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Decolonising Fiscal Management Practices for African Growth, Development and Change

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Despite that the management of public fund is highly legislated and the discipline populated with vastly skilled personalities in Africa, the rate of leakages of fiscal resources and the magnitude of waste recorded through the public treasuries is absurd. Consequently, this paper intends to answer: What are the critical issues mostly responsible for these leakages and the magnitude of waste across African continent and how can Africa be innovatively rescued from this quagmire? The paper relies on literature review, policy documents, reports, archival sources and library research covering the subject matter and uses 'Ajo' or 'Esusu', a tool for local fiscal resource mobilisation and allocation, as the theoretical framework. The paper discovered that the disconnect between indigenous practice, typified by the use of African Indigenous Knowledge, and western practices in fiscal management is extremely responsible for lack of pro-poor macro fiscal management and inclusive growth as exemplified by poor governance, slow economic development, lack of social equity and change in Africa. Decolonising fiscal management practices through the use of African Indigenous Knowledge in fiscal management will be an effective innovative antidote for achieving pro-poor macro fiscal management, inclusive growth and change in Africa.

Key words: *Decolonising; fiscal management; innovative; Indigenous knowledge; pro-poor*

I. INTRODUCTION

Globally, regardless of the type or nature of the political system and system of government, its legitimacy and the level of citizens' loyalty is a function of the ability of the government to deliver on dividends of governance explainable in effective provision of a whole range of public services. This in turn depends on adequate finances or fiscal resources and its management. There is reciprocal relationship between the government and the citizens in terms of duties, responsibilities, and obligations. While it is one of the civic responsibilities of the citizens to pay their taxes, it is the duty of the governments to use these resources, which were expected to be collected in a sufficient and appropriate manner, responsively and responsibly for the benefit of all citizens. To be specific, citizens all over the world expect good governance which focuses and delivers on their basic and fundamental needs. The process and/or mechanism that documents and specifies how these are intended to be executed is referred to as national budget. This document contains the sources of expected revenues and planned expenses, sustainably created by the governments, in manner that will make the expected service delivery attainable (Wildeman and Jogo, 2012).

Effective macro-fiscal management systems should involve plans scheduled to judiciously control incomes and outflows. It is against this fact that many stakeholders are constitutionally mandated to be engaged in the preparation of different fiscal reports for fiscal and administrative accountability and countries have constitutional stipulations and acts regulating fiscal management as a form of legislative interventions. The essence is to guide financial spending, limit fiscal waste and ensure unbiased and impartial allocation among the different levels and organs of government.

It is however surprising that in Africa, especially among the low-income countries, prudent management of government finances remains a myth as considerable leakages of public resources is ever witnessed (Reinikka and Svenson, 2004; Benon and Phago, 2014). This is in spite of governments in the continent's claims of existence of many specialised and commendable public fund administration institutions (Benon and Phago, 2014). The trading of blame among every stakeholders for weak fiscal management that is less supportive of the poor notwithstanding, effective pro-poor fiscal management remains an unquestionably and undeniably serious managerial task critical to the achievement of good public living particularly the poor. This fact was attested to by Hughes (2003) when he established that financial management encompasses the most vital aspect of the internal management of government. As asserted by Benon and Phago (2014), public finance is primarily concern with disbursements of money belonging to others by those who are authorised to do so. In this circumstance, those who are entrusted with the responsibilities to spend should be transparent, responsible and easily reached in performing such responsibilities (see, Shah, 2007). Understanding the importance of prudent fiscal policy and management for enhancing poor people's welfare, Prakash and Cabezon (2008) posited that it is a life-threatening tool in the execution of economic policy and its operation is confirmed by the way it influences the apportionment and utilisation of society's wealth in line with the existing financial plans and via tax and spending activities of the government.

Consequently, this article is an attempt to interrogate why effective pro-poor macro-fiscal management remains difficult in Africa and provide an innovative framework supportive of pro-poor fiscal management for getting out of this quagmire.

II. PUBLIC FISCAL MANAGEMENT IN THE LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A search of the literature revealed that the subject area of public fiscal management is wide. This is attested to by the existence of plethora of definitions that have been ascribed to it. One of such definitions was the one provided by Brobäck and Sjölander (2001) which sees public finance management as a system of five key functions in which each function comprises several components including planning and budgeting, accounting, payments, audit and revenues. From this definition, it can be inferred that public fiscal management aims are to achieve accurate preparation of society's revenue and spending, its judicious administration, and taking full liability and responsibility for any amount spent (Kiragu, 1999). This coincides with what is expected of any responsive and responsible government to pursue and achieve in order to judiciously spend the public revenues collected on public behalf to effectively discharge its constitutional responsibility of effective service delivery to its citizens. To this end, Gildenhuys (1997) highlights critical democratic values which forms the bedrock of any active public fiscal management in an egalitarian society as follows:

i. moderation and unbiased;
ii. best deployment of society's funds;
iii. unrestricted participation;
iv. consensus on tax and considerable share of its liability.
v. introduction, levy and decision on collection and allocation of tax proceed is made by recognised authority;
vi. elected officers are obligated to be answerable to the public;
vii. compassion and receptiveness;
viii. timely agenda implementation by the administrator;
ix. general fairness in terms of low cost better and quality services.; and
x. openness regarding the following of due process in the implementation of PFM. This implies and requires that accounts of stewardship is given in all honesty and plainness (Gildenhuys (1997 as cited in Benon and Phago, 2014).

Interestingly, most government in African countries have, through various economic reforms, fiscal management reform inclusive, followed these principles but with little success. This failure was ascribed to the neglect of many domestic or local advantages and potentials in most of the states (Benon and Phago, 2014). Although Folscher and Cole (2006) confirmed success stories resulting from restructuring efforts in some cases and allocative efficiency improved through some reforms, notwithstanding, as also argued, operational efficacy and proficiency are still a challenge. This shows that there is variation in the achievement of efficient fiscal management. This opinion was corroborated by Wildeman and Jogo (2012) report which stated that there is variation in the achieved successes by various governments at different phases. However, Schiavo-Campo (2008) opinion differs from this as he was never persuaded of the breakthrough and efficacy of other fiscal management techniques. Ascertaining the imperative of public fiscal management, Hughes (2003) affirms that public fiscal reform remains an essential aspect of the general public management reform. He stressed further that, the financial reforms seemed to achieve its goals in places, Ethiopia for example, where it is dedicatedly undertaken. This, by implication, suggests that the failure to efficiently and effectively implement public management reform in Africa is the bane of its fiscal management problem.

From the above, one may not be wrong to argue that, financial strength and firmness produce citizens' contentment and wellbeing due to enriched services which is dependent on effective decision financial matters. Public fiscal management system is built on the understanding and belief that public cash should come from or deposited in a vault or treasury, undoubtedly the government account held in such country's highest bank, the central bank for example (Ajam and Aron, 2007). In most countries, the constitution has clearly stated who should collect public revenue and the period allowed such money to be retained and remitted into the appropriate public or government account. A typical example is the Treasury Single Account (TSA) in Nigeria and no agency or individual outside the government is authorised to run any other account for whatever reason. Despite this legal provision, little has been achieved in the area of efficient fiscal management and pro-poor fiscal engagements. The reason being that there is disconnect between indigenous practices strengthen by Africa's tradition, religion, culture and values, and western practices of fiscal management. This has been seen to be the bane of the lack of pro-poor macro fiscal management as indicated by lack of good governance, poor economic development and lack of social equity, especially for the poor and other disadvantaged groups in the society. Viable economic growth and development is a function of fund accessibility and commendable skill of utilisation. This entails fiscal uprightness driven by values of transparency, accountability, sincerity, integrity among others. However, lacking of these values is responsible for the endemic corruption, treasury looting and financial recklessness, among others in Africa. Decolonising fiscal management practices through the use of African Indigenous Knowledge (AIK) of fiscal management will be an effective antidote for achieving pro-poor macro fiscal management and inclusive growth in Africa. This is because AIK guarantees incentives (the rewards and sanctions) that motivate public servants and policymakers which are in associated with efficiency.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Ajo' or 'Esusu' System of fiscal Management

In Africa, traditional savings and credit institutions have not been given the deserved attention. If not for the interest and role of the sociologists, economists, anthropologists and political economists, the subject could have gone into oblivion and its contribution to resource mobilisation would have equally gone unnoticed. The reason for this is not farfetched. As argued, writings on banking and finance in colonial and postcolonial Africa avoid dealing with traditional financial institutions under the pretext that they were, strictly speaking, not banks (Falola and Adebayo, 2000). According to Ojera (2018), as clear as the fact that many indigenous African financial management practices exist at a date earlier than Western practices, little attention has been paid to them as they are seeing to be comparatively inferior to the western practices by both scholars and financial management practitioners. One of such institutions that is basically known for saving and credit among the Yorubas of Southwest, Nigeria is thrift collection popularly called 'Ajo' or 'Esusu'. 'Esusu' can said to be a ‘universal’ word across the African continent. A sou-sou, which comes from the Yoruba term “esusu,” is an informal savings club popular in the Caribbean and Africa. Basically, it is like making a rainy-day fund with your friends. Odeniyi (2016) refers to this as the wise economy in the management of money and other resources in order to save more and secure the future.

As argued by Falola and Adebayo (2000), ‘ ‘esusu’ was more developed and served the people in most senses of the term ‘savings’ while ‘ajo’ was simply to satisfy the first sense in which savings has been used by economists, that is, the process of accumulating money’. Regardless of the usage, none replaced each other but they continued to exist side by side, and individuals have the freedom to choose any one he or she likes (Falola and Adebayo, 2000). The pivot of this system was the ‘alajo’ (the saving collector or treasurer) and could be a man or woman.

'Ajo' or 'Esusu' is undoubtedly the first form of micro-credit and finance banking business upon which the modern micro finance banking practices is erected. Esusu describes traditional forms of cooperation that existed and still exists among indigenous communities in which financial payment is made to casual or unregistered associations for symbiotic relations. Although, there are no laws guiding the practice persee so far every member gets exactly what he or she contributed, notwithstanding, there is little legal recourse in the event someone is taken advantage of.

‘Ajo’ system involves a group of people who know and trust each other, and take turns in pooling a certain substantial sum of savings to each participating member on a monthly basis, till the cycle is completed and all members have collected a similar amount of savings (Oluyemi, 2019, See also, Odeniyi, 2016). There are four key principles that drives the thrift system as highlighted by Oluyemi (2019). These are the principles of “**Know**”: All stakeholders, participants or members should be very familiar to one another before starting or joining the group; "**Trust**": There must be high level of conviction, confidence, sincerity, dedication, faith and comradeship among and within the group; "**Pooling**": It involves combination and sharing of funds and risks; and "**Cycle**": There is always at least two cycles for 'ajo' system in order to ensure that those who take last contribution are put or slated at the beginning of the second cycle and inculcate or imparts the principle of fairness (Oluyemi, 2019). All these principles are meant to ensure the welfare of the participants and facilitate effective fund management in the 'Ajo' or 'Esusu' system. Besides, they assist in facilitating the process of prudent fund mobilisation and management which is the primary concern of any fiscal management and pro-poor agenda.

A question that could arise at this juncture is that: how can fraud be or is prevented in the system. Interestingly, the fund are made to be secured through recourse to traditional, cultural and religious injunctions and sanctions as well as reward for uprightness. In Oyo, southwest of Nigeria, where the practice seems to be more pronounced for instance, cases of fraud, cheating and misappropriation were prevented or settled through oath taking and or appeal to goddesses including Sango (god of thunder, known to strike cheats, thieves, and wrongdoers with thunderstorm) and Ogun (god of iron, known to harm those who have committed acts of injustice) (Falola and Adebayo, 2000). At the extreme, culprits are banished or ostracised from the community while upright behaviour is rewarded by chieftaincy titles, enjoyment of pride, accorded family and self-esteem, and integrity.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This paper rely on secondary data from literature review, policy documents, reports, archival sources and library research covering the subject matter. The analytical discussion is limited to Africa due to the conviction that the countries in the continent are similar in the type of governance system and, exceptionally distinct generally on the factors affecting and challenging the operations of their fiscal management system compare to the developed world. While few researches have been conducted on the determinants of effective public financial management in developing countries, there is dearth of research that focus on the innovative use of African Indigenous Knowledge or resources to improve the subject matter which is the focus of this paper.

V. PRO-POOR MACRO FISCAL MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA: AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS

Globally, economists, finance experts, administrators and other stakeholders generally have the unanimity of opinion as to the fact that the budget forms the rallying point between politics and reality. This is stressed by the multilateral role the budget is intended to play as a tool for strengthening macro-economic stability, collaborative public policy, and translating government policies and programmes into concrete action. In Africa, specifically after independence, the budget is expected to be the most important instrument through which government at all levels provides the benefits of long-yearning democratic governance such as poverty reduction and unemployment, and sustainable trend of economic growth and development. Through budget, governments provide the public services and realise the expectations of their citizens. In a democracy, these expectations are often listed and formed the focus of the political parties during electioneering campaigns and after forming the governments, and are ratified by parliaments through annual appropriations. Authoritarian and non-democratic societies alike, also work with budgets but these are enacted through decrees.

In an ideal world, for public expenditure to be pro-poor and deliver on its goals, it must meet certain standard and criteria. These are put into perspectives by Wambia (2016) as follows where he asserts that public expenditure has to be:

a. Effective: It must be real and active to achieve the reasons for its pursuit timely and with deserved attention on quality. This embraces quick and appropriate completion of infrastructure programmes.
b. Efficient: Tasks must be performed, completed and delivered within the financial plan and money allocated. This is with a view to showing value for money.
c. Relevant: Any expenditure must be directly related to its purpose, and not indirect or vague.
d. Sustainable: The government must be able to limit its spending within the financial plan as defined, appropriated or enacted by the legislatures, over a reasonable period.
e. It must involve cooperation and collaboration between the government and the public, as well as between the government and its national or foreign development partners.
f. The practice must include continuous learning, sharing and updating of knowledge within the government and between the practitioners and academicians, and between an advanced nations and developing nations in order to avoid repeated mistakes.
g. transparent and ethical in order to build stakeholders' confident and repose same in the policy makers that tax gathered will be used or is being used for public interests and benefits.
h. formulated through a participatory process and bottom-up approach in order to be truly accepted and owned by the citizens (Wambia, 2016).

It is instructive to note that most countries have designed good and better fiscal management mechanism to achieve the contents of their budget. Their strength notwithstanding, public fiscal management system is still weak in most of these countries, hence inability to achieve efficient public service delivery. Most of these strengths and weaknesses in some selected African countries are summarised in the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) Assessments Reports (2005–2010 cited in Benon and Phago, 2014) as follows:

Table 1 PFM Country Weaknesses and Strengths

COUNTRY	ASSESSMENT PERIOD	PFM WEAKNESSES	PFM STRENGTHS
Central African Republic (CAR)	2010	Budget credibility was low	Methodical improvement attained by the Office in charge of preparation of Fiscal allocation
		Limited efforts in implementation of budget	Progress in the budget preparation process
		Lack of proper monitoring, evaluation and appraisal of fund allocated	The reliability of funds allocated in the previous statement of income and expenditure legal framework was restricted
Uganda	2009	Financial recklessness and immorality and its accompanying insincerity aggravated failure to accomplish financial goals.	All related financial activities followed due process and strengthen the entrenchment of strong foundation for financial restraint.
		Substantially, in-house restraints in implementation are usually neglected and inner review remains feeble.	IFMS delivered regular monitoring and evaluation exercise on financial activities in line with acceptable and quality financial guidelines promptly.
		Swelling outstanding with opportunity for booking outside the IFMS jurisdiction by accounting officers in IFMS-enabled MDAs.	Availability of required fundamental framework for good fund administration
Republic of South Africa	2008	Uncertainty in the payment of development partners aids and financial assistance.	Over-reliance on income and expenditure estimates.
		Availability of significant amount of financial resources from donor outside budget estimates.	All-inclusive and openness nature of national government PFM systems.
		Ambiguous definition of statement of income and expenditure for donor funds.	Consistent, adequate and appropriate recording and checking of all outstanding inventories.
Tanzania	2005	Inadequate reliability in the value of process of preparing income and expenditure estimates.	Better-quality and regular monitoring and evaluation of all accounting and budgetary procedures
		Poor and weak monitoring, evaluation and control of activities involved in the implementation of income and expenditure, especially for the MDAs.	Commission responsible for public financial records are not overburdened with too much responsibilities.

		Inability to meet MDA's financial demands due to constant dearth of cash resulted to poor performance.	Strong institutional mechanism for dealing with observations raised by the auditors .
Kenya	2009	Non-existing useful operational record and accounts	Efficient use of budget as reliable financial tool for accounting decision making.
		Significant financial allocation to some divisions do not show the specific reasons or project for which they are directed or allocated or hope to achieve.	Arrears were contained and reduced.
		Lack of detailed information on the websites while there was delay of the official procedure by the law makers.	There was prompt and improved direct allocation of and access to funds to all levels of government.
		Absence of all-inclusive and clear legal framework for PFM and other stakeholders.	

Source: PEFA Assessments Reports (2005–2010)

The above remains a puzzle despite the fact that the continent has plethora of institutions, constitutional provisions, financial acts and equally endowed with great technically skilled career officers and elites in administrative, management and finance disciplines, among others (Benon and Phago, 2014) which are capable of translating into an amassed fortune of potentials and expertise for enriching the management of public treasury. Nevertheless, most African countries are yet to achieve efficient fiscal management that can be utilised in driven the budget to harness their huge mineral and natural endowments in order to realise the economic potentials and foster inclusive growth and economic development of their countries and the continent in general. The reason why African fiscal management remained consistently and persistently weak and inefficient in spite of the strength of the macro fiscal management is the focus of the next section.

VI. SUPPORTING AND ACHIEVING PRO-POOR MACRO FISCAL MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA: ISSUES AND FACTS

The importance of budget as one of the central tools for macro fiscal management is predicated on its indispensability to any successful financial policy in that the policy encompass the manipulation of items in the budget. In any political system, the preparation of budget is the creation of a network and indeed complex interaction of social, political, and economic forces. As a result, it is usually a political process in all countries over the world regardless of the system of government in practice (Pretorius and Pretorius, 2008). Any analysis of the efficacy of the macro fiscal management system, therefore, has to take due cognition of this political process for better assessment. Using this as a basis, as argued by Benon and Phago (2014), offers a means of measuring the degree of budgetary transparency. These means or indices include all efforts at creating a viable atmosphere that supports effective achievement of the aims and objectives of the fiscal management as epitomised by the openness in the creation of strong governance structure, sincerity in reaching resolutions and means of rationalising them, honesty in collecting and disseminating facts associated with economic policies, and provision of regular feedbacks, in terms of accountability and transparency to the public in manner that it will be easy to understand by the citizens. In fact, these indices are succinctly highlighted in the PEFA (2005) as:

(i) budget comprehensiveness and transparency;
(ii) policy-based budgeting;
(iii) predictability and control in budget execution;
(iv) accounting and reporting; and
(v) external scrutiny and audit (PEFA, 2005).

Thus, from above, it is believed that any fiscal management system built within the framework is bound to be sound, effective and efficient, pro-poor and, will be accompanying with credible budget all of which are central to the challenge of raising the quality of governance and reducing corruption (Kaberuka, 2013).

In Africa, however, rather than the policy makers or the political elites to see budget as a tool for achieving better and sound pro-poor fiscal management, it was seen as the preference of those in power. The process of budget making is top-bottom instead of bottom-up, a situation which hinders acceptability and credibility. The public, most times, are not aware of the process of budgeting, a situation that negates the principles of 'know' in the 'ajo' system. As noted by Fombad (2013), poor transparency in the conduct of those involved in budgetary process, the situation that give room for minute contributions from the public, on the excuse of "commercial confidentiality" (Makiva and Ile, 2018).

The career officers often time are being dictated the figures to be included while budget contents are being padded illegally by the parliament as witnessed in Nigeria (See, Olaopa and Ojakorotu, 2018). Inclusion of many items are not made public not to talk of the justification for such acts. It is very disheartening that most of the so-called representatives of the people do not visit their constituency to give steward required for accountability and transparency. Constituency projects funds meant for the provision of basic amenities for the wellbeing of the rural societies, are being inflated (Onuigbo, 2015) and afterwards never implemented.

The attitude of the policy makers, the legislature and executive in particular, are equally found in reckless spending, diversion and/or looting of allocation, unethical request and spending (Agunyai and Olawoyin, 2018). All these acts of fiscal impunity and corrupt practices do not only contradicts Wambia (2016) qualities of good public expenditure has to be and run contrary to the principles underlining the 'ajo' system as stated by Oluyemi (2019) but also have a significant effects and impacts on macro fiscal management and good governance in Nigeria and Africa in general (Ezekwesil, 2013; Ukase, 2014; Olaopa and Ojakorotu, 2018). The typical example in this regard is the decision of the House of Representatives in Nigeria to purchase 400 exotic cars worth 5.04billions of naira for its principal officers and other members (Akoni, 2020) while majority of the workers and pensioners are yet to receive their entitlements for years. Not only this, the law makers outrightly rejected Nigerian brands (TVC News, 2020; Punch, 2020) not minding the implication on the infant industries, employment level and capital flight on the country's economy. With special reference to the effects on the poor and downtrodden, majority of people in this category have been living a very poor and difficult lives due to lack of jobs which provide income for survival (UNICEF, 2002; See also, Momodu, 2012; Momodu and Matudi, 2013; Fatile and Adejuwon, 2016; National Bureau of Statistics, 2017) arising from misallocation of public funds to corrupt practices. How can the behaviour of those who are the custodian of public treasury and other related fiscal matters charged with the responsibility of service delivery be explained or justified in this circumstance. To be candid, the list of fiscal atrocities of African parliamentarians which made the achievement of pro-poor macro fiscal management absolutely impossible is endless (See, Olaopa and Ojakorotu, 2018). Besides, the process of fiscal management and elites fiscal behaviour equally exhibit significant variations in public fiscal management aims as earlier highlighted by Kiragu (1999) as well as Gildenhuys (1997) critical democratic principles which should form the foundation of any effective public fiscal management in a democracy. Hence, seeing financial indiscipline, fiscal recklessness, poor budget implementation, lack of consultation, among others which characterise fiscal management in Africa and its attendant poor or low budget credibility and weak fiscal management may not be surprising.

Generally, regardless of the various conceptions of macro fiscal management, it is still an incontrovertible fact that the subject matter of fiscal management concerns both technical accounting and reporting issues as well as the general taxing, spending and debt management of government, which in turn influences resource allocation and income distribution (Pretorius and Pretorius, 2008). Both processes undeniably involve a structure comprising several role-players, multifarious relationships and vibrant and unified or interconnected processes. This fact is neglected in Africa as people who are supposed to be the focus of the policy are never engaged or considered. Inequality dominate fiscal policy in Africa. A typical experience is found in the tax system and policy expected to reduce poverty among the poor and strengthen empowerment. For instance in Nigeria, the situation which may unlikely different across the continent of Africa, the tax system is a regressive one that makes the liability of payment to rest on or affect significantly the small enterprises and the down-trodden. Contrarily, big companies and multinational corporations enjoy tax waivers and tax holidays, and take the undue advantage and opportunities of ambiguities and excuses in tax laws to their selfish interest. Consequently, according to Oxfam report (2020), every year, Nigeria losses \$2.9 billion of potential revenues to tax incentives – tax holiday as the Multinational corporations involved in LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) had enjoyed tax holidays amounting to \$3.9 billion, the amount that is equal to about three times the total health budget in 2015 (Ahmed, 2020).

The implication of this is poor fiscal mobilisation and efficiency in resource allocation and deprivation of the good services ought to be delivered or provided through such funds. This is as a result of the fiscal leakages to the pocket of few unidentified individual as a result the financial incapacity of the government caused by ineffective and inefficient fiscal management. All these run contrary to the four key principles, meant to ensure the welfare of the participants and facilitate effective fund management in the 'Ajo' or 'Esusu' system as highlighted by Oluyemi (2019). Besides, they assist in facilitating the process of prudent fund mobilisation and management which is the primary concern of any fiscal management and pro-poor agenda in any democratic society.

As asserted by Porter, Andrews, Turkewitz and Wescott (2010), emergence of an efficacious and prosperous society is pivoted by sound economic and resource allocation systems institutionalised by people in leadership position, both political and non-political office holders. Institutions governing public finances is reminiscent of the ‘alajo’ who have a decisive influence on the mobilisation and allocation of income, expenses and other incurred overheads and benefits by the society. ‘Ajo’ or ‘esusu’ as established in the preceding discussion is a rational economic institutions developed to mobilise and allocate funds locally among the participants to meet their needs and that of the society and the engine or facilitator of this system is the ‘alajo’ (the saving collector or treasurer) whose concern is the prudent management of the contributed funds. However, the efficient role of ‘alajo’ is never brought to bear or practice in the contemporary fiscal management system. The failure of African leaders in this regard has been put into perspectives by Van de Walle (2001), when he argued that African leadership’s lackadaisical attitude, lack of determination and commitment to reforms and unethical behaviour with respect to manipulation of information has since given fake impression about the status of economic management in the continent. Political will and dedication which involve possession, acceptance and control of any development agenda by leadership without any form of external influence is indispensable to achieving strong financial management. This remains dearth in African. On this note, The Economic Commission on Africa (2002) recommends that the role of effective leaders should include making plan for promoting and encouraging public participation and involvement in the design of macroeconomic policy agendas; human capital development in budgeting; and establishing effective stakeholders networking in policymaking.

The above, by implication, tends to suggest that there is strong relationship between leadership and resource management. In fact, the study conducted by Obiwiri, Andy, Akpa and Nwankwere (2011) confirms that the extent to which an individual participate and utilise his/her society’s resources is highly determined or influenced on the style of leadership adopted by the leader in the process of discharging their duties. This position is further confirmed and reinforced by Lee and Chuang (2009) when he asserted that the outstanding leader does not only stimulates subordinates’ potential to boost proficiency but also fulfil their obligations towards achieving organisational goals. This is different across Africa as leaders are not only selfish but very greedy. After all, how do you explain the motive behind a Nigeria former Minister of Petroleum Resources, Diezani Alison-Madueke buying $40,000 worth of jewelleries with public funds? (See, BBC News, 2019; Sahara Reporters, 2019). So also a Senator of the Federal Republic who spent N45m luxury decoration of his mother's grave (www.operanewsapp.com). There have also been reported cases of unethical influencing of the head of government for undue and exceptional favour or advantage on fiscal matters by powerful individuals, family and top-ranking public officials which enables public officers to use the public offices for personal pecuniary gains. Example of this was that which was reported in the PP Report (2014, 2015) in South Africa (Makiva and Ile, 2018). The situation is not different in Nigeria as top public officers and corporate organisations were accused of conspiracy in committing high-tech financial scandal, misappropriation and fiscal mismanagement blunders. For instance, a former Head of Service of the federation, Mrs. Winnifred Oyo-Ita and eight others including different companies were arraigned for financial fraud and misappropriation in relation to Duty Tour Allowances (DTA), Estacodes, conference fees and receiving kickbacks on contracts meant to improve peoples life (The Nation, March 23, 2020). This opportunistic behaviour of leaders at all levels has been responsible for the weaknesses in Africa's macro fiscal management system. This arose from the complexity of public finance (Witt and Müller, 2008) which has resulted in the difficulty to practically detach politics from administration and how to manage their complementarity (Svara, 2001) coupled with lack of effective rewards and sanction systems in Africa.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

From the foregoing analysis, it cannot be disputed that sound fiscal management is desirable. A well-organized public sector that delivers quality public services consistent with citizen preferences and promotes private market-driven growth while managing fiscal resources prudently is considered critical to achieving reduced corruption, poverty reduction and effective democratic governance. The attainment of this is predicated on sound public fiscal management system, equitable revenue mobilization and distribution, assured fiscal sustainability, compatibility in resource allocation-development priorities, controlled expenditure while enabling efficient management, and safeguarding due process. However, the process of attaining this is multifaceted and with sophistication. This is so in that it involves series of interaction, networking and support of a number of participants at different levels among other issues which does not immune it from technical hitches and other challenges. These issues are recognised as the impediments to efficient fiscal management system in spite of relevant and related fiscal and material resources in Africa. Given the indispensability of effective management of macro fiscal systems for the efficient resources allocation, utilisation and management, repose of confidence, transparency and accountability in government financial transactions and ensuring sustainable economic accomplishment, there is need to pay special attention to any efforts directed at improving fiscal management system.

VIII. IS THERE ANY WAY OUT OF FISCAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM QUAGMIRE IN AFRICA?

There is no doubt the fact that the main aim of the public sector reforms across the continent of Africa is to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the operations and performance of the public sector (Polidano, 1999; Hughes, 2003). The implementation of this reform was predicated on the principles of new public management (NPM) vis-a-vis freedom of the administrators or leaders to operate in accomplishing task and making them answerable and responsible for their actions or inactions based on strong performance targets (Manning, 2001). However, to utmost dismay, the doctrines has never manifested in the practices of fiscal management in Africa as the weak system tends to suggest. What then is the way out of this quagmire and deadlock? This is found in the need to entrench and instil transparency and accountability, essential prerequisites, in governance, for sustaining the financial activities and performance of the whole economy, good governance and general ethical financial behaviour. This is with a view to mitigating the effects of financial indiscipline and recklessness of both the political non-political office holders in Africa. This can be achieved, facilitated and strengthened by utilising African Indigenous Knowledge or resources. This will be expedited by developing the theory of African communalism.

Not minding the philosophical challenges to this conception (See, Olufemi, 2016), it is a traditional way of life of African rural societies before colonialism, devoid of formal hierarchies, with equal access to all society resources without any discrimination (Wikipedia, Agulanna, 2010). In the society, there exists a moral doctrine that gives credence, importance and recognition to human dignity, rights, and responsibilities (Ikuenobe, 2018). In this society, as argued by Ikuenobe, togetherness or collectivism in African settings generates and engenders mutual living, cooperation and understanding, it demands people's moral uprightness and zeal to give back to their society for mutual and self-benefits or general welfare. This attitudinal behaviour generates the main concern for duty as the central goal of forming a community, in order to provide for the needs and aspirations as well as the wellbeing of its inhabitant (Ikuenobe, 2018). As posited by Etta, Esowe, and Asukwo (2016), through African communalism, indigenous Africans are emotional, conveyed global opinion, traditional ethics based on blood association and connection among their relatives within a community. In this circumstance, the first step in mitigating strategies to combat the spread of corruption, financial indiscipline, fiscal recklessness, poor budget implementation, lack of pro-poor macro fiscal management, among others which characterise fiscal management in Africa, will be by developing the requisite theories of African Ubuntu and Ujaama Philosophies, to recognize the continent as community, not collection of individuals.

Ubuntu and Ujaama provide a strong philosophical bases for the community and brotherhood respectively. They are philosophies that encourage public welfare and embrace humility as critical component of human existence (Venter, 2004). With this in the minds of the leaders, they will be prepared to work harmoniously and cooperatively for the benefit of the whole rather than selfish interest (see, Ezenweke and Nwadialor, 2013). Related to this is the value of 'Omoluwabi'. According to Usamot, Ige and Olaopa (2019), 'Omoluwabi' is an embodiment of the core values of Yoruba which hold in high esteem honesty, decency, hard work, contentment, integrity and selflessness and as long as these values remained un-internalised into the fabrics of Nigerians and Nigeria's political system, corruption, unethical behaviour and other fiscal indiscipline will continue to thrive while pro- poor fiscal policy and management will not be feasible.

As the last resort, a cue could be taken the way cases of fraud, cheating and misappropriation were prevented or settled in the Yoruba society of Oyo Kingdom. This is through oath taking and or appeal to goddesses including Sango (god of thunder, known to strike cheats, thieves, and wrongdoers with thunderstorm) and Ogun (god of iron, known to harm those who have committed acts of injustice). When leaders take oath of office with these African resources, they mind their behaviour and act accordingly and appropriately. More so, there is need for effective rewards and sanctions system by taking a cue from the indigenous society and its resources where anybody culpable of unethical financial behaviour, at the extreme cases, are banished or ostracised from the community while upright behaviour is rewarded by award of chieftaincy titles, enjoyment of pride, accorded family and self-esteem, and integrity. However, colonial rule has eroded this practice and opportunity and undue advantage of the society is taken by the leaders to misbehave and engage in immorality and unethical financial behaviour.

The above is not to argue for the discard of other good measures highlighted by other scholars for prudent fiscal management, the belief is that coalesce of all the measures into one harmonious strategy is bound to be effective and helpful. This is against the conviction that existing tendency of not given recognition to the values, utility and propensity of the body of African Indigenous knowledge and resources for solving African challenges due to the colonisation of ideas in Africa has made us to be subservient to western ideas and external supports, yet less effective, for solving African challenges. It is high time that we look inward and use the continent's endowments for its benefits. Failure to implement this, the continent will continue to suffer in the midst of plenty, rejoicing under economic utopias and gallivanting under complete economic enslavement.

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