

## The Perennial Challenge of Corruption in Nigeria: The Way Forward

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### Abstract

Corruption is a global phenomenon and continues to ravage nations with endemic abuse of entrusted power for personal gain. However, this problem is more devastating in developing nations such as Nigeria. In Nigeria, the challenging of corruption has become institutionalised, highly malignant and cancerous. Corrupt practices in the Nigeria have assumed threatening dimension that if the malaise is left unchecked, it may be the beginning of the end of a nation-state that its founders toiled assiduously to build. In view of the overwhelming impacts of corruption, this paper examines the perennial challenging corruption in Nigeria and the way forward to tackle the menace. Many factors are proved to have been responsible for this ugly scenario, amongst which is the institutional factors. The impacts are manifest in the decay infrastructure and decline in leadership's trust and this call for collective efforts to checkmate and put an end to corruption and bring development in the country. The study utilises secondary sources of data mainly. The paper therefore suggests that a potent action against corruption must produce effective sanction and greater political transparency as a means of ensuring that the resources of the country are deployed to bring about sustainable development in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Corruption, Socio-Economic Development and Nigeria

### Introduction

Corruption is a great disaster that destroys socio-economic development and political prosperity of any nation; and the debasement has caused developing countries of the world to fall behind in terms of national and international development (Mikail, 2024). It is a phenomenon that has existed throughout the ages and even ancient civilisations showed traces of widespread corruption and illegality. The phenomenon is a multidimensional social disease plaguing most nations of the world. However, it is more prevalent in some nations than in others. The menace of corruption is increasingly receiving international, national and local

attention. According to Lawal (2022), this development is partly due to the following reason: series of high-level corruption cases in industrialised countries, an increasing awareness of the costs of corruption throughout the world and the political and economic changes which many countries are undergoing.

It has been observed that corruption could aid development; no such evidence could be claimed to any root most especially for a developing nation such as Nigeria (Moyosore, 2015). Compelling evidences across the globe demonstrate that corruption is an anathema to development. Furthermore, evidences in Nigeria have shown that corruption does more harm than good. This is evident in the fact that despite Nigeria's abundant natural resources the country is classified among the poorest countries of the world (Moyosore, 2015; Obuah, 2020). Nigeria as a nation is bestowed with vast human and natural resources, with oil exports accounting for about 95% of foreign exchange income and some 80% of government income, with a population of about 160 million (Faloore, 2020). However, Nigeria is faced with endemic corruption which has become the part of life of its citizens. As a result of corruption in Nigeria, its quest for socio-economic development has remained a mirage. Despite its enormous array of resources, Nigeria's economy has witnessed a stagnant economic growth, an ugly development which has partly been attributed to corruption and gross mismanagement of the country's vast resources. Corruption has tremendously affected lives and provoked animosity amongst Nigerians. It has unashamedly eaten deep into the fabric of the Nigerian government, the public and private sectors, governmental and non-governmental organisation and it has essentially become a way of life and an important source of accumulation of private property in Nigeria (Smah, 2015; Shah, 2018; Obuah, 2020).

Indeed, there is now the increasing realisation about the ill-impacts of corruption on the country's social, political and economic fabrics. Though it is evident that there is no nation of the world that is totally free from corruption, the prevalence of corruption is on the increase especially in developing and underdeveloped nations. The anti-corruption efforts of the Nigerian government have proved non-effective because of the questionable and illegal behaviour of anti-graft agencies who are supposed to lead the fight against the menace; hence, large scale corrupt related cases involving bribery, extortion, fraud and other forms of misconduct. There were cases of missing funds, budget scam/padding, missing oil revenue, non-remittance of revenue generated by institutions of government into the federation account, contract imposition and scam, oil theft, administrative inefficiency or dereliction of duty, illegal

sale of government property, bribery, extortion and other forms of corruption, economic and financial crimes which hinders Nigerian development (Muhammed, Habbib & Jibrin, 2023). In recent times, the agenda of sustainable development has become of paramount importance in Nigeria because of the growing realisation that for a nation such as Nigeria to grow and become an advanced economy, it must first experience sustainable development. However, the state of affairs is that Nigeria remains an underdeveloped country with majority of the citizens experiencing poverty and poor living conditions. Corruption has caused so many defects to the Nigerian society in terms of human capital development, unemployment, infrastructure and economic growth and development in general (Moyosore, 2015). Furthermore, corruption has caused other defects in Nigeria such as increase in crime rate, unemployment rate and social unrest. Therefore, it is crucial to undertake a review of the persistence challenge and suggest ways of tackling corruption in Nigeria.

## **Conceptual Review**

### **Corruption**

Corruption is a social phenomenon that is difficult to define and it does not have a universally accepted definition. The definitions vary depending on the inclination of the scholar and perception of the concept. Shah (2018) is of the opinion that corruption is a “complex and multifaceted phenomenon with multiple causes and effects, as it takes on various forms and contexts”. Similarly, Okafor (2008) is of the view that while it is hard to define corruption, the crisis that is linked to corruption is not difficult to identify.

Odenkule (2010) defines corruption as any action or omission enacted by a member of an organisation, which is against the rules, regulations, norms and ethics of the organisation and the purpose is to meet the selfish end of the member at the detriment of the organisation. Agbu (2023) observes that public office can be abused for selfish gain even if bribery does not take place. This implies that political corruption could be defined in the form of patronage, election rigging and voters register manipulation, favouritism in the award of contract, procurement scam, tribalism and nepotism in recruitment and promotion, unfair punishment/sanctions for public officials. Given the above definitions, corruption or political corruption implies any action that violates electoral rules/the formal duties of any public role, rules, or norms with regard to public trust.

Smah (2015) hinted that “corruption is the pervasion of integrity or state of affairs through bribery, favour or moral depravity”. He further pointed out that “corruption takes place when

at least two parties have interacted to change the structure or processes of society or the behaviour of functionaries in order to produce dishonest, unfaithful or defiled situations”. This description by the African anthropologist is the common attitude of most African elites and Nigerian power brokers. Indeed, they connive towards changing the reality to favour their self-centric mission to the anguish of societal and national development. Corruption is perceived by the majority as a major factor that hinders the development of any effective system of administration (Yusuf, 2010; Dong, Dulleck & Togler, 2022).

Corruption can be understood as a sign that something unethical is occurring to the administrative affairs of the state (Shall, 2016). Corruption is a challenge to good governance, interferes with public policy and affects the equitable distribution of wealth and a setback to economic development (Osoba, 2020; Arowolo, 2021). Corruption has affected all facets of human endeavours and is threatening the existence of developing countries by weakening control institutions, undermining the rule of law and good governance and destroying the economy. Shehu (2015) posits that the most serious matter concerns the effects of debasement on state security, democratic governance and national development, pointing out the assertion is made with respect to the gravity of corrupt practices in Nigeria’s fourth republic.

Smah (2015) mentioned that “Nearly all economists agree that corruption is a major cause of stagnation for much of Sub-Saharan Africa and indeed much work has been done to combat its existence in many countries in this region. However, corruption still exists and in some cases continues to worsen”. Nigerian society is characterised by social malaise such as governance failure, economic downturn, insecurity of life, poverty, armed robbery, dilemma of development and all forms of corruption, moral degeneration, succession crises and a general lack of accountability by those entrusted with governance (Transparency international, 2016; World Bank, 2019).

This vindicates the fragile dwindling economy that would not cater for the betterment of its citizens and national development. Corruption has created a legitimacy crisis between leaders and their followers and had caused a number of citizens to establish their own religious militancy, tribal or regional warlordism in order to challenge the state power through the withdrawal of their limited legitimacy from the state. A practical illustration is the militants’ activities of the Niger Delta region, complacency of armed banditry activities in North-West region and the menace of religious warlords of “Boko Haram” in the North eastern region of the country. In fact, such episodes emerge due to the absence of equity, justice and transparency in governance.

To this end, corruption in Nigeria has severe and multifaceted negative effects across various sectors. These impacts include hindering economic growth, undermining democratic institutions and eroding public trust. Specifically, corruption leads to decreased government revenue, reduced foreign investment and poor public service delivery, while also exacerbating poverty and inequality.

### **Theoretical Perspective**

This paper considered the social learning theory, credited to Albert Bandura and Ronald Aker. The theory holds that people learn how to act by watching others or watching television (Siegel, 2005). According to Bandura (1986) much of what we learn is obtained by observing others and that this is much more efficient than learning through direct experience because it spares us countless responses that might be followed by punishment or no reinforcement of any kind. The people whose behaviours are observed are referred to as models. The modelling of a behaviour is determined by the characteristics of the model, the characteristics of the observer and the consequences of the observed behaviour on the model (Gire, 1999). But even of more crucial importance for the paper is the impact on learning when a model is either punished for a given behaviour or not. Observers learn to refrain from modelling a behaviour that produces severe punishment to the model. For example, a person who sees another being punished for corruption might not wait to receive the same punishment before deciding to refrain from this activity. Situating this argument within the Nigeria context with reference to the problem of corruption, it is obvious that Nigerians see cases of corruption everywhere. Many of the kickbacks received by the top officials go through intermediaries, some of whom are subordinates of these officials. People who are hitherto living from hand to mouth often begin to build houses and are commonly seen driving around in flashy cars shortly after being appointed to lucrative positions that grant them access to money or influence. Of more relevance to this paper is the consequence of the observed behaviour on the model. In this regard the question one may ask is: “what typically happens to people who engage in corruption in Nigeria?” The answer is, hardly anything at all. It is in Nigeria that people clearly see individuals whose only source of income is supposedly the salary, living up to several times above their means. Yet, few, if any of these people are ever questioned, let alone tried for these apparent corrupt practices. Occasionally, when a top official is retired, rumours go on for some time that the retirement was due to embezzlement, but it remains at the level of rumours. The official announcements usually indicate something like “retired in the public interest,” but these

people are often allowed to keep their questionably acquired wealth. In fact, sometimes, due to the ethno-religious and sectional sentiment, a convicted corrupt official is pathetically not only pardoned but even given a national merit award in Nigeria. This in effect goes a long way in motivating others to engage in the same act tomorrow since even if they are caught and convicted, they may be pardoned and receive a merit award later. But if the individual caught (the models) are appropriately punished for their act, it will discourage others from imitating the said model behaviour.

### **Forms of Corruption in Nigeria**

Indeed, the bases of the corruption perception index and ranking of nations, by Transparency International, on the perceived level of corruption in countries' public sectors, tends to focus attention more on three categories of corruption, namely: (a) Bureaucratic Corruption (b) Electoral Corruption (c) Political Corruption.

However, some unwholesome involvements have received special attention outside the categorisation due to their venomous effects on the economy. Some of such involvements are: (i) Nepotism (ii) Favouritism (iii) Extortion (iv) Embezzlement (v) Bribery and (vi) Fraud.

**a. Bureaucratic Corruption:** This can also be referred to as administrative corruption. It “exhibits many of the pricing characteristics of the economic free market”, in which the forces of demand and supply interact freely to determine price (Tilman, 1978). The bureaucrat (the seller) and the client (buyer) usually involve in pricing different from the official (government) price (cost). Some services may be highly inelastic, while some, less essential, may have greater elasticity. Both the buyer and the seller are seeking private interest. Administrative corruption is daily encountered by people at places such as police stations, taxing and licensing offices, hospitals, schools, immigration offices, customs offices.

**b. Electoral Corruption:** This involves the selling and buying of votes with money, or with promises of political offices or special favours by politicians (Dike, 2004). It involves, intimidation, killing, maiming, jailing and kidnapping of an opposition or his or her relatives. It is the twisting of the constitutionally-accepted political process, where votes are cast in private houses instead of legally-approved polls, where votes are returned in thousands from where no votes were cast; where electoral officials are bribed, or are forced at gun point, to alter election results, leading to losers being announced as and becoming winners.

**c. Political Corruption:** This involves the formulation and implementation of laws, by the politician and political decision - makers, to favour the already corrupt politicians. It involves

the directing of the affairs of political institutions to favour the politicians at the detriment of the masses (Dike, 2024).

**d. Nepotism:** This is the giving of special (unfair) advantages by one in a position of power to one's kinfolk and family members. It can also be seen as exempting of one's kinfolk or family members from due punishment (Odekunle, 2010; Agbu, 2023; Mohammed, 2024).

**e. Favouritism:** This is an act of unfairly treating one person better than others in the same category.

**f. Extortion:** This is the extraction of money or other resources from people using force and violence. It involves the use of power and office to extract money and other resources from people for whom the power and office supposed to protect. This is very common in the Nigerian Police, Federal Road Safety Corps, etc.

**f. Embezzlement:** This is the stealing of monies under one's control but does not belong to one. It involves the conversion of public funds to private or personal use, with subsequent neglect or abandonment of the responsibilities for which the funds were intended.

**g. Bribery:** In this article, bribery is regarded as an act of giving and taking anything tangible or intangible (service), sometimes, as agreed by parties involved, the giver and the acceptor, or as imposed on the giver by the acceptor, with the intention to pervert justice or twist the due process, either in the present or in future.

**h. Budgeting Padding:** This is a form of corruption where management of a public organisation in connivance with governing council or board minister/commissioner bribes some members of the legislature to approve inflated estimate for the institution during budgeting. In a situation where the budget is already approved, the management is expected to give tips or gratifications to the government functionaries whose duty it is to release money to the institutions (Azelama, 2005).

**i. Ghost-Workers Phenomenon:** This is a practice where the management of a public organisation deliberately inflates the payroll by including fictitious names to get more subventions for salary. The excess is siphoned by the members of management in connivance with some members of governing councils or boards (Azelama, 2005).

All the forms of corruption can be found in Nigeria with great consequences on the socio-economic development of the country.

### **The Impacts of Corruption in Nigeria**

No doubt, corruption has been a major challenge in realising Nigeria's potential, reinforcing underdevelopment because of its corrosive effects on the socio-economics of emerging economies, affects infrastructural development and the living condition of the citizenry. The devastating nature of corruption can be felt in education, healthcare, job creation, welfare programme (poverty alleviation) and economy which are important aspects of national development.

Corruption has 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 unsuitable projects, loss of confidence of the people in government and the development of cynical attitude towards leadership (Odekunle, 2010. According to Adesolate and Abimbola (2012), for the nation, the effects of corruption can be summarised to include: wastage of resources resulting in:

- i. Near total collapse of infrastructure,
- ii. Poor delivery of Service,
- iii. Ill-equipped and ill-trained bureaucracy,
- iv. Politicisation of the Civil Service resulting in manipulation of the electoral and judicial process,
- v. Loss of billions of Naira into private pockets through looting by public officials resulting to low GDP, GNP, etc.
- vi. Undeveloped economy resulting from sharp practices and poor corporate government due to inefficient and ineffective regulation and supervision by regulatory bodies.

It is disheartening to note that most funds that would have been utilised for development are being defrauded and privatized (Agbu, 2023). 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 frauds, it is definite that frauds lead to poverty (Igbuzor, 2018). The rot has become so worrisome that recently the House of Senate in Nigeria expressed its disgust over alleged misuse of N873 billion solid minerals fund (World Bank, 2022). It has been opined that corruption encourages 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 (Odedunle, 2010).

Basically, eradication of corruption has implications for the sustenance of democracy in Nigeria. Subsequently, the effect corruption has on moral values is laughable. Moral values of the Nigerian state have degenerated. After independence in the 1960s, public servants operated

in a society where moral values were very high. Unexplained wealth was looked upon with suspicion. In fact, stories were told of how highly placed Civil Servants hid Mercedes Benz cars they acquired a few months to retirement to avoid being questioned officially and by the public about the source of acquisition (Odekunle, 2010).

Today, either because of poverty or other reasons, wealth from any source is celebrated. The collapse of public facilities in Nigeria has occasioned serious hardship on the people. This could also be traced to the negative effects of corruption. Money meant for repairs of the country's refineries, electric power generation installation, hospitals, roads, schools etc have been diverted to private ends by public officials through direct misappropriation and the award of phony contracts to cronies.

More important is the factor of security. One of the recent worries of government has been the issue of security, especially the "boko haram" headache (Okafor, 2019). It needed 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 socioeconomic 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. The effects of corruption also manifest in the economic sphere of the Nigerian society.

Corruption undermines economic development by generating considerable distortions and inefficiency. The economic effects of corruption can be categorised as minor and major. However, both, in one way or the other, have 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 funnelling of scarce public resources to uneconomic high profile projects at the expense of the 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 personal property, inflation, imbalanced economic development, weakling work ethics and professionalism, hindrance of the development of fair in market structures and unhealthy competition there by deterring competition. Large scale corruption hurts the economy and impoverishes entire population.

### **The Perennial Challenges of Corruption in Nigeria**

The perennial challenges of corruption in Nigeria have compromised the country's entire process of growth and development. Corruption discourages investment and growth (Asaju & Adagba, 2021). The malaise of corruption has led to the harrowing infrastructural decay in the country today. Adeniyi (2016) asserts that public infrastructure had deteriorated before 1999 to the extent that no meaningful economic growth could be supported. The corollary of infrastructural collapse and a corrupt business environment had been the paralysing decline in domestic and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the country.

Abubakar (2024) espouses the view too that there is a concord that corruption retards significant variables for social and economic development by making impotent the very institutions and human resources that are designed to help growth. Oddly enough, corruption is harmfully affecting every sector of the Nigerian society, with its devastating blow felt more in education, healthcare, infrastructure development, job creation, environment, foreign investment and economy, which are considered to be the symptoms and not the cause of Nigeria's underdevelopment (Asaju & Adagba, 2021). Corruption has increasingly placed Nigeria and her citizens at risk of international castigation. Even analysts also posit that corruption is not only dangerous to democracy but an impediment to the overall growth of the economy and that economic development cannot thrive in a corrupt environment especially in Nigeria which is one of the largest economies of the world. They say the effects of graft to the society are incalculable with its lasting impacts on a nation better imagined than described (Adegbite, 2022). Though the monetary loss and vestiges of sleaze can be estimated, it may never be known the exact human cost of this enigma.

Corruption clearly has become a great impediment to Nigerian development and, above all, threatened the stability of the polity and greater integration of the nation (Achua, 2024). Loyalties have been fragmented by thoughts of personal gains while centrifugal tendencies have been promoted through the instrumentality of corruption, causing the distortion or diversion of government welfare programmes and continuing to undermine the goals of development as public funds are arbitrarily handled, used for personal purposes or deposited in personal accounts including those of foreign banks. Consequently, governance and socio-economic conditions deteriorate as resources, which ordinarily should be targeted at the country's development are mismanaged and looted (Adeleke, 2023).

Corruption has indeed been an evil monster that has permeated the fabric of the Nigerian society especially among public officers that has access to government funds. It has pauperised

the polity to the extent that while most Nigerians cannot afford to live in a decent accommodation and afford three square meals in a day; the citizens are bombarded daily with reports of how billions of naira are squandered by some public servants including those in the political category (Asaju & Adagba, 2021). While we cannot completely agree that these media reports are completely true, the enormous revenue generated by the country daily must have been and is still being misused by the public servants and politicians alike, since the impact of such revenue has not been felt by the common citizen. Infrastructural decay, epileptic power supply and absence of medical facilities, education etc are common place. The pervasive nature of poverty in Nigeria in the midst of abundant human and materials resources has been traced by empirical studies to corruption in government.

Mohammed (2028) traced the causes of the state of poverty in the country to amongst other things corruption and unfocused government policies. Nigerians are not by any standard lazy people neither is the nation itself poor. In fact, Nigeria is richly endowed with abundant natural and human resources. Being the sixth largest producer and exporter of crude oil in the world, Nigeria earns billions of dollars from the export of liquefied natural gas. But in spite of this, over seventy percent of Nigerians wallow in abject poverty and Nigeria remains highly underdeveloped. The level of poverty is however at variance with the huge revenue profile of the government over the years, a pointer that successive governments have failed to apply the rising oil revenues to improve the lives of Nigerians, no thanks to corruption among public officers and institutions of government.

### **Discussion and the Way Forward**

Corruption as a concept has attracted a lot of public outcry and considerable equal attention from different researchers in different fields in recent times. The endemic nature of corruption ensures that it is pervasive and threatens the very fabric of the society. Adebayo (2021) looks into the fundamental basis of the endemic nature of corruption in the world and the social impact of corruption, using some economic statistical packages such as E-Views and the Engel-Granger causality tests to investigate its determinants and endemic nature. The study reveals that poverty is the main determinant of corruption, concluding that a vigorous battle against corruption is necessary if society is to meet the target of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (World Bank, 2022; Agbu, 2023).

Since man was created, one recurrent problem in the society has been the malaise of corruption with its scale varying from one society to another (Adams, 2021). Adam examines corruption

in primitive society between 631BC and 520BC and explored the link between corruption and economic stability. He noted that the correlation between the use by public office holders of their official power to further personal, clique, or group gains and societal decay. It posits that corruption is counterproductive, slowing development and, by extension, leading to social vices like crimes. It also points out the futility of various attempts at combating corruption by successive rulers in the society due to the hypocrisy of its leaders and the institutions tasked with the responsibility. The study recommends the reorientation of societal value system by placing more emphasis on the ethics of employment, the entrenchment of democracy and effective political institutions, among others.

While many analysts and commentators have proffered solutions to corruption, only a few pay attention to understanding the conditions that create it. Bello (2018) and Asaju and Adagba (2021) conceptualise the conditions that create the corruption phenomenon in an underdeveloped or semi-peripheral society like Africa. These conditions are not the same or uniform, but based on the nature of the political and economic organisations, the development of the private vis-à-vis the public sectors, the participation of citizens in the national security and the historical conditions which gave rise to their political independence. They suggest that in a new rapidly growing political space in the region, public office holders are caught by surprise. They are able to accumulate some wealth in a short time, sometimes exceeding their expectations. Because of the advantages in such position/office, both political class and public servants are disposed to practice corruption in order to maintain their privileged position or expand their status at all costs. He concludes that corruption is ubiquitous in emerging societies but can be controlled through strict measures or policies (Achua, 2021; Lawal, 2022).

The Nigerian law enforcement agencies feature prominently in the rankings of the most corrupt institutions in Nigeria, making it one of the most despised public institutions in Nigeria. The negative implications of such widespread corrupt practices by law enforcement agencies especially the military and police officers on the security of citizens and national development cannot be overemphasised. The role of the police as the key promoter of corruption in Nigeria has given bad image to Nigerian law enforcement agency (Mohamed, *et al.* 2024). Using Lagos State as a case study, corrupt practices in the Nigeria Police Force are not a “one-off event”; rather, they constitute a “web of structural and accentuating factors,” which are interwoven with the political, economic, social and cultural milieu. Flowing from many observations, combating this phenomenon has necessitated a holistic approach that transcends mere income improvement (Okafor, 2019; Agbu, 2023).

In a related development, Adegbite (2022) argued that corruption has been identified as the major obstacle to economic, political and social development of the African continent. He evaluates the nature of Nigeria's regulatory governance system by assessing the roles of regulatory agencies such as the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) and the Securities Exchange Commission (SEC), as well as indigenous initiatives on corporate governance development and regulation, including the role professionals' play. Adegbite (2022) argues that corporate governance policy is environment-centric, that is, specific to the business environment, hence the Nigerian regulatory agencies have a major role to play if the Nigerian business environment, which is stymied by endemic corruption, is to be sanitised. He contends that unless a principle-based approach on the issue of corporate governance regulation is adopted, a lasting culture of good corporate governance might become a myth in the Nigerian business environment. Adegbite (2022) further argues for strict enforcement of regulations and stiff punishment for contradicting existing ethics in the Nigerian business environment. Otherwise, corporate corruption might just become a norm. Moreover, it is now a widely accepted fact that corruption is as widespread in the private sector as it is in the public sector. Adeleke (2023) examines the system of corruption in the private sector which has been nurtured and sustained by the endemic nature of corruption in the public sector. This problem itself is an effect of the attitudes and activities of the leadership of the Nigerian nation. Adeleke (2023) portrays various scenarios of corruption in Nigeria, beginning with the individual trying to skip ahead in the queue and progressing to the awarding of contracts by public office holders and the shady details of the country's mobile telephone licensing scheme. It further examines the conflicts of interest for officials before concluding that borrowing some of China and Germany's ideas about corporate citizenship and governance codes could be a panacea to corruption in Nigeria (Yusuf, 2010).

As a result of corruption, Nigeria's abundant natural resources have failed to translate into economic growth. Using the Granger causality test and impulse response function and regression analysis, Adenike (2023) examines the effects of corruption on economic growth with an annual data collection conducted between 2010 and 2022. The findings reveal that corruption per worker yields a negative influence on output per worker, foreign private investment, expenditure on education and capital expenditure per worker. Secondly, there is a one-sided causality, where the direction of influence runs from output per worker to corruption per worker. Thus, Adenike (2023) recommends a multifaceted approach that involves various sectors of the Nigerian economy in combating corruption, a long-term problem that has

assumed pandemic proportion in recent years. Although governance is important for economic growth and poverty eradication in developing countries, it is widely perceived as one of the most corrupt and mismanaged industries around the world. Adewale, Siyanbola & Fasasi (2021) examines current corrupt practices in how contracts are being awarded and executed in the construction industry by the public office holders and analyses the impact of the scourge on the socio-economic development of the nation.

As a prelude to determining the factors involved in the increase in corruption, Adewale (2021) also reviews the various anti-corruption measures designed to address current corrupt practices. The study reveals that corruption occurs in different forms and phases regarding the management of construction projects. The study purports that the measures put in place by existing legal systems and anti-corruption agencies are not adequate to deal with raging corruption, contending that most anti-corruption laws are retroactive rather than proactive, which makes them very ineffective. Therefore, eradicating corruption in the construction sector depends upon the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders, including civil society groups and the press, who are expected to work hand in hand to expose corrupt officials. In addition, the strengthening of agencies statutorily empowered to fight corruption in the criminal justice system and improvements in regulatory procedures are necessary.

Corruption is widely believed to be responsible for the shortcomings and poor performance of the Nigerian political economy. In a very detailed and critical manner, Agbibo (2013) examines the historical trajectory of corruption in Nigeria and its underlying causes, as well as its overwhelmingly negative cumulative impact on national development. After assessing some public and private sector initiatives undertaken to curb corruption, he concludes that these initiatives must be further strengthened to reduce corruption to a reasonable level in Nigeria. Finally, despite possessing abundant resources, Nigeria has proven intractable to development. Findings show that corruption represents the most stubborn obstacle militating against the objectives of socio-economy and national development efforts in Nigeria. This was discussed at the level of both the change agents and change targets. The arguments are buttressed by evidence from various case studies, which highlight the different sources of corrupt practices and their consequences on socio-economic development efforts. Although corruption is a pervasive human act, it is something everyone should condemn and no one confesses to practicing. This calls for more aggressive and sustained anti-corruption agency's efforts in order to encourage the nation's growth and development.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The prevalence of corruption in Nigeria is endemic and cancerous. It has permeated all fabric of the society. There is no doubt corruption has been a perennial challenge in Nigeria. Its corrosive effects have not spared any segment of the society (formal and informal; public and private sector) leaving behind it a tale of sparks and sorrows.

Corruption has impeded the growth and development of Nigeria, as well as dented the image and reputation of the country among the comity of nations. This malignant phenomenon has affected foreign investment flow, currency crisis, infrastructural decay etc. To address the problem of corruption in Nigeria, all hands must be on deck to emancipate the country from this perennial challenge called corruption.

Without good governance, there can be no accountability. Good governance plays a critical role in ensuring collaborative, peaceful, coexistence and progressive process of democratic culture and socialisation. It also attracts investment to a country, improving productivity and competitiveness, promoting political stability and enhances 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 direction and segment of government, the scale, manner and impunity of “junior – officer” corruption is directly connected to the scale, manner and impunity of the boss or “senior officers” corruption. The leaders have a lot of roles to play by shunning corruption so that the junior officers too can avoid this. The on-going reform in the public sectors should be handled with seriousness and that the anti-graft agencies should not be used as an instrument by the ruling All Progressive Congress against opposition or perceived enemies. Rather, the agencies should be empowered to carry out their constitutional duties without any interference from the government. The focus and the best way to tackle corruption is to prevent it from happening. This study recommends that all the public loots should be thoroughly investigated and the offenders, once found guilty should be prosecuted and the loots taken back on the face value of what has been stolen.

The powers and authority of the anti-corruption agencies such as the EFCC, ICPC and CCB should be broadened, empowered and strengthened to deal with corrupt acts of governmental administrators and those in positions of power by making them truly independent with adequate funding to monitor, dictate and investigate corruption acts among public office holders.

There should be a sensitisation programme led by the government and educational institutions to teach Nigerians regarding the dangers of corruption and the essence of integrity in day-to-

day life with subject/course on corruption studies been introduced in our school curriculum to teach the younger ones the negative consequences of corruption in our educational institutions.

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