

CORRUPTION AND THREAT OF STATE FAILURE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Institutionalized corruption constitutes the worst challenge to Nigeria's socio-economic and political development since the attainment of independence in 1960. Nigeria with abundant human and material resources has the potential of becoming a modern state but corruption and insecurity have continued to act as barrier to her aspiration. The study aimed at examining the connection between corruption and state failure in Nigeria. This study which is theoretical in nature draws its argument basically from secondary data which include journal articles, textbooks and internet sources. Based on the existing threat of corruption and insecurity, the study concludes that Nigeria is drifting towards state failure. In the final analysis, the study recommends that there is the urgent need for institutional and ethical reorientations with emphasis on performance, transparency, accountability and civility in every sector of the economy.

Keywords: *Corruption, Nigeria, state failure, failed state, insecurity*

Introduction

The most intractable problem in Nigeria following the era of independence is corruption. The phenomenon of corruption among public officials has impacted negatively on the socio-economic and political development of Nigeria. An estimated 50% of Nigeria revenue generated since independence has been looted by public officials (Ocampo, 2015). The most disturbing aspect is that these stolen funds are kept in foreign account, thereby enriching the economies of the country where the funds are stashed. Corruption remains the bane of Nigeria's development as its manifestation increases the gap between the rich and the poor.

Institutionized corruption constitutes the basis of underdevelopment debacle of Nigeria's socio-economic development. In addition, corruption is the major factor responsible for the distortion of the normal functioning of institutions of governance and economic advancement (Oluwole 2014).

The extent of the damage which corruption has done to Nigeria was captured by Nwabuzor (2005), using the World Bank statistics, put corruption at over 1 trillion per year, representing about 12% of the gross domestic product (GDP) of Nigeria and other countries like Kenya and Venezuela. Lamenting the high level of corruption in Nigeria, Achebe (1983), asserted that the phenomenon has heightened to a fatal stage or level.

Corruption portrays Nigeria as a fragile state or as a failing state if not a failed state. State fragility or failed state refers to a situation characterized by dysfunctional, deteriorating or collapsed central authorities. Furthermore, the term conveys much a condition of vulnerability to potential shocks rather than a situation of existence of crisis (Helena and Philippe, 2013). It is as a result of the failure of the Nigerian state to satisfy the basic needs of the people since independence that some analysts have argued that Nigeria is a fragile state or rather declining towards a state failure.

Corruption in Nigeria occurs in every facet of the Nigerian economy. All institutions of governance are involved in corruption: the civil service, police, custom, army, immigration and even in learning institutions among others. Christopher, Daniel, Mark, Douglas and Roberts (2011), remarked that, corruption has reached the highest level in Nigeria that it has the potential to cause state failure. In tandem with the above view, Oko, Henry and Washington (2018) qualify Nigeria as a failing state that is drifting towards a failed or collapsed state. Failing or fragile States exhibit widespread corruption which is a catalyst for bad governance and legitimacy crisis. Fragile states are characteristically vulnerable as a result of weak institutional capacity, poor governance and political instability.

Describing the seeming complexity embedded in the concept of corruption in Nigeria, Smith (1976), opined that the more we device complex and ambitious plans to arrive at socio-economic and political development, the more their implementation is frustrated by the evolution of ever more effective and sophisticated method of corruption.

Method of Study

The paper utilized the historical method of data collection and the observational technique. The historical method which is essentially descriptive is the synthesis of literature obtained from secondary source such as textbooks, journals, periodicals and

the visual and audio media including websites. On the other hand, the observational technique is a primary tool of scientific inquiry which makes it possible to record events simultaneously with their spontaneous occurrence. This affords the researcher to observe socio-political phenomena as they are happening.

Contextualizing Corruption

There is no generally accepted meaning of the word corruption. The reason is that the term means different things to different people. While politicians and civil servants commonly use the term "corruption" to refer to the abuse of public power, it actually refers to a pattern of behavior that can be found in almost any area of life. When they see corruption, the majority of people recognize it. At the end of the day, defining corruption is a social and political process, even if some lines can be drawn and some behaviors universally condemned. (Fitzsimons, 2002).

The International Monetary Fund (IMF, 1998) regards corruption as an abuse of office or trust by both public officials and private or non-profit organizations, for private benefits. Brownsberger (1983) views corruption as an official or fiduciary person who illegally abuses his position to obtain for himself or others what belongs to the public.

The Lexicon (1991) of the Lectric Law Library defines corruption as an act done with the intent to gain an advantage at the expense of official duty and others' rights. It includes bribery, but it is broader because an act can be completed even if the benefit derived from it is not provided by another. Corruption, according to the Cambridge International Dictionary of English (1996), is a dishonest means of utilizing one's position or authority for one's personal benefit, especially for money, a morally wrong act, a criminal conduct, and a practice that has an impact on a nation's or society's growth and development.

Nkom (2000), views bribery or the use of unauthorized rewards to persuade individuals in positions of power to act or refuse to act; it covers bribery or the use of unauthorized rewards to persuade people in positions of authority to act or refuse to act. It entails theft of public finances and resources for personal advantage, as well as nepotism, among other things. Umoru (2005), in a similar spirit, sees corruption as a distortion or divergence from the righteous path frequently connected with one influence or the other, an evil that overwhelms moral judgements and relegates conscience. He went on to say that corruption is a purposeful act carried out underhandedly with the express objective of impoverishing the victim and society as a whole; a societal evil that disrupts a society's growth and development.

Adegbite (1976), opined that corruption is defined as the “transition from a sound to a rotten state, or from a condition of uprightness, correctness, or truth to a bad state, or from a tainted use of money to get things done illegally.” Corruption, according to Smith (1976), is the diversion of material riches intended for achieving socially desirable purposes into the pockets of people.

Adegbola (2007), views corruption as unlawful use of official power or influence to enrich himself or advance his career at the expense of the public, in violation of his oath of office. Corruption is a perversion of justice in which established rules are broken for personal advantage and profit. Purchase of votes, election results manipulation, contract inflation, kickbacks, project abandonment, placement of names of ghost workers on monthly pay-roll, arsons to cover up fraudulent practices, bribery, nepotism, tribalism, favoritism, and so on are all examples of corrupt practices. Bribery, favor, or moral depravity are all examples of perversion of integrity or state of affairs. Corruption manifests itself in a variety of ways, as characterized by the definitions above:

- i. Use of positions or office for gratification.
- ii. Offering or accepting inducements or gratification directly or through proxies or agents.
- iii. Demanding or receiving any property or benefit of any kind directly or indirectly from others.
- iv. Payment of bribes so as to get contracts, inflation of contracts, kickback or abandonment of contracts and the likes.

Types of Corruption

There are different types of corrupt practices in Nigeria. They include political corruption, bureaucratic corruption, electoral corruption, favouritism, nepotism, money laundering, among others.

Political Corruption: Political corruption, also referred to as grand corruption, occurs at the highest levels of government. When politicians and political decision-makers who formulate, establish, and implement laws in the name of the people are themselves corrupt, this occurs. It also occurs when policy and laws are crafted to favor politicians, legislators, and high-ranking government officials. In fact, greedy corruption distorts government institutions through manipulating political decisions, institutions, and rules of process (Amumdsen, 2000; the Encyclopedia Americana, 1999).

Bureaucratic Corruption: Also called petty corruption. Bureaucratic corruption can be traced to the intervention of the government in the economy through such policies aimed at liberalization etc. Through these government regulations, officials have discretion in awarding contracts, e.t.c to their cronies and individuals who offer bribes to circumvent the rules (Mauro, 1997) cited in Akpotor et al (2007). Bureaucratic corruption takes place in the public sector or at the point where policy is being implemented. Low-level and street-level corruption are terms used to describe the types of corruption that citizens experience on a daily basis in locations such as hospitals, schools, municipal licensing offices, politics, and tax offices. When someone obtains a business from the government through unethical means, this is known as bureaucratic corruption. (Amumdsen, 2000).

Electoral Corruption: Electoral corruption is the type of corruption which characterizes the entire processes of election such as bribery, threats of office or special favors, pressure, intimidation, and interference with electoral freedom. Votes are bought, people are slain or wounded in the name of elections, losers become election winners, and votes appear in places where they were not cast. The sale of parliamentary votes, administrative or judicial decisions, or government appointments are all examples of corruption in power. Gifts, legal fees, employment, favors to relatives, social influence, or any other relationship that puts the public interest and welfare first (The Encyclopedia Americana, 2000). Another aspect of electoral corruption is gerrymandering which has to do with pre-election manipulation of electoral constituency in favour of a preferred party or candidate.

Buttressing electoral corruption in Nigeria, Akpotor (2018), opined that the image of the Nigeria judiciary is tainted by perversion of justice, particularly, civil and political cases. He argued that, the general elections held between 2003 - 2016 were marred by massive fraud, except in few cases, the judiciary connived to bury democracy in Nigeria.

Favouritism: This is the abuse of office by government or private officials in which resources such as positions or money etc. are biasely distributed in favour of people that are known and others not known are discriminated and excluded from the largesse

Nepotism: This is a type of favoritism in which a person in a position of power prefers his or her relatives and family members. Nepotism occurs when someone is exempted from the application of certain laws, regulations, or given undue preference in the

allocation of scarce resources, which is also common in Nigeria (Amumdsen, 2000; Amumdsen, 1997, Girling, 1997; Fairbanks, 1999)

Money Laundering: Include extra legal and illegal transfer of funds particularly, foreign currency across borders by avoiding official controls over such transfer.

Reasons for Corruption in Nigeria

Certain factors have been adduced to explain corruption in Nigeria as follow:

- i. **Self-Actualization:** The ambition or aspiration of man is to attain the zenith and this means man will always strive to acquire and accumulate wealth. This is because of the great inequality in the distribution of wealth in the society. This point is however faulted on the ground that the well to do individuals among us indulged more in corruption than the poor. However, the quest to get rich at all cost without commensurate means of income can lead to dubious behaviour and corruption.
- ii. **Government Failure to Provide Basic Needs of the People:** Another reason that has been identified for corruption is the government's failure to provide basic necessities of life and employment for the citizens. Life becomes uneasy when an individual looks around and discovered that he is cut out of all forms of happiness through lack of essential amenities of life. Low wages and irregular payments of salaries by employers, lack of job security in the private sectors, delayed pensions and gratuities payment combined with high cost of living stirs corruption because people have to look beyond their legitimate earnings in order to survive. When society fails in her capacity to provide for citizens, then corruption is encouraged. Any economy where the employed are not sure of the next meal is ground corruption.
- iii. **Social Structure:** In their explanation of the causes of corruption, the functionalists, Chinoy (1967) and Merton (1957), deviant behavior, it is argued, is a result of society's social structure, which places unavoidable pressure on some members of society to act or not act corruptly. For example, many Nigerians, regardless of their means, have a strong desire to become wealthy this had led to acquisition without consideration for the source of attainment of goals. Consequently, corruption is resorted to in order to "arrive". Wealthy people are respected because of their money without taking into cognizance the source of their wealth. The scenario was painted appropriate by Ubeku (1989), thus: Nigeria is probably one of the only places in the world where a man's source of riches is unconcerned by his neighbors, the general public, or the

- government. When a guy is able to distribute money, the church prays for him, and he receives a chieftaincy title and mingles with the ruling class.
- iv. **Colonialism and the Two Publics:** Another causal factor of corruption is that linked to colonialism and imperialism and the attendant infiltration of foreign codes of conduct which conflict with the African way of life characterized by reciprocal exchange of goodwill. Gunner (1968), contends that corruption is a residue of African traditional society which is based on the tendency to always cater for the less privileged, magnanimity, reciprocity and communal feelings. Corruption, from this perspective results from the clash of values between the African indigenous ethics and the complexities of modern culture. This has aptly been explained by the theory proposed by Ekeh (1995), that colonialism produced two publics, the primordial public and the civil public. The primordial public belongs to the individual's family relations and kinsmen. The civil public refers to the larger society control by the government officials who are working in the public sector or government. The primordial public is socially moral while the civil public is amoral. Ironically, it is the civil public which is amoral that dominates governance and public actions. Consequently, there is the tendency to regard public property, assets or resources as something that can be recklessly handled or vandalized, looted and misappropriated. The era following independence brought conflict between the colonial authority and indigenous political leaders whose interests was not to serve but to use the instrument of the state to enrich themselves. This is largely responsible for the endemic corruption in Africa and in particular Nigeria.
- v. **Politics of Winner Takes-all:** the process of seeking political office in Nigeria which is often viewed as the survival of the fittest whereby the winner takes-all paves way for corrupt practices. It is the belief of the average Nigerian politician that politics is a do or die affair and that they must win at all cost. The problem is exacerbated by the politics of exclusion, that is, the losing party or parties and candidates are excluded from participating in government because they are regarded as opponents. Based on this, every means is employed including bribery, rigging, menacing, killing and other bizarre means to get power, thus making politicians doled out money to electorates with the expectation that such money will be recovered through looting when in power. This is responsible for the high incidence of political corruption in Nigeria.
- vi. **Weak Institutions:** Also identified as the cause of corruption in Nigeria is the weak institutional framework to prevent or check corruption both in the public and private sectors. Even when such apparatus exist, they are incapacitated and

therefore unable to perform effectively. That is, the institutions are deliberately weakened by either denying them of autonomy or funds which will make them dysfunctional. Besides, the institutions are also culpable of corrupt practices. They have been indicted many a times of misdemeanour and corruption.

Furthermore, Ajie and Wokekoro (2012) cited in Agbekaka et al, (2016), enumerated the factors that are responsible for persistent corruption as:

- i. Unaccountable leadership
- ii. Interference of politics into administration
- iii. Weakness of government institutions and informal structures
- iv. Use of political office as the major access to wealth
- v. Clash of values with moral codes
- vi. Ineffective social and governmental enforcement
- vii. Lack of patriotism
- viii. Deficient legal system
- ix. Ineffective budgetary provisions
- x. Lack of probity, transparency and responsibility
- xi. Inequality of wealth
- xii. Poor remunerations and lack of incentives
- xiii. The problem of catering for large family and polygamous household
- xiv. The issue of culture and value systems in Nigeria society
- xv. Mass poverty. e.t.c.

Effects of Corruption

In any economy, the crippling impacts of corruption and mismanagement cannot be overstated. Corruption strikes hardest at the lowest members of society, who must ultimately pay the price for the resulting distortions and suffering. Corruption has slowed national, economic, social, and political advancement, according to Peter Langseth (2003), program manager, United Nations Center for International Crime Prevention. He went on to say that because of corrupt patronage, public resources are allocated inefficiently, competent and honest citizens are disappointed, and as a result, production suffers, administrative efficiency suffers, and the legitimacy of the political and economic order suffers.

The cost of government services is exaggerated as a result of corruption. Furthermore, corruption contributes to political instability. Corruption and inefficiency have been blamed for previous coups in Nigeria. Political instability in Nigeria is invariably the result of corruption (Shively, 1997). As Nigeria and other emerging countries across the

world have discovered, corruption leads to a shaky political and economic structure. Corruption distorts the political and economic structure and only serves to promote the civilian and military echelons who exploit the government's machinery for personal gain at the expense of the public. Nigeria's image has been tarnished by corruption.

Corruption is a regressive force that stifles progress. "Corruption in Nigeria has reached a fatal stage," Achebe (1983) argued, "and the country was probably bound for the death bed if nothing dramatic was done." Nigeria has squandered tremendous opportunities in the international world as a result of corrupt practices. Many Nigerians have been humiliated as a result of the corrupt behavior of some Nigerians, both at home and abroad. The trend continues unabated every day. Nigeria has consistently been listed at the bottom of the world's most corrupt countries by Transparency International. According to David (1999), public sector corruption has a negative impact on society in the following ways:

- i. Corruption tends to dissuade people from putting up honest effort.
- ii. Economic initiatives are discouraged due to Corruption.
- iii. Corruption breeds lack of trust to political office holders.
- iv. A corrupt environment encourages officials to divert scarce resources to low-priority sectors.
- v. Where Corruption exists people would not want to invest.
- vi. Corruption, more than anything else, devalues a society, degrades its very fabric, and promotes economic reliance and underdevelopment.

Corruption puts decent governance, democracy, and the rule of law in jeopardy. Corruption is to blame for extreme poverty, inequality, criminality, and state collapse.

Theoretical Framework

There are copious theories to explain the phenomenon of corruption, however the modernization theory and its other variants will be adopted in this study. According to the modernization theory as posited by Huntington (1968), cited by Adefulu (2007), corruption is perceived to be a consequence of modernizing societies in the course of their social and political development which produce uneven distribution of wealth, political turmoil and corruption because of the abuse of power by those holding public offices for their selfish gain.

The modernization theory further asserts that corruption can be understood in terms of the contradictions inherent in colonial and post-colonial African societies. In other

words, corruption can be seen from the perspective of patrimonialism, prebendalism and patro-clientelism characteristics of the African indigenous social and political structure (Adefulu, 2007). With the superimposition of modern social, political and economic structures on the African traditional heritage, those entrusted with public power do not regard themselves as working for the people and the public does not also see them as such. Patrimonialism therefore explains why office holders fail to recognize the distinction between what is public and what is private. The result of this confusion is corruption.

Similarly, the prebendal theory postulated by Joseph (1996), views politics in Nigeria as being defined by ethno-cultural values and patronage. According to this postulation, prebendalism is a bane of sustainable democracy and development in Nigeria which has its motivation in the rent-seeking psychology of seeing state resources and machinery as possible objects of appropriation. On his part, Gunner (1968), regards corruption as a residue of African traditional society which is based on the principles of magnanimity, reciprocal relations and the tendency to cater for the less privileged ones. Corruption therefore, results from the clash of values between African cultural heritage and the complexities of foreign modern values. In tandem with Gunner's view, Akeredolu (1976), averred that the colonial economy which brought with it, monetary rewards for performance of state duty, introduced corrupt practices. The predatory and exploitative activities of foreign monopoly capital which perpetuated mercantile capitalism retarded the growth of indigenous entrepreneurship. The effect of these on the Nigerian economy is the frightening level of corruption as the only access to wealth is to align with the state where petroleum resources is the only major source of foreign earnings. The political barons carried away by the huge petro dollar income embarked on embezzlement and wasteful spree, thereby denying their country of socio-economic and political development. Emphasizing this point further, Odekunle (1986) and Yecho, (2006) stated that, the only viable industry remains the government and once government apparatus is captured, the occupant uses all means including corruption to sustain themselves and their cronies in power.

In an attempt to explicate the nature of contradiction in the pre-colonial and colonial African condition, Ekeh (1995), posited in his theory of the Two Publics that colonialism produced: the primordial public and the civil public. The primordial public belongs to the individual family relations and kinsmen. While the civil public pertains to the realm of government in which public officials are employed or appointed to run the affairs of government. According to this theory, the primordial public is socially and morally in contrast with the civil public which is amoral in the sense that the tendency

exists to consider public assets as commonwealth which must be squandered, vandalized or looted. Colonialism therefore, engendered conflicts such that the indigenous political class who took over from the colonial authority have no interest in serving but rather use the instrument of the state for personal aggrandizement.

The postulations examined above have a poignant relevance to the persistent and pervasive corruption in Nigeria.

Contextualizing State Failure

The concept of state failure has been given scholarly attention by individuals and research bodies. The term emerged as a humanitarian concern back in the 1990s in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union (Nguyen, 2002). Since then, the concept has been widely employed to depict a political entity which has lost its authority over its population and unable to sustain its legitimate authority over its territorial domain. Stohl and Smith (1999) are of the view that a failed or failing state is the one whereby political leaders tend to neglect and trample over the fundamental rights of their people or direct state apparatus against a segment of the population or otherwise. A nation is prone to state failure when the governing class jettisons their statutory obligation over the governed.

The Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) cited in Symon and Pha, (2003), classified failed states as having:

- i. Weak institutions
- ii. Corrupt governments
- iii. Criminalization of politics
- iv. Poor law and order
- v. Insufficient revenue
- vi. Economic dislocation
- vii. Disaffected and alienated youth
- viii. A growing culture of violence, e.t.c.

The U.S. Commission on National Security cited in Christopher, et al (2011) points out that state failure indicates heightened or frightening nationalism, ethno-religious uprising, disaster of humanitarian nature, proliferation of weapons and possible regional disruptions. The fund for peace and foreign policy (2007) in its Failed State Index, listed the indicators of failed state in terms of institutional corruption, crime rate, the efficiency of the government over its economy and tax collection, displacement of

persons within the state, severe economic crisis, legacy of group vengeance, brain drain and ecological condition.

USAID (2005), cited in Christopher, et al (2011) refers to falling states or failed states as belonging to the same class that are recovering from crisis. While the most severe stage of fragile states is “crisis states”. In crisis states conflict is either ongoing or the chances of occurring is very high and the central government cannot exercise effective control over the state including diminishing or total lack of legitimacy among the population. The U.S Commission Report on Weak States (2003), conceives weak states as those states which are incapable of meeting responsibilities for their own people as well as those the international community expected of them. These include protection from internal and external danger, provision of healthcare, education and the provision of institutions to cater for the need of the people.

Charles and Shannon, (2011) in their examination of the concept of failed states said that the concept refer to governments whose legitimacy are threatened by revolting citizens and by those persons who flee the country or organize revolts in order to assert independent existence in part of the country in order to undermine democratic institutions and national security.

Collier (2007) and piazza, (2008) cited in Charles and Shannon (2011), outlined the characteristics of failed states generally as follows:

- i. Poverty, (extreme income and gender inequality) are signs of state failure
- ii. Vulnerability to internal rebellion under corrupt leadership
- iii. Democratic system with strong parliament lowers the risk of state failure while autocracy increases it.
- iv. Poor democracies tend to be more unstable and vulnerable to state failure than rich and poor non democracies
- v. Population pressure, internally displaced people, refugees and food shortage cause state failure
- vi. Governments that violate human rights are prone to fail
- vii. Countries that depend on only petroleum and gas (monocultural economy) for income are vulnerable, especially if political power and wealth are unevenly distributed.
- viii. States whose governments fail to protect freedom of religion may face state failure.

- ix. States that adhere to strict free or liberal international trade are more stable while states experiencing economic inflation face the risk of state failure.
- x. States that have the capacity to tackle environmental degradation may be more stable
- xi. States having teeming unemployed youths may be more volatile since the “pool” of youths can readily and easily be mobilized for violent actions.

Amaechi (2017), culled the views of other scholars on the characteristics of state failure are presented in the table below:

Scholar	Basis	Features of State Failure
Helman and Ratner (1993)	Humanitarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to maintain public order, • Chaos leading to the exodus of citizens to other countries
Zartman (1995)	Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-performance of the basic functions of the state; • The structure, authority, law and political order have fallen apart and needs to be reconstructed in some form, old or new
Gross (1996)	Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public authorities are either unable or unwilling to carry out their end of the social contract
Ignatiff (2002)	Despotic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of monopoly of the means of violence by the federal government; • Rise of several armed groups threatening to overthrow the state
Miliken and Krause (2003)	Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to provide public goods; • Extreme disintegration of state authority
Rotberg (2003)	Not specified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent internal conflicts; • Inability of the government to deliver political goods to its citizens • Loss of legitimacy; • Growth of criminal violence • The state is bitterly contested by warring parties; • Inability to control borders; • The exercise of official power is limited to the capital city and some other major cities; • Provision of only limited quantities of essential political goods; • Privatization of effective educational and health system; • Unusual prevalence rate of destructive corruption; and

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to provide adequate food especially during disaster periods
Ottaway and Meier (2004)	Not specified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As one or more secessionist groups succeed in capturing a portion of a territory and forming a functioning new state, a country is split into several entities. • Neighboring states annexing part or all of the area; and • The loss of any centralized power.
The Fund Peace (2010)	Not specified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of physical authority over its borders, as well as the monopoly on authorized uses of physical force inside it; • Loss of legitimate authority to make decisions collectively; • Inability to offer adequate public services, as well as • Inability to interact as full members of the international community with other states
Failed State Index (2010)	Social, Economic, Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy Indicators • Uneven Economic Growth Across Group Lines; • Economic and / or severe Sharp Decline; • Social Indicators • Mounting Demographic Pressure, • Massive influxes of refugees or internally displaced people are causing complicated humanitarian crises; • Seeking Group Grievance or Group Paranoia as a legacy of vengeance; • Chronic and sustained human right; • Political Indicators • Criminalization and/or delegitimazation of the state; • Progressive deterioration of public services; • Suspension or arbitrary application of the rule of law, as well as widespread human rights violations; • The Security Apparatus is a "state within a state"; • Rise of Factionalized Elites; and • External political actors or other states intervening.

Source: Amaechi (2017).

Discourse on the Nexus between Corruption and State Failure in Nigeria

There is overwhelming evidence to suggest that Nigeria is exhibiting the characteristics of state failure or failing state. Among the indicators is the level of frightening corruption. To show the seriousness and centrality of corruption to state failure, Rotberg (2002) explained that state failure is not accidental but man-made. Several decades after independence, Nigeria continues to fight corruption which has become a way of life. The political class and their accomplices siphoned Nigeria's resources thereby denying the people of good governance. Corruption is antithetical to good governance and socio-economic development. Endemic corruption in Nigeria is clearly symptomatic of state failure. The resources that are supposed to be used for economic development are wasted through corruption and mismanagement, subjecting the masses to chronic poverty and underdevelopment.

Rotberg (2002), noted further that nation states fail as a result of their inability to perform their statutory duties to the people, such as security, education, healthcare, social infrastructure, and employment, among others. In the same vein, Oko, Ufuomba and Washington (2018), argued that state fails because of the inability of the government to provide basic necessities for the masses. Studies have revealed that corruption more than other factors is a catalyst for state failure. The political class is more concerned with enriching their own pockets, than providing basic facilities and good governance for the population. Corruption generates economic stagnation, escalates inequality and increase poverty which are manifestation of state failure

Related to the chronic problem of corruption in Nigeria is the pervasive and alarming incidence of insecurity across the country which Igbuzor (2011), has linked to government failure. The institutional framework in Nigeria are incapable of sustaining a stable or enduring democracy. In other words, democratic institutions are unable to provide the basic requirements such as food, healthcare and security which are recipe for violence. Nwabueze (2018), using the 1999 constitution, section 14 (2) (b), as a reference point, argued that Nigeria has failed in its primary responsibility to maintain peace, security and welfare for its population, points to the direction of state failure. Security implies the protection of lives and properties in line with the aforementioned section of the 1999 constitution, to which Nigeria has failed to discharge.

Since 2009, Boko Haram Islamic sect has continued to wage unconventional warfare on north east Nigeria, covering Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States. The insurgents have carried out endless attacks on mostly ethno-religious targets with the purpose of inflicting physical and psychological damage and national insecurity. The problem of insecurity is worsened by Nigeria's heterogeneous composition of over 250 ethnic

groups with attendant lack of national integration. This poly-ethnic status of the Nigerian state is partly responsible for the perennial tensions and acrimonious relationship among the nationalities. Nigeria has 36 States and 774 local government areas and under this arrangement, both the states and local governments receive monthly appropriation from the federal government. Paradoxically, this system has led to the “decentralization of corruption”. A situation in which corruption and mismanagement has become widespread and organized crime.

In his contribution to the insecurity situation in Nigeria, Orhero (2010), opined that apart from the challenges arising from Nigeria’s heterogeneity, it is threatened by electoral violence, ethno-religious violence, economic underdevelopment, subversion, sabotage, piracy and smuggling, among others. All these portend a negative situation to Nigeria’s homeland security and make the country prone to instability and total state failure.

In the Niger Delta geo-political zone, youth militancy is rife as a result of the activities of the oil multinational companies. Since oil was found in commercial quantity in the Niger Delta region peace has eluded the people of the region because of the militant groups who are aggrieved by the environmental degradation, intermittent oil spillage and loss of their source of livelihood. Militant groups which have grown in numbers due to their proliferations resorted to all forms of violence such as kidnapping of mostly foreign employees of oil companies for ransom, vandalization of petroleum pipelines, causing low production of oil and gas with adverse effect on Nigeria’s export earnings.

Meanwhile, the Nigerian government proved to be incapable of addressing the chaotic situation even as the host communities became metaphor for neglect, deprivation, pervasive poverty and underdevelopment. The reason given for the failure of the government to address the situation is attributed to the different interpretations of security threat in the area. For instance, the host communities perceive the pattern of oil extraction as exploitation and threat to livelihood while state officials and oil companies see security in terms of disruption of production of petroleum (Ibeanu, 2000).

From the above discussion one cannot divorce insecurity from corruption. Insecurity and corruption instigate state failure. Evidence shows that failing or fragile states with widespread problem of corruption experience governance difficulties and breakdown which in turn lead to legitimacy crisis of the regime in power. Most of the states that are fragile or failing such as Somalia, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Haiti, DR Congo, Zimbabwe,

Nigeria, Central African Republic, e.t.c., are equally not only corrupt but volatile politically.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has argued that the manifestation of the characteristics of state failure in Nigeria poses a serious threat to the stability and corporate existence of the Nigerian State. Given the spate of insurgency in north east, militancy in the south-south and separatist agitation in the east, and a magnitude of other general challenges as poverty, unemployment, ethno-religious conflicts, kidnapping, armed robbery, proliferation of small and light weapons, e.t.c., Nigeria is at the brink of precipice.

The rentier nature of the Nigerian State is also of major concern. As a rentier state, Nigeria political elite seek the control of the state resources through diverse means that include corruption for personal enrichment. With weak institutional capacity, lack of accountability and the culture of impunity, public office holders extract rent from the state which has monopoly of oil revenue. The study also revealed that Nigeria's political class has failed to honour the social contract entered with the people by engaging in kleptocratic and illegal acts. Despite the enormity of the problem, the various anti-graft institutions have proven to be ineffective.

Having identified that high graft incidence and insecurity are factors of Nigeria state failure, the following recommendations are apt:

1. The war against corruption should be vigorously pursued and any corrupt official should be made to face the music.
2. The fight against corruption should only involve people with proven integrity, disciplined and without skeleton in their cupboard. In other words, government officials who are to champion the war on corruption should be those who are honest, experienced, and with proven record of integrity.
3. The Anti-graft Agencies should be totally independent of government control and be strengthened to enable them discharge their responsibilities effectively.
4. Anti-Corruption Agencies in Nigeria should work in collaboration with other International Anti-corruption bodies like Transparency International (TI) for capacity building as well as other countries known for their success in fighting corruption.
5. The Anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria should not be biased or be an instrument for witch-hunting of only political opponents. The war on corruption should be holistic, transparent and fair no matter whose ox is gored.

6. Selective punishment will diminish the gain recorded so far by the Agencies and tarnish the image of the government.
7. There is a dire need for institutional and value reorientation with emphasis on performance, probity, transparency and accountability in public service. Nigerian politicians must change their attitude and values by turning away from “business as usual” and imbibe the virtues of politeness.
8. Another recommendation that could be effective in fighting corruption is for the international community and organizations to suspend any country mired in corruption and equally impose stiff sanctions on it in order to compel it to change its attitude.

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