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**The Impact and Consequences of Corruption on the Nigerian
Society and Economy**

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Abstract

There is no doubt that corruption has eaten deep into the fabric of the Nigerian society. Successive governments in the country since independence in 1960 had in recognition of the evil of corruption established programmes and agencies to deal with it. These include the War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAIC); Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC); the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC); etc. Despite the establishment of these agencies and targeted programmes, corruption has continued to ruin every aspect of the country's national life with serious damages to her image before the international community. Corruption has not only become pervasive in Nigeria but it is more or less a way of life, much to the detriment of the Nigerian society and economy. The paper interrogates the nature of corruption and its implications for national development efforts in Nigeria. The paper concludes that without effectively dealing with corruption in a holistic manner, there can be no meaningful socio-economic and political development of the country. This is because in the opinion of the paper, corruption is evil, which is not reformable but must be removed in its entirety.

Key words: Corruption, Impact, Consequences, Society, and Economy

Introduction

Corruption in Nigeria exists at an alarming proportion. In government it thrives in the areas of project costing; ghost workers syndrome; contract awards and their subsequent abandonment; payment of huge sums of money to political godfathers; embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds; among others. The impact of corruption on the Nigerian society includes poor service delivery, inadequate infrastructure, bad governance, pervasive dehumanizing poverty, and general underdevelopment. Corruption accounts for the inefficiency and unimpressive growth and development including the cyclical failure of democracy and good governance in Nigeria. In an apparent expression of anger and frustration over the high level of corruption in Nigeria, Abubakar (2014) noted: "We have spent more money to provide less electricity; and have created more poverty alleviation and job creation agencies with less to show for them than any other nation on earth."

Faboyede (2009) argued that the history of corruption in Nigeria is rooted in the years of military rule in the country, which subdued the rule of law, facilitated wanton looting of public treasury, decapitated public institutions and free speech and instituted a secret and opaque culture in the running of government business. The result has been total insecurity, poor economic management, abuse of human rights, ethnic conflict, capital flight, etc. Poverty and the enormous wealth inequality in Nigeria are deeply rooted in the country's pervasive corruption. Corruption remains a major challenge against Nigerian's lack of appreciable socio-economic development given its rich endowment in both human and material resources.

Corruption is so destructive to the Nigerian society and economy that despite its size and wealth, it lingers in the doldrums perpetually, a country of the future. The country is economically plundered and mismanaged. There is therefore, a general rapid deterioration in the living conditions of Nigerians due to wanton corruption in government on an unimaginable scale. According to Obasanjo (1994), no society that treats public funds and property with utter disregard and cares only for personal accumulation on the principles of "steal and go" can make progress.

Corruption kills the development spirit. Nothing is as destructive to a society as the rush to quick and easy money, which makes fools of those who work honestly and constructively (Frisch, 1994). Corruption has stunted the growth and development of the country to the extent that the country has become incapable of executing even the most basic functions such as providing security of lives and property, provision of social services and engendering national consciousness and patriotism in the citizens. The institutions of state are in decay and exhibiting monumental lack of capacity to deliver. Starting from the coercive instruments of law

and order, through to the legislature, the judiciary, the civil service and other sundry organs of government, corruption has become so rooted and devastating. According to Adibe (2012):

The politicians entrusted to protect the common patrimony of Nigerians steal the country blind; law enforcement officers see or hear no evil at a slight inducement; government workers drag their feet and refuse to give their best; organized labour including University Lecturers in public institutions go on indefinite strikes on a whim while journalists accept brown envelopes to turn truth on its head...

The combined impact and consequences of corruption entail enormous damage to the country's corporate life and existence economically, politically and socially ranging from the lost of government revenue; the undermining of the economy and national development, political instability; the debilitating effect on public service efficiency and effectiveness; workers' morale and productivity; the pervasion and frustration of development goals and objectives; as well as threatening the corporate existence of the Nigerian-state. Thus, corruption has systematically destroyed the socio-economic and political fabrics of the Nigerian-state. This further manifests in the breakdown of the authority as opposed to power; the rule of law giving way to the rule of might; the fast declining of the feeling of Nigerianess in favour of individualism; among others. Corruption has been thoroughly domesticated and institutionalized in the country, especially by the elite class.

Corruption is found to be responsible for the underdevelopment of the Nigerian-state as no meaningful development can be achieved in the face of widespread corruption like it is being witnessed in the country today. It has for instance, depleted the abundant resources of the country to further her underdevelopment. Corruption has led to the moral decay of the Nigerian society. Many basic facilities like water, electricity supply, health and educational services, etc are not provided adequately, mainly because of the excessive corruption of the state officials, who frequently steal much of the financial allocations to their establishments.

Corruption is anti-development such that Nigeria, despite its rich endowment in resources is perpetually seeking for foreign aid while what is corruptly taken away from the national purse is often over and above the loan expected from the World Bank, Paris and London Clubs. According to Uke (2009), for the period a government is in power, \$10 billion may be borrowed while during the same regime, \$30 billion may be corruptly taken abroad by the leaders into their private accounts. Also, because of corruption, to execute a project in Nigeria cost more than double the normal price elsewhere. Uke (2009) argued that in the 1960s; Nigeria's level of

development was ranked the same with the “Asian-Tiggers” but today, these countries have gone farther in development, technologically and otherwise. Nigeria, in contrast, has grown deeper in poverty and underdevelopment, ranking as one of the most corrupt and poor nations of the world with a mono-culture economy based on oil & gas. The paper is structured as follows: Section I is the introduction, which highlights the problem of corruption in Nigeria. Section II examines the concept and act of corruption in Nigeria. Section III discusses the nature, causes and impact of corruption on the Nigerian society and economy. Section IV reviews the attempts to combat corruption in the country; while section V looks at the way forward and then conclusion.

The Concept and Act of Corruption in Nigeria

There is no single definition of the word corruption, which has been universally accepted as it leads itself to many definitions. Corruption embraces a broad spectrum of activities ranging from fraud, embezzlement to bribery, among others. It is one of much intractable social pathology ravaging the Nigerian society, the effects and implications of which lack coherent and definitive bounds. Igwe (2010) argued that corruption is universally decried and constitutes a phenomenon in itself and invariably the outcome of a conglomeration of discrete failure such as failure of institutional controls over bureaucrats or a failure of the legal system that checkmates the behavior of those who perpetrate the crime.

Corruption is a symptom of deep institutional weakness that leads to inefficient economic, social and political outcomes. It reduces economic growth, retards long-term foreign and domestic investments. Atlas (1968) considers corruption as a symptom of dysfunctionality of the relationship between the state and the people, characterized by bribery, extortion and nepotism. The World Bank cited in Oviasuyi, etal (2007) defines corruption as the abuse of public office for private gains when an officer accepts, solicits or extorts a bribe. Corruption takes place when private agents actively offer bribes to circumvent public policies and processes for competitive advantages and profit. Public office can equally be abused for personal benefits through patronage, nepotism or diversion of government revenues.

The Corrupt Practice and Other Related Offences Act, (2000) section (2) quoted in Oviasuyi et al (2007) defines corruption to include bribery, fraud and other related offences. Corruption is further defined as any action or commission enacted by a member of an organization, which is against the rules, regulations, norms, and ethics of the organization and the purpose of which is to meet the selfish end of the member (Azelewa, 2002). Oviasuyi, etal (2007) further described corruption as any form of anti-social behavior by an individual or group, which confers unjust or fraudulent benefits on its perpetrators but which is inconsistent with the established legal norms and moral ethos of the land. Olaniyan (2002) defines corruption to

include bribery, fraud and dishonesty, which is capable of destroying or perverting the purity of societal well-being.

Corruption, according to Chris Ngige quoted in Chigbo (2010) is anything that does not come in its pure form, noting that it manifests in two ways. First, corruption takes administrative form such as favouritism, nepotism, tribalism, sexual harassment, etc. Secondly, corruption takes financial form e.g. bribery and extortion.

The evil of corruption in Nigeria is not limited to the public sector only as private sector also partakes in the practice, which has cost the country money that could be invested to foster the growth and development of the economy. Corruption has therefore, retarded the social and economic development of the Nigerian nation. Describing the act of corruption in Nigeria, Chigbo (2010) noted:

When you come to an office, a messenger will ask you what do you have for me. At a check point, the Police will ask what do you have for me. If you call an Artisan to work for you, he will inflate the cost.

The story of corruption in Nigeria dates back to the time of the country's independence in 1960. At that time, it was like a mustard seed, which has today grown into a very big tree with deep tap roots, branches and leaves. The inability of the political leadership to tackle corruption in a decisive manner led to the collapse of the First and Second Republics and provided justifications for military coups. Giving reasons for the first military coup, which truncated the First Republic in 1966, Chukwuma Nzeogwu quoted in Chigbo (2010) said:

Our enemies are the political profiteers, the swindlers, the man in high and low places that seek bribes and demand 10%, those that seek to keep the country divided permanently so that they can remain in office as minister or VIPs at least, the tribalist, the nepotists, those that make the country look big for nothing before international circles, those that have corrupted our society and put the Nigerian political calendar back by their words and deeds.

However, rather than addressing the menace of corruption, the military governments in Nigeria did not only perfect corruption but elevated it to a state art. Thus, fifty-four years after political independence (1960-2014), Nigeria is still wallowing in corruption at both public and private sectors of the economy. Indeed, other than direct stealing from government treasury, the major forms of corruption in Nigeria are perpetrated through private sector companies and organizations. For instance, some public officials even form their own private companies or fronts with which they corner inflated contracts from their ministries, agencies and parastatal (Chigbo, 2010). Under the electoral process, corruption has robbed the nation of credible and patriotic leaders. Because of corruption, the people's votes do not count

with the result that manners of people impose themselves on the Nigerian citizens as leaders in the legislature and executive arms of government.

According to Igwe (2010), corruption, like “Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)”, is an acknowledged global malaise that pays no credence to race or geography. The pervasiveness of corruption in Nigeria is therefore, not unique. However, what makes the Nigerian case particularly intriguing is the apparently high tolerance level exhibited by the generality of Nigerians to an otherwise despicable conduct. Whether on account of distortion of values, conspiracy of silence or outright connivance with perpetrators of corruption, majority of Nigerians, it would seem, tend to treat corruption as an incurable cancer, which the country has to live with. Thus, the Nigerian-state lacked the courage and the will-power to enforce the laws, procedures and policies meant to fight corruption, especially among the elite; who often sweep the incidents under the carpet. As a result of this, corrupt practices become common-place on our streets and highways; border posts and ports of entry; educational and health institutions; government ministries and parastatals; banks and other financial institutions; markets and places of worship; such that no sector of the Nigerian society and economy is spared and protected from the devastating effects of corruption.

The Nature of Corruption

Corruption takes multiple dimensions but state corruption otherwise called grand corruption is the progenitor of all other forms of corruption, which include bureaucratic corruption, electoral corruption, bribery, fraud and embezzlement, extortions, nepotism, cronyism or neo-patrimonialism. Corruption can be classified as either systemic or sporadic in nature. In other words, corruption may take place occasionally or entrenched in a given society.

Sporadic corruption occurs irregularly and as such, it does not pose much threat to the economy of a nation but where not checked, it could dampen morale and saps the economy of resources. Systemic corruption on the other hand, occurs where corruption has become not only endemic but an integral and essential aspect of the economic, social and political life of a nation so much so that honesty becomes irrational. The citizens are forced to follow what would have otherwise been considered unacceptable ways and those who resist are punished. Thus systemic corruption describes a situation in which the major institutions and processes of the state are routinely dominated and used by corrupt individuals or groups and in which people have no alternative in dealing with the corrupt officials.

When corruption has eaten deep into the fabrics of any society, it develops strong resistance to anti-corruption measures. According to Igwe (2010):

Corruption is akin to the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). As the virus renders comatose inbuilt immune capacity of the body system so also does systemic corruption subvert the immunity of a political system destroying all its institutions and consequently rescinds its growth, which is why nothing works wherever, it exists; no social programme or economic policy however lofty can achieve its set objectives to the letter wherever corruption virus strives.

The only difference between systemic corruption virus and the AIDS virus is that corruption is curable. Corruption is all pervading as one level of corruption begets another of its kind in a network of unending ripple effects or multiplier reaction including amidst other social and economic ills such as poverty, economic stagnation, wars, ethnic strife to mention but a few.

Corruption is assaulting every aspect of Nigeria's socio-economic and political life. It causes the distortion and diversion of government welfare programmes and undermines the goals of national development. As noted earlier, corruption manifests in diverse ways such as bribery, sexual harassment, nepotism, examination malpractice, inflation of contract, misappropriation and embezzlement of public funds, falsification of election results, and what have you? Corruption permeates every aspect of Nigeria's life. Public officials demand bribes before they do their jobs. If a policeman stops you for routine traffic check, he expects "kola" (money) from you or else he delays your business. To pick up a form from a ministry often requires bribing the clerk handing out such forms or else suddenly there are no forms available; come back next week, you are told but produce the required bribe and the form appears. If you desire to have a contract from a ministry, you must be prepared to pay 10% or more of the contract sum to the awarding committee. In Nigeria, it is therefore, obvious that one bribes to get whatever, he or she wants.

The Causes of Corruption in Nigeria

The causes of corruption in Nigeria can be traced to the importation of African culture into otherwise impersonal public service. In African societies, we are supposed to be our brothers' keepers. Therefore, when people secure jobs with the government, they feel obligated to use their positions to help their relatives. This desire to help sometimes result in stealing money from government coffers to help siblings and town's people that are dependent on the officer for help. Thus, much of the corruption that exists in Nigeria is motivated by goodwill. Officials whether in public or private sector desire to obtain money to help their people, which often result in taking bribes or stealing public money to meet up with such demands. Thus, the extended family system in Nigeria, which places burden on few Nigerians with jobs, plays a significant role in the high incidence of corruption in the country.

Lack of modesty among the political leaders is another major cause of corruption in Nigeria. According to Magaji (2005):

When the former President of Tanzania, late Julius Nyerere, retired as President, he possessed not more than ten jackets and no single personal house. The President had to request for a three-bedroom flat from the government of Tanzania for the rest of his life. Meanwhile, his Vice-President resorted to teaching English in a Community school.

How many Nigerians in positions of authority possess this quality? Thus, lack of modesty is one of the causes of corruption in Nigeria.

The underlying basic principles of social organization in Nigeria is that everybody must be allowed to seek his own good through legitimate individual efforts with the rationale that the principle would guarantee the common good of the Nigerian people. This principle has formed the basic foundation of the Nigerian social order, and the ultimate consideration for economic, political, social and cultural or whatever, activity of an average Nigerian. However, since survival of the fittest (or at any cost and by any means) is as well implied in the individualized type of social organization, it means that not everybody can successfully seek his own good, let alone pursue and accumulate wealth. Thus, in reality only a tiny fraction of the Nigerian population, and mostly those with direct or indirect aid of the state have been able to seek their own good; accumulate enough wealth and property to further appropriate state power and resources, which would enable them to exploit the labour and sweat of the majority unhampered; as well as to ignore laws, rules and procedures hypocritically established by themselves to moderate the so-called seeking of one's own good. This development provides a fertile ground for corruption in the public service.

The over concentration of power at the centre under the Nigerian federal structure, accentuated by the long years of military rule has continued to ensure that corruption thrives in the country. The government is the focus of power in the country, determining the level and nature of economic activity. In short, the government is the economy. It is the greatest industrial and agricultural power. It is the biggest contractor and the sole owner of natural resources. It is the largest employer and financier, and determines the rule of the game, i.e. the regulations with which all economic activities must comply such as interest rates, land tenure, service fees, import quotas, pricing, among others.

Where the bureaucracy is under constant pressure from numberless profit seekers, all clamouring for permits, contracts, certificates, import licenses, etc, the temptation becomes overwhelming to jump the queue, to lubricate one's way, and to

make certain of results. It is argued that even where powers are diffused at the different levels of government in the spirit of true federalism, governmental role in the polity should be limited to the prescription of standards or regulations for the operation of business. The direct involvement of government in economic activities is an invitation for corruption to thrive. These factors have severally and collectively provided fertile grounds for sharp practices in both public and private organizations with serious impact and consequences on the Nigerian society and economy.

The Impact and Consequences of Corruption in Nigeria

Corruption is a cankerworm, whose effect has brought untold hardship to the socio-economic and political life of Nigerians. Corruption, according to Obasanjo (1994), does not bring good to any nation rather, it stultifies growth and development. He lamented on the level of corruption in Nigeria thus:

Let us all give our dear nation a chance to grow. Corruption brings a nation no good. The resources meant for water supply, roads, education, health and other basic social services are captured and stolen by a handful of Nigerians through corrupt acts, which stultify development. When you encourage cover ups or join hands in such acts, you are destroying the nation and our collective future.

It is stressed that for every incidence of ghost worker, one person has been denied employment, for every corrupt practice in the health sector, a life is put in jeopardy, and lives are ruined.

The impact and consequences of corruption is of particular and increasing concern to the Nigerian nation. Corruption raises moral questions on individuals and national probity and accountability. It burdens the private sector and deters foreign and domestic investments. The cost of corruption often falls disproportionately on the poor who are unable to pay bribes and thus, may be denied essential services. Widespread corruption also undermines public trust in government and prevents the emergence of necessary ingredients for socio-economic and political development. The disastrous impact and consequences of corruption on the Nigerian nation was further attested to by Obasanjo (1999) in his swearing in speech as President on May 29, 1999 when he said: "Corruption, the greatest single bane of our society today will be tackled head on; no society can achieve anything near its full potential if it allows corruption to become the full blown cancer it has been in Nigeria".

Corruption is a key factor in every crisis that had rocked the Nigerian nation since independence. The sabotage of the nationalists and the demise of the First Republic; fall of the Gowon regime; the overthrow of the Shagari administration; the un-wholesome vagaries and the annulment of June 12, Presidential election; the derailment of the Babangida transition programme; etc are clear indices of these

crises. During the Babangida administration, corruption became not only intensified but institutionalized such that the outcome of government policies often become erratic; and apparently well-intentioned measures and programmes aimed at dealing with socio-economic and political problems seemed increasingly inept and sometimes futile. For example, the more fertilizers and agro-business, the less food at affordable prices; the more electric power station, the less electricity supply; the more policemen with guns and walkie-talkies, the more the crime rate; etc.

The impact of corruption on the Nigerian society and economy is overwhelming. Corruption has posed serious challenges to economic development in the country and undermined democracy and good governance by subverting the electoral process and governmental procedures. Corruption in elections reduces the legitimacy of government, accountability and representation in policy-making. In the judiciary, corruption suspends the rule of law and erodes public confidence in the administration of justice. Corruption also erodes the institutional capacity of government as institutional safe guards are disregarded, resources are siphoned and officials are hired or promoted without regard to performance. It undermines economic development by generating considerable distortions and inefficiency.

In the private sector, corruption increases the cost of doing business through the cost of illicit payments, the risk of breached agreements, etc. It also distorts the playing field, shielding companies with connections from competition and thereby sustaining inefficient companies. Corruption generates economic distortions in the public sector by diverting public investments away from social welfare programmes such as education and health, into capital projects where the prospects of bribes and kick-backs are brighter. Government officials may increase the technical complexity of public sector projects to conceal corrupt dealings, thus further distorting investments. Corruption is not only a disincentive to investment because of immediate cost but also because it entangles business in wasteful and unproductive relations, which discourage prospective investors.

Corruption undermines human and capital development through distorting public spending and fosters unaccountable government as the elite in leadership positions strive to prevent the masses from getting to know exactly how much funds are acquired and how they are utilized. Information on financial allocation to government projects and the basis for such decisions are deliberately masked in obscurity. The practice erodes the quality of governance and induces apathy on the part of the populace and sometimes breeds overt and subversive activities against the state.

Corruption constitutes a major obstacle to democracy and good governance. The legitimacy of any democratic government is eroded where its institutions are misused for private advantage. Corruption is a major consideration in the deployment

of scarce resources to uneconomic high profile projects such as fly-over bridges; 5-star hotels, airports, etc at the expense of less spectacular but fundamental infrastructure projects such as schools, hospitals, roads, provisions of rural water and electricity. The high profile projects are given preference in funding because they are easy targets for siphoning public money into private coffers.

Today, Nigeria stands out unarguably as the heart-land of systemic and all other forms of corruption. Corruption has become endemic in the country so much so that even the choice of development projects earmarked for execution are made not on the basis of their strict economic value to the society but on the opportunity for bribe and kick-backs such projects present. Corruption is so pervasive and deeply rooted in the Nigerian society that in virtually every sector, an encounter with any public official usually ends with one form of bribe or the other. Corruption has thus, taken a huge toll on the economic growth and development of Nigeria. In spite of the country's relatively large earnings from oil export, many Nigerians remain impoverished; and the country is stuck with blighted and crumbling infrastructures.

Corruption affects political stability. It is on record that corruption was the most frequently cited reason for the series of military coups; ethnic and religious conflicts including militancy and terrorism in the political history of Nigeria. The political instability of the country in turn, affects socio-economic development. In fact, national development is handicapped in an atmosphere of instability and uncertainty with the result that long-term planning is jeopardized. The social impact of corruption is the creation of an atmosphere of tension, dishonesty, lawlessness, etc, which in corollary breed cynicism and loss of faith in the political and administrative system. Unfortunately, however, corruption is probably about the only "industry" in the post-independence Nigeria that has maintained a steady growth. Economic, political and social developments have either stagnated or degenerated into crises management.

Morally, corruption has debased the ethical values of uprightness, selflessness, contentment, industry and enthroned duplicity, gross selfishness, avarice and indolence. In fact, most Nigerians have become seized by the frenzy to take the short-cut to life achievement. Corruption has also thrown the country into the paradox of grinding poverty in the midst of plenty. The economy suffers stunted growth as both foreign and domestic investors lost confidence in the system while existing critical infrastructures experience decline and eventual collapse. Corruption causes massive brain drain as professionals trained with the nation's resources trooped abroad in quantum in search of greener pastures, benefiting other societies with Nigerian's investment and intellectual resources while the country groaned under a dearth of professionals in critical sectors of the economy. Corruption poses constant threat to the stability and greater integration of the Nigerian state. The high incidence

of corruption has often provided the excuse for violent crimes such as terrorism, armed robbery kidnapping, suicide bombing, and general insecurity.

Combating Corruption in Nigeria

The establishment of government's instrumentality of anti-corruption war such as the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC); and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) were demonstrations of government's attempts to combat the menace of corruption in the country. In addition to the establishment of these institutions, some administrative and sectorial reforms were undertaken to curb corruption. These measures include strict enforcement of financial regulations; the setting up of a "Due Process and Monitoring Office" with adequate checks and balances to ensure transparency in procedures for contracts and procurement; the monetization of fringe benefits for public servants; the initiative to commit public officials to a service compact with Nigerians (SERVICOM); etc. These measures were targeted at curbing corruption by making public decision process and public service delivery more transparent.

Other institutions for transparency and integrity were established and strengthened to reduce opportunities for corruption. These include the Code of Conduct Bureau, Public Complaints Commission, and the opening of the Office of Auditor-general at various levels of government. Before the promulgation of the Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Act in June, 2000 by the Obasanjo Government, corruption had resulted in the loss of confidence in the Nigerian nation both at home and abroad due to the activities of fraudsters, corrupt public officials and the general mis-governance by the political leadership. On the international scene, Nigeria was blacklisted and isolated as a pariah state where integrity and transparency were alien, and where no transaction occurred without the greasing of palms.

The anti-corruption efforts of the government through the establishment of institutional frameworks have provided a corridor of integrity for foreign investors to seek to do business with Nigeria. Also, as a direct result of government's multi-faceted approach to fighting corruption, billions of stolen money have been recovered, more proceeds of various scams refunded while the "Due Process" procedures have saved billions of Naira from the pockets of treasury looters. The government's anti-corruption war had also counted in favour of the country to secure 60% debt relief in 2006. The impact of these efforts has been a keen consciousness of the anti-corruption war in the psyche of Nigerians. The Nigerian public has been receptive to the anti-corruption measures by coming forward with petitions in defiance of possible victimization.

The Way Forward

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

As John Noonan in his book titled, "Bribe" cited in Otaru (2012) has predicted: "As slavery was once a way of life and now... has become absolute and is incomprehensible, so the practice of bribery in the central form of the exchange of payment for official action will become obsolete."

However, moralizing about the evil of corruption is of little use if John Noonan's prediction about eventual demise of corruption is to be realized in Nigeria. Merely instituting probe panels without effective re-orientation of the people to a better value system will not eradicate corruption. The practice of virtue is the ultimate solution to behavioural change and eradication of corruption. The war against corruption in Nigeria today operates at the level of symbolism. Whatever, positive change that might come to the nation would not be engineered by those benefiting from corruption. Positive change will only come from a breed without greed and who is radically opposed to corruption, i.e. agents of social change who are totally sold out to public good.

Conclusion

The anti-corruption institutions, measures, and crusades have not worked effectively to eradicate corruption in Nigeria because they are built on manipulation of behaviours within inefficient rules. Thus, a fundamental step in curbing corruption in the country is the selection of appropriate rules embodied in the constitution, which would provide for the establishment of institutions of good governance, accountability and transparency; a properly trained police force; an independent judiciary; a professional civil service; an independent media; an independent central bank; a representative legislature; among others. The paper therefore, recommends massive re-orientation drive to return the country to the virtues of integrity, and selfless service anchored on high moral and ethical standards. In the opinion of the paper the war against corruption in Nigeria cannot be won unless and until the leaders concerned themselves with the building of viable institutions of good governance that would ensure transparency; probity; and accountability in governance.

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