

## CIVIL SOCIETY AND ANTI-CORRUPTION CRUSADE IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC

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### ABSTRACT

This paper is a contribution to the debate on the role of civil society in the war against corruption in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. It argued that corruption has been one of the worst problems, hindering Nigeria's socio-economic and political advancement, efforts by the successive regime to fight the scourge since the country got her flag independence did not yield the desired result. Moreover, the paper argued further that anti-corruption crusades do not belong to the sphere of government, alone and that civil society organizations were not left behind in the struggle; they have initiated a lot of programs geared towards curbing corruption since the country returned to civil rule in May 1999. They have recorded some level of success through whistle blowing, watch dogs, promotion of awareness on the devastating effect of corruption, formation of anti-corruption clubs in schools, etc. However, in spite of these commendable roles of civil society in the fight against corruption in Nigeria, they are faced with many challenges, such as lack of access to valid information, finance, sentiment, and corruption among others. The paper infers that for the anti-graft war to succeed in the country, every Nigerian must see corruption as a national problem, which must be confronted before the economic and social progress of Nigeria can reach its full maturity.

**Keywords:** Corruption; Civil Society; Anti-corruption; Crusade; Fourth Republic

### INTRODUCTION

It is now history that eleven years ago, Nigeria returned to multiparty democracy with all the expectations that the fruit of democratic governance would be brought to bear on the economy, that the country would witness a greater respect for civil and political liberties, and, above all, the institutionalization of accountability and transparency in governance. However, the period since 1999 has witnessed an increased number of ethno-religious violence, leading to social, economic, and political misfortunes. The violence not only posed serious obstacles to the enhancement of democratic ethos and values, but also constituted a threat to the viability of Nigerian nationhood and governance. In spite of her human and natural resource endowments, the majority of Nigerians still lives in abject poverty. Public institutions are ill equipped and service delivery is poor. The theft of public funds has resulted in serious chaos. Nigeria's treasury looters and their allies are getting richer, while the masses are wallowing in abject poverty. In the public sector, a band of short-sighted and greedy elite, both military and civilian, have, within a decade, created, nurtured, and perpetuated the conversion of public treasury and national wealth for exceeding private uses. These elite eschewed transparency and abhorred rules and regulations, broken laws, violated due processes, and crudely stole from the public coffers (Jega, 2009).

Nowadays, many “big men” are awarded with traditional titles, such as Chiefs, honorary doctorate degrees, National Merit Awards, among others, for building schools, town halls, hostels, clinics, etc. with stolen money, without anyone asking the question where the money came from (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2003). In recent times, many development scholars and public affairs commentators have concluded that the socio-political and economic woes of Nigeria are rooted in corruption. In an opinion poll conducted by The Guardian Newspaper in 2007, 70% of the Nigerian respondents picked corruption as one of the worst problems hindering the nation’s advancement (Igbuzor, Otive 2008). In spite of the exposure in the media and public outrage over scandal perpetrated by public officials, few officials were investigated or charged for their offences. The absence of accountability for the misuse of public funds and fruitless attempts to hold the government responsible for poor performance has led to an increase in public distrust towards the government’s institutions and elected officials. Sadly, the scarce resources meant for the development of the people and their environment are frittered into private pockets, slowing down the overall development and reinforcing the poverty circle. This development has exposed the country to ridicule before the international community. Today, for much of the international press and world public opinion, Nigeria is the *bête noire*, or the *enfant terrible*, of Africa. Tales of violence, extortion, and other criminal acts abound in conversation about Nigeria around the world (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2002).

Although the governing elites at all levels bemoaned these developments, the efforts to arrest the ugly situation through various policies and programs were largely ineffective and often overshadowed by the officials’ pursuit of personal interests. For instance, there have been agencies established to fight corruption and laws that condemn bribery, fraud, embezzlement, kickbacks, extortion, forgery, misappropriation of funds, nepotism, and other forms of corruption, yet the political will to implement these laws has been lacking. Moreover, the daunting task of fighting corruption was not entrusted to government, alone. The civil society community has been at the vanguard of the struggle for enthrone accountability and responsiveness in governance and subjecting the action and inactions of the public office-holder to public scrutiny. Few examples include the exposure of the former speaker of the Federal House of Representatives, Alhaji Salisu Buhari, by The News Magazine, of certificate forgery and perjury in the early life of the current fourth republic. Another scandalous and equally corrupt story blown open by the media was the questionable past of the ousted former Senate President, late Evans Enwerem, which should not give him the privilege of becoming a number three man in the polity (Ojo, 2001). Similarly, the N268 million contract scandals that led to the removal of the first female speaker of the Federal House of Representatives, Patricia Etteh, were exposed by the press. It is within this context that civil society becomes central in the fight against corruption. The questions are what role has civil society played or is playing in the fight against corruption in the present dispensation in Nigeria? What are the challenges confronting civil society in its quest to eradicate corruption in Nigeria? How may the roles be enhanced? This article attempts to provide answer to these and other related questions.

### **CIVIL SOCIETY AND ANTI-CORRUPTION CRUSADE: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS**

Before delving into the analyses of the interface between the civil society and anti-corruption crusade, it is pertinent to specify some conceptual definitions. This is because the primary requirement for discussing anything is to understand, first and foremost, the actual thing that is being talk about. The three concepts, civil society, corruption, and anti-corruption

crusades, are well known and widely used, but it is necessary to define them within the context of this paper. This becomes imperative because the concepts may have both cultural and ideological contextualization.

Despite the wide and the various uses to which it is put, the concept of civil society has not lent itself to a universally accepted definition. Different writers have explored the complexity of the concept, showing different dimensions of civil society. In the words of Robert Fattouh, Jr. (1992), “civil society is the private sphere of material, cultural, and political activities resisting the incursions of the state”. In its general and provisional configuration, civil society represents a counterweight to state power and thus serves as critical agents of transparency and accountability. Larry Diamond (1999) defined civil society as the realm of organized social life that is open, voluntary, self-generating, at least partially self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules. In his words, civil society is distinct from society in that it involves the citizens acting collectively in a public realm (Diamond, 1999). For Eghosa Osaghae, three key elements are important in the definition or conceptualization of civil society: autonomy from the state, public character (setting a normative order for the state), and furtherance of a common good. Grassroots social movements, which draw their strength from solidarity and the struggle against oppression, are parts and parcels of civil society (Osaghae, 1997, cited in Egwu, 2008).

There is an implicit, though important, assumption that is derived from the liberal tradition, which makes a distinction between the political and civil spheres. While the former is the sphere associated with the struggle for power, the latter is the source of mandate for those in the political sphere to govern. In other words ‘civil’ society is constituted by boundaries that mark it ‘political’ society (Egwu, 2008). On the part of Bratton (1992), civil society refers to the emergence of new patterns of political participation outside of the formal state structures and one party system. In the same vein, Dwayne (1992) viewed civil society as an all encompassing term that refers to social phenomenon putatively beyond the formal state structure, but necessarily free of all contact with the state.

It needs to be pointed out that civil society encompasses a vast array of organizations, which are formal and informal in character. These include: economic; cultural; informational and educational; interest based; developmental; civic-seeking in non-partisan fashion to improve political system; and make it more democratic through ...anti-corruption efforts (Ojo, 1997) by promoting transparency and accountability. The primary functions and significant of civil society is that it provides a platform for the citizens “to express their interests, passions, preferences and ideas, to exchange information, to achieve collective goals, to make demands on the state, and to hold the state officials accountable (Roninger, 1994). However, it is important to recognize that the different groups that constitute civil society do not have to equal political and economic leverage that may be deployed to influencing the behavior, policies, and actions of government. The power of the organization is related to the materials resources they control, size, class, and location of their membership (Alemika, 2000).

The concept of corruption is a familiar concept, but it is not easy to define. It has been defined in many societies in relation to the culture or prescribed way of people’s social life. While some view corruption in terms of illegal acquisition of material things, others tend to stretch it further by bringing in social and moral values (Metiboba, 1999). However, within the social

perspective, Odekunle (1986) defines corruption as asking, giving, of gift, or favor in pervasion or the performance of an illegitimate task; boarding, collusive price-fixing, smuggling, transfer pricing, inflation of prices, election rigging, and illegal arrest for harassment or intimidation, purposes, conversion of other persons money, or property to indirect personal use. Similarly, El-Rufai (2003) viewed corruption as covering a wide range of social misconducts, including fraud, extortion, embezzlement, bribery, nepotism, influence peddling, bestowing of favor to friends, rigging of elections, abuse of public property, the leaking of a government secret, and sale of expired and defective goods, such as drugs, food, and electronic and spare parts to the public, etc. These definitions bring light to the extent to which corrupt practices are indulged and perpetrated. They further revealed the degree at which aiding and abetting could breed and nurture corruption.

Furthermore, Akinyemi (2004) defined corruption as the acquisition of that which one (as a member of society, not public official alone) is not entitle to. Bolaji, on his part, sees corruption as being synonymous with bribery which may come inform of kind gesture or giving and taking of money(in kind and money giving and taking); nepotism, cheating, and deception, as well as undue influence (Bolaji, 1970, cited in Ojo, 2001). In the same vein, Higgins sees corruption as stealing public funds, receiving bribes unjustly, seeking gifts, money, or advantages other than the lawful salary for performance of public duties (cited in Ojo, 2001). This definition viewed corruption within the context of the public sector. Corruption should be broadened to include the private sector because, whether private or public sector, corruption mars the potentials of nation's greatness. However, for the purpose of analysis in this paper, corruption is viewed as inducing someone by gifts, promises, or persuasion to act against his /her conscience or duty, or the act of letting oneself be induced.

## **TYPES OF CORRUPTION**

Corruption has many types. These include: political; economic; bureaucratic; judicial; and moral corruption.

Political corruption involves using political power to manipulate the rules of events in the society. Two main areas in which political corruption manifest include activities connected with election and succession and the manipulation of people and rules/tradition in order to retain power and/or office. Political positions are scarce and the prizes of the office are very high. Hence, the competition for such resources-positions involves every possible extra-legal means through corruption in order to overcome obstacles and opposition.

Economic corruption is very common in the business and economic world. Businessmen and entrepreneurs dislike the obstacles to profit-making and, therefore, use corrupt means to pervert the normal institutional regulations to hasten or shorten the procedures, or draw attention to their outstanding applications, vouchers, bills, or the like.

Bureaucratic corruption involves buying favors from bureaucrats who formulate and administer the government's socio-economic and political policies. The areas that are chiefly involved are the acquisition of foreign exchange, import licenses, industrial establishment, and avoidance of taxes, among others.

Judicial corruption is when the police and judiciary play a vital role in the social structure. Notably in this regard include the use of wealth to secure police attention and bails, and even to pervert the administration of justice.

Moral corruption is the desire for employment, the wish for flamboyant demonstration of individual materialistic possession in the midst of societal inadequacies, and the exploitation of man by man – the powerless poor by the powerful rich, etc. (Otite, cited in Fakoya & Lalude, 2001)

Having defined corruption, what is anti-corruption crusade and what are its contents? Anti-corruption crusade simply means the initiatives, measures, and programs put in place to create a corruption-free society and maintaining a high moral standard. Anti-corruption crusades can also be defined as the announcements or campaigns by an organization which may be private, such as the civil society organization or the public-like state agency that concerted actions will be taken or are being taken to fight corruption. Usually, such announcements or campaign starts at the national, or sub-national, to local levels.

### **CORRUPTION: THEORETICAL DISCOURSE**

It has been argued that corruption is a universal phenomenon that cuts across nations, cultures, races, and classes of people in both developed and developing countries. It is a well-known fact that Mafia groups have remained powerful in a number of advanced democracies, including Italy and United States. Moreover, as the famous case prosecuted against the French oil company ELF by EVA Joly clearly shows, transnational corporation do engage in corrupt practices in the developing countries (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2003). In view of the above, the question is why the much talk and analysis of corruption in Africa (Nigeria) and other developing countries of the south and less in the developed states of the north? Put differently, why is corruption prevalent in developing countries and not in developed economies? Anti-corruption practitioners, scholars, and activists have attempted to answer this question. Their explanations can be summarized into two schools of argument. The first school argues that the level of economic development in Africa and other developing countries cannot, by any means, be compared to that of the developed countries. The level of economic development, according to this school, has direct impacts on the well-being of the citizens in most northern countries. This high level of development has helped to drastically mitigate the effects of corrupt practices and thus make corruption a minor issue in the developed countries. In this context, corruption will continue to remain a serious issue, precisely in Nigeria and other African countries, because the continent's economy is unremittingly poor and weak and cannot successfully neutralize and/or mitigate the effects of corrupt practices (Ikubaje, 2006).

The second school argues that, while it is true that the level of economic development has a direct impact on the effects of corrupt practices, it is, however, not sufficient to explain why corruption remains an issue in developing countries and a non-issue in developed economies. Good governance, according to this school, is one of the fundamental practices that must be entrenched in all political systems to overcome corruption and actualize sustainable national human and economic development. One of the research findings by the German-based Transparency International (TI) and world-leading anti-corruption body supports this argument and concludes that corruption is the major explanation for rampant poverty in many parts of the world today (Ikubaje, 2006). In view of the above, corruption in Nigeria and other developing countries is

endemic because of the absence of good governance. For them to overcome poverty and eradicate corruption, good governance must be entrenched in their political system.

On his part, Nzongola-Ntalaja (2003) argued that the major difference between developed and developing countries is that the causes and opportunity for corruption are greater in developing countries because:

- a. Poverty and the difficulty of making ends meet, which encourages petty corruption among lower civil servant and law enforcement agents;
- b. The expanding role of the state in the economy, which offers government officials the opportunities to seek rent from economic operators; and
- c. The absence or weakness of national accountability, integrity, and transparency systems, which have helped to reduce corruption in developed countries (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2003).

Furthermore, other arguments in support of the prevalence of corruption in Nigeria, include:

- a. When an individual believes and are sure that when they commit malpractice, they will not be caught;
- b. When such individual perceives that even if/when they are caught, they will not be penalized for their wrong doing; and
- c. When they are caught and penalized, the penalty will be lower in value than the gains derived from the corrupt practice (Daily Times, 1999, cited in Ojo, 2001).

In view of the above, the economics of corruption vis-à-vis the accompany sanctions really encourage it.

For instance, a public official who misappropriates millions of naira and was compulsorily retired from office may not feel bad because if he were to stay in service until his retirement age, his pension and gratuity may be nothing to write home about, due to the meager wages paid to public servants in Nigeria (Ojo, 2001).

#### **AN OVERVIEW OF ANTI-CORRUPTION PROGRAM IN THE FOURTH REPUBLIC**

An endemic culture of corruption has continued to pose obstacles to the realization of development, human rights, and welfare for the Nigerian people. In view of this, the successive government that came to power put in place various measures, programs, and policies geared towards eradicating corruption in Nigeria. Chiefly among these measures are Murtala/Obasanjo's Jaji Declaration of the 1970s, Shagari's Ethical Revolution of 1981, and the War Against Indiscipline (WAI) by Buhari/Idiagbon administration in 1984. Although in 1989, Babangida set up committees on corruption and other economic crimes, but his administration never declare war on corruption. In 1994, Abacha's administration introduced War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAI-C). However, these anti-corruption initiatives remained at the level of rhetoric and did not result in any significant changes.

Similarly, in 1999, when Obasanjo came to power, he told Nigerians that corruption was the major clog in the wheel of Nigeria's development and, until the social menace is cured, development will continue to elude the country. Consequently, his government put in place different anti-corruption initiatives to deal with the problem. Critical among these are the

Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiatives (NEITI), the Public Procurement Act, the Fiscal Responsibility Act, Due Processes, and e-payment to detect and deter embezzlement and other forms of financial fraud. In addition to the above, Obasanjo's government also established anti-corruption departments in some of the federal ministries and parastatals. He rounded up his anti-corruption initiatives with the establishment of the Technical Unit on Governance and Anti-Corruption Reforms (TUGAR) (Ibrahim, 2003). These, amongst others, were the anti-corruption institutions and legal frameworks that were introduced in the current Fourth Republic. These initiatives, at the early life of Obasanjo's administration, were greeted by a lot of hope with the expectation that changes will come to punish those persons who have carried out gross corrupt acts in the past and prevent others in the future from doing likewise. Unfortunately, these programs, policies, and strategies made no meaningful impact in the fight against corruption in Nigeria. For instance, for three consecutive years, 2000, 2001, and 2003, Transparency International, an international, non-governmental, anti-corruption organization in its Corruption Perception Index (CPI) ranked Nigeria as the second most corrupt country in the world. The unimaginable greed, obtuse and prodigious in thievery, arbitrariness, contempt for rule of law and fundamental human rights, selective investigation of corruption allegations, and poor handling of the economy were only a few of the woes that Nigerians experienced under Obasanjo's administration. Taken a step further, Obasanjo later used the excuse of an anti-corruption crusade to carry out witch hunts of its opponents and perceived enemies of his government. The irony is that the anti-corruption initiatives were unraveled by various investigations into massive acts of corruption by his administration after he left office. Chiefly among the revealing information that have emerged is that the former president waived due process for the contracts awards and gave away vast amounts of Nigeria's hard earned resources to his friends, family, and political allies. Investigation by the House of Representatives into the power sector revealed that Obasanjo's administration wasted public resources to the tune of 16 billion US dollars in the power sector with nothing to show for it.

Furthermore, since the inauguration of Yar'Adua/Goodluck government in May 2007, the administration has consistently proclaimed the respect for the rule of law and due process as its anchor point. However, the actions of government have left more to be desired as its body language seems to portray the opposite of what it proclaims. Since Goodluck became the substantive president of Nigeria, many cases of corruption have occurred, but the president did not have the tenacity to call for an investigation. Specifically, there has been a decline in the tempo of prosecution of public officers from the previous regime (Ibrahim, 2008). The retention of numerous personalities reputed to be corrupt clearly eroded the credibility of this administration's resolve to fight corruption. It is, therefore, not surprising that the performance of normal state functions, which collapsed under the military, still have not been revived. Many basic facilities, such as water and electricity supply and health and education services, are not working efficiently mainly because of the excessive corruption of state officials, who regularly steal much of the financial allocations of their ministries and parastatals. At this juncture, we can safely conclude that all anti-corruption measures put in place in the fourth republic did not yield the desired result because of the wide gap between the intent and actual practice. Moreover, it has been argued that a neo-colonial state cannot meaningfully fight corruption because it is administered on the basis of corruption, executive lawlessness, brigandage, and violence. The ruling cliques, because it does not have faith in the state, engages in systematic looting of the public treasury (Falana, 2010). In line with this, the late President Mobutu of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) used to sack ministers who were not indulging

in corrupt practices; for him they were wasting their time in the government. In a public rally in 1974, he advised his compatriots to “steal, but steal little by little and invest your fortune in the country” (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2003). In Africa, anti-graft agencies are set up to satisfy conditions for the oversea development assistance, to impress the international community, and deliberately castrate them to render them ineffective. The experiences in Nigeria and other African countries have shown that anti-corruption officials who fail to cover up a corrupt regime and its friends may end up in a shallow grave or exile (Falana, 2010). Since a neo-colonial state cannot allow anti-graft agencies to succeed, the people, who are the greatest victims of official corruption, should be mobilized to fight for transparency and accountability in government. In this context, the civil society becomes central. The question that readily comes to mind here is what role do civil society organizations play in the fight against corruption in Nigeria since 1999?

### **CIVIL SOCIETY AND ANTI-CORRUPTION CRUSADES IN THE FOURTH REPUBLIC**

Anti-Corruption crusade in Nigeria is not restricted to the domain of the state. The non-state actors especially the civil society organizations have initiated policies and programmes that are geared towards fighting corruption in the Nigeria since May 29, 1999 when the country returned to civil rule. In fact, investigations of many allegations of corruption by government were as a result of pressure mounted by civil society groups that demanded the accountability in the face of scandal.

Furthermore, through an investigation and reporting on corruption, civil society organizations, especially the media, have provided an important counterpoint to the abuse of an entrusted power for private gains, shedding light on the wrong doings of the public office holder and corporate executive alike. As such, it significantly, contributes to the basis of knowledge with which citizens can hold public and private institutions accountable. Besides, through collaboration with the anti-graft and other law enforcement agencies, civil society organizations have exposed corruption in many highly and lowly placed officials. This subsequently led to the removal, resignation, and prosecution of highly placed public officials. Typical examples are Tafa Balogun, the former inspector general of Police, Patricia Etteh former Speaker Federal House of Representative and Adolphus Wabara, former Senate President. Others are Fabian Osuji, former Minister of Education, and other senior officials in the federal Ministry of Education over N50million bribe as well as Grange, former Minister of Health and other officials of the Federal Ministry of health over N300million unspent allocation and many more cases of corruption were exposed by civil society organizations.

Moreover, the massive and aggressive campaign of civil society has also helped in reinforcing anti-graft values of honesty and integrity in the society. This makes civil society a formidable force that has etched anti-corruption crusades in people’s consciousness. Although corruption could not be said to have reduced drastically, anti-corruption issues have been brought into forefront burner of national discourses more than any other time in the history of the country. Similarly, the very consciousness among the people that there exists a vibrant civil society to expose any act of corruption has served as a deterrent to the corruption inclined public officials and individuals.

Another area where civil society has played a significant role in the fight against corruption in Nigeria is through promotion of awareness in secondary schools. They have engaged the school system in the drive to sensitize students about the causes



and ill effects of corruption on the national development and on the life of an individual. Their major activities include formation of anti-corruption club, advocacy for the inclusion of anti-corruption in school curriculum, essay competition among secondary school students, etc. These have helped in inculcating the values of discipline, hard work, and high moral standards on students.

Civil Society organizations have also contributed to anti-graft war in Nigeria by understanding issues related to judicial corruption through monitoring and exposing incidences of corruption, as well as indicators of corruption, such as delays, granting of injunctions, and quality of decisions. Lastly, the watch-dog roles of civil society on the activities of anti-graft agencies of the government have been sustaining anti-corruption crusades in Nigeria. Pressures usually mounted on anti-graft agencies to revisit and commence investigations and prosecute corrupt officials clearly articulated the ambiguous manner in which anti-graft agencies fight corruption in Nigeria.

### **CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE CHALLENGES OF ANTI-CORRUPTION CRUSADE**

In spite of the commendable role of civil society in the fight against corruption in Nigeria, they are, however, faced with many challenges. These include: the lack of access to valid information; the problem of finance; and the enigma of corruption.

**The lack of access to valid information:** To a very large extent, activities of government in Nigeria are carried out in secret. Many documents that could be useful in the investigation and exposure of corrupt practices are usually classified as officially secret. This always frustrates efforts of civil society.

**The problem of Finance:** Many civil society organizations lack a strong financial base. They survived on grants and donations from donor agencies, politicians, corporate organizations, and government agencies they are to watch. There is the tendency to soft pedal or cover up most biases in the investigation of corrupt allegations involving agencies or individuals that support them.

**The enigma of corruption:** The sincerity and transparency of some civil society organizations in the area of handling funds and other support given to them by the donor community for anti-corruption crusade is doubtful. Substantial amounts of the money given to some of them are frittered into the private pockets of the Executive Director and other senior members of the organization. Only a little fraction is spent on anti-graft programs.

Another challenge facing the civil society in its quest for a corrupt-free Nigeria is the lack of coordination and inability to harmonize their anti-graft programs. Although there are quite a number of coalitions of civil society organizations, such as Movement Against Corruption, Transparency in Nigeria, Zero Corruption Coalition, Integrity Group, Procurement Watch, Transition Monitoring Groups, and Budget transparency Network, among others, who engage in anti-corruption activities. However, there is evidence of program duplication and poor research work on the level and situation of corruption in Nigeria. Hence, many of them operate in a vacuum.

Furthermore, most of the strategies and approaches adopted by the civil society in its anti-graft crusades are donor-driven, which do not take into consideration the peculiarity of the Nigerian society. In most cases the approaches are biased against the government. In addition, the anti-graft efforts of civil society have typically been reactive rather than pro-active and lacked sustainability and, most times, ignored by the authority. Its roles have been limited largely to; exhortations, episodic focus on corruption scandals, and condemnation of official corruptions (Gyimah-Boadi, 1999). These strategies can only eradicate corruption at the surface level.

Moreover, the anti-graft crusade of civil society in Nigeria is weak at the grass root level. Most of the campaign through seminars, conferences, and workshops are carried out in foreign languages. The uneducated rural people, who form about 70% of the country's population, are not carried along. Besides, investigations of corrupt practices are seldom done in the rural areas, whereas the study has shown that corruption is equally high in the rural areas.

Finally, civil society groups in Nigeria failed to transcend ethno-religious and regional cleavages and some undermined the struggle to eradicate corruption in the country. Attempted by some section of the civil society to check the activities of state official from particular ethnic, religion, or region are usually interpreted by other section of the civil society based on ethnic and religious bias. A typical example was the case of former Speaker of the Federal House of Representatives, Alhaji Salisu Buhari, who was removed from office for falsifying his age and educational qualifications. The immediate response of Buhari's constituency in northern Nigeria to the allegation was to describe it as a fabrication aimed at destroying the political career of a notable northern politician (Nkwachukwu, 2003).

### **Concluding Remarks**

This article recognizes the major contributions of civil society and the challenges confronting it in the fight against corruption in Nigeria. However, to enhance its roles, the following recommendations are made:

Civil Society should do more in the area of preventing corruption, rather than reporting and exposing it;

Civil society groups imbibe values of courage, impartial, and determination in order to achieve lasting success in the fight against corruption;

The keys to fight corruption effectively are honesty, transparency, and accountability; hence the civil society must imbibe these values because a corrupt organization cannot wage effective war against corruption and will not have a moral right to embark on anti-graft crusade. Nobody can give what he or she does not have;

Civil society should develop anti-corruption documentary that would unveil the cases and impact of corruption, especially on the socio-economic and cultural rights of individuals. This would serve as an education tool for the public to understand the complex nature of corruption.

Civil society groups should link the battle against corruption with the struggle for the consolidation of democracy, rule of law, and human rights. Instead of concentrating energy on arrest, reporting and prosecution of few corrupt elements in the society. In addition, civil society should demand for full compliance with the provision of the appropriation, public procurement, and money laundering acts and insist on the passage into law the information and whistle blower acts that are before the National Assembly.

Finally, the time has come for all of us, as a nation, to see corruption as a national problem, which must be confronted before economic and social progress of Nigeria can reach its full maturity. If the anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria were to get the support of traditional rulers, pastors, imams, politicians, and opinion leaders, the impact of the awareness would be overwhelming. Plato reminds us that the quest for Knowledge is a common enterprise. So, if we to rid Nigeria from the incubus of corruption, we must start the fight from the top and work our way to the bottom and from the public to the private sector.

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