

CORRUPTION, LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Corruption is a moral decadence that has eaten deep into the fabric of the Nigerian political terrain. Most government world over, Nigerian government inclusive, are bedeviled by the problem of good governance, they are most hit by the precarious problem of corruption, as such most of them records a downward trend in development be it political, economic or social development. The promise of the early years of independence has given way to mismanagement, personal or group aggrandizement by the ruling elite at the expense of the ordinary citizens. There is high level of corruption which has driven many Nigerians in to absolute poverty. People are adversely affected through bad and corrupt governance as such it has made meaningful development elusive. Corruption inflicts so many kinds of negative effects on any society where it exists and persists until such society is purged of such immorality and social problem, which in turn can lead to other social problems. Corruption is a world - wide phenomenon which has been with societies throughout history, it has caused political and economic instability in societies and depending on the scale. It has led to social conflict and violence as contending groups struggle for state power which is the source of distribution of resources and other amenities in the society. Therefore, the paper attempts to investigate corruption, leadership and development in Nigeria.

Key words: Corruption, Development, Leadership, Embezzlement, Economic crime

INTRODUCTION

Corruption in the Nigerian system after independence centers on nepotism, bribery, favoritism and official incentives, inflation of contracts and delay of payment for job awarded in order to collect gratification from the contractors. The situation became worse during the military regime and this led to the retrenchment of corrupt officials from government service by Generals Muritala Mohammed and Olusegun Obasanjo administration. But the disciplinary measures taken like probe, seizure of asset and refund of money misappropriated did not produce the clean public service envisaged by the military administration. Rather, it created a kind of smartness among the public servants. The resultant lack of security of tenure created by the mass purge of the public service in 1975 led to desperation, among the public servants, to have enough savings just in case of retrenchment.

Corruption has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigerian society; both the low and high level officials are involved. The private sector cannot be spared of this evil vice; the public sector is worst off.

Government officials do demand gratification from clients before they could get contracts in public service e.g. water works officials, collect bribe to reconnect consumer back to the water meter, custom official openly collect bribe to release seized material while workers in Nigeria tertiary institutions indulge in admission scandals.

Above all, one needs to know somebody in Nigeria Telecommunication office before one could obtain a telephone set at home. During the tenure of the Babangida administration, corruption and “settlement” culture became state policy. Government in order to prolong itself in office had to give 50 million naira cash gift to some top military officers. The Abacha government also followed the same corrupt path by granting an allowance of N350, 000 to every officer in the military from level of Captain and above; Abacha outright cash inducement cost the Nigerian government almost N880 million naira (Adebayo, 1993). All these were attempts by the two military dictators to perpetuate themselves in power. The politicking of the public service and federal character principle which was meant to bring equality into civil service system has also been corrupted. Public officials do assist their friends to change their state of origin in order to get position. The National Youth Service Corps is not spared of the corrupt practices as prospective corp member pay huge amount of money to NYSC officials in order to secure posting to a state of their choice. Thus, Youth Service scheme which was based on National integration objective has beenderailed.

The Nigeria Football Association (NFA) is not spared of this canker worm called corruption. Talented footballers are forced to pay the coach and team managers thousands of naira before they are featured in the National teams. The foreign visitors and those who came to Nigeria to transact business have known Nigerian public officials to be corrupt people. As soon as you can give officials money, your request will be honoured, if you refused calamity will follow you. How long would Nigeria continue to embrace corruption and the image it portend for the nation. Even though, corruption is a worldwide plaque, but the dimension it has taken in Nigeria makes the research topic worthy of studying. For Nigerians, especially social crusaders, religious leaders and public critics, corruption has a new dimension in Nigeria.

Today corruption has shifted from the materials acquisition and gratification of forgery, fraud, embezzlement of public fund and using computer to transfer billions of naira from one account to the other from Nigeria to overseas.

The overseas business corporations do not have confidence in transacting business with genuine and reputable Nigerian entrepreneurs. Nigeria is noted for the advance fee fraud popularly known as 419 deals.

ORIGIN OF CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

Corruption is a nationwide phenomenon which has been with the society throughout history (Odunuga, 2000). The evolution of corruption in Nigeria predates independence; there had been corruption, a situation where by sanitary inspectors collected bribe from members of the public for violating public hygiene rules and regulations.

However, immediately after independence, corruption centered on nepotism, bribery, favouritism and official incentives, inflation of contracts and delay of payment for job awarded in order to collect bribe from the contractors (Adebayo, 1993). Indeed, corruption in Nigeria has become legendary. Right from independence in 1960; the seed of corruption was planted which germinated in the post-independence era. No one probably knew then that its fruit would today put Nigeria on the edge of catastrophe. No one knows how Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu who identified Nigeria's problem as corruption would describe the problem of Nigeria at the turn of the 20th century. Nzeogwu, leader of the first military coup in Nigeria, declared, in 1966: "Our enemies are the political profiteers, the swindlers, the men in high and low places, who seek bribes and demand ten percent, those who have corrupted our society" (Adamolekun, 1992).

MEANING OF CORRUPTION

Onigutite describes corruption as "the perversion of integrity or state of affairs through bribery favour or moral depravity" (Odunuga, 2000). Asserting, further he went on to state that corruption takes place "when at least two parties have interacted to change the structure or processes of society or the behaviour of functionaries in order to produce dishonest, unfaithful or defiled situation. From Otite's view, corruption can be of any kind bribery, favour etc. either directly or indirectly that defile the morality of any society integrity or state affairs.

In Otite's new corruption includes some aspect of immorality which attributes to various mishaps and other microprobes to the society, to him corruption is an endemic act that involves injection of additional but improper transaction aimed at changing the moral course of events and altering

judgment and positions of trust. Accordingly Olopoenia, (1998) citing Kham defined corruption as "an act which deviates from the moral rules of conduct governing the actions of someone in a position of public authority because of private-regarding motive such as wealth, power or status". Corruption can be analyzed within paradigm of political economy. From Olopoenia (1998) perspective citing Khams definition puts forward that corruption is brought about through the quest regarding motive such as wealth, power or status as such to him corruption can be analyzed within the paradigm of political and economic framework. He believes that the origin of corruption is located in the political and economic arrangement which govern that organization or society. Odunuga,(2000) in his own conception views see corruption to be "behaviour by individuals because of the great inequality in the distribution of wealth, political offices as the primary means of gaining access to wealth and the absence of a strong sense of natural community". Corruption through an immoral act is brought about because of inequality which exist in the position an individual occupies in the society as such according to him corruption is brought about by the immoral pursuit of wealth, power and so on.

According to Kalu and Osibayo(1999), corruption is aconscious and well planned act by a person or group of person to appropriate by unlawful means to the wealth of another person it is also the act of turning power and authority into ready cash. Corruption can also be viewed as the diversion of resources from the betterment of the community. Albeit, it includes not only bribery or treasury looting, but also the deliberate bending of the system (prebendalism) to favour friends and relations or hurt foes or misleading or giving strong or distorted information about things.

From the foregoing, it is deducible that corruption is an immoral disposition (latitudinal) of people in power or authority against the less privileged people to acquire more wealth. Odekunle (1991) hasobserved that corruption could take any of the following typology:

- i. Economic/Commercial Corruption: By this it is meant an act largely perpetuated by businessmen and contractors directly motivated by financial gains.
- ii. Organized Corruption: This is the relatively large scale and complex criminal activity carried out by group of elites and control agents loosely or tightly organized, for the enrichment of those participating and at the expense of the community and its members. This is common in the public sector including federal and state ministries as well as local government councils.
- iii. Administrative Corruption: By this it meant the act by top administrative and professional states for private material and socio-political gains. Political Corruption refers to that largely

perpetuated by political office holders and their henchmen. It is usually instigated by the desire to acquire or retain political power.

CAUSES OF CORRUPTION

Mauro (1997) observed, bureaucratic (public) corruption can be traced to government intervention in the economy, policies aimed at liberalization, stabilization, deregulation and privatization. According to him, "where government regulation are pervasive and government officials have discretion in applying them, individuals are often willing to offer bribes to officials to circumvent the rules, and official are occasionally tempted to accept these bribes". When there are trade restrictions, especially if certain imported goods are subjected to quantitative restriction, the necessary, import licenses become very valuable and importer will consider bribing the officials who control their issue. Equally, protecting a home industry from foreign competition through tariffs tends to create a semi-monopoly for the local industry. Local manufacturers can lobby for establishment and maintenance of these tariffs.

In the process some industrialists may even be willing to corrupt influential politicians to keep the monopoly going. Other areas where corruption is practiced include price control, multiple exchange rate practice, natural resources endowments etc.

CORRUPTION AND CORRUPT PRACTICES IN NIGERIA

On the 27th of August 1985, the Buhari administration was overthrown by Major General Babangida, the chief of Army staff in the regime, in what was described as a 'palace' coup. The Buhari regime, as was accused of having lost its way because it failed to come to grips with the political and economic regeneration of the nation.

It had become very rigid and uncompromising, and did not pay enough attention to protection of human rights of Nigerians. Major General Tunde Idiagbon was further accused of arrogating to himself absolute knowledge of problems and solutions. Apart from the perception that he had a hidden agenda to remain in office, despite the fact that he was conducting a transition programme which was supposed to lead to military disengagement from politics, and his manipulative tendencies which earned him the nickname "Maradona", General Babangida has to do with the high level of corruption that came to be associated with his regime. Infact corruption assumed new heights under him and came to be analogous with the term "settlement" (Daily Champion,

1991). Corruption is a difficult subject to tackle given the fact that it is usually very difficult to find concrete examples to back one up unless on official probe or a court case.

The Abacha administration made it clear that it would serve no useful purpose for any member of the Babangida regime to be probed.

The reason for this can only be because General Abacha could not probe the corruption allegations leveled against members of General Babangida's regime without probing himself. However, corruption or "settlement" manifested itself in several ways.

Many of General Babangida's close aides maintain that right from day one he had a hidden agenda to remain in office. Lt. - Col. Tony OtuNyiam, one of the leaders of the abortive April, 1990 coup, recalled that when General Babangida was the chief of Army staff under the Buhari administration, he had asked him to carry out a study on the regime of Abdul Nasser and General Pinochet of Chile. "Nasser, as you know, set a system in Egypt where till today, the military always produces the presidential candidates with a civilian prime minister. So I want you to conduct a study on all that and do me a memo". He was also interested in knowing how General Pinochet of Chile remained in power for as long as he did (Daily Champion, 1991:2). Whether he had a hidden agenda or not, the strategies he devised to ensure his survival as the Head of state all helped to encourage corruption. For example, he changed state governors, ministers and service chiefs as often as possible, so as to prevent anyone of them to get too powerful. With this, he was also able to spread the largesse that comes with public office. Throughout the period he was in office, General Babangida had no fewer than 80 military governors and administrators. The spreading of largesse was what he used to compromise junior and senior military officers alike, and indeed civilians long before he became military president.

It was reported that Gen. Babangida financed the master degree programme of an editor of a government owned newspaper in journalism at Columbia when the federal government withdrew a Commonwealth scholarship the editor won to punish him for the critical leader articles the paper was writing about the then government (Babangida, 1990:3). General Babangida, or "the Prince of Niger", as Chidi Amuta, one of his many biographers called him, used this to build bridges of loyalty and commitment that would help him when he became military President in 1985. This is probably what Major General Jemibewon meant when he said, "I never met anybody who said anything terrible about General Babangida before he became the military President" (Vogt, 1992: 30). One of the first institutions to suffer under General Babangida's

corruptive influence was the military. In terms of appointment of officers, he ensured that only those he considered loyal were appointed to key military and political positions. Once in government, these officers turned the state treasury into private use.

Even where these activities became public knowledge, the government did not prosecute anyone. This gave the impression that they had official backing for what they did. For example, Admiral Aikhomu, then Chief of General Staff, was accused, in 1989 by Mohammed Bashir, of receiving \$500,000 as bribe from him. Instead of investigating the allegations, the government promptly detained Bashir under Decree No 2. The Decree was essentially intended to intimidate the citizens against criticizing the administration and it empowered the government to arrest citizens anywhere and at any time without giving explanation or reason for arrest. So bad did it become that officers preferred political postings to purely military ones. Lt. Gen. Salihu Ibrahim, Gen. Babangida's last chief of Army staff before he was forced out of office, lamented at a farewell dinner for in his honour that "it was an open secret that some officers preferred political appointment over and above regimental appointments no matter the relevance of such appointments to their career prospects" (Vogt, 1992 : 30).

In addition to all these, to further buy the loyalty of those who were not so lucky to get plum political appointments, General Babangida showered gifts on them from the public purse. He was said to have spent millions of naira to provide gifts of Peugeot 504 cars to officers. Nobody believed the government when it explained it was a loan which was to be repaid.

After the annulment of the June 12 1993 election, presidential General Babangida, spent billions of naira 'settling' legislators, high ranked party officials so that they could agree to him continuing in office after 27 August 1993 when he was due to hand over to an elected president. It was a judge of Abuja High court that almost stalled the 12 June 1993 presidential election when he granted an injunction brought by a group called Association for Better Nigeria (ABN), that had been banned by law. The federal military government ignored the court order and ordered that the election should go ahead.

The perception was that both the judge and members of the group who were actively working for General Babangida's staying in office, were all 'settled'. The legacy of the Babangida administration slowed down or indeed brought a considerable decline in Nigeria's economic and political fortunes. General Babangida's never-ending political transition programme and the

annulment of the June 12 1993 election results affected considerably the corporate image of the Nigerian military.

In the present time, it is the weakness of Nigeria's economic base that constitutes the greatest constraint on the military's future growth and development.

The country cannot move forward politically until and unless the crisis generated by the annulment of the June 12, 1993 election is resolved (Vogt, 1992: 30). General Sanni Abacha had been in government since military took over the government from the civilian government of Alhaji Shehu Sagari on December 31, 1983. General Abacha announced the overthrow of the Shagari government on radio. In the same way, he announced the takeover of government of Gen. Mohammed Buhari by another military government headed by Gen. Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida. During the two military administrations, General Sanni Abacha was an active participant. In fact, he was the Chief of Army Staff and the Minister of Defence under General Babangida's regime.

The position he held till the formation of the transition government. Even in the transition government, he was the Secretary of defence. The position that gave him the edge over other members of the transition cabinet, General Sanni Abacha used the opportunity as the defense secretary and the weakness of the transition government to assume the office as the new head of state. General Abacha was the head of state of Nigeria between November 1993 and June 1998, when he died in office at the age of 57 years. General Abacha took power under the circumstances following June 12, 1993 election organized by former head of state, General Babangida. The elections were annulled by General Babangida, officially due to electoral malpractices. As a result of the annulment, there were riots and disturbance of public peace in the country. As a remedy, General Babangida decided to establish a transitional government and appointed Chief Ernest Shonekan a civilian, as the head of state. The transition government was overthrown by General Sanni Abacha in November 1993. The assumption of office as the Head of state by General Sanni Abacha signaled a qualitative transformation of the Nigerian state into a fully criminalized and indeed rogue state; a pariah state in the international community. Abacha's rule threatened the existence of Nigeria as a corporate entity and thus, the continued prosperity of the power elite.

Abacha's attempt to transform himself into a civilian president unleashed the very centrifugal forces that Nigeria's ruling elite had been trying to put into a safe and secure bottle since the end

of the civil war in January 1970 (Okonta 1998). An important aspect of political corruption under the Abacha regime was the reckless use of state power for self-aggrandizement.

To create favourable conditions for Abacha's self-succession plans, all those who had explicit political ambitions or were openly critical of the regime were accused of various crimes and detained or jailed. M.K.O Abiola was detained for four years, until his death in 1998.

General Olusegun Obasanjo was accused of plotting a coup against the government and was detained with his former deputy Shehu Yar'dua, who died in detention. Over thirty people were accused of plotting a coup in March, 1995 and were sentenced to long jail terms. In March 1997, treason charges were filed against leading opposition's Nobel Laureate Soyinka, Chief Anthony Enaharo and General Alani Akinrinade. Many politicians such as chief Bola Ige and Alhaji Abubakar Rimi, second Republic Governor of Oyo and Kano States, Lam Adesina, the late Comrade Ola Oni, Alhaji Sule Lamido, Chief Olu Falae and so on were also detained or imprisoned. Human rights activist such as Olisa Agbakoba, Center of United Action for Democracy, Beko Ransome Kuti and Segun Maiyegun of campaign for Democracy, Femi Falana of the CDHR suffered the same fate. Numerous trade unionists, journalists, religious leaders, army officers, even Nigerian ambassadors abroad were all detained for disloyalty to Abacha (Ibrahim, 2000:10)

The level of extra-judicial killing was very high. Many notable members of the opposition whom the regime considered hard critics were assassinated by armed gangs, who in most instances were state security agents. These included Alfred Rewane, who was killed in his house by armed men. He was alleged to have been one of the financiers of National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), the opposition coalition. Kudirat Abiola, the vocal wife of the detained winner of June 12, 1993 election, the late M.K.O. Abiola, was also slain by armed agents in 1996. Bagauda Kauto; the Kaduna correspondent of the News Magazine was bombed. The explanation was that the regime was embarrassed that a "Northerner" was revealing articles for a magazine the regime was branded as a "Southwestern mouthpiece" (Concord, 1998).

In December 1997, the regime announced the arrest of its second in command, General Oladipo Diya and many other senior military officers for plotting a coup to oust General Abacha from office. They were tried for treason and were about to be executed when Abacha suddenly died. The Muritala/Obasanjo administration seized properties of corrupt public officers and dismissed public officers who had been found to have misused their offices.

The Shagari administration to which it handed over introduced the ethical revolution and the Buhari/Idiagbon regime was famous for the war it waged against indiscipline (WAI) bothering upon corruption and misuse of public office.

Following its overthrow, the new administration, under General Babangida, inaugurated in 1989 a committee on corruption and other economic crimes in Nigeria. The committee made efforts through a proposal to the National Assembly on how to curb corruption in Nigeria (Coleman, 1998: 113). The situation rather than improving is worsening under the Shagari regime, corruption did not subside but thrived resulting in the alienation of the citizens from the ruling elite. Some hope for rejuvenation seemed to be in the offing upon the takeover of the military in December 1983. However, the Buhari/Idiagbon regime had a short life span for its impact to be deeply felt in this area. However, in its Eighteen months, many public officials were indicted and some semblance of sanity seemed to be returning to the polity (Coleman, 1998: 14).

The Buhari/ Idiagbon regime made the first major attempt at curbing corruption. It did not only probe its predecessor but launched a War against Indiscipline (W AI) which it identified as the bane of Nigeria. This government was cut short. Then came the Laisser Faire approach of Babangida which reversed the gains recorded by his predecessor. Though he put in place National Orientation Agency (NOA) and Mass Mobilization for Social and Economic Reconstruction (MAMSER), the organs did little or nothing to re-engineer the society on the path of sanity.

Under President Ibrahim Babangida, however, it is instructive to note that the administration did not find the time to deal with the report submitted by the Justice Kayode Eso committee it set up. At the end of its rule, the regime had condoned rather than try to curb corruption. The interim government's life was short-lived to make any impact on the society having been preoccupied with earning legitimacy. The efforts of the present administration are to all intents and purposes, haphazard, pretentious and selective, making it impossible to be considered serious, bearing in mind its desire to deal with corruption only onwards but not before (Coleman, 1998). Abacha launched War against Indiscipline and corruption (WAI-C) which dimmed out as soon as it was launched. The Head of state himself went into a looting spree.

By his overt-action, he encouraged his lieutenants to do likewise as he financially supported a political machinery to perpetuate himself in power. His looting spree appeared unprecedented which made Chief GaniFawehinmi to say; "Never can Nigeria have a leader with a passion to loot like Abacha" (National Concord, 1998).

CORRUPTION, LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Nigeria is one of the sub-Saharan African states that have been identified as being very corrupt. In fact, it is state that corruption runs rampant in Nigeria. Since independence in 1960 there has not been any administration, Civilian or military that has been adjudged corruption free. What has been the notable difference is the degree of corruption. The first republic collapsed in early 1966 when the military intervened ostensibly to stop, among other things, the spate of corruption with which regional and national government had been enmeshed. According to Nzeogwu, the aim of the revolutionary council is to establish a strong, united and prosperous nation, free from corruption and internal strife "our enemies are the political profiteers, the swindlers, the men in high and low places that seek bribes and demand ten percent, those that seek to keep the country divided permanently so that they can remain in office as ministers or VIP, at least, the tribalists, the nepotists, those that make the country that are big for nothing before international circles; those that have corrupted our society and put the Nigerian Calendar back by their words and deeds" (Nzeogwu,1981). Virtually every military administration since then hammered on the issue of corruption and the need to extirpate it from our system.

If Nzeogwu's dream was to rout the ten percents and make the bureaucrats and the political bosses more transparent and responsive to the needs of the society, that dream died with the failure of his revolutionary council to administer the country. Though Nigeria was to be under military rule for 13 years, thereafter the incidences of corruption increased. Undetected incidences of corruption according to a 1980 Ministry of Justice study were put about 87.5 percent of all reported cases. Except for the settlement of political scores, many cases of corruption are either dismissed or placed in the cooler after the reports of investigating commission have been submitted (Odunuga,2000). The sea on which the ship of our economy has been afloat and drifting because the rudder is in the hand of those who have failed to study the mechanics of turning the economy round. Because of the mess that has been made of the economy, Nigeria has today become a nation of salesmen since inflation which is about 70

percent at an annual rate and the high cost of borrowing has made the cost of production in Nigeria one of the highest in the world.

Real GDP which was about 7 percent a year in the 1980's dropped to 3.6 percent in the 1990's (Odunuga, 2000). Rather than patronize local products the average Nigerian goes for imported ones which are regarded as not only being relatively cheaper but qualitatively superior because local manufactures hardly find the foreign exchange needed to import vital equipment and machinery. The productive base of the economy is being constantly depleted by a large proportion of the imports which are mainly consumer goods. In the midst of this, those close to the executive arm had easy access to foreign exchange (Odunuga, 2000).

Any economy that is to be competitive on the international level will boast of basic infrastructure like water, electricity, communications facilities good transportation system and above all cheap skilled labour. Our inability to provide these coupled with the high rate of official corruption has forced investors to look for better profitable regimes for their capital. The Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) has been badly hit by this reality as about half of its 1,500 members have been forced to close since 1987 (Odunuga, 2000). The economic performance is a sad reflection on a nation that was once thought to be on the way to becoming an engine for growth in Africa because of the energy resources and the potential that ensure regular supply of oil at the current rate for the next 30 years.

Rather than tap our resources in good time and reap benefits there from, we let opportunities pass us by while engaging in political antics for over 25 years. We have flared off natural gas just because we believe we have huge reserves. It was only in 1993 that we succeeded, thanks largely to France which provided about \$4 million for the feasibility studies, in signing a multilateral agreement with Benin, Togo and Ghana for the laying of gas pipeline to supply-natural gas to these countries. Because of political crisis in Nigeria, the liquefied natural gas project could not take off because we could not raise the necessary funds - \$3.6 billion, though \$1.36 billion of it had been contributed by the shareholders as equity and deposited in an account (Odunuga, 2000). One of the problems at the Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas(NLNG) has to do with local politics. The frequent leadership turnover in the board has not endeared the project to would be investors.

Gamaliel Onosode's and Ahmed Joda's teams were not given a chance to prove their mettle as they were dissolved before they could get started because they had to make way for political

appointees who were being compensated for their loyalty. In business, such instability in leadership is a threat to business survival (Odunuga, 2000).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Corruption is a moral decadence that has eaten so deep into the fabric of the Nigerian political and social terrain. Nigerian society as a result has tint into difference direction and made a precarious conjuncture little wonder. Nigerian political scene has been reduced to a battlefield of battle contestants where by people fight to gain power and use same to oppress others and those who already have power do everything to keep it. The polity is made into a terrain of taking and not given. Over the years, measures as have been put in place to curb the moral decadence so inherent in the Nigerian society, but to no avail. Such measures as numerous as they are have not made any appreciable impact. For the purpose of this study emphasis would be limited to recent anti-corruption effort i.e. the anti-corruption bill of 1999. Social scientific concern with the problem of corruption in Nigeria started in the early eighties with 1982 Annual Conference of the Nigerian Anthropological and Sociological Association on "Corruption in Development". Subsequently, successive regimes have manifested varying interest in the matter, as the following documents would reveal. Proceedings of the national seminar on indiscipline and corruption and their adverse effects on the Nigerian society and economy; Report of the head of state's study group on law and order. Proceedings of the national conference on corruption and other Economic crime and Report of the national committee on corruption and economic crimes (Odekunle, 1991).

Consequently, the endemic prevalence of corruption in the country; its debilitating consequences on the economy and the society in all conceivable respects, the failure as well as the futility of existing control measures and mechanisms; and social scientific explanation for both the observed prevalence and the inappropriateness or inadequacy of control efforts have contained social - scientifically - anchored recommendations.

The thrust of these at providing political, economic and socio-cultural environment which can reduce the disposition towards, and opportunities for, corruption and related manifestation, and they contain measures aimed at improving laws against corruption as well as enhancing the enforcement of such laws.

The point here is that on this problem of corruption; our leadership and ruling elites have always been adequately well informed and have always known what needs to be done.

This knowledge notwithstanding, the situation has gone from bad to worse to the extent that Nigeria, in spite of its human and material resources, has been derisively referred to as 'poor and run by crooks' and rated by transparency international as one of the two most corrupt countries on the planet (Guest, 2000). These railing words against corruption have been unceasing and they have coupled with relentless insistences on honesty, transparency, probity and accountability in the conduct of government and public affairs. More significant however is that they have been observably matched indeed, through and productive review of large scale contracts and crude oil license awarded or granted, respectively, in the five months preceding the coming of the Obasanjo Administration, seeking and locating stolen public funds for return into the public treasury, blocking patent avenues for large-scale corruption, informing the public about foiled and sanctioned attempts by public officers to commit fraud or embezzlement, and submitting an omnibus Anti-Corruption Bill to the National Assembly (Guest, 2000: 2). The act of corruption within the Nigerian society has become a serious concern to the social crusaders and host of other public leaders that have interest of the nation at heart. The social scourge has given Nigeria a bad image both at home and abroad. Foreign investors do not trust genuine businessmen from Nigeria and therefore always feel reluctant to transact business with some people. Nigeria has been notorious for the international money laundering and over invoicing of import and export bills. This invariably has lowered the volume of export business to Nigeria.

Corruption in Nigeria manifest itself in virtually all aspects of our national life; it has crippled the local; state and federal government. Nigeria is one of the states in Africa that have been identified as being corrupt, and the corruption percentage degree continues to grow. Virtually, every administration professes to control corruption yet the problem continues unabated. Corruption under the military reaches the high echelon and has weakened the fabric of the nation. The present civilian administration has also embarked on anti-corruption crusade, how successful this would be only time can tell. However, this hydra cancer needs to be controlled to save the nation from international disgrace and national calamity. The following remedies are being suggested as means to reduce or curb corruption and corrupt practices:

- a. Confiscation of property of public officials found to be involved in wrongful acts
- b. Death penalty for siphoning of state money abroad.
- c. Jail sentences without fine option for offenders.
- d. Cancellation of election result based on corruption.

- e. Disqualification of public officers implicated in election mal-practices.
- f. Public disgrace and life jail for corrupt business barons.

Government needs to encourage positive virtues among Nigerians especially social ethical behaviour that can boost the morale of others.

- a. National Award for civil servants that show good morale behaviour i.e. attitude to work and honest in conduct.
- b. Improvement in the lower class ways of compensation as to minimize fraud within that class
- c. Motivation and ethical virtues promotion in the public sector.

Finally, the future of Nigeria as a sovereign nation is gloomy if government cannot control corruption effectively. Corruption will continue to weaken the sociological moral of Nigerian, stifle economic development and make Nigeria unstable if not nipped in the bud.

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