

Corruption in Public Administration and National Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

Although the facts of weak institutional structure, inefficiency, poor professional standards, low productivity, a culture of waste, over-bloated staff structure etc., have been identified as problems of the civil service in Nigeria, only scant attention has been paid to the debilitating effects of corruption. This paper chronicled some of the annals of administrative corruption, *vis-à-vis*, their impacts on administrative development in Nigeria. Adopting the qualitative approach, the paper utilized the Market-Centred perspective as an analytical guide and considered corruption, not just as the epicentre of the problems of administrative development in Nigeria but also as the bane of the nation's development processes. Besides the plugging of corruption loopholes and the institution of a more robust reward system for corrupt-free administrative officials, the paper recommended stringent measures to restrain systemic corruption, by making it a high-risk activity where perpetrators must be apprehended, severely punished and dispossessed of corruptly earned monies and property.

Keywords

Corruption, Administration, Public Service, Bureaucracy, Development

1. Introduction

Corruption in the governance culture of Nigeria assumed an octopus-like nomenclature to the extent that it did not just pervade the entire fabric of the society but also became one of the strongest factors for determining who the electorate voted for (during the 2015/2019 general elections), with a preference for those who possessed the capacity to fight corruption. It is pertinent to observe that whereas successive administrations (whether military or civilian) have been

blamed for the ills of corruption in Nigeria, the civil service—being that constant enabling entity and common denominator under the various systems, appears to be the worst culprit of the corruption malaise.

This paper conceptualises the civil service, the bureaucracy and or the public sector (as the case may be) as interwoven or synonymous with the administrative machinery, which can also be situated in the context of public administration. This disposition is thus congruent with the observation by Okekeocha (2013) that the public sector is an essential part of the government in Nigeria and plays a key role in the implementation of services vital to the economic growth of the country. It coordinates the federal ministries, advises political officials, formulates and implements government policies, gathers and supplies data for policymakers, and ensures continuity of services and public relations services. These roles are important in running an efficient administration because the public sector can either make or mar any administration. This buttresses the fact that the civil service is expected to play a key role in managing and implementing reform programmes in the country. It is the institution whose mandate should play an important role in ensuring that government policies are properly implemented for the good of the citizenry; without an effective Civil Service, the government cannot operate effectively and efficiently (Anonymous, 2015).

Ironically, it is disheartening to observe that over the years, the Nigerian Civil Service has been ensnared in a myriad of problems, among them being poor accountability culture, poor professional standards, a culture of waste, and an over-bloated staff structure, all of which are also corruption-related. This is perhaps why Olateju (2015) laments that:

We cannot achieve meaningful and sustainable development if those entrusted with public office routinely sow the seeds of corruption and partake in its proceeds. Have you asked who drafts the memos for politicians? Who are those making the submissions for the appropriation of funds? Who disburses the funds? It would be near impossible for politicians to engage in corruption if public servants refuse to be used as means to corrupt ends or if they decline to be willing accomplices in corrupt schemes. Politicians cannot and do not act alone. They act in concert with civil servants.

Indeed, it is commonplace to affirm that no politician can conclude and effectively perpetuate any act of grand corruption that dominate the pages of newspapers, without the active connivance of the public servant who, most often (as experts/technocrats in public policy affairs), are also the source of criminal knowledge/information on where and how politicians can pilfer public coffers.

Aside from the plethora of quiet/not-very-obvious corruption activities of bureaucrats in various types of administrative malpractices involving teachers, doctors, nurses, engineers, accountants, desk officers, inspectors and other frontline administrative officials, dovetailing in all forms of petty corrupt acts including absenteeism, rule-bending for personal advantages, issuance of certificates where jobs are not done or are performed below standards, abetting examination mal-

practices/sex for marks, wrong medical diagnosis/pilfering of drugs and hospital equipment, referral of patients to privately owned medical facilities; recent reports have shown that frontline public officials in Nigeria have graduated to diverting public funds that are way out of the magnitude of what was ever thought possible from the perspective of core administrative officials, ditto the recently alleged case of the theft of 80 billion Naira by suspended Accountant General, Ahmed Idris (see [Vanguard, 2022](#)). Besides, Nigerians have also recently been inundated with reports of public administrative officials saddled with the responsibility of fighting social and financial crimes, turning such administrative positions into criminal/self-enrichment/corruption tools/centres like the cases of criminal investigations into the activities of a Deputy Commissioner of Police, Abba Kyari for involvement in not just corruption and human rights abuses, but also of drug peddling (see [Sahara Reporters, 2022](#)).

The ill effects of administrative corruption as witnessed in the Nigerian civil service bureaucracy and other challenges have long been entrenched in the system to the point that the country cannot achieve much success without first addressing all the ancillary issues that militate against well-articulated and well-directed policies and actions of government. This much was admitted by President Muhammadu Buhari who, at the launch of a capacity-building initiative for Civil Servants, observed that “many who mourn the decline of the Civil Service today from its days as ‘primus inter pares’ in the commonwealth to one which has earned a reputation for inefficiency, low productivity, corruption and insensitivity to the needs of the public, fall into the error of thinking that the problem is a poverty of ideas and capacity on the part of the Civil Service”, insinuating that Nigeria’s civil service had lost its steam more to corruption than to any other factor, which results in inefficiency and poor output ([Anonymous, 2015](#)).

This paper, therefore, examines the impact of corruption on administrative development in Nigeria, chronicling some of the annals of administrative corruption, *vis-à-vis* measures adopted by successive administrations to deal with the menace.

2. Theoretical Underpinning

Market-Centred Perspective

The market-centred perspective is based on the theories of the market where office bearers regard their offices as businesses through which they must maximize their income. Proponents of this perspective consider that the norms governing public office have shifted from a mandatory pricing model to a free-market model, thereby considerably changing the nature of corruption ([Tilman, 1970: pp. 62-64](#)). Thus, the office is the maximizing unit and the size of the income is directly dependent on the market situation and the talents for finding the points of maximal gain. The bureaucracy, therefore, becomes a free market where the central allocative mechanisms no longer apply. Clients may then risk sanctions and pay higher prices to be assured of receiving desired benefits or results (Hei-

denheimer, 1977 cited in Hope Sr., 2000). This explains the tendency toward venality (the state of being for sale), which is hardly a recent phenomenon in politics or the public sphere, with the emergence of the so-called “business politicians” or the business-oriented public servants who get into public offices (elective or appointive) for purely personal gains.

Applied to this study, the market-centred perspective aptly captures the growing tendency where public servants/administrative officials manning sensitive administrative and accounting positions in the various Ministries, Departments and Agencies of the Nigerian governments, have converted such positions into businesses platforms for the maximization of personal gains instead of the public centred goals envisaged for such positions. This has resulted in all forms of abuse of official principles and corrupt practices for personal enrichment, to the detriment of the public. That is how the market-centred perspective on corruption is relevant as a theoretical foundation for the discourse of this paper.

3. Conceptual Clarifications

Public Service/Bureaucracy and National Development

Section 318 of the 1999 Nigerian constitution defines public service as “the service of the federation in any capacity in respect of the Government of the Federation” and includes service as:

- 1) Clerk or other Staff of the National Assembly or each House of the National Assembly.
- 2) Member of Staff of the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal, the Federal High Court, the High Court of the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, the Sharia Court of Appeal of FCT, the Customary Court of Appeal of FCT or other courts established for the Federation by this Constitution and by Act of the National Assembly.
- 3) Member or Staff of any Commission or authority established for the Federation by this Constitution or by an Act of the National Assembly.
- 4) Staff of any area Council.
- 5) Staff of any Statutory Corporation established by an Act of the National Assembly.
- 6) Staff of any educational institution established or financed principally by the Government of the Federation.
- 7) Staff of any company or enterprises in which the Government of the Federation or its agency owns controlling shares or interest.
- 8) Members or officers of the armed forces of the Federation or the Nigeria Police Force or other government security agencies established by law.

The same constitution also defines the public service/civil service of a state, to cover people in the service of state governments in the same capacities as those of the federation. It is within this definitional context of the public service that administration and administrative development are contextualized in this chapter. This is bearing in mind the fact that there seems to be a point of convergence

between public administration and the more generic concept of administration, the crux of the matter being in “determined action taken in pursuit of a conscious purpose”. Whereas administration stresses the element of cooperative human efforts among two or more individuals geared towards predetermined goals, public administration is that sector of administration found in a political setting, concerned primarily with the implementation of public policy. It connotes the application of the principles of administration in a political setting, and the harnessing of both human and material resources in pursuit of the implementation of government policies, goals and objectives, with the ultimate fact that national development rests almost entirely on public administration (Ibietan, 2013).

National development comprises the holistic array of policies, programmes, and actions detailed in the confrontation of national challenges to improve the internal workings of government, the private sector and the entire citizenry. The nexus between public administration and national development, therefore, harbours the implication that whatever makes national development a priority, naturally underscores the need for an efficient and effective public administration. It is doubtful, judging by either historical antecedents or contemporary realities, whether it is possible to achieve meaningful national development without public administration playing a catalysing role, and the reason is not farfetched; public administration is that unit of political governance that implements the policies, programmes and plans of government (Hassan et al., 2013).

4. Corruption

Corruption is not only a universal phenomenon but also a complex and multifaceted phenomenon with multiple causes and effects. And just as it takes on various forms and functions in different contexts, many authors have adopted various standpoints to describe the concept. The word “corruption” owes its origin to the Latin verb “*rumpere*” which means “to break”, implying that something is badly broken. Whatever is so badly broken might be a moral or ethical code or more often, an administrative rule or a law (Tanzi, 1994 cited in Hope, 2000). From this conceptualisation, corruption means the breaking of a certain code of conduct for the personal benefit of the perpetrator. It is perhaps in this wise that Hope (2000) defines corruption as the misuse of public power for private benefit. The term “private benefit” does not just relate to receiving money or valuable assets, but also encompasses an increase in power or status. Receiving promises for future favours or benefits for relatives and friends may also be considered a private benefit (Lambsdorff, 2007).

According to Osoba cited in Aluko (2009), corruption is an anti-social behaviour conferring improper benefits contrary to legal and moral norms, and undermining the capacity of authorities to improve the living conditions of the people. From the point of view of the World Bank and Transparency International (TI), a leading global anti-corruption watchdog, corruption is the abuse

of public office for private gains for the benefit of the holder of the office or some third party. This definition suits the purview of the conceptualization of this paper since, in the words of Begovic (2005), it considers the cause of corruption in public authority and its abuse, and links corruption to the state, its activities, its intervention in the market and the public sector, instead of the private sector.

To buttress the public-office-centred definitional perspective, Nye's (1997), classical definition of corruption, as cited in Khan (n. d.) offers a useful insight as he defines corruption as behaviour which deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private-regarding (personal, close family, private clique) pecuniary or status gains; or violation of rules against the exercise of certain types of private-regarding influence. He lists such behaviours to include bribery (use of a reward to pervert the judgment of a person in a position of trust); nepotism (bestowal of patronage because of an ascriptive relationship rather than merit); and misappropriation (illegal appropriation of public resources for private-regarding uses). By way of definitional expansion of the subject matter of corruption, as regards its areas of coverage, The African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM, 1991) offers a broader definition of corruption as the "use of one's official position for personal and group gain; that includes unethical actions like bribery, nepotism, patronage, conflict of interest, divided loyalty, influence-peddling, misuse or stealing of government property, selling of favours, receiving kickbacks, embezzlement, fraud, extortion, misappropriation, under- or over-invoicing, court tempering, phoney travel and administrative documents and use of regulation as bureaucratic capital".

This paper, therefore, conceptualises corruption as the wrong use of governmental positions and their institutional/administrative apparatuses and instruments for the advancement of personal or sectional benefits, at the expense of the public. It further contemplates the likelihood of corruption at any of the public sector platforms, being either encouraged or checked by the conduct of those at the helm of affairs of public/administrative paraphernalia, especially from the political point of relevance. It also subscribes to Begovic's (2005) exposition that corruption is both endogenous to the political process, as well as institutionalised and that its level and pattern depend on the political constellation, i.e. the political regime in the country; insinuating that corruption is nothing but a consequence of the political process.

Political corruption does not just correlate with systemic corruption but is also known to expound the latter, the same reason it has generated a lot of interest in recent years. Paul (1997) decries the poignancy of political corruption, describing it as being more damaging to democracies by undermining their basic principles, notably, the equality of citizens before institutions (that is, the idea that individuals should be treated with fairness and respect by government officials) and the openness of decision making (that is, cruciality, accountability)—corruption contributes to the de-legitimation of the political and institutional systems in which it takes root.

5. Annals of Administrative Corruption in Nigeria

The central thesis of this paper is that corruption under whatever name or guise is only made possible by the administrative bureaucratic system/personnel. This is because procedurally, going by the provisions of the Allison Ayida Civil Service Reform of 1995, the permanent secretary is the chief accounting officer of the ministry and politicians cannot initiate transactions on behalf of the government and complete them without the involvement of the civil service machinery i.e. those who are in charge of public administration. As such, no stealing or conversion can take place without the active connivance of the public servants. This is in tandem with the position of [Hassan et al. \(2013\)](#) that corruption is perhaps the greatest bane of the Nigerian public service. It is so endemic that it runs through the system—from the recruitment process, down to retirement. The public sector, no doubt, is responsible for about 80% of the vices that give Nigeria her very high world corruption ranking.

In Nigeria, corruption in whatever form or frame and the way it crept into our administrative processes, is not unconnected with the same way the rudiments of formal administrative procedure were introduced and that is, through manifestations inherent in its colonial heritage. It is to this extent that [Omotola's \(2006\)](#) effort at tracing Nigeria's corruption to colonialism is germane; arguing that colonialism (by all standards) in Nigeria, was built on corruption. Omotola, therefore, insists that "because of the colonialist's corrupt disposition to exploit the state for their exclusive benefit, they liquidated social structure against corruption associated with pre-colonial Africa and replaced or transformed them to their purposes".

Some shreds of evidence of colonial dispensation-induced corruption included the 1947 setting up of a commission of inquiry by the colonial authority to investigate cases of corruption and wrongdoing as well as punish the culprits; the 1955 inquiry into the affairs of the Igbo-Etiti District Council, where "systematic corruption" was reported in the appointment and promotion of staff; in the award of contracts; and where bribes of £80 to £100 were demanded for unnecessary appointments ([Okonkwo, 2005](#)). In the Eastern region, in 1956, the Foster-Sutton Tribunal is documented to have investigated the Premier of the Eastern region, Nnamdi Azikiwe for his involvement in the affairs of the African Continental Bank (ACB) where ACB loaned over £163,000 to the Zik Group of Companies at low interest and where the Group did not have to repay the loans until 1971, leading to the failure of the bank ([Ekong, 2015](#)).

At independence in 1960, when Nigerian nationals took over the administrative leadership, the bureaucrats who occupied the leadership positions in the Civil Service imbibed the colonial mentality of wealth acquisition for self-aggrandizement and self-superiority. Instead of working to improve the lot of the country, they became colonial masters in a "black man's skin". This aggravated the abysmal performance of the Civil Service and consequently the under-development of the country. These and other factors necessitated the clamour for

reforms in the Nigerian Civil Service. The colonial masters carried out some reforms, among which was the Harragin Commission of 1945, the first commission set up to look into the Nigeria Civil Service, and the Gorsuch Commission of 1954-55 (Anazodo et al., 2012).

With the coming of the military in 1966 and its over 25 years' occupation of the Nigerian political/administrative space, the civil service was co-opted with some civil servants manning ministerial posts, thereby giving them enormous powers to initiate economic, social, and political policies and at the same time executing them. This brought about the breakdown of accountability for public spending and a lack of probity in the service (Agbodike et al., 2015). Between 1988 and June 1994, some \$12.5 billion in government revenues in extraordinary "Special Accounts" were unaccounted (Henderson, 1999). Writing about the Abacha family's US \$600 million loot stashed in various accounts in Switzerland, Ribadu (2010) stressed that it is important to note that almost all acts of financial haemorrhage are carried out with the active participation of career public administrators.

At the return of civilian administration in 1999, Ogundiya (2009) observes that corruption continued to grow unabated, notwithstanding the anti-corruption agencies and policies of the Chief Olusegun Obasanjo administration. Citing the Human Rights Watch (HRW) in 2007, he concluded that some Western diplomats had the belief that Nigeria lost between \$4 billion and \$8 billion yearly to corruption during the eight years of Obasanjo's administration.

In 2001, a Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Defence was accused of embezzling funds amounting to N450 million; between 1993 and 2000, the chairperson of the Educational Tax Fund (ETF), and the Accountant General of the Federation, the former Chairman of the Inland Revenue Services, were alleged to have embezzled funds of the ETF to the tune of N40 billion (Anazodo et al., 2012).

Other records of administrative corruption during the civilian era include the case of the former Inspector General of Police Tafa Balogun who was convicted in 2004. Though his salary was not more than \$25,000 per month, he had assets in Nigeria worth \$150 million and a foreign Bank account worth \$6.7 million (see Ribadu, 2010). There was also the case of the national identity card scheme which saw US \$214 million go down the drain with nobody able to account for it (see Daily Sun, June 14, 2010). In 2010, it was discovered that the sum of N5 billion was allocated to non-existent agencies in the budget. This happened with the active cooperation of bureaucrats (see Hassan et al., 2013).

Arguably at the top of the list of corruption cases being prosecuted by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in recent times are:

In 2009, EFCC arraigned two former comptrollers of Custom Service, Hannatu Sulaiman and Olufemi Taylor for alleged N3 billion waived for the importation of rice by the Vaswani brothers (see Gistmania, 2009).

In March 2011, ten suspects from the office of the Head of the Civil Service of

the Federation were arraigned alongside 30 companies on a 134-count charge for allegedly defrauding the Pensions Account, Office of the Head of Service of the Federation, to the tune of over N30 billion.

In December 2013, the EFCC said it discovered that Steve Oronsanye, a former Head of Service, and other top directors of the civil service allegedly conspired to defraud the country of N6.2 billion pension fund. The Money was alleged to have been stolen through complex contracts for biometric enrolment and payment for computer accessories that were never supplied.

There was a currency fraud in which the accused persons: Patience Okoro Eye, Afolabi Olufemi Johnson, Ilori Adekunle Sunday Kolawole Babalola, Olaniran Muniru Adeola and Fatai Adedokun Yusuf, are being prosecuted by the EFCC for over N8billion mutilated currency “recycling” fraud (see [Mutum, 2015](#)).

There was the trial of an ex-Director General of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Patrick Akpobolokemi and five others for allegedly converting to their personal use, a total of N2, 658,957,666 belonging to NIMASA (see [Soyele, 2023](#); [Oladimeji, 2016](#)).

In May 2015, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) arrested a top official of the Nigerian Prisons Service, Dr (Mrs) Imaobong Akon Esu-Nte. The suspect, a Grade Level 14 Officer with the Federal Ministry of Finance seconded to the Nigerian Prison Service as Head of Capital Accounts, was picked up on a tip-off regarding the suspect’s lifestyle which was inconsistent with her position as a public servant on a monthly salary of N121, 460 (\$751). The report has it that she failed to provide an explanation for the nearly N60million she paid in various tranches, into the account of Redeem Christian Church of God, a prominent Pentecostal church in Karu, a suburb of Abuja (see [Anu, 2015](#)).

There is the case of the former Comptroller of the Nigerian Customs Service, Abdullahi Dikko, investigated for fraud in diverting some N40b from the agency’s coffers ([Odunsi, 2016](#)). He later returned the sum of N1bn to the federal government (see [Oluwagbemi, 2016](#)) and had the charges dismissed by the federal high court, Abuja, on the inability of the anti-graft agency to apprehend him, because he (Dikko) jumped bail and fled the country (see [Sanni, 2020](#)).

Former Chairman of the Pension Reform Task Team, Abdulasheed Maina, was tried for allegedly stealing N2.8 billion (see [Odunsi, 2016](#)).

There is the trial of 2 retired senior military officers, Sarki Yarki-Bello, a retired General and Director of Counter Terrorism and Bello Fadike, a retired Colonel who worked with the former National Security Adviser, Mr Sambo Dasuki (who himself was under trial for allegedly diverting the sum of \$2.1 billion meant for the purchase of arms) (see [Ibekwe, 2016](#)).

The Minister of Information and Culture, Lai Mohammed, at a press conference, to announce a National Sensitization Campaign against corruption in Abuja on Monday, January 17, 2016, declared that 12 former civil servants stole over N14.18 billion, while 8 people in the banking industry allegedly stole N524

billion (see [Tukur, 2016](#)).

A former Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Adesola Amosu (retd.) has been on trial alongside Jacob and Gbadebo Owodunmi on 13 counts of fraud involving the diversion of N21 billion belonging to the Nigeria Air Force since 2016. The Economic and Financial Commission obtained a final forfeiture of the sum of N2.5 billion found in Amosu's bank accounts.

The former Chairman of the defunct Pension Reforms Taskforce Team, Abdulasheed Maina alongside his son, Faisal, has been standing trial before an Abuja High Court, on a 12-count charge and 3-counts respectively, over the alleged laundering of the sum of N2 billion pension funds. He was reported to have jumped bail and absconded to the Niger Republic where he was re-arrested on November 30, 2020, and has been in custody ever since.

In another instance, five people, including the former Director of the Police Pension Fund, Esai Dangabar, were accused of misusing N32.8 billion from the Police Pension Fund. Mr Dangabar accused some committee members of the Senate of benefiting from the loot. [Premium Times \(2020\)](#) reported that the Senate denied the allegation without ordering an investigation and that nothing has been heard of the case ever since.

Since 2017, a former Group Managing Director of the Nigerian Petroleum Corporation, Andrew Yakubu, has been standing trial for money laundering, after the sums of \$9,772,800 and £74,000 were recovered from his home in Kaduna.

On February 20, 2019, the federal high Court sitting in Abuja, sentenced Tony Omenyi, a former Air Vice Marshal of the Nigerian Air Force, to seven years imprisonment after the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission was able to prove its money laundering charges against him, in the sum of N136 million (see [Sahara Reporters, 2019](#)).

In 2020, the former Head of Civil Service, Winifred Oyo Ita was arranged alongside Garba Umar and Ubong Okon Effiok on bribery charges worth N467 million. The companies listed were Frontline Ace Global Services Ltd, Asanaya Projects Ltd, Slopes International Ltd, Good deal Investment Ltd and Prince Mega Logistics Ltd (see [Daily Trust, 2021](#)).

The Chairman of the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission, ICPC, on October 28, 2021, announced that the agency recovered 301 houses from two public officers in the Federal Capital Territory. Speaking at the inauguration of the House of Representatives ad-hoc Committee on Investigation of the Operations of Real Estate Developers, the ICPC chairman said while 241 buildings were recovered from one of the suspects at different locations within the FCT, the remaining 60 were recovered on a large expanse of land at another location (see [Ojo, 2021](#)).

Recently, the House of Representatives Committee on Public Accounts announced that it uncovered how the federal Fire Service expended over N1 billion on recruitment and logistics between 2017 and 2022, without recourse to laid

down financial rules (see [Abulu & Akubo, 2022](#)).

In May 2022, the immediate past Accountant General of the Nigerian federation, Amed Idris was arrested and suspended from service following allegations that he fraudulently amassed the sum of N80 billion through bogus consultancy contracts and other illegal activities using proxies, associates and family members. Later in the same month, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, announced that it had uncovered another N90 billion alleged fraud involving the suspended Accountant-General of the Federation, Ahmed Idris. He is currently remanded at the Kuje Correctional Facility on the order of the court, on charges of stealing and criminal breach of trust to the tune of N109.4 billion (see [Ejekwonyilo, 2022](#)).

6. Consequences of Administrative Corruption on Development in Nigeria

The effects of corruption, whether from the general public administrative institutions of governance or the core civil service platforms within a country, have generally been known to be deleterious and overwhelming, such as has been experienced in Nigeria. The negative effects are by no means exhaustive but a few are considered within the context of this paper:

Corruption in the public service sector implies that public servants have jettisoned their commitment to national consensus and development for their selfish ends, hence the cumulative impact of turning individual public service positions into market centres for profit maximizations undermines commitment to the ends of the public and stifles national development by extension.

The inclination of public officials to engage in corruption naturally predisposes such officials to distort due process and introduce, sustain and perpetuate all forms of complex bureaucratic processes and bottlenecks that were not originally embedded or envisaged within the operational codes of their practices. These bottlenecks, therefore, undermine/slow down public service deliveries and implementation of public policies; aggravate the already existing red-tape conditions of the service; and exacerbate the efficiency of public service.

Complex administrative mechanisms discourage foreign direct investments and foreign aid and deprive the state of development avenues and technical assistance, especially worse for a state that is largely import/foreign technology dependent.

The monies diverted either directly by core public service administrative officials or by the abetment of political office holders to institutionalize grand corruption are public funds that should have been utilized for the overall development of society. This flows from the thesis of this paper that corruption, whether at the political or administrative levels of governance, is largely made possible only to the extent of involvement of administrative officials who are first and foremost, chief accounting officers of Ministries, Departments of Agencies of government, as envisaged in extant civil service reforms, conditions of service,

financial standards and other operational documents.

The diversion of state funds for personal use means that the state is deprived of resources which should have been utilized for development. This results in the continuous widening of the income gap between the few corrupt ones and the generality of others who do not have access to such funds.

Widespread corruption impugns the development capabilities of the state, earning the state the inglorious deposition of a weak state, weak state structures and weak institutions. All these mean that enforcement mechanisms are undermined, where crimes and all forms of ills are perpetuated without adequate check or control.

Weak state structures result in poor policy implementation, total policy failures, increasing poverty and corresponding resort to crime and general insecurity.

7. Conclusion

Corruption has been a cankerworm on the development strides of Nigeria, worse where administrative personnel, instead of the diligent execution of work under extant codes of public administration, convert such positions to market-centred platforms for personal profit. The paper fingered administrative corruption as the bedrock of all other forms of corruption, given that no politician can conclude and effectively perpetuate any act of grand corruption without the active connivance of the public servant who, most often (as experts/technocrats in public policy affairs), are also the source of criminal knowledge/information on where and how politicians can pilfer public coffers.

Recommendations

On the strength of the imperatives of administrative corruption on development in Nigeria, as gleaned from the context of this paper, the following recommendations are made to curb the menace in our society:

Government should abolish the plea bargain culture of making corrupt officials return just a paltry portion of their loot while retaining freedom. This is certainly not enough for deterrence, rather successfully tried corrupt officials, when found guilty, should face the full consequences of prescribed jail terms and all property linked to such individuals completely forfeited by the government. This will make corruption unattractive to would-be corrupt officials;

It is possible that some public officials who resort to all other forms of quiet corrupt acts or embezzle government money do so in a bid to survive and make ends meet with growing personal/family responsibilities, in the face of poor remuneration and galloping inflation that reduces the expendable income of public servants. The Nigerian government needs to better cater to the needs of its employees through other welfare packages like workers' housing schemes, family health insurance, educational loan facilities for workers' children etc., so that they do not resort to corrupt means to provide for their families;

Unfortunately, retired public servants carry out for many years, often spanning decades, and sometimes die without accessing their retirement benefits, especially the gratuities. In such a scenario, it is difficult to dissuade public officials from engaging in corrupt acts, since, by experience, they are almost certain that these entitlements may never come or may come only when it is too late. Government should therefore work out modalities to ensure the prompt payment of retirement benefits to public servants. This would certainly reduce the push to still on the part of several conscientious public officials; and

It is important for the government to continuously carry out reforms that are germane to the sanitization of the public sector to reduce the level of corruption, going by the inescapable consequences they harbour for the overall development of the country. If these recommendations or modifications of them are carried out, it is believed that the issue of endemic corruption would be reduced, at least from the platform of administrative officials of Ministries, Agencies and Departments of government.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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