



Corruption and Nigeria's National Development

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Abstract

Corruption is making or becoming morally corrupt. It is a change from good to bad in morals, manners or actions, a perversion from right principles. Nigeria has been so weakened that corruption has been institutionalized. Even the churches and other religious organizations are themselves not completely free from corruption. Despite institutions put in place by different Nigerian governments, the extent and effects of corruption seem not to be abating. If not controlled, it will eventually endanger, or destroy completely Nigeria and its national development. The paper examines the extent, effect and possible solutions to the problem of corruption so as to rescue Nigerian Nation and ensure sustainable development in the country.

Keywords: National Development, Corruption, Governance & Nigeria

Introduction

Corruption is Nigeria's biggest challenge. It is clear to every citizen that the level of corruption in the country is high. It's found in every sector of the society. Be it a small or big sector, there is every possibility of observing corrupt practices when critically examined. It is the dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, typically involving bribery. It is the illegitimate use of power to benefit a private interest (Morris 1991). Corruption refers to the giving of bribe to an official so that the truth will not be told. It involves the embezzlement of public fund. Transparency international in their corruption perception index in early 2002, pronounced Nigeria as one of the most corrupt nations in the world.

This was in spite of the fact that democratic institutions had been introduced and the Anti-corruption commission set up even as at today, Nigeria is among the last position down the ladder among nations adjudged to be corrupt by transparency international corruption perception index.

Corruption takes many forms in Nigeria ranging from political corruption, embezzlement, favouritism and nepotism, to extortion. The causes of corruption in Nigeria include the capitalistic and materialistic nature of Nigerian society that induces corruption; moral laxity, decline in family value, ostentation and poverty, the need for party funding as a form of investment, poor remuneration of public

servants, weak and ineffective institution, among others. Corruption is so pervasive in Nigeria that the World's Bank survey of the level of corruption in selected public and private sector 2004-2006 shows that every institution in Nigeria is corruption, including religious bodies. The police led the pack while political parties, the customs services, the Legislature, educational system, the Judiciary, the NGOs, even religious bodies were not exempted. Also Transparency International (TI) rating of Nigeria over 11 years adjudged the country as the most corruption nation on earth thrice, precisely in 1996, 2001, 2001 and 2003. There is hardly any other country, which has had such dismal rating so consistently.

Corruption is antithesis to transparency. Thus, various governments in Nigeria had made conscious efforts at curbing corruption and ensure transparency in the Nigeria public life. The various instrumentalities and measures employed include the following:

- The fraud units of law enforcement agencies like the police and security service
- Compulsory retirement, of public officers and civil servant
- Buhari regime's War Against Indiscipline and public trial of politicians 1984
- Abacha's Establishment of code of conduct Bureau;
- The independent corrupt practices and commission (ICPC)
- The economic and financial crimes commission (EFCC); the Nigerian extractive industries transparency initiatives (NEITI)

- The due process office; and monetization of fringe benefits of public of officials.

Despite these efforts, corruption still thrives in the country. It is against this backdrop that one would want to contemplate other avenues that could help eradicate the scourge or complement the efforts of government at ameliorating the sting of corruption on the public life and thereby curtailing its continued spread. Therefore, the paper examined the extent aspects, effects and possible solutions to corruption with the aim of ensuring transparency, and encouraging sustainable National development. Corruption is potent cancer that has mercilessly eaten Nigeria to a stage of stupor. It has done much damage not only to Nigeria and Nigerians, but the overall national development of the country.

Extent of Corruption in Nigeria

Nigeria which is the most populated country in Africa, has been ranked high in corruption by transparency international and other notable organizations that monitor corrupt practices around the world. They do not have anything good to say about Nigeria at all. High corruption rankings affect almost all Nigerians who migrate to foreign countries, as foreigners have the perception that since Nigeria is corrupt, so are all Nigerians. In the year 2000, transparency international carried out a survey of 90 countries, including Kenya, Cameroon, Angola, Nigeria, Cote-d'Ivoire, Zembabew, Ethiopia, Ghana, Senegal, Zambia, India, Venezuela, Moldova, and others. At the end of the ranking, Nigeria was seen as the most corrupt in that ranking because the country occupied the 90th position in terms of transparency. Nigeria was the most corrupt country in the year 2000. In 2001, Nigeria

was ranked the second-most corrupt nation in the world out of 91 countries, falling only to Bangladesh (Ugochukwu, 2017).

Still from the same source, in the year 2002, Nigeria has again ranked the second-most corrupt country in the world, after the organization surveyed 102 countries. Nigeria was seen at the bottom, occupying the 10^{1st} positions in terms of confidence interval (CI). In 2003, Nigeria received the same ranking, making, making no improvements from 2003. In 2004, Nigeria was ranked the third most corrupt country in the world in that year, performing better than Bangladesh and Haiti. That year, 146 nations were surveyed. In 2005, the number of countries surveyed by the transparency international was 158. Nigeria was ranked eighth most corrupt.

In 2006, 163 countries were surveyed; the results showed that Nigeria was ranked the 21st most corrupt country in the world. Haiti was the world's most corrupt nation that year. Among the 180 countries surveyed in 2007, Nigeria ranked 147 on the table alongside with Angola and Guinea-Bissau. The result shows that Nigeria was 33rd most corrupt country in the world. Any analysis of the anti-corruption laws in Nigeria shows that corruption will continue in spite of the law because the perpetrators do not fear any consequences (Oyinola 2001).

In that year's survey, Nigeria sat at number 136 on the table with Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Myanmar, and Papua New Guinea. From calculation, it shows that Nigeria and the mentioned countries were ranked 40th most corrupt in 2016. Nigeria failed when it came to transparency in the country. By contrast, in 2013, Denmark and New Zealand scored highest

at 91% each, meaning the countries are clean and have higher confidence intervals than Nigeria. In the other words, Nigeria is highly corrupt.

The situation has made so many people feel a lot of pains as the money which would have been used to reduce poverty in the country are being channeled into the pockets of a small group of persons. About \$2.1 billion which was budgeted for the purchase of arms in the fight against Boko Haram insurgency group in the country all of a sudden disappeared. The stain of corruption did not spare anti-graft agencies as former Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes commission, EFCC, Ibrahim Lamorde, was accused of fraudulently diverting over N1tn proceeds from corruption recovered by the agency (Adeyemi 2016). This is incredible as those who were appointed to fight corruption in the country are also found as the victim of the same problem they fight

Corruption is not only experienced among the Presidents of the country because many governors have been found guilty of it. The News agency of Nigeria (NAN) reported that Nyako, the former governor of Adamawa and seven others, including corporate organizations, are standing trial on a 37-count charge bordering on money laundering (Pulse 2016). The governor opened 30 different accounts in Zenith bank of Nigeria using different names whose aim is to siphon funds, an opening of multiple bank accounts and stealing to the tune of N29 billion (twenty-nine billion naira).

The former President of the country, Olusegun Obasanjo, on November 24, 2016, while speaking at the first Akintola Williams Annual lecture in Lagos, reacted

negatively on the level of corruption going on among the members of the House of assembly and House of representatives. According to Jola (2016) “Former President, Olusegun Obasanjo has described the National assembly as a den of corruption “Part of the speech delivered by the ex-president which hammered on the level of corruption among the members of the house has it thus:

Members of the national assembly pay themselves allowances for staff and office they do not have or maintain. Once you are a member, you are co-opted and your mouth is stuffed with rot and corruption that you cannot opt out as you go home with not less than N15 million a month for a senator and N10 million a month for a member of the House of representatives”.

According to Lewis Obi, (Economic magazine, 2016) the national assembly is nothing but a business enterprise and the primary objective of the members is to make money for themselves. He went further as he explained that the National assembly of the country is the highest paid legislature in the world. The Chamber earns more than that of United States of America and yet American economy is far much better than that of Nigeria. According to the documentation, United State senators make an approximate annual income of \$174,000.00 while that of Nigeria is \$2,183, 685.00.

Aspects of Corruption in the Country

Corruption takes many forms and can be interpreted by many people in many ways. It is hard to enter any sector in Nigeria without observing one corrupt practice or the other. The areas where corruption is

observed are not only in those public sectors or in politics. Sincerely, the faces are much. Though there have been a lot of writing on the high level of corruption in Nigeria politics, yet the political perpetrators pretend as if they are not the people being talked about. They feel they are above the law.

Corruption takes many shapes, starting with embezzlement, bribery, rituals, rigging in elections and so on. In fact, corruption is highest in the political system, (Nzeagwu 2012). In both the senate and the House of Representatives, corruption is seen as normal. It is because of the “wicked level” of corruption that makes both the youths and the old struggle to find themselves in one political party or the other. They believe that once they occupy any position in politics, even the smallest, they will use corrupt tricks to fill their pockets with public funds.

Embezzlement of public funds is common. Many leaders have helped boost the economics of other nations by depositing embezzled money in foreign banks. Facts and figures have shown that on many occasions, the men who rule the country have embezzled funds into foreign banks (Ugochukwu, 2017). Political corruption is persistent in the Nigerian state. Since the creation of modern public administration in the country, there have been cases of official misuse of resources for personal enrichment (Storey Report, 2014). After the death of the former president, President Sani Abacha, an investigation was carried out to detect the amount of money he embezzled in gas plant construction in the country. The investigations led to the freezing of accounts containing about \$100 million United States dollars (Hector 2004) that he stole. The

Abacha administration in the 1990s notoriously looted upwards of \$3 billion (Uzochukwu 2013).

As of a few years back, whenever it was time for an election, in Nigeria small children in the country began to go missing. (Punnun educational, Oct, 2015). Child-missing during that period was rampant and parents were usually advised to guide and guard their children against ritualists. This is another face of corruption that breaks the hearts of mothers. The missing children were used by contesting politicians to perform ritual killings in order to get protections and other devilish powers that will enable them to win elections. This is corruption and wickedness in the highest order because it involves the termination of human life.

Election rigging is not an unheard-of phenomenon. During elections, the contestants hire thugs who go around the election polling stations to highjack the ballot boxes. When they steal these boxes, they then use their hands to vote for their candidate. In the recent times, the new tactics that the contestants have adopted are buying voter's cards so that they can manipulate and use the cards for their own advantages. On many occasions, politicians have bribed some top officials to do wrong things to their favor. Some political leaders, including governors and presidents, have been sued by opponents, but the sued followed the back door, bribing barristers and judges. At the end of the judgment, the leader who bribed won in the case.

Corruption parades itself in universities, polytechnics, and colleges. Most lecturers use the opportunity they have to take advantage of others. Harassment of women

by lecturers and pressure to sleep with them is common. The most painful part of it is that some of them are married, yet they are not satisfied. After some of the female undergraduates submit to the lecturer's request, they are rewarded with good grades. Universities have been crying about a number of funds allocated to them. What makes our foundry to be of a low standard is corruption. Organizations give departments some money that could have been more than enough to upgrade and standardize the foundry, management of the departments do away with the money. Corruption is one of the biggest challenges faced by the education system.

Some students find their ways into the universities not by merit, but through a kind of bribery called sorting. Some rich men in the country bribe vice-chancellors and heads of departments to secure admission for their children. When this kind of dirty practice is conducted, those who would have made it on merit are cheated, as no admission will be offered to them.

It is terrible when it comes to the nature of corruption observed in the police. They are involved in bribery, intimidation, sexual harassment of the young inmates in the prisons, or turning truths upside down. In Nigeria, policemen can deny the truth and collect bribes to do so. Because of the encounter, many Nigerian's have had with policemen; even the good ones among them are generalized as being bad. (Neeagwu, 2015)

The police who work in some checkpoints on the expressways cannot do so without collecting of bribes from car owners and drivers. Their interest is to collect money from road users and not to secure the road.

Bribes become compulsory even when ones particulars are in order. Bus drivers must offer money before they continue with their transportation business, some women prison inmates went into prisons singled to come out doubled. What this implies is that the policemen use the opportunity they have to assault women who are imprisoned. The women may say no, but because the policemen have guns, the women could not do anything. They were impregnated before they were granted bail.

Even in football has corruption. Players are not chosen by merit. It is all about who you know in top political offices or society. (Ugochukwu, 2017). In the Nigerian Football Federation (NFF), corruption is the reason why Mr. A is elected as the leader of the group today and tomorrow the election is nullified and Mr. B was chosen. Everybody wants to be at the head so that he will fill his bag with the national cake. People do not fight to work because it is stressful, so whenever people fight for a particular position, there is every possibility that they are there to clear out the organization. Reports and evidence have shown that there are corrupt practices in Nigerian football. A BBC news report said this: "A senior football official and a club administrator have been banned for 10 years, following their involvement in corruption, the football authority has announced" (BBC Sports news 2013), Match-fixing and corruption is a problem in Nigerian football and has led to sanctions against a number of clubs, referees and officials (Oluwashina, 2013).

Most churches are corrupt. However not all the churches in the country have equal corruption strength corruption is witnessed mainly in the "new generation churches".

Those are churches which do not have solid origin or foundation. They are those churches which start when a person who calls himself a pastor goes and rents a room, decorates it, and convinces people to join him, that he has been given powers to summon signs and miracles from God. Most of the pastors claim that they have been called and can transform people's financial status. This usually makes Nigerians yield to their deceptions. The people come and the so-called pastors use their tricks to collect the money that is remaining in the pockets of the poor ones in the country. Some of the pastors go to the extent of using magical and devilish powers in running their church business in the name of God's power. They give the congregations what they want without them knowing the source of their so-called power. Pastors have on many occasions been caught in adultery and fornication. Through newspapers, televisions, and other channels, the immoral acts committed by Nigerian pastors have been observed. In early November of 2014, there was a radio program from Blaze FM, Orifite, on a pastor that impregnated an 11 year old girl. According to the report, the girl was impregnated by the pastor when her mother took her to the pastor's place for prayers, and left for her own business.

Fraudulent internet activity is another face of corruption. Graduates and non-graduates who lack the knowledge and skills to help them earn money find joy in internet fraud. Among the classes of offences committed in Nigeria, some Nigerians, who are mainly youths, have been scamming their fellow citizens using illegal means. Some host websites online and claim to be giving jobs to job seekers and scam any who fall prey to their tricks. They tell job seekers to make

certain payments for processing documents without them knowing that they will not be issued any job. Some Nigerians have been stolen from by cyber criminals (Ibe, 2016).

Nigerian customs are not really doing the work they are called to do correctly. The customs service of Nigeria is the organization that is authorized to clear goods that are imported into the country. This group is not free from the menace of corruption. In most occasions, one must pay bribes to customs before his/her goods are cleared. Many containers are being held captive by customs because the owners may not be willing to pay a large amount of money being demanded.

Effects of Corruption on Nigerian's National Development

Unemployment in Nigeria would have been eradicated to some extent if only investors were attracted. Corruption has discouraged investment in Nigeria by both foreigners and Nigeria themselves. Companies that would have invested in Nigeria are afraid because they do not know if the corrupt practice will ruin their industries in time. Because of this, they refuse to invest in Nigeria.

When the heads of public service are busy laundering the money that is supposed to be used to create employment for the masses and reduce poverty, what happens is that there will be a rise in the poverty level of the country. Since the government and the agencies help the poor, poverty continues to rise in Nigeria.

It is evident that corruption has done incalculable damage to Nigeria, Nigerians and its national development. It has led to gross inefficiency in public institutions,

erosion of people's confidence in the government, its agencies, parastatals, security organizations, the judiciary, schools, hospitals, to mention but a few. Hence there is mass collapse of government institutions and establishments.

Corruption has led to diminished productivity in both public and private sectors. As a result of corruption, the economy has become generally distressed. There has galloping inflation and severe decline in the quality of life of Nigeria. The cost of living in Nigeria has increased while the standard of living is seriously on the decline. Corruption has indeed created acute poverty in Nigeria.

Corruption has given Nigeria and Nigerians a bad image in the international community consequently, the country spend a lot of money in laundering its image. Much money is also spent on agencies that are established to fight corruption. Nigeria national development is therefore hindered. This is more so as corruption always kills ultimately and destroys both its victims and its perpetrators in the long run.

Recommendations

Self-satisfaction is necessary. In this context, it implies being content with what the one has, when the leaders of Nigeria are satisfied with salary they are paid and use them in the right way, the issue of embezzlement and money laundering will be history. Managers who are satisfied with what they are paid will not have time to indulge in corruption to make more money.

Creating strong anti-corruption institutions is another arsenal to win the fight against corruption. This group is to work independently with the government to

ensure transparency. Anyone who is caught to corrupt practice by the group should experience the consequences decided by the anti-corruption agency. That he is a minister or governor of a state should not be an excuse from facing the punishment he is to receive according to the constitution of Nigeria.

The unemployed in the country find themselves involved in corruption mainly because they want to make money to meet the demand of the day. Governments and capable hands should endeavor to generate more jobs for citizens to get employed and paid in return. A busy mind may find it difficult to indulge in corruption because he is being paid adequately.

Understanding the importance of skill acquisition will go a long way to propel them to develop all the schools in Nigeria. When more attention is paid to the tertiary institutions in the country, it will produce graduates who are employable. Installation of the necessary machines needed in universities will help Nigeria graduates acquire skills and use them to generate income, even if no company employs them after graduation. Self-employment will make graduates more determined in the work they do and will prevent them from corruption like internet scams, kidnapping and the rest.

Treating any offender in the country equally will help reduce corruption. Nobody is above the law and any who acts contrary to it should be given the punishment that he or she deserves. That he is the minister of aviation or governor of the central bank of Nigeria should not count in this case. If any minister or head of state is given the punishment he deserves for corruption,

others will learn and separate themselves from any corrupt practice.

The government should raise the standard of living of Nigeria and reduce poverty to the barest minimum. If the law enforcement agents are well remunerated, and adequately equipped, it would be easier for them to combat all these social ills in the society.

The public accounting system in Nigeria is cash based and therefore easy to manipulate. In addition, money is released at last minute for the activities that are pre-scheduled and sometimes deliberately. It is therefore not surprising that general public officers or civil servants who are masters of lies are tempted. The temptation is magnified with the fear of non-payment of post-retirement gratuities and irregular payment of pension entitlements. However, Nigeria can overcome those personal temptations by putting in place cash-less transaction in the civil service and monitoring payments to post-service servants in order to avoid taking advantage of the system.

There is need to appeal to the conscience of Nigeria leaders, civil servants, traditional rulers, top-ranking public servants and politicians to show good example. Public awareness and enlightenment through mass media should be set up with branches in every parts of the country. This unit will be used to mobilize the ordinary man against corruption crisis and crime.

Conclusion

Corruption is a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigeria. Discussed are the many faces of corruption, effects, and the possible solutions. It is expected that if corruption is tackled stringently Nigerians society will not only improve, but every

aspect national development the country

would be increasing monumentally.

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