



## CORRUPTION, GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

Corruption in Nigeria has become a cancer that has defied all modern solutions. In fact, so pervasive is the cankerworm that scholars labeled it as chronic virus militating democratic consolidation in Nigeria. This paper researched on factors like individual, institutional and situational explanation and posits that corruption breed poverty, bad image and hindering economic development. Exploring secondary data technique, this paper examines Corruption, Governance and Development in Nigeria and effort of public policy to nip in the bud and which had conversely yielded any result. The author further argued that corruption is a cankerworm that has eaten deep into virtually all facets of Nigerian society, so generalized to the extent that everybody is used to it. The paper however recommends accountability and good governance, political reform, judicial reform, civil service reform etc as well as political will to implement the reform exercise as genuine strategy for combating corruption in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Accountability, bureaucratic, democracy, economy and Nigeria

### Introduction

It may not be an overstatement to say that corruption in Nigeria has 'reached cancerous proportions; so pervasive is this phenomenon in the region that it has been labeled the 'AIDS of democracy' Kempe and Born well (2000). In fact, it's both systemic and endemic. The pandemic of corruption in Nigeria has affects virtually all socio-economic development and Governance in Nigeria. The abundance wealth and resources have little or no impact on the people as majority continues to live in abject poverty. Corruption arose in Nigeria as a result of malfunctioning of the state. The problem of corruption in Nigeria alone is not only on developmental thesis but also on governance. It is therefore an ethical and criminal problem which has been discussed throughout history (Klitgaard, 1988). In fact, corruption in third world nations is receiving serious globally attention particularly from Transparency International and other agencies. This is amidst constant call for transparency, accountability and adherence to ideals of democratic principles. Corruption in Africa and Nigeria in particular could be traced to poor leadership and bad Governance which in turn accounted for reason for corruption to be pandemic. Today, corruption is very rampant in Nigerian Public sector and it manifests itself through nepotism and favoritism, bribes, fraud, and lack of accountability. From this analysis, "the ravenous and devastating issue of corruption and corrupt practices touches all in its various forms of gratification, influence and tardiness etc Ogbona (2004).

It was the realization of this that former President Obasanjo during his campaign in 1999 promised to fight corruption to a standstill. Therefore, the first bill he sent to the National Assembly in June 1999 was on anti-corruption. And after the passage of the bill, and assented to by the president, it was known as the (Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences). Today, the anti- corruption agencies, Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and

Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) have demonstrated their seriousness to combat the scourge of corruption despite the antics of political elites as billions of naira was revealed to have been recovered. The festering tumor of corruption in our nation's political life has dealt a huge blow to quality of governance in the commitment to accountability. In fact, there have been total losses of accountability in the system. Although, we cannot entirely blame the military for established corruption in Nigeria without referring to their civilian collaborator, their mindless looting during the past decades was disastrous for the country.

Nigerian military established the culture of oppression, nepotism, mal-administration, waste and mismanagement in our public life. It was in view of this development that Obasanjo after his inauguration on May 29<sup>th</sup> 1999 and lamented that; "One of the greatest tragedies of military rule in recent times is that corruption was allowed to grow unchallenged, and unchecked, even when it was glaring for everybody to see. The rules and regulations for doing official business were deliberately ignored, set aside or by-passed to facilitate corrupt practices" (Obasanjo, 1999). This paper is divided into three major parts. The first section dealt with conceptual analysis of corruption, Governance and Development nexus. The second parts discuss theoretical frame work, causes and effect of corruption while the final parts explain how to combat corruption and conclusion.

### **Conceptual and Theoretical Analysis**

The term corruption comes from Latin verb which implies that something is badly broken (Tanzir, 1994). The issue of corruption has remained a life political debate globally and with its attendant consequence on Africa and Nigeria in particular. Corruption has been described as abused of entrusted power for private gain Syed Hussein (1990). It is described as a wide range of illegal practices. It has. Corruption, therefore, is a deviant behavior associated with gain and is exacted at public expense (Alatas, 1990; Friedrich, 1972) (1996). Corruption can take the form of bribery, extortion, cronyism, nepotism, patronage, graft and embezzlement. It is therefore argued that political class in Nigeria has reduce governance to kleptocratic system 'which literarily means rule by thieves' (Akinyemi, 2010: 10) .

The foundations for corruption in African countries were established when after independence the continent particularly Nigeria drifted shamelessly from bureaucratic administration that emphasized good governance and accountability to one that glorified the sovereignty of politics (Kempe Ronald & Bornwell (2000). This invariably led to emergence of politicized bureaucracy in Nigeria and other African Countries. Therefore, the post-independence governmental bureaucracy that emerge in most Africa and Nigeria in particular, contributed to institutional instability and patrimonial economic management and incentives, whereby clientelism replaced moral and political legitimacy, and political and personal loyalty and obedience were rewarded more than merit (Dia,1996)This however remains the genesis of rampaging corruption in Nigeria and Africa in general. Corruption in Nigeria has grown wing to the extent in 2009 Transparency International (IT) ranked Nigeria 130 position out of 180 countries as the most corrupt nation (Akinyem, 2009).

Today, it has reached alarming proportion to the extent that federal government was forced to introduce 'whistle blower system' to assist in fighting corruption. It has been estimated (according to the United Nations Offices on Drug and Crime) that \$400b was stolen from Nigerian treasury between 1960 and 1999 (Akinyemi, 2010). While another similar report according to Independent policy Institute (Chatham Howe) a London based organization reported that \$480b and \$182b were stolen from Nigeria between 1960 and 1999 and between 2005- 2014 respectively. This further explains that "corruption is a symptom that the administration of the state is functioning poorly and it's not only a failure of good leadership but of good governance as well" (Kempe, 2000).

### **Governance**

governance simply mean activity of governing a country or controlling a company or an organization, the way in which a country is governed or an institution. Therefore, governance is different from government. Governance refers to the "relationship between civil society and state, between rulers and the ruled, the government and the governed" (Ismail Sera Gelding & Pierre Land ell-Mills, 1991). Governance means the manner in which power is exercised in management and distribution of nation's resources. Governance encompasses the process of decision making process, how it's implemented or not implemented, Governance can be used in several contexts such as corporate governance, international governance, national governance and local governance (Benson, 2010). Basically, government is one of the actors in governance while we have various actors like associations of farmers, landlords, religious leaders etc. Therefore, good governance is the

ability of government to judiciously use the nation's resources to uplift the quality of life of its citizens. Good governance is the ability of a government to maintain peace and order to promote good atmosphere for business activities and necessary condition for economic growth and social security. Good governance according to (Akanbi, 2004:154) simplifies

*effective and efficient usage of public administration, good policies and best management of nation's resources on the right channels. It incorporate the features of accountability of public officials, transparency in government procedures and processes, reliable flow of information to the citizenry, freedom of press and adherence to the rule of Law.*

Bad governance is the one that lacks accountability, underdevelopment either widespread or systemic corruption and other vices which consequently impedes the goals of accountability and good governance in a society.

### **Corruption, Governance and Development Nexus**

Corruption has a dysfunctional effect on economic, social and political development of any nation and it would continue to do so unless the authority takes the right decision. These consequences aptly describe the prevailing endemic corruption on Nigeria development paradigm. This however informs the manifestation of three interrelated headings; political corruption, Bureaucratic corruption and electoral corruption: Political corruption has become a significant feature in Nigeria politics and has been used partly to amass wealth and keeping the political power. The level of corruption has reached astronomical level in Nigeria to the extent that those in position of authority particularly the National Assembly are enmeshed in corruption. Majority of our past leaders, Governors, and 2/3 of our senators are either under EFCC probe or court cases over corrupt practices. Thus, we have had Dansukigate scandal, Diazzani, A.Madueke diverting \$20bn oil revenue, Alex Badeh now Maina saga and a host of others. On daily basis, whistle blower reveals millions of Naira dug or stash inside sucker way.

**Bureaucratic corruption:** A transition to democratic rule in Nigeria in 1999 may arguably have begun with bold promises made by former President Olusegun Obasanjo when he was sworn-in as president in 1999 to stamp out corruption in Nigeria. But instead democratic rule has added impetus to the upsurge of corruption in Nigeria. Bureaucratic corruption is so rampant that due process are abandoned in place of short-cut, through bribery and corruption which have become imperative to survival. This kind of corruption cut across various segments of Nigerian public service. In recent times, a raid on premises of some High Courts Judges by EFCC led to discovery of sum of #93,558,000, \$530,087, #25,087 and Euros 5,680. The discovery of sum of #421m from Julius Makanjuola, a former permanent secretary, \$214m National identity card scam involving former interior minister Sunday Afolabi. Recently, EFCC made a discovery of another \$9.8m from ex-NNPC (GMD) Andrew Yakubu from a slum in Kaduna state. Similarly, \$500,000 that was connected with Mohammed Shatta and others indicated that bureaucratic corruption in Nigeria is at alarming proportion. These ugly trends put together hamper growth and development.

**Electoral corruption:** Bribe giving is the order of the day in contemporary Nigeria to fund political parties and electioneering campaign and to buy political influence and decision. Politicians also use bribes to buy votes during and after election. In fact, they offer bribes to manipulate electoral result. Rivers state is a pointer where some INEC officials were involved in manipulating electoral results in the last 2015 general elections. In fact, report has it that the sums of #450m were been shared among some INEC official to manipulate the outcome of 2015 general election in the state. This development has led to a situation whereby ordinary citizen's vote does not count anymore as electoral result seems to have failed to reflect the true assessment of the candidate or political parties. Bribery, embezzlement and theft either minimal or on grand scale expropriate a nation's wealth thereby leaving little for its poorest citizens to live with, and if unchecked it eventually blossoms into culture of corruption as noted by Chazan et al (1992-180). He continues:

*Unrestrained corruption pervades the civil service, statutory Boards and public corporation what began as occasional acts of public misconduct spread like a cancer. The result is a pathological condition of "systemic corruption" where as the notion of public responsibility has become the exception, not the rule, corruption is so regularized and institutionalized that organization supports back wrong-doing and actually penalize those who live to the old norms.*

### Theoretical Analysis

The inadequacy of other theories like cultural pluralism, modernization, structural functionalism made elite theory as the best model to explain the causes and effect of corruption on Nigerian society. The Nigerian elite which took over the reins of governance from colonial master possessed the skills and literacy to be in leading institutions which was fortunately accrued to them after departed colonial master. The elite did not only dominate the structures and other institutional apparatus like economy and politics but also shape the beliefs, orientations and philosophical direction of Nigerian society. The activities and behavior of these elites created statist and two classes in Nigerian society (ie) the capitalist group and proletariat –the masses. This invariably gives reason for the establishment of corruption in Nigeria. Thus, possession of political power represent sine qua non to good life, status, honors, security and wealth. The Nigerian elite appropriated successfully the state resources to achieve their own objective at the expense of the poor and later resort to all means to get power. The contradiction of post Independence would have had no concern if political independence had followed economic independence. This situation leads to persistent neo-colonial capitalist relations, thus, perpetuating the elite's dependence on neocolonialism.

Similarly, neocolonialism paves way for ethnicity which in turn introduced series of contradictions into political life of the first Republic and its eventual collapse. Therefore, the self serving ethos which was laid by the colonial master had engrained in the mentality of the emerging elites. The devastating effect of this explains the basis for self centered orientation in the post colonial Nigerian state. It's not surprising therefore that many theorist of African politics trace the problem of political corruption to debauchery of colonial rule (Ekeh, 1975). The Nigerian elites have abdicated their role in promoting ideals of democratic norms but rather seen democracy as a means to an end and thereby promoting the culture of corruption in Nigerian political system. Although the theory has been criticized for being historical, yet it remains the best model to explain the emergence of corruption in Nigeria and role played by Nigerian elites in promoting culture of corruptions in various dimension in Nigeria.

### *Anti Corruption Policies in Nigeria: Why have they Failed?*

Corruption strives in Nigeria and Africa in general for several reasons. The first reason is lack of transparency and accountability. Public accountability means holding public officials for their actions and which is germane to good governance. "Such lack of real accountability has been regarded elsewhere as a major bane of Africa which has breed Irresponsibility among public officials and has further led to resistance and cynicism among the citizenry" (Adedeji, 1995). Lack of political will and commitment; Corruption has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigerians society and has become a way of life in Nigeria civil servants. And as such Politicians and businessmen are very notorious at this level as millions of naira and dollars are being lost on daily basis. Foreign exchange earned from oil proceeds are not remitted adequately into national coffers or not at all. The campaign against corruption in Nigeria has yielded little result due to lack of political will to take decisive and punitive action against the looters. There must be political will to pass legislation and enforce law that prevent and punish corrupt attitude and its attitude.

Politicization of Bureaucracy; politicization of the civil service escalated during the past military administration in Nigeria particularly under Ibrahim Babangida failed democratic transition and Abacha failed transmuted from military to civilian dictator. Bureaucrats made use of corrupts attitude to laud the image of these former Heads of state. In fact, under Jonathan administration, bureaucrats were so corrupts that it nearly rendered the regime inefficient Poverty: poverty level is high in Nigeria. This is as a result of hash economic condition and low income earning by civil servants. As at year 2000, per capital income for average Nigerians is \$260 which is far short of international minimum standard of \$370 per annum. Today, it is argued that poverty level among Nigerians were high as 74.2% that is those living below poverty level. Therefore, the most Africa populous nation was rated 25th position among the poorest nations of the world. Inadequate salaries for Government employees' is another major factor.

A low salary encourages corrupt behavior. A poorly paid officer for example in either ministry of finance, Central Bank or Budgets are bound to face irresistible temptation on daily basis to levy a fee to supplement this poor income. Corruption in Nigeria takes place both among the lower civil servants and senior colleagues. In fact, most cases of corruption usually take place at substantially higher levels. This is common among the ministers, permanent secretaries and senior cadres who are believe to always involve in corrupt practices than their junior counterparts. Survival instinct among Political class; political and economic insecurity breeds corruption. The fear of what one would fall back after the expiration of their tenure

or retirement has been one of the bases for endemic corruption in Nigeria. The lust for power and the desire to remain in power at all cost often made political class to involve in dirty deals, ranging from corrupt practices, maiming and killing of political opponents. Therefore, there is high tendency for Public officer who is not sure what he or she would fall back after retirement will likely endear to corrupt practices.

### *The Deleterious Effects of Corruption on Nigerian Economy*

Corruption has done unimaginable damage to Nigerian economy. One of the effects of corruption is that it breeds inefficiency and waste. It is undeniable fact that in a corrupt political system bribes and kick backs reign supreme. Contractor and suppliers always prefer to offer bribe as against efficiency and high productivity. In other words, they prefer to do shoddy job against good delivery of work. The effect of this had blossom to inefficiency, waste, and underdevelopment in all facet of our administration. Virtually all our social system has been destroyed by endemic corruption. Postal services are not working the way it should, roads are bad, infrastructures and institutions are in a deteriorating condition. Today religious and ethnic origin determines what you get in Nigerian system. All our institutions have been tainted by trials and settled bribes.

Corruption aggravates the Budget deficit. In fact, ever since corruption has reached unimaginable level in Nigeria, the story has been Budget padding during annual Budget debate at the National Assembly. Countless of ghost workers are on government payroll. This ugly development has continuing to bring budget deficit on yearly basis."The ghost workers" are fake, retired or dead persons whose names remain on the payroll for fraudulent officials to claim their wages" Editorial comment (African News weekly, 11-17 November 1996:17). Taxes are evaded or not remit in full to federal government coffers. Today in Nigeria Government is chronically in deficit which had resulted into constant borrowing to finance the budget.

Corruption drives away foreign investors. Foreign investors have argued that the cost of doing business in Africa and Nigeria in particular is too high. This was as a result of excessive contractual margin inserted into such contract for personal gains. In addition to these are weak currencies, inactive private investors and [poor infrastructure have continue to wreck down the economy which was occasioned as a result of corruption. Devastating situation on infrastructure, ethnic tension and other vices have continue to deter foreign investors in Nigeria. Corruption and political participation; Democracy remains the best way for citizens to actively participate in governance and opportunity to replace bad leaders with purposeful leadership. But this is no longer achievable with prevalent endemic corruption ravaging the society. In a contemporary politics in Nigeria, campaigns require enormous resources. Thus only the rich would have the way to bribe for nomination as a candidate, campaign ,as well as having the capacity to settle the electorate by buying their votes during election thereby mortgaging electorate confidence, future and their opinions.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has examined corruption and its relationship on governance and development in Nigeria. The paper infers that corruption has worsened the political, administrative and socio-economic life of Nigerians which has in turn led to political and economic backwardness of Nigerian state. Therefore, effort to control corruption globally and Nigeria in particular must be intensified. To control corruption, it requires ethical behavior, political will and leadership with outstanding character. Apart from this, it conclude that lip service alone would not reduce or eliminate corruption in Nigeria but strict and effective system of administration of justice and involvement of mass media to expose corrupt practices in both government and non-governmental organization to achieve accountability and transparency. This would in addition instill discipline in governance.

### **The way Forward**

#### *Political Reforms*

The structure and institutions of political system is a strong determinant step when fighting corruption. It's unrealistic to expect that corruption fight can be successful with old approach and faulty structure. There is the need to overhaul the institution completely. The constitution should be amended to remove all remnants of autocratic rule since this legalized personal rule and ensure political patronage. The internal restructuring must include ant corruption agencies in the country

(ICPC and EFCC) by giving them total autonomy to operate. Equally, is freedom of press, active opposition and civil societies group are more likely to play a crucial role in the fight against corruption.

### *Periodic Review of Salaries*

There is a need for periodic review of salaries of public service in Nigeria if fight against corruption is to succeed. The workers' salaries are very poor in Nigeria due to skyrocketing inflation. Workers salaries in Nigeria are incomparable to her African neighbors, not to talk of advance countries. Government has not deemed it fit to adjust it to keep pace with the level of inflation in the country. This development has reduced productivity because workers must look for alternative income to keep things afloat. Independent anti-corruption agency,

The establishments of Anti-corruption agencies like Independent Corrupt Practices And Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) have not been functioning the way Nigerians had expected due to various obstacles like political interest and judicial summersault. Therefore, a competent independent agency with subpoena and enforcement powers remain the best way to tackled institutionalized corruption in Nigeria. They must enjoy total freedom to operate and not tie to the whims and caprices of the presidency. It must have the capacity to gather intelligence, process complaints and constant advice to government and private sectors.

### *Judicial Reform*

We have seen a lot of political game and practices that confront the nation's judiciary. A basic condition for fighting corruption is a viable judicial system that devoid of material temptation, Political favoritism or abuse ethics of the profession. Part of the measures to improve judicial system is to improve their working conditions and judicial autonomy. Similarly, there must be establishment of separate tribunal for easy, quick, adjudication and dispensation of cases.

### *Declaration of Asset*

Although, we have this in our nation's constitution, but public service and politicians often disregard this rule. There should be strict laws that require senior government workers to submit annual declaration of asset statements. In addition, politicians and senior government officials should be made to have records with various anti-corruption agencies for proper documentation for the purpose of periodic reviews. This no doubt would instill discipline between the rule and the ruled and indeed loyalty to the government.

### **Policy Recommendations**

It's clear that any attempt to understand the bane of Nigeria underdeveloped state and factors militating democratic consolidation must come to terms with the effect of corruption and its consequence on larger society. Therefore, Corruption in most African countries particularly under (late) Mobutu Zezeko of Zaire now (DRC) Cameroon under the present leadership of Paul Biya and Nigeria under past leaders like Shagari ,Babangida, Abacha regimes etc and their civilian administration counterpart since 1999 is systemic, structural and largely resistant to policy changes. The entrenchment of corruption as part of social life has created unwanted crises and significant damage on socio-economic, administrative and political development of Nigerian state. In this wise, aside combine input from various African Governments, international organizations, and foreign government to fight it globally government itself should do more by taking some proactive and stringent measure to arrest the scourge. Thus, the control of corruption requires "ethical political leadership; with vigor and determination to succeed.

Another controlling measure is that judiciary must be completely insulated from political, government pressure and interference. There must be strong punitive actions. That is trials of key serving and none serving political and public office holders to serve as deterrent to others. Similarly, Independent Corrupt Commission and Financial Crime Commission must be very much active than before and should be funded adequately to performed optimally Also, the various religious organizations must also complement government effort in anti corruption war and the media must also be given maximum latitude to operate by exposing corrupt people. Above all, it's important to reiterate that corruption in Nigeria is closely link to bad leadership and mal-administration. Thus, good governance encompasses three factors; accountability, transparency and the rule of law.

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