



APPRAISING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CRIMES COMMISSION (EFCC) IN COMBATTING CORRUPTION AND ECONOMIC CRIMES IN NIGERIA WITH GENDER PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Corruption has significantly affected the economic activities of Nigerians and thrown citizens into untold hardship. Without prejudice to other causes affecting economic development, there is no doubt that Nigeria's situation is largely due to financial and economic crimes. With the establishment of anti-corruption agencies like the EFCC and ICPC, alongside their attendant statutory provisions, it is therefore of great concern and interest that the trend rather than abate continue to increase due to the ineffectiveness of the constituted agencies. This paper thus seeks to critically examine the role of the anti-corruption agency and the resultant effect on the economy and women's rights in Nigeria. The paper suggests that the EFCC and THE ICPC need to strengthen their operations to duly prosecute economic and financial crime offenders to aid quick recovery from the current economic woes. This ultimately should improve the standard of living of the citizens, women in particular.

Keywords: Corruption, economic crimes, financial crimes, economic recession.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Successive governments in Nigeria have adopted different strategies to combat

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the evil phenomenon called corruption. These strategies include moral sensitization, legal instruments, and establishment of anticorruption bodies or agencies. It has been argued that the blame for corruption in Nigeria is properly at the doorstep of anti-corruption agencies. This is due to the improbable detection of corruption by the agencies and the uncertainty of punishment even when detected.¹ Corruption applies to both the public and private sectors. It is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. Economic crimes are grounded in corrupt practices. This is often manifested in the use of powers by government officials for illegitimate private gain to the detriment of the nation's economy. Theft of government financial resources is a major form of corruption that has thrown Nigeria into economic woes.

Many institutions have been created to combat corruption in Nigeria. These chiefly include the Independent Corrupt Practices and Investigation Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). The integrity of these bodies are being questioned. There is a great linkage between graft by government officials and the failure of governance in Nigeria. Hence, the anti-corruption agencies were established to save Nigeria from poverty resulting from graft in high places.² When ICPC and EFCC were established, Nigerians applauded them. However, corruption has not only become difficult to fight, it has continued to thrive.³ Corruption has stifled economic growth in Nigeria, to say the least. It has diverted much-needed public funds for education, healthcare services, roads, water and sanitation, and other critical public goods due to inefficient investments in public projects.⁴ Corruption discourages foreign direct investment, foreign trade as cost of production and inefficient tax reduce profitability, and humanitarian aid which are often mismanaged. It continues to widen the gap between the rich and the poor, thereby sustaining inequality and wealth disparity.⁵ This paper looks at the powers and functions of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the effective exercise or otherwise and the impact on women. It proposes fast-tracking of its operations, making more detections of looted funds and prosecuting cases to conclusion promptly. This will ensure prompt

¹ Y. Akinsheye-George, and VO Ayeni, 'Independence of Anti-corruption Bodies in Nigeria: Myth or Reality' (2016) in Yusuf O. Alli (ed), *Anatomy of Corruption in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and Solutions*. Ilorin: Ali, Y.O. 2-31

² Ibid

³ ibid

⁴ <https://www.researchgate.net> -the effects of corruption on the Nigerian economy-2024 accessed 10 January, 2025.

⁵ T. A. Makar et al' 'The Impact of Corruption on Economic Growth: An Empirical Evidence from Nigeria' *Journal of Public Administration, Finance and Law* (2023) 268



redirection of recovered funds to rescue the ailing economy and enhance public trust in governance.

2.0 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Corruption

Corruption represents a significant challenge to society, as it involves the misuse of public office for personal gain. This abuse manifests in various illegal activities, including bribery, embezzlement, and money laundering. Such actions not only undermine the integrity of public institutions but also erode public trust in government. When officials prioritize personal interests over their duties, the principles of fairness and justice become compromised.

The implications of corruption extend far beyond individual cases. It precipitates widespread social issues such as gross violations of human rights. Communities grappling with corruption often experience a lack of accountability, which can lead to oppression and discrimination. As public resources are misappropriated, the most vulnerable segments of society bear the brunt. Social injustice proliferates, as opportunities for advancement are denied to those who cannot navigate a corrupted system. Economic consequences also arise from corruption. Embezzlement and bribery siphon off funds that could otherwise be used for public services. This diversion of resources thwarts socio-economic development, fostering environments of mass poverty and illiteracy. Access to quality education and healthcare becomes restricted, perpetuating cycles of disadvantage. Without significant investment in infrastructure and public services, communities suffer from inadequate housing, transportation, and communication systems. Corruption engenders instability within societies. High unemployment rates are often a result of economic mismanagement linked to corrupt practices.⁶ Resisting such practices requires a concerted effort toward fostering transparency, accountability, and ethical governance. Only by addressing the root causes of corruption can societies hope to reclaim resources for the collective benefit and rebuild trust in public institutions. Corruption is a deeply rooted issue that affects many countries around the world, with its impacts felt not only in governance but also in the daily lives of citizens. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) offers valuable insights into how corruption manifests in various forms. By categorizing corruption into grand, petty, and political corruption, the CPI allows us to understand the different levels at which corruption operates and the specific challenges each type presents.⁷

⁶ *ibid*

⁷ *ibid*



Grand corruption refers to serious acts committed at the highest levels of government, often involving significant policy distortions. This type of corruption can undermine the very foundations of state governance, allowing leaders to prioritize their interests over the public good. When government officials engage in grand corruption, the consequences can ripple through society, leading to a loss of trust in institutions and a deteriorating quality of life for citizens. The resources that should be allocated towards crucial public services—such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure, are instead siphoned off for personal gain, resulting in widespread negative effects on economic development and societal well-being. On the other hand, petty corruption manifests in the everyday interactions between low and mid-level public officials and ordinary citizens. This type of corruption often involves small, informal payments or bribes to access basic public goods and services. For many individuals, especially in countries where public services are already limited, these interactions can create significant barriers to receiving necessary assistance. Petty corruption adds to the burden of poverty, perpetuating a cycle of inequality and disenfranchisement. Citizens may feel trapped in a system where they must navigate corruption to meet even their most basic needs, which can further entrench distrust in public institutions.

Political corruption occurs when political decision-makers manipulate policies and procedures to maintain their power and wealth, often at the expense of fair resource allocation. This form of corruption can distort democratic processes and hinder effective governance, as decisions may favor a select few rather than the larger population. Political corruption can lead to a misallocation of resources that stifles economic growth, exacerbates social inequalities, and fosters an environment where the rule of law is weakened. In Nigeria, the implications of corruption are dire and warrant urgent attention. According to projections, if corruption is not effectively addressed, it could cost the country up to 37% of its GDP by 2030. This staggering figure highlights the potential economic fallout that could ensue if these deeply embedded corrupt practices continue unchecked. As it stands, the financial burden of corruption translates to nearly \$1,000 per person in 2014, with expectations that this amount could nearly double by 2030. Such a scenario paints a grim picture for the average citizen, who bears the brunt of the systemic inefficiencies and lost opportunities that corruption breeds.

2.2 Economic and Financial Crimes

Under the Act, Economic and Financial Crimes means the non-violent criminal and illicit activity committed with the objectives of earning wealth illegally. This could be either individually or in a group or organized manner thereby violating existing legislation governing the economic activities of government and its



administration. Economic and financial crimes include any form of fraud, narcotic drug trafficking, money laundering, embezzlement, bribery, looting, and any form of corrupt malpractices, illegal arms deals, smuggling, human trafficking, and child labor, illegal oil bunkering and illegal mining, tax evasion, foreign exchange malpractices including counterfeiting of currency, theft of intellectual property and piracy, open market abuse, dumping of toxic wastes and prohibited goods, etc.⁸

3.0 STRUCTURE, POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CRIMES COMMISSION (EFCC)

Prevalence of economic and financial crimes such as Advance Fee Fraud (419), and Money Laundering has had great consequences on Nigeria's economy. These include decreased Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and tarnishing of Nigeria's national image. These situations led to the establishment of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) under the EFCC (Establishment) Act, 2002. The EFCC Act mandates the EFCC to combat financial and economic crimes in Nigeria. The functions of the EFCC is well stated in the Act.⁹

The Commission is tasked with several critical responsibilities aimed at combating economic and financial crimes. Firstly, it is responsible for enforcing the provisions of this Act and ensuring that they are administered effectively. The Commission conducts investigations into a range of financial crimes, including advance fee fraud, money laundering, counterfeiting, illegal fund transfers, futures market fraud, computer credit card fraud, and contract scams, among others. In addition to investigations, the Commission coordinates and enforces laws related to economic and financial crimes, collaborating with other individuals and authorities that share similar responsibilities. It adopts measures to identify, trace, freeze, confiscate, or seize any proceeds linked to terrorist activities or economic and financial offenses, as well as properties that hold equivalent value.

The Commission actively works to eliminate the occurrence of such crimes by implementing preventive strategies and maintaining rigorous investigative techniques. The Commission also facilitates the rapid sharing of scientific and technical information and leads joint operations focused on eradicating economic and financial crimes. It examines all reported cases of such crimes to identify individuals, businesses, or groups involved and assesses the financial losses incurred by the government and private entities. Furthermore, the Commission collaborates with various governmental bodies, both within

⁸ Section 46, EFCC Act, 2004

⁹ Part 2, Section 6, EFCC Act, 2004



Nigeria and internationally, to identify and monitor individuals suspected of involvement in these crimes. This cooperation includes tracking the movement of proceeds from illegal activities and sharing personnel and resources. The Commission maintains a comprehensive system for recording and analyzing data related to economic and financial crimes.

The Commission also oversees matters related to extradition and mutual legal assistance between Nigeria and other countries concerning economic and financial offenses. It is responsible for collecting reports of suspicious financial transactions, analyzing these reports, and sharing the findings with relevant government agencies. By supervising and coordinating all aspects of investigations and prosecutions related to economic and financial crimes, the Commission aims to streamline efforts across different units in Nigeria. It works closely with various organizations, including the Attorney-General's office, customs, immigration, and law enforcement agencies, to combat these crimes effectively. Lastly, the Commission engages in public awareness campaigns to educate the public about economic and financial crimes, both domestically and abroad. It also undertakes any additional necessary activities to fulfill its functions as outlined in this Act.

Under the same Act, the Commission is entrusted with the responsibility of investigating whether any individual, organization, or corporate entity has committed violations of this Act or any other laws pertaining to economic and financial crimes.¹⁰ It can scrutinize the assets of individuals whose lifestyle and the extent of their possessions appear inconsistent with their reported sources of income. The Commission is also charged with enforcing several important laws including the Money Laundering Act of 2003, the Advance Fee Fraud and Other Fraud Related Offences Act of 1995, and the Failed Banks (Recovery of Debts) and Financial Malpractices in Banks Act of 1994, as amended. Moreover, the Commission oversees the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act of 1991, as amended, along with the Miscellaneous Offences Act. It is also empowered to enforce any other relevant legislation or regulations related to economic and financial crimes, which may encompass provisions found within the Criminal Code or Penal Code.

The Act has been amended over time. Section 46 of the EFCC (Establishment) Act, 2004 provides for offences such as money laundering, embezzlement, bribery, looting and any form of corrupt practices, illegal arms deals, smuggling, human trafficking and child labour, illegal oil bunkering, illegal mining, tax

¹⁰ Section 7(1), EFCC Act, 2004



evasion, foreign exchange malpractices including counterfeiting of currency, theft of intellectual property and privacy, open market abuse, dumping of toxic waste and prohibiting goods.

EFCC is faced with a number of challenges hindering its effective functioning. The Commission is not independent due to its composition, the qualification for appointment as Chairman of the Commission and its funding. A serving law enforcement officer of the rank of Assistant Commissioner of Police and above may be appointed as Chairman of the Commission.¹¹ The fear has been expressed that the Commission's Chairman is situated within the command structure of law enforcement institutions. As such he might be constrained to deal softly with his superiors who are corrupt to avoid a reprisal when he leaves office as Chairman of the EFCC. In addition, the EFCC has no independent budget or appropriation from the National Assembly. It is funded from the Presidency which funds are seldom released in full.¹² Composition of the membership of the Commission is also a challenge. The Commission is composed of heads of government institutions or their representatives.¹³ Thus, the Commission becomes an appendage of the corrupt government institutions and the corrupt public officials who they are supposed to prosecute. It is however obvious that the EFCC is overloaded considering the wide range of its powers which include terrorism,¹⁴ false information¹⁵ and offenses to proceeds of criminal conduct.¹⁶ The agency is also responsible for coordinating the enforcement of several related legislations.¹⁷ It will be better if the EFCC is delimited in its scope of powers to economic and financial crimes committed by public officials for better effect. Offenses committed by others should be handled by the Police or any other suitable agency.

4.0 EFCC AND ECONOMIC FINANCIAL PRACTICES

Corruption has emerged as a significant and persistent factor undermining Nigeria's economic stability and growth. It manifests in various forms and permeates different sectors, creating ripple effects that hinder progress. One of the primary consequences of corruption is the country's inability to save adequately, which has resulted in alarmingly low foreign reserves. Foreign reserves are vital for stabilizing a nation's currency and maintaining confidence

¹¹ Section 2(1), EFCC Act, 2004).

¹² Iredia, T. (2012). Who is Crippling EFCC? www.vanguardngr.com/2012/12/who-is-crippling-the-efcc accessed 22 January 2025

¹³ Section 2(1) of EFCC Act, 2004.

¹⁴ Section 15, EFCC Act, 2004

¹⁵ Section 16, EFCC Act, 2004

¹⁶ Section 17, EFCC Act, 2004

¹⁷ Section 7(2), EFCC Act, 2004



in its economy. However, when funds meant for development are misappropriated or embezzled, it leaves the nation financially vulnerable, unable to respond effectively to external shocks or crises. Another major issue is Nigeria's overdependence on foreign products. This reliance on imported goods weakens local industries and drains foreign exchange reserves. Local production is often stifled due to corruption in policy implementation, poor infrastructure, and a lack of incentives for domestic industries. This dependence creates a trade imbalance, with the country importing far more than it exports, further exacerbating economic challenges.

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has faced criticism for its perceived inaction on foreign exchange policies, which has contributed to economic instability. Fluctuations in foreign exchange rates directly impact the cost of imports and exports, affecting businesses and consumers alike. Without robust and proactive forex policies, the naira has faced significant devaluation, leading to higher import costs and a decline in purchasing power for the average Nigerian. The oil sector, which remains the backbone of Nigeria's economy, accounting for approximately 70% of government revenue, has also been severely affected by corruption and global price volatility. Mismanagement of oil revenues and lack of transparency in the industry have compounded the impact of weaker global oil prices. With the oil sector being a critical source of foreign exchange and government funding, any disruption or inefficiency has far-reaching consequences for the broader economy.¹⁸

Despite declining oil revenues, government spending remains excessive, with funds often allocated inefficiently or diverted through corrupt practices. This uncontrolled spending strains public finances and limits the government's ability to invest in critical sectors such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure. As a result, essential public services deteriorate, further undermining economic productivity and social development. The devaluation of the naira has also led to a significant increase in import prices, placing additional strain on businesses and consumers. With most essential goods being imported, the higher costs are passed on to consumers, leading to a steep rise in the cost of living. Inflation rates surged up over the years causing widespread hardship. Inflation erodes the purchasing power of individuals and reduces their ability to afford necessities, deepening poverty and inequality.¹⁹ Women are the greatest victim being handlers of the economy of the family.

¹⁸ A Abina 'Nigeria Foreign Exchange Experience; Challenges, Prospects and Options for Optimal Performance' (2021), research gate.net.accessed 25 January 2025

¹⁹ J Mohammed 'De-Transcending Corruption to Culture and Tradition in Nigeria: Imperative of Anti-Corruption Laws for the Attainment of Economic Justice' in Yinusa, K.S., Famakinwa, J.O. and Fasiku G. (eds) (2015). Nationalism and Economic Justice in Nigeria. Ile-Ife, Obafemi Awolowo University Press. 209-210.



Bad debts is yet another critical issue plaguing the Nigerian economy. Corruption in the financial sector has led to reckless lending practices, with loans often granted based on favoritism rather than creditworthiness. This has resulted in a high volume of non-performing loans, weakening the banking system and reducing its capacity to support economic growth. Bad debts not only harm financial institutions but also create a climate of mistrust that discourages investment and hinders entrepreneurship. Corruption has entrenched itself as a major obstacle to Nigeria's economic progress. Its effects are evident in the depletion of foreign reserves, overdependence on imports, mismanagement of the oil sector, excessive government spending, and rising inflation. The prevalence of bad debts further complicates the economic landscape. To address these challenges, Nigeria must strengthen anti-corruption measures, implement sound economic policies, and prioritize investments in domestic production and infrastructure.

The EFCC can get its information from any source. Whistle-blowing has been of help in recent times. However, there is a need for caution on the attached monetary incentive; this may lead to other forms of corruption. Rather, awards of recognition or reward with national honours will be a better motivation or should be more emphasized. Social media is another veritable source of information for the EFCC, although this is often regarded as speculative, a good number of probable cases can be identified and followed up, although a daunting task for the EFCC. Although there are records of convictions of economic crime offenders, the progress is slow and figures insignificant compared to cases tried on social media. The case of 150500 square meter estate in Abuja, forfeited by Godwin Emefiele was a land mark trial and unprecedented recovery.²⁰ The case of repatriation of \$53million looted funds by Deziani Allisson-Madueke and her cohorts by the USA back to Nigeria is another in recent time among others.²¹ In 2021, Human And Environmental Development Agenda (HEDA), an NGO, published 100 high profile corruption cases in Nigeria as in the two preceeding years, which publications have been useful as background for investigation into many cases of illicit funds stacked in foreign banks.²² Under the Stolen Assets Initiative of the Worldbank, (star),²³ Switzerland returned Abacha loot valued \$723 million.²⁴

²⁰ TVC News, December 2, 2025.

²¹ HEDA Resource Centre, BBC< www.bbc.com> accessed ,10 January 2025

²² HEDA Resource Centre, A Compendium of 100 High Profile Corruption Cases in Nigeria, (5th Edn 2023) 1.

²³ <https://star.worldbank.org>

²⁴ Star is an initiative of worrldbank group andvthe United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.



Nigerians are asking what is the EFCC doing? There are series of arraignments of persons mostly politicians accused of economic and financial crimes without prosecution. For instance, on March 10, 2017, the News *headline said "EFCC re-arraigns 3 Directors over N100m DESOPADEC Frauds"*²⁵ Refund of 90 billion dollars by former Petroleum Minister, Deziane Allison Madueke; Former NNPC GMD Andrew Yakubu's stacked dollars; EFCC drags ex-NNPC Boss Andrew Yakubu to Court on Six-count charges. The six-count charge before the Federal High Court, Abuja is on false declaration of assets, advanced fee fraud, and money laundering contrary to Section 27(3)(a) of the EFCC Act, 2004. Earlier, a Federal High Court had ordered the forfeiture of the recovered sums of \$9,772,000 and £74,000; N500bn Social Intervention Scheme - Reps to Probe Osinbajo, Adeosun, Udoma.²⁶ Non-remittances by NNPC to Federation Account. EFCC set to prosecute former Governors accused of corruption.

The consensus among Nigerians is that there is a genuine commitment from both the government and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to combat corruption. However, due to persistent undue influence, many investigated cases remain inconclusive and are pending in the courts (Nwagwu, 2011). Some accused former governors and high-ranking government officials continue to enjoy unchecked freedom. Notable examples include Gbenga Daniel from Ogun State, Rasheed Ladoja and Alao Akala from Oyo State, and Olagunsoye Oyinlola from Osun State. Some of these individuals even rise to higher political positions; for instance, many indicted former governors have become Senators or Ministers. Examples of this include Rt. Hon. Rotimi Amaechi from Rivers State and Kayode Fayemi from Ekiti State. In 2021, the NGO HEDA published a compendium of high-profile corruption cases in Nigeria.²⁷ That corruption persists in the face of existing laws and established institutions like the EFCC is a pointer to the fact that there are challenges which should be addressed. These include lack of independence of the EFCC from the apron string of the government, inadequate financial and manpower resources, corrupt personnel investigating corrupt others, lack of effective strategy to prevent corruption in government business, lack of unified laws to address all aspects of corruption, inadequate penalties for corruption offenses, irregular audits and monitoring of government finances, among others.

²⁵ Leadership Newspaper, March 10, 2017

²⁶ B Akinsola, 'Insight: What Caused Nigeria's Economic Recession?' (2015) accessed <www.naija247news.com> accessed on 13 January 2025.

²⁷ <Hdr.undp.org.2018> accessed on 30 January 2025



5.0 IMPACT OF CORRUPTION ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN

Generally, in Nigeria the level of poverty is high. Nigeria's social and economic development is constrained by corruption in almost all facets of its national life. Corruption by public officials and corrupt national institutions have negatively impacted the provision and availability of important infrastructures and other social and economic facilities. This has therefore affected the realization of economic and social rights in the country. The New World Human Development Index as of 2018, ranked Nigeria as 157 out of 189 countries.²⁹ The report includes an analysis of the state of human development and long-term trends in human development indicators. These include education health and income. It is more excruciating for women to access common basic needs required for average quality living. Whenever there is a crisis in governance, or decay in social infrastructure, women and their children are the greatest victims.³⁰

In the past ten years, the consciousness of Socio-economic rights has increased. This is in response to actions by the grassroots civil societies. The impact of the rapid large-scale infrastructure projects, economic reform programs, unsustainable debt burden, and corruption which had become obvious among nations, Nigeria inclusive, are also important factors affecting Socio-economic rights. In 2015, the World Bank conducted an analysis of Women's Business and the Law in 173 nations. The report recognizes that many issues affect women's economic prospects.³¹ For instance, unless women have opportunities to get educated or build their skills, gender-equal laws affecting entrepreneurship or jobs may not mean much. Where there is limited or no access to child care, and safe transportation, women's ability and interest to work in some places may be jeopardized.

In 2023, the World Economic Forum published its Global Gender Gap Index.³² The report considered 144 countries on their progress towards gender parity. The themes cut across economic involvement and prospects, educational

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ U Shehu. "Women and Poverty in Nigeria: Agenda for Poverty Eradication" *Developing Country Studies*, vol 5, No. 3 (2015). Accessed on June 15, 2018.

³⁰ Jade Mohammed, *Safeguarding Socio-Economic Rights of Women in Nigeria In the Framework of International Human Right* (OAU, Ile-Ife, unpublished Ph.D thesis, 2019).

³¹ Women, Business and the Law, www.womwnbusinessandlaw.org accessed on May 20, 2018. p. 13

³² World Economic Forum, Geneva, Switzerland (2023) *Global Gender Report*; www.globalgenderreport.org accessed on Dec 20, 2024 The Global Gap Index is captures the



achievement, health, survival and political empowerment. The results obviously show that gender inequalities are prevalent worldwide.³³ Global Gender Gap by Country shows that Nigeria is number 122 out of the 144 countries analysed.³⁴ Sometime in 2016, the “International Labour Organisation” (ILO) raised an alarm that the population of poor people in the world has hit the one billion mark. This is a manifestation of the restriction of access to the most basic needs which rob people of their dignity, increase vulnerability to hunger, physical and mental illness, human rights abuse and exclusion. In 2016, the ILO's theme of the “International Day for the Eradication of Poverty”³⁵ focused on “Moving from humiliation and exclusion to participation: ending poverty in all its forms”. Poverty has been identified as a significant setback to women in realising their rights. It was therefore a priority concern at the Beijing fourth world conference in 1995. As at 1995, about 70% poor people across the globe, mostly women, live in a state of abject poverty, especially in developing nations.³⁶ Poverty affects families generally, due to the partitions of work and duties along gender lines. Hence, women bear a lopsided burden, in managing families' needs and production with little or no resources. For women living in the villages, poverty is particularly severe.³⁷ Recently, the UN Women, in collaboration with the “African Union”, European Union, and other partners, sought to increase efforts to abrogate or amend discriminatory laws all over the globe by 2023. At the 63rd Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York, the Commission launched the “Equality in Law for Women and Girls by 2030: A Multi-stakeholder Strategy for Accelerated Action”.³⁸ The session noted with concern that more than 2.5 billion women and girls across the globe suffered discrimination because of laws that hinder “gender equality” and deny them equal opportunity to legal rights in certain aspects of the economy.³⁹

Gender based inequities and tackles them progressively.

- ³³ World Economic Forum, Geneva, Switzerland (2024) Global Gender Report, in its preface
- ³⁴ World Economic Forum, Geneva, Switzerland (2024) Global Gender Report; Figure 2: Gender Gap by Country 2017, p. 18.
- ³⁵ Guy Ryder, the then ILO Director-General, mentioned this on “International Day for the Eradication of Poverty”, on 17th October, 2016. In 1992, the United Nations Officially designated Oct. 17 as the “International Day for the Eradication of Poverty”; A path toward peaceful and inclusive societies, <https://un.org.desa> accessed on dec 20, 2024.
- ³⁶ Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995, www.un.org-daw-beijing-pdf accessed on 18th Nov. 2024
- ³⁷ Amaka for Kids, Nigeria Women and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria: From Rhetorics to Action; human rights , Poverty, Maternal Health & Child Mortality(2007). Global Online Publication, www.informationng.com; National Human Development Report (NHDR) 2016 www.undp.org. accessed on nov. 19 2024.
- ³⁸ www.pmnewsnigeria.com accessed on October 24, 2024
- ³⁹ Ibid



In Nigeria, women constitute a significant part of the production force. As at the 2006 National Census, Nigeria's population was put at about 150 million, 50% of which were females. By 2016, women constituted 49.34% of the 167m estimated population in Nigeria.⁴⁰ 72% of whom live in acute poverty of less than \$1 a day.⁴¹ Their level of poverty is a lot more than that of the men; this constitutes a severe threat to their survival. According to world population review, 2019, the population of Nigeria is 200, 278,573 while the percentage of the female is 49.4%.⁴² Several efforts have been made to reduce gender inequalities and provide a suitable environment for opportunities for women to develop in Nigeria. Such efforts include the establishment of the Federal “Ministry of Women Affairs” and Poverty Alleviation, Gender Electoral Reform Committee, Donor Coordination and Gender Group.⁴³ The Federal Government also approved the major policies such as “National Gender Policy” (2006), National Education Policy on Women (2001), National Empowerment and Economic Development Strategies (NEEDS) (2004), and Strategies for Acceleration of Girls Education in Nigeria (2003)⁴⁴ These efforts however have yielded no significant result. Women spend substantially more time than men on house works in both rural and urban areas.

This commences early with girls aged 6-14 spending one-third more time on house work than boys of the same age. Access to water and power has a major effect on time use for women in the cities and villages. It greatly lowers the amount of time women spend on self-development. Women and girls lack access to productive resources and opportunities compared with boys and men. This is a challenge that demands more than the provision of jobs or social services. Factors that hinder women's ability to take advantage of resources in Nigeria are rooted in patriarchal norms.⁴⁵ The educational curricula often reinforce these norms and also legal and institutional regimes which mould common knowledge and behaviours in society.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, international and regional treaties on women are yet to be domesticated.⁴⁷

⁴⁰ National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) 2017 <www.nbs.org.ng> accessed on 20 January 2025

⁴¹ *ibid*

⁴² www.worldpopulationreview.com accessed 20 January 2025

³⁹ *Ibid*

⁴⁵ DE Ekpe, EE Aloba and IJ Egbe, Women, “gender equality” in Nigeria: a critical analysis of socio-economic and political (gender issues). *Journal Research in Peace, Gender and Development (JRP GD)* 2014 4(1) 15-20,

⁴⁶ *Ibid*

⁴⁷ National Human Rights Commission. Status Report submitted to United Nations Human Rights Council (2023). October 6



Generally, in Nigeria, poverty level is high. Social and economic development are affected by corruption in almost all facets of its political life. Corruption by public officials and corrupt national institutions has negatively impacted the provision of essential infrastructures and other social and economic facilities. The new World Human Development Index as at 2018, ranked Nigeria as 157 out of 189 countries⁴⁸ The report includes an analysis of the state of human development and long-term trends in human development indicators which include education, health, and income. It is more painful for women to access the everyday basic needs needed for average quality living in Nigeria.⁴⁹ On October 11, 2018, Nigeria joined the world to celebrate “the International Day of Girl Child” with the theme “With Her: A Skilled Girl Force”.⁵⁰ It was observed that many girls are still disadvantaged in education, particularly in Africa and the Northern part of Nigeria.⁵¹ In Nigeria, almost five and a half million girls are out of school.⁵² In essence, the effect of corruption and discriminatory practices against women ultimately often result in disconnection from the laws of the land thus putting women into a disadvantage.⁵³ These practices amount to denial of the human rights of women; the right to live in dignity.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The paper looks at the structure, powers, and functions of the EFCC in Nigeria. It identifies and links the role of the EFCC to the economic development of the nation and the excruciating effect of corruption on women folk in Nigeria. Corruption is a major issue affecting the nation which is the basis of economic and financial crimes. It is noted that the EFCC is not very effective at the moment due to its lack of independence in structure and funding. There is no limit to the period within which to conduct prosecution and conclude coupled with the revealing facts in recent time that the officials are also corrupt. It is thus urgent and critical to review the EFCC Act and consolidate all forms of

⁴⁸ hdr.undp.org.2018. accessed 13 January 2025

⁴⁹ U Shehu. “Women and Poverty in Nigeria: Agenda for Poverty Eradication” *Developing Country Studies* (2015) 5(3)

⁵⁰ The UNGA on December 9, 2011, adopted Resolution 66/170 declaring Oct. 11 as the International Day of the Girl Child. The day is to recognize girls' rights and the challenges they face and promote girls' empowerment and fulfillment of their rights.

⁵¹ RT NATJA Friday Editor Leadership Newspaper online, www.leadership.ng – accessed on 13 October, 2024.

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ JC Diala, Implications of the Disconnection between Law and Practice in the Context of “gender inequality” in Southeast Nigeria. *Journal of Culture, Society and Development*, (2015) 15



corruption under it. The EFCC Act should be revised to streamline the prosecution process for economic and financial crimes, ensuring that cases are resolved within three months to enhance the urgency and effectiveness of law enforcement. Mechanisms should be strengthened for the rapid reinvestment of funds recovered from financial crimes, directing it towards infrastructure development, social services, and public welfare projects to lessen the stress of citizens especially women. Encouraging whistle blowing is good, however financial rewards should be carefully regulated with monetary incentives offered only in high-impact cases to prevent abuse of the system. It is imperative to review composition of the EFCC in order to reduce representation from government institutions but increase presence of independent individuals with integrity and expertise in relevant areas such as financial management and law enforcement as well as members of civil society's organisation (CSOs). More attention should be given to investments in training and capacity-building programs for EFCC personnel, equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively investigate and prosecute complex financial crimes.

Recovered looted funds should be promptly deployed to public goods with effective monitoring mechanisms put in place. Community engagement initiatives needs to be developed by relevant government agencies and CSOs, to educate citizens about economic crime, promote a culture of reporting suspicious activity while ensuring their safety and anonymity. There is the need for greater collaboration with international law enforcement and financial institutions to share intelligence and best practices in the global fight against corruption.