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CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA SINCE THE FOURTH REPUBLIC (1999)

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ABSTRACT

One of the greatest threats to economic and political development of any nation is corruption. Therefore, the challenges of corruption remain a major devastating issue facing Nigeria since the colonial period. Since the return of the country to civil rule on May 29, 1999, the Nigerian government has taken a number of measures to address the problems of corruption and bad governance in the country. These measures include public service reform (monetization to reduce waste and reduction of over-bloated personnel, reform of public procurement); establishment of anti-corruption enforcement agencies (such as the Economic and Financial Crime Commission, Independent Corruption and other Practices Commission). Despite the successes attained by these measures, the situation remains unacceptable as corruption continues to permeate and pervade every facet of national life in Nigeria. Against this backdrop, this paper will attempt to expose some acts of corruption in the Fourth Republic and state its dire consequences on sustainable development in Nigeria.

KEYWORDS: Corruption, Nigeria, Fourth Republic.

1. INTRODUCTION

May 29, 1999 marked the beginning of Nigeria's fourth republic after several years of military dictatorships in the country. However, no meaningful development to commensurate the Nigeria's civil rule. This is in spite the fact that the nascent democracy in country is over a decade. Corruption has eaten deep into the country's socio- economic and political system and which serves as a major threat to Nigeria's democracy. Public office holders use their power to undermine basic human rights and enrich themselves at the expense of Nigeria's impoverished populace. This makes it imperative in this study to examine corruption as one of the hurdles of Nigerian democracy.

It can be said that Corruption been the bane of legitimacy, democratic stability and socio-economic and political development in Nigeria. Indeed, any attempt to understand the tragedy of development and the challenges to democracy in Nigeria must come to grips with the problem of corruption and stupendous wastage of scarce resources. All attempts by successive regimes to nip the problem in the bud have failed. Corruption has been identified as the major obstacle to the development of Nigeria. Where corruption is one of the greatest challenges of the Nigerian economy that stands out as contributing significantly to impoverishment and loss of lives. The impact, of course, threatens the stability of the Nigerian society. The issue of political corruption has been a recurring decimal in Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation that is richly endowed with immense natural and human resources but squandered in hysterical adventure of corruption that have led the nation into a state of underdevelopment due largely to uncommitted self-serving leaders to national development. In this context, this study deals with corruption in Nigeria since the Fourth Republic (1999) through several axes, which is the following: The Concept of corruption, corruption practices in Nigeria, The impact of corruption on governance and development in Nigeria, Corruption Challenges in Nigeria, Prospects for activating corruption in Nigeria.

2. THE CONCEPT OF POLITICAL CORRUPTION

Defining corruption is clearly one of the major challenges of scholars and other stakeholders like the international development agencies that are interested in the anti-corruption discussion. There is no single, comprehensive and universally accepted definition of what constitutes a corrupt behaviour, this to a large extent, may be attributed to the ambiguous nature of what is encompassed under the term. This is particularly so because the sensitivity of public perceptions

about behaviour that is corrupt varies considerably from one country to another and in different cultures. Thus, a particular behavior that is considered corrupt in one cultural setting may not be labelled as corrupt in another. Furthermore, the complexity of this phenomenon is also underlined by the difficulties involved in gathering data which in most cases are unreliable and disjointed. Consequently, due to the complexity surrounding what could be defined as a corrupt behaviour, it is often even more challenging to agree on the necessary punishment for a corrupt act. For instance, while those in authority and popular opinion may unanimously condemn and call for punishments to be enacted against certain acts of corruption, there are also other acts of corruption that the authorities may want to punish but segments of public opinion may not object to. On the other hand, public opinion may condemn certain corrupt behaviours which are condoned by the authorities. This scenario makes the process of prosecution and conviction a daunting task.

However, despite the array of controversies surrounding the phenomenon, corruption has been defined and classified in different forms and sub-forms as different authors and agencies have attempted to operationalise the term for practical analyses and actions. Against this backdrop, the attempts of these individual authors and institutions to provide workable definitions of corruption within the context of their understanding of what constitutes a corrupt behaviour have not been without their problems. Otiite hinted that “corruption is the pervasion of integrity or state of affairs through bribery, favour or moral depravity”. He further pointed out that “corruption takes place when at least two parties have interacted to change the structure or processes of society or the behaviour of functionaries in order to produce dishonest, unfaithful or defiled situations”. This description by the African anthropologist is the common attitudes of most African elites and Nigerian power brokers. Indeed, they used to connive towards changing the reality to favour their self-centric mission to the anguish of societal and national development.

Some scholars have defined corruption as behaviour by public officials that deviates from the public interest, others have conceptualised corruption, based on deviation from moral standards. Similarly, Morris defines corruption as behaviour that deviates from serving the common good, suggesting that it is an embodiment of a state's original norms and legitimising ideology. The lack of specificity, however, of the public interest centred definitions of corruption has continued to generate a lot of criticism from some quarters. For instance, one of the probing questions concerns who defines what is in the public interest? As Theobald suggests, complex societies have a wide range of publics, each with their own interests. This can be illustrated, for example, through some of the problems associated with the politicisation of Nigeria's anti-corruption crusade, where it has become difficult to bring corrupt political officials to justice as a result of the ways in which politicians have been able to turn the country's multi-ethnic divides to their favour by promoting their regional and ethnic interest. In the same vein, Peter and Welch contend that almost any act could be said to be in some sense of public benefit.

However, there is another group of scholars that have attempted to define corruption in a narrower sense. These definitions of corruption have had a greater emphasis upon the legal and moral aspects. For instance, Nye defines corruption as “behaviour that deviates from the formal duties of a public role” because of private interests or status gains. In a similar vein, Khan defines corruption as behaviour that deviates from the formal rules of conduct governing the actions of someone in a position of public authority. Thus, “corrupt behaviour in this view involves the violation of established rules for personal gain and profit”. This legalistic definition of corruption is often referred to as public-centred corruption. One of the problems with these kinds of definitions of corruption is that frequently what is popularly considered to constitute corrupt behaviour is also found beyond the public sector and may not involve any direct sense of monetary benefit – factors which lay outside a lot of the focus of attention in the dominant anti-corruption literatures. The “efforts to secure wealth or power through illegal means for private gain at the public expense” whether or not the perpetrator works in the public sector according to Lipset and Lenz, could also be classified as corrupt behaviour. This is an issue that will be discussed in more detail in the subsequent sections.

Other scholars have attempted to define corruption in relation to particular state-society relationships and a distinction has been made between grand (political) and petty (bureaucratic) corruption. According to Robinson, a distinction can also be drawn between (1) incidental corruption, that is the individual behaviours of politicians and public office holders, (2) institutional corruption, where institutional cultures of corruption may have grown up around an entire institution and (3) systemic corruption, representing the idea of the embedding of corrupt practices as a way of life within a whole society.

According to Ngouo and the World Bank, corruption is the exploiting of public positions for private benefits. She also states that the lack of any civil spirit among all categories of civil servants leads to corruption and misappropriation of public funds. To Tanzi et al, corruption is not only found in the public sector, it is equally prominent in the private sectors; Akindele

sees corruption as behavior, which deviates from the formal rules of governing the actions of someone in a position of authority. According to Osunyinkanmi, the term corruption is a synonym with the terms fraud, bribery, settlement etc. In his explanation, the settlement in corruption perception parlance became a euphemism for bribery in Nigeria during the Babangida administration in 1989. In support of Osunyinkanmi's view, Rose Ackerman opines that corruption can assume several forms such as bribery, embezzlement, fraud etc, where bribery assumes the most predominant forms of corruption. Rose – Ackerman further submits that bribery could manifest in incentive payments, obtaining lower cost and buying influence or votes. While Dwivedi, sees corruption as including “nepotism, favouritism, bribery, graft and other unfair means adopted by government employees and the public alike to extract some socially and legally prohibited favours”. To Scott, corruption “involves a deviation from certain acceptable standards of behaviour”.

The most prominent definition of corruption, however, is the one used by the World Bank and this is worth exploring in a little more detail given how prominent it has been within discussion of corruption within the "development" context. The World Bank defines corruption as the “abuse of public office for private gain” (World Bank 1997). This definition is also used by Transparency International (TI). Although, this definition may be useful, it is rather too narrow and simplistic, as argued above corruption is also prevalent in the private sector. Thus, for example, in the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) judgement, the definition provided by the World Bank does not give adequate attention to the problem of corruption in the private sector or the role of the private sphere in fostering corruption in the public sector. Thus, the ADB define corruption as the abuse of public or private office for personal gain (ADB 1998). In consonance with the ADB's judgement, therefore, I would argue that corrupt practices do not only occur in the public sector, but they also occur within and between private business and individuals in society, with or without the involvement of public officials. For instance, domestic firms, multinational corporations and banks have often been implicated for corrupt behaviour. However, because of the huge economic and political implications of public sector corruption, more emphasis is often placed on public sector corruption.

Brown and Cloke point out some further limitations of the World Bank's definition of corruption. They argue that private individuals' gains from corruption are not limited to purely personal and monetary interests and that the abuse of political position (political corruption) to subvert, super-impose, or pursue a particular ideological agenda for personal interest, against the will of the majority of the people, is not adequately considered in the Bank's definition of corruption. The deduction from above is that what someone regards as a corrupt act is seen differently by another person. The 1999 and other previous constitutions established a code of conduct for public officers and made it a political objective for the state to abolish all corrupt practices associated with abuse of power. However, it does not define corruption or give a list of acts that will amount to corruption. It has also been observed that the statutory criminal laws, the criminal and penal codes, do not define corruption. The Independent Corrupt Practices (and other related offences) Commission (ICPC) Act 2000, and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Act 2004 have now broadened the definition of corruption. The EFCC act empowers the commission to investigate, prevent and prosecute offenders who engage in:

Money laundering, embezzlement, bribery, looting and any form of corrupt practices, illegal arms deal, smuggling, human trafficking, and child labour, illegal oil bunkering, illegal mining, tax evasion, foreign exchange malpractices including counterfeiting to currency, theft of intellectual property and piracy, open market abuse, dumping of toxic, wastes, and prohibited goods (EFCC Act, 2004).

3. PRACTICES OF CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

3.1. Practices Corruption from Independence to the Fourth Republic (1960 – 1999)

Practices of corruption in Nigeria could be traced back to the pre-colonial era when for the sake of self-preservation and glory, Nigerians accepted ‘bribes’ to sell out their brothers into slavery. It was manifested also when the forerunners to colonial masters created Afro-European conservations that were premised on falsehood. In fact the colonialists established its empire in Nigeria on the foundation of scam and fraud through its “carrot and stick” approach which was itself manipulative and deceptive. Practices of corruption had also found right footing in Nigeria even before independence and kept assuming different dimensions after independence. For instance, Nnamdi Azikiwe as Premier of Eastern Nigeria was exposed by the Foster Suffon Tribunal of Enquiry of 1956 into the African Continental Bank (ACB) to have abused his office and divert huge sums of Eastern Nigeria's government funds into his own bank, the ACB.

On January 16th 1966, the Federal Military Government was formed with General Johnson Aguiyi Ironsi as Head of State and Supreme Commander of the Nigerian Armed Forces. It must be stressed for record purpose, that General Aguiyi Ironsi was never a part of the original coup plotters who attempted to seize power on 15th January 1966. It was the failure

of the coup, coupled with the fact that he was the most senior military officer in the Nigeria Army as at that time that automatically made him the first in line to assume authority. 46 On July 29th 1966, a counter coup d'état by military officers mostly from the northern part of Nigeria led to the assassination of General Ironsi and established Major General Yakubu Gowon as Head of State.

It is important to note that the coup plotters of January 15th 1966 did not specifically mention corruption as one of the major reasons for staging the coup that sacked the first republic, for if anything, it was only mentioned in passing as the issues of nepotism, dividing the country along ethnic lines and election violence were seen to be far worst than political and bureaucratic corruption which was then at a very low level. The counter coup d'état of July 29th 1966 was merely a case of retaliation by the northern elements in the Nigerian Army against their counterparts from the South for the January coup which led to the death of many prominent northern politicians like Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa-the then Prime Minister of Nigeria, the sultan of Sokoto-Sir Ahmadu Bello and a list of other prominent northerners. As mentioned earlier, the issue of political and bureaucratic corruption was not specifically named as being among the leading reasons for the coup of January 1966 or for the counter coup of July 1966. And then enters Major General Yakubu Gowon as Head of State. The desire rid Nigeria of 'corruption' was part of the justifications the military gave for intervening in the democratic governance of Nigeria in 1966. Yet its anti-graft war was such that "corruption was used to check corruption by corrupting the system all the more". For instance, in 1974, under the watch of Gen. Yakubu Gowan, 16.23 million metric tons of cement was imported at the rate of \$115 while its official market price was \$25. This means that someone stood to gain \$75 per ton for 16.23 million tons.

On assumption of office in 1975, Murtala Muhammed set a panel that probed the assets of all the former governors, the administrators of Eastern and Western states and some federal commissioners. The confiscated assets stood at about N10 million. Olusegun Obasanjo who emerged as Head State in 1976 following the assassination of Murtala Muhammed stimulated corruption manifestation by promulgating the Decree No.11 of 1976 (Public Officer Protection Against False Accusation). Public officers were now protected and shielded with the decree to exhibit their corrupt potentials. Obasanjo himself, inflated the cost of contracting the international trade fair complex in Lagos from N45,212,000 (which Murtala his predecessor considered to be inflated) to N95,820,000 and further revised it to N116,257,893. Obasanjo's regime was also enmeshed in the scandal surrounding N2.8 billion missing from the coffers of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). This said money was refunded from a London bank to the coffers of the federal government of Nigeria three years later (1977-1980) without interest. President Shagari, who began his tenure in 1979, paid deaf ears to the ills, scandals and manifestations of corruption that defaced his predecessors' regimes. According to Nwaobi, President Shagari's tenure was "marred by intrigues, smear campaigns, thuggery, violence and widespread rigging, repositories of power, the teaming citizens were cajoled, and brazenly bribed as the politicians took their campaign message to the people...the Shagari scorecard was a parchment of corruption and iniquities, a shocking and sad commentary on how unpatriotic leaders will sink a nation into an irredeemable abyss of perditions".

It can be said During the 70's, the import licensing system was widely exploited by government officials and their friends in the business sectors for self enrichment. Contracts for public works were frequently inflated, while civil servants rampantly engaged many forms of bribery and extortion. In 1976, 10 out of 12 of the then state military governors were dismissed from office and the military, haven been found guilty of grossly abusing their offices by a judicial probe panel. The probe by the Mohammed regime (1975/76) also extended to other key state institutions, including the judiciary, police, civil service and parastatals, and even universities culminating in the purge of over 10,000 officials, many of them on corruption related offences. With the return of electoral politics in 1979, under the Second Republic (1979-83), large scale and high level fraud, diversion, embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds either to finance political parties or for self enrichment, and more brazen inflation of state contracts, nepotism, ostentatious display of ill-gotten wealth, stuffing of pay-roll with ghost workers, and electoral malpractices and violence returned to the front burner, after a brief lull.

The Shagari regime (1979-1983) earned and squandered N40.5 billion, depleted external reserves of N2.3 billion and further incurred N10.21 billion as debt without anything to show for it. Shagari's rule was terminated by Muhammadu Buhari who through Decree 2 and others tried several politicians and recovered public funds and properties. The Ibrahim Babangida administration (1985-1993) was indicted by the Pius Okigbo led panel to have embezzled \$12.4 billion from the "Dedication and other Special Account" and dumped it in the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), a bank for drug barons and money launderers worldwide. The full details of Babangida's worldwide investments will never be known. While he is perhaps the richest Nigerian alive today with assets in excess of \$30 billion, proxy holds much of his holdings...the effect was clear (as) more than 3,000 officials now have Swiss Amounts totaling about \$90 billion and in Britain £75 billion.

General Sanni Abacha's administration remains the most notorious in terms of corruption manifestations and autocracy. Abacha, through the Chagouri and Chagouri (an international consortium owned by five Lebanese brothers) embezzled Nigeria's funds and deposited in banks across the world. His loot is valued at over \$20 billion dollars. General Abdulsalami Abubakar who succeeded the Late Sanni Abacha is reported to have spent few weeks in power when the chairman of National Economic Intelligence Committee (NEIC) Prof. Aluko made the disclosure that \$50 million was missing in the national coffers. Gen. Abubakar awarded N15 billion for the construction of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) headquarters and spent N19 billion hosting the World Youth Championship. He quickly privatized Nigeria's firms and used looted funds to purchase them through proxies. This is more so as these deals were consummated in utter negation of transparency and accountability. General Abdulsalami Abubakar's administration which lasted for just eleven months corruptly utilized about N650 billion. During this period, he awarded 4072 new contracts, granted 576 new licenses, made 807 new appointments, gave 111 approvals and made 807 awards and honours.

Succeeding regimes (1985-99), marked by very corrupt and repressive military rule and growing personalization of power, saw corruption spreading to virtually all spheres of society, including the civil society and the private sector, becoming a national culture. The scale of corruption during that era in Nigeria is reflected in the Pius Okigbo Report, which noted that about \$ 12 billion in oil windfall which accrued to the nation during the 1990 gulf war could not be accounted for, by the military regime of Ibrahim Babangida. In 1998, a Panel constituted to facilitate the recovery of funds looted under the Abacha regime (1993-98) also revealed how top military and civilian leaders, including Abacha himself, siphoned billions of dollars in public funds to offshore accounts, while using their positions and public resources to acquire choice properties around the country. In 1999, following return to democratic rule, the Christopher Kolade Panel in a very celebrated report also indicted the last military regime of General Abdulsalami Abubakar (1998-99), for awarding, massively inflated, contracts, licences, awards, etc., usually to firms in which top echelon of the regime had substantial interests, causing a sharp drop in the country's external reserves.

3.2. Practices Corruption in Fourth Republic (1999 – 2018)

The Obasanjo civilian administration (1999-2007) characterized by looting public treasury, bribing law makers. Embezzlement and tantalization of public funds by political elites. This issue culminated into the squandering of multi-billion dollars of Nigerian money by different dignitaries under the auspices of some projects and programmes in their office for the sake of national development. The House of Representative Committee on power and steel revealed that \$16 billion invested on National Integrated Power Project (NIPP) between 2006 and 2007 was squandered. Ogunديya pointed that "the senate committee pronounced vice president Atiku Abubakar guilty on allegation that he diverted \$5 million of Petroleum Technology Development Funds (PTDF). The falsification of age and academic qualification from Toronto University by Alhaji Salisu Buhari; former speaker House of Representative was initial case of corruption from the beginning of fourth republic. Meanwhile, three senate presidents who included Chief Evans Enwerem, Chuba Okadigbo and Adolphus Nwabarawere impeached on the account of mismanagement in office and corrupt enrichment. For instance, Idris Kuta's panel investigated the allegation of corruption against senator Okadigbo found out among others that he was involved in the inflation of the street light project to the tune of 173 million Naira.

In the same context Olusegun Obasanjo on his second coming to office as an elected president in 1999 pledged to fight corruption but yet, could not hesitate to share the N10 billion he voted for poverty reduction with his party members as booty (Edo, 2006). Under the disguise of hosting the Eight All Africa Games, Obasanjo is alleged to have inflated the cost of constructing the new ultra-modern stadium to N60 billion but still owed the contractors N500 million. In Edo's words, "there is no gain saying the fact that more than 50% of the cost of hosting the games was really fictitious". Obasanjo was also alleged to have bribed the Nigerian Senate to further his Third Term quest. His government was also involved in the scandalous Harliburton bribe case in which about \$579 million was given as bribe to some top government officials to secure contracts in Nigeria. Other cases include the Siemens \$1.6 billion settlement scandal, Sillbros Inc's \$32 million, Panalpina's Nigeria's National Identity Card Scheme scandal, and Segem giving about \$200 million as bribe to senior government officials.

Practices of corruption were also rampant in state and local government levels. For instance, the Bayelsa state governor Chief D. S. P. Alamiesiegha was on September 15, 2005 arrested in London on arrival from Germany where he had gone to undergo surgery on tummy tuck. He was found to have about £2 million in his house. Similarly, Governor Dariye of Plateau was arrested and tried for money laundering in London in 2004 but he jumped bail before his next court appearance and travelled back to Jos as a Gambian. The list is inexhaustible. It can be said that though Obasanjo laid the foundation of his civilian administration on the vociferous campaign and determination to eliminate corruption in the public life. He

proposed and later signed Anticorruption bill into law. He established two anti-graft commissions, the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC). Despite this, corruption has continued to grow like a wild flame of fire. For example, questions bordering on corruption have created serious instability in the upper and lower legislative House. From 1999 when the country returned to electoral democracy, the leadership in the Senate and the House of Representative has not been stable. Chief Evans Enwerem, Chuba Okadigbo and Adolphos Nwabara were impeached on account of mismanagement and corrupt enrichment. For instance, Senator Idris Kuta ledpanel that investigated the allegation of corruption against Senator Chuba Okadigbo found out among others that he was involved in the inflation of the street light project to the tune of 173 million naira; authorized the payment of 37.2million naira to furnish the Senate president's residence, an amount above the approved 25million; installed and commissioned a 100KVA generating set at the Senate President's residence at an inflated price of 15million naira.

When Yar'Adua came in as Obasanjo's successor, he showed the commitment to fight corruption but his body language revealed that he was not committed to what he stood for. This was evident in his effort to stop the prosecution of James Ibori former governor of Delta State and the subsequent removal of Ribadu as the EFCC chairman. After the death of Yar'Adua, President Goodluck Jonathan who took over from him did not show courage to fight corruption as most of his political appointees were corrupt. They looted government treasury without conviction. The likes of the former Aviation minister Miss Stella Oduah who used the ministry's finance to buy bullet proof cars for her personal use. The immediate past minister of Petroleum Resources Mrs. Diezani Allison Madueke has been accused of stealing a whooping sum of \$9.3 billion under the watch of President Jonathan. In the words of Melaye, the government of President Goodluck was unable to prosecute corrupt political office holder even those that were exposed. Jonathan showed a total lack of political will to fight corruption in Nigeria.

The Jonathan administration geared towards covering the most corrupt dignitaries in past and present dispensation through given them National Pardon as well as to award them with National honors. For instance the former governor of Bayelsa state chief Alameiseigha (i.e. a political mentor to President Jonathan) has received national pardon despite the hundred charges on corruption label against him and Ateke Tompolo one of the criminal leaders of Niger Delta Militants received national honorwhile, Ms. Orunma Otehas reinstated to her position as Director General of Security and Exchange Commission (SEC) by President Jonathan without taken a due course over her suspension by National Assembly on Misappropriation account. Recently, the Minister of Aviation Mrs. Stella Oduah was queried by federal Government over purchased of bullet proof cars at the cost of N255 million. The House of Representatives Committee on Aviation has recommended the removal of Minister of Aviation Stella Oduah over extra-budgetary spending including the purchase of N255 million bullet proof cars. The 2013 budget approved N240 million for the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority for the purchase of 27 vehicles, but Oduah raised it to N643 million for 54 vehicles including two bulletproof cars. Though, up to the time of this research Mrs. Oduah is still a minister while investigation probed that she was indicted on the said scandal.

Nevertheless, the Jonathan's administration has already compromise the standard on graft indecent attitude. This scenario precipitates a gesture for upgrading the image of corrupt dignitaries in government and consolidates the non-chalet government attitude towards corruption. Ironically, the year 2013 of Jonathan administration is centered on missing of huge amount of funds from millions and billions to trillions from National coffers without ascertaining their where about. A classical illustration were among others: N480 billion Subsidy Reinvestment Empowerment Programme Fund (i.e. SURE-P); the controversial \$5 billion missing from Excess Crude Account (ECA) or not yet received by the Governors Forum (NGF) as pointed out by the chairman Governors forum, Governor Rotimi Ameachi; and currently, N8 trillion missing from federation account which the Central Bank Governor Malam Sanusi Lamido Sanusi blamed the federal government as well as the federal Minister of Finance Dr. Okonjo Iweala on that scandal. The Central Bank Governor alleged that \$49.8 billion (i.e. 8 trillion Naira) Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) oil remittance to the Federation Account was missing. Responding to such scandal, President Jonathan asked CBN Governor to resign for allegedly leaking his letter on the "missing \$49.8 billion" to ex-president Obasanjo, who wrote damning letter to the president (the nation, 10th January, 2014). Though, such amount is two years Nigerian budget for intensive capital projects".

It is instructive to note that since the inception of the current administration of President Muhammadu Buhari in May 29, 2015, efforts have been geared towards tackling corruption in the country. So many strategies have been employed by the current administration like the single treasury account for ministries, agencies and departments of government that are revenue generating. With the emergence of a new government in the year 2015, many Nigerians were having great faith that corruption in the country will be minimized. In that year, power left the hands of People's Democratic Party (PDP) to All Progressive Congress (APC). One of the campaign promises made by the present President Muhammadu Buhari was the

massive eradication of corruption in the country. Irrespective of the campaign promises, Nigeria ranked low in transparency and high in corruption in that year. In the year 2015, out of the 168 countries surveyed, Nigeria was seen at the bottom of the table in the category of number 136. This implies that Nigeria was the 32nd most corrupt country in the world in 2015.

In the year 2017, there was no remarkable improvement in transparency in the country. Irrespective of the promise made by the current president to fight corruption, it appears that the former President Goodluck Jonathan did quit better than him when compared with his result of 2014 before he left the presidential seat. It is very disappointing that in the latest Corruption Perception Index released by Transparency International today, Nigeria has relapsed deeper into corruption and has moved 12 steps backwards from 136 to 148 in respect to 2014 result. From the foregoing, it is clear that corruption is endemic in the Nigerian state and each government despite efforts and commitments to fight it usually fail in its bid to eradicate or reduce it to the minimal level. This has led to argument as to why corruption still persists in Nigeria. Some reasons have been deduced for this to include: greed; poverty, unemployment and poor youth empowerment. Conversely, the resultant effect and implications of these anomalies leads to poor investment; rise in poverty; national crises and ultimately poor national development.

It can be said The first, second and third republic in Nigeria was characterized by widespread corruption that gave the military the impetus to overthrow democratic governance. The irony of this is that even the military that came into power in some instances to save the country from the grip of Kleptocratic government (rule by thieves) are enmeshed in an unprecedented level of corruption. The fourth republic has not been exempted from widespread corruption despite the two anti-corruption agencies that were created by the Obasanjo's administration.

4. EFFECTS OF CORRUPTION ON NIGERIA

The existence of political corruption in a democratic society (Nigeria inclusive) is perceived as an aberration. This is because the actual practice of democratic principles rest squarely on the legal code of society. Thus, the existence of high incidence of political corruption tends to have more serious consequences on democracies more than any form of government. This is so because it poses dangerous omen to the principles of democracy. There is a strong consensus among scholars that suggests that political corruption does no good to democracy. Consequently, political corruption erodes and corrodes the meaning, mechanisms and the very essence of democracy. Again, political corruption breaks the link and people's power to influence collective decisions, contribute input into the system, affects voting pattern, generates general apathy for meaningful participation and basically overheats the polity due to public disaffection and disenchantments. Most societies especially, the North African axes have degenerated into chaos, anarchy and even avoidable war and terrorism due to what has been generally perceived as elitist misguided quest to stay on in power eternally, or even because of clear-cut cases of poor governance orchestrated by corruption. By way of extending the argument from the foregoing, since political corruption is a deviant behavior that inhibits the rules and tenets of democracy, it also poses dangerous threat to the consolidation and objectives of democracy in Nigeria.

In fact, there are lots of negative impacts of corruption on every sphere of societal development: social, economic and political. For instance, Ikubaje posits that corruption is a global phenomenon and its effects on individual, institutions, countries and global development have made it an issue of universal concern. Why is it a concern? Because of the negative consequences it has on society and the citizenry. According to the Lima Declaration, the impact of corruption include the erosion of the moral fabric of society, violation of the social and economic rights of the poor and vulnerable, undermining of democracy, subversion of the rule of law, retardation of development and denial of society, particularly the poor, of the benefits of free and open competition. No society sits by and watch corruption retard efforts of society at growth and development, that is why in many societies it is systemically embedded in the norms and laws to reduce if not totally eliminate the effects of corruption. But the aforementioned notwithstanding, Bello-Imam has been able to outline comprehensively, the negative consequences of corruption to include:

- The misallocation of talent where rent seeking proves more lucrative than productive work such that talents are misallocated and people will then be lured to rent seeking rather than productive work.
- Corruption also brings about limitation of aid flows as donor agencies are unwilling to put in their money for development projects.
- Corruption also brings about the loss of tax revenue as people and corporate entities evade tax or claims improper tax exemptions thereby resulting in loss of revenues.
- It also leads to adverse budgetary consequences especially when corruption is rampant in the society as budgeted amounts are not used to deliver the required services.

- Corruption also brings about negative impact on quality of infrastructure and public services in the sense that public contracts are procured through a corrupt system thereby resulting in lower quality of infrastructure and public services.
- Corruption often tempts government officials to choose government projects less on the basis of public welfare than on the opportunity they provide for extorting bribes. Under such a situation, large projects, whose exact value and benefit are difficult to monitor, usually present lucrative opportunities for corruption while returns on workers' salaries and textbooks could be zero for the same set of officials.

In summary this is bad and should be confronted with all alacrity because as the former Chairman of Transparency International, Eigen correctly notes that, "corruption does not just line the pockets of political and the business elite it leaves ordinary people without essential services such as life saving medicines. It can be said The cost of corruption can be classified into four factors", political, economic, social, and environmental. On the political front corruption constitutes a major obstacle to democracy and the rule of law. In a democratic system, offices and institution lose their legitimacy when they are misused for private advantage. This is harmful to our democracy. Our democracy and political leadership cannot develop in a corrupt climate. Economically, corruption leads to the depletion of our national wealth. It has led to the use of scarce public resources to finance uneconomic high profile projects such as power plants pipelines that cost billions whereas if these were channel towards building schools, hospitals and roads or the supply of Electricity and water to rural areas which are basic needs of life. This has hindered the development of fair market structures which has led to job losses and also affects investment. On the social ladder, the people have lost their trust in the political system. In its institutions and leadership, they have developed nonchalant attitude and general apathy towards government policies resulting in a weak civil society. Environmental degradation is yet another consequence of corrupt systems. The non enforcement of environmental regulations and legislation has led to the pollution of the environment in Nigeria. Careless exploitation of Natural resources from oil and minerals by domestic and international agents hassled to ravaged natural environments affecting the health of her citizens. Most environmental devastating project are given preference in funding, because they are easy target for siphoning of public funds into private pockets.

In the same context, Corruption affects on:

- i. Corruption perpetuates social, economic and political inequality and thus, aggravates mass poverty as poor people on the average pay higher proportion of their incomes in bribes. This, in economic parlance, retards economic growth. The misappropriation and mismanagement of public resources by successive regimes, has rendered millions of Nigerians poor, unemployed and uneducated. This can be described as oil that worsens factors related to overall human development. In the words of Osoba, it is an anti-social behavior conferring improper benefits contrary to legal and moral norms, and which undermine the authorities to improve the living conditions of the people.
- ii. Corruption also diverts public expenditure from sectors that benefit the poor the most, away to the sectors and project where kick-backs can readily be obtained by public officials. In effect, distorted priorities of public policies and diversion of public resources which could have been productively employed to increase productivity bring about effectiveness and efficiency of government performance becomes the order of the day. This also endangers the fiscal viability of the state as substantial portions of government revenues do not reach government coffers. Because the system creates avenue for leakages. Corruption, it is averred, can bring about skewing of the composition of public expenditure from social services that are important to the poor.
- iii. Corruptions can also cause reduction in quality of goods and services available to the public, as some companies could cut corners (thereby producing sub-standard goods to increase profit margins. Put differently, it generates allocative inefficiency (Khan, b) by permitting the least efficient contractor or most costly supplier with the highest ability to bribe those who award government contracts or awarding contracts to cronies or companies where they have interest. Cumulatively, these acts undermine the reputation and make government agencies ineffective and inefficient and impact negatively on the wellbeing of the people.
- iv. Corruption also impacts negatively on efficient mobilization and management of human and material resources. It can also alienate modernity-oriented civil servants and cause them to reduce (or withdraw) their service and to leave the country for greener pasture (the "brain-drain" episode is tied to corruption) as many Nigerians believe it is profitable to work outside Nigeria's shore.

v. Corruption is a cause of low investment with a resultant effect of reduced economic growth both at foreign and at the domestic level. An economy undermined by corruption has the effect of discouraging foreign investment and public donors. The resultant effect of this is shortage of fund for productive investment. Simply put, corruption hinders direct foreign investment.

vi. Corruption has a negative impact on human rights of the citizenry. A country with a corrupt government will have no regard for people's fundamental human rights as guaranteed in the constitution. Hence, it desecrates the rule of law and distorts the entire decision-making process, undermines the credibility and legitimacy of government. Even, those who tried to expose corrupt activities find themselves to blame as they can be dealt with and the culprits walk away without being punished. This has encouraged the acceptance of the saying "join them if you cannot beat them"

vii. It has also caused political decay and economic downturn in Nigeria and, depending on the scale; it has led to social conflict and violence as competing groups vie for state power which is the source of distribution of resources and other amenities in the country. This made politics all-comers job and is seen as surest means to affluence, earn respect and recognition.

5. CHALLENGES CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

Lumumba pointed out that the greatest challenge for anti-corruption commissions in Africa is centered on political interference due to lack of political leaders and officers to fight corruption. The challenges which plague anti-corruption institutions in Nigeria include the lack of adequate funding, political interference and judicial bottlenecks. In this respect, Waziri postulated that anti-graft agencies are also ill-equipped to combat corruption in the country due to the absence of autonomy, unequal treatment, institutional factors, lack of judicial power, inadequate database and lack of political will towards the fight against corruption. The fact is that they are good in publicising the names of corrupt individuals instead of punishing them. The anti-corruption institutions are simply inefficient in carrying out their responsibilities. These anti-graft agencies were unable to persecute an adequate number of top public officials. This is the main deterrence to campaign against corrupt practices in Nigeria. It demonstrates that there are exceptions or untouchables among Nigerian citizens that the long hands of the law cannot get to or capture. Beside these measures, the country has consistently occupied the most corrupt position among all countries in the global arena. This is due to inadequate institutional approach, socio-economic reforms as well as poor political will to implement anti-corruption laws.

In fact, the general challenges for the anti-corruption strategies encompass the lack of institutional framework and autonomy for anti-graft institutions to prosecute the culprit in accordance to the extant regulations. A weak judicial system, absence of severe or soft punishment, and government interference into the activities of anti-graft institutions are among the other challenges which exist today. Moreover, other contributing factors include bad leadership, paucity of funds, absence of a comprehensive database, lack of autonomy and needs to reform the public sector. These hurdles are the great ailments that interfere with the strategies set out by anti-graft institutions in fighting against corruption in the country.

Aside all these, one main area that corruption has hinders is the decay in infrastructure. For instance, health services, water supply, power supply, good roads, sound education are a mirage in the fourth republic, despite the promised made to Nigerians during election campaigns that all these areas will be addressed by the new democratic government. Fifteen years after, the story remains the same or even getting worse and this is one of the reasons Nigerians have turn India to their medical tourism because of inadequate medical facilities and manpower at the government hospitals.

6. PROSPECTS FOR ACTIVATING CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

The study demonstrates that corruption in Nigeria takes more shapes than one. Of particular importance to this discourse is the political corruption which appears to re-enact and reinforce itself in every aspect of the Nigerian facet owing to its strategic role in the making and unmaking of the Nigerian nation-state. The resultant effect of prevailing political corruption according to the study negates every conditions and adherence of social cohesion, stability and democratic sustenance. It entrenches self-seeking attitudes, private regarding and accumulation. The result of this is that citizens who are now alienated from the public office holders become apathetic and in most cases, disillusioned and aggressive in their behaviors, the effect of which trickles down to the general conditions of moral rots, depravity and at best, insecurity as exemplified in the new mode of insurgency witnessed in Nigeria at the onset of democratic experimentation from the better of 1999 to date. The poser therefore is: what is the way forward for Nigeria and its people? In an attempt to answer this question, the paper will address the following vital resolutions as panacea for the country:

Firstly, the constitution of the land must be respected and obeyed to the letter. Every rule guiding the behaviors of public officials are domesticated in the 1999 constitution. The onus is for the political head to act in accordance with the dictates and injunctions of the law. This will foster accountability and probity. Secondly, all anti-graft agencies namely, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) should be strengthened. By implications, the body should be made autonomous and independent of politicians at whatever level – be they federal, state and local government. The best way to do this is to urgently amend the anti-graft law of the EFCC and hence, divorce the agency from politics and place it under the control of the civil society organizations, trade unions and other political groups.

Again, every known legal obstacles and challenges on the path of the EFCC must be removed. Such hindrances such as the immunity enjoyed by major political office holders in Nigeria have been found to stifle justice system in the country. Unfortunately, this legal instrument enjoyed by political arrow-heads have shielded them from investigations and prosecutions either while in office or outside in most cases. The tendency therefore is that several monies running into billions of naira or dollars have been reportedly siphoned and laundered in foreign banks with reckless abandon. This indeed, is not healthy for the country. Moreover, the freedom of Information Bill should further be explored and strengthened to the extent that the secret deals of public officials and politicians, including their private businesses and accounts are made public for everyone to see. When this is done, caution in the affairs of public business will be at the heart of every public official. And circumventing these rules will spell stiff punishment for such a person as well as serve as deterring factor to potential partners in crime.

Finally, the affluence associated with politics in Nigeria today where those in power appears to be amassing public wealth has literally transformed politics into a lucrative business. Those going into politics should not be made to be exceedingly rich so that prospective politicians will think of other trade other than politics. A situation where politicians dominate the circle of oil money, and continue to do so sends a serious wave of awakening to peoples that money making is best carried out in politics. It is the contention of this study that when all these strategies enumerated above as part of the broader policy objectives to stem the tide of political corruption in Nigeria are dully followed, then, there is the likelihood that realizing Nigeria's political and socio-economic goals, objectives and aspirations will be much more easier than settling down to take bread and butter in a public café.

Corruption is the major obstacle to development in Nigeria and tackling it is essential to the survival and progress of Nigeria. The fight against corruption is everyone's responsibility, the government, the citizen and even the international community; this is as a result of the fact that they are guilty of money laundry for most government officials in the country. But the people's commitment would be difficult to secure if the leaders who are calling on them for sacrifice do not themselves make any sacrifices. To stamp out corruption in the country, Nigerians should always elect or appoint people of probity to manage the affairs of the nation. This group must analyze each situation in the society critically, in order to determine appropriate target of change, which should be involve in the effort, and what method will most likely lead to the desired outcome.

It can be said Corruption be eliminated through the following axes:

- Restoration of indigenous values and institutions: Nigerian indigenous values and systems were for the most part debunked by first, the missionaries, then the colonialists in a much more forceful manner. Indigenous solutions to corruption must once again be explored followed by the rediscovery of indigenous systems of administration. Rwanda has successfully done the latter through the Gacaca, Abunzi, Umuganda, Umudugudu and other indigenous systems. The above is by no means a call for Nigeria Christians and Muslims to revert to African traditional religion as is often perceived whenever the indigenous is mentioned. Far from it. The merging of Nigeria's social, cultural, and moral values with its religion was the handiwork of some over-zealous missionaries and racist colonialists. Nigerians have come of age to separate between religion and other causes and to realize that one can be fully functioning in his chosen religion and still abide by several positively rewarding indigenous Nigerian values.
- Formal, Informal and non-formal Education: The greatest vehicle for cultural transmission towards a transformation of prevailing social paradigm is education. In its formal form, the curriculum of learning across Nigerian must be overhauled to make for real mental and intellectual independence. In its non-formal manifestation, conferences, workshops, camps, and other non-formal learning situations must be widely utilized to re-educate citizens on the fact that real living occurs only when individuals have sound moral values, or at least, consistently and seriously aspire to it. Informally, the media will be mobilized as a crucial element of mass mobilization towards an appreciation of the Nigeria's authentic social, cultural and economic environment.

- Religion as a nation building institution: Nigerians listen to their spiritual leaders, much more than they do politicians and policy makers. The pulpit ought to be mobilized as a knowledge and faith-based platform for reaching the souls of Nigerians and in directing them towards nation-building.
- Promotion of the “African” nation state: For the past 50 years, Nigerians have been struggling in vain to assimilate the artificially imposed colonial boundaries. It is time to promote the greater African nation-state and de-emphasize the cosmetic divisions that is filled with antagonistic ethnic groups.
- Nigerians must be encouraged, motivated and facilitated to travel widely across the continent in order to overcome the ethnic animosities that was ignited by colonialism, established by the post colonial tussle for power among ruling elites, and strengthened by geographic claustrophobia.
- Strengthening of anti-graft institutions: Strong anti-graft institutions are a necessity across Nigeria state, as in any other part of the world. Governments across Nigeria should appoint credible and determined individuals who may even be nationals of other African countries, to take up the fight against corruption in the high and low places. A strengthened judiciary is a necessity in this respect.
- The need for the establishment of anti corruption court that will take charge of all criminal cases against corrupt politicians and administrators.
- The (EFCC) need leadership that commands legitimacy, which will enable them to assert their independence and build the integrity with its rank and file. EFCC should be empowered and grant absolute autonomy in handling cases relating to corruption. Anti corruption laws, legislations and regulations should be written in simpler language and made accessible to the populace.
- Economic growth: Poverty breeds vice. Nigeria government should embark on not just the deceptive increment in Gross Domestic Product, but real development in terms of standard of living. Health, education, food security, and infrastructural growth must be given prominence.

In this respect, the informants have suggested that the government should have political will in combating corruption for both public and private sector management. This would enable them to offer autonomy to all anti-graft institutions and provide them with sufficient funds to discharge their mandate objectively. In fact, political interference should be completely discarded to ensure autonomy and funding of the anti-corruption institutions for the proper combat against debasement across the states without any fear. Indeed, if these suggestions and modifications are done, it will enhance the administration of criminal justice, probity and public accountability and in turn it would lead to national development. This is in line with the assertion of Adagba, Idris, Shehu and Mikail that they should discard all sorts of political interferences so as to offer autonomy to anti-graft institutions, provide adequate funding to man the activities of the agencies, and handle corrupt cases in higher court among others. These measures would aid the strategies for combating corruption.

CONCLUSION

Since 1999 when the country returned to civil rule, there is that corruption has been the bane of democratic stability and survival. News about corruption is no longer stunning. This vindicates consistent rating of Nigeria by Transparency International (TI), the global watchdog on corruption, as one of the most corrupt nations in the world. All anticorruption strategies by the various successive governments have had trifling impacts. The pathological effects of corruption democratic instability, low level of governmental legitimacy, voracious poverty, infrastructural decay, electoral crisis, contract killing, political assassination, insecurity and generally, developmental problems- have been very devastating.

Therefore, for a country awakening to democracy after long years of military authoritarianism, endemic corruption and stupendous wastage pose greater challenges. The critical challenge which the stubborn persistence and growing virulence of corruption poses to all Nigerians of integrity and conscience is, therefore, how to roll back the escalating phenomenon of corruption in our public life and terminate the culture of impunity that underpins it. Meeting this challenge will involve the mounting of a determined and robust struggle to change the constitutional and legal order and the power configuration in the Nigerian society such that the vast majority of marginalized Nigerian men and women are empowered to participate freely, actively and maximally in the politics, economy and overall culture of the society.

It can be said The necessary expedient of empowering the Nigerian working people vis-à-vis the corrupt and subversive political leader can be facilitated by pursuing the minimum political agenda of democratic governance. Corruption hinders development and economic growth. It increases poverty and dent the image of a country. The total eradication of corruption in Nigeria should involve everybody and not only the government. For Nigeria to move forward and for the citizens to benefit

from the democratic dividends a national awareness campaign is necessary to let Nigerians know the implications of corruption on the economy. Furthermore, the government should take the giant stride to lead by example by inculcating good governance, transparency, accountability in order for Nigerians to have hope in the democratic governance.

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