



ABSTRACT

Corruption is a way of life and deeply rooted in Nigeria not only in the public sector, governance, civil service, compradors but also in families, churches and communities. It is an obstacle to development and well being of Nigerians. It has badly damaged Nigeria beyond panel beating. What it is now in Nigeria is that wealthy people who are known to be corrupt are regularly courted and honoured by communities, religions leaders, social clubs and other organizations. These attitudes serve to discourage a new breed of public servants who are not engaged in corrupt practices. This paper

C ONVICTING CORRUPT NIGERIANS TO THE GALLOWAS AS A MEANS OF COMBATING INCESSANT CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

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Introduction

Corruption is a way of life and deeply rooted in Nigeria not only in the Public sector, governance, compradors, civil service but also in families, churches and communities. It is a hindrance to development and well being of the Nigerian citizens. Also, corruption has made Nigerians sad and reduced them to walking corpses. It has badly damaged Nigeria beyond panel beating and it has also become a culture In Nigeria, there are displays of unacceptable and disgraceful wealth among the political leaders with attendant progressing poverty, and suffering among Nigerians.

Corruption is abuse of public office for private gains; it is also a situation where private agents actively offer bribes to circumvent public policies and processes for competitive profit and public officer can also be abused for personal benefit even if no bribery occurs through patronage and nepotism.

Public officers collect bribes for issuing Nigerian passports or visa, for providing goods and services at airports and seaports, for awarding of contracts or artificial scarcity. Nigerians give bribes to receive a preferential treatment for something that the bribe received is required to do by law. In addition, the following are nature and character of corruption in Nigeria. Falsification of documents and records, primitive accumulation of wealth, abuse of office, bribery, smuggling and frauds, illegal payment, money laundering, drug and child trafficking. Nigeria must be one of the very few countries in the world where a man's source of wealth is of no concern to his neighbours, the public and the government (Nwaobi, 2004).

Corruption has no strait jacket definition. Agbese, (1992) adumbrated that



interrogates corruption in Nigeria through the prism of the theory of two publics propounded by Peter Ekeh. Information and data used for this work were obtained mostly from secondary sources and personal experience with the Nigerian corrupt environment. This paper adumbrates that incessant corruption in Nigeria is premised on weaknesses of Nigerian Judicial system, poor reward system among others. It is suggested that public officers found guilty of corruption in Nigeria should be compelled to return their loots to the government before they are sent to the gallows.

Keywords: *corruption, poverty, accumulation of wealth, economic growth, godfatherism, and progressing poverty.*

When we use our position in society to secure certain advantages jumping queue, being waved off at the checkpoint or making others bend the rules to accommodate our demands... by whatever means even if it is just "Thank you" our action however innocent, however well-intentional, however unthreatening to others has corrupted a system or a convention or some rules and regulations in application.

According to (Salisu, 2000) "The simple definition of corruption is the misapplication of public resources to private ends. Koine, (2003) identified two types of corruption (I) vertical corruption which involves managers and decision makers. This is common in less developed countries. (II) Horizontal corruption which involves the entire officials, informed and laymen groups in the countries. Corruption is Christmas present, new year gift, free breakfast, lunch and dinner. All these could sway the conduct of the giver or receiver. A public official is corrupt if he demands and accepts money or anything that worth money for rendering the services he ought to have rendered as his duty.

Regardless of the variations in these holistic definitions of corruption there is a consensus that corruption is the diversion of money meant for the public to personal use at the detriment of the masses. Corruption ought not to be a culture, in Nigeria the political leadership ought to guarantee the security, welfare and good governance. The political class ought to be responsible, responsive, accountable and transparent to Nigerians and political class ought to ensure efficient and effective functioning of government institutions and services rather than getting involved in colossal corruption.

The public officers ought to be in the position to ensure sustainable socio-economic development rather than stealing from the civic public realm. The Nigerian leadership ought to be providing the citizens with basic necessities of life, namely food, shelter and employment. What it is in Nigeria now is that public officers are turning power and authority into ready cash and abusing their



powers. There is no longer integrity in Nigeria. Poverty persists in Nigeria as a result of the mismanagement of resources.

In Nigeria now, corruption has reduced economic growth and development and also reduced the government's capacity to respond to people's needs. All these swerves down to create poverty in Nigeria. Nigerians are now paying for the corruption of their own officials and corruption has led to a grooving gap between the rich and the poor and deepening the poverty by enriching a few at the expense of fellow citizens.

What it is now in Nigeria is that wealthy people who are known to be corrupt are regularly courted and honoured by communities, religious leaders, social club and other organisations. These attitudes serve to discourage a new breed of public servants who are not engaged in corrupt practices.

Besides, in Nigeria, honest and dedicated public servants who have not accumulated dirty wealth do not command much respect from the society and traditional chieftaincy titles and members of boards of directors of government owned corporations are only for the influential individual in the society who have made it economically and politically.

The problem of corruption is still subsisting in Nigeria. A lot of researches have been carried out on corruption in Nigeria and several papers have also discussed the problems of corruption in Nigeria, all to no avail as corruption has come to stay in Nigeria with its attendant effects.

The reason for this paper is to consolidate various suggestions by scholars to reduce corruption in Nigeria and to further proffer panacea to this hydra problem called corruption that is reproducing itself in Nigeria by sending corrupt Nigerians to the gallows with a view to combating it in Nigeria. This paper reviews corruption in Nigeria through the prism of two republics propounded by Peter Ekeh in 1975 and 1985. It also x-rays the causes and consequence of corruption in Nigeria and finally submits that corrupt Nigerians should be sent to the gallows with a view to ameliorating the problems of corruption in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Many erudite scholars have written severally on corruption with a view to reducing and all eliminating corruption but to no avail.

According to some analysts, the anti-corruption effort of governments such as Muhammadu/Tunde Idiagbon and Ibrahim Babangida governments failed to produce desired results (Agbu, 2003). The War Against Indiscipline (WAI) launched on the 20th day of March, 1984 by Late General Tunde Idiagbon and general Muhammdu Buhari was suddenly terminated in August 1985 by General Ibrahim Babangida in July, 1987, the military President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, has he then was. The War against indiscipline was intended to be implemented in thirty five phases but only four phases were executed. So, incessant change of government in Nigeria affect the control and the management of corruption in Nigeria.

(Obanyelu, 2007) on his own part posits that the biggest challenge for this country is not just to punished those who were involved in these corrupt practices, but the education of her populace on the dangers and measures to tackle corruption. There is no amount of citizenship and political education that will change the mind of Nigerians on corruption because corruption has become a



way of life and religion. The best antidote for corruption in Nigeria is convicting corrupt Nigeria to the gallows as a means of combating incessant corruption in Nigeria as it is done in China.

Statement of the Problem

The anti-corruption efforts of governments in Nigeria failed to produce desired results. The War Against Indiscipline (WAI) launched on the 20th day of March, 1984 was terminated in August 1985. The incessant change of government in Nigeria affects the control and management of corruption in Nigeria.

Also, the biggest challenge for Nigeria is not just to punish those who were involved in corrupt practices but the education of her populace on the danger and measures to tackle corruption. There is no amount of citizenship and political education that would change the mind sets of Nigerians on corruption because corruption has become a way of life and religion. The best antidote for corruption in Nigeria is convicting corrupt Nigerians to the gallows as a means of combating incessant corruption in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions are designed to guide the study.

- (i) Does incessant change of government in Nigeria affect the control and management of corruption in Nigeria?
- (ii) Does punishment of those who were involved in corrupt practices affect the reduction of corruption in Nigeria?
- (iii) Does citizenship and political education change the minds of Nigerians on corruption?
- (iv) Does convicting of corrupt Nigerians to the gallows combat incessant corruption in Nigeria?

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of the study is to eliminate corruption that has crippled Nigeria socio-economic developments.

The specific objectives are to:

- (i) to examine some cases of corruption in Nigeria.
- (ii) to examine the causes of corruption in Nigeria.
- (iii) to examine the consequences of corruption in Nigeria.
- (iv) to examine the failure of agencies for combating corruption in Nigeria.

Some Cases of Corruption In Nigeria

The federal High court sitting in Abuja on the 24th day of March, 2021, admitted in evidence, a total sum of \$1,030,517 million allegedly recovered from the residence of a former Chief of Air Staff. The former Chief of Air Staff who was a member of the presidential committee on procurement of Arms and Equipment in the Armed forces is facing money laundering trial alongside his company. The trial Justice admitted several Foreign currencies the federal government rendered in evidence against the defendants. Government told the court that the foreign currencies were retrieved from the former Chief of Air Staff's house by the operators of the Department of State Services (DSS).



The Socio – Economic Rights and Accountability Project, (SERAP), on the 28th day of March, 2021, urged president Muhammadu Buhari to investigate the alleged misuse of the ₦4.5 billion donations, loans and support the Kogi state government obtained from the Federal Government, including ₦90,720,000.00 reportedly spent on software to track COVID 19 cases in the state. SERAP while also urging Buhari to direct the Attorney – General of the Federation and Minister of Justice to investigate the case maintaining that “If there is relevant and sufficient admissible evidence, anyone suspected to be involved should face prosecution as appropriate. (Akoni, 2021(a)

The senate has raised the alarm on how the Solicitor General of the Federation allegedly single-handedly disbursed ₦4.16 billion judgement debts without due process, it is described as violation of due process the action of the Solicitor General, following reports from the office of the Auditor – General for the Federation. (Umoru 2021(a)

The Chairman, Senate committee on Public Accounts, said an ad-hoc committee was set up on the order of National Assembly to administer the disbursement of judgement debts, following public outcry over the non-payment of Judgement debts by the federal government.

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, (EFCC), has presented a third prosecution witness against the Former Secretary to the Government of the Federation in an alleged ₦544 million grass-cutting fraud. (Eromosele, 2021)

The Socio – Economic Rights and Accountability Project, (SERAP), has sued President Muhammadu Buhari over failure to probe allegations of missing ₦3,836,685,213.13 of public funds meant for the Federal Ministry of Health, Teaching hospitals, Medical centres and The National Food, Drug Administration and Control, NAFDAC. The organisation stated that the missing money was alleged to be mismanaged, diverted or stolen, as documented in the recently released 2018 audited report by the office of the Auditor – General of the Federation. (Akoni, 2021 (b)

The Nigerian Senate has expressed shock over how officials of Lake Chad Research Institute, Maidugiri, sold two prado Jeeps worth ₦31 million for ₦1.5million. The senate committee on Public Accounts said the vehicles were procured in 2015 and 2014 respectively but sold three years later for ridiculous amount. The committee is relying on the query to the institute, based on the 2017 report of the Auditor – General for the Federation submitted to the National Assembly for consideration. During the investigation, the committee members were amazed to hear from the Executive Director, that he was currently using a refurbished Hilux van as official vehicle when the SUV's were procured for him.

The query read: “Management of The Institute could not account for two Toyota Prado Jeeps which were purchased in 2013 & 2014 with Registration No. 45K01FG for one Jeep and none for the other”. “No reason was given for not registering the second Prado Jeep. In addition, a Toyota Hiace bus with Registration No. 45K03FG could not be accounted for during audit. “This is a violation of financial regulation, which states “Every public officer is personally and pecuniary responsible for government property under his control or in his custody”. “Inability of management of the Institute to account for government property under its custody suggests abuse and mismanagement, as government property have been diverted to private use”. “The Executive Director is required to account for the vehicles”. (Umoru, 2021(b)

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To all intents and purposes for a comprehensive understanding of this subject, the theory of two publics was adopted in this paper. Ekeh (1975,1985) adumbrated that one of the most striking



impacts of colonialism was the emergence of two public realms (1) The primordial public realm. (2) The civic public realm.

The civic public realm was characterized with illegitimate and exploitative colonial rule and no moral linkages with the private realm. It was an amoral public realm in which cheating the system was considered a patriotic duty (Ifidan 1996:102). As the same actors operate in the two realms, the state monies is used to service the primordial public which brought corruption, ethnicity and nepotism to the Civic Public.

The Actor steals state resources from the civic public realm to service the primordial public realm. The theory is that it is legitimate to steal from the civic public realm with a view to servicing the primordial public. This Ekeh's framework explains the reasons for the sustainable corruption in Nigeria.

Besides, the stealing in the civic public realm pauperizes the primordial public realm. In any case, the primordial attachment is an instrument of political fraud and manipulation in the hands of the privileged political and bureaucratic elite for selfish and because most of the stolen money from the civic public realm has been siphoned to Europe and America to acquire estates, organise lavish parties, etc. In fact, some of the ill-gotten wealth may filter down to the primordial public realm along the line. It is not sufficient to build it in term of social, economic and political development. Despite the fact that money is stolen from the civic public realm to service the primordial public realm, the primordial public realm is at the receiving end of all the corruption exercised by the political elites, against the backdrop of high level of illiteracy, abject poverty, prevalence of preventable diseases etc. It is interesting to note that these same primordial public realms who are at the receiving end does anything to protect the milito-bureautic and political elite who steal who from the public realm. The primordial public realm is too hostile to the actors in civic republic realm if the actors refused, failed and or neglected to steal money from civic realm.

Conclusively, this paper x-rays corruption in Nigeria through the prism of the theory of two publics.

Causes of Corruption in Nigeria

One of the major causes of corruption in Nigeria is that the punishment prescribed by law for a common criminal that stole bicycle that cost not more than Thirty Thousand Naira (N30,000.00) is graver than the punishment meted to public officer who stole billions of Naira, because Public officers who corruptly enriched themselves are not well punished, this encourages public officers to sustain looting the treasury of Nigeria.

In addition, the snail's pace which Judiciary in Nigeria operates is another reason for corruption in Nigeria because it creates the chance for the Accused persons to win witnesses on their sides. The Nigeria legal system is weak. More so, the weak political will to implement anti-graft and corruption programmes in Nigeria. Successful anti-graft and corruption is the function of sustainable political will by the government.

Furthermore, another reason for sustainable corruption in Nigeria is the issue of godfatherism and godmotherism. In Nigerian Politics, political parties' caucus are characterized by godfatherism and godmotherism. These godfathers and mothers are small selected leaders of a political party who usually agreed on which aspirant to support to become the party flag bearer. They provide the resources to finance elections for their godsons or daughters (Gambo, 2006). The godson or



daughter pay heavy returns to the godfather and mother through huge corruption. When they get to the political office, it is incumbent on them to aggressively grab anything that comes their way through corruption to pay returns to their masters.

Also, poor reward system contributes to corruption in Nigeria. The few employed Nigerians received weak wages not in line with inflation trends in Nigeria, which has negatively reduced the purchasing strength of Nigerians. Unemployment has reached embarrassing state. The youths who engaged in graft and corrupt practices such as kidnapping, armed robbery, oil bunkering, paid assassins, political thuggery, prostitution, cybercrime also known as (yahoo) drug peddling etc.

Again, corruption is flourishing in Nigeria because those public officers charged with the responsibility of checking corruption are those stealing government money. They carry out corrupt practices with impunity because they are well connected. These public officers lodged government fund in their private accounts; used proxy names to buy and accumulate property, accept kick back and make payment upfront for projects that would not be completed, and inflate contracts. Nigerian public officers are not patriotic.

Furthermore, avarice and greed, consumption attitude of some Nigerians, love for mundane things and excessive materialism generated by Nigerian individual capitalist which emphasized personal wealth without due regard to the general interest and welfare of Nigeria, is another cause of graft and corruption in Nigeria. Greed and passion for luxurious living within the ruling class breeds corruption.

Moreover, the nature and character of Nigeria as a prismatic society contributes to corrupt practices in Nigeria. Consumption pattern aimed at meeting the luxurious lifestyles of the western world is also promoting corrupt practice in Nigeria. The values, idea, culture and African traditional religion which was premised upon responsibility, transparency, accountability and probity were dismantled by imported values and ideas, alien to Nigerian culture replaced with the Western culture. The African Traditional Religion forbids corruption while Western Religion promotes corruption. As a result of the imposition of the Western culture on Nigerians, they failed, refused and neglect to conform to African religion tenet. There was the collapse of African tradition and culture.

It is interesting to know that the absence of social security for public officers and political office holders after expiration of tenure is also responsible for corruption in Nigeria. In Nigeria, the fear of public officers for not getting their gratuity and pension after retirement is a contributory factor for corruption in Nigeria. Public officers and political office holders steal from government treasury with a view to fending for themselves and families as a result of non payment of gratuity to retired officers. Nigerian retired public officers are walking corpses, some die before their gratuity is paid to their families. Generally, in Nigeria, there is absence of a welfare scheme which cushions the effects of unemployment, large families hence quest for power to perpetrate corruption.

Another reason why corruption flourishes in Nigeria is that public officers convicted for corruption are not usually asked to return the loots. When some are compelled to return the loots to Government officers, same returned loot are re-looted by the public officers who recovered them. The leaders themselves are corrupt and can not lead by example. In Nigeria, the benefits of corruption are greater than the consequences of being caught and disciplined. There is too much desperation of Nigerians to acquire wealth by all means.



In Nigeria, when corruption are unveiled and the perpetrator(s) are under probe, it is the culture to associate such probe with ethnicity, politics and questions such as – how many Hausas/Fulanis or Yorubas or ibo under probe or how many have been punished are not uncommon.

Corruption strives in Nigeria because the Nigeria state is soft in the sense that laws are discriminately applied and the anti-corruption laws are not an exception. In Nigeria, there is over permissiveness of corruption and corrupt act.

Consequences of Corruption in Nigeria

It could be safely stated that corruption among Public officers and politicians in Nigeria has lowered the respect Nigerians have for constituted authority and undermined the credibility and the legitimacy of the government.

Corruption in Nigeria prompted the military to rule Nigeria between 1966 and 1979 and between 1983 and 1999. There was hardly any government that has been toppled by the military in Nigeria that political corruption has not been mentioned as the immediate or remote causes of such a coup. Some military government have used this explanation to rationalize their seizure of power. Political corruption in Nigeria has slowed down the efficiency and the productivity of civil servants. It has also contributed to political instability which often leads to national insecurity. This scares away potential investors from the country and portrays the nation in bad light to the international communities.

Corruption among public officers and politicians causes a state of lawlessness, violence and anarchy. There is lack of probity and accountability. The reasons why public officers hold public offices in Nigeria are to satisfy particular and or personal interest. This explains the decay of public accountability in Nigeria.

Corruption among public officers have slowed down the rate of development in Nigeria. The state funds or the huge oil revenue that should have been used to develop Nigeria are either embezzled or transferred to private accounts abroad.

Corruption leads to political, social and economic decay. The country is left bankrupt and riddled with diseases and hunger. The citizens on the other hand are disillusioned, discontented and malnourished, thereby providing some air of uncertainty and insecurity in Nigeria. The people have been reduced to mere walking corpses. Corruption has wreaked havoc on the psyche of the Nigeria people.

Many Nigerian airports, seaports and borders have become porous, unsecured and they are fertile routes for smuggled goods. This is partly attributed to the corrupt public officers that man these border posts. Illegal aliens give them money and enter Nigeria with impunity. These acts of corruption contribute to national insecurity. In fact, a disguised invading army can easily bribe its way through some entry points in Nigeria and overthrow the government in Nigeria without much qualms.

Failure of Agencies for Combating Corruption in Nigeria

Several agencies such as War Against Indiscipline (WAI), War Against Indiscipline and Corruption, Mass Mobilization for Self Reliance, Economic recovery and social justice (MAMSOR), War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAI – C) and National Orientation Agency (NOA) were established in Nigeria to combat corruption. All these programmes could not succeed because of the following reasons.

- (a) The implementation processes of these agencies were ineffective and inefficient.
- (b) The political leaders themselves were corrupt and could not lead by example. In Nigeria, there is the poverty of political leadership, which has accentuated the problem of social mobilization.



The rationale for these failures is that the leadership which ordinarily should lead and provide leadership is itself immobilized and exploitative.

The exercise of these reforms was not continuous and successive, leadership do not believe in their philosophy and refused to vigorously pursue the programmes. In Nigeria, as a result of corruption in Nigeria, there is a high concentration of wealth in the hands of a tiny minority of the population, resultantly in income distribution became high skewed.

Also, corruption is the major obstacle to democracy and rule of law in Nigeria. Corruption in Nigeria has increased abject poverty, infrastructural decay, electoral crisis, contract killing, political assassination, insecurity and Nigerians are now paying dearly for the corruption of their own officials through inflation and starvation. Corruption reduced economic growth, enhances inequalities and reduces the government's capacity to respond to citizens' needs.

Conclusion

This paper submits that incessant corruption in Nigeria is predicated upon the punishment prescribed by law for a common criminal and public officers, weaknesses of Nigerian Judicial system, Godfatherism and poor reward system among others. It is suggested that corrupt public officers in Nigeria should be sent to the gallows as a means of checkmating corruption in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Incessant corruption in Nigeria should not be handled with kid's gloves. It needs a surgical operation and the causative factors should be addressed more holistically.

1. Public officers found guilty of corruption in Nigeria after trial should be sent to the gallows to serve as a deterrent to others and the convicted public officers should be compelled to return their loots to government before they are sent to the gallows.
2. The Nigerian Judicial system should be overhauled, with a view to administering justice with dispatch. The rule of law should be upheld.
3. The political will to implement the war against graft and corruption and the will without breaking the war against graft and corruption until the war against graft and corruption are won.
4. Mass political education is another suggestion to eradicate corruption in Nigeria especially on the issue of godfatherism and motherism. Politics should be made less expensive in Nigeria with a view to encouraging the youths to damn Godfatherism and motherism.
5. Public officers and political office holders should be paid reasonable salary and wages. Also, honest, faithful and hard workers should be rewarded in Nigeria; unemployment among the youths should be reduced drastically.
6. There should be social security for public officers and political office holder after the expiration of tenure and pension and gratuity should be paid as at when due.
7. Aggressive public enlightenment for love for mundane things and excessive materialism should be carried out by the government.
8. The values, idea, culture and African Traditional religion which was promised upon responsibility, transparency, accountability and probity should be reinstalled by Nigerians.
9. The issue of ethnicity should not come into play in any case of corruption. Regardless of which ethnicity group the corrupt officers hailed from, they should face the music and punished if found guilty. Ethnicity should be demystified in Nigeria.
10. The Nigerian leaders should guarantee the economic security of Nigerians. The leadership should provide the citizens with basic necessities of life namely food, shelter and employment. Hungry and economically emancipated, ignorant and psychological hopeless rural citizens would continue to be deaf and apathetic to any jingo of war against corruption in Nigeria (SANUBI & AGIRI, 2020).
11. Public officers should give accurate and genuine account of their stewardship and public officers who have corruptibly enriched themselves should not be given primary place recognition and respect in the society.
12. Vertical and horizontal corruptions should be seriously addressed and eradicated if any meaningful economic or political progress is to be made.



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