.). Citizenship is about the ideas of civil virtue referring to the set of habits, values and attitudes that promote the general welfare and effective functioning (Compass Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People, nd.). Those who exhibit such attributes have demonstrated active citizenship by working for the good of one's community which is the prospect government holds of the citizens of a country that is, to be good or active citizens. It goes beyond vote casting during elections to monitoring actions of public officers for public good. Responsible or active citizenship demands transparency of and holds leaders accountable for their decisions and actions. It entails being aware of social issues, advocating for justice as well as participating or taking individual and collective actions to address social challenges (Jallof, nd) thereby becoming socially accountable.

Social accountability is understood as those formal or informal mechanisms through which citizen engage to bring state officials or service providers to account. It holds significant potential to counter corruption (Fox in Camango, 2018) and thrives on good communication. Communication is key to promoting transparency, foster ethical behaviour and raise public awareness. It becomes effective as corruption control tool when citizens can consistently monitor procedures to ensure alignment with pertinent rules and policies. Citizens are expected to speak up, complain, resist the lure to join the bandwagon, refuse to abet corruptive tendencies and above all, proactively report corruption (Sera, 2012).

Citizen participation in anti-corruption endeavours and encompass dynamics and approaches that differ from citizen participation in other processes. This owes to the fact that the public servant run the states apparatus with politicians and are accused of corruption by the citizens. They appoint or co-opt citizens to participate in governance. They issue directives and receive results from the appointees and employees who act within prescribed frames elastic enough to make for productivity. However, they may not provide citizens with the same space to access information in relation to fighting corruption (Emmanuel & Bot, 2023) and citizens' personal efforts in that direction suffer disapproval and are met with vengeance. In such impossible circumstances citizen's participation against corruption is driven by a subjective feeling of membership of community or state with shared values and responsibilities and involves risk-taking. It goes beyond legal construction and relate to personal conviction to directly shape or influence such community/states on the right path (Manual for Human rights education and Young People, nd). Such citizens have a drive for fulfillment of obligations that comes with attendant risks, demonstrable interest in public issues and acceptance of fundamental social values (Logan & Derricot, 2014) that would enable them develop a stance against corruption.

Antecedence of Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is directly related to corruption disclosure ab initio. The act is by and large a response to the hurdles public spirited in individuals encounter in their effort to save society from underhand activities of public servant. It is about making actionable anticorruption information available to the authorities for appropriate action. Whistle blowing is broadly defined as disclosure or reporting of wrongdoing, including but not limited to corruption; criminal offences; legal breaches; specific dangers to public health, abuse of authority, unauthorized use of public fund or property; gross waste or mismanagements; human rights violations and acts to cover up any of such acts. A whistleblower is seen as a public or private sector-employee or worker who discloses information covered in the scope provided above and is at risk of retribution (Transparency International, 2013). The risks involved makes it practically impossible for the individual to unguardedly offer information on what is deemed unlawful hence punishable. Essentially, the whistleblower is someone who becomes aware of corruption or other wrongdoing and takes steps to do something about it risking attendant consequences on himself.

The history of whistleblowing dates back to the Qui Tam era in 14th century England when private citizens sued on behalf of the King and themselves through a writ and can receive for themselves part of the financial penalties ((Philips & Cohen, 2024) such law suits were instituted by individuals to expose wrongdoing against the crown for which the initiator was rewarded. Qui Tam provision in the US came in the form of False Claims Act of 1863 during the civil war to combat fraudulent claims by arms suppliers to the Union Army. The false claims Act also known as the "Lincoln Act" allows Qui tam plaintiffs or relators to sue individual, companies or other entities that are defrauding the government and earn a reward of 15 to 30 percent of the total recovery. However, the exact

percentage of the reward is predicated on factors such as significance of the information provided, the whistleblower's role in the case, timeliness of the report after discovery of the fraud, the level of risk taken and the whistleblower's compliance with FCA procedural requirements (Philip & Cohen, nd). Qui tam actions assisted the US government to root-out fraud while incentivizing private citizens to offer information available to them for a reward (Philip & Cohen, nd).

Going by Transparency International's (2013) encompassing definition of whistleblowing, a few instances are cited to highlight its essence to society and attendant risks on whistleblowers. Daphine Caruana Galizia through her reportage exposed deep-seated corruption scandal involving influential politician and others in Malta and abroad. She was murdered in October 16, 2017. Though Maltese authorities have initiated criminal proceedings against her alleged killers, Caruana Galiza's family have asked the Maltese government to establish a public inquiry to investigate whether the Maltese state bears any responsibility for her death either by failure to protect her from retaliation or as a result of any state complicity (Transparency International, 2018). Ana Garido Ramos is identified with a 300-page dossier to a Spanish trade union containing evidences of corrupt practices in her former place of work, the Boadika Town Hall. The investigation that was dubbed the "Gurtel Case" exposed corruption in Spanish government dealing with a particular businessman. Her claims as a whistleblower and key witness contributed in bringing Mariano Rajoy's infamous government to its knees in 2018 (Transparency International, 2018). Daphine Caruana and Ana Garido were proclaimed joint winners of the 2018 Anti-Corruption Award. However, while Daphne died of possible reprisal attack, Ana Garido became a victim of virulent campaign of harassment. (Transparency International, 2018).

Modechai Vanunu is identified with exposing Israel's secret nuclear programme on 1986 to the British press. This disclosure engendered fears of nuclear proliferation in the middle east and accountability in military programmes. Modechai was abducted by MOSSAD agents and suffered imprisonment for 18 years (Bartkiv, 2025) his motivation was the exception he had for weapons of mass destruction. Though he won the Right Livelihood Award in 1987, he suffers restrictions in life to date. In 2016 for instance, Israel preferred charges on him for breaching restrictions against his rights to freedoms of movement and expression, (Amnesty International, 2016). In the US, whistleblowing brought to the fore, president Donald Trumps' collusion with Ukrainian authorities to investigate Joe Biden for discrediting evidence in the latter's bid for the Democratic Party's nomination ahead of the presidential elections. Trump was found culpable and impeached but was later acquitted (Ebbs, 2019). The call for whistleblower protection was accentuated since 1778 when sailors that reported suspected war crimes by Navy commanders were thrown into jail. On July 23, 1778 the victims (whistleblowers) Marven and Shaw asked for congress help after being retaliated against. The Continental Congress responded by unanimously passing America's first whistleblower protection law on July 30, 1778 and followed it up on May 22, 1779 by offsetting the attorney's fees and cost incurred in the successful defence of Marven and Shaw (National Whistleblower Center, 2021).

The importance of whistleblowing to the polity is accentuated in John Kostyak's (Executive Director of the US National Whistleblower Center) remark that whistleblowers serve an important function in improving organizations, eliminating corruption and limiting government waste of tax payer resources. He told ABC News that whistleblowers are needed if we want to enforce the laws we have passed and essentially have a democracy (Ebbs, 2019). This remark underscores the necessity to shield whistleblowers from risk to system their contribution to nation building. The analysis brings to light the essence dimensions and consequences (Positive and negative) of whistleblowing across the globe. We shall draw an analogy with what obtains in Nigeria and suggest the way forward.

Whistleblower victimization and Decline of Whistleblowing in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the whistleblowing policy was launched in December 21, 2016 by the Muhammadu Buhari administration and in December 14, 2022, the same administration approved a new whistleblower bill. In a statement, the then minister of finance acknowledged that the new bill was necessary because the extant one of 2016 had lost momentum (Agbulu, 2022). Notably, the whistleblowing policy forms part of a number of anti-corruption measures in the country. Such measures include those provided in the constitution including the Freedom of Information Act of 2011 which is intended to make possible unfettered access to useful information in the fight against corruption. Some agencies particularly established for the fight against corruption are: The Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission of 2006, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission of 2002, Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit, 2023 and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative of 2023 (ICPC, EFCC, BMPIU, and EITI respectively) (Awopeju, 2022).

These agencies function on information hence cannot but wait for furtively sourced information on criminal elements to be functional. On the other hand, the informants need protection that could be provided by government only through legislative intervention. The FOI Act is a principal player in the fight against corruption but has not been maximally utilized to be impactful in the anti-corruption fight because of self-serving restrictions people in authority have put on access to information. Aside the information provision role of the FOI Act, it has been observed that while countries treat whistleblowers protection as a distinct law, Nigeria subsumes its own under a section of the FOI Act (Usman, 2025). This bespeaks the low esteem Nigeria has for whistleblowing. To date Nigeria unlike other countries even in Africa, has no standalone whistleblowing law with ample provision for protection the whistleblower (Adebayo & Idowu, 2024, Emmanuel & Bot, 2023 and Usman, 2025). This reality is affirmed by calls from Nigeria to tow the path of Zambia that enacted its whistleblower protection Act in 2025 (AFRICMIL, 2025)

At inception of the whistleblowing policy, Nigerians thought the nation was on the path to recovery from the quagmire of corruption with impunity. This hope was ignited by the amounts of money discovered from public servants in positions of trust. The situation was so promising that Nigeria's minister of finance between 2015 and 2018 Kemi Adeosun made glowing remarks in a speech about the whistleblowing policy and the Treasury Single Account as veritable tools for fighting corruption (Emmanuel & Bot, 2023). It could also be recalled that in 2017 the minister disclosed that with whistleblowing, the fight against corruption has become the people's fight given that people preferred anti-corruption information to the authorities with a sense of patriotism and not for rewards. While expressing thankfulness for Nigerians she affirmed that Nigerians response to the whistleblowing policy has given a national outlook to the fight against corruption (Emmanuel & Bot, 2023). After implementation in 2016, the whistleblowing trend became pronounced in 2017 and 2018 (Emmanuel & Bot, 2023) concerns about its effectiveness and sustainability surfaced in 2019 occasioned by growing apathy (Bolarinwai et al, 2024). Apathy for whistleblowing worsened between 2020 and 2022 (PPAAF, 2024). The downturn persists to date and is marked by factors such as decrease in number or frequency of anti-corruption confidential reports, reduced recovery of stolen government assets and emboldened victimization of whistleblowers (Adebayo in Bolarimua et al, 2024).

It is evident from the acceptance whistleblowing received in 2016 and 2017 that Nigerian citizen understood what whistleblowing is and its benefits to a society whose bane of development is unchallenged corruption. However, misgiving in the handling of the processes and the mechanisms designed to encourage whistleblowing could not sustain the people's confidence thereby giving rise to apathy. For instance, aside the spirit of patriotism that engendered massive acceptance of the policy, the reward promised comes across as a very strong trigger in a poverty-stricken society yet, accessing the reward puts the whistleblower through stringent conditions. It is expected that the report is unimpeachable and not obtainable from other public sources. The report must be specific and fact-based concerning what occurred, who was/were involved, date of occurrence and the amount of money involved (Denning, 2017). While it is daunting to meet this provision given the deplorable record keeping attitude and the difficulties in accessing records if any. Nigerians are afraid that insiders could trade off tip-offs to cronies and benefit unduly (Ogbonia, 2017). Again, there is a moral-dampening probability that all revealed perpetrators would be brought to book, to serve as primary amelioration against the consequences the unprotected whistleblowers face (Denning, 2017). Enforcement and protection measures of whistleblowing are consistently susceptible to heavy political influence. The political profile of the culprit or to whom he is connected greatly affects the overall credibility of the whistleblower's evidence and whistleblowing policy invariably (Botarnwa et al, 2023).

The institutional constraints include weak institution in corruption fighting occasioned by indeterminate administrative structures that serve as corruption breeding grounds inversely. This is evident for instance in EFCC's inability to prosecute Patricia Etteh and Babangide Nguroje's 628.8-million-naira scandal and the 16 billion National integrated power project scandal identified with former President Olusegun Obasanjo. These are incidents of significant benefits to the culprits and substantial loss to the citizenry (Nwaodu et al. 2014). Nigerians cannot but live with these realities and to date no efforts are made to address this and many suchlike situations. The aftermath of all of this is the pervading apathy for whistleblowing in the country. This situation in the nation has been leveraged by criminal elements to visit untold comeuppances on whistleblower in the form of threats to life, job loss, stagnation in the work place, stigmatization, harassment, denials etc. (Shubayan, 2023). For instance, Murtala Ibrahim of the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria was sacked by the director of the bank. His crime was blowing the lid on corruption by querying the payment of N233 billion for a questionable contract of rehabilitation work on the banks property in Lagos. He also declined assent to the banks statement of financial position alleging, it was doctored and went ahead to petition the EFCC and SSS in 2019 as an auditor in the bank (Adulaziz, 2019). Martins Artijegebe of the Federal ministry of works blew the whistle on fraud including false appointment letters

being documented and enrolled in the Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS). Regrettably, this system was created to eliminate payroll fraud *inter alia*. His salary was stopped since August 2024 and has been denied promotion.

Martins Artijegbe's petition was sent to the minister of works and housing on July 27, 2020. His lawyer remarked that when whistleblowers are persecuted, corruption wins and that his client deserves protection not persecution and vindication not victimization (Atabo, 2025). Daniel Ojukwu of the Foundation for Investigative Journalism was abducted and detained by the Nigerian police for exposing corruption in the office of the Senior Special Adviser to President Buhari on Sustainable Development Goals. Abraham Tamo Joseph, a senior accountant of the forestry research institute blew the whistle on corruption in 2021 and was dismissed, harassed by the police and was threatened with death and law suit. He suffered for three years before reinstatement on the order of the minister of state for environment (Foundation for Investigative Journalism, 2025). These are just a few of the myriad of cases of whistleblower victimization in Nigeria that calls for a whistleblower protection legislation in the nation.

Benefits of whistleblowing and Need for Whistleblower Protection

Whistleblowing came into reckoning in Nigeria as an anti-crime programme at the launch of the whistleblowing policy in December 2016 by the Federal ministry of Finance. The policy was created to encourage citizens to participate in crime fighting by reporting wrongdoing in public offices confidentially. The primary objective was to give public spirited citizens opportunity to volunteer information to the appropriate authority on breeches in governance but the policy is titled much towards financial crime prevention and recovery of public funds stashed away. Disclosure of fraud, bribery and corruption are key focal points of the policy which has a commitment to reward the whistleblower with 2.5 of 5% of total sum of money recovered (Platform to protect whistleblowers in Africa, 2024). Types of information anticipated in the policy include:

1. Violation of government financial regulations e.g failure to comply with the financial regulations Act, public procurement Act etc.
2. Mismanagement and misappropriation of public funds and assets (Properties and vehicle)
3. Stolen or concealed public funds.
4. Financial malpractice or fraud
5. Collection and soliciting bribe, diversion of revenues.
6. Under-remitting of revenues
7. Diversion of fund, contract splitting, fraudulent and unapproved payments
8. Procurement fraud (Kickbacks and over invoicing. (Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National planning, 2021).

Such information are expected through submission to the Federal Ministry of Finance or The Presidential Initiative for Continuous Audit in writing and calls on 09098067946 or through the online portal of FMFBNP-whistle (Edith, 2020). The policy expects concerns to be raised in good faith and in public interest and whistleblowers identity would be treated with confidentiality to the fullest possible extents provided by law.

Following the enactment of the policy, Nigeria witnessed a barrage of information that led to the recovery of substantial amount of public funds in private hands. Such information were followed by actions including EFCC's raid of a Kaduna apartment retrieving 9.8 million dollars in February and the April 10, 2017 recovery of 43 million dollars, 230 million Naira and 270,000 Pounds in Osborne Towers at Ikoyi, Lagos. Of all, the biggest recovery was that of \$136,676,600.51 recovered from a fake account in a commercial bank (Edith, 2020, Janah, 2017) In the records, a total amount of money recovered through whistleblowing between 2017 and 2023 is put at N83 billion, \$609 million and 5.4 million euros according to Yusuf Sule, Director, President Initiative on continuous Audit, Federal Ministry of Finance ((Arise news, 2024). The aforesaid financial benefits to government notwithstanding, it is note-worthy that the results of whistleblowing impact people differently. Those who get relief from whistleblowing (government and management of organizations) regard it as a commendable act and the whistleblower, a hero. Conversely those adversely affected by the disclosures (corrupt elements) class the whistleblower with traitors and are vengeful towards him. That makes whistleblowing highly risky and dangerous to the whistleblower.

A statement credited to Kemi Adeosun, former finance minister of Nigeria is to the effect that whistleblowing is less driven by financial rewards or treachery than patriotism (Danbata, nd). A related opinion of whistleblowing is that the act is driven by moral and ethical concerns or a duty either to the public, an organization or a nation (Dungan and Waytz, 2019). The whistleblower acts in defence against harm to the nation (Delmas, 2015) or unwholesome interference with the well-being of the citizenry by exposing wrongdoing and upholding accountability and integrity in public affairs. It encourages maintenance of ethical conduct and good governance

and promotes a culture of compliance with laws, regulations and guidelines applicable to a particular organization's activities (Adebayo and Idowu, 2024). Again, by exposing wrongdoing, whistleblowing acts as an early warning system for society, protecting public resources and upholding the rule of law (Usman, 2025). Emphasizing the centrality of whistleblowing to national growth and stability whistleblowers are referred to as good Samaritans who act at considerable risk to life, career, financial security and personal relations (Emmanuel and Bot, 2023). To this extent, the whistleblower's protection is for his well-being as much as national development given that nations that built strong legal frameworks for whistleblower protection have reaped the benefits of greater accountability and transparency in governance (Usman, 2025).

This explains why so many nations have stand-alone whistleblower protection legislation with sections unequivocally spelling out measures to protect the whistleblower from reprisal or retribution. For instance, section 12 of Ghana's whistleblower Act 2006 clearly provides protection for whistleblowers against dismissal, suspension, redundancy and denial of promotion. Others include inappropriate transfers, harassment, intimidation, threats on life and discrimination. India's whistleblower Protection Act of 2011 has protection against victimization in section 11 while section 3 of South Africa's Protected Disclosures Act among other provisions prohibits any whistleblower employee from being subjected to occupational detriments (Usman, 2025). African countries that have been able to give legislative backing to whistleblowing to maximize its benefits include: Botswana 2016, Ghana 2006, Zambia 2010, Uganda 2010 and South Africa which enacted its legislation in 2000 and amended it in 2017 (McCarthy, 2023). In fact, Zambia's impressive anti-corruption rating in 2024 is attributed the effectiveness of this legislation in enhancing transparency in governance (Banoba, et al, 2025) Senegal is the latest of countries whose national assembly enacted whistleblowing law on August 26, 2025 (AFRICMIL, 2025). By and large, the global acceptance of whistleblowing affirms it as a veritable anti-corruption tool considering its capacity to foster transparency in governance but the whistleblower is an unrequited patriot given the circumstances in which whistleblowing takes place. This situation stridently calls for whistleblowers protection against vengeful culprits so the policy could be maximally utilized in nation building.

Conclusion

Whistleblowing is a universally accepted anti-corruption procedure that has lasted for decades in government both in private and public sectors. Its benefits are clear and cherished globally as a veritable means of citizens' participation in the fight against corruption. Like citizens in other climes Nigerians participated in whistleblowing with fervour but got disappointed along the line as whistleblowers did not get blessed but punished, not celebrated but stigmatized not rewarded but suffered loss of salaries and stagnation in their places of work. This situation compared to the disclosures and financial discoveries whistleblowing has enhanced, speaks volumes of the misplaced priorities in the nation.

Recommendations

To get it right, this paper recommends:

1. A speedy passage of whistleblower bill in the national assembly to offer legislative protection for the whistleblower.
2. Put requisite measures in place to enhance the applicability of FOI law concerning access to information in all ramification.
3. Swift and decisive punishment be meted out on individuals whose activities forestall whistleblowing in whatever capacity they may be operating on.
4. Prompt release in the right measure, of rewards promised in the whistleblowing law.

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