

Research Report

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

By

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Executive Summary

Being a reflexive research; instigated by the need to gather useful first-hand information on individual and group's construction, experiences and knowledge of corruption in Nigeria, this study employed an exploratory approach that combines in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) for the collection of primary data. Purposive sampling technique was applied in selecting the research participants from the four study locations (Enugu, Kano, Kwara and Lagos States).

Across board, it has been apparent that participants in various IDI and FGD sessions were not only aware of existence of corruption in both public and private realms in Nigeria as a subsisting clog, but it has been a popular opinion of the people that it is the most teething challenge inhibiting the development of the country, over time and space. More specifically, a significant proportion of the participants did affirm that varying degrees of corrupt practices exist within the precincts of their workplaces; for instance, bribery, sex-for-promotion, money-for-justice and inflated contracting/procurement process, nevertheless, their respective organizations have been making frantic efforts towards mitigation of the menace. Meanwhile, in most cases, there was no concrete evidence to support exact interventions, which such organizations have devised or implemented.

At both individual and sectoral levels, the urge to “make” quick money and the inability of numerous public actors to delineate what is actually “public” from what is actually “private” have been the primary stimulators (and sustainers) of corrupt practices in Nigeria. Meanwhile, denegrating conditions of service of workers at all levels, especially in the public sector and absence of any kind of social services to support living, particularly in such critical sectors like education and health, have practically made corrupt practices among majority of public servants in the country routine and virtually inevitable.

To most of the participants in various IDI and FGD sessions, corruption could actually be eradicated from the country through processes of sustained value re-orientation (via establishment of relevant educational curricula and by means of religious teaching), public enlightenment and holistic improvement in the conditions of existence in the country. However, a major obstacle in this regard is continued politicization of the operations of various anti-corruption agencies in the country, notably the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Related Offences Commission (ICPC), which many adjudged to be dysfunctionally selective.

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Background to the Study

The fact that corruption has continued to fester as the most pivotal clog in Nigeria's drive towards sustainable development is no longer contestable. But, how it has remained ubiquitous to the functioning of the entire social institutions in the country, such as applicable to the family, politics (and public service), economy, education and religion, has been quite riveting. While corruption has tended to be presented as a problem, which is largely synonymous with the process of service delivery in the public sector, realistically, the blot permeates all levels of governance, all sectors of the economy and all strata of the society. Hence, the need to explore budding patterns, manifestations and experiences of corruption in selected sectors of Nigerian national life since the conduct of the 1st National Household Survey on Corruption in the country in 2016.

Although different procedures for contextualizing corruption have been engaged in the case of Nigeria, it has been so obvious that related attempts have characteristically reflected either a micro-level or a macro-level elucidation. In most cases, the crisis has not always been clear-cut or, at best, limited in description, but usually interconnected, involving a range of behaviors that cleaves across individual-level interaction and sector-based processes. In this regard, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has proposed this study as the medium for sourcing for first-hand, exploratory information on patterns, experiences and manifestations of corruption in Nigeria; notably from relevant actors in both public and private sectors and from the general public. This was initiated so as to corroborate the outcomes of the 2nd National Household Survey on Corruption in Nigeria, which UNODC executed in partnership with the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) between May and June, 2019.

With increasing difficulty in accessing public services in Nigeria without parting with bribes, and also, with the expanding trend of macro-level corruption in the country despite the anti-corruption cleavage of the current government in the country, the significance and timeliness of this study cannot be underplayed.

Aim and Objectives

The primary goal of the study is to explore extant patterns, experiences and manifestations of corruption in Nigeria since the conduct of 1st National Household Survey on Corruption in 2016. Other specific objectives of the study include:

- i. To understand the awareness/construction of corruption among Nigerians;
- ii. To fathom existing patterns of corruption in Nigeria;
- iii. To probe how corruption is experienced by Nigerians;
- iv. To understand how corruption is manifested in Nigeria;
- v. To present feasible remedies to corruption in Nigeria;

Research Questions

- i. Do you regard corruption as a crisis of development in Nigeria?
- ii. What are the most prevalent patterns of corruption in Nigeria?
- iii. How is corruption experienced among Nigerians?
- iv. What are the general manifestations of corruption in Nigeria?
- v. What are the probable solutions to the menace of corruption in Nigeria?

Research Methodology

Study design

Being a reflexive research, which focuses on individual and group's construction, experiences and knowledge of corruption in Nigeria, this study employed an exploratory approach that utilized in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) as the primary data collection tools. Purposive sampling technique was employed in selecting the research participants from the four study locations (Enugu, Kano, Kwara and Lagos States). Variables such as sex, age, locality, nationality, education and profession/vocation were put into cognizance in the sampling process. In all, a total of 40 IDIs and 8 FGDs were conducted. All of the research instruments were prepared in longitudinal and case study format. In addition, the methods of content analysis and ethnographic summary were incorporated in the process of data analysis.

Study locations

The study were executed in 4 locations: Enugu State (South-East), Kano (North-West), Kwara (North-Central) and Lagos State (South-West). In each of the states, one urban and one rural Local Government Areas (LGAs) were included in the study.

Study population

Participants in the IDI sessions were drawn from the agencies, institutions and sectors identified in the table below.

S/No	Agency/Institution/Sector	Justification
1	The Judiciary/Courts of Law	This is an arm of government that is responsible for interpretation of law and has been a key player in enabling prosecution of offenders. Unfortunately, it has been enmeshed in various corruption-related allegations in recent past.
2	The Legislature (at both Federal and State levels)	Corruption, especially in the likeness of “constituency project” funding, is believed to be rife in this critical arm of government, which is assigned the task of making laws for good governance of the society.
3	The Executive (Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of the government)	They are saddled with the function of coordinating the day-to-day running of the government; such as employment, payment of salaries and wages, procurement and award of contracts. Varying forms of corruption are believed to have become normative trends in the MDAs.
4	Law Enforcement Agencies (The Nigerian Police Force (NPF)), Vehicle Licencing Office (VIO), Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), State Traffick Management Agencies (such as LASTMA)	These agencies are primarily responsible for maintenance of law and order. They are equally responsible for the arrest and prosecution of offenders. But, they have been widely accused and, indeed, culpable of cogent corrupt practices.
5	Media Organizations (Online, Radio and Television stations)	These outfits play a vital role in keeping the public abreast of developments in the society and have jointly been a prominent player in the campaign against corruption in Nigeria.
6	Religious/Traditional Institutions	Due to high religious and cultural inclination of the Nigerian society, citizens opinions on issues, such as corruption, are usually aligned to the opinions of respective religious and traditional leaders.
7	Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)	They are usually involved in advocacy for human rights, prevalence of rule law, openness, accountability and transparency in governance. As such, they have been at the core of the campaign against corruption in Nigeria.
8	Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)	They usually receive funds from both local and foreign donor sources to execute various interventionist projects in specific sectors/areas where government’s presence is either unfelt or lacking.

9	Anti Corruption Agencies (Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) and Code of Conduct Tribunal (CCT)	These agencies have been established by the Nigerian government to investigate and to prosecute various cases of corruption in the country. They have, unfortunately, been accused of unfairness, nepotism, partiality, witchhunting and indeed, bribery in the execution of their assigned responsibilities.
10	Professional bodies and registered associations (such as the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) and the Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE))	They regulate the professional conducts of their members. In this regard, they are expected to have rules and regulations that serve as code of conducts for their members.

For the FGDs, 8 sessions were conducted in the entire 4 states that were selected for the study. Each of the FGD sessions had a sample size of 8 participants, which was purposively drawn. The FGDs did present the study with useful group reflections on subsisting patterns, experiences and manifestations of corruption in Nigeria.

Sample Size

A total of 40 IDIs and 8 FGDs was conducted in the selected 4 states. In each state, 10 IDIs (5 female and 5 male) and 2 FGDs (1 female session and 1 male session) were conducted.

Inclusion and Exclusion criteria

Capability in oral English (or in relevant local language) was a basic criterion for inclusion of participants in the study. Such participants were drawn from different strata of the society.

For both IDI and FGD sessions, eligible participants were Nigerian citizens who had been resident in Nigeria for a minimum of 5 years preceding the conduct of the study. The justification for this benchmark was to ensure that participants were able to depict apt knowledge of specific trends of patterns, experiences and manifestations of corruption in the country, specifically since the completion of the 1st National Household Survey on Corruption in 2016.

However, individuals who fell within the category of non-Nigerians as at the time of conduct of the study were excluded irrespective of their ages or the number of years they have been resident in Nigeria. In the same vein, Nigerian citizens who were below 18 years of age as at the time of conduct of the study were routinely excluded from the study.

Findings from the In-depth Interviews (IDIs)

On a general note, all participants in various IDI sessions that were held between July 20 and August 12, 2019 across Enugu, Kano, Kwara and Lagos States did claim to be aware of corruption in Nigeria as a major crisis of national development. They routinely perceived corruption as “a bad thing”, which cannot be justified in any way; existentially, morally or religiously. However, prevalent social injustice, poor conditions of working and living, lack of social support programs and stalled economic performance, as observable in increasing job loss and job insecurity, have been identified as conditions that would continue to make corrupt practices attractive in Nigeria, notably among the civil servants.

Individual Construction and Opinions on Corruption

While the interpretations that have been provided to describe corruption as a developmental problem in Nigeria by various participants in the IDI sessions seemed to be similar; that is, an illegal mechanism for personal enrichment, their perceptions of what could actually be ascribed as corrupt practices varied:

“Whenever I hear the word “corruption”, I don’t feel happy because it is not a good thing.....as we all know, corruption can mean a lot of things. But, to me it is when one is reaping from where he has not sown.....it is when you are taking something that doesn’t belong to you.....some of our scholars used to say that whenever anyone is desirous of obtaining a gift from some else whether he/she merits it or not, this is corruption” (IDI, Male, Religious Leader, 48 years, Kano, August 5, 2019).

“Corruption to me simply means cutting corners.....when rules and regulations are not being followed, it is corruption..... for example, I was denied promotion for 12 years because I refused to lobby and behave in an unjust manner..... this is corruption. Also, sometimes ago, I was victimized by a staff of PHCN (Power Holding Company of Nigeria).....my (electricity) meter was suddenly compromised because I was not giving bribes.....this left me in total darkness for about a year while the bills kept coming in..... this is corruption” (IDI, Female, Prison Controller, 56 years, Alagbon, Lagos, July 25, 2019).

“.....whenever I hear of corruption, what comes to my mind is involvement in illegal actions that are criminal in nature....I believe that notwithstanding the hardship in the country.....honesty should still not be compromised” (IDI, Male, Librarian, 49 years, Enugu, July 31, 2019).

“Corruption” is something that is not good to hear.....Well, to me, corruption is getting something that is not yours through bribery. In other words, it means getting what is not rightfully yours.....it means paying to have what you are not qualified to have or what should have ordinarily gone the ways of other people. Corruption is something that brings destruction to a nation” (IDI, Male, Lecturer, 40 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 10, 2019).

“Whenever I hear corruption, what usually comes to my mind is embezzlement of public funds by government officials through inflated contract awards in various ministries and departments of governments at both federal and state levels.....but, I do not see anything wrong in offering gifts or tips to government officials provided that such have not been forcefully solicited” (IDI, Male, Traditional Ruler, 68 years, Kano, August 5, 2019).

Views on Overcoming Corruption at both Individual and Group Levels

Opinions that were expressed by various IDI respondents on the feasibility of winning the fight against corruption within the context of prevalent economic reality in the country (at both personal and national levels) were quite pessimistic. The major motivating factors that have made corruption an attractive undertaking in Nigeria are poverty, unemployment and inept policy projection, which could still be connected to malfunctioning economic institution. According to the respondents, it appears as if the menace has been ingrained into the socio-economic frameworks of the country as a pre-requisite for subsisting. Hence, its seeming intractability. From the family institution to the religious institution, politics, health sector and the economic institution, the menace of corruption has been visible. For reference purposes, in the education sector, the teachers have been affirmed as bribe takers and parents as bribe givers; in the health sector, doctors and nurses are involved in obtaining bribes from patients and in government parastatals, public servants do demand for bribes from Nigerians in order to offer relevant services.

The extracts of the following IDI sessions attest to the seeming intractability of corruption, at both individual and group levels in the country:

“.....for instance, in the Ministry of Education, we are currently on holidays as teachers and we are expected to engage in “conference marking”.....we are expected go to the designated centers for grading of examination scripts.....with the marking schemes.....but, as I speak to you, some of the teachers are already done with grading (of scripts) though the marking schemes are yet to be out.....again, even when you (the teachers) go to the designated centers, the number of teachers on the attendance list will be up to one hundred persons, but physically you will not see more than ten teachers. Meanwhile, whenever the inspectors come for assessment, instead of reporting what they have actually seen on the ground, contradictory reports are given because of bribes.....without any doubt, these are instances of corruption” (IDI, Male, Teacher, 52 years, Lagos, July 28, 2019).

“.....so, corruption could be seen everywhere, especially in all the ministries and departments.....at the points of obtaining international passport, driver’s license and vehicle license.....but, it could be addressed if the civil servants or public office holders who are found wanting are prosecuted within the frameworks of relevant laws, but obvious lack of needed political will to do this is the problem.....I see the ongoing anti-corruption campaign as a good idea; particularly, the whistle-blowing

policy.....but, it is already being abused across board” (IDI, Female, State Legislator, 50 years, Kano, August 7, 2019).

“Individually, no one can win the battle against corruption. In Nigeria, for example, we all know that the words and actions of the President show that he is against corruption. But, there is little he could achieve alone as an individual.....he cannot fight it alone.....Nigeria is a very big country with huge population and diverse ethnic groups, different religions, cultures and traditions.....before one can discuss the possibility of winning the war against corruption at any level, workable institutions are pre-requisites.....and I cannot see anything of such in the country presently.....but, if the country as a whole can jettison their differences, we can win the battle against corruption” (IDI, Male, Anti-Corruption Agency Operative, 36 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

“.....the battle against corruption can only be won at any level by following the teachings of God Almighty.....by not being too materialistic.....the interest of most of Nigerians in ostentatious living cannot be helpful to the course of winning the corruption fight.....there is urgent need for public re-orientation towards mean and progressive thinking in the country” (IDI, Male, Lecturer, 40 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 10, 2019).

“It all depends on when we agree to entrust ourselves with dictates of social norms. But, I don’t think that this is possible in present day Nigeria.....because, almost everybody in this country is corrupt one way or the other. Only rich people are celebrated irrespective of sources of their monies.....there is presently an expanding culture of corruption in the country” (IDI, Male, Professor, 61 years, Kano, August 7, 2019).

Individuals’ Experiences of Corruption in Nigeria

Though there were instances where few of the respondents had either affirm “can’t recall” or “didn’t experience it”, majority of the respondents have been victims of micro-level corruption at one point or the other, especially while relating with public officials. Even, in cases where respondents did claim ignorance of experiencing corruption, it was so apparent that they have, in reality, been either a giver or a receiver of bribes. However, their current jobs as public officials had actually necessitated such disposition. The following abridged texts contain what individuals’ responses to their experiences of corruption reflect:

“I can’t remember whether I have experienced corruption in the past.....for example, one cannot really understand the difference between gifts and bribes in most cases.....what I know for sure is that there is no way anyone can survive in Nigeria without motivating some public officials from time to time (bribery)” (IDI, Male, Political Office Holder, 66 years, Kano, August 6, 2019).

“We are in Nigeria, so one must be a victim of corruption at one point or the other.....especially, on the roads, I have always given bribes to the police and to the road safety officials” (IDI, Male, Journalist, 46 years, Enugu, August 2, 2019).

“No, I have never been a victim of corruption.....I don’t give and I don’t take bribes” (IDI, Female, State Legislator, 58 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 10, 2019).

“Yes, I have been a victim and I am still coming across it (corruption) from time to time.....in the hospitals, on the roads, in the (government) offices; everywhere” (IDI, Male, Anti-Corruption Agency Operative, 36 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

“I have been a victim of corruption at official level.....for several times.....while obtaining (international) passport, driver’s license and many more. Besides, I have also been a victim of other crimes like theft, robbery et cetera” (IDI, Female, Human Rights Advocate, Lagos, July 29, 2019).

“Yes, I have been a victim.....everybody is a victim of corruption in Nigeria” (IDI, Male, Professor, 61 years, Kano, August 7, 2019).

General Manifestations of Corruption in Nigeria

Aside from bribery and kickbacks that usually pervade the delivery and accessing of services in the health, education, social, economic and public sectors in Nigeria, the conducted IDI sessions have shown that new trends of corrupt practices are cropping up across all of the major segments of the Nigerian society. Such include prayers-for-money in the religious environment, sex-for-mark in the tertiary institutions, appointments-for-money in both public and private establishments and weapons-for-money in military procurement process (particularly in the ongoing counter-insurgency operations in the country North-East region).

“If you look at the religious institutions, the pastors have been having sexual intercourse with female worshippers and have also been collecting money for prayers.....so also, Islamic clerics.....everybody wants to cheat in one way or the other.....in the educational, traditional, commercial and public service sector, corruption has been the order of the day” (IDI, Male, Medical Doctor, 41 years, Lagos, July 28, 2019).

“.....in the military, in the police and in the other law enforcement agencies, there is one or more ways of corruption.....for example, demand for bribes at check-points on the roads by the police and inflation of contracts amount in procuring arms and ammunitions by top military officers in the ongoing counter-insurgency operations in some parts of the country” (IDI, Female, Teacher, 58 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

“.....in general, corruption is conducted through bribery in Nigeria.....but it is often manifested by means of kick-backs, demand and offer of sex, demand and offer of goods and services that are not paid for.....these practices cut across all sectors of the economy and the larger society.....and to a large extent, they are conducted as parts of daily routines without any form of remorse or wrong doing” (IDI, Female, Chief Magistrate, 44 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 11, 2019).

“.....the truth is that it (corruption) is everywhere and there is no way that I can be specific because it is everywhere.....each organization has its unique way of accommodating its corrupt practices.....it is in the market, government offices.....I have not seen anyone in this country who has been able to obtain his/her international passport, driver’s license and vehicle license at the official rate” (IDI, Male, Islamic Scholar, 70 years, Kano, August 6, 2019).

“Corruption exists in all ministries, homes, mosques and churches across the states and at the national level in forms sexual exchange, selling of employment letters, kick-backs and even undue tipping for rendered services” (IDI, Male, NGO executive, 39 years, Lagos, July 27, 2019).

“.....you know if your files must move accordingly in any government office, you must first bribe the secretary and continue along that line..... otherwise, nothing gets done” (IDI, Female, Newspaper Editor, 47 years, Enugu, August 2, 2019).

Individuals’ Roles in the Fight against Corruption in Nigeria

At individual level, virtually all of the IDI participants did claim that they have been making frantic efforts towards ending corruption within their immediate work environment. However, such efforts have been largely elusive. In most cases, they found it difficult to situate associated efforts within appropriate contexts.

“I have been trying in my own little way to discourage people from engaging in corruption.....for instance, any time that parents come to meet me to award unmerited scores to their children and their wards in order enjoy double promotion (in the secondary school).....I usually object.....I know that such solicitation wouldn’t have been made without the intention to give bribe” (IDI, Male, Teacher, 42 years, Enugu, August 2, 2019).

“I am involved in waging war against corruption in all organizations that I belong to..... in the church, I usually encourage fellow women (worshippers) to do the right thing as I lead by example.....in my place of work, I do not wait for bribe before I do my work, rather I do my work as at when due without waiting for anybody to tip me.....also, I have been trying to ensure that my children always do the right thing as a mother.....whenever they err, they are promptly reprimanded” (IDI, Female, Human Rights Advocate, Lagos, July 29, 2019).

“Well, I always try to avoid it (corruption) whenever the temptation comes.....in this way, I believe that I am playing a good role to deal with it” (IDI, Female, Civil Servant, 50 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 10, 2019).

“Yes, I always try to avoid corruption by refusing to take bribes before I perform my duties at work.....though there are some documents that one cannot acquire in this country without having to pay more than the official rates.....a good example is (international) passport.....so, at this level I cannot claim to be fighting against corruption because there is no alternative.....you just have to pay the inflated rate of 30,000 Naira” (IDI, Male, Police Officer, 34 years, Kano, August 4, 2019).

“.....as an investigative journalist, I am actively waging war against the growth of corruption in Nigeria, but unfortunately, it has been fighting back with greater institutionalized resilience and consequences” (IDI, Female, Journalist, 28 years, Lagos, July 28, 2019).

“In my lectures on civics and social development at the undergraduate level in particular, I have always tried to introduce anti-corruption course contentsthese have remained the most veritable mechanisms for me to wage personal war against corruption within the education sector and at the larger societal realm” (IDI, Male, Professor, 51 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

Organizational Efforts towards fighting Corruption in Nigeria

Unlike the case with individualized efforts, the fight against corruption appears to be more specific and essentially visible at the organizational level. Though such efforts have been backed by relevant rules and regulations that guide the operations of these organizations, they are rarely applied. Hence, undue continuation of filthy attributes at organizational level in the country. The following IDI extracts are quite useful in understanding inherent dynamics:

“In my department as a prison officer, we have the following measures in place to curb corruption: i. call centers, which enable the officers-in-charge to monitor incoming and outgoing calls of prison officers on duty and those of inmates in order to ensure that there is no form of deceit or fraudulent act in their conversation. ii. Intelligence office, which facilitates assignment of intelligent officers to the entrances of the prison cells to checkmate visitors who are coming in and going out. iii. Intelligence report, with which the conducts and actions of prison officers are evaluated” (IDI, Female, Prison Controller, 56 years, Lagos, July 22, 2019).

“Well, you know that state legislature is an autonomous arm of government and it has various sub-units that undertake 70% of its entire responsibilities. It has a particular committee called ‘Public Petition Committee’ which helps with public complaints on corruption against law makers and the larger society.....this is how my organization fights corruption” (IDI, Female, State Legislator, 50 years, Kano, August 7, 2019).

“We have representatives who are working directly with various anti-corruption agencies in the country and we usually provide the names of our personnel who are caught in the act of bribery or related matters to them for prosecution” (IDI, Male, Senior Police Officer, 43 years, Kano, August 4, 2019).

“We do receive petitions against corrupt operatives.....and we normally make recourse to the asset declaration forms, which such operatives must have completed and signed at the point of their engagement” (IDI, Male, Code of Conduct Official, 44 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

“We have special programs that enlighten the public on the dangers of corruption. This Radio Corporation (Gidan Bello Dandaqo) is doing its best in enlightening people of Kano State on ways to avoid corruption” (IDI, Male, Broadcaster, 48 years, Kano, August 7, 2019).

“.....the little that I can say is that, almost on daily basis people of proven integrity are appointed to the higher bench, as judges and as other members of the lower bench.....they are thoroughly scrutinized by the State Judiciary Service Commission and the Department of State Security Services before their appointments can be confirmed” (IDI, Female, Chief Magistrate, 44 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 11, 2019).

“We do educate and instill discipline in our students.....of course, we expect them to transfer whatever they must have learnt from the university into the larger society upon completion of their studies” (IDI, Male, Professor, 62 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

“In my organization there are penalties that are applied to officers who do not adhere to the rules and regulations that guide the agency and so we are encouraged to do the right thing always” (IDI, Female, Internal Revenue Official, 38 years, Lagos, July 27, 2019).

Barriers to the Fight against Corruption in Nigeria

While a plethora of factors have been presented as hinderances to the fight against corruption in Nigeria by various IDI participants, common denominators to all are “prevalence of unfairness” and “inoperable rules” across public establishments. The following texts are particularly expository:

“.....the most significant barrier to the fight against corruption in Nigeria is favoritism.....the idea of preferential application of rules and regulations has been really unhelpful” (IDI, Male, Civil Servant, 27 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

“One of the challenges is that most of the legislators do not understand the roles of the Houses of Assembly at the state level and the roles of the National Assembly at the federal level..... in most cases, they are only interested in self-aggrandizementas such, they themselves constitute barriers to the fight against corruption rather than providing essential oversight functions for relevant agencies of the government” (IDI, Female, Legal Practitioner, 53 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 12, 2019).

“We have few barriers like non-compliance and nepotism. When we issue out asset declaration forms to employees, especially in the civil service.....and, thereafter, some of them (employees) refuse to return the forms.....sometimes, there could be under-declaration or over-declaration.....we are usually unable to act if such defaulting personnel have god-fathers in the government, which is often the case” (IDI, Male, Code of Conduct Official, 44 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

“The major barrier is that the activeness of top civil servants in various large-scale corruption cases for which they are rarely prosecuted has made it difficult to discourage junior workers who engage in petty corruption or to recommend them for prosecution” (IDI, Male, Police Officer, 34 years, Kano, August 4, 2019).

Winning the Fight against Corruption at Organizational Level in Nigeria

In order to make measurable progress in the anti-corruption drive in Nigeria, majority of the IDI participants have virtually presented the opposite of prior attributes that have constituted barriers to the fight against corruption in the country. Such are extracted thus:

“.....the government should try to reward the good and punish the offenders, let the right thing be done at the right time” (IDI, Male, Teacher, 42 years, Enugu, August 2, 2019).

“The three arms of the government should be made independent. This will make the legislature and the judiciary to be truly autonomous of the executive manipulationthis is central to any successful anti-corruption campaign in the country” (IDI, Female, State Legislator, 50 years, Kano, August 7, 2019).

“.....applicable rules and regulations of various organizations should take pre-eminent position in dealing with all categories of workers” (IDI, Female, Newspaper Editor, 47 years, Enugu, August 2, 2019).

.....before the war against corruption can be won on a sustainable basis in Nigeria, there is need to serve commensurate punishments to those who are caught in the acts of corrupt practices in the country” (IDI, Female, Civil Servant, 50 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 10, 2019).

“I think only by genuinely prosecuting the defaulters that the war against corruption can be won in this country” (IDI, Male, Code of Conduct Official, 44 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

“By punishing anyone involved in corrupt practices, substantial progress can be recorded in the anti-corruption fight in the country” (IDI, Female, Prison Controller, 56 years, Lagos, July 22, 2019).

“People emulate what they see.....therefore, significant value re-orientation is necessary to win the battle against corruption in the country” (IDI, Male, Islamic Scholar, 70 years, Kano, August 6, 2019).

“immediate termination of the appointment of any culpable worker will serve as deterrent.....and, indeed, assist in winning the war against corruption in Nigeria” (IDI, Male, NGO executive, 39 years, Lagos, July 27, 2019).

Motivation for Engaging in Corrupt Practices in Nigeria

Though a significant proportion of corrupt practices in Nigeria, as presented by most of the IDI participants, has had general economic disempowerment of majority of the citizenry at its base, an unmitigated culture of making “quick wealth” among the people appears to have been a primary motivating factor of corruption in the country. Related submissions are presented thus:

“.....to me, the new pension scheme in the country is a good motivation for corruption among civil servants in particular.....imagine, for upward of 2 years upon retirement, no access to any of one’s rightful benefits: gratuity or the monthly retirement stipend” (IDI, Male, Civil Servant, 40 years, Lagos, July 27, 2019).

“.....the misery that usually accompany retirement in Nigeria has made it lucrative to collect bribes and to loot government fund while still in active service depending on which categories of workers you belong to” (IDI, Male, Police Officer, 34 years, Kano, August 4, 2019).

“.....obviously, prevalent corruption within the rank and file of various anti-corruption agencies has been a significant motivating factor for Nigerians to even see corruption as a part of life.....they are meant to curb procedural infractionsyet, they are active in collecting bribes.....so, most people do not see the whole anti-corruption campaign as any serious thing” (IDI, Female, Legal Practitioner, 53 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 12, 2019).

“.....the salary scale that is applicable to both junior and intermediate level civil servants, which is by all evaluation poor, will perpetually make bribery to grow and to be a lucrative venture in Nigeria” (IDI, Male, Broadcaster, 48 years, Kano, August 7, 2019).

“.....without any doubt, the inability to punish earlier culprits of corrupt practices via the instrumentality of law has been encouraging many Nigerians to take a shot at corruption” (IDI, Female, Chief Magistrate, 44 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 11, 2019).

“Offer of chieftaincy titles and national awards to notable looters of public funds have been motivating the younger ones to learn the art of corruption” (IDI, Female, Journalist, 28 years, Lagos, July 28, 2019).

“Poverty, greed and selfishness are what motivate individual Nigerians to get involved in corrupt practices” (IDI, Male, CSO Personnel, 62 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

“Greed and lack of contentment are the main reasons that make people to get involved in corrupt practices in this country (Nigeria)” (IDI, Male, NGO executive, 39 years, Lagos, July 27, 2019).

“The approval of sudden wealth by most cultures in Nigeria has been an important factor in becoming a corrupt person in the country” (IDI, Male, Professor, 51 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

Perceptions of Nigerians and Public Office Holders on Corruption in Nigeria

While the general public reticently views corruption as a way of life and as a strategy for survival, a significant proportion of public actors in the country (in both managerial and junior positions) understandably does not perceive any kind of corruptive practice in respective daily routines. In most cases, the IDI participants did affirm extra income (bribes) as the only means

through which average civil servants could have access to good life in the country, but not necessarily opulence. Useful excerpts are given below:

“.....with extra income (bribe) aside from the official remuneration, which is nothing to write home about in the first place, one is able to ‘motivate’ officials in charge of promotion to speed up the exercise on one’s behalf.....I do not see anything wrong in the whole of this process” (IDI, Male, Civil Servant, 40 years, Lagos, July 27, 2019).

“.....extra income from anywhere.....I am not talking about bribe or corruption.....is just inevitable in this country” (IDI, Male, Prison Officer, 35 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 11, 2019).

“.....among the government workers, at all levels, it is so obvious that collection of bribes or stealing of government money is considered necessary in order to have basic necessities of life.....to a large extent, they perceive corruption as a way of becoming very rich” (IDI, Female, Newspaper Editor, 47 years, Enugu, August 2, 2019).

“They (civil servants) perceive corruption as the only way to become rich without working hard. They don’t see it as anything bad nowadays. But, in reality, can anyone in this country be able to attend to all needed basics of life without being filthy? I don’t think that this is possible” (IDI, Male, Professor, 51 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

“.....the truth is that it (corruption) has become a tradition.....something habitual among Nigerians, either in private or public sector.....of course, the poor state of the economy or, better still, the dropping purchasing power parity of Nigerians has been particularly applicable in understanding the increasing trend of corruption in Nigeria.....though I do not in any way encourage corruption, but I cannot see any other veritable alternative if the average monthly salary of Nigerians in the public sector can hardly last beyond 1/3rd of the month” (IDI, Male, Police Officer, 34 years, Kano, August 4, 2019).

Roles of Governments’ Actors in Promoting Corruption in Nigeria

Of all comments that were made on how governments’ officials have been aiding corruption in Nigeria, actual involvement and readiness to abet corrupt practices have been the most flagrant. Such comments are summarized below:

“Government officials promote corruption by asking for bribe. You see, corruption concerns giving and taking of bribes. Before you can get anything, for example, in a ministry, the officer in charge will ask for something from you, in form of cash or something like that, if you don’t give him/her, then you won’t get what you want and it is your right as a citizen of Nigeria.....in fact, as soon as you notice a kind of undue delay in having response to your request, you must be quick to package something (bribe) for the official.....otherwise, you will not have anything done” (IDI, Male, Teacher, 62 years, Enugu, August 2, 2019).

“Indeed, the major contribution of public servants towards promotion of corruption in Nigeria is their inability to expose it (corruption).....paying lip service to the fight against corruption by government officials at both federal and state levels has been encouraging the growth of corruption in the country” (IDI, Male, NGO executive, 39 years, Lagos, July 27, 2019).

“As bureaucrats and technocrats, they have access to the procurement and the contracting systems.....instead of using such exalted positions to make things work, they have been using their positions to amass wealth.....a good reference is the case of the immediate past Head of Service of the Federation – Mrs. Winifred Oyo-Ita, who was removed (on September 19, 2019) because of alleged contract fraud totaling N3 Billion.....As professionals in the field and being in positions of influence, they manipulate whatever is brought before them for personal gains” (IDI, Male, Broadcaster, 48 years, Kano, August 7, 2019).

“.....without any doubt, the lifestyles of many of the top government functionaries have been sufficient grounds to present corruption to the entire Nigerian populace as an essential part of life.....at least, if one is desirous of good life.....definitely, not all of them (government officials) are involved in promoting corruption in this way.....but, in many government ministries, departments and agencies, one will find ministers and directors going away with huge amount of money; in billions, and sometimes in trillions of Naira; buying expensive properties in and outside the country. Meanwhile, millions of Nigerians are living in abject poverty. With routine contents of various newspapers in the country and other social media platforms on the rising volume of public monies that are going into the pockets of top government officials, I do not think that there is any other means to promote corruption in the country than this.....” (IDI, Female, Legal Practitioner, 53 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 12, 2019).

Ways to Eradicate Corruption in Nigeria

With reference to the contents of various submissions that were made by most of the IDI participants, social justice, equity, re-energized process of socialization and sustained improvement of the conditions of living of Nigerians have been noted as the most reliable mechanisms for eradicating, or at least, lessening the tide of corruption in the country. Some of the comments are presented below:

“The family unit should endeavor to inculcate in their children helpful norms and values.....there should be restoration of social norms and values’ inculcation in the younger ones, especially at both elementary and secondary (school) levels.....this is presently lacking because of obvious need for parents to spend more time outside the home to look for extra income to sustain the family. The church (and other religious groups) should endeavor to stop undue tasking of their members for constant payments without minding where such members are getting the money from” (IDI, Male, NGO executive, 39 years, Lagos, July 27, 2019).

“Corruption can be eradicated through continuous enlightenment of the public on the dangers it poses to the entire social system. Also, by punishing officials who are implicated in corrupt practices. There shouldn’t be any kind of bias. With these

done, I believe the problem of corruption will be reduced significantly, if not totally eradicated from the country” (IDI, Male, Community Leader, 42 years, Enugu, August 2, 2019).

“Corruption can be eradicated from Nigeria only if we could become conscious of the teachings of God Almighty on honesty and truthfulness. When we put the fear of God into all that we do, then we can be talking about eradication of corruption from the country” (IDI, Male, Islamic Scholar, 70 years, Kano, August 6, 2019).

“Government should give every citizen his/her right. Realistic salary increments and extra allowances should be treated as a matter of necessity for public servants who are, in most cases, under-remunerated. Also, government should ensure that appropriate punishments are meted out to all categories of public officials who are involved in corruption” (IDI, Female, Legal Practitioner, 53 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 12, 2019).

“Actually, the way I feel that corruption can be eradicated from Nigeria is by provisioning of welfare services for Nigerians by governments at various levels..... The problems of unemployment and dysfunctional pension scheme should be tackled.....there should be qualified doctors and good medications in the hospitals.....top government officials should be mandated to patronize public hospitals in the country.....private schools should be eradicated.....let everybody, including the children of government officials attend government schools.....but as long as there are private hospitals and private institutions of learning, which are usually owned and patronized by corrupt government officials, then corruption can never be eradicated from Nigeria” (IDI, Male, Traditional Ruler, 51 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

Ways to Curb Corruption at Respective Areas of Engagements in Nigeria

Honest implementation of the “whistle blowing” policy, improvement in the condition of service of the working class who are, in most cases, under-remunerated and creation of monitoring and evaluation units, have been affirmed as imperatives in order to impactfully address the problem of corruption within individual area of assignment in Nigeria. Abridged texts of relevant IDI sessions are presented below:

“By improving the condition of service of workers” (IDI, Male, Prison Officer, 35 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 11, 2019).

“All the workers in this organization and in all other organizations should be under constant observation. A pattern of monitoring and evaluation unit, whose primary responsibility will be to ensure compliance to all laid down rules and regulations by all categories of workers, should be put in place.....this is presently lacking..... unfortunately, “Servicom”, which ought to have been useful here has become moribund” (IDI, Male, Broadcaster, 48 years, Kano, August 7, 2019).

“.....personnel, whose main job will be to report suspected cases of corruption to respective anti-corruption agencies should be engaged in each of the government establishments” (IDI, Female, Prison Controller, 56 years, Lagos, July 22, 2019).

“By prompt prosecution of offenders, whether in the private or in the public sector; whether at high or low level.....there should not be any sacred cow.....but, this is not presently the case” (IDI, Female, Chief Magistrate, 44 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 11, 2019).

“They must improve on the conditions of service (of workers).....and corrupt officials must be brought to book in good time.....also, favoritism must be discouraged in all its ramifications” (IDI, Male, Teacher, 62 years, Enugu, August 2, 2019).

“Eradication of corruption can only be made possible through an honest fight. For instance, the “whistle-blowing” policy is no longer effective since government has been renegeing on its promises and obligations to the “whistle-blowers” in terms of payment and protection.....” (IDI, Male, CSO Personnel, 62 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

Opinions on Ongoing Anti-Corruption Campaign in Nigeria

On a general note, most of the IDI respondents did consider ongoing anti-corruption campaign in Nigeria as worthwhile, but its selective implementation has been a major shortcoming. Sampled responses are provided below:

“I see the ongoing anti-corruption campaign in the country as a good idea since it could have a multiplier effect on the national development agenda eventuallybut, it shouldn’t continue to target the perceived enemies of the government alone” (IDI, Male, Traditional Ruler, 72 years, Kano, August 6, 2019).

“.....to me, I see the ongoing anti-corruption campaign in the country as a scam.....the federal government should, first and foremost, probe its top functionaries.....it is just unacceptable to target others while covering members of your inner caucus popularly called “the cabal” for the same crime” (IDI, Male, Journalist, 46 years, Enugu, August 2, 2019).

“.....current anti-graft campaign in Nigeria is a good one.....though those who are being caught and arrested are not happy.....before now, you will see top government officials carrying “Ghana must go bag”, filled with money, from their various offices, especially on weekends..... with this government now, such is no longer possible.....the “treasury single account” (TSA) policy of the government has put a noticeable stop to such act.....however, I am not in any way saying that there is no corruption in Nigeria again.....but, definitely not like before” (IDI, Male, Anti-Corruption Agency Operative, 36 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

“.....well, it (ongoing anti-corruption campaign) is a very good thing. It should be continued but not selectively” (IDI, Female, Human Rights Advocate, Lagos, July 29, 2019).

Factors Hindering the Effectiveness of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Nigeria

While bias, partiality, lack of diligence, lack of independence and poor management of given information have been identified as factors that are hindering appropriate functioning of various

anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria by most of the IDI submissions, politics appears to be the fulcrum around which related shortcomings have revolved. Relevant comments are highlighted below:

“.....obtaining needed information from various government offices has continued to be herculean for most of the anti-corruption agencies.....this is largely due to absolute lack of confidence in such agencies, especially in the management of given information, which are often traced to the providers by the culprits” (IDI, Male, Journalist, 46 years, Enugu, August 2, 2019).

“incapable operatives are being engaged within the rank and file of the anti-corruption agencies.....as usual, politics has been implied here.....I would say that in order to eradicate corruption from Nigeria, round pegs should be put in round holes in a meritorious manner while employing various categories of anti-corruption workers” (IDI, Female, State Legislator, 58 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 10, 2019).

“Bias and partiality in the prosecution of corruption cases have been major shortcomings in the operations of the anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria, notably the EFCC (Economic and Financial Crimes Commission). For example, there have been cases whereby accused persons, who are well-connected, are speedily cleared by the EFCC of any infraction, usually less than 24 hours, without conducting diligent investigation” (IDI, Male, NGO executive, 39 years, Lagos, July 27, 2019).

“In-house corruption and lack of inter-agency cooperation have been militating against result-oriented working of all anti-corruption agencies in this country.....in most cases, they are guilty of what they are employed to curb.....existing mutual distrust among the agencies has made productive intelligence sharing difficult” (IDI, Male, Professor, 51 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

“In my own opinion, politics is the major factor that hinders the effectiveness of all anti-corruption agencies operating in Nigeria.....they have usually been used as instruments of witch-hunting by any government in power in this country, including the present (federal) government” (IDI, Female, Legal Practitioner, 53 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 12, 2019).

“Corruption, favoritism and politics are the most prominent factors that hamper the effectiveness of the anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria” (IDI, Male, Police Officer, 34 years, Kano, August 4, 2019).

Other Relevant Comments on Corruption in Nigeria

Other relevant comments on corruption in Nigeria have tended to provide explanations on some subtle precipitators of corruption in the country; such as the practice of polygamy and high rate of procreation among the poor members of the society. Equally, enhanced awareness and sensitization programs have been suggested as central concerns in order to functionally prosecute the anti-corruption fight in the country. See related excerpts below:

“If evil is allowed to fester, it will automatically become a domineering culture and, of course, an irresistible way of life of the people. The fight against corruption has to derive inspiration from this proverb if this country is not going to be destroyed irredeemably in the nearest future.....more than any other consideration, a culture of discipline, which would come with both reward for compliance and punishment for deterrence, has to be devised for Nigerians across board” (IDI, Male, Medical Doctor, 41 years, Lagos, July 28, 2019).

“To avoid cross-generational culture of corruption in Nigeria, it is high time that children are enlightened right from primary schools on the ills of corruption within the society. They should be properly trained at home as well so that they will grow up perceiving corruption as evil.....more importantly, they should be able to see that older citizens who are involved in corruption are punished as appropriate” (IDI, Female, Chief Magistrate, 44 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 11, 2019).

“.....awareness and sensitization programs on the effects of corruption vis-à-vis the process of human development in the country should be taken seriously through relevant agencies of the government. For example, the National Orientation Agency (NOA) should be repackaged in such a way that it will be able to deliver this onerous responsibility” (IDI, Female, Teacher, 58 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

“Polygamy and uncontrolled procreation should be discouraged in Nigeria as a matter of urgency.....with many wives and so many children, the urge to be corrupt is usually constant, especially for the menfolk.....with the current minimum wage of N18,000, how can they manage what they earn to educate their children, to feed their children, to give them all what they want except to go the way of corruption?.....this is a country where governments do not help with the schooling of children and the healthcare of children.....and high rate of procreation is far common with the illiterate and the poor components of the population relative to the educated and the wealthy components” (IDI, Male, Islamic Scholar, 70 years, Kano, August 6, 2019).

Findings from the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

From all responses gathered from various FGD sessions that were held between July 20 and August 12, 2019 across 4 states in Nigeria (Enugu, Kano, Kwara and Lagos), it has been so evident that an average Nigerian has not just routinely been a victim of corruption, directly or indirectly, but also its impacts have been felt by both the rich and the poor. Meanwhile, poor Nigerians seem to have been more battered than rich Nigerians on a relative note. While greed has often been identified as prominent stimulator of corrupt practices in the country, other factors, such as impatience to receive service, inability to reprimand obviously corrupt top public and private actors, prevalent poverty, soaring level of unemployment, traumatic post-retirement experience and lack of social supports appear to have been other potent motivators of corruption in Nigeria. To a large extent, traces of corruption have been noted to be borderless in manifestation in the country. They cut across both private and public realms. More than any

other determinants, lack of protection and unpreparedness of relevant institutional functionaries to act on given corruption-related information have been primary disincentives to reporting such by most Nigerians. A significant proportion of the FGD participants could not recollect any effective measure that has been taken in respect of tackling corruption by the Nigerian government in recent past. Even, in cases where respondents had claimed awareness of some effective measures, they were unable to specify actual measures that were taken or the precise policies that were implemented. Aside from recommendation of capital punishment and resort to religious/spiritual realm for probable way out of the menace of corruption in Nigeria, there was no concrete idea or fact-driven suggestion on how to address the corrupt tendencies among Nigerians.

Experiences as Victims of Corruption in Nigeria

Nearly all participants in the FGD sessions had been victims of corruption in recent past. Their experiences ranged from small-scale offer of bribes to law enforcement agencies like the Police, Vehicle Inspection Officers (VIOs) and Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) officials to large-scale contract/procurement-related corruption. The following texts are quite succinct:

“I have been a victim of corruption.....several times I have been denied promotion because I refused to play along with the officials in charge.....now, I have learnt how to pay tips so that my files could be acted upon” (FGD, Female, Civil Servant, 55 years, Lagos, July 28, 2019).

“I have been a victim of corruption because it took me several years just to gain employment after paying several bribes” (FGD, Male, University Lecturer, 48 years, Lagos, July 25, 2019).

“I have been a victim of corruption.....but I believe that the number one corruption problem in Nigeria today is the police. They are meant to be security personnel.....but, they have turned to ‘revenue collector’.....they are the masses’ worst enemy.....if a soldier is dismissed from service, it will be published for all to see.....not with police.....for more than 5yrs after a police officer is dismissed, he(or she) will still be working as a police man (or woman). They extort money.....and also perpetuate crime.....often time, police, armed robbers and kidnappers work together as comrades.....They (police officers) live and plan together with armed robbers and kidnappers.....they smoke with them, provide information on where to rub and also provide them with arms for their operations” (FGD, Male, Journalist, 35 years, Kano, August 6, 2019).

“.....all Nigerians are victims of corruption. Even, in the markets, when you want to buy something with your money, the seller would have adjusted the measuring cup or the scale.....also, the bus conductor will purposely wait and delay in giving you change so as to make you forget about your money before you get to your bus stop.....a more recent instance of corruption is the unjust retrenchment of some workers who were yet to be 60 years old or who were yet to put in 35 years of work

as stipulated by the constitution by the immediate past Governor of Lagos state (Mr. Akinwumi Ambode) of which I am a victim.....he did it because he was in power and nobody could have questioned him.....is this not part of the corruption we are talking about? This reflects corruption that we are talking about” (FGD, Female, Retired Civil Servant, 59 years, Lagos, July 28, 2019).

“Well, for me, psychologically, I have been a victim of corrupt practices in this country on several occasions. In my former place of work, for example, if you see my file, it is full of query letters because I refused to be part of different corrupt practices that were inherent in that organization.....which other experience could be worse than this?” (FGD, Female, FRSC Official, 40 years, Kano, August 8, 2019).

“As an oil dealer with 25 years of both offshore and onshore experiences, I have been a victim of corruption on many occasions. I can recall that I once needed some funds for my business.....so I applied for a loan from the Bank of Industry (operated by the federal government).....though the loan was never approved, at some point, I received a mail from the bank requesting that I should complete a feedback form on how the ‘loan’ was utilized.....do you know what that implies in Nigeria.....it means that the loan was actually approved and awarded using my details.....but someone else had collected the money” (FGD, Male, Businessman, 52 years, Enugu, July 31, 2019).

“I have also been a victim of corruption. For instance, as a pensioner, there has been no month that I would collect my stipend that I will not bribe the officials in spite of the fact they could see that I am an old man.....I have been a victim of corruption right from my primary school days to secondary to university and up till this old age” (FGD, Female, Pensioner, 72 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

“.....actually, when we started working in the university, the issue of tax clearance did generate a lot of corrupt practices.....if you want to do your tax clearance at the (Kwara State) Revenue Office and you refused to do some sort of tipping, no one will attend to you. Even, if you go to the court to do affidavit, they will be demanding for money for a service that is meant to be free.....so, to that extent, I have experienced corruption. But, as for here (University), where we are working, the most common corrupt practice is ‘sex-for-marks’ usually between some lecturers and their female students.....also, there have been cases of embezzlement/diversion of research funds to private use by some top administrators in the school” (FGD, Female, University Administrator, 58 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 11, 2019).

“.....even, within household, there have been experiences of corruption involving members of the family.....there have been reported cases of husbands who duped their wives and vice versa” (FGD, Male, Anti-Corruption Operative, 35 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 10, 2019).

“I have been a victim of corruption directly and indirectly. You see, even the fifty, fifty naira that the police usually collect on the road is a major corruption issue in Nigeria.....even, there was a day that an immigration officer had to give his bank details to me in order to remit N30,000 to obtain my (international) passport, which officially costs less than N10, 000. I had to comply because there was no alternative.....it (corruption) is so glaring that they remit these monies into their

private pockets.....yet, the entire society, including myself, has been complying with this indecent practice. So, I can say that I have been a victim of corruption” (FGD, Female, NGO Manager, 44 years, Lagos, July 28, 2019).

“Sincerely speaking, as Nigerians, we are all victims of corruption, directly or indirectly. I used to keep change (money) with me all the time to avoid embarrassment on the road, especially from the police for no justifiable reason” (FGD, Female, Secondary School Proprietor, 62 years, Enugu, July 31, 2019).

“Well, I have always tried my possible best to avoid being a victim of corruption. Why? Because my organization is an anti-corruption agency, we fight against corruption and other crimes. So, I will say that I am not a victim of corruption because I do not give or take bribe” (FGD, Male Anti-Corruption Operative, 38 years, Kano, August 8, 2019).

“Yes, I am a victim of corruption.....just of recent, I deposited a certain amount of money in a financial agency with the promise that every month I would be receiving double of my deposit.....though I was paid once.....afterwards, everything just stopped.....both original deposit and the accrued interests were not forthcoming.....this scheme affected a lot of people. In fact, the person (the financial agent) is presently in the EFCC custody” (FGD, Female, Civil Servant, 48 years, Kano, August 10, 2019).

Corruption affects both Poor and Rich Nigerians

Most contributions to the FGD sessions did reveal that all classes of Nigerians, whether rich or poor, are impacted by vestiges of corruption. While existing skewed access and distribution of resources of the society seem to have put the poor at the receiving end of institutional corruption, rich Nigerians, in and out of government, have often been the targets of kidnapping and armed robbery attacks, which are mostly instigated by expanding social inequality and social injustice in the country. Ostensibly, corruption has remained as the primary stimulator of social inequality and social injustice in Nigeria. Contents of the following extracts are glaringly fitting:

“Corruption affects both the poor and the rich in Nigeria.....I will say at least 99 percent of the Nigerian population are affected by the problem of corruption.....see our roads, see our airports, see our hospitals, see our universities, see everything.....why do you think that all of these institutions and infrastructures have been epileptic or completely broken down?.....It is corruption. This is why I believe that everyone is affected by corruption.....though the rich, especially the political elites have been marginalizing the poor.....the poor are dying every day because of lack and the rich people are the sources of all the problems of the poor in the country.....yet the rich are not having rest of mind because of the troubles that their corruption has created for the society.....for example kidnapping for ransom.....who has the money to pay? Of course, the rich Nigerians.....who often lose their lives in the hands of kidnappers after payment of ransom.....it is rich Nigerians” (FGD, Male, Judicial Officer, 52 years, Enugu, July 31, 2019).

“Whenever I hear of corruption what comes into my mind is the hardship it gives to the poor in the country. They are the main victims of corruption and not the rich because the rich, that is, those in power have access to limitless resources and they are the problems we have in this country” (FGD, Female, Civil Servant, 52 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

“Corruption affects the rich and the poor, but the poor are more at the receiving end. The poor will work and work, yet they cannot put food on their tableswhereas if you get to the rich people doorsteps, nutritious foods are given to their dogs” (FGD, Female, Broadcaster, 38 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 11, 2019)

“Impacts of corruption could be seen in the conditions of both the poor and the rich in Nigeria.....but, in the real sense, corruption largely affects only the poor. The resources of the masses are what the rich people use in giving themselves good life leaving the poor shattered.....for instance, one of the biggest wrist-watch companies in the world.....located in Switzerland is owned by (Ibrahim) Babangida (former Nigerian Military President)....during the last (2019 general election) campaign, Atiku (Abubakar) was giving out millions of naira and dollars to get peoples’ supports. These are resources of the general public.....so, the poor people are more affected by corruption” (FGD, Male, Business Owner, 50 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 10, 2019).

“Corruption affects both the poor and the rich.....for instance, when the former Governor of Lagos State (Mr. Akinwumi Ambode) visited the school that recently collapsed in Lagos Island (March, 2019), the people living in that environment were stoning him because the school and the collapsed building had valid licenses from the Lagos State Government.....so, psychologically, I believe he would have been affected even though he is rich.....don’t forget that arm robbers do randomly kill the children of the rich upon their return from oversea studies and the poor also suffer hunger, poor amenities, and death, which are caused by corruption of the rich.....in my view, all are affected (FGD, Female, Civil Servant, 48 years, Lagos, July 28, 2019).

“Although I feel the rich are more affected than the poor because they kidnap them and demand huge ransom.....sometimes, they kill them. Business women (and men) reduce their measuring cups in order to make more gains and cheat the general public.....of course, both rich and poor people patronize them” (FGD, Male, CSO Personnel, 34 years, Lagos, July 25, 2019).

“In my views, it (corruption) affects the poor more than the rich in this country because the rich people know how to get public monies into their accounts in a professional way. Poor people don’t know anything. When the rich man embezzles all the money, the poor people don’t know what is happening, they just keep quiet, just going about their normal activities as if all is well. The big people embezzle the money and keep quiet too as if nothing has happened. Now, see Nigeria, (the federal) government recently said that it has banned imported rice from coming into Nigeria.....and then, see the rich people.....their stores are filled with such proscribed commodities. Where will all these lead us to? Nowhere” (FGD, Male, Islamic Scholar, 68 years, Kano, August 6, 2019).

“Yes, it affects the poor more than the rich. This is because poor people are not getting things easily in the country. They have to suffer for everything they need, right from the local government level to the federal government level. But, the rich get everything they want easily. Therefore, corruption affects the poor more than the rich here in Nigeria” (FGD, Female, Journalist, 52 years, Kano, August 8, 2019).

“Corruption affects everyone. For example, the disintegration of NEPA (National Electric Power Authority) affected all Nigerians regardless of whether you are rich or poor. Corruption killed NEPA. This is the reason why I am saying everyone is affected.....even, the rich people who could afford to install private energy sources like generator or solar panel will still have to bear the costs.....things are this way because of corruption” (FGD, Male, Anti-Corruption Operative, 41 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 10, 2019).

“Corruption affects everyone, both the poor and the rich. I have an uncle who has retired from (public) service as a top civil servant (Permanent Secretary) for more than ten years now. And, up till now, he has not received his retirement benefits.....another uncle of mine who retired from (public) service as a middle level officer just a year ago has collected all his money, because he gave some percentage of his money out as bribe. They (pension officers) removed almost ₦200,000 from his money. So, this is why I said it affects the rich and the poor alike.....” (FGD, Female, Civil Servant, 55 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 11, 2019).

“Corruption affects everyone, but it affects the poor more than the rich. This is because the poor are the ones suffering in the country. To get anything, the poor must suffer for it. A good example is securing admission into public higher institutions, which involves heavy bribe in most cases; even if it is scholarship, a person has to pay before he can get it” (FGD, Male, Traditional Ruler, 53 years, Enugu, July 31, 2019).

“Corruption affects both the poor and the rich. This is because any rich person in Nigeria would still have to pay (bribe) before he can get whatever he/she wants. For example, ministerial position.....It was a public knowledge.....and even all over the social media that each of the newly sworn in Ministers in charge of federal government offices had to pay the sum of Twenty Five Million Naira (N25,000,000) to some powerful people in government before they could be given the chance to be included on the ministerial list.....though I don’t have the proof, but we all know this it is something very common in the corridors of power in Nigeria” (FGD, Male, Secondary School Teacher, 58 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

“Both poor and rich are affected by corruption in Nigeria. This is because no matter how rich you are, to get anything or connection, you have to pay. Likewise, a poor person.....so corruption is all over and it does not respect any class.....it affects everyone in all positions directly or indirectly” (FGD, Female, Legal Practitioner, 68 years, Lagos, July 28, 2019).

“Yes, a rich man has a way of doing his own business and has the money but the poor man doesn’t know any step and he is not deep into business like a rich man, so he can easily fall in wrong hands. I am talking about duping.....but on a general note, corruption affects everyone, but it affects the poor more because they don’t have money” (FGD, Male, Business Owner, 50 years, Lagos, July 25, 2019).

“Corruption affects everybody; the rich and the poor. But in most cases, it affects the poor more than the rich.....while the rich are able to connect or able to pay bribe to secure employments for their children in government agencies, the poor are left to their fate” (FGD, Female, Housewife, 46 years, Kano, August 8, 2019).

“.....the poor are mostly affected compared to the rich because the rich have money to pay if bribe is demanded at any point, but the poor do not have and as such they suffer unduly” (FGD, Female, Human Rights Advocate, 33 years, Kano, August 6, 2019).

Greed not necessarily the Sole Motivation for involvement in Corruption

While greed is generally agreed to be the underlying precipitator of large-scale corruption among top-level public actors in Nigeria, it has been largely irrelevant in understanding what actually motivates petty corrupt intents among majority of Nigerians who rely on relatively inconsequential incomes and who do not have access to public treasury. Impatience to get service done, scarcity, stifling bureaucratic culture, selective anti-corruption policies, poverty, hunger, unemployment, ostentatious lifestyle of the political class and absence of social supports (and related social protection opportunities) have been identified as potent precipitators of corruption among low-income earning Nigerians, who are spread across all sectors of the economy. The following FGD excerpts are deemed apt:

“Poverty and hunger are the motivating factors of corruption and our leaders are not helping matters” (FGD, Male, Journalist, 35 years, Kano, August 6, 2019).

“.....corruption starts with our leaders’ lifestyles. Now, we hear about what they are doing in newspapers and we see them on the TV.....Nigerians leaders will embezzle money, and they are left free. Some influential people will collect millions or billions of naira for contracts that they will never execute.....truly, nothing happens to them.....do we need any other kind of motivation to try one’s luck with corruption? (FGD, Male, University Lecturer, 48 years, Lagos, July 25, 2019).

“Of course, the big civil servants are greedy. It is greed because if you look at the US, when my son traveled to the US, he said the moment you have your car, and you have a building, you are sufficient. But, here in Nigeria, the rich wants to become richer than ever before. And, the issue now is that since they are finding it difficult to launder money oversea again, they are presently using the Naira as if it is ordinary paper.....in my thinking, this is a huge motivation for corruption” (FGD, Female, Civil Servant, 55 years, Lagos, July 28, 2019).

“Sir, talking about being greedy, he (co-FGD participant) mentioned (Olusegun Obasanjo (former Nigerian President) or something like that.....Like MTN now, Obasanjo, from generation to generation, will be a beneficiary of the company in terms of shareholding.....I hope you remember that the company was licensed in 2001 while Obasanjo was in power.....this pattern of using public space for private enrichment is sufficient motivation for corruption within the public service” (FGD, Female, Retired Civil Servant, 59 years, Lagos, July 28, 2019).

“.....what they (other FGD participants) are saying is that the government itself is the problem of Nigeria. See the issue with the minimum wage, the (federal) government is now denying the agreement it reached with workers on the thirty thousand naira (N30,000) minimum wage. They (federal and state governments) have the money, but they are keeping kept it for their personal use and the poor are left unattended to. In the same Nigeria, I escorted my brother to buy food for his 2 dogs some time ago.....we spent fifty thousand naira (50,000 naira). I learnt that the food will only be able to last them (the dogs) for a week. And then, we stay in the same Nigeria and you expect me to stay away from corruption.....I don't think it will work” (FGD, Female, FRSC Official, 40 years, Kano, August 8, 2019).

“See the road transport workers, somebody would institute himself as the chairman and he doesn't want to leave the position again.....no constitution governs their operations. There was one ugly incidence that happened at Gaa Akanbi (in Ilorin, Kwara State) recently among the Keke Napep (tricycle commercial) riders. One of them said he will be life chairman, and he has been the chairman of the group for more than ten years and they (members) wanted a change.....he went to bribe the Police who promptly arrested the protesting members of the group and the case has been rested. I see this situation as sufficient motivation for corruption” (FGD, Female, University Administrator, 58 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 11, 2019).

“Yes, of course, as I said earlier, both impatience and lack of discipline are all that I can see as the motivators of corruption among most of Nigerians.....we are all always in haste to nowhere” (FGD, Male, Business man, 52 years, Enugu, July 31, 2019).

“Yes, sometimes it is greed, sometimes it is impatience” (FGD, Female, Pensioner, 72 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

“Greed appears as the major motivation to get involved in corrupt practices in Nigeria. For example, in the Judiciary, what could make a Judge or a Court Registrar to delay a simple case for several years if not greed?” (FGD, Male, Anti-Corruption Operative, 35 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 10, 2019).

“I quite agree that greed is implied in being corrupt, but conditions like seeking for employment and the desire to obtain travel documents (international passports) will naturally prompt ordinary Nigerians to pay bribe.....in fact, bribes at this level seems to be absolutely normal since no immediate alternatives could be accessed.....also, the need to make both ends meet will continue to be a good motivation of corruption in the country due to prevalent poverty” (FGD, Female, NGO Manager, 44 years, Lagos, July 28, 2019).

“Yes, I will it is greed. This is because, in Nigeria, everyone wants to become rich within a short time and without working for it” (FGD, Female, Civil Servant, 48 years, Kano, August 10, 2019).

“It is not always greed.....sometimes, one could be involved in corruption for safety purpose, especially when you are threatened by superior officers for non-involvement.....I have personally been in such difficult situation.....and sometimes, just innocently, one will be involved” (FGD, Female, Secondary School Proprietor, 62 years, Enugu, July 31, 2019).

“.....in most cases it is greed, but not all the time.....sometimes, it is impatience or lack of contentment” (FGD, Male, Business Owner, 65 years, Lagos, August 25, 2019).

“I don’t think it is always greed, but I can say it is one of the reasons for getting involved in corruption. Everybody wants to become rich within a short period of time and without working hard for it” (FGD, Male, Anti-Corruption Operative, 38 years, Kano, August 8, 2019).

“Well, I can’t say it is always greed, there are other factors that motivate an individual to get involved in corrupt practices. For example, lack, hunger, peer and family pressure” (FGD, Civil Servant, 40 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 10, 2019).

Corruption is Cross-Sectoral

As derived from the submissions made by various FGD participants, corruption in Nigeria is not sector-bound. It cuts across board. However, in terms of trends and manifestations, there have been obvious variations. While grand corruption has been peculiar to influential public and private actors, who usually occupy management positions, petty corruption has been largely associated with non-influential actors in both public and private sectors. See related excerpts below:

“I would say that corruption is prevalent in both private and public sectors in Nigeria.....it is in government offices and public schools.....so also, it could be found in commercial banks and private legal practice.....corruption does not respect any sector in the country” (FGD, Male, Judicial Officer, 52 years, Enugu, July 31, 2019).

“Once anyone mentions corruption, what comes into my mind is the public service, which is operated by nepotism and unfairness.....also, I have personally encountered corrupt practices in my banks, which are private entities.....If I have not been paying bribes from time to time, there was no way that my promotion file would have been moving to wherever it ought to have gone to despite meriting it.....corruption is in all sectors in Nigeria; be it public and private” (FGD, Female, Civil Servant, 52 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

“Corruption is visible everywhere whether in the public sector or in the private sector.....all categories of workers in Nigeria still live together in the same country.....” (FGD, Female, Broadcaster, 38 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 11, 2019)

“Neither the public nor the private sector is spared.....employment or contract can only be secured from any of the sectors on the basis of who you know.....not on the basis of what you are capable of offering.....Meanwhile, most of the private companies are good in exploiting their workers by underpaying them” (FGD, Male, Business Owner, 50 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 10, 2019).

“The private sector exploits their workers while the public sector embezzles workers’ benefits.....can you imagine that some academic allowances of lecturers in all federal universities in Nigeria are yet to be paid since 2009.....what could have been responsible for this except corruption” (FGD, Male, Anti-Corruption Operative, 41 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 10, 2019).

“There is corruption in the public sector because of readiness of government officials to take bribes from private operators who are often keen on disregarding laid down rules in securing contracts from the government..... in most cases, the private operators will find it difficult to obtain contracts from the government unless they follow the route called ‘PRO- Kickback’ in the federal civil service, which means that some monies must be remitted to designated private accounts before the contracts could be awarded” (FGD, Female, Civil Servant, 48 years, Lagos, July 28, 2019).

“.....like what I was discussing about an apprentice in the hair salon where I usually make my hair.....she will attend to more than 10 customers, but she would claim to her boss that she had attended to only one customer. That is just one apprentice in the private sector.....the stylist in question seems to be richer than her boss. Meanwhile, it is her boss who will still pay for the rent, she will still give her salary at the end of the month. This is corruption in the private sector” (FGD, Female, Journalist, 52 years, Kano, August 8, 2019).

“.....what they (other FGD participants) have been saying is true about our society, so I don’t need to go over them again.....but, look at the case of a caretaker who would rent out properties on behalf of the owners.....he will collect monies from the tenants, but would still tell the owners that the tenants have not paid. This is very common in Lagos nowadays. To me, this is an instance of corruption in the private sector” (FGD, Male, CSO Personnel, 34 years, Lagos, July 25, 2019).

“Yes, there is no limit to the spread of corruption in Nigeria.....it could be found in both private and public sectors.....there is no form of corruption that can be found in the public sector that is not in private sector.....as you will find a managing director of bank amassing a huge share of the bank to himself/herself, so also, you will find a permanent secretary in the federal or state civil service selling government properties to himself/herself at ridiculous prices” (FGD, Female, Civil Servant, 55 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 11, 2019).

“Of course, corruption does not have boundary in Nigeria.....more so, since there is apparent synergy between the private and the public sectors in some areas....for instance, the operations of the ‘Monetary Policy Committee’ in the country have provided space for cooperation between the private and the public sectors.....so also, space for some sharp practices” (FGD, Male, Business Owner, 50 years, Lagos, July 25, 2019).

“Obviously, corruption has circulated to everywhere in Nigeria.....not only to the public or private sector, even, to the supposed charity organizations like the Church and Mosque.....those that are not working for public or private sector are equally corrupt” (FGD, Male, Religious Leader, 53 years, Enugu, July 31, 2019).

Lack of Protection and Non-utilization of Given Information are the Major Disincentives to reporting Corruption Cases to Public Authorities

Although offer of incentives, such as benefits accruable from the infamous whistle-blowing policy of the federal government, would have naturally motivated individuals to report corruption cases to the appropriate authorities, poor management of given information by respective public authorities has been the major reason for non-reporting of corruption cases by individuals. It was a common affirmation of the FGD participants that, often time, it is either that the given information will not be worked on or that the informants' identities are carelessly accessed by the culprits. Hence, the reason why corruption cases are rarely reported by Nigerians to public authorities. Detail extracts are provided below:

“Nobody wants to speak out because if you speak you are most likely to end up as the victim. Your details will be sold to the supposed offender. Nothing has worked in the time past and nothing is working now in respect of how information is handled by the respective government agencies.....we only need the grace of God to help us out of quagmire of corruption in this country” (FGD, Female, Civil Servant, 37 years, Lagos, July 28, 2019).

“Any report you make has the potential of landing you in trouble if not deathNobody is interested in exposing any corrupt person.....you will just become an enemy of the person you are exposing. It has even been alleged that the identities of most whistle-blowers are sold out to the criminals by some anti-corruption workersI think what have become of few of the whistle-blowers are clear testimonies to the danger inherent in reporting corrupt people to the concerned authorities in Nigeria” (FGD, Male, Secondary School Teacher, 58 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

“The poor people in particular are not interested in reporting any corrupt or related criminal cases because it will automatically increase their sorrows.....it is either no action will be taken or the reporter will become eventual victim since the poor are voiceless in Nigeria” (FGD, Female, Legal Practitioner, 68 years, Lagos, July 28, 2019).

“We are not encouraged to report corrupt practices to the appropriate authorities because the government itself is not sincere in how it deals with ordinary Nigerians. The government will promise to reward you for reporting which it will never fulfill. For instance, so many years ago, Nigerian footballers (Flying Eagles) were promised houses in Abuja if they win the Under 23 World Cup which they eventually won.....but, upon their return the promises were not honored by the federal governmentjust recently the team's coach was given a house after a long wait.....see how they have been maltreating few whistle-blowers.....after collecting the stolen funds from the public officials, the percentages that were meant for the whistleblowers were never paid” (FGD, Female, Housewife, 46 years, Kano, August 8, 2019).

“The whole country is corrupt, so it not advisable to report any corruption case because of possible leakages. Nigeria system is very porous.....that is why people

find it difficult nowadays to report corrupt practices to the police or to any other agencies because you will end up causing more harm to yourself. For instance, in some recent whistle-blowing cases, the (federal) government blatantly refused to keep to its promises.....instead, the whistle-blowers landed in bigger trouble of identity disclosure” (FGD, Female, Human Rights Advocate, 33 years, Kano, August 6, 2019).

“There are incentives for reporting corruption and some other criminal acts, but the problem is that such incentives can also lead to the death of the individual reporters. For instance, there was a reported case that the whistle-blower got his commission, but the police sent armed robbers after him.....he was only fortunate to escape being assassinated” (FGD, Male, University Professor, 58 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 10, 2019).

“.....nothing will happen even if you report because they (assigned anti-corruption operatives) are the corrupt people. How can you report corruption to the corrupt? Nothing will happen; the issue will just die down. When you are too insistent, you will be surprised that you are actually reporting same person in charge of corruption to himself/herself. Do you know the meaning of that? Nothing will happen, and sometimes, the reporter might witness more that he bargains for” (FGD, Female, Journalist, 47 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 11, 2019).

“What she (another FGD participant) has said is true. How can a person who is a thief prosecute himself (or herself)? Or, how can a thief judge another thief? What would he or she say?” (FGD, Female, Legal Practitioner, 52 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 11, 2019).

“.....you will recall the case of former Delta State Governor (Mr. James Ibori) who stole billions of naira of public funds.....he was duly reported to the EFCC. Everyone thought that he will be jailed. Rather, he was set free by the Nigerian judiciary.....he was actually jailed in England for several years for the same offenses that he had escaped from in Nigeria. Report any issue to the EFCC today, then, you should be assured that it's either you will enter trouble yourself or that nothing will come out of your report. Obviously, there are corrupt elements in the EFCC and in other anti-corruption agencies” (FGD, Male, Civil Servant, 54 years, Kano, August 6, 2019).

“Yes, it is true. Nothing will be done because those who have been appointed to fight corruption are habitually more corrupt than the people being reported. This is the dilemma of the struggle against corrupt practices in Nigeria” (FGD, Female, Teacher, 43 years, Kano, August 8, 2019).

“I don't think that anything will be done about it if you report to the government agencies. For example, since the first tenure of President Buhari (2015-2019), the case of the disgraced Chief Judge of Nigeria has remained pending in the judiciaryor, at best, jettisoned. What do you think would be the fate of the person who actually exposed the secret accounts where the Chief Justice was keeping the monies he corruptly acquired? Agony, of course.....the people who are supposed to uphold the rule of law are the same people enmeshed in corruption and they are left free” (FGD, Female, NGO Executive, 50 years, Lagos, July 28, 2019).

“Yes, it is true that there is no tangible incentive and people are even skeptical to report. The reason being that if you report nothing will be done due to existence of god-fatherism in most cases.....and even if something will be done, the time it would take will be frustrating. This is why people are discouraged about reporting corruption cases in Nigeria” (FGD, Male, Broadcaster, 39 years, Lagos, July 25, 2019).

“Sometimes, something could be done about it (the report), but it could take some time. One would have to be patient and go to the right authority while making the report” (FGD, Female, Civil Servant, 25 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

“Yes, it is true that nothing will be done about reported (corruption” cases. May be, few of the concerned authorities would take appropriate actions, but definitely not the police (FGD, Male, Business Owner, 30 years, Enugu, July 31, 2019).

“..... like in my own case, right now, the person has been arrested by the EFCC and I believe that this arrest is going to be effective.....I hope they will be able to compel him to return all the monies he (fugitive financial agent) has collected from different people” (FGD, Female, Civil Servant, 48 years, Kano, August 8, 2019).

“In Kano, Hisba (Islamic Anti-Corruption Agency) has been very active.....it has often handled corruption cases very well. But, the police authority is zero. I am sorry to say this. There was a time that I held a meeting with Hisba top hierarchy on how the organization has been able to record good outcomes.....I can confirm to you that the entire citizenry is happy with Hisba.....so, approaching the organization with useful information on suspected corruption cases has been very easy for the people. I believe that the anonymity with which individuals’ identities are handled has built trust and confidence in the people” (FGD, Male, Islamic Scholar, 68 years, Kano, August 6, 2019).

Knowledge of Effective Measures taken against Corruption is Limited

It has been really conspicuous that nearly all of the participants in various FGD sessions could not readily recollect any policy or measure that has been taken against corruption in recent past in Nigeria that has produced the expected results. Even, in cases where few of the respondents had attempted to explain few interventions, which they considered relatively effective, visible incoherence that trailed associated claims did give credence to the fact that their knowledge of such effective measures was either inadequate or secondary. Relevant FGD extracts are presented below:

“To the best of my understanding, there has been no measure in place to fight corruption, which has been particularly effective in recent past. Is it the highly politicized EFCC or ICPC? None. What has the EFFC done in the case of Babachir David Lawal (the immediate past Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF)) who diverted funds that were assigned for rehabilitation purposes in the crisis-ridden North-East Nigeria to his private pockets? He has been walking freely because he is a top member of the ruling (All Progressives Congress) APC. What has been the fate of (Senator Joshua) Dariye, who was accused of diversion of public

funds as the Governor of Plateau State? He has been languishing in jail because he is a member of the main opposition (Peoples Democratic Party) PDP” (FGD, Female, CSO Personnel, 38 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

“I consider the ‘War Against Indiscipline’ (WAI) policy of (General Mohamadu) Buhari as the Military Head of State, as it was executed in early 1980s, as the only solution to the problem of corruption in the country.....you know, it was discipline, honesty and hard work all through the period of implementing the policy.....if not for the military coup of (General Ibrahim) Babangida that eventually institutionalized all strands of corruption in the country, I know that with the zeal with which WAI was being implemented, corruption would have vanished from Nigeria by now” (FGD, Male, University Professor, 47 years, Lagos, July 25, 2019).

“The action of both (General Mohamadu) Buhari and (General Tunde) Idiagbon during the (War Against Indiscipline) WAI era between 1983 and 1984 has remained the best solution to corruption in this country.....Could anyone dare urinating by the road side? Could anyone public servant dare demanding for or taking bribes? Could any government worker resume work late? Not possible. Uprightness and integrity were already becoming sub-conscious realities of Nigerians. To eradicate greed and self-centeredness, which are the roots of corruption, it is necessary to re-introduce a policy in the likeness of WAI.....and government should attend to the needs of the people” (FGD, Female, Estate Valuer, 69 years, Kano, August 6, 2019).

“.....there is no one (policy/program) that has been effective.....their whistle-blowing (policy) has turned out to be the worse because of government’s insincerity. At the end of the day, the Federal Government doesn’t fulfill whatever it has promised. They kept promising. There is no law made for corruption so far in Nigeria yet. If Nigeria will take a leaf from what is happening in Saudi Arabia, I think there will be limitation to corruption in the country. There is no measure to curtail corruption in Nigeria yet. There has been no measure to make people to be afraid. They (top public and political actors) have even instilled it (corruption) in their own children” (FGD, Male, Islamic Scholar, 75 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 10, 2019).

“Let me talk about one thing about the Saudi Arabia that my colleague just mentioned. When you steal, in the law of Saudi Arabia, they will cut your hand. That is, one hand will go. If you kill, they will kill you in Saudi Arabia because they are following what the Quran says. If we truly apply the content of the (Holy) Bible and the (Holy) Quran, there will be peace in Nigeria” (FGD, Male, Trader, 68 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 10, 2019).

“There has been no effective policy to tackle corruption in the country as far as I know. I cannot see any plan against corruption that has worked in Nigeria. Is it the new whistle-blowing policy of which the whistle-blowers have been denied of their entitlements? Is it the EFCC or the ICPC that I consider as operational departments of the ruling APC? Without any doubt, if we continue this way, corruption will definitely kill the country as the President (Muhamadu Buhari) has suggested recently” (FGD, Female, Auxiliary Nurse, 33 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

Propositions on Measurable Action(s) that could be taken against Corruption in Nigeria

Although different suggestions, ranging from emergence of good and visionary leadership to divine intervention, emulating other good countries and improvement in the conditions of living in the country, were presented by the FGD participants, the contextual frameworks for the application of such propositions in order to eradicate corruption in Nigeria were clearly underplayed. See related excerpts below:

“The only way forward is for us to go back to the drawing board”, especially the immediate post-1960 independence public service process where hard work and competence were the drivers of public institutions” (FGD, Male, Judicial Officer, 52 years, Enugu, July 31, 2019).

“We must return to our cultural values and societal norms of old if we must get it right in Nigeria. All the needed wisdom and knowledge to eradicate corruption are there.....Do you think a political office holder or a top public servant can use “ogun” (Yoruba god of iron) or “sango” (Yoruba god of thunder) to swear into office and move there to steal? It is not possible” (FGD, Female, Broadcaster, 38 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 11, 2019).

“Leadership by example is the only way forward for us in this country because as it stands now we have greedy leaders who lack vision. Without a good and visionary leadership, corruption will continue to grow in this country” (FGD, Female, Civil Servant, 48 years, Lagos, July 28, 2019).

“The only way forward for us is to introduce capital punishment as the reward for proven cases of corruption and it should not be respecter of anybody. If capital punishment is not applied to curb corruption of all categories in Nigeria, the problem will never end in the country” (FGD, Female, Journalist, 52 years, Kano, August 8, 2019).

“We can also learn from other African countries who are performing well in their anti-corruption fights. For example, Rwanda and Ghana.....emulating the good attributes that are moving them away from shackles of corruption and incorporating such into our system will most appropriate” (FGD, Male, Secondary School Teacher, 58 years, Enugu, August 1, 2019).

“In order to genuinely fight corruption in Nigeria, it is necessary to adopt the measures that the Chinese are engaging.....immediate justice is served on anyone that is caught with corruption regardless of who you are or what you represent in the society” (FGD, Male, CSO Personnel, 34 years, Lagos, July 25, 2019).

“We need to learn from our past mistakes and from other developing countries that are doing better and improve on our situation” (FGD, Male, Anti-Corruption Operative, 41 years, Ilorin, Kwara State, August 10, 2019).

“The only way forward for this country is by means of divine intervention. After all the Bible says if the foundation is destroyed what can the righteous do” (FGD, Male, Religious Leader, 53 years, Enugu, July 31, 2019).

“There is urgent need to sanitize the whole country of all loop-holes that have given space for corrupt thinking.....there should be full and gainful employment for the youth.....accessible social welfare plans should be extended to all classes of vulnerable Nigerians and recreational centers for the old, the retired and the handicapped should be established in order to keep them busy. After all these, we should offer prayers that the Almighty God will bless our land” (FGD, Male, Islamic Scholar, 68 years, Kano, August 6, 2019).

Concluding Comments

Inferring from the outcomes of the entire study, corruption is perceived by the majority of the IDI and FGD participants as the most potent social reality inhibiting the development of Nigeria in the 21st Century. It is a daily reality that confronts all classes of Nigerians, especially while trying to access public services (in various government ministries and agencies, hospitals, educational institutions, in interactions with law enforcement officers, notably on the roads and in obtaining government documents such as international passports, drivers’ licenses and vehicle licenses) and also in the bid to access private services in the banks and in the market places.

Though greed has been noted as a major precipitator of grand corruption in Nigeria, especially among influential private and public actors, festering poverty, soaring unemployment and absolute lack of social support and social protection programs have been equally adjudged as motivators of petty corruption among majority of poor Nigerians who have to subsist on meager incomes.

This study has revealed that obvious mis-handling of information that are provided to respective governmental authorities has been the primary disincentive to reporting corruption cases by Nigerians to such agencies. Also, routine dishonesty that has trailed the payment of benefits that were due to most whistle-blowers has naturally discouraged Nigerians from providing useful information on glaring corruption cases to the governmental authorities.

While a significant proportion of participants in the research had agreed that corruption can be eradicated from Nigeria, they were of the view that apparent loop-holes in the utilization of various anti-corruption laws and seeming political cleavage of the anti-corruption agencies have to be resolved as imperative pre-conditions for any successful and sustainable anti-corruption campaign to be attained in the country.