

Corruption as the Bane of Nigeria's Security

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Abstract

Corruption has been one of the pandemics that put the security and peace of Nigerians in jeopardy. From the country's independence in October, 1960 to date, hundreds of trillions were estimated to have been siphoned by stakeholders in various key positions in the country, thereby leading to harsh socio-economic realities that have direct negative impacts on the security of lives and properties of people in the country. Thus, this paper is specifically set to discuss how corruption leads to security challenges in Nigeria. The paper reviewed the literature thematically, and used frustration-aggression theory as its theoretical framework. Also, the data for the research was completely generated from secondary sources, through textbooks, journals, periodicals and newspapers, and the content analysis method was adopted in the analysis of the data gathered. Based on that, the research arrived at the findings that corruption is the major element that created the security challenges face in Southern and Northern Nigerian states. Likewise, the research discovered that corruption in the security sector aggravated the situation and made Nigerian security agencies incapable of executing the fight against insecurity in all the sections of the country. Finally, the research recommends the need to strengthen the activities of various anti-graft agencies in the country in such a manner that they will work without bias or favour, and at the same time, hard punishments like that of China, Morocco etc. need to be enforced against anyone found guilty of corrupt practice in the country.

Keywords: Corruption, Security, Nigeria, Development, Governance

Introduction

Corruption is a global phenomenon that has far reaching consequences on security, politics, governance and the general wellbeing of a society. (Department of International Development, 2015). Corruption is virtually everywhere in the world. It is not restricted to a particular section or group of nations, it is rather pervasive, as there are much evidence of corruption in developed as there is in developing societies of the world (Bracking, 2007). In United States for instance, corrupt practices visibly exist in both public and private sector. That has led to the widespread belief that money corrupts election processes in the country. As such, in the country's 2016 presidential elections, corruption related issues were at the centre of discourse of campaign finance and the extent to which wealthy donors, rather than citizens in general influence political agenda and priorities of political parties and candidates (Anderson & Anechiarico, 2019).

In Africa, poor governance which to a larger extent results from corrupt practices among political and bureaucratic leaders lead to massive poverty and at the same time strip poor of their human dignity, and deprived them access to public goods and services needed in walking themselves out of the vicious circles of poverty and depression (Kimenyi & Mbaku, 2011). The consequences of this are very visible as it has direct impacts on the security of lives and properties of people. This is because scholars always see correlation between poverty and security challenges, believing that poverty and insecurity are two inseparable friends that reinforce one another.

Nigeria which is located in West African sub-region and usually described as the giant of Africa, is not immune from the incidence of corruption, rather, it usually appears among the first few most corrupt nations in Africa and the world at large. Therefore, Nigerian security challenges like armed Militants in Niger-Delta

region of the Southern part of the country; bandits in the Northwest and North Central; Boko Haram in the Northeast, among others, cannot be unconnected with corrupt practices in the country which give chance to few elites and higher ranking personalities to amass a lot of wealth at the expense of the larger society. The repercussion of this manifests in generalized poverty, penury and discomforts among majority of the population, which in turn expose them to easy conscription into criminal activities that pose serious threat to the country's security. Thus, it is in light with the above background that this paper sets to discuss how corruption appears to be the bane for security of lives and properties in Nigeria, with a view to proffering solution to the problem.

Literature Review

Conceptual Clarifications

Corruption

Corruption is a multifaceted phenomenon that captures the attention of scholars who interpreted it in various ways. The origin of the concept is traced to Latin words "corruptio" and "corrumpere" which are simply translated and linked to certain words precisely, "destroy" or "destruction". Based on this thus, corruption can be said to refer to dishonest behaviour and acts that bring society down to its final destruction. In other words, corruption can in general be attributed to "dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, and dishonest or illegal behaviour especially by powerful people" (UNODC, 2019:8). At the same time, UNODC also refers corruption to transformation from purity to debasement.

In reaction to World Bank's conception that defined corruption as "abuse of public power for private benefits", Tanzi (1998) opined that the definition cannot scale through critical assessment, because firstly for instance, the conception indicated that corruption could not exist in private sector. Secondly, abuse of public office can be done not only for one's private interest, but other interests like that of ethnic group, tribe, class, friends, family, among others. By this, Tanzi is very clear that corruption is wider than the scope within which the World Bank situated it.

Looking at it from wider perspective, Cecillie (2021) stresses that corruption takes different forms, and it takes place at all levels, and among all categories of people. He further explained that corrupt acts include bribery, facilitation payments, gift giving, embezzlement, favoritism, fraud, extortion, collusion, "sextortion", and impunity. This presents corruption in its multidimensional shape, and it clearly implies that issues that have to do with both financial and nonfinancial misconduct, irrespective of who the act benefits are corruption in a society.

In line with the above, Bracking (2007) added that corruption and corrupt practices can be in form of administrative or bureaucratic misconduct, graft, influencing, political corruption, state capture and so on. The implication of these variables on well-being of a giving social settings is that the affairs of a society will be ran in such a manner where certain interests that are not meant for the overall development of the society surface and alter the existing laid down regulations. For instance, political corruption in a democratic settings may bring incompetent, corrupt and bad hands into leadership positions thereby setting a society on destruction track. Political corruption is likely to facilitate other forms of corrupt acts mentioned above.

In their report on corruption, United Kingdom's Department for International Development (2015) highlighted three major factors that facilitates corruption. These factors are categorized into economic, political and sociological factors. Under economic factors, things that facilitate corruption include levels of development, pattern of wealth accumulation, salaries, structure of the economy and openness to trade, sources of income, illicit flows, resource curse, etc. Whereas, political factors include among other things: thus, competition for power and authority at different levels, accountability relationships, meritocracy and patronage. Finally, sociological ones include such things like gift giving and other forms of solidarity networks.

From the forgoing, it can be understood that corruption is multidimensional in its shape, it include not only financial misconduct or misuse of public funds for private or personal gains, but it also composed of all forms of deliberate

refusal to adhere to the laid down regulations for achievement of certain interest that are not meant for overall good of the society. However, to make it clear, corruption is discussed as financial crime in the context of this paper, with a view to understanding how it becomes bane to Nigeria's security.

The Concept of Security

The concept of security has gained different interpretations from different experts, both within and outside the academia. Based on the old literature, especially those that talked on security in pre-cold war era, the thought of security was on the safety of a state within the wider global system. Lippmann (1987) for instance narrowed security to state and national defence. According to him, a nation can be considered secured when it is able to secure its core national values, deter external aggression and win a war, citing things to be taken into account in that regards as military, economic and political strength of a state concerned.

With the experience of post-cold war period, there has been a shift from this traditional perception above. Thus, security is considered to be beyond just national defence, law and order, but includes all economics, social and political indicators required to make human lives free from danger, risk and fear (Husseini, Gnisci & Wanjiru, 2004). In agreement with this, though too narrowed to human security, Mohammed and Pindiga (2020) put it that security is all about the "condition where people's lives and properties are protected and guarded against all forms of dangers and infiltration of unwanted elements (p.104)". More comprehensively however, OECD defined security as:

An all encompassing condition in which people and communities live in freedom, peace and safety, participate fully in the governance of their countries, enjoy the protection of fundamental human rights, have access to resources and the basic necessities of life, and inhabit environment which is not detrimental to their health and well-being (OECD DAC, 2001, cited in Abdu & Okoro,

2016:9).

What this definition implies is the fact that for a society to be considered secured and peaceful free from grave security threats, the indices mentioned in the definition must exist, otherwise, security is not guaranteed, because conflict could likely break anytime in a society where people's fundamental human rights are deprived; where majority are blocked from access to the national resources; where people find it difficult to get their basic necessities of life satisfied, and so forth. Similarly, Shinkaiye (2004) further notes that security involves the "sum total of actions and measures, including legislative and operational procedures adopted to ensure peace, stability and the general well-being of a nation and its citizens.

Security is many sided phenomenon that alot is needed for it to be total and beneficial to the human life and society at large. In this regard, security can be described in relations to seven dimensions reflecting almost all of the key components of human development. These are: Economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security (UNDP, 1994, cited in Husseini, Gnisci & Wanjiru, 2004).

Note at this stage that despite the differences in terms of perspectives upon which the concept of security is described, all the definitions and descriptions above are pointing to the fact that security does not only mean ability to provide physical protection against internal or external aggression through police or military and defensive hard and software, but the condition where the lives, necessary needs; rights and freedoms are protected and provided respectively. Therefore, it can be technically wrong to expect security where people's lives are in misery; where necessities of life are not satisfied; where people's fundamental rights, freedoms and liberties are not provided and protected. In a nutshell, poverty, human right deprivation, discrimination, etc, are all considered as security challenges.

Corruption in Nigeria

From its creation to date, Nigeria has been walloping in financial corruption cases that remain a serious blockade to the country's quest

for rapid Socio-economic and political development. Olatunde (2007) listed ways through which financial corruption manifests in Nigerian state. He categorized the case into 'Grand' and 'Petty' corruption. According to him, grand corruption occurs when the most influential public officials and political office holders are paid large irresistible amount of money by big businesses in order to get certain favour from the state or run away from paying the exact accrued taxes and other things that would ease their ways in running from abiding to certain constitutionally spelt out rules they see as threat to their businesses. On the other hand, petty corruption includes financial corruptions that are not weightier as the first one. This corruption occurs when certain modest payments are made to public or private officials to avoid checks, delay, queues, etc. Other things put under petty corruption are embezzlement of public funds, coercing a person to pay in cash or in kind in exchange for acting or failing to act, receiving an unlawful gratuity or illegal commission.

In agreement with the above, International Monetary Fund (IMF's) report (2004) indicated that in Nigeria, what is considered as corruption through financial crimes include among others, bribery, embezzlement, theft of public funds, extortion, abuse of discretion, and so forth. In most cases, the money syphoned through these ways are taken and hidden in foreign banks as means of ensuring the safety of the said stolen funds. In that, though the exact figures being stolen from the public funds in the country annually are not clear, however, an estimation by certain bodies like IMF put it that for instance, from 2004 backward, the amount being syphoned from the Nigerian government coffers and kept in foreign private accounts stand around 2.0 to 5.0 percent of the world

Gross Domestic Products (GDP) (IMF, 2004). It has also been estimated that from its independence to 1999, over \$400 billion from the oil revenue were either stolen or misappropriated (Ezekwesili, 2012). While describing the magnitude of this figure, the former Boss of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Nuhu Ribadu claimed that the said amount which was looted by Nigerian political and public officials is "six times the total value of resources committed to rebuilding Western Europe after the Second World War (cited in Ademola, 2011). In another occasion, Ribadu also vividly mentioned, referring to the said \$400 billion that "to put these staggering sums in perspective, imagine putting \$400 billion in a row, it will cover the distance from here to the moons 75 times" (Ribadu, 2010:2).

It should be noted at this juncture that despite the long history of corruption in Nigerian state, period from 2010 to 2022 have been one of the darkest period in the history of the country. This is because within such period, unprecedented issues of financial crimes, mismanagement and misappropriation were recorded, but without a concerted effort to prosecute the offenders especially those connected to the ruling party, in fact many that were earlier charged of corruption cases were later discharged or let their cases die a natural dead due to their affiliation with the ruling party or connection with some untouchable individuals in the country (the cases of former Governors of Plateau State- Joshua Dariye and that of Taraba- Jolly Nyame) can serve as example. These have become prevalent in all spheres of Nigeria's politico-economic spaces. That is why the country's position in the international corruption index remains always alarming. See the table below for instance:

Nigeria on Global Corruption Index

Year	Nigeria's Position	Total Number of the Countries Surveyed
1999	98	99
2000	90	90
2001	90	91
2002	101	102
2003	132	133
2004	144	156
2005	152	158
2006	150	163
2007	32	147
2008	121	150
2009	130	150
2010	134	178
2011	143	183
2012	139	176
2013	144	177
2014	136	175
2015	136	168
2016	136	176
2017	148	180
2018	144	180
2019	146	180
2020	149	180
2021	154	180

Source (Transparency International Reports, 1990-2021).

Through out the above rankings, Nigeria continued to be in the darkest mood as far as corruption is concerned. In most instances ranks first, second or third most corrupt state in the West African region. Even the post 2015 period which was generally applauded to be repulsive of corrupt practices in the country did not show any change in the nature and flow of the menace, because from the table above, it will be observed that from 2015 to 2021, the position of Nigeria in the ranking kept deteriorating. In fact, the 2021 position of the country is worse than the last ten years. This is not amazing considering the unprecedented increasing cases of financial mismanagement and embezzlement which manifest excessively high among the public officials and political office holders in the country. To cite some few examples for instance, between 2015 and 2021, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) was into investigation of various corruption cases of millions/trillions of naira involving many public officials in the country. Some of these cases are: the case of Sambo Dasuki (Former National Security Adviser, during president Jonathan's administration); Olisa Metuh

(former national chairman of People's Democratic Party- PDP); Doyin Kupe (Former Spokeperson of president Jonathan); Diezani Alison Madueke (former minister of aviation); AbdulRasheed Maina (Former Chairman of the Pension Reform Task Team); Ahmed Idris (former Accountant General of the federation), and indeed many more uninvestigated cases labelled against many officials and political appointees of the of Buhari's administration, like the case of unexplained and ridiculous spending of hundreds of billions of naira by the Ministry of Humanitarian and Disaster Management, headed by Sadiya Umar Faruk, especially on issues associated with N-Power and Home Grown School Feeding Programme of the government where billions have said to have been spent without any satisfactory explanation. This can be understood well by looking at the hundreds of billions the ministry claimed to have spent for feeding children in schools, even when the schools were closed due to COVID-19 lockdown in 2020 (EFCC Profile, 2022, & Kunle, 2021).

Another example of uninvestigated serious corruption allegations is the Nigerian petroleum

sector, specifically the case of fuel subsidy payment by the federal government of Nigeria. A call for investigation by many stakeholders, both within and outside of the government were made to check and halt the billionaire fraud club of certain powerful individuals who feed fat from the government's coffers in the name of petroleum subsidy. This crime has become more worrisome in the recent years, especially the period from 2015 to 2022. For instance, in his speech during the KADINVEST summit in Kaduna State in November, 2022, the former Central Bank Governor Sunusi Lamido Sunusi outrightly queried the volume of Nigeria daily petroleum consumption, comparing the number of millions of litres in 2022 with the previous years, and in relations to other countries of the world, doubting the unbelievable upsurge in Nigerian case. He queried: "NNPC tells us officially that we are consuming 66 million litres per day. That means we are consuming more than Pakistan, Egypt, Cote D' Voire, more than Kenya?" (Oyero, 2022).

He continued:

In 2019, officially we were importing 40 million litres per day. In 2022, officially, we are importing 66 million per day. In three years, we have increased our petroleum consumption by 50%. Please, tell me, is it the population? Is it the number of cars? Just ask yourself if it makes sense that just in three years you increase your consumption by 50% (Oyero, 2022).

The queries above are indication that billions of naira are being inflated and taken on daily basis from the public funds in the name of payment for petroleum subsidy. Similar allegations were also made by the former Nigerian Custom Service Director General (RT.), Hameed Ali, who faulted Nigerian National Petroleum Commission (NNPC) over the claim that it supplies about 98 million litres of petroleum in the country daily, while putting the actual consumption at slightly above 60 million litres. He too first queried the authenticity of the NNPC's claim of importing 98 million litres daily when the daily consumption of the country is slightly above 60 million litres. Being one of

the principal stakeholders overseeing the movement of people and goods along Nigeria's land routes, air and seaways, Ali doubted with full confidence the authenticity of the 60 million litres daily consumption put forward by NNPC, else the additional 38 million litres claimed to be being imported daily. In his words, Ali was directly quoted to have said:

I have always argued this with NNPC. If we are consuming 60m litres of petrol per day by their own computations, why in the world do you allow the lifting of petroleum of 98 million litres per day? Why, if you know this is our consumption, why do you allow that lifting? That is one. That computation to me is not anything to be believed because scientifically, you cannot tell me that I filled my tank today and tomorrow, I will still fill my tank with the same quantity of fuel. And if I'm running a petrol station, for instance, today, if I go to Minna Depot and lift a truck and I'm taking it to Kaduna; if I reach Kaduna in the evening and offload that truck that evening, there's no way I could have sold that petrol for you to have said that it has been expended. So, how do we get to 60 million litres every day? These are my problems. If you say you release 98 million litres and then, we use only 60 million litres; the balance will be 38 million litres. How many trucks will that 38 million litres every day be? That will be almost 500 trucks; which roads are they following, where are they carrying them to? (Daily Trust, Sept. 1st, 2022).

Still on the issue of subsidy payment vis- a- vis corrupt practices surrounding it, a famous Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) Femi Falana during an interview on Channels Tv recounted the alleged involvement of some untouchable individuals in the whole of this issue of deliberate stealing of public funds through

petroleum subsidy payment. He revealed that 17 billion naira was in August 8, 2018 earmarked for purchase of 'trackers' for tracking of the movements of all trucks and ships loaded with Nigerian subsidized oil within and outside the Nigerian shore. Unfortunately, nothing was purchased, and the money were looted without any explanation, leaving the situation for continued looting of Nigerian public funds by few individuals in the name of payment for petroleum subsidy (Channels Tv, 2022).

To put this discussion in perspective, corruption especially among public officials in Nigeria has reached that terrible height where public funds are being mismanaged, and the culprits are left untouched, while putting the lives of majority of the citizens in penury, abject poverty, frustration and anger, which by implication remains a direct threat to the country's security. It is due to these corrupt practices that billions of naira that should be used to revamp the country by reviving the country's educational institutions, industries, private businesses and other sectors that are meant to absorb the teeming youth population thereby providing them with employment opportunities for the overall good of the country, are syphoned by few

From Corruption to Poverty to Security Challenge

There are controversies among scholars on the relationship between corruption and poverty, and then security challenges. Despite the disagreement, it appears that there are strong instances of relationship between the variables, and some scholars were able to clearly demonstrate how corruption contributes to poverty and security challenges. For instance, the study conducted by African centre for Economic Growth (2020) clearly established that corruption is the main if not the only cause of poverty in Africa. Likewise, some scholars along this line of thought also opined that corruption fuels poverty in virtually two ways. Firstly, that corruption aggravates poverty through its negative effects on economic factors such as economic growth, quality of government expenditure, foreign and domestic investments, income inequality, tax and government revenues. Secondly, it is argued that higher level of corruption reduces

government capacity through reducing the quality of delivering of public services (like health, education, housing etc) by the government which benefit mainly the poor (Chetwynd, 2003 and Ellis, 2012, cited in Aina, 2014).

Ochuno aptly captures the issue when he spelt out that:

The embezzlement, mismanagement or misappropriation of public funds often leads to a cessation of certain social services, or the non-completion of a road, school, or hospital project. The deterioration and scarcity of infrastructure and social services have worsened in direct proportion to the corruption problem. The loss of public funds to corruption translates inevitably to a lack of medicine in a rural hospital; a lack of access to education for millions of African children; a lack of potable drinking water and electricity for millions of Africans; and a lack of good transportation infrastructure” (Ochonu, 2008 cited in Aina, 2014).

When these happened, (which are the repercussions of corruption) then the people affected are put in poverty trap, and poverty leads to insecurity. According to Verstegen (2001), poverty is the major cause of insecurity. Thus, by implication, corruption causes security challenges. Also, the report of Transparency International (2020) reveals that there is a clear and strong relationship between corruption and security challenges. According to the report:

It is little surprise that six out of the ten lowest-scoring countries in the 2019 Corruption Index (CPI) are also among the ten least peaceful countries in the 2020 Global Peace Index (Transparency International, 2020:1).

These instances points to the fact that there is a

clear connection between corruption and security in most countries of the world, Nigeria inclusive. Due to corruption, the Nigerians' social and economic wellbeing have been collapsing continuously creating a condition for mass poverty, which manifests in people's inability to cater for their basic necessities of life, like food, clothing and shelter. For instance, the report from the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics indicated that as at 2022, 63% (133 million) persons living in Nigeria are multi-dimensionally poor. Out of this figure, 65% (86 million) reside in the North, while 35% (47 million) are in the southern part of the country (NBS, 2022).

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts Aggression-Frustration theory to explain how corrupt practices in Nigeria create a situation for frustration and aggression, which form the basis for security challenges in the country. The theory which was earlier known as frustration-aggression hypothesis was first propounded by Dollard, Miller, Doob, Mawrer and Sears in 1939. The theory was later been reworked by Miller in 1941 and Berkowitz in 1969. According to the theory, aggression is necessary when one's goals are frustrated or blocked. Thus, frustration is a precondition for aggression. In other words, aggression only occurs when there are prior frustrations, therefore, aggression is the certain outcome of frustration. The theory further explained that since aggression comes as a result of frustration, the frustrated persons concerned channels their aggressions back to those that led to their frustration, but when the source of the frustration cannot be successfully challenged, the aggressions are usually misplaced and turned to target innocent entities (in Johannes & Malte, 2017).

The relevance of the frustration-aggression theory to this paper is very clear, as it is common that corruption especially among high political and bureaucratic leaders in Nigeria give some few a chance to siphon public funds meant for developmental projects and other initiatives to better the lives of the populace. That creates abject poverty, penury and other unpleasant social conditions that make youths frustrated and susceptible to recruitment into various criminal activities that threaten the peace,

security and stability of Nigerian state. Therefore, corruption has been the source of frustration that led many youths to join armed groups in Northern and Southern Nigerian states, and has been the demoralizing factor that made Nigerians security agencies incapable of tackling various security challenges bedevilling the country, as can be seen later in this work.

Research Methodology

This research is purely documentary and relied completely on secondary sources of data through consultation of documented materials such as textbooks, journals, newspapers, reports, periodicals, among others. The paper used content analysis method to analyse the data generated from the instruments above. In order to easily cover the scope of the work, the research simply looks at the corruption and corrupt practices among administrative and political leaders in the Southern and Northern Nigeria, and also in the security sector, with a view to finding how it directly or indirectly fuels Nigerian security challenges.

Corruption and Security Challenges: The Nigerian State in View

Corruption is a fundamental threat to peace and security. It has been shown time and again that corruption is not only a consequence but also a cause of conflict, fuelling it in several ways. Corruption generates new grievances in society, or drives existing ones, by undermining defence and security institutions, and by eroding state legitimacy (Transparency International, 2022:8).

The quote above clearly exhibit that corruption has very devastating impact on security of lives and properties. However, the discussion in this section focuses on vivid discussion of the nexus between corruption and security challenges in Nigeria. The style through which issues are presented here is simply by sampling some corruption and security cases in some parts southern Nigerian state; some parts of northern states, and the corruption in the security sector of the country.

For long, corruption has been the source of problems that turn to various forms of security challenges in all the six geopolitical zones of Nigerian state. To start with the Niger-Delta region for instance, the oil exploration activities of multinational oil companies which result in oil spillage and other environmental problems put the lives of people in the region in serious socio-economic crisis, thereby causing death of aquatic inhabitants; destruction of farm lands; contamination of drinking waters, among other things. However, in an effort to address these for the wellbeing of the people in the area, several measures were put in place. Some of these measures include, earmarking of 13 percent derivation revenue to the affected states; creation of Niger Delta Development Commission; Ministry of Niger Delta, Niger Delta Power Distribution company and so forth (cited in Mohammed & Pindiga, 2020). But corrupt practices mainly among the political leaders in the area render these grossly insignificant, leaving the mass population in abject poverty, humanitarian crisis and other frustrating conditions that set many youths in the region readily available for recruitment into various forms of anti- social crimes and violent conflict acts.

The data generated from Economic and Financial Crimes Commission's webside disclosed that many of the state governor's in the region were arraigned and convicted of various corrupt cases. For instance, between 1999 and 2007, governor Diepreye Alamaieyeseigha of Bayelsa state was was arraigned for 6 count charge of corruption; James Ibori of Delta State charged with over 179 state count charge bordering on corruption; Lucky Igbinodian of Edo state also charged on 191 state count cases; Orji Kalu of Abia State arraigned on 107 count charges bordering on corruption and mismanagement of public funds (Francis, Lapin & Rossiasco, 2011), among others huge financial corrupt cases involving many high profile personnel holding various key position in the past and present administrations.

Similarly, in August, 2022, EFCC intensified investigation on the missing of over 25 billion naira tax remittances. That led to what the media reported as arrest of the then Niger Delta commission's Director, Finance and Accounts. Though, the commission denied the

arrest news, but did not dispute the fact that 25 billion naira was missing from the commission's account. Likewise, in the same year, a former Managing Director of the commission Nsima Ekere was arrested by the operatives of EFCC over alleged corrupt case of over 47 billion naira (Nigerian Tribune Editorial, 2022).

As a result of these and many other corrupt cases in the region, poverty, penury and frustration have built high in the region, leaving youths in the area susceptible to conscription into various armed groups like Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta Volunteer Force, among others who engage in pipeline vandalism, armed robbery, thuggery, oil bunkering and other things meant to terrorize the peace of the region and the country at large, which in some cases make northerners in the region the target of the armed groups, and thus, creating condition for reprisal attacks in the north, putting the whole country in a war like situation. In agreement with this, Agudiegwe and Ezeani as cited in Mohammed and Pindiga rightly captured the situation when they said:

It is axiomatic that the situation would have been better than the current sorry state if the government officials in the region have judiciously utilized their monthly allocations to better the lots ordinary people through creation of jobs and infrastructural development. This is not done, rather the jumbo allocation are spent on frivolous things that have little or no positive bearing on the life's of people (Mohammed & Pindiga, 2020:109).

This and all the previous points above indicate that had it been corrupt practices have not grown worse among the stakeholders in the region, the lives of the people would have been better to such a state that armed groups will naturally seize to exist as they can hardly have persons to recruit since majority live a relatively prosperous life. But, when majority are in poverty (which was facilitated by the corrupt practices of the political leaders), the recruitment into armed groups is very possible

and easy.

Like in the southern part of the country, Northern region, especially Northwestern states are also being disturbed by activities of armed bandits who engaged in heinous acts such as armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom; cattle rustling; indiscriminate attacks and raid of markets; vandalization of farm products among other things. This cannot come by default, there must be causes, and surely, corrupt practices among leaders in the zone have greatly contributed to that. Most of those that participate in these terrorist activities are unemployed, illiterates and frustrated youths whose governments' negligence to provide them with the least education and means of livelihood, coupled with the governments' insensitivity to address their plights and grievances at its initial stage, turned them into armed bandits. And the failure of the government in that regards is mainly due to corruption by the managers of the states' affairs, who divert public funds meant for general welfare of all, to personal benefits, preventing majority from enjoying the dividends of democracy.

In the Northern region, Sokoto state for example, is one of the states with intense armed banditry incidences, and at the same time is one of the state in the zone with the highest cases of corruption. This is because, all the administrations that led the state from 1999 to date, were accused of various corruption scandals. Citing the governor that ruled the state between 2007 and 2015 for example, he was accused of siphoning N15 billion from the public funds while in office. Likewise, his immediate successor who led from 2015 to 2023 was also full of alleged financial corruption cases. A document from Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) revealed that between 2015 and 2021, Central Bank Nigeria (CBN) uncovered the diversion of over N181 billion from the public funds to various private individual accounts (Sahara Reporters, March, 31, 2022). More so, the governor that led the state within same period was challenged by EFCC for pardoning some five former commissioners in the state who were on EFCC's investigation list over alleged corruption case of N15 billion (Punch, September, 26, 2017).

The scenario of Sokoto state above presents the picture of the situation in other states in the region like Zamfara, Katsina and Kebbi State where the activities of bandits destabilized the peace of the people.

Another region bedevilled by security challenge in Northern Nigeria is northeastern region which housed six states: Borno, Gombe, Yobe, Adamawa, Taraba and Bauchi State. The data generated from various sources indicated that there were many financial corruption cases against the political leaders of these states. For instance, the former Governor of Borno State who led the state from 2003 to 2011 was on EFCC investigation list on financial corrupt case of N300 billion (Danial, 2015). Also, in 2018, a court convicted former governor of Taraba State who headed the state from 1999 to 2007 over 41 count charges of corruption and other financial crimes engulfing a sum of N1.64 billion, and he was sentenced to 14 years imprisonment, though he later enjoyed presidential pardon in 2021. The same was the case with the former leadership of Adamawa State. The former governors- Murtala Nyako and Musa Bawa Ngilari were all in EFCC's black book, with alleged diversion of billions of naira into private accounts. Murtala Nyako was accused of N29 billion fraud while Ngilari was sentenced to five years imprisonment over financial corrupt practice (Vanguard, March, 6, 2017).

Other sector where corruption has similar devastating effect on Nigerian security is corruption in the country's defense sector. Nigerian defense and security sector has been one of the sectors with huge financial corruption allegations. By implication, corruption in the sector contributes to the continued security problems that keep consuming the lives and properties of people in the country. For instance, Owasanoye (2019) in his work on corruption in Nigeria security sector revealed that the audit committee on defense equipment procurement set up by former president Muhammadu Buhari to investigate spending in the security sector between 2007 and 2015 discovered corrupt practices of estimated \$1.26 billion, or N67,934 billion which were perpetrated through contract inflation, procurement fraud, purchase of substandard or inferior military equipment, tax evasion, failure to execute contract paid for,

multiple payment for same contract, under performance against contract provision, award of fictitious contracts, direct looting of funds by military chiefs through unauthorized monthly cash allocations, among others.

Thus, these corrupt practices led to non-payment of the soldiers (especially those in the battle fields) duties allowances, and non procurement of adequate military soft and hard wires to successfully execute the war against various armed groups in the country. This is for instance is evident in 2020 when soldiers fighting insurgency in the country complained that about 50 percent of their dangerous field duty allowances were unceremoniously siphoned by their commanders, leaving them in deplorable living condition, sometimes in short of ammunition to confront the armed groups operating Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPGs) and other sophisticated military hard wires. In fact, corrupt practices among the military chiefs led to a situation where soldiers have to use their own funds to buy military uniforms, and cover their medical expenses when wounded in the field (Transparency International, 2020).

These undermine the performance and morale of the personnel in the field, forcing some of them into some ungodly behaviours which include alleged selling of the military equipment to terrorist armed groups. The hope for sudden reversal of this ugly corruption trend, especially with the coming of Buhari's administration, was dashed as reports in the late days of the administration did not show any positive change, rather the chronic corruption bordering on non-payment of combatant duty allowances (despite being budgeted for) made the soldiers affected to write directly to the president seeking for payment of their hard earned entitlements (Transparency International, 2020).

From the discussions above, the clear linkage between security challenges in Nigeria and corruption can be visibly identified. Whether in the north, the south and within the security sector, corruption has created a daring condition that promote possibilities of instabilities and general security challenges in the country. In other words, corrupt practices among certain administrative and political leaders led to the drying up of finances and resources that should be used for various public

welfare programmes in the country, thereby leading to mass poverty, frustration and anger among the general public, which in turn give room for negative thoughts among many, and consequently make many readily available for recruitment into various armed and terrorist groups that disturb the peace of the Nigerian state. The same has also been the case with corruption in the defense and security sector, as it has far-reaching effects on the armed capabilities and morale of the troops in the field.

The Summary of the Major Findings of the Research

Based on the discussions in the preceding section of this research, the following findings can be derived:

- i. Corruption and corrupt practices have been the major factors that fueled conflict and other security challenges in the southern states of Nigeria. Because for instance, the money being earmarked for environmental sustenance to alleviate the sufferings of masses resulting from oil exploration activities in Niger Delta rich petroleum region are continuously being siphoned by few, leaving the overwhelming majority of masses in deplorable living conditions which make them join armed groups in the name of fighting for their rights.
- ii. Also, corruption has been the catalyst that made security of lives in Northern Nigerian states, especially the conflict zones of Northwest and Northeast, uncertain. Due to corrupt practices by the administrative and political leaders in the states, majority of the population in the zone live in abject poverty, penury and frustration, which in turn make them vulnerable to absorption into various arms groups in the region.
- iii. Finally, the research discovered that the reason why Nigerian security agencies were not able to successfully tackle the security issues in the country is corruption. This is because, corruption among the security heads lead to procurement of unsophisticated/outdated military hard and soft wares; siphoning of personnel's field duty allowances; non procurement of arms, among other

things, the implications of which make the troops in the field incapable and demoralized, making it harder or rather impossible for them to successfully execute the war for the general peace, security and stability of the Nigerian state.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Corruption is one of the social vices that have multiple effects and consequences on various sectors of human life. This is more visible in developing countries of the world, where corrupt practices have eaten deep especially among the administrative and political leaders, thereby giving few a chance to amass an unimaginable wealth at the expense of the general public, and at long run, the repercussions of that exhibit in various catastrophic ways such as poverty and intense security challenges as it has been established above in case of Nigerian state. Therefore, corruption has been the bane for Nigerian security issues, and it needs to be dealt with in order to have the country back to its peaceful and secured mode. In line with this therefore, the following recommendations are proffered by this paper:

- i. All the anti-graft agencies like Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), Court of Conduct Bureau (CCB), etc, should sit up to their responsibilities of fighting corrupt practices both in the centre, in the North, and the Southern part of the country. Likewise, these agencies need to be highly neutral, and their activities should not in anyway be politicised as against the current realities where these agencies are used to witch-hunt oppositions.
- ii. There is need for Nigerian masses, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and other civilian bodies to raise up to the task of holding government accountable on all spendings that have to do with public funds. To achieve this, enlightenment campaigns need to be intensified by CSOs, academics and other community based bodies to avail all to the realities in the country.
- iii. The paper also recommends the need for

prosecution of all caught with corrupt practices both in the centre; in the defense and security sector; in the North and the Southern parts of the country, as that will serve as deterrence against those willing to be part of any corrupt practice in the future. In this, the Nigerian government is needed to borrow some strict, hard and unprejudiced measures of some countries like China, Morocco and other countries that have nearly zero tolerance on corruption.

- iv. Moreover, the research recommends the need for intense scrutiny before appointment of the heads of various security and anti-graft agencies in the country. The appointment should be strictly based on merit, ability and past tract records of integrity, truthfulness and commitment to achieving the genuine goal of an establishment.
- v. Finally, the research suggests the need for changes in the country's pattern of Politics and elections. Excessive use of money in campaign, purchase of party forms, and the centralized primary elections pattern need to be immediately grossly discouraged. Through that, more pure hands are likely to come into the country's politics, and equally that will give masses a chance to elect uncorrupt persons to various leadership positions from the primary elections levels.

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