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CORRUPTION AND EMERGING DEMOCRACIES: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

This paper is a study on corruption and its implications for emerging democracies taking a critical analysis on the Nigerian experience. The study sought to review the challenges of corruption in Nigeria with emphasis on its implication on Nigeria as an emerging democracy. The theory underpinning this study is the people-centered approach to development. Data for this study were derived majorly from secondary sources with the use of content analysis in carrying out a qualitative analysis of the data generated. It is the argument of this study that corrupt leadership, mismanagement of public funds and funds diversions significantly contributed to the continual development challenges being experienced in Nigeria. The study concluded that despite the huge endowment of human and material resources certain factors, such as corruption and mismanagement of public funds, funds diversion etc, have contributed to stalling the desired objectives in the implementation of development programmes to fully yield the desired objectives. Consequently, until deliberate steps are taken to address these daunting and monstrous challenges, development will remain a mirage in Nigeria.

Keywords: Corruption, Democracy, Bad Leadership, Nepotism

Introduction

Corruption which is basically the mismanagement of public funds for personal or private gains seems to ravage virtually every facet of the entire system in Nigeria. It is no doubt a clog in the wheel of meaningful socio-economic development as seen in the case of Nigeria. Corruption is inherent in every country (that is, it is not limited by borders) and manifests in a number of ways such as cyber-crime, money laundering, misappropriation and diversion of funds to mention a few.

A country or society must elevate someone to the leadership position so as to oversee and direct the affairs of all. Unfortunately however, some people often seek power not out of a genuine desire to serve or contribute to the common good of the State but because of their

greed and selfish interest. Put differently, some people seek to acquire State power with a selfish intent to satisfy their greedy and oppressive tendencies and also for the purpose of embezzling State resources for personal aggrandizement. Consequently, a society bedeviled with corruption is often robbed of development or can hardly experience meaningful development. According to Hanson, (2009), 'Corruption has mainly contributed to stunted development and impoverishment of many States in the African continent'. Suffice to state that, good governance which is the expectation of a democratic society is still far from reach with impunity and corruption a challenge especially in Nigeria.

Most democratic States, especially emerging democratic Nations, often formulate and promote policies geared towards the improvement of the living standards of the people as well as development of the country in its entirety. Unfortunately, these policies and programmes often fail to achieve their aims largely due to many factors including corruption. It is imperative to note that, policies, no matter how beautiful they are, may not deliver better and improved public goods in a polity with massive corrupt activities, weak and biased institutions and lack of political will to eradicate corruption.

Corruption is endemic in Africa and it is pertinent to note that most African leaders are guilty of allowing corruption to thrive especially with the high level of corruption cases being recorded over the years. In fact, corruption can be said to have been institutionalized in many African countries, Nigeria inclusive. The point being made here is that, most African leaders are sometimes guilty of not being fair minded or consciously guided especially as it bothers on corruption. The incessant and high cases of corruption majorly contribute to the underdeveloped State of Africa and some other third world countries despite many years of decolonization. Igwe Stanley (2012) opines that African leaders have no interest in developing Africa. According to him, most of them are living very comfortable lives, as they are living off aid or whatever their income is and the idea of bringing education or health to their population doesn't interest them in the slightest. It is important to add that the immunity clause on political positions limits the anti-corruption fight against political office holders. According to the International Crisis Group, while in office, the immunity enjoyed by the President and State governors from criminal prosecution in Nigeria undermines the powers of the EFCC by perpetuating a dangerous culture of impunity (ICG, 2006b).

One can hardly point to a positive aspect of corruption as its negative effects are acute particularly in emerging democracies or economies. Not only does corruption undermine human and capital development, it equally deprives citizens of a nation access to good and quality life as well as poses as a stumbling block to economic development. Corruption a lot of times involves lots of conspiracy with key government officials perpetuating or aiding and abetting the activities of corruption. The Corruption Perception Index (CPI) published annually by Transparency International has often come out with a revelation of how highly corrupt Nigeria is. According to a Transparency International report, Nigeria's external image suffered setbacks as it consistently remained the world's second most corrupt nation in the world in 2000, 2001 and 2002 (T1, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

Leadership is basically a call to service. The concept of leadership itself is service. Whenever politicians come up with various campaign promises during the campaigns preceding

elections, they often project the interest of the citizens above any form of personal interest or ambition. Unfortunately, most leaders end up turning their campaign promises the other way round. Public interest rather becomes private interest with political office holders taking advantage of every given opportunity to embezzle public funds for private use. This act of dishonesty and corruption has further deepened the challenges confronting citizens and the country at large.

Nigeria's inability to consolidate on Democratic gains is due to many factors, one of which is corruption. Corruption is a major challenge that has contributed in draining Nigeria and caused great setbacks in the pursuit for socio- economic and political development.

With the weighty allegations frequently being leveled against public officials at one point or the other, one begins to wonder if public office holders in Nigeria still imbibe the servant leader style that is geared towards serving the interest of the people or if the quest for power is for personal aggrandizement. Also, some important questions begging for answers are: how can the country win the war against corruption and entrench the right values in their citizens for a better Nigeria. What can Nigeria do to consolidate her democracy? These and many more are key questions this paper seeks to unravel.

Conceptual Framework

Corruption

The concept of corruption attracts different meanings from different people particularly the social scientists. However, some questions that come to mind when the topic is discussed are: what is corruption and how corrupt is Nigeria as a nation? What are the causes and effects of corruption in Nigeria? What steps have the government of Nigeria taken to fight corruption? There is no gainsaying the fact that corruption is widely seen as an impediment to development especially in Africa and other third World Countries. As Igwe Stanley (2012) succinctly puts it, corruption is any organized, interdependent system in which parts of the system are either not performing their duties as ethically expected or are performing them improperly to the detriment of the system's original purpose. Corruption, according to Nkom (1982) is the perversion of public affairs for private advantage. Corruption is also seen as a persistent cancerous phenomenon which bedevils Nigeria (Inienger, Orban and Emem, 2018). It is indeed cancerous as it eats deep into the fabric of society affecting the length and breadth of the system.

Democracy

Democracy, like many concepts in the social sciences cannot be confined or caged with a single meaning as many people have various conceptions and definitions of the term.

Abraham Lincoln defines democracy in unambiguous terms as government of the people, for the people and by the people. Democracy which simply has to do with the government of the majority is seen as a system of government that improves the socio-economic welfare of the people. Ideally, democracy is a system of government believed to reflect the wishes, interest and desires of the people. Otive, (2011) on his part says democracy is only meaningful if it delivers in bringing socio-economic development to the nation. Bello, (2011) maintained that democracy seems to be the only means of governance that appeals to all and sundry in both advanced countries as well as the underdeveloped ones. There are basic tenets present in an ideal democracy. According to Ayua (1997), under a democratic system,

the following are normally present: fundamental human rights and liberties, universal suffrage, rule of law through the establishment of an independent judiciary, popularly elected government, free trade unions etc. Furthermore, Franceschet (2009) identified legality, transparency and enhanced participation as democratic ethics and principles.

Theoretical Discourse

This work adopts the System's theory as a guide. This theory encompasses a wide field of research with different conceptualizations and areas of focus. The emphasis of this theory is based on the argument that the conglomeration of interrelated and interdependent parts to a large extent affects its functioning.

First of all, a system can be defined as an entity, which is a coherent whole (Ng, Maull and Yip, 2009). On his part, Capra, explains Systems theory to be an interdisciplinary theory about every system in nature, in society and in many scientific domains as well as a framework with which phenomena can be investigated from a holistic approach (Capra, 1997). Furthermore, , Kuhlmann (2001, p. 955) offers the following conceptualization for a system: "As a system we understand a conglomeration of actors, institutions and processes all functionally bound together, whereby certain characteristic functions of each form the demarcation criteria against other societal (sub)systems".

The choice for the adoption of this approach as the theory underpinning this work stems from the fact that the interactions and relationships between various parts is important in order to understand the organization, functioning and outcomes of an entity. David Easton, stresses as possible "units of analysis": action, decision, function, and even systems can serve as units of analysis, when a system is being understood as a part (element) of a larger system (Easton 1965b). Easton further analyzed politics under the premises of systems theory and to frame political activities as a system of behavior. Consequently, Easton submits that, a meaningful systems analysis requires the following: a "system" which entails the political life; an "environment", in which the system is embedded; "response", which implies the varying parts of the structures and processes of a system, in response to the environment and the "internal sources"; as well as "feedback", that influences the decision-making of actors (Easton 1965a, pp. 23–25).

The political system enhances the performance of a society through the governance of society: policy-making and legislation, coordination, and communication (and the support of market-building) (Carayannis et al. 2016:9).

The operations within a system have the capacity to make or mar that system or society. In other words, a healthy system will produce positive outcome(s) while a sick or failed system will equally be reflected in society in a negative light. Nigeria has over the years suffered the negative experiences that come with corruption which is a contributory factor of underdevelopment of the country. Corruption which seems to have been institutionalized in Nigeria is more or less due to systemic failure. Consequently, when the system is sick or fails to live up to its responsibility, tangible development can rarely be achieved. It is an unarguable fact that almost every sector or facet of the nation is ridden with corruption. Several allegations have at one point or the other been leveled against officials of private and especially public organizations. Large sums of money are either being misappropriated or diverted for personal rather than public gains. The lack of integrity or honesty among officials of various

organizations, who indulge in the acts of corruption, hinders the consolidation of Nigeria's democracy and development. Suffice to say that systemic flaws are common with emerging democracies and is a great hindrance to the actualization of the development dreams of such countries.

Anti-Corruption Agencies in Nigeria

The economic and financial crimes commission (EFCC) was established in December 2002 by former President Olusegun Obasanjo who placed Nuhu Ribadu as the head of the commission. This corruption fighting body is vested with the responsibility of investigating cases of abuse of office, official corruption, bribery of government officials, diversion of public funds through fraudulent award of contracts etc. EFCC deserves commendation as they have recorded a number of successes as seen in the investigation, arrest, detainment and prosecution of not just the ordinary Nigerians but also some sacred cows in the economic, political and military classes.

The mission of the EFCC is basically to curb the menace of corruption. By mid-2010 it had listed 55 high-profile cases outstanding on its website along with scores of others. The Commission is however perceived to be a tool of any incumbent president in dealing with political opponents and it is invariably accused of selectivity in investigations and prosecutions. (Inienger, Urban and Emem, 2018).

Apart from the EFCC, other bodies or agencies involved in one way or the other in the anti-corruption fight include the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offenses Commission (ICPC), Code of Conduct Bureau, and the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI)

Some other measures introduced by the Nigerian government to expose and possibly curb corruption include Whistle blowing, Treasury Single Account (TSA)

Growing Concerns of Corruption in Nigeria

The antics, desperation and excessive ambition of some public officials who use their position of trust for selfish or dishonest gains have done the country more harm than good. Despite the presence of a few honest and patriotic Nigerians who will do everything it takes to stand for the truth and maintain their integrity, some others lack moral uprightness and are drunk with the quest to acquire more wealth than they need. Some of these people who are privileged to serve in one capacity or the other either have character flaws and reputation deficiency. It is imperative to state that when people of questionable character are given the opportunity to occupy key positions, dishonesty and corrupt practices become the order of the day. There is however no gainsaying the fact that corruption is inimical to the growth and development of any society.

This section will x-ray a few public owned organizations that have had or currently have corruption allegations leveled against some of their officials and how these have largely affected their operations or denied them the opportunity of fully actualizing their objectives.

The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)

The States that make up the Niger Delta Region are: Akwa Ibom State, Delta State, Rivers State, Bayelsa State, Cross River State, Ondo state, Abia State, Imo State and Edo State. The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) was created by the Obasanjo led

administration in the year 2000 as an interventionist agency. The intent behind the creation of the commission was to address the development challenges of the region.

Unfortunately, NDDC has become a cash cow or at best can be described as a commission that feeds the interest of a few privileged ones. Development of the Niger Delta when juxtaposed with the flow of resources earmarked for the development of the region is a sham and nothing to write home about. The rot in NDDC is quite high. Brooks (2017: 128) submits that, “oil rich States have a history of warfare and endemic poverty”. Indigenous communities have been adversely affected by oil extraction, with destruction of local livelihoods and severe environmental pollution. (Ushie, 2013). Consequently, Aja [2007] opines that Niger Delta crisis is anchored on the logic that despite the vast wealth produced in the area, plus the negative impacts of the oil industry which largely affects the ecosystem of the region, the people remain poorer than the national average. According to Ushie (2013), enormous State largesse is being funneled into the Niger Delta, particularly through the amnesty programme.

However, these resources are not reaching the poor, marginalized communities that are in desperate need of help. Contracts awarded are not carried out with best international standards. Substandard and incomplete projects abound with the contractors sometimes getting their full payment upfront. Unfortunately, the citizens are almost voiceless and rarely challenge their leaders or hold them accountable. Citizens have great difficulty accessing information on the actual allocation and use of public revenues. They cannot easily hold their representatives accountable (HRW 2007).

State level corruption is even more endemic than federal, particularly in the oil producing states of the Niger Delta, with their huge inflows of revenue.

(Francis, Lapin, and Rossiasco, 2001). They further added that past and present State governors in the Niger Delta, and elsewhere in Nigeria, have not escaped the scrutiny of anti-corruption agencies as well. Worthy of note are the activities of some former Governors, Alamaieyeseigha Diepreye (Gov. of Bayelsa State, 1999–2005), James Ibori (Gov. of Delta State, 1999–2007), Lucky Igbinedion (Gov. of Edo State, 1999–2007), Orji Kalu (Gov. of Abia State, 1999–2007), etc (Francis, Lapin, and Rossiasco, 2001).

Recently, weighty allegations of financial recklessness in the NDDC came up again. The Minister of the Niger Delta Ministry, Sen. Godswill Akpabio and the former acting Managing Director of NDDC, Dr. Mrs Joy Nunieh came up with allegations and revelations that exposed certain misappropriations and acts of corruption in the NDDC. Consequently, the President ordered that a thorough investigation into the allegations of corruption rocking the NDDC be carried out. Consequently, the acting Managing Director of NDDC, Prof. Kemebradikumo Daniel Pondei, who took over from Dr. Mrs Joy Nunieh and all parties involved are to be investigated to ascertain the truth behind the whole saga of corruption and misappropriation of funds meant for the development of the Niger delta region.

It is imperative to note that the Niger Delta Region is very rich but unfortunately, has a high number of impoverished people within the region. Corruption however accounts for one of the major factors responsible for the underdevelopment, unemployment and poverty in the region.

Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) is the body leading the fight against economic and financial crimes in Nigeria. Unfortunately, some of the corruption

fighters are themselves found to be corrupt. Ibrahim Magu (EFCC Chairman) was in July 2020 arrested by operatives of the Department of State Services and the Nigeria Police Force and driven to the Presidential Villa to answer questions on alleged corruption against him. He was suspended from his position as chairman of the agency pending the completion of the investigation. His suspension follows an all too familiar trend of top bosses of the Nigerian anti-graft agency facing the axe in very questionable ways for alleged improprieties (Adeshokan, 2020). It is unfortunate to note that despite the purpose of the establishment of EFCC, the body does not fully fight corruption on the scale that is expected of it.

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is the commission vested with the power to conduct free, fair and credible elections in Nigeria into various positions of power. Unfortunately, most polls conducted have been marred by allegations of ballot stuffing, inflation of results, and election-related violence. It is quite worrisome that the confidence of the people in electing their leaders has been shifted from INEC to the law courts as dissatisfactions usually arise after most elections with the court deciding the fate of the aspirants. The corruption allegations often leveled against the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is quite worrisome. This has led to many agitating and calling for the overhaul and reform of the electoral system. The corruption in this area is so endemic that free, fair and credible elections can hardly be achieved except something is done about it as a matter of urgency. As seen in most of the elections previously conducted in Nigeria, most contestants are determined to rig the election in their favour, and it has been alleged that this is sometimes done in connivance with corrupt electoral officers. In fact, the struggle for power as seen with most Nigerian politicians is with the intention to acquire power by hook or crook basically because of the gains of political office. And where rigging is made impossible, violence, arson, kidnapping and murder of opponents are introduced into the electoral game (Ajayi, 1998).

Security Agencies

It is quite worrisome that despite the budgetary allocation to the security agencies, high security concerns still abound in Nigeria. Certainly, challenges such as illegal oil-bunkering and other criminal activities like banditry, herdsmen attacks, Boko-haram insurgency, sea piracy, pipeline vandalism and kidnapping to mention a few still exists in Nigeria and appears to be on the increase.

Following a plethora of corruption petitions, the Federal Government through its anti-corruption agencies ferociously beamed their searchlights on corruption starting with how the security money approved by former President Goodluck Jonathan's government for arms purchase was utilized. (Akpan and Eyo, 2018). The former National Security Adviser (NSA), Col. Sambo Dasuki (Rtd.) who was in charge had to undergo trial for the corruption charges leveled against him and other key personalities who were involved. According to Inienger, Orban and Emem, The sum of \$2.1 billion meant to procure arms to fight the menace of Boko Haram insurgency were diverted and shared among top politicians. In the arms purchase scandal alone, the EFCC has arrested and grilled over 20 persons. (Inienger, Orban and Emem, 2018:160).

It is quite unfortunate that sophisticated weapons which should have been acquired to strengthen and boost the efforts of security agencies are lacking due to the greed and corrupt

practices of key personalities responsible for the actualization of these goals. This has contributed in hampering the fight against various crimes in Nigeria.

Governance and Corruption

Official corruption is currently a highly topical issue in Nigeria. The experiences of leaders at various levels of government in Nigeria as it concerns corruption are a pathetic situation. In fact, one is tempted to equate governance with corruption. Most of the leaders, past and even present, either at the Federal, States or Local governments have either been alleged to be corrupt or mismanaged public funds meant for execution of projects that will better the standard of living of the people they are elected to serve. In fact, military and civilian administrations right from when Nigeria gained independence have performed in ways that show that most of them are selfish and corrupt. They embezzle and stash away huge sums of public funds in foreign accounts without remorse. Abacha's loot for instance, is being repatriated for many years back into Nigeria and it seems like an unending flow.

Mike Murdock once said that 'when the purpose of a thing is not known, abuse is inevitable'. Many Nigerian leaders operate as if they have lost touch with their purpose of leadership thereby leading to reckless use of power to amass wealth at the detriment of the development of the country. Governance at any level is associated with introducing policies that will create positive changes in the lives and welfare of the people as well as providing security for the people. Unfortunately, the reverse is the case as leaders often concern themselves more with things that are often too frivolous that make little meaning to the less privileged in society. Little wonder Lenin opines that "the State is nothing other than the special committee for managing the common affairs of the bourgeoisie" (Nna, 2004, p.37). Furthermore, "those who are economically powerful use their economic power to acquire political power and thus attain control positions to make laws and policies which promote, project and protect their own class interest, most often against the interest of the working class." (Nna, 2004, p.37).

The activities of most government officials are not open and transparent but rather shrouded in secrecy. Governance is carried out in ways that oftentimes relegate the people to the background giving room for all manner of manipulations and exploitations. The welfare of the people is usually not given the needed attention. Even when funds are earmarked for projects, those projects are usually executed in a shoddy manner or even abandoned. The generality of the people are forced to bear the brunt of the irresponsibility and nonchalant attitude of the corrupt officials whose concern basically lies in a swollen pocket. Despite the enormous resources Nigeria is blessed with, poverty keeps rising with only a few living in comfort.

The high cost of governance in Nigeria caused by self-centered politicians who perceive political positions as a ladder to amassing wealth and greatness. Humongous resources are usually set aside in the name of various allowances. The attractions and glamour that comes with political offices especially in Nigeria is partly the reason why politics is a do or die affair in Nigeria. Also the identification of certain offices as 'juicy offices' attracts people with over bloated appetite for wealth to desire such offices because of the benefits that accrue to such offices.

President Buhari during his campaign promised to address major areas needing attention if given the opportunity to rule. They include revamping the economy, improving the security of the nation and taking up the fight against corruption. Although Buhari has been making efforts to fight corruption, the endemic character of corruption in Nigeria makes some commentators skeptical about the potential endurance and success of his government's anti-corruption campaign stand as they adjudge it to be lopsided and unbalanced. Buhari has been accused severally of using his position to target political opponents in his anti-corruption fight. Most African countries are notorious for bad leadership and corruption.

These two basic factors account for the continuous underdevelopment in Africa despite many years of political independence. For instance, recently, in August 2020, a coup was staged in Mali leading to the forceful resignation of the President, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, who had been in power since 2013. There had been protests in Mali before the eventual evasion of the army leading to the detainment and consequent resignation of the President. Many Malians were dissatisfied with Keita's government as there were cases of a bad economy, corruption and a list of other challenges which the people of Mali were tired of and protested against. This scenario paints a picture of the experiences in most parts of Africa. The narrative in Africa has been that of high levels of corruption, bad leadership, insecurity to mention a few with the military taking advantage of these challenges to forcefully come into power.

Corruption and its Implication for Emerging Democracies: The Nigerian Experience

The endless list of corrupt cases ravaging virtually every sector of the nation has dealt a big blow to the desire and pursuit of development in its entirety and largely contributes to a number of challenges being faced in the country. In fact, corruption, like the biblical story of Goliath, is that giant that has oppressed Nigeria and largely contributed to the deprivation, suffering, hardship, oppression, suppression and dehumanization of many Nigerians. People in leadership positions who have sworn to protect the interest of the generality of the people unfortunately take advantage of their leadership platform to amass, embezzle and misappropriate funds meant for development, channeling public resources for personal gratification. Undoubtedly, politics is today an attractive and a lucrative venture especially in Nigeria. It is an obvious fact that most people, especially in developing countries, tend to see politics and power as a means for wealth acquisition and accumulation and not necessarily for service. In fact, Ugwuja, (2016) noted that successive governments have in many ways claimed to fight corruption, unfortunately, each has always come out worse than the former in terms of matters concerning corruption rating.

The ripple effects of corruption are innumerable. For instance, corruption heightens inequality in many societies as those who are privileged to serve in various capacities often take advantage of such positions to have a share of the national cake. Brooks (2017:189) affirms when he states that, "The cake might be getting bigger but was everyone's size increasing?" He further added that inequality abounds in many African economies resulting in the poorest receiving little benefit from the national, on the level of GDP growth, which was concentrated in the hands of a few elites.(Brooks, 2017). Apart from inequality, poverty, unemployment, insecurity etc are partly products of some ripple effects of corruption. A clear-cut correlation exists between corruption and economic growth, which calls for stringent measures to be taken so as to avoid impaired development of the affected country (Inienger, Orban and Emem, 2018).

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Many sectors still suffer challenges in the area of development. As much as lack of funds is sometimes given as the reason for these challenges, corruption is another fundamental factor hindering the development in some of these sectors as it leads to retrogression rather than progression. Lysias and Newman (2015) opine that a country could be considered to be developed to the extent at which every sector of its economy, or national life reflects steady, yet progressive growth.

Unfortunately, despite the huge number of allegations leveled against many government officials, only a few are tried and prosecuted while the cases of so many others who may best be described as 'sacred cows' are swept underneath the carpet with little or nothing being heard about such 'special cases'. In fact, while the wrath of the law descends on a few, the same law seems to shield others and favour them. Many critics allege that the fight against corruption can become politically selective by targeting opponents or protecting friends of the administration (Francis, Lapin, and Rossiasco, 2001).

Corruption is such a strange bedfellow that every Nigerian irrespective of class, status, gender, political affiliation, religious or cultural inclination etc must rise up to resist and condemn it in the strongest terms possible and insistently demand accountability especially from those in positions of authority. In fact, it is important to pass a bill mandating all public office holders to ensure that every budgetary allocation made by all levels of government, ministry and department must be made public. Also that the public will know the plans of the government and consequently hold them accountable.

Credit can however be given to the corruption fighting agency for some of the successes so far recorded in the fight against corruption. There are lists of those prosecuted for corruption related cases. For instance, Olabulo and Gbenga-Ogundare (2011) noted that the EFCC chair, Farida Waziri reported in 2011 that the commission had recorded over 600 convictions and recovered \$12 billion.

The Corruption Perception Index (CPI) published annually by Transparency International (T.I) has often come out with a report of how highly corrupt Nigeria is. This unfortunately paints the country in bad light and is capable of negatively affecting investment in the country. This calls for an urgent need to change the narrative. When there is no security and confidence in a system, investors will feel it is unsafe and unwise to invest in such a system as they will most likely have fears about the safety of their investment.

Conclusion

Nigeria as a nation has always been faced with the challenge of bad leaders who are greedy and self-centered and oftentimes takes advantage of available opportunity to loot and amass public funds for private gains. The attitude of those in positions of authority who see their assignment as an opportunity to share the "national cake". This is at the expense of the people they claim to represent which equally affects the realization of the objectives of developmental policies and programmes. Corruption is perpetuated with impunity not taking consideration of the citizenry and their welfare. For any meaningful and impressive development to be achieved, corruption must be tackled because it is not just how rich a country is, but how well and equitable the meager or abundant resources are distributed and judiciously utilized. Appropriate sanctions must be meted out to whoever is found to be corrupt while the reward system must be beefed up or strengthened to encourage those found to have

exhibited exemplary lifestyles especially at work places and elsewhere. Also, greater political transparency and accountability must be encouraged so as to remove secrecy under which corruption thrives.

Recommendations

Allegations of financial recklessness and corruption of any form should be promptly investigated without interference. The States and Federal Governments should develop the political will to prosecute individuals and corporate organizations that are tried and found to be guilty of corruption allegations. Those found to be corrupt must step aside from their positions to allow for fair, credible and transparent investigations. If they are found culpable, they must be made to face the wrath of the law. This will serve as a deterrent to others. The Federal government of Nigeria should therefore not politicize the clean-up of the system as regards the fight against corruption. Rather, the fight against corruption which must be done with all sense of honesty and sincerity, devoid of politics and ulterior motives and with a resolution to ensure a holistic and strategic fight against the anti-development monster.

Consequently, periodic auditing of government agencies must be carried out to ascertain their performances and keep a constant check on their activities.

Attitudinal change by both the leaders and the followers is a necessary factor in having a better and developed nation. Public positions should be seen as opportunity for service and not an opportunity to share the “national cake”. There should also be the introduction of a reward system for honesty and transparency while naming, shaming and appropriate sanctions should be adopted for corrupt officials found guilty.

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