

The Escapade of Corruption on Service Delivery in Imo State Civil Service

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Abstract: *This study investigated the relationship between corruption and service delivery in Imo State Civil Service (1999-2020). The study developed a conceptual framework to guide the enquiry. Five specific objectives of the study were conceptualized and a concomitant five research questions and hypotheses were stated. The theory that underpins this study is the Principal/Agent theory. The sample size for this study is one hundred and thirty two (400) respondents. The population of the study is 5825. The sample size was obtained using the Slovin formular of Sample determination (1960). Data for this study was obtained using the structured questionnaires as well as personal interview with respondents. The triangulation of the quantitative and qualitative analysis was carried out. The collected data was analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences version 20 (SPSS version 20). The reliability of the research instrument was determined by the benchmark of a Cronbach Alfa of 0.70 and above. The null hypotheses were tested using the statistical package for social sciences (Version 20). The analysis indicated that the dimensions of criterion-variable (corruption) positively correlated with the measures of the predictor variable (service delivery). The study therefore concluded that corruption impacted on service delivery in Imo State Civil Service. It is recommended that corruption and its dimensions should be mitigated in Imo State Civil Service in order to enhance service delivery to the residents of Imo State.*

Keywords: Corruption, Civil Service, Escapade, Service Delivery

Background to the Study

The history of Nigeria is characterized by corruption amplified by her encounter with the European imperialists. The encounter took three stages namely slave trade, the partition of Africa by the European powers who scrambled for territories therein, and the Christianization of Africa which occurred during the partition era (Uka, 1980, Ayandele, 1966). Corruption as a way of life in Nigeria is a kind of belief or practice that defies any reasonable solution, a deliberate attempt to set forth one line of argument so forcefully, as repeatedly, and so uncompromisingly that the learner is unable to consider other alternatives of better life styles. While traditional and religious values aim at producing people with dignity, identity with critical and analytical minds, corrupt officials' indoctrination tends to suppress the development of such minds. dependency theory tended to neglect factors internal to poor societies such as cultures or ethnic resistant to change, gender inequality, political corruption and the reckless misuse of available resources (Hornsby-Smith, 2006).

Citing United Nations office on drug and crime (UNODC) in its "Action against corruption and Economic Crime", Onyiloha (2015) defined corruption as a, complete, social, political and economic phenomena that affect all countries. It undermines democratic institutions, and slows economic development. It attacks the foundation of democratic institutions by distorting electoral processes, perverting the rule of law and creating bureaucratic quagmires whose only reason for existing is the soliciting of bribes. Economic development is stunted, because foreign direct investment is discouraged and small businesses with the country often find it impossible to overcome the "start-up costs" required because of corruption.

The above description highlights major aspects of corruption and their negative impacts on the society. Given the importance of the fight against the scourge of corruption on a global scale, the United Nations (UN) has declared the "9th of every December as UN International Anti-Corruption Day." All member-states including Nigeria observe the day every year. Corruption embraces a broad spectrum of activities ranging from fraud (theft through misrepresentation), embezzlement (misappropriation of corporate or public funds) to bribery (payments made in order to gain an advantage or avoid a disadvantages). Sen (1999) and Atlas (1968) described corruption from the sociological viewpoint as the violation of established rules for personal gains and profits. To

Kunhiyop (2008), corruption is making someone morally corrupt or becoming morally corrupt by indulging in bribery, extortion, fraud, nepotism, outright theft, match-fixing, examination fraud, kickbacks, illegal awarding of contracts and the like. In the political spectrum, corruption occurs in rigging of election, the purchase and sale of votes and the falsification of elections' results.

Furthermore, from a legal standpoint, Nigeria's Anti-corruption Law of 2010 (12), defines corruption as "gratification by an official":
(1) any person who corruptly:

- a) asks for, receives or obtains any property or benefit of any kind for himself or for any other person.
- b) agrees attempts to receive or obtain any property or benefit of any kind or for himself or for any other person, on account of
 - i) anything already done or omitted to be done, or for any favour or disfavour or disfavour already shown to any person by himself in the discharge of his official duties or in relation to any matter connected with the functions, affairs or business of a government development, or corporate body or other organization or institution in which he is serving as an official;
 - ii) anything to be afterwards done or omitted to be done or favour or disfavour to be afterwards shown to any person, by himself in the discharge of his official duties or in relation to any such matter as aforesaid, is guilty of an offence of official corruption...”The global position on corruption has elicited responses from concerned organizations or agencies both in its study, analysis, and evaluation and one of such bodies is the Transparency International, a non-governmental organization (NGO). For such body, corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain.

Nigeria is presently suffering from systemic corruption which manifests itself in a near-decay of social infrastructure as well as a meteoric rise in a number of corrupt persons in the cross all fields of human endeavour. The history of Nigeria is characterized by corruption amplified by her encounter with the European imperialists. The encounter took three stages namely slave trade, the partition of Africa by the European powers who scrambled for territories therein, and the Christianization of Africa which occurred during the partition era (Uka, 1980, Ayandele, 1966).

Igwe (2010), corruption occurs in any organized, interdependent system in which parts of the system are either not performing their duties as ethically expected or are performing them improperly to the detriment of the system’s original scope. According to Kunhiyop (2008), corruption is a feature of African social, political and even religious life, with disastrous consequences. It not only impedes economic development, but also increase poverty by making a few individuals richer and many poorer. Corruption is making someone morally bankrupt, spiritually barren, and academic without character. corruption involves bribery, extortion, fraud, nepotism, kickbacks, outright theft, match-fixing, disobedient to court order, examination malpractice, illegal awarding of contracts and mal-administration. Bribery, for instance, is giving money or favour to someone who is in a position of trust, in order to pervert their judgment or corrupt their conduct. It is intended to make a person act illegally, unjustly or immorally. The responsibility for bribery rests with both the giver and the recipient. Extortion comes from a word that means ‘to squeeze; and refers to “the act of obtaining something, such as money from an entity (whether a person, group, corporate or institution) through threats, violence or the misuse of authority (Grenz and Smith, 2003).

Fraud includes financial crimes such as forging cheques and inflating costs. It occurs also when “funds raised for such activities as famine, relief, bursary funds for poor children’s school fees, and funds to assist the disabled within society are not put to the intended use. Nepotism occurs when someone appoints relatives and friends to positions of authority or awards them contracts. It often leads to the dominance of one ethnic group over another, which has negative implications for nation building (Kunhiyop, 2008). In the political sphere, it manifests itself in election rigging, the purchase and sale of votes and the falsification of election results. The idea of appointing a retired military officer to head custom or immigration is a corruption in disguise. Likewise the defence ministry or police affairs or even ministries or parastatals. The government at any level should always appoint appropriate persons to appropriate offices to enhance service delivery. Federal government, state governments, local government councils, political parties and civil service should stop re-cycling particular individuals for appointments as if the remaining citizens have nothing to offer towards the development of the councils, states and Nigeria at large. Parties submitting ex-convicts names to contest for elections is another way of institutionalizing corruption in the country.

Moreover, the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery is largely (Whether the private or the public sector) dependent on the caliber of corruptless and selfless workforce. The perennial problem of the state bureaucracy (in Imo State) is the issue of prevailing incidence of corruption. This persistent cancerous phenomenon is manifested from mere misappropriation, bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, money laundering and massive looting of government treasury.

This persuasive romance with corrupt practices “constitutes the greatest impediment to efficient service delivery; in a state that needs all the available fund for infrastructural development and better service delivery to the helpless citizens. The level of stupendous wastages of limited and scarce resources has requested by inferred opinions that prodigality are peculiar to Imo State, and few others in the same zone. However, the severity and its devastating impact vary from Imo to the others. As stated in the views of Danjuma, in Adeyemi (2012),

Corruption has denied the Ordinary Citizens the basic means of livelihood, worsen unemployment and erode our image as a society within the local entity and as individual

It is important to note what corruption means in the Public Sector:

Transparency International defines corruption as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. This can happen anywhere and can be classified as grand or petty, depending on the amounts of money lost and the sector where it occurs.

Corruption has presented a conflict of interest where an employee or the entity in Imo State for which they work, whether a government civil service or any other public agencies are confronted with choosing between the duties and demands of their position and their own private interests.

All sorts of processes in the public sector are vulnerable to these kinds of corruption. It pervaded every segment of the national, tier of government or arm of government. However, there have been efforts by successive governments aimed at curbing the menace of corruption in Nigeria specially in Imo State but socio-economic and service delivery have deteriorated; hence the basis of the research work.

One of the greatest problems of Nigerian public service is the prevailing incidence of corruption. Corruption therefore has become a persistent cancerous phenomenon which bedevils Nigeria public sector. Misappropriation, bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, and money laundering by public officials have permeated the fabric of the society. Any attempt to understand the tragedy of development and the challenges to democracy in most developing countries (Nigeria inclusive), must come to grips with the problem of corruption and stupendous wastage of scarce resources. This is not to suggest that corruption and prodigality are peculiar to the developing countries. Certainly, corruption is neither culture specific nor system bound. It is ubiquitous.

However, the severity and its devastating impact vary from one system to the other. The impact is undoubtedly more severe and devastating in the developing world with weak economic base, fragile political institutions and inadequate control mechanisms. According to the Executive Director, Office of Drugs and Crime at the United Nations, Dr. Antonio Maria Costa, about US\$400 billion was stolen from Nigeria and stashed away in foreign banks by past corrupt leaders before the return to democratic rule in 1999 (<http://allafrica.com>). Most people would argue that poverty definitely contributes to corruption. In many poor countries, the wages of public and private sector workers is not sufficient for them to survive (Otiye, 2008).

It is ironic that Nigeria is the sixth largest exporter of oil and at the same time hosts the third largest number of poor people after China and India. Statistics show that the incidence of poverty, using the rate of US \$1 per day, increased from 28.1% in 1980 to 46.3% in 1985 and declined to 42.7% in 1992 but increased again to 65.6% in 1996 (Obasanjo, 1995). The incidence increased to 69.2% in 1999 (CBN, 1999:95). If the rate of US \$2 per day is used to measure the poverty level, the percentage of those living below poverty line will jump to 90.8%.

It is against this background that sectoral distribution of the nationwide corruption survey in the Nigeria Corruption Index (NCI) 2007 identified the Nigerian Police as the most corrupt organization in the country, closely followed by the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN). Corruption in the Education Ministry was found to have increased from 63 per cent in 2005 to 74 per cent in 2007, as against 96 per cent to 99 per cent for the Police in the corresponding period. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), was the only new organization identified as corrupt among the 16 organizations on a list which included Joint Admission and Matriculation Board, the Presidency, and the Nigerian National Petroleum Commission (NNPC). While the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) and the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) have been identified as the least corrupt organizations with respect to bribe taking from the populace as at June 2007 (Abimbola, 2007).

Corruption has therefore reached an unprecedented level in Nigeria. It has pervaded every facet of the nation and has even metamorphosed into a way of life for most Nigerians. The Nigerian civil service has the potential to transform the collective challenge of Nigeria as a nation if its immense energies are properly harnessed; but the situation seems different after its radical reform between 1960 and 1976; during which period, the civil servants were in control of government political process due to the emergence of military rulers in political administration prevailing in the African continent then, coupled with their lack of experience of political leadership in governance. Some scholars blame the institutionalization of corruption in Nigeria on military rule. Amongst these scholars is Ribadu (2006:1) who asserted that: The history of corruption in Nigeria is strongly rooted in the over 29 years of military rule, out of 46 years of her statehood successive military regimes facilitated the wanton looting of the public treasury, decapitated institutions and free speech and instituted a secret and opaque culture in the running of government business. The result was total insecurity, poor economic management, abuse of human rights, ethnic conflicts and capital flight.

Against the above views of Ribadu however, are also other contending postulations that did not restrict the issues of corruption in Nigeria to preponderance of military rule in Nigeria alone. In this regard, Yinusa and Akanle (2008:297) have asserted that: Corruption has become a way of life in Nigeria, which no one can ignore. Corruption and cronyism have long haunted Nigeria while military has been castigated for generally misruling the country. It must be noted that the military did not emerge from another

planet. They are made up of people who come from the various parts of the country and therefore are a reflection of the society. The first, second and third Republics failed essentially due to corruption from our political gladiators.

From the above views; it is evident that corruption has permeated every facet of our national life; and has remained unabated under both the military and civilian administrations in the country. However, there have been efforts aimed at curbing the menace of corruption in Nigeria. This anti-corruption war in Nigeria dates to a very long time. The fight against corruption in Nigeria one must acknowledge, is one of the most daunting and challenging task to embark on, but with political will and commitment by her leaders and the right attitude by all Nigerians there is no doubt that someday, the Transparency International will in her report rank Nigeria as one of the least corrupt countries in the world (Ameh, 2007). Every community in Nigeria has mechanisms for dealing with corruption with appropriate sanctions for corruption. The anti corruption fight in the public sector came to the limelight in 1966 when the military identified corruption of the politicians as one of the reasons for taking over political power. Each of the past regimes contributed to the problem of corruption.

According to Nwaka (2003), corruption became legitimized, especially during the Babangida and Abacha regimes (1985-1998), with huge revenues, but wasteful spending, and nothing to show in terms of physical developments. Experience has shown that the military is probably more corrupt than civilian politicians. The military ruled Nigeria from 1966-1979 and handed over power to Alhaji Shehu Shagari administration in 1979. But barely four years later, was the Shagari administration overthrown by the Buhari/Idiagbon regime. The Buhari/Idiagbon regime launched a war against corruption, tried and jailed many politicians and dismissed many civil servants. But when the Ibrahim Babangida regime overthrew the Buhari regime, it released many of the politicians that were jailed by the Buhari regime and reduced the sentences of others.

In fact, it has been argued that “Babangida’s government was unique in its unconcern about corruption within its ranks and among public servants generally; it was as if the government existed so that corruption might thrive (Gboyega, 1996). Scholars no doubt agree that corruption reached unprecedented levels in incidence and magnitude during General Ibrahim Babangida’s regime. It is ironic that the regime also had its own re-orientation and anticorruption programme, christened MAMSER. By the time President Olusegun Obasanjo came back to power as a civilian President in 1999, corruption had reached unprecedented proportion that it formed a major portion of his inaugural speech.

Ideally, in a democratic setting like Nigeria, the public service consists of the civil service, parastatals and agencies with structure that is systematically patterned to serve as a lasting instrument through which the government drives, regulates and manages all aspects of the society. However, the Nigerian public service has performed below the expectations of the public as a result of corruption in the service. Thus, corruption has become a cog in the wheel of efficient and effective service delivery. Corruption has eaten so deep into Nigeria that corrupt practices are even encouraged in most businesses (private or public) nowadays. Nigeria is the major oil producer in the world, but the average Nigerian on the street is poor and there is poor infrastructure like power supply, roads, schools, hospitals etc. The Nigerian public service is filled with stories of wrong practices such as stories of ghost workers on the pay roll of Ministries, Extra-ministerial Departments and Parastatals, frauds, embezzlements and setting ablaze of offices housing sensitive documents and award of contracts without recourse to due process mechanisms (Okwoli, 2004). According to Bello (2001), huge amount of Naira is lost through one financial malpractice or the other in the country, which to say the least, drains the nation’s meager resources through fraudulent means with far-reaching and attendant consequences on the development or even socio-economic or political programmes of Nigeria.

Billions of Naira is lost in the public sector every year through fraudulent means. This represents only the amount that is ferreted out and made public. Indeed much more substantial or huge sums are lost in undetected frauds or those that are for one reason or the other hushed up. Appah and Appiah (2010) argues that cases of fraud is prevalent in the Nigerian public sector that every segment of the public service, could seem to be involved in one way or the other in some of these nasty acts.

A cursory look at the Nigeria public service further indicates poor public service delivery which manifests in corrupt practices such as distortion of official records, forgery of official documents like collection of taxes with fake receipts in which such revenue is not paid into the public treasury but pocketed by the individual official, falsification of their official age, the insistence by public servants for monetary and material gratification from their client before carrying out their official responsibilities for which they are being paid still persist in the Service. Furthermore, civil service recruitments and promotions do not often go to the best qualified persons but to “political clients”, who keep their jobs not by being efficient but by “maintaining their loyalty.

In the light of the foregoing, the study examines the incidence of corruption in the Nigerian public service focusing essentially on Imo State civil service from 1999 to 2020.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives will guide this study

- 1, To identify the factors responsible for widespread of bribery and corruption in Imo State Civil Service.
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2. To examine the extent to which corrupt practices have hindered transparency and accountability in Imo State Civil Service.
3. To determine the extent to which corruption has hindered the provision of social Services in the Imo State Civil Service.
4. To investigate the basic relationship between embezzlement and Service delivery in Imo State Civil Service.
5. To ascertain the extent to which corruption hinders peaceful co-existence in Imo state Civil State Service.

Corruption and Service Delivery

Corruption is no doubt a global phenomenon that has paraded the spectrum of nations, continents and the world as a whole. It threatened the developmental road map to the progress of nations and continents of the world. Nigeria therefore is not an exception from the ravaging realities of this scourge. Adanie (2007) posited that corruption exist in one form or the other in all society. The differential in this case of corruption in Nigeria is the extent of its pervasiveness and its implication for good governance, its value system and political culture in particular.

Corruption in service delivery is the form of corruption most frequently encountered by citizens and can plague all kinds of interactions with the state (Transparency International 2013). Global corruption Barometer, 27 percentages of respondents worldwide claimed that they have encountered corruption while dealing with a public service provider.

This basically affects, marginalized the vulnerable groups as well as, more powerful groups of the society are less reliant on state assistance. Corruption affects the “re-distribution” nature of public services, hampers policy decisions such that it is no longer focused on public interest and refocuses on available public resources into the hands of corrupts group inside, outside and straddling the state apparatus. Corruption can drastically chop off public confidence and service delivery in nations and states of the world (OECD, 2017).

Public service delivery basically refers to services provided by governments (local, state or national) to their citizens. Hence, it encapsulates the provision of a wide range of services such as health care, education, water and sanitation etc. Service in this context entails tangible and intangible goods and services provided by the government in order to improve the well-being of the citizenry Carlson et al (2005). Conceptualized service delivery as the relationship between policy makers, service providers and poor people encompasses services and their supporting systems that are typically regarded as a state responsibility. These entail social services (Primary education and basic health services, infrastructure, water, sanitation, roads and bridges) and services that provide personal security (Justice, Police, etc.). In Nigeria, local, state and federal constitute the major service purports all organizations that exist as part of government machinery for implementer’s policy decisions and delivery services that are of value to the citizens.

The Nigeria public service includes the civil service, which is often referred to as a core service, consisting of ministries and parastatal, judiciary and the Armed forces, the police and other security agencies, etc. Corruption or corrupt practices pertains to fraudulent activities especially siphoning of funds that are meant for the general populace for one’s aggrandizement only (Adisa, 2003). Osoba (1996) defined corruption as an anti-social behaviour conferring improper benefits contrary to legal and moral norms and which undermines the authority’s ability to improve the living condition of the people. Corruption is the misuse of entrusted power for private gain (AusAid, 2003).

Service Delivery

Service connotes tangible and intangible goods and services provided by the government in order to improve the well-being of the citizenry. The high rate of corruption in the public service has great implication for effective service delivery. This is because that public service is the major implementer of government policies and programmes geared towards providing essential services that impact on the well-being of the entire citizenry. Principal agent relationship which is supposed to bring about improvement in the well-being of the citizens, has rather brought about degeneration in the quality of life of the citizenry.

Imo State came into existence in 1976 along with other new states under the leadership of late military ruler of Nigeria, Murtala Muhammed, having been previously part of East-Central State. The State is named after the Imo River. Part of it was split off in 1991 as Abia State and another part become Ebonyi State. The main city in Imo State is (Owerri which is its capital). It has twenty seven (27) local government areas. The local language is Igbo and Christianity is the predominant religion. The decision to create Imo State was at Ngwoma with late Raymond Amanze Njoku as the Champion.

Imo State lies within latitude 4^o45N and 7^o15N and longitude 6^o50E and 7^o25E with area of around 5,100SqKm. It is bordered by Abia State on the East, by the River Niger and Delta state on the West, by Anambra state to the North and Rivers state to the South. The State is rich in natural resources, including crude oil, natural gas, lead, zinc. Economically exploitable flora like the iroko, mahogany, Obeche, bamboo, rubber tree and oil palm predominate.

However, with a high population density and over farming the soil has been degraded and much of the natural vegetation has disappeared. The deforestation has triggered soil erosion which is compounded by heavy seasonal rainfall that led to the destruction

of houses and roads. The state has a three tier administrative structure: state, local and autonomous community levels. The three arms at state level are: the executive, the legislature and judiciary. The executive arm is headed by an elected Governor which is assisted by a Deputy Governor, Commissioners and executive advisers.

The legislative arm is headed by the Speaker of the State House of Assembly, other members are elected legislators. The "House" is the law making body of the state. The judiciary is made up of the high court justices and customary and appeal courts, headed by the Chief Judge of the State. The Public Service in Imo State is responsible for helping to formulate and implement government policies and to assign responsibilities for specific activities or group of activities. The Civil Service is divided into Ministries and Extra-Ministerial Departments presenting twenty six (26) in number.

Civil Service in Imo State is a body or organ which enjoys continuity of existence of its members unlike members of Parliament or a House of Assembly, are not limited to a short term of office at the end which they may not be returned to office. Elected members come and go but Civil Servants relinquish his office for whatever reason, his place is taken by another person who similarly enjoys security of employment.

Corruption is a complex and nefarious problem and its consequences almost as intractable as corruption parse. Corruption is indeed a global phenomenon that has threatened and still continues to threaten the development efforts in many nations, Nigeria inclusive. It has been a bedeviling monument to eradicate corruption and its negative impact on, good governance and effective service delivery, According to Adamu (2007), corruption exists in one form or the other in virtually all societies.

The term corruption can be seen from varied perspectives Adisa (2003) asserted that corruption or corrupt practices has to do with fraudulent activities especially siphoning of funds that are meant for the general populace for one's aggrandizement only. Osoba (1996) posited that corruption is an anti-social behaviour conferring improper benefits contrary to legal or formal norms and which undermines the authority's ability to improve the living condition of the people. According to AUSAID (2000), corruption is the misuse of entrusted power for private gain. The principal Agent theory thus will aid in espousing how the perpetration of this selfish interest of the (Agent, Government, bureaucracy) in providing the necessary services to the consumers (i.e principals/ Public), in an effective and efficient manger, in the right quantity and quality, in the right place, and at when necessary.

According to International Review of Law Computer and Technology (2004) public service is described as the direct and indirect services provided by a government to its nationals or residents within a country. Government provides public service directly by engaging in production, distribution or service and indirectly by financing services rendered to the citizenry by third parties. Governments control the resources of the people and are duty-bound to render services that benefit the people albeit in varying degrees. The extent of involvement of government in service delivery to the masses often corresponds to the economic system in use. While the private sector dominates service delivery in a capitalist economic system, the government is the dominant figure in a socialist economy. For a mixed economy like Nigeria, both the private sector and government provide services substantially to the general public. In Nigeria, government constitutes the major service provider through the public service. The public service refers to all organisations that exist as part of government machinery for delivering services that are of value to the citizens.

According to Oronsaye (2010), Cetoma (2009), Anthonella, Benard and Pace (2017), public service delivery can be seen as 'the process of meeting the needs of citizens through prompt and efficient procedures'. This implies that the interaction between government and citizens should happen in a way such that the needs of the citizens are met in a timely manner, thereby making the citizens key in public service delivery. The implication here is that as the private sector considers its customer as 'king', thereby ensuring quality service delivery, the public should be regarded as 'master' and the beneficiary of enhanced performance of the public service (Aladegbola & Jaiyeola (2016), Acceptable service delivery can be seen as one of the core responsibilities for the establishment of public organisations. It is identified as 'one of the key functions of the public sector' (Mitel, 2007). Okafor, Fatile and Ejalonibu (2014), see public service delivery as 'the result of the intentions, decision of government and government institutions, and the actions undertaken and decision made by people employed in government institutions'. They posit that it is 'the provision of public goods or social (education, health), economic (grants) or infrastructural (water, electricity) services to those who need (or demand) them'.

Kayoed et al (2013), posits Service delivery to imply tangible and intangible goods and services provided by the government in order to improve the well being of the citizenry, Carlson et al (2005) in Kayode et al (2013) also conceptualized Service Delivery as the relationship between policy makers, service providers and poor people. According to them, it encompasses service and their supporting systems that are typically regarded as a state responsibility. These include social services (primary education and basic health services), infrastructure (water, sanitation, roads and bridges).

Bello-Imam & Roberts (2001) quoted in Agba et al (2013), agree with this understanding of Service Delivery when they noted that service delivery is the provision of services intended to alleviate human suffering and by extension, enhance the quality of life of the citizens.

The existence of any organization is anchored on productivity and its importance cannot be over-emphasized. It is the wish of every organization to be productive because productivity (employee service delivery) forms the cardinal essence for which every organization exists. To attain or increase employees performance has led many organizations into constant reshuffling practice. This is in line with Simon (1957) when he rightly noted that ‘the issue of employees’ performance has been instrumental to most repositioning exercise that go on from time to time in many organizations’. In fact, employees’ service delivery has often become the most central and contentious and analytical issues in all organizations be it public or private.

According to Robert and Tybout (1997), employees service delivery can be seen as the measure of the relationship between the quantity and quality of goods and services produced and the quantity and quality of resources needed to produce them (that is, factors input as labour, capital and technology).

According to Mali (1978), in attempting to come to terms with issues of workers service delivery, brought in the idea of produce. In this regard, he sees workers performance as “the measure of how well resources are brought together in the organizations resources are brought together in the organizations and utilized the highest level of performance with the least expenditure or resources. Regarding the above definition, employees’ service delivery entails an effective integration of resources, physical and human to yield output.

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Acceptable service delivery can be seen as one of the core responsibilities for the establishment of public organisations. It is identified as “one of the key functions of the public sector.” (Mitel, 2007). Okafor, Fatile & Ejalonibu (2014) see public service delivery as “the result of the intentions, decision of government and government institutions, and the actions undertaken and decision made by people employed in government institutions.” They posit that it is “the provision of public goods or social (education, health), economic (grants) or infrastructural (water, electricity) services to those who need (or demand) them”. Supporting the arguments above, Ohemeng (2010) views public service delivery from the light of its key features as “doing more with less, empowering citizens, enhancing transparency and holding public servants accountable.” Corroborating this further, Coopers (2014) itemizes seven core objectives for public service delivery namely:

- **Speed:** The time taken to deliver a service should be the shortest possible for both the customer and the organization delivering the service, right first time.
- **Engagement:** The manner in which services are delivered should be seen as customer centric (i.e. participatory and trustworthy with the customer’s needs at the core).
- **Responsiveness:** There should be an „intelligent“ mechanism in place to address any variation in meeting service levels and to drive changes in the service delivery organization.
- **Value:** The customer needs to believe that the service delivery mechanism is cost effective, and value is driven by customer outcomes, not organizational processes.
- **Integration:** The service delivery mechanism should be integrated. There should be no „wrong door“ policy for the customer.
- **Choice:** There should be multiple channels for service delivery, so that customers can have „channels of choice“, depending on specific needs at specific times.
- **Experience:** Personalization of service is necessary to ensure that customers’ experiences are on a par with what they are used to receiving from the private sector. Arising from the above, it can be concluded that there is a relationship between e-administration adoption and enhanced public service delivery in a country. Joseph (1999) identifies six quality service delivery factors – convenience/accuracy; feedback/complaint; management; efficiency; queue management; accessibility; and customization. Equally important is security and privacy, and website design and ease of use.

Service delivery according to (Olaopa, 2014), governments are distinguished by four complementary functions-policy formulation, management, regulation and service delivery functions. The fourth one is usually taken to be fundamental to the emergence of the

state in the first place. There is therefore no doubt that out of the four functions of government, service delivery holds a critical significance within the context of the expectation of good things by Nigerians. Thus, the essence of public delivery is basically to bring the government in touch with the people and conversely, to unfold the loyalty of the people in the service of the state, service delivery is a major factor in the maintenance of the legitimacy of a state. In other words, the quality and availability of essential services is a key factor in the determination of the degree of support that a state enjoys from its citizens. Where this is adequate, the state is strong. Where, on the other hand, it is grossly inadequate, the state becomes fragile and prone to failure. Unfortunately, this is the situation in many African societies, Nigeria inclusive.

The Nature of Corruption and Relationship with Imo State Civil Service

Corruption and Service Delivery has provided a negative consequences and it is a “sewage” to economic prosperity. The nature of corruption in Imo State Public Sector is argued that the society adores wealth without asking questions on how it was acquired. This attitude justifies the Machiavellian Principle that the end justifies the means. The people attitude has shown that this “Sudden Wealth” is being celebrated by “the right thinking members” of the society.

The matter is welcomed and accepted as a way of life because, people are aware that no punishment will be melted out to them but rather they use their ill-gotten wealth to control the “courts” and by extension intimate the society. The legitimatization of corruption in Imo Public Sector, according to Chukwunzie is the inner derive to fulfill cultural demands liking owing a personal house, to celebrate expensive “title taking”, performing expensive funeral rites for deceased parents and catering for a large extended family.

Corruption as (The Fear) as a Result of Government Inability to Honour Obligation

The poverty factor is a major cause of corruption that leads to poor service delivery in Imo State. A situation, where no nobody is sure that he can provide for himself the basic necessities of life, any opportunity available is considered as an “open door” for survival and looting for the rainy day. Government is no longer responsible, does no longer supply the basic necessities of life, such as hygienic water, electricity and functional infrastructure. The worse problem is the irregular payment of salaries and none payment of Retirement benefits to public servants after their meritorious service. All these limitations of government, are responsible for mass corruption. The people have resorted to self-help by getting involved in sharp practices for survival.

Effective Service Delivery

Effective service delivery involves a clear understanding of the specific services an organization provides, and its target customers. Understanding the service characteristics enhances how their customers see the services an organization provides. According to Nash and Nash (2004), effective service delivery is the provision of services to a buyer in such a way the buyer's expectations can be met or exceeded while, at the same time, the business remains viable. Effective service delivery is rendering services that correspond to the customers' desires, needs and expectations. This concept emanates from the perceived need to treat members of the public that require government services like a private-sector entrepreneur would treat his/her customers. This is against the backdrop that a major obstacle to efficient and effective delivery of government services is the attitude of public servants to members of the public who are their customers (Fagbemi, 2006). A customer is the direct recipient of a service through dealings with the service provider. Customers can be internal or external.

Consequences of Corruption in Nigeria

A negative correlation between levels of corruption and economic growth is thereby making it difficult for Nigeria to develop fast. Corruption in Nigeria has stifled industrialization and infrastructural provision. No meaningful development can be achieved without short, medium and long-term industrialization strategies. The poor state of electricity, transport and communications is a major handicap for doing business in Nigeria. This situation is reflected in deficiency of sufficient power supply, good road net-work, poor school environment, lack of learning facilities, improperly equipped health centers, among others.

Ilechukwu (2014) stressed that corruption poses a serious development challenge. In the political realm, it undermines democracy and good governance by flouting or even subverting formal process. Corruption in election and in legislative bodies reduces accountability and distorts representations in policy making. Similarly, Findings cited in Ilechukwu (2014) averred that corruption in Nigeria has largely retarded social development, undermined economic growth, discouraged foreign investment and reduced resources available for infrastructural development, public service and poverty reduction programmes. Further on the effects of corruption in Nigeria, Ilechukwu (2014) maintained that: Corruption in the judiciary compromises the rule of law; and corruption in the public administration result in the unfair and inefficient provision of services. More generally, corruption erodes the institutional capacity of government as procedures are disregarded, resources are siphoned off, and public offices are bought and sold. Thus corruption undermines the legitimacy of government democratic values of trust and tolerance.

Corruption exacerbates poverty and disproportionately affects those of lower income, because it pulls resources from the national treasures, placing the money into the bank accounts of few individuals who are politically powerful. The scourge of corruption leaves the poor perpetually and disproportionately under privileged, even as it renders the development of democracy and the buildings of a society more problematic. By diverting assets away from their intended use, corruption can be said to be the single most important factor responsible for the failure of governance and lack of sustainable socioeconomic development in Nigeria.

There are many unresolved problems in Nigeria, but the issue of the upsurge of corruption is particularly troubling. The damages it has done to the polity are astronomical. The menace of corruption leads to slow movement of files in offices, police extortion on

highways and slow traffics on the highways, port congestion, queues at passport offices and gas stations, ghost workers syndrome, election irregularities, among others high-lighted four serious implications of corruption as follows:

One, corruption affects adversely the quality of governance and social structure in Nigeria. Two, corruption has eroded government's ability to provide the needed social amenities like water, sanitation, healthcare, education et cetera. Three, it retards economic development and precipitates deterioration of public infrastructure and amenities (roads, refineries, dams, plants, telecommunication networks). Four, at the political level, untamed corruption in the polity entrenches bad governance in Nigeria despite the various legislations promulgated to check this despicable phenomenon. Corruption has therefore affected the socio economic, political and other related institutions in Nigeria in adverse proportion. It therefore becomes imperative that something must be done to stop it.

Summary of Findings

The Summary of Findings are -

That bribery is one of the endemic factors responsible for widespread corruption of in Imo State Civil Service.

Transparency and accountability in Imo State Civil Service has been hindered by corrupt practices.

It was highly observed that corruption has hindered the provision of social services in the system and governance.

Researchers found out that there is a basic relationship between embezzlement and Service delivery in Imo State Civil Service.

Findings reveal that corruption hinders peaceful co-existence in Imo state Civil State Service.

Conclusion

The study examined the corruption and service delivery: a study of Imo State Civil Service (1999-2020). It concentrated more on the factors that are responsible for the widespread cases of corruption and how it has affected service delivery in the Imo State Civil Service; the effect of corrupt practices on: accountability and transparency in local government areas in Imo State, as well as how corruption has negatively affected the provision of social services to the people at the grass root in Imo State. It is obvious from findings of the study that the consequences of corruption on accountability, transparency, and provision of social services to the people at grass-root are not favourable. Therefore, corruption has retarded development at the grass-root in Imo State, as a result of poor service delivery by Imo state government system.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made in this study:

- The relationship between bribery, embezzlement and reliability suggest that managers/employees in Imo State Civil Service are advised against the corrupt practice of bribery which is capable of affecting the reliability of employees. It is therefore recommended that bribery should be eschewed in order to guarantee their reliability.
- Bribery should be expunged in the operations of employees in Imo State Civil Service. This will aid the government of the day to have the relevant fund that will enable it attain define goals.
- Embezzlement should be eschewed so as to enhance the operations and capacity development of employees in Imo State Civil Service.
- Extortion should be eschewed in order to ensure the enhancement of the development of human capital in Imo State Civil Service.
- Extortion should be avoided by employees of Imo State Civil Service in order to ensure the advancement of technological development as applied to their employees.

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