**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**The study of corruption was conducted in Federal Capital Territory Abuja (FCT), Lagos and Rivers State, among representatives from diverse sectors in Nigeria. A total of thirty in Depth Interviews and six focus group discussions were conducted in three states. Most of the participants agree that corruption does not only exist in Nigeria but is deeply rooted. Corruption slowly crept into the system but now rapidly destroying almost every sector of the Nigerian economy and governance. All the participants established that they have been a victim of corruption either directly or indirectly. They were unanimous in their hope that the battle against corruption can be won if the right approaches, attitudes and changes are made both individually and more importantly collectively. However, some participants were of the opinion that corruption can never be completely purged from the Nigerian system but can only be curbed to be a bearable minimum.**

**Religious leaders were of the view that every effort in the fight against corruption will amount to no avail, except people embrace religious truth and tenets. Representatives from Civil Society Organization (CSO) strongly believe that no individual or country can win the battle against corruption as long as he or she has friends or family existing within the same system. Law makers who participated called for reviews of the Nigeria constitution to ensure provision of suffer punishments for persons convicted of corrupt practices.**

**The general opinion from the focus group discussion is that corruption affects the poor more than the rich. Participants agreed that the major motivation for corruption is greed from people in government and poverty among the general population. They echoed that corruption is very prevalent in both the private and public sectors and that the leadership of those sectors by their actions and inactions determine whether corruption will thrive or not. Participants believe that the public authorities have lost the confidence of the people; hence no incentive to report cases of corruption to the relevant anti-corruption authorities. Participants submitted that stringent punishments will serve as deterrent to intending perpetrators.**

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**Introduction**

**Any discourse on corruption across developing countries like Nigeria in the 21st century not to establish its existence, as this is well founded. Rather, it is to ascertain the diverse manifestation, proportions, and patterns of corruptions and particularly, practical ways to curb its pervasive threat in order to pave way for sustainable development. The widely held world bank definition of corruption as “the abuse or misuse of office for private gains” portrays the phenomena as menace occurring in the public domain alone. However, a cursory look at the reality shows that corruption is ubiquitous, as it pervade both the public and private sectors, in both the developing countries of the world.**

**The existing body of knowledge on corruption in Nigeria tits to its public, state-centric, official, micro and bureaucratic nature, to the neglect of the private, social, unofficial, macro and informal side. The Nigerian state and the larger society have had to grapple with mind-boggling and unprecedented cases of corruption from the early post-independence years, to the most recent happenings in her political history. Indeed, the inefficiency of the first three republics was in connection to corruption, while the present fourth republic is also seriously threatened by this trend. Consequently, the study seeks to provide an overview of the patterns and manifestations of corruption in Nigeria.**

**Aim and Objectives**

**The overall aim of the study is to determine the pattern, experiences and manifestation of corruption in Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the are to determine:**

* **General awareness/definition of corruption in Nigeria**
* **Patterns of corruption in Nigeria**
* **Manifestations of corruption in Nigeria**
* **Possible solution to corruption in in Nigeria**
* **Ways to implement these solutions towards the eradication of corruption in Nigeria**

**Research Questions**

**In specific terms, this study seeks to answer the following question:**

1. **What are the general manifestations of corruption across various sectors in Nigeria?**
2. **What are the experiences of Nigerians with respect to corruption?**
3. **What are the motivations for getting involved in corrupt practices?**
4. **What are the perceptions of Nigerians and public office holders on corruption in Nigeria?**

**Research Methodology**

**Study Design**

**The research was commission as a qualitative study in other to capture individual and group perception, experiences and opinion on corruption in Nigeria. Qualitative research takes an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject maters and qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in the terms of the meanings that people bring to them. For the purpose of this study, the methods of data collection involve use of in-depth interview (IDI), and focus group discussion (FGD). Semi-structed interviews are conducted on the basis of a loose structure consisting of open-ended questions that define the area to be explored, at least initially, and from which the interviewer or participant may diverge in order to pursue an idea in more detail. A total of 30 IDIs and 6 FGDs were conducted to provide unbiased responses to the research questions.**

**Study Location**

**The qualitative study was conducted among individuals, government and civil society groups in Abuja, Rivers, and Lagos States. The study locations are capital cities drawn from the North, South and Western Nigeria.**

**Study Population**

**Participants for the In-Depth Interviews were drawn from the sectors presented in the table below.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **S/No** | **Sector** | **Justification** |
| **1** | **The judiciary/ court of law** | **This group interprets the law and has been a key player in the prosecution of offenders** |
| **2** | **Law Enforcement Agencies (The Nigerian Police Force)** | **The Nigeria police is responsible for apprehending and procecuting cases of corruption and they have also been widely accused of corrupt practices** |
| **3** | **Media Organizations** | **The media plays a critical role in shaping public opinion and represents a key stakeholder in the ongoing fight against corruption in Nigeria.** |
| **4** | **Religious/Traditional leader** | **Responsible for behavior change and maintenance and also regarded as opinion leaders whose position on issues like corruption go a long way to influence the behavior and practices of followers and subjects** |
| **5** | **Civil Society Organizations** | **Responsible for advocating peace and transparency and has been at the fore front of the fight against corruption in Nigeria** |
| **6** | **Government Ministries (Office of the Head of Service)** | **Coordinates affairs of government workers and government ministries where corruption such as petty theft and bribery is believed to be deep seated.** |
| **7** | **House of Assembly** | **Made up of politician who have been perceived as responsible for the state of corruption in the country.** |
| **8** | **Anti-Corruption Agencies** | **Set up by law to make arrest releted to corruption and prosecute perpetrators. They have also been accuse of partiality and one sidedness.** |
| **9** | **Professional bodies and registered association e.g Nigeria Medical & Dental Association** | **Coordinates and regulate affairs of members and expected to institute law and polices that will prevent corrupt practices and apprehend offenders.** |
| **10** | **Non-Governmental Organizations** | **They receive donor funds and implement project with little or no oversight from the government.** |

**Sample Size**

**A total of 30 in-depth interviews and 6 focus group discussion were conducted in the three state for study. In each state, 10 IDIs and 2 FGDs were conducted.**

**Findings from the in-depth Interviews**

**Most of the participants agree that corruptions does not only exist in Nigeria, but is deeply rooted. It slowly crept into the system but is now rapidly destroying almost every sector of the Nigeria economy and governance. They were unanimous in their hope that the battle against corruption can be won if the right approaches, attitudes and changes are made individually and more importantly collectively. However some participants were of the opinion that corruption can never be completely purged from the Nigerian system, but can only be curbed to a bearable minimum.**

**General opinion about corruption**

**The general opinion from participants is that corruption is any conscious action or inaction, process or procedure, perpetuated by an individual or group that unfairly and unduly appropriates rewards, resources, or advantage to some individuals or group at the expense of others. Most participants corruption as an impairment of moral values, denying you of what belong to you. Participants further stress that corruption is not only in finance but in all sector and can also be expressed in character, thought, relationship, family among others.**

**Overview of corruption in Nigeria**

**Participants believed that Nigerians are the architect of corruption due to the way people celebrate financial success and ascribe value to an individual based on the position they occupy in the society. In addition, participants believed that corruption has eaten deep in the Nigerian government system in the era of bribe and kickbacks. All participants believed that corruption is engrained in Nigeria, both in the public and private sectors, family, household, religious institution, civil service, judiciary, police, house of assemblies and many other such systems.**

**Several of the participants attributed the deplorable state of the country to corruption and total negligence. Some participants believe that individuals contribute to corruption by not helping the relevant authorities, by not supporting the fight in their own little ways. Some participants say people have refused to even talk about corruption. Some participants are of the opinion that individuals contribute to corruption by accepting bribes from politicians before they vote in elections. Generally, by not doing what you are supposed to do as a citizen or doing it wrongly, you are contributing to corruption in the country.**

**Motivation for Involvement in Corruption**

**Majority opinion from this study is that greed is essentially the highest motivation for corruption. A few argued that it could also be other issues such as poverty, economic headship, quest for fame and recognition, peer pressure from the family, that may be responsible for engaging in corrupt practices. Several of the participants also believe that soft punishments meted to corrupt persons act as huge motivation to people to indulge in corruption. Both male and female participants were unanimous in their opinion on the motivation for corruption although female participants believed men do take undue advantage of women. Also, participants in Rivers State and FCT mentioned and mentioned the high cost of living as responsible for engagement in fraud and bribery citing house rent and meager salary to meet the family needs as major factors.**

**Individual Experiences of corruption**

**Several of the participants have been a victim of corruption personally in the form of deprivation of certain rights and benefits within their place of work in favour of another person who is perceived to be enjoying some support from the leadership. Also participants mentioned situations where they were denied service in favour of another person who have arrived late than themselves due to financial status or positions in the community, especially when services are supposed to be first come first serve basis. Participants agreed that corruption has affected everyone in Nigeria especially the poor, such as denial of civil right, social amenities, stealing or diverting public funds for selfish gains, extortions from the police, discrimination, tribalism and favouritism in awarding or rewarding and selecting public offices.**

**Some gender differences were observed in personal experiences of corruption in Nigeria. While female participants mentioned payment of bribe to gain admission or pass exams in school exchanging sex for similar favour and being a victim of employment scam, male participants reported bribing government officials and the police at the one time or the other. Most of the participants across the three states have engaged in bribery at one point or the other and have been denied of their rights to employment, promotion, and other benefits in favour of another person who is seen to be enjoying some support from authority.**

**General Manifestation of corruption in Nigeria**

**Corruption is manifested in several ways in Nigeria based on the opinion of participants. While most of the participants mentioned bribe and kickbacks as one of the most prevalent forms of corruption, others mentioned favoritism, tribalism, and nepotism, gross embezzlement by government officials, fraud , employment racketeering, double standard and lack of accountability. Also some form of corruption such as exam malpractices, internet fraud, falsification of results and unauthorized increment in prices of goods and services delayed services, advance fee fraud, impersonation, internet and cyber-crime were among the list of corrupt practiced that are common in Nigeria as reported by the participants. They believed that an average Nigerian sees the public office holders as corrupt.**

**Participants were of the belief that government officials contribute largely to corruption in Nigeria. This is perpetuated through the misuse of office, lack of accountability. And diverting of public funds. Instance was the budget padding saga that happened in the National Assembly about 2 years ago.**

**Individual Efforts in the Fight Against Corruption**

**Almost all the participants mentioned that they are involved in the fight against corruption in one way or the other. Firstly, most of that respondents mentioned that the way to fight corruption is not to be involved in activities that foster corruption. Therefore, the first rule to eradicating corruption as reported is self-discipline. This was explained as not asking, giving or receiving bribes and kickback, not compromising standards. However, the participants believed that the people will conform if there are strict and tougher measures deployed in the fight against corruption. Individuals can only do so little in the absence of an enabling environment. All the participants believed that the attitude of “why not do it if everyone is doing it” is what fosters corruption in Nigeria. Generally, by not doing what you are supposed to do as a citizen or doing it wrongly, you are contributing to corruption in the country. Others mentioned barriers such as not trusting who to report corruption to since all the system is corrupt. Some of these opinions are demonstrated in excerpts below.**

**“I don’t think so, I’m not involved, but I preach against it to my children, to my family, so in that way I think I’m trying to work on my family units” – Staff, FCT judiciary**

**“Of course that is what we are here for, we are here to serve you in our best abilities, in fact we are here to protect from the hands of these corrupt persons and make sure they pay for their crimes when caught…” – Police officer, FCT Abuja**

**Winning the battle against corruption: Barriers and recommendations**

**On the possibility of winning the battle against corruption in Nigeria, participants had mixed opinions. While some of the participants believed that the battle against corruption can be won if serious measures are put in place to prevent corrupt practices and punish offenders, others believed that a corrupt system cannot battle corruption. The fear as resonated by the participants is that Nigeria is fighting corruption using the same institutions, systems, people and practices that were established through corruption itself and had benefited largely from corruption in Nigeria. Participants believed that Nigeria will need to clean the system before any meaningful achievement can be recorded in the fight against corruption. Most of the participants believed this is achievable through strong leadership and commitment.**

**Most of the participants agree to the use of more stringent punishments for corrupt officers and individuals proven guilty. They also advocate strengthening of relevant institutions charged with the fight against corruption, like the EFCC, the police, the judiciary, the media and so on. Some participants are of the opinion that an anticorruption war is a course that must be championed by the leadership before it will stand a chance, starting with new polices and constitutional amendments that will enhance our chance of defeating corruption.**

**Finidings from Focus Group Discussions**

**The general opinion from the focus group discussions is that corruption affects the poor more than the rich. They also agreed that the major motivation for corruption is greed from people in government and poverty among the general population. They opined corruption is very perverse both in private and public sectors and that the head of a group or country determines if corruption will flourish or not within the system they govern.**

**Ever begin a victim of corruption.**

**Generally, all the participants admitted begin victims of corruption, suffering in one way or the other in hands of corrupt individuals, institutions, and the general system. Female participants suffered more than male participants from corruption within the educational system. It appears from the FGDs that females have been victim of corruption more than males. Both male and female participants mentioned begin victim of drivers license scam, employment scam, price hike and police harassment.**

**Corruption affects the poor more than the rich**

**This particular point ins instigated more participants during the sessions. The opinion of participants was not absolute, but the general understanding is that the poor suffer more from corruption. However some participants argued that the rich also suffer consequences of corruption are victims too. They cited court decisions, employment opportunities, purchasing power, standard of education etc as instances that back their arguments for the poor. However, participants admitted that on general note, corruption affects both the richer class and the poorer class. It suffers to admit based on the arguments that corruption affects everyone in the country, but not as much as it affects the poor and vulnerable.**

**The motivation to engage in corruption is always greed**

**This was another very interesting topic for participants as they expressed their thoughts with emotions. The groups were divided in opinion across the tree states. Some participants felt that there is no way you can remove greed as the only motivation for corruption regardless of circumstances, while others begged to differ. To the participants who disagree, they believe there are other strong and compelling factors that may lead to corrupt thoughts and practice like unemployment, hardship, family pressures etc. as much as freed is a basic factor in most acts of corruption it may be fair and insensitive to conclude as such and ignore other factors, situations that can force a man’s hand into doing what he will not do ordinary all things been equal.**

**Corruption also occurs in the private sectors not only in the public sectors**

**Participants were united in their opinions that corruption transcends facets, sectors, métiers, or group in the society. And they backed this up with personal experiences and examples. Based on the discussion, it suffices to agree that corruption is not limited to public sectors only.**

**If the head is corrupt other members of the team will be corrupt**

**Here , participants were divided in their opinion. Some participants believed that the head has the alpha power to influence or even prevent corruption from subordinates. Whereas other participants believe that the case is not always the same, citing example of people who will never compromise their faiths, believes, or characters for personal gratifications.**

**There is no incentive to report corruption to public authorities**

**Participants were of the opinion that the Nigerian police and relevant institutions have failed woefully in this regard. They recounted instances and experiences to depict fear from Nigerians to cooperate or support the institutions because of fear or loss of faith in their ability to act on your report.**

**Suggestions on effective measures against corruption**

**The most frequently mentioned measure mentioned by participants against corruption is employing stringent measures, for corrupt officials or individuals alike, to act as deterrent for people to indulge in corruption. Strengthening of relevant government institutions and upholding the rule of law and separation of power. Some participants also advised exemplary life styles by leaders amongst others. Some of these opinions are demonstrated in excerpts below.**

**Corruption**

**This study has provided insight into the patterns, experiences and manifestations of corruption in Nigeria. Participants are quite convinced about the fact that corruption is perverse in Nigeria, affecting both the rich and the poor. The current deplorable state of the country’s infrastructure and governance has been linked directly to corruption in the public, private and family systems. Several suggestions for tackling corruption were provided such as changing our moral and value systems, improvement in welfare packages for civil servants and the law enforcement agencies and ensuring stiffer punishment for perpetrators. The study revealed that for Nigeria to be corruption free, the Presidency has to lead the fight and demonstrate zero tolerance to corruption in his actions and inactions. There will be much achievement in the fight against corruption in the nearest future if anti-corruption agencies are empowered and supported by the judiciary to prosecute and punish offenders. A review of the Nigeria constitution may be necessary to achieve maximum sentences for convicted offenders. Finally, the fight against corruption must start from the individual and the family which will ultimately lead to having persons with good morals and family background occupying positions and making the right decisions.**