



FUW CENTRE FOR RESEARCH JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT & SOCIAL SCIENCES (FUWCRJMSS)



'I Belong to Everybody and I Belong to Nobody': An Assessment of President Mohammadu Buhari's Anti-Corruption Crusade in Nigeria, 2015-2023

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Abstract

Corruption is a global phenomenon that has plagued economies to a halt with Nigeria inclusive. The perception that corruption has exerted enormous negative consequences on the Nigerian economy cannot be farfetched. The paper examined the eight years (two-term) anti-corruption policy of President Mohammadu Buhari from 2015-2023. Adopting the Termite Governance Theory as framework of analysis, the paper uses a qualitative approach with secondary source of data. The president promised to tackle corruption if elected but failed as evidenced by high cases of corruption in his administration despite the far reaching measures adopted to tame the cankerworm. The study unraveled and itemized several cases of successes and failures recorded under the administration despite the pledge by the president to stamp out corruption. The paper in this regard recommends among others that a serious state of emergency be declared on fight against corruption, and also liaise with the National Assembly to get rid of the immunity clause that serves as a shield for corrupt officials while in office. The study concludes that the wisest course of action moving forward, is to firmly establish constitutional provisions with stiffer penalties be it death sentence or life imprisonment for anyone convicted of corrupt practices which will serve as deterrence. This can only be successfully championed by an incorruptible president that does not belong to somebody but everybody or one who will not pass over you if he sees the broom.

Keywords: *Corruption, Governance, Development, Leadership*

Introduction

Corruption is now referred to as a global phenomenon because of the damages associated with the practice. Sadly so, Nigeria has been consistently rated among the most corrupt countries in the world by Transparency International (Mu'awiyya & Sayuti, 2018). For nearly sixty-four years of Nigeria's nationhood, corruption has manifested in bribery, graft, treasury looting, subsidy and pension theft, money laundering, advance fee fraud, general indiscipline, favouritism and nepotism.

Stober (2019) correctly asserted that, despite being portrayed as Africa's powerhouse, Nigeria has failed to improve its rankings and scores on the Corruption Perceptions Index. The situation at the time was unacceptable, and the country's evident rampant corruption prompted citizens to express their dissatisfaction through the ballot system in 2015, resulting in an incumbent president losing an election for the first time in Nigerian history to Mohammadu Buhari, who campaigned vigorously to end corruption. Despite all of this, Nigeria's abundant natural and human resources have not resulted in development

Corruption has become a part of daily life, tolerated, accepted, institutionalized, and celebrated to the point where both those who pay and receive bribes have absorbed it as a cultural norm. The World Bank's (2022) view that 100 million Nigerians (62.6 percent) live below the international poverty line (US\$1.25 per day), as well as the World Poverty Clock's (2019) designation of Nigeria as "the poverty capital of the world," demonstrate that Nigerians are exceedingly impoverished. This implies that extreme poverty in Nigeria is expanding at a rate of about six people every minute (Heonu and Urama, 2019).

Over the years, we came to the painful realization of how deeply embedded corruption has become in our countries and continent, as well as how corrosive it can be. Corruption has dwarfed our growth and tainted our nations and continent. Africa remains at the far end of the development index and concerted efforts made in the last few years need to be sustained, deepened by good governance and accountability that are guided by the rule of law. (Peoples' Gazette, September 24, 2022).

The President's attitude emphasizes the magnitude of corruption in Nigeria, but it also reflects a lack of political will to address the problem over time by successive administrations. In 2015, he promised to tackle corruption no matter who was hurt (Onya & Elemanya, 2016; Ozah, 2020), and many Nigerians believed him due to his military background and perceived moral character. However, the cankerworm continues to spread like wildfire during and after his reign.

In December 2022, the immediate past EFCC Chairman, Abdulrasheed Bawa, stated that the commission recorded 3,615 convictions in 2022, amidst the U.S. 2021 Country Report on Human Rights Practices, which described the scale of corruption under Mr Buhari as "massive, widespread, and pervasive," attributing this to a failure to apply relevant laws against

According to the Buharimeter Report (2016), Buhari made over two hundred distinct promises during the 2015 election, with corruption as one of the pillars or center pieces of his administration, but stated in a 2016 media chat that "whatever we did in the campaign, in fact we were saying rubbish, and that made it very difficult for us." Things were considerably more difficult during the budget, as you are all aware." (State House Press Corps, 30 May 2016: Freedom, et al., 2015: Onuigbo and innocent, 2015).

The President acknowledged the serious threat that corruption posed to good governance and national growth when he lamented thus:

corrupt practices among officials in his regime. The study is based on these principles and tries to analyze the administration in terms of its commitment to combat corruption over the course of eight years.

Statement of the Problem

Corruption is a severe challenge in Nigeria for both the government and the people due to its negative consequences. This is why Akpan and Onya (2018) stated that politicians, public officials, and civil servants are the agents of corruption in Nigeria. This circumstance makes corruption a vexing subject, which is frequently politicized and praised by those who do it.

The implementation of anti-corruption measures such as the Integrated Personnel Payroll and Information System

(IPPIS), Treasury Single Account (TAS), Whistleblowing Policy, and Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, among others, to combat corruption does not appear to have produced the desired results, as evidenced by an increase in corruption cases under the administration. The president has been scolded and accused of waging a selective battle against corruption. Several sources said that his anti-corruption effort targeted members of the opposition People's Democratic Party (The Guardian Nigeria, February 9, 2016, p. 12).

The question is, then, whether President Buhari's vow to eradicate corruption in Nigeria is a reality or simply campaign hyperbole designed to fool the population once more, as his predecessors promised but failed. Based on the aforementioned, the purpose of this study was to assess President Mohammadu Buhari's vow to fight corruption from 2015 to 2023.

Objectives of the Study

Centrally, the objective of this study is to examine the anti-corruption posture of former President Mohammadu Buhari's government from 2015-2023 giving his promises to tackle the menace upon assumption of office. In this regard, the following specific objectives shall be addressed:

- i. To examine the anti-corruption policy of President Mohammadu Buhari's administration
- ii. To assess the state of corruption during the administration
- iii. The bottlenecks surrounding the fight against corruption in Nigeria

- iv. To proffer better options of tackling the menace of corruption

Methodology

The paper used qualitative approach with an ex-post facto (after the event) research strategy. Kerlinger (1977) describes ex-post facto approach as a sort of spellbinding examination. This study ultimately relied on information obtained from secondary sources, which are primarily documented and archival materials pertinent to the subject matter such as textbooks, periodicals, newspapers, gazette reports, and journals. However, content analysis is used to facilitate thorough discussions.

Conceptual Issues and Theoretical Framework

Conceptually, clarification aims to promote rational cognition while reducing ambiguity. The best understanding of important concepts like corruption comes from this viewpoint.

Corruption

Corruption is commonly defined as the exploitation of government procedures for personal advantage, which can emerge in a variety of ways and content. On the contrary, it is a common occurrence with a long history. Akandi (2003) correctly defines corruption as unethical or illegal benefits obtained through an official position. Jain (2001) defines corruption as the wrongful exploitation of public authority for personal benefit. On the other side, Transparency International has chosen to define the phrase as "the abuse of entrusted power for private gain" in a clear and precise manner. The World Bank defines corruption as "the abuse of office for personal gain."

Akinyemi (2004) referred to corruption as “the acquisition of that which one (as a member of society not public official alone) is not entitled”. Mike, (2018), on the other hand, see corruption as not only a misuse of power, but it is also a violation of the principle of political equality, while Dawood, (2014) defines corruption as a dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, typically involving bribery. Politicians in Nigeria now prefer to relate with the government in power for personal and selfish reasons thereby making it the most lucrative industry.

El-Rufia (2003), also contributed on the concept to mean:

a wide range of social misconducts, including fraud, extortion, embezzlement, bribery, nepotism, influence peddling, bestowing of favours to friends, rigging of elections, abuse of public property, the leaking of official government secret, sales of expired and defective goods like drugs, food, electronics and spare parts to the public, etc.

While the position above succinctly captured the picture of corruption in Nigeria, for fear of prosecution, politicians cross-carpet without justifications even when it is constitutionally forbidden. The position of former governor of Edo State, Adams Oshiomhole during the 2019 presidential campaign rally of Muhammadu Buhari, while seeking for a second term was indicting of a president that promises to halt corruption. He stated thus;

I’m told that there are a lot of senior people from PDP who have decided to join forces with President Buhari to take the broom to sweep away PDP to continue to ensure that APC continues to

preside over Nigeria,” he said. It includes my own brother and friend Henry Duke, he is the former organising secretary of PDP. We also have former vice chairman PDP and leader of PDP Edo North, in fact, once you join APC, all your sins are forgiven (The Cable News January 17, 2019; Sobechi, 2020).

This political statement is an affirmation that corruption has no moral, political or judicial consequences. The gale of defections that followed afterwards is much expected and now a normal practice in Nigeria. While, the defectors are mostly in the books of EFCC, their “sins” seems to have been forgiven indeed as they now walk the streets of Nigeria free.

Some alleged victims of corruption under President Buhari’s Administration

- i. Under Buhari, Chief Justice of the Nigerian Court Walter Onnoghen was convicted by the Code of Conduct Tribunal on April 18, 2019 for false assets declaration
- ii. Accused Federal High Court Judge Adeniyi Ademola resigned involuntarily in December 2017
- iii. Former Pension Reform Taskforce head Abdulrasheed Maina, who was arrested in the neighboring country of Niger after jumping bail, appeared in a Abuja court on a 12-count charge of fraud and money
- iv. Sambo Dasuki, the National Security Adviser who allegedly masterminded the \$2 billions arms deal
- v. In June 2015, six top officials of the Central Bank of Nigeria and 16 other employees of commercial banks were arrested by the anti-

- graft agency, the EFCC over 8 billion naira currency scam
- vi. A former managing director of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Mr Nsima Ekere, has just been taken into custody by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in connection with the mismanagement of N47 billion contracts awarded between 2017 and 2019
 - vii. By June 2017, a year after the policy was first introduced, over 3,000 tips were said to have been received by the regime from whistleblowers. Then in September 2020, over N700 billion were reported to have been recouped through information provided by whistleblowers
 - viii. Ikoyi Gate scandal in which \$43.5 million, £27,800 and N23.2 million were recovered. It was reported that the government paid the whistleblower about N421 million. While, his administration lampooned the Goodluck Jonathans' administration for corrupt practices, what played out between 2015 and 2023 was mind boggling. The Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), a non-governmental organisation concerned with economic and social rights in Nigeria, alleged the failure of MDAs to retire unspent funds, award of contracts without due process, spending of funds above the statutory limit without official approval, payment of funds for contracts never executed and non-remittance of revenues generated by MDAs, among others as at 2022 (SERAP, 2022).

There will be no confusion as to where I stand. Corruption will have no place and the corrupt will not be appointed into my administration. First and foremost, we will plug the holes in the budgetary process. Revenue producing entities such as Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and Customs and Excise will have one set of books only. Their revenues will be publicly disclosed and regularly audited. The institutions of state dedicated to fighting corruption will be given independence and prosecutorial authority without political interference (Ojeifo, 2016 cited in Akpan & Onya, 2018).

It is clear that the president lacked the political will to practice what he preached or he was simply out of touch with what was happening around him giving the barrage of corrupt cases that fester under his leadership.

Some Selected Cases of corruption under President Buhari's administration

- i. In 2015, President Buhari started his fight against corruption by arresting Col Ibrahim Sambo Dasuki (rtd), the then National Security Adviser of President Jonathan who was as at 31 Dec, 1983, a young Nigeria Army Colonel that arrested the then General Buhari when Buhari's government as Military Head of State was overthrown by General Ibrahim Babangida.
- ii. Under Buhari, 19 billion was spent on turnaround maintenance without the refineries working
- iii. The sacked Accountant-General Ahmed Idris who was

- appointed on June 25, 2015. was reappointed for a second tenure of five years in 2019 despite turning 60, the mandatory age for retirement but later suspended and arrested for embezzling 109 billion naira, which stood out as one of the highest corrupt case of a public servant in history with 30 billion so far retrieved as at December, 2022.
- iv. With COVID-19 lockdown in 2020 and schools shut, children were fed at home with billions of Naira. The “magic” of feeding nine million children and 84,000 schools across the country is record breaking
- v. Nigerian former Attorney-General dubiously paid \$16.9 million fees to his friends as FG’s new lawyers for the recovery of the loot traced to the late Sani Abacha. This was after a Swiss lawyer, Enrico Monfrini, hired and fully paid by the previous government to help in the recovery, had completed his brief. Monfrini openly declared that fresh lawyers were absolutely unnecessary because he had concluded all legal work.
- vi. A serving army chief under Buhari bought a \$2 million property in Dubai and shamelessly defended it with impunity even as the then National Security Adviser, Babagana Monguno, once pointed out the corruption in security outlays but recanted under pressure.
- vii. In 2019, the sacked Executive Secretary of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Abdullahi Baffa, had alleged that he was forced out of office owing to his refusal to provide monetary kickbacks to Adamu Adamu. Baffa alleged that the Minister had sent a contractor to him demanding his share of 10% kickback of the N200 billion (N20 billion) disbursed by the agency to tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
- viii. The Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), through its chairman, Professor Bolaji Owasanoye, during his speech at the Third National Summit on Diminishing Corruption and Presentation of Public Service and Integrity, disclosed that the anti-graft commission uncovered 257 duplicated projects worth N20 billion in the 2021 budget.
- ix. In 2019, an Audit report showed that federal MDAs failed to account for N323.5 billion in 2019 alone. The report declares that in several financial transactions, the spending by public officers violated Paragraph 415 of the Financial Regulations Act.
- x. The Special Investigator on the CBN and Related Entities, Jim Obaze, accused Godwin Emefiele the CBN Governor of unlawfully lodging billions of naira in at least 593 bank accounts across the United States, United Kingdom, and China without the necessary

approvals from the CBN board of directors and the CBN Investment Committee.

- xi. In February 2018, a snake was accused of swallowing N36 million from the office vault of the Joint Admission Matriculation Board, Makurdi, Benue State. A sales representative, Philomina Chieshe, told the JAMB team that she could not account for the N36 million she made in previous years before the elimination of scratch card
- xii. The termites made news too on August 14, 2022, as N17.128 billion got missing from the storeroom of the Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund. The money represents the documents of transfers from the NSITF accounts in its Skye and First Bank accounts, untraceable accounts belonging to individuals and companies from January to December 2013.
- xiii. Ibrahim Magu, the former acting chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), was arrested in 2020 for corruption and investigated by a secret panel set up by the AGF, whose findings were never made public. Instead, Mr Magu got promoted days before he retired from the Nigerian police.
- xiv. A contractor James Okwete was arrested in connection with N37 billion allegedly laundered by the Ministry of

Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development, under the leadership of former minister, Sadiya Umar Farouq who superintended the controversial National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme where children were fed during covid-19 lockdown.

- xv. What happened to the returned \$322.5million (approximately 30 billion naira @ 800 dollar can better) Gen. Abacha loot can better be imagined if not re-looted.

Hon Abdulmumini of the ruling party, APC, and former House chairman of the appropriation committee representing Kiru-Bebeji Federal Constituency, Kano State, stated categorically in a press conference after being relieved of his position that the "House of Representatives is a den of systemic corruption" (Punch, 2016). The question is whether this bogus charge would have surfaced if he had not been dismissed of his position. He was listed in the initial release. how they secretly split money, and is prepared to back up the charge with evidence. He identified the beneficiaries, beginning with him;

- i. Hon Abdulmumini Jibrin (N650 million)
- ii. Speaker Yakubu Dogara (N1.5 billion)
- iii. His Deputy Yusuf Lasun (N800 million)
- iv. House Majority Leader Femi Gbajabiamila (N1.2 billion)
- v. Deputy Majority Leader Buba Jubrin (N1.2 billion)
- vi. House Whip Alhassan Ado Doguwa (N1.2 billion)
- vii. Deputy House Whip (N700 million)

- viii. House Minority Leader Leo Ogor (N1.2 billion)
- ix. Deputy Minority Leader Onyema (N800 million)
- x. Minority Whip (N700 million)
- xi. Deputy Minority Whip (N700 million)

All of this occurred under the watch of President Buhari, with no action done. If the House of Representatives experienced such widespread corruption, one can only imagine what the Senate must have gone through. This is how Nigerian political elites function while the masses continue to suffer from extreme poverty, squalor, and disease. It is regrettable that President Buhari just went to sleep while corruption stayed awake, despite his commitment to “kill corruption before it kills Nigeria. In the end, he bequeath to generations unborn, a Nigeria that is defined by corruption under his watch.

Challenges of fighting corruption in Nigeria

- i. The Acts establishing the Anti-Corruption Agencies is inherently weak and ineffective. The agencies had been poorly funded and there are evidences of lack of political will by the crusaders to actualize an objective anti-corruption campaigns thus, making the campaign selective and unattractive (Ademola, 2011). The crusade has not yielded the expected results as the menace rather than abating, keeps festering uncontrollable like wildfire..
- ii. The institutional weakness of the ICPC, EFCC and the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) makes them susceptible to sluggish operations.

iii. The close affinities of CCB, ICPC and EFCC with the presidency that created them in the first place, have made them to appear like instruments of political vendetta thus, the need for their independence for smooth and effective operations.

iv. The overt politicization of the anti-corruption crusade has made the fight against corruption a means of witch-hunting opponents. Instances where a sitting Attorney-General influenced the appointment of his relation as the Chair of EFCC speaks volume.

v. Lack of a constitutional prescription of capital punishment for corruption gives the court the leverage to tamper justice with mercy despite the enormity of the charges. This is responsible for the high number of charges than convicts in Nigeria.

vi. The absence of a special court has made the prosecution of cases difficult as some cases takes years or some are lost based on technicalities.

vii. The 1999 Federal Constitution, conferred immunity on 74 public office holders, including the president, vice-President, 36 state Governors, and 36 Deputy Governors, who can neither have criminal proceedings instituted against them or be arrested or imprisoned while in office.(Okojie & Momoh, 2005). That the governors cannot be the subject of criminal action is why almost all governors have issues with EFCC.

In Nigeria today, corruption is no longer secret, it is celebrated. This is why the fight against corruption has remained unsuccessful as evident by persistent rise in corrupt practices (Odalonu, 2021).

Table 2: Some Skewed Appointments under President Mohammadu Buhari (2015-2023)

| S/N | Name | Position | Region |
|-----|----------------------|---------------------|--------|
| 1 | Lt Gen Tukur Buratai | Chief of Army Staff | North |
| 2 | Musa Lawal Daura | DG-SSS | North |

| | | | |
|----|-------------------------|--|-------------|
| 3 | Yusuf Magaji Bichi | DG-SSS | North |
| 4 | Rtd Lt Gen Dambazzu | Minister of Interior | North |
| 5 | Aregbesola | Minister of Interior | North |
| 6 | Air Mars Sadique A. | Chief of Air Staff | North |
| 7 | Rtd Maj GenMonguno | National Sec. Adv | North |
| 8 | Mansur Dan Ali | Minister of Defense | North |
| 9 | Ibrahim Kpotun Idris | Inspector General of Police | North |
| 10 | Usman Alkali Baba | Inspector General of Police | North |
| 11 | Ahmed Rufai Abubakar | DG NIA | North |
| 12 | Retired Col Hameed Ali | CG Custom Service | North |
| 13 | Mohammed Babandede | CG Immigration | North |
| 14 | Ahmed Ja'afaru | CG Prisons Service | North |
| 15 | Boboye O. Oyeyemi | Corps Marshall FRSC | North |
| 16 | Anebi Garba Joseph | CG Fed Fire Service | North |
| 17 | Abdulahi .G. M | Com Gen NSCDC | North |
| 18 | Abubakar Malami | AG of the Federation | North |
| 19 | Ibrahim Magu | Chairman of EFCC | North |
| 20 | Abdulrasheed Bawa | Chairman of EFCC | North |
| 21 | Muh'd Mustapha A | Chairman NDLEA | North |
| 22 | Rtd Gen Marwa Buba | Chairman/CEO NDLEA | North |
| 23 | Lt Gen Abayomi G. | Chief of Def. Staff | South-West |
| 24 | Vice Admiral Ibok-Ete | Chief of Naval Staff | Niger-Delta |
| 25 | Alhaji Abdul J. Oyewale | Min of Police Affairs | North |
| 26 | Mele Kolo Kyari | GMD, NNPC | North |
| 27 | Umar Isa Ajiya | Chief Finance Officer | North |
| 28 | Yusuf Usman | Chief Operation. Officer, Gas & Power | North |
| 29 | Farouk Garba Sa'id | Chief Operation. Officer Corporate Services | North |
| 30 | Mustapha Y. Yakubu | C. O. O Refining and Petrochemicals | North |
| 31 | Hadiza Y. Coomassie | Corporate Sec./Legal Adviser to | North |
| 32 | Omar Farouk Ibrahim | G G M International Energy Relations, IER | North |
| 33 | Kallamu Abdullahi | GGM, Renewable Energy | North |
| 34 | Ibrahim Birma | GGM, Governance Risk and Compliance | North |
| 35 | Bala Wunti | GGM, NAPIMS | North |
| 36 | Inuwa Waya | MD, NNPC Shipping | North |
| 37 | Musa Lawan | MD, Pipelines & Product Marketing, PPMC | North |
| 38 | Mansur Sambo | MD, Nigeria Petroleum Development Comp | North |
| 39 | Lawal Sade | MD, Duke Oil/NNPC Trading Company | North |
| 40 | Malami Shehu | MD, Port Harcourt Refining Company | North |
| 41 | Muhammed Abah | MD, Warri Refining and Petrochemical Com | North |
| 42 | Abdulkadir Ahmed | MD, Nigeria Gas Marketing Company | North |
| 43 | Salihi Jamari | MD, Nig Gas and Power Invest Comp Ltd | North |
| 29 | Mohammed Zango | MD, NNPC Medical Services | North |
| 40 | Sarki Auwalu. | Director, Department of Petroleum Resources, | North |
| 41 | Bashir Salihi Magashi | Minister of Defence | North |
| 42 | Mohammed Adamu | Inspector General of Police | North |
| 43 | Liman Ibrahim | Controller General, Federal Fire Service | North |
| 44 | Jaafar Ahmed | C. G, Nigeria Correctional Services | North |

Source: Culled from Chiamogu & Chiamogu, 2019; Onyekakeyah, 2020, Adebowale, (2020).).

It is instructive to note that all the security chiefs of the Armed Forces minus two and the heads of all the paramilitary agencies as well as 98% top executives of NNPC seemed like an exclusive preserve of people from a section of the country (Osuji, 2016: Omeihe, 2020). While 98% of the appointees profess Islamic religion in a secular state, the rationale behind such level of impunity in disregarding the dictate or spirit of federal character is anti-democracy.

Favoritism and nepotism are two unmistakable opponents of national progress that President Buhari has openly used. They amplify corruption since hiring someone based on family links or friendships, or to reward a supporter, are all poor factors, regardless of objective evaluation of ability or suitability (Chudinov, 2003; Mulwa et al., 2009). Odalonu (2021) acknowledged that the largest problem with the Buhari administration is the elephant in the room,

also known as "lopsided appointments," "nepotism," "sectionalism," "parochialism," and so on (The Guardian Editorial, 2020). Despite the unbalanced

appointments, the north remains the most devastated by instability and poverty (Abdu & Okoro, 2016).

Table 1: Nigeria's Corruption Perception Index, (2015-2023)

| Year | Rank | Score |
|------|---------|--------|
| 2015 | 136/168 | 26/100 |
| 2016 | 136/176 | 28/100 |
| 2017 | 148/180 | 27/100 |
| 2018 | 144/180 | 32/100 |
| 2019 | 146/180 | 27/100 |
| 2020 | 149/180 | 25/100 |
| 2021 | 155/180 | 24/100 |
| 2022 | 145/180 | 25/100 |
| 2023 | 150/180 | 24/100 |

Source: Curled from Transparency International Perception Index, 2024

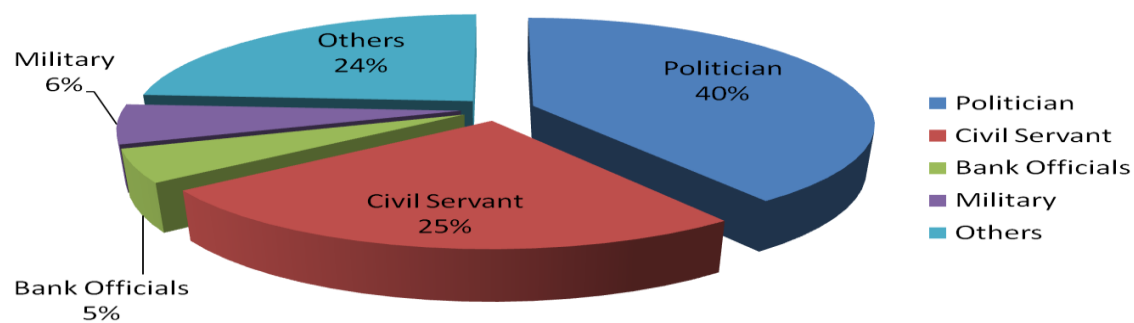
It is evident in the table above that rather decreasing, corruption keeps increasing since Buhari became president in 2015. The government has criticized every of TI yearly reports claiming that the yearly report are not reliable but purely speculative.

Anti-Corruption measures under President Buhari's administration.

The establishment of EFCC by the Obasanjo administration has been

somewhat mixed. The EFCC Establishment Act (2004), the Money Laundering Act 1995, the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act 2004, the Advance Fee Fraud and Other Fraud Related Offences Act 1995, the Failed Financial Institutions Act, and the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act 2004 are among the laws and regulations relating to economic and financial crimes that the Commission is tasked with enforcing (Ojewale 2006).

Table 3: Official corruption: Distribution of Cases by classes



Source: DataPro Special Report, 2016

The pie chart above shows that despite the efforts so far, corruption continue to flourishes as a serious business in Nigeria with politicians taking the lead followed by civil servant. It is difficult to imagine that the trend has improved in 2023. The fight against graft since the beginning of the Olusegun Obasanjo era has been through the EFCC, ICPC and Code of Conduct Bureau. The government also ensured the passage of the Proceeds of Crime Agency Bill, the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Bill, the Money laundering (Prohibition) Bill as well as a bill to create autonomy for the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Agency, which was hitherto under the EFCC. The former

minister of finance, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala noted that:

In October 2013, the introduction of TSA had helped to reduce how government account was being overdrawn. It was observed that 93 MDAs had hooked on to the TSA platform while government's overdrawn position has dropped from N102 billion in 2011 to N19 billion in 2012. The implementation of the TSA play a central and strategic role in reforming the public financial management currently plagued with problems of corruption, high cost of governance and also tackle the challenges of leakages in government revenue and wastages in expenditure patterns in MDAs (Vanguard Editorial, 2015:18).

As expected, the president inaugurated a Presidential Advisory Committee against Corruption (PAAC) in August 11, 2015 to advice his administration on how to reform the Nigeria's criminal justice system, and steps needed to fight corruption. Prof. Itse Sagay, was mandated to chair the committee. It was expected that with a novel advisory body like this, Nigerians would see a new paradigm shift in the fight against corruption in terms of strategies,

techniques, and legislation that would not only curtail corruption but also deter future occurrences (Ekpo et al, 2016). Our framework rightly postulates that it is in man's nature and character to demonstrate insatiable greed and primitive amassing of wealth, regardless of the damage done to the system.

President Muhammadu Buhari's strict implementation of the Treasury Single Account (TSA) has been able to stop financial leakages in the financial system to

an extent, which is also accompanied by the Integrated Payroll and Personal Information Systems (IPPIS)

Table 3: Table 3: IPPIS and Ghost Workers

| Pre and Post IPPIS Nominal Roll of MDAs | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
| S/ N | Ministries, Department and Agenciess | Pre IPPIS | Post IPPIS | Difference | Percentage |
| 1 | Budget Office | 1,500 | 300 | 1160 | 77.33% |
| 2 | National Planning Comm | 1,000 | 251 | 749 | 74.90% |
| 3 | Office of the SGF | 1,773 | 449 | 1324 | 74.68% |
| 4 | Public Service Institute | 69 | 23 | 46 | 66.67% |
| 5 | Fed. Ministry of Niger Delta | 501 | 176 | 325 | 64.87% |
| 6 | Fed. Ministry of Information | 6,500 | 2785 | 3715 | 57.15% |
| 7 | Ministry of Work. | 10,000 | 4833 | 5167 | 51.67% |
| | TOTAL | 21343 | 8857 | 12486 | 58.50% |

Source: Okoye, et al., (2016)

The table above shows clearly the high level of corruption in the public service with huge number of ghost workers. This is not only worrisome but a trend that must be curtailed for public service efficiency. The government also said that by 2020, it had already saved an average of N45 billion monthly from the implementation of the TSA and the detection of 54,000 fraudulent payroll entries on the federal IPPIS platform.

Despite the attempt at transparency and accountability, some policies, such as the popular whistleblower policy was not fully adopted by the government. The African Centre for Media and Information Literacy notes that three out of every four whistleblowers do not report cases of looted funds due to nepotism in the regime, fear of victimisation and lack of knowledge on the kind of information and appropriate channel to report to. The Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC) however, stated in a report that 204 MDAs do not have whistleblowing policies.

Conclusion

The paper examined only the skyrocketed level of corruption under

president Mohammadu Buhari administration in the context of his promise to “kill corruption before corruption kills Nigeria”. Some of the president's flaws include, his inclination to nominate people without the political will to ‘fire’ even they are found wanting, and also his propensity to protect political cronies from scrutiny and prosecution.

Again, his lack of concern for how the ruling party finances its election campaigns as witnessed in the 2022 APC presidential primary election where a presidential nomination form was pegged at 100 million, the costliest in the 25 years of Nigeria’s unbroken democracy is totally unacceptable. This leaves much to be desired from a president that portray himself as ‘Mr. Integrity’. In contrast, Buhari’s fight against corruption was supposed to be one of his main campaign promises when he ran for president. He promised to recover looted funds from previous administrations and prosecute those involved in corruption scandals. However, his efforts have been largely ineffective and controversial

Recommendations

Evidenced by the issues unraveled in extant literature, the following recommendations were proffered for policy considerations going forward:

Firstly, there is the need to hasten the administration of justice in cases involving corruption with the establishment of specialized courts in Nigeria for timely adjudication as justice delayed is justice denied. The Federal Executive Council, which has been turned into a weekly market for government contracts, should concentrate on its principal function of people-oriented-policy making.

Secondly, the fight against corruption must be broad-based and transparent, not focusing on a particular region of the nation, members of a specific political party, or deemed adversaries of the government in power. This can be misconstrued as selective or political vendetta.

Thirdly, an executive bill should be initiated on jettisoning the 'immunity clause' that serves as a shield for corrupt practices and the need for capital punishment as obtained in places like China and Singapore. Possibly death or life imprisonment should be the benchmark for anyone convicted of corruption. Heaven will not fall if such punishments are invoked for public treasury looters after all, these heartless thieves have indirectly sent many Nigerians to their untimely sepulcher by their insatiable greedy actions.

Fourthly, the executive should initiate a bill that mandates all political office holders/appointees publicly declare their assets while ensuring the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) should function as an autonomous and operational agency.

Finally, the public and civil servants should be well remunerated and motivated to do their job with improved staff welfare packages for them to have job satisfaction.

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