

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF CORRUPT PRACTICES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Corruption in Nigerian society has become contagious because of its spread and impact on the civil society and the entire society that cut across the educational, religious, economic and the political sector. The paper sought to identify how various aspects of corruption in Nigeria has impacted on the socioeconomic life of the people of Nigeria and how such antisocial behaviour can be checkmated through many means. The paper adopts analytical and historical methods of research. Interdisciplinary approach in the collection of data was also employed. The analytical method was utilized in explaining of collected information from various sources. It was shown in the paper that many sectors in Nigeria's system has an iota of corrupt practices. There is an element of corruption in the political, economic, religious, governmental and non-governmental organisations. Inarguably, it is very clear that Nigeria people has suffered terribly because of corrupt practices in various sectors of the country. It therefore becomes important for various stakeholders in the country to start the process of enacting laws capable of checkmating corruption in various sectors of the country. The paper recommends that for corruption to reduce in the country, governmental and non-governmental organisations should tackle corruption holistically. More so, religious leaders in the country should emphasize more on anticorruption messages in their various places of worship. In addition, the Federal government should call for a national conference on the need to fight corruption holistically

Keywords: Government, Corruption, Country, Anticorruption, Socioeconomic, Civil Society, Nigeria.

Introduction

Corruption is used by both adults and children because it is found in almost every aspect of Nigeria system. It has been nick named in most Nigerian languages particularly the three major languages. Ndokwu (2004) says: the Igbo call it *Igbuozu*, the Yoruba call it *Egunje*, while the Hausa call it *Chuachua*. It has become acceptable phenomenon in many societies.

Due to high level of moral decadence and practices that are inimical to the social economic life of the people of the country, many corrupt practices have become part of Nigeria's political, educational, economic and religious settings. Aluko (2009) notes that the menace has led to a situation like movement of files in offices, police extortion, port congestion, long queues at passport offices, ghost worker's syndrome and election irregularities.

Sadly, it is difficult for people to distinguish corruption from societal business as usual. As a result, people in the society, their entire life is measured according to the criteria of the 21 century - wrong value system of wealth and physical properties. At whatever cost and by any means necessary, various classes of people in the country are using every opportunity on offer to amass riches to the detriment of everybody else.

The cause for some people being corrupt is pride and greed. This negative sign has negatively taken the lives of many people in our nation especially the young individuals. Many do not care about what people say about the aftermath of their activities. Corruption did not actually start in Nigeria. It has been around in other parts of the world before it came to Nigeria. As stated in Dike 2005, the history of fraud is as old as the world. Corruption exists to some extent in almost every country in the world, some are still more corrupt than the other. So from all intention from these different examples, Nigeria is doing well on fighting corruption, but as for the product and the movement of such institutions aren't reflected in administrative areas of the country.

Therefore, this hugging of money between the people and officials of the government is not really a problem in Nigeria, but more of a process, as it gives insanity to one and oppression to the other.

Corruption has become the order of the day in many sectors of the country. The grabs are either for a contract or a job, hence people sharpens government officials. On the other hand, some primary and post-primary school administrators specialize in bribing education sector government officials, just for their students to perform excellently in WAEC and other examinations. In the religious sphere, some churches have also boarded the same chariot of corruption along with the clergy. Senior pastors will have junior pastors bribe them with their income, just to send them to a large congregation. Many reasons results in corruption in most societies. These include poverty, love of lust, pride and so on. In one of the papers presented John Ajodele states that poverty, greed and an insatiable appetite of people to acquire wealth is what we can blame corruption on. Onongha (2007).

Therefore, according to (Dimant, et al 2007), the following reasons have been reported as contributing to the causes of corruption; greed of money, desires; higher levels of market and political monopolization; low levels of democracy, weak civil participation and low political transparency; higher levels of bureaucracy and inefficient administrative structures; low press freedom; low economic freedom; large ethnic divisions and high levels of in-group favoritism; poverty; political instability and low level of education.

Theoretical Theoretical Approach

Many authors have propounded many theories of corruption. However, this paper adopts modernisation theory which refers to a model of a progressive transition from a "pre-modern" or "traditional" to a "modern" society. This theory posits that all societies would evolve from traditional stages to modern ones as more modern practices were adopted. Reason for adoption of this theory is because various policies government normally implement at the developmental stages especially in the developing countries are potential of corrupt practices. Moreover, in modernising and traditional societies there is an ever-present corruption. Modernisation theory argues that modern states are wealthier and stronger and their citizens and in possession of a standard of living higher than that of previous eras. Modernization is essential with the improvement and innovation of the technology and the necessity to modernize conventional techniques in transportation, communication and production.

Traditional religious beliefs and cultural traits become less meaningful, according to this theory, with society's advances in modernisation (Modernisation 2017) Bringing a country to development is its internal process, assuming that "traditional" countries can develop in the same way, with assistance, like other more developed countries had. (Smelser, 1992). Modernization theory seeks to pinpoint the social variables that help move societies forward and explain how the process of social evolution happens." Scholars like Daniel Lerner, for example, identified modernisation with Westernisation (Lerner, 1968). That is to say, according to Huntington 1968, (Hilma 2007) that the process of economic and political development in most modernizing societies, tends to promote inequality, political instability and corruption, which can be simply defined as the use of public powers to achieve private goals.

Methodology

The paper uses analytical and historic methods in actualizing the purpose of the article. The study on corruption in Nigeria Public Sectors were analysed using descriptive and exploratory analysis. The paper which is theoretical in nature derived its argument from secondary sources which include journal publication, textbooks and internet sources. In order to comprehend the aim of this paper and for ease of analysis, the paper thematically traverses through the following six stages that comprehend the introduction, the conceptual and theoretical discourse, brief history and genesis of corruption in Nigeria, socioeconomic implications of corruption in Nigeria, conclusion, and recommendation.

A Brief History of Corruption in Nigeria

Corrupt practices have pervaded various part of the world long before Nigeria was granted independence in 1960. Corruption was never absent in the precolonial Nigeria. According to the level of argument, there was no doubt in the pre-colonial period that man could introduce corruption in the given society.

However, the building blocks of corruption in Nigeria were laid at the time of the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Protectorates in 1914. Domiciled tribes that constitute the current Nigerian state were neither consulted nor their consent obtained for the amalgamation decision. The effects of the merger included distrust, disunity, bitterness,

hatred, and calls from some ethnic groups to secede from the country. But the way this was used in the lie of the founding of Nigeria, and its continuous use has poisoned and corrupted the country everywhere. So it will be difficult for crooked practices to fade away from the country in great extent because the ground is faulty in the first place.

Corruption, in Nigeria, comes in phases. Corruption is never new to any administration; each administration has their own forms they engaged in corrupt practices. As per (Victor 2022) in his detailed discussion, he mentioned:

Nigeria's corruption started in 1914 when the Southern and Northern Protectorates were merged to form Nigeria. Corruption in Nigeria entered its second phase a few years after the violent merger of the Southern and Northern Protectorates in 1914. That was when the British contractors and traders first introduced percentage profit into the Nigerian trade system. The next phase of corruption started in 1955, when the late District Head of Sokoto and Northern People's Congress (NPC) Leader, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, with the intention to dominate the South, asked the Nigerian Colonies Secretary Mr. Oliver Lyttleton that "If you want us (North) to be part of this Nigeria you have in mind, then we want 50% of the total membership of the National Assembly." The fourth phase of corruption started when large amount of money started vanishing from the coffers of government agencies, commissions and parastatals. The oil sector lost \$2.8 billion between 1976-1979. The fifth phase of corruption was executed through the promulgation of the Land Use Decree (Now Land Use Act). For instance, there were Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) and Green Revolution (GR) programmes where millions of hectares of land were seized from Nigerians under the pretense to farm and feed them. The sixth phase of corruption occurred during the creation of states. Before the creation of states, there were four regions: North, West, Midwest and East. Similarly, corruption also came into Nigeria through obtaining local and foreign loans. Both governors and presidents at various times had obtained questionable loans with no visible infrastructures to show for such loans.

No one government in Nigeria has come up with a way to rid the system from these malfeasances, needed for the different sectors of the country. Various types of corruption is still evident in many government and non-government institutions in the country. So, as the bedrock of corruption has already been built, it becomes a pathway to pursue by the ruling regime of the state.

Types of Corruption

There are many types of corruption in the world, some of these types of corruption can be explain below.

Family Corruption: This type of corruption is seen in the family. It is a situation whereby the husband, wife, and children are corrupt in the area of the distribution of family assets and

daily incomes. This aspect of corruption is common in polygamous homes and some monogamous homes that lack unity.

Petty Corruption: This type of corruption is common among many services. It is rampant among finance officers, customs officers, police officers, military and para-military officers. Sabongo (1993).

Big Corruption: According to Sabongo (1993), he notes that this aspect of corruption occurs behind the scene as opposed to open corruption, and it has more serious consequences. He further commented that more educated people who conduct their affairs more discretely are involved in this type of corruption. It is carried out by top government officials in the form of payment of a certain percent of contract value before a contract is signed, fictitious budgeting, inflation of payroll to increase personnel cost and subvention. Sabongo (1993).

Endemic Corruption: This type of corruption leads to the abuse of office that occurs in varying degrees. It prevails in the administrative systems which control exclusively the distribution of scarce welfare services. In endemic corruption, money is given to, or demanded by public officials so that they will ignore the rules of conduct set up by the government for public good. Ndubisi (1991).

Planned Corruption: This aspect of corruption is political in nature. It is an instrument of control by politicians to retain power at all cost. Ndubisi (1991). This type of corruption has a nexus with political corruption.

Developmental Corruption: In this type of corruption many developments in the society are hindered with the aim of diverting public money to individual pulse. It encompasses all activities by public officials which are at variance with standard rules and thereby hinders the success of developmental programmes. Ndubisi (1991).

Political Corruption: This includes election and electoral fraud, rigging of election results, awards of false contracts, wealth acquisition through financial impropriety by political officer holders, misuse and abuse of political or bureaucratic office, nepotism and tribalism. Yahaya (1993). It is very common in developing countries because of the craving for power by all means.

Corruption in the Routine Course of Government Business: This includes bribes solicited for and paid to have compromising documents retrieved from files and for other favours, payment for letters of recommendation, kick-backs for hiring government equipment, false travel documents and other claims, ghost workers and salary frauds, neglect of public service for personnel business. Yahaya (1993).

Corruption in the Exercise of Substantive Government Business: This includes false bills, court tampering, postal fraud, all form of tax fraud and auditing fraud. This list is not in any way exhaustive but does help to expose the various corrupt practices which thrive in Nigerian governmental institutions. Yahaya (1993).

Educational Corruption: This type of corrupt practices can be found among students and teachers. It manifests in the form of cheating in an examination, particularly on the side of the students. More so, on the side of the teachers, it manifests in the form of exploitation of students with the aim of passing them on a paper that the student did not perform well.

Religious Corruption: This is a type of corruption that is seen in the church. Some church workers usually steal church offerings and tithes. It also occurs in a situation whereby a pastor of a local church involves in dubious acts with church members.

Socioeconomic Impact of Corruption in Nigeria

The effect of corruption in Nigeria cannot be overemphasised, this is because it has entered into the nook and cranny of every sector of the country. Corrupt practices have eaten deep into the fabric of the economic, social, religious and political sectors. The impact of corruption in Nigeria cannot be over-exaggerated, this is because corruption has eaten deep into the nook and cranny of many departments in the country.

However, here are the socioeconomic effect of corrupt practices in Nigeria. Corruption in Nigeria has made several Nigerian Citizens continue to migrate constantly to the West in search of a better life. A lot are migrating to various overseas countries because of maladministration and mismanagement of our resources. (Martin and Weil 2006).

Comprehensive economic reforms, bilateral and regional treaties and agreements, incentives for foreign direct investments, and official development assistantships covered by a single country are some of the developmental frameworks through which migration can be checked. Some of our various primary, post-primary and tertiary institutions are not well funded due to poor handling of educational funds as a particular body or a few people in the country embezzled the money assigned for that purpose. This development has made it possible for most of our youths to have a choice to migrate to different countries, seeking a value driven education in developed countries. In fact, between 2000 and 2006, the number of students who left Nigeria to study overseas rose from 10,000 to nearly 22,000. (IOM, 2009).

Corruption is the bane of Nigeria economy and international image. In the genesis of this situation the name Nigeria is heard around the world as bad name, which has social and psychological impact on Nigeria citizens who are living in other countries. According to (Victor, 2021) Nigeria's position on the corruption perception index has kept going down in the past five years with the recent report controversially placing Nigeria as second most corrupt country in the West African region as it was rated (159) out of 180 countries globally surveyed. This had led to the negative image of the country which, unfortunately, will have a way of influencing how Nigerian citizens are treated abroad since a lot of people have come to believe that you are what your country is.

In furtherance to this (Oyebode, 1999) explains;

Corruption brings bad name to a country. Nigeria suffers an atrocious global reputation born of its failure to tackle bribery and corruption. For instance, in its 1996 study of corruption, Transparency International and Goettingen University ranked Nigeria the most corrupt nation of the 54 nations studied.

Unwittingly, Nigeria would have found itself being given a high premium the same way they do give the USA citizens visas to travel to a majority of the countries in the world.

As of now, the passport of United States of America offers visa-free access to 186 countries across the globe. Our full guide has all the details of which countries can United States of America passport holders visit visa-free or in visa-on-arrival. It additionally covers information on travel destinations that require a prior visa,

electronic visa and regular visa, etc. (2023, List of Countries You Can Visit Without a United States of America Passport)

This rare privilege for the United States is largely due to her position in the global community and the highest premium placed on them especially in respect of integrity. But the Nigerian citizens are only able to travel visa-free to 26 countries in the world. (Passport Holders Exempt Visa Countries in Nigeria, 2023). However, for the other countries, citizens of Nigeria must apply for a visa in advance to gain entry. If corruption has not soiled Nigeria in the international community, the number of countries she can visit without a visa would have increased.

As Lipset and Lenz (2000) point out, the impact upon economic growth is primarily negative as it diminishes the level of investment even more, by adding to the risk investment. Costello, at an EC meeting in 2001, backing Nigeria's anti-poverty initiatives said: Nigeria has the wealth to solve its problem of poverty. If the government can win this war on corruption and mismanagement, the money will really start becoming functional in schools, health services and an efficient water supply, creating the basis to eliminate poverty. (Dike, 2005).

In addition, in this type of regime, corrupt government officials, often, misbalance government spending to areas they can demand bribes. Most development projects are needlessly complicated in Nigeria just to make it legal for the people overseeing them to become corrupt/ and expensive.

Due to the prevalence of corruption in Nigeria, some companies started cutting corners to boost profit margins which in turn has negatively affected the quality of goods and services available to the general public. Corruption in economic sector of the country has led to poor produced products in the market. The quality of the products and goods keeps degrading on a daily basis. It continues to influence investments, growth in the economy, and choices in government spending. It also decreases private investment. (Mauro, 1997).

The Nigerian government is battling corruption through the Code of Conduct Bureau, the Independent Corrupt Practice, the Police, the Central Bank and the Court of Justice, among others.

As observed by (Philips & Akpokighe, 2014) that;

Our national wealth continues to dwindle from corruption. It resulted in counterfeit uses of scarce public resources to finance unprofitable public projects with attractive names: dams, pipelines and power plant which ecosystem destroys and ignores the real needs of life thus manages to lose billions, while those allocated should be invested in health care, education, infrastructure, power and water supply to rural areas. This has stunted identity structures for fair market which means job loss and investment woes as well.

Nigeria is bleeding socially and economically, even though the country is the largest economy in Africa and the most populous black nation in the world, there are many areas the nation has failed, socially and economically due to corrupt practices that are manifesting in the area of diversion of public funds to individual pulse.

Conclusion

It is true that corrupt practices are rife in Nigeria virtually in every sector. However, it is a fact that the narratives in the chariot of corruption can be rewritten in the country, if the administration turns to a new leaf. This can be done through a personal revolution and reformation regarding corruption and a total declaration of a state of emergency on corrupt practices in government sectors. The fight against corrupt practices in the country should not be left in the hand of one person. Every citizen should start contributing their quota in the area of eliminating corruption.

Notwithstanding, even though many entities, systems and myriad of individuals are swimming in the ocean of corruption. There are still many people and sectors in the country that are not corrupt. Such sectors, systems, organisations and individuals should continue in that spirit of good decorum and high moral standard.

Recommendations

- ❖ The Federal Government of Nigeria should adopt holistic measures in the fight against corruption. This will go a long way to reduce corrupt practices in the country.
- ❖ Since many religious leaders have numerous followers, it, therefore, becomes paramount for such leaders to use their positions to declare war against corruption.
- ❖ Indeed, one cannot preach against what one is doing, in recourse to this all religious and political leaders, various heads of government agencies, heads of nongovernmental organisations, leaders in economic, agricultural, and educational sectors and students etc. should start leading by example.
- ❖ The Federal Government should enact a new law that will handle corrupt cases in various governmental establishments. Some of the punitive measures should be life imprisonment for any person found in the case of corruption despite the level of the person in the government.
- ❖ The federal government has created many anti-corruption agencies like ICCP, EFCC and others. Another agency should be created in addition to the already existing ones. The Federal Government should consult various religious leaders in the country regarding the classes of people that will lead the agency.

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