



Research Paper

Political Corruption and Youth Restiveness in Kaduna State: Issues and Prospect.

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Abstract

This paper gives details of how the activities of corrupt political leaders affects youth's socio economic development and how youth restiveness intensify violent conflict and deviant behaviors in Kaduna state and beyond. The paper investigates the nature and forms of corruption, the effects of corruption on socio-economic development of youths and youth restiveness in Kaduna state, issues and way forward. Data for this paper were drawn from both primary and secondary source. Anomie theory which was utilized is predicated on the notion that most youths strive to achieve culturally recognized goals. A state of anomie develops when access to these goals is blocked by the activities of corrupt politicians. Corruption has led to alienation among youths and has progressed into a dysfunctional inability to integrate within normative situations of their social world like to find a job, find success in relationships, etc. The paper reveals that activities of corrupt politicians and youth restiveness are caused by lack of social ethics, ignorance, illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, and unhealthy communication among others. This produces moral deregulation and an absence of legitimate aspirations. These issues creates avenue for alternatives to goal attainment because most youths may feel alienated and purposelessness. The paper recommends among others the need for social institutions such as the justice system, the family, religion and education as agent of socialization and means of social cohesion and bond to bring about moral community in Kaduna state in particular and in Nigeria at large.

Key words: Politics; Corruption; Youth Restiveness; Youth; Socio-Economic Development.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Corruption as a social problem is as dangerous as cancer that eats into the entire social structures of the society and destroys the functioning of vital organs. According to Transparency International (1998), "Corruption is one of the greatest challenges of the contemporary world. It undermines good government, fundamentally distorts public policy, leads to the misallocation of resources, harms the private sector and private sector development and particularly hurts the poor". In the definition shared by most political scientists, political corruption is any transaction between private and public sector actors through which collective goods are illegitimately converted into private-regarding payoffs (Heidenheimer et al., 1993:6). This definition does not, however, distinguish clearly between political and bureaucratic corruption. It establishes the necessary involvement of the state and state agents in corruption, without any notion as to the level of authority where corruption takes place.

In a more strict definition, political corruption involves political decision makers. Political or *grand* corruption takes place at the high levels of the political system. It is when the politicians and state agents, who are entitled to make and enforce the laws in the name of the people, are themselves corrupt. Political corruption is when political decision-makers use the political power they are armed with, to sustain their power, status and wealth. Thus, political corruption can be distinguished from bureaucratic or *petty* corruption, which is corruption in the public administration, at the implementation end of politics.

Political corruption is therefore something *more* than a deviation from formal and written legal norms, from professional codes of ethics and court rulings. Political corruption is when laws and regulations are more

or less systematically abused by the rulers, side-stepped, ignored, or even tailored to fit their interests (Johnston, 1996).

Kaduna State in recent time has witnessed massive involvements of youth in various violence, crime and other social vices. The natures of this violence were political or economical violence and partly religious. The emergence of these conflicts and the involvements of youth in it has attracted a lot of researchers to focus their studies and highlighted the roles of youth in it. These vices includes the kidnapping and killing of innocent citizens as well as high level of theft (Asamu 2006). Kaduna State which once lived in peace with minimal youth involvement in criminal activities is now afflicted by conflict. Territorial disputes have been exacerbated by economic struggles, political manipulation, criminality and youth unemployment, resulting in ethnic and religious divisions. Banditry, theft of property and cattle, and kidnapping has also become rampant. Kaduna State lies in the Northern part of Nigeria, between the predominantly Muslim north and the predominantly Christian south. The region has become a venue for conflict between Muslim Fulani nomadic herdsmen and the Christian farmers and tensions have increased as previously open grazing lands become increasingly dominated by infrastructure such as railways, roads and urban expansion prompted by Nigeria's rapid growth. One of four initiatives in 2020 in Southern Kaduna supported by KAICIID, arose out of consultations with respected community leaders, both Christian and Muslim, aimed at finding an interreligious solution to the cycle of violence in the State. With this entire problem, political corruption has delayed the restoration of peace as many youths felt left out with no jobs and meaningful activities to keep them busy. The relationship between political corruption and youth restiveness is what this study set out to investigate.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to examine public perception on the effect of corruption on youth restiveness in Kaduna State. The specific objectives are:

1. To examine public perception on the nature and factors influencing corruption in Nigeria.
2. To assess public perception on the effects corruption on youths in Kaduna State
3. To proffer possible ways to curb corruption and its resulting consequence on human livelihood.

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical frame work according to Gadzama (2015), is the structure that holds or supports a research. It introduces and describes the theory which explains why the research problem under question exists; it also specifies which key variables influence a phenomenon of interest. The thrust of the **Anomie Theory** sought to explain the pressures that society exert on its members as many of the reasons individuals are disposed to engage in antisocial and/or illegal behaviors. Those under the societal pressure are conditioned to enact corrupt behaviors. This theory is associated with R. K Merton and E. Chinoy. Merton (1957) and Chinoy (1967) argue that the society sets goals for groups and individuals and the same society prescribes the means of attaining these goals. There are individuals whose means are not enough to attain the goals set for them by the society, leading to breeding of corrupt and unethical behaviors. Merton is of the opinion that individuals in the society receive messages of what is normal—in addition to acceptable behavior—from societal institutions. From the perspective of Merton as cited in Murphy and Robinson (2008), normal is that which is the “psychologically expectable, if not culturally approved, response to determinate social conditions”

Most people, most of the time, abide by society's rules of behavior, thereby remaining “normal.” Yet, pressures from social institutions, specifically from expectations associated with the societal goal, can lead some “to engage in nonconforming/unethical behaviors among which is corruption rather than conforming conduct” (Merton, 1957, p. 132; Murphy & Robinson, 2008, p. 503). The central theme of Merton's theory with regard to deviance and criminality asserts that criminality is a function of an overemphasis on the goals associated with accumulation of wealth, as well as a disjuncture between the goals valued by society and the means available to individuals to achieve them (Merton, 1957). Therefore, the primary instrument through which deviance and criminality are fostered has its origin in goals—means discrepancies (whether because of an overemphasis on cultural goals or goal blockage; Murphy & Robinson, 2008).

Strengths of the Theory

Anomie theory deals with the question of why norm breaks occur more clearly in certain societies or historical epochs than in others. The focus is on the link between crime and the social structure of society. According to anomie theories, crime arises in particular as a result of the pressure exerted by the unequal distribution of socio-economic resources in society. Anomie can thus be described as disturbed stability in society due to inequality in the social structure or a lack of individual or collective strategies for adapting to changing social circumstances. It further focused on the discrepancy between pre-defined goals and the limited social resources available. If there is a discrepancy between cultural (primarily economic) goals and given

possibilities to realize these goals, a structural burden arises from this. This results in a weakening of norms, anomie and finally an increased crime rate (corruption) (Wickert, 2019).

Weaknesses of the Theory

The following list presents important criticisms of Anomie Theory that served as the foundation for new theoretical developments in the sociological study of deviance and social control

1. Anomie theory does not explain conformity
2. Anomie theory does not consider "illegitimate opportunity"
3. The theory overlooks social interaction and group processes
4. It assumes a common culture in the U.S.
5. Anomie theory ignores social control
6. The theory overlooks "crime in the suites"—crimes by the wealthy and powerful

Application of the theory

The theoretical explanations above all have different approaches to what anomie is, as it affects corrupt practices. On one hand, Durkheim maintain that anomie refers to the ill formulated goals within the culture of an industrial society where as Merton relied on the Marxist explanation of the relationship between the poor and the rich in face of lopsided rules, which claims, that there is normlessness due to inadequate means available to fulfill society's goals. Ultimately, each perspective revolves around the weight that the market economy holds in regard to the spirit and atmosphere of the cultural rather than the ethos of the culture being dependent on the values set forth by the constitution. The pursuit of self-interest, attraction of monetary rewards and competitions, become exaggerated relative to the value of orientations of these institutions, resulting to economic dominance stimulating the emergence of corruption in the society. With regard to political corruption, the emphasis on competition and materialism combined with anomie ethic as theorists have termed it spark a disregard for the moral status of the way in which one achieves goals.

Nigerian society institutes value system and attitudes, which dictate expectation from its citizens and employees without considering income differential. This pressure could lead to the sufferers enacting corrupt and unethical behavior in an attempt to meet the expectations of the society. Educational elite, politicians, bureaucrats, religious elite, traditional rulers, managers of public enterprises, contractors, and so on are sufferers of this phenomenon in Nigeria (Azelama, 2002). In Nigeria, the society does not accept any reason as good enough for an employed graduate not to have a good car and a good visiting home. Political leaders, contractors, managers in a public sector, and so-on have no acceptable reason to the society for not living in affluence, donating much money at launchings (Azelama cited in Ijewereme, 2012).

Nigerian society tends to overemphasize the individual goal attainment at the expense of the legitimate means of achieving these set goals (Anazodo, Okoye, & Ezenwile, 2012).

In Nigeria, people hail you when you have accumulated wealth, material acquisition has virtually become the ultimate goal and the society does not appear to be concerned with how one "makes" it. In fact, the clergies in various religions call it "break-through". They pretend not to know that you have acquired the wealth through illegitimate means. Those who are yet to make it are regarded as those whose miracles are on the way. These value systems in our society invariably exert pressure on people, which leads to various forms of corruption such as embezzlement and misappropriation of public fund, offering and acceptance of bribe, over invoicing, illegal road blocks by police officers, rigging of election by politicians and so on which may have effects on youths in Kaduna State and also acts as a clog in the wheel of development in Nigeria. Merton anomie is highly operational in Nigeria and will be adopted for this study.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Kaduna State. The study was a survey research conducted on households selected from the study area using systematic sampling technique. A total of 186 respondents were studied. One adult respondent was drawn from each household selected using simple random sampling. Primary source of data was generated for the study using questionnaire. The data collected was coded and analyzed using the SPSS and the result was presented in frequency tables and thereafter, interpreted.

III. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

| Age | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 18 – 25years | 33 | 17.7 |
| 26 – 35years | 21 | 11.3 |
| 36 - 45years | 48 | 25.8 |
| 46years and above | 84 | 45.2 |

| | | |
|-----------------------|------------|--------------|
| Total | 186 | 100.0 |
| Sex | | |
| Male | 139 | 74.7 |
| Female | 47 | 25.3 |
| Total | 186 | 100.0 |
| Marital Status | | |
| Single | 42 | 22.6 |
| Married | 123 | 66.1 |
| Divorce/separated | 14 | 7.5 |
| Widowed | 7 | 3.8 |
| Total | 186 | 100.0 |
| Religion | | |
| Christianity | 75 | 40.3 |
| Islam | 111 | 59.7 |
| Total | 186 | 100.0 |
| Occupation | | |
| Students | 44 | 23.7 |
| Civil servant | 23 | 12.3 |
| Trading | 108 | 58.1 |
| Artisan | 11 | 5.9 |
| Total | 186 | 100.0 |

SOURCE: Field Survey, 2021

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. It was gathered that majority 84 (45.2%) of the respondents had attained the age of 46 years and above. The sex distribution shows that significant proportion 139 (74.7%) are males respondents and 47 (25.3%) are females respondents. The marital status indicated that 123 (66.1%) of them are married. The findings also revealed that 111 (59.7%) of the respondents practice Islam and majority 108 (58.1%) of them are traders.

PUBLIC PERCEPTION ON THE NATURE AND FACTORS INFLUENCING CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

Table 2: Respondents Assessment of Corruption in Nigeria

| Assessment | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|------------|--------------|
| High | 151 | 81.2 |
| Moderate | 23 | 12.4 |
| Low | 12 | 6.4 |
| Total | 186 | 100.0 |

SOURCE: Field Survey, 2021

Table 2 shows respondents assessment of corruption in Nigeria. It was gathered that an overwhelming majority 151(81.2%) of the respondents said corruption in Nigeria is high, 23(12.4%) said it is moderate while 12(6.4%) said it is low.

Table 3: Views of Respondents on the Forms of Corruption in Nigeria

| Forms | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|------------|--------------|
| Bribery and theft of public funds | 89 | 47.8 |
| Diversion of public resource for personal use | 51 | 27.4 |
| Advance fee fraud and money laundry | 12 | 6.5 |
| Nepotism and favoritism | 34 | 18.3 |
| Total | 186 | 100.0 |

SOURCE: Field Survey, 2021

Table 3 reported that 89 (47.8%) of the respondents identified bribery and theft of public funds as the most common form of corrupt practices while 12(6.5%) of the respondents said advance fee fraud and money laundry. This therefore means that bribery and theft of public funds are the most common form of corruption in Nigeria.

Table 4: Views of Respondents on Perpetrators of Corruption

| Perpetrators | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Civil servants | 41 | 22.0 |
| Political office holders | 94 | 50.5 |
| Traditional rulers | 10 | 5.4 |
| Religious leaders | 13 | 7.0 |
| Security agents | 28 | 15.1 |
| Total | 186 | 100.0 |

SOURCE: Field Survey, 2021

Table 4 shows views of respondents on the perpetrators of corruption in Nigeria. The findings indicate that 94(50.5%) of the respondents said political office holders while only 10(5.4%) of them said traditional rulers. This means that most corrupt acts perpetrated in Nigerian are done by political office holders. While this may seem to be true, obvious cases of accused persons in Nigeria today are mostly people who held one political office or the other ranging from former governors, ministers, commissioners, advisers among others.

Table 5: Views of Respondents on the Factors Influencing Corruption in Nigeria

| Factors | Agreed | Disagreed | Undecided | Total |
|--|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Weak legal/law enforcement institution | 167(89.8%) | 13(7%) | 6(3.2%) | 186(100.0%) |
| Low salary and poor working conditions | 143(76.9%) | 11(5.9%) | 32(17.2%) | 186(100.0%) |
| Lack of modesty | 88(47.3%) | 62(33.3%) | 36(19.4%) | 186(100.0%) |
| Materialism and greed | 137(73.6%) | 15(8.1%) | 34(18.3%) | 186(100.0%) |
| Weird culture and value system | 161(86.6%) | 14(7.5%) | 11(5.9%) | 186(100.0%) |
| Poor leadership | 173(93%) | 4(2.2%) | 9(4.8%) | 186(100.0%) |

SOURCE: Field Survey, 2021

Table 5 shows the views of respondents on the factors influencing corruption in Nigeria. The data collected show that 167(89.8%) of the respondents said weak legal/law enforcement institutions is responsible for the menace, 143(76.9%) said low salary and poor working conditions influences one to indulge in corrupt practices and 88(47.3%) of the respondents said that lack of modesty in society is responsible for the incidence of corrupt practice in the Nigerian society.

Also, 137(73.6%) of the respondents said that materialism and greed and 173(93%) of the respondents identified poor leadership. The finding therefore shows that poor leadership, weak law/legal institution and weird culture and value system are the major reasons behind peoples' involvement in corruption in Nigeria.

PUBLIC PERCEPTION ON THE EFFECTS OF CORRUPTION ON YOUTH RESTIVENESS IN KADUN STATE

Table 6: Views of Respondents on the Effects of Corruption on Human Livelihood

| Effects | Agree | Disagreed | Undecided | Total |
|--|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Corruption leads to inadequate supply of social amenities, equipment/facilities/infrastructures | 177(95.2%) | 3(1.6%) | 6(3.2%) | 186(100%) |
| It leads to diversion of funds meant for development | 153(82.3%) | 11(5.9%) | 22(11.8%) | 186(100%) |
| Corruption leads youths to involve in criminal activities | 98(51.9%) | 67(36%) | 21(11.1%) | 186(100%) |
| Undermine good governance, democracy and rule of law | 136(73.1%) | 39(21%) | 11(5.9%) | 186(100%) |
| Corruption provide ground for criminal activities like arm robbery, terrorism, kidnapping/hostage taking | 117(62.9%) | 15(8.1%) | 54(29%) | 186(100%) |
| Wide spread poverty | 126(67.7%) | 34(18.3%) | 26(14%) | 186(100.0%) |

SOURCE: Field Survey, 2021

Table 6 shows the views of respondents on the effect of corruption. The results show that 177(95.2%) of the respondents opined that corruption leads to inadequate supply of social amenities, equipment, facilities and infrastructures for development, 153(82.3%) said it leads to diversion of funds meant for development, while 98(51.9%) said corruption leads youths into various criminal activities. Also, significant proportion 136 (73.1%) of the respondents said that corruption undermine good governance, democracy and rule of law, 117(62.9%) said it provide ground for criminal activities like armed robbery, terrorism, kidnapping/hostage taking and 67.7% of the respondents said corruption leads to wide spread poverty among the populace. The finding shows that corruption has significant effects on inadequate supply of social amenities, equipment/facilities/infrastructures, diversion of funds meant for development and undermining of good governance, democracy and rule of law.

Table 7: Views of Respondents on whether or not Corruption can lead to Youth Restiveness

| Views | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Yes | 128 | 68.8 |
| No | 58 | 31.2 |
| Total | 186 | 100.0 |

SOURCE: Field Survey, 2021

Table 7 shows the views of the respondents on whether or not corruption can lead to youths restiveness in Kaduna State. The data show that 128(68.8%) of the respondents believed that corruption in can lead to youths restiveness while 58(31.2%) declined. This shows that a significant majority of those studied are of the

view that there is a relationship between the activities of corrupt leaders and youth involvement in different social vices in Kaduna State.

Table 8: Views of Respondents on the possible ways to Combating Corruption and Its Resultant Consequence on Youths

| Views | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|------------|--------------|
| Public officials should shun corruption and be transparent and accountable | 76 | 40.9 |
| Institution fighting corruption should be strengthen and independent of political interference | 23 | 12.4 |
| There should be frequent public education to the general public on the dangers of indulging corrupt practices | 43 | 23.1 |
| There should be strict implementation and monitoring of laws and penalty against corruption by corruption persons mated without favour | 44 | 23.6 |
| Total | 186 | 100.0 |

SOURCE: Field Survey, 2021

Table 8 shows respondents suggestions on how corruption can be combated in Kaduna State. The findings reveal that majority 76(40.9%) of the respondents suggested that public officials should shun corruption, be transparent and accountable, 44(23.6%) suggested that there should be strict implementation and monitoring of laws and penalty, corrupt persons should be made to face the wrath of the law, 43(23.1%) of them said there should be frequent public education to the general public on the dangers of indulging corrupt practices and 23(12.4%) said that the institution fighting corruption should be strengthen and independent of political interference. From the findings, frowning at corruptions by public officials and also strict implementation of laws against corruption in Nigeria would go a long to promoting transparency and accountability thereby accelerating human development.

IV. CONCLUSION/SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATIONS

Political corruption and its relationship with Youth restiveness in Nigeria today has become devastating and has constituted one of the securities concerned to both individuals and the society in general. Youth which are considered as leaders of tomorrow are turned to be society destroyers since they were mostly involved in all conflicts and violence that the country suffers. Obviously, government has not been reluctant to the phenomenon, but the strategy adopted in curbing most the restiveness in Kaduna was more of repressive and violence acts through the deployment of police to curb the menace. The government continues to use reprisal means to suppress the restiveness in the area. Again, the development commissions, boards and ministry established by the government as the responds to the demands of the people never made any meaningful achievements rather the serves as avenue for self enrichment and corruption at the expense of the poverty stricken masses of the region (Chukuezi 2009). The state of insecurity in the State is no more a news. But the worrisome is the way and manner which the leaders are handling the state of affairs in relation to corrupt practices (Alubo 2012).

Corruption in Kaduna State now exists at an alarming proportion. In government, it thrives in the areas of project costing; ghost workers syndrome; contract awards and their subsequent abandonment; embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds; among others. The impacts of corruption on youths and their livelihood include poor service delivery, inadequate infrastructure, bad governance, pervasive dehumanizing poverty, and general underdevelopment. The study therefore recommends that:

1. There is a need for social institutions such as the justice system, the family, religion and education as agent of socialization and means of social cohesion and bond to bring about moral community among youths in Kaduna state in particular and in Nigeria at large.
2. The Nigerian anti-graft agencies should be strengthened and allow to operate independent of political interference.
3. Persons found guilty of corrupt practices should be duly punished according to the law.
4. Public office officials should imbibe and cultivate habits of good governance that would ensure transparency; probity; and accountability in governance.
5. Also, Government and religious bodies should regularly carry out massive orientation and education program to the general public on the ills of corruption with the views to always exhibit virtues of integrity, accountability, transparency and selfless service.

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