

Governance, Corruption and Underdevelopment in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

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Abstract

Governance is a series of public activities that entail making choices in the public interest for the well-being of a nation. Corrupt practices have polluted these activities. Corruption in Nigeria is not just widespread but also systemic and responsible largely for the country's underdevelopment. The main objective is to probe the implications of governance and corruption on development in Nigeria's Fourth Republic utilizing qualitative research design and content analyses. The paper is guided by Social Learning Theory (SLT) propagated by Albert Bandura arguing that corruption is pervasive in Nigeria because people watch and learn from those in positions of governance. The study traces the foundation of corruption in governance from the colonial era and relates with the dimensions of corruption to governance in Nigeria, from where the justifications, motivations and implications of corruption are identified and discussed, and concludes that corruption in governance has undermined economic growth and development, worsened social services, neglected environmental pollution, challenged peace and security, heightened electoral frauds and scared foreign investments. It recommends the reappraisal of the anti-corruption strategy among others.

Keywords: Governance, Corruption, Underdevelopment, Fourth Republic, Corrupt Practice.

Introduction

Governance in Nigeria faces threats as corruption jacks up the cost of running institutions of governance to the plus point of political and bureaucratic elites. Majority of Nigerians are exposed to the consequences of an unfavourable and unfriendly economic climate. Corruption has devalued the quality of lives of Nigerians whereas personal interests are placed over and above national interests. The ostentatious and provocative display of corruption proceeds by elites are norms, thus corruption is a menace threatening the corporate existence of Nigeria. It has become pervasive and endemic among people and institutions.

Unfortunately, in many of the legal frameworks established to fight corruption, the concept is not well defined. For instance, there is nowhere in the 1999 constitution where corruption is particularly defined (Asobie, 2012). In the same vein, the Act that established the Nigerian ICPC criminalises corruption, it emphasises corrupt practices and corruption in many parts and even has a section for the definition of terms, yet the concept is not specifically defined. Rather, it defined 'gratification' as corruption (Asobie, 2012).

Institutions have been established to fight corruption and some cosmetic efforts have been made. However, these institutions have been grossly ineffective, instances of their officials compromising and many other actions and inactions have shown they are inadequate in fighting corruption to enhance good governance that will spur development. Corruption has reached its zenith; no institution is spared. The judiciary has been caught up in controversial judgments, the National Assembly's image is outrightly negative among Nigerians and the executive level of efficiency and responsiveness is in for public scrutiny. Policies have been formulated and implemented, yet Nigerians have been pushed into more poverty and underdevelopment.

Premised on the background, the focus of this paper is to explicate corruption as impeding the growth and development of Nigeria in all facets. In setting the issues in perspective, the paper clarifies concepts, explains the theoretical basis of the study, delves into the historical foundations of governance and corruption in Nigeria, explores governance and corruption in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, probes the dimensions of corruption in governance in the Fourth Republic, as well as the justifications of corruption from where the motivations are drawn and finally the implication of corruption on governance are analyzed with conclusion and recommendations.

Statement of the Problem

Since the return of civil rule in 1999, governance and specifically corruption have taken different dimensions with justifications and motivations, and have been one of the bases of Nigeria's acute economic regression and consequent underdevelopment where poverty is immense, unemployment is high, returns on investment are low, infrastructures are worn out and insecurity is on the rise among others issues. The enormous revenue capacity of Nigeria is not introspective of its level of development due to phenomenal governance and particularly corruption which pervades the country despite several efforts intensified by various regimes to stamp out corruption. The institutional mechanism for addressing the scourge of corruption has not resulted in any meaningful outcome, as public officeholders manipulate and undermine efforts to stamp out corruption. It is common in Nigeria for public officeholders to see public service as their personal business, thus undermining procedures and shifting rules and regulations at the behest of the public. More worrisome is that despite popular anger against corruption and bad leadership, there is a lack of national consensus on repulsion against the perpetrators. Excruciating poverty exists side by side with obscene opulence (Orude, 2014). The paper, therefore, seeks to unknot the forces which incite these states of affairs. In doing this, the study asked some questions taciturnly from where the following objectives are raised:

- i. To explain the foundation on which governance and corruption in the Fourth Republic is built.
- ii. To know the nature of governance and corruption in the Fourth Republic.
- iii. To identify the dimensions of corruption in governance in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

- iv. To assess the justifications and motivations for governance and corruption in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.
- v. To explore the implications of governance and corruption on development in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research paradigm, whereby the objectives of the study are addressed with the help of existing research. It is a systematic subjective approach used to describe experiences and give them meaning. This method involves the examination and interpretation of content in documents in order to find a connection, verify events, and identify patterns or trends. Ibietan, Abasilim and Ebhohimen (2017) explain this to essentially mean the textual or content analysis of secondary data before the conclusion and recommendations of a paper. In this light, content analysis is used as arguments are drawn from secondary data which include government reports and publications, journal publications, newspapers, textbooks and internet sources. The non-intrusive nature of content analysis makes it ideal for examining social phenomena. Based on the authors' experiences and understanding, a conceptual framework is developed to bring new insights into the extant literature, whereby the interplay between governance and corruption provides renewed attention to underdevelopment from a national perspective. This study argues that governance and corruption recurrently parley to set the tone of public services, which eventually affects the state of development in the country.

Conceptual Perspectives of Governance, Corruption and Underdevelopment

Many definitions around the concept of governance are put together that make it difficult for scholars and even practitioners to come to terms with what constitutes governance. It is perceived to involve a series of public activities encompassing making choices in the public interest for the well-being of a nation. It can be seen as the act of making decisions and rendering efficient and effective services.

According to Salihu (2022), it is the use of institutional structures of authority and even collaborations to allocate resources and coordinate or control activities in the society or the economy. Governance is the process of organizing and mobilizing people and resources to achieve a common goal. It is the process of motivating people to participate actively in dreaming dreams and seeing the vision of a possible future, encouraging them to own the vision and use their energies, resources and possibilities to work cooperatively together to realize the virtues, dreams and possibilities (Asobie, 2012:7). Governance can be good or bad. In other words, there is good governance and bad governance (Odeh, 2015). Good governance encompasses certain standard principles: accountability, transparency, civil participation, achievement of results and impact. Bad governance is featured by corruption, exclusiveness, opacity and focus on output rather than outcome (Akhakpe, 2014). Corruption therefore is a component of governance, notwithstanding bad governance or negation of good governance (Asobie, 2012:7). Governance, as an inclusive term, provides

a wider scope across definition, measurement, and application. Thus, the applicability of governance mechanisms is contextual, and the absence of conceptual clarity may lead to operational difficulty. In general, good governance symbolizes a strong partnership between the state and society and among its citizens, linking transparency, the rule of law, and accountability. To measure the state of good governance, there are some popular indices, e.g., the Index of Public Integrity (IPI), the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) of the World Bank, and the Freedom in the World report of Freedom House. Some indices are also available with a regional focus, such as the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG). Each of these indices examines different aspects of governance and considers various indicators to measure good governance (Al-Faryan and Shil, 2023).

Governance is one issue that has assumed its deserved importance in the world in recent decades, especially on appreciation of Breton Woods institutions and other donor agencies' acknowledgements that the governance environment has been ignored, thus frustrating the development efforts of third world countries (Hyden, 2000: Blair, 2009: Al-Faryan and Shil, 2023). Due attention is today accorded to governance because its health or otherwise is principal in harnessing the potential of a nation's development (Al-Faryan and Shil, 2023). Breton Woods's institutions and other donor agencies have been urging developing countries to improve their governance structure as a condition to benefit from their programmes (Chabal, 2009).

Corruption like most social sciences concepts has no universally acceptable definition. The definition of corruption is dependent on perceptions, actors, commentators, profiteers, the initiators, how and where it takes place etc. It is unethical and is viewed to represent a serious threat to the basic principles and values of government (Dukku, 2012: 227). Transparency International (2019) defines corruption as the misuse of power entrusted to someone for personal gain. Control of corruption reflects perceptions of the extent to which authoritative power is exercised for personal gain (both petty and grand forms of corruption), as well as, the extent to which the state is captured by the elites and private interest holders (Ogundajo et al. 2022). It is a larger concept and a much more serious issue than misuse of public office for personal benefits (Asobie, 2012:5). Corruption is the breach or perversion of legal rules, established procedures, and code of conduct or social norms in the service of unethical or illegitimate ends. It means, therefore, that for corruption to have taken place there must be some legal rules, established procedures, code of conduct or social norms that have been violated or perverted. Simply put, corruption is the diversion from public regulations or rules, or code of conduct or social norms. The litmus test of corrupt practice is not based on whether groups or some private individuals benefit from the act, it is based on the rule or code of conduct that was violated and whether the end served in so doing was illegitimate or unethical. No single definition can capture all the dimensions of corruption as the practices associated with corruption are so wide and diverse. It is so pervasive and endemic that it is threatening to consume most African countries when personal rule has replaced democratic governance. Corruption seriously harms the economy and society as a whole. Economic growth and development are

restrained by corruption (Al-Faryan 2022), which slows down the economic pace, generates losses, misuses people's assets, causes budget damage, and widens the gap between the rich and the poor, thus increasing poverty (Dang et al. 2022). Many countries around the world suffer from deep-rooted corruption that hampers economic development, undermines democracy, and damages social justice and the rule of law. It impinges on good governance, sound management of public money, and competitive markets. In extreme cases, it undermines the trust of citizens in democratic institutions and processes (European Commission 2014). Corruption is a major factor in the underdevelopment of Nigeria. It promotes public revenue loss, natural capital flight and brain drain, thus depriving Nigeria of the bulk of capital and technology – the two key factors of economic production (Asobie, 2012:5). Corruption encourages the multiplication of rules, regulations, and procedures for commencing and running business enterprises, thus leading to loss of precious productive time by entrepreneurs and public officers alike, and providing disincentives to foreign and domestic investors. It leads to the misallocation of human and financial resources, thereby serving as a drag on economic growth.

Based on the foregoing, the connection between corruption and underdevelopment should be obvious. The concept of governance presupposes that the entrenchment of democratic rule in the past twenty-five (25) years has not necessarily seen the country's march confidently on the ladder of development. The reason for this is that despite the establishment of anti-corruption agencies, the status of corruption in Nigeria does not seem to be alarmed by all actions taken by the anti-corruption agencies. As Nigeria is growing in the number of years spent under democracy, so are the tentacles of corruption spreading like wildfire, destroying all the institutions of governance that come their way: the judiciary, customs, universities, executive, legislature, police, immigration etc (Igwe, 2010).

Theoretical Framework

This paper is fitted on Social Learning Theory (SLT) advanced by Albert Bandura. The theory holds that humans are active information processors who think about the relationship between their behaviour and its consequences. It suggests that people learn new behaviours by observing and imitating others. The theory believes that by watching others, people learn how to act (Siegel, 2005). Bandura (1986) argues that to a great extent what people learn is acquired by watching what other people do, which is to a large extent more resourceful than employing direct experience. He refers to those being watched as models. Therefore, the modelling of behaviour is influenced by the features of the models, the peculiarities of the spectators and the attractions of the observed behaviour from the models (Gire, 1999). People who observe models learn to desist from modelling behaviours that produce harsh punishment for the models. For instance, an observer who watches a model being punished for corruption will not wish to see himself/herself given the same punishment, thus he/she will refrain from activities that will put him/her in the situation of the model.

Domesticating the above argument in the context of corruption and governance in Nigeria, it is clear that corruption is seen everywhere and there are no effective and efficient mechanisms to punish perpetrators accordingly. Hence people who are watching imbibe the character and once they get the opportunity into governance, they are likely to follow what they watch. People who previously lived from hand to mouth before getting the opportunity into governance positions begin to amass wealth and live ostentatiously. The question of concern is: what happens to people involved in corrupt practices? The answer is nothing at all. People found guilty of corrupt practices are often not just pardoned but are given national merit awards in addition (Yusuf, 2014:3). The system in effect is motivating corruption. If models are punished accordingly for their acts, it will serve as a deterrent to observers.

Historical Foundation of Governance and Corruption in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

Nigeria's foundation for issues of governance and corruption can be traced beginning from 1922 when British colonialism introduced the elective principle (Salihu, 2012:121). Until 1959 when the general elections were conducted that led to Nigeria's independence in 1960, the experiment with governance and corruption was expanding gradually. The independence government was formed on a coalition arrangement that brought the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) and the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons (NCNC) together. Though not satisfactory, the climate of governance granted by the government was commendable (Salihu, 2012:121). Each of the then four (4) regions was allowed to control resources found in its area, although each and everyone paid royalty to the central government. However, the management of the 1964 general elections and the western region election was an eyesore. Incidences of corruption perpetuated by principal government officials, boycotts and allegations of foul play were some of the features of the elections which culminated eventually with the termination of the First Republic following the assassination of Sir Tafawa Balewa, Premier Ahmadu Bello and Premier Samuel Akintola. The military who struck through a coup d'état adduced widespread corruption as among the reasons they overthrew the First Republic (Ali, 2011). Irrespective, the level of manipulation and rigging of elections, and the alleged looting by politicians were not sophisticated as it is witnessed in the Fourth Republic today.

Following thirteen (13) years of military misrule, the Shagari administration that came with the Second Republic in 1979 threw the caution and minimal corruption witnessed in the First Republic overboard. Heightened corrupt disposition of the Shagari administration was the depletion of the external reserves of the country through indiscriminate granting of import licenses (Salihu, 2012:121). With time, the economy became wrecked, the external debt worsened and corruption became a norm of the national agenda. Belatedly, after realizing its destructive impact on the economy, the administration introduced the austerity measure. Life had already been unbearable to the ordinary citizens (Alabi, 2009). Little wonder when the military took over again on the political scene, Nigerians jubilated openly, and the military met inconsequential resistance. Many politicians were arrested, tried and

sentenced to prison terms on account of corrupt practices they perpetuated while in office (Alabi, 2009).

From the preceding evaluation, it is clear that democratic governance before 1999 was not a good legacy. The experience was characterized by personal interests above national interests, ostentatious and provocative showmanship of the proceeds of corruption, non-adherence to party manifestoes and party discipline. It was the same scenario with the short-lived period of the Third Republic. Before 1999, no any foundation was laid for sustained democratic governance which could have brought about development. Countries like Brazil, Malaysia, and India etc that were peers with Nigeria have overtaken Nigeria because of its inability to minimize corruption to the bare minimum and curtail its negative impact on the country (Salihu, 2012:121).

The Nature of Governance and Corruption in the Fourth Republic

Nigeria with its trappings of civil rule since 1999 has had seven (7) rounds of elections at the centre and state levels ushering in politicians into the executive and legislative arms of government. The judiciary has been amid allegations of misconduct against some of its key officers, especially on election petition cases. However, some landmark judgments have been delivered in the process. The controversial judgements suggest that the affected judicial officers could be influenced by political considerations. Fears are expressed on the culpability of the judicial arm surviving the dimension justice has taken in the country.

As the situation with the judiciary is frightening, there is also scepticism with the legislature. The image of the legislature is scornfully negative among Nigerians. This is largely due to the self-serving posture the legislators have assumed, especially towards their welfare at the expense of the generality of Nigerians. It is no news that Nigeria is parting with a huge fortune in maintaining the legislators. Their take home is a drain on the national economy (Arowolo, 2010)

The executive is not left out. Its efficiency and level of responsiveness have been issues of concern in the public domain. The sizes of cabinets in both the central and state governments are issues and the expenditures that go with them are not helping in reducing the cost of governance. Fofowora (2011) argues that although the governments have set up committees previously on how to reduce the number of parastatals and thereby reduce cost, the feeling is strong that the executive is attributing significantly to the larger percentage of cost Nigeria incurs on account of recurrent expenditure at the detriment of the capital budget.

Many political parties have been participating in all general elections so far, only a few are visually active on the political scene. Even those that are active, their efforts at strengthening good governance are scornful. Beyond being the constitutionally acceptable means for political and elective offices, the clear lack of cohesion, discipline, ideologies and commitments negates the very essence of the political party in a democracy (Clark, 2008). It can be argued that the perturbing feature of Nigeria's governance is essentially a by-product of existing political parties. No doubt, they are important ovens for baking

corruption in the country. The political parties are often the violators of their laws. This is evidenced by the numerous cases in courts premised on the undemocratic nomination processes witnessed during every election (Salihu, 2012).

Instead of rescuing Nigerians from poverty, policies formulated and implemented have pushed more Nigerians into poverty (El Rufai, 2011). If not for anything, governance in Nigeria gives the impression that the people do not matter. How government institutions handle various issues relating to minimum wage and how they quickly respond to their various allowances are clear examples.

Issues have been raised with the conduct of elections generally in the Fourth Republic in Nigeria. The cost of conducting elections, the actual conduct and outcomes appear to be the costliest in world history. Fundamental sectors of the economy are often left unattended due to the colossal cost of conducting elections and security. Yet opinions always differ on the outcomes. Nigeria still has some grounds to cover in terms of credible elections.

Most often, when analyzing issues on governance, there is the tendency to ignore other levels of government. Nigeria is a Federal State with constitutionally recognized Local Government Administration. Although discussion on this paper will not go down to the Local Government, this paper appreciates that for whatever happens at the centre, perhaps worse things happen at the level of the states. Most if not all Governors are conquerors in their various States. The Governors perfectly control all structures of their states. For instance, the Houses of Assembly are in most cases rubber stamps of the Governors, opposition parties are often denied access to state facilities, there is little or no accountability at the state level and it extends to control of the Local Government Councils. On the security landscape, governance in the Fourth Republic has not been adequate in addressing challenges. Some scholars have observed that the grave security climate will not disappear as corruption in its widest dimensions has been the major reason Nigeria is where it is today (Odeh, 2015). Nigerians are concerned about the security situation of the country today. Nigerians feel gravely insecure. Banditry, kidnapping, terrorism etc are the order. Assurances by key government officials have not inspired confidence in the citizens. Although corruption has long been with Nigeria, the reality of its existence in the Fourth Republic has compounded development.

Dimensions of Corruption in Governance in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

In the act of governance, corruption has been perpetrated from different dimensions and forms. These dimensions include but are not limited to:

1. Political Class Corruption

Political class corruption is perpetrated among the political elites and occurs at the peak levels of political power. It becomes apparent when political actors entrusted with responsibilities to formulate and implement laws, policies and programmes for the benefit of people are themselves corrupt, tailoring initiatives to their selfish benefits – one good example is budget padding. Cases of official misuse of resources for personal enrichment

are prevalent in the act of governance among the political class in the Fourth Republic; the country over the years has seen its wealth shattered with nothing to show in upgrading the living conditions of the common people.

2. Bureaucratic Class Corruption

Bureaucratic class corruption is common in the implementation process of policies. It is the corruption by public officers who are not career politicians but aided and abetted by corrupt political class. It is the exploitation of bureaucratic official positions for private gain. This is rampant in organisations like schools, hospitals, ministries, departments and agencies (Odeh, 2015). This is common in routine courses of government business; it includes bribery, misappropriation of funds, embezzlement (in its many varieties), kickback, gratification, false bills, income tax fraud, favouritism, nepotism, extortion, etc.

3. Electoral Corruption

In Nigeria, elections are characterized by votes buying, killing, maiming, and violence. Losers end up as winners in elections and election results turn up in areas where votes were not cast (Dike, 2005). Electoral corruption includes vote buying, intimidation, promises of office or special favours, obstructing the freedom of election, coercion, and manipulation of voters' registers.

Justifications of Corruption

Justifications for corruption in Nigeria's Fourth Republic are diverse, especially in the public sector. These among others are:

- i. **Prolonged Experience with Military Rule:** The military rules that characterized Nigeria's history are well known for their disregard for rules of law, decisions are taken arbitrarily with impunity, and there are no effective checks and balances. These and many issues associated with the military created and foisted a culture in the system that is hard to get rid of even after the military rule.
- ii. **Disregard for the Rule of Law:** The debility to apply standards as prescribed by laws and rules of engagement in governance is a major cause of corruption in the Fourth Republic. Government officials disregard operational procedures and operate with large discretion in the act of performing duties. There are feeble internal managerial controls in most government institutions to prevent corruption.
- iii. **Inefficiency and Inconsistency in Legal and Judicial Processes:** Many corrupt-related cases are often dispensed arbitrarily with no synergy. The legal and judicial system has been politicized and what is seen is selective justice. For instance, many former governors have not been brought to book, while just a few have been punished. Judicial interpretations of laws are marred with a lot of technicalities against merit.
- iv. **Compromised Law Enforcement Apparatus:** The various organisations charged with the responsibility of enforcing laws are weak and oftentimes compromised. They lack the competence to investigate and prosecute cases appropriately and

often corrupt themselves. They most often investigate and prosecute cases they have interests.

- v. Lacks of Patriotic Leaders – Most leaders are not patriotic to lead by example. Leadership positions are often regarded as avenues to amass wealth. Most leaders do not come with the intent to effect change. They aid and abate corruption, they are relaxed and do not see the need to fight corruption. Those with patriotic zeal are silenced or not given roles that support the fight against corruption. Leadership that is fraudulent or perceived to be so often encourages the followership to be fraudulent.
- vi. Terrible Working Conditions and Welfare: The conditions of service for most government officials especially at the bureaucratic levels are poor and many cannot afford decent living conditions. No good incentives and welfare packages which often induce officials to engage in different corrupt practices to enhance their living conditions. For instance, the removal of subsidies on most goods and services, especially the recent removal of subsidies on oil and power has subjected the prices of goods and services to market forces. These have made low and medium-class workers poorer and susceptible to corrupt practices.
- vii. Fear of the Unknown: The uncertainty of getting jobs, government payment of retirement benefits as at when due and the worsening jobs loss among others have influenced the perception of many, hence, given any slightest opportunity, people always want to utilize it to amass wealth.
- viii. Prevailing and Large-Scale Poverty: The level of poverty in Nigeria is so alarming that it has put pressure on government officials. These pressures induce the intent to engage in corrupt practices.
- ix. Materialism and Decay in Moral Values: People's quests for material things and deterioration in moral values have pushed for a high societal tolerance for corruption. People adjudged wealthy are those rewarded with titles in our communities and places of worship without regard to the source(s) of wealth. – It is common to see traditional rulers award chieftaincy titles to people whose sources of wealth are questionable.
- x. Deficient Awareness and Lack of Education: A lot of people do not know their rights and little or no efforts are made to enlighten the public on their rights and penalties for corrupt practices. Hence, a lot of people are docile in asserting their rights.

All highlighted above are justifications for corruption generally. However, in the course of governance, these justifications can be grouped into motivations for the prevalence of corruption in governance and we group them to fall under political motivations, economic motivations and socio-cultural motivations.

1. Political Motivations

Political motivations can be attributed to being the foremost rationale why corruption transpires and perseveres in Nigeria. This can be linked with political interferences experienced in the past. These needless interferences in politics and good governance

repeatedly lead to the conceding of merit, tolerating corruption to leak into the system. Instigating from the viewpoint of political interference, military incursion can be held as greatly stirring up the level of corruption in Nigeria. Lack of political will also accounts for a further phase of politically motivated corruption in Nigeria. This can be viewed from the inadequate funding for the anti-corruption crusade, and the lack of common goals and national strategies in the war against corruption. Perfidious positions of both the public servants and political dramatis personae also account for the politically motivated corruption in Nigeria. The polity is trapped with tribalism, unpatriotic leaders, the culture of nepotism, politics of money and impunity in the political leadership of the country.

2. Economic Motivations

Corruption is motivated by the consideration that it has become an economically viable venture in Nigeria, thus very lucrative. People see the gains prevailing over the costs as there are no adequate punishments for perpetrators. Violators of rules are hardly brought to justice. There are inadequate measures to serve as deterrents. In Nigeria, there is a sort of cost-benefit analysis between being corrupt and the end results connected to corruption. People engage in corrupt practices with impunity because corruption is beneficial to them. Where there are punishments, they do not commiserate with the nature of corrupt practices committed; hence public servants rather get involved in corruption and go with inconsequential punishment. This has made corruption a viable venture attracting investors from within and outside governance.

Also connected to economic motivation is survival issues. People are often engaged in corruption because of the pressure to survive. Pressures are the basis for corruption. Pressures coming from hardship, poverty, poor remuneration, poor conditions of service and lack of job security; personal and family pressures; lack of functional social amenities; and the quest for wealth habitually induce corrupt practices among public office holders.

3. Socio-Cultural motivations

In Nigeria, societal influence and cultural affiliations are great precursors of corruption. Held societal values are no longer adhered to and some cultural practices contribute to fueling the prevailing corrupt practices in Nigeria. Corruption and corrupt public officers are revered and dignified in society. People no longer care about the means and capacity of amassed wealth by public officers. People tend to condone the act even when not involved and lack the courage to speak the truth. The erosion of moral values and unethical behaviours culminate in corrupt practices. Nigerians are deeply rooted in religious practices, yet that has not helped or deterred involvement in corrupt practices. The public servants who are believed to be lighthouse keepers of good governance fall into betraying the trust by indulging in corrupt practices as a result of lacking moral values. The quest for self-interest at the expense of the state and the lack of moral and religious values lay bare issues principal to corruption on moral and ethical grounds. When there is greed in one and public office is viewed as a means to getting rich, then there will be strong motivation for corruption.

Implications of Governance and Corruption on Development in the Fourth Republic

Corruption has serious implications on governance as people engaged in corrupt practices interfere with the decision-making process for egocentric motives, denying the public optimal benefits of public policy. The implications include:

- i. **Undermining Economic Growth and Development:** As corruption permeates into governance, the standard of living of the people is compromised. When resources meant for the general well-being of the citizens are embezzled, it tells on the welfare of the people. It means there will be less revenue accruing to the government, fewer projects to be executed and quality will be compromised. Most often, resources garnered through corrupt practices are not invested in the economy to provide jobs, they are wasted on luxury goods or invested in foreign economies thereby putting pressure on demand for foreign exchange, depreciating the local currency in value, affecting the country's balance of payments and resulting to the inability of government to attract foreign investments. These are some of the impediments to economic growth and development (Nwogbo & Akhakpe, 2021).
- ii. **Worsening Public/Social Services:** As it stands today, health services, educational services, and other public corporations are deteriorating as a result of corrupt practices (Nwogbo & Akhakpe, 2021). Medical doctors corner patients and hospital equipment to their private hospitals, public school teachers are inefficient in delivering services, the epileptic power supply is the order of the day, road networks are in shambles, absenteeism, etc have grounded services aimed at bettering the society.
- iii. **Environmental Pollution and Degradation:** Due to corrupt practices, regulations are not enforced and most often penalties are relaxed. Hence gas flaring and water and air pollution by industries are posing serious challenges to the corporate existence of the people. The case of the Niger Delta is a good example (Nwogbo & Akhakpe, 2021).
- iv. **Declining Peace and Security:** The diversion of resources and other corrupt practices by the ruling class have provoked the relative peace and security of the country. Boko Haram in the northeast, banditry in the northwest, Niger Delta crisis, threats of secession in the southeast, herders–farmers crises and the menace of kidnapping throughout the country are resultant effects of corruption. The ruling elites in the pretence of fighting these menaces have yet seen open avenues to deepen their corrupt tendencies. Billions of naira are siphoned in the name of restoring peace and security yet nothing to show (Oghi, 2013; Nwogbo & Akhakpe, 2021).
- v. **Heightening Electoral Fraud and Waning Political Participation:** Corruption has infiltrated the electoral process and dwindled electorates' faith in governance, thus creating a legitimacy crisis. People no longer see governments as their products. The corrupted political system has created spaces for the emergence of autocratic

rulers whose brand in trade is the disregard for the rule of law. The political system is maneuvered to weaken opposition to the detriment of the people.

- vi. The Disinclination of Financial Institutions and Donor Agencies: Good governance and transparency are some of the yardsticks financial institutions and donor agencies consider in giving assistance or aid. It is believed that governments that are apparent to be corrupt typically lack cooperation that can promote development. At the multilateral echelon, global financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank are mostly reluctant to release credit or recommend corrupt countries for financial assistance. At the bilateral stage, corrupt countries are deprived of development aid. Oftentimes, when such countries are indebted to foreign creditors, reliefs are by and large not extended. Accordingly, the rate of development of the country will be affected. This was the case with Nigeria until the country was evident to have embraced policy measures to fight corruption, even though ineffective.

Conclusion

Governance in Nigeria has not been effective and efficient in bringing about development largely because of corrupt practices that have eaten deep into the fabric of the nation. Corruption in governance is endemic thus it has undermined economic growth and development, worsened social services, neglected environmental pollution, challenged peace and security, heightened electoral fraud and denied the country opportunities for foreign investments. Although no society is clean from corruption, it is expected that the level of corruption in the country would be curtailed considerably by putting appropriate precautionary and disciplinary measures and the various levels of government will demonstrate zeal for good governance.

Recommendations

Despite so many efforts put in place to fight corruption in Nigeria, corruption has remained one of the greatest factors hindering development in the country. To achieve a minimal level of corruption, we recommend the following:

- i. There is a need to reappraise the anti-corruption strategy in place making it transparent and realistic, focusing on fighting the causes of corruption and not the symptoms. The strategy should be mindful of how to tackle the cost of legal representation and political interference. The strategy should adopt a holistic and integrated approach.
- ii. The stakeholders should see the need to collaborate and show commitment to fighting corruption. The collaboration should involve the executive, the legislature and the judiciary at all levels of government, the media, the private sector, the civil society organisations and the institutions charged with the responsibilities of fighting corruption like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the ICPC and the Code of Conduct Bureau etc.

- iii. Exclusively, there should be effective legislations that protect whistle-blowers, support access to information, and support partnerships with international institutions.
- iv. Civil society should be encouraged to be much more involved in scrutinizing, discovering and reversing corrupt activities.
- v. Separation of powers among the various arms of government and institutional checks and balances should be operational for effective oversight functions. Executive supremacy in a democratic setup always promotes corruption.
- vi. There is a need to educate the public to personalize the fight against corruption and perform oversight functions. Ownership of the anti-corruption war requires attention. Presently, the people see the anti-corruption concern as a government affair.
- vii. Information concerning offences, punishment and court cases of corrupt persons should be well broadcast to dissuade others from corrupt acts. To be successful as a deterrent, disciplinary measure must, within the requirements of due process, be prompt, evenly applied and publicized.
- viii. Policy guidelines on principal areas of operation must be without a doubt communicated as necessitated down the line to shun abusive use of discretion.
- ix. Procedural complexity which gives room for corrupt practices should be reduced or eliminated. Similarly, the code of business ethics should be put in place, publicized and strictly enforced.
- x. The judicial system should be prepared to ensure prompt dispensation of justice and the legal system should be dynamic to support the fight against corruption. The conviction that the judiciary can be negotiated has always been a major factor in prevalent corruption in Nigeria.
- xi. For a successful war against corruption, leadership by example is a major requirement. The fight against corruption will unavoidably have to start from the highest levels of the state. Leaders should be symbols and, as such, should act what they sermonize. When leaders speak against corruption and events around them show they are corrupt, they are not helping the struggle.
- xii. Officials at the individual level should make a personal commitment to live up to the obligations of fashioning an ethical providence for their organizations and certainly Nigeria at large. They should turn down the enticement of joining forces with outsiders to commit fraud and endeavour to report corrupt habits through the Anti-Corruption Unit of their institutions. Workers should aim to live good bequests by making sacrifices and evading activities that can smear the image of their society.

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