

## *Preface*

This book of reading addresses diverse issues, problems, challenges that have brought Nigeria to the present cantankerous, precarious and paradoxical socio-economic condition despite the huge resources with which our dear nation is naturally blessed. Contributors are optimistic that Nigeria will find its primacy of place among comity of developed nations in no distance future. This is however realizable provided the Nigerian power blocs and the civil societies abhor corruption and other unethical behaviours and practices such as mismanagement and embezzlement of funds in the oil and energy sectors, aiding and abetting corruption. Also, positives of good governance, accountable leadership and strong state should be adopted with a view to achieve the state of our dream akin to that of U.S.A. and Canada to mention a few.

This book "Reflections on the State of the Nigerian State" carefully ensures the breakdown of the subject matter into easily under stable categories. The examples used are intended to keep readers at ease with the ideas and concepts explicated in the book.

Chapter one looks at the impact of corruption on economic growth in Nigeria. The authors are of the view that cultural peculiarities of the Nigerian people which aid and abet corruption impede growth and development in Nigeria. Chapter two surveys the Nigerian Local Government and Development of the Grassroots as a paradox. Chapter three addresses corruption, public life and Good Governance in Nigeria. Chapter four discusses Development Dilemma and Political Corruption in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Chapter five examines presentation of corrupt practices in the Nigerian State which the authors viewed that the prosecution has been selective; while chapter six analyses Nigeria's Oil Wealth and Democratization in Nigeria. The authors are of the view that our oil boom is oil doom for, Nigeria has been a nation of paradox; being rich but extremely poor. Chapter seven appraises the relevance of Local Government Election to Grassroots Democracy in Nigeria.

Chapter Eight discusses Insecurity in Nigeria and the nexus between poverty, corruption and insecurity. These triple but serious problems have robbed Nigeria of enjoying dividends of democracy. The authors opined



that unless the issues of poverty, corruption and insecurity are addressed, Nigeria will continue to face development challenges. Also, chapter nine deals with the media, democratic consolidation and National integration – the challenges of ethnic militias. The authors are of the view that unless the menace of ethnic militias are addressed Nigeria's development will be a mirage. Chapter ten looks at Leadership and The Quest For National Integration. The authors are of the opinion that the problem of national integration is traceable to inept leadership in Nigeria.

Chapter eleven addresses Accountability and transparency for sustainable development. The authors discussed the importance of transparency and accountable in the promotion of sustainable development in Nigeria. Chapter Twelve discusses Governance, sustainable peace and Development in Nigeria. The author submitted that sustainable peace is a fulcrum for tangible development in Nigeria while chapter thirteen analyses the Nigerian State and the cost of corruption. The author concludes that unless corruption is eschewed in both private and public institutions, sustainable development will be a mirage. Chapter fourteen looks at Local Government and the challenges of Financing Rural Development in Nigeria. Chapter fifteen discusses unemployment in Nigeria-the way forward. The authors analyzed causes and consequences of unemployment in our nation and proffered solutions. Chapter sixteen discusses Human Capital Development and Economic Growth in Nigeria.

In preparing this book, references were made to many Literature and scholars. We cannot list all of them here; however, we sincerely acknowledge the cooperation of the Chancellor, Oduduwa University Dr./Chief Abdulrahman Adegoke Adedoyin for his moral and financial support. We also appreciate the support of the Vice Chancellor of our University Professor Chibuzo N. Nwoke for his professional advice. In this book of reading, it is expedient to emphasize that while editors take responsibility for the editorial work, the authors of the various chapters take full responsibility for the contents of their chapters.

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## *Contents*

### Preface

iv

### List of Contributors

vi

### Table of Contents

ix

#### Chapter One

1

The Impact of Corruption on Economic Growth in  
Nigeria-Looking Back, Looking Ahead  
*\*Alimi, M.K.O. \*\* Isiramen, I.E.*

23

#### Chapter Two

The Nigerian Local Government and Development  
of the Grassroots – Analysis of a Paradox  
*\*Alimi, M. Kajogbola Olalere\*\* Aloba, I.F\*\*\*Nofiu, S.O.A.*

39

#### Chapter Three

Corruption, Public Life and Good Governance in Nigeria  
*\*Idada, Walter \*\* Isiramen, I.E. \*\*\* Aloba, I.F*

59

#### Chapter Four

Development Dilemma and Political Corruption in  
Nigeria's Fourth Republic  
*\*Bamisaye, A.O. \*\* Joshua, A.E. \*\*\* Usman, S.A.*

85

#### Chapter Five

Prosecution of Corrupt Practices in the Nigerian State  
*Aliyu, M. Kolawole*

99

#### Chapter Six

Nigeria's Oil Wealth and Democratization since 1999  
*Aliyu, M. Kolawole*

117

#### Chapter Seven

The Relevance of Local Government Election to Grassroots



Democracy in Nigeria

*\*O.A. Bamisaye, \*\* F.O. Fagbohun\*\*\* S.C. Agunyai*

**Chapter Eight** 139

Insecurity in Nigeria: Nexus Between Poverty, Corruption and Insurgency

*\*Agbalajobi, Damilola Taiye \*\* Akinlabi, Akinumi Afeez*

**Chapter Nine** 163

The Media, Democratic Consolidation and National Integration- The Challenges of Ethnic Militias

*\*Dawood, Omolumen Egbefo, \*\* Onyema, Nnaemeka Shedrack*

**Chapter Ten** 203

Leadership and The Quest for National Integration

*\*Dawood, Omolumen Egbefo, \*\* Onyema, Nnaemeka Shedrack*

**Chapter Eleven** 231

Accountability and Transparency for Sustainable Development in Africa

*Obasa, S.O.*

**Chapter Twelve** 271

Governance, Sustainable Peace, and Development in Nigeria

*Obasa, S.O.*

**Chapter Thirteen** 311

The Nigerian State and The Cost of Corruption

*Erigbe, Patience A.*

**Chapter Fourteen** 321

Local Government and The Challenges of Financing Rural Development in Nigeria

*Omeonyekwule, Victor Monday*



345

**Chapter Fifteen**

Unemployment in Nigeria: The Way Forward.

*\*Bamisaye, Olajire, Abiola\*\* Hanafi Dele Ibrahim,**\*\*\* Akintunde Patric Adediran\*\*\*\* Aguyi Nelson Ikemba*

363

**Chapter Sixteen**

Human Capital Development and Economic Growth in Nigeria

*\*Bamisaye. Olajire Abiola, \*\*Hanafi Dele Ibrahim**\*\*\*Akintunde Patrick Adediran \*\*\*\*Aguiyi Nelson Ikemba*



## *Chapter Thirteen*

### **The Nigerian State and The Cost of Corruption**

*Erigbe, Patience A.*

#### **Introduction**

Long before now, two of the major reasons for military take-over of government in Nigeria had always been corruption and mismanagement of the public sector. The public sector constitutes the nucleus of the economy. These two factors have still remained as fundamental problems to the Nigerian society. Corruption has spread so widely and rapidly that concerned individuals and organizations begin to wonder whether it is the factor responsible for poor plan execution. For several years, Transparency International, in its annual survey of ethical conduct among nations, labeled Nigeria as one of the most corrupt nations in the world. The organization's perception of Nigeria as a corrupt nation must have been determined by the application of a number of factors and indices. Mismanagement of public institutions in Nigeria partly has its origin in the influence of corrupt practices mostly among public officials and outsiders. Within Nigeria, and in government, the Presidency has made public pronouncements on the deep-rooted prevalence of corruption and its resolve to fight the vice.

Since the inception of democratic governance in Nigeria, the issue of corruption has become more pronounced thus attracting the attention of the international community. It is not that corruption was not prevalent in the past governments, but the magnitude of its incidence since 1999 has reached a significantly alarming proportion as to attract academic and research interest. The public sector, by its administrative design, is the engine room of the economy. Where it is clogged with problems or corruption, other sectors of the economy cannot be spared of defects. Persistence of corruption in public sector establishments results in low productivity, ineffectiveness, recklessness, fiscal indiscipline and lack of



attention to priority. This scenario has led to the moribund state of public enterprises and public corporations. For illustrative purposes, Nigeria Airways, National Supply Company and Daily Times of Lagos among others ceased to function, owing partly to corruption, administrative lapses and much of bureaucratic infringement (Bamidele, 2013).

Corruption in its ramifications is a major threat to investment and culture of good governance. As a result, a higher incidence of corruption poses a risk to potential investment. The three arms of government, the executive government, parastatals and the civil service depend on government financial vote which is grossly exposed to corrupt practices. There is to be no record of transparency in spite of government's pronouncement of policy of transparency and accountability.

### **Conceptualizing Corruption**

Corruption, as a social vice, is prevalent in every country, but the degree of prevalence varies significantly. Corruption is a phenomenon seen from different perspectives. But no matter the perspective, it is generally accepted worldwide that corruption is negative. It is a question. Corruption is not only manifested in form of chronic mismanagement, there is equally a demonstration of wasteful spending as well as the ghost worker syndrome in the public sector (Bamidele, 2013). Furthermore, corruption is conceived as any activity which involves an individual undertaking for financial gains in order to satisfy his personal interests at the detriment of others without consideration for ethical considerations (Bamidele, 2009). Basically, corruption depicts the act of unlawfully using one's position or character to procure some benefits for oneself or another person contrary to the duties and rights of others.

It is an act that involves giving or taking a bribe, illegitimate enrichment by means of a public office or position over which one has immediate power of control. In this regard, those who have contact with government are sometimes compelled to provide services



to public officials to offer them favours. However, it is appropriate to state that even public officials create the atmosphere for corruption to thrive. Seydon (2015), does not agree that there is any consensus view of corruption. However, he locates corruption as invoking private interest in public decision making, not for the good of all, but only for an individual or a group of individuals whose interest is best served in that instance. Because of different human perceptions, the concept of corruption may be difficult to establish. Nonetheless, some values and norms seem to feature in what is considered as corruption. In essence, once there is violation of what is considered to be of public good and interest then corruption is being featured.

The press media in most parts of the world brand a range of behavior as corrupt. These include bribery, embezzlement, illegal collection of fees, blackmailing, smuggling, profiteering, sale of defective goods, swindling, establishment and operation of illegal business among others. Tiebor (2012), posits that corruption occurs when at least two parties interact to change the structure of the process laid by the society. According to the writer, corruption is the dishonest behavior of individuals or public officers in an attempt to secure private benefits. Hence, corruption can only be identified in terms of ingredients, scope and character. Sociologists and psychologists classify corruption as a social disease.

Odekunle as cited in Kojo (2016), conceives corruption as simply a species of a more inclusive criminal social conduct or behavior, coded or uncoded, perpetrated primarily for economic gains. It involves the use or abuse of legitimate means between individuals perpetrating the corrupt act. It implies therefore that perpetrators of corruption operate across the strata of society as corroborated by the popular elite deviance theory. This is to the extent that perpetrators of the crime have social status, and sometimes political and economic power. Corruption is compatible with all political systems which in most cases serve the concern of rich and influential



interest groups. In Nigeria, while emphasis is on public officers, the impact of corruption goes beyond the public sphere as evident in the administration and performance of public institutions, government and the economy.

### **Political Corruption**

Nigeria has had a significant proportion of corrupt political leaders and public officers. They have at different times acted as the conduit pipe through which resources are drained. Some of the worst examples of embezzlement of aids and loans obtained from foreign donor agencies and countries abound in Nigeria. Evidence from the performance of the Nigerian economy indicates a display of visionless and unpatriotic leadership characterized by total lack of commitment to the welfare of citizens. The problem of Nigeria lies with how to manage the country's resources judiciously when those saddled with the responsibility have failed miserably during the military era or in the present democratic dispensation, corruption presents a cost to the socio-economic development of Nigeria.

The battle at the polls is objective-laden as it is already established that whoever controls political power has good control over economic resources. This thesis is therefore the root of political corruption. Political parties are not exempt from the allegation of corruption, particularly the use of party funds and fraudulent electoral practices. Consequently, the use of political power for financial gains or to establish one's interest falls into the category of political corruption. A former Secretary to the Federal Government once declared, "Nigeria, it is not just that officials are corrupt but that corruption is official" as reported in *Horizon* (2009). In the democratic dispensation such as what is being experimented in Nigeria, given the fact that government's welfare policy is not effective, individuals who find themselves in power wish to amass wealth by all means available as possible. Political corruption may also be seen as the use of financial power to buy political favours and to secure political power.

Political corruption is hinged on the political system, and it is a



interest of some politicians to maintain its cycle. Barns (2016) claims that no politician is wholly honest nor can any politician be entrusted with national resources without closely monitoring their activities. In Nigeria, poverty tends to aid political corruption. Perhaps because of poverty inherited from the days of pre-colonial administration, politicians and public office holders tend to be self-centred, unresponsive to the needs of majority of the people, but are only inspired by the desire to amass wealth. This is only to the extent that they are empowered by state legislation to occupy public office.

The origin of political corruption can be traced to the desires of politicians to use unwholesome means to gain power. Their focus is on rigging elections (Daniyan, 2010). Rigging elections takes many forms. It may be an act of altering or modifying the rules safeguarding the recruitment of supporters, bribing voters and officers, preventing submission of nomination papers, providing illegal ballot papers, destroying ballot boxes or simply inflating the figures. Thus, electoral forms of corruption arise from the desire to compete for and gain control of power, wealth and influence by means of state machinery wrongly used. This is the prevalent practice in Nigeria at all levels where elections determine who receives the staff of office.

### **Consequences of Corruption**

Effect of corruption on national life and national development has been considered by several writers. They all tend to agree that corruption is a hindrance to national development. Also, among the easily identifiable negative consequences of corruption are waste, misallocation of human and material resources, increased cost of public administration, delay in project execution, violation of social order, enthronement of greed, graft and nepotism (Rajman, 2016). The effect of corruption on the state is noticeable. First, the public service is grossly inefficient, sometimes to the point of paralysis. It no longer appears to fill the goals for which it set up in the first instance.



At the international level, the external image of Nigeria is questionable, owing to cases of corruption in various dimensions. It is not surprising that former British Prime Minister labeled Nigeria as "fantastically corrupt." Nigerians are also subjected to thorough scrutiny at points of entry into other nations. Many foreigners have become suspicious of Nigerians. The reason for this is the stigmatization of corruption directed at Nigeria and Nigerians. The incidence of corruption may undoubtedly keep donor countries and international organizations away from Nigeria. They fear the corruption might make nonsense of their charitable plans. Further, investors are wary of corruption in Nigeria. No business-minded investor would invest resources in a country where corruption is almost the culture. Corruption undermines the goals of development as public funds are arbitrarily handled, used for private purposes or deposited in personal foreign accounts, thus causing public hardship that cannot be quantified. Governance and social economic conditions have deteriorated. Corruption has adversely affected the stability of government. Loyalty is seen to be fragmented by the consideration of personal gains. In the same way, national unity has lost its value to corruption. Corruption has become an instrument for the promotion of self-objectives to the detriment of national interests (Akpan, 2009). Where funds set aside for sports development disappear from the coffers, good performance cannot be expected from sportsmen and women. In every sector of the economy where government has control, cases of corruption are pervasive. Indeed, the preparation of national budgets over the years is riddled with corrupt practices and self-interest is perpetrated by legislators.

#### **Governments Efforts At Curbing Corruption**

In pursuance of the will to combat corruption, laudable measures have been taken but advertently rendered unworkable. Some of such measures include institution of Public Assets Recovery Tribunal; Code of Conduct Bureau; Professional (Private Practice) Prohibition Decree; Personal Assets Declaration by Public Officers; Public Complaints Commission;



Legal Aids Scheme; National Ethical Reorientation Committee; War Against Indiscipline; Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau; Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and Tribunals of Enquiry among several others. The question again is whether they are strong politically to pursue the objectives for which they were set up.

However, with good intentions and sincerity of purpose, the above measures could effectively address corrupt practices in Nigeria. But, where officers in charge of the anti-corruption bodies are also engaged in fraudulent practices, the bodies can do little to combat corruption. The head of any anti-corruption agency should be seen as an incorruptible character. Evidence has shown that key personnel in the judiciary are corrupt, having been involved in cases of gratification. In such a situation, the judiciary cannot administer justice effectively. The plausible reason for the weakness of anti-corruption bodies in Nigeria can be traced to political corruption. Those who are supposed to apply the measures have been caught in the act of corruption. Consequently, the judicial process is of little effect in this regard.

The 1999 Constitution of Nigeria in chapter two, section 15 (5) provides that, "The state shall punish all corrupt practices and abuse of power." Thus, realizing the immense danger posed to the nation by corruption, and in furtherance of the above provision, a former president, Olusegun Obasanjo, set the motion for the anti-corruption agenda, resulting in the passage of the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Bill in 1999. It eventually became Act in 2000. Although certain statutes such as the criminal and penal codes had been in existence before the Act, the government attempted to fight corruption with a new zeal, using the Act. It is yet to be seen the extent to which the Act has helped to reduce corruption in Nigeria. The level of corruption, its institutional dimension and methods of advancing it have attracted scientific mode. It is therefore implied that corruption is a systemic problem in Nigeria.



## Conclusion

There is already a sufficient number of institutions and laws to effectively minimize corruption in Nigeria. They only need to be strengthened with a new level of orientation. The problem may basically be with the operators of the anti-graft bodies. They need individuals who display a track record of honesty, loyalty to national interest and a strong religious background. The problem of ineffectiveness of responses to corruption does not rest as much with the applicability or appropriateness of measures. What appears lacking is the absence of a clear perspective on the causes of corruption.

It is observed that corruption thrives on the prevailing levels of poverty, adversity and hardship. For this reason, it is a challenge for the government to create an enabling environment for the improvement of the social welfare system. Although there are different degrees of its manifestation in both the private and public sectors, fighting corruption effectively will require a broad-based and multi-level approach which must involve all Nigerians. To achieve this, Nigerians must be made to believe in the approach as well as participate in the execution of measures against corruption.

One principle that already exists in the public sector is accountability. However, it appears to be only on paper. In other words, the extent to which it is applied remains questionable. What is recommended is the resuscitation and practical enforcement of the principle of accountability at all levels in the public sector. A commitment to accountability would suggest that every public official, irrespective of category and position, should account for, and justify the use of resources in his office.

A new ethical orientation is needful for every Nigerian who occupies a position whether in the private or public sector. The National Orientation Centre appears silent in its obligations in this dimension. It has to be



evaluated and repositioned for a new challenge in this new dispensation. Furthermore, regular appraisal and monitoring of public officers and their agencies is recommended. Such a task could result in efficient management of public establishments and the resources allocated to them. In the current dispensation, there is need to re-structure the public sector to make it results-oriented. This can only be effectively done through reforms.

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