

CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS, AN IMPEDIMENT TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: ISSUE FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

Iliya Bawa¹, Nyikyaa Miriam Nguavese², Garba Ibrahim³

¹Department of Marketing, ²Department of Accounting

³Department of Public Administration

Federal Polytechnic Nasarawa — Nigeria.

Email: iliyabawa84@gmail.com

Abstract: *Scholars have subverted democracy through sycophancy. They use their skills to turn from serving the cause of democracy, rule of law and good governance into perpetuating authoritarianism, corruption, lawlessness and abuse of fundamental right. The achievement of the Educational system is recognized by the quality of instruction given to the students as well as the output product inform of graduates. The intellectuals who are supposed to give policy relevant advice have for the past decades served as sycophants in the service of military dictators and Politicians. The objective of the study is to examine corruption and its impediments on Nigeria Higher Educational sector. The study used secondary source of data gleaned from text books, journals, the internet, magazines and newspapers, relevant to the subject matter. From which conclusion was made. It was recommended that intellectuals and leaders need to be more transparent and show a high degree of accountability in discharging their duties.*

Keywords: *Corruption, Economic development, governance, higher education, impediment.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Corruption unarguably incapacitates economic growth and development. All over the world especially among developing countries, this negative impact is associated directly or indirectly with many anti-political unrest and low standard of living. Ribadu (2009) states that the African Union has reported that corruption drains the region of some \$140billion a year which is about 25% of the continents GDP. The corruption endemic in our region is not just about bribery but about mismanagement, incompetency, abuse of office and inability to establish justice and the rule of law.

In Nigeria, the first generations of higher institutions were few in number, and small in size and their financial requirements are moderate. The student population was small and the academic programmes were few. Universities, polytechnics and other tertiary institutions, teachers in those years were among the highest paid in the society. They enjoyed exquisite perquisites of academic life such as unrestricted access to conferences, reward publications and other intellectual development facilities locally and internationally. The quality of institutional products was of international standard (Shehu, 2005). By 1980 a well regarded higher educational system offering internationally accepted instructions in a number of disciplinary areas had been established.

Education is the bedrock of any development. The present state of education in Nigeria is pathetic, with secondary school levels at 13% quality, and primary school levels even lower than this. The literacy rate in Nigeria is presently less than the Asia average of 90%. Japan has 100% literacy rate, and Nigeria figure, keep dropping due to lack of adequate and proper funding of education (Ayodele, Olafemi & Ebong, 2013).

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Tega (1994) noted that there has been gross underfunding of the education sector in the past two decades in Nigeria. The meager resources that actually went into the system were quite often mismanaged, misapplied or misappropriated by corrupt university administrators. Aiyedun (2004) confirmed that scholars have subverted democracy through sycophancy. They use their skills to turn from serving the cause of democracy, rule of law and good governance into perpetuating authoritarianism, corruption, lawlessness and abuse of fundamental right. The deterioration in the educational sector specially in terms of infrastructure and conditions of intellectuals diminished the possibilities of Nigerian scholars playing a fundamental role in the repositioning of the country.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The objectives of the study are:

- To examine corruption in Nigeria tertiary institutions and its impediments to economic development
- To provide ways for good governance.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study is qualitative in nature, it is a review with data drawn largely from secondary source. Relevant data were therefore gathered from published work of scholars in the field, documented facts, and related literatures from journals, articles, newspapers as well as online information were used from which contents analysis, conclusion and recommendation was made.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW:

The concept of corruption

United Nations (2002) defines corruption descriptively to include bribery, embezzlement, illicit enrichment, abuse of office, laundering of proceeds of corruption and obstruction of justice among others as corrupt acts.

Though, Jain (2001) observed that there is no universally accepted definition of corruption because of differences in political, social and cultural perceptions across peoples and nations. The Transparency International (1996) defines corruption as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain”. In a similar vein, the World Bank (2000) encapsulates corruption as “the abuse of public power for private benefit”. Mbaegbu, Okonkwo & Agbagiogu (2015) traced the history of corruption in high places from pre-independence and the first republic era to the present third republic. The findings of the paper lead to the conclusion that there has been a correlation between the incidence of mass poverty and official corruption in Nigeria. Poverty is the evidence of underdevelopment. Corruption, therefore is related to mass poverty and underdevelopment.

According to Osoba (2007), one of the main factors responsible for the endemic spread and sustenance of official corruption in Nigeria has been the long history of direct government intervention in economic activities. Though this intervention is often carried out in the proclaimed attempt to direct and control economic activities. The regulatory efforts so adapted often results to bureaucratic corruption and the multiplicity of corrupt public officers.

Corruption and Nigeria Economic Development

Corruption distracts the economy through waste and misallocation of resources and creates the need for external assistance. In 1991, Transparency International rated Nigeria as the most corrupt country on earth, followed by Pakistan and Kenya. Since then there has been little or no improvement. According to Transparency International (2007), corruption on the part of government, the private sector and citizens affects development initiatives at their very root by skewing decision-making, budgeting and implementation processes.

There seems to be little or no change as Transparency International in 2009 ranked Nigeria among the most corrupt nations in a corruption perception index (CPI) report. In the report Nigeria tied with three other sub-Saharan Africa countries (Mauritania, Mozambique and Uganda) with a score of 2.5 ranking 27 out of 47 in the region. As stated in the report, countries that score 3.0 or above are perceived as relatively less corrupt. Botswana ranked 37 in the world and 1st in the region with CPI score of 5.6. New Zealand is rated the cleanest occupying the first slot with 9.2 CPI (Business Day Wednesday 18, November, 2009).

One of the sectors of the economy where corruption is hindering development in Nigeria is the energy sector. Ayodele (1988) observed that the energy sector has always been in crises such that the per capital consumption of electricity in Nigeria was estimated at 100 kilowatts per hour (kwhr) as against 4.500 kwhr in South Africa, 1934kwhr in Brazil and 1379kwhr in China.

In 1999 when democracy was restored, Nigerians were assured of more regular supply of electricity. In 2006 the administration pumped in a whopping \$16billion into the power sector (Ajanaku, 2015). Yet until the end of that administration after 8 years power generation was on the average as low as 2,800 megawatts. The sector was flattened and many vibrant industries relocated to Ghana to develop the country by creating jobs there while using Nigeria as a market for their products.

Tunji (2015) noted that more funds were pumped in subsequently before the power sector was privatized into Generating Companies (Gencos) and Distribution Company (Discos). Yet the problem of power supply has worsened. There have been days during the first quarter of 2016 when electricity generation from Gencos was zero megawatts partly because of vandalization of gas pipelines and partly because of corrupt practices. The various administration from 1999 to 2015 made noise about fighting corruption yet the anti-corruption organizations they set up, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) have not seriously prosecuted any corrupt official and jail him or her to serve as deterrent. Ibrahim (2014) reported that in the fuel subsidy scam, Nigeria lost N2trillion annually and that was never resolved until power changed over in 2015 and nothing has been heard of it again. Daily, Newspapers reeled out corruption cases involving various ministries, arms deal by the military brass and recently the N40billion padding of the 2016 budget. Though the issue of padding of the budget was first reported in 2010. Writing under the heading “Greedy law makers” Ayorinde (2010) reported how the National Assembly armtwisted the presidency to approve over bloated budgets for their selfish and corrupt uses. The amounts reported run into trillions of naira from 2008 to 2010. In 2008, N2.4trillion was

presented and N2.7trillion was approved. In 2009, N2.8trillion was presented but N3.1trillion was approved. In 2010 N4.1trillion was presented and 4.6trillion was approved. The amount approved included the amount padded by the law makers for their corrupt uses.

Igbokwe (2009) observed that a United State based agency rated Nigeria as 15th out of the 177 countries that have greater tendencies to fail in the world. The fund for peace in its 2009 failed states index of 177 countries has this to say “although Nigeria is an oil rich nation, oil revenue scarcely benefits the majority of Nigerians, and instead elites and criminals benefits from the vast oil reserves. In order to improve its economy, oil revenue should increasingly be directed toward public services programmes”. Yusuf (2015) noted that it has been estimated that the amount of revenue earned by Nigeria since independence in 1960 was over \$600 billion out of which Nigeria has lost \$400billion to corruption. The current regime under the leadership of President Mohammadu Buhari put the amount stolen in the past decade alone at over N150billion (Tribune 21 July 2015 p.1). these funds could have been used to develop the country if Nigeria had good leaders.

Corruption in Higher educational Sector

Education is the gateway to knowledge and progress. Knowledge is power; the future of this country depends on the access of the children to good functional education. Education has remained the best and key instrument per excellence for individual and social development. The philosophy of education in Nigeria for instance concentrates on sector for national development, focusing on the worth and development of individual for the sake of that individual and as a basic sector. It is viewed as a good investment in nations development. It is believed that quantity and quality of education given to any nation’s citizenry determine to a large extent the quality of output expected of them.

The issue of quality education remains a major problem in the context of the rapid expansion of the education system, the compelling desire to have more citizens access to education. Consequently, education in Nigeria has concerned itself mainly with quantity as opposed to quality. Thus experts have argued that our education has for long concerned for qualitative improvement. Critics point out that the policy markers and planers are more concerned with the number of education and number graduating rather than with the quality of graduates (Oguntoye, 2000). What this implies, according to Durasaro (2010), is that the educational system should produce quantity and quality human, resources required for the economy’s growth using the right mix of inputs. Once we accept that education is part, if not the corner stone of national development, it will become obvious that national policies of education should focus on acquisition of knowledge and technological disciplines that will enhance development.

As a nation, corruption has eaten up most public institutions. Corruption has led to the construction of substandard roads, hospitals and schools, power supply has become elusive. Corruption has fought EFCC to a stand still, and we are so ideological and psychologically weak that we cannot revolve to destroy the root. The National Assembly that is supposed to stem corruption is deep into it. Our educational institutions have the serious problem of internal corruption to content with. The corruption involve both the students, lecturer’s and both non- academic staff, parents and politicians. It comes in different forms of compulsory fees, sales of handout, poor project conception and examination, students given bribes for grades, examination malpractices and others.

Ogu (2010) noted that Nigerian politicians scramble for appointments into the governing councils of Nigerian tertiary institutions where they share the funds allocated to such institution only to turn around and lament the rot in educational system. Education has become attainable by those who can afford. With crime rate on the increase, terrorism has become the order of the day. Ethics and principles have been dumped into the trash can, the issue of what is right and what is wrong of people conduct and national ideals have become distorted. Within these changes politics also altered its cause, characterized by lack of good governance, dishonesty, corruption within the leadership with no regard to moral principles and ethical value. Politicians rig elections and embezzle national treasures. Can the younger ones who are the product of such a system learn any good thing? The vast majority of Nigerians are ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed and ill-educated. They live in the rural areas characterized by massive underdevelopment. Poverty is the basic malady of Nigeria which is involved in misery-go-round as part of the slum of the world economy (Onyenekenwa, 2011).

The culture of merit and excellence was the hallmark of Nigeria tertiary institutions. It was free from nepotism, and tribalism which was prevalent in the larger society. The resultant outcome was the production of scholars of international repute who became Vice Chancellors, Rectors or Provost of reputable institutions. Today, when a Vice Chancellor, Rector or Provost is to be appointed, all sorts of pressure groups come up to insist that only son or daughter of the soil should head the institution. This contraption is at variance with the desire for inclusive globalized thinking in the rest of the world. People irrespective of where you came should be given equal chances to contest. Good governance has no state of origin.

Good Governance:

Good governance could generally be described as government that meets or satisfy the yearning or needs of people in-terms of development and welfare. It include institutional and structural arrangements, decision making,

processes, policy formulation and implementation capacity, development of personal information flows and the nature and style of leadership within a political system. Hence government is largely about problem identification and solving (Ilusoye 2010).

Dogara (2016) noted that good governance has three principal characteristics: participation, transparency, and accountability. Participation has to do with involvement and inclusiveness of the citizens in the affairs of government. The public plays a significant role in choosing their leaders and representations. Transparency envisages that activities and decisions of government are open to public view and scrutiny. Transparency, promotes efficiency and effectiveness in governance. Accountability denotes the degree to which government or any of its agencies are held responsible for its action.

In the final analysis, Dogara (2016) enumerated what he termed as the key principle of good governance in the public sector, and argued that the function of good governance in the public sector is to ensure that entities act in the public interest at all times. This, among others include; strong commitment to integrity, ethical values and the role of law; and openness and comprehensive stakeholders engagement. In addition to the requirements for acting in the public interest, good governance in the public sector also requires: defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economics, social and environmental benefits; determining the intervention necessary to optimize the achievement interested outcomes; developing the capacity of the entity, including the capacity of its leadership and the individuals within it; managing risks, and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management; and implementation of good practices in transparency and reporting to deliver effective accountability.

6. CONCLUSION:

Nigerian needs leaders that can utilize judiciously the country's abundant human and natural resources to enhance the capacity to compete in the global system. In this way she will be able to enjoy a fair share of the benefits of profound social economics and technological interactions that now pervade the entire world. The Nigerian educational sector must be well positioned to be able to contribute significantly and actively to national development. When the higher educational sectors becomes innovative, inventive and are focused on addressing the needs of their immediate community using system based on the degree of excellence and integrity. When all of us courageously, scientifically and truthfully challenge the methods and the administration and control of these institution by our government and its agencies. Then we would have recognized that excellence has a universal definition and not coloured by national standard. On the long run nothing beats excellence and integrity; it may take time, but it is worth fighting and waiting for.

7. RECOMMENDATION:

- i. Our tertiary institutions must dedicate themselves to encouraging teaching and research.
- ii. Newer tertiary institutions should be mentored by older ones, and promotion of synergy between Nigerian tertiary institutions with their international counterparts should be encouraged, this will make it possible for them to widen their horizon through deliberate promotion of linkages.
- iii. For the educational sector to work towards national development, it must protect the sanctity of examination. It is the determinant of the certificates of the institution itself.
- iv. Our tertiary institutions must be properly equipped to undertake the training and development of skilled manpower relevance to our national development through presentation of the culture of merit and excellence.
- v. The high rate of corruption has encouraged non-compliance and down graded hard work. Government should develop a framework that would encourage and reward honesty and hard-work while spelling out punishment for non-compliance or violation of the rules. The sanitization arms of the government, the ICPC and the EFCC must step up action towards stopping dubious government officials from stealing public funds.
- vi. On a general note, the intellectuals and our leaders need to be more transparent and show a high degree of accountability in discharging their duties

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