

THE NEXUS OF CORRUPTION AND POVERTY IN THE QUEST FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Corruption retards a nation. It breeds poverty and impedes national development. Since independence, Nigeria has been bedevilled with massive corruption by the political elite, who have impoverished the nation. The paper investigates the reality of corruption in Nigeria and its connection with poverty and underdevelopment. As a result of unrelenting corruption, majority of Nigerians are confined to living below the poverty line. The study proffers that social reformation and re-engineering of the nation and its populace both young and old is essential for the eradication of poverty and foster accelerated national development.

Keywords: Corruption, National Development, Poverty, Underdevelopment, Political elite

INTRODUCTION

Corruption is a global phenomenon. It exists in virtually every part of the globe. Corruption is the bane of any nation. It cuts across religious, political and economic life of any nation and affects both old and young. It is like a cancer that contaminates all strata of the socio-political and economic structure of any society and its malignant nature is difficult to treat. Corruption is a social malaise that permeates all the nerves of any polity. It is contagious and malignant to the physiology of any political system. Once it sets into any part, it automatically contaminates all the strata of the system's socio-political structure in ways symmetrical to the spread of a bush fire (Aluko, 2002). It has, however, assumed a worrisome dimension in Nigeria. It is a general perception that corruption is endemic in Nigeria. Corruption is the main means of accumulating quick wealth in Nigeria. It occurs in many forms, and it has contributed immensely to the poverty and misery of a large segment of the Nigerian population. For Dike (2011), the menace of corruption leads to slow movement of files in the offices, police extortion at illegal toll gates and slow traffic on the highways, port congestion, queues at passport offices and gas stations, ghost workers syndrome, election irregularities, among others. Even the mad people on the street recognize the havoc caused by corruption – the funds allocated for their welfare disappearing into thin air.

Various Scholars have attempted to define corruption over time. Akorede (2010) defines corruption as any form of reciprocal behaviour or transaction where both the power/office holder can respectively initiate inducement of each other by some rewards to grant (illegal) preferential treatment or favour against the principles and interest of specific organization (or public) within the society. Overall, corruption covers such acts as use of office for pecuniary gains, gratification, influence peddling, and insincerity in advice with the aim of gaining advantage, less than a full day's work for a full day's pay. Corruption is a social problem that has interested many scholars. The dishonest and illegal behavior exhibited especially by people in authority for their personal gain is corruption. According to the ICPC Act (section 2), corruption includes vices like bribery, fraud, and other related offences. Corruption is the abuse or misuse of power or position of trust for personal or group benefit (Ayobami, 2011). Corruption as an anti-social behaviour conferring improper benefits contrary to legal norms, and which undermine the authorities to improve the living conditions of the people. Corruption, therefore, implies all forms of bribery, unwarranted exercise of power, intentional neglect of a recognized duty, and all forms of favour done to with the motive of gaining some advantages (Ayeboyin, 2001).

Nigeria got her independence in 1960, but fifty-three years after, in spite massive human and natural resources, corruption has stifled its growth, confining it to the ranks of developing nations. Corruption breeds poverty and stifles growth in any society. According to President Barrack Obama, in his address to the members of the parliament in Ghana; No country is going to create wealth if its leaders exploit the economy to enrich themselves, or police can be bought off by drug traffickers, no business wants to invest in a place where the government skims 20 percent off the top or the head of the port authority is corrupt... no person want to live in a society where the rule of law gives way to the rule of brutality and bribery (Punch, 2009). The ruling elite lack the kind of philosophical and ideological vision and orientation that is committed to developing "a dream society." They have no dream beyond the satisfaction of their selfish desires.

Corruption is a symptom of numerous difficulties within contemporary societies. It usually involves more than one party. It takes the form of an organized crime. At times, an organization can be established on corruption to beget corruption. According to the perception index of Transparency International, Nigeria was ranked 144th out of the 146 countries,

beating Bangladesh and Haiti to last position. An analysis of the anti-graft/anti-corruption laws in Nigeria shows that corruption will continue in spite of the laws because the perpetrators do not fear any consequences. It is now dawning on the Nigerian public that the so-called private enterprise and legislators are free from scrutiny, and governors claim to be immune. Corruption is found in the award of contracts, promotion of staff, dispensation of justice, and misuse of public offices, positions, and privileges, embezzlement of public funds. Corruption can be systematic in nature and affect the whole life of an organization or society (Ayobami, 2011).

Corruption is so endemic in Nigeria to the extent that the country was adjudged to be most corrupt nation in the world in 2003 and the second most corrupt country in 2004. By 2005, the country succeeded to some extent in her fight against corruption, moving from the first to the sixth position on the corruption index (Punch, 2009). This improvement was due to the efforts of the anti-graft agencies namely; Economic and Financial crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission, established by the government of President Olusegun Obasanjo.

Nigeria remains underdeveloped because of the prevalence of corruption. Hillary Clinton on her visit to Nigeria revealed that corruption prevented the country from being admitted as a member of the G-20 (Group of 20, the club of key rich and developed nations). Every successive government since independence has been accused of profligacy, lack of accountability and corruption. Good governance is judged by the extent of provision of basic necessities of life like education, health facilities, infrastructure and other social amenities, as well as the peaceful co-existence of citizens and institutions and the equitable distribution of government benefits (Omotoye, 2012). Good governance is essential for economic, social and political development of any country.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

Few years after attaining independence from colonial rule in 1960, Nigeria has been bedevilled with successive corrupt government regimes. As early as 1966, six years after independence, the then civilian administration was overthrown by a coup d'état which was staged by the military officers led by Major Nzeogwu. The military junta accused the civilian regime of tribalism, nepotism, corruption and regionalism (Ojiako, 1980). In a broadcast to the nation on the 28th of January 1966, Major general Aguiyi Ironsi said among other things, that the military government will stamp out corruption and dishonesty in our public life with ruthless efficiency and restore integrity and self-respect in our public affairs (Omotoye, 2012). However, this regime was short-lived because it lasted for less than seven months in power as it was toppled by a counter coup d'état.

A counter coup that occurred on the 29th of July 1966, led to the emergence of Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon as the new military Head of State. It was this regime that went through the civil war. This regime was accused of corruption and many of the government officials were found guilty of corrupt practices. This government battled hard with the stain of corruption until it was toppled by another coup d'état in 1976. General Murtala took over and accused the Gowon regime of widespread corruption. He removed the government functionaries which include governors on the basis of alleged graft and misuse of public funds. However, Murtala Mohammed did not stay long in power as he was assassinated. It was then that General Olusegun Obasanjo took over the mantle of leadership as the new Head of State and his administration was not well known for corruption.

General Olusegun Obasanjo successfully conducted transition to civilian rule, which led to the emergence of Alhaji Shehu Shagari as civilian President. This civilian administration was dogged by massive corruption. Many of the ministers and governors were accused of corruption and misappropriation of public funds, and a new dangerous dimension of corruption known as 'money laundering was introduced' (Ayegboyin, 2001). The Shagari regime was overthrown by the Buhari/Idiagbon military coup d'état. The military junta made considerable efforts to recover some of the stolen funds. This led many politicians to being locked up in various prisons across the country. Every effort made by the Buhari/Idiagbon regime to sanitise the polity was rubbished and jettisoned when a counter coup that ushered in General Ibrahim Babangida administration toppled it. Babangida ruled for eight years (1984-1993) before he controversially stepped aside for an interim national government, after annulling the supposed fairest election in the country. This regime witnessed unprecedented massive corruption and graft. Infact it is reputed that this regime institutionalized corruption in Nigeria. Settlements and settling, advanced fee fraud otherwise known as "419" were the order of the day. He was accused of diverting a 2.5billion oil windfall to his personal account as well as many other anomalies.

General Sani Abacha took over as military Head of State in 1993. He was alleged to be involved in direct withdrawal of funds from the Central Bank and other ministries. Various scams included dubious fuel transactions and procurement of fictitious equipment running into billions of naira. When he died unceremoniously, General Abdulsalam Abubakar took over the reins of power. Abdusalam's tenure, though short, was also riddled with corruption. He was succeeded by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as civilian President. Before President Olusegun Obasanjo's regime, the police and some related agencies were the only ones fighting corruption. When Obasanjo became president in 1999, the Economic Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences (ICPC) were put in place, they have dealt seriously with the pandemic situation (Ayobami, 2011). However, the regime of Obasanjo was also riddled with corruption as many functionaries of governments as well as governors were found guilty of corrupt practices. He was succeeded by Alhaji Musa Yar'Adua. Under Yar'Adua, the fight against corruption subsided with the change of guards at Economic and Financial Crimes Commission. Politicians accused of corruption were alleged to have nominated their cronies into the leadership positions in the anti-graft commissions. At the sudden death of Yar'Adua, Goodluck Jonathan, his erstwhile deputy took over as President. Under Goodluck Jonathan, there have been loud outcries against massive corruption in the polity. Corruption has continued with reckless abandon and there is a seeming lack of political will to fight the evil of corruption. Infact, Hillary Clinton drew our attention to the World Bank study reports that Nigeria's corruption and related problems had cost the country about 300 billion dollars over the past three decades (Omotoye, 2012).

Corruption now appears to have become a permanent feature of the Nigerian policy. It had become completely institutionalized, entered into the realm of culture and the value systems; it is now normal and no longer an aberration. The young ones are born into it, grow up in it, live with it, and possibly will die in it. The aged are not left out as they are re-socialized and begin to conform to it. Corruption has virtually turned Nigeria into the land of starvation and a debtor nation in spite of the nation's enormous resources. Corruption in Nigeria diverts financial resources from building roads, hospitals, schools, and otherwise investing in infrastructure that would serve businesses, attract foreign investment and create jobs. It serves to promote criminal and extremist activity by creating barriers to legitimate economic endeavors. Nigeria's 53 years of independence from the British have been tainted by numerous examples of corruption, from the unfinished \$5 billion Ajaokuta Steel plant to last year's conviction of former Delta State Governor James Ibori for 13

years in the United Kingdom for stealing about \$250 million of public funds. In the same vein, Albert Jack Stanley, the former KBR Inc. Chief Executive Officer, was sentenced in February 2012 to two-and-a-half years in prison in the U.S. for bribing Nigerian officials to win \$6 billion in natural gas contracts. Between 2001 and 2010, Nigeria had the seventh-highest level of illicit financial outflows out of 143 developing nations, totalling \$129 billion, according to Washington-based Global Financial Integrity (The Nation, 2013).

Nigeria is a country blessed with abundant natural resources. Each region was blessed by God with various mineral resources and bountiful agricultural products. These resources were optimally utilized before independence by the regions. Each region had control over her resources and developed at their own pace. At this point, corruption was virtually non-existent, and as a result, public money was committed to public welfare which engendered unprecedented development in the regions. As already seen above with the successive administrations after independence, corruption and corrupt enrichment of government functionaries became the order of the day, thereby fuelling underdevelopment, poverty and misery in the land. According to Omotoye (2012), a major problem after independence was the mismanagement of the economy by the politicians, foreign investors and capital lenders. Existing strategic development plans which did not serve the interest of politicians were brazenly distorted and circumvented.

Scholars and administrators alike have argued that Nigerians have no reason to be poor because of the abundance of human and natural resources including oil and gas available in the country. For instance, Nigeria realized the sum \$300 billion from crude oil between 1970 and 1990. In addition, the government earned the total sum of ₦998.4 billion from crude oil in 2003, yet nothing meaningful to show in terms of development (Ikelegbe, 2004; Esemé et. al 2012).

CAUSES OF CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

1. Lack of patriotism: Nigerian politicians and big businessmen are self-centred. They are not concerned with the future of the nation. All they are concerned about is a brazen accumulation of wealth into their private pockets to the detriment of the nation.
2. Get-rich Quick Syndrome: The desire to get rich by all means in the quickest way possible breeds corruption. The values placed on hardwork and patience has diminished considerably in the polity.
3. Government's Lackadaisical attitude to corruption: The government has consistently failed to show political will to fight corruption and punish offenders in order to deter others. Rather many known corrupt officials even after been found guilty of corruption are set free or pardoned. E.g. Chief Diepreye Alamiesegha, a former governor of Bayelsa State. The Siemens and Haliburton scandals have largely remained sore points as far as tolerance for corruption is concerned. This has continued to encouraged others to also go into corrupt practices.
4. Trade Restriction. This is Government-induced source of rent seeking/corruption. The restriction on importation of foreign automobiles are examples of how government officials and politicians can make quick money via rent seeking/corruption.
5. Government subsidies. When government allocates scarce resources to individuals and firms using legal criteria other than the ability or willingness to pay, corruption is likely to be the result. Corruption can thrive under industrial policies that allow poorly-targeted subsidies to be appropriated by firms for which they are not intended. The rot in the fuel subsidy programme of the Federal Government is a perfect example of corruption through government subsidies.

6. Low wages in civil service. When public wages are low, public servants may be compelled to use their official positions to collect bribes as a way of making ends meet, particularly when the chances of being caught are low.

PANGS OF POVERTY AND CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

Poverty is an enemy of man because it humiliates and dehumanises its victim. Poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that affects many aspects of human conditions ranging from the physical, moral to the psychological. It is defined as the state of being poor or deficient in money or means of subsistence. The concept of basic subsistence is measured by the availability of infrastructural services, such as safe water, sanitation, solid waste collection, healthcare, schools and security. Balami and Naphtali (1999) opined that since poverty affects many aspect of the human condition, including physical, moral, and psychological, a concise and universally accepted definition of poverty is elusive. The Human Development Report (1997), defined poverty as deprivation in the valuable things that a person can do or be. In other words, poverty is a socio-economic condition of a person's inability to adequately cater for his basic needs of survival. The World Bank Report (2001), classified poverty in terms of lack of access to resources by individuals which leads to a state of powerlessness, helplessness and despair, inability to subsist and protect oneself against economic shocks, social, cultural and political discrimination and marginalization among others. The National Policy on Poverty Eradication in Nigeria (2000), enumerates the attributes of poverty as follows: not having enough food to eat, poor nutrition, unfit housing, high rate of infant mortality, low life expectancy, inadequate health care, lack of productive assets, lack of economic infrastructure. Furthermore, the World Bank (2003) further defined poverty as a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to; not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living and not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living on marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation.

Poverty can also be defined based on the concepts of lack of access to opportunities and resources, concern for human rights and environmental challenges. Other factors include exposure to violence, injustice, powerlessness and uncertainty in the face of unexpected situations like sicknesses, accidents and natural disasters. The 2010 Global Monitoring Report (GMR) of the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), revealed that about 92 percent of the Nigerian population survives on less than \$2 daily, while 71 per cent survives on less than \$1 daily. This is an embarrassment to the country regarded as the 'Giant of Africa'. That Nigeria with its enormous resources and potentials, is ranking 20th among the world's poorest countries is to say the least disgusting (Agbi, 2011). Corruption has impoverished many Nigerians. The tragedy of the country is that through corruption, government policies have failed to alleviate poverty, but have instead elevated poverty in the country. The reasons for these include corruption in government and neglect of the target group – the poor, who were never considered during the formulation of these policies. Poverty has been a serious challenge to governments in Nigeria. Its effect, which includes lack and deprivation in the basic necessities of life, is worrisome. While the International Monetary Fund has praised the government's "prudent macroeconomic policies," corruption is costing Nigeria billions of dollars. The funds could be used to reduce the poverty that fuels insurgencies by the Islamist group Boko Haram in the North and militants in the southern oil-rich Niger Delta. As of 2010, more than 60 percent of the population of Africa's largest oil producer and most populous nation lived on less than \$1 a day, up from 51.6 percent in 2004, according to the (National Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

These scenarios and other silent images of inequality and denial which daily confront us tend to confirm that justice is yet to be done in Nigeria. We live in a society where the poor are severely endangered and have got no place to hide. The children of the poor are always rundown on busy highways during their hawking endeavours. At school, they are the first to be sent home, not for poor performance, but for failing to pay tuition on time. It is a horrifying reality that as large as Nigeria is there seem not to be enough room, enough homes, and enough food for the poor.

The truth is that there is indeed widespread poverty in the land and the consequences of this on the development of the nation have been pathetic. There is also the fact that the quality of life of most Nigerians has been on the downward trend. While the generality of Nigerians continue to wallow in abject poverty, a privileged few live in opulence (Agbi, 2011). Poverty in Nigeria is characterized by hunger, homelessness, diseases, malnutrition, high child mortality rate, family disintegration, unemployment, human trafficking, child labour, kidnapping, killing, sexual assault, drug abuse, prostitution and high mortality rate etc.

In its efforts to rid the polity of poverty, various government regimes have initiated different policies and programmes between 1986 and 2004 to alleviate it. These programmes include: Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRFI), Better Life Programme (BLP), Directorate of Employment (NDE); People' Bank of Nigeria (PBN); Community Bank (CB); Family Support Programme (FSP); Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP); Poverty Eradication Programme (PEP); National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP); and National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) whose aim were to ameliorate the suffering of the people by providing them employment opportunities and access to credit facilities to enable them establish their own businesses (Eseme et. al. 2012). However, these programmes and initiatives seem to have largely failed to alleviate poverty owing to alleged corrupt practices in the execution of the programmes. Consequently, although Nigeria should be one of the richest countries in the world with vast oil reserves and a plentiful workforce, yet over 65% of the country's populations live under the poverty line and half of those live in abject poverty.

THE NEXUS OF CORRUPTION AND POVERTY

As pointed out already, corruption is an evil that begets poverty in any nation. Any nation where corruption thrives cannot escape the trap of poverty. The problem of corruption has been one that has been with us since the days of independence. Corruption accounts for the poor facilities we have and other anomalies eminent in the Nigerian polity. It creeps into the system when those who are saddled with the responsibility of running the affairs of this country become greedy and self-centered. In a situation where money budgeted for development purposes are embezzled by a few people, poverty is inevitable. It is a situation where a few public office holders accumulate wealth for themselves against the interest of the generality of the people. Corruption is the consuming fire that eats up funds that would have otherwise been used to rescue a lot of people from the pain and pangs of want. Corruption is a vicious cycle. Mismanagement of public funds has direct bearing on the country's collapsing infrastructure, standard of education, health facilities, insecurity, injustice, unemployment, poverty and other challenges which are interconnected (Ribadu, 2013).

Corruption remains the biggest barrier to ending extreme poverty and stand in the way of progress in the development of all areas mentioned here; preventing funds reaching healthcare and education, limiting individuals abilities to access jobs and social benefits, corroding systems of law and stopping aid working effectively in the poorest parts of the world. Corruption happens in developed countries as well as the least developed - but corruption in vulnerable communities destroys lives and stops progress. Corruption erodes the power of ordinary people by diverting resources and decisions

away from those who need it, and in many cases, corruption among government officials in developing countries like Nigeria and India can cost the country and the people billions of dollars. For instance in 2004, the World Bank estimated that developing countries in particular lose to up to \$100million every year because of corrupt acts. Because of corruption, most African nations are distinguished by low per capita income, the uneven distribution of wealth in the society, the tremendous emphasis on primary production, small scale farms mainly for subsistence, and a rural population with abject poverty and indebtedness. In most cases, less developed countries go on depending on the more developed ones for their physical development (Akorede, 2010).

The revenue Nigeria received for the whole of last year (2012) from the sale of crude oil is more than the yearly aid, the entire sub Saharan Africa received. Where is the money, where is the improvement?" This was a question posed by the UK Prime Minister, David Cameron at the World Economic Forum in Davos (Ribadu, 2013). Despite this huge revenue, a vast majority of Nigerians still wallow in abject poverty as the money has been diverted into private pockets of government official and their collaborators. This is why corruption, unemployment and poverty go hand in hand in the society. It is aggravated by failure to assure equality of opportunity for all the citizens. The people now become extremely vulnerable to all kinds of social vices which include violence. They are hurt, damaged and discounted by the very society that should protect them, promote their interest and welfare. Their past is blighted, their present compromised and their future endangered, mortgaged and at risk. In Nigeria, we daily witness the horrible images of the ruin of poverty and what it has brought to our people – some poor Nigerians, visibly frustrated, perching on roadsides, on busy highways, at bus stops combining refuse dumps for food and ‘valuables’, begging for alms etc. There are many other poor Nigerians, who live under bridges; in dirty and dilapidated buildings; against a normally decent choice. Many of these displaced populations have managed to raise offsprings within their endangered settlements; some of them maimed by falling bricks or other harmful objects or even diseased as a result of the poor quality of the environment in which they live.

CORRUPTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development is defined as the type of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (WCED, 1987). Development has to do with improving and refining that which is already in existence and adapting it to contemporary requirements. It also involves finding solutions to new problems or new forms of solutions to old problem which implies creative responses to social, political and economic affairs. Specifically, sustainable development suggests an enduring, remarkable, non-terminal improvement in the quality of life, standard of living and life chances of the people. Such development must be capable of surviving generations over a prolonged period of time. It favours a progressive curve in human development encompassing enhanced creativity, for increased productivity. According to Popoola (2009), sustainable development may be seen as balancing the fulfilment of human needs with the protection of the natural environment so that these needs can be met in the present as well as in the future. The society should manage its resources in an effective and efficient manner that it benefits all; the resources should be judiciously and carefully used so that there shall be no poverty, no diseases and the quality of life will be better.

From the above analysis of sustainable development, it is obvious that sustainable development is crucial and no society can afford to ignore it. Being concerned about sustainable development means planning, investing in it and educating people about it. The United Nations asserts that the component that work together to produce sustainable development

are economic development, social development and environmental protection (McKeown, 2002). Sustainable development has a moral dimension that demands a great sense of responsibility from both the leaders and followers. A culture of sustainable development is one that is selfless and cares passionately about human welfare today, tomorrow and generations to come (Ayeni, 2010). This is what corruption negates. Corruption is total disregard for the present and future welfare of all in order to selfishly enrich oneself, to the detriment of all. Corruption is wicked, stifles development and breeds abject poverty of the majority.

According to Akorede (2010), a community that is properly oriented, organized and disciplined will be prosperous through the efficient management of its scarce resources. But a nation that is reckless with large abundance will waste her resources through indiscriminate mismanagement and corruption. There have been many nations which squandered their abundant resources: the population lived lives of penury and poverty, while few of its leaders lived in extravagant abundance. Nigeria is in this situation. Whatever gains could have accrued to the populace from the abundant natural resources, have been swallowed by corruption, which ultimately leaves the vast majority of the citizens in a state of poverty and want.

The Halliburton's case, and so many other wanton looting of the treasury that continues unabated leaves a sour taste in the mouth. No nation can develop as long as corruption continues to be a clog on its wheel of progress. As long as we continue to dignify and celebrate corruption, it will continue to thrive and the younger generation will also take to corruption as a perceived acceptable way of life. One wonders what those who celebrated the release of Chief Bode George, a man who was convicted for corruption and recently the birthday of Chief James Ibori, who is serving a prison term for corruption in a United Kingdom prison, seek to achieve. As long as this culture of corruption continues, development will continue to be unattainable. Therefore, until growth of corruption is checkmated, availability of functional industries, adequately equipped hospitals, good roads and other basic amenities that will enhance the standard of living of Nigerians, will continue to be difficult to achieve. Eradication of corruption will lead to sustainable development, which will also create millions of job spaces for our teeming population of youths, who will be gainfully engaged and will therefore have little or no time to become a malaise to the society.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Corruption has dealt a deadly blow to the Nigerian nation, institutionalized poverty and has greatly impeded her development. However, all hope is not lost. Nigeria can be great if concerted efforts are made towards the eradication of corruption. There is need for social transformation and social re-engineering. Transformation in education of the public is a necessary factor in social transformation and re-engineering. There is need for orientation and re-orientation of the minds and heart of Nigerians, for them to see that corruption is the enemy of development. Emphasis must be placed on the virtues of transparency, integrity, and accountability in all their private and public transactions, and hard work should be rewarded and recognized.

The government must show political will to fight corruption through the enforcement of Anti-Corruption Laws. The law should be enforced to its fullest and without fear and favor. Corrupt offenders must be diligently prosecuted and convicted, so as to serve as deterrence to others in the society.

The anti-corruption agencies such ICPC and EFCC should be empowered by the government to carry out their investigation and prosecution without interference. They should be given the needed independence to prosecute offenders and bring them to book.

Improvement of Socio-political and Economic Life through the payment of just wages. The multiplying effects of this improvement will reduce the tendency of public servants to demand and take bribes and get involved in other corrupt practices.

The judiciary should be more proactive in the trial of persons accused of corruption. Unnecessary delay of corrupt cases should be avoided. The judiciary must avoid getting corrupt in order to be able to discharge its duty well.

Religious bodies should de-emphasize the preaching of prosperity messages that could aggravate the get-rich quick mentality of some Nigerians and consequently induce corruption.

The fact that corruption begets poverty cannot be over-emphasized. It is the contention of this paper that all hands must be on deck to eradicate corruption in Nigeria, if the nation must eradicate poverty, attain sustainable development and take her place in the comity of developed nations. The leaders and the followers should see the eradication of corruption as a project that must be accomplished for the well-being of all and sundry in the nation.

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