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## Anti-Corruption Drive and Attainment of Sustainable Economy in Nigeria

**Oladepo Kazeem Adebowale**

Senior Lecturer, Department of Local Government and Development Studies,  
The Polytechnic Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

**Sanni Olukayode Adekunle**

Lecturer, Department of Local Government and Development Studies,  
The Polytechnic Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

### **Abstract:**

*Several attempts by scholars, global policy makers and institutions to understand the cause(s) and continuous prevalence of economic crisis in Nigeria identified corruption as the most critical factor. Though corruption is a global scourge, Nigeria however appears to have suffered the most from the phenomenon where political leaders are seen to be pathologically corrupt. The inauguration of Muhammed Buhari Administration heralded new hopes and expectations for his anti-corruption drive after taking office on 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2015. There is a strong believe that the administration would end all forms of corrupt practices and the new order he established would promote the needed economic development in Nigeria. Surprisingly, to date, Nigeria experience still present a vastly contrasting scenario, the country's public administration has been characterized by massive corruption while the Nigeria system seems to have been hijacked by the merchants and political barons marginalizing the people and steadily sliding the Nigeria economy on the part of collapse. With heavy reliance on secondary data derived from library search, archival records, government records and internet search, the paper will evaluate the impact of anti-corruption drive on the attainment of sustainable economy in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Anti-corruption, drive, attainment and sustainable economy

### **1. Introduction**

Corruption has been identified as a cankerworm and the major obstacle to the achievement of sustainable economic development in Nigeria (Igbuzor, 2008). Presently, corruption is acknowledged by many analysts as pervasive, endemic and systemic; a social menace that has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigeria polity (Obadan, 2001; El-Rufai, 2003; Madichue, 2005; Odekunle, 20006; Omotola 2007, Obasanjo; 2009 and Obeidi 2012). Given this fact, the challenges of social and economic development in Nigeria have remained in the front burner of development discourse, it is therefore not a mere wish to note that the popular demand for political change in Nigeria have much to do with widespread and profound dissatisfaction with deteriorating economic conditions driven by massive corruption.

According to UNDP (2004) and World Bank (2006) corruption is the process of abuse of public office for private gain. This has become so blatant and widespread in Nigeria that it appears as if corrupt practices have been legalized as a state policy (Imohe (2005). This realism explains the fact that massive corruption, absence of political openness, transparency, accountability holds sway in the polity at all levels in Nigeria, while basic services meant for the development of the country are eroded couple with huge poverty and inequality. In effect, a close look at the political structure and process of the country left much to be desired, there has been continuous prevalence of economic crisis such that the basis of social contract for which Nigeria state was established has completely eroded to what Mederd (1982) referred to as the production of patrimonial bourgeoisie. Despite that Nigeria is the sixth largest producer of natural gas and crude oil in the world, 112 million of Nigeria estimated 160 million populations lived below the poverty line (NBS 2014). The inauguration of Muhammed Buhari, Administration heralded new hopes and expectations for his anti-corruption drive after taking office on 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2015. There was a strong believe that the administration would end all forms of corrupt practices and the new order he established would promote the needed development. Surprisingly, to date, Nigeria experience still present a vastly contrasting scenario, the country's public administration has been characterised by massive corruption while the Nigeria system seems to have been hijacked by what Agbaje and Adejumobi (2006) identified as the merchants and political barons marginalizing the people and steadily sliding the Nigeria economic development on the part of what Jega (2006) referred to as systemic collapse. Therebasing of the Nigerian economy that eventually created Nigeria to be the largest economy in Africa has been condemned byeconomic experts.This is because Nigeria being the largest economy in Africa does not translate to the well-being of her citizens. Justas the Nigerian federal

government was celebrating the country for being the largest economy in Africa; the World Bank came up with a damning finding of fact that Nigeria is the third countries in the world that has the highest number of extremely poor people. The attendant implication of this misnomer is the debilitating effect of corruption in the country. This is evident in poor environmental state of the Nigeria, infrastructural decay, unimaginable as depicted in dilapidated roads, epileptic power supply, lack of access to portable water, poor health care services, poor sanitation, massive poverty, hunger, malnutrition and unemployment. The focus of the various administrations in Nigeria therefore has led to the adoption of strategies, programmes and establishment of agencies to tackle the problem of corruption and the attendant poor service delivery in Nigeria. Despite several measures by various administrations over the years to fight corruption, the issue of corruption has continued to recur. Why are these strategies not winning the war against corruption? This paper examines the attempts to address corruption against the drive for the attainment of sustainable economy development in Nigeria.

### *1.1. Conceptual Clarifications*

There are divergent approaches to conceptualizing corruption which is the antithesis of anti-corruption; this paper therefore seeks to examine the concept of corruption to facilitate a good understanding of the concept of anti-corruption.

### *1.2. Corruption*

The concept of corruption means different thing to different people depending on the individual's cultural background, discipline and political leaning (Gyimah, 2002). However, the manner in which corruption is defined ends up The State in Contemporary Nigeria: Issues, Perspectives and Challenges determining what gets modelled and measured (Jain, 2001). It is an act in which the power of the public office is used for personal gain in the manner that contravenes the rules of the game (Jain, 2001). Given its impact on the society, Mulinge and Lesetedi (2002:23) sees corruption in the following perspective: corruption is an antisocial behaviour by an individual or social group which confers unjust or fraudulent benefits on its perpetrators, is inconsistent with the established legal norms and prevailing moral ethos of the land and is likely to subvert or diminish the capacity of the legitimate authorities to provide fully for the material and spiritual wellbeing of all manners of society in a just and equitable manner. Corruption from this perspective is seen as 'outright theft, embezzlement of funds or other misappropriation of state property, nepotism and the granting of favour to personal acquaintances and the abuse of the public authority to exact payments.

The literature is replete with varies definitions of corruption. One of the widely cited definitions is that preferred by Nye (1978) in which corruption forms the formal duties of public role because of private-regarding (personal, close family, private clique) peculiarly or status gain or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private regarding behaviors. To Nye, corruption is associated with rule-bending or even absolute disregard and lack of forth in rule, etiquette and moral standards. Corruption is therefore link with cheating, indiscipline and the abuse of power and privileges which promotes greet and grafts, inefficacy and waste of natural resources, the decay and inertial of institution and social functionaries, a breakdown of law and order and kills initiatives and introduces instability.

The World Bank (1997) defined corruption as the abuse of public office for private gain. This includes when public officials accept, solicit or extort bribes to subvert or circumvent public policies for competitive advantage and profit. Similarly, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2004) sees corruption as the misuse of public power or authority for private benefit-through bribery, extortion, influence peddling, nepotism, fraud, speed money or embezzlement.

To transparency international (IT) (2002) corruption is an inappropriate or illegal behavior of the public sector officials (political or public officer) by misusing the entrusted power for private gain of the person or related people. It is usually an activity that is outside of constitution government process, which involved the sales of publicly produced goods and services by government employees form payment or bribes not sanctioned by the government. To this end, corruption is a form of rent-seeking enterprise or activity, which is illegal, or an unauthorized transfer of money from one person to another.

To Yale professor, Ackerman (1998), corruption is an economics and private sector. Corruption according to the professor is evidence when institution established to regulate the interrelationship between the citizen and the state is used for personal enrichment and provision of benefits to the corrupt and underserved.

Olopoenia (1989) remarks, all manifestations of corruption are motivated by the desire to use the instrumentality of office for private regarding gains for the benefits of official, his relations, ethnic group or friends at the expense of general good.

Despite the never-ending debate on its definition, it can be concluded that corruption reflects the abuse of power and public trust for direct or indirect personal aggrandizement which in effects debase the people, culture and values of the society.

## **2. Anti-corruption Strategies in Nigeria**

In a bid of turning Nigeria into a corruption-free country, the nation has experimented with many strategies, programmes and policies designed to combat corruption in the country. Some of these include the criminal code: The Penal Code (applicable in the North); The criminal justice (Miscellaneous Provisions) Decree 1996; The Corruption Practices, Decree 1975, which established the Corrupt Practice Investigation Bureau; The ethical Revolution of President Shehu Shagari; The War Against Indiscipline (W.A.I) of Buhari/Idiagbon; Mass Mobilization for Social Justice, Self-Reliance and Economic Review (MAMSER) by General Babangida; The code of conduct Bureau and Tribunal Act (Cap 56, Law of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990); The Recovery of Public property Special Military Tribunal Act (Cap. 387, Law of the

Federation of Nigeria) as amended in 1991; The War Against indiscipline and Corruption of Late Gen. Sani Abacha; The Failed Banks Recovery of Debts and Financial Malpractices in Banks, Decree 1994 as amended in 1999; The Recovery of Public Property Special Military Tribunal Act, Cap. 389, laws of the Federation of Nigeria 1990, as amended in 1999 by Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar, Advance fee Fraud (419) and Fraud related offences Act of 1995, Prosecution and conviction of high ranking administration officials, tracing, seizing and confiscation of all proceeds of crime, while the former president Olusegun Obasanjo in 2000 instituted an anti-corruption commission under the independent corrupt practices related offences Act of 2000, established the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC). Other institutional approaches include; the establishment of the budget monitoring and price intelligence unit (BMPIU), otherwise known as 'Due process' and monthly publication of distributive revenue from the Federal Account to different tiers of government and many others.

Paradoxically, all these remedial measures merely operated at a level of mere symbolism since those who are waging the corruption war are themselves corrupt. The reason is the compromised sincerity of the policy makers and those entrusted with its enforcement and thus, it was not surprising that despite the plethora of laws, decrees and strategies, corruption still remains the bane of the Nigerian society which graduated from being an aberration into a national norm.

### 3. Anti-Corruption Drive and Attainment of Sustainable Economy in Nigeria

The inauguration of Muhammed Buhari Administration in Nigeria heralded new hopes and expectations for his anti-corruption drive after taking office on 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2015. This was clearly indicated in his inaugural speech when he said, 'I belong to everybody and I belong to nobody'. Immediately, he started by arresting Col Dasuki (rtd) the then National Security Adviser of President Jonathan. Dasuki's accomplices that are of the opposition party, People's Democratic Party (PDP) and those in the military were arrested and charged to court by Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) over the massive scam in weapons and defence procurements that led to the misuse of three trillion naira defence budget since 2011 under the guise of fighting the notorious Boko Haram menace (Izeze, 2015; Campuswaka 2015).

The Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) investigation where the former minister of petroleum Mrs Diezani Alison-Madueke was asked to give holistic account of her stewardship. The investigation exposed several oil deals committed in the NNPC. Among these are: The \$2.2 billion illegal withdrawal from Excess Crude Oil Account of which \$1 billion supposedly approved by the then President Jonathan to fund his re-election campaign without the knowledge of National Economic Council, the investigation of the discovered \$11.6 billion Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) dividend payments that is missing, the non-remittance of \$11.63 billion paid to NNPC on crude swaps due to subsidy and domestic crude allocation that was not remitted to the federation account from 2005 to 2012, the stealing of sixty million barrels of oil valued at \$13.7 billion under the watch of NNPC from 2009 to 2012 (Izeze, 2015), the invasions of tax by Oil Prospecting Licenses (OPL) and Oil Mining Licenses (OML) (Daily Sun 2016). Other cases investigated outside NNPC were diversion of 60% of \$1 billion foreign loan obtained by the Federal Ministry of Finance from the Chinese (Izeze (2015), diversion and mismanagement of \$2.2 million meant for vaccination of children (Siteadmin 2014), diversion of N1.9 billion Nigeria naira being payment for Ebola fight (Abiodun 2015). Federal Ministry of Finance hurried payment of \$2.2 million to Federal Ministry of Health contractor in disputed invoices (Punch 2015), the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) scam of N27 billion Nigeria naira contract award (Premium Times 2015), the Police Service Commission scam investigation of N150 million Nigerian Naira (Premium Times 2015), the security contracts of the militants on oil and gas pipeline (Africa Oil and Gas Report 2016), the alleged down payment of N50 billion Nigeria naira for the N1 trillion fine slammed on MTN by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) for a breach of the nations laws on Subscriber Identification Module (SIM) registration which was allegedly diverted by government agencies involved (Daily Sun 2016).

Broadly speaking, there have been attempts by the administration of President Buhari to investigate several cases of corruption during President Goodluck Jonathan's administration. However, some critics of Buhari's anti-corruption war have accused him of not being sincere and holistic in the fight against corruption as virtually all the people and corporate organizations investigated are all of the opposition party - PDP, and his perceived enemies. Worse off, to them, none of the cases so far investigated and charged to court has been clinically concluded. This school of thought is also of the opinion that President Buhari has no moral pedigree to fight corruption because he, Buhari is corrupt. Cases such as the following were cited to drag home their points: Buhari as Minister of Petroleum: Two Hundred and Eighty Billion United States of America Dollar (\$2.8b) Oil Money was unaccounted for in 1977 under the watch of Buhari as the Petroleum Minister that led to the then Military Head of State Lt. Gen Obasanjo to set up a 'crude oil sales tribunal' to investigate the operations of the then Nigeria National Oil Company (NNOC) now known as Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). The tribunal found out that in three years, the then NNOC has failed to collect its equity share of oil produced by Shell, Mobil and Gulf, which amount to \$2.8b USD (www.thecable.nigerianmonitor.com), Buhari as Military Head of State: The story of the fifty three (53) suitcases 'filled with cash' that his Aide-de-Camp (ADC) then Major Mustapha Jokolo and his soldiers forcefully passed through Muritala Mohammed Airport (MMA) Lagos without security check after Gen Buhari as the Military Head of State announced a change of Nigeria currency and gave an order that all luggage entering or leaving the country borders, seaports and airports should be searched to ensure no currency was being smuggled. In this case, there seemed to be one rule for all and another for a privileged few as the 53 suitcases forcefully passed through without security checking. According to Atiku Abubakar, Nigeria's Fourth Republic Vice President and the Controller of Customs as at the time of this incident at MMA Lagos, 'he was pressurized by Buhari's government to deny that the smuggling didn't take place, but he refused and told the truth' (therainbowonline.net). Buhari as Petroleum Trust Fund Chairman (PTF): Mismanagement of Twenty-Five Billion Seven Hundred and Fifty-Eight Million Five Hundred and Thirty-two Thousand

Four Hundred and Forty-Eight Naira (N25,758,532.448). On July 7th 1999, the then President Obasanjo instituted Petroleum (Special) Trust Fund Interim Report and the report revealed that the committee had advised President Obasanjo to set up a high powered judicial panel to recover the huge public fund and to take necessary action against any officer, consultant or contractor such as the Afri-Project Consortium (APC), a company contracted by the Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF) as management and project consultant that the report indicated that the sum of N25,758,532.448 was mismanaged when Buhari was the Chairman ([www.naij.com](http://www.naij.com)), Buhari's Certificate Forgery: Nwokocha-Ahaaiwe, an Abuja legal practitioner has charged President Buhari to court for an alleged certificate forgery. He alleged that President Buhari is unqualified to aspire to the office of the President of Federal Republic of Nigeria because President Buhari did not sit for Cambridge West African School Certificate (WASC) in 1961 as claimed. However, President Buhari's hiring of the services of twenty three best Senior Advocates of Nigeria (SAN) on this certificate forgery allegation is a proof according to his critics on this subject that indeed, President Buhari has no Cambridge West African School Certificate (WASC) as he claimed thus, has no morality to fight corruption ([www.post-nigeria.com](http://www.post-nigeria.com)), President Buhari Harboring Corrupt Ministers in His Cabinet: The Lagos State chapter of People's Democratic Party (PDP) has faulted the claims by President Buhari that his Ministers are not corrupt. According to the party, President Buhari was obviously shielding some of his corrupt Ministers because of their financial contributions to his election. They accused President Buhari of pretending to be corruption-free, stating that he should make himself available for live question and answer if indeed he was very confident none of his Ministers are corrupt ([www.informationng.com](http://www.informationng.com)).

The confessional statement made by Hon Abdulmumin of APC, Former Chairman of Appropriation Committee representing the people of Kiru-Bebeji Federal Constituency of Kano State in a press conference after being relieved of his position by his colleagues, stated categorically how the 'House of Representative is a den of systemic corruption', (Punch 2016). To further proof this, Hon Abdulmumin listed in the first release how they shared Nigeria money. He confessed in the following order starting with him: Hon Abdulmumini Jubrin got N650 million, speaker Yakubu Dogara got N1.5 billion, his deputy Yusuf Lasun got N800 million, house majority leader Femi Gbajabiamila got N1.2 billion, deputy majority leader Buba Jubrin got N1.2 billion, house whip Alhassan Ado Doguwa got N1.2 billion, deputy house whip got N700 million, house minority leader Leo Ogor got N1.2 billion, deputy minority leader Onyema got N800 million, minority whip got N700 million, deputy minority whip N700 million, and he concluded by saying that he has documents to back up all these. This neo overt concept of President Buhari's ruling party-APC bigwigs' accusations of each other on corruption in recent time and yet no invitation or arrest has been made by the anti-graft agencies, indeed, shows that Buhari's anti-corruption war is one rule for all and another for the privileged few. Thus, this brings us to the questions being asked covertly and overtly by Nigerians, if President Buhari is sincere in his fight against corruption or if the fight against corruption is a vendetta, a reality or an illusion? Presently, Nigerians optimism in Muhammed Buhari's administration to curb corruption in the country have fell short of expectations and currently being substituted with political despaired and skepticism. To this extent, 4 years into the Buhari's administration, corruption is still more visible in the country and has led to governance that has failed to deliver the much promised divided of democracy not to talk of attaining sustainable economic development in Nigeria.

#### 4. Conclusion

It has been observed in this paper that corruption is thriving in Nigeria despite the government's anti-corruption drive and its effects on the nation's economic development are numerous and devastating. It has damaged the image of the country to the extent that Nigeria is tagged as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. This has discouraged foreign investors and caused inflation and the depreciation of our currency. On a final note, the fight against corruption in Nigeria by the Buhari administration is being encouraging indeed; but it should be holistic and transparent.

#### 5. Recommendations

- The war against corruption should be holistic and transparent. Nigeria requires good and virtuous leaders who are men of proven integrity. Leaders who are disciplined, honest and trustworthy.
- The agencies of the anti-graft should ensure the immediate prosecution of people who are involved in corrupt practices. There should be no sacred cows and prosecution should not be on 'one rule for all and another for the privileged few'.
- The government should fund the anti-graft agencies adequately so that they can carry out the processes of prosecuting culprits without hindrances.
- The income of every public official should be thoroughly scrutinized by the code of conduct Bureau before and after office to avoid falsification of claims.
- There should be a special court for prosecuting people involved in corruption charges. This will reduce the cumbersome and delayed processes of the conventional court.
- Capital punishment should be clearly spelt out for offenders as it is obtained in other developed countries. Possibly death or life imprisonment should be meted as in the case of China and most Asian countries.
- The anti-graft staffs and the Nigerian police officers should be trained and equipped to carry out investigations without compromise.
- The public servants should be well remunerated and motivated with improved staff welfare packages to have job satisfaction.
- The Federal Government should jail past corrupt leaders to serve as deterrence to others. This will infuse fear in the system and reduce the act and science of corruption in Nigerian government and politics.



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