

Research Report

Qualitative Study on the Patterns, Experiences and Manifestations of Corruption in Nigeria

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Executive Summary

The study on 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 the 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 Nigeria 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 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 Organisation (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. Participants from the law enforcement agencies decried the state of their welfare as responsible for the high level of corruption within their system and are not so optimistic about winning the fight against corruption as long as prevailing conditions exist. Law makers who participated called for review of the Nigeria constitution to ensure provision of stiffer punishments for persons convicted of corrupt practices.

Representatives from the anti-corruption agencies like the Economic and Financial Crime Control (EFCC) believed strong commitment from the presidency is required to win the battle against corruption but blame the judiciary and the Nigeria Bar Association for their role in frustrating the anti-corruption efforts through delayed judgment and prolong legal proceedings. Other categories of participants interviewed shared similar opinions on corruption in Nigeria while almost all the participants commended the ongoing fight against corruption and are eager to see offenders convicted.

The general opinion from the focus group discussions 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 believed 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 is not to establish its existence, as this is well founded. Rather, it is to ascertain the diverse manifestations, proportions, and patterns of corruption and particularly, practical ways to curb its pervasive threat in order to pave the way for sustainable development. The widely held World Bank definition of corruption as “the abuse or misuse of public office for private gains” portrays the phenomenon as a menace occurring in the public domain alone. However, a cursory look at the reality shows that corruption is ubiquitous, as it pervades both the public and the private sectors, in both the developed and the developing countries of the world.

The existing body of knowledge on corruption in Nigeria tilts to its public, state-centric, official, micro and bureaucratic nature, to the neglect of the private, societal, unofficial, macro and informal side. The informal side of corruption, which has often suffered neglect from scholars and public affairs analysts, has far more reaching consequences on the state, than the widely acclaimed public corruption. 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 study are to determine:

- General awareness/definition of corruption in Nigeria
- Patterns of corruption in Nigeria
- Manifestations of corruption in Nigeria
- Possible solutions to corruption 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 questions:

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 commissioned as a qualitative study in order to capture individual and group perception, experiences and opinion on corruption in Nigeria. Qualitative research takes an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter and qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in 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-structured 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 prosecuting cases of corruption and they have also been widely accused of corrupt practices.
3	Media Organisations	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 Organisations	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 politicians who have been perceived as responsible for the state of corruption in the country
8	Anti Corruption Agencies	Setup by law to make arrest related to corruption and prosecute perpetrators. They have also been accused of partiality and one-sidedness.
9	Professional bodies and registered associations e.g. Nigeria Medical & Dental Association,	Coordinates and regulates affairs of members and expected to institute laws and policies that will prevent corrupt practices and apprehend offenders.
10	Non Governmental Organisations	They receive donor funds and implement projects with little or no oversight from the government.

Furthermore, participant for the Focus Group Discussions were drawn from the general population and included male groups and female groups respectively. Participants were drawn from different sectors of the economy to provide a cross-sectoral perspective to the study.

Sample Size

A total of 30 In-depth Interviews and 6 Focus Group Discussions were conducted in the three states selected for the study. In each state, 10 IDIs and 2 FGDs were conducted. Each FGD had a sample of 8 to 10 participants.

Study procedure

The research consultant identified and recruited participants from the sample population for the study. The interviews were conducted over a period of three weeks, working for six days in each state. The location of the In-Depth Interviews varied amongst participants including offices and office premises, residents, all determined by the participants' convenience and dispositions. The longest interview session lasted about 56 minutes while the shortest duration was 12 minutes. The focus group discussion participants were divided into male and female groups comprising 8 to 10 participants for each group. Participants were drawn from diverse sectors of the country like civil servants, NGO workers, teachers, Engineers, research consultants, health workers, students, youth corps members etc in order to get a wider perspective and perception on the subject matter. The longest male FGD lasted for about one hour twenty minutes (1:20) while the longest female FGD lasted for about one hour twenty five minutes (1:25).

Findings from the In-depth Interviews

Most of the participants agree that corruption 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. 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 a bearable minimum. Opinion of participants on corruption and its manifestations is presented in this section,

General opinion about corruption

Several definitions were provided by participants on what they generally believe to be corruption. Most of the respondents believe that corruption has a broad definition and can be viewed as any other crime. Therefore, the general definitions provided for corruption fits any other crime punishable under the law. 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 groups at the expense of others. Participants believed that corruption has become a cankerworm eating up the Nigerian system. Most of the participants described corruption as an impairment of moral values, denying you of what belongs to you. Participants further stressed that corruption is not only in finance but in all sectors and can also be expressed in character, thought, relationship, family among others. There are no observable differences in the opinion of participants on corruption across the three states and also no gender difference in opinion was observed. Some of these opinions are demonstrated in excerpts below.

“Anytime I hear the word corruption, the first thing that comes to my mind is epidemics, a disease. I view corruption as abuse of power when power being repose on you is being converted for personal gain. Corruption can be viewed in different ways, first we have polictical corruption, economic corruption and social corruption - CSO representative, FCT Abuja

“Corruption is worse than killing, when you kill a man, you have just killed an individul but in corruption, even generations unborn will suffer for it, this is why corruption is so dangerous. Everybody knows that coruption is a dangerous disease and its only a serious government can fight it...”- Staff FCT Judiciary, FCT Abuja

“Corruption to me as an individual mean injustice, cheating. Corruption is also trying to use what we have in the wrong way to get what we want...”- Representative from Health Insurance, Lagos State

"I'm close to saying that corruption is in our blood, it's that bad... Even as a child born in Nigeria, he has a virus called corruption... - State Judiciary, River State"

"Corruption has become so part of us, that it is now like our body spray, corruption is now our perfume..."- House of Assembly, Rivers state

"Corruption is a form of impairment of moral values, integrity, standard and normal expectation..." - TRADE UNION, Lagos State"

"Corruption is people taking what belongs to others..."- Religious Leader, Lagos State"

"Corruption is when [an] individual is going outside the rules and regulation and taking what does not belong to you morally, professionally and spiritually..."- TRADITIONAL LEADER, Lagos State"

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. Participants also agreed that all the sectors of the economy and government in Nigeria are corrupt. In addition, participant believed that corruption has eaten deep in the Nigeria government system in the area of bribe and kickbacks. All participants believed that corruption is engrained in Nigeria, both in the public and private sectors, family, households, religious institutions, civil service, judiciary, police, house of assemblies and many other such systems. A male participant in Abuja described corruption as an epidemics and disease that has eaten deep into the system. He blamed the current state of corruption in Nigeria on the negligence of the past administration who should have invested more in the past six years in agriculture as a way of diversifying the economy.

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. A female participant traced the history of corruption in Nigeria to the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) by the Babangida regime but is hopeful about the current administration in the fight against corruption.

Some of these opinions are demonstrated in excerpts below.

"Every Nigerian born and bred in Nigeria grew up in Nigeria knows that corruption is a problem that has become engrained in our society, almost every aspect of our society is corrupt... NGO staff, Rivers state"

"It depends on the individual, because when government is weak, people tend to like it and take advantage..... CSO representative, FCT Abuja"

"Almost every aspect, functions and sector in Nigeria is corrupt..... TRADE UNION, Lagos State"

Almost all the participant believed that every Nigerian is conscious of corruption and most are involved too. They also believe that an average Nigerian sees the public office holders as corrupt. Some of these opinions are demonstrated in excerpts below.

"Corruption has become a norm amongst Nigerians; it has eaten deep into us, the average man sees that corruption has become part of us..." - House of Assembly, River State

"I don't know the adjective to qualify their (public office holders) resolve, because I think they are swimming in the wealth of their corrupt practices, eighty percent of them are corrupt because even their bosses are corrupt and if you are not corrupt you lose your job..." - Civil servant, Lagos state

"The most corrupt people in the society is the government officials, our country is in this shapeless form because of the caliber of people we have in the government..." - Religious Leader, FCT

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 hardship, quest for fame and recognition, peer pressure, 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. Some of these opinions are demonstrated in excerpts below.

"From my own understanding, it is greed..." - CSO leader in Rivers state

"I will give you two reasons for that, the main reason for corruption is greed, people are greedy, they want to get rich overnight, for the poor masses, and most of them indulge in poverty because of the high level of poverty and unemployment..." - Civil Servant, Rivers state

"When a man steals money and is seen walking free in the streets driving his big cars, it motivates the others to steal too..." - EFCC Staff, FCT Abuja

"What motivates people like I said to you earlier on is lack of contentment..." - Religious Leader, River State

"The reason is just basically... I used to use the word poverty but then I see it that some people just have this penchant to acquire wealth..." - Staff, FCT Judiciary

"To a large extent I will say that people have been blindfolded by the charm of money, you see your friend doing fraud, you see your family member doing fraud, and you don't do anything about it, for crying out loud when will Nigeria get to that level of citizenry where a citizen contributes to the fight on corruption, why wouldn't they go to the police..." - Civil Servant, Lagos State

"When you are looking for something, instead of going through the due process, you want to get it from behind, probably because your uncle or your brother is in a position to get that thing for you, that's corruption..." - Lawyer, River State

Both male and female participants are 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 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. Participants in Lagos state blamed the situation on poor infrastructure (road) and the clear divide between the rich and the poor evidence with location of residence as major motivations for corruption in Nigeria.

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 some participants mentioned situations where they were denied services in favour of another person who have arrived later than themselves due to financial status or positions in the community, especially when services are supposed to be on a 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 favoritism in awarding or rewarding and selecting public offices. Some of the statements from participants are displayed below.

"Of course, especially in Nigeria, we are all victim because in the past 10 to 15 years ago, we all know how corruption has dealt with us in Nigeria. The past government wasted six good years and if they have channeled this into agriculture alone, we will have been there and used the proceed of agriculture to do many things.... But we are all suffering it today. In one way or the other, we are all affected..."- CSO representative, FCT Abuja

"The mere fact that Nigerians don't enjoy uninterrupted power supply is evidence of corruption, and this affects every Nigerian living in the country today..." - EFCC Staff, Rivers state

"I have been a victim of corruption when I am entitled for a position and there is victimization that is corruption..." - TRADE UNION, Lagos State

“Yes I have, I remembered when I came to Port Harcourt newly, we did contribution, and it became my turn to have my share of the money, and the guy who was managing the contribution, left with my money...” - Religious Leader, Rivers State

“...Worst still when you graduate, and start carrying papers around, it's not like you are not qualified, it's not like your result is not good, it's not like you don't have what it takes, and they deny you jobs because you do not know the big names that matter in the society is that not corruption? So my brother I have been a victim of corruption, in fact corruption is no longer news...” - Journalist, Lagos State

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 one time or the other. Participants in Lagos State report more cases of extortion by traffic control officers/warders than participants in Abuja and River State. They linked this to the notorious holdup and traffic situation in Lagos which causes motorist to disobey traffic rules almost on a daily basis. Participants in Abuja were more eloquent on the hand greasing practices to get jobs, contract and avoid the long bureaucratic practices of government officials. Also reported in Abuja is being a victim of employment scam where they had to pay a large sum of money to be considered for government employments which were never successful. 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 the authority. A respondent in River state reported to have been scammed within a social savings group.

General Manifestations 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 forms 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 practices that are common in Nigeria as reported by the participants. Almost all the participants believed that corruption is a syndrome that every Nigerian is conscious and guilty of. They believed that an average Nigerian sees the public office holders as corrupt. Some of these opinions are demonstrated in excerpts below.

“We have three types of corruption in Nigeria and have eaten deep into the system that the government of Nigeria has to root it out. We have political corruption that is seen within the government offices, where the head converts public funds to his personal use. Economic corruption deals with the business class

when they compromise with the government official for example when contractor connive with government officials, the normal things that is supposed to be done because money has been exchanged will not be done. The social corruption is where you have decay in the spirit of good moral. You see this also in the family circle...” - CSO representative, FCT Abuja

“In Nigeria, you have the judiciary being compromised where money is been exchanged between the accused person and the judge. Also in importation of good, people connive with the custom officials; they can bring in fake goods to the country because the officials have compromised the trust reposed on them. I can sight an example of NAFDAC, before Prof Doral Akunyili came on board, we all know that people bring in expired drugs, before then NAFDAC officials compromise and there was nobody responsible for checking the expiry dates of these products...” - TRADE UNION, Lagos State

“It (corruption), has invaded every sector in our country Nigeria, we even witness it in our families and the churches, not just amongst public officers..., it is everywhere and it appears it has come to stay...” - Police Officer, Rivers state

“I see it manifest in every facet, name it in the market, its everywhere, pick up the newspapers, the word corruption is the most reoccurring word in the newspapers. If you wants to get indices of corruption, go to the newspapers, the word corruption is a reoccurring decimal...” - Lawyer, Rivers state

“Nigeria is very corrupt, as a matter of fact, when you are looking at it globally, Nigeria is really considered to be a corrupt nation, and with what is happening of recent, the EFCC going after our top government officials and a lot of hidden truth coming out, it buttresses the fact that, Nigeria is really corrupt...” NGO Staff, Rivers state

Participants were unanimous in their belief that government officials contribute largely to corruption in Nigeria. This is perpetuated through misuse of office, lack of accountability, and diverting of public funds. Instance is the ongoing budget padding saga being criticized at the National Assembly and by Nigerians. Some of these opinions are demonstrated in excerpts below.

“Budget padding which has nearly made nonsense of our president... Member, Rivers State Judiciary”

“By accepting bribe and falsifying figures... NBA, Rivers state”

“When you collect money from someone to rob another person you are corrupt, now when a young who does not have money collects #40,000 to harass people in a community to vote for a particular person, is he not corrupt, corruption is just basically everywhere, when a manager in the office sees a young girl who has come with her CV and she so deserves the job, she is so qualified and because she cannot pay in kind, it is corruption...” - Media Personnel, Lagos state”

No gender difference was observed in the general opinion about manifestation of corruption in Nigeria and participants' responses did not vary across the three states. However, female participants are quick to express opinion on the moral and behavior that could be considered as corruption while male participants are more direct, providing examples and instances to support their opinion. Also male participants provided more insight than female respondents.

Individual Effort in the Fight Against Corruption

Almost all the participant mentioned that they are involved in the fight against corruption in one way or the other. Firstly, most of the respondents mentioned that the way to fight corruption is not to be involved in activities that may 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 kickbacks, not compromising standards. However, the participants believed that the government has the larger role to play to make the system corruption free and mentioned 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. Some of the quotes from participants are presented below.

"Well, in my own little way as maybe when you go to functions, you speak out, even in the field where I belong to, I don't compromise on the material and the right mixtures even when the profit margin is very little, I insist on the required quality....." - CSO Representative, Abuja

"I will not hesitate to report anything or act that is detrimental to my people..." - House of Assembly, Rivers state

"I keep saying it, I don't have an organization or campaign against it, but the thing is personally, I talk about it..." - NBA, Rivers state"

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, and that contributes to corruption. Some 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. 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.

“Who will we talk to about it, is it the police or the corrupt lawyers and judges, the corrupt government, even the so called government hospitals, people wants to get rich overnight, corruption is one of the reasons we cannot reach the level of economic potential we are capable of; we are one of the highest oil producing countries in the world, and we are still talking about poverty, it is corruption... Civil servant, Rivers state”

“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

“In my own little way I am, at least I try to make sure that if I collect five naira from my organization, and I say this five naira I’m going to use it for transport, I use it for transport, if there is change, I bring it back, I bring back a proper receipt, when you decide that in your own little corner, you do what you are supposed to do, and another person takes that same decision, corruption will go...” - NGO staff, FCT Abuja

“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

Both male and female participants are willing to support the fight against corruption in Nigeria by playing their part in the area of proper documentation, display of honesty and integrity. Male participants mentioned their willingness to speak out against corruption at public functions while female respondents are skeptical about reporting corruption to the authorities. No differentials in responses across the three states were observed.

Organisational Effort in the Fight Against Corruption

As reported earlier, participants were drawn from different walks of life which was evidenced in the role their workplace plays in the fight against corruption. Some participants mentioned that their organizations have established internal and external audit controls to check excesses or fraud. Internal committees are set up to act as watchdogs and decide appropriate sanctions to be meted to defaulters. Staff are aware of the anticorruption policy of the organisation and the punishment for offenders. For example, the House of Assembly as legislators make or enact laws that helps in curbing corrupt activities. The media participants also gave an active response. Some of the quotes from participants are presented below.

“The COREN is trying her best to see that the right thing is being done in engineering society...” - COREN Staff, FCT Abuja”

“If any lawyer is found guilty of any act of corruption, there are punishments meted out to the offenders...” - Lawyer, River state”

“The current law enacted against cultism is a pointer, the public procurement law where before you buy anything, you must go through due process...” - House of Assembly, River State”

“In the church the best way to fight corruption is to keep preaching it. That’s the best way you can fight corruption, because if you don’t preach against it, if you don’t talk against it, that means you are also in support of it...”- Religious Leader, FCT Abuja”

“Well we have what we call our internal auditors, we have our external auditors, and we have monthly audit checks, so that way, there’s internal control and there’s external control, so that way, issues of corruption are limited, if not exactly extinct...” - NGO Staff, River state”

“We have the Police Service Commission, who has the right to suspend or dismiss any officer found guilty of corruption; they were created to ensure transparency and accountability in the Nigerian police force....” - Police officer, Lagos State”

“Well this is the main goal of our anti-graft group, we try to open the people’s eyes to corrupt practices, and this we do by publicly exposing corrupt practices, in government and then report to relevant anti-corruption agencies...” - EFCC staff, FCT Abuja”

“My organization has been trying, at least we do not really kill stories like that, we don’t create problems, we are not sycophantic, and we do not sing the praise of who does not deserve to be praised...” - Journalist, River State

“We are playing the role of, if you want to fight (corruption), don’t be sentimental, if you know that A is bad, say A is bad, if B is bad say B is bad, but when you say A because A is not your partner you hold A and leave B, who is fooling who?...” - CSO leader, Rivers state”

Participants were of the opinion that the leadership of the organisation benefits one way or the other in corruption and that has been the major reason why the fight against corruption is not yielding much desired results. Participants from the paramilitary mentioned that the fight against corruption is the fight against the system itself. They pointed to the fact that they earn meager salaries and most of the time are not paid on time. This has led several of their colleagues to engage in collecting illegal toll from motorists in a bid to make ends meet. They pointed to the deplorable state of police barracks and why the need for better standards of living has led some colleagues to look the other way by releasing offenders in exchange for bribes. Other participants also considered the state of the economy and poor standard of living as the reason why some people engage in corruption. In addition, greed and unending thirst for expensive lifestyles have made people to consider clandestine approaches to enriching themselves. Some of these opinions are demonstrated in excerpts below.

“Yes there is, the barrier is mostly the government officials when work is given to be done. They know the right way and there right specification so that the work can last the test of time but for gain people are asked to inflate the contract...” CSO Representative, Lagos State”

“The Police is suffering, look at our barracks, or children, we receive meager salaries and are often not paid on time. That is why you see some of our people on the road collecting illegal money from road users. They just want to survive..... Policeman from Lagos state”

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 benefitted 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. Some of these opinions are demonstrated in excerpts below.

“Yes we can, because it all lies on the number one which is the presidency. By the time Mr. President come up with his own blue print., once the number 1 said this is the direction then everyone will follow. The president is the only one that can root out corruption in Nigeria...” - CSO representative, FCT Abuja”

*“Of course, there is nothing that is insurmountable, corruption can be surmounted, it can be defeated, but the will has to be there...”
- Nigeria Bar Association member, River State”*

“If you in your own little corner will commit to resisting corruption, and I commit to resisting corruption, corruption will go, it is a collective effort...” - NGO Staff, River state”

“Yes we can, we can only win the battle if we start appealing to each other and if we stop the value of acceptance in the society to be financial before you are accepted...” - TRADE UNION, Lagos State”

Most 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 etc. 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 policies and

constitutional amendments that will enhance our chances of defeating corruption. Some of these opinions are demonstrated in excerpts below.

“Yea the judiciary is trying, but the judiciary mind you is made up of people and the people who run the judiciary should be seen to be above board, my belief and my prayer for Nigeria is that we have corrupt free judges who will be able to administer justice and the people will be happy...” - Staff, FCT judiciary”

“To be honest with you, we can only try, but left for me, I’m not trying to be pessimistic here, I’m trying to be realistic, saying it the way it is; corruption can only be reduced, we cannot completely eradicate corruption in Nigeria, it will take centuries before we can even reduce it to about ten percent, so if I’m to suggest ways we can reduce corruption, it will be in any government in power where the presidents and the governors have good visions for the country...” - Civil servant, Rivers state”

“We have to build viral institutions; you have to fight corruption holistically and not selectively, the EFCC should be independent like the INEC, our laws also we should amend those laws that are too soft, make it hard like that of some Asian countries like Indonesia, where dealing drugs is punishable by death...” - House of Assembly, FCT”

“Corruption, unless everyone will be your enemy, when you decide that everybody will be your enemy, you stop corruption...” - CSO Representative Lagos state

“Collective decision by all Nigerians to rid corruption, it is that collective decision, and parents stepping it down to their children, in our school teachers teaching the children, by being role models, it’s not just about talking about it but also being role models...” - NGO staff, Lagos State”

“It starts from the leader; it starts from the top and cascades downwards. What Buhari is doing now is good, I’m apolitical, but what he is doing is good. As a lawyer or part of the judiciary what we have to do is to fight it, whenever it raises its ugly head up, we talk against it ...” - Lawyer, Rivers state”

“By removing the corrupt people around you, when you remove the corrupt people around you, everybody will open their hearts to the fight against corruption...” - CSO leader, Rivers state

“We can only intensify our resolve and dedication in exposing corrupt people and reporting them to the appropriate authorities, we can’t afford to slow the pace...” - EFCC Staff, FCT

Majority opinion holds that greed is essentially the highest motivation individuals need to be corrupt. A few argued that it is poverty/economic hardship, quest for fame and recognition, peer pressure, pressure from the family, the quest for power among other

factors. Others also believed that soft punishments meted to corrupt persons act as huge motivation to people to indulge in. One thing participants agreed to is that, the relevant bodies or institutions that fight corruption should be strengthened, and that even more importantly, in these institutions strong checks should be put in place for members that are corrupt. Respondents also provided insights to the barriers to the fight against corruption in Nigeria. Similar opinions were observed across the three states and between both male and female participants. Some of these opinions are demonstrated in excerpts below.

In every facet in life, where there is a fight against corruption, there must be barriers, so it's not something we think, it's something you to strategize against..."
- Staff, FCT Judiciary

"The barriers are that the corrupt people are still following the president; till when you move those corrupt people around you, the way will open for us to fight corruption..." - CSO Representative, Lagos State

"Yes definitely, the list is long, name them; poor funding of the police and inability to take care of the families, policemen and women who are either killed in the line of duty, lack of cooperation by the public in giving useful information that will help investigations .. the list goes on and on..." - Police officer, FCT

"These institutions, the police, the judiciary; they need men of good morals. For me one of the most corrupt institutions in Nigeria is the Nigerian Police force, I say it without fear or favor, government has a role to play, the police as a force has a role to play, the judiciary has a role to play, the agencies that are saddled with the responsibility of fighting corruption I mean the ICPC, the EFCC they have a role to play..." – Political Party Representative, River State

"For me, it really won't be an easy one because sometimes you are not just threatened to kill a story because you will be paid, it could be because your life could be at stake, but I think it's something we can do, so in my opinion as a media person, if the media should kill every form of bias, sentiments, sycophancy, just name them, I think we will win that fight..." - Media Personnel, FCT

Opinion on the Ongoing Anticorruption Campaign in Nigeria

Most participants support the ongoing anticorruption campaign, but are divided on the morals, goodwill or intent of the fight. Participants in FCT showed the lowest enthusiasm on the ongoing fight against corruption in Nigeria while participants from Lagos State are happy at the turn of events. This could easily be attributed to the fact that the APC government has always ruled in Lagos and now showing solidarity to the APC led Federal Government. Some participants see the fight as payback and therefore not expecting any good outcome due to the disregard to the rule of law evidenced with unlawful detainment of accused persons after being granted bail by the court. Female participants are very hopeful that the recent developments could save Nigeria from total collapse. Some of these opinions are demonstrated in excerpts below.

“With the advent of the new administration, some will call it witch hunting, but to me there is need to verify whatever claim the EFCC are making, there has been the issue of 2.1 billion arms scandal, even in my state the former administration was accused and there was a white paper to that effect, of embezzling billions of naira that couldn’t be accounted for up till now as I speak with you, and then you go to the oil sector, recently Diezani Madueke was invited to come and clear herself, if you go to the one involving the ex-militant Tompolo the NIMASA case. It’s also there, ...” - Political Party representative, River State

“To me, to be sincere to you, I have not seen any anti-corruption fight in Nigeria, in the next few months they would have spent one year, and up till now I have not seen any one that has been convicted...” – Religious Leader in FCT

“Till when they choose to fight everybody, if you are still choosing people to fight, you are not fighting corruption, it is not a genuine fight until you fight those around you...” - CSO Leader, Rivers state

“It’s a good thing; let everyone support the process (anti-corruption campaign)...” - NGO staff, Lagos State

“I want it stepped up, if I have the opportunity to join the EFCC, I will... ” - Lawyer, Lagos state

“The Nigeria populace now know that we have a serious government who has the feelings of people at heart. What concerns him is the citizen and how they can get it right. ...” - CSO representative, FCT

“Yes, even the president said it that his major problem is the judiciary. I believe English law in work in English land. I don’t really ascribe to it. The lawyers try to trun things upside down. The major challenge is the judiciary. If the judiciary can be overhauled and have a different orientation on what corrution has caused us. Then we will get it right. It is the judicary that is giving us the bottleneck. ...” - CSO representative, Abuja

“One of the factors is that we don’t have vibrant and robust government team, we don’t have people with clean hands, and if you don’t have people with clean hands, and you have people that are corrupt, it will be difficult for them to fight it because at one point or the other, they have been exposed to corruption and they know that once they raise up that kind of issue, in one way or the other they will be affected...” - Religious leader, Lagos State

*“One is the incessant interventions from the powers that be in the prosecution or administration of justice, again lack of adequate funding and ammunition...”
- Police officer, FCT*

“The immunity being enjoyed by top Government officials like the Governors is a big hindrance in the fight against corruption, and a very slow judicial prosecution process makes it even harder in the fight...” - EFCC Staff FCT Abuja

Findings 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 the private and public sector and that the head of a group or country determines if corruption will flourish or not within the system they govern. Participants believed that the public authorities have lost the confidence of the people hence no incentive to report to the relevant anti-corruption authorities, and that stringent punishment is the most viable way forward in the battle against corruption. Detailed findings from the FGD are presented in this section.

Ever being a victim of corruption.

Generally, all the participants admitted being victims of corruption, suffering in one way or the other in the 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 being victim of drivers license scam, employment scam, price hike and police harassment. Some of these opinions are demonstrated in excerpts below.

“I will say I have been a victim of corruption countless amounts of times, because Nigeria is a very corrupt country and surviving in Nigeria you have to face corruption, one time or the other; the experience I will share with you is my most recent experience, when I was getting my license at FRSC office, normally driving license is #7000, but they will collect #20000, #25000 it now depends on the bargaining power or how you can beat the price down, and after you even pay all these money, when they are now administering the test for you like asking you road signs, after you finish the test and you know you got all the road signs and all, they will say “Oga you have failed this test”, and you ask how can you go after paying #25,000, they will say, “bring #1000 again,” you drop #1000 and you have passed, it happens in the passport office too, immigration, everywhere.....” - Male Youth Corps Member, FGD participant from River State

“Many times; in school, one of our lecturers, he asked us to pay the sum of 20k (#20000) if you want to obtain A, if you want B 15k (#15000) depending on how much you pay, then I didn't have up to 20k, I had only 10k but I wanted A for that particular course, and he said if I don't have 20k I have to... you know what I mean go the other way round, he wanted me to pay in 'kind' (sleep with him), but luckily I was able to raise the money and paid that was how I passed that course.....” - Female NGO worker, FGD participant from FCT

“In the market place, I felt like I was duped, there was a time I actually wanted to go and get some items, gift items, you understand, and like two or three persons are selling a particular amount, like when you buy an item for #100 and add a profit of #50 on to, making it #150 and then you now meet another person who is adding

extra #100 to the #100 selling it for #200, I felt really bad when I was duped with that large amount of money, and when I entered the next shop, I just discovered that it was #150 and I bought for #200, it was really annoying, and I just feel that's also an act of corruption," - Female Civil Servant, FGD participant from Lagos State

"I only have my experience with police people, when you get to a check point, instead of them to check your booth, they prefer to collect your money and that is what we call bribery and corruption, and that's the problem I have with police people.." - Male School teacher, FGD participant from Lagos state"

"The last 2 years immigration conducted in Nigeria we all knew how it turned out.... So many people were killed. Already they have recruited the people they want but want to fulfill the due process and they have not given anybody jobs since then even those the former president promised automatic employment are yet to be given. I was there at that time, we paid #1000 but nothing came out of it." - Male Applicant, FGD participant from Lagos state"

Corruption affects the poor more than the rich

This particular point instigated more participation 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 and are victims too. They cited court decisions, employment opportunities, purchasing power, standard of living, standard of education etc as instances that back their arguments for the poor. However, participants admitted that on a general note, corruption affects both the richer class and the poorer class. It suffices to admit based on the arguments that corruption affects everyone in the country, but not as much as it affects the poor and vulnerable. Some statements from the participants are presented below.

"It (corruption) affects everybody it depends on if you are talking about it affecting you positively or negatively, I work as a consultant for UP Solutions Resources, it's a recruitment firm, you see a situation where ten persons applied for a job, and the Executive Director or the MD or whoever that is in charge has an interest, that person that you are interested in may not be most qualified for the job, and may not even have all that it takes to do the job, but be the person rich or poor, what happens is that the decision of the Executive Director is what they will carry out not minding your economic status....." - Male Private Sector worker, FGD participant from Lagos state

"Some people will lobby if they have the money for instance, our very own NYSC, you see some people saying I want to serve in Rivers state, I want to serve in Lagos... and they pay a whole lot of money, they pay from #40000, #50000, #100000, depending on where you want to serve, these things are corruption, now affecting the poor more means if you don't have money of course you can't influence it, that is one way I see it affecting the poor adversely" - Female Foundation Director, FGD participant from River State

“Why I say the poor are most affected when it comes to corruption is because there is a popular saying that “Nigerian laws are made for the poor” and its being applicable in all aspects, when in a situation by which, just like the politicians are doing now, if you are poor, and you have an issue with somebody who is rich, you now go to the court, the rich man will definitely intimidate you there, they will not judge in your own favor, so the poor ones are mostly affected.....” - Male Researcher, FGD participant from Lagos State

“Ok I’m going to talk in terms of conflicts; There is an adage that says,” When two elephants are fighting, it’s the grass that suffers it or gets trampled on.....” - Female teacher, FGD participant from River State

“I want to say corruption affects both parties, but I think it affects the poor most, I will give two examples; A poor man drives his poor car, and passes along the road, the probability is very high that the police will want to get something from that poor man, but a rich guy drives his range rover, tinted, winds up, and he drives by, hardly will you see the police wanting to stop and get something from him.....”. - Male Applicant, FGD participant from FCT”

“There are times that the rich fall victim to corruption more than the poor, I say this in a situation whereby probably you want someone to work for you, possibly a plumber to do something in your house, and he comes to your house, you are rich, chances are that he will charge you higher because he thinks that you are rich, whereas if he goes to a house that is not really ok, he will not charge as much as he charged the rich man, so corruption has its own effect on both parties.....” - Female NGO worker, FGD participant from FCT

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 three 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 believed there are other strong and compelling factors that may lead to corrupt thoughts and practices like unemployment, hardship, family pressures etc. As much as greed is a basic factor in most acts of corruption, it may be unfair 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 ordinarily all things being equal. Some of these opinions are demonstrated in excerpts below.

“Personally I think there is no other motive behind corruption other than greed, because if a man is not greedy, we have seen cases in Nigeria with people who stole twenty billion dollars, not twenty million naira, not even twenty billion naira but dollars. The richest black man in the world is worth fourteen billion dollars, and you, you stole twenty billion dollars just once.....”- Male Youth Corps member, FGD participant from FCT

“I agree with him that it is greed, but apart from greed, the Nigerian society in various segments of our society, put undue pressure on people to ‘hammer’ (make big money quickly) nobody is interested to know what you did to hammer, let us go pervasive now, even from our churches, we have some churches that put pressure on people to give all sorts of offering, like pay tithe, sow a seed, there is always a demand for one thing or the other, so society has a way of putting pressure on people to get into illegal acts which in some sense is corruption.....” - Male Applicant, FGD participant from FCT

“The motivation is greed, not just money, because even if you are rich, you will find out you want to be richer and that’s greed..... Female Civil Servant, FGD participant from Lagos state”

“Everything boils down to greed, the poor man who wants to be rich through corruption is because he is not contented with what he has and that is greed. There is no way we can look at corruption and try to take away greed as the main factor behind it.....” - Male NGO worker, FGD participant from River State

“I will never agree to what he said about greed, most people do it to survive, survival, sometimes some people want to cover a disgrace or embarrassment and it makes them indulge in corruption....” - Female Applicant, FGD participant from Lagos State

“I want to make us understand that it is not just one thing that motivates corruption, all these things are factors that can affect it. Let me talk about unemployment in this case, if for instance I don’t have a job, I’ve been applying and no one is employing me based on the fact that I don’t have all the qualifications you are looking for, and I’m looking at it that I need to eat something I need to survive, I need to feed my family, and the next thing that comes to my mind is going to buy a pure water selling machine, and I go into a room, I have a borehole, I fetch water and put inside sachets and seal, fake NNAFDAC number is there, and all that, you cannot term that greed, it might be just quest for survival, in other words unemployment can lead to a whole lot of things, hardship can make us do things that ordinarily we can’t think of doing.....” -Female Foundation Director, FGD participant from River State

Corruption also occurs in the private sector not only in the public sector

Participants were united in their opinions that corruption transcends facets, sectors, métiers, or groups in the society. And they backed this up with personal experiences and examples. Based on the discussions, it suffices to agree that corruption is not limited to public sectors only. Some of these opinions are demonstrated in excerpts below.

“I will like to let us understand that corruption is not about a sector, it’s about individuals, we have agreed before that greed and pressure fires up corruption, so anywhere you find someone who harbors greed and succumbs to pressure, you are susceptible to greed, then corruption is bound to come, either in the public sector or the private sector, you can’t isolate any one case.....” - Male Logistics consultant, FGD participant from River State

“We are always quick to judge people in the public sector, and most often than not, people believe that people in the public sector are more corrupt than those in the private sector, but I want to say that corruption happens in both sectors.....” - Male NGO worker, FGD participant from Lagos State

“I want to give an example, my neighbor works with one of the UN agencies as an accountant, she said that NGO people are the most corrupt people in Nigeria, and it’s so true. If you have worked in the NGO business before it is about receipts, retirements, so let’s not deceive ourselves that it is only in the public sector, it’s there in every sector you can think of, I agree with him, anywhere you have human beings, Nigerians, corruption is not likely to be far away.....” - Female Research Consultant FGD participant from FCT

“I want to even share a personal experience of corruption in the private sector, there was this guy, when I was in the secondary school , my dad is a Yoruba man so he used to go to our school’s accountant to bargain that the fees are too much, remove this one, let me not pay this one, and to my surprise, the man will agree, but will ask him to pay it to a certain account or pay cash to me, if you do so, he is the school accountant, it’s just for him to strike out your name that you have paid, and he doesn’t remit the money, and this deal went on for sections, and I’m sure it was not only my family that he was doing that thing for, I’m sure there will be lots of others, and that’s corruption in the private sector.....” - Female Youth Corps member, FGD participant from Lagos State

If the head is corrupt other member of the team will also 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, beliefs, or characters for personal gratifications. Some of these opinions are demonstrated in excerpts below.

“No, when I was in school, there was this lecturer, his name is Mr Eboke, the man is stubborn, he used to teach us classical political thought so he is being influenced by Aristotle, Socrates, all those Philosophers, so even if the president gives an order, the man will tell you ‘from the tallest to the shortest man, I’m not afraid of anybody, in my appointment letter I have my dos and don’ts’, so it doesn’t mean if the head is corrupt, the subjects will be corrupt... Some people will rather lose that job.....” - Female Researcher, FGD participant from River State

“I think I believe that because, let’s take for instance in the police force when your boss needs you to be corrupt, and for instance you are a Christian, and when you come back maybe from the traffic post and there’s nothing in your hand to give the boss, you can’t be promoted, so without being corrupt, you will still be where you are, and we all know that everything in life has to do with change, nobody wants to be in a particular position for long, so now if the head is corrupt, the team can also be corrupt because the head will be corrupting the team, the head can make it like, ‘without you doing this, I don’t think you can work with me...” - Male Teacher FGD participant from Lagos State

“Agreed, to a large extent, corruption from the top does influence corruption....” - Male Applicant, FGD participant from FCT

Family members and friends are the reason why people in government are corrupt

Participants believe this is relative and cannot be certain in all cases. Some participants argued that personally they will not relent subjecting themselves to corruption just to see their families’ lots bettered, while some believe that some individuals need no more incentive other than greed to indulge in corrupt practices. Some of these opinions are demonstrated in excerpts below.

“I think when you give them (family members) positions when they are not qualified for it, I think its nepotism and it’s not supposed to be like that, you are supposed to give the position to people that are qualified for the job, so when you start putting your family members ahead, that is corruption.....” - Male Youth Corps member, FGD participant from River State

“It’s an individual thing, most people get corrupt because they want to help their people, that’s just it, because if I’m in a position, I will want to put my people, I will want to help my people, whether qualified or not qualified.....” - Male Applicant, FGD participant from FCT

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. Some of these opinions are demonstrated in excerpts below.

“If you ask me I will say, I will just keep quiet, going to report my superior, there is no point doing it because I know they won’t take action, nothing will be done about it, and I don’t want to lose my job....” - Male Teacher FGD participant from Lagos State

“I don’t want to see it as a Nigerian thing but it’s in virtually all of us, it’s just like a scenario where I found out that somebody robbed somewhere and I know the armed robber that robbed, I will definitely not open my mouth and talk because I know there will be an aftermath, and then there’s no incentive to say ok there’s protection for me if I report this armed robber, so everyone is keeping quiet because you don’t want to get hurt or punished for doing the right thing...” - Female Applicant FGD participant from Rivers State

“Even in the court, when you want to be a witness for something you find out that in Nigeria, our security system is bad, the security is so poor, unlike other countries.....” - Female Applicant, FGD participant from FCT

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.

“One of the ways which I am not saying is 100% sure is to put a check on those who check. If you ask someone to go and check if Mr. A is having any corrupt act, there is every likely possibility that Mr. A will influence that check your check and he will likely come back to tell you that Mr. A is working, but when you send a check to check the check you sent to Mr. A.....” - Female Foundation Director, FGD participant from Rivers state

“I just want to say that the punishment for corruption in Nigeria is almost nonexistent, and that’s why people are corrupt or indulge in corrupt practices and they get away with it. If truly this changes and people are punished for what wrong they have done, I think it will serve as serious deterrent to other people...” - Female Teacher, FGD participant from Lagos State

“First of all it should begin with me, from every little angle I find myself, it should begin with me. As regards Nigeria, we have laws that are outdated. First of all let us strengthen the system, let’s work on the laws as to convicting this corrupt individuals, I think it will start up a process in solving this issue....” - Male NGO worker, FGD participant from FCT

“I will still talk about survival, if the government can make things readily available....” - Male Corps Member, FGD participant from River state”

Conclusion

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 of authority and making the right decisions.