

SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

Ganiyu, Rasaq Omokeji
Department of Sociology and Psychology
Fountain University, Osogbo, Osun State
mrgeemum@yahoo.com. 08037231666.

Rasak. Bamidele
Department of Sociology and Psychology
Fountain University, Osogbo, Osun State
delerasak@yahoo.co.uk. 08034955615

And

Taiwo, Felix Olalekan
Department of Business Administration and Management
Moshood Abiola Polytechnic, Abeokuta
Ogun State. Soft104@hotmail.com 08033256124

Corruption is one of the oldest and most perplexing phenomena in human society, political corruption exists in every country and it is not exclusively a problem of developing countries. Etymologically, the word corruption is derived from the Latin word "rumpere", meaning to "break". This connotes the breaking of normal or societal norms or practices. While the destructive nature of corruption is less contentious, the definition of what constitutes corruption tends to defile consensus among scholars and institutions. Corruption can be defined as the abuse of public office for private gain. Similarly, corruption can be defined as the abuse of public power for private gain. Corruption is behaviour which deviates from the formal duties of a public role (elective or appointive) because of private regarding (personal, close family, private clique) wealth or status gains; or violates rule against the exercising of certain private regarding influence. This study tends to examine socio-political and economic impacts of corruption in Nigeria.

Key words: Corruption, Misappropriation, Embezzlement, private gain

INTRODUCTION

Corruption has been given various definitions by various scholars. Corruption is a world - wide phenomenon which has been with societies throughout history, it has caused political and economic instability in societies and depending on the scale. It has led to social conflict and violence as competing group vie for state power which is the source of distribution of resources and other amenities in the society (Odunuga 2000). Onigu Otite describes corruption as " the perversion of integrity or state of affairs through bribery favour or moral depravity" (Odunuga 2000 : 4). Assenting further he went on to state that corruption takes place "when at least two parties have interacted to change the structure or processes of society or the

behaviour of functionaries in order to produce dishonest, unfaithful or defiled situation (Odunuga 2000: 4). From Otite's view corruption can be of any kind of give and take of bribery, favour etc. either directly or indirectly that defile the morality of any society integrity or state affairs.

In Otite's new corruption include some aspect of immorality which attributes to various mishaps and other microprobes to the society, to him corruption is an endemic act that involves injection of additional but improper transaction aimed at changing the moral course of events and altering judgment and positions of trust.

Accordingly (Olopeonina 1998:8) citing Kham defined corruption to mean "an act which deviates from the moral rules of conduct governing the actions of someone in a position of public authority because of private-regarding motive such as wealth, power or status".

Corruption can be analyzed within paradigm of political economy. From Oluponia's perspective citing Khams definition puts forward that corruption is brought about through the quest regarding motive such as wealth, power or status as such to him corruption can be analyzed within the paradigm of political and economic arrangement, he believes that the origin of corruption is located in the political and economic arrangement which govern that organization or society (Olopeonina 1998:18 and Odunuga 2000: 4 & 5). Lord Bryce (1986) in his own presentation see corruption to be "behavior by individuals because of the great inequality in the distribution of wealth, political offices as the primary means of gaining access to wealth and the absence of a strong sense of natural community. Lord Bryce in Otite (1986: 12).

From Bryce own perspective, corruption through an immoral act is brought about because of inequality which exist in the position an individual occupies in the society as such according to him corruption is brought about by the immoral pursuit of wealth, power and so on. According to Kalu and Yemi Osinbayo, (1999). Corruption is the conscious and well planned act by a persons or group of person to appropriate by unlawful means to the wealth of another person it is also the act of turning power and authority into ready cash From another perspective the assent that corruption can also be viewed as the diversion of resources from the betterment of the community. Albeit, it include not only bribery or treasury looting, but also the deliberate bending of the system (prebendalism) to favour friends and relations or hurt foes any misbaviour, derivation form perversion of the system, or misleading or giving strong or distorted information about things (Kalu and Yemi Osinbayo, 1999). From the foregoing, it is deducible that corruption is an immoral disposition (latitudinal) of people in power or authority against the less privilege people to widely acquire more wealth.

DIMENSION OF CORRUPTION

As agreed by so many sociologists the disdain for corruption is felt mainly on ground of morality, as such explaining corruption would be meaningless without relating it to a kind of moral decadence with so many concomitant attributes like conflict of various kinds, chauvinism, illegal award of contracts, oil cabals and pursuit of white elephant projects etc. Corruption inflicts so many kind of adverse effect on any society where it exist and persist until such society is purged of such immorality and social problem, which in turn can lead to other various or many social problem.

TYPES OF CORRUPTION

Due to the nature of corruption, it has to be typified into various levels. In the work of Odekunle (1991), he put forward that corruption could take any of the following typology.

Economic/Commercial Corruption: By this it is meant an act largely perpetuated by businessman and contractors directly motivated by the financial gains.

Organized Corruption: This is the relatively large scale and complex criminal activity carried on by group of elites and control agents loosely or tightly organized, for the enrichment of those participating and at the expense of the community and its members. This is common in the public officers including federal and state ministries as well as local government councils.

Administrative Corruption: By this it meant the act by which top administrative and professional convert official roles for private material and socio political gains.

Political Corruption; refers to that largely perpetuated by political office holders and their henchmen. It is usually instigated by the desire to acquire or retain political power. Source: - Odekunle (1991)

CAUSES OF CORRUPTION

Scholar (1997) observed, bureaucratic (public) corruption can be traced to government intervention in the economy, policies aimed at liberalization, stabilization, deregulation and privatization. According to him, "where government regulation are pervasive and government officials have discretion in applying them, individuals are often willing to offer bribes to officials to circumvent the rules, and sad to relate official are occasionally tempted to accept these bribes". When there are trade restrictions, especially if certain imported goods are subjected to quantitative restriction, the necessary, import licenses become very valuable and importer will consider bribing the officials who control their issue.

Equally, protecting a home industry from foreign competition through tariffs tends to create a semi-monopoly for the local industry. Local manufacturers can lobby for establishment and maintenance of these tariffs. In the process some industrialists may even be willing to corrupt influential politician to keep the monopoly going. Other areas where corruption is practiced include price control, multiple exchange rate practice, natural resources endowments etc.

CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

Successive administration in Nigeria reduced the state to a pathetic subjugation where the rule of law is down played, leading to the abuse of fundamental human right. Arrest and detention of persons or group of persons became the order of the day.

Corruption in the First Republic (1960-1966)

On independent in October 1960, Nigeria allowed British cabinet system of government Alhaji Balewa was prime minister. He battled among the major ethnic groups to restore peace and order in the country due to political impasse at that time each region then, had ethnic instead of national loyalty. There was

struggle to share in the pool of the office in the federal government. The struggle for power at the centre with corruption led to the disintegration of the central government. The political disorder led to the military coup of 1996 (Agaga 1999)

The military entered the political scene in Nigeria with the coup of Major General Aguyi Ironsi of January 1966. This was followed in July 1966 by another counter coup as a result of breakdown in the internal cohesion and discipline within the armed forces, especially the army. Since then, the military has gone on to rule Nigeria for twenty-nine years. The only break has been the period between October 1979 and December 1983.

The performance of military in the administration of Nigeria politics was not too inspiring. There was corruption, indiscipline, chaos and confusion. The military administration of Major General Aguyi Ironsi of 1966 came to power to restore peace and order sequel to the breakdown of law and order as at time. This regime was toppled by another military coup that saw General Gowon into power.

General Gowon ruled for nine years, from July 1966 to August 1975. The victory of Gowon in the civil war completed the coup that brought him to power (Emeka, 1991) Corruption became included in almost all facets of national life and virtually became a way of life. Officials abandoned their offices with impunity to attend to their private business (Obasanjo 1990). The coup July 1975 coups brought Murtala Mohammed/Olusegun Obasanjo to power. The regime decided frankly to purge the civil service and the armed forces for it corrupt practices. The ideas of corrupt practices investigation bureau and special tribunals to handle cases of corruption were noted (Obasanjo, 1990). An Ombudsman system to be known as public complaints commission was set up. Murtala/Obasanjo four years administration witnessed the best period in the political history of Nigeria. Some people felt uncomfortable with the style of ruling of Murtala, therefore he was assassinated in the morning of 13th February 1976 on his way to the office in an abortive coup led by Lt. Col. Dimka (Obasanjo, 1990). Obasanjo, instituted a political programme that saw the second Republic to power, He handed the reign of government to Shehu Shagari in October 1979.

Corruption in the second Republic Alhaji Shehu Shagari led the government of second republic in October 1979 to December 1983. The regime experienced decline in the moral status of the people. It was a democracy whose very name had become synonymous with austerity, insecurity and corruption. The Republic was full of clashes, and ethnic conflicts.

There was electoral fraud; National Party of Nigeria (N.P.N) won the 1979 and 1983 elections which were widely perceived to have been rigged. For instance, the NPN presidential election in 1983 which was dubbed a landslide victory was believed to have been an astonishing display of party's unwieldy power to manipulate state apparatus- television, radio, police, and army to rig election (Agaga, 1999)

People were calling for military coup on the ground that the 1983 presidential election was rigged. Shehu Shagari's government was kicked out of office and General Mohammed Buhari stepped in. The entire politician within reach who partook in the running of the second Republic were arrested and locked-up in various prisons across the country for the offences of corruption and indiscipline. These politicians along with some-businessmen who were alleged of economic sabotage were tried and sentenced to jail terms ranging from twenty-five to life imprisonment.

For instance, late Professor Ambrose Alli, the then governor of Bendel State was sentenced to twenty-five years imprisonment or in the alternative to refund nine hundred and ninety six thousand naira. The military tribunal then held that he among other governors corruptly enriched themselves and they were convicted accordingly (Agaga, 1999)

It was also in this irony of times that the rice, which was supposed to be imported (to the poor) by the Umaru Dikko task force, became a mirage inspite of the millions of naira government poured into bringing the rice. Dikko was alleged of corruption in the issue. The rootless corruption of the second republic was traced to the handiwork of Umaru Dikko and his cohorts.

Babangida's government, by disregarding and trivializing corruption, provide the enabling environment for its growth. He thought the annulment of June 12, 1993 presidential election would be viewed by Nigerians as the usual business of prebendal politics. But the heat from the citizen made him to unceremoniously 'step aside'. Before Babangida stepped aside, 12 billion dollars realized from oil revenue wind fall during the gulf war was not accounted for.

Due to the state of the nation, an interim national government was formed in to bring down the tension in the country as a result of the annulment of the presidential election result. The interim Government was led by Chief Ernest Shonekan, a civilian, who was appointed by Gen. Babangida himself. As if it was planned to fail, the government could not do anything to reduce the agitation for the release of the result of the annulled election.

After about four months in the office, with the legitimacy problem and attendant issues, the government was sacked in November 17, 1993. The sacking of the Interim Government brought in Gen. Sanni Abacha as head of state of another military government at first, the regime embrace the universal norms and established, restructured and reaffirmed- War Against Indiscipline and Corruption.(WAI & C).

Late Abaca's kleptocratic ambition of corruption was the most destructive of development that the country has ever experience. Because of the massive looting, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), the four refineries broke down. The era of production without maintenance was experienced. At present, fuel is being imported to the country for domestic use.

The death of Abacha brought General Abubakar into the fold of governance. The regime stayed for 11 months, make political programmes and transition to democratic rule and hand over to democratically elected president in person of Olusegun Obasanjo .Although the administration of General Abdulsalami Abubakar was very brief, the last minute rush for the awards of contracts was questionable. The contract was over 60 billion naira, and the foreign reserve dropped down to 4 billion from 7 billion dollars. This is another dimension of looting the nation's treasure (Tell Magazine 1999).

The president, Olusegun Obasanjo and his lieutenant's are talking tough on the issue of corruption. A bill was passed by the then house of assembly on the issue of corruption which is to punish any person or group of person found to have corruptly enriched himself or done so collectively, in his 100 days in office President Obasanjo remarked in his media chat that fuel scarcity experienced in Nigeria was due to the corrupt practices of the government functionaries under military administration of late Sanni Abacha.

Part of the achievement of the Obasanjo administration is the creation of anti-corruption agencies such as EFCC and ICPC which were saddle with responsibility of controlling any form of corruptions among Nigerians.

The fourth Republic is still on the right path in fighting corruption even till the administration of late Sheu Musa Ya'adua who was succeeded by President Goodluck Jonathan. The searchlight is still focusing on this regime which has brought so many hardships on the life of many Nigerians. The regime also is not doing anything tangible in the area of curbing corruption. In the little time spent by the regime several number of corruption cases has been reported such as Fuel subsidy, Pension Scam worth over 60 billion Naira, 600 dollars bribe collected by Hon. Faruk Lawal and the issue of Boko Haram cannot be ignored in developmental process of this country.

THE SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

Corruption in Nigeria manifest itself in virtually all aspect to national life it has cripple the encumber of the local; state and federal government.

Sociological impact:

- It has sapped the moral of the public servant.
- Honest is no more the best policy
- Public servant exhibit nonchalant attitude to work.
- It has cripple individual talent and creativity within the society
- Integrity and dedication is no more within the public sector system

Economic Impacts

- Decline in productivity
- Loss of revenue
- Reduction in Gross Domestic produce

Political impacts

- Perfection of election rigging
- Money as the ultimate aim
- Reckless exhibition of political power
- Violence and destruction
- Underline the political stability of the nation

ATTEMPTS AT CURBING CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

The Muritala/ Obasanjo Administration seized properties of corrupt public officer and dismissed public officers who had been found to have misused their offices.

The Shagari administration to which it handed over introduced the ethical revolution and the Buhar/ Idiagbon duo are famous for the way they waged against indiscipline (WAI) bothering upon corruption and misuse of public office. Following its overthrow, the new administration, under General Babangida, inaugurated in 1989 a committee on corruption and other economic crime in Nigeria. The committee made effort through a proposal to the National Assembly on how to curb corruption in Nigeria. The subsequent resignation of the head of interim government and take over by General Abacha has been the administration via among others, the institution of probe panel into many government agencies and parastatals. Coleman (1998).

Despite all the above, the situation rather than improving is worsening under the Shagari regime, corruption did not subside but thrived resulting in the alienation of the citizen from the ruling elite. Some hope for rejuvenation seemed to be in the offing upon the takeover of the military in December 1983. However, the regime had a short life span for its impact to be deeply felt in this area. However, in the twelve months, many public officials were indicted and some semblance of sanity seemed to be returning to the polity (Coleman 1998). General Buhari and Idiagbon regime was the first major attempt at curbing corruption. It did not only probing its predecessor but launched a War Against Indiscipline (WAI) which is indentified as the bone of Nigeria. This government was cut short. Then came the Laisser Faire approach of Babangida which reversed the gains recorded by his predecessor. Though he put in place National orientation Movement society on the path of sanity (National Concord (1998:12).

Under President Ibrahim Babangida, however, it is instructive to note that the administration did not find the time to deal with the report submitted by regime had condoned rather than try to curb corruption. The interim government's life was short-lived to make any impact on the society having been preoccupied with dealing with its legitimacy. The efforts of the present administration are to all intents and purpose, haphazard, pretentious and selective, making it impossible to be considered serious, bearing in mind its desire to deal with corruption only onward but not before (Coleman, 1998). Abacha launched War against Indiscipline and corruption (WAL-C) which dimmed out as soon as it was launched. The leader himself went into nation's treasury are looted the money. By his overt-action, he encouraged his lieutenants to do likewise as he funds a political machinery to perpetuate himself.

His looting spree appeared unprecedented which made Chief Gani Fawehinimi to say; "Never can Nigeria have a leader which a passion to loot like Abacha" (National Concord: 1998:12).

REMEDIES FOR CORRUPTION AND CORRUPT PRACTICES IN NIGERIA

Nigeria is one of the state in Africa that have been identify as being corrupt, the corruption percentage degree continue to grow. Virtually, every administration professes and swears to control corruption yet the problem continues unabated. Corruption's under military reach high echelon and weaken the fabric of the nation. The present civilian administration has also embarked on anti corrupt crusade, how successful this

would be only time can tell. However, this hydra cancer needs to be controlled to save the remedies are being suggested as means to reduced or curb corruption's and corrupt practices.

CONCLUSION

To achieve the best result from the anti-corruption programmes, It is recommended that policies used in reducing corruption should take into cognizance the experience of other countries which have succeeded in their fight against corruption. According to the World Bank (2007), the institutional strengthening is a key part of country's anti-corruption strategies. One of the most important institutions is a professional and well motivated civil service. The selection and promotion in civil service should be merit based rather than patronage. Pay of the civil servants is also very important, as pay is one of the major causes of corruption. The other important institution that needs to be reformed is the judicial system. Enforcement of anti-corruption legislation requires and efficient, accountable judiciary reform of the judicial system should concentrate on the independence of the arm of government. The Budget Reform is the other factor for combating corruption. Government should undertake only what it can do well within is resource constraints. Government should develop a well functioning budget process, allocate strategically and enable programs and projects to be implemented effectively and efficiently. Good financial management system is also a powerful instrument for preventing, discovering or facilitating the punishment of fraud and corruption. A look at the legislative branch of Nigeria exhibits that the majority of deputies of our parliament are powerful businessmen. They are elected by bribing people and getting into the parliament, their goal of course is not to serve the public, but for their personal and selfish benefit by paying less tax, creating new businesses, etc.

People taking some little amount of money for electing those deputies will have much more to pay in the future because of the above mentioned factor. Hence, one of the most important factors of combating corruption in Nigeria is for free and fair elections to be conducted.