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CORRUPTION AND THE CHALLENGES OF INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: NIGERIA IN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The challenges of infrastructural development in developing countries, particularly Nigeria are daunting. The deficits cover many critical areas of both social and infrastructures such as housing, roads, communication, power and energy health care among others. The result of this is the low quality of life and living coupled with huge deficit in infrastructures especially in Nigeria, which has been ascribed to corruption. This paper critically reviewed the effects of corruption on infrastructural development in Nigeria. It assessed the situation viz-a-viz analyses of research about infrastructural development in Nigeria and bottlenecks to achieving a good environment for improved quality of life. The paper adopted the library research methodology by content analysis of extant literature. Analysis was done through the use of descriptive method. The key research outcomes revealed that Nigeria has one of the lowest levels of access to improved basic infrastructure anywhere in the world, ranking 162 out of 186 countries. In Africa, Nigeria ranks 32 out of the 54 countries, and among its global middle-income peers. The review further showed that the public infrastructural spending-GDP ratio in Nigeria is low; it oscillated between 1.20% in 2012 to 1.02% in 2017. This public infrastructure-GDP ratio is quite low and very inadequate especially when compared to those of emerging economies like South Africa (20.4%), India (32%) and China (44.4%). Recommendations include: Professional regulatory bodies should properly play their roles in infrastructural projects service delivery; Government and the citizenry should pursue governance; Government should accelerate infrastructural development; Ethical re-orientation and education of the citizenry should be pursued; The Anti-Corruption agencies should be strengthened; The Bureau of Public Procurement should be domesticated in all government ministries, parastatals and agencies. The paper concludes that corruption has not only raised the cost of infrastructure but has also reduced the volume, quality of, durability, and the economic returns from infrastructural development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Corruption, Infrastructural development, Infrastructural spending, Developing country.

INTRODUCTION

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development dedicates several goals to infrastructural development, thereby recognising its encompassing nature and its fundamental importance for improvement in human welfare and living conditions. Specifically, amongst the Sustainability Development Goals, Goal 6 addresses the need for clean water and sanitation for all; Goal 7

tackles the need for universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services; and Goal 9 focuses on building resilient infrastructure, promoting sustainable industrialisation and fostering innovation (Bello-Schünemann & Porter 2019). Thus, an important consideration for sustainable development is the need for countries to accelerate their infrastructural development needs. Infrastructure is the fundamental physical and organisational composition required for the operation of the society like roads, bridges, industries, buildings, health services and so on (Oyedele,2012).

Infrastructure according to Ubi, Eke and Oduneka, (2011) can be classified into two major categories, namely: social or soft-core infrastructure and physical or hard-core infrastructure. On one hand Soft-core infrastructure relates to the provision of healthcare and education, transparency/accountability and property right and is regularly seen as the dynamic force for economic activity. While on the other hand, hard-core infrastructure pertains to physical structures and comprises housing, telecommunication, power, transportation, water supply and sewage (Jhingan, 2003). The importance of infrastructure in the promotion of sustainable development growth and international competitiveness of a nation cannot be over-emphasized. According to the World Bank (1994), there is a critical role of infrastructure in the development process, economic growth and sustainable development and this has been supported by a number of studies (Narayan & Dwetesh, 2002; Jerome, 2006; Kenny 2007; Sorunke, 2013; Dimuna, Olomu & Ahianba, 2016).

Regardless of the beneficial function credited to infrastructural development as a fundamental precursor for both physical and sustainable development, developing countries, particularly Nigeria faces huge infrastructural deficit. The Report of World Economic Forum, (WEF, 2018) suggested that Nigeria had one of the lowest levels of access to improved basic infrastructure anywhere in the world, ranking 162 out of 186 countries. In Africa, Nigeria ranks 32 out of 54 countries, and among its global lower middle-income peers only Sudan and Papua New Guinea perform worse (WEF, 2018). On the present development path, by 2040 Nigeria is expected to still rank only second- to-last in this group. Presently, the furthest drawback on Nigeria's economic development is the country's substantial shortfall in critical physical infrastructure that, in addition, relentlessly compromises human development. The World Economic Forum (2018) report for 2016-17 Global Competitiveness Index placed Nigeria's infrastructure at 132 out of 138 countries; this was ascribed partly to corruption and ease of doing business. Corruption according to The World Bank Fiscal Year Report (2007, p2), is *"a cancer that steals from the poor, eats away at governance and moral fibre and destroys trust"*.

Similarly, The United Nations Office on Drug and Crime and Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics in a joint report (2017, p1) stated that:

"Corruption is the bane of any progressive society. It stifles entrepreneurship, professionalism and erodes values of hard work and honesty, and is one of the root causes of underdevelopment in our society".

The Report further acknowledged that corruption is among the major global issues in the world. It is in recognition of its harmful effects that the eradication of corruption was included as a target in 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This assertion is a truism because corruption is a prevalent and pervasive social problem in Africa and many developing countries. Virtually, every African recognizes its harmful effects on the corporate well-being of the society. Past undemocratic changes of governments in developing countries, inclusive of Nigeria have been attributed to corruption; in association with bad governance (Jonathan, 2005).

The nexus linking corruption and infrastructural development in Nigeria is one that has been identified by a good number of scholars. There is the view that corruption has become a part of the entire infrastructure development value chain. Ogbuagu, Ubi and Effiom (2014) noted that it was not the scarcity of funds that resulted in infrastructural deterioration in Nigeria but corruption; while Kenny (2007) and Oyedele (2012) both argued that corruption had not only raised the cost of infrastructure but has also reduced the quality of, and economic returns from infrastructural investment in Nigeria. In the same vein, Sorunke (2013) asserted that to get infrastructural project contract in Nigeria, the contractor or senior member of the bidding firm must be a card carrying member of the ruling political party or major financier of the party programmes. This is so because according to Simeon (2010) political consideration is the most predominant determinant rather than competence in the contractor's selection process in many African countries. Agwu (2006) corroborated this and avowed that competence based competition and merit were surplus to requirements as the basic condition for the award of public contracts in Nigeria.

In a bid to intensify eradication of corruption, the Federal Government of Nigeria enacted laws and established many institutions. These are: the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) through the ICPC Act 2000, and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) vide the EFCC Act 2004. It also created the Bureau of Public Procurement established through the Public Procurement Act, 2007, and the Fiscal Responsibility Act 2007. Others are the Nigeria Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (NEITI) created by the NEITI Act 2007 and the Freedom of Information Act of 2011. Worried about the decaying infrastructure facilities in Nigeria, the Federal Government of Nigeria approved a National Integrated Infrastructure Master Plan on 2nd November, 2012 (Usman, 2013). The extent to which these anti-graft agencies have been able to restore hope and optimism in the infrastructural development process is still very debatable.

The aim of this paper therefore, is to attempt a theoretical discourse on the impact of corruption and the challenges of infrastructural development in Nigeria. This is with a view to (i) evaluate the Public Infrastructural Spending-GDP Ratio in Nigeria in the recent years; (ii) examine the nexus between infrastructural development and corruption in Nigeria; and (iii) proffer solutions to reduce corruption generally and particularly in infrastructural development in Nigeria.

THE CONCEPT OF INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Fourie (2006a) opined that infrastructure can be defined in two basic ways; first by describing it based on its characteristics, while the other is by putting together the entire existing infrastructure available which provide outputs and also render services such as water supply, transport, education, energy and communication. In the first method, Fourie (2006a) defined infrastructure as a form of capital which provide services usable by everyone. Often times, the features of infrastructure could be similar with those of public goods, mainly being “non-excludable” and having “positive externalities” (Fedderke & Garlick, 2008). However, these may not necessarily apply to all categories of infrastructure, especially when we look at such an infrastructure that includes public goods examples being military equipment or in another case being non-public goods which are infrastructure – an example could be privately owned transport infrastructure (Fourie, 2006a).

Srinivasu and Srinivasa-Rao (2013) defined infrastructure as comprising of basic facilities and capital equipment which are necessary for economic activity, productive activity and appropriate performance of a country. As a concept, it is useful in describing several activities and is also referred to as “Economic Overheads”, “Basic Economic Facilities”, “Social Overheads Capital” and “Overhead Capital” (World Bank. 1994; Snieska & Simkunaite, 2009; Srinivasu & Srinivasa-Rao, 2013;). Although, no general way exists to which infrastructure should be defined, yet a common component of every definition is referring to infrastructure as capital goods made available with a long-term perspective, and having strong public involvement (Prud’homme, 2004; Chetty, 2007; Baldwin & Dixon, 2008; Snieska & Simkunaite, 2009).

It has been observed that economists and urban planners tend to have a perspective in relation to the issue of what comprises of infrastructure. They see it from two angles, namely; “economic and social infrastructure” (Fourie, 2006b; Snieska & Simkunaite, 2009). In this context, economic infrastructure is defined to be a form of infrastructure with the aim of promoting economic activity and examples include: “roads, highways, electrical lines, railroads, airports, seaports, telecommunications, electricity, water supply and sanitation” (Fourie, 2006b). While social infrastructure on the other hand, involves the human capital aspect of an economy.

According to Jones and Llewellyn (2019), infrastructural development improves the country’s capital stock by investing in core essential physical infrastructure such as rail lines, roads, airports, bridges and water distribution, human capacity development, and clean power source. All of these investments ultimately result in improving a country’s productive capacity and living standards. The classical reason justifying public provision of infrastructure is traceable to the idea of public goods and market failures. The argument is that markets may not find the motivation to engage in the supply of socially beneficial public goods because it is non-profitable and non-excludable. This stands as one of the key rationale for public presence in the course of providing certain infrastructure. Another important consideration is the need to address social or equity considerations in the allocation of resources for infrastructural investment.

Anderson, de Renzio and Levy (2006) defined infrastructural investment to be public expenditure which increases the level of the physical capital owned by the government and it covers areas as the building of schools, hospitals, roads construction, etc and this view is in tandem with the way the national accounts record public investment data. They opined that the desire to meet the Millennium Development Goals is one factor that has led to huge investment in infrastructure which no doubt is needed to drive developmental efforts.

The Need for Infrastructural Development

Public investment and economic linkages

In the views of Hassen (2000) and Bertoldi (2010), infrastructural development has the capacity to heighten the potential and opportunities for economic linkages. This is achieved because public investments create a productive environment for the private sector, individuals and government to innovate, adapt and react to new forms of demand and markets (Prud'homme, 2004; Srinivasu & Srinivasa-Rao, 2013). Making a case in this regards, Ondiege, Moyo and Verdier-Chouchane (2013) opined that public investment in building roads and installing transmission lines that join rural communities to the national networks empower entrepreneurs and individuals to take part in income-generating activities. The issue of lack of good quality infrastructure is a major drawback for most developing economies. Heymans and Thome-Erasmus (1998), Hassen (2000) and Gjini and Kukeli, (2012) have all shown that availability of infrastructure services would go far in improving the productive capacity of developing countries, significantly improve employment conditions and drive growth.

Infrastructural development in Nigeria

Infrastructure investment is a vital element of the 2030 Development Agenda. Nevertheless, the significance about infrastructure is not novel (Rosenstein-Rodan, 1943). The World Bank, (1994) noted that since the 1990s there had been intensive literatures which seem to be looking at the possible development gains from investing in infrastructure. The Nigerian Integrated Infrastructure Master Plan (National Planning Commission, 2015) had projected that the country needs to invest the sum of USD 29 trillion in the next 30years to build and maintain her infrastructure in order to sustain the nation's infrastructural growth. The NIIMP framework further proposed that to sustain this growth path, the country will need to increase investment in infrastructure from USD 10 billion per annum to USD15.9 billion spent in 2014 and USD 35 billion in 2018 which average USD 25 billion per annum (equivalent of 7% of GDP); which was for the four-year period of 2014-2018. The investment rate was expected to increase to 10% of GDP as at 2014-2018 period, then stabilize at 9% of GDP for the rest of the 30-year plan until 2043 (Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, 2020).

Figure 1 shows the public Infrastructural Spending-GDP Ratio in Nigeria, and as can be observed, the ratio stood at 4.53% in 1981 and then declined to 4.14 in 1982. The decline

persisted for the next three years, settling at 2.84% in 1985. In 1986, it rose again to 4.21 but could not be sustained even at that low level and then declined continuously settling at 3.59 in 1989. The ratio stood at 4.81 in 1990, 4.75 in 1991 and 4.37 in 1992. It kept declining year after year and then settled at 4.18 in 1995.

In 1996, the ratio stood at 5.63 and the rose to 6.56 in 1997, 6.73 in 1998 and then 9.38 in 1999. In year 2000, it declined to 3.47 and then rose slightly to 5.39 in 2001 which was the highest for the decade between 2000-2010 as that ratio kept fluctuating between 2.60% and 1.59%. In 2011, the ratio stood at 1.44, declined to 1.20 in 2012 and had oscillated at less than 2% eventually settling at 1.02 in 2017. The abysmally low public infrastructural spending-GDP ratio indicates that Nigeria as a nation still has a long way to go in terms of critical public infrastructural investment that is needed to set the country on its path to development and productivity.

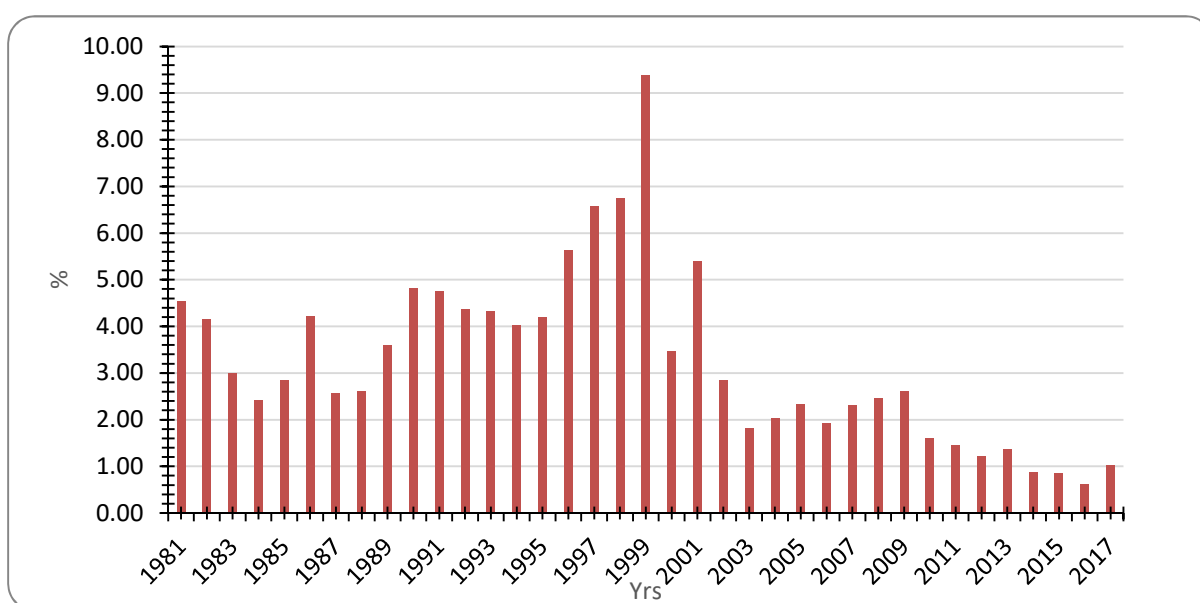


Figure 1: Shows the Public Infrastructural Spending-GDP Ratio.

Source: CBN (2018).

In Figure 2, the Infrastructural spending-GDP Ratio in selected emerging economies such as China, India, Russia, Brazil and South Africa is presented and as observed, the ratio in these economies is far higher than what is obtainable in Nigeria. China averaged a ratio of 44.2% for the period 2008-2016, India stood at an average of 32%, Russia averaged at 20.2%, Brazil at 19.4% and South Africa at 20.4%.

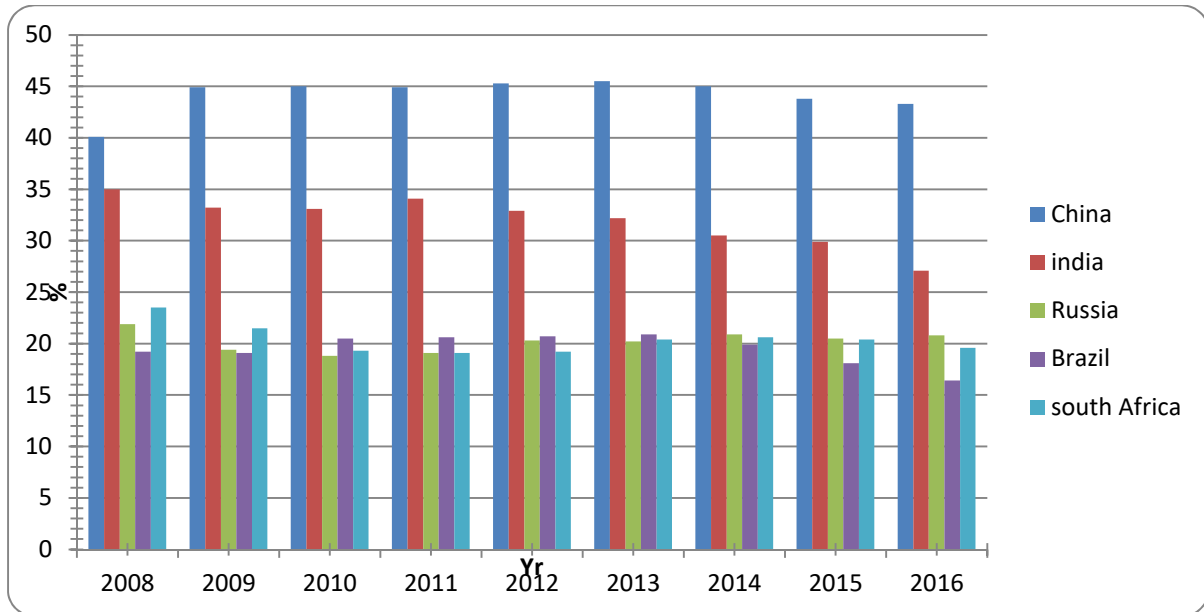


Figure 2: Infrastructural Spending-GDP Ratio in selected emerging economies

Source: IMF (2015)

The issue of infrastructural development must not be taken with a pinch of salt; if Nigeria’s dream and aspirations is to be among the 20 leading economies of the world by 2030. Akinyosoye (2010) and Eniola (2010) concluded that infrastructure development should be a key priority in the country's journey towards development. Infrastructure development is one of the bases of assessing the accomplishments of democratic leaders and it is the basis of excellent democratic governance. In developing countries, lobbying and agitations from the citizenry for infrastructural development is higher in democratic governments than in military regimes, or when compared with developed nations. This is because the funds for provision of infrastructure are always limited. The Infrastructural spending account of Nigeria, just like any developing country, is nothing to write home about. The state of affairs in the housing sector is in a regrettable condition both quantitatively and qualitatively (Agbola, 1998; Ajanlekoko, 2001; Nubi, 2000; Oyedele, 2006). However, Nigeria has made important progress in the improvement of its infrastructure in recent years compared to a number of Sub-Saharan countries. The country has in no small measure made relative progress in road, rail and information and communications technology (ICT) networks that cover wide-ranging areas of the country. Unlike some other countries in the West Africa region, Nigeria has developed infrastructure backbones that have a national reach. However, the condition of the road network is poor and as a result, national connectivity is impaired.

There is broad coverage by the Global System for Mobile (GSM) communications, although there are coverage gaps in several parts of the country. Nigeria’s regional infrastructure connections are expanding, but much remains to be done in this regard. Major liberalization measures in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector have resulted in

extensive, low-cost mobile services, a vibrant fixed line telephony circuit, and major private investments in the development of a national fibre-optic backbone. This progress notwithstanding, there is widespread agreement that the inadequate physical infrastructure of the country is one of the major constraints to sustained and broad-based strong economic growth. Tackling infrastructural deficits will require considerable commitments from all tiers of government in terms of resource allocations yearly for routine and periodic maintenance. This is to ensure reliable infrastructure services, and increased attention to the institutional engagements that maintain the infrastructure network of the country and the associated services.

An Overview of Corruption

Corruption is understood to be the alteration of the normal ways of living, or better put, the act of deviating from the moral norms of the society. Transparency International (2023) defined corruption as the misuse of public power of position or resources for personal interest or gain. Eshimolah (2016) viewed corruption as a form of unethical behaviour by someone occupying a position of trust with the motive of personal gratification. The Nigerian anti-corruption law has classified as corrupt practices, the use of pecuniary advantage, insincerity in advice with a view to gaining advantage, less than a full day's work for a full day's pay, tardiness and laziness towards public office or tasks, failure to report cases of inducement to the anti-corruption bodies, among others (Akanbi, 2004; Aiyede, 2006). It encompasses bribe taking or offering of bribes, dishonest use of influence or authority; fraud, theft, embezzlement; misuse of information or materials meant for public, government or corporate body.

The United Nations 'Manual on Anti-Corruption Policy III' makes a distinction between two important types of corruption, namely: grand and petty corruption. Grand corruption refers to acts against the state such as looting of the treasury, money laundering and operation of illegal foreign bank accounts by public officers, and advanced fee fraud. While petty corruption pertains to other acts such as immorality, dishonesty, perjury. Thus, grand corruption is another expression for public corruption; whilst petty corruption may perhaps refer to private corruption. However, both are not mutually exclusive as features of one can be obtained from the other.

Bhargava (2005) and World Bank (2007) stated that corruption is also the abuse of public or corporate office for private gains. A public office is abused for private gain when an official accepts, solicits, or extorts bribe. It is also abused when private representatives eagerly propose bribes to government officials in order to influence public policies and processes for competitive advantage and profit. Similarly, corruption manifests when a contractor uses inferior materials to carry out a project, whereas, he was paid for higher quality materials or worst still, abandons the job completely. Contract payment without work execution and over invoicing of contracts are also localized examples of corruption associated with infrastructural development in developing countries, Nigeria inclusive.

In their study, Okojie and Momoh (2005) classified grand corruption as an act which is prevalent and systematic in nature and destructive to the local economy. To commit grand corruption is to commit economic crime and those who commit it are considered 'economic criminals'. However, there is also the occurrence of political corruption that further explicates the term, grand corruption. Political or grand corruption has brought much social debauchery upon the Nigerian State, carrying along with it, such bad baggage as "godfatherism", influence-peddling, rigging of elections, manipulation of and buying of votes, manipulative political financing, misappropriation in office, and fraud. Aiyede (2006) describes political corruption as the misuse of public or governmental power for unlawful private advantage. The exercise of public power and resources for the advancement of only individual, factional, ethnic, religious or other partial interests at the expense of wider societal benefits could be described as corruption. Hence, power and public resources are utilized for private purposes and gains. Similarly, acts bordering on, bribery, extortion, theft, undue partiality, preferential treatment, and other practices are seen as corrupt practices.

Corruption in Nigeria according to (Jonathan, 2005) evolved due to: breakdown of communal life, poor attitude towards the common good, economic uncertainty and lack of social security and greed. Corruption has become a worldwide phenomenon and no country is completely corrupt free. Nevertheless, corruption is clearly more visible or obvious in a number of nations than others; the reason is that such less corrupt countries are better able to deal with corruption than others by placing necessary policies that limit prospects for corruption. Other countries are yet unable to outline adequate strategies to fight corruption or do not have the political willpower to act alike.

Reports showed that, for the third consecutive years, Nigeria dropped in the 2021 Corruption Perception Index (CPI) ranking released by Transparency International (TI) on January, 5th 2022. The country scored 24 out of 100 points in the 2021 index. The report further ranked Nigeria 154th out of 180 countries surveyed. In 2019, Nigeria was ranked the 146 least corrupt nations out of 180 countries, and scored 26 points out of 100 on the 2019 Corruption Perceptions Index as indicated in Transparency International report shown in Figure 3. Nigeria fell from 144th to 146th in the 2019 Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, as the country slipped by 26 points, a minus when compared to its score in 2018. According to the international anti-corruption monitor's 2019 index, Nigeria's position of 146 out of the 180 countries that were studied globally illustrates that its score of 26 is far lower than the universal average of 43 and the 2019 average score of 32 for the sub-Saharan Africa region. Accordingly, Nigeria was ranked 32 out of 49 countries in the sub-region. In the whole West African sub-region, Nigeria's position is only higher than Guinea Bissau whose score is 18. Another Report (Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC), 2018) revealed that corruption in Nigeria could cost up to 37% of GDP by 2030 if it is not tackled straight away. The Corruption Perception Index (CPI) is Transparency International tool for measuring levels of corruption in the systems of various countries around the world. Among the variables used are security sector corruption, high level of financial recklessness, abuse of budgetary process and failures of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to follow

due process of appropriation, among others. These are reasons Nigeria was ranked low in the CPI report.



Figure 3: Corruption Perception Index for Nigeria (Points)

Source: Transparency International (2019)

Since 2011 till date, Nigeria’s score has ranged between 24 to 28 per cent and its ranking from 136th to 148th. Since 2012 when the scale of 100 was first used, Nigeria improved her score to 28 and ranked 136 out of the 176 countries making the year 2016 Nigeria’s best year as reflected in Figure 4. In 2013, Nigeria scored 25 on the scale, and was ranked 144 out of 177 other countries which seemed to be the nation’s most corrupt year. Nigeria also was ranked 148 in 2017 as shown in Figure 4.

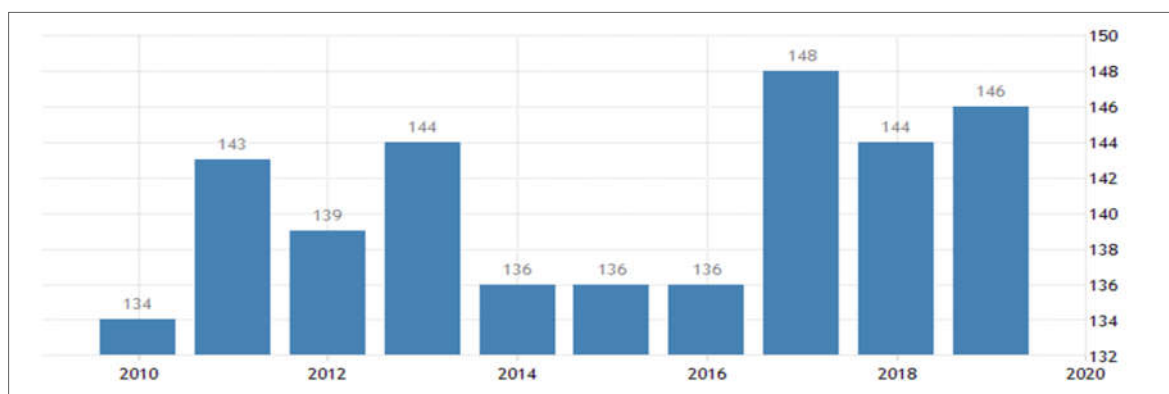


Figure 4: Corruption Perception Index for Nigeria (Rank)

Source: Transparency International (2019).

However, reports of some Nigeria media (Premium Times Nigeria, 2020, & Thisdaylive, 2020) revealed that the Nigeria government officials specifically the Attorney General of the Federation, and the anti-graft agencies such as the EFCC and the ICPC have condemned the

report as baseless. Government stated that TI was oblivious of the achievement of the President Buhari’s administration in tackling corruption- one of its cardinal campaign promises in 2015; and argued that the facts on the ground do not correlate with information dished out by the group. Specially, the EFCC portrayed the report as unjustifiable and awful. The ICPC also faulted the report and described it as a mere conjecture of TI. The Presidency as well attempted to deride the report and posited that it was based on mere perception rather than facts. Nigeria had scored rather low on the ranking since the last decade.

Key findings of another joint study carried out in Nigeria in 2016 by The United Nations Office on Drug and Crime and National Bureau of Statistics (2017) as shown in Figure 5; revealed that most bribes (68.9 per cent) are paid to public officials in Nigeria before a service is delivered. However, certain officials are more likely to receive payment before delivering a service than others: this is particularly true for customs officers (82.9 per cent), immigration officers (78.8 per cent) and public utility officers (73.1 per cent). On the other hand, some 29 per cent of bribes paid to doctors and nurses in public hospitals, and 23 per cent of bribes paid to teachers/lecturers in public schools, are paid after the service is delivered (Figure 5).

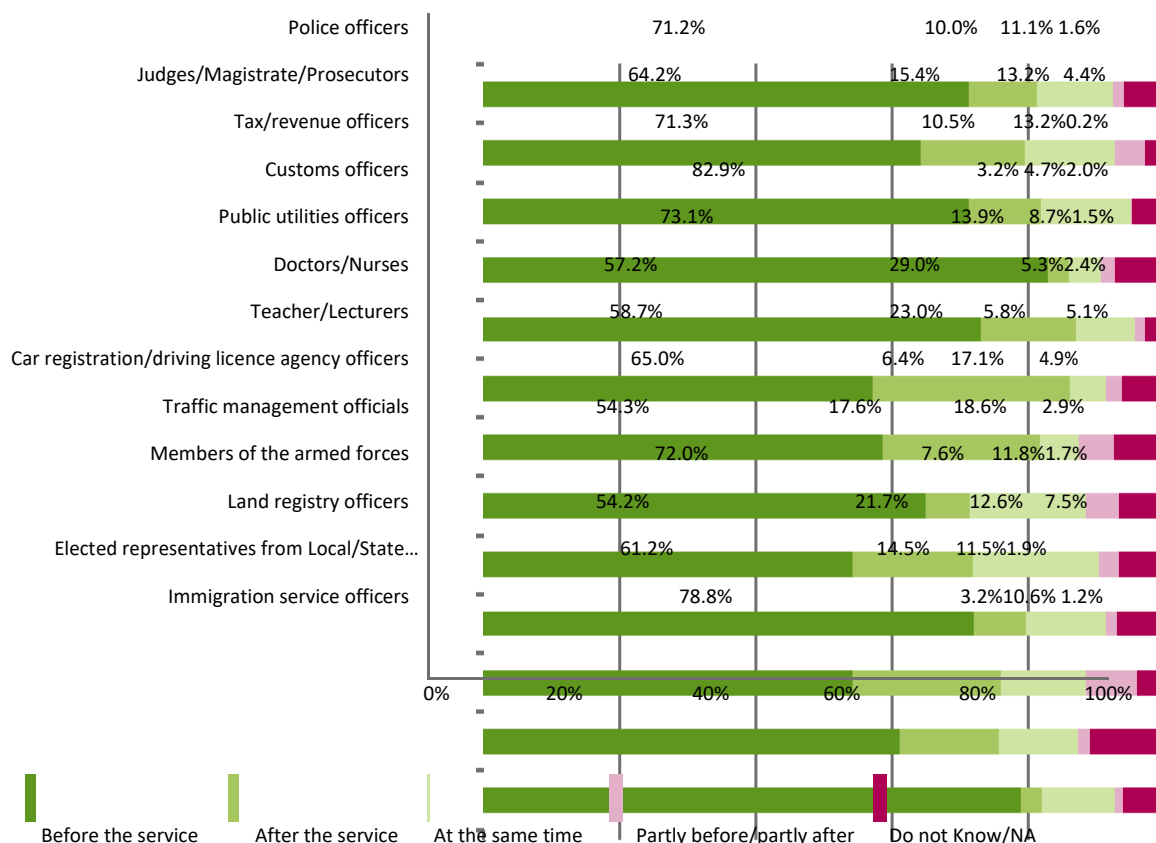


Figure 5: Percentage Distributions of Bribes Paid, by Public Official Receiving the Bribe and by Timing of Bribe Payment, Nigeria, 2016.

Source: The United Nations Office on Drug and Crime and National Bureau of Statistics (2017)

NEXUS BETWEEN INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND CORRUPTION

The effect of corruption on infrastructure can be measured through both its direct and indirect impact. Directly, corruption increases the cost of public services, lowers their quality and/or restricts the poor from accessing such essential services as water and sanitation. Indirectly, corruption diverts public resources away from social sectors and the poor thereby limiting development, growth and poverty reduction (Sahail & Cavill 2014). Among the major causes of such a soaring incidence of corruption as identified by (Stansbury, 2005) include the complexity of the project cycle, the uniqueness of projects, direct control by a government with often poor management practices, and a deep-seated “culture of secrecy”. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2014) had noted that corruption and bribe payment is pervasive in the industries with the major expenditure on infrastructure such as extractive (19%), construction (15%) and transportation (15%) sectors. The special effects of corruption on the infrastructural development can be seen in such outcomes like inappropriate project choice, high prices, poor quality, excessive time and cost overruns, inadequate maintenance and low returns. These impede the infrastructure’s contribution to economic growth.

Wells (2015) argued that corruption in the construction of public infrastructure has particularly serious implications for developing countries. Inappropriate project choice, high prices, poor quality, excessive time and cost overruns, inadequate maintenance, and low returns, among other challenges, impact negatively on economic growth and poverty alleviation. Corruption during the early stages of the project cycle, when projects are appraised, designed, and budgeted, may open up doors for additional corruption later on. Ogbuagu, Ubi and Effiom (2014) conducted a study which focused on descriptively analyzing the link between corruption and infrastructural decay in Nigeria using two selected infrastructural sub-sectors (electricity and governance). The result from the simple correlation analysis revealed that it is not absolute lack of funds that has caused infrastructural decay but outright mismanagement of funds (corruption) that is principally responsible for the level of infrastructural decay in Nigeria.

Furthermore, Musa and Shehu (2016) examining the situation in Nigeria, investigated the relationship between the level of corruption and infrastructural development. The research design was content analysis of secondary data from transparency international for data on corruption. The study established a soaring prevalence of corruption and poor infrastructural development in Nigeria. The authors indicated the presence of a negative relationship between corruption and infrastructural development in Nigeria. The study concludes that the high level of corruption has negatively affected infrastructural development in Nigeria. Therefore, a reduction in the rate of corruption is expected to improve infrastructural development in Nigeria. Considering all the setbacks corruption causes in any given society, it is obvious that corruption and development are mutually exclusive. This is because in a corrupt society, people become extremely greedy because of the passion for amassing wealth. Greed creates social strife.

The audit report of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) projects in Niger Delta as shown in Table 1 had been quite revealing. According to the Akintola (2020), the probe of projects abandoned by the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) by House of Representatives Committee had discovered that a total of 1,723 contractors had collected a total of N70, 495 billion without mobilizing to the site as shown in Table 1. The probe was necessitated by a report of the Auditor General of the Federation (AuGF) which had disclosed that N64.4 billion was wasted by the NDDC as mobilisation fees on abandoned projects in the Niger Delta. The report indicates that “90 percent of these contracts were awarded between 2011 and 2012. It needs to be stressed that some of these contractors had three to four jobs with their mobilization payments without reporting to site. Among contractors indicted in the Report are those that collected mobilization and reported to site but with insignificant achievement before abandoning the projects. Others are those in which the commission had declared their projects as stalled. Beside these, it was also observed that about 50 percent of the contractors claimed they had executed their various contracts to specifications and completed them with supported engineer’s valuation certificate. The report stated that “in the auditor’s opinion, this ugly trend will continue in the system in as much as the same class of people were being recycled in the management and Board of the Commission.” The Report attributed the poor infrastructure development in the Niger Delta Region to high incidences of corruption despite huge annual allocation in the creation of Niger Delta Commission as an intervention agency.

Table 1: Lists of jobs paid for by NDDC and not executed by contractors.

STATES	TOTAL NUMBER OF CONTRACTS	PROJECT SUM	AMOUNT PAID OUT	STATUS
Abia State	32	₦17.641 billion	₦2.027 billion	No activity
Awka Ibom State	64	₦31.681 billion	₦4.229 billion	Abandoned
Bayelsa State	80	₦27.647 billion	₦4.970 billion	Abandoned
Edo State	51	₦13.927 billion	₦2.065 billion	No activity
Imo State	33	₦13.184 billion	₦1.859 billion	No activity
Ondo State	50	₦29.977 billion	₦6.173 billion	Abandoned
Rivers State	106	₦56.717 billion	₦13.146 billion	Abandoned

Source: Akintola (2020)

PAST STRATEGIES FOR CORRUPTION REDUCTION IN NIGERIA

Successive governments have initiated various strategies aimed at fighting corruption. The Federal Government of Nigeria under the leadership of President Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007) established agencies such as the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) among others, yet, corruption continues unabated. Corruption thrives because most of the institutions established to combat corruption are not constitutionally, legally, organizationally or financially empowered to be independent in such

a way as to act without external influence in discharging their duties. To genuinely wage war against corruption, the necessary institutions should be made effective and independent.

Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC)

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) was inaugurated on September 29th, 2000; with a mission is “To employ all available legal means to liberate Nigeria of all forms of corruption and thus promote transparency, probity, accountability and integrity in the public and private life of all Nigerians” (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2000). The ICPC is at the centre of Nigeria's fight against corruption. The main duty of the Commission is to receive complaints, investigate and prosecute offenders. Other duties include education and enlightenment of the public about and against bribery, corruption and related offences. The ICPC Act 2000, which establishes the ICPC, has brought a fresh and decisive perspective to the fight against corruption in the form of a holistic approach encompassing enforcement, prevention and educational measures (ICPC, 2020).

Economics and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission was established in 2003 as a law enforcement agency that investigates and prosecutes financial crimes such as advance fee fraud and money laundering. The EFCC’s vision is to be an agency operating to best international standards and leading the fight against economic and financial crimes in Nigeria. Its mission is to rid Nigeria of economic and financial crimes and to effectively coordinate the domestic effort of the global fight against money laundering and financing terrorisms (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2004).

Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP)

The establishment of the office of Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit otherwise called “Due Process Office” is one of the measures taken by federal government under President Olusegun Obasanjo to reduce corruption in Nigeria, especially in infrastructural development. The administration of President Umaru Yar’Adua (2007-2010) sustained this initiative and further strengthened it with strict adherence to the ‘Rule of Law’ in the conduct of government process. The signing into law of the Public Procurement Act setting out provisions, powers and responsibilities of key players along with future sanction for breach or non-compliance is a demonstration of government resolve in ensuring maximum compliance with procurement processes and ensure reversal of identified ills (Arab, 2008).

EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ICPC, EFCC AND BPP

An appraisal of the status or victories in the anti-corruption fight in Nigeria can only be measured by the prosecutions and actual convictions, as well as data on interim and final forfeiture orders of courts in high profile corruption litigations. It has been reported that from the inception of the EFCC in 2003 till 2016, the Commission secured about 1,500 convictions

(Ebhuomhan, 2017). Probably, the Commission secured the highest convictions in 2016 (Jones, 2018). However, a recent report released by the EFCC and published by TransparencIT (TransparencIT, 2022) revealed that EFCC secured 2,220 convictions in 2021 bringing the total convictions secured by the Commission to 5,629 between 2010 and 2021. In terms of prosecutions, the Commission since its creation has prosecuted so many high profile corruption related cases before different courts across the country. Regrettably, the Commission seems to have lost the majority of its cases in courts due largely to lack of painstaking investigations, lack of equipment, lack of adequate and requisite trained personnel, lack of strategic preparation and prosecutions (Dania, 2017).

The first set of brickwalls in Nigeria's fight against corruption has been identified to be the institutional weaknesses of the ICPC and EFCC. The institutions, by their acts of omission and commission, appear to lack complete independence. The ICPC is very slow to act and cannot, *strictu sensu*, prosecute; while the seemingly effective EFCC can prosecute but appears incapable of penalizing. The close affinities ICPC and EFCC have with the Presidency that created them in the first place, have made the two to appear like instruments of State coercion and victimization of perceived and real enemies of the civilian administration. Lumumba (2013) pointed out that the greatest challenge for anti-corruption commissions in Africa is centred on political interference due to lack of will among political leaders and officers to fight corruption. The challenges which plague anti-corruption institutions in Nigeria include the lack of adequate funding, political interference and judicial bottlenecks. It has been acknowledged that the delay in treating high-profile cases of corruption dampens the morale of anti-graft agencies (Oyedele, 2012)

In this respect, Waziri (2010) postulated that anti-graft agencies are also ill-equipped to combat corruption in the country due to the absence of autonomy, unequal treatment, institutional factors, lack of judicial power, inadequate database and lack of political will towards the fight against corruption (Waziri, 2010). The fact is that they are good in publicising the names of corrupt individuals instead of punishing them. The anti-corruption institutions are simply inefficient in carrying out their responsibilities. These anti-graft agencies were unable to prosecute an adequate number of top public officials. This is the main deterrence to campaign against corrupt practices in Nigeria. It demonstrates that there are exceptions or untouchables among Nigerian citizens that the long hands of the law cannot get to or capture (Justine & Okoye, 2014).

Another vital organ in fight against corruption is the Bureau of Public Procurement. This is essentially a tool designed to promote Good Governance in the conduct of Public Procurement Process dictated by Guidelines and Procedures towards attaining desired outcome. For desired impact of the process mechanism to be achieved, dedicated and competent personnel with proven track record from various disciplines and fields are required. The calibre and right choice in the selection of operational staff is a critical success factor in this regard. Regrettably, despite these measures corruption is still prevalent in the country. However, according to Oyedele (2012), the BPP saved Nigeria the sum 216.6 billion naira during the 2010 Appropriation year from review of contract processes before the issuance of Certificate of No Objection.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Recommendations

Eradication of corruption completely in any human society is impossible but it can be reduced to a level that its effects on the economy, political activities and social life will no longer be very significant. To do this, the Federal Government, the States and the citizens have their own respective roles to play. Therefore, there is a pressing need to attend to the following:

1. Professionals and professional regulatory bodies of different professions in the built environment involved with procurements of infrastructural projects should be up and doing and properly play their roles in infrastructural projects service deliveries. This is in order to assist in curbing sharp practices among their members that is prevalent in the industry. This is necessary because the built environment professionals especially the architects, engineers and quantity surveyors have critical roles assigned to them in procurement of infrastructural development and services from inception to completion of any project. Among the roles include: design, documentation, tendering process, procurement of goods and services, contract administration, supervision and issuance of payment certificates to name a few. Therefore, these professionals should ensure that best global practices are adhered to always. These can be achieved by ensuring that; Due processes must be allowed in the composition of the design team and in the choice of the contractor. This will ensure that the contractors take responsibility for the entire dictate of the contract especially cost and timeliness as well as the specification of the materials. Ensure that competence is given preference in selection of contractors. Take cognizance at early stage of contract award that there are different categories of contractors at different level of hierarchy –Competence, Responsibility, Technology; therefore, the overheads vary. In this regard, contract can be awarded to contractor C for X million Naira; while, contractor A because of huge overhead will do same contract at multiple of the cost. After the award of the contract, due process must be allowed to rule on issues of variations and fluctuations in any regard; and ensure that certificates for payments are issued for only milestones completed. Contractors must submit bank performance/ guaranty bonds to stop abandonments of contracts and collection of mobilization with site activities. The construction team must be ready to take responsibility for every aspect that they are involved in the design and construction process. Proper competence level evaluation in an open book or public manner should be allowed. Any individual or group of individuals that have been indicted must be sanctioned accordingly and be available to serve their sanction by the regulatory body through their ethics committees of such professional body. Award process should be critical and to standards as prescribed in the law or regulations. Contractors must have qualified professionals with requisite knowledge in their team.
2. Government at all levels and the citizenry should pursue governance. Good Governance translates to the observance and adherence to the rule of law. This implies that the concept of “Rule of Law” should be respected both by the government at all levels and the citizenry. It demands that all of citizens should make personal and integral resolutions and

thus with the fear of God uphold faiths professed, values, and integrity without compromises. This will bring positive changes in Nigeria. Good governance will be the only antidote that can bridge the wide gap. Good governance advances accountability, lessens corruption and consequently minimises resource wastage through inefficiency. Good governance also guarantees stability (economic and political) and decreases the level of risk associated with large and lumpy infrastructure investments. This in turn facilitates the mobilisation of both public and private sector financing resources that are critical for infrastructure development.

3. Government should accelerate infrastructural development. There is an urgent need to tackle the problem of decaying infrastructure hallmarked by collapsing healthcare services, dilapidated road networks, dearth of social infrastructure, potholed roads, rising unemployment. There is also the need to fix the power sector which is also key to Nigeria's development. Until it is fixed the citizens would continue to wallow in extreme poverty. This is so because infrastructure is key to production in both the urban and rural areas. It should be noted that winning the war against poverty which is part of the MDG focus must begin with sound infrastructure, stable and reliable power services and institution of efficient social welfare schemes. Accelerated infrastructural developments will create jobs for the citizenry and increase economic growth.
4. Ethical re-orientation and education of the citizenry should be pursued. There is the need for reorientation of the citizenry for proper appreciation of the dangers of corruption in the society. The ethical, religious and cultural values need to be re-enforced and rejuvenated and invigorated. Religious and social institutions should stop the award of honours to undeserving members of the society because of their wealth. Religious organisations and the family institutions should try to teach and inculcate good moral values on members, children and wards. While at home, parents should teach their children /wards the fear of God and evil consequences of corruption by example and precept. This is so because the citizenry especially the masses suffer the wrecks of corruption directly in the society. Corruption has not only affected the nations infrastructural development but has affected health, education, caused mass migration to foreign countries, constant fuel increases and taxes, value added taxes, poor housing and sanitation.
5. The Anti-Corruption agencies should be strengthened. There is the need to strengthen the anti-corruption agencies from identified institutional weaknesses. Therefore, there is the need to insulate anti-corruption agencies from political control and influence. This is because appointment into offices in developing countries, Nigeria inclusive is a key to determining where the appointee's loyalty lies. In Nigeria all the heads of anti-corruption agencies are appointed by the President and confirmed by the National Assembly and report to the Attorney-General of the Federation, who is also appointed by the President. Therefore, the independence of these agencies is questionable as political opponents believe that any probe can only see the light of the day if the President wished it to. The politicians also accuse the ruling parties of manipulating and teleguiding these agencies. How can these Heads of anti-corruption agencies function effectively when they owe some allegiances to politicians who must have influenced their appointment? Therefore, there is need for proper insulation of these offices in order to have strong institutions that

will be loyal to the State rather than to the President as has been witnessed in advance democracies such as USA, UK, Israel, and France to mention a few.

6. The Bureau of Public Procurement should be domesticated in all government ministries, parastatals and agencies. This is to ensure proper scrutiny of contract documents, monitoring of contract performances and over invoicing of contract and other anomalies that have been associated with infrastructural development in Nigeria.

Conclusion

This paper has revealed clearly that infrastructural development is critical to economic growth and physical development for both developed and developing countries inclusive of Nigeria. Nigeria has a very huge social and economic infrastructural deficit which covers all the critical areas of housing, roads, communication infrastructure, power and energy, health care, etcetera. The low public infrastructure-GDP ratio has been quite low and very inadequate especially when compared to those of emerging economies like South Africa, India and China. This suggests that depending on public spending alone cannot address the infrastructural gap. Also noted was the strong correlation between infrastructural development and corruption. It was asserted that corruption hampers and undermines economic growth and sustainable development. Corruption has not only raised the cost of infrastructure but has also reduced the quality of, and economic returns from the infrastructural development in Nigeria.

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