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The Effects of Corruption on Governance in Nigeria (1999 – 2015)

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Abstract:

Corruption is one of the most important causes of Nigeria's underdevelopment. It is a common knowledge today among common watchers and analyst of the development in Nigeria that corruption is prevalent in the country and remains the major albatross on her path to growth. The paper attempts to examine the effects of corruption on governance between 1999 to 2015. In the analysis, mediocrity in leadership and lack of patriotism have led Nigeria to cluelessness and defective governance with an attendant negative effects that hampers serious economic growth. A complete attitudinal change has been advocated in the work, together with a change on the part of the Nigerian political leadership. A selfless political leadership that is interested in the people and the greatness of Nigeria than private ambition must be enthroned. Therefore, good and great leaders who will create an enabling environment for building and sustaining strong institution should be voted for by the electorates through credible electoral processes.

Keywords: *Corruption, Good Governance*

1. Introduction

There can be no doubt that the problem of corruption is one of the most important problems which the people of Nigeria have to tackle and overcome, if they are to make any significant and sustainable progress in the 21st century (Usman, 2018:1). This is widely recognized in almost all quarters in this country. Also widely recognized by the Nigerian public, are the practices which constitute corruption by those holding public office. But, what is barely understood is the essence of this corruption and its dimensions and root causes in the economy, the society and the political system, and in the larger global network of economics and nations which are a part of.

Corruption is the most threatening danger to stability anywhere in the world. It is a gargantuan evil that pervades all societies. It is everywhere, and does not discriminate between rich and poor, developed, developing and underdeveloped nations. It traverses all nations and creeds. It has been around since the beginning of all things. It is based on greed, avarice and selfish propensities and found among human beings (Uyouyo, 2005).

Stories about corruption dominate political and symbolic discourse in Nigeria. Everyday practices of corruption and the narratives of complaint they generate are primary vehicles through which Nigerians imagine and create the relationship between state and society (Smith, 2007: 36).

Section 15 (5) of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, as amended, provides that "the state shall abolish all corrupt practices and abuse of power". Pursuit to this, successive administration in Nigeria made concerted efforts to fight against corruption. However, corruption has continued to emerge as the greatest problem of governance in Nigeria. In fact, Nigeria's name has almost become synonymous with corruption in the international community, following its rating as one of the most corrupt nations in the world by Transparency International. Hardly does a day pass in Nigeria without the subject of corruption being discussed as the greatest threat to stability and economic development of the country. Clearly, this shows the extent and negative impact of corruption on society as well as society's reaction to it (Shehu, 2006:5).

The menace of corruption is actually a big problem in Nigeria. It was affirm that effects of corruption in the Nigerian society cannot be overemphasized. Thus the paper is structured into seven sections. Section one deals with the introduction. Section two conceptualizes the basic concepts; i.e. corruption, good governance in Nigeria. Section three discusses the methodology of the work, section four reviews some literature and theoretical framework. In section five, results and findings are presented. Section six of the work is an analysis of the implication of corruption on governance, while in section seven, conclusion and recommendations are drawn.

2. Conceptualizing Corruption and Good Governance

There is no single and comprehensive universally acceptable definition of corruption. One option that was considered during the elaboration of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) was not to define corruption parse but to identify and describe the specific conducts that are generally classified as corrupt, criminal misconduct. Such misconducts includes bribery, embezzlement, theft, fraud, extortion, abuse of discretion, favoritism and nepotism, creating or exploiting conflicting interests, and improper political party donation (Shehu, 2015:24). In other words, even though it is difficult to define corruption with any precision, it is however not impossible to discern and characterize what sort of conduct could be termed as corrupt/misconduct.

A typical public sector definition is one that attempts to provide an interface between the misconduct of politicians and bureaucrats and it takes that corruption is – the utilization of official position or titles for personal or private gains, either on an individual or collective basis, at the expense of the public good, in violation of established rules and ethical considerations, and through the direct or indirect participation of one or more public officials, whether they be politicians or bureaucrats.

Corruption according to Usman (2008) means much more than public officers taking bribes and gratification, committing fraud and stealing funds and assets entrusted to their care. Corruption means the deliberate violations, for gainful ends, of standards of conduct legally, professionally, or, even ethically established, in private and public affair. These gains may be in cash, or, kind, or, it may even be psychological, or political, but they are made from the violation of the integrity of any entity and involve the subversion of its quality and capacity.

In view of the above, Akinyemi (2013:4) defines corruption as the use of legislative powers by government officials for illegitimate private gains and “not only leads to the misallocation of resources but also affects the manner in which decisions are made”. There are different forms of corruption and they include bribery, extortion, cronyism, nepotism, patronage graft and embezzlement.

Section 2 of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) Act, 2000 defines corruption to include “bribery, fraud, and other related offences”. The most common types of corruption by this definition is bribery – which refers to the giving or taking of any kind of favour in return or exchange for undue advantage over other people. Other types include: abuse of power in any form of degree, extortion, embezzlement, inflation of contracts, kickbacks, diversion of funds, falsification or suppression of records, pervasion of justice, electoral malpractices, examination malpractices, drug trafficking, money laundering, abuse of selection processes, nepotism, sexual exploitation, gratification and so on (http://www.antigraft.org.cc.case1/corruptioncase_nigeria).

3. Types of Corruption

For the purpose of this paper, we shall identify the following forms of corruption in Nigeria which are defined by the spheres or arena of special activities and integrated by the general principles of corruption.

3.1. Political Corruption

The two main areas in which political corruption is manifested are the activities connected with elections and succession, and manipulation of people and institutions in order to retain power and office. Political positions are scarce and the prices of office are high. Hence, the competition of such resources involves every possible extra-legal means through corruptions in order to overcome obstacles of opposition (Abubakar, 1998:12). Political corruption takes many shapes, starting from embezzlement, bribery, ritual, rigging elections and so on. In fact, corruption is highest in the political system. In both the Senate and House of Representatives, corruption is seen as normal. Where do we start among politicians? It is because of the “wicked level” of corruption that makes both the youths, and the old struggle to find themselves in one political party or the other.

3.2. Bureaucratic Corruption

Bureaucratic corruption involves buying favour from bureaucrats who formulate and administer government economic and political policies. The areas chiefly involved are the acquisition of foreign exchange, import licenses, industrial establishments, avoidance of tax and the like. Abubakar (1998:13), citing Oluwadare Aguda observes in the connection that...”it is true that there are many situations in which people press bribes on officials thus tempting them away from the path of probity”. He further argues that in some cases, officials expect to be bribed for almost everything and that “worse still, they use their enormous power of delay to force people to bribe them”. Such bribes and corrupt payments according to Left (1964), are not legitimized by proper government process. Rather, they are appropriated by the bureaucrats, not by the state, and they involve subversion of government’s political and economic policies (Abubakar, 1998).

3.3. Judicial Corruption

Allegations of corruption are rife against law enforcement agencies, both indigenous and modern. Judicial corruption plays on the relative position of buyers in the social structure and the use of wealth to secure police attention and bails, and even pervert the administration of justice. In this manner, law enforcement officers, prosecutors, judges or other officials may

be bribed to ensure that criminal activities are not investigated or prosecuted, or, if they are prosecuted to ensure a favourable outcome.

4. The Concept of Governance

The term “governance” and “good governance” are being used in development literature. Bad governance is being increasingly regarded as one of the root cause of all evils within our societies. In fact, even major donors and international financial institutions are increasingly basing their aid and loans on the condition that reforms that ensure “good governance” are undertaken. Good governance means the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (<http://www.org/EN/issue/development/goodgovernance>).

According to Adelakun, D.A., Popoola, W.O. and Azeez, M.O. (2011), good governance is governance for sustainable development since it possesses ingredients which directly affect sustainable development. Such ingredient includes, poverty eradication, equity, improved quality of life, transparency, public participation and accountability in governance.

Governance is defined as general adherence to rule of law, transparency, productivity and accountability in government decision-making that constantly achieve effect and efficient outcomes for society. According to Tamiyu, R.A. and Olaleye, G.A. (2011), when there is reduction in corruption in a polity, there is tendency for an improved governance and probity. Therefore governance is traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised for the common good. Good governance has eight (8) major characteristics. It is participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law; opinions of the minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society (whatisgoodgovernance.com)

5. Theoretical Framework

5.1. The Social Contract Theory

The paper adopts the social contract theory as crystalized and popularized by Hugo Grotius (1625), Thomas Hobbes (1651), Samuel Pufendorf (1673), Emmanuel Kant (1797), Jean-Jacques and others, who were among the most prominent of the 17th century and 18th century theorists of social contract and natural rights.

Generally, social contract theorists advance views that the state or, more precisely, civil society is the product of a contract, a covenant, an agreement, or a compact. Contrarianism and contractualism are often generally used as synonymous terms for social contract theories, the central idea of which is that “the legitimacy of state and/or the principles of sound justice derive their legitimacy from a societal agreement or social contract.

Social contract arguments typically posits that individuals have consented, either explicitly or tacitly, to surrender some of their freedoms and submit to the authority of the ruler or magistrate (or to the decision of a majority), in exchange for the protection of their remaining. The question of the relation between natural rights and legal rights therefore, is often an aspect of social contract theory. The assumption here according to Rousseau, is that the state is a politically united community; hence the will of the state becomes that of a politically united people (Nbeta, 2012).

It becomes obvious from the above that in relation to Nigeria as a united community, corruption whatever form represent a fatal violation of the common good and trust made by the total population which has negatively affected governance. In addition to the direct and indirect cost of corruption and general indiscipline to individual Nigerians, they also exact near fatal toll on the country as a polity. Summarily put, their combined costs and consequences entails enormous damage to the country’s corporate life and existence economically, politically, socially and ethnically, incalculable loss of government revenue; the undermining of the economy; of national development; and of political stability, the debilitating effect on public service efficiency, effectiveness, worker morale and productivity, the pervasion and frustration of development objectives and people’s legitimate aspirations, the training of our national image and the soiling of our reputation from all over the world, and even the questioning of the viability of Nigeria as a corporate entity (Odekunle, 1994).

5.2. Methodology

The paper is based on secondary data. The secondary data is derived from content analysis of newspapers, journals, magazines, seminar papers, text books, conference proceedings and monographs. The publications of ICPC, the EFCC and other relevant materials have equally been consulted.

5.3. Corruption and Governance

Although the cankerworm of corruption is not peculiar to Nigeria, it seems to have permeated the country’s social life and eaten up deep into the fabrics of society. the collapse of values, ethics and morality also strikes at the heart of abrasive corruption which in turn dwarfs or reverses the process of development (Iyare, 2008).

The recent intensification of corruption in Nigeria, demonstrated by the stealing of public funds on a massive scale, calls for special attention. Nigeria’s corruption problem has become an urgent problem because it is the greatest obstacle in governance and development in general. Because of the prevalence of corruption and the inadequate efforts to deal with it in the recent past, many almost believe that it is impossible to deal with corruption.

According to Waziri (2010), conferences, seminars, workshops and even prayers have all been organized in respect of this self-inflicted monster with seemingly poor results. Indeed, a survey of our homes, offices, corporate organizations, ministries, institutions, leadership positions, even the commercial and banking sectors as revealed by the stock market and the investigations in the banking sector all go to show that corruption has become a living and breathing cancer which has unfortunately come to be justified by the average man as “the need to survive”.

Furthermore, she posits that the following behaviours indicates or are red flag for corruption: embezzlement, conflict of interest e.g. the award of contracts by public office holders to cronies and personally held companies, bribery, fraud, political corruption, e.g. nepotism and favoritism, ethnicity, rigging of elections, misappropriation and conversion of public funds for personal gains, bureaucratic corruption, extortion, manipulation of procurement procedures e.g. over-inflation of contracts, leaking tender information to friends and relations etc., corporate corruption e.g. manipulation or falsification of financial records (Waziri, 2010).

5.4. Institutionalizing Corruption

Various corruptions broke out between 1999 to 2015 especially during the reign of former president Olusegun Obasanjo. Uyouyo (2008:16), maintained that in the course of Obasanjo’s eight-year tenure, Nigeria earned \$222billion, two and a half times the amount earned over the previous eight years. But thanks to “Kleptocracy” and rampant grafts, much of the money has not gone where it should have. Of course, oil revenues had been misused long before Obasanjo’s administration...but the records of (Obasanjo makes a lot of Nigerians wonder why, despite the country’s riches, so many of (our) lives continue to be wretched).

Indeed, it will be difficult to address the problem of corruption and governance in Nigeria in isolation of the rest of Africa. According to Odinakalu (2010), corruption is not just a Nigeria problem. It is a problem for Africa and for development to which African countries collectively lose an estimated 25% of GDP or about \$148 billion annually. He further argues that our governance challenge of combating corruption effectively confront four cumulative crisis of political legitimacy, agency credibility, elite, values and institutional capabilities. In the ensuring atmosphere of political abnormality as normalcy, the fight against corruption has thus been made to look both rarefield and tokenized.

It is instructive to note that between June 1999 and May 2007 which spans the eight-year rule of Obasanjo Presidency, the three tiers of government shared a total of N16.447 trillion without much to show for democracy dividend. Of this amount, the federal government received the lion’s share of over N7.4 trillion. The 36 states and Abuja received a total of N5.7 trillion, while the 774 local government councils in the country received about N3.3trillion (Iyare, 2008:27).

There were also spiraling revenues from taxes which include Petroleum Profit Tax (PPT), Companies Income Tax (CIT), and Value Added Tax (VAT) and consolidated and Education Taxes. The Federal Inland Revenue Services (FIRS) in the three years, 2004-2006, realized close to N5 trillion, coming second only to revenue generated from oil resources. In 2004, the target of N800 billion was exceeded when the agency turned in N1.193 trillion into the Federation Account. In 2005, the collection of N1, 304 billion was targeted but N1.741 trillion was actually collected.

In spite of this huge revenue profile which is not inclusive of the billions of money from the internally generated funds, and the so-called recovery of “Abacha loot” which had not been accounted for, the quality of lives of the citizenry have plummeted with more than 70 percent of the population living below one dollar a day while average life expectancy in Nigeria has slipped to 43 years, according to the UN Human Development Report. That was why scholars noted that:

Former President Obasanjo had a golden opportunity to etch his name in gold, and radiate his eminence like an Iroko tree but chose to sputter it with specks. He had enough goodwill to redeem his opportunistic rise but opted to play the Russian roulette. Obasanjo had leverage to elevate governance in Nigeria from its...moras but preferred to glorify trite. He virtually had on his laps a window to lift the world’s most populous Black nation almost stultified by the antics of a thieving elite to a high pedestal, but decided to pilot it on a near rudderless path. He had an almost blank cheque to deepen the course of a country in the labyrinth of a fledgling democracy but opted to smoothen the people’s vote. Obasanjo can be likened to a student who had all it takes to come out tops but chose to flunk his test. A man who had a golden stride to end up like the south African icon, Nelson Mandela but opted to wallow in the ingnominy of Napoleon (Iyare, 2008:38)

5.5. Umaru Musa Yar’Adua’s Administration (May 2007- May 2010)

Yar’Adua’s ascent and stay in power was short, albeit with a fair share of corruption scandals from previous administration coming to light under his tenure and going without investigation due to lack of political will and poor health. Yar’Adua’s various acts of political corruption included of his Attorney General to frustrate ongoing local and international investigations of his powerful friends like governors Ibori, Igbinedion and Odili which led to massive losses to their states. Indeed, AG Aondoakaa, was legendry in his inability to obtain conviction in Nigeria even as UK and foreign courts successfully tried Nigeria’s deeply corrupt governors from the Obasanjo era that helped Yar’Adua emerge as president. In addition to these, Wikileaks revealed that the Supreme Court justices were bribed to legitimize the corrupt elections that saw to his emergence as president through massive rigging. Wikileaks documents also revealed the staying power of corruption under Yar Adua that saw, illegal payment from NNPC to president continued unabated (Corruption: A Case for Nigeria).

5.6. Goodluck Jonathan's Administration (May, 2010 – May, 2015)

In 2014, Nigeria's rank improved from 143rd to the 136th position on Transparency International's corruption perception index. In late 2013, the then Nigeria's Central Bank Governor, Sanusi Lamido Sanusi informed president Goodluck Jonathan that the state oil company, NNPC had failed to remit \$20 billion of oil revenues which it owed the state. Jonathan however, dismissed and replaced Sanusi for his mismanagement of the Central Bank budget. A Senate committee also found Sanusi's account to be lacking in substance. After the conclusion of the NNPC's account audit, it remitted revenue was actually \$1.48 billion, which it needs to refund back to the government. Upon the release of both the PWC and Deloitte report by the government at the eve of its exit, it was determined that truly close to \$20 billion was indeed missing or misappropriated or spent without appropriation (<http://www.antigraft.or/cc-case/corruptioncase>).

In addition to these, the government of Goodluck Jonathan had several running scandals including the BMW purchased by Aviation Minister, \$25 million plus security contracts to militants in the Niger Delta, massive corruption and kickbacks in the ministry of petroleum, Malibu oil international scandal, and several scandals involving the petroleum ministry, including accusation of sweetheart deals with select fronts and business people to divert public wealth. In the dying days of Goodluck Jonathan's administration, the Central Bank scandal of cash tripping of mutilated note also broke out, where it was revealed that in a 4days period, N8 billion was stolen directly by low level workers in the CBN. New allegations of corruption have since began to emerge since the departure of president Jonathan in May, 2015, including:

- \$2.2 billion illegally withdrawn from excess crude oil account of which \$1 billion supposedly approved by President Goodluck Jonathan to fund his re-election campaign without the knowledge of the National Economic Council, made up of state governors and the president and vice president.
- NEITI discovered \$11.6 billion was missing from Nigeria LNG Company dividend payments.
- 60 million barrels of oil valued at \$13.7 billion was stolen under the National Oil Giant, Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) from 2009 – 2012.
- NEITI indicates losses due to crude swaps to subsidy and domestic crude allocation from 2005-2012 indicated that \$11.63 billion had been paid to the NNPC but that "there is no evidence of the money being remitted to the federation account".
- Diversion of 60% of \$1 billion foreign loans obtained from the Chinese by the Ministry of Finance.
- Massive scam in weapons and defense procurements and misuse of N3 trillion defence budget since 2011 under the guise of fighting Boko Haram.
- Diversion of \$2.2 million naira vaccination medicine fund, by the Federal Ministry of Health.
- Ministry of finance under Ngozi Ikonjo Iweala hurried payment of \$2.2 million to Ministry of Health contractors in disputed invoices.
- Police Service Commission scam investigated by the ICPC that revealed misappropriation of over N150 million related to election training. ICPC made refund recommendations, but many analysts indicated prosecution was more appropriate.

More revelations, investigations and cases of arrests has continued to emerge, both at the federal and state levels. Some more recent investigations and arrest of suspects in connection with various cases of corruption and other sharp plays include:

- The arrest of the PDP National Publicity Secretary, Olisa Metuh over an allegation of receiving N1.4 billion from the office of the former National Security Adviser, Col. Sambo Dasuki. Metuh was further accused of receiving N4 million monthly from the same office (Daily Trust, Sunday, January 9, 2016).
- The arrest of the Director General of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), Emeka Mba, for allegedly operating a secret account into which about N17 billion fund were lodged. A source said the commission, under Mba operated the account inspite of a directive by the Presidency to collapse all government account into the Treasury Single Account (TSA) at the Central Bank (Daily Trust, Tuesday, January 21, 2016).
- The questioning of former President Goodluck Jonathan's ex-Aide-De-Camp (ADC) on the disbursement of more than N10 billion oil proceeds to People's Democratic Party (PDP) nomination convention delegates (The Nation, Friday, February 12, 2016).
- The arrest of Mrs. Esther Nenadi Usman, a former minister of finance, together with Femi Fani Kayode and 2 others who were asked to refund the sum of N3.1 billion allegedly shared by six Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Chiefs (The Nation, Thursday, March 17, 2016).
- The investigation of three serving Major Generals, a Rtd Major General, three Brigedier Generals, four Colonels and one Lieutenant Colonel for allegedly diverting a N5 billion vote ear marked for election operation. The illegal fund which was drawn from the CBN was allegedly used for personal services instead of election operation (The Nation, Sunday, March 20, 2016).
- The indictment of former Governor Suswam of Benue State and 51 others for alleged misappropriation and criminal diversion of N107 billion in Benue State, and the subsequent arrest of Gabriel Suswam by the EFCC (The Nation, May 29, 2016).

- The sacking of the Director General of Budget, Aliyu Yahaya Gusau, in the wake of the budget fiasco which forced the National Assembly to suspend the budget defence by Ministers in 2016.
- Many unapproved figures running into billions had found their way into the budget. These were only confirmed when ministers and top officials turned up for budget defence before the National Assembly Committees (Daily Trust, Tuesday, February 16, 2016).
- The arrest and subsequent arraignment of former Governor Saminu Turaki of Jigawa State, over an alleged cases of criminal conspiracy, stealing, money laundering and misappropriation of public funds to the tune of N36 billion (Daily Trust, Thursday, May 19, 2016).

So far, the Federal Government has recovered (N115 billion) one hundred and fifteen billion naira from looters, while over (N65 billion) sixty five billion naira awaits repatriation from overseas. The government did not however reveal the names of individuals the funds were recovered from (Daily Trust, June 5, 2016).

From the above, it is pertinent to stress here that in Nigeria, we have travelled far on the path of destruction occasioned by the criminal attitudes of our foster elites. The combination of the activities of the Nigerian thieving elites through massive corruption has engendered negative effects on the economy, which has further reduced the masses of the Nigerian population to the lowest level of wretchedness.

The implications of corruption in Nigeria are outrageous. Ijewerem, O., and Dunmade, E.O. (2014:3) observed that “corruption poses a serious development challenge”. An observation of the Nigerian Political realm shows that corruption have undermined democratic values of trust, credibility of government, and good governance by flouting or even subverting formal process. Corruption in the electioneering process and the executive and legislative bodies reduce accountability, transparency, integrity and distorts quality representation in policy making.

Furthermore, corruption in the judiciary compromises the rule of law, and corruption in public administration results in the unfair and inefficient provision of services”. Moreover, corruption weakens or erodes the institutional capability of public bureaucracy and procedures are disregarded, resources are siphoned off, and public offices are bought and sold. Corruption in Nigerian public service increases cost of running businesses as well as cost of governance. In any corrupt regime, a nation could lose billions of dollars into the pockets of the nation’s leaders at the expense of national development. Corruption in Nigeria has slowed down the pace of development because it weakens efficiency and effectiveness of public service and discourages genuine prospective investors. It also lowers compliance with construction, building, traffic rules, environmental, or other regulations, reduces the quality of government services and infrastructures, and increases budgetary pressure on government.

According to Bankole and Olaniye (2014), corruption aggregates poverty, eats up funds that would have otherwise been used to rescue a lot of people from the pain of starvation and want as it excessively pull resources from the national treasuries, placing the money (for economic development into the bank accounts of a few individuals who are politically powerful). Corruption and mismanagement of public funds have direct bearing on the Nigeria’s collapsing infrastructure like portable water, good road networks, health facilities, standard of education, security, justice, employment, and other challenges which are interconnected (Ribadu, 2013).

According to Akindayo (2014):

...Corruption remains the biggest barrier to ending extreme poverty and stands in the way of progress in the development of 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.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Having investigated the effects of corruption on governance in Nigeria, it is quite apparent that the problems have attained a pandemic proportion between 1999 – date. It is totally sad that Nigeria, a country blessed with material and human resources critical for national development is now doomed with uncertainty where abject poverty, high rate of unemployment, insecurity, looting and squandering of public funds, all as a result of corruption in governance, have become an accepted culture and value.

Although, the situation looks very bad, it is not insurmountable to break the cycle, here, we are impelled to quote the views of Waziri Farida (2010).

The war against corruption like terrorism is a special kind of war. It admits of no conventional methods. It is a war against human selfishness and greed. It is a war against rapid and senseless primitive capital accumulation. It is a war against decadence of mind, ethics and moral. Because of these special characteristics of the war, it requires a strong and uncompromising political will. It must be approached holistically. Causal and superficial approaches will not work. Rhetoric must match concrete action. Like all wars, on salvation and restoration, friends will be hurt, families and associates will equally be hurt; and above all, politics have no place in the war.

This implies that, there must be a complete attitudinal change on the part of the Nigerian political leadership, because no matter how excellent the constitution or other instruments for ensuring accountability, transparency and checking corruption in the Nigerian public sector might be, all will be fruitless except the political class shows the political will to abide by and enforce them. Subsequently, until political leadership and higher civil service appointments ceases to be an avenue for

easy accumulation of illegal wealth and a new political culture that abhors corruption in public life and humiliate public servant, the country cannot escape the disastrous consequences that comes with pervasive corruption.

The government has the duty to reverse the upsurge in the incidents of corruption in the country. The government must be seen to be serious in the fight to root out corruption from both public and private enterprises. The judiciary has a responsibility of ensuring that persons found guilty of corrupt practices are duly punished according to the law rather than giving them almost limitless latitude to circumvent the law and escape justice.

By this, government must show the political will and commitment that will bring about immediate and appropriate long - term convictions of those found guilty of looting the common wealth. Sanctions may include public exposure of those who have been found guilty, penalties of jail or detention for those who have committed criminal acts, dismissal for employment, fines payable to victims, and the withdrawal of a license to practice, in cases involving professionals.

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 Nigeria 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.

We need to provide security safety nets for our citizenry – massive provision of employment and productive self-engagements through deliberate investments in the real sector, free education including provision of free meals, free health care, affordable housing with long term mortgage facilities, generous retirement benefits, care for the aged and better working conditions in the public service. We also need to place a lot of value on human capital and its building and sustenance.

The fight against corruption has to involved, at its core, the building up of strong institutions nationwide and combating all the divisive, sectional, politics of ethnicity and religious and regional rivalries and animosities. This type of parochial politics, not only undermines unity and national development, subverts the common public interests of citizens, but is essentially corrupt and provides a fertile soil for generating and entrenching separation between public service and the private acquisition of wealth and the exercise of political power to establish the primacy of the public interest of all citizens, over and above everything else, as clearly provided for, in the constitution, any attempt to fight corruption is largely cosmetic.

Finally, Nigerian leadership class should turn a new leaf by rejecting the old habits of corruption which has impeded economic development. Nigeria needs leaders who are more interested in people than private ambition. Nigeria needs leaders who think more of the next generation than the next positions in the country they will occupy. We need leaders who think they owe a debt to the future. This country need leaders who are more dedicated to how history will remember them for transforming the society than accumulation of private wealth. Leaders who have adequate knowledge and intellectual training on governance should be selected. Nigeria need selfless leaders who will setup quality institutions and establish policies that eliminates incentives for corruption. It is an axiom that no country can develop a strong institutions without the benefits of good and great leadership. Therefore, good and great leaders who will create an enabling environment necessary for building and sustaining strong institutions should be voted for by the electorates through credible electoral processes.

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