

## **Understanding Corruption in Nigeria and its Implications to National Security and Sustainable Development**

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**Abstract:** *Corruption in Nigeria is pervasive and has remained deeply entrenched and robust despite the seeming wars declared by successive regimes since its independence in 1960. Its enormous natural resources beneath the surface have encouraged the skewed socio-economic and political arrangement that induces corruption. After fifty years of independence, the different ethnic entities are still not fused together into one indivisible entity but remained diverse and competing forces that seek power to dominate, oppress, and exploit one another to satisfy personal and clannish interests. They also compete for cultural superiority; struggle for land and citizenship, and the quest to impose one religion on others. It is this attitude to outsmart one another that is also reflected in appropriating public funds and not seen as an unethical behaviour. Systemic corruption undermines developmental efforts in all ramifications as public funds are diverted into private pockets. It scares investors due to increase cost of doing business. It also induces mediocrity which has been responsible for the poor public civil service delivery, and also induces anger, bitterness, and hatred in those that have been alienated from the scheme of things, and has played a vital role in deteriorating law and order. It is recommended that since corruption starts from the mind, there should be a renaissance that would re-orient citizens' mind through education. Efforts should be made to address fear of ethnic domination, resource control and Nigeria to operate true federalism.*

**Key Words:** *systemic Corruption, Ethnic Entities, Competing Forces, Re-Orient, Federalism.*

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### **I. Introduction**

Corruption is an aged long global phenomenon that is not exclusive to any particular continent, region or country and found in different forms of government and economic systems including religious groups, except that the frequency and magnitude of occurrence and how it is tackled differs by countries. Ancient civilizations such as Egypt, Rome, Greece, down to the present such as Britain, America and China all have traces of widespread illegality, indiscipline and corrupt practices. Lipset and Lenz (2000) opined that corruption cut across all nations including religious faiths such as Christianity, Muslim, Hinduism, and Buddhism etc. It is also found in different political systems such as democracies, monarchy, feudal and authoritarian regimes as well as different economic systems such as capitalist, communist and socialist system.

There is a predominant impression worldwide that Nigeria has high reputation for corruption. And that it is infested with serial looters and fraudsters that are suffering from pathological mental and psychological disorder associated with irresistible compulsion to steal public funds with impunity, and manipulate rules, procedures and processes to their advantage. There are also other issues that paint a gloomy picture and give the country a bad image. It includes the activities of those who have no access to loot from the public treasury but need to survive so indulged in heinous and bizarre crimes such as ritual killings, kidnapping, terrorism, scammers, and armed robbery. Also there are those that vandalise and steal important government vital properties and installations. Peter Eigen, a former World Bank official, and equally the founder and Chairman of Transparency International pointed that the political elites and their cronies continue to take kickbacks at every opportunity. They are hand in glove with corrupt business people, and have trapped the whole nations in poverty and hampering sustainable development (TI 2002).

What makes Nigeria's case peculiar and irksome is that it is endowed with enormous natural and human resources and should have no reason to be poor. However, all these have not translated into a better life and high standard of living to a greater majority of its citizens. The exploitation of these enormous natural resources deposits beneath its surface and the standard of living of the greatest number of citizens are inversely and disproportionately related. The dreams and aspirations of many Nigerians have remained elusive even after 50 years it attained independence (1960) from the colonial masters.

To understand the nature of Nigeria corruption, it is necessary to know the circumstances and conditions that brought and kept the different ethnic groups forcefully together and their attitudes towards each other. Nigeria was a British creation and colony from the conglomerate of diverse ethnic groupings that became a beautiful bride because of her enormous natural and human resources suitable for exploitation. After independence, these diverse ethnic entities could still not fused together into one whole entity but remained

dispersed and competing centrifugal forces that seeks for power to dominate, oppress and exploit one another to satisfy personal and clannish interests in the same manner their colonial masters did. Also, deeply embedded within the culture and character of the people is the attitude to outsmart one another in every sphere of lives cultivated since the colonial period. These include competition for cultural superiority and dominance, struggle for political power and domination, land acquisition and control among various ethnic groups that usually resulting in violent conflict, and struggle to impose one religion on others. It is also reflected in public centres where people declined to queue up and wait for turns. It is this general attitude to outsmart one another that is reflected in appropriating (stealing) public funds and not seen as a crime or immoral behaviour. This is also encouraged by the admiration and approbation by the public to salute people with wealth and material things which command obeisance that gives the individual some sense of importance, fulfilment and larger than life status. The glory associated with this, inspires further accumulation of more wealth (mindlessly) regardless of the means to keep them afloat. Within this culture of competitive exploitation, and pecuniary success, amassing wealth through unethical means (corruption) is not seen as crime but as a mark of prowess and heroism necessary cross-over to the tiny community of power and affluence. Therefore, corruption is only a sign/symptom that reflects the character of the people and one of the many problems besetting the Nigeria nationhood.

Since independence, corruption has been one intractable vice that has continued to plague the country, and like other aspects of life has grown from strength to strength in diversity and intensity. It is hardly possible to differentiate between corruption as a crime and official conduct in Nigeria. One reasons always advanced by the military for coup d'état and counter coup from 1966 is corruption. What has characterised the Nigeria society are political profiteering, smuggling of goods into the country backed by those in positions of authority, racketeering, over invoicing of contract projects by government functionaries, political pandering and patronage, rent-seeking behaviour among the elites etc. Prof Jega succinctly pointed thus:

In spite of her human and natural resource endowments, the majority of Nigerians still lives in abject poverty. Public institutions are ill equipped and service delivery is poor. The theft of public funds has resulted in serious chaos. Nigeria's treasury looters and their allies are getting richer, while the masses are wallowing in abject poverty. In the public sector, a band of short-sighted and greedy elite, both military and civilian, have, within a decade, created, nurtured, and perpetuated the conversion of public treasury and national wealth for private uses. These elite eschewed transparency and abhorred rules and regulations, broken laws, violated due processes, and crudely stole from the public coffers (Aderonmu, 2011).

The career and pathology of corruption in Nigeria is widespread and systemic and has reached an alarming rate. It has footprints on the floor of public and private lives including the presidency that should be the epitome and symbol of purity and perfection and trickles down to other tiers of government. Every now and then, some politician, government official, business executives and other opportune individuals are being pilloried in the media, castigated in the church or booed in the streets for alleged massive financial misconducts, or appropriation of public funds or some kind of unwholesome attitude despite their religiosity. It has become necessary to conduct a clinical or theoretical psychoanalysis on those involved.

It is this situation that the former Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) boss Waziri Farida opined that "the extent of aggrandizement and gluttonous accumulation of wealth that I have observed suggests to me that some people are mentally and psychologically unsuitable for public office. The unbridled amassing of public wealth had reached a point of madness or some form of obsessive-compulsive psychiatric disorder" (Ogaga, 2010). Corruption has become so pervasive that the entire public service and state has turned into some form of a criminal enterprise. Corruption has been condoned in Nigeria public and private institutions that it is hardly possible to differentiate between corruption as a crime and official conduct as a policy. Those involved are not punished rather, they are idolised, worshipped, revered and honoured with chieftaincy titles and honoraries awards by the custodian of our value system. The general perception today is that government officials occupying public offices work for personal interest and aggrandizement rather than for the public good or interest. They see their places of work as a place to steal public funds or properties as part of their own share of the national cake.

Most rich citizens either public servants and private individuals in the country are noted and renowned for corrupt practices, influences and unethical conduct in the manner they conduct themselves either in their places of work, business or at home. Gwom (2011) opined that formal authority in Nigeria is ineffective and checks and balances in governance are not working. And that, despite the stupendous wealth in the country, majority of the youth lack or have low or no access to (quality) education and employment. This is made worst by the inexplicable wealth displayed arrogantly by those whose rise to fame could only be traceable to few moments of lawlessness or defiance of order rather than through hard work. It is these types of people most of the youth sees as models and learn from them even if they are not doing the right thing. Some of the super rich persons were former coup plotters turned Head of States and their retinue of appointees. Others are renowned fraudsters, drugs peddlers and human traffickers. Also, they are those who looted the ministries and parastatals

dry by taking advantage of the loose judicial and weak enforcement arms of government. The collective wealth of the people has been appropriated by a few opportunists.

Corruption in Nigeria is an enigma because ordinary citizens are always critical and condemn corruption at home, worship centres, schools, commercial vehicles, streets, offices, bars and clubs and cannot hide how much they abhor the phenomenon. But this only happens as long as they are at the lowest rung of the society. Their attitudes suddenly change as soon as they are given an opportunity to occupy any position of authority. They exhibit character worst than those they have been criticising before they are elevated to the new levels.

The consequences of this chronic white-collar kleptomaniac syndrome have been the major cause of economic backwardness, social disintegration and political unrest in the country. In other words, many commercial ventures are moribund and lying prostrate, or closed shops with some relocated to other countries, while public corporations are in comatose, or totally collapsed. What is common and easily noticeable are: decayed infrastructures, deplorable and inaccessible roads, poor electricity supply, and lack of essential amenities such as good healthcare and (quality) education. Public schools have over the years atrophied and access to even the poor educational system is very limited. Many citizens are pauperised, traumatic and in very serious critical conditions or circumstances. In addition, it has induced bitterness and hatred among the different ethnic groupings especially those highly marginalised thereby fuelling the desire to secede. It has also been the greatest threat to peace and security to the corporate survival of Nigeria by way of violent acts and terrorism. Moreover, it is reason for the international pariah status Nigeria and even its most credible citizens suffers when they are constantly harassed and embarrassed at the corridor of other countries. Corruption have thwarted and stifled Nigeria match to progress and prosperity.

## **II. Theoretical Perspective**

This paper is anchored on *pecuniary success* theory as expounded by Ekpo (1987) who noted that it is a socio-economic perspective that locates some aspect of human behaviour and attitude to the predominant values of the society. It as an ideology as well as a state of mind embodying certain supportive values and beliefs that influences the way and manner in which the individual respond to societal norms. For instance, the individual response to pecuniary success pressure is dictated by the socio-culture of any given society. The nature of socio-cultural values influences the pecuniary behaviour. For instance in contemporary Nigeria, emphasis is placed on abstract symbols of wealth and materialism. The central theme of the theory is that human behaviour is seen as a reflection of an emotional attitude (a predisposition) to certain stimuli in the society.

The relevance of this theory to Nigeria situation is based on the overemphasis placed on goals which such as symbolic wealth and materialism over the means with which they are obtained. For instance, Paper money, bonds, stocks etc tend to promote the flexibility of economic exchange in Nigeria socio-economic organisation without regards how all these are obtained. This explains the predominant aberrant behaviours in society.

Furthermore, is *Public choice* theory as developed by James Buchanan in association with Gordon Tullock. It is a theory that uses the principle of economics to explain political behaviour and decision making. It takes the same principles that economist uses to analyses people's actions in the market place and applies them to people's actions in collective decision making (Jane, 2012). James Buchanan defines public choice as politics without romance, noting that it is a wishful thinking to presume that participants in the political sphere aspire to promote the common good. Public choice theory like the economics of rational behaviour assumes that people are guided by their own self-interest rather than for the public. Thus, public officials are portrayed as benevolent public servants who act in public interest and carryout the will of the people. In tending to public affairs, voters, politicians and policy makers are supposed somehow to rise above their parochial concern. Nonetheless, the behaviours of these people show that they are only motivated by the goal of utility maximization (self-interests). The central theme of this theory is that politicians, bureaucrats and government officials are motivated by personal self choice, rather than to work for the public interest, and putting into practice the policies of government as efficient and effective as possible.

Within the context of Nigeria, government is seen as serving private or special interest group rather than public interests. The politicians and bureaucrats are supposed to be agent of the general public and act in their own interest. However that is not the case. Unless it is in the interest of the agent, they may not act in the interest of the principal. In Nigeria, politic is a game where self-interested businesses, labour unions, and government bureaucrats use the state to enrich themselves at the expense of the public. Government employees will not do their job unless they are paid to specifically to do a task. This is what is called a bribe and is a corrupt tendency.

### **III. Conceptualizing corruption**

Corruption (broadly defined) includes bribery, grafts, frauds, misappropriation, and rent collection. It can be categorized as political, economic, administrative, and judicial Falola (2008). Huntington argued that corruption takes place when a public servant is in defiance of prescribed or accepted norms, and breaking the rules to advance his or her own personal interests. This is the behaviour which deviates from the duties from one's public role because private pecuniary gains or violets rules against the exercise of certain types of private influence. Bayley (1966) argues that corruption, while being tied particularly to the act of bribery, is a general term covering the misuse of authority as a result of considerations of personal gain, which need not be monetary. It includes behaviour such as bribery where a public official accept gifts from thankful members of the public for rendering services which does not count as gratitude but as bribes; nepotism which is the use of the power to advance friends and clannish interests; misappropriation of public funds or resources which is meant for the benefit of the public illegally for private use thereby depriving them of it (Nkosinathi, 1995). Corruption is the dishonest and improper use of one's power or position for personal gains. This includes such behaviour as bribery that is if a public official accepts gifts from thankful members of the public for services rendered; nepotism which is the use of official power to advance the interests of friends or of a member of one's family; misappropriation which is illegal appropriation of public resources for private use; and theft which is taking money or property meant to benefit the public with the intention of permanently depriving the public of it.

Corruption is the perversion from good to bad. It involves the violation of established rules for personal gains and profit. It is the efforts to secure wealth or power through illegal means and private gain at public expense or misuse of public power for private benefit (Lipset & Lenz). It includes such behaviour as bribery (use of a reward to pervert the judgment of a person in a position of trust); nepotism (bestowal of patronage by reason of ascriptive relationship rather than merit); and misappropriation (illegal appropriation of public resources for private uses (Banfield 1961). Osoba (1996) noted that corruption is an "anti-social behaviour conferring improper benefits contrary to legal and moral norms, and which undermine the authorities" to improve the living conditions of the people.

El-Rufai (2003) viewed corruption as covering a wide range of social misconducts which include fraud, extortion, embezzlement, bribery, nepotism, influence peddling, bestowing of favour to friends, rigging of elections, abuse of public property, the leaking of government secrets, and sale of expired and defective goods such as drugs, food, and electronic and spare parts to the public etc. Corruption is any kind of behaviour which deviates from the norms actually in a given society that is motivated by private gain at public expense or any other's interest. It includes many possible wrong acts or vices against other persons or the community or even oneself. It includes stealing public funds, receiving bribes, seeking gifts, money, or advantages other than the lawful salary for performance of public duties. From the above definitions, corruption is seen from the political angle which excludes other act of misdemeanour in public offices and in private life. Corruption impairs of integrity, virtue, or moral principles. It denotes decay and depravity in whatever form.

### **IV. The Contour of Corruption in Nigeria**

Over the decades, corruption continues to go unbridled, and painfully it trickles down from the highest levels of state authorities and institutions to the common man on the streets taking on different forms. Here are some ways corruption has been conducted but not limited to the following:

- ❖ The lowly paid employees are bribe to facilitate the procurement and provision of public services, people to escape from the law, or to protect specific interests. Sometimes, files missed because those responsible refused to grease the palms of those moving them.
- ❖ There is grand corruption perpetuated by the bureaucrats and politicians. For example, the Heads of Ministries Department and Agencies (MDAs) are noted to execute over invoiced contract by proxy. There are also cases of illegal deductions and late payment of employee's salaries, besides inclusion of ghost workers in payment vouchers to defraud the government. In January, the federal government decided to centralise payment of workers and discovered that it was losing over N100billion naira monthly to 45,000 ghost workers in 120 MDAs. Similar, the Nigeria parliament is noted for allocating huge unwarranted budget to itself and padding and approving the budgets of these MDAs in agreement of a certain percentage cut to it.
- ❖ Nigeria public corporations generate funds and not remit it to the public treasury. In a very recent investigation conducted by the parliament it discovered about N6.2 trillion unremitted revenues in the accounts of NNPC, and it could not give accurate account of crude oil production and shipments in 2012. This same practices applies to the Nigeria Port Authority (NPA,), Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) etc.
- ❖ In most instances, the private sector colludes with government officials in shoddy deals to transfer public resources/funds to themselves thereby defrauding the state. This is known in economic literature as rent-seeking. For instance, in January, 2012, the government was forced to reveal the shoddy deals in oil and gas

industries in the form of oil subsidies. It was discovered that the government was paying trillions of naira to independent oil marketers for petroleum products not imported.

- ❖ Another most salient point is the activities prevalent in the allocation of state acquired lands in competitive areas such as Lagos, Abuja Port Harcourt etc, cheaply to cronies, mafia groups, private interests or land and properties developers who will subsequently sell it at a premium prices to prospective seekers for home or commercial purposes.
- ❖ In addition, there have been instances where public corporations are sold and handover to fictitious buyers claiming to be big registered companies in Britain or United States without payments of concession price. For example is Nigeria Telecommunication (NITEL). They deplete the corporations' funds and assets while staff remunerations and allowances remained unpaid for years. Equally, commercial licenses are issued and loans from government banks are obtained and will wilfully default in payments with impunity.
- ❖ Though not a new trend in Nigeria, very often jobs are not advertised or even if they are, it is to fulfil all righteousness. Specifically there are ration or allocated to those in power and some are given to the highest bidders. For instance, recently, accusations are made against the immediate past Controller of Immigrations Services (NIS) for employment racketeering. Recently, in a plenary session some senators brought to the fore employment irregularities carried out by job syndicates that represent Heads of government organisations. Senator Abubakar had an experience through one of his constituents and raised the motion which was supported by senator Bagudu who also had a direct experience with one of his constituents as well requesting N400,000 naira from him. In a statement credited to the immediate past Immigration Boss, Mrs. Uzoma Chinyere she admitted that she apportioned many jobs slots to persons in the inner sanctum of power including the mother of President Goodluck Jonathan, while some slots were auction out to job seekers (The Nation 2013). It is curious that prospective jobs seekers that have stayed home for over five years after graduation from school are asked to pay as much as between four to five hundred thousand naira (USD 3205,000 dollars) when the minimum wage of an average Nigeria public servant is eighteen thousand naira (USD 115 dollars).
- ❖ In addition, there have been wide spread corruption such as nepotism, favouritism carried out in government organisations combined with deliberate maladministration of the public sector to attain personal gains. The massive corruption has been nourished by the interests of the buccaneer system structured into the socio-political and economic system advertently or inadvertently.
- ❖ Corruption is also conducted by academia at the ivory tower through admission racketeering and by way of sorting (giving unmerited scores to students after examinations) after collecting gratification from the students. The unfortunate thing is that the security officers that ought to be the watch dog of the society are neck deep in all of these.

### **Risk Factors of Corruption**

Corruption occurs in many forms in Nigeria. Here are some reasons that have promoted corruption the country but not limited to these.

### **V. Greedy and Corrupt Leadership**

Greed and corruption are the major malaises plaguing Nigeria since its independence in 1960. Nigeria has for decades been characterized by predatory and rapacious behaviour of the elites whose attitudes have been based on parochial mindedness which hinges on ascriptive values such as filial or clannish relationships thereby subordinating collective interests to narrow personal and tribal interests. These buccaneer elites are scattered throughout its political landscape. They indulge in deception and falsehood to sabotaged and plunder the economy with impunity and rendering it prostrate. To cover up, it is the same elites that often manufacture spectacular scenarios of anti-corruption campaign through programs and policies and advertised to the International Community who are scared of investing in the country due to its cost on business. Yet, within the system they create loopholes to escape and undermine anti-corruption efforts. Apter (2004) pointed that Nigeria officials are by nature experts in the act of double speaking about corruption in general. There are corrupt, but yet try to maintain a clean image.

From all intent and purpose, the main aim Governance is solely to seek opportunity for rent-seeking for personal aggrandizement. It seems the entire state machinery exists only to siphon off cash and many functions of government have been adapted mainly for personal gains. Vanda (2010) noted that seeking political position is to get access to the state is in order to control rents from various means which may include legal, semi-illegal, or outright illegal economies. The governing elites then will define or redefine what constitutes illegal economic behaviour and selectively issue exemptions from law enforcement and prosecution to families, friends, and its network of clients.

The Nigeria state has become a mafia-like bazaar where anyone with official designation pillage the country at will. President OLusegun Obasanjo shocked the world when he pardoned Salisu Buhari who had

amass wealth working for the then Nigeria Electric Power Authority (NEPA) and came to head the lower chambers of the parliament with forged certificates and perjury despite his apparent campaign to transform Nigeria into a corrupt free society (Dike, 2002).

## **VI. Political Conundrum**

Leadership recruitment system in Nigeria has been deliberately faulty. Throughout its political development history, positions of authority have never been occupied by those who are disciplined, best qualified and deliberately seek for elective post through the ballot box (popular acclamation). For instance, the military dominated the political scene through coup d'état and counter coups d'état and rule the country for over three decades. Political appointment has been through forceful candidate imposition by self-anointed power brokers. For instance, the 1993 presidential election supposedly won by the late Moshood Kashimawo Abiola through popular decision at a seemingly free and fair election was annulled and denied the opportunity. After prolonged political impasse, General Olusegun Obasanjo (retired) was imposed on Nigerians by the northern hegemony (mafias) whom himself also ensured that all qualified contestants to various positions who were not his choice where schemed out during his entire regime. In 2007, he unilaterally imposed the late President Musa YarÁdua known to be of ill-health as President and Goodluck Jonathan a naive and political greenhorn as Vice President on Nigerians as a parting gift ostensible for their denial of his fraudulent third term bid.

Moreover, many political leaders including parliamentarians did not win their elections from their states and constituencies respectively through popular wise choice based on assessment of their character, competence and selflessness. A small cable of people always ensures that those that are recruited are far low qualified in all ramifications. This is so because rather than seeing the failures of the preceding leaders, will be all too grateful for the opportunity given them and any idea of probing their past will never be contemplated. This set of people are often overwhelmed by the enormity of the task of managing state affairs as large as Nigeria and will always run back to those that aided their entry for advice that never worked.

Similarly, appointments into positions of authority into Ministries Departments and Agencies (MDAs) are seen as compensations to those that must have contributed immensely during the struggle (campaigns) with the hope of recouping from it and to those that would be servile and play to the gallery. This is why state affairs have been turned to personal fief, and why Nigerians have witnessed series of corruption probes and indictment of prominent politicians and reports swept under the carpet and do not see the light of the day. Ultimately, this arrangement and set of people will continue to invest and spread wrong values and principles throughout the entire system.

## **VII. Bad Policies Encourages Corruption**

Bad official policy can have a negative influence and act as a source of corruption in the society. For example, when President Olusegun Obasanjo banned the importation of used cars above five years from their year of manufacture without viable option to cater for people's need had a negative impact on the fight against corruption. Businessmen (importers) were forced to bribe the Nigeria Custom officials to allow cars of that categories enter into the country. Equally, the activities of border runners and illegal routes increased and became lucrative causing the state to lose huge revenue through import duties.

Furthermore, international policies and law of illicit drug control has also promoted the culture of corruption in Nigeria. Since the antinarcotics agency was established, the common and persistent issue is the cases of underhand dealings by officers of the organisation including those in helm of affairs. Robert (2002) pointed that the international laws influence by the rich countries prohibiting drug may seem to produce a scarcity value irresistible to producers, smugglers, and dealers. The government and the civil society in the third world are often undermined, sometimes destroyed by the violence and corruption that goes with the drug trade. The issue of illicit drug control has boosted the culture of corruption in Nigeria.

## **VIII. Limited job Opportunities**

Though many Nigerians are high achievers and oriented people however, they have relatively low access to economic opportunities. Lipset and Lenz, (2000) pointed that many people goes through the back door (corrupt system) to achieve their objectives because they have little or no access to opportunity. This could be as result of race, ethnicity, lack of skills and capital. These conditions are incentive for criminal and corrupt practices in the country. The culture that stress economic successes as an important goal, nevertheless, strongly restrict access to opportunity will have high levels of corruption. Hindrance of economic opportunities could induce one to commit crime.

## **IX. Poor Reward System**

A major incentive for corruption in Nigeria is the poor reward system in it national life. For instance, there are no incentives or appropriate reward system for dedicated and hard working people both at government

and community levels. Equally, there is no consequence for wrong doing especially for those from the ruling class or the rich. Remunerations in the civil service are dismally low and lately paid, so also benefits and allowance are low or non-existent. The effect is that with the culture of refusal, or delays in payment of services rendered businesses yield low turnover because they depend on the workforce to patronise them. Many of these civil servants working without pay are parents, who are expected to train their children in schools with empty wallet. The inability for a public servant to send a child to a good school, have access to healthcare, and own a home after 35 years of service or at the age of retirement at 65 years can only encourage such officials to develop unethical means (socially accepted norms) to achieve all these. Many Nigerians are aware of lowly paid nature of jobs but take them with the hope of making something extra out of it.

#### **X. Family pressure**

Nigeria as an African country practice extended family system which could bring pressure to bear on those who are opportune to be (gainfully) employed. In Nigeria, people's attachments and loyalty is geared more towards groups or social cleavages and relatives and those who become successful in the public sector or in the exchange economy are expected to share their benefits with their extended families and ethnic cleavage. In order to meet the needs of love ones and relations civil servants go extra-mile in their official capacity to advance their interests. One of the means to achieve this is to circumvent rules and have advantage to accumulate funds. Onalaja (1997) opined that peer community and extended family pressures, polygamous household are part of the reason for corruption in the society. The influence of the extended family system and pressure to meet family obligations are predominant in less developed countries. Corruption is linked to the strong family values involving intense feelings of obligation. Apter (1963) averred that public servants are obliged to share the proceeds of their public offices with their kinfolks. (Alam (1989) opined that civil servant may engage in corrupt activities in an effort to meet personal obligations to members of family or ethnic group.

Many kinsmen see government officials as holding necessary avenues for their personal survival and this that puts pressure on government officials. In Nigeria civil servants are known and believe to exploit their public positions to generate benefits for themselves, families, ethnic or social cleavage. Extended family system places significant pressures on civil servant forcing them to engage in corruption and nepotism. Friends and kinsmen seeking favour from government officials have imposed difficult strains on their ethical disposition.

#### **XI. Society's Attitude towards Pecuniary Success**

The decay and collapse of family and societal value systems, and the get-rich-quick syndrome without hard work is responsible for corruption in the land. The quest for wealth is overwhelming, so much so that the daily struggle by Nigerians is towards money. In present day Nigeria, success is not measured by one's inventions, or on services rendered to humanity or advancing society's development but by the number of expensive cars, houses and other material wealth a person owns. The desires and aspirations of many average citizens is the craze for ostentatious life style, cravings for conspicuous consumption of expensive (foreign) goods, owning (expensive) Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV) as a sign of status symbols.

In the country today, the society's socio-economic and political arrangement is where the social norms, custom and attitudes of the people are geared towards wealth and materialism, and is deep. For instance, paper money, bonds, stocks and expensive properties tend to promote social status, political power and the flexibility of economic exchange in Nigeria than anything else. The public approbation to high academic achievers without wealth is infinitely far less than the standing ovation given to a renowned criminals. People indulged in over-ambitious crimes to meet up with the society's standard of success in life.

In present day Nigeria, sending ones' children to foreign schools is a prestigious thing to do; shopping and buying exotic homes in choice areas in countries such as Dubai UK, USA and South Africa is fashionable; and receiving medical attention overseas hospitals is a highly glorious thing this days and are indications of an achiever and/or successful life. The worst is that even the religious institutions are also recipients of corrupt gains.

The society rather than castigating and asking for punishment for crime offenders they rather idolised, worshipped, revered and honoured them with chieftaincy titles and honoraries awards by the custodian of the value systems. A great number of people have forgotten the aged long African traditional moral values due to senseless quest for status. Under this condition many citizens would ignore societal norms and criminally innovate ways to make ends meet (Dike, 2002). A nation with inverted socio-cultural values is certainly going to produce class of rogues including those in government circle. Where hard work is not rewarded and rogues are glorified only serves to breed corruption.

#### **XII. State Responses to Corruption in Nigeria**

Corruption in Nigeria is not a new phenomenon. It has been one of the main reasons for coup d'état and counter coup. Every successive governments that came to power experimented and put various measures

through policies and programmes geared towards eradicating corruption in Nigeria but ended up to be more corrupt than the preceding one.

The primary legal instruments used in fighting corruption in Nigeria include the Criminal Code used prior to 1966 when Nigeria went into the civil war. However, due to its narrow nature in dealing with corruption cases such as criminalizing the conduct of bribe-taking by the public servants only leaving the private citizens involved, it was replaced by the Criminal Justice (Miscellaneous provision) Decree in 1966. This however, failed to stem the tide of corruption because the rules had loopholes and people were escaping punishment on technical grounds. It was then that the Code of Conduct was thereafter enshrined in the 1979 constitution where complaints on corrupt practices are referred to Code of Conduct Bureau Tribunal. Some of the rules stipulated by the Code of Conduct Bureau include:

- a) Forbids public officers from simultaneously receiving remuneration of two public offices and from engaging in private practices while in the employment of government.
- b) The code also barred public servants from accepting gifts or benefits in kind for themselves or any other person on account of anything done or omitted to be done in the discharge of their duties.
- c) It also prohibited public officers from maintaining or operating foreign bank accounts.
- d) Public officers are required to declare their assets and those of their families immediately after taking office, at the end of every four years in office, and at the end of their terms.

There were other programmes and policies such as the Judicial Commission of Inquiry; the Code of Conduct Bureau; Public Complaint Commission; Mass Mobilization, Social Justice, and Economic Recovery (MAMSER). National Open Apprenticeship, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) create in 1989, and money laundry act of 1995 re-enacted in 2005, Advance Fee Fraud (419), and Related Offences Act of 1995, to prosecution and convicting of high ranking administration officials. But none seems to have yielded the desired results.

In 1970s, the Murtala/Obasanjo military regime declared war on corruption with the introduction of Jaji declaration and many reforms in the civil service were carried out. Particularly noted was that which encouraged political office holders to be of low profile, and prohibiting the use of government vehicles except for official functions and time only. The crusade made much impact, but was short lived with the assassination of the Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the army General Murtala Mohammed.

In 1979, elections were conducted and power was handed over to Alhaji Shehu Shagari who introduced the Ethical Revolution in 1981. His administration was accused of being inept with high magnitude of corruption in his government, besides lacking policy direction (Suberu 1994). Unbridled corruption among the political class continued in grand style which led to military takeover by the duo of Buhari/Idiagbon in 1984. This brought to an end abruptly the second attempt of the republican government. The hallmark of their regime was the introduction of the War Against Indiscipline (WAI) in their quest to ride the country of corruption. Their stern approach on the issues of indiscipline arouses public consciousness, fear and good behaviour in public life. However, some members in the military fold were not comfortable with this new development and once again, a coup was hashed which led to their overthrow.

In 1985, Ibrahim Babangida took over power and set up committees on corruption and other economic crimes, but his administration never declared any outright war on corruption. Notably, he created the Mass Mobilization for Social Justice and Economic Recovery (MAMSER), National Open Apprenticeship (NOA), the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in 1989. However, he was perceived and alleged to have institutionalised corruption in Nigeria. In 1994, Abacha took over power in a bloodless palace coup and introduced War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAI-C). At the end he was reputed to have stolen more money than his predecessors. He stacked money in foreign bank accounts. These anti-corruption campaigns do not achieve any significant changes as they remained at the level of rhetoric. General Abdulsalam Abubakar took over power after death of General Sanni Abacha in a mysterious circumstance in 1998 and could not address the issue of corruption as he retained most of the military officers who looted the national treasury with General Abacha. He was alleged to have looted funds in trucks but was overlooked because he quickly conducted election that brought General Olusegun Obasanjo (Rtd).

When General Olusegun Obasanjo (Retired) took over power in May 1999, he identified corruption as the number one enemy and challenger to Nigeria quest for development. He told Nigerians that corruption was the major clog in the wheel of Nigeria's development and that until the social menace is eradicated, development will continue to elude Nigeria. In his inaugural speech in May 1999, he vowed to fight corruption to a standstill. He noted thus: "corruption will be tackled head-on. No society can achieve its full potential if it allows corruption to become a full-blown cancer it has in Nigeria". He equally promised that there will be no sacred cow to be spared as he fights corruption in Nigeria. Consequently, his government put in place different anti-corruption initiatives to deal with the problem. These include the establishment of anti-corruption institutions and legal frameworks such as the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other related Offences Act (ICPC) in 2000 and the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) created in 2003 was charged with the

responsibility of investigating, arresting and charging any offenders with corrupt practices either economic or financial crimes in Nigeria to court (Abiodun2007). He also established the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiatives (NEITI); the Public Procurement Act; the Fiscal Responsibility Act, and Due Process (Aderonmu, 2000). President Obasanjo's government also established anti-corruption departments in some of the federal ministries and parastatals. He rounded up his anti-corruption initiatives with the establishment of the Technical Unit on Governance and Anti-Corruption Reforms (TUGAR) (Ibrahim, 2003). It was expected that all these will sanitised the country and offenders would be grossly punished. Regrettably, all these beautiful programmes, policies, and strategies made no impact in the fight against corruption in Nigeria. For three consecutive years 2000-2003, Transparency International Perception Index continue to ranked Nigeria 2nd highest on corruption in the world. Aderonmu (2000) opined that the unimaginable greed, obtuse and prodigious in theft, arbitrariness, contempt for the rule of law and fundamental human rights, selective investigation of corrupt allegations, and poor handling of the economy were only a few of the woes that Nigerians experienced under Obasanjo's administration. Surprisingly, at the end of his administration, investigations revealed massive acts of corruption against him. For instance, he waived due processes in awarding contracts to his friends, family, and political allies. About US\$16 billion dollars was sunk in power projects without any result, N200billion was allocated for road construction and rehabilitation as the case maybe, but nothing came out of it. Worst was when he shocked the world by pardoning Salisu Buhari who had amass wealth (fraudulently) working for NEPA and come to Head the lower chambers of the Parliament with forged certificates and perjury despite his apparent campaign to transform Nigeria free from corrupt (Dike, 2002). Today, he is a super rich Nigerian that even Ibrahim Babangida could not leave to envy and confessed he (Obasanjo) made more money in one year than he did in eight years (Idumange 2011). His Anti-corruption bodies have been very weak, and largely served as a mechanism for purging domestic opposition instead of cleaning up deficient institutions. Anti-corruption drives has registered little or no systematic effects as notorious corruption continues to be robust and pervasively entrenched over a decade after the end of Sani Abacha's regime

There have been vapid portrait of disgraceful efforts of the various administrations to eradicated corruption in Nigeria. This include from the mundane to the ridiculous. The political leaders whom themselves are the major culprits in corruption cases often advocates for national prayers as means of fighting corruption. The religious leaders are not left of this charade. This is ludicrous as it is devoid of practical measures.

Moreover, has been dis-ingenious idea to take corruption campaigns to secondary schools in order to educate and inform the young ones of the evils of corruption as a means of fighting corruption from its foundation. This is a misnomer because the youth are not the problem and are not the ones directly involved in corruption practices. Obi (2008) pointed that focusing on young people can be a waste of time as these same youths are going to grow up to seek membership in an adult world they do not control. The price for that membership is conformity. And at this time most of the ideals of the youth that do not fit into the realities of the adult world must be discarded. The adult world of the Nigerians (establishment) knows its benefits from the corrupt condition of society. Changing those conditions will have to come from the adult world and not the youth. By the time the youth comes of age and begins to seek admittance into that adult world, it is not change that will be uppermost in the youths' mind, but acceptance and success. Unless they are prepared to define their own success and remain outside the mainstream, which the possibility is slim, the youth must conform. By the time the youths manage to gain that acceptance into the adult world, most of the anti-corruption tenets drummed into them in schools will have been washed out of them or at best watered down considerably.

### **XIII. Reasons for Failed Fight against Corruption**

There have also been anti-corruption shenanigans of the various administrations in the fight against corruption over the years in Nigeria. Here are some factors to be considered:

- ❖ The lack of the political will on the part of the government in the fight against corruption. The retired appellate court judge saddled with the responsibility of fighting and winning battles against official corruption in Nigeria was lamented both his personal and his organization's frustration over the way the Obasanjo administration has been treating the issue of anti-corruption campaign in the last four years (Guardian 2004) just as the current Chairman of the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission, (ICPC) Mr. Ekpo Nta (Daily Trust, 2013). Both at different instances said the administration has shown lack of political will to fight corruption because the commission has been perennially under-funded hence there has not been anyone convicted for any corruption act.
- ❖ Again, the organisations' ability has been deliberately hamstrung with limited judicial powers and scope in operations. The hands of the agency are tied together behind its back. One of the limitations for the agency is that, it has no power to investigate public officers who served before June 2004 when it was created no matter the weight of evidence against them. According to the chairman, he noted that even if the commission receives complaints about these people who had earlier held offices in the past, there is little or nothing the commission could do because it cannot investigate any corrupt practices that occurred before the

commission was established. Noting that, "...the law does not permit me to investigate President Babangida and other military heads of state or any suspected corrupt public officers who served before June 2000 in this country (Ihenacho, 2012). The Independent and Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and its sister organization, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, (EFCC), giving the fact that the laws establishing them have been intentionally skewed to have very limited application so as to adequately protect some corrupt individuals. Besides, they cannot initiate prosecution except an allegation is made by another with overwhelming evidence. The anti-corruption agencies are docile which merely bark without biting. It is not surprising because they operate under the apron of the same leaders who created them and are the same people that stole and are stealing our money with reckless abandon.

- ❖ Moreover, the officers who are responsible for the handling of corruption cases are hopelessly more corrupt than any other agency in Nigeria and made worst with the corrupt and opaque judicial system. The complicated nature of judicial process, counter accusation which is a cobweb like litigations that are difficult to disentangled. In most instances, the judiciary even challenge the legality of the anti corruption agencies. They have been muzzled through the skewed statute establishing it and bogged down by the corrupt and chameleon-like Nigerian judiciary.
- ❖ Within the Nigeria society there is polarisation between the elitist class which have the economic, political, and bureaucratic power, and then, the ordinary citizens who are constantly losing whatever they had favourable to the elites. Nigeria practice political bourgeois democracy system where state resources are appropriated by a handful of persons at the expense of the masses- the proletariats. In bourgeois democracy, the poor are deliberately created to continue to sustain the rich. There is also the comprador bourgeoisie who serve as cronies and fronts to protect foreign interest even at the expense of the domestic economy. This system generally encouraged the use of state police to ruthlessly quell any uprising and clampdown on the defenceless poor protesting corruption of the elitists' class and ensure they do not attempt it again. Such brutal uses of force instil fear on the poor.
- ❖ In Nigeria, there is hyper-sensitivity on issues of ethnicity and religion has been used by the elites to forestall the fight against corruption. They are often used and exploited by the elites to protect themselves from charges of misappropriation or looting of public funds. For instance, a former governor of one of the States in the Niger Delta who blindly stole his state funds was defended, protected until he escaped arrest to Dubai by high power security officials when he was asked to answer questions regarding how he managed the State funds for eight years hence nothing on ground to show for the huge revenue that accrues to it within the period. Similarly, there are instances where politicians will misinform their constituencies that they are being hated and hunted for being a faithful of a particular religion when they are asked to give account of public funds allocated to the offices they occupied. Today, most of them shout loudest of federal government neglect and quick to blame high employment for the terrorist and criminal activities among the array of youth in their areas.
- ❖ Globalisation has equally compounded the problem because large sums of money can easily be laundered through the new financial banking system which can be operated in any part of the globe. This makes it difficult for this money to be tracked. Besides, the banks do not cooperate by reporting most of these people because they survive on this illegal money which is usually huge that keep them afloat.
- ❖ Besides the fact that the presidency had not demonstrated the political will to fight corruption outside lips service, many Nigerians are mandarins who do everything to stifle the implementation of government policies. They work hard to ensure that public policies do not work so they can convince government to privatize everything (Idumange, 2010). Thus, it is difficult for the same group of persons who appropriate the commonwealth cannot turn out to be poverty alleviators of the poor they help to create.
- ❖ Furthermore, the government of the day is jumpy and unable to address issues of corruption. For instance, by temperament the President lacks the character (willpower) and is not politically minded either by the definition of the classical Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle or from the perspective of the Nigeria murky political ethics. As a shoeless growing boy (like many of us) rose from the creeks of the oppressed minority Niger Delta area whose environment have been degraded by the lacked-integrity Multi-national oil companies of the US and UK in collaboration with the scrupulous government officials. Certainly he will be naive and lacking the clout, the will and temerity to question the status quo (note that he recently declined to declare his assets as required by the law). Already, he is lost in the euphoria of the opportunity and the perks provided by the exulted office, and too grateful to the erstwhile Emperor President and self acclaimed kingmaker Olusegun Obasanjo (an interloper) and his likes that anointed him as the chosen one. With popular acclamation, (though the dreams and hopes have remained elusive) he was already luxuriating being the President of the most 'powerful' Black Country, and deliberately or not unmindful of the consequence that those that were bankrolling his political campaigns are investors (political entrepreneurs) and are members of the buccaneer club whom he must dance to their tunes. Today he is a

captive and prisoner of conscience. Again, with earnest desire for second term, he cannot contemplate toppling the applecart.

- ❖ Another issue is the culture of corruption cultivated through long years of convenience. In Nigeria, it remains convenient for the elites in this country to tolerate corruption because it gives them advantage of amassing wealth without much I do. It is a convenience built-up over a period of more than 50 years about a decade and a half before independence.
- ❖ Those who design anti-corruption war are the very ones involved in the acts and so do not mean business when they say they are fighting corruption. Osoba (1996) noted that all measures against corruption have failed because they have operated at the level of symbolism. Those waging the war on corruption are themselves corrupt. It is difficult to find leaders who can change the moral tone of the country. Government domination of the economic sphere significantly enhances opportunities and ability to seek rents.
- ❖ In Nigeria, many people have attributed some constitutional constraints inhibiting the prosecution of some political office holders such as the immunity clause in the constitution. They alleged that it has prevented some political office holders from prosecution while they are still in office. This may be true in part because they have not explained why those people could not be prosecuted after leaving offices. For instance, over thirty ruling Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) governors were investigated and accused of massive corruption during the time of anti-corruption czar Nuhu Rubadu, but none of them have been prosecuted or called to answer questions in the mismanagement of their states' finances. Most of the corruption cases are swept under the carpet after the initial storm.
- ❖ Again, the attitude of the defence lawyers in frustrating corruption trails by using court injunctions and counter injunctions as delay tactics to stall or forestall trails resulting in congestion of corruption cases, slow pace of court proceeding, or forgetfulness as the issue lost stem by the public needs to be factored into the calculus.

#### **XIV. Effects of Corruption to the Nigeria Society**

Corruption has far and wide ranging implications for both the government and the society in significant ways. An endemic culture of corruption has vices perpetuated by Nigeria leaders had contributed and continued to pose obstacles to the realization of socio-economic development, human rights, welfare and security for the Nigerian people.

- ❖ Systemic corruption is the major source of development failure (efforts) in Nigeria and Africa as a whole. Equally, it has undermined the country's economic and political influences in African and vulnerable. Fagbadeo averred that a failed, corrupt, and inept leadership have plunged Nigeria development performance into the abyss (Khan, 2008). Similarly, Tunku Abdul Aziz, the Vice-Chairman of Transparency International asserted that corruption continues to deny the poor, the marginalised, and the least educated members of every society the social, economic and political benefits that should properly accrue to them (TI 2002). A society where corruption and graft are institutionalized and generally accepted as a norm will hardly progress in anything.
- ❖ Corruption has rendered state institutions prostrate, dysfunctional and some moribund. It has been responsible for the weak institutions that cannot function effectively, resulting to Nigeria slow social development and economic growth. It has shackled the economy which leads to the inflation, unemployment, abandoned projects, epileptic electricity supply, road accidents, and lack of portable drinking water, absence of and affordable health care system, poor infrastructures. It has also denied millions of Nigerians access to the most basic health and education services and greatly reduced the life expectancy of its citizens.
- ❖ Corruption perverts fairness and justice and has played a pivotal role to deteriorate law and order in the country. It is responsible for fuelling hatred and bitterness which has resulted in violent crimes such as assassinations, attack on the security agencies especially the police. When people are denied access to justice and fair hearing, they resort to self-help project to address their grievances. It is believed in many quarters that the activities of Boko Haram, and Niger Delta Militants that has threatened the unity of the country is as result of injustice, and marginalisation.
- ❖ Corruption induces mediocrity and has been responsible for the poor public civil service delivery in the country. This is because those that have the required qualification and experience for employment are not given jobs for lack of either lack of money to pay for such jobs or lack of godfather to assist them. Equally promotions and appointments are not given to those that merit it because do not play by the 'rules' of the game. At the end rogues and criminals can be sponsored for such jobs and the implications are better imagined.
- ❖ Corruption undermined and stifled developmental efforts in all ramifications because it increases the cost of doing business. The implication is that investors are scared away because they only invest were there are sure of good returns. Again, it has limited opportunity for job openings over the years because investments

in real projects such as the Ajakuta Steel Mill, oil refineries and Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) that are engine of economic growth have been neglected. They have been turned white elephant projects that have witnessed billions of naira sunk in for turn-around maintenance and rejuvenate them by every successive administration in vain but used as a conduit pipe to siphoned money for personal gain.

- ❖ Consequence upon the foregoing, the country has experience brain-drain because of lack of opportunities or poor condition of service and low remunerations. The young intelligentsias and other professionals desperately seek to leave the country in search of greener pastures overseas. It is very common that the elites that kill this country meet with Nigeria professionals such as engineers, scientists, and medical doctors when they go for medical checkups in foreign hospitals, holidays or shopping spree and are reported to be doing very well over there.
- ❖ More seriously corrupt practices favours or gives advantage to persons or groups over the others. This has induced anger, bitterness, and hatred among those that have been alienated from the scheme of things and favour especially when they feel they are qualified or entitle to it. This applies to persons, ethnic groups or among individuals working in the same organisation. Many people that have been affected negatively by this phenomenon feel so alienated and lose any sense of belonging.
- ❖ The consequence is that it has further widened the ethnic divide, increase political tension that is threatening the unity of the country. The agitation and attempt to divide this country is because many people are having no sense of belong in a country where there is so much to go round.

### **XV. Recommendations**

Considering the endemic nature of corruption in the nation and the calibre and personalities sponsoring and fostering it, to effectively combat it, a new thinking that borders on the revolutionary process is indispensable.

- ❖ Corruption impairs integrity, virtue, and moral principles. These moral burden and crisis posed the greatest challenge to leaders. Electing credible leaders this is the most critical area which the political reform via credible elections should focus on. Free, fair and credible elections of leaders to run the affairs of the country are indispensable here. The leaders must first realise the gross implication and threat this unwholesome corruption posed to the nation and work towards a new thinking and a turning point. Those who occupy public offices should be men who have the character, competence, compassion and commitment. Nigeria needs bold and giant steps to win the war on corruption.
- ❖ For effective control of corruption, the society should insist on the development of the culture of relative openness, in contrast to the current bureaucratic system of secrecy. Leaders must ensure transparency and accountability in all levels of government and must be published. A merit system of employment, promotions, and appointment is necessary to move the country forward instead of the tribal bias, state of origin and nepotism or favouritism. The freedom of information bill passed should be well utilised here.
- ❖ The role of the press in public enlightenment campaign against corruption is very important in an attempt to eradicate corruption in Nigeria because this strategy can help to raise the peoples' awareness about the problem. If this is done it can certainly help create awareness of the problem that will motivate others to support the program. Fortunately too, the freedom press and the exponential growth of the media such as the television channels, radio, and the print media in Nigeria are to the advantage of the citizens. What is needed is that some of these programmes should be broadcast in the local languages so that the illiterate people in the hinterlands will understand who their real enemies are and know those they should not vote in the next elections or give chieftaincy titles.
- ❖ There is the need to give the anti corruption agencies new impetus by broadening its scope and amend its statutes, and most importantly, remove all constraints and obstacles hampering their operations. Furthermore, it is said justice delayed is justice denied, since the regular courts have failed, there should be special courts like tribunals with the sole responsibility to handle corruption cases. This will expedite action on corruption trials which are often forgotten with the rise of new issues.
- ❖ Besides reasonable and sufficient budgetary allocations made to these anti-corruption bodies, efforts should be made by the legislators that the appointment of heads of these bodies should be independence and free from undue influence by the executives.
- ❖ Since corruption starts from the mind and a culture cultivated through long years of convenience, there should be an African renaissance to rediscover it souls. There should be campaign that should start by re-orienting the mind through education. It will therefore be a journey of self-rediscovery, and restoration of Africans' own self-esteem and values. Positive cultural reinvention in morality, hard work, and love of one another is the key to the problem. When attention is directed towards the cultural change, then we would have found the solution to the problem. Only by tackling the problem from such a cultural perspective can the fight against corruption be successfully waged.

- ❖ Nigeria needs a true federalism where issues of ethnicity, domination, resource control will be addressed. It should be an independence state where people are free to aspire to the zenith based on qualification and experience. There should be equality before the law and fairness as well as respect for one another.
- ❖ There should be a fundamental reform program that will ensure a fundamental transformation. This is where the call for National Sovereign Conference (NSC) where different ethnic nationalities will make inputs on how they should be governed became relevant and urgent. This is even so when considered that most of today's elites are products of the Western representatives and constitutional discourse is always dominated by these urban elites and the military brass. A significant part of the political opinion has always excluded the peasant rural communities from participation. This means their desires, aspirations and needs were not represented.
- ❖ There should be a decentralisation and privatisation of all public corporations such as the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN), and Nigeria Ports Authority (NPA) etc in the same way they deregulated the communication sector. Deregulation of commercial sector will give greater opportunities to citizens to participate in the management of the affairs of the country that affects them. It has shown that concentrating power in the hands of few people breeds corruption and abuses.
- ❖ The Western countries have a role to play especially in monitoring funds laundered into their banks. Most of their banks survive on the looted funds saved in them, and their economy bubbles from the shopping spree of expensive luxury goods including sport vehicles bought by corrupt and dubious Nigerians. Also, their economies are lubricated by the crude oil theft and other mineral resources stolen in collaboration with some European business men. When rich Nigeria politicians visit, they roll out red carpet for them and are giving rousing welcome. At that time it does not bother them the sources of their money except when they begin to have security challenges committed by (illegal) migrants in search of greener pastures. This attitude needs to be change. For instance, the investigation of sources of funds and prosecution of the former governor of Delta state James Ibori from Nigeria is a welcome development. Just as they have punished the culprit involved in the Halliburton bribes allegations, the Western countries should continue to mount pressure on the Nigeria government to do likewise, and travel ban on those involved in corruption cases here should be placed on them. But Nigeria strategic interest to West especially in respect to energy will continue to limit any drastic actions. Freezing of assets of known criminal politicians and businessmen will be a welcome development.

## **XVI. Conclusion**

The greatest threat to this country is the greedy and corrupt thieving elites and not the ethnic, language or religious differences in Nigeria. Unfortunately, there is no hope that corruption will soon be wiped out except men and women of honesty and integrity in the labour unions, trade unions, civil society groups, the media, religious groups, academia, students and the masses, to stand up in unison against these criminal activities of the country's shameless leaders.

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