

## **The Fight Against Corruption in Nigeria: A Critical Analysis**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Corruption in Nigeria is a major issue that hinders economic, political, and social growth. Despite the government's efforts to combat this problem, the results have been underwhelming due to various complexities. This study aims to examine the fight against corruption in Nigeria, analyzing the factors that fuel its spread, government strategies implemented to tackle corruption, their effectiveness, and the obstacles that hinder their success. The research is based on a comprehensive literature review of existing studies, reports, and publications on corruption in Nigeria, including academic articles, government reports, newspaper articles, and other relevant sources. The study ultimately recommends possible solutions to eradicate corruption in Nigeria, including strengthening institutional and legal frameworks, increasing political will and public participation, enhancing transparency and accountability, and addressing poverty and inequality.*

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**Keywords:** *Corruption, Government, Fight, Policies, Nigeria*

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## INTRODUCTION

Corruption is a complex issue that is challenging to combat in any country, and it is a global problem that exists in both developed and developing countries (Ndubisi & Owoseni, 2020). Since Nigeria gained independence from British colonial rule in 1960, corruption has been a significant challenge facing the country, and it is pervasive at almost all levels of government (Adekunle, 2015). Unfortunately, the widespread corruption in Nigeria is frequently cited as the primary factor hindering the country's development, with Transparency International ranking Nigeria as one of the most corrupt countries globally (Transparency International, 2021). The fight against corruption in Nigeria has been a long-standing issue, with various efforts and measures implemented to combat the phenomenon (Adekunle, 2015). It is worth noting that for a long time, developed countries have been indifferent to the problem of corruption in developing countries and have even overlooked the role of foreign officials who gave bribes and public officials who laundered corrupt proceeds in foreign financial institutions (Harsch, 1997). In Nigeria and many African states, corruption is a malaise that plagues society, causing a loss of over \$140 billion annually from African countries (Ribadu, 2007a). Corruption has also hindered investment by creating a disincentive for potential investors, distorting public expenditures, increasing business overheads and diverting resources from poor to wealthy countries (Ndubisi & Owoseni, 2020).

Anti-corruption regimes and advocacy programs have been established by states and many supranational governmental organizations to combat corruption, which undermines the process of globalization (Andoyo, Katu, & Endang, 2019). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Council of Europe, the Organization of American States, the African Union (AU), the United Nations (UN), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have all implemented policies and measures to deal with corruption (Brainard et al., 2003). For instance, the OECD played a crucial role in criminalizing officials involved in bribery, creating the Anti-Corruption Network Action Plan, and establishing the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials to tackle corruption (Hudson & Thérien, 2013). The UN established the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), which has 140 signatories, while the AU established the African Union Regional Anti-Corruption Convention (Andoyo et al., 2019). International non-governmental organizations have also been active in the fight against corruption, with Transparency International (TI), a German-based organization, providing strong leadership in research, publications, advocacy, and sensitization of the public against the evils of corruption (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2013).

Multiple scholars and organizations have proposed different definitions of corruption. One widely cited definition is provided by Nye (1978), who defines corruption as behavior that deviates from formal public duties due to personal gain, such as pecuniary or status benefits, or violating rules against certain types of private-regarding conduct. The World Bank (1997) defines corruption as the misuse of public office for personal gain, which includes accepting or soliciting bribes by public officials and offering bribes by private actors to subvert or circumvent

public policies for competitive advantage and profit. Similarly, the UNDP (2004) defines corruption as the misuse of public power, office, or authority for private benefit through bribery, extortion, influence peddling, nepotism, fraud, speed money, or embezzlement. The TI (2002) defines corruption as inappropriate or illegal behavior of public sector officials, such as politicians or officers, by misusing entrusted power for personal gain or related individuals. Corruption is an unauthorized transfer of money or an in-kind substitute, which is a form of rent-seeking activity that is generally illegal.

Several studies have explored corruption and its causes, including Klitgaard (1988, 1991), Rose-Ackerman (1975, 1996a, and 1996b), Shleifer and Vishny (1993, 1998), Bardhan (1997), Elliot (1997), Jain (ed.) (1998, 2001a, 2001b), and Aidt (2003). Country and sector-based studies on corruption in developing nations, such as Wade (1985), Kpundeh (1995), de Dios and Ferrer (2000), Mendoza (n.d.), Virtucio and Lalunio (n.d.), and Kallon (2003), demonstrate the considerable impact and extensive market that corruption creates, particularly in bureaucracies that can generate significant bribes. The scholarship on corruption in developing countries generally proposes five hypotheses to explain its causes, including rent-seeking, cultural relativity, low salary, imitation, and institutional/political centralization. While earlier literature focused on the effects of corruption, models such as the "equilibrium queue model" (Lui, 1985) and the "auction model" (Becker and Maher, 1986) were developed. Some scholars, such as Myrdal (1968) and Leff (1970), suggest that corruption can positively contribute to economic and political development, serving as an administrative delay tool or lubricant for otherwise sluggish economies. Nepotism, spoils, and graft, functioning as corruption, perform necessary functions for political development, such as unification and stability, popular participation in public affairs, development of viable political parties, and bureaucracy (Merton, 1958; Abueva, 1970).

Abueva (1970) suggested that in developing countries with struggling economies, large-scale graft can assist entrepreneurs in creating industries by funneling capital to them. Lui (1985) proposed, using the "equilibrium queue model," that corruption minimizes time costs for services by reducing waiting time for customers who pay bribes when government officials demand a uniform price for public goods and cannot price discriminate. Using the "auction model," Becker and Maher (1986) argued that corruption could be a useful practice for competitive bidding in allocating licenses to entrepreneurs who offer the highest bribes. Others argued that corruption could facilitate efficient resource allocation because it is a cheap way to distribute wealth among politicians and agents in the private sector (Shleifer and Vishny, 1993), allowing the private sector to buy its way out of inefficiencies that would otherwise be introduced by politicians. However, other studies indicate that corruption has negative impacts on investment, economic growth, and political processes (Klitgaard, 1988; Mauro, 1995; Knack and Keefer, 1996; Rose-Ackerman, 1996b; Kallon, 2003; IMF, TI, World Bank, and UNDP).

Corruption poses significant obstacles to the development and stability of Nigeria, one of the top ten most populous countries in the world (Olufemi & Alhassan, 2020). Nigeria faces challenges addressing corruption due to institutional weaknesses, poor governance, lack of accountability,

and societal norms that encourage corruption. Corruption permeates various sectors and levels of Nigerian society and deters investment, contributing to the economic underdevelopment of the country (Aiyede, 2016). International organizations and donor countries have criticized Nigeria's inability to combat corruption, resulting in governmental initiatives such as the EFCC, ICPC, and Code of Conduct Bureau. Nevertheless, corruption remains a significant challenge that negatively impacts governance, economy, and social development in Nigeria (Olufemi & Alhassan, 2020). Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iwela in one of her books titled "Fighting Corruption is Dangerous" once said that "if you want to fight corruption, corruption would fight back".

Despite having a high priority in successive Nigerian governments, the fight against corruption has been slow due to various factors such as a lack of political will, weak institutional capacity, and inadequate legal framework. This research critically examines combatting corruption in Nigeria by analyzing the current situation, reasons for the slow progress, and evaluating the strategies and policies employed. It provides solutions and recommendations to strengthen anti-corruption efforts in Nigeria, offering insights and understanding of the country's corruption challenges and a way forward towards building a transparent, accountable, and prosperous nation. (Olufemi & Alhassan, 2020).

## **METHODOLOGY:**

The research is based on a literature review of existing studies, reports, and publications on corruption in Nigeria. The primary sources of data used in this research article include academic articles, government reports, newspaper articles, and other relevant publications. The study employs a critical analysis approach to examine the fight against corruption in Nigeria, using a range of sources to critically evaluate the factors contributing to corruption, measures taken by the government to tackle corruption, the impact of these measures, and the challenges hampering the fight against corruption.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Having seen the methodology adopted in the study, what then are the concepts that beg for elucidations and clarity in the paper?

### **Corruption in Nigeria**

Various scholars and organizations have provided different definitions of corruption. Nye proposed a definition that is widely cited where corruption refers to behaviors that contravene the formal duties of a public role by resulting in personal gains, such as pecuniary or status-gain, or violating the rules that forbid specific types of private-regarding behaviors (Nye, 1967). According to the World Bank, corruption refers to the exploitation of public office for private gains, with the cost being estimated globally at about \$80 billion. This includes public officials accepting, soliciting, or coercing bribes and individuals from the private sector offering bribes to undermine or bypass public policies for personal gain or competitive advantage (World Bank, 2019). The UNDP considers corruption as the misuse of public power, authority, or office for

personal gain, including bribery, extortion, influence-peddling, nepotism, fraud, speed money, or embezzlement (United Nations Development Programme, 2019). TI defines corruption as inappropriate or illegal conduct by a public sector official, such as a politician or public officer, through the misuse of their delegated power for personal gain for themselves or people close to them (Transparency International, n.d.).

Ogunwale (2012) claims that Nigeria is recognized internationally as one of the countries with the worst case of corrupt practices. The pervasiveness of corruption in Nigeria is linked to cultural traditions and has become normalized in day-to-day interactions (Dukku, 2012). Dukku explains that deviant acts of corruption have been disguised and symbolized in language used in everyday communication, for example, words like *Alfarma* (gift or favor), *egunje*, *goro* or *Igbuozu* (Kola), *badawaniabu* (giving something), and *yiwani abu* (do something). People in Nigeria have even manipulated the meaning of the English word "kola," which might refer to a tree that bears bitter fruits or bribe, due to the obsession for bribery (Dukku, 2012). Corruption is a major issue in all levels of government in Nigeria, including former governors, ministries, law enforcement agencies, paramilitaries, and the oil and gas sector (Mutum & Mohammed, 2015; Sadiq, 2015; Musa, 2015; Al-ghazali, 2015; Bamgboye, 2015). According to Abdullahi (2011), corruption occurs at all levels of government in Nigeria and is widespread. Corruption in local government councils is seen as an organized crime perpetrated by neglected people in the local areas rather than corruption among political and bureaucratic elites (Ribadu, 2007 as cited in Amuwo, 2012).

Corruption in Nigeria has grown notably since the tenures of Generals Ibrahim Babaginda and Sani Abacha. The nature of Nigerian corruption has transformed from prebendalism towards predation, where office holders and officials attempt to reward their supporters, family members, and ethnic group members with money, jobs, or contracts. Corruption has been identified as a cause of the failing of the first (1960-66) and second (1979-83) Nigerian republics. The country's dependence on crude oil is one of the reasons for the rise in corruption, which promotes rent-seeking and fraud. The US Senate Kerry Report affirmed the relationship between oil and corruption in Nigeria, exposing common tactics such as under or over-invoicing of imports and exports in the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). Past and present leaders were linked to the plunder of about £212bn in oil revenue from the country's treasury, with the EFCC aiming to battle an estimated £12 billion yearly in misappropriated state funds.

It is a common occurrence for government contracts to be inflated in Nigeria due to corrupt practices such as kickbacks given to public officials before the completion of the contracts (Akpan & Isikhuemen, 2019). Corruption in the judiciary system hinders its effective functioning as there is a widespread belief that judges can be easily bribed or settled (Transparency International, 2020). This has led to judicial officials requesting small bribes to expedite cases, and some even being charged for fraud and money laundering (Owolabi, 2018). Legislators at both national and state levels have been accused of accepting bribes and favors from the executive branch to facilitate the passage of bills favorable to them (Akinwotu, 2018). The country has also experienced insider credit abuses that have caused bank failures, with powerful

individuals reported to be responsible for N53 billion of the losses (Tella, 2019). The misuse of authority by elected officials, public servants, and military officials has contributed to the plundering and squandering of about £220 billion or \$380 billion by public officials in Nigeria, according to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) (Eghosa-Osagie, 2020).

The amount of money lost to corruption in Nigeria is staggering, as it has been estimated that there was an off-budget diversion of \$12.2 billion during General Ibrahim Babaginda's tenure, and during General Sani Abacha's regime, between two and five billion dollars were allegedly embezzled (Transparency International, 2004). This is more than six times the amount the United States provided for the reconstruction of post-World War II Europe through the Marshall Plan (Baten, 2016). The corruption problem persisted even after these regimes, as during President Obasanjo's time in office, Nigeria was estimated to have lost between \$4 billion to \$8 billion annually due to corruption, equaling between 4.25 percent and 9.5 percent of its total GDP in 2006 (Ebohon, 2012). The high level of corruption in Nigeria was illustrated by a dispute between President Obasanjo and the Vice President in 2006, which was related to corruption (BBC, 2006).

TI consistently ranks Nigeria low, such as in 2006 and 2007 where Nigeria scored a CPI of 2.2, ranking 146th and 148th out of 163 countries respectively. According to TI, low CPI scores suggest that public institutions are greatly compromised. TI found that more than half of bribes were directly solicited, while 60% were offered to avoid issues with authorities, and over 40% were offered to obtain services one was entitled to. The IAP corruption index reported the Nigerian Police Force, Power Holding Company of Nigeria, Ministry of Education, and Customs and Excise Department as the most corrupt sectors in Nigeria. The severity of corruption is increasing and evolving, particularly among Nigerian states; the EFCC reported in September 2006 that some state governors were stealing state treasuries and using family members as fronts to establish their private businesses. For instance, the Orji Kalu, governor of Abia State, was accused of misappropriating N35 billion to establish a business empire under his wife, mother, daughter, and brothers' names. This article aimed to investigate EFCC's operations since its establishment within this framework.

### **Causes of Corruption in Nigeria**

In line with the World Bank's definition of corruption as the fraudulent and non-transparent provision of private benefits to public officials, individuals, groups, or firms within both public and private sectors can use their influence to influence the development of laws, regulations, and government policies to their own advantage (World Bank, 2000). Corruption can also take place when existing laws, rules, and regulations are adjusted or altered to provide private gains to either state or non-state actors through non-transparent and illicit means.

Numerous perspectives have been put forward in the literature about the root causes of corruption as it is a widespread societal issue that affects a country's growth and development across all sectors. Nigeria, in particular, has been affected by corruption for many years, significantly impeding its progress. According to the 2020 Corruption Perception Index

published by Transparency International, Nigeria ranked 149th out of 180 countries, indicating a high level of corruption (Transparency International, 2020).

There are contrasting perspectives in the literature about the role of corruption in the economic and political development of a country. While some scholars argue that corruption can contribute positively to the economy and spur political development, others have identified negative consequences. Myrdal and Leff (1968) suggest that corruption plays a significant role in facilitating economic growth by acting as a lubricant for an otherwise sluggish economy. They argue that corruption, in the form of administrative delay, could attract more bribes.

Similarly, Merton (1968) and Abueva (1988) note that corruption in the form of nepotism, graft, and spoils can perform a critical function in political development, such as unification, popular participation in public affairs, bureaucratic responsibility, and development of viable political parties. Abueva further highlights that large-scale graft in capital-hungry economies can funnel capital to struggling entrepreneurs and foster the creation of industries. Conversely, various studies conducted by the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have reported negative impacts of corruption on investment, economic growth, and the political process (World Bank, 1997; UNDP, 1998).

According to scholarly sources, the cultural relativity argument asserts that corruption in developing countries is influenced by factors such as confusion between giving gifts and bribes, rapid modernization, the burden of the extended-family system, and the absence of a public domain (Myrdal, 1968; Huntington, 1968, 1979). De Dardan (1999) claims that the lack of public property in traditional African societies has led to African leaders' inability to distinguish between their public and private responsibilities. However, this notion is contradicted by the existence of communal farmland and roads in traditional African structures, which constitute a public domain. Furthermore, Kallon (2003) argues that the public domain argument is inconclusive, especially considering that many corrupt individuals in Africa are well-educated and have received Western training. This investigation primarily examines the causes of corruption in Nigeria, incorporating relevant literature.

- **Historical and Political Factors**

One of the causes of corruption in Nigeria can be traced to its colonial history. During the period of British colonialism, the country was governed by a small elite in collaboration with the British authorities. This system of governance led to the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few, which created an unequal distribution of resources and opportunities. This created a culture of greed and impunity that persists to this day (Mehrotra et al., 2012). Moreover, post-independence Nigeria has been characterized by political instability, which has been linked to the prevalence of corruption. The country has witnessed several military coups, which have disrupted the continuity of governance and have led to the embezzlement of public funds. The military regimes were also known for their disregard for the rule of law and the enforcement of corrupt practices (Adeleke et al., 2015).

- **Lack of Transparency and Accountability**

Transparency and accountability are essential components of good governance. However, Nigeria's public institutions are known for their lack of transparency and accountability. The absence of these vital traits enables corruption to thrive. For instance, public officials are not required to declare their assets and liabilities, and there are no effective mechanisms to monitor their activities. This leads to a situation where corrupt officials can embezzle public funds without fear of sanction (Lambsdorff et al., 2017). Furthermore, the Nigerian legal system is riddled with bureaucratic bottlenecks that make it difficult to prosecute corrupt officials. There is no proper framework for whistleblowers, and those who expose corruption are often subjected to harassment and intimidation (Ojukwu, 2013).

- **Socio-Economic Factors**

The socio-economic factors that contribute to corruption in Nigeria are multi-faceted. Poverty is a significant factor that is linked to corruption. The high level of poverty in Nigeria has led to a situation where many citizens depend on government aid for survival. This has created a culture of patronage, where officials who provide these services are seen as doing a service to the people. This leads to a situation where officials engage in corrupt practices to maintain power and influence (Adeleke et al., 2015). In addition, Nigeria is a country that is rich in natural resources, such as oil and gas. The exploitation of these resources has been linked to the prevalence of corruption. The revenue from these resources is often mismanaged and embezzled by officials. This has been compounded by the weak regulatory environment, which enables officials to exploit loopholes to engage in corrupt practices (Mehrotra et al., 2012).

There are many important studies that provided explanations on the causes of corruption in Nigeria. Ulu(2009) mentioned eleven factors responsible for widespread corrupt practices in the country. These are; selfishness, greed and ostentatious lifestyle, pressure from home front, pressure from the larger society, fear of poverty, lack of adequate social welfare system, extreme ethnicity and unpatriotism, availability of safe havens, lack of political will, apathy on the part of most citizens, and invisible factor (evilspirit). Nwaze(2012), on the other hand, identified five reasons why corruption has become an endemic social problem in Nigeria which include; weak institutional enforcement framework, commanders without army (disconnect between leaders and followers in Nigeria), lack of ethical standards in governance, poorreward systemand extended family.



### **Measures Taken by the Nigerian Government to Tackle Corruption:**

Corruption is a major challenge facing Nigeria's development, undermining public trust, and fueling social and political instability (Olajide, 2020). Therefore, the Nigerian government has implemented several measures to address corruption in various sectors, including legal, institutional, and cultural approaches. This paper highlights the measures taken by Nigeria's government to tackle corruption in the country.

#### **★ Legal Measures**

The Nigerian government has passed several laws to curb corruption and punish corrupt practices. The most prominent of these laws are the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) Act of 2000, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Act of 2004, and the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act of 2011 (Odinkalu, 2017). These laws provide for the investigation, prosecution, and punishment of individuals involved in corrupt practices such as bribery, embezzlement, and money laundering. Furthermore, Nigeria is a signatory to several international agreements, including the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUPCC)(Odinkalu, 2017). These agreements require states to take measures aimed at reducing corruption and promoting transparency and accountability within governance structures (Ogunrinade, 2019).

The government has established mechanisms such as the Freedom of Information Act, which enables citizens to access information held by public institutions (Nwanze & Orji, 2019). Additionally, the government has initiated efforts to improve financial management and governance, including the implementation of a single treasury account and the deployment of the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS). The Nigerian government enacted a Public Procurement Act which aimed at ensuring transparency and accountability in public procurement. The Act sets out the rules and procedures for public procurement and requires that contracts are awarded through competitive bidding. The Act also establishes the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) to oversee compliance with the Act.

However, no matter the amount of legal frame put in any nation but lack the independence of the judiciary; that fight would be a defeated one from the very beginning. Just as the saying goes, “the court is the last hope of the common man” in any democratic institution. Hence, in order not to give room for jungle justice to thrive, any democratic nation must avail the court the independence to discharge their constitutional duties without any interference from either the executive or legislative organs of government. In the developed climes, they tenaciously hold onto the independent of their judicial system knowing that its failure is automatically the end to democracy. Because we as a country practice a democratic system, the 1999 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended under section 6 made provision for the judiciary. Hence, anyone who feels that his/her rights has been, is being or is likely to be trampled upon has right to seek redress at the court of law seized with the requisite constitutional jurisdiction and justice

will be served. It is unfortunate that the fight against corruption has not yielded the desired results despite the amount of resources that has been expended in the judiciary and some of the anti-graft agencies such as EFCC, ICPC and others. This is not far fetch from the fact that some judicial officers who ordinarily ought to protect and defend and promote justice and rule of law have becomes an enemy of justice. Some conspire with some anti-graft agencies in company of the defendant's/suspect's lawyer to pervert justice after the suspect/defendant has offered them some huge amount of money just to get off the hook. It is no longer news that some defendant's lawyers most times have seen technicalities as a soft landing for their clients whenever they perceive that their client may be convicted after they have tried to bribe their way through and it failed. There are plethora of instances where an accused person was discharged and possibly acquitted on the altar of technicalities especially in matters that deals with fraud and money laundering. A good example is the FRN v Orji Uzor Kalu, where he was discharged and acquitted under the guise of technicalities and this has been the window that most persons who have been alleged of corrupt practices have had their freedom and the judiciary must find a way to discouraged same and rather decide the case based on the substance of it and not on technicalities.

#### ★ Institutional Measures

The Nigerian government has strengthened the institutions responsible for preventing and combating corruption. One of the significant efforts made by the government is the establishment of anti-corruption agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC). These agencies are responsible for investigating and prosecuting corrupt officials (Ogunrinade, 2019). The EFCC and the ICPC are the two primary anti-corruption agencies with a mandate to investigate and prosecute corruption cases. To make the agencies more efficient, the government has made efforts to ensure their autonomy, increase their institutional capacity, and provide them with adequate resources to carry out their mandate (Uzairue & Oghagbon, 2020). Another effort made by the Nigerian Government to tackle corruption is the establishment of e-governance systems. These systems enable online interaction between citizens and government institutions, thereby reducing the opportunities for corrupt practices in public service delivery (Uzairue & Oghagbon, 2020).

#### ★ Cultural Measures

The Nigerian government has adopted certain policies to change the existing cultural norms that fuel corruption. One of these policies is the National Orientation Agency (NOA) strategy known as 'Re-orientation of Nigerian Values and National Ethics Project.' The strategy aims to promote ethical values such as integrity, honesty, and hard work while condemning corrupt practices (Olajide, 2020). The project involves campaigns that have been implemented across Nigeria to encourage citizens to adopt ethical values, as well as public sector reforms aimed at reducing opportunities for graft. The government has strengthened oversight institutions, such as the Auditor-General's office and the Public Complaints Commission, to ensure greater accountability

and transparency in government operations. Furthermore, the government has approved the National Anti-Corruption Strategy, which is a roadmap to guide the fight against corruption. The strategy includes the development of a public service code of conduct, civil society involvement, and the establishment of public-private partnerships to minimize corruption in the private sector (Ogunrinade, 2019).

Moreover, the government has launched several campaigns, including the War Against Indiscipline, the War Against Corruption, and the Change Begins with Me campaign. These campaigns aim to change the cultural and social norms surrounding corruption and promote ethical values such as honesty, integrity, and accountability (Olajide, 2020). The Nigerian government has implemented a Whistleblower Policy aimed at encouraging citizens to report cases of corruption. The policy rewards people who provide credible information that leads to the recovery of stolen assets. The policy has led to the recovery of billions of naira in stolen assets and the prosecution of several high-profile corrupt persons.

In addition, the Nigerian government implemented various measures to tackle corruption, including the establishment of anti-corruption agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), and the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB). The Nigerian government has also introduced various policies and reforms aimed at promoting transparency, accountability, and good governance. The establishment of anti-corruption agencies has become a key strategy for addressing this problem. These agencies are charged with investigating, prosecuting, and preventing corruption in both the public and private sectors. These measures include the Treasury Single Account (TSA), the Whistleblower Policy, and the Open Government Partnership (OGP).

The Nigerian government requires all public officials to declare their assets before taking public office and after leaving office. The Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) is responsible for enforcing compliance with this requirement. This measure is aimed at ensuring that public officials do not use their position to acquire illegal wealth. Moreover, The Nigerian government has implemented a Treasury Single Account (TSA) aimed at consolidating all government revenue in one account. This measure is aimed at ensuring transparency and preventing the diversion of funds. The implementation of TSA has led to the recovery of billions of naira in stolen funds.

### **Impact of measures taken by the Nigerian Government**

Corruption has been a long-standing challenge for Nigeria, impeding its development and causing a loss of public trust in the government. The Nigerian government has taken measures to tackle corruption and improve the country's socio-economic status, but how effective have these measures been? This study examines the impact of measures taken by the Nigerian government in fighting corruption.

One of the measures taken by the Nigerian government to tackle corruption was the establishment of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in 2003, followed by the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) in 2000

(Ogundele, 2020). The EFCC and ICPC were created with the aim of investigating and prosecuting corrupt public officials and institutions, as well as recovering stolen assets. Over the years, both agencies have recorded some success in their operations, including the recovery of billions of naira in stolen assets (Abah, 2020). In 2015, President Muhammadu Buhari established the Presidential Advisory Committee Against Corruption (PACAC) to help tackle corruption in the country. The committee was mandated to develop a national anti-corruption strategy, ensure coordination between law enforcement agencies, and advise the government on anti-corruption policies (Adegbite, 2020). This was a significant step towards fighting corruption in Nigeria.

Another measure taken by the Nigerian government was the introduction of electronic platforms for transparency and accountability in public finance management. These measures include the Treasury Single Account (TSA) and the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS), which were introduced in 2015 and 2017, respectively. The TSA aimed to consolidate all government revenues into a single account to reduce leakages and foster accountability, while the IPPIS was designed to automate the payment of salaries and eliminate ghost workers on the government's payroll (Agbese, 2020). The implementation of these measures has resulted in an improved financial management system, reduced fraud and corruption in the payroll, and significant savings for the government (Abah, 2020).

Furthermore, the Nigerian government has enacted laws and policies aimed at preventing and combating corruption. One of these is the Whistleblower Policy, which was introduced in 2016 to encourage the reporting of corruption cases and provide incentives for whistleblowers. The policy has led to the recovery of a significant amount of looted public funds since its implementation (Abubakar, 2020). Additionally, Nigeria has signed and ratified several international anti-corruption treaties and conventions, such as the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AU-CPC), signaling its commitment to fighting corruption and improving accountability (Van Rooij, 2020).

Despite these measures, corruption remains a significant challenge in Nigeria. Some critics argue that the EFCC and ICPC face operational and political constraints that limit their effectiveness, such as insufficient funding, inadequate institutional capacity, and undue interference by political elites (Agbese, 2020). Additionally, some stakeholders have raised concerns about the selective targeting of corruption cases and the lack of transparency in the use of recovered funds (Abubakar, 2020).

In conclusion, the measures taken by the Nigerian government to combat corruption have had some positive impacts, such as the recovery of stolen assets and an improved financial management system. However, corruption remains a significant problem in the country, and more needs to be done to address the root causes of corruption and strengthen anti-corruption institutions. The government must prioritize the need for transparency and accountability to ensure that these measures are effective in reducing corruption in Nigeria.

### **Challenges Hampering the Fight against Corruption in Nigeria:**

Corruption is a pervasive problem in Nigeria that affects every sector of the economy. It is a major barrier to economic development, political stability, and social justice. Despite various efforts to tackle corruption, Nigeria remains one of the most corrupt countries in the world, with a low ranking on the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2020. This paper discusses some of the challenges that hamper the fight against corruption in Nigeria.

➤ **Weak Institutional and Legal Frameworks**

One of the major challenges facing the fight against corruption in Nigeria is the weak institutional and legal frameworks. The country's legal system lacks effective measures to investigate, prosecute, and punish corrupt officials. There are no strong anti-corruption laws, and the few available ones are not adequately enforced. Also, the institutions tasked with fighting corruption such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) are faced with inadequacy of staff, poor funding, and the lack of independence. Nigeria's legal framework for combating corruption is considered weak, as it lacks effective measures to investigate, prosecute and punish corrupt officials. This has led to a lack of confidence in the legal system and has allowed corrupt individuals to escape justice (Ogbu, 2018).

➤ **Political Will**

Another challenge facing the fight against corruption in Nigeria is the lack of political will to address corruption. Corruption is pervasive in Nigeria, and it affects every sector of the economy. However, politicians and government officials have been accused of being involved in corrupt activities, thereby making it difficult for them to take decisive actions against corruption. A lack of political will has resulted in an inconsistent approach to the enforcement of anti-corruption laws, weak judicial processes, and the protection of corrupt officials (Ezagbogun, 2017).

➤ **Inadequate Public Education and Awareness**

Many Nigerians do not understand the negative impact of corruption, and this makes it difficult for them to demand accountability from their leaders or challenge corrupt practices. This is compounded by the lack of access to information and a weak media landscape that does not effectively report on corruption issues. Citizens' apathy towards exposing corruption and participating in the fight against corruption affects the efforts of law enforcement agencies in Nigeria (Akpan, 2020).

➤ **Institutionalized Non-Transparency**

In Nigeria, non-transparency is institutionalized, and this has made it difficult to tackle corruption as it provides a breeding ground for corrupt practices. The bureaucratic bottlenecks, lack of accountability and transparency in the public and private institutions have led to a proliferation of corrupt practices, making it difficult to trace the financial flows of illicit wealth. This makes it hard for the state agencies to recover stolen public funds through the prosecution of corrupted officers.

➤ **Poverty and Inequality**

Corruption is linked to poverty and inequality, and addressing these broader societal issues is key to tackling corruption in Nigeria. Poverty and inequality drive people to engage in corrupt practices, and corruption further exacerbates poverty and inequality by diverting resources away from their intended beneficiaries. Public officials who abuse their power have severely detrimental effects on society as a whole, especially on the poor and vulnerable groups (Ugboajah, 2017). In conclusion, corruption in Nigeria is a multifaceted problem that requires an all-inclusive effort by all stakeholders, including the government, civil society, media, and the general public. It requires strengthening institutional and legal frameworks, addressing political will, increasing public awareness, and addressing the broader societal issues of poverty and inequality. The fight against corruption requires a multi-pronged approach to tackle all of its facets conclusively.

➤ **Tribalism and religious sentiments**

Nigeria as a nation has over 350 languages and tribes and three major religious organizations such as Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religion (ATC). Hence, this has made the fight of corruption extreme difficult though it ought not to be, because, some other nations like India, Ghana have similar features but they still promote justice and equity. When any anti-graft agency like EFCC goes after anyone who they reasonably believe has committed an offence known to law, some section of a particular tribe or religion sees it as witch-hunting even when it is very glaring and obvious that person has breach the law. This tactics has been used over the years by some of the corrupt leaders through the media so as to cause ethnic or religious crisis and this must be discouraged.

## **Discussion of Findings**

The findings suggest that corruption in Nigeria is a complex issue that is linked to historical, socio-economic, and political factors. Lack of transparency and accountability in public institutions, poverty, and weak institutional and legal frameworks are identified as significant contributors to corruption. Additionally, the paper highlights the measures taken by the Nigerian government to tackle corruption in various sectors, as well as the challenges hindering the fight against corruption.

It is essential to address corruption in Nigeria as it undermines public trust, fuels social and political instability and is a major barrier to economic development and social justice. Therefore, the Nigerian government needs to implement institutional reforms, strengthen legal frameworks, and improve public education and awareness to effectively combat corruption. Additionally, addressing poverty and inequality is crucial to reducing the prevalence of corruption in Nigeria.

## **Recommendation**

Nigeria has a long history of corruption, and despite various efforts to combat it, the country remains one of the most corrupt in the world. Effectively combating corruption requires a comprehensive approach that addresses the underlying causes of corruption, such as poverty and

inequality. This paper has provided recommendations for addressing the challenges identified in the fight against corruption in Nigeria, including strengthening institutional and legal frameworks, increasing political will and public participation, and addressing poverty and inequality, among others.

❖ **Strengthen Institutional and Legal Frameworks**

To effectively combat corruption in Nigeria, there is a need to strengthen institutional and legal frameworks. The government needs to ensure the independence, effectiveness, and sustainability of the anti-corruption agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC). These agencies should be adequately funded, staffed, and empowered to investigate, prosecute and punish offenders. Furthermore, there is a need to enact and enforce strong anti-corruption laws that will act as a deterrent to corrupt officials and individuals. These laws should focus on issues such as asset recovery, whistleblowing, and the protection of whistleblowers (Olaosebikan & Adekunle, 2017).

❖ **Increase Political Will and Public Participation**

To effectively tackle corruption, there is a need for political will and public participation. The government should demonstrate political will by taking decisive actions against corrupt officials regardless of their political affiliations. The judiciary and law enforcement agencies should also take a more proactive role in the fight against corruption by ensuring that cases are tried and concluded in a timely, transparent, and unbiased manner. In addition, the media should be empowered to expose corrupt practices and ensure that public officials are held accountable for their actions (Ogbu, 2018). The public needs to be adequately educated and sensitized on the negative effects of corruption, and their active participation is essential in creating a culture of transparency and accountability. This can be achieved through civic education and public campaigns to raise awareness about the consequences of corruption.

❖ **Strengthen Transparency and Accountability**

Transparency and accountability are critical in combating corruption. The government should ensure that public institutions are transparent and accountable in their operations, including procurement, budgeting, and financial reporting. There is a need for stricter enforcement of governance norms, including asset disclosure requirements, monitoring of public contracting, and audit practices. Also, there should be a focus on strengthening the regulatory environment that oversees the operation and behavior of private companies and the role of international institutions such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund in supporting transparency and accountability processes (Eragbogun, 2017).

❖ **Address Poverty and Inequality**

Poverty and inequality are drivers of corruption in Nigeria, and addressing these societal issues is critical in the fight against corruption. The government needs to prioritize social welfare programs, create employment opportunities, tackle the challenges of insecurity, and reduce economic inequality. Addressing poverty and inequality through inclusive

policies and programs would reduce the incentives for engaging in corrupt acts.

- Promote the independence of the judiciary and carter for their welfare.

When there is a practical independence of the judiciary and their welfare being taking care of by the government, it would reduce the corruption in the judiciary system.

### **Conclusion:**

Corruption is a major challenge in Nigeria, having significant negative impacts on the country's economic development, political stability, and social welfare. The Nigerian government has implemented various measures to tackle corruption, but the impact of these measures has been limited due to various challenges. Addressing corruption in Nigeria requires sustained efforts by the government, civil society, and the private sector to promote transparency, accountability, and good governance practices while reducing the opportunities for corrupt practices.

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