

CORRUPTION, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Since the advent of democratic rule in Nigeria in 1999, hitherto long nurtured but suppressed feelings of neglect, marginalization, discrimination and domination by aggrieved communities, nationalities/sections of the society against the Nigerian state have burst in the open; and the political landscape has been inundated with separatist agitation movements, calls for resource control/true federalism and the restructuring of the polity. This has surreptitiously given vent to emergence of ethnic militia, escalation of youth restiveness, acts of kidnapping and hostage taking which have posed a threat to the corporate existence of Nigeria. This study is a modest contribution to the ongoing national discourse on governance and political instability in Nigeria. The study which is analytical adopts the rentier-state theory as its framework of analysis; it relies on secondary data sources and situates corruption at the epicenter of political instability in the country. The study argues that the clamour for restructuring of the Nigerian polity, separatist agitations and the crisis of governance in the country are a direct response to social injustice and the obstacles imposed on the nation's development through acts of corruption. The study recommends among other things that corruption should attract severe penalty

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1. Introduction

Nigeria has had a harvest of corruption scandals since the return to civil rule in 1999. The rate of corruption is so alarming that President Muhammadu Buhari once declared if 'Nigeria does not kill corruption, corruption will kill Nigeria'. This attests to the level of corruption in the country. Pervasive corruption has not only eroded public trust, fairness and justice in the country but it also undermines the legitimacy of government as it hampers effective delivery of public goods

and services (Lawal, 2007). This has been emphasized by, Osah, Osundina, Ayim, Nwokocha and Chioma (2014) that;

By diverting scarce resources intended for development, corruption also makes it harder to meet fundamental needs such as those of food, health and education. It creates discrimination between the different groups in society, feeds inequality and injustice, discourages foreign investment and aid, and hinders growth. It is therefore, a major obstacle to political stability and to successful social and economic development (p.2).

The import of this on the polity is that ‘politics as the pursuit of the *res publica* to advance people’s socio-economic needs’ has been relegated to secondary consideration (Jinadu, 2016, p.15). But government as emphasized by social contract theorists, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau is a contract between the ruler and the ruled, consequently when and where the government reneges on the social contract, it may lead to a conflict situation in the polity. Otherwise stated, the contract collapses when government fails to meet the basic needs of the people. In line with the tenets of the social contract, the Constitution of Nigeria, 1999; Section 16 under the Fundamental Objectives of State Policy stipulates that

16 (1) The State shall

- (a) harness the resources of the nation and promote national prosperity and an efficient, a dynamic and self-reliant economy;*
- (b) control the national economy in such a manner as to secure the maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every citizen on the basis of social justice and equality of status and opportunity*

16(2b) that the material resources of the nation are harnessed and distributed as best as possible to serve the common good

- (c) that the economic system is not operated in such a manner as to permit the concentration of wealth or the means of production and exchange in the hands of few individuals or a group; and*
- (d) that suitable and adequate shelter, suitable and adequate food, reasonable national minimum living wage, old age care and pensions, and unemployment, sick benefits and welfare of the disabled are provided for all citizens.*

These constitutional provisions underscore that social justice is the basis of the state. Social justice seeks to eliminate excesses and dehumanizing conditions in the society that arise due to a

defective system of social and economic goods in the society. But the issue is, how can social justice be guaranteed by the state? This has long preoccupied the minds of great philosophers. Writing in the *Republic*, Plato saw justice as ‘proper stations’ in life; that is doing your own work and not meddling with what belongs to others (Johari, 2003). To Plato, an ideal state is a state based on justice. While to Aristotle, a society where everybody is ‘allotted honour, wealth and other social goods that are due and appropriate to him’ approximates to what he characterized as social justice. Hence, justice as conceived by Aristotle connotes equity and fairness.

But corruption tends to vitiate rules and basis of public and political conduct; consequently, social injustice is more likely to be associated with high incidence of corruption in the society (Mensah, 1986). This stems from the fact that corruption is an act of deviation from accepted standards of behavior in the society and it does not only impinge on efficiency and fairness in the society but undermines democracy and good governance (Rose-Ackerman, 1978). In Nigeria, corruption has not only been identified as the bane of development, but it is also the source of inequality in the distribution of wealth and administration of justice in the country (Musa, 2017).

Indeed, societies all over the world frown at corruption as a social miasma. In Nigeria, Section 15 (5) of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria stipulates that ‘the state shall abolish all corrupt practices and abuse of power’. The import of this is that corruption is a clog in the wheel of development in the country. It tends to sway the mind of public officers away from the welfare and aspirations of their subjects by giving primacy to personal benefit; and it also exacerbate social injustice and conflict in the society. But in spite of the negative consequences of corruption in the society, Nigeria as observed by former British Prime Minister David Cameron is however ‘fantastically corrupt’ (*The Nation*, May 11). The pervasiveness of corruption has not only given vent to the paradox of ‘poverty in the midst of plenty’ but it has also aggravated the crisis of development, undermined service delivery and heightened insecurity and political instability in the country. Since the return to civil rule in 1999, corruption has become one of the implacable problems plaguing social and political engineering in Nigeria. This study therefore sets out to address the following issues; the impact of corruption on service delivery and development in Nigeria; the concomitant reaction by the people to the state of affairs and its implication on the unity and political stability of the country.

2. Conceptual and Theoretical Discourse

2.1. Corruption

The World Bank (1997) defines corruption as ‘the abuse of office for private gain’ .While Nye (as cited in Elekwa, Eme & Okonkwo, 2009; p.218) sees corruption as ‘a behavior which deviates from the formal duties of public role because of private pecuniary or status gain or violate rules against the exercise of certain types regarding influence’. These definitions emphasize that corruption is the misuse of public position for pecuniary gain.

The motivation for corruption that can be deduced from the above definitions is to take undue advantage of position of trust in the public sector. However, it should be noted that corruption is not solely a political phenomenon as it encompasses the economic and social spheres of life. Corruption also aims at enriching layers of society and influencing the distribution of income and wealth in general (Klavaren, 1990). Corruption assumes diverse forms which vary from one society to another and it can be classified according to the scale. In Africa, grand corruption and petty corruption have been identified as the most conspicuous and familiar type of corruption (Ike, 2009). Grand Corruption refers to corruption in the developing countries that usually involve bureaucrats and politicians who are involved in decision making and the allocation of resources. While petty corruption refers to common criminal activities by police men, custom officers, judicial officers etc.

Adeagbo (2015) on the other hand has classified corruption into entrenched corruption, bureaucratic corruption and political corruption. Entrenched corruption is the type that is well organized and embedded in both political and social life of the people that helps to sustain it. This type of corruption is pervasive, organized and monopolistic. Bureaucratic corruption refers to public sector corruption. It occurs when bureaucratic functionaries take bribe from public clients and practice extortion on a regular basis. While political corruption basically refers to the use of political power for financial gains. It also includes bribery, extortion, election fraud, abusive patronage, and official intimidation of opposition groups; as well as receiving gratification for giving assistance in regard to contract (Ukwaba 2002).

In spite of its obvious disadvantages to the society, some scholars have romanticized corruption that it is beneficial to development as it acts as a lubricant that greases bureaucratic bottlenecks (Robinson, 1998). But recent findings particularly by the World Bank (1997) indicate that corruption is antithetical to development in all societies. It destabilizes the polity as it leads to social revolutions (Ike, 2009). In Nigeria the military take-over of 1966 and 1983 cited corruption as a major reason for the overthrow of the civilian regimes. Apart from hampering the effective delivery of public goods and services, corruption upsets ethnic balance and creates problems of national integration in developing countries especially where a corrupt but popular ruler from an ethnic group is replaced (Ike, 2009) this may upset an ethnic equilibrium and the cohorts may revolt.

Nigeria is indeed corrupt, over the years Transparency International has rated Nigeria as one of the most corrupt Countries in the world. Out of 100 points signaling maximum transparency and no corruption, Nigeria scored 27 points in 2018 and was ranked 144 out of 180 countries assessed in the world. In 2017, Nigeria ranked 148 out of 180 countries assessed and in 2016 the country scored 28 points and was ranked 136th in the rating of countries. On the African continent Nigeria is ranked 32nd position out of 52 countries assessed in 2017 while Botswana leads the continent with the record of competent and largely corrupt free public administration (Olawoyin, 2018). In West Africa, Nigeria is the 2nd worst country out of 17 countries leaving only Guinea Bissau behind (Olawoyin, 2018).

Corruption in Nigeria is reinforced by the plural nature of the society and the hitherto uneven division of the country into three regions, the North, West and South by the colonialists. The imbalance in the division of the country where the northern region was larger in population than the eastern and western region combined as well as the domination of the regions by three major ethnic groups, Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Ibo respectively laid the basis for disunity, mutual distrust and pervasive corruption in the country. As rightly pointed out by, Ikpeze, Soludo and Elekwa, (2009), the fear of domination which transcends the ethnic nationalities, is the basis not only for corruption but fragile peace, disunity and underdevelopment in Nigeria. This has been aptly adumbrated by Omatseye (2012) that corruption becomes more entrenched where governance is plagued by ethnic and sectional considerations. Thus, in a multi-ethnic society such as Nigeria where politics has been ethnicized, the rivalry among the diverse ethnic

nationalities for scarce political and economic resources has accentuated corruption and ethnic conflicts which have become a threat to the unity and stability of the country (Omodion & Aliu, 2013). It should be noted that the competition by ethnic nationalities to have a fair share of the national cake has pushed persons or individuals from different ethnic groups who occupy public office to view such appointments or office as an opportunity for their people or ethnic group. Consequently, such public office holders usually try to subvert public policies and laid down procedures to favour people as well as loot enough resources to dispense favour to their town's men or ethnic group (Ikpeze, Elekwa, & Soludo, 2009). These favours are often appreciated by the award of traditional chieftaincy titles and when such people who extend such largesse to their communities are caught and are tried for corrupt practices, their tribesmen do not only rally support for them and perceive them to be victims of ethnic witch-hunt and thus tacitly encouraging corruption in society.

The foregoing brings to fore why corruption is pervasive, injustice is prevalent, development is stunted and there are persistent agitations for the re-negotiation of federalism in Nigeria.

2.2. Social Justice

The concept social justice connotes within its fold everything pertaining to the norm of 'general interest' (Johari, 2003). It encompasses issues such as the protection of the interest of minorities, eradication of poverty, illiteracy, disease, unemployment and starvation. John Rawl (1971) on the other hand sees social justice as 'fairness'. This involves all parties being rational and mutually disinterested in issues.

In the Marxian perspective, social justice entails distributive justice, that is from each according to their ability, and to each according to their needs, (Jost and Kay, 2010). It should be noted that Marx condemned the exploitation of the workers and advocated the overthrow of capitalism. While in the liberal perspective, two major traditions have influenced scholarly and practical interest in the question of social justice, the utilitarian and deontological approach. The Utilitarian approach advocates a welfare state that can distribute wealth and other valued resources in a way to reduce misery in order to ensure happiness for the greatest number of people. While deontologists emphasize that social justice entails that we do only those things that

it would make sense to universalize. In other words, the determination of right and wrong depends not only on the consequences of human action but also on other considerations.

In developing countries such as Nigeria, Johari (2003) notes that the idea of social justice enjoins the state to make concerted efforts to improve the lot of the down trodden. This entails elimination of the vested interest that hinders the realization of the common good. Social justice is therefore a *sine qua non* for the society as it is a force behind social change. It arises when people perceive some fault with the existing social order such as exploitative social conditions which pushes them to demand for social justice by seeking suitable changes in policy for determining authoritative allocation of values (Gaubu, 2007). The import of this is that it seeks to eliminate injustice, excesses and dehumanizing conditions in the society that arise due to a defective system of distribution of social, economic and political goods in the society. The goal of social justice is to decide an appropriate allocation of the advantages that can be secured through the instrumentality of the social organization (Gaubu, 2007).

2.3. Political Instability

In order to properly comprehend the concept political instability, we need to understand what political stability is. This is because instability is the direct opposite of stability. Dudley (as cited in Echikwonye 2011, p.149) sees political stability as a condition where there is congruence between the constitutive and regulative rules of the system such that changes within the action-set either in terms of the re-alignment of forces in the set or in its configuration, can be made to follow from and conform to the regulative rules of the system. While Usman (2000) sees political stability as the stable realization of the essence of that form of government. Thus, the political stability of a feudal monarchy means the continuation of the exercise of power by the dynasty or dynasties that produce the monarch. In Nigeria, the political stability of the type of democracy enshrined in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria entails the continuation of the exercise of power by those freely elected by the people of this country for specific periods with definite mandate that conform to the fundamental objectives of state policy.

While political instability according to Dudley (1973, p.10) refers to those changes of political variety within a society, which do not conform to, or proceed from the rules governing political processes in the society. It encompasses the use or threat of political violence; the susceptibility

of a political system to military take-over, disintegration; warfare; riots; revolution; ethnic or religious conflicts; abhorrence to rule of law; arbitrary change and implementation of rules and political repression (Adilieje, 2005). It has been noted by Nwobashi (2010) that political systems are stable when the political institutions and processes are seen to be legitimate; the main decisions of government are based on rule of law, equity, fairness and justice; and the wishes of the people are respected and all forms of discrimination on the basis of socio-cultural imperatives are avoided. In this study, political instability refers to threats to the corporate existence of Nigeria and the country's democratic enterprise.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the rentier-state theory as its framework of analysis. A rentier state is one that relies on rents and royalties accruing from minerals extracted from the society by externally controlled sources such as Multi-National Corporations (MNCs). The economist Beblawi (1990) defines a rentier state with the following characteristics; in such a state, a rentier situation dominates the government's revenue structure in which (i) rents are acquired from foreign sources, (ii) they accrue directly to the government, and (iii) very few citizens are actually participants in the rent generating business with the majority only being beneficiaries of distribution.

Klas (2008) has pointed out that the fiscal situation in a rentier state is characterized by a dual capacity; the ability to draw sizeable rents from external sources and subsequently to discriminately distribute this wealth internally. This tends to perpetuate strong states and weakens civil society groups because the rentier state provides substantial funds that are easy to misallocate and invites little public scrutiny (Klas, 2008). He further notes that an embezzling politician once he assumes office counteracts demands for transparency and eventually patronage becomes the game. This stems from the fact that large rents make the state a prize to be possessed rather than a forum for consensual rule, they also constitute a significant incumbency advantage by providing the means to maintain hold on power (Gana, 2006). The state under such circumstances apart from been characterized by arbitrariness and corrupt tendencies reduces political reforms and democracy to privileges that could be dispensed by the 'benevolent ruler' (Gana, 2006).

It should be noted that Nigeria is a major producer as well as exporter of crude oil in the world. Over 70% of government revenue is derived from the sale of crude oil which accrues directly into the coffers of the federal government and this invariably makes the state an agent for the collection of petro-dollar rents in which it feeds the rapacious elite to the detriment of the masses (Ibiam & Itumo, 2014). What is emphasized here is that access to power has provided officials with access to resources and the theft of such resources go unpunished (Joseph, 1994). Those in control of state political structures depend on selective graft, gratifications, percentage cuts, kickbacks, contract inflation to perpetuate self in power, Gaddis (as cited in Ibiam & Itumo, 2014, p.157). They further noted that these acts have elevated corruption into a state craft and it debilitates development and aggravate problems such as lack of essential infrastructure and social services which reinforces poverty and causes citizen's resentment and agitations for change. Consequently, having labored and suffered for decades under this state to the benefit of the ruling elite, the Nigerian masses have come out strongly to demand for a revisit of the nature and functions of the state.

4. The State, Corruption and Development in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the state plays a dominant role in the socio-economic development of the country and this is largely responsible for official corruption in the country as access to state power has been central to the existence and wealth of the political leadership and the basis of corruption. Since the advent of civil rule in 1999, national dailies have been inundated with tales of corruption especially in the public sector by government officials. This has continued unabated and over a decade Transparency International (TI) has continually rated Nigeria as one of the poorest and most corrupt nations in the world.

Some of the notable corrupt scandals chronicled by Elekwa, Eme and Okwonkwo (2009) include the 'tenure amendment bribe allegation' in which a member of the House of Representatives, Olusola Adekeye reported that the Presidency was out at the verge of bribing each member of the House of Representatives with the sum of N70 million to vote in favour of tenure elongation. The 'Budget Bribe scandal' in which President Obasanjo sacked his Minister of Education, Fabian Osuji who was alleged to have offered bribe to the then Senate President Aldophus Wabara to increase the budgetary allocation to the ministry of Education which had suffered

underfunding for some years. It should be noted that this incident led to the resignation of Wabara as Senate President. Other corruption cases recorded by Elekwa et al (2009) include the NITEL-PENTASCOPE management scandal; the ‘MISSING MT AFRICAN PRIDE’ and the ‘SOLGAS and AJAOKUTA STEEL SCANDAL’.

Other corruption cases recorded by Ciboh (2010) are N2.4 billion contract scams for purchase of 380 Peugeot cars for House of Representatives Committees and the N557 million arms scandal involving a former Inspector general of Police, Sunday Ehindero and the embezzlement of over N60 million at the National Institute of Policy and strategic Studies Kuru. The N214 million scandal involving prominent civil servants over the National Identity Card project.

The Mohammadu Buhari administration that came to power in 2015 has unraveled many corruption scandals. Prominent amongst them is the ‘Dasuki Gate Scandal’ in which money earmarked for security and defense operations was diverted to settle prominent politicians in the country. Sambo Dasuki, former National Security Adviser (NSA) under President Jonathan is accused to have allegedly stolen more than \$2.4 billion meant to purchase weapons for the military to fight Boko Haram insurgency in the north eastern part of the country. Dasuki has been accused of awarding pantheon contracts to buy 12 helicopters, 4 fighter jets, bombs and ammunition worth \$2.4 billion that were never supplied (Fadeyi, 2015). He is also alleged to have caused the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to transfer \$145.6 million to a company with accounts in the United States, Britain and in West Africa for unknown purposes and without contracts. Also, the CBN transferred funds to individuals and companies on the say-so of Dasuki without detailed tenders.

Other prominent corruption cases reported in the media include the defense sector scandal that involves former chief of Air Staff, Air Marshall Umar Dikko that has been accused of misappropriating \$15 billion meant for procurement of arms. Details of the charges against Umar include payment of N4, 402,689,569.41 for unexecuted contracts and the procurement of two used Mi-24V helicopters instead of the recommended Mi-35M series at N136, 944,000.00. Four used Alpha- jets for NAF at \$7,180,000.00 funded by the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA); and the cannibalization of engines from NAF fleet to justify procurement of jets and

excessive pricing of 36D6 Low Level Air Defence Radar at \$33 million instead of \$6 million per one (Alli, 2016).

Money earmarked for critical infrastructure in certain parts of the country has not been spared. The management of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) has revealed that money earmarked for critical infrastructural facilities in the region was misappropriated. The new management headed by Nsima Ekerehas alleged report that over N200 billion meant for projects in this region have been mismanaged by the NDDC. In reaction to this development, the new management of NDDC has cancelled over 600 projects that were awarded under his predecessor. It was discovered that some of the contracts were awarded but contractors did not report to site. Some collected advance payments for the execution of the job with zero work done (*The Nation, July 21, 2017*).

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has recovered N47.2 billion and \$487.5 million in cash and properties from Diezani Alison-Madueke, former Minister of Petroleum under President Goodluck Jonathan (Onyeji, 2017). It has been alleged by the Buhari Media Support Group (BMSG) that the stolen money is enough to complete the Lagos-Kano rail projects and the Lagos- Calabar rail lines as well as agricultural projects that could generate employment for Nigerians.

This high level of profligacy, fraud and looting of the national treasury has deleterious impact on the country's socio-economic development. It is ironical that the country is a major producer and exporter of crude oil in the world but the level of poverty of her people stands in contrast to the country's oil earnings. Statistics from the World Bank indicate that apart from India which is ranked number one in the world with 33% of the world poor, China is ranked second with 13% of the world poor followed by Nigeria with 7% of the world poor (Omoh, 2014,). Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2012) figures suggest that poverty rate is on increase in Nigeria. It rose from 54.4% in 2004 to 69 % in 2010. Recent statistics from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2016) show that poverty rate is 62.6% and about 112 million of the country's 167 million live below poverty level (Vanguard, 18 Oct. 2016). The aftermath of this as noted by Igbuzor (as cited in Ezeani, 2017, p.5) Nigeria which hitherto used to be one of

the richest countries in the World in the early 1970's has retrogressed to be one of the poorest at the threshold of the twenty first century.

Pervasive corruption in Nigeria has also exacerbated unemployment in the country. In fact, the rate of unemployment has continued to rise since the return to democratic rule in 1999.

5. Corruption and Political Instability in Nigeria

Corruption has done great damage to the country. It has eroded trust, fairness and justice in Nigeria and this has precipitated political instability. The endemic political violence, ethno religious conflicts and terrorism rife in Nigeria is largely a function of unemployment and poverty perpetrated by acts of corruption.

Arguably, it has been observed by the Nigerian Stability and Reconciliation Programme an initiative funded by the British government (cited in the Economist, Sept, 12, 2014) that though poverty and unemployment does not directly cause violence, it tends to increase an individual's vulnerability to being mobilized by rebel movements and urban gangs. Hence in Nigeria, the greatest challenge to stability and national security is the large army of poor and unemployed people (Akwaru, Enwuchola, Adekunle & Udaw 2013). It should be noted that Nigeria is a major producer and exporter of crude oil in the world. Billions of oil revenue has been realized by the state since oil exploration and prospection began in the country in the early 60's but these billions of dollars of oil revenue have not translated into an improvement in the socio-economic life of Nigerian citizens. Rather the country exemplifies the paradox of 'poverty in the midst of plenty' as the leadership is mainly pre-occupied with the desire for personal aggrandizement. The import of this is that the citizens lack basic necessities for human existence. The inability of the government to utilize public funds to provide the basic needs for the citizens has generated insecurity in the country.

There is therefore a nexus between poverty and the anger and resentment against the Nigerian state. The restiveness in the Niger Delta region of the country and the concomitant demand for resource control for instance are a response to the neglect and underdevelopment of the region caused by corrupt leadership. It has been pointed out by Donasco (2014) that the crisis in the region emanated by a number of factors which included environmental pollution and

despoliation in the region, pervasive poverty and underdevelopment in the region. In fact, several years of oil exploration and production by the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited (MPNU), Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL), Texaco Overseas Petroleum Company of Nigeria Unlimited (TOPCON) and others have led to environmental pollution and despoliation of the Niger Delta area. However, the government has reneged on its constitutional responsibility to look after the welfare of the people of the region by failing to stop the annihilation perpetrated by the Multi-National Oil Companies under the guise of doing business. This is at variance with global best practices where MNOCs are compelled to clean up the spill and compensate the communities. Also, several billions of dollars of oil revenue that the federal government has realized from oil prospecting from the Niger Delta has not impacted positively on the lives of the people. Rather as observed by Donasco (2014) the political leadership has succeeded in looting and pilfering the oil wealth generated by the region while the people and the entire citizenry live in perpetual poverty. Hence, the violent protests perpetrated by the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP); the Ijaw National Congress (INC); the Niger Delta Force (NDF); the Egbesu Boys of Africa (EBA); the Niger Delta Vigilante Force (NDVF); Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) and others are a response to corruption in high places which has given vent to neglect of environmental issues, rising unemployment, infrastructure decay, lack of basic needs which beset the people (Donasco, 2014). These have triggered violent protests by the youths who are aggrieved and radicalized by the activities of government and oil firms that have failed to provide good roads, water, light, schools and hospitals. Thus, when government fails to address the demands of the people, the only way the people can get the attention of the government is by being militant.

The pro- Biafra agitation championed by the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) led by Ralph Uwazurike and Nnamdi Kanu respectively in the South East zone of the country is deeply rooted in corruption which has given vent to marginalization. The South East like much of the country, as pointed out by Obasi (2015) suffers from deficient and dilapidated infrastructure and widespread youth unemployment since the end of Nigeria after the civil war in 1970. The grievance of the people is that 'Igbos have not been reintegrated the Nigerian State since the end of the Nigeria-Biafra Civil War' and South East is not getting a fair share of federal appointments, social infrastructure and economic development, (Adangor, 2017, p.9). But as pointed by Adangor, in

as much as the perennial neglect of the Igbos by the federal government cannot be seriously contested, this is not peculiar to the South East geo-political as other geo-political zones too cry out for marginalization in the country.

Adibe, Akinyemi and Ahmadu-Suka (2014) have pointed out that these agitations will fizzle out when the political elite in Nigeria become more patriotic and more nationalistic and begin to govern with a sense of justice, equity and fairness and use resources for the benefit of the ordinary people. They emphasize that in a situation where Nigeria is blessed with abundant human and material resources and we are all talking of bad roads, poor electricity, lack of water supply and other such public utilities, the agitations will continue.

The lingering Boko Haram insurgency which has claimed so many lives, loss of property and threatened the corporate existence of the country over the past seven years cannot be detached to poor governance exacerbated by corruption. As succinctly pointed out by Musa (2017) corruption is the bane to inequality in wealth distribution and injustice in society which the Boko Haram use as a pretext to convince individuals to subscribe to their ideology. This has been underscored by human needs and poor governance theorists, that the primary cause of the protracted conflicts in Northern Nigeria is the quest to meet their unmet needs (Alozieuwa, 2013; Adibe, 2014). Despite a per capita income of \$2,700 and an impressive GDP rate for over a decade, the north has one of the poorest populations in Nigeria and the North East where Boko Haram operates has the largest concentration of the 'wretched of the earth' (Adibe,2014:). Granted that the groups' motive and grouse is not easy to decipher, but the groups adopted name, membership and activities suggest that it is bad governance accentuated by corruption exemplified by unemployment, mass poverty and the inability of many able body youths to realize their aspirations that has pushed them to resist the unfairness of the state to them (Alozieuwa, 2012). This can be gleaned from the groups' adopted name of 'Boko Haram' which literally means western education (civilization) is sin.

Viewed against the background of corruption and poor governance, the International Crisis Group has warned that crisis may likely prevail in Nigeria and this will threaten the legitimacy of the government and the panacea is that the Federal Government should work towards improving

the issue of bad governance, corruption and lack of transparency that constitute the core grievances of militant groups in the country (Ijtemaye, 2014).

6. Conclusion

Corruption has exacerbated the crisis of development, undermined service delivery and heightened social insecurity and political instability in Nigeria. This has waned the legitimacy of the government and contributed to the rise of groups that embrace violence and reject the authority of the state (Nwekeaku, 2010). The agitations for resource control and true federalism; separatist movements spearheaded by ethnic militia such as MASSOB, IPOB, OPC, IYC and a host of others are a response to rising spate of marginalization, unemployment, starvation, frustration and the yawning gap between the rich and the poor exacerbated by corruption. The multi-ethnic nature of the society and the attendant ethnicization of politics and the ensuing rivalry among the diverse ethnic nationalities for scarce political and economic resources has accentuated corruption and ethnic conflicts which posed a threat to the unity and stability of the country (Omodion and Aliu, 2013). The prevailing practice in the country is that once an individual gets access to public office such as the presidency, he regards such an office as an opportunity for his ethnic group thereby marginalizing other groups in appointive positions such as heads of boards, parastatals and agencies. Equally in the award of contracts, preference is giving to individuals from his ethnic group. Presently, President Muhammadu Buhari, is been accused of lopsided appointments favouring the Hausa/ Fulanis from the northern part of the country against the other ethnic groups in the country. This has fuelled a feeling of marginalization amongst some ethnic groups in the country particularly the oil producing communities who have felt that they are not getting a fair share in the distribution of the 'national cake' that they have baked through the crude oil that is being extracted from their soil that has triggered agitations for resource control, true federalism and restructuring in the country.

Corruption generally is a deviation from the norm and it feeds inequality and injustice the harbingers of political instability. Defects in the governance mechanism characterized by lopsided appointments, mismanagement of public resources, poor service delivery, unemployment and poverty are precursors to instability. There is need for the federal government to work assiduously to stem corruption and channel the states' resources to create jobs, provide

infrastructural facilities as well as social security programmes for the masses. Corruption should attract severe penalty to deter culprits because of harmful impact on the nation's development. The federal government should devolve more powers and resources to the states and the local governments to take care of the social needs of their people. Also civil society groups should wake up from slumber and actively demand accountability from those in leadership positions.

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