



Strengthening the Dedicated Anti-Corruption Agencies Fighting Corruption in Nigeria: The Role of Favourable Policy Environment

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Abstract

The goal of any independent anticorruption agency, wherever it may be located, is to reduce or eliminate the incentives and opportunities that make corrupt activities alluring, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of the ruling government by eliminating elements within the system that may be damaging or corrupt. Achieving these aims requires ensuring that dedicated anticorruption agencies are provided with sufficient personnel and resources, and that additionally their organisational development needs are met. This paper draws upon unique access to interviews with 20 senior officials employed in the dedicated anti-corruption agencies fighting corruption in Nigeria and access to 20 case files relating to prosecutions by the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC). The article asserts that the first step in fighting corruption must be to renew focus on economic development and welfare. These terms cover a range of government strategies designed to ensure the wellbeing of the citizenry, such as healthcare, education, vocational training, public housing and public transportation. It argues that until these support structures are easily accessible to the citizens, referred to within the article as taking care of "favourable policy context", countering corruption in Nigeria, will remain a vicious circle.

Keywords: Corruption; Anticorruption Agencies; Political Will; Welfare; Good Governance; Development

Abbreviations

ICPC: Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission; TI: Transparency International; ACAs: Anticorruption Agencies; ICAC: Independent Commission against Corruption; CPIB: Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau; EFCC: Economic and Financial Crime Commission; CCB: Code of Conduct Bureau; PCC: Public Complaint Commission; BPP: Bureau of Public Procurement; FRC: Fiscal Responsivity Commission; OAUGF: Office of the Auditor General of the Federation; TUGAR: Technical Unit of Governance and Anticorruption Reform; PACAC: Presidential Advisory Committee on Anticorruption; NSIWC: National

Salaries, Income and Wages Commission; FERMA: Federal Road Maintenance Agency.

Introduction

Overcoming systemic corruption within a society goes beyond the identification, investigation and prosecution of specific corrupt practices. While anticorruption agencies play a significant role in prosecuting the culprits of these activities, the problem of corruption cannot be overcome without first addressing a series of broader societal issues. Preventing and countering corruption requires a comprehensive approach, but this is only possible in a climate of transparency,



accountability and participation by all members of society, Governments, the private sector, the media, civil society organizations and the general public need to work together to curb this crime. In order to minimise corruption, it is first necessary to focus on economic development. It is thus, up to each country concerned to draw up its own action plan, by which it can then lead to a moral circle of development and good governance [1].

Implementing successful anticorruption reforms in any country, including Nigeria, requires fulfilling two essential prerequisites – political will and creating a context favourable to reforms (the environment).

Firstly, anti-corruption reformers in Nigeria need to ask themselves this question: do the political actors in the country have the political will to combat corruption? - Political will refers to the devotion of the political class to eliminate corruption and exists if these three characteristics are satisfied: that broad anticorruption laws exist; that dedicated anticorruption agencies are provided with sufficient personnel and resources and that anticorruption codes are legitimately implemented by the dedicated anticorruption agencies [2]. It is imperative to understand that if the political will is absent, both for transformation and for meticulous execution at all levels of leadership, no legislation can ever be successful in curbing corruption. One of the greatest serious hurdles to reform rests at the very heart of government, with the politicians and political interests in power. Those public officials with conflicts of interest problematically, hold positions that allow them to thwart major reforms [3].

Thus, in addition to political will, the second stipulation is creating a favourable policy context (environment) for executing anticorruption reforms. Does the policy context in the country (Nigeria) favour or hamper the countering of corruption? Is the policy context helpful or adverse for implementing anticorruption reforms? The recent experiences of Hong Kong and Singapore reveal that, aside from political will, they have succeeded in countering corruption because of the conducive policy contexts: namely small populations; stable governments; high standards of living; effective public service structure; and well-developed infrastructure. On the other hand, countries like Nigeria, Indonesia and the Philippines, with large populations of about 200 million, 212.1 million and 75.7 million, respectively, will experience significant difficulties in executing their anticorruption reform strategies due to their unhelpful policy environment. This tells us that the issues with corruption in the emergent nations cannot be resolved merely by employing anti-corruption policies that work in OECD countries [4-8]. The familiarity the latter countries have acquired regarding legislation, public procurement laws and

supervision procedures, for instance, is important- however it is just a specialist component in a much more complicated procedure of transformation. Based on this background, this study seeks to add to the thin foundation of existing research by setting out some findings from a study that secured unique access to senior public servants in Nigeria at the frontline in the fight against public sector corruption. A type of research rarely undertaken beyond the West. Using these accounts, the paper explores the scoping survey of the dedicated anticorruption agencies policing corruption in Nigeria, vis-à-vis their mandates, the sufficiency of their resources and personnel and the organizational development needs of these agencies.

This study also aims to analyze the nature and characteristics of the corruption problem that is predominant in the country and its negative correlation with the social infrastructure and lack of social welfare in Nigeria. This paper will begin with a brief literature review; it will then set out the methodology before exploring the findings [9,10].

Literature Review

Corruption

Corruption is a complex phenomenon that means different things to different people. Corruption, although being tied frequently to the act of bribery, is a collective word relating to the abuse of power for personal gain, which need not be monetary. Indeed, scholars have contended that concentrating on bribery when trying to understand corruption neglects its scope and intricacy. And this, is perhaps, why Transparency International [TI], sees corruption “as the ‘abuse of entrusted power for private gain” and go on to note that it “can take many forms, and can include behaviours like: public servants demanding or taking money or favours in exchange for services, politicians misusing public money or granting public jobs or contracts to their sponsors, friends and families, corporations bribing officials to get lucrative deals [10-15].

Corruption is a symptom of bad governance and weakness in institutions that exist in virtually every country in the world; in other words, no country is resistant to corruption, as it has become a global problem. It also reflects a lack of training and education that seeks to change the culture against corruption. Some scholar’s express corruption as perversion or a change from good to bad. specifically, corruption or corrupt activities entails the infringement of accepted norms for private gain or benefit. Thus, corruption is like a chameleon that metamorphoses alongside the culture, values norms, and politics of the country in question, and it affects all countries, irrespective of the administrative systems and cultures in place. While corruption is a feature

of all societies to varying degrees, it is a particular concern for developing countries because it undermines economic growth, discourages foreign investment and reduces resources available for infrastructure, public services and anti-poverty programmes [15-20].

Political Will and Leadership

Political will is a critical component to establishing sustainable and efficient anticorruption reforms. Without it, administrative efforts that aim to improve public service strengthen institutional reforms, and change the relationship between the public sector and private enterprise will turn out to be unproductive. When corruption is systemic, effective leadership including at the political level can play a crucial part in transforming attitudes and behaviour. Thus, where institutions have been absolutely compromised by corruption, active and sustained political will is vital because powerful vested interests can only be successfully confronted when a country's top leadership sends a clear message that it is no longer business as usual. A comparative study of anticorruption strategies in Hong Kong, China; India; Republic of Korea; Mongolia; Philippines; and Singapore. Concluded, "Political will is the most important prerequisite as a comprehensive anticorruption strategy will fail if it is not supported by the political leadership in a country." The notion of political will refers to the proven intent of political leaders to combat corruption at a systemic level. The attention is on the actors, their motives and the choices they make to support and execute anticorruption reforms, International studies have illustrated that the political will deficit in developing nations is generally linked to the lack of leadership and/or leadership capability leading to absence of good governance. Though Singapore and Botswana serve as example of developing nations where the political devotion to anticorruption measures and strong leadership have paid handsome democratic and developmental dividends, in most developing nations such political will has been absent. As many of these nations lack strong leadership, they frequently struggle to evolve constructive national responses to their corruption problem. Experiences from countries that have made significant progress in combating corruption and entrenching good governance, like Singapore, Hong Kong and even China, shows that the successes recorded were the result of having transformational leaders with strong political will, that understood the seriousness of the problem [21].

Anticorruption Agencies (ACAs)

The first best practice is to never let the police handle the task of controlling corruption. This would be like giving candy to a child, expecting that it would not be eaten. Instead, a separate agency dedicated solely to the task of

fighting corruption should be established to deal effectively with corruption in all government departments, including the police. The literature on Anticorruption Agencies (ACAs), stipulates that they commonly serve one or more of three general functions--investigation and enforcement; corruption prevention; and awareness and education. Those operating all three are generally recognised with the Hong Kong Independent Commission against Corruption (ICAC), ICPC, EFCC and CCB, and although not to the same extent, Singapore's Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB) [22].

One fundamental element to successfully establishing effective anticorruption agencies lies in the readiness of the advocates of good governance to share their experiences and to work together to advance greater knowledge of best practices. Experience suggests that international organizations can make a vital contribution on this front, but only if they work in collaboration with central governments and civil society, which, in turn, need to support business, academia, and a wide range of voluntary organizations. This can be achieved only when the organizations themselves set about the problem with a different and pragmatic mind [23].

Good Governance and Development

Given that corruption is itself a symptom of poor governance, the higher the incidence of corruption, the less an anticorruption strategy should include tactics that narrowly target corrupt behaviours and the more it should focus on the broad underlying features of the governance environment. For example, support for anticorruption agencies and public awareness campaigns is likely to meet with limited success in environments in which corruption is rampant and the governance system deeply flawed. In fact, in environments where governance is weak, anticorruption agencies are prone to being misused as tools of political victimization. These types of interventions are more appropriate in a "low" corruption setting, where governance fundamentals are reasonably sound, and corruption is a relatively marginal phenomenon [24].

Therefore, what is needed is to look at the whole governmental and institutional system and, in every country, this will be different. What are the major failings that are the cause, the root cause of corruption? Is it that there is absolute impunity or no rule of law? Is it that there is no voice for the citizens to hold the corrupt accountable? Is it the dearth of social infrastructure or the absence of social welfare? etc. Corruption acts as a restraint on development, denying millions of people around the world the prosperity, rights, services and employment which they desperately need and deserve [25].

Corruption is at the root of Nigeria's underdevelopment, the emergence of boko haram and gross unemployment [26].

Methodology

As the purpose of any research interview is to explore the views, experiences, opinions, beliefs and/or motivations of individuals on specific topics, i.e. (Scoping Survey of Dedicated Anti-Corruption Agencies Policing Corruption in Nigeria: First Things First). The author decided to conduct semi-structured interviews with public officers from a range of anticorruption agencies [26,27]. The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB), Public Complaint Commission (PCC), Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP), Fiscal Responsibility Commission (FRC), Office of the Auditor General of the Federation (OAUFGF), Technical Unit of Governance and Anticorruption Reform (TUGAR), Presidential Advisory Committee on Anticorruption (PACAC), National Salaries, Income and Wages Commission (NSIWC) and members of the presidential advisory committee against corruption, were used to identify and categories substantive information and relevant themes [28].

The benefit of this purposeful sampling of interviewees was that all had first-hand exposure to numerous cases of corruption over the course of their lives and careers [29]. As such the 21 interviews discussed hundreds of documented corruption cases. Each respondent was asked a series of structured open-ended questions gives a prompt over the course of the interview. Some of the questions during the semi-structured interviews inquired about countering public sector corruption: How and why corruption happens? How best to prevent it? What are the challenges faced by these anti-corruption agencies? And what can be done to strengthen these anti-corruption agencies? The approach was always to seek the most senior relevant official and to gradually move down the hierarchy in cases where this was not possible. The researcher has captured a sample of interviews which are representative of these organizations. The space constrains of this article mean it was only possible to quote from 11 of the 20 interviews [29].

The author also secured access to 20 case files of persons convicted of corruption in the public sector in Nigeria from the ICPC. The case files were selected to represent the diversity of corruption in Nigeria, and to find out the rationalization, modus operandi, opportunity and benefit involved in each corruption case file. The researcher used his contacts and applied for the 20 successfully convicted corruption cases from the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences commission (ICPC). The researcher decision was

informed by the fact that the agency has published two volumes (1 and 2) of law reports: Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences commission (ICPC) law report. This agency (ICPC) was established in the year 2000, with the primary responsibility of preventing corrupt practices and investigating and prosecuting corrupt persons, particularly in the public sector, which makes it at the hub of Nigeria's fight against corruption [30].

Findings and Discussion

Strengthening the Dedicated Anti-Corruption Agencies Fighting Corruption in Nigeria

Many countries including Singapore, Hong Kong, Nigeria and others have created anticorruption bodies explicitly mandated with the duty of following reports on corruption. To be successful these agencies must have independence from the political authority, sufficient resources, and personnel of highest integrity. They must also have the power of sanctions, or, at the minimum, have access to others, including the court, who may enforce sanctions. All the participants recognized that the dedicated anticorruption agencies (ACAs), in Nigeria, are far from being independent and that, due to their lack of resources, personnel and a clear mandate, they were frequently unable to carry out their duties. Lack of funding, manpower development and the need to have the power of enforcement included in their mandates (some of ACAs), consistently featuring as their main challenges. As one interviewee summed up The government has a lot of roles to play, why? The government has control of the police, the ACAS, it has diplomatic relations, it controls Labour force. Therefore, the government should be very serious regarding fighting corruption for example, if we take what is happening now, with the EFCC that is recovering a lot of money, it does have a reputable office for itself, some of them are poorly remunerated [31]. The ICPC that is doing a lot to tame the civil servant, you know maybe they are living in a rented office, Government should pump a lot of money into ACAS, to make the agencies very strong, very powerful, very conducive, empowering them with every confidence to do their job (Member, PACAC) [32-35].

Another noted the importance of strengthening the mandates of the ACAs through monitoring and evaluation tools, as key to developing their operational mandate: In delineating their mandates, we intend to use monitoring and evaluation tool. For instance, there are a lot of overlap in their functions. Each agency has areas that are core. And there some other mandate, that they have, which are not core to the specific agency, but core to another agency. So, using monitoring and evaluation tools, we are going to help identify their core areas, so that they pay more attention to

that core area. While leaving the one that are not core, or not paying as much attention to it, or doing it in conjunction with the agency that has the core mandate [sic] (Director, NSIWC).

A planned and directed effort to improve the efficiency and outcome of an anticorruption agency must take account of; the nature and main features of the corruption problem prevalent in the country, what the resulting organizational development needs of the Anticorruption agency will be, how and over what period these development needs will be met and what the projected costs will be. Only in this way, can an anti-corruption agency attain organisational competence, develop expertise, capability and external credibility and develop its capacity to perform within its operational mandate. In one interview, the participant describes the amendment of the CCB Act, as the surest way to ensure the operational efficiency of the organisation in future:

Even though we have not exhausted the laws with respect to CCB, I think the CCB Acts needs an amendment. An amendment that will define several roles, there are many roles, that are undefined by the CCB Acts, that sometimes affects the performance of the CCB. And there are some powers, we have in the Act, and the Constitutions, these powers are sum up. I think an amendment should be done to breakdown these powers for example, the CCB has powers to investigate breach or noncompliance with any of its codes. Now if you look at investigation as person, that has law enforcement background, there are quite several things, that you do in investigation; you have record examination, you enquire from the agencies to give you documents. so, these powers must be broken down to say that the CCB has the power 'to request'. There was a time we have these problems with some banks, we asked for bank statements, and they said where the powers is, we cited the section but they cannot see it, because what they are seeing is power to investigate.... so that amendments will now make it clear, and it will aid the bureau in carrying out it functions 'you get my point' [sic] (Senior Official CCB).

Political will refers to the sustained commitment of political leaders to implement anti-corruption policies and programmes. And exists when these three determinants are met: (i) broad anticorruption laws exist; (ii) the dedicated anticorruption agency is provided with adequate personnel and resources; and (iii) the anticorruption laws are equitably administered by the dedicated anticorruption agency. For example, the resources invested in the ICAC are crucial to its success. The impressive amount of ICAC resources leads to some doubt about the applicability of the commission's experiences in countries with other backgrounds and ambitions. First, developing countries rightfully argue that strategy proposals are not very realistic when they demand the availability of the financial resources that the ICAC has

at its disposal. A staff member from one of the dedicated anticorruption agencies mentioned the importance of funding, describing it as the fulcrum within which all other things rest. He said: first and foremost, funding. Funding will improve almost every other thing From the technology, the hiring of very quality manpower, improve our operations, so, the funding, is the fulcrum within which all other things rest. Look at ICPC, it is just about 800 staff, Nigeria is about 180 million people, if one look at all the people that are in anti-corruption, add all the agencies together, they are very negligible, and. then, one look also at the scale of the problem. From their experience in terms of looking at institutions, and the kinds of things that they have seen, the best way to have leverage in attacking the problem, is ensuring that those institutions are strong and able both internally to withstand vulnerabilities from within, and improve regulatory agencies. For a country of about 180 million people and 774 locals governments, Nigeria is big.

So, when you are looking at the agencies solving the problem, you also must look at the scale of the problem. (Director, ICPC).

Furthermore, the anticorruption laws should be revised recurrently to takeout ambiguities or deal with unforeseen difficulties by instituting adjustments or, if required, new codification. For instance, the Singaporean Prevention of Corruption Act, was amended in 1966, to encapsulate Singaporeans working for their government in embassies and other government agencies abroad. As Singaporean citizens—could now be prosecuted for corrupt acts executed outside Singapore and would be punished as though the offenses had occurred in Singapore. As one interviewee noted: First, the problem with the anti-corruption agencies, is delineation of mandates. The agencies are flopping around the same issue. The country is large, the issues are big. There is accommodation for everyone. They need to properly delineate, so that they know; this is their focus, then they apply their response to that area, that is his focus, and clean up that area. That way, they will cover a lot more ground. Do you think they should be streamlined. What I am advocating, is proper interpretation of there mandate. Most anti-corruption agencies, if you read their laws, and then one, see what they are doing; they are not laying the right kind of emphasis. And with the national strategy, what we hope to do, is to use the monitoring and evaluation component to align them [36].

Anticorruption strategies should include investigation, prevention, and education. Less developed countries, however, could benefit most from an emphasis on investigation and prosecution, whereas developed countries would profit more from prevention actions. One interviewee clearly remarks on the need to amend their laws, to include

enforcement powers: Lack of adequate budgetary provision, and weakness of the Act itself; inability of the Commission to prosecute directly. Because, if an agency, knows that look the Commission will come after me, they will be afraid, one of the reasons, they do not even care. Sometimes, we write letter to them (they will say: what will they do), and NThe Commission also write to Anthony general, and if a minister, that is not doing well, and knows that; what this Commission (FRC) can only do, is to write a letter. And the Attorney General is your colleague, one can say: okay, whenever they write I will go and meet my colleague. So that area is a major problem for us, right now in the National Assembly there is amendment bill going on, to address some of the challenges we have, we need enforcement (Senior Official FRC) [37,38].

The focal point should be recognising the key task of anticorruption agencies. Considering that prevention is always better than prosecution, a compact enforcement and monitoring unit with significant authority and political independence maybe much better placed than other government agencies to guarantee that functional preventive steps are discovered and taken [39].

The Role of Favourable Policy Environment

Does the policy context in the country favour or hinder the control of corruption? The examples of Hong Kong and Singapore show that, apart from political will, they have succeeded in curbing corruption because of their favourable policy contexts: they have small populations; stable governments; high standards of living; efficient civil service systems; and well-developed infrastructure. Moreover, Singapore does not have any natural deposits and is not plagued by the “natural resource curse” impacting those countries bestowed with rich natural deposits. In contrast to this, Nigeria, with a population of over 200 million, will experience more difficulty in countering corruption because of its unfavourable policy context and the influence of “natural resource curse” [40].

The poor living standard of majority of Nigerians is an obvious result of the lack of basic and social infrastructures like healthcare, education, power, water, transportation, food and shelter. In one interview, a participant elaborated on what happens to a civil servant who comes to work, in a society in which every individual assumes the function of a local council: “Let me tell what happens to civil servants, who comes to work, and he has not paid his house rent, he has not paid his children school fees and he cannot pay his bills, he cannot settle down. The integrity of such a person becomes a problem, he gets home and the wife says, there is no food in the house, he does not understand what they are talking about, one because his pay is not good. Everyone is a local government (council); you are providing your own

electricity; you are providing your transportation, you are providing everything, there is nothing from government. There is no power company, you buy your own generator, you buy fuel every day, there is no road. Thus, wherever you can follow, you will follow to get opportunity; these are the challenges of an average civil servant. Every day he comes out his head hot, thinking of how to make ends meet. The moment there is any opportunity to make money, before you open your mouth, he has done it” [sic] (Senior Official, PCC). Increased access to essential infrastructure services could reduce inequality, foster inclusion and support poverty reduction efforts, which can in turn reduce corruption within the society, As this interviewee remarked, that the focus should be on how to address the ‘drains of corruption’, and not agitation for a salary increase: I do not think, I want to be one of the people, who are going to be canvassing for increase remuneration, because that in isolation is not going to solve the problem.

I have seen people, who come from may be, the normal ministries, with very small take home Pay, to parastatals where they are getting 3, 4 or 5 times of what they are getting, yet when the opportunity arises, they still behave in unethical manner. So, for me the issue should be addressing the drains of corruption: that is those areas that makes our take-home pay, not able to takes us home: like the infrastructure services. If people have the confidence that public schools can educate their children, that hospitals can give, them good treatment, that the basics services are affordable, then the money you get will be able to solve some of the problems. Because what happens now is that there is an air of desperation; if one falls sick tomorrow, what will happen to me? I am going to pay so much for my child education, I need to buy generator, dig borehole, do A, B, C and D. So, no matter how much, you pay the person, once this desperation issues, are still there, then the problems remain (Director, NEITI).

Thus, “fighting corruption” may not be the best way to “fight corruption” criticising strategies that layer “yet another anti-corruption campaign, the creation of more anti-corruption commissions and ethics agencies, and the incessant drafting of new laws, decrees, and codes of conduct” that emphasise prosecutions over “more fundamental and systemic governance reforms” and that focus on prevention and incentives for integrity. For example, all Nigerians are victims of corruption; People are resorting to self-help because they cannot have the necessities of life, this is an area that must be addressed before anticorruption measures can have any success. If you want to eliminate corruption in the Nigeria Police Force, for example, you cannot do that without solving the problem of welfare and accommodation of the police personnel and so it is for other forces and the civil service. Every class of the society has one thing or another against the state and so this must be accounted for in

any future anticorruption strategies. As another interviewee noted: So, if they do not tie all these things together, then they have a major uphill task. they are not providing them water, they are not providing them electricity, they are not providing them good schools, they are not providing good health care, they are not providing them good health accommodation, and then they have a major issue talking about corruption. When all these things are in place, whoever wants to be corrupt, they will now be spending on only 10% of their population, it will be addressing. If they are absent, they will be addressing 80% of their population. And it will make it appear, as if your system is not doing, what it should do. The truth is that you are running after too many people [sic] (Senior Official, EFCC).

Corruption is rampant in underdeveloped and transition economies. Not, due to the innate character of the people in those countries, but because the circumstances are suitable for it. For instance, the incentive to increase one's earnings is tremendously high, worsened by poverty, meagre and inadequate public service pay, and the dearth of risk spreading mechanism (such as insurance and well-developed market).

The insufficiency of public sector pay contributes immensely to petty corruption driven by need, thus safeguarding living wages is essential to public sector productivity and effectiveness. Often, low pay is responsible for the mad struggle by public officials to get whatever is going and to compensate for the shortfall in their salaries. One interviewee commented that infrastructure and agitation for larger salaries are so interwoven in Nigeria, that it will be practically impossible to counter corruption without addressing these variables simultaneously: Whereas if governments provided good quality free education, the civil servant or public servant will not be harassing them for more salaries. The salaries he is looking for now: is to see that he can take his child private school, the salaries he is looking for, or money he wants to steal, is to be able to take his wife for surgery in a first-class hospital or take her abroad. When all these things are working, the man's mind is at rest, in that whether he is on tour anywhere in the country, an ambulance will come pick his family member and is getting immediate response. He does not need, to know who the doctor is. But today in this country, if one does not have a doctor in his family or do not know doctors, he is finished. The third one, has to do with accommodation, these are all Maslow requirements. If one has accommodation that is tight generally to his public or civil service, nobody will push him, to want to steal a penny, wherever he is working, that will temper with the public sector housing, he is given, which at the end of 30 years, he is paying mortgage, it belongs to him (Senior Official, OAUGF).

Enhancing infrastructure is a key component of the 2030 Development Agenda, mentioned explicitly in three

of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals. (SDGs 6, "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all"; SDG 7, "Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all"; and SDG 9, "Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation") and essential for achieving many others. Eventually, countering corruption is not just about 'fighting corruption'; it is about reinforcing the public confidence in, and loyalty to, the state – and strengthening the state's financial and policy capabilities to work for the citizens. According to 14 (2) of the Constitution of federal Republic of Nigeria as amended, [CFRN], the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government. The Oxford Lexico Dictionary defined welfare as: 'Statutory procedure or social effort designed to promote the basic physical and material well-being of people in need' – such as the provision of quality education, housing, healthcare and basic infrastructure to the citizenry. As one interviewee noted, it is about government responsibility: Let's talk about government responsibility to the people. people say their salaries are not enough, because they spend huge sum of money in getting those services, that ordinarily should have come at discounted rate from government, if at all government would charge for the services. people find themselves paying exorbitantly for two reasons: (1) may be the one, that the government provide are not even in existent, so they must seek for private sources, for the provision of those services, and they must pay through their noses. (2) or the one that the governments provide if it is in existent, it is of poor quality, it is inadequate, or because they must bribe the government offices that provides these services (Senior Official, BPP).

Another interviewee described the fashion in which the implementation of certain social welfare measures can lead to further corruption, due to the interference of local officials: So, if one's salary is low, and he must take his wife or child to hospital, and to pay for things he should not have pay for, or bribe his way to the hospital to be attended to, Or the hospital is not just functioning, and he must take his wife or child to a private clinic, where he has to pay a huge sum of money, that his low salary would not be able to cope with. When he must take his child to a private school, because the public schools has collapsed. and how did that happened; because those who oversee inspecting the school: the directors, or the federal ministry of education, they are negligent of their duty. They do not go for the inspection anymore, and they themselves allowed the public sector schools to crash. So, they set up their own private schools, and people desirous to give their children a good education, they are compelled to go to their private schools, so deliberately they raked the public schools Member 2, PACAC [41].

Thus, Corruption is a symptom that something has gone wrong in the management of the state.

Institutions designed to govern the interrelationships between the citizen and the state is used instead for personal enrichment and the provision of benefits to the corrupt. A reduction in corruption depends on economic development. It is thus for each country concerned to draw up its own strategy, by which it can then lead to a productive circle of development and good governance. For example, instead of creating a specialised enforcement body, a greater anticorruption result might be attained by less direct programme measures that may not have an obvious relationship to the acts of corruption being observed. This would include steps such as providing more and better schools. or a fairer legal system. And the provision of social infrastructure – healthcare (hospitals), education (schools and universities), public facilities (community housing and prisons) and transportation (railways and roads). These designs serve as the natural cushioning for societies and nations [42]. As this interviewee observed: First, starting from the root: that is identified the weakness within the system, address those weaknesses to remove a lot of opportunities. Then one need also, to addresses the issue of rationalization, because one of the key issues of rationalization, is that everyone is doing, and getting away with it. If they can also, have decisive sanction, to limit the rationalization, that will also help and of course, tied to the rationalization issue is remuneration, which keeps coming up, in terms of public sector corruption. people saying: they are not paid and all that, especially in an environment where there is dearth of infrastructure, the natural cushioning, which the state, could have done in certain areas; in terms of education of children, in terms of health, is not there. So, people from there limited income, still must provide alternatives to these things, expensive alternatives at that (Member 2, NEITI) [43-45].

A review of one of the 20-convicted case files consider for this paper shows the rationalization issue is tied to remuneration, which keeps coming up, in terms of public sector corruption, in an environment where there is dearth of infrastructure: In July 2017 a High court of the Sokoto Judiciary sentenced one Anthony Mbanefo, A public servant working with the Federal Road Maintenance Agency (FERMA), to two years imprisonment for collecting N20 million each from two companies (Crest Code and Dew Lands), in which, he has direct acquisition of private interest (In connivance with the private sector). In respect of two contracts awarded by his employer (FERMA), to execute the two road projects in Sokoto State, one of which was terminated because the defendant converted the money, he collected to his private use [45-48].

Conclusion

The findings from this research illustrate the systemic nature of corruption in Nigeria. Systemic corruption occurs when corrupt practices have become so pervasive that they have permeated the political, economic and social milieu, and in this sense, you are not dealing with an individual rationalization issue but rather a collective one. This research has shown that a reduction in corruption in Nigeria, as in most less developed countries depends on welfare and development-welfare and development is about the transformation of communities, ameliorating the lives of the impoverished, providing everyone with the opportunity to prosper and access to healthcare, education, vocational training and public housing.

The 1999 CFRN, explicitly stated that: the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government, and it appears that this welfare is grossly lacking. As all Nigerians are victims of corrupt system that has failed to provide adequate social welfare measures; people are resorting to self-help because they cannot have the necessities of life. The dedicated anticorruption agencies fighting corruption in Nigeria, can only do so much, as their capacity, capability, performance and success depends largely on good governance. Good governance, as this article has illustrated, is not about ethics, but rather it is about the effective and efficient utilization of public resources for the public good - meeting the needs of the masses as opposed to select groups in society. Nigeria is a systemically corrupt country, Delineating the Mandate of Dedicated Anti-Corruption Agencies Policing Corruption in Nigeria, is one thing, (and which is mostly about detection and prosecution), it is another thing for the country to effectively implement the preventative social welfare strategies that are needed to complement the work country's anti-corruption agencies. If we all agreed that prevention is better than cure, and that the goal of prevention is to stop the corruption before it occurs, then meeting the welfare concerns of the citizens and the development of the society cannot be overemphasized. More broadly, welfare may also encompass efforts to provide a basic level of well-being through free or subsidized social services such as health care, education, vocational training, and public housing. And these will greatly reduce those desperation tendencies fuelling corruption in the public sector. Also, this would create an environment that was more hospitable to the implementation of integrity training. Currently many have the feeling that, when they are training people in relation to integrity, they are hitting a brick wall. This is because it is difficult for these individual to behave ethically, or to expect them to carry out their responsibilities with integrity, when they are also having to contend with a number of issues relating to their basic wellbeing/survival.

The critical question today which remain unanswered in the quest for a sustainable preventive policy towards reducing corruption in Nigeria, is: are the governing institutions capable of ensuring the right to health, adequate housing, sufficient food, quality education, fair justice and personal security? In order to successfully deal with the issue of corruption, we must deal with these first things first”.

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