

Challenges of Corruption on Democratic Governance in Nigeria in the Fourth Republic (1999–2024)

Ojewunmi, Emmanuel Adelekan Olutunde

Department of Public Administration Winifred School of Management and Technology, Ibadan

Abstract: Corruption is an abuse of entrusted power for private gain(s). The concept of corruption is a constant phenomenon in every society, and it occurs in all civilizations. The focus of this paper, therefore, is to investigate through secondary data collections the causes and consequences of corruption on the democratic governance in Nigeria. The finding of this research is that in Nigeria, corruption has become one of the greatest social vices, pulling down the development and growth of the nation's economy. The result of the paper's investigation also shows three of the six zones in Nigeria have recently recorded a decrease in the prevalence of bribery, while by contrast, the other zones recorded further increases in the prevalence of bribery from 2016-2019. It is important to note the point that corruption is one of the most pervasive types of crime, which fuels transitional crime, wastes public resources, destabilizes countries, and impedes good governance. Accordingly, some of the major causes of corruption in Nigeria are bribery, dishonesty, tribalism, nepotism, obsession with materialism, getting rich-quick syndrome, and inequality of wealth, among others. Meanwhile, corruption has brought to Nigeria many negative effects, which include irrational decisions, squandering of resources on unsustainable projects, loss of confidence in leadership, and development of a cynical attitude toward leadership. To curb the malaise of corruption in Nigeria, the paper therefore recommends effective fight and control of corruption, Nigerians' collective attitude and commitment to eliminate or reduce the vice to a minimum bearable level, living lives of integrity, uprightness and godliness among others. The paper concludes that for the Nigerian electorates to enjoy the dividends of democracy, leaders in Nigeria should live by example through transparent lifestyles, dedication to the nation building, and reduction of flamboyant, extravagant, and wasteful living. They should stop looting the Nigerian treasury outright for their egocentric ends. The political leaders should work towards the provision of good and avoidable foods for their subjects, job provisions for the unemployed working class, and renovation of roads for the rural dwellers.

Keywords: Corruption, Democratic Governance, Nigeria, Leadership, Corrupt Practices

I. Introduction

Generally, corruption is an abuse of entrusted power for private gain(s). Virtually all countries in the world are determined to curb or eliminate the hydra-headed monster (corruption) because of its deleterious and ravaging effects on economies and societal development in general. As a result, responsible governments enact laws designed to curb corruption. These laws and subsidiary legislations arising there are expected to be obeyed by persons and businesses in that country. Nigeria is not left behind in the fight against graft and unethical practices in the conduct of businesses. Thus, several legislations regulating the marketplace were enacted to help eliminate corrupt practices in Nigeria.¹

The term "Corruption" is a constant phenomenon in society and occurs in all civilizations; however, it has only been in the past 20 years that this phenomenon has begun being seriously explored. It has many different shapes

¹Odinkonigbo, Jude; Mammon-Odey Mariam & Ehonire, Deborah, Anti-Corruption Laws and Regulatory Compliance Requirements that Businesses in Nigeria Need to Know. *TEMPLARS*, July 19, 2023.

as well as many various effects, both on the economy and the society at large.²Corruption can inhibit economic growth and affect business operations, employment, and investments. It also reduces tax revenue and the effectiveness of various financial assistance programmes. The wider society is influenced by a high degree of corruption in terms of lowering of trust in the law and rule of law, education, and consequently the quality of life (access to infrastructure, health care).³

The word “corruption” is derived from the Latin word ‘*corruptus*’ and, in legal terms, the abuse of a trusted position in one of the branches of power (executive, legislative and judicial) or in political or other organisations to obtain material benefit which is not legally justified for itself or others.⁴ The earliest records of corruption date back to the thirteenth century BC, to the time of the Assyrian civilization. From the found plates, written in cuneiform, the archaeologists managed to discern how and who accepted bribes. However, under Roman law, the criminal offense of corruption was defined as giving, receiving, or claiming benefits to influence an official in connection with his work. Due to the prevalence of corruption in the country, this law was supplemented by a new law, which predicted compensation for damage in double official, both in Rome itself and in the remote Roman provinces.⁵

II. Definition of Concept

Corruption can be defined to mean an anti-social attitude awarding improper privileges contrary to legal and moral norms and impairing the authority’s capacity to secure the welfare of all citizens.⁶ Corruption in Nigeria is a constant phenomenon. In 2012, Nigeria was estimated to have lost over \$400 billion to corruption since its independence.⁷

According to a scholar, corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain.⁸ Corruption erodes trust, weakens democracy, hampers economic development, and further exacerbates inequality, poverty, social division, and the environmental crisis. Exposing corruption and holding the corrupt people to account can only happen if we understand the way corruption works and the systems that enable it.⁹ Also, corruption can take many forms and can include behaviours like public servants demanding or taking money or favours in exchange for services; politicians misusing public money or granting public jobs or contracts to their sponsors, friends, and families; and corporations bribing officials to get lucrative deals.

However, corruption can happen in business, government, the courts, the media, and in civil society, as well as across all sectors from health and education to infrastructure and sports. Therefore, corruption can involve anyone: politicians, government officials, public servants, business people, or members of the public. Meanwhile, corruption happens in the shadows, with the help of professional enablers such as bankers, lawyers, accountants, and real estate agents, opaque financial systems, and anonymous shell companies that allow corruption schemes to flourish and the corrupt to launder and hide their illicit wealth.¹⁰

Similarly, corruption is viewed as “the abuse of public office for personal gain” In the present dispensation, corruption not only being abuse of public office for personal gain, it also considered to involve the abuse of power and influence vested in person as a result of holding a political office, of holding an influential role in a

²Sumah, Stephan; 2018. Corruption, Causes and Consequences: Trade and Global Market. Retrieved from <https://www.ontechopen.com> on June 17,2024.

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

⁶BeldaMulhar, Guillermo 2018. Citizens’ Attitude towards Political Corruption and the Social Impact (thesis). Universitat Jaume I doi:106035/14102. 2018. 525941

⁷Okoye,Rita (31st August, 2012), Nigeria has lost \$400bn oil revenue to corruption since independence – Ezekwesili: Daily Post, Nigeria. Retrieved 2, July 2016.

⁸ Transparency International: What is Corruption? Retrieved from www.transparency.org on 17th June, 2024.

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid

corporation of having personal wealth or access to significant resources, or of having elevated social standing.¹¹ Likewise, corruption does not only lead to personal gain but can involve gains for a collective entity such as a political party, a corporation, or a group of people. Gain should be understood as financial gain only but explicitly also include non-financial gains, and in particular, the preservation or increase of a person or entity's position of power and influence. Likewise, corruption is not only limited to the momentary form of corruption that is bribery, but that a wide range behaviours, such as conflicts of interest, patronage, nepotism, embezzlement, influence peddling or the manipulation of legislative processes with an ulterior corrupt objective are understood to be subsumed by the notion of corruption.¹²

III. Forms of Corruption

Corruption can take many forms linked to different types of behaviour, such as bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, extortion, kickbacks, money laundering, fraud, and conflicts of interest.¹³

1. **Bribery**-This is a situation of accepting something in exchange for a favour. If someone gives something of value, such as money, gifts, or favour, to make someone with power or authority do something for them or decide something in someone's favour, the other person has engaged in bribery. It also means asking for or receiving something in exchange for undertaking an action or making a decision in favour of someone, or also mean bribery. It is a form of corruption that can occur in various contexts, such as in politics, business, and public services, and can have significant negative impacts on fair competition, public trust, and the rule of law.
2. **Embezzlement**-This type involves misplacing, stealing, or misusing funds. Also, it means using one's position as an employee, trustee, or public official for one's benefit, such as diverting funds, as an example of embezzlement. It is a financial fraud and a form of corruption that occurs when a person entrusted with someone else's money or property steals it. Examples of embezzlement include falsifying financial records, creating fake invoices, or diverting money to personal accounts. It is considered a serious crime in many countries and jurisdictions and can result in criminal charges and severe penalties, including fines and imprisonment.¹⁴
3. **Kickbacks** (Getting Reward)-This happens when someone gets illegal payments or rewards, such as regular payoffs, to secure an undue favour, service, or business contact. Kickbacks can be cash, gifts, or other benefits. They are typically used to influence the decisions of individuals, people who have the authority to grant contracts or approve payments. Kickbacks can easily lead to unfair competition, lower levels of transparency, and accountability. It is usually also a waste of resources.
4. **Extortion** (Using Threats to Get Something)-The Extortion form of corruption involves using threats, hurt, blackmail, or other ways of intimidating someone to get something. This is considered to be a crime in many countries and jurisdictions. Also, extortion can appear in organised crime, political corruption, and business dealings. Extortion threatens the social order of a society and has substantial negative impacts on individuals, from financial losses to emotional trauma.
5. **Nepotism**-This happens when someone uses his or her position or office to give undue favour to his family. Favouring your family members or friends (also referred to as cronyism) by giving them jobs or positions of power that they are not qualified for is nepotism. Nepotism, another form of corruption, can occur in different contexts, such as politics, business, and public services. Nepotism can lead to inefficiency in different ways because it undermines fair competition. It also risks reducing transparency and accountability and can work against diversity, creating unfair meritocracies.

¹¹ Basel Institute on Governance. What is Governance? Retrieved from <https://baselgovernance.org> on 16th June, 2024.

¹² Ibid

¹³ Raoul, Wolleberg Institute: Corruption comes in many forms. Assessed from <https://rw1.lu.se/corruption.org>.on June 17, 2024.

¹⁴ Ibid

6. **Conflict of Interest (Misusing Authority for Personal Gain)**-This takes place when an individual or an organisation has competing interests that could compromise their ability to act in the best interests of others or fulfill their duties objectively and impartially. It often involves situations where personal, financial, or other interests could influence decision-making or actions in a way that benefits the individual or organisation rather than the best interests of those they serve. Meanwhile, conflict of interest can be particularly problematic in public sector roles, where individuals are entrusted with making decisions on behalf of the public. It can lead to biased decision-making, favouritism, and abuse of power for personal gain, undermining the integrity of institutions and eroding public trust.¹⁵
7. **Fraud (Deception for Personal Gain)** A Fraudulent form involves deceiving others for personal gains. It can occur in various forms, such as financial fraud, tax fraud, insurance fraud, and investment fraud, among others. Fraudulent activities can be committed by individuals, organisations, or even governments and often involve misrepresenting or manipulating information for personal or financial losses for victims, erosion of trust in institutions and markets, and legal repercussions for perpetrators. Fraud becomes a form of corruption when it involves abusing entrusted power for personal gain.
8. **Money Laundering (Making Illegal Funds Come Across as Legal)**- this is to disguise the origins of money or assets that are obtained illegally by making them appear as if they were obtained legally. Money laundering is a complex process that involves hiding the true source of illegal funds by transferring them through a series of transactions and financial instruments to make them appear legitimate. This is often done to avoid detection and to legitimize the illegal funds into the legitimate financial system. Money laundering is associated with organised crime, drug trafficking, corruption, and other illegal activities. It can have serious consequences, including undermining the integrity of the financial system, facilitating further criminal activities, and eroding public trust.¹⁶

IV. The Impact of Corruption on the Economy, Enterprises, and Investments

First, corruption increases the volume of public investments (at the expense of private investments), as many options allow for public expenditure manipulation carried out by high-level officials to get bribes (which means that more general government expenditures or a large budget offer more opportunities for corruption).

Second, corruption redirects the composition of public expenditure from the expenditure necessary for basic functioning and maintenance to expenditure on new equipment.

Third, corruption tends to pull away the composition of public expenditure from the necessary fixed assets for health and education, as there is less chance of getting commission than from others, perhaps unnecessary projects. Furthermore, corruption reduces the effectiveness of public investments and the infrastructure of a country.

In addition, corruption can reduce tax revenues by compromising the ability of the state administration to collect taxes and fees, although the net effect depends on how the normal tax and other regulatory burdens were selected by the officials exposed to corruption. Also, corruption affects total investment, the size and form of investments by foreign direct investors, the size of public investments, and lastly, the quality of investment decisions and investment projects.

However, indirectly, corruption hurts economic growth through the allocation of talents since gifted and prospective students are driven due to the influence of the environment and the situation in the country. For example, to study law rather than engineering, which would add value to the country?

Similarly, corruption is believed to negatively impact public spending and has a strong effect on education and health. One can also find a correlation between corruption and military expenditure, which can be interpreted to mean that a higher level of corruption reduces economic growth due to high military spending. Also, corruption reduces the taxes paid because some of the taxes will end up in the accounts or purses of corrupt tax officials. There are also frequent tax reliefs in corrupt countries, selective taxes and various progressive taxes; in short,

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid

there is much less money than the country could have, and so corruption, through the country's financial deficit, also affects the economic growth, and conclude the findings on the negative impact (both direct and indirect) of corruption on economic growth.¹⁷

Meanwhile, corruptive countries are generally unattractive for investors, and if they do opt for an investment, due to non-transparent bureaucracy, they often enter the market with a joint venture, as they usually understand or control matters of the home country better. The local partner can also help foreign companies with the acquisition of local licenses and permits or can otherwise negotiate with the bureaucratic labyrinths at lower costs.

In addition, in a country where the rate of corruption is high, empowerment does not go to the most suitable or qualified person, but to the one who is ready to pay for it or in any other way return the favour. Corruption, in addition, affects total investments.¹⁸The size and composition of foreign investment decisions and projects are always determined by the level of the country's corruption. In any country where the corruption level is high, the investments are always smaller as entrepreneurs are aware that they will have to bribe the officials or even give them a profit share for a successful implementation of a business. Therefore, because of the increased costs, entrepreneurs are not always interested in investing. According to Wei Projector, in the case of a reduction in corruption in Bangladesh to the level of corruption in Singapore, the growth rate of GDP per capita would increase by 1.8% per year between 1960 to 1985.¹⁹Wei also notes that in the event of a large increase in salaries, a new form of corruption would likely arise when everyone would be prepared to pay a bribe for a well-paid official job.²⁰

However, corruption often reduces the effectiveness of various financial assistance programmes (both state and international), as money is lost somewhere along the way and does not reach those that need it or for whom it is intended, as the financial benefit, driving from corruption, is not taxable because they are hidden. The state also loses part of the income from the taxes due to corruption, while the public spending results from corruption (or narrow private interests) leads to negative effects on the budget.

Moreover, according to another perspective, the report from the European Commission confirmed that corruption is costing the European economy about 120 billion a year, and according to the European Commissioner for Home Affairs, Cecilia Malmstrom, corruption in Europe is most present in public procurement, financing of political parties, and health care.²¹

V. Corruption in Nigeria

As stated above, the concept of corruption is an anti-social attitude awarding improper privileges contrary to legal and moral norms and impairs the authority's capacity to secure the welfare of all citizens.²² In Nigeria, corruption has become a constant phenomenon. In 2012, for example, a report showed that Nigeria was estimated to have lost over \$400 billion to corruption since its independence.²³According to the National Bureau of Statistics, it is reported that out of all Nigerian citizens who had at least one contact with a public official in the 12 months before the 2019 survey, 30.2% paid a bribe to or were asked to pay a bribe by a public official.

¹⁷ Rivas, M.F. An experiment on Corruption and Gender: *Bulletin of Economic Research*. 2013;65(1):10-42.

¹⁸ Bucic, VrsteKorupcije, V. SlovenijimMožnostiza: njihovopreprečevanje. Diplomskodelo. Ljubljana: Ekonomskafakulteta; 2024.

¹⁹ Wei, S.J. *Corruption in Economic Transition and Development: Grease or Sand?* Geneva: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe; 2001.

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ European Union Commission: Report from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament- EU Anti-Corruption Report. 2024. Available from: https://ec.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/e-library/documents/policies/organized-crime-and-human-trafficking/docs/acr_2014_en-pdf (Assessed: March 17, 2016).

²² BeldaMullor Guillermo 2018;Citizens' Attitude towards Political Corruption and the Impact of Social Media (Thesis). UniversatJaume I. Doi 106035/14102.2018.525941

²³ Okoye, Rita (31 August 2012). "Nigeria has lost \$400bn oil revenue to corruption since Independence-Ezekwesili" *Daily Post Nigeria*. Retrieved 2 July, 2016.

This means that, although still relatively high, the prevalence of bribery in Nigeria has undergone a moderate yet statistically significant decrease since 2016, when it stood at 32.3%.²⁴

Furthermore, it is also believed that three out of the country's six zones namely: North-East; North-West; and South-West have recorded decreases in the prevalence of bribery since 2016, with the North-West experiencing a considerable (and statistically significant) decline in the prevalence of bribery, from 36 to 25 per cent, while the two others zones recorded smaller decreases. By contrast, the other three zones, namely the North-Central, South-East, and South-South zones, recorded further increases in the prevalence of bribery from 2016 to 2019.²⁵ It is important to emphasize the point that corruption is one of the most pervasive types of crime; it fuels transnational crime, wastes public resources, destabilizes countries, and impedes good governance. Authoritarian countries and those veering toward authoritarianism increasingly weaponize corruption to perpetuate power at home and undermine democracy around the world.²⁶ This fact gives an accurate reason why the military governments in Nigeria were deeply rooted in corruption. They were known for their interest in perpetuating themselves in power. The most notable was the military regime of General Sani Abacha, who almost turned Nigeria into an authoritarian state. The corruption practices recorded during his military administration were unprecedented.

However, corruption is mostly pronounced among the politicians in Nigeria. The political class has contributed immensely to the promotion of corruption to make it normal to carry out the government's official business. This is because Nigerian politicians find themselves in a strong position of power and wealth due to their connections with the oil and gas industries in Nigeria. These gas industries are under the control of the state-owned company, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation Limited. Oil and gas exports account for over 90% of all Nigerian export revenues.²⁷ While many of these Nigerian politicians own or have shares in these industries, tax revenues from the energy sector are constantly reducing, and the distribution of Nigeria's energy resources is being distributed to favour certain classes of the society against the general benefits of the majority of Nigerians. Those who benefit a lot from the oil and gas resources that form the bulk revenue of Nigeria's Federal Government are the politicians, contractors, and civil servants, especially the top echelon of the bureaucracy, while projects and infrastructures that will be beneficial to the public are mostly being abandoned or out of supply. There are instead food shortages, inflation, unemployment, insecurity, and many others.

In addition, vote rigging is very rampant among political parties during general elections, and corruption is noticeably endemic within the government. Business arrangements and family loyalties dominate governmental appointments, paving the way for politicians, officials, and their business associates, who together make the ruling elites ensure that they all become wealthy through behind-the-scene agreements and the awarding of profitable contracts to favour supporters.²⁸ For instance, in 2018, many government employees received annual salaries that were over \$1 million. Corruption runs through every level of the Nigerian sector of government. From considerable contract fraud at the top, through petty bribery, money laundering schemes, embezzlement, and salaries from fake workers, it is estimated that corruption within the state apparatus costs the country billions of dollars annually.²⁹ Similarly, almost every opportunity that the people of Nigeria today need to enjoy freely from the government at all levels is being directly or indirectly paid for. For example, to secure a civil service job at the federal level is to be indirectly paid for through payment of a bribe to any of the stakeholders, such as the Director of ministries, Permanent Secretary, Head of Service, Parliamentarian, Minister, politician of high status, and many influential government officials. Most of those job seekers that will be employed must be

²⁴ National Bureau of Statistics-Corruption in Nigeria. Pattern and Trend (December 2019). Assessed from: <https://www.nigerian.start.gov.ng> on June 20, 2024.

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Combating Corruption and Promoting Good Governor. Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. Retrieved from: <https://state.gov> on June 20, 2024.

²⁷ Verrella, Simona (1 December 2020). "Topic: Oil industry in Nigeria" Retrieved 23-01-2021.

²⁸ Ralby, Ian; 2017; Downstream Oil Theft: Global Modalities, Trends, and Remedies. Atlantic Council: Global Energy Centre. SBN 978-1-61977-440-7

²⁹ Campbell, Page; John, Matthew 2018' Nigeria: What Everyone Needs to Know; New York. 89-103.

really to part away with a certain sum of money before he or she could be considered for a slot from the vacant position except for ladies who are ready to use their bodies in exchange for the financial bribe. The fact is that in Nigeria today, in most cases, only the children of the rich can easily gain employment at the federal level of government, and that is the reason the rich people continue to be richer while the people continue to be poorer in contemporary Nigeria.

Therefore, the genesis of corruption in Nigeria can be generally traced to greed, an ostentatious lifestyle, fear of tomorrow, customs, tribalism, and people's attitudes. Also, friends and kinsmen seek favour from officials as these kinsmen see government officials as holding avenues for their survival and gain. In the same way, the rise of public administration and the discovery of oil and natural gas are two major events believed to have led to the sustained increase in the incidence of corrupt practices in the country.³⁰

VI. Major Corruption Cases During Nigerian Democratic Governance of May 1999 to May 29, 2024

Chief Matthew Olusegun Obasanjo's governance from May 29, 1999, to May 29, 2007, witnessed various corruption scandals which included one of the international dimensions when his Vice President, Atiku Abubakar, was caught in cahoots with a US congressman stashing cold hard cash (literally) in freezers. Also, during his tenure, there were KBR and Siemens bribery scandals, which were investigated by the FBI and led to international indictments indicating high-level corruption in Obasanjo's administration. Notable among Chief Obasanjo's ministers who were involved in fraudulent practices were: Husaini Akwanga, who was alleged of taking bribes to approve a major government contract to a French electronics group, and former Inspector General of Police, Tafa Balogun who corrupted himself to the tune of N5.7 billion.

Similarly, according to reports, "while Nigeria dithered, the United States Department of Justice on January 18, 2012 announced that a Japanese construction firm, Marubeni Corporation agreed to pay a \$54.6 million criminal penalty for allegedly bribing officials of the Nigerian government to vacillate the award of the \$6 billion liquefied natural gas contract in Bonny, Nigeria to a multinational consortium, TSKJ." They paid bribes to Nigerian government officials between 1995 and 2004, in violation of the Nigerian Constitution.³¹

However, other corrupt practices that were linked to Obasanjo are Transcorp shares that were a violation of the code of conduct standards for public officers, and the presidential library donations on the eve of his exit from power that he pressed associates to donate.³² Obasanjo also said to unduly lobby for his failed campaign to alter the constitution to get a third term by actively bribing the legislative³³ arm of government, further deepening corruption at the highest levels.

Umaru Musa Yar'Adua administration of May 2007-2010 was unable to investigate a fair number of corruption scandals from previous administrations which came to light under his tenure due to his poor health and lack of political will. Meanwhile, Yar'Adua used various acts of political corruption through his Attorney-General to frustrate ongoing local and international investigations of his power friends like Governors James Ibori (delta), Lucky Igbinnedon (Edo), and Peter Odili (rivers), which led to huge losses of their states.³⁴ Michael Aondoaka, the Attorney General of the Federation, was unable to obtain a conviction in Nigeria even as the UK and foreign corrupts successfully tried Nigeria's deeply corrupt governors from the Obasanjo era. In addition, leaked diplomatic cables revealed that the Supreme Court Justices were bribed to legitimize the corrupt elections that led to his emergence as President through widespread rigging.³⁵

³⁰ The Storey Report. The Commission of Inquiry into the Administration of Lagos Town Council.

³¹ "Foreign Corrupt Practices Act FAO" National Whistle-blower Centre, Retrieved 22-01-2020.

³² "Things You Never Knew About Mike Adenuga, Nigeria's Second Richest Man-Information Nigeria" 27 February 2013. Retrieved 2 July 2016.

³³ "The third term bribery allegation-Vanguard News" 22 May 2011. Retrieved 2, July 2016.

³⁴ "Letter to Nigerian President Yar' Adua Marking His Two Years in Office". Human Rights Watch. 05-06-2009. Retrieved 17-05-2021

³⁵ "Yar' Adua knew Aondoaka was corrupt but could not sack him-Wikileaks-Vanguard News". Retrieved 2 July, 2016..

Similarly, during Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's democratic governance from 2010-2015, Nigeria's corruption rating by TT improved from 143rd to 136th in 2014.³⁶ In late 2013, Nigeria's then Central Bank Governor, Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, informed President Goodluck Jonathan that the state oil company, NNPC, had failed to remit US\$20 billion in oil revenue owed to the state. Jonathan, however, dismissed the claim and replaced Sanusi for his mismanagement of the Central Bank's budget.

Other corruptions levied against Jonathan's administration include the below:

1. Non-remitted revenue of US\$ 1.48 billion, which needed to be refunded to the government as of January 2015.
2. On the eve of Jonathan's exit from governance, close to \$20 billion was declared missing, misappropriated, or spent without appropriation.³⁷
3. So many running scandals including the BMW purchase by his aviation minister, to the tune of 255 Naira and security contacts to militants in the Niger Delta.³⁸
4. Extensive corruption and kickbacks in the Ministry of Petroleum, the Malabo Oil International Scandal, and several kickbacks in the Ministry of Petroleum.³⁹
5. In the dying days of Goodluck Jonathan's administration, the Central Bank scandal of cash tripping of mutilated notes broke out, where it was revealed that in four days, 8 billion Naira was stolen directly by low-level workers to the CBN in collaboration with some staff members of some commercial banks in Ibadan, Oyo State capital.
6. \$2.2 billion was illegally withdrawn from Excess Crude Oil Accounts of which \$1 billion was supposedly approved by President Jonathan for a re-election campaign Economic Council is made up of the state governors and the president and vice president.⁴⁰
7. NEITI discovered \$11.6 billion was missing from Nigeria LNG company dividend payments.⁴¹
8. Stolen 60 million barrels of oil company, NNPC, from 2009-2012.⁴²
9. NEITI indicates losses due to crude swaps due to subsidy and domestic crude allocation from 2005 to 2012 indicated that \$11.63 billion had been paid to the NNPC but that "there is no evidence of the money being remitted to the federation account."
10. Diversion of 60% of \$1 billion foreign loans obtained from the Chinese by the Ministry of Finance.⁴³
11. Enormous scam in weapons and defence procurements and misuse of 3 trillion Naira defence budget since 2011 under the guise of fighting Boko Haram.⁴⁴
12. Diversion of \$2.2 million vaccination medicine fund by the Ministry of Health.⁴⁵
13. Diversion of Ebola fight fund up to 1.9 billion Naira.⁴⁶

³⁶Chima, Obinna; 4 December 2014. "Nigeria Records Improvement, Ranked 39th on Corruption Index". This Day live. Achieved from the original on 8 February 2015. Retrieved 8 February, 2015.

³⁷"This Yam. This Goat, This Country: PwC on NNPC-Part1" 29 April 2015. Retrieved 2 July 2016.

³⁸Looking Beyond the Diezani Tenure-Africa Oil-Gas Report" 29 January 2015. Retrieved 12 August 2016.

³⁹Ibid

⁴⁰"Adams Oshiomale Accuses Okonjo-Iweala of Spending \$1Billion of Nigeria's Money on Jonathan's Election Campaign-She Denies Allegations". 14 July 2015. Retrieved 2 July 2016.

⁴¹"NNPC/NETI And Missing \$11.6Bn NLNG Dividends: Another One for Buhari's In-tray by IfeanyiIzeze" 18 June 2015. Retrieved 2 July, 2016.

⁴²"Oil Worth &13.7bn stolen under NNPC, says NEITI. Archived from the original on 20-08-2015. Retrieved 11-08-2015.

⁴³"Page not found-NTA.ng- Breaking News, Nigeria, Africa, worldwide". Achieved from the original on 27 August 2015. Retrieved 2 July 2016.

⁴⁴<https://024kid.com.ng/news/tension-in-military-as-buhari-demands-records-of-weapon-procurement>.

⁴⁵"Nigeria's Ministry of Health, Others Mismanage \$2.2Million Meant for Vaccination of Children-Auditors" 30 October 2014. Retrieved 2 July 2016.

⁴⁶Abiodun 12 June, 2015. "N1.9bn Ebola fund scam: Ministry staff stop arrest of officials". Retrieved 2 July 2016.

14. NIMASA fraud investigation by EFCC, inclusive of accusation of funding PDP and buying a small piece of land for 13 billion Naira.⁴⁷
15. The Ministry of Finance, led by DrOkonjoIweala, hurried payment of \$2.2 million to health ministry contractor in disputed invoices.⁴⁸
16. NDDC scams and multifarious scams, including 2.7 billion Naira worth of contracts that do not conform to the Public Procurement Acts.⁴⁹
17. The Police Service Commission (PSC) scam investigated by ICPC revealed the misappropriation of over 150 million Naira related to election-related training. ICPC made refund recommendations, but many analysts indicated prosecution was more appropriate.⁵⁰

Generally, Jonathan was assessed to be too weak for Nigeria's leadership position. He was a laissez-faire President (a timid leader). Jonathan was not firm in decision-making and implementation, his government was hijacked by some powerful women. Meanwhile, the two terms of Muhammadu Buhari, May 2015 to May 2023, started with major action against corruption in Nigeria. The searchlight on corruption was extended to almost all sectors and even the judiciary arm of government. Many sitting judges were indicted, and some were arrested and detained for their corrupt practices. The exercise also led to the removal of Justice Walter Onnoghen, a former Chief Judge of the Federation (though his removal was linked to tribalism and politically motivated reasons), because no financial misappropriation was levied against him. The removal of Onnoghen (a southerner) was done purposely to replace him with a northerner who will preside over the re-election of Buhari for the second term in office in 2019.

Furthermore, it was not long after Buhari assumed the presidential duties that the Senate ad-hoc committee on the mounting humanitarian crisis in the North-East led by Senator Sheu Sani in 2016 indicted the then secretary to the Government of the Federation, Mr. Babachri Lawal, whom Buhari appointed for an N200 million contract scandal. The contract was approved for the cleaning of invasive plant species in Yobe state by Rhola Vision Nigeria Limited, a company that Lawal owns. Lawal was later relieved of his post on October 30, 2017, through the report of a three-man panel that was led by Vice President Yemi Osinbajo.

The following are some of the fraudulent practices recorded during the democratic governance of Buhari. They are as follows:

1. In 2016, there was evidence that proved that Buhari's Chief of Staff, Abba Kyari, took a N500 million bribe from MTN to help the company slash the \$5 billion fine slammed against the telecommunication for violating Nigeria's telecommunications regulations that affected national security. The staff of MTN that was involved was sacked by MTN, but Abba Kyari was left alone despite that Buhari was supplied with the evidence. The report of the findings of the investigation was never made public by the Federal Government of Nigeria.
2. Buhari protected Abdu Rasheed Maina, who embezzled 2 billion Naira (5.6 million euros). When he returned to Nigeria after his arrest warrant was issued, he was returned to his position despite that Jonathan fired him, and he was even given a double promotion by Buhari. Maina was later convicted after he was found guilty of money laundering.⁵¹

⁴⁷ "EFFCC quizzes ex-NIMASSA DG for fraud". Achieved from the original on 20-08-2015. Retrieved 11-08-2015.

⁴⁸ "Okonjo-Iweala Connected with Fresh \$2.2 Million Trouble". 28 July 2015. Retrieved 2 July, 2015.

⁴⁹ "multibillion Naira contract scam rocks NDDC-Premium Times Nigeria". 8 August 2015. Retrieved 2 July, 2016.

⁵⁰ "ICPC INDICTS Okiro-led PSC, orders body to refund N145m- Premium Times Nigeria". 11 August 2015. Retrieved 24 February 2018.

⁵¹ Ejekwonyilo, Ameh 08-11-2021. "UPDATED: Court sentences Maina to eight years in jail for N2 billion pension fraud". Premium Times Nigeria. Abuja. Retrieved 13-03-2023.

3. The Senate Committee on Public Accounts confirmed that 85 government parastatals under the Buhari government failed to submit their audit report during Buhari's regime at the stipulated time because of their corruption.
4. EFCC in May 2018 announced that 603 Nigerian figures were convicted on corruption charges since Buhari took office in 2015.
5. In January 2020, Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index gave Nigeria a low ranking of 146 out of 180 countries surveyed.⁵²
6. In 2018, some politicians who assisted Buhari during his re-election process were indicted for corruption. One of them, former Governor of Nasarawa state (1999-2007), Alhaji Abdullahi Adamu, who became the chairman of All Progressive Action (APC), the ruling party where Buhari belongs, was alleged to have stolen N15 billion from his state, Nasarawa, when he was governor for 8 years. Abdullahi Adamu was set free despite that the corruption was confirmed, and he was immediately made chairman of the ruling party. Meanwhile, when the Presidency was accused of covering illegality, President Buhari replied that he had "repented."⁵³
7. During the October 2020 End SARS Saga, protesters alleged that the Nigerian Police Force was the most corrupt in Nigeria. The police salaries were later increased despite the accusation of their brutality and corrupt practices.
8. Ahmed Idris, the Accountant General of Nigeria during Buhari's regime, was arrested for money laundering and diversion of public funds in May 2022. Instead, his tenure was extended despite that he had reached the mandatory age for retirement from public service. The Accountant General is said to have committed fraud by corruptly manipulating the Treasury Single Account (TSA), Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS), and Integrated Payroll and Information System (IPPIS) to steal billions of Naira from the Nigerian workers paid through these paying systems and Nigeria's treasury. Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission was named as one of the parties to the corruption case.⁵⁴

Furthermore, the government of President Muhammadu Buhari has been adjudged to be one that failed in curbing corruption in government but rather encouraged the practice despite Buhari's slogan "change". Buhari himself failed to give an account for all the money spent on his various medical trips overseas. His family wasted in no small measure a huge amount of public funds on frivolous things. Despite that Buhari used to travel overseas for medical treatment, billions of Naira were still spent at Aso Rock, the seat of power hospital in Abuja yearly for his 8 years in power and nothing was shown for it.

Moreover, the second term of Buhari's term witnessed free-for-all sharing of Nigeria's resources as Buhari became too weak physically and mentally to actively supervise the running of government affairs.

The present President of Nigeria, Ahmed Bola Tinubu, who assumed office on May 29, 2023, has been faced with a great challenge on how to recover all the stolen public monies during Buhari's regime. First, Tinubu has yet to administratively recover the monies printed using the instrumentality of ways and means, amounting to over N30 trillion during the Buhari administration that suffered a series of alleged mishaps leading to diversion and unaccountability. Some properties and businesses bought and paid for in these axes of financial malfeasances have already been tied to certain individuals in the former administration of Buhari.⁵⁵

⁵² "Why Nigeria was Ranked Low in Corruption Index-Transparency Index."

⁵³ Nwachukwu, John Owen; 28-03-2022. "Alleged corruption: Adamu, others have repented-Presidency replies PDP". Daily Post Nigeria. Retrieved 21-01-2023.

⁵⁴ "How suspended Accountant-General swindled FG, EFCC reveals". The Guardian Nigeria News-Nigeria and World News. 30-07-2022. Retrieved 21-01-2023.

⁵⁵ Ibid

Second, the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project has sued all state governors and the minister for the Federal Capital Territory for their failure to account for and publish the agreements of the N5.9 trillion and \$4.6 billion loans obtained by their states and the FCT, respectively.⁵⁶

Third, Nasir El-Rufai immediate former Governor of Kaduna State, was accused of emptying the treasury of Kaduna State before handing over to his successor, Uba Sani, on May 29, 2023. The new governor said the state is now left with little money, not enough to pay salaries, adding that his administration inherited a total of N587 million, N85 billion, and 115 contracts liabilities from the ex-governor.⁵⁷

Moreover, anyone who has the perspective that Tinubu is capable and has moral justification to fight corruption will be disappointed because his records in Lagos speak otherwise and do not justify that claim. Tinubu himself is very corrupt and has no integrity to fight corruption in Nigeria. He can even be regarded as the grand patron of corruption and as the kingmaker in Lagos who does so purposely to enrich his purse. Lastly, the presidential election that ushered Buhari into the presidency was marred with various election malpractices.

Causes of Corruption in Nigeria

The first strong cause of corruption is bribery. Bribery and corruption are two very negative social vices that can lead to the disintegration and downfall of a nation. Bribery is an act of giving a person money to do your bidding. One of the major causes of bribery and corruption is greed. Greed is an act of wanting to acquire more resources, especially money and power. Generally, an average Nigerian is always eager to be in power, though not all Nigerians. Many Nigerians want to be in power, so they will do whatever it takes to get money, which includes bribery.

Another source of corruption in Nigeria is the lack of honest leaders. The country has suffered for long good leadership and governance. When leaders are corrupt, everything will fall apart. The people under them will follow their pattern of life. The basic fact is that most of the people who involve themselves in criminal deeds also know the consequences if they are eventually caught by the security agents, yet they keep on involving themselves in shady deeds because the love of materialism has blindfolded them.

Furthermore, tribalism and nepotism are also great contributors to the causes of corruption in Nigeria. These usually happen when you give something to someone who belongs to one's tribe despite that he does not qualify or deserve it while those who merited the privilege are turned back because they do not know the officer-in charge of it. For example, if a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or a director of a ministry decides to give a job vacancy to his friend based on their social relationship. However, other skilled applicants are denied the job based on the fact that they have no relationship with either the CEO or the Director, which is a corrupt act.

Meanwhile, the causes of corruption are myriad, and they have political and cultural variables. Some evidence points to the link between corruption and social diversity, ethnolinguistic fractionalisation, and the proportions of the country's population adhering to different religious traditions.⁵⁸ Thus, the political system and the culture of society could make the citizens more prone to corrupt activities.⁵⁹

However, obsession with materialism, compulsion for a shortcut to affluence, and glorification and approbation (of ill-gotten wealth) by the general public are among the reasons for the persistence of corruption in Nigeria.⁶⁰ It has been noted that some of the popular but unfortunate indices of the good life in Nigeria are flamboyant

⁵⁶ SERAP Sues governors, Wike over loans by states, Abuja., by Socio-Economic Rights & Accountability Project. Premium Times. Assessed from: <https://www.premiumtimes.ng.com> on July 9, 2024.

⁵⁷ Akinkuotu, Emiola. Nigeria: Trouble in paradise for El-Rufai as Sani flips the script. The Africa report. April 18, 2024. Assessed from: <https://www.theafricareport.com> on July 9, 2024.

⁵⁸ Lipset, S.M. & Lenz, G.S. 2000. Corruption, Culture and Markets, in Harrison, L.R. & Huntington, S.P. (eds) Culture Matters, New York: Basic Books.

⁵⁹ "SHOCKING, Buhari administration recalls wanted ex-pnsion boss sacked for alleged corruption-Premium Times Nigeria". 30-6-2017. Retrieved 09-05-2020. 2017

⁶⁰ Ndulor, T. 1999; Price Nigeria is Paying for Corruption. The Guardian Online, March 17.

affluence and conspicuous consumption. Because of this, some people get into dubious activities, including committing rituals and murder for money making.

Similarly, great inequality in the distribution of wealth is another reason why some people involve themselves in corruption in Nigeria. The rich are getting richer while the poor are getting poorer, and the prices of goods are increasing daily. The problem of poverty and lack of the means to sustain oneself are daily luring many Nigerians to corruption. The poor salaries of government workers and poor living conditions of many Nigerians are forcing many to involve themselves in corrupt practices.

Apart from the inequality in wealth distribution in Nigeria, many of those who engaged in corruption have been caught in the web of getting get-rich-quick syndrome.⁶¹ For example, an average Nigerian believes in “Isekekere, owonla” (meaning “little work, big money). Besides, most Nigerian citizens live and work in poor conditions. Many are living in abject poverty, the transportation system is bad, there is a high cost of goods and services, a poor hospital system, a high rate of inflation, insecurity of lives and properties, and no assurance of a better life tomorrow. Therefore, whenever many of them have the opportunity to steal, they will have no second thoughts about halting that devilish desire or temptation.

Furthermore, political office has been seen as a primary means of gaining access to wealth in Nigeria. The chief culprits of corruption in Nigeria are the politicians. They don't steal small amounts of money in the present dispensation, but bigger amounts. They loot the treasury anyhow. Whenever they are leaving office their offices, they are in the habit of emptying the government accounts and going away with several of the properties that are in their custody. They use their political offices to defraud the nation and to deny the poor Nigerians from enjoying the dividends of democracy. Also, the new occupiers have been noticed buying expensive things for themselves, their family members, and their political associates on account of the government. Generally, many Nigerians are wasteful and have no consideration for the interests of tomorrow's generations. To buttress this fact, Bola Tinubu, the current President of Nigeria, has disbursed a total sum of N14.77 billion for the repair and maintenance of the Presidential Air Fleet (PAF) in 11 months.⁶² Despite the huge amount of spending, the government is still planning to acquire two new aircraft, which may cost over \$623.4m or N918.7bn to experts' estimates. It is also reported that the Presidency currently maintains a fleet of six aircraft as well as six helicopters.⁶³ It was also reported that Buhari's government spent a total of N62.47bn for the operation and maintenance of PAF during his eight-year tenure, while in just eleven months, Tinubu has spent more than N14bn on PAF. This is a life of wasteful spending on the part of President Tinubu, Nigeria's flamboyant leader and a man who is indifferent to the sufferings of his subjects. What a pity of bad governance! The amount spent by Tinubu is separate from expenses incurred during foreign and local trips by himself, his Vice President, and other government officials.⁶⁴

Similarly, the weakness of social and government enforcement mechanisms is also causing corruption to flourish in the Nigerian state. The police work on the road has been reduced to the collection of bribes from the motorists and not to enforce the law or to arrest offenders. Processing bail for anyone under the custody of the Nigerian Police is done with a bribe. Police stations, just like public hospitals and Nigerian courts, are places people pray fervently against because nothing will be done for the victims freely. Also, several amounts that have been allocated to the military for the purchase of weaponry for the field soldiers have been diverted to the private purses of their Generals in command. The soldiers on the roadblocks are mere collectors of bribes from the road users rather than protecting the lives and properties of the travelers.

However, there is an absence of a strong sense of national community in Nigeria. The nation of Nigeria is of many nations. There is no spirit of oneness, unity of purpose, nationalism, or desire to build the state together. What is operating in Nigeria is the spirit of bribery, extortion, embezzlement, tribalism, and nepotism. The

⁶¹Adewale.S.A. 1988; *The Conflict of Materialism and Religious Ideals*. In *Religious and State: the Nigerian Experience*. Adewale, S.A. (ed). Orita Publications. 102-112

⁶²Aina, Damilola. FG spent N14.27Bn on presidential jets in 11 months-State report. Punch online. June 23, 2024. Assessed from: <https://www.punch.com> on July 9, 2024.

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ ibid

leaders' interest is to use their offices to favour the people of their ethnicity and cohorts rather than to lift the entire national community. According to Lotterman, bad rules and ineffective taxing systems, which make it difficult to track down people's financial activities, breed corruption. An ineffective tax system is a serious problem for Nigeria. Society should institute an appropriate and effective taxing system where everyone is made to explain his or her sources of income through end-of-the-year income tax filing.⁶⁵

Lastly, there is also the lukewarm attitude of those who are supposed to enforce the laws of the land, such as judges, police officers, and public officials. These could lead to people engaging in an amount of corrupt behaviour, knowing well that they would get away with it. Some cultural and institutional factors lead to corruption. For instance, nepotism and the strength of family values are linked to the feeling of obligation. The work of Robert K. Merton has demonstrated the relationship between culture and corruption. His means-ends schema implies that corruption is, at times, a motivated behaviour responding to social pressure to vacate the norms, to meet the said goals and objectives of a social system.⁶⁶

VII. Effects of Corruption in Nigeria

Corruption has brought to Nigeria many negative effects. It has been observed that the effects of corruption include irrational decisions which are myopic and motivated by greed, squandering of resources on unsustainable projects, loss of confidence of the people in government, and the development of a cynical attitude towards leadership.⁶⁷ According to Igbinovia and Aigbive, the effects of corruption can be summarised to include wastage of resources resulting in:

1. Near-total collapse of infrastructure;
2. Poor delivery of service;
3. Ill-equipped and ill-trained bureaucracy
4. Politicization of the civil service resulting in manipulation of the electoral and judicial process.
5. Loss of billions of Naira into private pockets through looting by public officials resulting in low GDP, GNP, and so on.
6. Underdeveloped economy resulting from sharp practices and poor corporate government due to inefficient and ineffective regulation and supervision by regulatory bodies.⁶⁸

Furthermore, the effects of corruption also manifest in the economic sphere of Nigerian society. Corruption undermines economic development by generating considerable distortions and inefficiency. The economic effects of corruption can be categorized as minor and major. However, both, in one way or another, have a serious impact on the individual community and country. First and foremost, corruption leads to the depletion of national wealth. It is often responsible for increased costs of goods and services, the funneling of scarce public resources to uneconomic high-profile projects at the expense of much-needed projects such as schools, hospitals and roads, or the supply of potable water, diversion and misallocation of resources, conversion of public wealth to private and national property; inflation, unbalanced economic development, weakling work ethics and professional hindrance of the development of fair in market structures and unhealthy competition thereby deterring competition Large-scale scale corruption hurts the economy and impoverished the entire population.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Lotterman, I. 2002; *Bad Rules Breed Corruption*, Pioneer Press. April 25.

⁶⁶ Merton, K. Robert; 1968. *Social Theory and Social Structure*. New York: Free Press.

⁶⁷Chinye, C.C. 2005; *The Nigerian Factor*. Lagos, Amazingrafolks Limited. 138-144.

⁶⁸Igbinovia, P.E. & Aigbive, O. 2009; *Corruption: A Bane to Efficiency and Effectiveness in the Public Service*. Ekpoma, Ambrose Alli University.

⁶⁹ Yusuf, Usman A. *Causes and Effects of Corruption in Nigeria*. International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management. United Kingdom. Vol 11(4) 2014. ISSN 2348 0386. 8.

However, it is disheartening to note that most funds that would have been utilised for development are being defrauded and privatised.⁷⁰ The consequence has been that deprivation has become exacerbated and poverty increased in the land. While it may be open to disputation whether poverty could lead to fraud, it is definite that fraud leads to poverty.⁷¹ The rot has become so worrisome that recently the House of Senate in Nigeria expressed its disgust over the alleged misuse of N873 billion sold minerals funds.⁷² Also, it has been opined that corruption encourages the government to be progressively less democratic and increasingly willing to abuse human rights while deriding openness, transparency, and accountability, which are the pillars of genuine democratic governance.⁷³ Eradication of corruption has implications for the sustenance of democracy in Nigeria.

Similarly, the effect corruption has on moral values is laughable. The moral values of the Nigerian state have degenerated. At independence in the 1960s, public servants operated in a society where moral values were very high. Unexplained wealth was looked upon with suspicion. Stories were told of how highly placed civil servants hid the Mercedes Benz cars they acquired a few months before retirement to avoid being questioned officially and by the public about the source of the acquisition. Today, either as a result of poverty or other reasons, wealth from any source is highly celebrated.

Meanwhile, the collapse of public facilities in Nigeria has occasioned serious hardship for the people. This could also be traced to the negative effects of corruption. Money meant for repairs of the country's refineries, electricity, hospitals, roads, schools, and so on has been diverted to private ends by public officials through direct misappropriation and the award of phony contracts to cronies. Likewise, more important is the factor of security. One of the recent worries of the government has been the issue of security, especially the 'Boko Haram' headache.⁷⁴ It needs to be stressed that where there is a social gap between wealthy and corrupt public officials on the one hand and the common people on the other hand, there is bound to be insecurity in the society. Elimination of corruption could make public officials responsive to the needs and interests of the people, thereby enhancing the socio-economic development of the society. It could also help to boost the interest of potential foreign investors, guarantee efficient delivery of public services, and promote a truly independent and prosperous country.⁷⁵

However, corruption as a social vice has greatly and negatively reduced Nigeria's integrity at the international level. Generally, Nigerians are regarded as corrupt people, so the level of trust foreigners have for Nigerians has been brought to the lowest web. Whenever Nigerians travel overseas, security agents of other nationals at the airports always subject them to a thorough and inhuman check because they feel Nigerians cannot be trusted. In addition, many Nigerian professionals who were qualified for certain international appointments have been denied some of these jobs the reason that Nigerians cannot be trusted.

Lastly, corruption is a great contributory factor to the high level of unemployment, poverty, imbalance of national resources distribution among regions in Nigeria, incessant school closures, bad economics, high level of prices of goods and services, increase in crime rate, insecurity and so on. This is because the public funds that are supposed to be used to develop the Nigerian nation have been diverted to private accounts at the expense of the majority of Nigerians.

VIII. Who is to be Blamed for Corruption in Nigeria?

⁷⁰Osameke, I.I 2011; *Corruption and Fraudulent Practices by Career Civil Servants and Political Appointees in Nigeria: The Forms, Causes and Implications*. Benin Journal of Social Sciences. Vol.19 (1&2), July. 180-189.

⁷¹Ogunleye, F. 2001; "Corruption, Fraud and Malpractices in the Banking System". Paper presented at the hearing on the developments in the Banking System, Organised by the House of Representatives Committee on Banking and Currency, Abuja, Nigeria.

⁷²The Guardian; 2013. "Ridiculous Pension Fraud Sentence" February 14, Vol.29(12, 467,14).

⁷³Chinye *ibid*.

⁷⁴Oghi, F.F. 2013. *Corruption in the Matrix of Development in Nigeria*. European Scientific Journal, March Edition Vol.9(7), 78-87.

⁷⁵Yusuf *ibid*.

First, the Nigerian greedy elites who seek to enrich themselves at the expense of the collective, the political class, and the influential are more liable for the increase in the corruption rate in Nigeria. The Nigerian greedy elites always want to live large and treat others like the poor cousins from the village. They are also responsible for taking steps to stop the vice, but because of what they enjoy from it, they have decided to keep on benefiting from it rather than stopping it.

Second, the masses in Nigeria are also culprits because they used to applaud looters and remain docile against corrupt leaders. Several of them are beneficiaries of the elite's corrupt acts. The stupefied commoners have a mess of potage because they used to stand by the corrupt elites by carrying placards in their support.

Third, the foreign powers are not to be exonerated from the blame because of their selfishness in allowing local rulers to steal and stash the loot in foreign accounts such as Swiss banks. For example, General Sani Abacha's loots have been traced to several foreign accounts. Money stolen in Nigeria is being laundered daily to all these foreign accounts without raising alarm because they are using such money to develop their own countries at the disadvantage of Nigeria. The colonial officers knew that the Hausa/Fulani were not educated enough to lead the nation, yet they went on to hand over the leadership of the nation to competent Nigerians to create disharmony, disunity, and crisis within the political class of Nigeria.

Finally, every Nigerian is guilty of entrenching corruption in Nigeria. In Nigeria, there are low moral standards, lack of education, and extravagant life, as manifested in the aiding and abetting of corrupt elites are largely responsible. Apart from the fact that Nigerians are docile as a people, they also celebrate mediocrity. There is also a lack of patriotism among Nigerians, which has contributed to the cause of corruption.

IX. Suggestions for the Reduction of Corruption in Nigeria

Corruption in Nigeria is very pervasive at the nation's various leadership levels, which is why it has become a difficult task to curb it in the country. This is because the leaders who are at the forefront of the anti-graft war are grossly embedded in corrupt activities themselves. Therefore, to curb the malaise of corruption in Nigeria, this work would like to recommend as following:

First, to effectively fight and control corruption in Nigeria, government and leadership at all levels must be simply honest, upright, sincere, and accountable in their management of state affairs. Very importantly, therefore, leaders need to exhibit exemplary attitudes and serve as models for upright and honest public and even private lives.⁷⁶

Second, Nigerian leaders must also be willing and capable of demonstrating personal commitment to the anti-graft war not only in words but, very importantly, in deeds. This is very necessary if the efforts at fighting corruption in Nigeria are to be effective and meaningful.⁷⁷

Third, to curb corruption, it also calls for all Nigerians' collective attitude and collective commitment to eliminate or reduce the vice to a minimum bearable level through the determination to live lives of integrity, uprightness, and godliness. To reduce corruption in Nigeria, all Nigerians must be prepared to live transparent and honest lives. The starting point must be with the leadership, while all people must support their leaders to wage war against corruption to enable them to a minimum level.

Furthermore, corruption can also be tackled through the promotion of values, religious and spiritual teachings, provision of jobs, provision of good and qualitative education, and adequate checks and balances system to bring back sanity into Nigerian society and governance.

However, without good governance, there can be no accountability. Good leadership plays a critical role in ensuring a collaborative, peaceful coexistence and progressive process of democratic culture and socialisation. It also attracts investment to a country, improving productivity and competitiveness, promoting political investment, and enhancing rapid socio-economic development. There is, therefore, a critical link between corruption and leadership. The experience in Nigeria in the present times is a top-down approach. In every

⁷⁶Chukuemeka, E.; Ugwuanyi, B.J.andEwuim, N. Curbing Corruption in Nigeria: The Imperatives of Good Leadership. African Journal Online. Vol.6 (3), 2012. Assessed from <https://www.ajol.info> June 27, 2024.

⁷⁷ Ibid

direction and segment of government, the scale, manner, and impunity of 'junior-officer' corruption is directly connected to the scale of the boss or 'senior-officers' corruption.⁷⁸ So, the leaders have a lot of roles to play by shunning corruption so that the junior officers, too, can avoid this.

Furthermore, all cases of public funds looted should be thoroughly investigated, and the offenders, once found guilty, should be prosecuted, and the lots recovered back on the face value of what has been stolen. The Nigerian masses also stop aiding, hailing, and celebrating Nigerian resource looters. Rather, they should cooperate with all anti-graft agencies to bring all looters to book to serve as a deterrent to their followers and successors.

Also, another very important suggestion is mobilising action via existing groups, Community-Based Organisations (CBOS), and other structures. This should involve religious and traditional leaders who, in most cases the authority and level to influence social norms and can be an effective method of mobilising citizens, although capacity building and group strengthening may be necessary.

Likewise, Nigerians should create a space to learn by moving beyond monitoring and evaluation for accountability purposes, allowing for adaptation and improvement. Future programmes should ensure that M7E systems can measure different aspects of transformative change that progress at different rates. In the same manner, Nigerians should always use technology and social media to mobilise their people to participate in topical anti-corruption issues. There is evidence of the rapid growth of young Nigerian people on Twitter and Facebook, and the increased use of social media by millions of Nigerians shows its potential influence in stimulating debate and encouraging engagement in the fight against corruption. Nigerians can harness the power of social media as an effective means of putting pressure on authorities.

Moreover, all law enforcement agencies are advised to wake up to their official responsibilities through prompt prosecution of all offenders. Those caught in the web of financial misappropriation should be brought before the courts of law. The judiciary also must stop the unnecessary adjournment of cases. This will create fear in the hearts of all public and civil servants and political appointees from engaging themselves in corrupt practices in Nigeria.

Finally, leaders should do their best through living styles of transparency, integrity, truthfulness, modesty, reduction of salaries and allowances, finding solutions to the reduction unemployment rate, and inflation, provision of social amenities, food of various kinds that are beneficial for human consumption at an affordable rate, stability of Nigerian educational system, good and well-equipped hospitals, and making Nigeria state to be a peaceful place to live. The government should try to pay more attention to the industrialisation of Nigeria and to be visionary and dedicated leaders, accountable and transparent to reduce the corruption rate in Nigeria and to enable foreign investors to be convinced that Nigeria is a very good place to invest their resources. Lastly, to improve the Nigerian economy, the government needs to look beyond resources from oil products, it is the right time to invest heavily in the other sectors of the economy such as agricultural products, tourism, technology, industrialisation, minerals, production and packages and many others to improve the country's external earnings.

X. Conclusion

This paper has proved that corruption is one of the most dangerous social ills of any society. Corruption, like a deadly virus, has attacked the vital structures that make for society's progressive functioning, thus putting its very existence in peril.⁷⁹ This is particularly true for developing countries in that limited but valuable funds and resources that are initially earmarked for industries, hospitals, schools, and other infrastructures are either outrightly embezzled, misappropriated, or otherwise severely depleted through kickbacks and over-invoicing agents of the government. It is also noted that there is no country in the world where corruption cannot be found

⁷⁸ Yusuf, op.cit. 9

⁷⁹Gire, J.T. 1999; 'Psychological Analysis of Corruption in Nigeria' in *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*. Vol1(2).

or has not been recorded, but the malaise of corruption is more pronounced in the developing countries of the world, especially in the African Continent.

In Nigeria, corruption, though a universal phenomenon, seems to have become so endemic in the people's body politics that most discourse about Nigeria, at home and internationally, centres on the high ascendancy of corruption in their public life. According to Aiyetan, corruption permeates all levels of government in Nigeria, from the legislative and judiciary arms of government to the police, military, civil, and public service.⁸⁰ It has been described as Nigeria's perennial struggle. This is very well since corruption has become a culture of public life despite the repeated and diverse efforts to rout out the malaise. It appears as if campaigns to deal with the problem only serve to diversify the many ways corruption is expressed and weaken the resolve to reduce it in public life.⁸¹ Furthermore, corruption is not only found in civil service; it is also well-pronounced and well-established in Nigerian hospitals, schools at all levels, the sports sector, and all other governmental ministries and parastatals.

Finally, the political leaders are admonished to provide avoidable foods for their subjects, jobs for the unemployed working class, and renovation of roads for people, especially for the rural dwellers, to enable them to transport their farming products to the urban areas to sell to reduce food insecurity in Nigeria. Empowerment of farmers through the availability of soft and easily accessible loan facilities, new technology means of farming should be considered for implementation. It is by so doing that corruption can be nailed to the cross for crucifixion in Nigeria.

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