



Corruption in Ethiopia: Assessing the Effectiveness of Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission in Combating Corruption

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ABSTRACT

Numerous studies showed that anti-corruption efforts have been made in various countries. But corruption remains a major obstacle, especially in developing countries, as it undermines the legitimacy and stability of the government. This study aims to assess the effectiveness of the Amhara National Regional State Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission in combating corruption. Effectiveness was assessed using institutional autonomy, resource, clearly formulated mandate, transparency, power of investigations, and cooperation with other stakeholders as a parameter. To this end, a qualitative case study research approach was adopted using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion. Besides, other secondary sources of data have also been used to obtain a broader understanding of the reality. From the data analysis, it is evident that the commission plays an important role in the fight against corruption, but it has not yet been effective. Therefore, we argued that all sections of the society should work hand in hand with the government to properly prevent and control this malpractice that is hindering the development of the country.

KEYWORDS : Ethiopia; anti-corruption commission; corruption; effectiveness

1. Introduction

It is widely agreed that corruption is a pervasive phenomenon that penetrates most societies (Schumacher, 2013; UNCAC, 2004; Ronald & Chikulo, 2000). Corruption exists in rich and poor countries, although its nature, extent, and overall dynamics vary greatly (Graycar, 2015; Radin, 2013). Corruption is seen as a significant obstruction in enhancing capacity building and development anomaly. Numerous studies have shown that corruption is one of the principal impediments to economic development, social security, service delivery, and good governance in Africa (Asongu, 2013; Graycar & Villa, 2011; Lessmann & Markwardt, 2010). Some countries in Africa, Asia and South America show alarming manifestations of corruption (Graycar & Villa, 2011). As a result, the government and international organizations are stepping up their efforts to reduce corruption (Goel & Nelson, 2010).

With this in mind, Ethiopia, after the adoption of the federal state structure moved on to the overall socio-economic and political reforms. One such reform was the Civil Service Reform Program (CSRP). The Ethiopia government initiated such reforms to inspect the overall management system and operation of the civil service at all levels of government (Arsema, 2010). One of the initial reasons for the launching of CSRP was to pull the civil service out of widespread untrustworthy practices and guarantee transparency and accountability (Biruk, 2016). The ethics sub-program was part of the National Civil Service Reform Program which is designed primarily to combat corruption and improve service delivery (Berihun, 2013).

This legal framework gave rise to the establishment of the Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (FEACC) in May 2001. The FEACC is an independent agency of the federal government established in cooperation with relevant bodies to:

- strive to create an aware society where corruption will not be condoned or tolerated by promoting ethics and anti-corruption education;
- prevent corruption offences and other improprieties;
- expose, investigate, and prosecute corruption offences and impropriety.

The FEACC is mandated to run at the federal level which includes the chartered cities of Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. The regional states have the privilege to form their own anti-corruption bodies under the federal arrangement (Biruk, 2016). In light of this the regional government begins to set up their own EACC to fight and prevent corruption in each of its regions and each regional office has its own autonomy in dealing with their tasks and budget (Arsema, 2010). Accordingly, on 15th December 2003, the Amhara National Regional State (ANRS) has established the Amhara National Regional State Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission in accordance with proclamation No.93/2003.

The Commission is the body responsible for coordinating the anti-corruption movement in the region and is situated in the capital city of the ANRS. The ANRS is one of the nine regional states of Ethiopia. It is located in the Northern and Northwest part of Ethiopia with a population of about 20 million, 11 zonal administrations, 140 woredas and about 3,429 kebeles (Denny & Demelash, 2013). Geographically, the estimated total area of the region is 170,150 square kilometers and is adjacent to four regional states. To the north is the Tigray Region, to the south is the Oromia Region, to the east is Afar Region, and to the west BenishangulGumuz.



In terms of organizational structure, the Commission is headed by a Commissioner. The Commissioner is supported by a Deputy Commissioner. According to the proclamation, there are also other subordinate Core Work Processes, professionals, and departments required for the works. Under the current organizational set up, particularly after April 2017, the organizational structure was organized by directorate level and the Commission consists of six directorates, three supporting work processes, and professionals. The directorates includes corruption prevention directorate, human resource management directorate, investigation and prosecution directorate, asset registration and disclosure directorate, finance and resource management directorate, and public relations directorate. These directorates are supported by three facilitative and supportive work processes, including planning, coordination and evaluation; information communication technology, and internal audit supportive work processes. In addition, these directorates and supportive work processes are supported by other professional branches, services, and necessary staff.

However, as Heilbrunn (2004) argues, many ACCs predominantly those established in Africa have been criticized for not being effective in reducing corruption. Similarly, Speville (2008) noted that countless ACCs do not play a significant role in combating corruption. Despite, ACCs are built up with incredible desire and promise; many have often been criticized for their ineffectiveness in their anti-corruption efforts (Biruk, 2016). Therefore, this study intended to assess the effectiveness of the Amhara National Regional State Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (hereinafter Commission) in the fight against corruption. The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews the related literature. Section 3 discusses the methodology. Section 4 illustrates the main empirical analysis and discussion and Section 5 concludes the paper.

Literature Review

Understanding Corruption

Almost everyone has an opinion on activities and behaviors that are considered corrupt, but given its complex nature, there is no agreement on the meaning of corruption (Graycar & Villa, 2011). Corruption is a multifaceted phenomenon that has been contested socially, legally, economically, and politically (Johnston, 1996). In most cases, corruption usually refers to the abuse of public office for private gain (Aduda, 2007; Girling, 1999; Bardhan, 1997). The office is a position of trust where one receives authority in order to act on behalf of an institution (de Lancer & Villoria, 2014:25). Aduda (2007) states that one can abuse power when public officials accept, demand or compel bribes, and when private agents offer bribes to sidestep public policies for their competitive advantage and benefit. Another widely used definition comes from Khan (1996), as to him corruption is a practice that deviates from the norms of public morality for personal motives such as wealth, power, or status. As Capasso & Santoro have argued:

Corruption is an agreement through which a public official receives a payment in exchange for a favorable decision on a specific matter and, as with every agreement, the splitting of its gains depends on the allocation of bargaining power of the parties involved, with bribes being high when public officials have great power and private agents fall behind (2018:104).

Activities including bribery and graft, extortion, kickbacks, misappropriation theft and fraud by virtue of one's position, self-dealing, patronage, abuse of discretion, creating or exploiting conflict of interest, nepotism, clientelism, and favoritism, as well as political manipulation are all generally agreed to constitute corrupt behavior (Graycar & Villa, 2011:420). These various corrupt behaviors occur in different activities and different sectors of all societies (Graycar & Villa, 2011:420). However, the above-mentioned scholarly interpretations are only related to public sector corruption as they ignore private sector corruption. As a solution to this limitation, Muthomi (2006) defines corruption as the abuse of not only public office but also private or commercial office for private gain. As to him, corruption invariably involves giving something to someone in a position of power either in government or in a corporation. Corruption can also be defined as the abuse or complicity of private or public power, office or resources for personal gain (Chinhamo & Shumba, 2007). The national proclamation of Ethiopian FEACC (2010:12) defines corruption as follows:

Corruption is the offering, giving, soliciting or accepting of an inducement, promise, or reward; the making of threats or the use of intimidation, in words or in behavior, exerting influence by the abuse of authority or its inconsistent application; which may improperly influence the actions subsequently taken, or not taken, by a body, its members, or its officers; for the benefit or competitive advantage of self or another.

It can be seen from the above discussion that there are different definitions of corruption. To this end, this study uses the well-known and widely used definition of corruption "the abuse of public office for private gain" for further discussion on corruption. This is because this definition is simple and broad enough to cover most forms of corruption.

Actors in Combating Corruption

Corruption is a very complex issue that affects institutions, citizens and various processes around the world. Therefore, the fight against corruption should be coordinated by integrating the capacity of the government and various actors. According to Rose-Ackerman (2013), there are four international actors that play a key role in the fight against corruption. The first and most obvious are International Financial Institutions (IFI) such as the World Bank (WB) and bilateral donors (Rose-Ackerman, 2013). These international institutions began promoting an anti-corruption agenda intensively in the mid-1990s. In fact, international actors cannot legitimately force domestic governments to become honest and free from corruption (Irrera, 2016). Rather, they are determined to support governance and anti-corruption projects in member states and to reduce corruption in their own loan and grant programs (De Sousa, 2010). These institutions support programs designed to transform government services and create accountable institutions.

The second set is directly related to cross-border civil and criminal law enforcement measures aimed at catching and punishing miscreants under criminal and civil law (Rose-Ackerman 2013). The offenders are firms engaged in international business, the firms' managers, organized crime groups, and country leaders, who enrich themselves through kickbacks and extortion (De Sousa, 2010). These institutions provide information on national legal systems that covers money laundering, asset recovery, and extradition, and help train prosecutors and police to prevent corruption within the country.

The third group of actors is a diverse group of international nonprofit institutions with an anti-corruption and good governance agenda, including organizations that support investigative journalism and freedom of the press (Omotoye, 2016). These actors are involved as one of the pressure groups, information providers, and groups to raise public awareness of corruption (Rose-Ackerman 2013). They also support research on the causes and consequences of corruption and the impact of reforms. In this way, people will push for change.

The fourth includes international business firms' work through some of the nonprofit groups such as TI (Rose-Ackerman 2013). These firms operate with extensive corporate support and board membership and have an interest in controlling corruption in business around the world (Omotoye, 2016). Other firms work closely with business and trade associations, participate in the promotion of codes of conduct and promote anti-corruption policies.

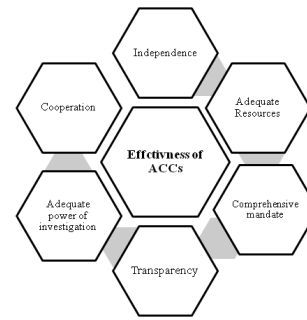
By and large, corruption is a global problem that needs the attention of all countries, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and all citizens. Thus, different actors including government, business, and non-governmental organizations need to increase their pressure on reducing it and bringing those responsible to justice (Kinkino, 2014). In this regard, many countries have joined the fight against corruption by recognizing anti-corruption activities at various levels and creating conducive environment for them to work.

Measuring the Effectiveness of ACCs

The establishment of the ACCs plays a wide range of roles in the fight against corruption. But its effectiveness should depend on the practice of the institution (Mezmur&Koen, 2011). Hence, it is important to look at a number of factors that need to be addressed in order to maximize the effectiveness of ACCs. The effectiveness of the ACCs depends on the extent to which the Commission achieves its goals and objectives. Therefore, although different ACCs have different characteristics, there are certain factors that need to be in place for ACCs to function effectively (Biruk, 2016; Arsema, 2010; De Sousa, 2010; Tewdros, 2009; TI, 2004; Pope, 2000). These factors include independence, adequate resources, comprehensive mandate, transparency, adequate power of investigations, and cooperation. As to the USAID (2004), without these criteria, any ACCs are vulnerable to failures. We will therefore discuss these issues in detail and use them as parameters to assess the effectiveness of the Commission in combating corruption, which is the main objective of this study.

Independence

Institutional independence refers to a provision that allows an organization to operate without the intervention of another



organization or individual. The independence of the ACC is considered as a fundamental criterion for its effectiveness, since it allows the institution to investigate suspected corruption without the influence of powerful individuals (Kpundeh& Levy, 2004). The international standard like the UNCAC, Article 6 and 36 require ACCs to perform its functions efficiently and to ensure the necessary independence. The independence of the ACCs can be guaranteed by the status the institution, appointment and dismissal procedure of appointees, and budget autonomy (UNDP, 2005; Pope, 2000).

A permanent agency, unit, or commission that exists separately and outside of government agencies is more independent than being established as a unit or department within an institutional structure (Arsema, 2010). If positioned in such an office, unit or department an ACC's ability to curb corruption may be compromised (Tewdros, 2009). The process of electing an ACC head should also be transparent and based on consensus among different high-level decision-makers (Arsema, 2010). Tewdros (2009) claims that any appointment made by the parliamentary selection committee can minimize any bias. However, it is not considered best practice if they are appointed by a politician such as a Minister or President (OECD, 2008). The removal of ACC appointees should also be protected by law against unfounded dismissal. Moreover, there is no better measure of institutional independence than allowing for budget autonomy (Mezmur&Koen, 2011). Therefore, to achieve its objective effectively, the ACCs require not only to exist separately as an independent institution but also to have an independent budget allocation.

Adequate Resources

Adequate material resources and specialized staff should be provided to ACCs to carry out its functions effectively (UNCAC, 2004). The adequacy of the resources can be assessed by some more qualitative indicators, such as the regular increase in financial resources, the stability of human resources, academic background, the reliability of staff members, and professional training. Tewodros (2009) also argued that institutions created to fight corruption should have the necessary financial resources and properly trained personnel. According to OECD (2007), the fight against corruption requires not only well-trained investigators and prosecutors, but also forensic specialists, financial experts, auditors, information technology specialists and so forth. Therefore, the adequacy of financial, human and technical resources is a key criterion for the effectiveness of ACCs.

Comprehensive Mandate

Fighting corruption is the broader mission of any ACCs. Anti-corruption activities include prevention, investigation, and awareness raising (OECD, 2008). In order to be able to fight corruption successfully, countries need to follow a holistic approach (UNDP, 2005). In particular, the ACCs should have a well-defined strategy that takes into account the country's unique cultural context and realities. ACCs should also have national objectives. However, most ACCs are created by imitating successful models, regardless of the specific political environment, socio-economic conditions, and resources available to a particular country (De Sousa, 2010). This practice does not always lead to success and effectiveness, but can create a gap between expected outcomes and achievements (Arsema, 2010). Therefore, for effective ACCs to exist there should be a comprehensive and coherent strategy, clearly formulated mandate, and a country-specific model with realistic and achievable goals.

Transparency

Transparency of ACCs is essential for ensuring their credibility and for building the public's trust (UNCAC, 2004). In practice, transparency is a necessary route to credibility for ACCs (Mezmur&Koen, 2011). Practice of the ACC shows that the main elements of transparency include regular reports presented to the parliament, president's office and government and available to the public as well as public forums such as consultative councils (Tewdros, 2009). Thus, like other factors, transparency is the factor that determines for the effectiveness and long-term success of ACCs.

Powers of Investigation

Powers of investigation include the ability to access records and the power to question witnesses as well as the ability to take action when necessary (Tewdros, 2009). Power of investigation also includes adequate internal coordination through integrating various anti-corruption functions. Such an integration of functions must be well coordinated in order for ACCs to operate effectively (Arsema, 2010). Prosecutor and investigative officers should also be organized in a way that respects their professional independence. Above all, prevention, investigation, and awareness-creation activities need to work together to effectively combat corruption,.

Cooperation

It is necessary to earn the cooperation and trust of the public in the fight against corruption. Laws and institutionalization alone are not sufficient to enforce the objective of ACCs and assure its effectiveness (Tewdros, 2009). Anti-corruption efforts can fail without the active involvement of the civil society and the private sector (OECD, 2008). Hence, the most important factor that influences the effectiveness of the ACCs is building cross sectional and sectoral support and interaction (Johnston & Kpundeh, 2002).

Free media and non-governmental organizations play an indispensable role in raising public awareness and monitoring the activities of the ACCs (Arsema, 2010; UNCAC, 2004). Therefore, building interactions and cooperation with different stakeholders is one factor for the effective functioning of ACCs.

Research Methodology

This research employed a qualitative case study research design. Case study design involves an in-depth examination of individuals, groups, or institutions in order to obtain a true and complete description of the subject chosen by the researcher (Marczyk, DeMatteo&Festinger, 2005). To achieve the objective of the study, the participants were from two categories, the staffs and customers of the Commission. Accordingly, the participants of this study were commissioners, directors, staffs, and customers. To select the participants, the researchers employed non-probability sampling technique. From the non-probability sampling, we used purposive sampling. The rationale behind the choice of purposive sampling is due to the fact that it is essential for situations where one needs to reach a targeted sample in a short period of time (Kultar, 2007). Another reason is to gather in-depth information from the participants.

When choosing an informant, one should first consider who can provide better information to achieve the research objective (Kumar, 2011). Therefore, the researchers assumed that purposively selected participants may have a good source of information as they have knowledge of the subject. In addition, due to the sensitive nature of the issue of corruption, the researchers use snowball sampling to reach potential and inaccessible informants, especially whistleblowers, witnesses and other customers of the Commission. The researchers also use the available sampling method to interview customers who come to the board to get services. Regarding the sample size, the most significant point in qualitative research is data saturation where there is no different information between the research participants (Kumar, 2011; Creswell, 2007). Therefore, interviews were conducted as long as participants responded in the same way to the interview questions. Accordingly, from March to June 2018 data were collected from 12 informants and one focus group discussants (with 6 participants).

In this study, both primary and secondary sources of data were explored. The primary sources of data consist of interviews and focus group discussion (FGD). The empirical part of this research have also consumed different secondary sources such as published and unpublished performance reports of the Commission, its publications and case reports, proclamations, regulations, guidelines, magazines, books, and journal articles. Finally, after the necessary data collection thematic data analysis was used to analyze the study results.

Effectiveness of the Commission in Combating Corruption

As mentioned earlier, there are number issues that need to be addressed in order to enhance the effectiveness of ACCs. Under this section, the researchers assess the effectiveness of the Commission based on the response of the study participants and document analysis. The criteria used to assess the Commission's effectiveness include independence, adequate resource, comprehensive mandate, transparency, adequate power of investigation, and cooperation (Arsema, 2010; De Sousa, 2010; Tewdros, 2009; TI, 2004; Pope, 2000).

Independence

The fight against corruption can only be effective if it is truly independent and free from undue interference (De Sousa, 2010). The independence of ACCs depends on the institutional position, appointment, and removal of the head and budget autonomy (UNDP, 2005; Pope, 2000). To become fully independent, ACCs should exist separately and independently rather than established as a unit or department within an institutional structure (Arsema, 2010; Mezmur, 2009). Accordingly, the Commission is established by the proclamation 237/2015 as an independent institution. It is not established as a unit or department within an institutional structure but exists separately as an independent government body. There are provisions on the revised establishment proclamation in 2015 regarding the appointment, tenure, and dismissal of the Commissioner and the deputy Commissioner. Pursuant to this provision, the Commissioner and the deputy Commissioner are appointed by the council of the region proposed with the Head of the Region (Article, 8). Their term of office shall be six years and may be reappointed when necessary (Article, 11). Once appointed, the Commissioner or the deputy Commissioner may not be removed from office without their consent. However, if they violate the provisions of the relevant code of conduct or are unable to fulfill their responsibilities due to mental or physical illness, they will be removed from office (Article, 13).

As to the customers of the Commission, there is a suspicion that the appointment process may be politically motivated. In fact, the head of the region and his cabinets play a decisive role in the appointment process. The EACC is a government-sponsored institution that aims to support the fight against corruption instead of opposing the government. The appointment of Commissioners therefore is based on their loyalty to the ruling party. Global Integrity (2010), also reports that appointments to the EACC are not entirely free from the executive domination. Nonetheless, if the Commissioners are loyal for the regional executives, they do not have the freedom to question and take measures when they commit corruption. This process will pave the way for the regional executives to intervene in the Commission's investigation and prosecution activities.

Other criteria used to ensure the independence of the ACCs are budget autonomy. In order to be more neutral, such institutions should be free from serious financial constraints (Mezmur&Koen, 2011). Pursuant to amended Proclamation No. 237/2015, the State Government shall allocate a budget in accordance with the Commission's Annual Work Plan (Article 16). The allocated budget should be commensurate with its responsibilities and there should be a law in place that prohibits a decrease in the current budget from last year's budget (Arsema, 2010). According to the Commission's report on budget allocations to the Commission, it is increasing year by year. Still, the increment in the allocation of annual budget is not proportional to the increasing volume of works of the Commission. However, the accountability of the Commission to the Chief Executive of the State limits the possibility of appealing to the Regional Council regarding the budget of the Commission.

The legal framework that grants independence to the investigative and prosecutorial role of the FEACC would have also been extended to the preventive activities of the Commission (Biruk, 2016). Similarly, regarding the practical aspect of securing independence in preventive activities, there have been attempts by some heads of institutions to unlawfully influence and intervene in the preventive works of the Commission particularly with respect to system-review studies. Though, some officials try to undermine the studies on systems and working procedures which aim at identifying malpractices that may lead to corruption in various government offices and public enterprises. Thus, the independence of Commission with respect to corruption prevention has not been assured fully, it needs to be guaranteed both in law as well as in practice. Therefore, the study concluded that although the Commission maintained its independence from any interference on investigation and prosecution activities legally, there were practical problems in budget autonomy and intimidation of the Commission's prevention activities by some government executive bodies.

Adequate Resources

ACCs should have sufficient resources to perform their functions effectively (UNCAC, 2004). Nevertheless, the participants of the study confirmed that resource inadequacy is the major problem for the effectiveness of the Commission. The annual budget allocated for the Commission is insufficient to undertake its mission when one considers the size of the ANRS and the cost of fighting corruption. This budget deficit has had negative impact on the Commission's financial sustainability and its key anti-corruption activities. The major functions of the Commission include education and training, systematic inspections, investigations, protection of whistleblowers and witnesses, distribution of printed and written materials, and more.

In support of the participants idea one can vividly see the gap between the annual budget allocated and required by the Commission in each year. In the year 2017/18, for example, the budget requested by the commission was 24, 786, 619 birr but the annual allocated budget was 10,732,053 birr and for the year 2018/19 the amount of budget the Commission's proposed to ask was 44,458,286 birr but, the maximum limit the Commission could ask for was 20,203,374 birr.

In addition to financial resources, the issue of manpower is another key factor for the effectiveness of the ACCs. As indicated in the human resource data, the number of employees in each directorate is insufficient. There are only 87 staffs in the Commission. In 2017/18 the Commission requested the recruitment of 34 staff members, but the regional government refused. The Commission will then be compelled to precede its work with the existing number of workforce. Hence, it is difficult to fulfill the broader responsibilities of the Commission by using these small numbers of staff. Based on the human resource data, there are only eight prosecutors and seven investigators, ten property registrars, one public relations officer, two media professionals, and a small number of educational, training, and research professionals. Furthermore, the problem is not only number but also there is a shortage of well-trained manpower. This may indicate a gap in skill and knowledge among the existing professionals to perform at optimal levels. Thus, the study concludes that while resource adequacy is the major factor for the effectiveness of the ACCs, the Commission is intensely tested by financial problem, shortage of human resources, as well as skilled personnel and special experts.

Comprehensive Mandate

There is no single solution for combating corruption. The comprehensive mandate of ACCs in fighting against corruption includes prevention, education, and investigation. Successful ACCs such as the Hong Kong's ICAC adopted these three pronged approaches (Meaghar, 2002). Ethiopia has also adopted these three approaches as a comprehensive mandate. Accordingly, the Commission has included these activities under its objectives and consists of separate departments and units each responsible for carrying out those tasks. To this end, the Corruption Prevention Directorate is responsible to examine the systems and procedures in the public sector, to identify corruption opportunities, and to make recommendations to plug the loopholes. This activity of the Commission is productive and used to save resource and time. For instance, according to the report of the Commission in the year 2016/17 the Commission protects 16,235,286 birr and 2184 care meter urban land through urgent system-review. In addition, through its education and training department the Prevention Directorate as a second aspect, is working to create an aware society where corruption will not be tolerated by promoting ethics and anti-corruption education.

To achieve the educational mandate, the Commission has been employing various mechanisms such as conducting trainings, producing and distributing publications and broadcast messages via radio, television and website for various sections of the society. Pertinent to preventing and combating corruption in 2016/17 fiscal year the Commission offers face to face training for 139,793 individuals.

Alongside the preventive and educational activities, the Investigation Directorate also focuses on investigation of alleged corruption offences, pressing charges against suspected corruption offences, freezing, and causing the confiscation of assets obtained through corruption, and providing protection to whistleblowers and witnesses. The directorate identifies corruption cases through links with police commission, media, complaints by the public, and research on the performance of institutions. The Commission in its 2016/17 report confirmed that, 973 records have been investigated, from these 516 records investigated by the Commission and 457 records by the Police Commission. However, there is a clear indication of gaps between expectation of the public and achievements of the Commission. The reasons for this gap may include a lack of human capacity and limited resources. Thus, although, the Commission adopted the three pronged approaches as a comprehensive mandate and made good progress, there is still a huge gap between the high expectations of the general public and the actual achievements of the Commission.

Transparency

The transparency of ACC is essential for its effective functioning and for ensuring its credibility and building public trust. Thus, in order to be truly independent, ACCs have to be transparent in their activities (Meghat, 2005). In line with this argument, the Commission publicizes its activities and anti-corruption awareness creation programs using newspapers, annual reports, brushers, and the regular magazines called FinoteMigbar (a bi-annual magazine). The Commission also used broadcast media such as Amhara Television, Bahir Dar, Dessie, and DebreBirhan FM and social media like Facebook and website (www.anrseac.gov.et). In addition, there are various facilities including fax (+251582220397), telephone (+251582263740), and postal (1798) services for those who wish to provide information, tip-off, and comments during all business days. Moreover, the Commission is always open and willing to provide any information to every legal person. Therefore, the Commission uses these strategies of disclosing information to ensure transparency.

However, according to the Commission's clients, the Commission does not respond promptly to cases like decisions of tip-offs and corruption crimes. A customer, who came 30 kilometers from Bahir Dar, stated that "information has been unduly delayed for long and the way it is presented does not take into account the rural and remote parts of the region".

In rectify the delay, the Commission has decided to complete an investigation of tip-off and information within one month, unless the nature of the case requires more time. Another way of ensuring transparency of the Commission is asset registration and disclosure. In 2010, Ethiopia passed a proclamation that requires the disclosure and registration of assets. According to this proclamation, any official, elected person or public servant has the obligation to register and disclose their assets. The Commission is empowered to conduct property registration and disclosure activities in the region. To date, the Commission has registered the assets of about 47,000 government employees, appointees and elected officials. The proclamation also requires the Commission to verify the information entered by the registrants. However, due to lack of capacity, manpower, and incomplete electronic system, the Commission was unable to effectively verify the information provided by the registrants.

The proclamation also states that all information related to registered property shall be available to the public. In this regard, there are public doubts about the Commission's readiness to disclose the registered data. The Commission has been criticized for failing to make the recorded information accessible to the public. The information has so far been used by the Commission and other judicial authorities for investigation purposes. In fact, anyone who wants to know the registered assets of the appointee or elected person can easily access up on a specific written request. The main reasons for restricting easy access to the registered information are the unavailability of applicable rules and guidelines in the Commission.

Therefore, it is plausible to state that the Commission guarantees its transparency by submitting an annual report to the state council, publicizing its activities using both print and broadcast media, and accepting any information, tip-off, and comments through phone, email, fax, and postal services. The commission has done a great job in registering assets of public servants, appointees, and elected persons, but does nothing about access of the registered information and verification of assets.

Adequate Powers of Investigation

To effectively investigate corruption cases, ACCs should have adequate powers. Some of the powers required for ACCs include but not limited to access documents, question witnesses, prosecution, freeze assets, seize passports, protect informants, and monitoring of income and assets. In accordance with the revised proclamation of 237/2015, the Commission has adequate and comprehensive investigation powers. The Commission has the power to receive and investigate allegations of corruption, search and seizure, investigation and surveillance, searching bank accounts, examining business and private documents, requiring suspects to provide details of their assets, income,

and expenditure, detaining travel documents, freezing assets, and protecting the confidentiality of an investigation.

Thus, in principle the Commission has adequate power of investigation. In practice due to financial constraints and human capacity, the Commission delegated the Police Commission and Justice Office to investigate corruption cases and respond promptly to the allegations. Therefore, according to the study participants, such delegation causes more inconvenience than improvement. The main problems identified by the participants included excessive bureaucracies and delays in the handling of corruption cases.

Cooperation

The primary role of the ACC is facilitating coordination and cooperation between various institutions and the public to combat corruption. As to Johnston and Kpundeh (2002) the establishment of cross-sectional and sectorial coordination is an important factor for the effectiveness of the ACCs. In accordance with article 20 of Proclamation No. 237/2015, the Commission is mandated to work and coordinate with various stakeholders. Consequently, the Commission is working with various government agencies to promote ethics and increase public participation in the fight against corruption at the regional level.

Accordingly, the Commission has established relationships and works closely with the Education Bureau, Technical and Vocational Training Bureau, Health Bureau, Agricultural Bureau, and Finance and Economy Bureau to work together in combating corruption. The Commission's public relations department works in collaboration with the regional Media such as Amhara Television, Amhara Radio, Bahir Dar, Dessie, and DebreBirhan FMs and other press Media. This has helped in giving the Commission visibility in the media and printed press and initiates the public to cooperate in the fight against corruption. Moreover, in an attempt to enhance the coordination of the Commission to a higher level, the Regional Anticorruption Coalition which comprises of government agencies, private sectors, civil societies, religious institutions and others around 129 institutions was formed in 2014.

The Coalition is mandated to provide direction in the fight against corruption and to evaluate the implementation of anti-corruption measures at the regional level. In practice, however, the coalition members are not committed to work with the commission, for instance Bahir Dar University, University of Gondar, Wollo University, and DebreBirhan University are members of the coalition which do not contribute in any way to the effectiveness of the Commission. Besides, the Coalition is not inclusive as most of its members are government institutions that care less about the private sector and opposition political parties. This undermines the credibility and trust of the Coalition and the Commission in strengthening their public mobilization role. The Commission has also working in coordination with the Police Commission and Justice Bureau of the region by forming delegation convention charter in January 25th 2018.

Cooperation with the police helps expedite investigations, disciplinary actions, and the sourcing of information, and it also helps to fill little gaps with regard to shortage of manpower of the Commission.

In summary, the study concludes that the Commission has begun a collaborative effort with different, government offices, enterprises, and institutions in the region through various mechanisms. But there is a problem with implementing agreements and monitoring the work started. This has brought an impact on the effectiveness of Commission to build a society that does not tolerate corruption.

Conclusions

Corruption is a major impediment to democracy, good governance, and the socio-economic development. For this reason, combating corruption is considered as one of the government's top priorities. That is why in many countries anti-corruption institutions have been established as the major actors in fighting against corruption. This study aims to assess the effectiveness of the Commission's in combating corruption. The effectiveness of the Commission was assessed using institutional autonomy, resource, clearly formulated mandate, transparency, power of investigations, and cooperation with other stakeholders as a parameter. Hence, the effectiveness of the Commission was measured by assessing the extent to which it has implemented the set criteria. Accordingly, the findings of the study reveals that even though the Commission is playing a significant role in combating corruption it is found to be ineffective. This is usually due to resource limitation in general and the existence of gap between the public expectation and achievements of the Commission in particular.

On the basis of the findings mentioned above, this study recommends different alternative measures to be taken to make the Commission more effective. Therefore, since fighting corruption is not a one-time campaign, it is recommended to disseminate ethics and anti-corruption education progressively among the members of the society to promote zero-tolerance towards corruption. Besides, allocating appropriate budget which considers the mission of the Commission and the cost of fighting corruption should be the regional government main concern. The strategies may apply through adopting specific policy directions; by giving guide for government officials, religious and community leaders, educational institutions, as well as other concerned government organizations, civic societies, NGOs and international organizations to work on the provision of necessary supports. Higher institutions should also play their role in strengthening the capacity of the Commission. In particular, those universities that are members of the ANRS Anti-Corruption Coalition should provide support by conducting research and providing community services.

The main limitation of this study is that it has not been able to assess the extent to which the Commission's work in the fight against corruption has satisfied the community. Therefore, it would be a good research idea to conduct further study to determine the level of public satisfaction in the work being done by the Commission in the fight against corruption.

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