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Corruption and Post 2015 Development Agenda in Nigeria

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Abstract- This work examined the impediments corruption pose on Nigerias' economy. It states that "Corruption in Nigeria is endemic in all facets and it has continued to challenge the goals of sustainability of development efforts in all ramifications. Thus, this chapter provides explanations on the corruption variable in the country, its negative impacts, consequences and impediments towards the country march to economic recovery in post 2015 and the sustenance of development effort. The work applied the historical method of data collection (secondary sources) using descriptive mechanism of analysis.

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Corruption and Post 2015 Development Agenda in Nigeria

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I. INTRODUCTION

It has been argued that Nigeria currently is richly endowed with qualitative human and natural resources but yet to find an appropriate and rightful place among the commity of nations in the world. One major reason that has accounted or responsible for this situation (socio – economic stagnation) is attributable to corruption and all effort geared at stemming the tide appears to be unsuccessful and problematique.

This work therefore is an attempt to unravel the mystery behind corruption in Nigeria and what has accounted for the difficulties in tackling it, so as to instigate and promote sustainability of development efforts in the country.

There is no gainsaying that the challenges corruption poses have a very severe and devastating consequences on Nigeria particularly from the colonial period to date.

Accordingly, Okolo and Akpokighe (2014. Pp 31 – 38) blamed corruption in Africa on colonialism. Thus, for them:

When specifically viewed with Africa's history in mind, administrative corruption, thought rampant across Africa today is an alien culture. Pre-colonial Africa, for the most part, was founded on strong ethical values sometimes packaged in spiritual terms, but with the end result of ensuring social justice and compliance. In both centralized and decentralized pre-colonial African communities, governance was conducted with the utmost seriousness. As the laws were mostly unwritten in nature and therefore prone to being easily forgotten, they were often couched in supernatural terms to instill fear and be instilled in the subconscious.

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For example, the heavy emphasis on accountability and good governance across several pre-colonial African communities in West Africa, the Asante confederation was a kingdom that thrived on strict rules and regulations. Established by seven clans close to the city of Kumasi, the Kingdom was held together by the symbolic Golden Stool of Asante-Hene. With strong cooperation from all groups the leadership of the Asante kingdom was known, according to Emizet Kisangani, to have "implemented several modernization policies in administration that included promoting advancement by merit and the development of state enterprise through public investment." The Asante were able to "build roads and promoted agriculture, commerce, industry and education through self-help and self-reliance."

The Yorubas of south western Nigeria for instance, have an institution, *Oyo-mesi* the king making body, acted as a check against the abuse of power by the Alafin (the Oba) or the King of Oyo. The Alafin was constrained to rule with caution and respect for his subjects. When he is proven to have engaged in acts that undermined the interests of his subjects, such as gross miscarriage of justice for personal gains, the *Oyo-mesi* would, in the words of Yunusa Salami "present him with an empty calabash or parrot's eggs as a sign that he must commit suicide" since he could not be deposed, according to tradition.

In the traditional Igbo acephalous society, the absence of any form of overarching authority, by itself, placed leadership in the hands of the people – the very epitome of accountability and good governance. The titled chiefs sat together to address the more difficult issues of governance, and there is a saying among the Igbo that a "titled man does not lie." If one wanted to hear the truth, to be granted pristine justice according to the prevailing standards, s/he only needed to get the impeccable body of titled men to hear the case in question.

Pre-colonial Rwanda had a highly organized, efficient and centralized system of administration. Although an autocratic and hierarchical system presided over by the king, there were systems of checks and balances among those who ruled at the clan level. A variant of the land ownership, *Ubukonde* permeated pre-colonial Rwanda. It was a custom of mutually beneficial exchange of labour between the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa, set on agreed principles. At the time it existed, *Ubukonde* was accepted by all parties involved and

those who tried to amass land wealth in a corrupt manner outside of the *Ubukonde* system incurred the wrath of the King. Numerous examples abound across sub-Saharan Africa, but in all, what held these communities together and brought administrative corruption down to the barest minimum was a set of rules and regulations, agreed principles and moral values that guided human interactions.

Be this as it may, Colonialism introduced systemic corruption on a grand scale across much of sub-Saharan Africa. The repudiation of indigenous values, standards, checks and balances and the pretensions of superimposing western structures destabilized the well-run bureaucratic machinery previously in existence across pre-colonial Africa. The end result is what is rampant across Africa today; conspicuous consumption, absence of loyalty to the state, oppressive and corrupt state institutions, to mention few. Apart from this introduction, the rest part of the work is divided into three (3), the first deals with the conceptual explanation of corruption; the second addressed the issue causes and cost of corruption and the third provided the conclusion and recommendations.

II. CONCEPTUAL EXPLANATION OF CORRUPTION

The concept "Corruption" like many other concepts in social sciences has no settled meaning. This means that there is no straight backed definition, or generally accepted, or encompassing definition for the term corruption.

The metaphor corruption has several meanings. For Nuhu Ribadu, pioneer Chairman of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), "corruption is an abuse of public office for private gains" (Jega, 2005:10). The concept "Corruption" like many other concepts in social sciences has no settled meaning. This means that there is no straight backed definition, or generally accepted, or encompassing definition for the term corruption.

However, certain definitional attempts have been proffered by different scholars. Although, there is often difficulties in defining it, because it means not only different things to different people, and even to the same people different things at different times, but also sanctions usually are attached to corrupt practices which hides them and gives them subtle forms. Thus, some people see "corruption" as a conscious and well planned act by a person or group of persons to appropriate by unlawful means the wealth of another person or group of persons. Then to others, it is the act of turning power and authority to ready cash.

This work provides a conceptual framework, conceptual explanation of corruption as a term is uncertain and indeed devoid of any strait jacket

definition. It depends on who is defining and from what perspective. What is corruption? If you are a typical Nigerian, you would define it as government officials looting our treasury. One could view; everything starts and ends in government offices. It will surprise you that almost everybody is campaigning against corruption in Nigeria? We are all waging a war against corruption. The main reason Nigeria is not making progress we say authoritatively is that those in government are just stealing public money. Corruption in Nigeria is not the exclusive preserve of politicians, civil servants, and captains of industry. Among the "common people" there is an instinctive honing of stealing skills. One should stop thinking people suddenly become corrupt when they join the government. However having been tutored and mentored on petty stealing from probably the age of five, Nigerians naturally explode when they occupy positions of authority at any level either in private or public sector. They join the bandwagon of selfish leaders after suddenly finding themselves in the corridor of power Rather than use their positions to repair its ills; they conform to the enrichment craze. In other words corruption is defined as the involvement in illegal, dishonest, or wicked behaviour which is destructive of the moral fabric of society. To some people corruption "is the conscious and will plan act by a person or group of persons to appropriate by unlawful means the wealth of another person or group of persons".

It is in this regard that, some see "corruption" as a conscious and well planned act by a person or group of persons to appropriate by unlawful means the wealth of another person or group of persons. Then to others, it is the act of turning power and authority to ready cash.

Dan Agbese, (1982), posits that "corruption is a phenomenon so difficult to define, yet it percolates every structure of the society. It affects the military as well as it soils the hands of the civilians". Agbese, went further to define corruption thus:

When we use our position in society to secure certain advantages jumping a queue, being waved off at the checkpoint or making others bend the rules to accommodate our demands ... by whatever means even if it is just 'thank you' our action however innocent, however well-intentional, however unthreatening to others, has corrupted a system or a convention or some rules and regulations in application.

Apparently, even whatever form of seasonal gifts, free air tickets, lunch or diner – "kola" is no longer exempted, since these are likely to influence future courses of action and transactions the giver or receiver is thus corrupting protocol or breaching some rules and regulations in the society (Nigeria) etc. Professor Abdullahi, Smith, for instance saw "corruption as the diversion of resources from the betterment of the community to the gain of individuals at the expense of

the community". (Mumullan 1961: 183 – 4) point out that a public official is corrupt if he accepts money or money's worth for doing something that he is under a duty to do or to exercise a legitimate discretion for improper reason. Then for Malam Adamu Ciroma, corruption is "the deliberate binding of the system to favour friends or hurt foes, any misbehaviour deviation from or perversion of the system, or misleading Nigerians or giving them wrong or distorted information about things they ought to know."

To this end, any act or behaviour or omission, committed, intentionally or not to influence the actions of another, the influential and the influenced, respectively has corrupted a system which is detrimental to the entire society.

The political science school see "corruption" as "an optimal means of bypassing the queues and bureaucratic inertia and hence conducive to economic growth". While the economics school like (Krueger 1974), saw "corruption" as "an external manifestation of rent seeking behaviour on the part of individuals"

The Webster Dictionary defines corruption as:

... that act of corruption or the state of being corrupt putrefactive decomposition, putrid matter, moral pervasion depravity, pervasion of integrity. Corrupt or dishonest proceedings, bribery, perversion from a state of purity, debasement as of a language; a debased form of a word.

Accordingly, Brownberger described corruption as a misapplication of public goods (broadly construed) to private ends. Edward C. Bandfield definition of corruption which we subscribe to for its elaborate and precise nature, defines corruption as the process of obtaining material enrichment or opportunities for oneself and or for others, through the use of public office (or influence) in ways other than those publicly acknowledge through rules and procedures of what office. This includes such behaviours as bribery (use of reward to pervert the judgment or actions of a person in a position of trust) nepotism bestowal of patronage by reasons of inscriptive relationship rather than merit and misappropriation (illegal appropriation of public resources for private uses).

To others it is the act of turning power and authority into ready cash. To yet another group, it is the diversion of resources for the betterment of the community to the gain of individuals at the expense of the community. Black law dictionary however defines corruption thus:

An act done to give some advantage inconsistent with the official duty and rights of others. The act of Official or Judiciary person, who unlawfully wrongly uses his position or character to procure some benefit for himself or the right of others.

The dictionary in the second segment of its definition says that: "Corruption is the act of doing

something with intent to give some advantage in consistent with official duty and right of others or officials use of a station or office to produce some benefit either personally or for someone else contrary to the right of others". The new edition of the chambers 20th century dictionary defines the term beyond the pilfering of public funds, the amassing of fortunes by illegal or corrupt means does not seem to necessarily disturb the average Nigerian as to make him lose sleep over it. Also, the British Department for International development (DFID) maintains in its Nigeria country strategy paper for the year 2000, that poverty persists in Nigeria because of the mismanagement of resources and corruption found practically but not exclusively in the public sector. The World Bank defines corruption as:

The abuse of public office for private gains. Public office is abused for private gain when an official accepts edicts or extorts a bribe. It is also abused when private agents actively offer bribes to circumvent public policies and processes for competitive advantage and profit. Public office can also be abused for personal benefit even if no bribery occurs through patronage and nepotism, the thereof state assets or the diversion of state resource.

The Asian development bank understand corruption as involving „the behaviour on the part of officials in the public and private sectors, in which they improperly and unlawfully enrich themselves and on these closely related to them, or induce others to do so, by misusing the position in which they are placed. According to Stople, (2008), United Nations Convention against Corruption, recognized corruption as a multi-faceted, dynamic and flexible phenomenon, and therefore does not define, but describe corrupt practices. Corruption may not be easy to define but, according to Tanzi, (1998), it is "generally not difficult to recognize when observed." Corrupt acts required a minimum of two individuals from one or more communities, and either exchange or the promise of an exchange of money.

Henley (2003), on the other hand, defines it as "misuse of private or public funds, office, power and/or position for private benefits". In the light of our experience, we shall adopt the United Nations Human Development (UNHD) report that defines corruption as:

Acceptance of money or other rewards for awarding contracts, violations of procedures to advance personal interests, including kickbacks from development programmes or multinational corporations; pay-offs for legislative support; and the diversion of public resources for private use, to overlooking illegal activities or intervening in the justice process. Forms of corruption also include nepotism, common theft, overpricing, establishing

non-existent projects, payroll padding, tax collection and tax assessment frauds (UNHD Report, 1998:11).

This definition is all encompassing and relates to petro-economy corruption in Nigeria. It should be emphasized that this work is on corruption, in its entirety, and not petro-economy corruption (PEC). The PEC is concerned with mismanagement and outright stealing of funds from oil and gas sector of the Nigerian economy. These, as reflected in range from the demand of payment of 10 percent for the award of contracts in the First Republic; sales of oil at concessionary prices to some African countries, over-invoicing, under-reporting of petroleum revenue and embezzlement during the military era; to the Halliburton scam, unaccounted proceeds from excess crude oil production, fuel subsidy and fraudulent award of oil blocks in the Third and Fourth Republics (Aluko, 1976; and Biersteker and Lewis, 1999). These corrupt practices had debilitating effects on the national economy and development (Ujomu, 2000).

According to Salisu, (2000), the simple definition of corruption is that it is the misapplication of public resources to private ends. For example, public Officials may collect bribes for issuing Passports or Visa, for providing goods at sea/airport for awarding contracts or artificial scarcity. Konie, (2003) identified two types of corruption, these are, Vertical corruption, which involves managers and decision makers. This is common in less developed countries and; Horizontal corruption, which involves the entire Officials, informed and laymen groups in the countries. The two types of corruption should be seriously addressed and eradicated if any meaningful economic or political progress is to be made.

Corruption also reduces economic growth, enhances inequalities and reduces the governments' capacity to respond to people's needs. All these swerve down to create poverty in the society. Corruption distorts economic and social developments, by engendering wrong choices and by encouraging competition in bribery rather than in the quality and price of goods and services and, all too often, it means that the world poorest must pay for the corruption of their own officials and of multinationals agents. Corruption leads to a grooving gap between the rich and the poor and deepens poverty by enriching a few at the expense of fellow citizens. Under a corrupt system, there is a concentration of wealth in the hands of a tiny minority of the population. Resultantly income distribution becomes highly skewed.

Closely associated with the connection of wealth in the hands of the few, a distorted consumption pattern, aimed at meeting the luxurious lifestyle of the urban elite, emerge, According to (Transparency International (TI), 2008) Corruption is the misuse of entrusted power for private gains. TI went further to

differentiate between "according to the rules" Corruption and "against the rule" Corruption. Facilitation of payments where a bribe is paid to receive preferential treatment for something that the bribe receiver is required to do by law, constitute the former. The latter on the other hand is a bribe paid to obtain services the bribe receiver is prohibited from providing. Some researchers have defined corruption to be related only to bribery and unlawful payments, (Grunner, 1999; Ojaide, 2000), defines corruption as "any systematic vice in an individual, society or a nation which reflects favoritism, nepotism, tribalism, sectionalism, undue enrichment or amassing of wealth, abuse of office, power position and derivation of undue gains and benefits. This is where the incumbent president Buhari's pattern of appointment becomes circumspect in my opinion and to those who share the same view with me, given the essential ingredient as provided by the Federal Character Principle (FCP) in Nigeria, were all sections and diverse ethnic nationalities is to be included in the governance process of the country. Corruption also includes bribery, smuggling, and fraud, illegal payments, money laundering, drug trafficking, falsification of documents and records, window dressing, false declaration, tax evasion of any kind to the detriment of another person, community society or nation. The question to ask is: what is the cause of corruption in Nigeria?

III. CAUSES AND COST OF CORRUPTION

a) Causes of Corruption

Re-current studies have revealed many reasons put forward as probable causes for the prevalence of corruption in Nigeria. These ranges from non-conformity to religious tenets, imparted values and ideas and ideas alien to our culture, ethnicity which encourages favoritism and nepotism, a weak legal system which is honored in the breach than observance. The political bureau in its report mentioned such causes as excessive materialism generated by our individual capitalist order which emphasize personal wealth without regard to the collective interest and welfare of the larger society. Other causes of poverty, illiteracy, get-rich- mania, statism, and wrong attitude to public property, absence of a welfare scheme which cushions effect of unemployment, retirement, large families, and quest for power, double standards and low level of patriotism. These are important in themselves; it does appear that poverty is the most important single factor that promotes the wide spread of giving and taking bribes, i.e. illegal financial inducements in the country, Okolo & Akpokighe, (2014. Pp. 31 - 38). As regards features of corruption, the most common are:

- Giving and receiving bribes
- Inflation of contracts
- Kick back and payment upfront

- Abuse of public property
- Lodging government fund in private accounts
- Examination malpractices
- Adulterated food or hazardous drugs
- Misappropriation and embezzlement of fund
- Money laundry by public officers
- Using proxy names to buy property.

Thus, Nwaobi, (2004) posited that Nigeria must be one of the very few countries in the world where a mans' source of wealth is of no concern to his neighbor, the public or the government. Wealthy people who are known to be corrupt are regularly courted and honored by communities, religious bodies, social clubs and other private organizations. This implies that people who benefit from the largesse of these corrupt people rarely ask questions. In Nigeria, although traditional values of gift giving and tributes to leaders often lead to what Berger, (1983) describes as "Polite Corruption", the extent of such corruption is relatively small. Dadajo, (2008) revealed that traditional Chieftaincy titles and membership of boards of directors of government – owned corporations are only for the influential individuals in the society who have "made it" economically or politically. Most of these people "made it" through enriching themselves fraudulently, but enjoy public respect and accolades. The most annoying thing is that honest and dedicated public servants, who have not accumulated dirty wealth, do not command much respect from the society. These attitudes serve to encourage a new breed of public servants who engage in corrupt practices.

According to Maduegbuna, (2005), the benefits of corruption are greater than the consequences of being caught and disciplined. High incidence of poverty, which according to National Bureau of Statistics, (2005) is put at 54.1% contributed in no small amount to the desperation of Nigeria to acquire Wealth through any means. While the few employed received low wages, unemployment is high. The unemployed are mostly the youths engaged in anti social activities such as cyber crime, drug peddling, prostitution, political thuggery, paid assassins, oil bunkering, kidnapping, militancy (Niger Delta) among others; all in the name of money. (Jimo et al, 2001) attributed corruption within the (Africa) regions public administration to over – centralization of power, lack of media freedom to expose scandals, the impunity of well connected officials and absence of transparency in public fund management, clienteles and low salaries. Dandago, (2008) observed that the poor salary levels of most public servants have not kept pace with inflation, which has eroded their purchasing power. It is also clear that the process of gaining power in Nigeria is either by armed force or the influence of money.

It is in this regard that, Chobal, & Daloz, (1999) reasoned that in Africa, such factors as the Obligations of mutual support, the imperatives of reciprocity, the importance of gift exchange, the payment of tribute, the need to redistribute even the habits of cattle rustling or, more generally, of plundering others, all have a bearing on the continent today. There are also those who believe that modern bribery may not be seen as cognate with traditional gift giving since it takes place outside the context of a patron – client relationship. Ethnically, the poor man's bribe to the faceless power he will never meet again is completely distinct from his traditional gift to a patron.

b) *Cost of Corruption*

One of the greatest threats to socio – economic and political development of any nation is corruption. The challenges of corruption have devastating consequences to Nigeria since the colonial period. Corruption as a phenomenon has become a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of our system. Almost all levels of Nigeria society are perverted by corruption. Ndubisi (2009) described corruption in Nigeria as endemic and Egonmwan (2002) considered corruption as a sub-culture within the Nigerian context. Thus, the socio – economic and political problem in Nigeria today is as a result of corruption. From the collapsed of our traditional institutions, failure of public enterprises, decay and inefficiency of our public service, to the failure of private enterprise are all considered as consequences of corruption in our society and body polity. (Nsikan, Aliyu & Udensi, 2015. Pp 1 – 5).

The menace of corruption has been tackled at different levels, yet this ugly incidence keeps surviving with us at all facets of our endeavours. For instance, in year 2000, the Guardian, one of the leading newspapers in Nigeria, conducted an opinion poll about the obstacles to Nigeria's development. Respondents were asked to choose from a list including corruption, bad leadership and unemployment. 70 percent of the 1080 respondent picked corruption as one of the worst problems that hinders Nigeria's development Igbuzor, (2008). Consequently, the extraction of billions of dollars in corruptly acquired funds has cost Nigeria dearly. It has been argued that Nigeria's past corrupt leaders stole and deposited about US\$400 billion in foreign banks from the first military government in 1966 and the return to civilian rule in 1999 (Ayttey, 2002).

Similarly, the former chairman of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Mallam Nuru Ribadu was noted to have observed that Nigeria's former leaders had misappropriated approximately US\$507 billion from public coffers which, when compared against the proposed 2008 budget of N2.456 trillion, translates into 26 years worth of public spending Igbuzor, (2008). This therefore described Nigeria as 'a money laundering haven' according to report by the

Financial Action Task Force of 2001 (Ochefu and Chima, 2008).

The former president of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo in his inauguration speech of 1999 asserted that corruption in Nigeria has reached the stage of a "full-blown cancer" and is "the greatest single bane of our society today" Maier, (2000 p.20). Even the most conservative estimates involve huge sums: in December 2010, Global Financial Integrity (GFI), an international illicit financial outflow watchdog, suggested that from 2000 to 2008, Nigeria's past leaders had overseen the illicit flow of US\$130 billion. The report, titled: Illicit Financial Flows from Developing Countries: 2000-2009, ranked Nigeria tenth on a list of nations losing money through illegal capital flights (Amundsen 2010; see also Nsikan, Aliyu & Udensi, 2015).

Corruption differs widely in its forms, pervasiveness and consequence, it occurs in monarchy, democracies and military dictatorships; at all levels of development and in all types of economic systems from open capitalist economies to centrally planned economies (Faloore 2010; Egwemi 2012). In developed countries, the effect may be less severe, while in developing countries particularly African continent the effect on national development are very severe. In Nigeria, corruption affects every facet of human development, little wonder, the Transparency International (TI), global corruption barometer survey rate Nigeria 27 percent in corruption index and ranked 136 out of 175 less corrupt countries (Transparency International, 2014). The futile attempt by the government to fight the cankerworm stems from the fact that government itself is greatly infected with the virus and an average Nigeria is seen as corrupt in most parts of the world (Odofoin & Omojuwa 2007).

According to Olugbenga (2007), the word corruption cannot easily be defined because of its complex and multifaceted dimensions having multiple causes and effects that take on various forms and contexts. However, the United Nations Global Programme against Corruption (GPAC) (2009 p.12S) defines it as "abuse of power for private gain". Similarly, the Transparency International, (2008) has chosen a clear and focused definition of the term as "the abuse of entrusted power and public office for private gain". Public office is abused for private gain when an official accepts, solicits or extorts a bribe. It is also abused when private agents actively offer bribes to circumvent public offices and processes for competitive advantages or profit. It also means theft of public trust whether the person concerned is elected, selected, nominated or appointed and it does not matter whether the person affected holds office or not since anybody can be corrupt.

On the other hand, national development refers to the type of economic growth pattern where the use of

resources meets the needs of the human population while conserving the environment at the same time. This implies that resources are used in such a way that both current and future human needs can be met (Sustainable development guide online 2012). It should be noted that consistent corrupt practices has the potential of eroding national development by compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Thus, corruption has strived and sustained despite all efforts at curbing it.

Pervasive corruption has remained a serious obstacle to economic development in Nigeria. Corruption inhibits human and social development. It has impaired hard work, diligence and efficiency. It has caused incalculable damages to the social and political development of Nigeria It subverts honest selection processes and distorts prices. Furthermore, it weakens institutions, hampers investment and retards economic development. More importantly, the resources that should be used for developmental purposes are being diverted from the society to private or personal use. This accumulation of the nation's economic resources for personal benefits had variously contributed to the leakage of capital from Nigeria or illegal deposits abroad.

Since the return of the country to civil rule in May 29, 1999, the Nigerian government has taken a number of measures to address the problems of corruption. These measures include public service reform (monetization to reduce waste and reduction of over-bloated personnel, reform of public procurement); establishment of anti-corruption enforcement agencies (such as the Economic and Financial Crime Commission, Independent Corruption and other Practices Commission); and the on-going sanitization of the financial service sector by the Central Bank.

Despite the crusades of anti-corruption in Nigeria, its magnitude appears to be on the high side as corruption continues to permeate and pervade every facet of national life in Nigeria Akindele, (2005). Against this backdrop, this study examines the causes, types and effects of corruption on Nigeria's development. The study also makes suggestion on ways of achieving a society that is free (if possible) from corruption. Thus arguably, the cost of corruption can be classified into four factors, political, economic, social, and environmental. On the political strand, corruption constitutes a major obstacle to democracy and the rule of law. In a democratic system, offices and institution lose their legitimacy when they are misused for private advantage. This is harmful to our democracy in Nigerian in the post 2015 development agenda. Our democracy and political leadership cannot develop in a corrupt climate and this has an implication for the sustainability of development effort in country towards our match to

achieving the new sustainable development goal in the current world order.

Generally, governance in Nigeria and more particularly in the Niger Delta States can be referred to anything except democratic: it lacks all the irreducible principles and tenets of democracy such as fair and credible election, rule of law, separation of powers, independence of the judiciary, fragrant abuse of court judgements and checks and balances between the arms of government. The political system of the region is highly mal – functional: the reason, the constitutional framework only exists in paper and not in practice. It is absurd that the democratic presidential system which Nigeria claim to practice, the executive arm could comprehensively dominate other branches such that the governors of the region have become repository of the three branches put together. Consequently, the legislature goes to the governor to ask for money, instead of the other way round, (Okolo & Inokoba, 2014).

The Niger Delta like the larger Nigeria political space is dominated by corrupt, greedy and desperate elites who will stop at nothing just to acquire political power. Corruption has been institutionalized by the ruling elites in Nigeria; hence, political leaders embezzle most of the money accruing from the sale of oil. The former anti – corruption Czar, Mr Nuhu Ribadu while granting an interview to the BBC in 2006 said “more than \$380billion has either been stolen or wasted by Nigerian Governments since independence in 1960” (Courson, 2009; see also Okolo & Inokoba, 2014. Pp 11 – 27).

While there is an abundance of extant literature devoted to oil and violence in the Niger Delta, there has been a dearth of studies highlighting the roles and linkages of corruption in the protracted conflict of the region, yet the persistence, the increasing frequency and the intensification of corrupt act among political actors, community leaders and private oil companies operating in the Niger Delta, have for some time been the hallmark of politics in the region Enweremadu, (2009). It is therefore less surprising that today Niger Delta governors and public officials are seen as the most corrupt in the country. Out of the four former governors of Nigeria’s major oil producing states (Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom, Delta and Rivers), three have either been convicted for large scale corruption. One has been convicted and jailed for plundering the resources of his state on a massive scale (Alamieyesegha of Bayelsa State). A second was arrested and charged on 105 counts of looting up to 10billion Naira from his state (Ibori of Delta state) Enweremadu, (2009). The same former governor was extradited from Dubai to United Kingdom for money laundering offences tried and convicted, and is currently serving jail term in the UK. The third former Niger Delta governor under close investigations over the same

offences though protected by the court is Dr. Peter Odili, and of course the former Governor Timipre Sylva of Bayelsa State between 2007 and Feb., 2012 has also been engulfed with wide scale corruption scandals, (see Okolo & Inokoba, 2014).

For instance, how best can one describe the situation were the immediate past governor of Rivers state Rotimi Amechi presents the States 2014 budget inside government house on the same day and the budget got passed first, second and third readings and signed into law. This goes a long way to explain the nature and manner of desperation politicians / so called political leaders in the region could be. How about the members of the Rivers state house of Assembly, who passed that budget, how do we describe them? Only time will tell, however there are indication that Ritimi Amechi is nominated by the incumbent president Mohammedu Buhari as minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in spite of the termed opposition/petitions of his perceived corrupt tendencies, but there is the absolute need for a change, and that change is now, and if this change is to occasion sustainability of development effort in post 2015 development agenda in Nigeria.

In order to strengthen this argument, on the relationship between mis – governance, poverty and violence in the Niger Delta and as a Nigeria, there is a urgent need to show how Peter Odili of Rivers state (1999 – 2007) recklessly spent the state’s 2006 budget. The Rivers states’ 2006 budget which was estimated at 160billion naira (\$1.2billion), governor Odili spent 10.7billion naira to maintain his office. This sum excluded the 500million naira spent on ‘gifts’ and ‘souvenirs’ for his visitors, the 4.3billion naira used as ‘Grants’ and ‘Donations’ and the hefty 5billion devoted to security vote. In the same budget, Governor Peter Odili reserved for himself 3billion naira to take care of his frequent trips overseas, which is even far above what the President of Nigeria gets. The 32 members of the Rivers House of Assembly also got 690million (about \$5.4million) naira for their travel, \$2.8million of which was meant for foreign trips. This is separate from the \$2.8million given to the legislature as sitting allowance (not salaries), Enweremadu, (2009). However, Odili Generosity never extended to social services, which would benefit a greater number of Rivers state citizens. A meagre sum of 2.8billion naira was all that was given to the state ministry of health out of a budget of 160billion naira, in spite of having been coined a ‘priority ministry’ Enweremadu (2009). It is therefore less surprising that Dr. Peter Odili ran the most expensive presidential campaign in 2007.

On the economic front, corruption leads to the depletion of our national wealth. It has led to the use of scarce public resources to finance uneconomic high profile projects such as power plants pipelines that cost billions whereas if these were channel towards building

schools, hospitals and roads or the supply of Electricity and water to rural areas which are basic needs of life. This has hindered the development of fair market structures which has led to job losses and also affects investment.

Corruption is the cause of poverty in Nigeria. This is premised on the logic that if poverty is the root cause of Petro – economy Corruption (PEC), Okolo & Etekepe, (2015. Pp 246 – 266) what can be said for the justification of the petty bourgeoisie who by every standard are not poor, and yet, stole money from the public coffers? What therefore fuels PEC in Nigeria is greed Bayart, (1993). Nigeria is not the only oil producing country in Africa or the world. But the country has one of the worst cases (manifestations) of how oil wealth has either been out rightly stolen or mismanaged to the tune of US \$400 billion since independence in 1960 (Ogundele and Unachukwu, 2012). This must have informed Ribadu to refer to oil wealth as the devil's excrement or the Dutch disease. Granted PEC is a global problem that is not peculiar to Nigeria as the world loses about US\$4,000 or 10 percent of its gross economic output per day, Global Financial Integrity estimates that between 1970 and 2010, Africa lost more than US\$854 billions to corruption.

The Transparency International (TI) puts the amount of bribe companies paid politicians and other public officials in developing and transiting economies annually at US\$40 billion; and that Nigeria, in particular, and Africa, in general, constituted major part of it (Ogundele and Unachukwu, 2012, and Isakpo, 2013:52-3). But the point of departure is the degree or pervasiveness which varies from country to country, and the measures each country has adopted to minimize, if not eradicate it. The essence is to produce new knowledge for multiple constituencies to formulate proactive policies for the eradication of corruption to engender sustainable development in Nigeria.

On the social ladder, the people have lost their trust in the political system. In its institutions and leadership, they have developed non-chalant attitude and general apathy towards government policies resulting in a weak civil society. Environmental degradation is yet another consequence of corrupt systems. The non enforcement of environmental regulations and legislation has led to the pollution of the environment in Nigeria. Careless exploitation of Natural resources from oil and minerals by domestic and international agents hassled to ravaged natural environments affecting the health of her citizens. Most environmental devastating project are given preference in funding, because they are easy target for siphoning of public funds into private pockets.

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Giving the foregoing discuss, a conclusion can be drawn that the war against corruption in Nigeria should be part of a societal transformation where the citizens are empowered in the fight against corruption. It should be a fight against inhumanity and for the re-orientation of values. It should be a fight that attempts to free the society from mediocrity and makes it difficult for corrupt and unworthy millionaires from taking part in the political process and holding public office. The fight against corruption should not be an event in isolation but a fight for the enthronement of a just, equitable and fair economic system throughout the world. It is only through this that a 'dependency state' can turn into a 'development to another for the benefit of the mass of the people.

The following recommendations are suggested for the reduction/eradication of corruption in Nigeria to promote the economic growth for sustainability of development efforts in the post 2015 development agenda in Nigeria.

- ❖ Nigeria's legal and judicial system should be reviewed and restructured to handle swiftly the cases of people that are engaged in corrupt practices. In addition, an establishment of special court for economic and financial crimes (corruptions) to forestall the prevailing attitude of regular courts' incessant adjournments and perpetual injunction.
- ❖ There is need for the strengthening of the activities of the anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Related Offences Commission (ICPC). This can only be possible if interference by political office holders is checkmated. Again, adequate funding and management of EFCC, ICPC, Police and other agencies saddled with the responsibility of the fight against corruption is required to engender sustenance of the post 2015 development agenda in Nigeria.
- ❖ Those who have demonstrated exemplary and corrupt free leadership should be celebrated by rewarding honesty and integrity as a way of checking corruption in Nigeria.
- ❖ Leadership position in Nigeria should be manned by honest and incorruptible people; men of high integrity.
- ❖ The National Assembly re-organize its standing committees to carry out diligent oversight/investigative functions inform of monitoring performance of ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), and holding persons accountable for their actions or inactions.

- ❖ Penalties for corrupt officials should be made very stiffer to serve as deterrent to others.
- ❖ The rule of law must be upheld to instill sanity in the administration of justice. Equal treatment of corrupt officials is a necessity. There should be 'no sacred cows' there should be no exceptions to the rules as the law is no respecter of persons. The prevailing situation were perceived corrupt officials are nominated by the incumbent president and undergoing screening by the senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to be appointed as ministers does not in any reflect the fact that all persons are equal before the law in Nigeria.
- ❖ Restoration of indigenous values and institutions: Nigerian indigenous values and systems were for the most part debunked by first, the missionaries, then the colonialists in a much more forceful manner. Indigenous solutions to corruption must once again be explored followed by the rediscovery of indigenous systems of administration. Rwanda has successfully done the latter through the *Gacaca, Abunzi, Umuganda, Umudugudu* and other indigenous systems. The above is by no means a call for Nigeria Christians and Muslims to revert to African traditional religion as is often perceived whenever the indigenous is mentioned. Far from it. The merging of Nigeria's social, cultural, and moral values with its religion was the handiwork of some over-zealous missionaries and racist colonialists. Nigerians have come of age to separate between religion and other causes and to realize that one can be fully functioning in his chosen religion and still abide by several positively rewarding indigenous Nigerian values.
- ❖ Education: Formal, Informal and non-formal education is the greatest vehicle for cultural transmission towards a transformation of prevailing social paradigm is education. In its formal form, the curriculum of learning across Nigerian must be overhauled to make for real mental and intellectual independence. In its non-formal manifestation, conferences, workshops, camps, and other non-formal learning situations must be widely utilized to re-educate citizens on the fact that real living occurs only when individuals have sound moral values, or at least, consistently and seriously aspire to it. Informally, the media will be mobilized as a crucial element of mass mobilization towards an appreciation of the Nigeria's authentic social, cultural and economic environment.
- ❖ Religion as a nation building institution: Nigerians listen to their spiritual leaders, much more than they do politicians and policy makers. The pulpit ought to be mobilized as a knowledge and faith-based platform for reaching the souls of Nigerians and in directing them towards nation-building.
- ❖ Promotion of the "African" nation state: For the past 55 years, Nigerians have been struggling in vain to assimilate the artificially imposed colonial boundaries. It is time to promote the greater African nation-state and de-emphasize the cosmetic divisions that is filled with antagonistic ethnic groups.
- ❖ Nigerians must be encouraged, motivated and facilitated to travel widely across the continent in order to overcome the ethnic animosities that was ignited by colonialism, established by the post colonial tussle for power among ruling elites, and strengthened by geographic claustrophobia.

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