

EFFECT OF CORRUPTION ON SERVICE DELIVERY: A STUDY OF NIGER STATE PUBLIC SERVICE

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ABSTRACT

This paper adopted secondary data to examine the effect of corruption on efficient and effective service delivery in Niger State public service. The paper argued that productive time, energy and enormous financial and material resources which could have been used for the implementation of meaningful economic and social development projects and programmes have been undermined because of corruption and corruption related cases. It is the findings of this paper that efficiency and effectiveness begets quality service and quality service begets quality standard of living of citizens and their contributions to societal transformation. This paper recommends the strengthening of all anti-corruption institutions in Nigeria and Niger State to eliminate or ensure a reduction of corruption in the state to give way for meaningful and sustainable political socio-economic growth and development.

Key words: *Corruption; efficiency; effectiveness, public, service*

Introduction

The increase in government's efforts towards curbing the menace of corruption in recent time in Nigeria is alarming. Productive time, energy and enormous material and financial resources which could have been used for the implementation of meaningful economic and social development projects and programmes have been channeled to tackling corruption problems in Nigeria. Despite all these efforts, corruption has remained a "Thorn in the Flesh" of Nigeria as a nation. It has hindered the rate of sustainable political and socio-economic growth and development of the country

Nigeria as a country got her independent in October 1st 1960 and Niger State as one of the state of the Federation was created out of the North-Western Region of Nigeria on the 3rd of February 1976 with a well-established Public Service for social service delivery as obtainable in other States of the Federation. It is worthy to note here that, the Public service of that era was based on the British tenets and philosophy of efficiency and effective service delivery. It served as the machinery for the formulation and implementation of public policies, plans, projects, and programmes for the welfare of the citizenry.

It is however, sad that after several years of existence and despite huge financial resources expended by the state government to improve its performance and quality service delivery, the Niger state Public Service is still struggling to survive even in the face of various Public Service Reforms among which includes; E-governance, E-payment, E-compliance, SERVICOM, Biometric Data Capturing, Elimination of "Ghost Workers", Training and proper placement of workers on jobs. In spite of the above, the Niger State Public Service is still bedeviled with the ills of corruption, epileptic service delivery, poor employee training and performance, poor attitude to work and poor working environment continued to characterize the Niger State Public Service. All these are the effects of corruption which has taken a monumental dimension in recent time.

This research work attempts to throw more light on the negative effects of corruption on the efficiency and effectiveness of the state's Public Service. It will also look at the various causes of corruption in the Niger State Public Service, the dimension it has taken, the various efforts put in place by government, corporate bodies and private individuals in tackling the menace. It will also suggest solutions that could bring corruption in the Public Service to its barest minimum so as to attain a level of sustainable political and socio-economic growth and development.

Conceptual Clarification

Generally, the conceptualization of the term corruption has long been ideologically, morally, culturally, politically and intellectually elusive to the point of losing sight of its detrimental and parasitic symbiosis with many polities including Nigeria and their citizens all over the world. As a result of this, its definition has continued to be shrouded by value preferences and differences. This has to some extent constituted the core of the conceptual difficulty of the analysis of the subject matter of corruption. This conceptual difficulty which is attributable to many factors (Odekunle, 1986; Akindele, 1985; Yaqub, 1998) ranging from the lack of universal values with regards to different behaviours and activities (nepotism, gift-giving, patronage, party-financing) which many writers and analysts have identified as corruption, fertility of certain political environments for corruption due to inequality brought about by exploitations; expansion of governmental functions to many aspect of human existence; to the amenability of primordial attachment of strong cultural and emotional loyalties to corrupt tendencies, is of two fold.

The first concerns the actual conception of the subject-matter per se, while the second revolves around the conception of corruption in practice or reality within the socio-political cultures (beliefs, attitudes and values) of the developing nations. While the latter is rooted in the multiplicity of variables (for example, Kinship ties, family expectations, favouritism and nepotism) that demand understanding within the polities of the third world, the former

raises moralistic and objective questions (Leys, 1965). These divergent views and multiplicity of perspectives cut across disciplines, moral, social lines, and across cultures hence, the elusiveness of the indispensable universal consensus regarding the activities, behaviours and other aspects of human being's existence that could be defined as corruption.

Definitions of corruption have ranged from its type as using of public or official positions in ways that forsake public interests; deviant behaviours that encourage private gains at public expense; maladjusted behaviours that flagrantly violate the acceptable and legitimized norms of societal expectations; to its conceptualization as spoiled, unethically polluted, and rotten behaviours that diverge from the formal and expected role which the society demands of everybody. McMullan A, (1961) defines corruption in the following way: "a public official is corrupt if he/she accepts money or money's worth for doing something that he is under a duty to do or that he is under a duty not to do, or exercise a legitimate discretion for improper reasons". As for Leff (1970) Corruption is: *an extra-legal institution used by individuals or groups to gain influence over the actions of the bureaucracy.* As such, the existence of corruption per se indicates only that these groups participate in the decision-making process to a greater extent than would otherwise be the case.

Banfield (1975) used a conceptual schematization for his definition of this concept. He starts by emphasizing that the "frame of reference"(with regards to corruption) is one in which an agent (an employee) who has accepted the obligation(an employment contract) to act on behalf of his principal, (a person or organization), serves or fails to serve the interest of the principal. He also stresses that in acting on behalf of his principal an agent must exercise some discretion.

From this analogy, he explains the concept of corruption thus:

An agent is personally corrupt if he unknowingly sacrifices his principal's interest to his own, that is, if he betrays his trust. He is

officially corrupt if, in serving his principal's interest, he knowingly violates a rule; that is, act illegally or unethically albeit, in his principal's

Dwivedi (1967) sees corruption as including “nepotism, favouritism, bribery, graft and other unfair means adopted by government employees and the public alike to extract some socially and legally prohibited favours”. To Scott (1972) corruption “involves a deviation from certain acceptable standards of behaviours”. According to Thorndike-Barnhart World Book dictionary (p888), “corruption is the act of making, or the process of becoming evil or wicked. It involves bribery and dishonesty. It is synonymous with rot, decay and putridity.

Friedrich (1972) in defining corruption, argues in the following manner: The pattern of corruption may be said to exist whenever a power holder who is charged with doing certain things; that is, a responsible functionary or office holder, is by monetary or other rewards, such as the expectation of a job in the future, induced to take actions which favour whoever provides the reward and thereby damages the group or organization to which the functionary belongs (more specifically, the government and, other socio-economic institutions). In his own contribution, Gibbons and Rowat (1976), define corruption in two distinct but implicitly connected ways.

On the other hand, the term public service refers to all organizations that are responsible for the delivery of government services (Adegoroye, 2005). The term includes; the Civil Service - the career personnel of the Presidency, Ministries, Extra-Ministerial Departments, the National Assembly and the Judiciary. The public service is the bedrock upon which the government is hinged. It is the hub for the implementation of programmes, policies, plans and actions of government. (Adelegan, 2009). The Public Service is defined as the vehicle for public service delivery and governance. The quality of the Public Service largely determines the pace of development of any nation. This is because of the crucial role public servants play in the formulation and implementation of programmes of governments.

The constitutional provisions do not recognize the term. “*The Nigerian Public Service*” The constitution only recognizes the Public Service of the Federation at the Federal ,State and Local Government Council Levels (Olaopa, 2008:371). In Nigeria, the country’s government bureaucracy is the public service. This is because government at whatever level enunciates and implements its policies, programmes and projects through the instrumentality of the public service. Most public services are service-oriented.

Origin of the Nigerian Public Service

The Civil Service was conceived as an apparatus or instrument of British rule to serve British interests. It had an upper service echelon, occupied by the colonialists and the Junior Service position occupied by Nigerians. This situation remained so till 1945 when agitation by Nigerian nationalists reached its peak. Generally, Nigerians began to take over the functions of the colonialists until the Civil service and all other organs of government were completely indigenized (Oladoyin, 2008). Public service is the business or activity of providing the public with essential goods or services such as electricity, pipe borne water, sanitation, transportation etc by the government. It is government’s employment, especially within the Civil Service (Microsoft Encarta 2009).

The Public Service is a term used to cover the public servants who are direct employees of the federal and state governments, other than the Civil Service. It include the Police, the Armed forces personnel, the Judicial personnel, Teachers, and employees of Statutory Corporations and Boards and it excludes employees of various Ministries and those in political appointments, who are employed in a Civil capacity and whose remuneration is paid out of money voted by the legislature. Though people often see the Civil Service and the Public Service as the same thing, they are technically, not the same. Public Service as a term is broader in scope than Civil Service. Hence it includes not only those who work in the regular government Ministries and Departments but also Statutory Corporations, Boards among others. Hence, Adamolekun (1983) defines it as the totality of services that are organized under government authority. It can therefore, be said that Civil Service is

narrower in scope and excludes some government employees who are Public Servants (Obikeze & Anthony, 2004:140).

The Public Service as an enterprise is thus viewed as an artificial person who is authorized by law to carry on particular activities and functions. It is described as a corporate body created by law with defined powers and functions and independently having a clear-cut jurisdiction over a specified area or over a particular type of commercial activity. (Ekhaton, 2002:167). Public Enterprises is part of government apparatus comprising persons in defence and security forces, persons holding political, legislative or judicial offices, and persons who work for government in an honorary capacity or are not paid out of public revenues. It include those engaged in the Local Government Services, Paramilitary Services, Judicial and Legislative Services, Commissions, Corporations, parastatal and the entire Civil Service of either the Federal, State or Local government.

History of the Niger State Public Service

The Niger State Public Service was created on the 3rd of February 1976 alongside the creation of the state. The service comprises of the Local Government Service, the various corporations, the State House of Assembly, the Judiciary, Commissions, Agencies, Parastatal, Educational institutions and all the paramilitary, local Security Agencies and the Civil Service established by the State Government. As a multifaceted agent of change and a veritable tool for sustainable political, socio-economic growth and development, it was established and structured by law and charged with the responsibility of propelling the wheel of progress for development as obtainable in the Federal Public service and the Public Service of other States in Nigeria.

The Niger state Public Service is the most single and most important agent of Niger State government established for formulating and implementing sustainable political, socio-economic policies, plans, projects and programmes of government. No wonder there is much attention given to it to perform optimally.

The Niger State Public Service is charged with various functions which include; advising the political heads, planning the various economic policies and programmes of government, Policy formulation, Drafting of Bills, Policy implementation and Budget preparation.

Corruption in Niger State Public Service

Among the many challenges facing public service institutions in developing countries, corruption remains one of the most pervasive and the least confronted. Historically, donor agencies and their clients accepted the inevitability of corruption in public service delivery. It was at worst a necessary evil and at best the “grease” essential to move the wheels of economic development (Lui, 1985). In recent years however, consensus has emerged that corruption is a central challenge to equitable and sustainable development. A growing body of research suggests that corruption shrink the range of opportunities available to developing countries as investments become less productive, the cost of capital increases, and private investment, foreign direct investment, and foreign aid all decline (Mauro, 1995; Tanzi & Davoodi, 1997; Wei, 1999). Donors are increasingly sponsoring research on corruption (including in their own projects), and many have created units dedicated to providing assistance to developing countries for assessing and responding to corruption-related problems. Many of these research and support activities, however, are not very helpful to individuals working on public service reform at the organizational level. Whereas curbing corruption requires understanding and action at both the policy and the institutional levels, most research and advice focuses on the former.

Anti-corruption programs sponsored by development agencies emphasize macro-level initiatives such as economic and sector policy reforms (e.g., liberalizing trade and reducing or removing subsidies) and transformation of critical institutions such as the judiciary (Kaufmann, 1998; OECD, 1999; World Bank, 1997). Large-scale reforms are, of course, critical in reducing corruption, but they also require time and considerable political will to implement (Dilulio, Garvey, & Kettl, 1993). Much of the anticorruption advice at the organizational level, however, implicitly assumes that a backdrop of such macro-reforms is in place.

The consequences of corruption on a nation's socio-political and economic development are monumental. The foremost effect of corruption is that it not only leads to a reduction in economic growth and development by lowering incentives to invest, it also leads to a divestment in such economies. Serious investors are always wary of offering bribes before being allowed investment rights or operational licenses. This is due to the fact that there is no guarantee that greased officials may keep their side of the agreement, and with no official cover the address in case of contract breach, the fleeced investor is on his own (Epele, 2006:11).

Applied to the above is the fact that foreign investors are also prone to withdraw their capital from a country with high incidence of corruption because the risk involved in doing business with such nations sometimes far outweighs the benefits. Granted that it has been argued that corruption provides both local and foreign investors the leverage to surmount bureaucratic impediments, yet the number of such successful deals is a far cry from the avalanche of investors that have stripped off their hard earned money. Corruption also alters the pattern of government expenditure. Experience has shown that in highly corrupt countries, officials throw government funds more into large and hard-to-manage projects, such as airports or highways than on social services like health and education. It has been a stumbling block to people enjoying the social fruits of good governance (Ibrahim, 2003).

Corruption contributes immensely to the inhibition of economic performance. It negatively affects investment and economic growth, which is antithetical to national development. If corruption discourages investment, limits economic growth and alters the composition of government spending, it unconsciously hinders future economic growth and sustainable development. Corruption contributes to the problem of mass poverty and renders millions of Nigerian citizens unemployed and uneducated. The poverty profile of Nigerians appears to be worsening. The 2017 UNDP Development

Report put Nigeria's Human Development Index (HDI) value at 0.527 positioning Nigeria at no 152 out of 188 countries surveyed. The situation could be said to have considerably remained worsens in comparison with 2003 report, which put Nigeria at HDI value at 0.445 positioning Nigeria at no 152 among the 175 countries covered in the report. It is truism that mass poverty has been a breeding ground for all forms of extremism in the frequent outbreak of ethno religious violence in some parts of Nigeria (Obadan, 2001).

The Centre for Advanced Social Sciences (CASS) Port Harcourt in their seminar in December (1993) noted that most worker are more interested in the "spoils" and patronage of office than in serving the masses. This weakens accountability in the delivery of public service on the part of public servants.

Corruption contributed to mass unemployment in the country. Its impact has led to the prevalent mistrust which has created fear and insecurity among investors. Again, the money lost by the government through corrupt practice makes it incapable of making investment on productive forces which will increase employment opportunities for the citizens. Besides, due to the prevailing fraud and corruption which portray us in bad image internationally, foreign investors who would have come to contribute to the industrialization of the country and thus providing more employment opportunities are scared because of their lack of confidence and trust in Nigeria.

Due to the effect of corruption, young graduates and other members of the workforce keep roaming the streets without jobs while the pot bellied politicians keep acquiring and siphoning the wealth of the country with reckless impunity at the detriment of the citizens. To worsen a bad situation, the proceeds of corruption are transferred abroad or used for the importation of non-essential goods, hosting of festivals etc. If the proceeds from corruption are invested within the country on productive forces, it can generate some multiplier effects, thereby increasing job opportunities for people.

The court of law, which is said to be the last hope of the common man, has lost this confidence. Now justice is sold to the highest bidder who might be guilty to the detriment or suffering of innocent poor people. The ugly situation in Nigeria is well portrayed in the address of the former Chief Justice of Nigeria; Justice Mohammed Lawal Uwais, in a conference organized by Lagos State Judiciary with the theme, "How to end corruption in the judiciary." He noted that "corruption in the judiciary is glaring and increasing". Whatever arguments advanced for the positive side of corruption, the positive impact is insignificant as the following discussion will show. A large number of literatures suggest that corruption has a deleterious effect on administrative efficiency, political and economic development. By presenting these positive aspects of corruption, Gould and Rey (1983) themselves emphasized that even under circumstance of benign corruption, the costs incurred in administrative and political performance far exceed the benefits derived from relative gains in economic efficiency.

Gould and Rey (1983) argued that there are mainly three types of effect of causing negative influence on economic development (i.e. political cost, economic cost, and administrative cost).

i. Cost on Political Development

Under political cost, corruption (1) encourages closed politics preventing development; (2) suppresses political opposition, generate increased resentment and violence;(3) widens social classes and economic division; (4) prevents policy changes and diverts public resources, contributing to conditions of private affluence and public squalor. Corruption slow down economic growth and reduce resources available for distribution and also slash disposable income available in the hands of individuals. Corruption in government lowers the respect for the constituted authority, reduces popularity of the government, reduces public trust and weakens peoples' support to the government.

ii. Cost on Economic Growth and Development

Macrae (1982) analyses the effect of corruption in relation to Game Theory. According to the Macrae (Ibid), the main effects can be identified as general equilibrium and distribution effects. Under the former, there is a production price effect.

Macrae (1982) pointed out that since corruption bases the choice of techniques in favour of capital, the income distribution will shift in favour of capital (generally overseas capital). Also the arrangement revenue will generally be spent on imported luxury goods, or deposited in a foreign bank account having virtually no multiplier effects and a loss of tax revenue to the government. Corruption slow down growth and reduce resources available for distribution and also slash disposable income available in the hands of individuals. Because of public sector corruption, large amount of money is shared among a smaller number of individuals, and then the level of the distribution of personal income inequality is created. Corruption aggravates inequity, the burden falls relatively heavily on the poor because eventually, the marginal utility of money is relatively high for the poor on one hand and corruption is a regressive tax on them (Indrarathne: 2007). Therefore, both the gap between the rich and the poor and the inequality of the post tax distribution of income will increase. Under these circumstances, the rich will gain both absolutely and relatively more.

b. Brain-drain, Corruption may lead to brain-drain in developing countries. In this sense, it has haunted many developing countries, in turn diminishing the chances for development.” Qualified and competent people, who cannot capture and sustain the necessary contacts for their personal growth or who simply find the way public affairs are conducted unacceptable on grounds of principle, have often chosen to emigrate and settle elsewhere” (Ouma,1979: 485). Under this situation, the gap between the developed countries and underdeveloped countries will be widened.

iii. **Administrative Cost**

Public sector corruption may influence negatively on administrative performance. As

Gould and Reys (1983) highlighted that corruption generates an atmosphere of resentment and frustration and distrust that permeates all levels of administration.

It can contribute to frustration in competent and honest Public Servants and subvert trust and cooperation. Similarly, it may inhibit innovation and encourage violation of rules and regulations. On the other hand, public sector corruption intimidates and terrorizes honest Public Servants into silence.

Corruption tends to politicize bureaucracy. It affects the efficiency of bureaucracy as it displaces the highly qualified manpower required for effective policy implementation. If a qualified manpower is not available, there can be no lasting and significant process of growth and development.

Even though both positive and negative impacts are highlighted, it can be argued that, a widespread corruption in Public Service has serious negative impact in all its political, economic, and social dimensions. Even existing benefits will ultimately be lost because it is clear that corruption makes the poor to be poorer, and the rich to be richer. Therefore, public sector corruption has to be eradicated as a pre condition for sustainable Public Service efficiency and effectiveness.

Corrupt Practices as Reported in the Niger State Public Service

“Large volumes of revenue are forgone due to corruption”. The Niger state’s Auditor General, Accountant General and Head of Service have already uncovered a large number of “Ghost Workers” in the Public Service and have affirm that a huge amount of funds amounting to Millions of Naira was lost through the public enterprises over the years due to “Ghost Worker Syndrome” and other corrupt practices. If these funds had been saved and invested, Niger Sate’s growth rate would be raised further without any increase in the present rate of gross investment. The two major and recent corruption cases reported in Niger State are the N258 Million naira pension fund scam 2016, and 2000 “ghost workers” amounting to N216million naira monthly, discovered in

the Niger State's payroll during the 2016 Staff verification exercise (Niger State/NLC Staff Audit Report, 2016).

In the pension fund scan, no fewer than 30 persons were indicted to have diverted N258 million naira as reported by a panel of inquiry instituted by the Niger State Government to unravel the said pension fraud. A permanent secretary and a Director General were among thirty staff of the Niger State Government that were indicted the panel. The indicted persons were said to have siphoned the retirees and death gratuity of civil servants worth over N258million and refunded about N156 million with a balance of over N94 million still hanging (Niger State Pension Fraud Inquiry Report, 2016). This monumental corruption was perpetuated by a syndicate comprising an accountant, a cashier, an internal auditor and a messenger while another 6 leaders of the syndicate were staff of a government parastatal. The panel turned in its report to the Niger State Civil Service Commission (CSC) with a recommendation that punitive actions against the staff should be implemented since "it is the commission that has the legal instrument to punish erring workers" sequel to section 127, 128 and 202 of the 1999 constitution of Nigeria.

It was learnt that not less than N200m was recovered from the indicted government officials while the N100m traced to the account of the messenger described as the "go-between" between the indicted officials and other members of the syndicate was frozen. Aside from this, some buildings and vehicles believed to have been bought with proceeds from the scam were seized.

The State's Civil Service Commission issued letters of dismissal to 3 members of the syndicate while 13 were compulsorily retired, 8 demoted, 3 warned, while one staff involved was "advised to be cautious in receiving gifts" which was what connected him to the crime. The State Head of Service was directed to prosecute all those who were yet to refund their share of the looted pension fund.

Other corruption cases involving the diversion of public funds running into several billions of naira still pending in court are those involving the former Niger State Governor. Dr Muazu Babangida Aliyu, his erstwhile Chief of Staff, Umar Nasko as well as a former commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs; Liman Kantigi. Some recoveries and refunds have however been made from some of the accused public servants.

Under what circumstances are actions called corruption? The following discussions illustrate some examples of corrupt practices reported recently in the state Public Service to describe the meanings of both administrative and political corruption.

Strategies for Combating Corruption in Niger State Public Service

The fight against corruption has been on for a while. The federal government has initiated several laws to combat corruption in Nigeria. Some of these laws includes: the Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal Act of 1991, the Money Laundering Act of 1995, the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) Act of 2000, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission Establishment Act of 2004, the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act of 2004 and most recently, the Whistle Blowing Policy of 2016 based on the Whistleblower Act. Under this Act patriotic citizens and individuals can anonymously and voluntarily provide tips online in regards to criminal acts, mismanagement, or misappropriation of public funds and assets. If this lead to the successful recovery of funds, the whistleblower is entitled to 2.5%-5% of proceeds. In the first two months of establishing the policy, over USD 180 million have been recovered (*Quartz*, Feb. 2017).

On the other hand, various measures have already been taken by the government of Niger State to face the problem of public sector corruption. These are outlined as follows:

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- **Legislation:** Anti corruption related legislature in Niger state is based on the Code of Conduct Act. According to the Act, each year Public Servants and Officials must declare their assets and liabilities. The state has taken advantage of this by making Public Servants and Public officials in the state fill and submit the form at regular intervals.
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- **Invitation of Anti- Corruption Agencies:** The Niger state government have at regular interval invites the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) to investigate allegations of bribery& corruption acts among the states Public servants. The commission has power to investigate bribery and corruption made by both politicians and the public servants.

- **The Accountant General's and Auditor General's Office** and the Office of the Head of Service of the State. These departments monitor all government units at the State and Local Governments to ensure the transparency of the public finances.
- General public and the media comments on the public sector corrupt practices.
However, the effectiveness of these formal devices seems not much at satisfactory level, because, corrupt practices are common nowadays.
- **Due Process Office:** the office is responsible in ensuring that Government contracts are not over bloated and are done according to the law.

Niger State Public Procurement Board (NSPPB). This is an agencies created to monitor and reduce the rate of corruption on Public Service procurement and public enterprise privatization, commercialization or sales through transparency, accountability and credibility in public procurement and privatization processes. It ensures that Public purchases are not over invoiced or substandard. It also ensures that the right quality and quantity of supplies are delivered according to specifications. This has led to a high reduction in public finance and material wastages to corrupt practices.

- **SERVICOM.** In order to make sure that governments achieve “value for money” from services offered by the Public Servants, it has established a SERVICOM unit in all the public institution across the state.
This is meant to reduce the level of Bureaucratic Corruption and unnecessary delays in the Public Service. It ensures that Public Servants carry out their official responsibilities in line with international best standards and practices.

Public Service and Ethics

Ethics has been defined as the code of moral principles and values that governs the behaviour of individuals or groups with respect to what is right or wrong. The scope of ethics in organization covers both management and leadership. Under management ethics according to Joseph W. Weiss (1996), “Business ethics is the art and discipline of applying ethical principles to examine and solve complex moral dilemmas”. Ethics in organization bothers on a moral way of behaviour that is expected in an organization. Ethical

issues are issues bothering on employee's conflicting interests, inappropriate gifts, sexual harassment, unauthorized payments and affirmative action issues.

Discussing the ethical dimensions of leadership Weiss says that leading effectively also means leading ethically and morally while businesses expand over geographic and cultural boundaries, question concerning the sense of right or wrong of leaders and followers in their business practices gain importance.

Ethical decisions are not easy to take as the question of right or wrong is so much "person - dependent". However, there are criteria that define the limits of ethical reasoning:

- ✓ Ethical reasoning should be logical, assumption should be based on facts, and judgments made explicit.
- ✓ Facts and evidence should be accurate, relevant and complete.
- ✓ Standards used in one's ethical reasoning should be consistent if not, there the standards should be modified.

The followings can be considered as ethical principle:

Ethical Relationship: Moral authority is based on individuals or cultural self-interests, customs or religions principles. An act is morally right if it serves one's cultural self-interests, needs or standards.

Utilitarianism: A morally or ethically sound decision or policy is the one that is adjudged on the basis of cost - benefit analysis. The benefits exceed the cost of the majority of the people.

Rights: The principle of utilitarianism is based on the inalienable rights and entitlements of individuals or groups guaranteed to all in their pursuit of freedom of speech, choice happiness and self - respect. A manager who overlooks the rights of even one individual or group may jeopardize the implementation of a decision, policy or procedure.

Universalism: Here moral authority is based on the extent to which the intention of an act treats all persons as ends in themselves and with respect. This rule enjoins managers to give individuals unique treatment if their cases so demand and that they may not be treated as mere statistics.

Justice: Moral authority is based on the extent to which opportunity, wealth and burden are fairly distributed among all. Here fairness and equity govern the decision.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

It is doubtful that corruption can be eradicated altogether, because human being by nature tends to be greedy with no limits. They are change resistant; hence, the objective in this regard should be to reduce it to the lowest level possible. When reducing corrupt practices, it is needed to answer the question of “who gets what, when and how”? Answering this question may not be easy because, the facts cannot be discovered, or that if they can, they cannot be proved, or that if they can be proved, the proof cannot be published. A major way forward for tackling corruption in the public service, is through motivation. This implies the reconfiguration of the mindset and orientation of public servants by way of establishing a good working environment, a good compensation system, transformational human capital development strategies and programmes, a sense of security in the context of job sustainability and a dependable separation packages in the context of retirement pension and gratuity.

Specifically, the following strategies should be allocated to combat corruption in Niger State Public Service. As the short term measures, the essential ingredients for combating corruption are suggested as follows;

1. It is important to strengthen the Auditor General’s Office by giving more autonomy and power.
2. Appropriate checks and balances between and among various agencies of government as well as departments of various ministries and parastatals.
3. It also requires increasing public awareness of different forms, manifestations and effects of corruption.
4. With the help of Information Technology, there should be more transparency in public works and transaction should be published.

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