

CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA AND WHAT IS EXPECTED FROM THE POLICY MAKERS

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Introduction

Human society cannot sustain its existence and development without set of laws, rules and regulations that differentiate between right and wrong, which regulated the acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Laws put a ceiling in the life of men by apportioning powers, responsibilities and obligations for political office holders, bureaucrats and citizens. Although rules and regulations are meant to ensure peace, progress and tranquility, they are useless without enforcement agents that ensure compliance, arrest violators and prosecute suspects in a court of law to serve as deterrence to others especially intending criminals. Corruption and its practices in Nigeria have become endemic despite the laws established by the state and anti-corruption agencies. Thus, there is need to commence an opinion survey on people's perception with the aim of ascertaining its root causes and the measures to be taken as a right step towards curtailing corruption in the country.

Therefore, it's against this background the paper seek to explore some measures expected to be taken by the policy makers in an efforts to curtail corrupt practices in Nigeria.

The concept of corruption

Corruption is perhaps the most serious challenge facing African Nations, threatening all aspects of life socio-cultural, political, economic, religious and educational. Nye (1967) defines corruption as "behavior which deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private-regarding (personal, family members, friend's clique) pecuniary or status gains; or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private-regarding influence". This definition involves four simple assertions: That public officials deviate from their formal public role; secondly, they do deviate because of pecuniary or status inducement by private individuals or groups; thirdly, this deviation violates the rules and regulations of the land; fourthly, all these are done to achieve private benefit, (Cheri, 2015). In a similar vein, it is defined as "a form of secret social exchange through which those in power (political or administrative) take personal advantage, of one type or another, of the influence they exercise by virtue of their mandate or their function" (Méry cited in Amundsen, 1999:7) In addition to the four features of Nye's definition, Méry adds that corruption is often done in secret, far away from

the public eye. This feature makes research on the issue a very difficult and dangerous engagement as both corrupt and the corrupters can derogate, injure, or even kill. Nonetheless, in all definitions of the term, the state appears as the key player which explains why the working definition of World Bank and Transparency International remains that corruption is the abuse of public power for private benefit (or profit).

Corruption in Nigeria and the policy expectation

Corruption in Nigeria has become an order of the day in every sector of human endeavor such as economy, social-cultural and political aspects, despite the existence and efforts of anti-corruption agencies such as EFCC, ICPC, Code of Conduct Bureau, legislative branches of government expected to perform an oversight functions for checks and balances and the stand of present administration on its commitment in the fight against corruption. This has become an irony within which the severity of the corrupt practices still remains as its peak; to the extend corruption in Nigeria has become cankerworm that makes developmental agenda nearly impossible to be achieved as a result of some hindering factors that served as a setbacks in the fight against corruption by the government institutions and other agencies responsible for the fight against corruption, researches has revealed that these factors include indiscipline, lack of

patriotism and integrity of the nationals, executives interferences on the activities of anti-corruption agencies, lacks of modern tools/gadgets of detecting and combating corruption, delay in the judgments of corrupt government officials by the courts, nepotism in the public services among others. Therefore, it is against the aforementioned background that the direction of the paper will portray in exploring some recommendations that would serve as measures in addressing the negative practice by the public policy makers as a way forward in the fight against the “monster” that becomes a setback to the progress of our dear nation and to some researches corrupt practices are the root causes that paved way for the proliferation of social vices such as poverty, insecurity, hunger, violent conflict etc in our contemporary Nigerian society. The following are the suggested measures expected to be adopted by policy makers to curtail and prevent corrupt practices in Nigeria:

- i. Institutions of Government should be strengthened through government policies to be zero-tolerant oriented on corruption;
- ii. Anti-corruption agencies should be allowed to operate independently without executive interference(s) and government should provide them with adequate (and needed) funds for their operations;

- iii. There's need for the creation of Special Courts and Tribunals to deal with corruption-related cases within shortest possible time;
- iv. The Legislatures should amend (when needed) outdated laws on corruption to reflect the contemporary Nigerian reality;
- v. The government should improve (and reform when needed) the public service especially on areas of recruitment, training, promotion to be based on meritocracy and ensure good payment of salaries and wages on due time;
- vi. Institute discipline amongst the nationals through the national orientation agency and the Government Policies such as War Against Indiscipline and Change Begins with me campaign and ensure its implementation and its success;
- vii. The operation of the institutions shouldered with the fight against corruption and corrupt practices should be extended to Local Governments level;
- viii. Modern tools for combating corrupt practices like electronic surveillances such as CCTVs should be introduced at MDAs to help in monitoring the activities of personnel; and

ix. The government should encourage nationalism and patriotism among the citizens through Public Policies.

Conclusion

The paper concluded that the fight against corruption that have bedeviled the political system which become pervasive in nature because of its severity has tilted and hit the highest point to the extent that corruption has made development nearly impossible in the contemporary Nigerian society. Therefore, the above mentioned recommendations and suggestions would help anti-corruption agencies and policy maker's fight against corruption to be win when there's political will and commitments.

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