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The Influence Of Corruption In Curbing Illicit Drugs Activities In Nigeria

Rawlings Akonbede UDAMA

PhD student, Peace and Conflict Studies Program in the Institute of African
Studies of the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

Abstract:

The problem of illicit drug trafficking is not a new phenomenon in Nigeria. But when illicit drug activities pandemic began to assume a worrisome dimension, the government established the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) to fight the drug scourge. However, after two decades illicit drugs activities has been on the increase while the competing scarce resources expended on the malaise and the long-standing efforts of NDLEA have not yielded the desired result depriving other essential areas of funds. This study identified corruption as a major factor to have undermined the fight against illicit drug activities. It is recommended that the government should be committed and resilient in the fight against illicit drug activities by restructuring and strengthening the agency. It should enforce the rule of law in a manner that citizens will conduct themselves within socially acceptable norms and formal rules.

Keywords: *Illicit Drugs, NDLEA, Corruption, Undermines Restructure and Strengthen.*

1.Introduction And Background To The Problem

One of the challenges most countries of the world faced is the alarming rate of the growth, use and effects of illicit drug activities to its citizens and society at large. OSCE (1997) noted that the production, distribution and consumption of illicit drugs are one of the greatest modern blights. Though, in earlier times, the operations of the organizations of illegal drug trafficking can be seen and analyzed as a business phenomenon like any other. But by the early 20th century, there was a shift in this perception because of the negative effects of the activities of this phenomenon. Since then, the business of the production, distribution and sales of hard drugs and use were declared illegal. Nevertheless, illegal drugs are still being produced, distributed and abused and their effects are felt within the society. The routes, means of transportation and international markets keep growing and reproducing. These activities continue to generate high profit margin for individuals and organizations dealing in drugs. Ordinarily this however ought to create an obstacle and open conflict with the government institution in charge of the control of illicit drug trafficking. For the dealers, it is an obstacle that must be overcome in whatever means. With the profit-oriented activities of drug trafficking, the state represents an obstacle that must be avoided or neutralised in order to remain efficient and survive. One of the strategies implored by traffickers is to bribe the officials.

By the mid 20th century illicit drug activities was beginning to take prominence and posing great danger to the country's development efforts which include its effects human health and capital development, crime and security, and genuine economic prosperity. When the federal government realised the adverse implications of illicit drug activities on the country, it established the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in 1989 to curb the growing menace of the phenomenon. However, despite its existence for over two decades and the efforts being made, illicit drug activities in the country are on the increase.

One of the factors that have undermined effective operation of the antinarcotics agency is the issue of corruption within illicit drug policing system in Nigeria. Daily reports of arrests of drug traffickers, discovery of cannabis farm lands by the antinarcotics agency, and the growing number of users are indications of the increase and booming illicit drug activities in the country. Lanre Ipinmisho a former Secretary/Director General of NDLEA noted that the arrest being made is just grazing the surface of the country's booming illicit drug trade. He also noted that, Drugs have been trickling across Nigeria borders since the nineteen eighties, but over the years the trickling has become a torrent.

In a similar vein, Larmode Ibrahim, the present Chairman of the Nigeria Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), when he was a Director of Operations in EFCC said sometimes he stumbled on illicit drugs during money laundry raids against financial crime suspects (Economist 2009). Most illicit drug activities have gone without challenge or molestation and illicit drug hotspots have developed in major cities and some rural areas across Nigeria.

Corruption has been identified as one of the main reasons for the growth of this trend. Scholars and opinion leaders have identified corruption in the society as the major cause of the development and sustenance of the illicit drug trade in Nigeria. James and Williams (2009) noted that corruption in illicit drug policing is an invisible tide that is rising on the shores of West African countries. It is creeping into its slums, banks, courts, barracks, and government institutions. It is the tide of money, influence, and power under the control of drug traffickers.

The concept of corruption has been looked at from different angles by different scholars. Broadly, it means when a person either holding or not holding a public office is in defiance of prescribed or accepted norms and values, or breaking the rules to advance his or her personal interests. It includes deception and falsehood to sway people's opinion. Toyin (2008) noted that corruption includes bribery, grafts, frauds, misappropriation, and rent collection. It can be categorised as political, economic, administrative, judicial and moral. Corruption is the act of using the power of office for making private gains in breach of laws and regulations normally in force. El-Rufai (2003) viewed corruption as covering a wide range of social misconducts, including fraud, extortion, grafts, misappropriation, embezzlement, bribery, nepotism, and rent collection, influence peddling and bestowing of favour to friends. Corruption in public administration and institutions is seen as a perversion of rules and regulations, power, extortion, discrimination, intentional misperformance or neglect of a recognized duty. Remo (2000) and Vanda (2010) noted that corruption is a form of personal rule which is a political strategy where common interest is subverted by personal interest and involves the use of state institutions for personal gains such as power, wealth and influence. Other forms of corruption include: Bribery, Fraud, Embezzlement, Extortion, Favouritism, and Nepotism. Banifield (1961) said corruption includes behaviour such as bribery or the use of a reward to pervert the judgment of a person in a position of trust; nepotism is the bestowal of patronage by reason of ascriptive relationship rather than merit; and misappropriation which is the illegal appropriation of public resources for private uses.

Corruption is an anti-social behaviour that confers improper benefits contrary to legal and moral norms upon oneself.

In Nigeria, notorious corruption continues to be robust and pervasive even after the establishment of anti-corruption bodies over a decade ago. In 2005, the Nigerian National Planning Commission, the apex government economic planning and coordination body identified systemic corruption as a major source of development failure (Fagbadebo, 2007). Corruptive acts are being carried out by public officials on daily bases and is not limited to the public sector alone but extend to the private sector as well. UNDOC (2009) pointed that some Nigerians have reputation for venality which has become a cultural value system and way of life thereby making it a systemic phenomenon. Most Nigerians see their work place rather than to render services to the public, and others take any given opportunity or advantage of others even in times of adversity to exploit them for personal advantage.

The management and control of illicit drug activities in Nigeria, some state officials have direct or indirect participated in the trade. They have not only compromised and collaborated with drug rings, but also have directly participated in them including the echelon of the organization. They maintain a coordinating relationship with trafficking organizations and who must have its approval. State officials also directly participate in trafficking by entering the circuit and selling drugs confiscated. When they do, it means they have failed to fulfil the control duties of their positions. Corruption in illicit drug trade is visible at three different levels of the law enforcement system. These are the antinarcotics officials, judiciary, and penal system. Sometimes, the officers collaborate with drug traffickers by warning them of missions or actions against them before the operation. The judges give questionable judgements and fine not commensurate with the offence. And the penal system may allow convicts to escape serving jail terms. In certain cases, traffickers seek not only the participation of career officials, but also influence in policy making. The role of corruption in illicit drug trade is that it facilitates a better economic and commercial connection of the different stages of the process of production and distribution. It makes the role of the state more flexible or relaxed, completely neutralizes it or even permits direct collaboration with traffickers and policing officials.

The measures adopted by policy makers in the war on drugs have created for the most part the risks of corruption at any level without solving the drug production, trafficking, and consumption problems. Moreover, state responses to drug trafficking and corruption have been inadequate hence drug production and consumption have continued to

increase. It has involved a greater bureaucracy of agencies to fight drug trafficking, which instead of solving the problem only increases the risk of corruption.

2. Methodology

The theme embodied in this paper reflects both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data were analysed using central measures of tendency, while qualitative data collected and extant literatures were content analysed. The analytical focus was on Ondo and Lagos states and purposively selected. They were the more relevant states of inquiry based on the problem of their high incidence of illicit drug production and distribution channel respectively. However the underlying nature of the phenomenon and principle in the research method and finding are to a large extent applicable to other states in the country.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on public choice theory viewed from the behaviour of public officials in decision making as developed by James Buchanan in association with Gordon Tullock. It is a theory that uses the principle of economics to explain political behaviour decision making. It takes the same principles that economist uses to analyses people's actions in the market place and applies them to people's actions in collective decision making (Jane, 2012). James Buchanan defines public choice as politics without romance, noting that it is a wishful thinking to presume that participants in the political sphere aspire to promote the common good. Public choice theory like the economics of rational behaviour assumes that people are guided by their own self-interest rather than for the public. Thus, public officials are portrayed as benevolent public servants who act in public interest and carryout the will of the people. In tending to public affairs, voters, politicians and policy makers are supposed somehow to rise above their parochial concern. Nonetheless, the behaviours of these people show that they are only motivated by the goal of utility maximization (self-interests). The central theme of this theory is that politicians, bureaucrats and government officials are motivated by personal self choice, while they are supposed to work for the public interest, putting into practice the policies of government as efficient and effective as possible. For instance, during elections, voters vote and support candidates and ballot proposition they think will only make them personally better off; bureaucrats strive to advance their own careers by manipulating government policies and so also the politicians. Equally, legislators are

supposed and expected to pursue public interest while they make decisions, however they make decisions on how to use the people's resources to advance their own personal interests. This is known as political corruption which is the perversion of power, extortion, discrimination, intentional misperformance or neglect of a recognised duty to achieve personal gains. Moreover, Government creates Ministries, Departments and Agencies and employ people to perform certain functions in the interest of the public. However, sometimes the very government renege on its own responsibilities. And in some cases also the government employees will not do their job unless they are paid to specifically to do a task in the office where he/she is employed. This is known as bribe and is a corrupt act.

William (1980) launched the bureaucratic aspect of corruption and pointed that due to specialisation and division of labour, legislature delegate responsibilities for implementing government policy initiatives to various department and agencies who secure their positions through civil service appointments rather than by election. However, the bureaucrats of these agencies would use the information and expertise they gained in administering specific legislative program to extract the largest budget possible from relatively uninformed, inexperienced legislators. He saw the bureaucrats as self-interested utility maximisers who are motivated by factors such as salary, prerequisite of the office, public reputation, power, patronage and the ease of managing the bureau, and would want to collect as much as possible to maintain the status (Niskarren,1973). And in order to advance their own careers, they subject thousands of citizens to abuse, torture, starvation, confinement and even death (Downs, 1967). Gerald (1980) opined that bureaucratic corruptions are acts clearly committed by public administrators in their official capacity or political capacity and not in their personal capacity. Public choice theory shows that either public official or the private individual acts at least partly in their own private interest.

Within the context of Nigeria, government is seen as serving private or special interest group rather than public interests. The politicians and bureaucrats are supposed to be agent of the general public and act in their own interest. However that is not the case. Unless it is in the interest of the agent, they may not act in the interest of the principal. In Nigeria, politics is a game where self-interested businesses, labour unions, and government bureaucrats use the state to enrich themselves at the expense of the public. Government employees will not do their job unless they are paid to specifically to do a task. This is what is called a bribe and is a corrupt tendency.

The position of the Rational Choice Theory is that human beings have the ability to become greedy, vain or lustful (Siegel, 2004) and have the ability to control decisions or choices. They equally have the ability to analyse situations with regards to their positive outcome and their potential consequences. If the risks involved in engaging in certain behaviour are much less than the benefits, the individual is likely to commit that crime. Equally important in this theory is on the swiftness, severity and certainty of punishment. The work is vital on the aspect of judiciary influence on the law and judicial process in the society. Punishment is an incentive for obeying the law, but if punishment is conducted rationally and legitimately, it can deter crime (Cook, 2005). People generally act in their self-interest and make decisions to commit crime after weighing the potential risks including getting caught and punished against the rewards.

Within the context of rational choice theory, corruption, as a crime, can be explained to mean that the individual chooses to engage in crime because there are minimal chances of getting caught if it is covered against the background of the crime. Besides, the benefits of committing the crime even when caught outweigh the punishment to be received from the act, and so this prompts them to continue with the act of committing the criminal act.

The relevance of this theory is that there is the swiftness, the certainty in applying the law and severity of punishment is not assured. Potential criminals are mostly deterred from proceeding of criminal acts. Punishments are conducted fairly or not at all, which has reinforced the belief in crime.

4.Literature Review

4.1.The Context of NDLEA Operations in Nigeria

The nature and structure of Nigeria's society has made it vulnerable to some form of crimes, especially illicit drug activities. This ranges from the geo-political to socio-economic factors as well as ethical disposition.

4.1.1 Geographical Factor

Nigeria's growing role in the global drug trade is influenced by its geographic location, especially its easy access to America and Europe, where the demand for cocaine has skyrocketed in recent years. Nigeria's location makes it a crossroad for smuggling cocaine from Colombia and Venezuela, as well as heroin and opiates from Afghanistan,

Pakistan, Thailand, and other Asian countries. This central location, combined with lack of adequate security, lack of operation vehicles, engine boats, communication equipment and functional arms and ammunitions, provides a very convenient area for drug-running (Danielle, 2009). Andrew (2007) noted that West Africa is a region with inadequate governance structure, a lot of corruption, and many tiny islands in the Gulf of Guinea (ideal for hiding the shipments of illicit drugs) and relatively close to Europe, has become an ideal stopping point for smugglers who travel from South America across the Atlantic, which is ultimately the shortest geographical crossing over the ocean. Gail (2005) pointed that the vast and porous land borders, riverine, and seaports, and corruption among government and custom officials provide an ideal environment for drug trafficking. There are vast expanses of unprotected, unfenced and porous lands borders stretching to other countries. Nigeria equally has hundreds of miles of unpatrolled coastal lines vastly stretched from the high sea to hidden bays, islets, islands and marshy swamps to the riverine communities.

4.1.2. Economic Factor

Although Nigeria has enormous natural and human resources, by 1970 - 80s there was great economic decline which reached a state of virtual collapse. This was brought about by corruption and inefficiency of the administration of Shehu Shagari from 1979-1983, and later by Ibrahim Babangida from 1985-1993 and Abacha in 1995. The fertile conditions responsible for illicit drug trafficking are ultimate poverty, massive unemployment and general lack of opportunity for viable economic activities. Nigeria's economic development has been hindered by years of mismanagement and corruption. Vanda (2010) noted that overall, many countries in West African have been characterised by poor governance, intense corruption, poor leadership, burning ethnic and tribal conflicts, great poverty and social marginalisation with very large unemployment and few opportunities for social development. It is hardly surprising that within this context of illegal economies and criminal behaviours are not often seen as legitimate undertakings to provide for one's livelihood.

4.1.3. Political Factor

The government has not lived up to the expectation of providing the needs security, welfare, and opportunities for economic security and social advancement. In his study of poverty, Myrdal (1970) noted that incompetent leaders of poor countries are a major

problem. Leaders had assumed responsibilities in poor countries they cannot lead. Some of these countries lack sufficient resources to ameliorate poverty and advance national developments.

The legacy of a soft state pervades and provides a fertile context for all manners of crimes, including illicit drug trafficking. Nigeria's leadership is weak and has no courage or determination to change the prevailing attitudes and institutions that stand in the way of reforms and developments. The high levels of corruption among enforcement, judicial and military officials, is particularly due to institutional and economic weakness. Illicit drug activities are on the increase because the Nigerian judicial system is weak. There is the near absence of punishment for any wrong doing, especially among the ruling elites and those connected to the ruling elites, or those with money to influence court rulings. Many analysts contended that the inability of the nation's judicial system to decisively deal with drug offenders is obviously one of the reasons for the resurgence of illicit drug trafficking. Davidson (2008) argued that the inability of the law to deal with people caught with hard drugs usually sends a wrong signal to the public that drug related offences would only attract mild punishment as long as the judiciary could be compromised. This feeling has given much credence to the upsurge in drug offences and the increasing number of Nigerians that are being apprehended almost on daily basis both in Nigeria and abroad.

4.1.4. Corruption In Illicit Drug Policing System

Nigeria' history of fighting illicit drug activities is not the type that can discourage dealers from their activities. The antinarcotics agency founded in 1989 to raid the country of the menace of illicit drugs immediately immersed in scandal when its top officials were found to have compromised their positions. The antinarcotics officials (including the high ranking ones) are not immune to the lure of drug money. Many of them have not shown moral probity; rather have manifested greedy and corruptive behaviours. There are different ways corruption has influenced negatively the policing illicit drug activities in Nigeria. The NDLEA hierarchy have shown that they are not immune to the lure of dirty drug money. In many instances those charged with the responsibility of eliminating drugs showed that they were more interested in the illegal drug trade money than the professional drug barons as some of them had acquired a particular notoriety in this regard. For instance, Jennifer Madike, a Lagos socialite embarrassed Mr. Fidelis Oyakilome, then a Police Commissioner and former Governor

of Rivers State was assigned the privileged responsibility of becoming the agency's first Chairman/ Chief Executive and the entire country with tales of deals, friendship and accusations that linked him to drug deals and gratification from drug traffickers (Alabi 2010). Mr. Oyakhilome apart from being a law enforcement officer also had a doctorate degree in law. He was smeared in a scandal from which he did not recover from it. From that point, the battle against illicit drugs shifted focus from combating the menace outside the agency to that of rescuing the agency from the credibility crisis it had slugged.

There have cases of seized drugs disappearing from the office of the antinarcotics agency. For instance, during the regime of Alhaji Bappa jama'are equally a police officer, there were rampant reports of seized drugs disappearing from the agency's custody. In January 1993, a senior officer of the agency was suspended for allegedly masterminding the removal of 200 grammes of cocaine from the agency. In February 1993, 40 tonnes of Indian hemp impounded during a raid in Ondo state disappeared. In May, same year, an Assistant Director of the agency was sentenced to ten years imprisonment for receiving a one hundred thousand naira bribe; earlier on, in August 1992, the agency paraded four of its men who allegedly aided drugs suspect to escape from detention. That same year, the Chairman of the Lagos zone of the Miscellaneous Offences Tribunal justice Fumilayo Oni-Okpaku accused the NDLEA of suppression of evidence in drug cases (Alabi 2009). A decade later, a similar thing happened when Bello Lafiaji whom many held the opinion that given his activities in the agency, he was sponsored by drug barons to be head of the anti-narcotic agency from 2001-2005. He was later convicted in June 22, 2010 to serve 8 years jail term (four years each to run concurrently) for corrupt practices involving 168,400 Euros drug money that suddenly disappeared. Within the policing system itself, often times the officers find themselves trapped in conflict of moral choice to compromise their official role for personal gains through sharp practices. Adebola (2008) asserted that a major factor that has weakened the fight against drug trafficking is the fact that more and more anti-drug officials are using their positions to corruptly enrich themselves. In a similar vein, MajiriOghene (2008) noted that senior security officials including members of the judiciary are known accomplices in the drug trade. Watchers of the Ghanaians judicial system revealed that the recurring decimal is that judges give judgements in drug cases that have revealed a culpable pattern. When those involved in 675 kilograms of cocaine worth \$140 million at street value were apprehended, the judge granted bail of \$2,000 US dollars only to them.

This gives credence to the point that most times judges give judgements in drug cases which reveal a culpable pattern. With bribes, barons can employ the assistance of NDLEA officials and flight cabin crew members to transport illicit drugs. Nothing can be more demoralising or have a worse debilitating impact on efforts to fight the menace than attempts by some narcotics officials to undermine the campaign against illicit drug trade and use and protect those who grease their palms. Sometimes producers and dealers are informed in advance before anti-narcotics enforcement operations are conducted. This enables the dealers to hide their drugs before antinarcotics operations arrived. It could be recalled that under late Gen. Bamaiyi about 600 agents were dismissed due to corruption. Similarly, in 2009, Giade Ahmadu dismissed 72 antinarcotics officers for various degrees of corruption cases. Corruption has also plague the banking sector whose purpose is primarily to launder money with participation of public and private entities. Corruption is equally being realised particularly at the entry points of seaports and airports where high levels of trafficking of illegal drugs take place. When the people that are charged with the responsibility of curbing illicit drug trade take bribe in order to let off drug kingpins and their errand boys, what you would have is an illicit trade that will continue to boom to the detriment of the nation. Opportunistic corruption has neutralised law enforcement agents, corroded, and undermined the rule of law. Corruption in the society especially among public officials opens up opportunity to infiltrate state apparatuses and enable traffickers to always by-pass immigration, customs and antinarcotics agents. There have been serious allegations of government officials using their official position to discourage investigation and prosecution of drug cases. MOST (2002) pointed that the impunity the drug lords enjoy is due to their skill in neutralising or undermining the work of antinarcotics through systematic corruption and, in some cases, by infiltrating government forces.

Over the years, the management of the security border has been ineffective in preventing illegal movement of goods and illicit drugs. Smuggling is well tolerated and the officials have penchant for corruption. The security agencies at the border control points rather than collaborating and cooperating, they compete to outsmart each other to line their pockets with bribes. The report of the International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR, 1997) indicated that Nigeria's land borders are poorly patrolled and border patrol agencies are rift with corruption. The efforts of NDLEA to cooperate with the other law enforcement agencies are hindered by pervasive corruption and lack of cooperation among these agencies.

5. Research Setting And Methodology

The data presented in this paper were collected as part of the doctoral thesis undertaken by the researcher attempting to explore the context and operations of NDLEA in curbing illicit drug activities in Lagos and Ondo states-Nigeria. The choice of these areas is informed by the fact that, Ondo state produces large and high quality cannabis and Lagos is one of the commercial centres with large population and distribution networks of illicit drugs through land, sea, and air.

The study adopts survey design. It uses both quantitative and qualitative data. It generated data from people's opinions, and observations, through questionnaires and interviews. The study population consists of 536 respondents across the study areas. Interviews were conducted with 30 informants including key persons to compliment the finding from the questionnaires. Quantitative data were analysed using frequency distribution in simple percentages while qualitative data were content analysed. Consensus opinions as well as personal views of respondents were presented. Sometimes respondent's specific views were quoted to buttress a point.

6. Presentation And Discussion Of Findings

6.1. Corruption Undermines War On Illicit Drug Activities

Interdiction is the central method in attempt to curb illicit drug trade and it is the point of contact between antinarcotics officials and drug traffickers. Their relationship at this time has a tremendous effect on the aspect of illicit drug policing in Nigeria. There are two options here: they could choice to apply the full weight of the law on any suspected drug trafficker when apprehended, or exchange drug traffickers' freedom after a negotiated settlement. Both have their effects. If the latter option is preferred to the former, as indications have shown, that is why the issue of illicit drug activities have continued to be a problem. The finding of the study indicates that 89% (477) of the respondents agreed that corruption in the agency is a very serious problem that hampers the fight against illicit drug activities in Nigeria. This is in consonance with the report of the UNDOC (2008) which noted that the main reason for the flourishing of the trade is corruption among the leaders. The organisation further noted that corruption is perverting weak economies and corrupting broad sections of the population- from the youth to the police, military officers, and senior government officials. It also noted with regret that when the people who are charged with stamping illicit drug activities take

bribe in order to let off drug kingpins and their errand boys, what one will have is an illicit trade that will continue to boom at the detriment of the nation. MOST (2008) noted that the impunity the drug lords enjoy is due to their skill in neutralising or undermining the work of anti-narcotic agents through systematic corruption and infiltration of government forces such as the army, customs and immigrations. Both the antinarcotics officials and the administrative branch of the agency are all caught-up in corrupt practices in various degrees. In buttressing the above position, a businessman in Akure noted that:

Corruption at the highest levels of the agency and lack of personnel and equipment are impeding the ability of antinarcotics agency to crack down on drug trafficking. Again because of corruption, traffickers are often released hours after their arrest and many drug caches disappear (July, 2010)

The assertion given by the businessman indicates that by his profession, he must have come in contact with some of the personnel working in the organisation who sometimes mount checkpoints to arrest drug traffickers. Again, his view strongly indicates that he is familiar with the composition and operations of the agency. Corruption is deeply entrenched in illicit drug markets, especially in Nigeria where the rule of law is almost absent. Corruption impedes global efforts in the fight against the illicit drug problem. In illicit drug policing in Nigeria, there has been a complex as well as a negotiated relationship between the business of illicit drugs traffickers and the duty of policing drugs. Most times, drug dealers are arrested by the antinarcotics agents, but their cases do not reach the court as they are released from the office and their cases are swept under the carpet.

There are various methods those antinarcotics agents deploy in letting go suspected drug traffickers after apprehension. For instance, drugs seized from a suspect are recycled when they are changed with other fake substances while in custody of the officers. This happens even while the suspect is still undergoing trial. This explains why when a re-test is conducted the result changes from positive to negative. Sometimes, suspects will exchange the drugs within their disposal with their freedom. It is often common to see major drug dealers walking freely in town and the policing agents turn their faces the other way. This kind of arrangement creates room for drug activities to boom. Sometimes these suspected drug barons are seen with antinarcotics officials in one function or the other. Findings revealed that this group of people are readily on hand to

assist the officials in times of needs. In an interview with an Akure farmer, he captured this view in a far reaching way thus:

Anytime they come for arrest what we do here at the initial time is try to calm them down. After all, we will let them know that though they are working for the government but they are working in our own environment they have to cooperate with us so we settle them. They solve their problems with the money we settle them. Some of them meet us when they have problems or any occasion like marriage ceremony or wedding to attend or they have something to do and even burial ceremony. At this time the government cannot help them. Nobody says the laws are not effective or are not being obeyed or complied with here. But you should understand the laws are made by man and only man can bend the law (July 2010).

From the position of the interviewed farmer, there is a possibility that he is a producer of cannabis. It is on record that Ondo State produces high quality cannabis in the world. He is speaking from the position of someone who might have been having close contact with antinarcotics officers in his area. In recent times, some drug barons are seen as friends of the office where protection fees are collected within an agreed time frame. This allows the drug barons to conduct their businesses with impunity. In most instances, those who are entrusted with sensitive public offices and the responsibility of raiding the nation of the menace of drug are themselves involved in unwholesome practices showing lack of integrity to handle such offices. This could be gleaned from the comment of a key informant interviewed in Lagos:

Some of us are aware of the problem the antinarcotics face in the fight against illicit drug trafficking in this country. That is the odds they faced with wealthy and powerful drug syndicates including other security agencies that would have been. But what is most disturbing to me is the issue of corruption among the officers within the agency. It can be demoralising and debilitating to some officers who would want to work with dedication but are always frustrated by their colleagues. A situation where public officials undermined the campaigns against drugs and protect drug traffickers is to me disappointing. Look at it this way, judging from the history of the agency, most of the top officials have been out rightly involved in corrupt practices form the time of Fidelis Oyakhilome to Bello Lafiaji for money theft and missing drugs exhibit (June 2010).

The comment made by the key informant shows that he is not only a well informed person, but one who follows the trend of things in the country constantly. In Nigeria, some antinarcotics officers have not lived above board. This is the kind of scenario that was revealed by a Civil Society member that was interviewed in Akure, who opined that: Some corrupt operatives had been a clog in the wheel of progress within the NDLEA, who aid in various ways the traffickers and Barons. These include bribery, evading of prison sentences, total and partial loss of exhibits, among others. We should not forget that not too long ago, NDLEA leadership dismissed 72 NDLEA operatives culpable for various forms of corrupt practices in 2007. However, despite these punitive measures, it has not prevented others from corrupt practices as evidence in the recurrence of such offences. People want to drive big cars, own big houses and be respected in their communities (July 2010).

Civil society organisations have played significant role in the society by highlighting development of negative forces in the society. Most of them know the problems and genesis of these problems in the society. A staff of the agency, serving at the Muritala Mohammed International Airport (MMIA), gave a window onto the activities of some of the officers with the collaboration of the staff of other organisations. He revealed that: Drug barons form alliance with some of our staff for them to have easy access to pass drug to other countries. There are syndicates in the command here who work with airline staff to make it easy for traffickers to travel with drugs. Then there are others who intimidate travellers with delay and missing of flight and obtain money from them. That is the reason why most times postings here are highly restricted to most officers. And when you see those types of officers you can mistake them. They wear costly clothes, wristwatch and drive expensive cars, and live in expensive homes (July, 2010).

Assertions given by an insider such as this are important because they reveal the clandestine activities of the antinarcotics agent. It has shown that in most instances the antinarcotics agents are very strong allies of drug barons. They facilitate the movement of illicit drugs in their distribution networks. With such element in the organisation, the fight against illicit drugs can hardly be won and the country will hardly be rid of illicit drugs.

On the part of the management of the agency, though they often complain of the paucity of funds to run the agency, they have not shown justification for the money they have so far received to provide essential working tools for the antinarcotics officers. This attitude

has been responsible for the part of logistics and indecent working environment for the agency. For instance, the training academy located in Jos, the capital of Plateau State, has not depicted the status of a Regional Training Academy. This is so despite the huge investment by the Federal Government of Nigeria, counterpart funding by the United State Government, and other European countries. There have been cases of allegation of embezzlement of the money meant to improve the status and capacity of the academy to bring it to an international standard. One of the staff in Lagos commented that:

We continue to hear of the huge investment in the academy and there is nothing to justify the amount of money received. There have been cases where top management award contracts to themselves and nothing is done. Some people keep about a hundred million naira of the money meant to develop the academy in their personal account which eventually would get lost. Contracts are given to the tune of five to ten million naira to plant flowers to develop the essential areas, and yet you cannot find the flowers (June, 2010).

As a staff of the organisation and probably close to the management, information such as this could be authentic. Though the management has always complained about insufficient funds to empower the agency properly, they have not justified the amount given to them in anyway. There have been lamentations by some well-informed Nigeria over the relocation of the regional training academy from Nigeria to Ghana. The academy was not only to serve as a human resource development only for antinarcotics agents, but was to benefit other agencies such as Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and Information Technology Experts. That is one of the consequences of corruption to the Nigeria society.

Another area where the management of the agency has not shown equity and justice is in the conduct of the agency's affair. For instance, a staff interviewed in Akure pointed that: One of the problems we have with the management of the agency is the manner they appoint and post people to different offices and locations. They are not even fair in their promotion of officers. Let the posting of officers be done in a fair and equitable manner. At least let them respect the provision of federal character in our statues books (July 2010).

The interview revealed that the officer could be one of those unfortunate ones who have not been favoured by the leadership of the agency, especially in respect to postings. The comments here indicate that the management has not been fair and equitable in the distribution of appointments and postings, and this has created disaffection and rancor

among the staff. This is because some beats are seen to be more lucrative than the others. In Nigeria, appointments and postings are very key and sensitive issues in the country. There is the general believe that the location one works has a lot to do in the success of one's career. And success in one's chosen field in Nigeria does not mean how well one has impacted positively on humanity and the development of the society, but how much wealth and material things one has been able to acquire for oneself in the course of one's career. It is within this context that the complaint of the interviewed staff can best be understood.

7. Summary and Conclusion

Illicit drug activities continue to increase in scope, intensity, and sophistication despite over twenty years of suppression and prevention efforts because public official are venal. One negative externalities of illicit drug trafficking in Nigeria is that it fosters corruption in the society, especially among public officers and other law enforcement agencies. This has eroded Nigeria's social capital. The large amount of illicit funds in the hands of drug traffickers, couple with their desperation for more gains serves as a platform that accentuates corruption in the country. Drug trafficking is well-known for corrupting authorities from all levels in the government hierarchy. For instance, in Mexico, the links among drug traffickers and police, prosecutors, judges, and the politicians are not secret. It is well documented that significant part of drug revenues go into the hands of corrupt politicians.

Corruption in any society has ripple effects on the economy and the development agenda of any government in the world. This is no exception with Nigeria. The government has continued to spend huge amount of money without achieving tangible results. The type of corruption that exists in the anti-drug campaign is seen as a form of tax paid. But this tax is in an informal way. This informal tax serves as protection fees against drug barons and dealers.

It is therefore recommended that there is the need for holistic social reforms and orientation that would change the attitude of Nigerian citizens towards ill-gotten wealth and material acquisition. A moral regeneration is very important and necessary. The campaign should target at inner rebirth or spiritual rejuvenation of the citizens.

Campaign against corruption is necessary and a key area requiring action in the fight against illicit drug activities. Genuine fight against corrupt officials in the society should be enforced and not mere rhetoric. In this regard, there is the need to give new impetus to

corruption regulatory bodies to enforce anti-corruption laws and to reduce personal gains and corruptive behaviours with tough penalty to culprits. There should be tough rules with rigorous enforcement that can deter corruption.

Observance of the rule of law and appropriate punishment for crimes as deterrent are imperative. The people should be encouraged to expose corrupt tendencies, and severe consequences for those who get involved in illicit drug trafficking no matter how highly placed one could so as to serve as a deterrent to others.

There is the need to carry out a vigorous campaign to educate the people on the dangers of illicit drug activities in the society; here the role of the mass media, both electronic and print, civil society groups and community leaders should be employed.

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