

## **CORRUPTION AND CORRUPT PRACTICES IN NIGERIA: AN AGENDA FOR TAMING THE MONSTER**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The paper examines the phenomenon of corruption in Nigeria. It argues that while it is indeed a global challenge, its prevalence, persistence and gravity varies from country to country. In Nigeria, the crisis of corruption seems to have defied all the solutions put forward by governments over the years in the country. In spite of all the rhetoric about a war on corruption, the phenomenon has shown so much resilience that it seems to have become normal in the country. The agencies charged with the fight against corruption all seem to be at a loss in this direction. The paper proposes an agenda for dealing with the scourge of corruption. The major issue in this agenda is the need to muster the necessary political will in the war on corruption.

**Keywords:** Corruption, corrupt practices, agenda, monster, Nigeria.

### **INTRODUCTION**

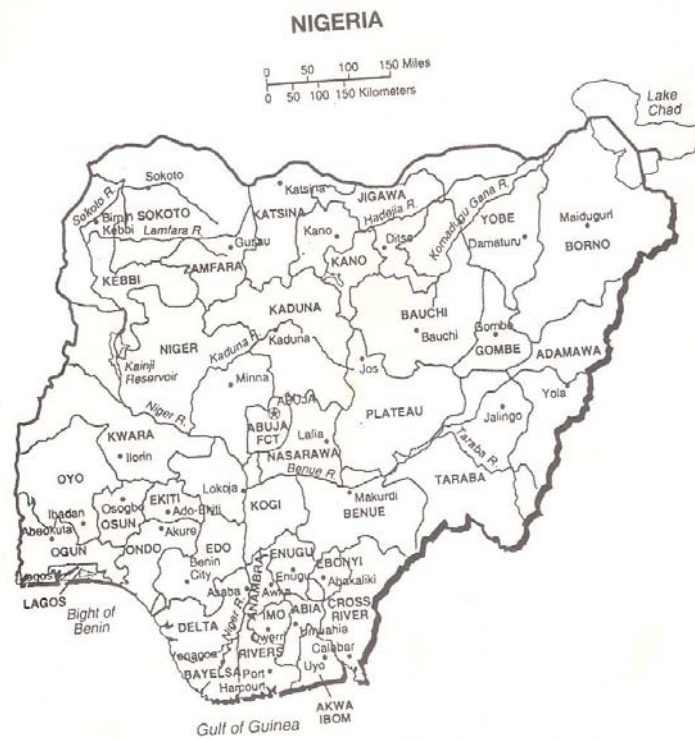
The challenge of corruption remains one of the most debilitating issues facing Nigeria. It has been one of the impediments to the country's development efforts (Egwemi, 2010; Ajibewa, 2006; Orngu, 2006; Saliu and Aremu, 2004). Having said this, it is equally important to add that corruption is a problem that confronts all countries of the world. The only difference is that the prevalence, gravity and persistence of the corruption menace vary from one country to the other. That said, the effects or consequences of corruption are always negative. Corruption blocks and frustrates genuine efforts at development. It leaves its victims literally gasping for breath.

Corruption is one human vice which requires immediate tackling. Given its damaging consequence, it is not a problem whose solution can be put off to another day. That is why most countries have in place institutions charged with tackling the menace. In Nigeria, the challenge of corruption has been discussed, examined and dissected at various fora: seminars, high-powered committees, academic gatherings, and in the media (Abdul-Ismael, n.d.; Egwemi, 2012; Odekunle, 1986; Ibrahim 2003).

All these efforts have been made so that solutions can be found to the problem. However, the problem of corruption as we have argued elsewhere seems to have defied solution (Egwemi, 2007). This intractability of the problem is captured by Mundt and Aborishade in the following words, "each political regime comes to power promising to eliminate the practice and punish offenders only to fall into the same pattern" (Mundt and Aborishade, 2004: 707).

In Nigeria, metaphorical allusions like “long leg”, “bottom power”, “chop chop”, “kick back”, “scratch my back” are all euphemisms for corrupt behavior. Every government that has come to power has pledged that “there would be no sacred cows” and that it would “not be business as usual” (Nwezeh, 2011; Egwemi and Usman, 2010). Such promises have not done much to stem the tide of corruption and the phenomenon seems to have become *normal* in the country.

It is against the above background that this paper attempts to come to terms with the problem of corruption with a view to finding a solution to it. The paper is divided into six sections. Section two conceptualises corruption, section three discusses manifestations and acts of corruption. Section four examines the cost and consequences of corruption, while section five interrogates the incidence of corruption in Nigeria. The last section proposes and expatiates an agenda for taming the monster of corruption.



Map of Nigeria showing the thirty six states and the Federal Capital Territory.

## CONCEPTUALIZING CORRUPTION

Any attempt to conceptualize corruption may seem almost a mere rehash of existing conceptions of the phenomenon. Rehashing old definitions would seem easy. However, after the rehash putting a finger on what constitutes corruption would still prove to be a difficult endeavour. Conceptualizing corruption is not an easy task. Indeed, it is a daunting and challenging venture. (Olugbenga, 2007, Odojin and Omojuwa, 2007, Ajibewa, 2006, Falore, 2010, Igbuzor, 2008).

According to Andrig and Fjeldstad (2001:4) “corruption is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon with multiple causes and effects, as it takes on various forms and functions in different contexts”. In fact, one of the major crises in conceptualizing corruption is that while it is difficult for it to disappear it has a capacity to take on new forms (Andrig and Fjeldstad, 2001; Girling 1997). The difficulty of defining corruption is first a function of its being a secret and

clandestine activity and secondly because it has many manifestations, dimensions and forms. That is why Johnston argues that studying corruption is a tricky business. According to him:

Definitions are controversial, and solid evidence is often elusive. Descriptive accounts may be clouded by self-serving equivocations. Equally subtle is the question of the significance of a corrupt act – not only its consequences, but also its meaning as perceived by citizens and officials alike (in Ogundiya, 2009:282).

Be that as it may Tanzi has argued that while it may not be easy to define corruption, the crisis associated with corruption is not difficult to recognize (Tanzi, 1998).

The word corruption is originally from the Latin verb *rumpere* which means to break (Abdul-Ismail, n.d.). Following from the above, corruption means the breaking of a certain code of conduct for the personal benefit of the perpetrator. Many definitions of corruption have been put forward. For example, Sen defines it as the violation of established rules for personal gain and profit (in Aluko 2009:2). Osoba defines it as “an anti-social behavior conferring improper benefits contrary to legal and moral norms, and which undermines the capacity of authorities to improve the living conditions of the people” (in Aluko, 2009:3) The World Bank defines corruption as:

The abuse of public office for private gains. Public office is abused for private gain when an official accepts, solicits, or extorts a bribe. It is also abused when private agents actively offer bribes to circumvent public policies and processes for competitive advantages or profit. Public office can also be abused for personal benefit even if no bribery occurs, through patronage and nepotism, the theft of state assets, or the diversion of state resources (in Agbu, 2003:3).

In J.S. Nye’s classical definition, corruption is “behaviour that deviates from the formal duties of a public role (elective or appointive) because of private regarding (personal, close family, private clique) wealth or status gains” (Nye, 1967:416).

What we can deduce from the definitions above is that corruption entails any behaviour that deviates from accepted norm especially in the public space. It is any behavior that goes against established rules, regulations, and established procedure. In short, corruption is behaviour that breaks the law or aid and abets breaking the law. Such behaviour usually confers undue and/or unmerited advantages on the perpetrator. Such behaviour also expresses the notion of a betrayal of trust especially in a democracy where public office is held in trust for the people.

Corruption has various forms and dimensions. Aluko has identified nine forms namely:

- Political corruption (grand)
- Bureaucratic corruption (petty)
- Electoral corruption
- Bribery
- Fraud
- Embezzlement
- Favouritism
- Nepotism (Aluko, 2009:5)

Other categorizations which do not differ from that of Aluko exist (see Yaru, 2010, Adenugba, 2009; Omotola, 2006, Orngu, 2006, Aghemelo and Oarhe, 2003). What is important, however, is that in whatever form it manifests, corruption perverts public interest and unlawfully elevates private gain and advantage.

## **MANIFESTATION AND ACTS OF CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA**

The following discussion on the manifestations of corruption and the next one on the consequences of corruption is adopted from Otive Igbuzor's (2008) intervention on the issues.

Corruption manifests itself in various ways. According to the Political Bureau established in Nigeria in 1987, the manifestations of corruption include:

***The inflation of government contracts:*** In return for kickbacks; frauds and falsification of accounts in the public service; examination malpractices in our educational institutions including universities; the taking of bribes and perversion of justice among the police, the judiciary and other organs for administering justice; and various heinous crimes against the state in the business and industrial sectors of our economy, in collusion with multinational companies such as over-invoicing of goods; foreign exchange swindling, hoarding, and smuggling.

The African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption and Related Offences lists acts of corruption to include:

- a. The solicitation or acceptance, directly or indirectly by a public official or any other person, of any goods of monetary, or other benefit, such as a gift, favour, promise or advantage for himself or herself or for another person or entity, in exchange for any act or omission in the performance, of his or her public functions;
- b. The offering or granting, directly or indirectly, to a public official or any other person of any goods of monetary value, or other benefit, such as a gift, favour, promise or advantage for himself or herself or for any person or entity, in exchange for any act or omission in the performance of his or her public functions;
- c. The offering or granting, directly or indirectly, to a public official or any other person for the purpose of illicitly obtaining benefits for himself or herself or for a third party;
- d. The diversion by a public official or any other person, for purposes unrelated to those for which they were intended, for his own or her own benefit or that of a third party, of any property belonging to the state or its agencies, to an independent agency, or to an individual, that such official has received by virtue of his or her position;
- e. The offering or giving, promising, solicitation or acceptance, directly or indirectly, of any undue advantage to or by any person, who directs or works for, in any capacity, a private sector entity, for himself or herself or for anyone else, for him or her to act or refrain from acting, in breach of his or her duties;
- f. The offering, giving, soliciting or accepting directly or indirectly, or promising of any undue advantage to or by any person who asserts or confirms that he or she is able to exert any improper influence over the decision making of any person performing functions in the public or private sector in consideration thereof, whether the undue advantage is for himself or herself or for anyone else, as well as the request, receipt or the acceptance of the offer or the promise of such an advantage, in consideration of that influence, whether or not the influence is exerted or whether or not the supposed influence leads to the intended result;
- g. Illicit enrichment

- h. The use or concealment of proceeds derived from any of the acts referred to in this article; and
- i. Participation as a principal, co-principal, agent, instigator, accomplice or accessory after the fact, or in any other manner in the commission or attempted commission of, in any collaboration or conspiracy to commit, any of the acts referred to in this article.

The Corrupt Practices, and Other Related Offences Act 2000 lists offences, which are punishable by the Act to include among other things gratification by an official, corrupt offers to public officers, corrupt demand by persons, fraudulent acquisition of property, fraudulent receipt of property, making false statement or return, gratification by and through agents, bribery of public officers and using position for gratification.

### **COST AND CONSEQUENCES OF CORRUPTION**

Corruption has a lot of negative impact on every sphere of societal development: social, economic and political (Igbuzor, 2008). As Ikubaje (2004) has argued, corruption is a global phenomenon and its effects on individual, institutions, countries and global development have made it an issue of universal concern (Igbuzor, 2008). According to the Lima Declaration, the impacts of corruption include: the erosion of the moral fabric of society, violation of the social and economic rights of the poor and vulnerable, undermining of democracy, subversion of the rule of law, retardation of development and denial of society, particularly the poor, denial of the benefits of free and open competition (Igbuzor, 2008).

Bello-Imam (2004), in the same vein, has outlined the negative consequences of corruption to include:

- i. Retardation of Economic Growth: Corruption lowers investment and retards economic growth.
- ii. Misallocation of Talent: Where rent seeking proves more lucrative than productive work, talent will be misallocated. People will be lured to rent seeking rather than productive work.
- iii. Limitation of Aid Flows: Where corruption is rampant, donor agencies are unwilling to put in their money.
- iv. Loss of Tax Revenue: Revenue is lost through tax evasion or claiming improper tax exemptions.
- v. Adverse Budgetary Consequences: When corruption is rampant budgeted amounts will not deliver the required services.
- vi. Negative Impact on Quality of Infrastructure and Public Services: When public contracts are procured through a corrupt system, it results in lower quality of infrastructure and public services.
- vii. Negative Composition of Government Expenditure: Corruption often tempts government officials to choose government projects less on the basis of public welfare than on the opportunity they provide for extorting bribes. Under such a situation, large projects, whose exact value and benefit are difficult to monitor, usually present lucrative opportunities for corruption while returns on teachers' salaries and textbooks could be zero for the same set of officials.

As the Chairman of Transparency International, Peter Eigen correctly noted, corruption doesn't just line the pockets of political and business elites; it leaves ordinary people without essential services such as life saving medicines and deprives them of access to sanitation and housing. In short, corruption costs lives (See Igbuzor, 2008:12-16). Therein lies the problem of corruption. It negatively affects any country's development drive. Given the negative consequences of

corruption (see Table 1), development in a corruption endemic country does not begin at all and so there is no talk about sustaining it.

Table 1: Types, causes and consequences of corruption

<b>Types of Corruption</b>	<b>Causes</b>	<b>Forms</b>	<b>Consequences</b>
Political Corruption	Weak electoral commission, law enforcement mechanism, judiciary and one party dominated state	Inflation of voters, rigging of elections and deprivation of winners from weaker political parties	Civil unrest, bad governance, incompetent rulers and bad international image and electoral violence
Economic Corruption	Weak state, poverty and wide income gap between the rich and the poor	Bribing to win contract, influenced service delivery, contract cutbacks, inflation of government contracts and non-payment of taxes by highly placed businessmen	Escalating cost of governance, poor or non-implementation of public contracts, poor public service delivery, shut down of public parastatals and loss of public revenue through tax evasion and avoidance.
Bureaucratic corruption	Lack of national commitment, weak state and complex bureaucratic process	Bribery of public officials and distortion of due process/normal procedure in the public sectors	Bad policies, non-pursuance of policy objectives, policy failures, employment of incompetent hands as public officials and poor service delivery
Judicial Corruption	Poor salary scale, greed and weak law enforcement mechanism	Free bail, distortion of judgments, acceptance of bribes by judges and delay in passing judgment	Corruption persists, private cost of corruption is lowered or reduced to zero, civil unrest and lawlessness takes stage, and decadence of rule of law
Moral Corruption	Non-taxation of property, high level of poverty and wide income distribution	Flamboyant demonstration of individual materialistic possession and exploitation of masses by the few powerful rich in the society	Desperation to acquire wealth, armed robbery (419s), civil disorder and eventually revolution for change.

Source: Yaru, 2010:146.

Corruption covers a whole gamut of activities which include but are not necessarily limited to the following:

- 1) Intentional distortion of financial records.
- 2) Misappropriation of assets whether or not accompanied by distortion of statement.
- 3) Payment for contracts of jobs not executed.
- 4) Ten percent kick backs from contracts awarded.
- 5) Intentional loss of receipts and mutilation of account documents.
- 6) Insertion of fictitious names in the payment voucher and the amount involved paid to unauthorized persons.
- 7) Using government official letter head paper to order for goods for private use purporting that it belongs to government.
- 8) Paying public cheques into private account for any reason best known to the officer.
- 9) Paying twice the cost of item(s) using the same document.
- 10) Leaving ex-employees on the pay roll and collecting the said amount for private use.
- 11) Charging the public or students unauthorized fees that are not utilized for the supply of any material for the institution.
- 12) Doctoring marks for students for personal reasons.
- 13) Asking and receiving cash or material before approving projects.
- 14) Having carnal knowledge of opposite sex before transacting business.
- 15) Receiving cash or kind to write project for student.
- 16) Disposal of any government assets without due approval.
- 17) Auctioning government property to one self at little or no cost.
- 18) DOLLING money to people to allow you stay in an office for another term.
- 19) Over-inflating the cost of items purchased for the public.
- 20) Diversion of workers' salaries and allowances for personal use (Agenyi and Ameh, 2009:129).

Corruption is a universal menace (Otite, 1986, Lash, 2003). It does not seem to have respect for geographical boundaries, creed, race or ethnicity. However, having said so, it is also important to note that the scope and scale of corruption varies from one country to the other. Whatever the scale and scope of corruption, the important thing about it is that according to Obasanjo, corruption on any scale is bad (Obasanjo, 1994).

Corruption is an ancient practice that has been traced back to pre-biblical times and was known in the ancient civilizations of China, Greece, India and Rome (Lash, 2003). Despite this long history Nicholas Lash is of the opinion that "the 1990's witnessed a decline in public acceptance" of corruption (Lash, 2003:1).

### **CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA**

Corruption is as old as civilization itself and in the particular case of Nigeria, it is as old as the history of the country itself (Aluko, 2009). Omotola traces corruption to colonialism. He argues that by all standards, colonialism in Nigeria was built on corruption. This is to the extent that "because of the colonialist's corrupt disposition to exploit the state for their exclusive benefit, they liquidated social structure against corruption associated with pre-colonial Africa and replaced and or transformed them to their own purposes" (Omotola, 2006:217).

The colonial era was characterized by allegations of corrupt practices against civil servants and police officers (Aluko, 2009). This colonial legacy of corruption was carried into the independence period. Chinua Achebe, the famous Nigerian

novelist, has highlighted the incidence of corruption in some of his novels, (Achebe, 1960, 1966, 1988). Achebe's literary presentation of corruption indicates the extent and damaging impact of the phenomenon on Nigeria and her people.

In Nigeria as indicated above, the incidence of corruption is quite high. Since the return to democratic rule in the country in 1999, the country has either been ranked first or second in global corruption rating by Transparency International. This has been a matter of deep concern for both ordinary Nigerians and the political leadership of the country. Before 1999, there were many attempts at stemming the spate of corruption in the country (Faloore, 2010, Igbuzor, 2008). However, since 1999, there seemed to be a renewed determination to fight corruption. A number of anti-corruption bodies have been set up in this direction. For example the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). In spite of these agencies, corrupt activities have continued in the country almost making nonsense of the activities of these agencies and the war on corruption. This is quite unfortunate because it seems to have become an established pattern. For example, according to Mundt and Aborishade "each political regime comes to power promising to eliminate the practice and punish offenders, only to fall into the same pattern" (Mundt and Aborishade, 2004:707). Such a scenario qualifies Nigeria, according to J.S. Omotola (n.d.:3), "to belong to the category of countries which Jeremy Pope classifies as those whose national integrity system has effectively collapsed". In fact as argued elsewhere, the problem of corruption in Nigeria seems to have defied solution (Egwemi, 2009).

The crisis of corruption in Nigeria is difficult to tackle because it seems, as some argue, to be part of the culture of the country as in many other developing countries (Egwemi, 2009, Igbuzor, 2008, Audu 2008). The argument is usually that:

What is regarded as corruption in Africa is a myth because it is expected that a beneficiary should show appreciation for a favour granted him/her. If a government official offers one a job or contract, the beneficiary would be obliged to show appreciation either in kind or cash to the government official just as he would do to a village chief if granted a land to cultivate crops or build a house. Corruption is a myth because in our cultures bribery is another's mutual goodwill (in Igbuzor, 2008:9).

While the argument that corruption may be part of Nigerian culture is easily dismissed by many (see for example Maduagwu, Obasanjo in Igbuzor 2008) it is important to note that the fact that "corruption is very widespread in Nigeria and (it) manifests itself in virtually all aspects of national life" (Ibrahim, 2003:3) tells a lot about the intensity of the phenomenon in the country.

An attempt is made in the following section to proffer solutions to the menace of corruption in Nigeria.

### **CONCLUSION: AN AGENDA FOR TAMING THE MONSTER**

In Nigeria it is not only that officials are corrupt, but that corruption is official (in Adesina, 2011:56).

The Nigerian public is highly ambivalent about the corruption problem, frequently complaining about it and condemning it, but generally resigned to its pervasive presence (Mundt and Aborishade, 2004:7).

When confronted with a challenge, man attempts as much as possible to overcome such a challenge. To be sure overcoming a challenge like corruption is definitely not child's play. This is much more so in a country like Nigeria



where corruption seems to have become “normal”. In Nigeria, it would seem that not being corrupt is the aberration while being corrupt is the norm.

Given the above scenario, governments over the years in Nigeria have attempted to stem, the tide of corruption in the country. It would seem that the Nigerian government is serious about waging a war on corruption. Paradoxically it also seems that corruption seems to be very resilient in the country and as a corollary has persisted. Why has corruption assumed such a status in Nigeria and what can be done about it? It would seem on the surface that dealing with the problem of corruption is simple and straight forward. This is to the extent that once people decide to and begin to do things correctly, the elementary condition for corruption to thrive has been removed. However, it is not that simple especially when a phenomenon has taken root. Beginning to do things correctly becomes difficult since many people benefit from the status quo.

Secondly, dealing with corruption in Nigeria is supposed to be easy because there are institutions charged with fighting the scourge. In the last decade, the ICPC and EFCC have become household names in the country. In spite of these institutions, corruption has soared and has become intractable (Egwemi, 2009, 2010). Why is this the case?

According to Igbuzor (2008), there are six questions that should test the seriousness of any anti-corruption crusade (1) Is it systematic? (2) Is it comprehensive? (3) Is it consistent? (4) Does it have focus? (5) Is it well published? (6) Does it carry people along? According to him the Obasanjo administration failed on all these questions except for the fifth one. The rhetoric about anti-corruption was everywhere but the impact of the war was minimal (Egwemi, 2010, Igbuzor, 2008).

What then can be done about taming the monster called corruption in Nigeria? Many individuals, groups and organizations have identified certain important elements which can facilitate the taming of the monster called corruption. Some of these elements are:

- a. Legislative Framework for transparent and accountable government and for fighting corruption including Freedom of Information Act (FOI ACT), Budget law, Fiscal responsibility law, Whistle blowers’ Act etc.
- b. Political will and commitment to fight corruption
- c. Comprehensive strategy that is systematic, comprehensive, consistent, focused, published, non-selective and non-partisan.
- d. Protection of whistle blowers.
- e. Political Reform to curb political corruption
- f. Reform of substantive programmes and administrative procedures
- g. Mobilization for social re-orientation with participation of civil society and faith based organizations
- h. Effective parliamentary oversight through the Public Accounts Committee
- i. Independent media
- j. Adequate remuneration for workers to reflect the responsibilities of their post and a living wage
- k. Code of ethics for political office holders, business people and CSOs
- m. Movement for Anti-corruption (see Igbuzor, 2008:40-41).

Many organizations and individuals are agreed on the workability of these elements in the war against corruption (Igbuzor, 2008: 40) while advocating that the Nigerian government will do well to factor these elements in the war against corruption this paper proposes the following agenda for taming the monster of corruption.

The agenda is made up of the following five components:

- Mustering the necessary political will
- Adopting good governance as article of faith
- De-politicizing the war on corruption
- A special court to try corruption cases
- Matching action and consistency with the rhetoric of anti-corruption war.

These are expatiated below:

First, in the war on corruption in Nigeria, the need for government to muster the necessary political is paramount. Elsewhere, it has been argued as follows:

The need to frontally confront corruption in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized... the desire by government over the years (and especially since 1999) to tackle the menace of corruption is clear, at least institutionally. However, the rhetoric of a war against corruption has not been matched by action... in spite of the avowed war against corruption, (it) seems to have soared in the country. (Egwemi, 2010:127).

In the face of the above, it was recommended that what seems to be lacking in the war against corruption is the political will (Egwemi, 2010). In fact Farida Waziri, the immediate past chairman of the EFCC has identified this lack of political will as one of the obstacles to the war on corruption (Alli, 2011).

For the avoidance of any doubt, political will as used in this paper refers to the willingness by governments at all levels to genuinely fight corruption instead of dealing with it in a half-hearted manner. It would mean enthroning a regime in which there are no sacred cows, a system in which the law is applied to deal with corruption irrespective of who the culprit is.

A clear case of the lack of political will in the fight against corruption played out on 17 April 2012 with the conviction of former Delta state governor James Ibori on charges of corruption by the Southwark Crown Court in London (Adegbamgbo, 2012; Arhewe and Oluwalana, 2012).

Ibori's conviction in London came almost three years after he was acquitted of a 170-count charge of corruption by a Federal High Court in Asaba (Adegbamigbe, 2012). Ibori's conviction in London has cast a long shadow on the fight against corruption in Nigeria (Adegbamigbe, 2012, Ajaero, 2012, Adeyemi, 2012, Sefeolu, 2012, Editorial: *Sunday Sun*, 22 April 2012, Editorial: *The Guardian*, 26 April 2012). Apart from Ibori many high profile individuals have been undergoing prosecution and the institutions do not seem to be serious about doing their job. The government therefore needs to rejig its anti-corruption war to give it credibility (Bisugu, 2012). It would also mean that the functionaries of the agencies in charge of the war on corruption are themselves above board. In this direction the words of the chairman of the ICPC, Justice Emmanuel Ayoola readily comes to mind. According to him,

The fight against corruption can succeed only if Nigerians at all levels, stop paying lip service to it, change their corrupt ways and embrace integrity, transparency and accountability as the only way forward to national honour and prosperity (in Dan'Azumi, 2009:21).

Political will, will also entail doing away with such things as plea bargaining which has become a veritable obstacle in the war against corruption. As Nigeria's new Chief Justice Dahiru Musdapher has argued concerning plea bargaining;

It has no place in our law – substantive or procedural. It was invented to provide soft landing to high profile criminals who loot the treasury entrusted to them. It is an obstacle to our fight against corruption. It should never again be mentioned in our jurisprudence (in Ogundele, 2011:6).

In the same vein, Nigeria's Senate president, David Mark has spoken out against plea bargain. According to him "... plea bargain has been used not to meet the ends of justice but to protect the big men in our midst" (in Ojiabo and Onogu, 2012: 9). What is therefore left is to go beyond the words to action.

The entire arms of government taking such a position will strengthen the hand of the law. In such a circumstance, instead of plea-bargain which amounts to only a slap on the wrist, corrupt individuals are made to face the full weight of the law (Ojiabor and Onogu, 2012; Oderemi, 2012; Ukaibe, 2012).

Lastly, political will would mean that since there are institutions in place to fight corruption, the government of the day should allow them to operate without hindrance. A situation in which government intervenes with the work of the agencies or in which frequent changes are made in the leadership of anti-graft agencies will not conduce for a good fight against corruption (Omojologu, 2011, Sanusi, 2011). Political will, will also mean adoption of such "extreme" penalties like the death sentence which many Asian countries have used with high degree of success (Abdu, 2012; Usman, 2012; Egwemi and Usman, 2010; *Nigerian Tribune*, 24 November 2010). Corruption many times results in death of innocent people and so sentencing corrupt officials to death may not be extreme as it seems.

As a corollary to the first, the second issue that Nigeria needs to examine in her war on corruption is that of good governance. Since the return to democratic rule in Nigeria in 1999, the governments in place have shown a proclivity towards lawlessness and this has been a major impediment to the war against corruption in the country. (Egwemi 2007, 2008a, 2008b). Good governance is important because according to Omotola

... the greatest antidote to corruption is good governance. Whatever measures are put in place, these should be ones that promote good governance, accountability and control. This is the only framework that would allow for a reasonable degree of symbolic coherence between policy frameworks and their implementation (Omotola, 2006:226).

Thirdly, there is the need to de-politicise the war on corruption for it to be effective. During the Obasanjo years, 1999-2007, the anti-corruption agencies were used as tools of vendetta to harass and intimidate real and perceived enemies of his government. To that extent it was thought that the former president's campaign lacked seriousness. In the build up to the 2011 general elections, the EFCC came up with an advisory list. The aim of the list was to stop certain individuals undergoing trial for graft from contesting the elections (see Kolawole, 2010, Shettima, 2010; Ajobe, Bello and Alhassan, 2010; Aremu, 2010, Abati, 2010). It will be recalled that a similar list was produced preparatory to the 2007 elections.

The EFCC as an agency should concentrate on doing its work of apprehending and prosecuting to a logical conclusion those accused of graft. It should not allow itself to be used as an agency of intimidation.

Furthermore, the advocacy for special courts to fight corruption needs to be seriously considered. It is clear that the judiciary in the country is burdened with many other civil and criminal cases which do not allow for expeditious treatment of corruption cases. The call for special courts for corruption made by the former EFCC chair needs to be seriously considered (see Balogun, 2011; Olamiti, 2012; *The Guardian* Editorial, September 21, 2011; *Nigerian Tribune* Editorial, July 11, 2011). Government may need to have special courts so that cases of corruption can be easily dispensed with.

Lastly, it has to be re-emphasized that tackling corruption is not a one-shot endeavour, but a challenging long-term undertaking (Ogundiya, 2009). As it has been argued elsewhere, the fight against corruption in Nigeria has to be consistent and sustained since it seems that corruption is part and parcel of Nigeria. The Nigerian government needs to move beyond the isolated and fire brigade approach currently adopted, it needs to match rhetoric with action in the war against corruption (Egwemi, 2010). As a corollary, it has to be emphasized also that the war on corruption is not a one man or one institution affair. In this wise every Nigerian has a role to play. Also all relevant institutions must build a synergy in the fight against corruption. It is only when every individual and institution work together that corruption can be tackled in a holistic and all-embracing manner. It is then that the monster will be tamed. Until the monster of corruption is tamed efforts at national development will continue to be futile.

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