

## **CORRUPTION IN GOVERNANCE: THE BANE OF HEALTH AND ELECTRICITY INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The corruption in the health and electricity sectors spread almost in all areas. This paper examined the corruption in governance linking to health and electricity infrastructure development. Corruption is a huge problem to achieving both health and energy goals. Investigations were carried out on the causes of corruption in the health sector as well as the reasons why corruption persist in the electricity umpire. Two objectives and hypotheses were given respectively. The study applied the survey method of which interviews and structured questionnaires were administered to 400 respondents using the accidental sampling technique to collect data. The study relied both on primary and secondary data. Data analyzed are shown on tables using a statistical tool. Recommendations were made amongst which is government should compel electricity service distributor to provide prepared meters to the public to discourage corruption.*

***Keywords: Corruption, governance, health, electricity, development.***

### **INTRODUCTION**

Corruption is a wide spread problem to achieving needed development in society, particularly in the health sector as well as in electricity generation. In the health sector, achieving basic goals has since been a great issue due to corrupt practices among public officials who do not consider the interest of the public. At the same time those in governance, who are elected into political positions have also encouraged corruption to higher propensity thereby slowing down the efforts for development in both the health and electricity sectors. When political office holders ignore the interest of the masses but use their amiable office to benefit themselves and their associates, the public will lose trust and hope on them, and there will be loss of public funds or resources in greater measure. Corruption is described as a social, economic and political problem that can destroy any effort of development in the health and energy sectors of the country. Corruption is a problem in governance which shows the lack of concern to basic principles of development in the health and energy sectors. Where these basic principles are obscured by corruption, financial resources will be misappropriated and scarce resources will be wasted in the hands of corrupt officials (Vian, 2008). In recent years, corruption has seized the drive for rapid advancement in health and electricity infrastructure procurements. The funds budgeted for purchase of energy and health equipment is embezzled, and carted away by those delegated to purchase them. More so, corruption has caused public officials to procure substandard tools, equipment and medicines which are not part of the specifications originally provided. Those who are privileged to contribute to development of the health and electricity sectors are the ones destroying it through their regular self-centred corruption mindset, (Johnston, 1997). Moreover, the government has remained mute to

corrupt officials despite their involvement in various corrupt practices due to the fact that they are members of their political affiliation party. Therefore, it appears that corruption seem to take the high podium in governance in Nigeria today. It has been observed that high corrupt personnel are given executive positions in government. This reveals that corruption is handled with mildness and is encouraged to spread further instead of penalizing and stripping those found to have been involved in corrupt practices of their offices.

The consumers of electricity and health facilities are facing serious problems of inefficient, irregular power and wrong billing systems because of corruption. In the health sector money that are supposed to be used to purchase basic drugs for the citizens or consumers are been diverted into the purse of corrupt officials. This major problem has collapsed the pinnacle of development in both the health and electricity sectors in the country.

In addition, the irregularities in the provision of basic infrastructure, the lack of transparency and the constant disrupted electricity supply for consumers remains the arrow points of corruption in the country which must be addressed with vigor in order to reduce it to its best minimum in all of the public health centres and electricity power institution (Johnston, 1997).

### **Corruption in Governance and Health Infrastructure**

The term corruption captures how public officials, otherwise government personnel involved in carting away with public resources and fund for themselves and their political affiliates. Corruption has no preferred definition, but it explains the extent to which government officials use public office for family and personal gain at the detriment of the health of people who seek health care in public health institutions where health \*facilities are lacking and the health delivery system has been jeopardized by corrupt practices (Johnston, 1997). To this end, governance with corruption combined shows that public office holders are not held accountable for the deprivation of public health care system collapse and the resultant deaths it has caused to many households for the loss of their loved ones who were left untreated due to lack of drugs, equipment and adequate health professionals.

Good governance in healthcare delivery requires the efficient combining of human resources, financial resources, supply of adequate drugs, quality healthcare devices, well equipped healthcare infrastructure and delivering of services promptly to all individuals accessing the healthcare delivery institution. Where there is a system that mobilizes and uses public funds for the wellbeing of the public in terms of providing healthcare services, processing and distributing health information, alerting the public on any outbreak of epidemic and distributing health care resources to the reach of all and sundry, then there will be confidence on public health providers and government in general (Lewis, 2006).

Corruption in governance never allows public servants to think good of the masses. It does not make public officials to mobilize and distribute family public owned resources, but blindfolds them from seeing the deteriorating health conditions of individuals thronging health care infrastructures or institutions daily with their lives uncertain because of the absence of reasonable services and drugs. Most of the drugs that were provided by non-government agencies, which were deposited in the health centres are usually stolen by corrupt public servants in high position. These stolen drugs are sold out to drug vendors, and sick patients are made to go outside the public health institutions to purchase them at higher cost. Corruption is really a critical factor that has crippled the health care delivery

system in Nigeria. This shows that the health sector has poor governance, corrupt governance and consequently is left in the hand of corrupt public servants to wither away, leading to increase in death rate in the health institutions. However, corrupt healthcare system, usually move hand in hand with corrupt leadership. But sound healthcare delivery, also go hand in hand with good governance in which the healthcare systems functions effectively and efficiently (Kaufman & Recant, 2008).

Corruption in health care system refers to abuse of public health resources for private gain. The misuse of position in governance to achieve personal gain appears to be the regular attitudes of so many individuals with the opportunity to serve the public in the office they occupy. The lack of passion for improved public health delivery among public health servants has kept the health institutions in a frustrating nature even after huge expenditures are claimed to be made. Despite these expenditures, there are no signs of positive changes in administering health resources for the wellbeing of all that through the health infrastructure. But what seems to be realistic is the unjust enrichment of public servants through embezzled funds meant to transform the system. Due to the accumulations derived from public resources meant to galvanize the health care delivery system for present and future patients who report their health conditions at the health institution with the hope of receiving adequate help, drugs and treatment, most of the corrupt public health care delivery officials feel less concern to the plight of these innocent folks (Klitgard, Maclean-Abaroa & Lindsey, 2000).

In most cases, the corrupt government breeds corrupt officials. Corruption occurs in all aspects of governance which the government itself is corrupt. So a public servant or official given authority in healthcare delivery planning, implementation, purchasing of health care equipment, drugs and apparatus for the goal of improving the society's health, instead uses such power and position to accumulate resources for self, due to viewing personal interest above that of the public health and outcry to eliminating and preventing existing illnesses. The collaboration of decision makers and stakeholders provides a fertile ground for corruption to exist and spread in the health care delivery sector (Vian, 2008). However, corruption can exist among government officials that embezzle funds meant for medical equipment or steals acquired revenues from user fees as well as divert drugs to individual drugs outlet to hike the cost for health care seekers. Another way officials indulge in corruption is by involving other parties on private ground by bribing to get a drug added to the government reimbursement list without actual purchase to amass more money, and to give kickback to medical personnel in order to retain their public office. Corruption has made many officials entrusted with authority to make decisions that can improve the health sector in the interest of the masses to look away from transforming the health care institutions to enriching their own pockets at the health risk of their friends, family and themselves, either directly or indirectly (Vian, 2008).

### **Corruption in Governance and Electricity Infrastructure**

Since electricity is on high demand in society, corruption is seen to have spread in all areas and forms of the electricity umpire (Ahmed, 2012). Corruption in the electricity sector has impacted negatively on rapid advancement of the sector for decades. The billing unit and the procurement department are the areas corrupt practices mostly occur. Usually, customers complain of inaccurate meter reading, overbilling and getting electricity after payment. Certain irregularities in the electricity sector uncovers the levels of corruption in

the sector, these include; leakages of financial resources, procurement of substandard equipment at higher cost, lack of transparency, undisrupted electricity supply for influential persons and unwillingness to distribute prepared meters to customers (Ahmed, 2012). As industrialization and public development rapidly continues to increase the demand for electricity will also rise. Globally, electricity demand is on the increase due to technological advancement. However, development and growth in many folds of existence requires energy for man to survive and stabilize its industrial activities.

In developing countries, there are challenges of shortage in electricity supply coupled with a high demand of energy with high population density in cities and suburbs. The gap between the demand of energy and supply of electricity keeps widening without being abated. There are proactive steps and enacted policies that are on paper wishing to be complied with for efficient electricity supply, but corruption in the system has frustrated every effort made to provide power to customers on regular basis. It is one reason or the other that is given by the energy provider for the lack of regular power.

Corruption seem to have blurred the eyes of the electricity officials to begin to think that a hike in tariff of electricity will make them have more funds to procure electricity infrastructures and provide regular power. Instead of utilizing available resources to build on energy stability, the money realized from the hike in tariff has rather improved their personal savings than improving electricity supply. All of these accounts to how corruption has gone so deep in the system. Electricity is a primary input for the industrial sector (Ahmed, 2012). More so, industrial expansion encourages expansion in electricity distribution and energy consistency. Corrupt practices of electricity officials have lasted for decades and this has reduced the industrial effort of economic growth and customer satisfaction on electricity consumption. However, electricity providers have the excuse that liquidity, lack of funds, shortage of water in dams, soaring oil prices and vandalization of electricity equipment lower production in electricity generation and distribution. Meanwhile, the government and electricity umpire keep giving themselves the credit of boosting electricity generation to high capacity without corresponding regularity of electricity distribution.

If there is any improvement in power generation, there should also be electricity availability to consumers. But it is evident that the inconsistency of electricity is as a result of various corrupt practices that has lingered between the government and the power providers. The funds raised by the government to improve the energy sector are usually and corruptly diverted into individual companies of corrupt officers in disguise of procuring relevant equipment and machineries for power generation, transmission and distribution. Instead of the officials to purchase the materials, they utilize the money for their selfish interest. Despite the corporate corruption in the high cadre, there is also petty corruption. This exists between electricity officials and some corrupt customers (Ahmed, 2012). Corruption in governance and electricity sector, have assumed a major place in development collapse and deepen inequality. This is because only a few people in society amass power and wealth at the cost of others. Corruption has also stifled economic development and growth in most developing countries like Nigeria. The monopoly in electricity sector in Nigeria has fanned the irregularity of energy in the country due to the existence of corruption.

The corruption associated with meter reaching and estimated billing has become a key problem between officials and customers in the electricity sector. The volume of estimated billing keeps encouraging the electricity umpire to slow down the distribution of prepared

meters to eligible customers. The government is involved in the corruption existing in the energy industry by only making watery pronouncement regarding the huge amount spent on power without stringent compulsion to the electricity umpire to make electricity available. The government official and energy providers have compromised in allowing corruption thrive. Corruption is a serious system of poor governance which may have caused more harm in wastage of resources and the money that changes hands as kickbacks and bribes contributes to lower production and availability of electricity. Gulati and Rao (2007) suggest that the prevalence of corruption in the electricity sector can be noticed in all aspect of operations such as in generation, transmission, and distribution of energy to consumers. Corruption in the power sector in Nigeria is begging for fight. However, the fight against corruption may have assumed a key position in recent policies to strengthen the economy by distributing power to citizens and to encourage democracy to function in governance. Electricity sector fail to serve people with power because of poor governance at the utility level as well as government level. Under a good governance and management electricity providers can minimize or eradicate any existing corruption and provide power to households, industries and development activities (Lovell and Mekechnie, 2000).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Electricity consumers are faced with the problem of electricity deficiency and supply to their household and industries. The irregularity of power in cities have made people to seek for alternative of using power plants, generators and other engines for regular energy supply, and this has contributed to the massive pollution of the environment. Despite the huge funds assigned to power providers to improve the electricity infrastructures across the country, it is observed that the supply of electricity has instead of advancing, continues to dwindle.

This means that the issue of corruption in governance and corruption in electricity sector are likely to be held responsible. The corrupt officials in government and their counterpart among the electricity provider have diverted the money approved for a complete turnaround of the electricity sector into their individual account for their self-interest and use. Corruption as a cankerworm has eaten so deep into the electricity sector to the extent that money generated legally and illegally are distributed and shared among corrupt officials in the rank and file. Imagine a country with high population density where every household is billed with estimate high tariffs and the revenue that is generated is not utilized to acquire damage transformers and other accessories. The same people billed monthly are the ones to contribute among themselves to purchase a new transformer. All of this are the extent corruption has spread in the electricity sector and the present day government are toothless and speechless to this anomaly. Corruption has weakened the electricity sector and it appears to remain the order of the day. Therefore, until corruption in governance and in the electricity sector is dealt with there may be no hope of seeing electricity regularly.

Electricity remains very essential for offices, homes and industries. Without its regularity businesses, industries and producers will have to spend more to generate their own power. This in turn will make producers to inflate the prices of their products. The increase in prices of products will result to high inflation rate. Corruption is a killer of economy, development and industries dependent, on electricity. It will also not allow the society to move along with the trend of technological advancement with other countries in the world that have rectified their energy problem.

### Objectives of the Study

The paper intends to ascertain the following:

- ❖ Determine the causes of corruption in the health infrastructure
- ❖ Reason for corruption in the electricity sector

### Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses guides the paper

H<sub>1</sub>: Corruption exist in the health sector

H<sub>2</sub>: There are reasons for corruption in the electricity sector

### Research Methodology

The study used well-structured questionnaires to administer to 400 respondents who were accidentally sampled with the purpose of extracting useful data. The study population comprises customers to public hospitals and electricity providers in Port Harcourt metropolis. The survey focuses on the perception of people regarding their individual experience of corruption on their interaction with the officials in the health and electricity sectors.

### Results

**Table 1: Causes of Corruption in the Health Sector**

Causes of Corruption	Percentage of Respondents
Pursuit of self interest	35.40%
Neglect of public values	31.50%
Lack of transparency	20.30%
Poor salary	2.20%
Influence of corrupt superiors	10.60%

Source: Survey, 2020

**Table 2: Reasons for Corruption in the Electricity Sector**

Reason	Percentage of Respondents
Low salary	35.10%
Lack of transparency	23.90%
Power of influential people	6.40%
Monopoly power	28.30
Lack of accountability	17.20
Discretionary power of officers	15.60%

Source: Survey, 2020

### Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study, shows that there are various causes why corruption exist in the health sector. Out of the 400 respondents that were investigated with the questionnaires, 388 of them returned their copies, and of those that returned the questionnaires 35.40% affirmed that it is the pursuit of self-interest to cope with economic situation that makes health officers to engage in corrupt practices. To some respondents, making 31.50%, it is

the neglect of public value system that lure them into corruption and misappropriation of health infrastructure.

However, officers who abide by the ethics of their profession are likely to promote public health. About 20.30% agreed that lack of transparency in the health sector is a key factor to why corruption is pliable in the health institution. Transparency prevents corruption and lack of it promotes corruption.

To an extent 2.20% of respondents agreed that poor salary is seen to have motivated few officers to involve in corrupt practices in the health sector. Salary is a motivator and low salary of which the officer is not satisfied with encourages him or her to engage in corrupt activities.

More findings are shown on why corruption persists in the electricity sector. One of the reasons seen as being responsible for the existence of corruption among electricity officers is low salary. This is because 35.10% of respondents said yes to it. On a different note 23.90% affirmed that lack of transparency in the electricity sector is largely responsible to why corruption exist in the sector. About 6.40% of the respondents affirmed that corruption in the electricity sector is caused by the power of influential people who occupy top position in the sector. Such officers usually compel their subordinates to abide by their directives and report back to them for reward. Also, 28.30% of respondents agreed that monopoly power of the electricity institution is a major cause for corruption in the electricity umpire. On a different perspective 17.20% of respondents affirmed that the lack of proper accountability is tantamount to the persistence of corruption in the institution. Finally, 15.60% agreed that discretionary power of officers is a key factor to why corruption is common in the electricity institution. Officers who are allowed to take sole decision on certain procurements utilize such opportunity to gratify their self-interest of the accumulation of money to themselves at the detriment of the public.

## **CONCLUSION**

Health reforms meant to address the problems of efficiency and incorporate strategies to reduce corruption are highly encouraged for quality service delivery. Corruption melts down resources provided to improve healthcare service delivery to the public. When corruption exists in the health care delivery system, only those who are willing to compromise with the corrupt officers will be at the mercy of such officers. It is therefore necessary for government and public healthcare delivery officers to change their corrupt mindset and promote quality service through maintaining their professional ethics and morals. On the other hand, electricity service providers should desist from the petty corruption and corporate corruption that has plunged the public into perpetual darkness and decay of electricity infrastructure. The citizens of the nation, wants proper service delivery in the electricity sector. To achieve this, corruption should be jettisoned both in the government and in the electricity umpire. Electricity is important for households, industries and cities. And every effort should be made toward improvement of electricity supply to all customers who regularly pay their bills. Overbilling estimated billing and bribes requested by officers should be totally discouraged.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- ❖ Anticorruption strategies and procedures should be developed and implemented with proper accountability of services delivered to people.

- ❖ Transparency of information to effective service delivery to the public should be done without any interference by officers in the health care delivery sector.
- ❖ Government should compel electricity providers to distribute prepared meters freely to the public to discourage overbilling, under billing and other corruption tariffs.
- ❖ Electricity service providers should use the print and media to effectively create awareness to the public on how to discourage all the corrupt practices permitted by their officers in service delivery.

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