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AN ASSESSMENT OF CORRUPTION, SECURITY CHALLENGES AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROWTH OF NIGERIA'S SOCIAL ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract

In the world over, it has been proved that no other variable has foment crisis in human societies than corruption. This attests to the fact that corruption breeds insecurity. Undoubtedly, security holds a pride of place in the life of any nation and considering the fact that it determines the status of other phenomenon in the society makes it outstanding. The neglect of security can spell a doom for nation because a crisis of an hour can destroy provisions of centuries. This paper therefore examined the nexus between corruption and crisis cum insecurity. It argued that corruption instigates crisis which brings about insecurity and adverse effect on economic growth. It posited that the most aggravating aspect of corruption which breeds crisis is embezzlement which most of Nigerian leaders exhibit in social administration, thereby denying the citizenry of good governance. In conclusion, the paper advocated that our leaders should be more focused in social administration as opposed to the corrupt act which they presently display that has been instigating citizens' annoyance cum crisis in the society. If socio-economic growth would be realizable, the political administration of the country must be strictly censored and sanctioned by law of enforcement.

Keywords: *Crisis, Corruption, Security, Society, Administration, Development*

Introduction

Nigeria is one of the countries in West Africa sub - region whose development has been undermined by the menace of corrupt practices by her leaders. Corrupt practices in Nigeria are very glaring and have permeated every segment of the society (Anazodo,

Okoye & Ezenwile, 2012). In Nigeria, corruption has been identified as the major bane of urgently needed development. As Agba (2010) puts it, corruption remains the greatest threat to the attainment of sustainable development and Millennium Development Goals (MDGS), and even to the continued existence of the Nigerian State. Corruption inhibits socio-economic development and denies equitable distribution of wealth and makes some sections of the country, which are considered ethnically disadvantaged, remain worst off in the distributive arrangement of national resources. Corruption has proved ubiquitous mixing with individual blood and societal life, where officials not only personalize public office but also personify it.

Dike (2003) contends that corruption is a function of great inequality in wealth distribution. The perception that political offices are the primary means of gaining access to wealth, conflict between changing moral codes, weakness of social and governmental enforcement mechanism and lack of a strong sense of national community. Gray and Kaufmann (1998) identified seven factors that engender corruption; these are: the value of wages and salaries, presence of strong opportunities and awareness of how to perpetrate corruption, weak measures against accountability, population, national resources, lack of political will and indecisive pressure and assistance from the global community. The lack of will to enforce the law in due apprehension and sanction of offenders irrespective of their social status forms the basis of grievance expressions by aggrieved citizens who seek to administer justice in redressing their plight their own way; hence, the security challenges posed by the various insurgent groups.

In any academic discourse, there are terminologies that tend to elicit varying meanings according to each scholar's perception of the issue. It is in this context that the need to clarify our usage of some concepts in the paper has become imperative. Each of the concepts employed in the title of the paper are briefly examined (Abdullahi, Abdullahi, & Yelwa, 2012).

Corruption

Khan (1996) defines corruption as an act which deviates from the formal rules of conduct governing the actions of someone in a position of public authority because of private-regarding motive such as wealth, power or status. Otite (2000) argues that corruption is the perversion of integrity or state of affairs through bribery, favour or moral depravity. It takes place when at least two parties have interacted to change the structure or processes of the society or the behaviour of functionaries in order to produce dishonest, unfaithful or defiled situations. In other words, corruption is a systematic vice in an individual, society or a nation which reflects favouritism, nepotism, tribalism, sectionalism, undue enrichment, amassing of wealth, abuse of office, power, position and derivation of undue gains and benefits. Corruption also includes bribery, smuggling, fraud, illegal payments, money laundering, drug trafficking, falsification of documents and records, window dressing, false declaration, evasion, underpayment, deceit, forgery, concealment, aiding and abetting of any kind to the detriment of another person, community, society or nation.

Security

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2010), defines security as protection. The activities involved in protecting a country, building or person against attack, danger, etc. It is the protection against something bad that might happen in future. Nwanebo and Odigbo (2013) asserted that the need for security necessitated the social contract in which people willingly surrender their rights to an organ (government) who oversees the survival of all.

Challenges

Challenges refer to new or difficult tasks that test somebody's ability and skill. It is an invitation or a suggestion to somebody that they should enter a competition, fight, and the likes. For an event to be challenging, it means that such event is difficult in an interesting way and it tests your ability.

Socio-Economic Growth

This refers to the development of the economy and the society simultaneously. This concept emphasised the growth and development of the economy cum society of a particular place.

Assessment

It is an opinion or a judgment about something or somebody that has been thought about very carefully. It is the act of judging or forming an opinion about something or somebody (Hornby, 2010).

Implications of Corrupt Acts of Nigerian Leaders

According to Joseph et al., (1996) quoted in Fagbadebo (2007), scholars have described Nigeria as an "Unfinished state" and "a truculent African tragedy" who in the midst of abundant human and material resources are propelled in the vicious cycle of poverty and autocracy Leadership Corruption according to Anazodo, Okoye and Ezenwile (2012), has been one of the greatest concerns to all observers of the country's socio-political and economic development. The menace of corruption by Nigerian leaders has certainly emerged as one of the main impediments to national development. Corruption by Nigerian leaders has caused the country severe losses economically, politically and socially, and these facts are responsible for decayed infrastructure, downturn of the economy, fragile political institution, and steady decline in all indicators of national development (Fagbadebo, 2007).

Babatunde (2008) observed that in Nigeria, it surprises many as to why a country so endowed, both in human and mineral resources, is well ridden with underdevelopment in perpetuity. However, in any analysis of why Nigeria's greatness is being delayed or slowed down, and why majority of her people have failed to see democracy as a means to development, corruption has remained a chief variable. Corruption is found more in government institutions, the executive arm, the Legislative arm, and the Judiciary. Various past and present Nigerian leaders have been indicted for being corrupt to the Macro level. Research has shown that the levels of corruption under various

administrations are enormous. For example, Alli, Odunuga and Ikuomola (2016) specified that fifty-five privileged Nigerians stole #1.34 trillion from the treasury between 2006 and 2013, according to the Federal Government. The period of the looting spans the last three administrations of former president Olusegun Obasanjo, the late Umaru Musa Yar'Adua and Goodluck Jonathan. The minister of information, Alhaji Lai Mohammed disclosed that the 55 people involved in the act include 15 ex-governors, 4 ex-ministers, 5 ex-legislators, 7 ex-federal public servants, 5 ex-state public servants, 8 Bankers, and 11 Businessmen. Adeleke and Adeboye (2016) asserted that with the economy in dire straits and the country facing massive institutional challenges and infrastructural deficit, a collation by the point of funds purported stolen or misappropriated by the nation's leaders, their appointees or proxies in recent history, from the administration of former head of state, General Ibrahim Babangida (retd.) to the Jonathan era, put the value at about \$1.647trn. The implication of the massive theft according to economists is that over the years, a lot of facilities have been left to decay, social institutions have been broken and infrastructure is comatose, reducing productivity and stunting economic growth across various facets of national life. The Assets Investigation Panel which probed the governors and other public officers that served under General Yakubu Gowon (Retired) indicted ten out of twelve military governors. General Babangida's corrupt practices between 1989 and 1993 was put to one hundred and eighty six billion, nine million Naria (186.9billion), (Anazodo, Okoye & Ezenwile, Ibid).

Abdullahi, Abdullahi and Yelwa (2012) stressed that studies on corruption in Nigeria dates back to the first republic of 1963 to 1966. During this period, there were allegations of electoral malpractices evidence used by the military as justification to intervene in Nigeria's body politics in 1966. The anti-corruption crusade of the military interventionists too got entangled in the net of corruption. It is useful to observe that the Gowon era witnessed serious decline in "national morality with his supreme military council members accused of unprecedented personal aggrandizement and arbitrary awards of Jumbo contracts to friends, relations and foreign partners". Thus, the sudden petrodollar which dominated Nigeria's external revenue gave rise to greed, avarice and corruption.

There have been cases of official misuse of resources for personal enrichment. In spite of the abundant natural and human resources, the so-called Nigerian leaders have not only found it difficult to institute good governance and meaningful lifestyle for the citizens, they have also made living a normal life difficult for the average Nigerian. Since the creation of modern public administration in the country, there have been cases of official misuse of resources for personal enrichment. During the second Republic (1979-1983) under the leadership of Alhaji Shehu Shagari, the first executive president of Nigeria, there were numerous allegations of financial corrupt practices leveled against the government by the military government that overthrew it in December, 1983. The Shagari government promoted high rate of corrupt practices through the award of contracts (Adebote & Abimbola, 2012). Suberu (1990) quoting Bala Usman (1984) referred to the Shagari's Government as "Contractocracy regime", meaning, a government of contractors by contractors for contractors, all bonded by the logic of fraud and corruption.

Lawal and Tobi (2007) contested that corruption has been a cause for concern because it diverts already limited funds, undermines economic progress, provision of infrastructural facilities and impede policy changes required for development. Transparency International stated that Nigerian leaders are so corrupt that they loot government treasury at the expense of societal development. Maduagwu (1993) listed some of the highlights of Babangida's corrupt practices as \$200 million siphoned from the Aluminum and Smelter project, ₦400million wasted on Better life project, Huge extra budgeting spending of ₦186.9billion naira between 1989 and 1993. General AbdulSalami Abubakar was accused of depleting Nigeria's foreign reserve from \$7.6billion to \$3.8billion in May 1999. Late Gen. Abacha's loot top the list at \$20billion.

The exploits of Nigerian leaders in corrupt acts is inexhaustible; hence, the few ones evaluated. Corruption has been the major cause of poverty around the world with special emphasis on Nigeria. Poverty is the cause of intense human suffering. Also, poverty is considered as an effect or outcome of corruption. Poverty results from economic crisis and underdevelopment. It is understood as a consequence of political structure characterized by corruption in government, abuse of power, and widespread injustice. Thus, there is poverty because those who are in power take advantage of the underprivileged (Samar, 2008). Years of military rule, political instability, policy reversals, weak economic growth, and endemic corruption have been entrenched within the country alarming levels of poverty, inequality, and alienation among vast majority of its citizens (Katsina, 2012).

Nigerian leaders, according to Brimah, Bolaji and Brimah (2013), consider political activities as an investment which must profit the investor; hence, the transactive approach towards social administration and masses' welfare. After more than four decades of developmental efforts and management, Nigeria is still being classified as an underdeveloped poor country of the third world. Despite being one of the richest countries in the world in terms of human and natural resources, with the seventh largest reserves of crude oil, the country is still living below the poverty line with a gross national product per capital of ₦1,220. Brimah, Bolaji and Brimah, (Ibid) further argues that if the production of poverty-stricken citizens was not the aim of the Nigerian leaders, it would have occurred to them that paying workers ₦36,000 minimum wage should not be subjected to debate in the National Assembly before approval. Ironically, the discussant of the approval debate earns over ₦15.2million and ₦10.6million monthly, respectively. Even, the yet to be approved ₦18,000 minimum wage is less than one percent (1%) of the lawmakers' monthly pay. From the above, there is an indication that the various corrupt act of the Nigeria leaders, especially their embezzlement and financial misappropriation and misapplication, creates poverty and aggravates violence cum security challenges in the Nigerian society.

Poverty, Corruption and Security Challenges Implication for Socio-Economic Growth

Scweitzer, Kim and Mackin (1999) quoted in Katsina (2012) argues that one of the inevitable consequences of urbanization, especially in the third world countries is the spread of urban poverty. In-depth analysis reveals that the poverty in most of these

developing third world countries with special emphasis on Nigeria are artificially-inflicted poverty. Maier (2000) asserted that Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999 brought a number of expectations among the people. Years of military rule, political instability, policy reversals, weak economic growth, and endemic corruption have been entrenched within the country alarming levels of poverty, inequality, and alienation among vast majority of its citizens (Yagboyaju, 2011). The phenomenon of urban congestion, stretching of social services, and the impossibility of having enough employment opportunities among the urban dwellers contributes in no small measure to the spread of poverty in the urban areas (Baker & Schuler, 2004). For Curley (2005), this is mostly responsible for the spread of urban crime and violence. The lack of employment aggravated by mismanagement, embezzlement and corruption exhibited by our leaders in government instigates violence cum insecurity.

While emphasizing the fact that poverty is a major cause of violence in Nigeria with the main cause of poverty itself being unemployment, is an aftermath or by product of maladministration or bad governance. Closely related to this are the inadequately paid employed workers which also constitute poverty. Unemployment and poverty are so intertwined that one can easily confuse one for the other. Although, it is possible for one to be employed and still poor, this is likely to be a case of underemployment which reflects a significant feature of Nigeria's social administration. Aiyedogbon and Ohwofasa (2012) see unemployment as underemployment which reflects the failure to make use of an important factor of production, labour. According to conflicts theorists. Arazeeem and Saka (2007) testify that conflicts whether political, communal, ethnic or religious are often influenced or motivated by disparity rather than similarity among the people especially unequal ones, emphasizing Marx (1937) in the "Communist manifesto" that the history of all existing society is the history of class differences.

By implication, the disparity which influences conflicts in the Nigerian society is artificial and not natural; hence, the aggravation of the aggrieved class. Considering the injustice exhibited by the ruling class in terms of unequal distribution of income and the deliberate impoverishment of the masses, this instigates violence and brings about security challenges. The existing example in the Nigerian society is the Boko-Haram insurgency which resulted into violence as a means of curbing the excesses of political office holders in social administration. Their major argument being that if the occupants of political office holders are educated (Western education), and at the same time mismanaging and embezzling the government treasury, then such education or knowledge acquired is unlawful because it does not benefit the society, rather, it is injurious and destructive; hence Boko-Haram has carried out attacks on symbolic targets (Nees, 2013). Orhero (2015) argues that the spate of violence in Nigeria is symptomatic of a "failing state" if not a "failed state". A failed state describes a state which is unable to perform its legitimate functions, such as maintenance of its territorial integrity, the security of its population and property, including the provision of basic public services to its citizens, among others. Nmonye (2011) emphasized that youths' unemployment is often considered as a social problem, but it is also an industrial sociology issue especially as it relates to the supply of, and the demand for labour; because a lot of able bodies and willing workers are made to waste away, which affects

the development of the economy and the society at large. Moreover, in democracy, people have an obligation to become informed about public issues, to watch carefully how their political leaders and representatives use their powers, and to express their own opinions and interests. All these constitute indices of socio-economic growth if properly harnessed.

For Obumneke (2012), youths' unemployment has been identified as one of the core cause of the rising level of social disorder and insecurity permeating the entire country of Nigeria. Statistics of Nigerian unemployment seems to consist not of uneducated rural populations, who have been uprooted by falling agricultural production resulting from the absence of mechanization and decreasing incomes, but also of some highly educated populations as well who normally would form the core of the productive vanguard in a developing country. Adesoji (2010) asserted that in Nigeria, the marginalization and imbalance distribution or implementation of the resources made some radicalized scholars to preach against the government and democratic setting which later gave birth to the present Boko-Haram insurgency. Furthermore, Nigeria, a country with more than 160 million people, nearly 330 ethnic groups, more than 250 languages with 50% muslims and 40% Christians as well as 10% traditional belief is very poor (Shuaibu, Salleh & Shehu, 2015). Poverty is seen by many observers and analysts as the root cause of most ethno-religious crisis in Nigeria. In other words, many of Nigeria's unemployed and consequently poor are well educated even by European and American Standards. Nigeria's underemployment and low productivity constitute a vicious cycle that explains the endemic poverty in the country. Overall unemployment in Nigeria has affected youths from a broad spectrum of socio-economic groups, both the well and less-well educated, although it has particularly stricken a substantial fraction of youths from low income backgrounds and limited education. From the foregoing, it is obvious that unemployment, especially the unemployment of graduates, impedes Nigeria's progress in many ways. Apart from economic waste, it also constitutes danger for political stability (Ipaye, 1998). It is disturbing to note that Nigeria's graduates have limited chances of becoming gainfully employed. It is even more disheartening that the country's economic condition is such that it is hardly able to absorb an optimal proportion of the production of its own educational system (Obumneke, 2012).

According to the Transparency International (2008), the global coalition against corruption, combating poverty and corruption means addressing and overcoming the barriers that stand in the way of citizen's engagement and a state's accountability. TI's global corruption report (2004) signaled that corruption can be used to manipulate a country's political institutions, parties and process to maintain the status-quo-violating the rights of poor citizens and perpetuating poverty. The inability of the system to control, alleviate and abrogate corruption fuelled violence cum security problem in the Nigerian society. Ndikumana and Boyce (1998), asserted that corruption causes much more damage to the African people than to developed countries' populations. While the continent hosts some of the most destitute households in the world, it also counts some of the wealthiest individuals on the planet. Former Zairian dictator, Mobutu, once held assets abroad that exceeded his country's external debt. The former dictators of Nigeria amassed wealth in several billions of dollars by milking the country's oil reserves in

connivance with international oil corporations. The plunder of African resources is a double blow to African economies. It bleeds the countries of their resources and also denies the African people the benefits that may accrue from investment of the stolen funds in the country (Ndikumana, 2006). The foremost effect of corruption is that it leads to a reduction in economic growth and development by lowering incentives to invest; it also leads to a divestment in such economies: Corruption contributes immensely to inhibition of economic performance (Ajie & Wokekoro, 2012).

Conclusion

All said and done, the major problem that the country is facing today is the insincerity and insensitivity of her leaders to the needs of the ordinary people by whom they have been elected to serve, which brings about the insecurity problem we are currently facing (Ebegbulem, 2012). As a matter of fact, the Nigeria government spends a lot in mobilizing and motivating the military, para-military and other security outfits as a means of curbing the insecurity which the various crisis that corruption breeds has brought about. In the real sense of it, can huge spending on security operatives give us true peace? True peace can only be achieved if the government ensures steady provision of food for every citizen. For this to be assured, there must be meaningful employment for the citizens so that the idle minds that have been serving as the devil's workshop will stop being available for these vices. Lastly, if Nigeria desires being classified among the developing economies of the world, which is a prerequisite for development, designing and implementing programmes for the promotion of youth will be her utmost priority because without the youth, socio-economic growth will continue to elude her (Nigeria) which translates to the fact that she might never develop.

Recommendations

Anazodo, Okoye, and Ezenwile (2012) purported that studies have shown that leadership corruption manifests heavily as a result of greed by the leaders, spoil system, selfishness etc. These acts promote poverty and aggravate violence against the leaders. For the Nigerian society to improve from the current security problems she is currently experiencing, the following recommendations will assist in achieving a desired result:

1. There should be strict and stringent rules against embezzlement and other forms of maladministration in Nigeria which should be comparable to what obtains in China, i.e. death sentence for public office holders who embezzle amount up to the tune of five million Naira.
2. There should be basis and moral standard for the screening of applicants to political offices so that the occupants of the positions will lead by practical good examples.
3. Anti-graft agencies such as the E.F.C.C and I.C.P.C. should be fortified and empowered to investigate corrupt acts and prosecute duly without the elements of victimizing and wish-hunting political opponents.
4. Politics should be totally defaced, i.e. re-define as a social service rather than a calling whose remuneration stand above other jobs to the extent of citizens assassinating, kidnapping and attacking opposing contestant to the same political

positions. Salaries should be abrogated to some political positions like the houses of assemblies (state and Federal), Members of parastatals boards, and the likes. Occupants of these positions are supposed to be paid sitting allowances and not salaries let alone the embezzlement of public fund.

5. To reduce the youthful urge for violence, there must be a practical approach towards alleviating or abrogating embezzlement in all government positions by ensuring full recovery of embezzled fund from offenders in addition to serving jail terms. This will drastically reduce youthful involvement in violence and militancy as this forms the bulk of what impoverished a larger percentage of this group either by being unemployed or underemployed. (Immunity clause should be reviewed so that all offenders would be punished at the right time irrespective of their political positions).
6. As a way of reducing unnecessary government expenses, official positions created by government for their political supporters such as offices of the special assistants to the Presidents, Governors, Ministers of States should be cancelled. Events have revealed that these positions are mere duplication of duties which cost government several billions that would have been used to create jobs for the irate youth. The most ridiculous of these positions are the offices of the first ladies, i.e to the president, governors, ministers, senators, Commissioners, chairman of local governments and even commissioners and councilors. Despite the un-executive status of these offices, they so much wield a lot of power and command substantial part of the nations budget for unofficial duties. The most agonizing aspect is that these offices promote corruption which fuels youth restiveness and militancy.
7. Government should organize a kind of honorarium, social up-keep allowance to be inculcated in the budget for all graduates who has served but unable to secure gainful employment as a way of reducing the violent tendency in them. This should be designed in the Format used in the western world. (Social security allowance).
8. Government at all levels should be serious about job creation which mostly should focus agricultural production for local and foreign concern.

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