



CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA: A THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY

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Abstract

Globally, corruption has been identified as a major problem that affects the development of nations and service delivery. It is a malaise that needs to be frontally tackled, especially in developing countries, because of its corrosive impact on good governance and the socio-economic well being of the people whom government exists for. In Nigeria, corruption has eaten deep into every fabric of the society, particularly in the conduct of governmental business. This paper exposes the endemic nature of corruption in Nigeria and how it has grown to constitute a potential threat to national security. It is no longer in doubt that the inability of government to curb corruption has affected her ability to provide welfare services and to reduce poverty, unemployment and inequality in society. The paper relies mainly on qualitative data derived from secondary sources (official documents of government, non-governments publications i.e. Books, Journals, newspapers, magazine etc. These secondary data are descriptively analyzed using the content analysis. The paper concludes that corruption in governance has led to massive poverty, unemployment and inequality, thus constituting a serious threat to national security. The paper adopts the "Agent - Principal" model as its theoretical framework and argues that because the "Agent" (government) has failed to apply albeit judiciously public resources and abused privileged positions to the detriment of the "Principals", there exists potential threat to national security from the mass of unemployed and poor. The paper among others recommends a sincere and proactive war against corruption backed with the required political will, effective poverty alleviation strategies and policies geared at massive unemployment reduction in the country. It is only then that this majority of Nigerians who daily live in despair under the weight of this albatross (corruption) will cease to be a threat to national security.

Keywords: Corruption, Security, National Security.

Introduction

Corruption has generally been acknowledged to be a global phenomenon. It is not known to have spared any country and its prevalence cuts across the continents of the world. What perhaps differs

is the magnitude of the malaise. According to Lipset and Lenz (2000:112 - 113) cited in Dike (2008), corruption is found in democratic and dictatorial politics; feudal, capitalist and socialist economies. And corrupt practices did not begin today: The history is as old as the world. Ancient civilizations have traces of wide spread illegality and corruption. Thus corruption has been ubiquitous in complex societies from ancient Egypt, Israel, Rome and Greece down to present. In Nigeria, corruption has eaten deep into every facet of the society, particularly the government which is supposed to be the goal setter or change agent of society.

Corruption in Nigeria has been a great impediment to economic development and above all, threatens the stability of the polity and greater integration of the nation. Loyalties in the country have been fragmented by thoughts of personal gains to the detriment of collective welfare and national development while centrifugal tendencies have been and are still being promoted through the instrumentality of corruption (FMINO, 2005). Although corruption is a worldwide phenomenon, with the ranking of countries differing on the corruption index, it has assumed a special dimension in Nigeria and indeed Africa, given that unlike Europe, Asia and Latin America, endemic corruption has undermined the process of development, led to the creation of a mass of unemployed people, worsen the poverty situation in the country, despair among the citizens and thus posing a tangible threat to national security.

Eradicating corruption has been a major concern of successive government in the country but with very little success. According to Adamu (2007), an average Nigerian has accepted corruption as inevitable and uncontrollable, believing that the society as a whole is corrupt and beyond remedy. Additionally, Nigerians believe that nothing meaningful will ever get done to correct or punish those perpetuating these heinous crimes. According to Obasanjo (1999),

Government officials had become progressively indifferent to propriety of conduct and showed little commitment to promoting the general welfare of the people and the public goods. Government and all its agencies had become thoroughly corrupt and reckless. Members of the public have had to bribe their way through in ministries and parastatals to get attention and government had to bribe another government agency to obtain the release of their statutory allocation of funds.

According to Dike (2010), in Nigeria, the embezzlement of public funds is one of the most common ways of economic accumulation, perhaps due to lack of strict regulatory systems. Corruption is not a new phenomenon in Nigeria neither is its history recent. The only mystery beclouding the nation is combating or at least minimizing corruption in our body polity. Taking a history swipe to the issue of corruption, Adewunmi (2007:179) asserts that: Nigeria itself is fraud-personified; the white leaders originally planted the nation as a seed of corruption. The seed was only inherited by the black successors to nurture into a mighty blossoming tree. This negative perception of colonial and neo-colonial leadership provides a paradigm for analysis of corruption in Nigeria.

Despite the structures (reforms) put in place to combat the malaise or at least reduce it, corruption still continues to be endemic, particularly in the Public Service. Also, Abubakar (1994:2) espouses the view that "indeed, every major report on the Nigerian public service since the country attained independence in 1960 that touched even tangentially on financial management procedure in the

service, has expressed very deep reservations regarding the hitherto prevailing provisions and the weaknesses of the techno-bureaucratic mechanism for ensuring control and accountability in the service. Since then corruption in Nigeria has become a cankerworm that has eaten deep into every aspect of the Nigerian life.

Because of this malaise, successive administrations have not been able to place Nigeria on the path of sustainable development, because the ruling class, members of their families and their associates have cornered state resources, enriching themselves in the process. Most often, they use state institutions to protect and advance their interests as well as those of cronies. As a result, they have left Nigerians hungrier, less educated, more unemployed, inflicting untold pain, hardship and misery on the people. The tragedy of this is unimaginable, the upsurge in the rate of hooliganism, armed robbery, banditry, kidnapping, ethnic and religious militias vandalism and violence.

The question is what is the magnitude and dimension of corruption in Nigeria? What are the effects of this malaise? How does corruption constitute a threat to our national security? The main objective of this study therefore is to expose the magnitude and dimension of corruption in Nigeria. Specifically, the paper seeks to examine the nexus between corruption and national security.

The sources of data for this study are mainly secondary and were collated through official documents of government, non-governments publications i.e. Books, Journals, newspapers, magazine etc. These secondary data are descriptively analyzed using the content analysis.

Conceptual Issues

Despite the wide knowledge on the concept of corruption, it has continued to pose a great deal of difficulty in terms of a generally acceptable definition. Its definition is problematic in a way that is independent of ethics or normative values of the observer. In other words, it is burdensome to define in a value-free fashion and the most important analytical problem is the difficulty of agreeing on what constitutes a corrupt behaviour and more so, how to operationalise the concept. It is however important to note here, that corruption cannot be adequately diagnosed and discussed without reference to accountability and transparency. While the three concepts have become popular parlance in both public and private sectors, it is still worth mentioning that they are self supporting, often times viewed as two sides of a coin by public administration scholars and practitioners alike.

According to Adisa (2003) corruption or corrupt practices has to do with fraudulent activities especially siphoning of funds that are meant for the general populace for ones aggrandizement only. In line with this, Osoba (1996) defines corruption as an anti-social behaviour conferring improper benefits contrary to legal and moral norms and which undermines the authority's ability to improve the living condition of the people. AusAID (2003:3) on the other hand asserts that corruption is the misuse of entrusted power for private gain. From the definitions, we see that corruption is a selfish and dishonest act that deprives a vast majority (apart from the perpetrators and their cohorts) of desired legitimate benefits i.e. social, economic, political etc.

Our definition of corruption has emphasis on personal interest as against the public interest/good. The Principal -Agent theory thus will help in espousing how the perpetration of this selfish interest has affected the ability of the Agent (government, bureaucracy) in providing the necessary services

to the consumers (i.e. Principals/Public), in an effective and efficient manner, in the right quantity and quality, in the right place and as at when necessary. What is the concomitant effect of the perpetration of this selfish interest of the agent against the principal i.e citizens? This forms part of the concern of this paper.

Thus, corruption is looked at here from the political and bureaucratic perspective. Political corruption occurs at the highest level of political authority amongst politicians and political decision makers, who are entitled to formulate, establish and implement the laws in the name of the people. These people thus make and formulate policies and legislated laws that are intended to benefit themselves. It is characterized by greed because it affects the manner in which decisions are made, as it manipulates political institutions, rules of procedure and distorts the institutions of government.

The bureaucratic corruption on the other hand, occurs in the Public Administration or the implementation end of politics. In Nigeria, this type of corruption occurs daily in places like the hospitals, schools, local licensing offices, police, and tax offices etc where citizens must have to offer bribes to access what they are legally entitled to. The other variant is the outright embezzlement of public fund by public officials in their places of assignments. According to Dike (2010), in Nigeria, the embezzlement of public funds is one of the most common ways of economic accumulation, perhaps due to lack of strict regulatory systems.

Abdulsalami (2004:2) also espouses the view that, in recent times, most of the most frequently cited features of the public service in Nigeria is the absence or low level of accountability and transparency in the conduct of high public officials. Thus, a scenario where the code of ethics and its essential elements of transparency and accountability have been discarded can only portend a discouraging indicator of good governance.

On transparency, Anyebe (2007:50) asserts that the concept of transparency may be conventionally defined as “being pervious to light, open, clear and frank.” He asserts that the importance of transparency underscores the three (3) crucial components of accountability which are a clear definition of responsibility, reporting mechanism and sanctions; and its linkage with accountability.

The views of scholars on what accountability means, however varies. Anyebe (2007:49) asserts that “genetically, accountability refers to answerability for one’s action or behaviour. According to Abdulsalami (2004:3), in everyday popular parlance, to be accountable means to be responsible to somebody or for some thing. He justifies the notion that “accountability” and ‘responsibility” could be used interchangeably or even as synonyms; because a person or an official is responsible, if he is expected to render an account or an explanation in respect of an assignment. To Pfifner and Presthus (1960:551) Accountability is the formal or legal locus of responsibility. All these (ie transparency and accountability), are nearly non existent in the conduct of our public affairs.

National Security

Security has to do with freedom from danger, fear, anxiety or uncertainty. It is normally a priority concern of every nation because it affects not only satisfying the need of the inhabitants, but also and perhaps more importantly, the fundamental issue of the national survival as a viable entity. It

is only under a secure atmosphere that a state can develop and direct its human and material resources towards productive activities (Imobighe, 2003: iv). This conception of security gives considerations to the state, its human populations and resources. In 2003, the Committee on Human Security (CHS) took the concept of security to new dimensions when it conceptualized human security as not just being the absence of violent conflict, but must emphasize the preservation of human rights, democratic/good governance, access to health care, education, and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfill his or her own potential. Thus the concept of security can be applied to a wide variety of circumstances.

Issues of national security often evoke thoughts of military might, but as Ate and Akinterinwa (1992:150) argue, the concept is predicated on a wide range of relativity and is never an absolute concept. In Political Science, the concept of national security is used to refer to safety for the territory and population of a state, and by extension, the policies adopted for its preservation. Security is sometimes defined as the assurance of future welfare. In this broad sense, national security might be regarded as the range of measures affecting the economic and social welfare of a population, as well as provision against aggression from abroad or sub-version from within. It is this policies for the welfare of the citizens and their protection that are no longer guaranteed thus posing danger and anxiety due to despair on the part of the citizenry.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework in the management and social sciences greatly helps in the analysis and even understanding of concepts from some theoretical point of view and/or orientation. Therefore, the theoretical framework of analysis adopted in this paper is the Principal- Agent theory.

The Principal -Agent theory adopted from Batley (2004:38) examines organizational relationships as a tension between the “Principal” who demands a service and the “Agent” who provides it. The model assumes that actors are motivated by rational self interest. The issue in connection with this paper is how the Principal (in this case, the Nigerian citizens) can manage the self interest of those empowered to act on their behalf (i.e. the Agents: government officials, politicians, legislators, bureaucrats etc) so that it is aligned with the purposes that they (the Principal) wish to achieve. The problem arises not just from conflict of interest but also from the privileged access of the agents to information- the problem of asymmetric information. The agents who have been employed to provide a service will tend to use their superior knowledge to divert benefits in their own direction.

In a democratic polity, the ultimate Principals are the citizens who are the consumers of specific services provided by the government. In the Principal -Agent theory, they are Principal in the sense that politicians as Agents seek their mandate from and act as the representatives of the public. In their turn, appointed officials (Public Servants) are in theory, the agents of political leaders in executing the programmes and policies of the government. Each of these players has a measure of autonomy and their own interests to advance. The likelihood of the Principal effectively controlling the Agent depends on how much information the Principal has about the performance of the Agent, and how far the Principal can structure the relationship so as to control the Agent or give incentives so as to make the Agents’ interest correspond to the Principals. This is where the conflict is arising as a result of the failure of the agent to structure this relationship to be mutually beneficial to both parties, thus constituting a potential threat to national security.

Corruption and National Security: The Nexus

Corruption and the abuse of office have long been a way of life both in the public and private sectors in Nigeria. In fact it has been institutionalised that today, corruption exists in low and high places of the Nigerian society, cutting across all works of life. Its magnitude and manifestation are high and endemic. According to Umar (2004:5) corruption in the public service manifests in many forms such as: self enrichment through misappropriation, inflation of contracts, over invoicing, ghost worker syndrome, diversion of government properties for un-authorised uses, collecting bribes, goodfatherism, charging personal expenses to government, submission of false claims, printing un-authorised receipt booklets, violation of rules and regulations etc.

Even today, and in spite of the efforts of the government and other institutions, and notwithstanding all the retreats, workshops, exhortations and prayers by religious groups, corrupt practices are still rife among public servants and politicians. The police are still carrying out their extortion at road blocks, civil servants still manipulate figures and compel those who have transactions with them to pay gratifications before performing their legitimate duties. Lecturers on campuses continue to carry out their academic research on the “not-so-innocent-flesh of some of their female students in exchange for academic grades (Ogiri, 2004:13 – 14). The experience of having to offer bribes, whether in cash or in kind in order to access basic social services or what rightly belongs to one has serious psychological implications for many Nigerians. It negatively affects one’s state of mind. Indeed corruption has become widespread that it is an albatross, a colossus on the neck of a country that appears to be almost helpless.

The misdeed of government, past and present leaders have taken corruption into the family units and even into the places of worship. Criminals are known to receive great favours from religious leaders. Even a clerk who donates a ten million Naira organ or builds part of a place of a religious leader and his family plus vacation cost abroad is never questioned. Rather, such a crook receives prayers and praises from the religious leaders, but of course not the blessing from God who knows all things. Parents often display the product of their criminal activities even when their children know what they earn and the investment they have. It is indeed very sad. In trying to explain the endemic nature of corruption in Nigeria, Bryce (1921), explains that the Factors that engender corrupt practices in less developed nations and particularly Nigeria include;

- 1) Great inequality in distribution of wealth;
- 2) Political office as the primary means of gaining access to wealth;
- 3) Conflict between changing moral codes;
- 4) The absence of social and governmental enforcement mechanism; and
- 5) The absence of a strong sense of national community.

The effect of corruption is indeed grave. The glaring reality of its ravages can no longer be ignored or simply wished away. The effects of this malaise are mostly well known and at best felt by those who are supposed to be the beneficiaries of governmental policies and programmes, ‘The public’. It causes starvation, wars, ethnic uprisings, undermining of democratic institutions and brings about economic bankruptcy in the countries in which it occurs and general increase in crime rates. The corollary of all these is the increased threat to our political stability and ultimately, national security. In the same vain, Jamen (2016), also asserts that corruption has been the major cause of insecurity in Nigeria.

Corruption in Nigeria has reached an alarming stage that even the international community dread doing any form of business with Nigerians. To that stead, the country has constantly been rated as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. Transparency International (T.I) has consistently rated the country high in terms of corruption. Nigeria was ranked first most corrupt country in the world in 1996 and 1997, 4th position in 1998, slipped again to second position in 1999, 1st again in 2000, 2nd in 2001, 2002 and 2003, 3rd position in 2004 and 2005. There was a slight improvement in 2006 when it was ranked the 5th most corrupt country in the world (Aluko, 2006). In 2009 Nigeria was ranked 13th most corrupt country and 12th position in 2010. In 2011, the country was ranked 37th most corrupt country in the world out of 183 countries surveyed. In 2012, Transparency International ranked Nigeria 35th most corrupt country out of 176 countries surveyed. The above ranking within 2009 - 2012 does not represent much significant reduction in corruption in Nigeria. Rather, it was due to the fact that many other countries are tied on the same ranking, which makes the position of Nigeria in the index to be on the high side. The reports from 2009-2012 concludes that Nigeria still remains one of the most corrupt countries in the world.(Awolusi, 2009, Awolusi, 2010, Yishau, 2011, Premium Times, 2012, Wikipedia, 2012.

Furthermore, a Report by US-based group, Global Financial Integrity (GFI) indicates that Nigeria might have lost 130 billion dollars from 2000 to 2008 due to illicit financial flows. The Report showed that Nigeria has the 10th highest measured illicit outflows in the developing countries/world, an average of 150 billion dollars per year. The Report also showed the annual outflows for each country and breaks outflows down into two categories of drivers: trade mispricing and “others” which includes “kick-backs, bribes, embezzlement and other forms of official corruption”. Other countries in the top 10 list are Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Venezuela, and Qatar. What makes the case of Nigeria unique is that the reasons for the illicit outflows are mainly attributed to corruption and corrupt act i.e. kickbacks, bribes, embezzlement, and other forms of official corruption as indicated in “other” categories of drivers (Global Financial Integrity, 2013)

According to Dike (2008), the effects of corruption to a nation’s socio-political and economic development are myriad. The negative effects impact economic growth as it, among other things, reduces public spending on education (Mauro, 1997; and 1995). Lipset and Lenz (2000) note that the effect on growth, is in part, a result of reduced level of investment, as it adds to investment risk. The effect of corruption on education comes from the fact that the government spends relatively more on items to make room for graft (Shleifa & Vishny 1993; Lipset & Lenz, 2000). And corrupt government officials would shift government expenditures to areas in which they can collect bribes easily. Large and hard to manage projects such as airports, highways and power supply, make fraud easy. In addition, poverty and income inequalities are tied to corruption (Lipset & Lenz, 2000). Development projects too are often made unnecessarily complex in Nigeria to justify the corrupt and huge expense on them.

Also using the state of Nigerian roads to demonstrate the failure of governance in Nigeria, Abati (2006) lamented thus:

The state of Nigerian roads is the state of Nigeria and a reflection of the level of governance in the country. Every sphere of national life is like the road: pot-hole ridden, abandon to the vagaries of nature, crying out loudly, for vision and difference... The roads are bad; the hospitals are

ill-equipped, the school system is in disarray, access to health remains a problem, human life in both the cities and the rural areas is on the edge of despair...Since 1999, contracts have been awarded by government at all levels for the repair, rehabilitation and construction of roads. There have been stories told of how this has provided great opportunities for corrupt self-enrichment; the beneficiaries being contractors, Public officials and consultants.

According to the American Diaspora initiatives (2007:3) the effects of corruption are diverse and excruciating. In the political realm, it has undermined democracy and the legitimacy of government by subverting formal processes. In doing so, it reduces seriously the trust and confidence of the people in their institutions. Corruption in elections and in legislative bodies reduces accountability and representation in policy making. Corruption in public administration results in uneven provision of services. It undermines economic development in a variety of ways, of creating distortions, inefficiencies and diverting resources.

Obviously, corruption has been the greatest impediment to the economic development of the country. According to the World Bank Federal Public Expenditure Review published in 1995, “approximately US \$200 billion was invested in Nigeria between 1973 and 1993 with very little to show for it.” Eigen (2004) who also describes the effects of corruption as tellingly disastrous and compares it to an unwanted weed, that invades every space and suffocates every “valuable plant, otherwise carefully planted” argues that “it has become a daunting obstacle to sustainable development and has resulted in major losses of public funds needed for education, healthcare and poverty alleviation in developing countries” Nigeria certainly belongs to this group of developing states.

Corruption has conspired with political deficiency, social decadence and economic kwashiorkor to eat up whatever is known as public morality; weakened Nigeria’s ability for self redemption and sent red signal to potential investors in the international community that might eye investing in Nigeria’s otherwise lucrative economy.

To most outsiders, the name “Nigeria” conjures up images of chaos and confusion, military coups, repression, drug trafficking and business fraud. The international media generally shun Nigeria because it is a difficult place to work and it is not easy for journalist to sell their story to editors in New York, Atlanta or London. Nigeria does not present a cut-and-dried moralistic tale of South African type about an evil racial minority suppressing heroic resistance fighters. So from time to time Nigeria drifts across our television screens and into the world’s public consciousness, only to fade out again (Maier, 2000:xviii).

The malaise of corruption has led to the harrowing infrastructural decay in the country today. FMINO asserts here that public infrastructure had deteriorated before 1999 to the extent that no meaningful economic growth could be supported. The corollary of infrastructural collapse and a corrupt business environment had been the paralyzing decline in domestic and Foreign Direct

Investment (FDI) in the country. Abubakar (2007:15) espouses the view too that there is a concord that corruption retards significant variables for social and economic development by making impotent the very institutions and human resources that are designed to help growth. Oddly enough, corruption is harmfully affecting every sector of the Nigerian society.” Its devastating blow is felt more in education, healthcare, infrastructure development, job creation, environment, foreign investment and economy, which are considered to be the symptoms and not the cause of Nigeria’s underdevelopment.

Observers also posit that corruption is not only dangerous to democracy but an impediment to the overall growth of the economy and that economic development, cannot thrive in a corrupt environment especially in Nigeria which is one of the 20 largest economies of the world. They say the effect of graft to the society is incalculable. Its lasting impacts on a nation could better be imagined than described. Though we can estimate the monetary loss and vestiges of sleaze but we may never know the exact human cost of this enigma.

Iweala (2008) in Daily Trust, aptly shows the inverse relationship between corruption and development when she observes that “at several junctions in Nigeria’s history, corruption has sent development into reverse”. Nigeria’s level of corruption coupled with the pervasive “419” scams, has also contributed to a continued poor image for the country. As Adewunmi (2007:204) also wraps it, “the destructive effects of financial corruption on the economy cannot be easily quantified. As an inordinate practice, of taking undue advantage at the expense of other compatriots, it is tantamount to interpersonal injustice, because it diverts resources away from their planned use for maximum gain, it bastardises and puts out of gear national strategies for wealth creation and distribution, because it misappropriates wealth to the rich and powerful clique, it strengthens the basis of inequality and oppression, and because it diverts productive resources from collective investment to personal use, it reduces the capacity of the government to provide education, health and other social services that redistributes wealth to areas of greater marginal utility.

The pervasive nature of poverty in Nigeria in the midst of abundant human and materials resources can evidently be traced to corruption in government and unfocused government policies. Nigerians are not by any standard lazy people neither is the nation itself poor. In fact Nigeria is richly endowed with abundant natural and human resources. It is the sixth largest producer and exporter of crude oil in the world. It earns billions of dollars from the export of liquefied natural gas. But in spite of this, over seventy percent of Nigerians wallow in abject poverty and Nigeria remains highly underdeveloped.

The analysis (2010) reports that in the last five decades, and with increased revenue, many Asian and Latin American countries, improved the living standards of their population. China is a good example. It reported that before the Chinese revolution, the country was backward and agrarian with the economy mostly in the hands of various imperialist. But in the last fifty years, it has developed to be the second largest economy in the world and improved the living standard of it people. This was in spite of its rising population. But the reverse however is the case of Nigeria. Since the return to civil rule in 1999, there has been yearly increase in revenue accruing to government from the federation account. For instance, in 2000, a total of N531, 612,593,116.79 billion accrued to the federal government from the federation account.

This soared to N792, 879, 926, 357.91 billion in 2003. The revenue then dramatically went up to N1,616,787,906,335.10 trillion in 2006. In 2008, the federal government got over two trillion naira. These figures do not include revenue from the non-oil sector yet. But with this increase, government also upped spending as budget figures also went up. But in the midst of this plenty, the living standard of Nigerians continue to fall abysmally to a low level. Despite the trillions of naira budgeted, every year, the social and economic lives of the people continue to deteriorate. Corruption has taken its toll on innocent citizens who have come to see the budget merely as a sharing formula for the elect few politicians and bureaucrat. Mohammed (2010) here concludes that “our elite on the other hand live lavishly, eating all sorts of assorted foods and drinks, driving expensive exotic cars while 70 percent of Nigerians are malnourished. It is obvious that the ruling elite have over the years carted away the nation’s resources to their personal accounts and still continue to do so, enriching themselves at the expense of the majority of Nigerians. The negative effect of this is multi-dimensional, permeating all aspects of socio-economic lives of a majority of the people.”

Despite all these impressive figures being rolled out annually as budget expenditures, statistics still shows that the level of poverty and inequality in the country is still very appalling. 70% of Nigerians are still very poor as at 2011 (Sanusi: 2011). According to Oluwarotimi (2013), quoting the World Bank, despite perceived growth rates, ‘poverty and inequality remain unacceptably high and the pace of reduction unacceptably slow’. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2013) analysis of the national consumption expenditure showed that out of 96 million Nigerians just 20 percent have purchasing power in the country. What this means is that inequality is soaring and the ‘big fish’ popularly known as giant of Africa suddenly seems helpless. Since inception of democracy, inequality continues to grow as much if not more. Also, the 2011 International Human Development indicators classified Nigeria as one of the poorest countries of the world, with a multi dimensional poverty index of 0.310 and a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.459 which compares unfavourable to the world HDI average of 0.682 and 0.463 for sub-Sahara Africa. The HDI placed the country at 156 out of 187 countries with comparable data (UNDP, 2011). In this index, Nigeria is trailing behind countries like Eritrea, Senegal, Namibia, Togo, Gabon, and even war torn Sudan. It is indeed distressing to see Nigeria, the so-called giant of Africa barely ahead of nineteen countries; Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, drought ravished Ethiopia, war torn Tchad, Sierra-Leone, Mali, Niger, Benin, non of which possess the number of our resources. The level of poverty is however at variance with the huge revenue profile of the government over the years, a pointer that successive governments have failed to apply the rising oil revenues to improve the lives of Nigerians, no thanks to corruption among public officers and institutions of government. Corruption at the end of the day has also conspired with its creation (poverty) to significantly reduce the life expectancy of Nigerians to a very low level. According to the Human Development Report of 2009, life expectancy in Nigeria in 2007 was 47.7 years. This is because majority of Nigerians lack access to portable clean water in spite of the country being endowed by nature with generous rainfall, numerous streams, rivers, lakes and a large reserve of untapped underground water. Government has failed to tap this resource for the benefit of its people. This has serious implications for the health and general well-being of the people, leading to the spread of water borne diseases such as cholera, guinea worm, typhoid fever, diarrhoea, hepatitis A and E, virus infections, schistosomiasis, onchoceciasis etc.

Comparatively, the life expectancy in Nigeria (47.7 years) is a far cry from that of Malaysia which started its development plan almost at the same time with Nigeria. There, life expectancy is 73.9 years. In Ghana, life expectancy is 56.5 years while that of Namibia is 60 years. We are only marginally ahead of democratic Republic of Congo which is 47.6.

In Namibia, for example, only seven percent (7%) of its population lack access to sustainable and clean water. Indonesia with a very large population of over 100 hundred million people is able to provide clean and safe water to eighty percent of its population leaving twenty percent without access. In Nigeria, fifty-three percent (53%) of its population is exposed to dangers posed by water borne diseases. This explains why life expectancy in Nigeria is quite low compared to a large number of developing countries. These low indicators imply more serious underlying crisis in the national economy, the failure of leadership and surge in corruption.” (Mohammed 2010).

Added to the problem of poverty and inequality with their attendant consequences, is the problem of unemployment. Unemployment has continued to rise thus posing a serious threat to our national security. According to Punch (2013), and quoting the National Population Commission (NPC), the rate of unemployment in Nigeria is on a steady rise. It said the rate of unemployment was 21.1 percent in 2010 but rose to 23.9 percent in 2011. The rate will unarguably be higher in 2012 and 2013, considering the mass privatization of government enterprises and the resultant disengagement of labour. The report further said that the nation’s economic growth had not translated into job creation, thus fuelling and already dire situation. Psychologically, the unemployed usually experience trauma, anger, frustration, low self esteem, negative life satisfaction, unhappiness and mental disorder including depression and acute stress. All these are issues that drive them to despair and consequently constitute threat to our political stability and national security. The recent spate of militancy in the Niger delta and other South-South states, Boko haram religious insurgency in some Northern states, increased crime rate, kidnapping and the general state of insecurity can majorly be traced to general level of poverty and unemployment in the country.

It is quite obvious that over the years, corrupt practices by our leaders have almost brought our country to her knees. Nigeria was almost becoming a failed state under the previous regime of President Goodluck Jonathan. Public resources which ordinarily should have been directed at road construction, education, poverty alleviation, health and security were diverted into individuals’ pockets and political campaign for the party’s re election. The Nigerian army and other security agencies were as a result left without the required arms and funds to carry out their constitutional duties. Even in the face of a small internal terrorist group (Boko Haram), the Nigerian army, known for its gallantry was severely disgraced. The ongoing Dasukigate investigation is a sad reminder of how our political leaders are insensitive and lack the conscience to govern the people.

The Nation (2016) reports that since the advent of the President Buhari regime and its fight against corruption, looters of the country’s treasury have so far retuned N78 billion, \$185 million U.S dollars, 3 million British pounds and 11,250 Euros. Apart from this, another N126 billion naira and \$9 billion U.S dollars have also been forfeited to the government pending the trial of some corrupt officials. Other items seized pending trial include 182 number of seized houses, 25 number of forfeited vehicles, 5 number of seized vessels and 22 number of forfeited farmlands. All these monies and properties were seized by the anti graft agencies of government i.e Independent

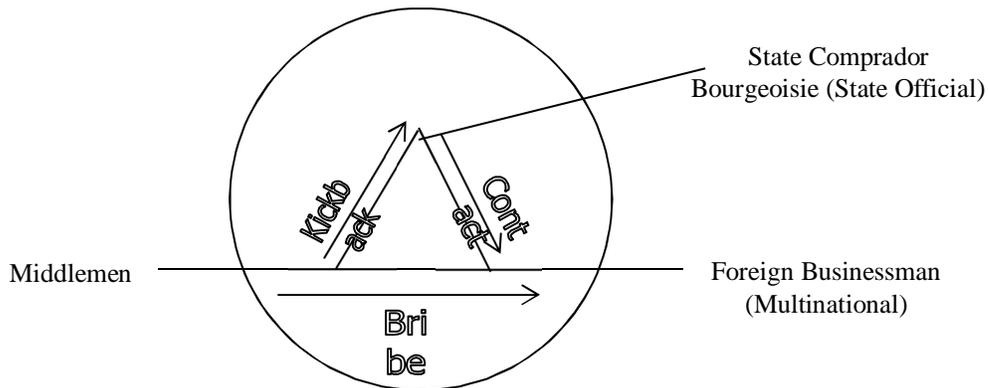
Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

This kleptomaniac plundering of our nation's resources has further heightened the frustration of the citizenry and dampened their hopes and faith in their political leaders. It has created much bitterness and anger as the nation has been put on a very difficult and hard pedestal, of little hope of recovery in the nearest future. All is definitely not well and nothing seem to be guaranteed, not even an enduring security which is a prime responsibility of government. As Alamu (2016) puts it "as the harsh and hostile economic realities finally dissolve and evaporate the remnants of the old Nigerian middle class and its lower sub-stratum, there is much bitterness and anger in the land while the old lower classes welcome back their absconding siblings with open smiling arms".

One of the features of the developing countries, to which Nigeria belongs, is the instability of the polity. Various scholars have variously tried to explain the causes of political instability using various theories. For example, Huntington S – Guide on political instability; Easton, D – System's theory, Dudley B.J. – Games theory and Turner T – Political economy, analysis have used these theories to explain the cause of political instability. Of particular interest here is Teresa Turner's theory/analysis (1978).

In this work, she uses corruption to explain the cause of instability in Nigeria. In her work – political economy analysis, she asserts that there is what she calls the "commercial triangle" of corruption in Nigeria. She explains that it comprises three (3) major parties and elements in triangular relationship viz.:

Fig. 1: Causes of Political Instability, T. Turner (1978)



- (a) The businessman who represents the multinational corporation.
 - (b) The local middleman from the national, private sector; and
 - (c) The state official who assists the foreign businessman in gaining access to the local market.
- This triangular relation is what turner (1978) calls triad and she characterise this system as instability. She further explains the operationalisation or working methodology of this triangle of corruption thus:

A foreign businessman comes to the country to sell his firms' product. He hires a local citizen as a go between with the state. If the contract materialises, the state official is usually rewarded with payment arranged by the go between or middleman ...

According to Turner (1978), there are two things to note:

- (i) There is always a constant struggle among the middlemen, because those who have access to government officials continue to grow big, having money and yielding influence over officials. The struggle here is "cut-throat."
- (ii) The amount of 'kickback' an official gets depends on the amount of power he has over policy matter. There is struggle here too thus leading to instability. Those who are not in power or position of influence, plan to overthrow the regime so that they come to power to control policy matters or decision-making.

In all these discussion on the impact/effects of corruption, it is important to note here that the effects of corruption go beyond the country of origin. Corruption in Nigeria like any other part of the world also constitutes a serious threat to peace, stability and progress of a segment of the world. That is perhaps why some governments and non-governmental organisations etc across the world seem to be interested in dealing with the issue of corruption, transparency and accountability in Nigeria. Not being mindful of it, may be to their own peril too. Maier, (2000:xx) espouses the view of a foreigner in respect of the effect of Nigeria's case as follows:

We, the outside world, ignore Nigeria at our peril, and we are ill served when our governments demonstrate such indifference. From almost any point of view, Nigeria truly matters. However deep it has sunk into a mire of corruption, repression and economic dilapidation, Nigeria remains one of the world's strategic nations. It is the biggest trading partner the US has in Africa. It is the fifth largest supplier of oil to the US market, where its low sulphur bonny light crude is especially priced because it is easily refined into gasoline. As the world's tenth most populous country, Nigeria represents an inherently sizable market that could provide trade opportunities for US and European companies. It is a vast land, stretching from the dense mangrove swamps and tropical rain forests of the Atlantic coast to the spectacular rocky outcrops of the interior and the wide belt of savannah that finally melts into the arid rim of the Sahara desert. Its (150) million people are extraordinary human pot-pourri of over three hundred ethnic groups that represent one out of six African. Nigeria is Africa's equivalent of Brazil, India or Indonesia. It is the pivot point on which the continent turns. Designed by alien occupiers and abused by army rule for three quarters of its brief life span, the Nigerian state is like a battered and brushed elephant staggering towards an abyss with the ground crumbling under its feet. Should it fall, the impact will shake the rest of West Africa.

Indeed, corruption and its creations (poverty, massive inequality, unemployment, flawed electoral processes, poor governance, political instability etc), are some of the factors that has driven the average Nigerian to the depths of despair. There is no gain saying therefore that our leaders have continued to remain insensitive to the plight of many Nigerians who continue to live under the

excruciating pains caused by corruption. Besides, at a time when strong state intervention is becoming the norm in world economies, our government is blindly pursuing a policy of rolling back the state from the provision of basic and critical social services including power (with their attendant consequences), even in the face of a near complete absence of infrastructures to support the process. The ruling elite and their cronies have regarded themselves as unaccountable to Nigerians they swore an oath to serve. Tensions are building by the day because of the oppression of the poor and the flagrant show of wealth stolen by the custodians of our common wealth. Who can help them? Our leaders have forgotten too early or refuse to acknowledge that the Arab spring that started off in Tunis was caused by massive unemployment, poverty and oppression of the government and/or her agents

According to Mohammed (2010), because they have created a state of insecurity as a result of their wanton plunder of national resources, they are forced to build high walls around their houses with strong gates and mount latest security gadgets with security personnel to keep out robbers and protect their loot.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Corruption is no doubt a malaise that has eaten deep into our national psyche and set our developmental efforts back. In fact it has shaken the very foundation of our country and posed a great threat to our national security and whatever as a country today we hope to bequeath to the next generation. Corruption with its creation, poverty, massive inequality, unemployment etc have created a mass of frustrated people who daily live in despair and oppression of those who are supposed to be their protectors (government). The Public Service, being the engine shaft of government, has become elaborately corrupt. This has affected her ability to formulate and implement policies that are geared towards the improvement of the socio-economic living condition of the citizenry. Basic infrastructures that enhance the quality of life are lacking thus further increasing the frustration and anger of the people. The Principal- Agent theory and its relationship which is supposed to be mutually symbiotic have ceased to be so. Instead, the relationship has been tailored by the Agent (government) to its own advantage, much to the disadvantage of the Principal (citizenry) who daily suffer under the Agent, thus posing considerable threat to our National Development and security. The paper therefore makes the following recommendations,

- There should be a new and comprehensive ethical re-orientation of the public service in particular and the public in general to see corruption as an evil phenomena to be shunned in its entirety. This will enable the service to focus more on the collective interest and welfare of its people rather than parochial and selfish interests.
- The education we provide should be made more functional to equip the citizens with the necessary knowledge and skills that promotes self employment rather than total reliance on white collar jobs. Entrepreneurial studies should be encouraged from secondary to tertiary institutions.
- The fight against corruption in Nigeria should be given the necessary political support and will for its success while special corruption courts should be established to try corruption cases with the urgency it requires. This will give the citizenry that hope and faith that the future ahead is bright.
- More anti poor programmes that have direct impact on the needy should be established and well funded to reduce the level of poverty and inequality in the country.

- Policies and programmes that encourage the creation of more employment opportunities should be encouraged. This will seriously reduce the psychological aggression and frustration associated with unemployment that poses security threat to the nation.

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