CORRUPTION & ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA: THE CHARACTER OF THE STATE THESIS

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Abstract
The objective of this paper is to explore the linkage between corruption and administration by using Nigeria as a case study. This is because corruption has been around for a very long time and will be around in the future unless governments figure out effective ways to combat it. Though various anti-corruption strategies have been designed and implemented. Toward the end of the twentieth century economics turned their attention to corruption that beforehand was the subject of sociology, political science, history, public administration, and criminal law researches. Despite the vivid link between corruption and economic performance hot debates arose to determine the nature (negative or positive) of this correlation. Reviewing the results of these empirical studies we can conclude that corruption in few cases can boost economic growth but only in the short run, for in the long-run and in general, corruption destroys the economy and the culture and impedes welfare. All empirical results of different research programs support the proposition that corruption inhibits economic performance. The surveyed studies provide evidence that corruption may seriously inhibit long-term economic growth and increase the volatility of business cycles. Various leading international organizations (the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and Transparency international) national governments, scientists (despite their specialization) regard corruption as damaging factor for development and democracy. This paper adopts a qualitative methodology and uses the technique of content analysis and tables to document its findings. The paper suggests active policy against corruption should be elaborated and implemented in Nigeria.

Keywords: Corruption& Anti-corruption Strategies, Character of the state theory, Corruption Perception index & Nigeria

Introduction
The Corruption Perceptions Index for 2014 had been released by the Transparency International and shows that corruption remains a global phenomenon, while Nigeria now ranks among the most corrupt nations. The Corruption Perceptions Index for 2013 for instance, according to the TI, serves as a reminder that the abuse of power, secret dealings
and bribery continue to ravage societies around the world. “The index scores 177 countries and territories on a scale from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). No country has a perfect score, and two-thirds of countries score below 50. This indicates a serious, worldwide corruption problem,” TI said in the report. The global anti-corruption crusader therefore calls for urgent renewal of anti-graft war by building transparent public institutions. “The world urgently needs a renewed effort to crack down on money laundering, clean up political finance, pursue the return of stolen assets and build more transparent public institutions. It is time to stop those who get away with acts of corruption,” TI said. Countries that are rated the best 17 in zero tolerance for corruption are Denmark, New Zealand, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Singapore, Switzerland, Netherlands, Australia, and Canada. Others are Luxembourg, Germany, Iceland, United Kingdom, Barbados, Belgium and Hong Kong in that order. Both Denmark and New Zealand scored 91 per cent, Finland and Sweden 89 per cent, Norway and Singapore 86 per cent, Australia and Canada 81, Germany and Iceland 78 while Barbados, Belgium and Hong Kong scored 75.

However, while no African country made the first 17, they dominate the first 10 while Nigeria ranks 31 on the list. To be sure, this is an improvement on the previous situation. But there is still a lot to be done in the effort to rid the country of graft. In our view, being 31st most corrupt out of 177 countries is just not good enough. It is disheartening that those who are supposed to review and examine the damning report and formulate and implement strategies to tame the menace of corruption either ignore or condemn such reports. This suggests a lack of a genuine commitment to fighting corruption in the country. Nor is the menace limited to the public sector alone. Corruption is at all levels and in every sector of the political economy. All levels of the education sector, for instance, are sadly entangled in massive corruption. Indeed, it is so widespread these days that it is almost like an official policy of the state.

Corruption also generates economic distortions in the public sector by diverting public investment into capital projects where bribes and kickbacks are more plentiful. Officials may increase the technical complexity of public sector projects to conceal such dealings, thus further distorting investment. Corruption also lowers quality of standards of compliance with construction, environmental or other regulations. It reduces the quality of government services and infrastructure and increases budgetary pressures on government. This may be the reason the federal government still finds it quite difficult to balance its annual budgets, despite the unprecedented surge in oil revenues following hikes in oil prices over time. In the private sector, corruption increases the cost of business through illicit payments, high cost of negotiating with officials and the risk of breached agreements or detection. Although some claim corruption reduces costs by cutting red tape, an emerging consensus holds that the availability of bribes induces officials to contrive new rules and perpetrate delays.

Where corruption inflates the cost of business, it also distorts the playing field, shielding firms with connections from competition and thereby sustaining inefficiency. Political corruption, probably the worst part of the malady, is widespread in many countries, and represents a major detriment to the well-being of their citizens. Political corruption means that government policies tend to benefit the givers of bribes, not the general public. Another example is how politicians would draft laws that protect large corporations while hurting small businesses. These “pro-business” politicians are simply returning favours to those commercial enterprises that contributed heavily to their election campaigns to the detriment of the larger population. The establishment of the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), the Economic and Financial Crimes
Commission (EFCC) as well as the Code of Conduct Bureau and its Tribunal is a laudable step in the war against corruption.

Unfortunately, though some successes have been registered by these bodies, the general impression is that they have gone after the tail of the monster of corruption rather than its head. Former British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw why speaking with the median in Nigeria corruption and lack of transparency among the political class have become a great problem that have permeated all cadre of administration in Nigeria. Straw said that for the war against corruption in the country to be decisively fought and won by government and the people, there must be transparency in governance at all levels as well as incorruptible judiciary to give appropriate penalties to apprehended corrupt officials.

The former British Secretary who stated this recently in an interaction with Senators on the platform of the All Progressives Congress, APC, stated that though opposition may not be in government, they can use their voice in a democracy to bring about good governance. He urged Nigeria to copy the British model by meting out stiffer penalties to corrupt officials, adding that allowing for transparency in governance and having clean courts to handle corruption related cases in the land, would go a long way in reducing corruption in the country. He said,

There’s need to raise the penalty for corruption in Nigeria. You have anti-corruption laws, you have great laws and you jail people on corruption and you ensure proper transparency; then, it’s safe to say that people would stop being corrupt. You’ve got to change the quality of your public administration. One of the encouraging signs about Nigeria is the fact that you have effective and viable opposition because democracy requires that there’s change. In democracy, there are alternatives. What message can I give you about opposition? Well, first of all, you can change the weather in opposition. Although you’ve not got the votes, you’ve got the voice. As you make the better use of the voice, you get public support then you start to unnerve the government (Eme, 2010:256).

Straw however, challenged the opposition lawmakers to get quality manifestos and should not mistake the quantity of policies for quality of policies just as he described the 2011 elections as better than the rest but that it didn’t meet international standards. He further stated, “The second thing is that you cannot just wait for the government to be unpopular…you have to fight crime, tackle health problems, deal with immigration and ensure transparency in government. He added.

Leadership is about character, but if you don’t have the right leaders, who have the right characters, the right backbone, then, it won’t work. He won’t have the qualities to bring out the best in people who would work with him. Of course, elections are fought through the prisms of leaders…don’t mistake quantity of policies for quality of policies (Agbakwuru,2014:32).
Present at the interactive meeting were about five out of the 11 Peoples Democratic Party Senators, Senators Bukola Saraki, Danjuma Goje, Ali Ndume, Abdullahi Adamu and Umaru Dahiru, who had written to the senate to announce their defection to the APC. They have maintained that they are already in the APC as they participated actively in the registration exercise of the APC and they proved this yesterday by openly aligning with the opposition lawmakers. Speaking on behalf of the opposition Senators, the Senate minority leader, Senator George Akume said the country was under siege due to the rising wave of insecurity in the North East and some parts of the country. Akume stated that lack of transparency was one of the major causes of insecurity and corruption in the country adding that the government had failed in its primary duty of protecting the citizens of the country. He told the former foreign secretary that as the nation was preparing for the 2015 elections, it was pertinent that the elections must be free and fair. The Senate Minority Leader said, “you are coming at a time when there are many problems in the country. On a positive note, you are coming when the country is celebrating its centenary. Every country has its history. You are also visiting at difficult circumstances in our dear country. The objective of this paper is to examine the linkage between corruption and administration using Nigeria as a case study. To achieve this objective, the first part of the papers discusses conceptual issues. The next section explores the theoretical framework of analysis. The third part uses concrete examples to support issues raised in the paper. The final part offers recommendations and concludes the paper.

**Theoretical Perspectives of Corruption**

To date, three major approaches to the systematic enquiry of corruption have emerged. Historical studies which has widely been used in Britain; inquisitional studies – a specialty of the United States of America and some African and Asian countries and sociological studies which have dealt with corruption only incidentally (Leys, 1965:212). Specifically, these studies have yielded three schools of thought on the subject: the moralistic/traditional, the functional and the legalistic approaches.

**The Traditionalist/Moralistic Approach**

This approach treats corruption in a moralistic manner. Causes of corruptions were seen as the gaining of positions of power and trust by evil and dishonest means. Corruption was therefore incidental to the working of society which might be self guarded by appropriate laws and exhortation (Caiden and Caiden, 1977:302). This approach is rather problematic. The different moral codes in different societies make moral judgments culturally determined. For example, an aberrant behaviour in one culture may be normal and acceptable in another. Thus, if corruption is to require moral censure, it will have to be culturally conditioned. Consequently, an act is corrupt if the society in which the act occurs condemns it so. This observation denotes patterns of action which derive their relevance from the role of value system in social behaviour (Eze, 1987: 157). Simpkins and Wraith (1963:12) concludes that an act is presumably corrupt if society condemns it as such, and if the doer is afflicted with a sense of guilt when he does it.

But in both Africa and Asia continents, the man who uses his official position to obtain jobs for his relations is not considered immoral. He is only doing what he is traditionally expected to do. This point is strongly made by a British social worker in these utterances: “... for villages have kickbacks, scams, palm greasing are non-issues... corruption is so well embedded, part of everyday life itself, no one’s eyebrow’s would ever get raised on the issue...” (Simpkins and Wraith, 1963:12)

One thing, which all corrupt acts have in common, is that someone not involved in the act regards each act as a wrong thing. However, those who are involved in the corrupt acts do
not regard such acts as a bad thing. Although proponent of the moralist school accepts this, they posit that such behavior is at all times against the public interest. Friedrich (1966:112) regards corruption as that which arises: Wherever a power holder… that is, a responsible functionary or officeholder, is either by monetary or other rewards not legally provided for, means to cause wrongful gain or wrongful loss amounts to corruption induced to take an action which favours whoever provides the rewards, and thereby does damage to the public interest.

This definition prejudges the result of corruption, is imprecise, (as the meaning of public interest is open to different interpretations), and may preclude recognition of corruption until after the event only when public interest can be clarified (Caiden and Caiden 1977:302). But even without looking into what the public interest is, there are some cases of corruption which imply that the public interest, sometimes, condones some corrupt acts. McMullan (1961) and Hoselitz (1963) have maintained that the early years of the life of a nation are dominated by those “persistent integrative needs of the society”. They further maintain that:

Much of the alleged corruption that western technical advisers and administrative services of Asia and African states encounter, and against which they inveigh in their technical inputs, with so little genuine success is nothing but the prevalence of these non-rational norms on the basis of which administration operates (Hoselitz, 1963:190).

**Functional/Tonic Approach**

This approach does not see corruption as a problem to be concerned about in so far as it has utilitarian manifestations (Van Roy 1970). According to Eze (1984:156), the consequential benefit of corruption as a social practice is believed to originate from the prevailing conditions in emerging countries. As Huntington (1968:69) rightly states “… since administration in these countries tend to be slow, costly and rigid, corruption may also be regarded as a solvent, to or lubricant to overcome and bypass excessive bureaucratic inflexibility, sluggishness and bungling”.

Put differently, about thirty years ago, some economists argued that corruption actually assisted economic development because it helps lubricate the wheels of otherwise obstructive bureaucracies. Today, no one seriously contends that corruption provides a net benefit. On the contrary, it distorts economic development by rewarding the most dishonest rather than the most competent. High levels of graft make it harder to justify unconditional debt relief given to Nigeria by the international multilateral agencies.

As the former Vice – President of the United State, AlGore once noted: “corruption accelerates crime, hurts investments, stall growth, bleeds the national budget, and worst of all – undermines our faith in freedom” (African Business, 1998:19).

**The Legalistic Approach**

That some practices regarded as corrupt in some countries are tolerated in others makes the fight against corruption that much more difficult. Warioba and Werema gave the example of the American Foreign Corruption Practices Act (FCPA) which prohibits bribing foreign officials, but condones “good will payment to persons holding ministerial jobs for facilitation of paper processing on the basis that they are not based on quid pro quo”
Called “greasing payment”, such practices are not criminalized; in spite of the fact that they form bulk of public complaints and have adverse impact on social and economic development.

It is easy enough to find examples in Africa, with Late Mobutu’s Zaire and Abacha’s Nigeria merely the most extreme. Elsewhere, the use of political patronage to benefit a small number of presidential followers is too common. The written law may prohibit bribery, but everyday procedures are often very different, and businesses are caught in the middle.

Corruption is scarcely a purely African phenomenon and it is simplistic to say that it is just ‘part of the culture’. Former Nigerian President, Olusegun Obasanjo points out that there are many differences between “gifts” and “bribes”:

- In the African concept of appreciation and hospitality, a gift is a token; it is a token, it is demanded. The value is in the spirit of giving, not the material worth. The gift is made in the open, never in the secret. Where a gift is excessive it becomes an embarrassment, and is returned (Bray, 1999:15).

At a popular level, the common reaction to corruption is often one of resignation. But, just as often, this is accompanied by a deep sense of anger directed at corrupt leaders and by extension, the commercial and institutional interest that sustain them. Public anger at the apparent scale of governmental corruption in Nigeria is a major source of political tension. Corruption may be built into the political fabric of many Nigerian administrations, but pressure for reform is building up on several different fronts.

According to Eze (1984), this approach, which is essentially a synthesis of the previous approaches, may give us the solution as to what corruption is. Adherents of this school perceive corruption as a violation of the legal boundaries, which guarantees and safeguards the prescribed standard of behaviour (expected of public officials and politicians), which has been determined by the polity through its legal, judicial, legislative and other institutions. In its simplest sense, the approach maintains that any act or action contrary to the canons of honesty and integrity and the employment of unfair or irregular means to cause wrongful gain or wrongful loss amounts to corruption. Dwivedi and Bhargava (1967:1) describe a corrupt person as one whom:

- Being or expecting to be a public servant accepts or obtains, or agrees to accept or attempts to obtain from any person, for himself or for any other person, any gratification whatever, other than remuneration, as a motive or reward for doing or bearing to do any official act, or for showing up, for bearing to show, in the exercise of his official functions, favour or disfavour any person, or for rendering or attempting to render any service or disservice to any person, with the central or state government or parliament or the legislature or any state, or with any public servant at such.

The above passage implies that, the use, abuse or misuse of official power, authority or discretion for persons or the other’s gratification is corruption. From the above theses corruption may be divided into three types: extortive, manipulative and nepotistic. The former refers to a situation where one is forced to bribe in order to gain or protect one’s rights or needs. The second refers to an attempt to influence decisions in one’s favour in any area of life. The last refers to preferential treatment of relatives and friends in appointments to
positions, which can also include organizational nepotism that is, special favours given to political parties or organizations.

For our purpose, corruption refers to any behaviour that deviates from the formal rules of conduct governing the action of someone in position of public trust and authority because of private motives such as wealth, power or status. This definition is significant because it identifies corrupt acts to include fraud, bribery or other improper actions or transactions aimed at changing the course of events, judgments and positions of trust. The activity of PEF actors captures this descriptive definition of corruption.

On the basis of the above definitions, the basic characteristic of corruption:
1. it is a deliberate or intentional exploitation of one’s position, status or resources;
2. it may be done directly or indirectly;
3. it is done for personal aggrandisement, whether it is a material gain or an enhancement of power, or prestige or influence;
4. it is done by violating legitimate or sanctioned of commonly accepted norms of behaviour; and
5. it is done against the interest of the community or other persons (Sharma and Sadana, 2005:770).

Theoretical Framework of Analysis: The Theory of the Character of the State
Robert Klitgaard (1996) has proffered the following formula to explain the dynamics of corruption:

\[ C = M + D - A \]

where

- C = Corruption
- M = Monopoly power
- D = Discretion
- A = Accountability.

Klitgaard’s thesis is that the extent of corruption in any society depends on the amount of monopoly power and discretionary power that officials exercise and the degree to which they are held accountable for their actions. Thus, if the level of corruption is high in such countries as Nigeria, Cameroun Indonesia, Honduras, Tanzania, etc., the explanatory factors are triple. First such countries have highly (state) regulated economies and monopoly power is often large in highly regulated economies. Second, (bureaucratic)-discretionary power is often large in the transition economies of post-colonial states because administrative rules and regulations are often poorly defined. Third, in such countries, too, public accountability is weak as a result of poorly defined ethical standards of public services, weak administrative and financial systems or ineffective watchdog agencies.

Klitgaard’s position is supported and reinforced by an observer of the Nigerian private sector, J.M. Elegido of the Lagos Business School. As he puts it,

There is an opportunity for corruption whenever an individual is entrusted with discretionary powers of decision and the interest of other parties can be affected positively or negatively by the way in which these powers are exercised… Corruption will flourish whenever there is a monopolistic or oligopolistic control of a valuable resource…it is the existence of islands of monopoly power that creates opportunities for corrupt behaviour as managers attempt to appropriate to themselves part of the monopoly profits available to their organization (Agbakwuru, 2014:32).
As Mushtag H. Khan (1996) has shown the character of the state is important in setting the limits of corrupt practices. For instance corruption is likely to feature were in an interventionist than is a non-interventionist state. When the state plays an interventionist role in industrialization, as is common with post-colonial states, the power of bureaucrats to allocate right over scarce resources is enhanced, under that circumstance, the bureaucrats would usually bargain for a share of the rents they help to create. (Khan,1996: 13)

Even more important is the structure of state agencies providing the right, Khan maintains. Where the state is centralized, and a single agency is the sole supplier of all the relevant rights, corruption will be of the highest magnitude. (Khan,1996, 16 and 17) on the other extreme, where there is a number of corrupting agencies, each supplying all the rights, corruption will be at its lowest. This is because “competition among the [autonomous agencies, or] mini-states “ have … the very… desirable “effect of “pushing the price of the package of rights to zero and therefore total rents collected to zero as well”. (Khan,1996:17)

The intermediate position is where a number of state agencies compete in the provision of complementary rights. For instance, one agency may provide the right to set up a factory; a second may-provide the right to import raw materials: and a third may provide access to credit. Corruption would be moderate in such a state. The reason is that each of the different agencies acting independently to maximize profits for itself would face a prisoner’s dilemma. As Khan put it, “In attempting to maximizing rents for itself, each may be raising the price of the particular right it supplies so high that overall activity shrinks and the total rent collected by all agencies falls”. (Khan,1996: 16)

The overall implication of Khan’s position is that monopoly breeds corruption. And corruption is beds dealt with by increasing competing among bureaucrats, allowing more agencies to supply similar rights and decentralizing state power.

Khan goes further still to situate the discussion of the causes of corruption in the context of the balance of state power. His central argument here is that rent sharing by bureaucrats and politicians typically happens in the context of patron-client relations. Indeed, Khan asserts, often “the dominant, relationship underlying corrupt transfers is a patron-client relationship between the state acting as a patron and its clients who are recipients of subsidies, licenses and other valuable resources”. Hence the balance of power between state agencies and different classes of clients is an important determinant of the degree of corruption in the state. Two types of power balance are discussed by khan. The first is the patrimonial power balance while the second is the clientelist power balance.

In countries at the centre of world capitalism what prevails is the patrimonial power balance. This is the conventional patron-client political settlement. Here, the state as a patron is the politically dominant partner. It dispenses resources to clients to get a share of the rent or simply additional political support. The power of the state, visa-vis society in defining rights in general is not in question. Besides, there are well-defined property rights and the state is an effective mechanism when it comes to the protection of existing rights. In such countries, there is corruption, but it is seen as an essentially economic phenomenon “where rights are transferred to the agents who value them the most giving a pre-existing distribution of economic resources giving a pre-existing distribution of economic resources (Dibiana,2002:9).

In the periphery, what is prevalent is the clientelist power balance. Here properly rights are weakly defined by the state and are contested by well-organised groups. The state is placed in a relatively weak position as far as the protection and enforcement of property rights is concerned. Such state therefore, often lack legitimacy and do not command the confidence and loyalty of a vast majority of citizens.
In the face of such contestation for legitimacy between the state and powerful social groups, agents khan explains, granted rights by the state have to make pay-offs to other clients to continue to have access to the incomes granted by their assets, often the payoffs have to be made through the mediation of the state. The payoffs may take the form of employment generation for organizationally powerful groups, or bribes to lower level functionaries, payoffs to local mafias, and so on (Ibid).

As a big businessman a few years ago, the former Defence Minister Theophilus Danjuma, submitted that “When the fish is rotten it starts from the head,” It is therefore instructive that within the last four years, Nigeria has sunk to the lowest level of the most corrupt country in the world according to transparency International. Furthermore, both British and American intelligence report concluded that sixty percent of corruption in Nigeria is within the Presidency at Abuja (Daily Champion, April 17, 2003:32).

The consequence of this has been: poor infrastructure, wrecked refineries, crippling education, mass unemployment and mass poverty. Although we now have a Civilian government in place, the federal government has been most reluctant to allow more funds to be given to the other tiers of government. It is therefore no surprise that Nigeria is still known as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. Furthermore, it is estimated that 60 percent of the corruption in the country emanates from the Presidency alone. The way the federal government locates projects in constituent states has also proved to be very unjust, favoring mainly the regions that dominate the center. Take, for instance, the case of Rivers State.

Although it is a major oil producing State, it has negligible federal presence. In its memorandum to the Okigbo Commission, it asserted that:

In the early 1970s, when oil revenue became very dominant, constituting about 90 percent of the Federal Financial resources, a dangerous system of as-hoc federal grants to the States was introduced. From revenues, the Federal Government retained for itself, which at the time was constituting about 70-80 percent of all total revenues, in the country, it introduced a system of non statutory specific grants outside the regular revenue allocation scheme in order to increase the flow of Federal Finances to the States in such areas as Agriculture, Health, Road transportation, Education, Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage and River Basin Developments. Undoubtedly, there were several lopsided unfair allocations to some favored States of the Federation. Rivers State in particular did not receive fair allocation from the ad-hoc grant even though it was contributing immensely to the Federal Revenue. A summary of roads, proposed to be carried out by the Federal Government, in the 1970-75 Plan Period shows that out of 10,058.8 miles of roads, only 338 miles were proposed for Rivers State. This again is the smallest mileage in the whole Federation. Such feeling of marginalization is widespread in the entire Southern Nigeria. Most States here believe that the Federal Government has deliberately favored the Northern States at the expense of their Southern counterparts (FGN,1980:329).

This issue has been further complicated by Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission, it was asserted that:
The Federal Government has so far spent about N42.1 billion to build dams in six arid states in the North while neglecting the massive gully erosion menace and severe environmental degradation of the States of the South-East and South-South…. [Furthermore] the PTF [Petroleum Trust Fund] intervened massively in the rehabilitation of the accordance, by most States, including Southern States, of superior rights to its indigenes. Admittedly, this policy, which had its origins in Northern Nigeria, in the 1950s, commenced at the time when derivation was the main basis of revenue allocation and before the rise in prominence of oil as a main source of revenue. The Northernization policy was simply aimed at developing Northern manpower which would take over the Southern dominated Northern Civil Service. Between 1954 and 1958, for instance, a total of 2148 Southerners lost their jobs in the Northern Public Service in the spirit of the Northernization policy (Bello-Imam,2005:45).

The Northernization policy hardly occasioned any protests at the time. This was particularly so given the fact that at the time, most of the resources of the Regions were derived from the regions. They therefore had the moral right to determine how to spend it. Things has however since changed. Most states are now dependent on the Federation Account, which is sustained mainly by oil revenue from the oil producing states in the South. Despite this, discriminatory policies that give preference to indigenes is still widespread. Southerners living in the North scarcely have the same rights as their Northern counterparts. For example, an indigene of Rivers State, a southern oil producing state, that resides in Kano State, a non-oil producing northern state, will have limited employment rights in the Kano State Civil Service. This is so despite the fact that oil from his state contributes immensely to the funding of Kano State. Such practice, which turns the entire concept of national unity on its head, is clearly objectionable. Like the vertical allocation of revenue among the various tiers of government, the horizontal allocation of revenue amongst the constituent states of the federation is also mired in controversy. This has been so especially since the country formally became a federation in 1954 (Bello-Imam,2005:46).

The process of extracting resources and public money are used for power preservation and power extension purposes, usually takes the form of favouritism and patronage politics. It includes a favourist and politically motivated distribution of financial and material inducements, benefits, advantages, and spoils. Techniques include money and material favours to build political loyalty and political support. Power-holders can pay off rivals and opposition and secure a parliamentary majority. By giving preferences to private companies they can get party and campaign funds, and by paying off the governmental institutions of checks and control they can stop investigations and audits and gain judicial impunity. Furthermore, by buying loyal decisions from election commissions and by buying votes they can secure their re-election.

**Corruption in Administration: An Analysis**

While everybody concerned tend to be focusing on political corruption in public discourse in the legislature, none has however, bothered to ask who are its drivers?:

While Nigerians are busy talking about jumbo pay for legislatures, they don’t seem to know where their problem is coming from. The
problem is from the Civil Service and the Executive. But the Executive, the Civil Service, and the Press are coming after the National Assembly. The drain pipe has always been there, only that it is expanding. We discovered N400 billion, and another N250 billion that was meant to go. If we look at our budget performance, it is not close to 30 per cent. What has happened to this budget performance over the years since independence? The Executive will rush into awarding contracts by November, by 15th December, only to write off the money at the end of the year. Those jobs are not done. I have come across where a rolling project that was awarded for N5 billion rose to about N20-25 billion without appropriation. What happened: Every year, the Budget Office was meant to put N3 billion in that project; they continue putting N3 billion for 15 years, and they continue collecting the money. What I’m telling you is not a here say. Go to Abuja, and take data of choice houses. They are owned by Civil Servants and Government officials. How did they get the money? (Omegara, Saturday Sun, January 22, 2011: 61-2).

As TI’s reports indicate Nigeria’s ranking and score are so abysmally low because the country has been unable to build the strong institutions and legal framework that would ensure that corrupt practices are so difficult to get away with; or that they will be reduced to the barest minimum. Vital agencies of law enforcement, such as the police, continued to under – perform; indeed, the Nigeria police force has regularly come tops in polls of the country’s most corrupt institution as tables 1 and 2 below indicate.

**Table 2: Assessment of levels of corruption in Nigerian institutions**

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<td>Religious bodies</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Emenyeonu (2007:17)

**Table 3: Assessment of levels of corruption in Nigerian institutions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Percentage affected by the corruption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Political Parties</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Police</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Churches</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Business Day, Monday 02 November 2009:1

*The Guardian Editorial* of Tuesday, November, 24; 2009 stated that “corruption is everywhere now, from school to churches, to traditional institutions, to political parties and it continues to spread. We run a political system that lacks legitimacy so that it should not come as a surprise that corruption has become endemic” (Fadipe, 2010:27). A communiqué issued by the Christian Association of Nigeria at the end of its 6th National Assembly, summarises the problem of corruption thus:

> Corruption today is still a deadly disease in Nigeria. Corruption has been responsible for the collapse of our economy, the infrastructure and the collapse of educational and health sectors and other areas of life. Many Nigerians are yet to be free from it. The Christian Church in Nigeria cannot claim to be free from it. Where is corruption not present in Nigerian society? Is it in the Executive Arm of our Government, the Legislative-the Senate, house of Representatives, the State Assemblies, Local Governments, the Judiciary-courts, the uniformed establishment-military, police, Immigration Services, Customs, the Prison, the Civil and Administrative Services, the Education (Schools, colleges) and Health Sectors and Private Sectors and Mercantile House, where? Unless we want to deceive ourselves, the whole nation is sick. Our road are bad because of it, armed robbers, smugglers are everywhere by the grace of corruption. The church and all Nigerians must decide to eradicate corruption in Nigeria at all cost. But first the physician must heal himself. The Christian Church and her leaders must be alive to their responsibilities to her people.

(Emenyeonu, 2007:17).

Just recently, a damning report detailing how Ministries Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of the Federal Government have circumvented the rules and engaged in sharp practices in recruitment into the public service emerged at the weekend with indictments on the Federal Civil Service Commission, Federal Character Commission (FCC) and Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation for failing to enforce the rules. Also indicted were the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) and Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), which were found wanting in their less than transparent recruitment processes.
The report, exclusively obtained by New Telegraph, is the outcome of an investigative hearing which was undertaken by the House of Representatives’ Joint Committee on Public Service Matters, Labour Employment and Productivity, Anti-Corruption, National Ethics and Values. The document has some “startling and disturbing” revelations on how MDAs have adopted recruitment procedures that were prone to easy manipulation and underhand dealings rather than complying with the standard procedures stipulated in the Public Service Rules.

The House had, on November 7, 2012, passed a resolution mandating the joint committee to conduct a comprehensive probe into the alleged employment racket in recruitment into the public service. In order to deliver on the mandate, the committee identified key sectors in the public service that are representative enough of the over 500 MDAs and how they fared in terms of staff recruitment between 2007 and 2011. The sectors covered were the civil service, armed forces, paramilitary institutions, education, economy and regulatory agencies.

According to the report during the period under consideration, only a few of the agencies sampled advertised their vacancies consistently. “The whole situation presents very strong evidence that recruitments were done behind the scene and were shrouded in secrecy,” it added. The report showed that only a few agencies had clear-cut procedures for staff recruitment. The implication is that many qualified Nigerians were not given the opportunity to compete for the available positions in the public service. In addition, the MDAs had no proper records and statistics of their staff recruitment between 2007 and 2012 and where records existed, they were often in pieces and difficult to reconcile.

There is complete lack of co-ordination of recruitments into the public service by the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, the report stated. The report said a federal circular dated February 21, 2012, issued by the Office of the Head of the Civil Service was consistently and flagrantly ignored by most of the agencies. The circular had directed that MDAs desiring to recruit must secure a waiver from the Office of the Head of Service. Worse still, the Federal Character Commission usurped the powers of the Office of the Head of Service by acting outside its constitutional powers; issuing waivers to the various agencies of government. For example, in 2013, the Federal Character Commission gave waiver to the Nigeria Customs Service to recruit 5,595 officers without advertisement and no waiver from the office of the Head of Service was obtained.

The obvious implication of these waivers is that MDAs should not advertise for any vacancies before recruiting staff. “It is a sad commentary to note that unemployed youths desiring to secure paid jobs are being directed to pay application and or processing fees to consultants in order to be employed by their own government. More worrying is the fact that even with these payments, they may not even be employed,” it added. For example, the Federal Ministry of Interior appointed a consultant to recruit about 4,500 new staff and the applicants were expected to pay N1, 000 each. So far, over 700,000 applications were received, implying that the consultant would have made about N700 million from this singular programme. The report said it was regrettable that the job was contracted out to a consultant when the Nigeria Immigration Service has a well-established Administration and Human Resources Department to execute the task.

New Telegraph investigation revealed that in the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), there were no advertisements for recruitment into the commission for three consecutive years (2007-2009) and employments were done secretly. According to the report, a total of 35 temporary staff was converted to permanent and pensionable staff between 2004 and 2011. The findings of the above studies asserts that Nigerians are denied basic services
by the various institutions in the society, except they are willing to offer incentives to obtain what they are entitled to.

**Recommendations**

Corruption in the democratic governance of Nigeria cannot fully be eradicated but can be reduced to an acceptable minimum (Effiong 2001:222). For this country and indeed its component states and local governments, realize its objectives of reducing the epidemic of corruption, these suggestions below and its implementation are necessary.

1. There should be a corrupt free value re-orientation in Nigeria. This border on moral regeneration of the social norms and mores of the Nigerian people towards materialistic life as well as greediness. This can be done through the use of governmental and non-governmental bodies like the National Orientation Agency (NOA), Campaign for Democracy (CD), etc.

2. The poverty level within the local government and the country at large should be alleviated. Good and implementable policies should be embarked upon to generate employment for the masses, adequate social service provided and adequate compensation for employment for the masses, adequate social service provided and adequate compensation for employed citizens in line with the economic condition and living index as well as massive development of the rural areas with facilities and infrastructure.

3. The fight against corruption should require direct, clear and forceful support of the highest political authority.

4. Transparency and accountability should be introduced in financial transactions especially in government functions.

5. The slow judicial system of prosecuting corrupt officials in Nigeria should be looked at once more. Thus, judicial reform is necessary for faster prosecution of corrupt offenders in order to deter others.

6. Provision of adequate personnel and technological capacity for fighting corruption in the various anti-corruption institutions in Nigeria is agent.

7. Stiff and enforceable punishment should be fully applied upon offenders such as long jail terms, life ban from political activities, forfeiture of assets of officials who have been found guilty etc.

8. A free press and electronic media should be encouraged to report to the public, corrupt practices in the society.

9. The curriculum of all section of educational institutions from Nursery to primary should be re-organized by relevant bodies, to reflect anti-corruption studies, good ethical practices.

10. Organized civil societies should also play active roles by monitoring government officials, programmes and policies with a view to reviewing their activities and know if any unethical practice has taken place.

11. Religious institutions should also reject unexplained funds and if possible, should go ahead and excommunicate, ostracize and rebuke member who have perpetrated one form of corruption or the other.

**Conclusion**

Corruption is well and thriving well in Nigeria without signs of letting up because it seems to be everywhere, indeed encouraged; and Nigerians are a greedy people with an insatiable appetite for material possessions fueled by a desire to follow their corrupt leaders’ footpath. As a way of remedying the situation, the report recommended that the Federal
Public Service must develop and adopt a standardised procedure for recruitments into the service. For instance, it is not advisable that agencies in the same public service continue to adopt different procedures in recruitment into the service. “It should be mandatory on all MDAs to advertise all vacancies for employment in at least two national dailies, to give every Nigerian the opportunity to apply for the positions existing in its own government. It said henceforth, no agency of government should request applicants to pay fees before being given jobs.

According to the report, agencies that believe the cost of processing huge applications for employment would be high should properly provide for such costs/charges in their annual budgets as it is “immoral” to levy a charge on applicants whose employments are not even guaranteed. It also demanded that the consultant recruited by the Federal Ministry of Interior to hire 4,500 immigration officers should be further investigated to establish its existence and capacity to undertake the task. Again, Nigeria stands at the threshold of history, and therefore the crucial need to rethink her public service in terms of historical dynamics, institutional capacity and transformation.

References


Business Africa (1998), How Corruption is Killing Africa (Special Edition)


