
PERSISTENT RISE IN CORRUPT PRACTICES IN NIGERIA:
THE IRONY OF FIGHTING CORRUPTION IN PRESIDENT
BUHARI'S ADMINISTRATION (2015-2020)

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Abstract

President Buhari came to power in the 2015 elections and one of his main campaign promises was to fight the corruption that was seen as rife in his predecessor's administration. However, five years after, corruption still subsists as one of the greatest challenges facing Nigeria. In recent time, public attention has been drawn to the spectacles of corruption cases in Nigeria especially in the agencies of government. This has shown that moral values are fast diminishing among the people. As it were, integrity, honesty and dedication to duty have collapsed in the society and particularly among politicians, political office holders and government officials. The menace of corruption in Nigeria poses a great threat to the development of the country. Therefore, this paper assessed the trend of corruption under Buhari's administration and the efforts made to tackle corruption in Nigeria from 2015 to 2020. The assessment was achieved through the adoption of the narrative-textual case study (NTCS) research method that sources the required data on the phenomenon of study from secondary sources like official reports, internet, online book, newspaper and journal publications. It was

discovered that the Buhari's administration has made some efforts in fighting corruption by introducing anti-corruption measures, policies and legal frameworks such as the Integrated Personnel Payroll and Information System (IPPIS), Treasury Single Account (TAS), Whistle-blowing Policy, Code of Conduct Bureau and Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative amongst others to fight against corruption. However, based on the evidence of increasing cases of corruption in recent time, these efforts seem not to have yielded positive results. Therefore the paper recommends among other things, that President Buhari should not be selective in his corruption fight rather he should tackle the menace of corruption holistically irrespective of political affiliations or ethnic affinity of those involved in corrupt acts.

Keywords: *Corruption, Anti-Corruption, Buhari Administration, Nigeria*

Introduction

Nigeria is one of the countries in the world endowed natural and human resource. Nigeria is also one of the world's largest oil exporters, and has been the continent's leading economy for several years (Kreck, 2019). With over 200 million inhabitants, Nigeria is Africa's most populous country. Sadly, presently about 87 million people in Nigeria live on less than 1.90 US dollar a day, making it the country with the world's highest number of people living in extreme poverty (Kreck, 2019). Consequently, Nigeria has been recently tagged the poverty capital of the world, overtaken India a country with seven times the population of Nigeria (World Poverty Clock, 2019). This has been attributed to pervasive nature of corruption in Nigeria.

Lack of transparency, accountability, good morals, and ethical conduct are wanting among many of Nigeria's leaders. The resources meant for the implementation of some of the developmental programmes are misplaced, diverted or even misappropriated, with gross impunity. Thus, Nigerians are poor and

deprived even when the country is blessed with resources. The reason is not farfetched. It is all centered on corruption and bad governance (Ayor & Odey, 2018; Aminu, 2019). Though, corruption is a global phenomenon (problem) and exists in varying degrees in different countries hence, no country in the world is absolutely corrupt free (Umuna, 2018). However, corruption in the case of Nigeria has become very worrisome.

The incidence of corruption has taken a frightening dimension to the extent that Nigeria has been consistently placed among the most corrupt countries in the world. The pervasive and deep rooted nature of corruption in Nigeria is also indicated by the global corruption index ranking by Transparency International. For instance, in 2015, Nigeria ranked 136 out of 170 countries assessed. In 2016, Nigeria was rated the 136 most corrupt nations out of the 176 countries surveyed. In 2017, the TI also ranked Nigeria as the 35th most corrupt nation in the world. Thus, according to the report, Nigeria was rated 148 out of about 175 countries surveyed worldwide. In 2018, the TI, in its report on corruption perception, rated Nigeria as the 144 most corrupt nations out of the 175 countries surveyed. According to the latest report released by Transparency International, Nigeria is now ranked 146 out of the 180 countries considered in 2019. This is two steps lower from 144th ranked in 2018 (Transparency International, 2020; Adesoji, 2020). President Buhari came to power in the 2015 elections and one of his main campaign promises was to fight the corruption that was seen as rife in his predecessor's administration. Consequently, the Buhari administration set up a presidential committee on anti-corruption headed by Professor Itse Sagay. The mandate of the committee includes among other things, to formulate a strategy and co-ordinate the anti-corruption war of the administration ensuring that all sectors of the Nigerian society are involved in the fight (Otunuga, 2016; Amannah & Adeyeye, 2018).

However, five years after, corruption still subsists as one of the greatest challenges facing Nigeria. Despite efforts at curbing corruption in Nigeria under the leadership of President Muhammadu Buhari it seems the trend of corruption is on the increase (Momoh, 2018). Recently, public attention has been drawn to the spectacles

of corruption cases in Nigeria especially in government agencies. The gale of corruption discovered in the ministries, institutions and agencies of government especially in NDDC and EFCC in recent time is alarming and humongous (Olugbode, 2020; Ozah, 2020).

For instance some of the agencies of government have been enmeshed and embroiled with one scandal of corruption to another in recent times. These are: Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF) corruption scandal that has led to the suspension of the Managing Director and two Executive Directors; the crisis in the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) where the removed Managing Director, Joi Nunieh and the Niger Delta Minister, Godswill Akpabio are trading damaging allegations of corruption; the allegations of wrongdoing, including insubordination, failure to properly account for recovered assets, abuse of office, and other corrupt acts levelled against the Chairman of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Ibrahim Magu (Ekpo, Chime & Enor, 2016; Olawale, 2020; Thisdaylive Editorial, 2020).

Consequently, the president has set up probe panel to investigate the affairs of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and he had expressed regrets that some public officials put in positions of trust had abused the confidence reposed in them. Again, corruption especially among top political and public officials under the executive arm of government in Nigeria has been a major problem confronting the present administration in Nigeria. This has shown that moral values are fast diminishing among the people. As it were, integrity, honesty and dedication to duty have collapsed in the society and particularly among politicians, political office holders and government officials. The menace of corruption in Nigeria poses a great threat to the development of the country (Ozah, 2020).

It is against this background that this paper assessed the trend of corruption under Buhari's administration and the efforts made to tackle corruption in Nigeria from 2015 to 2020. The assessment was achieved through the adoption of the narrative-textual case study (NTCS) research method that sources the required data on the phenomenon of study from secondary sources like official reports, internet, online book, newspaper and journal publications.

Concept and Forms of Corruption

Many scholars have defined corruption in different ways. However, one central argument among them is that corruption is a violation of an established standard or norm, and this breach of standard has different costs (Hellman, 2013). Umuna (2018) defined corruption as the exploitation of public position, resources, and power for private gain. In other words, it is the betrayal of public trust for individual or group gain. Corruption could also be seen as efforts to secure wealth or power through illegal means for private gain at public expense; or a misuse of public power for private benefit (Umuna, 2018). Corruption is not only a misuse of power, but it is also a violation of the principle of political equality (Dawood, 2014). More so, corruption is a dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, typically involving bribery (Mike, 2018).

There are different forms of corruption. De Sardan (1999) notes that the corruption complex include all forms of nepotism, abuse of power, embezzlement and various forms of misappropriation, influence-peddling, prevarication, insider trading and abuse of public fund.

Similarly, Aluko (2009) identified nine forms of corruption as follows: Political corruption (grand); Bureaucratic corruption (petty); Electoral corruption; Bribery; Fraud; Embezzlement; Favouritism; Nepotism (Aluko 2009; 5). In same vein, Schater and Shah (2000) listed three broad categories of corruption as: (a) Bureaucratic or Petty Corruption – Vast number of public officials (bureaucratic and politicians) are abusing public office often extracting small bribes or favour; (b) Grand Corruption – theft or misuse of vast amount of public funds by a relatively number of officials; and (c) State Capture or regulatory Capture – Collusion among public and private agents for private benefits.

Added to the above, Onuigbo and Emeh (2015) cited in Amannah and Adeyeye, (2018:11) concisely tabulated the some forms of corruption below.

Table 1: Forms of Corruption

Type	Status of Main Perpetrator	Enabling Means	Usual Motive	Victims of Corruption
Political corruption	- Chief Executives - Other Political Office Holders	- political power - economic power - social power	-to gain or retain political power - to victimize	- ideals and values of the polity - political opponents
Economic and commercial corruption	- businessmen - contractors - consultants	- economic power - political and social connections	to make more profits and money	the generality of tax payers and other citizens
Administrative and professional corruption	-highly placed civil servants and executives of parastatals	Administrative authority - technicality, exclusivity and - professional such as lawyers, doctors, engineers, university teachers, etc.	- material wealth - cultivation of political and social connections autonomy of the professions	the generality of tax payers and other citizens - consumers of the professions
Organized corruption	- political, economic, social and bureaucratic elites - high echelons of control agencies	influential connections to information sources - control and enforcement authority	Money and material wealth	- government treasure - private individuals

Source: Adapted from Amannah and Adeyeye, (2018: 11)

On the other hand, there are different factors responsible for corruption. According to Akpan & Eyo (2018), it has been discovered that institutional factors are the root causes of all corruption in Nigeria. For instance, economic corruption has been traced to poverty and pressure on the office holder, human failure or weakness. Greed and the syndrome of get-rich-quick due to the fear of the unknown, anxiety and the insecurity of work are also possible causes of corruption. This is so because of the perception that government is not interested in the welfare of public office holders after retirement and so the available solution is to engage in corrupt practices in order to provide for the rainy day and put a shelter over their head (Akpan & Eyo, 2018).

In same vein Bagshaw (2004), identified a number of factors that are the causes of corruption in Nigeria as:

Secrecy in Government Offices: Lack of information to the public on activities of public offices leads to financial misappropriation as most of the government transactions are done in secrecy.

Low Public Sector Remunerations: The salaries of public servants in Nigeria are so low that they cannot afford to live above board. This makes them to look for any opportunity to enrich themselves as they believe that “where you work is where you chop”.

Immunity of Public Officials: Some government officials are immune from prosecution while in office. For example, most governors divert monies meant for public expenditure,

Bad Procurement Practices: This creates room for inflated contracts and diversion of funds meant for capital expenditure.

Absence of Functional Governmental System: Supervising agencies and periodic auditing of government accounts are usually circumvented and falsified,

Inherent Flaws in the Structure of the Nigerian Economy: Due to the federal government browbeat fiscal centralization policy; loopholes are often created to effect misappropriation of funds.

Furthermore, Shuaib (2015) attributed the following reasons as some of the factors responsible for corruption in Nigeria; Weak institution of government, a culture of affluent and get rich syndrome which has become part and parcel of public officials coupled with the extended family pressure, village and ethnic loyalties and, unbridled competition between and among the ethnic groups, a dysfunctional legal system, lukewarm attitude of the enforcers of the law (police, judges etc) forced some officials to be corrupt because they believe they could go unpunished and get away with their unwholesome acts, some cultural and institutional factors, poor reward system, bureaucratic bottlenecks, low remuneration for public servants and greed account for corruption related behaviour or actions.

The Nature and Effects of Corruption in Nigeria

Corruption pervades the whole of fabric of Nigeria. It is systematically practiced by the ruling elite and comes in many guises, including: embezzlement of state funds, clientelism, nepo-tism, fraud, bribery and, as a result, large-scale money laundering at home and abroad. It permeates every level of society, from high-level politicians and civil servants to the security forces, business people and the country's poorest citizens (Kreck, 2019). Thus, corruption manifests itself in Nigeria in form of abuse of position and privileges, low level of transparency and accountability, inflation of contacts, bribery, kickbacks, misappropriation or diversion of funds, under and over invoicing, false declaration, advance free fraud know as 419, collection of illegal tolls, etc (Ogbonnaya, 2018). Corruption has been the source of problems militating against the attainment of political integration, political stability, social justice, equity and economic development in Nigeria. Corruption is responsible for the high level of poverty, insecurity, widespread diseases, and high unemployment rate. In Nigeria, public revenues are not only stolen and misused, but often pay for the services and weapons behind political violence experienced in the country (Umuna, 2018). Corruption, which has been depriving the country of the resources it needs to develop, is largely to blame for the current state of affairs (Kreck, 2019). The current situation in Nigeria is largely due to the scale of corruption that has deprived the country of vital development capital for decades (Kreck, 2019). As it were, corruption has been largely responsible for the seeming collapse of every institution in the Nigeria. It is disheartening to note that corruption is not only systemic, it has become institutionalized that no aspect of societal life is spared (Ozah, 2020).

Despite having the world's seventh largest reserve of crude oil coupled with other resources in Nigeria, poverty and underdevelopment still ravage the country, this can be seen from all indexes of development over the years. The major reason advanced for this is the prevalence of corruption in governance, public and private places (Nageri, Umar & Abdul, 2013). Thus, the impact of corruption has drastically increased the rate of poverty in Nigeria in recent times. For instance, it was first revealed in June 2018 that

Nigeria had overtaken India as the nation with the highest number of people living in extreme poverty across the world, with an estimated 87 million Nigerians measured to be living on less than \$1.90 (N684) a day. Thus, the World Poverty Clock had named Nigeria the poverty capital of the world in June, 2018. Presently, Nigeria had about 93.7 million people in extreme poverty, compared with India's 73 million. What is more, extreme poverty in Nigeria is growing by six people every minute, while poverty in India continues to fall." India with a population of 1.324 billion people previously held the position, which is now occupied by Nigeria which has a population of about 200 million (Aderinokun, 2018; Olayinka, 2019).

Examples of Corruption in Buhari's Administration

Informing the negative perceptions, as it seemed, were perceived and actual biases in the execution of the anti-corruption campaign of President Buhari. Some argued that mostly targeted for prosecution were members of the PDP (Abosedo, 2018; Mossman, 2019). The US government that was once effusive in praise of the anti-corruption programme expressed worry over unaddressed corruption allegations involving APC elites and allies of President Buhari (Sahara Reporters, 2019).

Evidences abound that those who are strong supporter of President Buhari or a member of the ruling Political party APC have been left unprosecuted for corruption cases. Some of these people include; Mr. Andrew Yakubu, former GMD of Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation's (NNPC), Babachir Lawal, Former SSG to the President, Ambassador Ayodele Oke, former head of the National Intelligence Agency, Professor Usman Yusuf, head of the National Health Insurance Scheme, Abdulrasheed Maina, former Director of Pension Scheme, etc, (Bada, 2018; Bello, 2018; Akinkuotu, Adeoye & Alagbe, 2018; Tukur, 2019; Sobechi, 2020). For instance, in 2016, President Buhari was reportedly presented evidence that his Chief of Staff, Abba Kyari, took N500 million naira bribe from MTN to help it slash the \$5 Billion dollar fine slammed against it for violation of Nigeria telecommunications regulations bothering on national security (Opejobi, 2016). MTN fired the staff involved in the bribery scandal (Sahara Reporters, 2016). But Abba Kyari was left intact in

his position as Chief of Staff to national outrage forcing Buhari to announce the probe of Kyari. The findings of the investigation were never made public (Sahara Reporters, 2016; Omonobi, 2016).

In addition, Abdurashheed Maina, President Buhari ally who was the head of the task force on pension reforms during the President Goodluck Jonathan led administration but fled Nigeria in 2015 after claims that he embezzled two billion naira (\$5.6 million, 4.8 million euros). Despite the fact that an Interpol arrest warrant was issued, he still managed to return to Nigeria, where he was said to have enjoyed protection from the Buhari government (Vanguard, 2017). Maina was sacked in 2013 during Goodluck Jonathan's administration and was put under investigation for corrupt practices but was reinstated and given double promotion by Buhari administration (Abdulaziz, & Busari, 2017).

Corrupt persons have been spared on account of party allegiance. There were cases that went cold possibly on account of the change of political affiliation of the accused persons or lack of zeal in their prosecution. They include Godswill Akpabio for his indictment of allegedly stealing N180 billion, Senator Adamu Abdullahi, who was facing charges for misappropriating N15 billion, APC's former national chairman, Adams Oshiomhole, who was indicted for \$55 million in bribery, who was quoted as saying that any corrupt politician that finds his way to the ruling party would have his sins forgiven (Sobechi, 2020). For example, Godswill Akpabio, who has been suspected of corruption, was made Minister of Affairs of the oil-rich Niger Delta. He was the -PDP governor of Akwa Ibom State from 2007 to 2015, and was a -PDP senator and Senate Minority Leader during the last legislative period. In August 2018, he was in the spotlight when he left the -PDP and joined the -APC. Before his nomination was announced, the -EFCC refused to respond to press queries relating to ongoing corruption investigations against him and his wife (Kreck, 2019). Also, Babachir Lawal (the immediate past Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) who diverted funds that were assigned for rehabilitation purposes in the crisis-ridden North-East Nigeria to his private pockets? He has been walking freely because he is a top

member of the ruling (All Progressives Congress) APC (Adebusuyi, 2019).

Again, a well known financier and supporter of the APC administration of President Muhammadu Buhari, Ex-Governor of Bayelsa State, Timipre Sylva was alleged to have looted | 19.7 billion and was facing trial before Justice A. Y. Mohammed of the Federal High Court, Abuja. However, two days after President Buhari was sworn in, the new APC government withdrew the charges preferred against Sylva on June 1, 2015 and on October 3, 2018, the EFCC returned to Sylva, 48 houses seized from him during the administration of former president, Goodluck Jonathan in 2013 to him (Bada, 2018; Akinkuotu, Adeoye & Alagbe, 2018). In fact, some of these alleged corrupt persons; politicians and government officials (former and present) are displayed in the table below.

Table 2: Alleged Corrupt Officials and Politicians Under Buhari Administration

S/N	Name	Alleged Corrupt act	Status
1	Ambassador Ayodele Oke and his wife Folashade	Oke was the former DG of the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), allegedly hid \$43million totaling N13billion of government's fund in a Lagos apartment. The money was discovered in one of the flats, where his wife runs a private firm in Ikoyi, Lagos. Folashade, the wife of Oke, was said to have rented the flat for the sum of \$1.6m, which she paid cash, and lodged the remaining part of the loot in the safety of the flat before she was expose.	There has been no news of the outcome of the prosecution of either Folashade or the Ayodele Oke under an administration that is fighting corruption.
2	Mr. Andrew Yakubu	He was former Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation's (NNPC) boss, and he was arrested for corruption by EFCC and N39 billion (\$9.7m and £74000) recovered from his home.	Due to the affinity to the president, EFCC is powerless to act on the case
3	Mustapha Maihaja	Director General of National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). He was indicted for embezzling N33billion.	Due to the affinity to the president, EFCC is powerless to act on the case
4	Ishaq Kawu	Director General of Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation's (NBC). He was indicted for	Due to the affinity to the president, EFCC is case

5	Babachir Lawal	The immediate past Secretary to the Government of the Federation. He was indicted for awarding N223m consultancy contract for the removal of invasive plant species in Komadugu, Yobe Water Channels to his company, Rholavision Engineering in contravention of Section 43(iii) and (iv) of the Public Procurement Act 2007 by the by the Senate ad hoc Committee on Mounting Humanitarian Crisis in the North-East	Has been sacked after protest by the opposition and civil society. He has still not been charged he was allowed to be replaced as SGF by his own cousin
6	Abdulrasheed Maina	Former head of the task force on pension reforms during the President Goodluck Jonathan led administration but fled Nigeria in 2015 after claims that he embezzled two billion naira (\$5.6 million, 4.8 million euros).	He was reinstated into the civil service with a promotion as deputy director ministry of interior and has not been prosecuted.
7	Professor Usman Yusuf	DG, National Health Insurance Scheme, was suspended/sacked for allegedly involved in a fraud to the tune of N919 million.	Professor Usman Yusuf, was reinstated despite being under investigation for fraud.
8	Godswill Akpabio	Former Governor of Akwa Ibom State and current Minister of Niger Delta Affairs. He was under investigation by EFCC for alleged embezzlement of N108bn during his tenure as governor of Akwa Ibom State (2007-2015).	He has not been prosecuted and his case is still pending with the EFCC
9	Rotimi Amaechi	Former Governor of Rivers State and current Minister of Transportation. He was indicted by the Justice George Omeregi-led Rivers State Judicial Commission of Inquiry set up to investigate the sale of state assets. He and others were accused of allegedly misappropriating N97bn through the sale of the state valued assets.	He has not been prosecuted
10	Ganduje Yahaya	Current governor of Kano State. He was caught in video evidence collecting bribe of large chunks of American dollars from an undisclosed associate and rolling them into his babaringa in the last quarter of 2018.	He has not been prosecuted by EFCC due to immunity of prosecution
11	Ibrahim Magu	Former acting chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). He was accused of a myriad of contraventions,	Currently facing Presidential probe panel

especially diversion of recovered loot, insubordination and misconduct by the Attorney General of the Federation (AGF) and Justice Minister, Abubakar Malami. He was also alleged of selling off most the assets recovered by the EFCC without the knowledge of anyone.

Source: Adapted from Adetayo, (2017); Bada (2018); Akinkuotu, Adeoye and Alagbe (2018); Awala, (2018); Tukur, (2019); Kreck, (2019); Sobechi (2020).

The issues of nepotism and favouritism which are forms of corruption have also characterized most of the appointments into key positions by President Buhari. The biggest trouble with the Buhari administration is the elephant in the room variously tagged as “lopsided appointments,” “nepotism,” “sectionalism,” “parochialism,” etc, (The Guardian Editorial, 2020). These have been largely displayed with impunity. For example, there is imbalance in the appointments of those heading the military and para-military agencies. These are displayed in the table below:

Table 3: Personnel of Military and Para-Military Agencies in Nigeria

S/N	Name of Officer	Position	State of Origin
1	Bashir Salih Magashi	Minister of Defence	Kano State
2	Babagana Monguno	National Security Adviser	Bornu State
3	Abayomi Olonisakin	Chief of Defence Staff	Ekiti State
4	Tukur Burutai	Chief of Army Staff	Bornu State
5	Sadique Abubakar	Chief of Air Staff,	Bauchi State
6	Ibok-Etelbas	Chief of Naval Staff	Cross River State
7	Mohammed Adamu	Inspector General of Police	Nasarawa State
8	Yusuf Bichi	Director-General, Department of State Services	Kano State
9	Ahmed Abubakar	Director-General, National Intelligence Agency	Katsina State
10	Hameed Ali	Comptroller-General of Customs	Bauchi State
11	Jaafar Ahmed	Comptroller General, Nigeria Correction Services	Kebbi State
12	Mohammed Babandede	Comptroller General, Nigeria Immigration Service	Jigawa State
13	Liman Ibrahim	Controller General, Federal Fire Service	Niger State
14	Abdullahi Muhammadu	Commandant General, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC),	Niger State

Source: Adapted from Adebowale, (2020).

The table 3 is an evident from extant appointments to the commanding heights of the military and paramilitary institutions that now seem an exclusive preserve of people from a section of the country (Omeihe, 2020). As you can see, almost all the agencies under the Ministry of Internal Affairs are headed by people from a section of the country. Apart from Chief of Naval Staff, Ibok-Etelbas who is from Cross River State in the South-South geo-political zone and Chief of Defence Staff, Abayomi Olonisakin who is from Ekiti State in the South-West geo-political zone, all others are from the north. This has never happened in all the 60 years of Nigeria as an independent entity. How does this list represent Nigeria, in key military and para-military agencies like these? This list cannot and will not promote a sense of national unity in this country of ours called Nigeria (Adebowale, 2020).

In 2017 there was outrage in some parts of the country over the lopsided appointments in the Department of State Service (DSS) by the president. The appointments revealed that 51 of the 479 new recruits came from Katsina the President’s state of origin, which is more than the 42 new cadets recruited from the six South-South states. These appointments are shown in the table below

Table 4: Number of Personnel Recruited into the Department of State Service (DSS) by the President in 2017

S/N	STATE	GEO-POLITICAL ZONE	NUMBER OF DSS RECRUITED
1	Akwa Ibom	SOUTH-SOUTH	5
2	Bayelsa		7
3	Cross River		9
4	Delta		8
5	Edo		6
6	Rivers		7
7	Anambra	SOUTH-EAST	10
8	Ebonyi		7
9	Enugu		9
10	Imo	SOUTH-WEST	11
11	Ekiti		12
12	Lagos		7
13	Ondo		9

14	Ogun		8
15	Osun		10
16	Oyo		11
17	FCT	NORTH-CENTRAL	7
18	Benue		9
19	Kogi		11
20	Kaduna		24
21	Kwara		13
22	Nassarawa		11
23	Plateau		9
24	Bauchi	NORTH-EAST	23
25	Borno		16
26	Gombe		14
27	Taraba		16
28	Yobe		12
29	Jigawa	NORTH-WEST	14
30	Kano		25
31	Katsina		51
32	Kebbi		16
33	Niger		11
34	Sokoto		15
35	Zamfara		20

Source: Adapted from Kumolu et al, (2017)

From the above table, Katsina had 51 new cadets, more than 42 cadets from the six state South-South geo-political zone whereas Lagos state with the highest population in Nigeria had 7 while Kano which follows had 25 and was closely followed by Kaduna with 24 and Bauchi, 23 cadets (Kumolu et al, 2017). Evidently, the recruitment slots were lopsided and this has led to some reactions as captured by Kumolu, et al (2017). Mr Olayiwola Afolabi, describes DSS recruitment as corruption in appointments. He said:

“The President has been getting away with such lopsided appointments in the past because Nigerians have refused to confront him constitutionally. We can no longer take this.” “His lopsided appointees have never worked for the interest of Nigeria and Nigerians and it is time we resort to merit in appointments so that the country can take its place in the comity of developed nations” (Kumolu, et al, 2017).

Dr. Lawrence Ekwok, a lecturer in the University of Calabar said that:

“The appointments by the President are actually the highest form of corruption. I wonder why they are parading people whom they claim stole money. To me, the fight against corruption is mere shadow-chasing. Look at the list of recent recruitments into the DSS, the number of those from Katsina State alone is more than those from the six states of South-South put together and if such is not corruption what is it called? They should tell us or redefine the word to give it another dictionary meaning” (Kumolu, et al, 2017).

Also commenting on the lopsided appointments in DSS, Niger Delta activist, Ankio-Briggs, said that:

“I think this is unacceptable. It is not surprising because that is what this government has done since it came. Its appointment has favoured the North. Some of us now refer to the federal government as Government of the Northern Republic of Nigeria. They have changed from federal character to northern character. The government of the day is not listening to what Nigerians are saying, Nigerians are complaining everyday against nepotism in the system. They have taken more employment for themselves. Everything about Nigeria is skewed against us. We begin to wonder what exactly binds us together if it is not the oil and gas” (Kumolu, et al, 2017).

Recently, there was reported lamentation of the leaders of Pan Niger Delta Forum (PANDEF), over the blatant lopsided appointments into top management positions of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). The outcry was based on the latest appointments of 20 northerners into management positions while the entire oil-producing zones of southern Nigeria was allotted only three top management positions in the NNPC

(Onyekakeyah, 2020; The Guardian Editorial, 2020). These appointments are also indicated in the table below.

Table 5: Key Management Positions Held By Northerners in NNPC

S/N	Name	Position Held
1	Mele Kolo Kyari	Group Managing Director, GMD
2	Umar Isa Ajiya	Chief Finance Officer, Finance & Account
3	Yusuf Usman	Chief Operating Officer, Gas & Power
4	Farouk Garba Sa'id	Chief Operating Officer, Corporate Services
5	Mustapha Y. Yakubu	Chief Operating Officer, Refining and Petrochemicals
6	Hadiza Y. Coomassie	Corporate Secretary/Legal Adviser to the Corporation
7	Omar Farouk Ibrahim	GGM, International Energy Relations, IER
8	Kallamu Abdullahi	GGM, Renewable Energy
9	Ibrahim Birma	GGM, Governance Risk and Compliance
10	Bala Wunti	GGM, NAPIMS
11	Inuwa Waya	MD, NNPC Shipping
12	Musa Lawan	MD, Pipelines & Product Marketing, PPMC
13	Mansur Sambo	MD, Nigeria Petroleum Development Company, NPDC
14	Lawal Sade	MD, Duke Oil/NNPC Trading Company
15	Malami Shehu	MD, Port Harcourt Refining Company
16	Muhammed Abah	MD, Warri Refining and Petrochemical Company
17	Abdulkadir Ahmed	MD, Nigeria Gas Marketing Company
18	Salihu Jamari	MD, Nigeria Gas and Power Investment Company Limited
19	Mohammed Zango	MD, NNPC Medical Services
20	Sarki Auwalu.	Director, Department of Petroleum Resources, DPR

Source: Onyekakeyah (2020).

From these appointments in the above table, the entire southern Nigeria was allotted only three top management positions in the NNPC. In other words, the oil-producing zones of South-south, South-east, and South-west are left with one Chief Operating Officer Position each, and a few senior and middle-level management positions in peripheral and incidental subsidiaries, departments and divisions of the corporation (Onyekakeyah, 2020). This development makes one wonder if the organization has surreptitiously become

Northern Nigeria Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). To say the least, the northernisation of federal offices is legendary and a daylight assault on merit or national integration (The Guardian Editorial, 2020).

Moreso, there is gross imbalance and dominance by northerners in an unprecedented manner at the top of all these institutions and agencies of government below: Federal Inland Revenue, Customs and Excise, Nigeria Maritime Administration and Safety Agency, Nigeria Ports Authority, Central Bank of Nigeria, Tertiary Education Fund, Bank of Industry, Pension Commission, Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation, Petroleum Technology Development Fund, Petroleum Pricing and Regulation Agency, Petroleum Equalisation Fund, Department of Petroleum Resources, Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria, the Universal Basic Education Commission, National Broadcasting Commission, Energy Commission of Nigeria, The Department of State Security (DSS), Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA), National Intelligence Agency (NIA), Police Force, Air Force, Nigerian Army, Customs, Immigrations and Correctional Service, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Defence Ministry, NIMASA, Nigerian Shippers' Council, FAAN, NCAA, EFCC, NFIU, Code of Conduct Bureau, (CCB), Code of Conduct Tribunal (CCT), and so on (Adebowale, 2020: The Guardian Editorial, 2020).

From all indications, almost all key departments and agencies of the federal government under President Buhari are headed by people from the northern part of the country. These appointments are in violation of the Federal Character Principle in Nigeria (The Guardian Editorial, 2020). For clarity, Chapter 2, Section 14, subsection 3 of the 1999 Constitution, as amended, provides in detail that: "the composition of the government of the federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity, and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in the government or in any of its agencies.

The brazen assault on the federal character principle in Nigeria was further replicated by the President in the appointment of both the chairman, Dr. Muheeba Farida Dankaka (Kwara State) and the secretary Mohammed Bello Tukur (Taraba State) of the Federal Character Commission from one section of the country - the north contrary to extant tradition (Omeihe, 2020). If such a balancing institution can be subverted in such a manner, what else is left of its constitutional objective? Obviously, in the context of appointments, President Buhari has consistently failed to respect the federal character provision in the country's constitution. The provision is designed to address lopsided appointments and build a peace that has eluded us since independence almost 60 years ago (The Guardian Editorial, 2020).

Anti-Corruption Efforts of Buharis' Administration (2015-2020)

In order to combat corruption in Nigeria, the Buhari's administration has made some efforts by introducing anti-corruption measures, policies and legal frameworks such as the Integrated Personnel Payroll and Information System (IPPIIS), Treasury Single Account (TAS), Whistle-blowing Policy, Code of Conduct Bureau and Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative amongst others (Akpan, & Eyo, 2018). This effort has brought about a modicum of victories in certain aspects of the corruption perception index. However, Nigeria has, regrettably and consistently, remained on the negative corruption perception index, regionally and internationally (Akpan, & Eyo, 2018).

At inception of President Buhari administration in 2015, he vowed to tackle and combat corruption in Nigeria no matter whose ox is gored (Onya & Elemanya, 2016; Ozah, 2020). . However, five years later, the public perceptions of Buhari's anti-corruption drive remain poor (Abosedo, 2018). Despite a number of high-profile prosecutions in the early days of the Buhari administration, investigations have seldom led to significant convictions. And the recent convictions of two former governors, Jolly Nyame and Joshua Dariye, have failed to convince the public of any improvement. The slow pace of court cases, and financial settlements made by wealthy

individuals and entities outside of the courtroom have also impeded successful prosecutions (Abosedo, 2018). Regrettably, at the moment, the ruling government can be referred to as a toothless bulldog that lacks the political will and action to pursue its objectives. For a government that was founded on the wings of radical change with a burning desire to purge the nation of bandits, terrorism, and corruption among others within the shortest possible time according to their pledge (Ozah, 2020)

At the beginning of President Buhari administration in 2015, he worked more closely with the US, the UK, and various Middle Eastern countries to seize and repatriate assets from public officials that were suspected to have been purchased with illicit funds. Also, the anti-corruption agency, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), became more active and launched a series of investigations into former high-ranking public officials from previous administrations, in particular former cabinet officials, state governors and senior civil servants (Abosedo, 2018). Buhari's administration through the EFCC has tried to convict many of the country's politicians and influential elites on charges of corruption. The Alison-Madueke case is one of the few success stories in the fight against corruption (Kreck, 2019). Diezani Alison-Madueke, former oil minister is one of the highest profile members of the previous regime facing charges of corruption. The EFCC says it has traced at least N47.2bn and \$487.5m in cash, properties and other valuables to Mrs Alison-Madueke, who served as petroleum minister from 2010 to 2015. The assets include "boxes of gold, silver and diamond jewellery worth several million pounds sterling" at one residence in Abuja and a \$37.5m apartment building in Lagos, according to the EFCC.

Besides, several top government officials of the Jonathan administration were indicted in the \$2.1 billion arms purchase scandal and they have been arrested by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). The major culprit of the scandal like Colonel Dasuki (former National Security Adviser) and Olisa Metuh (Publicity Secretary of the People's Democratic Party), were tried and remanded on several count charges. Olisa Metuh, though, accused of benefiting N400 million from the arms deal scandal was granted

bail with the tone of N700 million by two separate courts. On the other hand, Lawal Jafaru Isa (former military governor of Kaduna State) who was accused of receiving N170 million from the arms deal was set free without trial when he returned N100 million and promised to return the remaining N70 million (Ekpo, Chime & Enor, 2016). Though the president has displayed the political will to combat corruption, his objective and intention appears to be misguided. Recovering stolen funds from corrupt public officials is not a fight against corruption but rather a fight against the manifestations of corruption (Ekpo, Chime & Enor, 2016).

One major concern in the current anti-corruption fight in Nigeria under the leadership of President Muhammadu Buhari is that despite determined efforts of anti-corruption agencies and widespread uncovering of phenomenal corruption in the public services, actual convictions of indicted persons are few. This could be attributed to the lack of complete independence of anticorruption agencies, politicization of the anticorruption fight and inefficiency of the judiciary (Momoh, 2018). From all indications, the Buhari's anti-corruption fight tends to rather place more emphasis on fighting the manifestations of corruption, thereby negating the root and the vector of this germ. Just like his predecessors, the modus operandi of his anti-corruption war is to arrest suspected looters with any of its intelligence agencies, employ the antics of its anti-graft agencies for general probing and investigation, then charge the suspect to court for prosecution (Ekpo, Chime & Enor, 2016).

Convincingly, Buhari's critics, both within his ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) and the PDP, claim that he is using anti-corruption efforts to target political opponents (Abosedo, 2018). This is because many of those investigated for corruption cases were part of the government circle of former President Jonathan or -PDP members (Kreck, 2019). This insinuation is made more germane by the fact that several petitions written against top members of the Buhari led All Progressive's Congress (APC) such as Rotimi Ameachi (former governor of Rivers State) and Babatunde Raji Fashola (former governor of Lagos State) have fallen on deaf ears. Instead, the president has appointed this duo into his cabinet as ministers and as such shielded them with interesting portfolios (Ekpo, Chime

& Enor, 2016). Meanwhile, a number of APC political figures have defected to the PDP in recent months, only to see EFCC investigations launched against them. For example, the defection of Benue state Governor Samuel Ortom from the APC to the PDP was promptly followed by EFCC investigations into his alleged involvement in the diversion of state funds. Anecdotal evidence suggests that politicians who defected from the PDP to the APC have faced less pressure from anti-corruption agencies (Abosede, 2018).

Conclusion

From all indications, despite the efforts at curbing corruption in Nigeria under the leadership of President Muhammadu Buhari, it seems the trend of corruption is on the increase (Momoh, 2018). Reports shows that the current Buharis's administration is fighting corruption but it lacks the basic understanding of what drives it in Nigeria. This weakness reveals why it has concentrated on punishment without addressing the socio-economic factors driving corruption. An overwhelming majority people in Nigeria do not have portable water to drink, they don't have access to stable power supply, they do not have good roads to carry out commercial activities and their income per capita is too low to do anything more than just consume to stay alive (Amannah & Adeyeye, 2018). How does one stop a ridiculously low-income earner from taking bribe under the present inflationary circumstance? These are the pathetic situations confronting average Nigerian citizens.

Way Forward

The fight against corruption remains one of the strongest promises of Buhari's campaign. Therefore, President Buhari should not waiver on his stand against corruption. This will go a long way to make his administration regain some of its lost glory. He should use the limited time at his disposal to ensure that all corrupt officials, politicians and political office holders both in present and previous administration are probed and brought to book. Therefore, in order to succeed in anti-corruption fight, the paper suggests some measures as follows:

President Buhari should not be selective in his corruption fight rather he should tackle the menace of corruption holistically irrespective of political affiliations or ethnic affinity of those involved in corrupt acts.

Welfare services should be accorded to all Nigerians by governments at all levels especially the public and civil servants; all forms of favouritism should be discouraged in appointments of personnel into government establishments and in the distribution of national wealth.

To curb corruption, there is the need for social justice, equity, re-energized process of socialization and sustained improvement of the conditions of living of Nigerians especially civil and public servants. This would be the most reliable mechanisms for eradicating, or at least, lessening the tide of corruption in the public sector in Nigeria.

The agencies of the anti-graft should ensure the immediate prosecution of people who are involved in corrupt practices. There should be no sacred cows and prosecution should not be on one rule for all and another for the privileged few.

Agencies of government should be audited as at when due. There is hardly any government agency that is audited as at when due. Audit reports are submitted three to four years belatedly; hence the reports become a mere routine with no effect (ThisDayEditorial, 2020).

There should be fairness and equity in the distribution of national resources, incomes and execution of developmental projects and employment opportunities of all Nigerians irrespective of their ethnic background and/or political affiliations.

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