

Corruption and its Devastating Effects: The Nigerian Experience

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Abstract

Corruption is an evil wind that blows no one any good. Corruption impairs the survival and development of any country in the world. Several anti-graft policies had been put in place in Nigeria from 1999 to date, with varying degrees of results achieved at every point in time. This paper's primary objectives are to point out the negative impact of corruption in the citizenry's political and economic lives and the proffers solution to surmount the corruption pandemic challenges in Nigeria. This methodologies adopted in this paper included reference to statute books, textbooks, Internet sources, Newspaper publications and journals. The article finds that the corruption pandemic had been the evil monster that has kept Nigeria politically and economically backwards. There is the need to bring information regarding the ills of corruption to the knowledge of the masses. Monitoring and enforcement



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of anti-graft laws can only be effective when there is an adequate flow of information. By so doing, the people will become conscious of how corruption militates against the development of Nigeria. This paper recommends sporadic accountability and restructuring of the Nigerian polity. This paper further suggests that the government take proactive measures to enforce anti grafts law and undertake holistic restructuring of Nigeria.

Keywords: Corruption pandemic, Restructuring, Anti-graft agencies, Economic development, Economic and financial Crime Commission.

Introduction

The article is divided into several sections ranging from defining keywords/concepts to the legal framework and then, causes of corruption, the impact of corruption in Nigeria, solutions/recommendations. The issue of corruption is not new in Nigeria. The pre-colonial Nigeria had a lesser corruption index than what obtains in the present dispensation, where corruption had eaten deep in every facet of Nigerians' national lives, with wantonly looting of national wealth being the order of the day. Corruption as a pandemic in Nigeria has become a topical issue and perhaps most threatening to Nigeria's corporate existence. It has become a matter of concern for Elites, Lawyers, Economic analysts, public and private administrators. They have all aired their varying opinions on the causes and solutions to corruption in the Nigerian state. Judges alike have made judicial pronouncements on this evil monster called corruption in Nigeria. Notable writers in the past and present such as John Okwoeze Odey (2001)¹, I.B. Bello-Iman (2015)², Chuks Nwaze (2011)³, among others, have dwelt on this subject matter of corruption as a destructive element of human survival in Nigeria. Several domestic instruments have been put in place to curb bribery and also guarantee sanity in public lives. There is no doubt that for Nigeria to prosper, there is the need to maintain some proactive action by monitoring and enforcing legislations against corruption. It is a known fact that a corruption-free society will improve the Nigerians' productivity and increase the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). There is no doubt that a

¹ John Okwoeze Odey, *The Anti-Corruption Crusade* (Snaap Press 2001) 39-43

² I.B. Bello-Iman, *The War Against Corruption in Nigeria: Problems and Perspectives* (2nd edn College Press 2015)256-265

³ Chuks Nwaze, *Corruption in Nigeria Exposed* (1st CSA control & Surveillance Associates publications 2011) 1-15

discussion of this nature will be impetus to Nigeria's economic emancipation if the suggestions are appropriately followed.

1. Conceptual clarification

Corruption may be defined⁴ as 'Depravity, perversion, or tainted; an impairment of integrity, virtue, or moral principle, especially the impairment of public officials' duties by bribery. It is an act of doing something with an intent to give some undue advantages inconsistent with official duty and the right of others, a fiduciary's or official's use of a station or office to give some benefit either personally or for someone else, contrary to the rights of others'

A pandemic is defined as a disease that spreads over a whole country or the whole world⁵.

A combination of the meanings of the term corruption and the word 'pandemic' brings us to the real issue of corruption pandemic plaguing Nigerian society that this article seeks to x-ray and solve.

A famous Nigeria writer, Professor Chinua Achebe in describing the corruption pandemic, has this to say: 'my frank and honest opinion is that anybody who can say that corruption in Nigeria has not yet become alarming is either a fool, a crook, or else does not live in this country. Corruption in Nigeria has passed the alarming and entered the fatal stage; Nigeria will die if we keep pretending she is only slightly indisposed. Keeping away an average Nigerian from corruption is like keeping away a goat from eating yam⁶. The pandemic level of corruption in Nigeria was attained during General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida and General Sani Abacha's regime⁷. Nigeria is blessed with abundant human and material resources; still, the country cannot put daily bread on its citizens' table because the country's wealth has been coveted and concentrated in the hands of few political-military and political, civilian evil spirits, who through corruption had milked the country dry to the detriment of the masses. The mass poverty, repression, insecurity, are all the product of corruption, led Nigerian citizens to defy international laws and regulations for migration and resort to migrating to other countries through illegal sea and land routes to Europe. This development had dragged Nigeria image to the mud.

⁴ Edited by Bryan A Garner (9th Revised edn, Thomson Reuters publishers 2004) 394

⁵ Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (9th Revised edn, London university press 2015) 1112

⁶ Ibid (n 3)

⁷ ibid

Nigeria was once reputed to be the giant of Africa in all respects. Nigeria was perceived to be the centrepiece of third world scientific and technological advancement. Nigeria served as the mouthpiece of Africa on major international issues. Nigeria that mustered both material and human resources to end Apartheid policy in South Africa has suddenly become a beggar and fragile nation globally. The inept and corrupt leaders plunged Nigeria into an avoidable hopeless situation where hunger, ignorance, and disease stand at the centrepiece of the citizens' national lives. This seemingly hopeless situation compelled the Nigerian youths to rise and staged nationwide protests against police brutality and called for police reforms cum economic reforms. The youths demanded accountability, justice and participation in governance⁸. Nowadays, Nigeria corruption pandemic leaves no citizen without a smear. The name Nigeria at the international arena is synonymous with corruption, embezzlement, advance fee fraud, rituals, armed robbery, and the like. A Nigerian is dreaded like a coronavirus, feared like a python, cautiously approached like a lion den. All Nigerians at the international level are perceived as criminals, both the guilty and the law-abiding. This ugly trend prompted a one-time Attorney-General of the Federation of Nigeria, Prince Bola Ajibola, to observe as follows:

'in Nigeria's acquisitive society, many people are rated in terms of what they own and what they are. Social climbing based on illicit wealth is not frowned at. Public office is regarded as a vehicle for acquiring wealth with an unbridled influence and not as a merited avenue for rendering invaluable service to the nation for the collective good'⁹.

Similarly, a renowned jurist, Chukwudifu Akunne Oputa,⁹ a retired justice of the Supreme Court of Nigeria, lamented that Nigeria had given money much value than it deserves. Everybody seemed to have lost the sense of worth and integrity in the quest for sudden ill-gotten wealth. Bishop Osa-Oni, a cleric, lending his voice to the issue of corruption, added as follows:

'the major problem confronting this nation is that of corruption. Most Nigerians would show tremendous respect for any President that wages war against the vice. Solve the corruption problem and more than half of Nigeria's problems have been solved'¹⁰.

Anti Graft Agencies in Nigeria.

We shall take a holistic look at three anti-graft agencies in Nigeria

⁸ Olasunkanmi Akoni, 'Sanwo-Olu reveals identities of officers who brutalized End SARS protesters' Vanguard Newspaper (*Lagos, 16 October 2020*) 10

⁹ Ibid (n 3)13

¹⁰ ibid

(i) Independent Corrupt Practices & Other Related Offences (ICPC).

Independent Corrupt Practices & Other Related Offences (ICPC) ¹¹ extensively made provision curbing corrupt practices in Nigerians' public and private lives. From sections 8-19 of the ICPC Act, several conducts amounting to corruption are covered. The ICPC Act covers a wide range of corrupt practices among public officers. It provides a prohibition against a corrupt offer to public officers and prescribes a penalty of seven (7) years imprisonment for any person found guilty under the section. Section 8 of the Act provides that :

"(a) any person who asks for, receives or obtains any property or benefit of any kind for himself or any other person; (i) Anything already done or omitted to be done, or for any favour or disfavour already shown to any person by himself, in the discharge of his official duties or business of a government department, or corporate body or other organisation or institution in which he is serving as an official is guilty of an offence of official Corruption and is liable to imprisonment for seven (7) years¹²."

While section 8 of the Act speaks against the offence of receiving with corrupt intent and prescribes penalty, section 9 forbids crime against giving with the purpose to corrupt. The section provides explicitly:

"Any person who corruptly- (a) gives, confers or procures any property or benefit of any kind to, on or for a public officer or to, on or for any other person; is guilty of an offence of official corruption and shall on conviction be liable to imprisonment for seven (7) years."¹³

The Act punishes an offender who gives and who receives; the Act exonerates none. Similarly, any person who demands gratification to enrich himself corruptly is also guilty of an offence of official corruption arising in the course of the discharge under the Act and shall on conviction be liable to imprisonment for seven (7) years.¹⁴

Even if a public officer did not ask for a bribe and did not receive it with corrupt intent, the Act prohibits fraudulent property acquisition by public officers. Specific provision under this section is as follows

"Any person who, being employed in the public service, knowingly acquires or holds, directly or indirectly, otherwise

¹¹ ICPC Act 2000

¹² Ibid, s 8

¹³ Ibid, s 9

¹⁴ Ibid, s10

than as a member of a registered joint-stock company consisting of more than twenty (20) persons, private interest in any contract, agreement or investment emanating from or connected with the department or office in which he is employed is guilty of an offence, and shall on conviction be liable to imprisonment for seven (7) years.¹⁵"

The offences of fraudulent self-enrichment attract seven (7) years imprisonment. It is a severe provision that no sane public officer should attempt to breach or contravene.

(ii) Money laundering (Prohibition) Act of 2011

To sanitise public life in Nigeria, the parliament enacted a money laundering Act¹⁶. The Act's objective is to prohibit the laundering into banks and other financial institutions funds illicitly acquired by any citizen of Nigeria. To this end, Banks are not to open an account for any person without verifying such a person's identity. Banks must not allow anonymous accounts to be held by any person. The Act, therefore, provides as follows:

The opening or maintaining of numbered or anonymous accounts by any person, Financial Institution or corporate body is prohibited. Any person, Financial Institution or a corporate body that contravenes the provisions of subsection (1) of this section commits an offence and is liable on conviction to- (a) in the case of an individual, a term of imprisonment of not less than two years but not more than five years; (b) in the case of a Financial Institution or corporate body, a fine of not less than N10 million but not more than N50 million.¹⁷

It is a crime, therefore, for any bank to receive money suspected to be proceeds of an illicit transaction. It becomes a severe offence where the bank or corporate body maintains anonymous accounts for any customer in whatever guise. Such crime attracts fines between N10 million and N50 million, but it attracts a prison term of two (2) years or more for individual offenders.

The money laundering Act forbids any person from concealing proceeds of illegal transactions that may be brought for lodgment or as deposits. It amounts to an offence for any person or body corporate to receive illicit transaction proceeds or transfer such illicit funds to any named or designated nominees. See the following provisions:

¹⁵ Ibid, s 12

¹⁶ Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act 2011 amended 2012

¹⁷ Ibid, s 11(1& 2)

"A person who conceals removes from jurisdiction, transfers to nominees or otherwise retains the proceeds of a crime or an illegal act on behalf of another person knowing or suspecting that other person to be engaged in criminal conduct or has benefited from criminal conduct, or conspiracy, aiding, is liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term not less than 5 years or to a fine equivalent to 5 times the value of the proceeds of the criminal conduct or both such imprisonment and fine"¹⁸.

We could deduce from the above section 17 of the money laundering Act that, retaining proceeds of illicit funds, or the person who receives illicitly acquired property or fund and uses same for himself is guilty under the Act and liable upon conviction to a minimum of five years imprisonment or a fine equivalent of five (5) term for such illegally acquired funds.

(iii) The Economic & Financial Crimes Commissions (called the EFCC Act 2004)

The Economic & Financial Crimes Commissions (called the EFCC Act 2004) is another prominent legislation in Nigeria to curb corruption in Nigeria. The Commission investigates cases of corrupt enrichment brought to its attention via petition. On receiving a petition, the Commission invites the culprits for a question. If the Commission feels that a prima facie case has been made, it will prosecute the accused person at the Federal High Court, the court which has jurisdiction on EFCC charges.

By section 7 (1), the Commission is empowered to cause investigations to be conducted into any person's properties if it appears to the Commission that his source of income does not justify the person's lifestyle and extent of the properties¹⁹."

Section 18 (1)²⁰ of the Money laundering (Prohibition) Act provides that:

"a person who, without lawful authority – (a) engages in the acquisition, possession or use of property knowing at the time of its acquisition, possession or use that such property was derived from any offence under this Act is liable on conviction to the penalties provided in subsection (2) of this section."

Section 18 (2) of the Act provides imprisonment for a term not less than two years and not exceeding three years.

Interestingly, section 20 (1) of the Act provides that a person convicted of an offence under this Act shall forfeit to the Federal Government any asset or

¹⁸ *ibid*, s 17(a& b)

¹⁹ EFCC Act 2004

²⁰ *ibid*

property confiscated or derived from any proceeds the person obtained directly or indirectly, as a result of fraud under this Act²¹.

Despite the above three legislation coupled with the harsh penalty of long prison term, fines and forfeiture of assets provided under the Economic & Financial Crimes Commissions (called the EFCC Act 2004), corruption has become endemic in Nigeria with no sector spared of corruption pandemic. The question is: why are many Nigerians corrupt, particularly public servants, despite these legislations? Why has the corruption index been on a high level in Nigeria? It may appear to suggest these anti-corruption laws are not enforced and that most Nigerian public officers can easily circumvent these laws and perpetuate corruption in any jurisdiction that they operate. The crime of bribery appears challenging to eradicate, leading us to examine why corruption persists in Nigeria. Or better put, why do corrupt practices go on in Nigeria with impunity despite all the anti-corruption legislations existing in Nigeria?

Causes of corruption in Nigeria?

The following, but not limited to these factors, have been identified as the reasons for the unprecedented level of corruption in Nigeria despite several anti-corruption legislations.

- Greed and avarice
- Influence of the affluent lifestyle of the political class
- Unhealthy competitive lifestyle and failure of moral value in the Nigeria society
- The high rate of poverty in Nigeria due to low income
- Attitudinal impunity of public office holders in Nigeria

i. Greed and Avarice

It is disheartening that Nigeria's highest political office holders steal public funds with impunity due to greed and moral value failures. The Late General Sani Abacha, president and the number one citizen of Nigeria, entrusted with the citizens' security and welfare, turned around and embezzled public funds with impunity, and nobody questioned him. It is on record that the former president, General Sani Abacha of Nigeria looted the public treasury to the tune of Nigeria has over the past 18 years recovered \$4.6 billion (1.4trn) between 2002 and 2020²². It was reported that the Federal Government confirmed that the \$311m looted by the former president of Nigeria in the person of Gen. Sani Abacha had been received by the federal government, specifically from the United States and the Bailiwick of Jersey. These sums alone could

²¹ ibid

²² <https://allafrica.com/stories/202002160175.html>>accessed 10 October 2021

be used to build several universities to fulfil educational yearnings of the teeming youths who desire to enjoy their constitutional right to quality education, but whose hopes have been dashed by the corrupt late president Sani Abacha looting such enormous amount from the national treasury. The incumbent Attorney General of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Abubakar Malami, on Monday 4th May 2020, confirmed the repatriated funds²³. The minister's Special Assistant on Media and Publicity, Dr Gwandu Umar Jibrilu, made the repatriated funds known to the public. The recovered funds had so far been transferred to the Central bank of Nigeria²⁴. The Attorney General of Federation (AGF) explained that the return of the funds stolen by the late president Sani Abacha was facilitated by applying international law and cooperation measures that the Nigerian government set in motion in 2014. The signing of the agreement for the return of the looted funds was concluded on the 3rd day of February 2020²⁵.

Similarly, the US Department of Justice (DOJ) has also opposed the return of \$320m stolen by the same late president Sani Abacha to Nigeria on the fears that such money, if returned to the Nigeria Government, will empower the government to further abuse of human rights. The US Department of Justice noted that there might be more violations of human rights in the areas of liberty abuses, right of religions violations and abuse of due processes.²⁶

The Nigeria Government also recovered the sum of \$322m from Switzerland in 2018, being another fund looted by the late president Sani Abacha while in office. The Switzerland authority and the World Bank signed an agreement with the Nigerian government that the money should be used to help indigent Nigerians. The US embassy revealed on Wednesday, 6th day of May 2020, that there is a separate \$167 million stolen and kept in France while another sum of \$152 million is also in the UK, which is still subject to litigation; all these being public funds was stolen by one man, the late dictator and president of Nigeria, General Sani Abacha due to greed and avarice²⁷.

Transparency International reported that General Sani Abacha stole between \$3billion and \$5 billion of public funds²⁸. This amount contributed to why Nigeria cannot provide quality health care for its citizens. The water, air, and land, the forest can not be maintained and preserved in line with the constitution because the funds have been lost due to corrupt

²³ <https://thewhistler.ng/abacha-loot-fg-receives-311m-recovered-assets-from-us-bailiwick-of-jersey/>>accessed 10 December 2020

²⁴ <https://thewhistler.ng/abacha-loot-fg-receives-311m-recovered-assets-from-us-bailiwick-of-jersey/>>accessed 10 December 2020

²⁵ ibid

²⁶ www.independent.ng>accessed 10 December 2020

²⁷ www.lindaikejisblog.com> accessed 10 December 2020

²⁸ www.vanguardngr.com> accessed 10 January 2021

leadership²⁹. Nigerian citizens do not have good portable water, no good health services, no healthy environment, and no good educational facilities due to corruption. Public officers had siphoned the funds to be used to provide these amenities due to corruption.

ii. Influence of the affluent lifestyle of the political class

In Nigeria, the political class has been reputed for an extravagant and affluent lifestyle. This wealthy lifestyle results from exorbitant salaries and allowances they receive monthly at the expense of the masses who wallow in poverty of thirty thousand (=N=30 000.00) (\$77.20) monthly minimum wage. A Nigerian Senator, Senator Shehu Sani's revealed earns seven hundred and fifty thousand Naira (=N= 750 000.00) as a basic monthly salary and a monthly allowance of thirteen million, five hundred thousand Naira (=N= 13.5m). This total to a sum of one hundred and seventy-one million Naira (=N=171m) annually³⁰. What it means is that a Nigeria Senator earns an equivalent of \$440,063.03 annually. By comparison, a United States Senator earns \$174 000.00) per annum which is below his Nigerian counterpart. These inordinate incomes by Nigerian politicians coupled with their luxuriant and ostentatious lifestyle attract envy and harsh criticisms from the Nigerian populace; hence many Nigeria public officers also want to live affluently like the politicians. Such desires for affluence by public servants lead to corruption in the government department and public services. The inordinate wealth could be traced to the lifestyle of the chairman of the Pension Reform Task Team in Nigeria, Mr Abdulrasheed Maina. Mr Abdulrasheed Maina was arrested and prosecuted for stealing the massive sum of two billion Naira (\$ 5 146 936.00). While standing trial for money laundering, Maina jumped bail and left Nigeria's shores but was rearrested by the international police cooperation of the Niger republic and Nigeria. The surety of Maina, Senator Ali Ndume was arrested for failure to produce Maina in court to stand his trial³¹. This attitude of Mr Abdulrasheed Maina shows the extent corruption has eaten deep into Nigeria public life.

iii. Unhealthy competitive lifestyle and failure of moral value in the Nigeria society

Fellow citizens usually praise a Nigerian for acquiring wealth regardless of how the wealth was acquired. People are crowned with chieftaincy titles if they become affluent. Most Nigerians resort to the looting of public funds once they are handling such funds. They want to be honoured by society and given chieftaincy titles at all cost. Corruption is the order of the day. There is moral value failure as nobody is questioned on how he became wealthy

²⁹ CFRN 1999 as amended, s 20

³⁰ www.nigeriaprice.com> accessed 10 December 2020

³¹ *ibid*

suddenly. The failure of moral value led to the embezzlement of the sum of =N=100 billion (\$ 263, 157, 890.00) at the North East Development Commission, NEDC³². Mr Ndudi Elumelu, a minority leader in the House of Representative in the Nigerian parliament, raised the alarm over the disappearance of the funds meant for rehabilitating the North East region of Nigeria, who have long been victims of Boko haram insurgents devastation, home displacement, tackling of illiteracy, hunger and disease. In the Northeast region of Nigeria, houses, schools, mosques, churches, farmlands and businesses were destroyed, thereby rendering people homeless and jobless, yet funds meant for their rehabilitation were reported to have been diverted to private bank accounts by the Managing Director Mohammed Goni Alkali through awards of non-existent contracts, massive contract splitting and over-inflation of contracts, without due process in the procurement laws in awarding contracts. All these frauds were reported to the House of Representatives by honourable Ndudi Elumelu ³³. An Honourable member of the House of Representatives, Mr Elumelu, also indicted the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Hajia Sadiya Umar Farouk, for illegally withdrawing money from the North East Development Commission. The money withdrawn unlawfully was used by Mohammed Goni Alkali and the minister of Humanitarian Affairs to purchase mansions in Abuja-the Nigeria capital and Maiduguri and Kaduna without being sensitive to the suffering of the masses. The attitudes of these public officers clearly show loss of moral value in the Nigeria society. The Nigerian House of Representatives investigated the embezzlement of the N100 billion at the North East Development Commission (NEDC)³⁴. The discovery after the investigation was startling. The displaced persons' right to protection, welfare, education, and health were eroded through embezzlement of the N100 billion (\$ 263, 157, 890.00) palliatives meant for them.

iv. The high rate of the poverty level in Nigeria due to low income.

The poverty index is very high in Nigeria. A person is said to live in poverty if they earn less than \$361 per year, implying less than a dollar per day. It has been discovered that 40.1% of Nigerians live in poverty³⁵. A person who lives in poverty is more exposed to corruption than a person who lives in average comfort. The high poverty rate accounts for why Nigerian public office holders take undue advantage of their position to loot public funds in disregard of the masses' hardship. The Nigerian masses live in hardship as the minimum

³² ibid

³³ Thisday newspaper (Ibadan 24 July) 4

³⁴ ibid

³⁵ <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/north-east/404705-reps-investigate-alleged-mismanagement-of-n100-billion-by-north-east-development-commission-nedc.html>.>accessed 12

December 2020

wage in Nigeria is put at thirty thousand Naira (=N=30 000.00) per month³⁶, equivalent to \$77.20 per month. This is quite disheartening.

v. Attitudinal impunity of public officers in Nigeria

Nigeria is a country where some of those in the position of authority abuse their offices' powers with impunity. They believe that they cannot be arrested, and even if caught, they would eventually wriggle out the hook. This attitudinal impunity of public office holders in Nigeria is why high profile fraud cases are recorded frequently. For instance, it was reported that the former chairman of the Anti-corruption Agency called Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Ibrahim Magu, was facing many count charges of corruption in June 2020, bordering on the conversion of funds recovered from corrupt officials³⁷. It is disheartening that the interest rates running into millions of Naira accrued on the N550 billion recovered from fraudsters by the EFCC were allegedly looted by the chairman of the EFCC, Ibrahim Magu³⁸. It is right to submit that if Ibrahim Magu stole the interests on the N550 billion, he had done so on the presumption that his position as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) chairman is unquestionable. Nigeria needs to address this attitudinal decay urgently if corruption is to be checked.

It is therefore doubtful how a country engulfed with corruption from the grass root to the leaders will make progress. In a situation where public officers embezzle public funds, funds meant for infrastructural development, such a country cannot make progress. This account for while Nigeria GDP had been unstable and dwindling, creating a deficit balance of payments. As the looters of public funds display ostentatious living without being questioned, corruption became accepted as a way of life of most Nigerians. Corruption is a product of greed and avarice, and where these twins ill take root, as in Nigeria, the spiral effect is devastating.

Various ways corruption has impacted Nigeria

i. Fall in Gross Domestic Product (GDP):

The GDP is the total value of goods and services produced in a country over a given period, usually a year. Diversion of resources by government officials have dwindled the volume of goods and services producible in Nigeria, as money meant for investment, loans for small and medium scale enterprises

³⁶<https://www.google.com/search?q=minimum+wage+in+nigeria&oq=minimum+wage&aqs=chrome.2.69i57j0i402j0l3j0i131i433j0l4.7026j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>>accessed 21 January 2021

³⁷ M.guardian.ng> accessed 10 December 2020

³⁸ Thisday newspaper (Ibadan 24 July) 4

are diverted to private bank accounts. The abysmal fall in Gross Domestic Product means that the people will lose the right to adequate food, good health facilities, and quality education and so on. In 2020 Nigeria had an annual growth rate of -1.8% annual change representing 432.3 billion USD (2020)³⁹. In 2019, Nigeria had annual growth rate of 2.2% annual change representing 448.1 billion USD⁴⁰. In 2018, Nigeria had an annual growth rate of 1.9% yearly change representing 397.2 billion USD (2018). In 2017 Nigeria had an annual growth rate of 0.8% yearly change representing 375.7 billion USD⁴¹. In 2016, Nigeria had yearly growth rate of -1.6% annual change representing \$404 549m⁴². In a period of four years, that is 2016 to 2020; there has been an embarrassing low Gross Domestic Product (GDP growth rate

In four years, from 2016 to 2020, there has been an embarrassing unstable low Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate. In 2016 and 2020, there was a negative growth rate of the GDP. This situation is unconnected with the worsening trend of corruption. Corruption is an evil wind that blows no country any good. A negative GDP rate leads to an unfavourable balance of payment and low per capita income, which accounted for the current economic recession Nigeria is experiencing in the last quarter of 2021 with attendant hyperinflation and mass poverty among the low-income group.

ii. Abandonment of projects:

Several abandoned projects are found nationwide because the funds meant for developmental projects were embezzled and funds transferred to foreign bank accounts, as shown in the example of late Nigeria head of state, General Sani Abacha, which has been highlighted earlier in this article. Corruption is

³⁹[https://www.google.com/search?q=gdp+of+nigeria+2020&ei=oZFsYYOJBKWJjLsP8bqe2Ao&ved=0ahUKEwjD3f-](https://www.google.com/search?q=gdp+of+nigeria+2020&ei=oZFsYYOJBKWJjLsP8bqe2Ao&ved=0ahUKEwjD3f-IrtLzAhWIBGMBHXGdB6sQ4dUDCA4&uact=5&oq=gdp+of+nigeria+2020&gs_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAMyBQgAEIAEMgUIABCABDlGCAAQFhAeMgYIABAWEb4yBggAEByQHjIGCAAQFhAeMgYIABAWEb4yBggAEByQHjIGCAAQFhAeOgcIABBHELADOGcIABCwAxBDogQIABBDsGqIQRgAUkC7FFiN0BRgk9UUaAJwAngAgAHuAYgBlweSAQMyLTSYAQCgAAQHIAQrAAQE&scient=gws-wiz>accessed 10 October 2021)

[IrtLzAhWIBGMBHXGdB6sQ4dUDCA4&uact=5&oq=gdp+of+nigeria+2020&gs_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAMyBQgAEIAEMgYIABAWEb4yBggAEByQHjIGCAAQFhAeMgYIABAWEb4yBggAEByQHjIGCAAQFhAeOgcIABBHELADOGcIABCwAxBDogQIABBDsGqIQRgAUkC7FFiN0BRgk9UUaAJwAngAgAHuAYgBlweSAQMyLTSYAQCgAAQHIAQrAAQE&scient=gws-wiz>accessed 10 October 2021](https://www.google.com/search?q=gdp+of+nigeria+2020&gs_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAMyBQgAEIAEMgYIABAWEb4yBggAEByQHjIGCAAQFhAeMgYIABAWEb4yBggAEByQHjIGCAAQFhAeOgcIABBHELADOGcIABCwAxBDogQIABBDsGqIQRgAUkC7FFiN0BRgk9UUaAJwAngAgAHuAYgBlweSAQMyLTSYAQCgAAQHIAQrAAQE&scient=gws-wiz>accessed 10 October 2021)

⁴⁰ https://www.google.com/search?q=gdp+of+nigeria+2019&ei=1o9sYY-_H5GFjLsP7omy-AE&ved=0ahUKEwiPgqyurNLzAhWRAMMBHe6EDB8Q4dUDCA4&uact=5&oq=gdp+of+nigeria+2019&gs_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAMyBQgAEIAEMgYIABAHEB4yBggAEAcQHjIGCAAQBRAeMgYIABAFEB4yBggAEAUQHjIICAAQbXAFEB4yBggAEAgQHjIGCAAQCBAeMgYIABAE46BwgAEecQsAM6BwgAELADEEM6BAGAEEM6BggAEByQHkoECEEYAFDmmpYluMaYJeBG2gBcAJ4AIAB5QGIAYYIkgEFMC4yLjOYAQCgAAQHIAQrAAQE&scient=gws-wiz>accessed 10 October 2021

⁴¹ https://www.google.com/search?q=gdp+of+nigeria+2017&ei=TJNsYcz1OLujjLsPoZuI-A8&ved=0ahUKEwjMy4LVr9LzAhW7EWMBHaENAv8Q4dUDCA4&uact=5&oq=gdp+of+nigeria+2017&gs_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAMyBggAEByQHjIGCAAQFhAeOgcIABBHELADOGcIABCwAxBDogQIABBDogUIABCABEOECEEYAFDB9A1YuP4NYLyWDmgBcAJ4AIAB3wGIAZkDkgEFMC4xLjGYAQcGAAQHIAQnAAQE&scient=gws-wiz>accessed 10 October 2021

⁴² <https://countryeconomy.com/gdp/nigeria?year=2016>accessed 10 October 2021>

the primary factor for abandoned projects in Nigeria. Funds are approved, and as soon as the projects commence on sites, they are left because the political class had diverted the funds to private bank accounts in Nigeria and abroad. The Chartered Institute of Nigeria estimates such abandoned projects to be over =N=12 trillion Naira (\$ 31, 479, 537, 600. 00)⁴³. According to their geo-political zone, a breakdown of the abandoned projects is as follows: 15000 abandoned in the South-East, 10000 abandoned projects in the South-west, 11000 abandoned in the South-South. Six thousand projects were abandoned in the North-west, 7000 abandoned projects in the North-central, 5000 abandoned projects in the North-East and 2000 projects abandoned at Abuja federal capital territory⁴⁴. With these alarming trends in abandoning projects, Nigeria cannot record meaningful economic and structural progress. Truly, corruption is worse than covid 19 pandemics in Nigeria. As corruption permeates Nigeria society, funds meant for the educational sector are swindled as exemplified in late general Sani Abacha loots, the citizens' rights to free and quality education⁴⁵ is denied as there are no funds to provide quality education.

- iii. Low foreign exchange earnings through the laundering of money in foreign accounts:

A country can't record economic progress when the political class and their allies embezzle money for agriculture and other raw materials investment. Nigeria has abundant resources but cannot earn enough foreign exchange to finance developmental projects. For example, the late Nigeria head of state, General Sani Abacha, highlighted earlier in this article, diverted Nigeria foreign exchange to the tune of \$1.3 billion as of 2013 to foreign banks⁴⁶. These are the foreign exchange that could have been used to import advanced technology to create investment, create jobs for the teeming youths and reduce Nigeria debts burden.

- iv. Small and light weapons are freely imported through the aid of corrupt customs officers:

Corruption has become so endemic that customs officials freely left the Nigerian borders porous to the extent that Small and light weapons are easily smuggled with the cooperation of corrupt security agents. This corruption among security agents Mr Ken Ukoha, who is the current president of the National Association of Nigeria Traders, noted, with dismay, that over-invoicing, false declaration, drug peddling, human trafficking and other sharp practices go on freely at the borders⁴⁷. What is the border

⁴³ <https://www.sunnewsonline.com/abandoned-n12trn-projects/>>accessed 20th December 2020

⁴⁴ ibid

⁴⁵ ibid

⁴⁶ ibid

⁴⁷ www.reuters.com>accessed 6 January 2021

security agents, especially the Nigerian custom and excise doing based on statutory duty placed on them, Mr Ken Ukoha queried? Corrupt Nigerian customs and immigration officials collude with smugglers and economic saboteurs to jeopardise Nigeria development. As corruption ravages Nigeria's public lives, Small and light weapons are easily smuggled, citizens are easily killed by criminals carrying weapons illegally. In such situations, the right to life guaranteed under section 33⁴⁸ is breached with impunity due to corrupt practices at the Nigerian borders.

v. Tarnishing of Nigeria image at the international arena:

Nigeria has acquired an international reputation for corruption and abuse of human rights. Due to corruption and abuse of human rights, the international community are reluctant to assist Nigeria with weapons and resources to combat insurgents, citing corruption in the Nigerian military and abuse of human rights as their reasons and fears. For example, two United States senators- Cory Booker and Rand Paul had opposed the release of 12 A-29 Super Tucano 29 fighter jets worth \$600million,⁴⁹. It is not that the aircrafts were to be released to the Nigerian government for free, but due to corruption and human rights abuses which were rife in Nigeria, the dealers were reluctant to sell to Nigeria.

vi. Perversion of justice by the judicial officers in Nigeria

In Nigeria, several judicial officers have perverted justice due to corrupt practices. In many instances, justice appears to be for sale to the highest bidder, and it ought not to be so. Corruption has caused Judges to deliver bad judgments in Nigeria. Several of the judges have been dismissed from office by the National Judicial Council (NJC). Rita Ofili-Ajumogobia and Justice James Agbadu-Fishim, both Judges of the Federal High Court and the National Industrial Court, were dismissed from offices over allegations of receiving bribes.⁵⁰ Danladi Umar, who is the chairman of the Code of Conduct Bureau/court, was indicted by an anti-corruption agency known as the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC). The EFCC had accused Justice Danladi Umar of demanding bribes of ten million Naira (=N=10M) (\$22,300, \$ 27 800) from a suspect arraigned before him⁵¹. Several cases of perversion of justice due to corruption abound in Nigeria. Corruption has destroyed the judiciary's reputation in Nigeria; the court is no longer the last hope of the common person as it used to be. When the court is corrupt, it

⁴⁸ CFRN 1999 as amended

⁴⁹ www.thecable.ng >accessed 6 January 2021

⁵⁰ www.aa.com.tr>accessed 10 January 2021

⁵¹ www.africanews.com>accessed 10 January 2021

cannot defend the constitutional right of fair hearing guaranteed under section 36⁵²

6. Solution and recommendations to corruption plaguing Nigeria

i. There should be national reorientation: corruption has been institutionalised in all facets of Nigerians' national lives. There should be a massive and aggressive reorientation campaign to condemn this vice. Religious bodies should always live by example while preaching against corruption regularly to their followers. Nigeria's political class must minimise the present ostentatious lifestyle that encourages other citizens to emulate them via corrupt processes.

ii. Policies that would revamp the economy should be pursued with honesty and commitment by the government. When this is done with transparency, and the economy picks up, jobs will be created, housing and adequate health care become available; the inflation rate will also drop to a level that ordinary persons' hopes are revived. When there are abundant goods and services at affordable prices, the tendency of resorting people resorting to corruption to meet their basic needs is minimised. It is usually a hopeless situation that breeds corruption in the minds of the citizens.

iii. As a corollary to the above argument, the minimum wage has to be reasonable. A situation where a citizen earns thirty thousand Naira (=N=30 000.00) (\$78.53) per month will never discourage corruption because a hungry man is an angry man. \$78.53 per month amounts to \$2.6 per day. The man who earns \$2.6 per day is already subjected to poverty and hardship. He cannot survive on this meagre income. He must feed his family of four, made up of his wife and at least two children. He has to pay house rent, clothing, education and medical bills. He cannot meet these obligations with an income of \$78.53 per month. If such a man finds an opportunity to steal public funds, he would readily do so due to low-income/hardship. To this end, we suggest a review of the minimum wage of (=N=30 000.00) (\$78.53) per month to \$500 (=N= 190, 598, 660) per month so that a citizen will be able to meet the basic needs of life and the tendency of being corrupt will be minimised.

There should not be any preferential treatment to any corrupt public officers irrespective of their societal status. No one should be above the law. Section 308⁵³ should be amended to remove the immunity clauses meant to protect serving Governors and the President against prosecution while in office. A man who knows he cannot be investigated and prosecuted while in office is likely to be reckless in financial dealings and can breach human rights with impunity. Human rights are grossly abused in Nigeria because the

⁵² www.thecable.ng >accessed 6 January 2021

⁵³ www.thecable.ng >accessed 6 January 2021

constitution created immunity against arrests and prosecution for Governors and the president.

Conclusion

Corruption has been a commonly reported issue in Nigerian dailies. Regrettably, despite statutes prohibiting corruption, corrupt practices have persisted in every facet of Nigeria. Corruption is a symbol of the moral breakdown in Nigeria and has caused economic recessions, the balance of payment deficit, workers incessant strikes and a high wave of crimes. This is why we put forward suggestions to curb corruption. If these suggestions are adhered to, it will indeed stem the tide of corruption. We have to start somewhere, but with time we will have a sane society free of corruption. All hands must be on deck. These perpetrators of corruption must be dealt with decisively in whatever ways it demands. Nigeria cannot continue with the bad image of corruption irrespective of the culprits and their positions in society. This is a time of proactive action to monitor all public office holders closely and bring corrupt ones to book. Corruption, may not be stamped out, but with concerted efforts, it will be minimised to the lowest ebb contrary to the state of corruption in the country.