

The Concept of Organized and Chaotic Corruption and the Impact on Nigeria Economy

Cynado Cyril N.O. Ezeogidi

Division of General Studies, Anambra State University Uli, Nigeria

Abstract: *The issue of corruption in Nigeria is no longer news. What is news and in fact worrisome is the dimension that the issue is currently taking in the country. It becomes more worrisome when it is obvious that the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated and even the clergy and the lay men are involved in one form of corrupt practice or the other. In fact corruption has indeed aggravated the pace of development in Nigeria. The focus of this paper is to analyze the concept of organized and chaotic corruption in Nigeria and to show how it has led to the underdevelopment of Nigeria economy. This paper will also proffer solution to the problem. Both human needs social conflict theory and frustration aggression theory shall be adopted in this paper. The work shall make use of oral and secondary source materials in accomplishing its tasks.*

I. Introduction:

The issue of corruption is not new in the history of Nigeria and has become a word that is frequently used in Nigeria both by individuals and government. The way people talk against corruption is so serious that one wonders why corruption still exists. In the church the preachers emphasized corruption, in schools the school administrators hammer on corruption. In government circles, you hear of zero tolerance of corruption. In the military regimes, it was accusations and counter accusations of corruption. In fact, Ezeogidi Cynado noted that, the entire military coup carried out in Nigeria accused their predecessor of corruption¹. It is therefore necessary and timely too to look at corruption especially on what is considered as organized corruption and chaotic corruption to see whether both types are the same or have same interest and their impact on the economy of Nigeria. This will be done by looking at the definition of corruption as well as the concept of organized and chaotic corruption. This work shall also give a brief history of corruption and overview the scope as well as what it has done in Nigeria. Finally there shall be suggestions on the way forward.

II. Operational Concept

The definition of corruption by S.C. Chutta will make a good start for this work. In his words "corruption is an evil and wicked act"². What this means is that corruption by all standard is not acceptable in a society. Rundel sees corruption as "a dishonest or illegal behavior by official or people in position of power especially when they accept money in exchange for doing things for someone"³. This definition looks as if corruption is limited to people in authority and suggests that corruption is just bribery. This is not so, because a house wife who cheats on her husband or a husband who as well cheats on his wife is corrupt. So also a person who gives the people in authority or positions something to get what does not belong to him or to access secret information is corrupt. The definition of corruption by the Social Science Encyclopedia seems to be more direct and concise. The encyclopedia looks at corruption as "the pervasion or abandonment of a standard"⁴. This means that to measure corruption, there must be an approved standard. One will be said to be corrupt when he begins to act in contradiction to the standard. In the words of Chutta, "In every human set up, there are levels of quality, behaviour, decency, value and measure of weight which are adjudged necessary and acceptable for social well-being. The absence or alteration of these standards will result in Chaos, insecurity, retrogression and frustration"⁵ pervasion of standards obviously will lead to social unsoundness, decay, mobility, harmful and underdevelopment. This is because those who deviate from the accepted norms and values will surly revel in the proceeds of corruption. In order to continue to enjoy such proceeds, they become agents and instruments of such corruption, thereby increasing the tempo of social decadence and menace. The legal definition of corruption looks at corruption as "an act done with intent to give some advantage inconsistent with official duty and the rights of others. It includes bribery but more comprehensive; because an act may be corruptly done though the advantage to be derived from it be not offered by another"⁶. This definition presupposes that one can benefit from a corrupt action of another person. Take for instance a student who arranged with somebody outside examination hall to help him in examination malpractices. While the student was inside the hall, his friend (mercenary) was outside and solved the question and was ready to forward it to the person inside. He could not do so because of the location of the student in the center of the hall. He then gave it to another student at the window side for onward delivery to the first student (owner). Rather than sending the exhibit material to the

original owner, the student by the window side decided to make use of the materials. Legal definition of corruption opines that the student by the window side is also corrupt even though he did not bargain for the corruption.

III. brief history of corruption

The genesis of corruption in Nigeria is traceable to the era of colonialism when the British Colonial masters introduced the system of indirect rule. The system was to enable the British Authority to reach the grass root with ease and to solve other administrative bottleneck and other impediments for effective administration. Such impediments included cost of employing enough British personnels to cover the entire country and language barrier⁷. Indirect rule relied on warrant Chiefs and clerks, or court massagers especially in southern Nigeria while in the North, the Emirs and his subordinates were used. The appointment of the warrant Chiefs were done by the British colonial masters through appointment. Such appointment did not take recognition of the existing social status in southern Nigeria. Hence the appointments or selections were arbitrarily done to the disgust of the people. The warrant chiefs were empowered to try cases, and control forced labour such that they became very powerful, corrupt and unpopular. In the words of G.C. Unachukwu “these chiefs became so corrupt and unpopular”. They became notorious for of sales of justice and for using forced labour”⁸. This attracted a lot of criticism from the people and so in 1919, a panel of enquiry was set up by the colonial government. The report of the panel of enquiry revealed that application for warrants was merely for the purpose of self enrichment and that, were the warrant system to be investigated on the issue of bribery and corruption, about ninety percent of the warrant chiefs would be imprisoned...through bribery and corruption most of the warrant chiefs prospered in material substance”⁹. Afigbo succinctly summarized that warrant chief system was simply “Rotten to the Core”¹⁰. The truth remains that after the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914, corruption began to rear its ugly head in Nigeria politics such that before the independence many prominent Nigerians have been accused of one corrupt practice or the other. In 1954 a commission of enquiry was set up to look into the affairs of Igbo Etti District Council. The report of the commission revealed that “the conduct of the council affairs had become a scandal”¹¹.

THE CONCEPT OF ORGANIZED AND CHAOTIC CORRUPTION

The concept of organized and chaotic corruption became an issue of discussion when scholars begin to analyze the nature of corruption, the method of operation and the personnel involvement. In fact organized corruption represents the high level corruption while the chaotic corruption represents the low level corruption. Both the high level and low level corruption fall within the definition of corruption adumbrated above. Both are involved in pervasion or abandonment of standard. Both are involved in giving and taking of bribes. In the thinking of Arjun Thaur, In Chaotic corruption, the system and process of offering bribe is not organized at all. There is no surety that even if the bribes are paid the work will be done. He went further to say that in organized corruption, there is process system for bribing. It is well known to whom bribe is to be paid. He emphasized that under the organized corruption, the rate of bribe is also fixed and that there is a good chance that the work will be completed once the bribe is paid¹².

Another definition of organized corruption is that it is “a well organized system of corruption in which there is a clear idea of who to bribe, how much should be offered and confident that they will receive favour in return”¹³. On the other hand a chaotic corruption is defined as “A disorganized system of corruption as there is no clarity regarding who to bribe and how much payment should be offered. There is no guarantee that further bribes will not have to be paid to other officials”¹⁴.

What all these definitions emphasized is that while there is a proper coordination in organized corruption, there is no proper coordination in chaotic corruption. The lack of coordination is what made chaotic corruption very complicated and conflict generating. Both chaotic and organized are not acceptable in any society and so none is better than the other. Therefore this paper shall treat them just as corruption.

THE SCOPE OF CORRUPTION

The word of Chinua Achebe will give us a good hindsight as to the scope of corruption in Nigeria. In his words, “My frank and honest opinion is that anybody who can say that corruption has not yet become alarming is either a fool, a crook or else does not live in Nigeria ... corruption in Nigeria has passed the alarming stage and entered the fatal stage: and Nigeria will die if we keep pretending that she is only slightly indisposed”¹⁴. In a similar view, the former president senate Chief Adolphus Nwagbara categorically said that “corruption is a household thing, there is virtually no Nigeria who is not corrupt. The entire nation is corrupt”¹⁵.

The scope of corruption has no bound in Nigeria because it is found amongst the Government administrators including heads of states, senators and speakers of House of Representatives and state house of assembly and their members. The local government chairman and councilors are not exempted. It is also found amongst the bourgeois and the proletariats. It would be recalled that chief Adolphus Nwagbala the former

senate president was later removed from office for corruption. It is also recalled that Chief Chuba Okadigbo who was his predecessor was also removed from office for corruption. Hon. Mrs Felicia Eteh, former speaker of Federal house of representative was also removed for corruption. His successor Hon. Bankole Balogun is currently answering a cases of corruption which he committed while in office. As for Nigeria President the BBC has this to say about them. "All leaders in Nigeria have pledge to eliminate such practices (corruption) only for several of them later to be accused of theft on a spectacular scale"¹⁶. This statement was made by BBC in 1999 when chief Olusegun Obasanjo assumed the mantle of leadership of Nigeria. It should also be noted that at the end of president Obasanjo's regime he was accused and still being accused of one corrupt offense or the other. The former vice president Alhaji Atiku Abubakar accused him of diverting ₦10 billion for third term bid¹⁷. While the former president of Nigeria, General Mohamadu Buhari accused him of \$200b oil money¹⁸. The former president of Nigeria Bar Association summarized that "corruption in Obasanjo's government has no precedent"¹⁹.

At the low level scope of corruption, there is various reports about police men on duty extorting money from motorists. The refusal of such demand of N20.00, from bus drivers has resulted in the killing of either driver or conductor of the bus. University authorities are accused of taking bribes before giving admission to students, lecturers are accused of demanding money and other cash and kind gift to award marks. Students on the other hand are accused of engaging in examination malpractices as well as inducing lecturers with different items. Fuel dealers are accused of altering their meters to cheat unsuspecting customers. Some other government workers have been accused of cheating the government and not justifying their salaries by coming to work late and leaving from office earlier. Medicine patent dealers are accused of dealing on fake drugs. Religious men are accused of using their members for rituals. In fact the scope of corruption in Nigeria has touched every circle of life. Although there is no nation that is exempted from corruption what is worrisome in the case of Nigeria is that "owing to its persistence and pervasiveness, the conclusion is being drawn to the effect that everyone in Nigeria is corrupt in varying degrees, and that corruption in Nigeria has become a way of life"²⁰. The truth is that so far, Nigeria has not gotten a patriotic leadership who is accountable to the people and who genuinely detested corruption. As a result this cankerworm called corruption continues to eat deep into our fabric. In fact, "the Nigeria problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise up to their responsibility"²¹.

THE EFFECT OF CORRUPTION TO NIGERIA ECONOMY

The effect of corruption in Nigeria is so enormous that only a few areas can be touched in this paper. These areas included the infrastructural decay, hunger and starvation, poor medical facilities, reduction in academic standard and increase in unemployment.

There is no doubt that infrastructural development is one of the criteria that is used in measuring development. There is also no doubt that availability of basic infrastructures is one of the factors that must be considered before an industry is sited. It is therefore unarguable that lack of infrastructures is a great source of discouragement for investment whether local or foreign investment. Yet, this is the area that corruption in Nigeria has touched painfully.

Railway transport thrived in Nigeria during the colonial era and collapsed as soon as Nigeria got her independent. Road transport effectively replaced railway transport but it is greatly suffering because of poor road network in Nigeria. No vehicle no matter how new and how strong can travel from Onitsha to Jos for one year without developing serious problems which can siphon all the profit made within the period. No pregnant woman can travel from Enugu to Portharcourt without visiting a Doctor or taking drugs. No driver can travel to Lagos from Onitsha on normal record time of five hours without being held by "go-slow" occasioned by pot-holes and bad road. The effect of this poor road network is tremendous not only on the hardship in transporting people from one city to the other but on our agrarian communities. This sector of the economy is rural based but they form the food basket of the economy. There is no doubt that the absence of road and other rural network thwarts and impedes economic growth in which the poor paid the highest price. According to World Bank report of 1997, "when there are adequate communications network; roads, storage facilities and electricity, farmers can obtain what they need to grow the most profitable cost, store them, move them to the market and receive the best price for them"²².

In the words of Mabogunje "road transport is the heart of a formidable socio-economic development in a nation"²³ in 2003 the CBN report shows that despite the huge sum of money that have been sunked in road project in Nigeria these roads are still un-built and the ones built are plagued by a number of problems ranging from faulty design, inadequate drainage system, pot holes, fallen bridges and poor maintenance culture. The annual cost due to bad roads was put at N80 billion with additional vehicle operating cost of N53.8 billion²⁴.

Electricity is another area of neglect due to corruption. According to Abimbola and Adesote "electricity supply has remained unreliable as power outages: load shading and rationing have become very frequent. Power supply has been so erratic and unreliable that many cottage industries had folded up while

some and high income households have resorted to purchasing private generating plants at prohibitive costs.”²⁵ The use of generating plants by individuals and companies equally have some adverse effect. They bring about pollution, noisy and overheating of the environment and they are very expensive to maintain. As a result of high cost of generators, many industries could not produce with it. The result was that some of the industries closed down while some resorted to retrenchment of workers. The effect was that unemployment continued to grow. Emodi E.C. noted that “it is against this back drop that by 2001, a number of manufacturing industries in the country estimated at about 300, which employed over 2,752,832 workers, began to shut down production operation because of the inability to cope with the energy crises. By 2005, a lot of workers had been laid off and the total number of workers employed in the sector fell to 1,043,982. By 2008 it further declined to 1,026,305”²⁶ it should be noted that when chief Olusegun Obasanjo came to power in 1999, he laid a great emphasis on energy and power and promised to increase the capacity of power generation to 10,000 MW by the end of 2007. Based on this projection, he injected N10 billion in national integrated power project (NIPP). The truth remains that Nigerians did not feel the impact of this injection. This is because the usual load shading and rationing of electricity continued. Another area of pity was the medical supplies. One area that corruption has done much havoc in Nigeria is in the area of provision of health care facilities. The high cost of accessing medical facilities in Nigeria has resulted in the death of many Nigerians especially those living in the rural areas. This is because “Nigeria’s health sector has been performing below expectation for so long despite the billions spent for it. Ibrahim Waziri noted that inspite of the fact that “policies have been produced, refined, panel beaten and changed : agencies have been created to focus on specific health matters; all sorts of foreign aids and assistance have been poured in the country for several decades. Yet Nigerians still die of health conditions and diseases that are easily preventable”²⁷. It is surprising to note that in 2007 alone about 10,506 deaths were recorded for malaria²⁸.

Education sector is not spared in the effect of corruption. The standard of education in Nigeria has consistently continued to fall due to poor infrastructures both human and material infrastructures. This is because our schools; primary, secondary and tertiary institutions lack adequate man power to function with. Writing on rebranding of education system in Nigeria, Osisioma B.C. noted that rebranding education system in Nigeria is therefore an acknowledgement that Nigeria has lost grounds as Africa’s number human resource center even by global standard. He quoted Obaze (2010) as describing Nigeria education as being in surreal state having encountered arrested development. He concluded that education values and academic performances are on slippery slope and described the standard as dwindling and dismal.²⁹.

THE WAY FORWARD

It is the opinion of this paper that there can be a progressive movement towards development if the following recommendations are appropriated.

- 1) There should be total rebranding of the leadership or governance style. A good leader is one who leads with total commitment. UNDP’s definition of a good governance recognized nine core characteristics. Participation, rule of law, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency, equality, consensus orientation, accountability, strategic vision, and responsiveness.³⁰
- 2) Government should try to encourage dedication, honesty and selfless service. This should serve as a way of discouraging hooliganism and greed. This can be done when those who work conscientiously are rewarded and those who engage in illicit act are actually punished. On Saturday, 8th of September there was a good report that Governor Peter Obi of Anambra State, personally supervised the demolition of the buildings of an Anambra kidnapping king pin, Osita Olisagbo Ifedike in his town Oraifite. Such punishment will surely discourage such offenders and encourage goodness.
- 3) The Government should solidify the authority of the anti graft agencies such as EFCC and ICPC by giving them complete autonomy. This will give them the impetus to work fearlessly.

IV. Conclusions

This paper concludes that the definition of corruption remains the perversion of standard whether it was in an organized or high level or in a chaotic or low level form. Corruption is corruption. This is because both type of corruption are bad and serve as an obstruction to the wheel of progress and development. It’s noted that various sectors of Nigeria economy have been negatively affected by corruption. Therefore there is need to work towards combating corruption. It is suggested that the recommendations enumerated shall assist in reducing corruption when they are put into implementation.

References

- [1]. Ezeogidi Cyril C.N.O. "Historical Survey of Corruption in Nigeria" in Ansu Journal of Integrated Knowledge Vol. 1 No. 1 setember2011 p97
- [2]. Chutta S.C. Corruption in Nigeria, (Nsukka, Afro-obis Publisher, 2004) 2
- [3]. Rundel M. Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners New Edition, (Malaysia, Black Publisher 2008)332
- [4]. Akper Adam and Kuper Jerica, The Social Science Encyclopedia, (London Rout Ledge and Kegan Paul, 1985)163
- [5]. Chutt S.C. page 3
- [6]. www.Lectlaw.com.
- [7]. Obikeze O.S and Anthony O.E., Government and Politics of Nigeria, (Onitsha, Bookpint 2006)39
- [8]. G.C. Unachukwu etal Nigeria peoples and culture, (Enugu, John Publisher, 2003)14 Chutta S.C ibid
- [9]. A.E. Afigbo Indirect rule system in southern Nigeria, the Era of warrant chiefs 1891-1929 in Taink vol 1 20.
- [10]. Rina Okonkwo "Corruption in Nigeria" in Francis Anyika (ed) African Humanities, (Nsukka: Afro- orbis, 2005)81.
- [11]. www.indiastudychannel.com "current situation of corruption in India"
- [12]. www.angaram.budget.mampulation.biogsp.
- [13]. Chinua Achebe, The trouble with Nigeria, (Enugu, fourth dimension, 1983) 37-38.
- [14]. The Guardian News paper, 3rd July 1999 p.36
- [15]. BBC on line network News. BBC.co.uk/2/hi/Africa.
- [16]. Daily Independent Newspaper, March, 16th 2006 p. B31.
- [17]. Saturday Independent Newspaper, February, 17th 2007 p. B3.
- [18]. Daily Independent Newspaper, December, 19th 2006.
- [19]. Chutta S.C. Corruption in Nigeria p. 53.
- [20]. Chinua Achebe The trouble with Nigeria p:1.
- [21]. World Bank report 1977, www.worldbank.org/infrastructuremedia.efm.
- [22]. Mabogunje P. The Development process: A special perspective. A paper presented at Hutchinson University in Great Britain in 1980.
- [23]. CBN report on high way maintenance. 2003.
- [24]. Abimbola J.O. and Adesote S.A. Corruption and infrastructure Development in Nigeria: The way forward mechanism in the Book of proceedings of 56th annual congress of the Historical Society of Nigeria held at Osun State University in November, 2011 p.8.
- [25]. E.C. Emodi, The power challenge in the manufacturing sector of the Nigeria Economy in the Book of proceedings of 56th annual congress of the Historical Society of Nigeria held at Osun State University in November, 2011 p.352.
- [26]. Ibrahim Waziri Abubakar, "Infrastructural inadequacies and health sector crises in Nigeria : A case of road, water and power supply" in the Book of proceedings of 56th annual congress of the Historical Society of Nigeria held at Osun State University in November, 2011 p. 75.
- [27]. National Bureau of statistics report of 2008.
- [28]. B.C. Osioma, Rebranding the Educational system through professional ethics: An over view in International journal of professional excellence vol. 1 No 1 2012 p. 1.
- [29]. UNDD policy paper Governance for sustainable human development 1997, p.2-3.