CORRUPTION AND ITS EFFECT ON SOCIAL SERVICE DELIVERY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
The paper set out to examine one of the social ailments that has become endemic in Nigeria - "corruption" and its effect on social service delivery in Nigeria society. It also analysed its effect on the state governance. Furthermore, it critically looked at the social causes and sources of both political and bureaucratic corruption. The paper utilised primary and secondary sources of information to elicit the opinions of academicians, political and market men and women as well as students of tertiary institutions. The gathered opinions of the respondents were descriptively summed up and on aggregate, the paper viewed corruption as inimical to effective governance, service delivery and the entire Nigeria political system and its national and international integrity. The paper concludes that what Nigeria needs most, today, is a moral revolution to tackle corruption, snap out of the present phase and co-ordinate moral, intellectual and physical resources to make a final thrust to break the bonds of poverty.

Keywords: Bureaucracy, corruption, service delivery, good governance, public accountability

Introduction
Corruption is a global phenomenon. The issue of private and public bureaucratic corruption has become part and parcel of the large socio-economic and political misnomer that has inundated the Nigerian state and society. Corruption undermines not only the public support for government, but also the good governance, administrative capacity, and reliability of the Nigerian government. Until recently, many people in the country were revealed in their attitudes towards corruption. In a country, that is, used to government tyranny and political ineptitude, corrupt or illicit behavior was often overlooked. However, important development have conspired to force a revolutionary reassessment to the fact that only a few now doubt that corruption exerts a heavy cost upon social, economic, political, service delivery and structural development of Nigeria (Kanu and Osinbajo, 1990). In Nigeria, corruption is a pervasive phenomenon. Corruption practices have become synonymous with governance, and consequently, has become the bane of the Nigerian society. Corruption is a general malaise pervading both the public and private sector organisations in Nigeria (Anifowose, 2002).

Corruption in Nigeria has a long history, but it phenomenal expansion in the fourth republic has been attributed to prolonged military dictatorship. Under the previous Olusegun Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan civilian administrations, what used to be known as corruption became the art of government itself. Under Obasanjo’s administration (1999–2007), corruption reached unprecedented levels in incidence and magnitude as the practice was elevated almost to a state policy. And under the Jonathan administration, Nigeria went beyond prebendalism (Joseph, 1991) to a system based in the outright confiscation of public assets, as government officials and political office holders simply appropriated public assets without even attempting to camouflage their behaviour behind rules and procedures. The past administration withdrew huge sum of money from the Central Bank of Nigeria as if it were minister’s and political party’s personal bank account (Adegbami & Uche, 2016).

To be sure, attempts have been made in the Obasanjo’s administration by introduction of anti-corruption agencies not to identify but put in place measures to plug loop-holes that give rise, ab initio, to this pernicious phenomenon of bureaucratic corruption. But such corrective measures have often fallen below administrative and societal expectations. The problem with administrative reform has been that its implementors lacked the political will to pursue the reforms in a courageous and persistent manner in such a way that once they are addressed, the problem does not rare its ugly head. The lack of sustained campaign against bureaucratic corruption is at the bottom of the numerous failed attempts at solving corruption in its larger context (Akhakpe, 2001).

Given the belief that corruption can only thrive in some specific kinds of environment, e.g. in a corruption – regenerative social context (note the connection between perennial military rule, non-accountability and endemic corruption), it will be interesting to see what change there has been in the volume, pattern, as well as, sectoral and geographical distribution of corruption in the fourth republic as compared with the antecedent military era. An assessment of the success so far achieved in the campaign together with identification of obstacles and challenges connected therewith are
also considered as indices of governance failure in the fourth republic dispensation (Nwabueze, 2002).

**Conceptual framework**

**Bureaucracy**

Kamenka (1989) opines that bureaucracy is the most visible branch of the executive arm of government which is charged with the responsibility of giving effect to government policies and programmes, and the provision of goods and services to the people. Bureaucracy could also be seen as depicting a formalised and systematised method of administration which proceeds on the basis of what Weber called "calculable rules". Modern bureaucracy is indebted to Max Weber who came up with what an ideal bureaucracy that aim at efficiency should look like. Weber in his articulation of bureaucracy came up with some major elements which he considered sacrosanct for the efficient, functioning of any formal bureaucratic structure.

Omoleke (2003) sees bureaucracy as adherence to the rules, originally conceived as a means, becomes transformed into an end-in-itself; there occurs the familiar process of disappointment of goals whereby an instrumental value becomes a terminal values. This emphasis, resulting from the displacement of the original goals, develops into rigidities and an inability to adjust readily. Formalism, even ritualism ensues with an unchallenged insistence upon punctilious adherence to formalized procedures. Thus the very elements, which conduce towards efficiency in general, produce inefficiency.

Weber, who deserves to rank as the greatest exponent of bureaucracy, wrote that the fully developed bureaucratic mechanism compares with other organisations, exactly as does the machine with the non-mechanical modes of production. Precision, speed, unambiguity, knowledge of the files, continuity, discretion, unity, strict subordination, reduction of friction and of material and personal costs, these are raised to the optimum point in the strictly bureaucratic administration.

**Corruption**

Vittal (2003) defines corruption as the use of public office for private gains. Public servants, which includes both the political executive and the bureaucracy, are in a special position to practice corruption because of the public office they occupy. He explained further that if the person misuses the knowledge, he/she becomes the reverse as a demon, what we find in Nigeria today is the demonisation of governance. Corruption undermines not only the public support for government, but also the good governance, administrative capacity, and reliability of the Nigerian government. Until recently, many people in the country were revealed in their attitudes towards corruption. In a country, that is, used to government tyranny and political ineptitude, corrupt or illicit behavior was often overlooked. However, important development have conspired to force a revolutionary reassessment to the fact that only a few now doubt that corruption exerts a heavy cost upon social, economic, political, service delivery and structural development of Nigeria (Kanu and Osinbajo, 1990).

Bello-Imam (2005) opines that corruption is a vice which is international in scope, monstrous in nature, crudely rampant in developing economies and unobstructively devastating and pervasive in virtually all less developing countries of the world, He sees corruption as "dishonest or illegal behavior especially of an authority". It also sees the concept as "the act or effect of making somebody change from moral to immoral standards of behavior". He also defines corruption as "inducement offered to someone for wrong by improper or unlawful means such as bribery".

According to Nye (1967) corruption is a deviation from the formal duties of a public role because of private-regarding (personal, close family, private clique) pecuniary exercise of certain types of private regarding influence. This includes such behavior as bribery (use of reward to pervert the judgement of a person in position of trust); nepotism (appointment by reason of ascriptive relationship rather than merit); and misappropriation (illegal approipration of public resources for private regarding uses) (Nye, 1967). World Bank (2002) has described corruption as the abuse of public office through the instrumentality of private agents who actively offer bribes to circumvent public policies and processes for competitive advantage and profit. Beyond bribery, public office can also be abused for personal benefit through patronage and nepotism, for example the theft of state assets or the diversion of state resources.

**Service delivery**

Service delivery is a component of business that defines the interaction between providers and clients where the provider offers a service, whether that to be information or a task, and the client either finds value or loses value as a result. Good service delivery provides clients with an increase in value. Service delivery framework is a set of principles, standards, policies and constraints to be used to guide the designs, development, deployment, operation and
retirement of services delivered by a service provider with a view to offering a consistent service experience to a specific user community in a specific business context (Kim; 2013).

“Service delivery” is a common phrase in Nigeria used to describe the distribution of basic resources citizens depend on like water, electricity, sanitation infrastructure, land, and housing. Unfortunately, the government’s delivery and upkeep of these resources is unreliable - greatly inconveniencing or endangering whole communities. In response, the numbers of “service delivery protests,” or protests demanding better service delivery, have become more popular in recent years. So popular, in fact, that the term “service delivery protest” has become a loosely used term by the media to define various types of protests (Arora; 2003).

**Good governance**

Arora (2003) opines that governance refers to all of processes of governing, whether undertaken by a government, market or network, whether over a family, tribe, formal or informal organization or territory and whether through the laws, norms, power or language. It relates to the processes of interaction and decision-making among the actors involved in a collective problem that lead to the creation, reinforcement or reproduction of social norms and institutions. He explained further that governance is the way the rules, norms and actions are structured, sustained, regulated and held accountable. The degree of formality depends on the internal rules of a given organisation and externally with its business partners. As such, government may take many forms, driven by many different motivations and with many different results. For instance, a government may operate as a democracy where citizens vote on who should govern and the public good is the goal, while a non-profit organization may be governed by small board of directors and pursue more specific aims.

Oladoyin (2010) sees governance as a combine of the two notions of economic and political variables involved in the act of governance. Another World Bank publication on development management in Africa describes the concept of governance as the exercise of political power to manage a nation’s affairs, because counter-veiling power had been lacking. They explained further that governance is the use of political authority and exercise of control over a society and the management of its resources for socio-economic development.

Vittal (2003) sees governance as a process by which policies of a state, which affect the public are implemented. In this context of development, good governance is necessary to see that the various development programmes are carried out successfully. The instrument for carrying out the development policies is the executive. In Nigeria, governance depends upon the three basic pillars of the constitution namely, the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. The legislature makes the laws, the judiciary interprets the laws and ultimately it is the executive, which includes both the political executive as well as the government bureaucracy, which implement the law.

**Public accountability**

Public accountability is currently a topical issue in Nigerian fourth republic dispensation for some obvious reasons. According to Ezeani (2003) he sees public accountability as an essential element of any democratic government. Democracy is based on the mandate principle which demands that elected officials remain accountable to their constituencies. He explained further that the concepts of “accountability” and “responsibility” have often been used interchangeable. For instance, to be “accountable” is often assumed to mean to be responsible to somebody or for something. A person is responsible if he is expected to render an account or an explanation in respect of an assignment. In this context, therefore, responsibility connotes a duty with which a person or group of persons is formally charged or which it is authorised to carry out, and respect of which he can be blamed for failure or complimented for success. According to “International Transparency” Nigeria is ranked among the most corrupt countries of the world (Agboola, 2009). The fourth democratic dispensation in Nigeria headed by Obasanjo’s administration introduced anti-corruption laws aimed at eradicating corruption and enthroning accountability. However, Nigerians are yet to feel the impact of the anti-corruption crusade.

Obianyo (2003) opines that public accountability therefore is a system whereby public officers were made to give account of their stewardship to members of the electorates. The notion of public accountability also connotes transparency and openness. He explained further that public accountability is ensuring that the bureaucracy serves national interest as agreed upon, render account of their stewardship to the people for all the resources entrusted in their care. Elected officials must also render account for the way they exercised the power given to them at the last elections. The concept of public accountability means the firm recognition and acceptance by the public of the fact that all public servants owe and hold their positions, (and everything associated with those
positions) as trust of the people, who are their masters. The whole idea of public accountability and its purpose is to ensure good conduct in management of the public affairs, public morality, and proper use of power and public funds as well as the fulfillment of public expectations.

**Theoretical perspectives**

According to the World Bank, corruption is the abuse of public office for private gain. Public office is abused for private gain when an official accepts, solicits or extorts a bribe. It is also abused when private agents actively offer bribes to circumvent public policies and processes for competitive advantage and profit. Public office can also be abused for personal benefit through patronage and nepotism, the theft of state assets or office can also be abused for personal benefit through extorts a bribe. It is also abused when private agents for private gain when an official accepts, solicits or of public office for private gain. Public office is abused according to the World Bank, corruption is the abuse of public office for private gain. Public office is abused for private gain when an official accepts, solicits or extorts a bribe. It is also abused when private agents actively offer bribes to circumvent public policies and processes for competitive advantage and profit. Public office can also be abused for personal benefit through patronage and nepotism, the theft of state assets or office can also be abused for private ends (Anifowose, 2002).

From the sociological perspective, corruption is a form of social deviance, in some cases, of criminal deviance, the result of failure or lack of will to respect the norms and social interaction. It is an extra-legal or a normative approach to gaining access. It is a form of maladaptation involving the acceptance of society’s cultural goals and the rejection of the socially approved means of attaining the goals (Nwabueze, 2002). Radical theorizing on causes of corruption tends to emphasise the failure of the post-colonial state in Africa to meet the short and long term interests of the people. In other words, the state does not exist to advance the interests of the generality but has turned out to be an instrument in the hands of a privileged few to exploit and oppress the people. It is an indictment on the ineffectiveness of society’s socialisation function; a sign of some defects in the development of citizens’ personality system. It indicates the existence of weakness in the agencies of social control which should punish rather than reward the perpetrators of corruption. The character of the state has led to the people’s withdrawal of allegiance from the state and investiture of some on the primordial or community realm where they are appreciated and centred for and, to this primordial public, the people give their loyalty and willingness to obey and serve (Akhabpe, 2001).

**The causes of corruption**

Corruption in public life in Nigeria began in the 1950’s when the first panel of inquiry was set up to look into African Continental Bank (ACB). The accusation was that the highly received politician abused his office by allowing public funds to be invested in bank in which he had interest. Corruption is a worldwide phenomenon which has been with societies through history. In both developed and developing countries, corruption is a serious problem which confronts the people and the government. Corruption differs in terms of intensity from one country to another due to socio-political specifics. Corruption is one of the Nigeria’s greatest social problems. It can then be said that corruption in Nigeria is as old as Nigerians have occupied positions of authority whether in business or in public administration. However, it was from the late 1970’s that the corruption menace spread widely and became almost institutionalised (Bello-Imam and Obadan, 2004).

Agboola (2009) opines that the causes of corruption in Nigeria are multi-faceted and diverse, these includes, low salary of public officials, job insecurity, problem of extended family, lack of transparency and accountable political process, lack of effective incentive mechanism for public officials, lack of effective reporting system cultural aspects and lack of independent and effective media. Nigeria’s reward system is perhaps the poorest in the world. The salary paid to public officials is so low that the basic needs of officials cannot be met. The influence of extended family system and pressure to meet family obligations are more in Nigeria than in any other country. This however coupled with the cost of transportation, housing, feeding and education for the children makes it difficult for a public official to make a living thereby seeking corrupt means to meet his needs.

Srilatha (2003) asked what causes corruption and this question is necessary because as many social studies have shown, solutions to social problems are often not possible without first identifying the causes of those problems. It does not seem that the very root of corruption lies in the dishonest manipulation of legal provisions in the country. According to Rose-Ackerman (1989) in Anifowose (2002) has pointed out that all states control and the distribution of benefits and also the imposition of costs were usually passed through agents who possess discretionary power. Often, because these services are scarce and the processes are full of red-tape, especially in the developing nations, private individuals and firms may have to pay to obtain them.

The unfolding research result in the area of public corruption posits that government intervention in the economy is at the core of what precipitates the vice. Consequently, it is argued that policies aimed at liberalization, stabilization, deregulation and privatisation can sharply reduce the opportunities for rent seeking behavior and corruption (Bello-Iman, 2005). Payments are corrupt when they are illegally
made to public agents with the goal of obtaining a benefit or avoiding a cost. In developing or third world countries, particularly, many incentives were in existence for corrupt behavior in the society. Low wages and salaries (nominal or real) in the public sector relative to wages in the private sector are a source of low-level corruption. When public service pay too low, public servants may be compelled to use their official positions to collect bribes as a way of making ends meet, particularly when expected cost of being caught is low. Similarly, whenever there is extreme poverty, the citizens are less able to resist corruption, relatedly, when there is extreme greed and hence immense taste for materialism as in Nigeria, corruption is also very prevalent (Bello-Imam, 2005).

Anifowose (2002) opines that another situation favourable to corruption is when bribes serve as incentive payments for bureaucrats to do their jobs well because of low pay and inadequate monitoring. Queue managers/administrators and documentation officers for instance could accept pay-offs to work quickly and to favour those who value their time highly. The situation could arise when private individuals and firms seek to lower costs of taxes, duties and regulations imposed on them by government, especially where such payments are considered high. Individuals and firms may pay for relief from these costs for example, by colluding with tax collectors and customs officials to lower the sums collected. Contract awards and concessions are further incentives to corrupt practices.

Akhakpe (2001) opines that at the independence, Nigeria inherited a technically competence civil service which concentrated on giving practical expression to government policies and programmes and the provision of goods and service to the people. Nigeria is a country blessed with so much wealth which if properly harnessed would have put enough food on every citizen’s table, but unfortunately the country has not been blessed with sound economic managers and patriotic leaders. The military ruled for nearly29 years, and left with no visible evidence of what the oil windfall of the early 1970s and early 1990s was used for. The Retired General Ibrahim Babangida administration was one of the “fortunate” regimes which had so much money in its kitty (for example, the 1991 Gulf war proceeds) but squandered it on endless transition programme which resulted in constructing secretariat buildings for the two political parties Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republic Party (NRC) in the 30 states capital (as it were then), and each of the Local Government Headquarters, of the country.

Today those buildings are lying waste without being put into any productive use.

Agboola (2009) opines that another situation favourable to corruption is leadership by bad examples, when the head is sick then the functioning of the rest of the body is adversely affected, so goes on adage. We cannot succeed in the Anti-war crusade when the political and bureaucratic leaderships in Nigeria’s public service are neck-deep in corruption, graft, fraud before their very subordinates, when a top civil servant claims travelling allowance for an official trip that never was, what can one expect from the clerks and messengers who demand “transport fares” before the personal file of his colleague in the office is fetched for the treatment of any personnel matter. He explained further that the struggle for political power at all cost and the contestants for power and positions resort to various corrupt means to achieve their ambition. Here lie the underlying factors for political corruption and other unethical conducts such as electoral malpractices, politically motivated violence, political institution that is carpet-crossing and buying of votes.

Bello-Imam and Obadan (2004) sees sociological factors as the causes of corruption and they explained further that multi-ethnic societies are more likely to be corrupt as they tend to favour non-quantifiable criteria like relations in determining “who gets what, when and how” especially where family ties are very strong. These days, social recognition and rewards are no more based on individual’s positive contribution towards the development of his community. A public official who leaves the service at retirement without “making it” while in government is adjudged a failure by his immediate community. Your community wants you to succeed without bothering how you do it. In fact, they have their standards of measuring success. All these are as a result of the neglect of those ethical principles which regulated social rewards and sanctions in the distant past. The contemporary experience of Nigerians in this connection gives added credence to this point. Also prominent in the Nigerian case are some unfortunate developments like the notion of “big manism” who is above the law, with numerous clients, retainers and hangers on, the misplaced perception that government property is no one’s property and hence it could be plundered by the “lucky few” and the wrong perception of the inexhaustible “national cake” which everyone strives to gain access to by all means.

In order to appreciate why Buhari has waged a war against corruption in Nigeria since May, 29, 2015, one needs to peep into his antecedent. First, during Buhari
Nature of political and bureaucratic corruption in Nigeria

The study of political corruption is one of the utmost values in the Nigerian context, in other types of corruption have examined from it. Politics being the seat of power, the manifestations of corrupt politics are observable at all levels of power hierarchy. Broadly speaking, political corruption is the misuse of political power for private profits. Political corruption implies exercise of more pressures and influence with the use of money power. Major manifestations of political corruption are deflection, factionalism and political bargaining. In Nigeria, the continued existence of “winning party” the unconvincing opposition and political apathy of the common people have provided unintended support to the phenomenon of political corruption (Srilatha, 2003). Agboola (2009) agreed that political corruption is the use of powers by government officials for illegitimate private gain. An illegal act by an office holder constitutes political corruption only if the act is directly related to their official duties, is done under colour of law or involves trading in influence. Forms of corruption vary, but include bribery, extortion, cronyism, nepotism, parochialism, patronage, influence peddling, graft and embezzlement. Corruption may facilitate criminal enterprise such as drug trafficking, money laundering, and human trafficking, though is not restricted to these activities. Misuse of government power for other purposes, such as repression of political opponents and police brutality, is also considered political corruption.

He explained further that the activities that constitute illegal corruption differ depending on the country or jurisdiction. For instance, some political funding practices that are legal in one place may be illegal in another. In some cases, government officials have broad or ill-defined powers, which make it difficult to distinguish between legal and illegal actions. Worldwide, bribery alone is estimated to involve over 1 trillion US dollars annually. A state of unrestrained political corruption is known as a kleptocracy, literally meaning "rule by thieves". Some forms of corruption – now called “institutional corruption”– are distinguished from bribery and other kinds of obvious personal gain. A similar problem of corruption arises in any institution that depends on financial support from people who have interests that may conflict with the primary purpose of the institution.

Singh (2003) also opines that one more important reasons why public officials are able to get away with bribes is that there is no law, rule or convention, compelling or encouraging public officials to lay open their income and assets to the public. It is generally found that a very large number of officials and ministers have unaccounted assets and incomes disproportionate to their legal sources of income. Also many of these officials and politicians do not file their income-tax return, nor are they held accountable, and this helps them get away. He explained further that however, it cannot be emphasized that mere disclosure of information about assets and income would reveal every corrupt official, since, by and large, bribes are in the form of unaccounted money or assets. Yet, there is a requirement for public disclosure of assets and income and if this information is available to the public, there will be a number of people, who would be exposed by possession of the illegal assets.
and income and this would be a very salutary effect on curbing the menace of corruption in public life.

Nwabueze (2002) opines that if the highest echelons of the governments also take advantage from corruption or embezzlement from the state's treasury, it is sometimes referred with the neologism kleptocracy. Members of the government can take advantage of the natural resources (e.g., diamonds and oil in a few prominent cases) or state-owned productive industries. A number of corrupt governments have enriched themselves via foreign aid, which is often spent on showy buildings and armaments. A corrupt dictatorship typically results in many years of general hardship and suffering for the vast majority of citizens as civil society and the rule of law disintegrate. In addition, corrupt dictators routinely ignore economic and social problems in their quest to amass ever more wealth and power.

He explained further that the classic case of a corrupt, exploitative dictator often given is the regime of General Sani Abacha who was de facto president of Nigeria from 1993 until his death in 1998. He is reputed to have stolen some USS 3-4 billion. He and his relatives are often mentioned in Nigerian 419 letter scams claiming to offer vast fortunes for "help" in laundering his stolen "fortunes", which in reality turn out not to exist. More than $400 billion was stolen from the treasury by Nigeria’s leaders between 1960 and 1999. Achebe (1983) opines that there are two methods of corruption of the judiciary: the state (through budget planning and various privileges), and the private. Budget of the judiciary in many transitional and Nigeria is almost completely controlled by the executive. The latter undermines the separation of powers, as it creates a critical financial dependence of the judiciary. The proper national wealth distribution including the government spending on the judiciary is subject of the constitutional economics. Judicial corruption can be difficult to completely eradicate, even in developed countries like Nigeria.

Corruption and its impact on governance and national development in Nigeria
The National struggle for independence was based on the premise that development that is, social economic and political would not be possible till the people of Nigeria had a system of governance set up their free will and choice which is accountable to them for development in all fields by harnessing and committing the total resources available. Nigeria is noted as one of the most corrupt countries in the world being ranked 136 out of 140 countries in the world Corruption Perception Index (CPI) published by the Transparent International, and NGO in Berlin. The least corrupt country at rank one is Finland and the most corrupt is Nigeria (Agboola, 2009).

Akhakpe (2001) sees the brain drain problem has been accelerated at the situation shown no sign of abetment with serious consequences on the future of the country. When some of the best brains in the country travelled abroad in search of greener pasture, it portends retardation in the nation's development. No nation that allows its skilled human resources to leave its shores in large numbers can ever develop meaningfully to the nation's development.

IJewereme (2013) agrees that regardless of causes of corruption, corruption results in the leakage of resources needed for national development, it leads to wasteful government and stagnant growth and development. As an informal supplementary system of taxation, it increases costs and deters growth in both the private and public sectors. Widespread corruption in governance makes it impossible for the leadership to command respect for its plans and judgement and to enlist the support of the people for development programs, or to ask the people to commit themselves to efforts and sacrifices necessary for development. Corruption gives a bad image to Nigeria and discourages genuine foreign investors from country in to do business in the country. The long-term effect is the continued dependency status of Nigerian economy and attendant social consequences like unemployment and crime. Corruption distorts the role of government in the polity as well as the operation of services and other economics activities.

IJewereme explained further that corruption as the malaise that debases public morality and engenders public distrust of leaders and cynicism towards public institutions. It questions the credibility and moral standing of leaders at the various levels and the result is high rate of deviancy and crime, as an indirect protest against leadership by bad examples. Besides, corruption gives rise to the conviction that across to public office is the easiest way to accumulate private wealth. In fostering this notion, corrupt enrichment by Nigerian leaders serves to reinforce the intensity of the struggle for power and conception of politics as a business investment from which to derive profits. Thus, corruption creates an artificial need for external assistance to compensate for corrupt and irresponsible mismanagement of local resources, but having created the need, corruption then impedes foreign assistance and investment.

Singh (2003) opines that in politics, corruption undermines democracy and good governance by
flouting or even subverting formal processes. Corruption in elections and in the legislature reduces accountability and distorts representation in policymaking; corruption in the judiciary compromises the rule of law; and corruption in public administration results in the inefficient provision of services. It violates a basic principle of republicanism regarding the centrality of civic virtue. He explained further that more generally, corruption erodes the institutional capacity of government if procedures are disregarded, resources are siphoned off, and public offices are bought and sold. Corruption undermines the legitimacy of government and such democratic values as trust and tolerance. Recent evidence suggests that variation in the levels of corruption amongst high-income democracies can vary significantly depending on the level of accountability of decision-makers. Evidence from fragile states also shows that corruption and bribery can adversely impact trust in institutions.

Arora (2003) agreed that in the private sector, corruption increases the cost of business through the price of illicit payments themselves, the management cost of negotiating with officials and the risk of breached agreements or detection. Although some claim corruption reduces costs by cutting bureaucracy, the availability of bribes can also induce officials to contrive new rules and delays. Openly removing costly and lengthy regulations are better than covertly allowing them to be bypassed by using bribes. Where corruption inflates the cost of business, it also distorts the playing field, shielding firms with connections from competition and thereby sustaining inefficient firms. He explained further that corruption also generates economic distortion 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 or pave the way for such dealings, thus further distorting investment. Corruption also lowers compliance with construction, environmental, or other regulations, reduces the quality of government services and infrastructure, and increases budgetary pressures on government.

Ogundiya (2009) agreed that the history of corruption in Nigeria is rooted in the over 30 years of military rule, out of 48 years of her statehood since 1960. Successful military regimes subdues the rule of law facilitated the wanton looting of the public treasury, decapitated public institutions and free speech and instituted a secret and opaque culture in the running of government business. The result was total insecurity, poor economic management, abused of human rights, ethnic conflicts and capital flight. He explained further that this negative phenomenon called corruption has been identified as the greatest bane affecting the rate of socio-economic growth in Nigeria which would have led to better standard of living for the citizenry. Efforts in the past to destroy or prevent corruption and bring about proved macro-economic stability, better public expenditure management and increase, consider its destructive ability and socio-economic development endeavours however, continuous efforts at struggling corruption need to be exerted.

Conclusion

It is very clear that the present state of Nigerian bureaucracy is unable to tackle the growing challenges of governance facing a globalized and privatized world. They are still in the mental framework of “Mafia” without realizing that they have few powers of control left; except recourse to law if they have to be an effective adjudicator in modern governance. As such a drastic reorientation of their thinking and training is necessary for making them relevant in the 21st Century.

Corruption is endemic everywhere but is more harmful in developing countries. Nigeria is a high-corruption state, a political system where there is entrenched corruption. We have argued that corruption in whatever form it takes is an ill wind that portends evil for any nation. Although, there are socio-economic and contextual factors that contribute to corruption, the most fundamental variable remains a weak and ineffective state which rather than transform the oppressive state structures it inherited from the colonial masters, it has only succeeded in perfecting its strategies for exploiting and oppressing people.

Corruption in our setting is an instrument of class expansion, consolidation and preservation and the state remains the principal arena of that corruption, as well as a tool for reproduction in cover-up and exonerations of culprits by the entrenched interests. It is the position of this paper that until the state is transformed to make it people centred, responsible and accountable to them it will continue to slip deeper into the crisis of legitimacy and mismanagement. Poverty is the major obstacle to development, transparency and accountability will remain elusive unless the economy is rescued from its dangerous slide to total collapse. Many have so acclimatized with corruption that they cannot survive in a decent, corruption-free society. To succeed, therefore, what Buhari needs is social revolution not just reformation. But can he afford to lead or rather, does he possess
the requisite credentials to champion a revolution in Nigeria.

**Recommendations**

No nation can afford to allow corruption destroy the basic fabric of its society. This explains why attempts are made to combat this scourge in every sphere of human endeavour before so called victimless crime makes a victim of everybody. For the present anti-corruption crusade to succeed, and for accountability and transparency to be instilled in the country’s public and private sectors. The cause and symptoms of corruption must be identified and addressed. In the past, efforts by government to address the problem of corruption and other social vices in the country failed to tackle the problem in a constituent and persistent manner.

With the notable exception of the General Murtala Mohammed and General Muhammadu Buhari efforts of 1976 and 1984 respectively that identified and to a large extent punished those found culpable of enriching themselves at the expense of the general public through compulsory retirement from service and various terms of imprisonment, other attacks on corruption, has been little more than government pronouncement and the setting up of commissions of inquiry whose reports are hardly implemented.

Much as we would agree to the view that just as it is difficult (if not impossible) to eradicate crime in the society, it won’t be easy to eradicate or “wipe out” corruption. This view receives a boost from the fact that corruption is global phenomenon, and not limited to one country or community. But it can be reduced to a very minimum level the following suggestion/remedies are proffered, general improvement in the character of people through intensive moral education and mass enlightenment. This view is based on the assumption that as the general character of people improves, we are likely to have politicians and bureaucrats with better character which will empower them to resist the lucre of office. The only short-coming of this suggestion is that more often than not, corrupt schemes are part-time of those at the top, whose character may not change for the better, except, perhaps, they witness a violent revolution or “baptism of the Holy Spirit”. Any change of character must therefore start from home. These should be a partnership project between the individual, public, government and other organisations, to discourage corruption by preaching its effects on nation’s development.

The public service must also be reformed if corruption is to be eradicated. Most public servants are poorly paid and officials often supplement their pay with their second jobs or payoffs. The government to make it an instrument for meeting the basic needs of the people in the areas of food, shelter, education, security of life and properties and other social services that create a sense of belonging in the people rather than a state that is, perceived by the people as an alien force meant to exploit, oppress and brutalise them. Reform policies must in fact aim to create jobs and reduce the pressure on those already employed to make the best out of their employment as quickly as possible.

Law against corruption must not only be made they must be enforced as a negative campaign against corruption. A viable legal framework that enforces the law without political favouritism or arbitrariness, such a system deters those tempted to engage in corrupt acts and encourages the public to resist criminal conduct by officials. In this regard, the promulgation of anti-corruption laws in Nigeria is in the right dimension, the agencies of implementation must be effective. Good leadership is sine-qua-non to reduce corruption in Nigeria hence a guilty leader must be punished accordingly irrespective of his political status.

Curbing corruption, the autonomy of the media is essential to enable them access government information seriously and objectively and to ensure its reports are credible to the people at large. Thus, government contacts with media must be transparent and they must not compromise the essential autonomy of the media either in practice or in public perception. Strongly to autonomy and objectivity is the separation of media ownership from government or political functions or if this is impossible ensuring that there is a diverse to represent a full range of political opinion. The staffing of individual media should be multi-partisan if possible. For the media to access anti-corruption efforts strongly and freely they must possess sufficient technical legal economic and other expertise. Training, awareness raising and technical briefing at media personnel in anti-corruption efforts may also be useful.

Passage of freedom and information bill by the National Assembly will guarantee the right to seek for information without inhibition and to publish or broadcast news safely and effectively. The media should be encouraged to develop, enforce adequate standards of conduct regarding their professional competence and other objectivity. The media should try as much as possible to reach much of the masses where that involves use of the people resources. For example to enable coverage of remote areas they should be controls in place that government cannot stop such resources to exert
influence on the media. Furthermore journalist should be taught how to evaluate and monitor government activities and be informed about the achievements and standards of anti-corruption work in the region and at the international level. It possible representatives of those institutions should be peak to inform journalists about their work both the success and the failures.

In ending, one should observe that if these suggestions are faithfully implemented, a new dawn of an appropriate but conducive working environment with skilled human resource and a receptive public would emerge in Nigeria for these vital agencies of the government. Such a development would hopefully but automatically enhance both the efficiency and effectiveness of the anti-corruption agencies in their drive for transparency and accountability in democratic governance.

References


