CORRUPTION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC

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Abstract

This article assessed the impact of corruption on national development in Nigeria's democratic dispensation. Secondary source of data was employed in this study. The paper revealed that bad governance, poor service delivery, inadequate infrastructural amenities, poor management of public enterprise, moral decadence and general underdevelopment were among the impact of corruption on national development in democratic dispensation. It is recommended that three tiers of government, religious bodies and civil society organizations should organize workshops/seminars frequently to the political leaders and the entire public in order to inculcate in them the spirit of consciousness, probity and accountability so as to reduce the corruption to the barest minimal.

Keywords: Corruption, national development, democratic dispensation

Introduction

In recent years the issue of corruption and the search for strategies to combat its corrosive effects have grown in importance as a topic of public debate and a criterion by which civil society evaluates leadership. For many emerging democracies formerly characterized by their leaders' economic predation the decentralization of authority, privatization of property and reform of administrative structures demonstrate the value of alternative approaches to governance and political culture. While these changes are invariably accompanied by uncertainty and sometimes by abusive opportunism, they present and expanding range of opportunities for political initiative in a law-based society. As citizens are exposed to these alternatives, they discover they can demand for accountability from their leaders (Kpundeh. 1997).

Ogundiya (2009) observed that "since 1999 when the country returned to civil rule, there is no doubt that corruption has been the bane of democratic stability and survival. News about corruption is no longer stunning. This vindicates consistent rating of Nigeria by Transparency International (TI), the global watchdog on corruption, as one of the most corrupt nations in the world. All anti corruption strategies by the various successive governments have had trifling impacts. Today, Nigeria has degenerated with basic cultural characteristics fast disappearing for the mundane. The most single cankerworm that has eaten into the fabric of our society today is the problem of corruption. And this has so pervaded the nation that most Nigerians are corrupt in one way or the other. Nigeria is presently in a state of disequilibrium as activities in the various social institutions have become rather unethical and synonymous with decadence. Consequently, the Nigerian society is presently characterized by social malaise such as insecurity of life, poverty, armed robbery, all forms of corruption, moral degeneration, succession crisis, and a general lack of accountability by those entrusted with governance (Aluko, 2002).

In Nigeria, the intricacies of corruption have eroded morality, equity, transparency and public accountability which breed insecurity through ethno religious or regional militia to challenge the state power. This conundrum truncates peace, stability, and sanity which would give birth to general underdevelopment and absence for national development. In this regard, Ogundiya (2009) opines that "pathological effects of corruption-democratic instability, low level of governmental legitimacy, voracious poverty, infrastructural decay, electoral crisis, contract killing, political assassination,
insecurity and generally, developmental problems have been very devastating.

He further argued that "it is not an overstatement to contend that the return of the country to electoral democracy in 1999 has not made significant impact on economic and social well being of the people. Several other factors explain the development tragedy in Nigeria. These are: the colonial legacy, bureaucracy and political corruption, poor labour disciplines, globalization and unfavourable international environment, unpatriotic followers and bad leadership to mention but a few (Ogundiya. 2010).

This paper examines the relationship between corruption and National development and pointed out the impact of corruption on National development in Nigeria’s democratic dispensation.

Conception clarification and theoretical framework

It is imperative therefore, to point out the conceptual background of the subject so as to comprehend the preponderance meaning of corruption from different perspectives. Klitgaard (1998) observed that corruption is a monopoly plus discretion minus accountability." Corruption is efforts to secure wealth or power through illegal means-private gain at public expense; or a misuse of public power for private benefit (Lipset & Lenz, 2000). Though, some International Agencies contend that "corruption is the abuse of public office for private gain." (World Bank. 2000, US AID, 1999, and IDB. 2001).

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) defined corruption as the abuse of public office for private gain. It encompasses unilateral abuses by government officials such as embezzlement and nepotism, as well as abuses linking public and private sectors such as bribery, extortion, influence peddling and fraud. Corruption arises both in political and bureaucratic offices. It can be petty or grand, organized or unorganized. (USAID, Handboook, 1999). Meanwhile, the Transparency International TI (2000) contend that corruption is the misuse of entrusted power for private benefit. Corruption involves behavior on the part of officials in the public sector in which they improperly and unlawfully enrich themselves, or those close to them by misuse of power entrusted in them.

In the same vein, United Nations Development Program UNDP (2003) maintained that corruption is misuse of public power, office or authority for private benefit through bribery, extortion, influence peddling, nepotism by government and public servants, it also prevail, in the private sector.

Meanwhile, this paper is in agreement with prebandsalism and clientalism theory of Joseph (1987) where he observed that, the politics of competition over allocation of resources or what in Nigeria is called "the National cake," has its most dire consequences, the transformation of the offices of the state into prebands…..' According to the theory of prebandsalism, state offices are regarded as prebands that can be appropriated by office holders who use them to generate material benefits for themselves and their constituents and kin groups.

Infact, prebandsalism and clientalism were among the contending factors that breed corruption and mitigate national development. Clientalism assists to understand the mechanism of (how) class control legitimizes the lopsided distribution of resources among social groups and enhances the status of the political elites (Seteoly, 2005 quoted from Ogundiya, 2009). Indeed, the prevalence of corruption in Nigerian political economy was resulted from clientalism and prebandsal politics (i.e God fatherism, son of the soil, dominance of comprador elites and money politics etc) which distort a gesture for the competent and credible candidates to emerge for ensuring national development and reducing the menace of corruption to the barest minimum.

Accordingly, the cause and effect postulation analyzed how the menace of corruption has a negative effect on national development in Nigerian democratic dispensation. The funds earmarked for intensive capital project towards executing some development projects would be siphoned and misappropriated for the self enrichment of few group of undesirable elites and their cronies to the detrimental of the populace and national development.

Corruption in Nigeria’s democratic dispensation

On assumption of office in May, 1999 many state governors started lamenting the state of their treasury already looted by the military
administrators (Lawal and Tobi, 2006). For instance James Ibori of Delta state claimed that he inherited a debt of N300 million, Achike Udenwa of Imo state claimed that he inherited a debt of N10 billion, Akume of Benue claimed that he inherited N12 million. Governor Osoba claimed that he inherited a debt of N687,824,729 salaries and allowance, N754,187,825.52 leave allowance, N26,635,407.71 pension, N71,18,000.08 up paid gratuities. N46,826,815.90. Governor Tinubu of Lagos state claimed that he inherited a total debt of XI billion from Governor Marwa etc. (Newswatch magazine. 1999).

In his attempt to reduce the level of corruption in public service and to ensure public service and to ensure public accountability in civilian administration, president Obasanjo promised to offer some proactive measures against the menace of corruption and to foster national development. "Obasanjo laid the foundation of his civilian administration on the vociferous campaign and determination to eliminate corruption in the public life. He proposed and later signed anti corruption bill into law. He established two anti-graft commission Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC). Despite this, corruption has continued to grow like a wild flame of fire (Ogundiya, 2009).

The falsification of age and academic qualification by Alhaji Salisu Buhari; Speaker House of Representatives was the initial case of corruption from the inception of Obasanjo’s administration. Furthermore, the removal of three senate presidents consecutively (i.e Chief Evans Enwerem, Chuba Okadigbo, and Adolplus Nwabara) were on account of corruption due to misappropriation and self enrichment in their office.

The revelation of senator Idris Kuta's panel over the allegation of corruption against senator Chuba Okadigbo found out among others that he was involved in the inflation of the street light project to the tune of 173 million Naira, authorized the payment of 37.2 million naira to furnish the senate presidents residence, an amount above the approved 25 million; installed and commissioned a 100KVA generator set at the said residence at an inflated price of N15 million naira. While, senate president Nwabara who took over from Okadigbo was also guilty of receiving a bribe of 55 million Naira from Professor Fabian Osuji (former Minister of Education) to inflate the budgetary allocation, to education ministry. This episode led to the removal of both senate president (Nwabara) from his position to become a floor member and professor Osuji to leave the executive arm as a minister of education.

From the side of executive arm of government, the senate committee pronounced vice president Atiku Abubakar guilty on the allegation that he diverted US $145 million Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF). They reported that the vice president abused his office by aiding or abetting the diversion of public funds in the sum of $125 million and $20 million respectively approved for the specific projects of deposits in banks, some of which were fraudulently converted as loans to NDTV, Mofas Shipping Company Limited and Transveri Service Limited (Ogundiya, 2009).

Meanwhile, the removal of Madam Patricia Etteh the first female speaker of House of Representatives resigned following her indictment over misappropriation of public funds in multiple contracts of N628 million (US $5 million) for the renovation of her official residence and purchase of 12 official cars. In the same vein, professor Adenike Grange minister of Health was also guilty of sharing the money of her ministry as end of year bonus. Though, immediately after he left the office Dimeji Bankole a speaker House of Representatives who inherited madam Etteh and his Deputy Bayero Nafada were paraded to EFFC on account of mismanagement of public funds. These were among the eloquent examples of corruption during Yar'adua/Jonathan's administration.

Furthermore, the ad hoc committee on petroleum subsidy revealed that almost 3 trillion naira was misappropriated through subsidy scandal by different firms, oil companies and government functionaries or what they call petroleum cabal. Before the implementation of the report, the chairman of the committee Faruq Lawan was guilty of collecting the bribe of $620,000 (80 million naira) from a business man and oil magnate Femi Otedola which precipitated him to the loss of his post as chairman of the ad hoc committee on fuel subsidy and that of House Committee on Education.

**Impact of corruption on national development**
Ogundiya (2009) observed that "corruption is a huge challenge in public administration in Nigeria. It is at the core of crisis of governance and legitimacy, the establishment of stable democratic order, rule of law, development and the welfare of citizens. Of all forms of corruption, political corruption has posed a major obstacle to national progress in Nigeria." Indeed, the current crisis of development in Nigeria can be attributed to a history of poor governance characterized by corruption, social injustice and political instability.

As rightly pointed out by Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD, Ghana, 2001) "Corruption promotes economic decay and social and political instability, perverts the ability of state to foster rule of law, and eventually corrodes trust and undermines legitimacy.” However, the major impact of corruption on national development in Nigerian fourth republic were bad governance, poor service delivery, inadequate infrastructural amenities, poor management of public enterprise, brain drain of professional skills manpower, absence of rule of law and constitutionalism, moral decadence and general underdevelopment. These impact were discuss in sequence:

1. Bad governance: World Bank (1992) contends that bad governance has many features, among which are failure to make a clear separation between what is public and what is private, hence a tendency to divert public resources for private gain; failure to establish a predictable framework for law and government behavior that is conducive to development or arbitrariness rules, regulations, licensing requirements etc which impede the functioning of markets and encouragement of rent seeking; priorities that are inconsistent with development, thus, resulting in misallocation of resources and excessively narrow base for, or non-transparencies, decision making.

Obadan (1988) maintained that "when these features occur together they create an environment that is hostile to development. In such circumstances, he further argued that the authority of governments over their peoples tends to be progressively eroded And also bad governance by entailing corruption, and lack of accountability and transparency, provides opportunities for the well connected elites and interest groups in the society to corner for themselves a sizeable proportion of the society's resources at the expense of the masses." Indeed, the above descriptions symbolically represent the nature of Nigerian fourth republic.

2. Poor service delivery: Adebayo (1985) hinted that using official stationery, envelopes, papers, government drug, dressing and hospital equipment, government labour and government time for private work. A lot of government functionaries use government documents, equipment, vehicles etc for private purpose. In the same regard, they divert government labour and time for government services to their private gain. This unwanted attitude precipitates poor service delivery in government and breeds obstacle to national development.

In fact, collection of extortion from the applicants and demanding sex from female applicants for job. The most disheartening one is purchasing offer of appointment with certain amount of money. It was reported that most of the youth who joined the security services such as the military, the police, immigration and custom services were given bribes to the recruitment officers or use philanthropic connection so as to be in the system. This aspect create a gesture for engaging the services of unskilled and incompetent manpower to run the public and security services which would in turn lead to the poor service delivery in the government

3. Inadequate infrastructural amenities: Social infrastructure in health, education and transportation sectors were in shambles, basic social amenities such as potable water and electricity became scarce, rural-urban drift increased and with it came crime and insecurity. As rightly observed by Abdulraheem (2009) we should regard public officials and their private sectors collaborators as mass murderers, killing millions of our people through inadequate public service compromised by corruption. Moneys meant for drugs, roads, hospitals, schools, public security etc are siphoned away making all of us vulnerable to premature death.
An eloquent example was squandering of $16 billion invested on national integrated power project just between 2006 and 2007 respectively. Moreso the misappropriation of over N6 billion for rural electrification project in 2009 under Elemelu committee on the said project.

4. Poor management of public enterprise: There gross mismanagement on public cooperation and enterprise in Nigeria. These agencies such as NITEL, NEPA, RAILWAY and Water Board etc were not performing as they are expected due to the ravage of corruption. There is inefficiency and poor service delivery which affects most of public enterprises since the inception of civilian administration in 1999. Nigerian telecommunication (NITEL) and Mobile telecommunication (MTEL) were paralyzed and now dead, National Electrical Power Authority (NEPA) changed its nomenclature to Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) under the notion of privatization. Meanwhile, Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) has decade and Water Board is operating at a chameleon speed due to corrupt practices by those who are entrusted to handle them for effective service delivery.

5. Brain drain: Heanan (2005) pointed out that brain drain or human capital flight is an emigration of trained and talented individuals (human capital) to other nations or jurisdictions, due to conflicts, lack of opportunity, health of hazard where they were living or other reasons." These talented individuals or professionals, include medical doctors, engineers, academics etc. The root cause of brain drain in Nigeria and its citizens were not their priority

However, doctors and other professions were complaining of brain waste and seek better opportunities for professional development in country with better medical infrastructure as well as they were under paid compared to Europe, North America and Middle East (Still well et al, 2004).

In fact, there was political and bureaucratic corruption in Nigeria which erodes welfare service to the concerned workers in public service. The federal government and some states are yet to implement the N18,500 minimum wage. While, the retirement benefit was also diverted by few undesirable elites for their self enrichment. The scandal of almost N3 trillion over police pension scheme was a good example at point of time.

6. Absence of rule of law/constitutionalism: There is a gross failure to respect the rule of law in accordance with the constitutional guidelines and extant regulations of the state: executive lawlessness, complacency of legislature, incapacitation of judiciary and politicization of public service were among the order of the day (AH, 2007).

7. Moral decadence: Corruption is the great ailment that destroyed our moral values, removed idea of meritocracy and enhanced all sorts of atrocities such as prostitution, robbery, nepotism, tribalism, broken homes, juvenile delinquency, as well as breeds unproductive generation to man our organization which it has negative effect to our future sustainable human development.

8. General underdevelopment: Corruption breeds underdevelopment in all political, economic, socio-cultural, educational and even psychological sectors. Indeed, most of the public policies were not established for the sake of the public rather than for the benefit of elites (i.e elites beneficial policies) to the detriment of the populace. This issue has accelerated poverty, inequality and underdevelopment and presented the country to attain national development.

Conclusion and recommendations

In a nutshell, the paper concludes that bad governance, poor service delivery, inadequate infrastructural amenities, lack of proper management to public enterprise, brain drain, absence of rule of law/constitutionalism and general underdevelopment among others were the impact of corruption on national development in Nigeria's fourth republic. Indeed these were among the
factors that held responsible for our underdevelopment in democratic dispensation.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. Three tiers of government should inculcate the spirit of consciousness in the mind of Nigerian leaders through organizing workshop/seminars frequently in order to have attitudinal change from corrupt practices to probity in public service delivery.

2. The two anti graft agencies (Economic and Financial Crime Commission EFCC and Independent Corrupt Practices and Related Offences Commission ICPC) should establish their offices in all the 36 states across the federation in order to checkmate corrupt practices in the states and their local governments.

3. The federal government should make a law with severe penalty (such as life imprisonment or execution) to those who found guilty on mismanagement of public & private fund and all sorts of corrupt practices.

4. Religious bodies and Civil Society Organizations CSOs should collaborate towards organizing workshop/seminars on transparency and public accountability to our leaders at all levels. This would ensure probity and reduce corruption to the barest minimum.

5. Employment in both public and private sectors should be based on merit so as to engage credible and competent manpower to man our organizations. This would enable them to work with the extant regulations in order to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

6. Federal government should consolidates and entrench the principles of rules of law (i.e equality before law impartiality, and supremacy of law) and constitutionalism in order to deal with all corrupt officers in both public & private service without any fear or favour.

7. Educational stakeholders should include the menace of corruption and its impact to the Nigerian society in the curriculum so as to teach our students ranging from basic education to tertiary institutions. This would enable our students to became free corrupt society and in their future endeavours.

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