

Democratic governance and the frightening impact of corruption in contemporary Nigerian society

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Abstract. This paper focuses on democratic governance and the frightening impact of corruption in contemporary Nigerian society in the attempt to restore good governance and also improve the socio-economic development of the citizenry after about fifty eight years of independence. Related literatures to the variables were reviewed including the adoption of the descriptive and content analytical method in the analysis of the secondary data in order to achieve the objectives of the study. The social learning theory was employed as theoretical framework to guide the study. Findings reveal that the phenomenon of corruption has evidently graduated beyond impunity, both in volume, scale, breadth, depth and has become a national cancer in the country. Furthermore, findings also show that Nigerian politicians have entered into yet other webs of delusion, and deception to the extent that their pursuit of corrupt practices, they reason, is greeted with ovation. Aside this, the paper also highlights that since the mad rush for corrupt practices, especially amongst politicians seems impossible to abate, the alarming rate of vicious opulence which has engulfed the Nigerian nation clearly demonstrates naivety, desperation and un-Godly helplessness. Based on all these, the paper suggests that there is the urgent need to halt the hypocritical position in corrupt cases involving high influential members of the government as well as the immunity covertly granted their cronies. The paper recommends that amongst other measures, government should not only be transparent in enforcing all relevant laws against corruption, but prosecute all those found culpable. Finally, Judicial Service Commission as autonomous body should halt the incessant dismissal of corrupt cases by judges on technical grounds, as well as continuing to beam its searchlight on all corrupt judicial officers.

Keywords: Corruption; Transparency International; Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC); Judicial Service Commission.

Resumo. *Governança democrática e o impacto assustador da corrupção na sociedade nigeriana contemporânea.* Este artigo enfoca a governança democrática e o impacto assustador da

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corrupção na sociedade nigeriana contemporânea na tentativa de restaurar a boa governança e também melhorar o desenvolvimento socioeconômico dos cidadãos após cerca de 58 anos de independência. A literatura foi revisada, incluindo a adoção do método descritivo e analítico de conteúdo na análise dos dados secundários, a fim de alcançar os objetivos do estudo. A teoria do aprendizado social foi empregada como referencial teórico para orientar o estudo. Os resultados revelam que o fenômeno da corrupção evidentemente formou-se além da impunidade, tanto em volume, escala, amplitude e profundidade, tornando-se um câncer nacional no país. Além disso, as descobertas também mostram que os políticos nigerianos entraram em outras teias de ilusão e engano, na medida em que sua busca de práticas corruptas, eles raciocinam, é recebida com ovação. Além disso, o artigo também destaca que desde a louca correria por práticas corruptas, especialmente entre os políticos, parece impossível de diminuir. A taxa alarmante de opulência viciosa que envolveu a nação nigeriana demonstra claramente ingenuidade, desespero e desamparo piedoso. Com base em tudo isso, o artigo sugere que há a necessidade urgente de deter a posição hipócrita em casos de corrupção envolvendo membros altamente influentes do governo, bem como a imunidade concedida secretamente a seus companheiros. O artigo recomenda que, entre outras medidas, o governo não só seja transparente na aplicação de todas as leis relevantes contra a corrupção, mas processe todos os que forem considerados culpados. Finalmente, a Comissão de Serviços Judiciais, como órgão autônomo, deve suspender a rejeição incessante de casos corruptos por juízes por motivos técnicos, bem como continuar a direcionar seu holofote para todos os funcionários judiciais corruptos.

Palavras-chave: Corrupção; Transparência Internacional; Comissão de Crimes Econômicos e Financeiros (CCEF); Comissão de Serviço Judicial.

Introduction

The present nature of the Nigerian socio-economic uncertainties brings to the fore the extent corruption has arrested growth in all sectors of the society. It is such that the thick cloud of corruption has covered every aspect of our national life to our dismay and confusion. Admittedly, corruption is an insidious crime which is neither unique nor peculiar to any society or culture but which has, invariably, a universal colouration irrespective of the society being x-rayed. Corruption as a concept has no universal and comprehensive

definition, but as an act, it is self evident and hence morally reprehensible. Understanding the implications of not having a precise definition, the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) avoided the temptation to proffer one which easily could be rejected, but instead identified and described the specific conducts that are generally classified as corrupt, criminal misconduct. For Abdullahi (2006), such corrupt and criminal misconduct include bribery, embezzlement, theft, fraud, extortion, abuse of discretion, favouritism, nepotism, exploiting conflicting interest, improper political

party donations et cetera. Digging further, Amuwo (2005) and Obayelu (2007) view corruption as the exploitation of public position, resources and power for private gain. Perceptively, all efforts to secure wealth or power through illegal means for private gain at public expense; or a misuse of power for private benefit or the betrayal of public trust for individual or sectional gain constitutes corruption. As a matter of fact, the Nigerian political class has turned the supposed Nigeria's democracy into money making ventures as this is now the dynamics and motivating factor for politics within the Nigerian polity. The scandalous practice of diverting public funds into private coffers and also of inflating government contracts in the hope of eventual kickback brings to the fore that the challenges facing Nigeria's democracy are deep rooted in bad leadership and corruption. In a similar strand, Achebe describes the overall state of affairs in Nigeria thus:

Indiscipline pervades our life so completely today that one may be justified in calling it the condition per excellence of contemporary Nigerian society. We can see and hear and read about indiscipline in the home, in the school, in public service, in the Legislative Assemblies (Achebe, 1983:24)

Sustaining this position, Chukwudum (1994) argues that, the Nigerian society is perhaps the only society in the world whose social problems are as complex and numerous as her population. Furthermore, Achebe (1983:2) amplifies this view when he notes that:

Whenever two Nigerians meet, their conversation will sooner or later slide into a litany of our national deficiencies. The trouble with Nigeria has become the subject of our small talk in much the same way as the weather is for the English.

Despite the resounding wind of the return of democracy in Nigeria (1999) which, was expected to usher in good governance, the philosophy of "at any cost" or "at any price" has eroded the Nigerian value system and besmirched our reputation as a people (Chukwu, 2013). Notwithstanding the pains and frustration inflicted on Nigerians by corrupt practices perpetrated by all past governments since the enthronement of democratic rule in Nigeria (1999), new ones which ordinarily ought to have been halted are currently growing into mountain heaps and unfortunately, being hypocritically shielded from the public domain by the present government. This is not necessarily because corruption is part and parcel of the change mantra which brought the All Progressive Congress (APC) to power, but because 99% of those in the present government and other political appointees – are those recycled from the past governments infested with corruption. They have been socialized into the different techniques of corruption, and find it hard to break away from the past and are also teaching others to take corruption as way of life.

This explains, according to Abdullah et al. (2016) in the Daily Trust, is due to the fact that twenty one former governors who are now senators in the present National Assembly and four others, at present, federal ministers are currently receiving monthly pensions and at the same time collecting their salaries as senators and ministers of the federal republic of Nigeria, and no one pretends to see. The double pay for these former governors and their deputies which range from 300% to 100% of their annual basic salaries for some and others between N 2.5 million¹ to N 5 million naira per month respectively were passed by the 36 State Houses of Assemblies and assented by the then governors prior to the expiration of their tenures. In Rivers, the law provides

¹ N = Naira, Nigerian currency. 1 Nigerian Naira = 0.0028 US Dollar (April, 2018) (N. E.).

100% of annual basic salaries for ex-governor and deputy, one residential house for former governor “anywhere of his choice in Nigeria”; one residential house anywhere in Rivers for the deputy, three cars for the ex-governor every four years; two cars for the deputy every four years. His furniture is 300% of annual basic salary every four years en bloc. House maintenance is 10% of annual basic salary. In Gombe, there is N300 million executive pension benefits for the ex-governor. In Kwara, the 2010 law gives a former governor two cars and a security car, replaceable every three years, a “well-furnished 5-bedroom duplex,” furniture allowance of 300% of his salary; five personal staff, three State Security Service (DSS), free medical care for the governor and the deputy, 30% of salary for car maintenance, 20% for utility, 10% for entertainment, 10% for house maintenance. For Akwa Ibom State, the law provides for N 200 million annual pay to ex governors, and deputy. They enjoy a pension for life at a rate equivalent to the salary of the incumbent governor/deputy governor respectively. A new official car and a utility vehicle every four years; one personal aide and provision of adequate security; a cook, chauffeurs and security guards for the governor at a sum not exceeding N 5 million per month and N 2.5 million for the deputy governor. There is also a free medical service for governor and spouse at an amount not exceeding N 100 million for the governor per annum and N 50 million for the deputy governor. Also, there is a five-bedroom mansion in Abuja and Akwa Ibom and allowance of 300% of annual basic salary for the deputy governor. He takes a furniture allowance of 300% of annual basic salary every four years in addition to severance gratuity.

Similarly, the Lagos Pension Law approved the following benefits for the former governor, Bola Tinubu, who ruled between (1999 - 2007) and his predecessor, for life: Two houses, one in Lagos and another in Abuja (estimated to

cost N 500 million, and Abuja N 700 million, respectively) Others are six brand new cars replaceable every three years; furniture allowance of 300% of annual salary to be paid every two years, and a close to N 2.5 million as pension (about N 30 million pension annually). They will also enjoy security detail, free medicals including for their immediate families. Other benefits are 10% house maintenance, 30% car maintenance, 10% entertainment, 20% utility, and several domestic staff. This is a reality for all the 21 ex-governors and their deputies in the senate aside the four who are ministers. Though there exists minor differences in these different packages for all former governors, but the question is: How is it that the Economic and Fraud Crime Commission (EFCC) has done nothing to halt this blatant fraud - collecting salaries and allowances, and still have the audacity to claim pension equivalent to the salaries of serving governors in the country? Among the many questions begging for answers, the first is: what was running through the minds of all the members of the different State Houses of Assemblies when such obnoxious and offensive bill was passed into law? Were they hypnotized? Where is the fight against corruption?

Section 2 (a) of the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) law provides that a public officer shall not “receive or be paid the emoluments of any public office at the same time as he receives or is paid emoluments of any other public office; or (b) except where he is not employed on full time basis, engage or participate in the management or running of any private business, profession or trade; but nothing in this sub-paragraph shall prevent a public officer from engaging in farming.” Section 4 of the law says “A public officer shall not, after his retirement from public service and while receiving pension from public funds, accept more than one remunerative position as Chairman, Director or employee of – (a) a company owned or

controlled by the government; or (b) any public authority. A retired public servant shall not receive any other remuneration from public funds in addition to his pension and the emolument of such one remunerative position.” Section 14 of the same law exempted lawmakers from the above provisions thus: “In its application to public officers – (a) members of legislative houses shall be exempted from the Provisions of paragraph 4 of this Code; and (b) the National Assembly may by law exempt any cadre of public officers from the provisions of paragraph 4 and 11 of this Code if it appears to it that their position in the Public Service is below the rank which it considers appropriate for the application of the provisions”.

As a matter of fact, the Nigerian political class has turned the supposed Nigeria’s democracy into money making ventures as this is now the dynamics and motivating factor for politics within the Nigerian polity. The governmental structures are poor and so are holders of political offices are not often accountable. Vying candidates could do anything humanly possible (including murder) just to win election and perhaps become rich overnight. Nigeria since independence has made fortunes worth over \$ 600 billion, although the Save Nigeria Group claimed that the money made so far is \$ 1 trillion and that \$ 600 billion has been stolen by the Nigeria leaders. But a greater part of this money had been siphoned into the private accounts of those in power. As it stands, it is crystal clear that the absence of the right leadership with the right characters, and the right backbone has facilitated the spread of corrupt practices in Nigeria. From genuflecting to perpetual adoration of fraudulent wealth, corruption has eaten deep into all segments of the Nigerian society. Resulting from this menace is the fact that the Nigerian society has consistently been producing a large population of *nouveau riches* whose sources of wealth are never questioned or scrutinized. Even if sources are known

to be corrupt and rotten more than the slim at the bottom of garbage dump, they are still being showcased arrogantly to attract some ovations. In the light of this, so much hope of ethical reorientation, of the value system are said to have been washed ashore in the sands of irrelevance to the extent that greater part of Nigerians can no longer put their footprints on the sands of history such that, in departing, the living may entertain beautiful reminiscences of their sublime achievements (Chukwu, 2016). By implication, the hope of strengthening Nigeria’s ethical reorientation, and also of the value system are said to have been washed ashore in the sands of irrelevance to the extent that greater part of Nigerians can no longer put their footprints on the sands of history such that, in departing, the living may entertain beautiful reminiscences of their sublime achievements. Corroborating, a renowned Kenyan legal scholar, Professor Patrick Loch Otieno Lumumba, believes that President Muhammadu Buhari is not getting the much needed support in his fight against corruption, as many high-profile public office holders and officials in his government are corrupt and also bent on derailing the process of transparency and accountability. According to Kenyan legal scholar, in an interview with Sahara Reporters (2017), the Nigerian president’s lack of support in anti-corruption campaign and this explains why the much intended results are not being felt evenly. Extending his position, he avers that President Buhari is surrounded by corrupt individuals who have normalized corruption in Nigerian society and have prevented his fight against corruption from taking off. Substantiating, Professor Lumumba said

many of these individuals who are in the position of power don’t want to leave because they are thieves and they are scared that if they leave office, they will be prosecuted, and my view is that they should be

prosecuted. What lacks in Africa is punishment, impunity is alive and well in Africa and we, the electorate, are in the business of celebrating thieves.

Concluding, Professor Lumumba remarks thus:

I wish President Buhari institutionalizes and ensures that his agenda is bought by others. No matter how good your idea is, it must be sold to others and they must buy into it. That is how you institutionalize the idea. You cannot be a lone warrior in this matter because the children of darkness hunt like a pack of wolves and they will devour you if you are alone.

In Nigeria, unlike many other developed nations where corruption is abhorred and the long hand of the law generously unleashed on those found guilty without obstructions, thieves are crowned chiefs, and criminals celebrities. This work, therefore, examines democratic governance and the frightening impact of corruption in contemporary Nigerian society since 1999.

Statement of the problem

Nigeria has been ranked as one of the most corrupt nations in the world by the various reports of Transparency International since 2000 when the body beamed her searchlight on the country. The phenomenon of corruption in the Nigerian society is endemic. National legislators, governors and political appointees are simply looting the treasury and buying properties as if it is the end of the world. Materialism and breaches of confidence and betrayal of trust for money, have become the order of the day. Thus, as a norm, funds meant for the general good are daily siphoned, and are shared amongst a few. It is not just the phenomenon of corruption that is the issue, but the impunity with which collective funds are shared amongst a

few. Unfortunately, majority of Nigerians have become too keen about the fanfare, the pomp and panoply with which these corrupt Nigerians are celebrated. National legislators, governors and political appointees are simply looting the treasury and buying properties as if it is the end of the world. Materialism and breaches of confidence and betrayal of trust for corruption, have become the order of the day.

Methodology

The study adopts the descriptive and content analytical methods in the analysis of the secondary data. The study basically involves investigating, recording and analyzing past events with a view to discovering generalizations that are significant in understanding democratic governance and the challenges of corruption in Nigeria.

Theoretical framework

Every research must be based on a theory or theories however this research is based on the Social Learning which is used to analyze the reoccurrence of corrupt practices in Nigerian society, particularly since Nigeria's democratic governance.

The Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory was propounded by Bandura (1971). The theory emphasises that behaviour is learnt and also that, the individual's psychological and social adjustment can be examined in relation to accumulated impact of a series of learning experiences. Bandura (1971) argues that learning principles like observation principle of learning can adequately explain such social psychological adjustment, and that the most fundamental and significant principles of social learning are the reinforcement principles, through which lot of behaviour is learned. Based on this supposition, Tocqueville (1998) writing about corruption in democratic

governance warned about “not so much the immorality of the great as the fact that immorality may lead to greatness”, when private citizens impute a ruler’s success “mainly to some of his vices... an odious connection is formed between the ideas of turpitude and power, unworthiness and success, utility and dishonour”. Such development provide dangerous examples, which discourage the struggle for virtuous independence. In Nigeria, this is what makes it all dangerous; not one leader is exempt from independence. Over the years, corrupt actions of Nigerian leaders have been influencing the public in subtle ways that they often go unnoticed among citizens (Charles, 2011). Prior to Charles (2011), Awoniyi (2003) averred that it often assumed a gradual process and hard to perceive over a period of time until it got to a cancerous height as it is in Nigeria today. But how did Nigerians get here?

Awa (1984) pointed to criminal socialization - a situation where the leadership innovate alternative means other than the societal approved means so as to achieve societal approved goals, and in so doing provides example for the rest of the citizenry to adopt. Aligning, Bandura supports parental role in modeling, and also maintain that reinforcement plays a considerable vital role as far as modeling is concerned in the social and psychological development of children (individuals). In Nigeria, politicians, like other role models in other countries, command a cult-like followership across all age brackets not necessarily because they are charismatic but because of the huge amount of stolen wealth at their disposal. Nigerian politicians all seem to adopt those standards of self-reinforcement that correspond with the standard of the models to which they have been exposed. Thus corruption is encouraged as a positive reinforcement to maintain the cult-like followership and also to develop the tendency for the responses to be repeated in future. Individuals’

characteristic behaviours are thus moulded by their experiences and by the models they imitate. Such models play a very vital role in structuring and remolding the individuals. A child’s socialization and self concept formation therefore depends to a large extent on how he interacts with his environment including the significant others.

Literature review

Democracy

Democracy means different things to different people: a platform for power contestation and not the least a class struggle. As a form of government, it started from ancient Greece, (Athens). Democracy simply means “rule by the people” thus; it is a government of the people, by the people and for the people. Essentially, democracy implies majority rule and respect for fundamental rights of the people. For Dahl (2000), democracy produces desirable consequences, avoiding tyranny, provision of essential rights, general freedom, self determination, moral autonomy, human development, protection of essential personal interests, political equality; in addition, he noted, modern democracies are peace-seeking and prosperous. In a nutshell, it is a government of the majority and always seen as the best form of government because the people exercise their governing power either directly or through representatives periodically elected by them. By extension, democracy provides institutions for the expression and the supremacy of the people or popular will on basic issues bordering on social and policy making. Democracy is a form of government as well as a way of life, goal, ideal and philosophy which guarantees freedom of the majority and rights of the minority. The World Book (2001) maintains that democracy has certain tenets which include: free elections, majority rule, and participation of political parties, unimpeachable judiciary and parliament.

Democracy is an embodiment of the will of the people. Bjornlund et al. (1992) put it succinctly thus:

However, one defines democracy; it is irreducibly a system of government in which the authority to exercise power derives from the will of the people.

For Agbaje (1999), democracy is an idea, process (series of events leading to change or course of action) of system of government. Ademolokun (2000) sees it an idea targeted at enhancing a sound and egalitarian society through an integrated effort of the masses towards a better society. The wellbeing of the citizens largely depends on the extent to which the democratic institution is strengthened and sustained. Therefore, democracy entrenches and expands, or seeks to entrench and expand, rights, ability and capacity of the citizens in a given society. It is always seen as the best form of government whereby people elect their leaders in society. Democracy is about freedom, but it is not freedom to be irresponsible.

Generally speaking, democracy as a way of life involves freedom to make choices about what one does, where he lives, and how he uses his earnings; the operation of institutions-the home, the church, local, state and federal government; the right of justified property ownership; social justice and fairness; absence of social and class barriers, equality of opportunity; and the solution of common problems through the exercise of the free will of the people (Mbachu, 1990). Although the constitution guarantees freedom to form and hold an opinion, the Nigerian situation is such that the competitors for power have taken control of an issue that is definitely well beyond their sphere of competence, and they are making personal profits out of it at the expense of the corporate existence, economic revival and integration of the nation-state. In this vein, other factors such as

political and economic equality, fraternal feelings are basic issues for a successful working of the democratic system. In other words, democratic government should not only be responsible or acceptable to the 'demos'-people or the masses-but indeed political power itself and its expression should emanate from the popular will. However, its practices have taken different dimension across the globe. In developing nations for example, it has been characterized with get-rich-quick syndrome (corruption), tribal and religious politics and money-bag-politics.

The concept of corruption

The term corruption is derived from Latin word "conumpere" which means to "spoil or any action or activity in the society that is contrary to what is right". In Nigeria, every ethnic group has one jargon or another to describe it; the Yoruba call it "egunji," (lit. free food) while the Igbo call it "akazu," (lit. money given through the back hand). In its ordinary meaning, the Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English defines corruption as decomposition, moral deterioration and use of corrupt practices like bribery etc., to get an undue advantage over another. The Encyclopedia Americana defines corruption as "the unsanctioned use of public/political resources and/or goods for non-public ends." The Transparency International (1996) defines corruption as "misuse of public power for private profit". In another strand, the Anti-Corruption Law (Nigeria, 2000) defines corruption beyond the giving and receiving of bribes to include, use of one's office for pecuniary advantage, gratification, insincerity in advice with the aim of gaining advantage, less than a full day's work for a full day's pay, tardiness and slovenliness. Corroborating, Agbakor, (2010) finds an easier explanation of corruption in the Black's Law Dictionary as:

An art done with the intent to give some advantage inconsistent with official duty and rights of others, the act of an official or fiduciary person who unlawfully and wrongfully uses his station or character to procure some benefit for himself or for another person contrary to duty and the right of others.

Corruption is defined as “impairment of integrity, virtue or moral principle” (Dictionary definition). Oyewo (2000) sees corruption from within the context of legal system and administration of justice, as well as from the “internal legal normative expression of the term”. According to him, there is no universally acceptable definition of corruption. Despite the fact that the term “corruption” suffers from multi-definitions in which none seems all embracing; Aidt (2003) has proceeded to define it as a universal, complex and multifaceted phenomenon associated with all forms of human organization. In another strand, Tiihonen (2003) said corruption could be characterized as a “disease” inherent to public power and an indication of bad governance. World Bank (2014) sees it as among the greatest obstacles to economic and social development since it distorts the rule of law and weakens the institutional foundations on which economic growth depends or at least as a serious obstacle to development. A definition provided by the nongovernmental organization Transparency International sees corruption the misuse of trusted power for own profit (TI, 2011). There is, however, public sector definition of corruption as the misuse of public office, roles or resources for private benefit, material or otherwise (OECD, 1996). In practical terms, corruption can take up several facets, such as bribery, embezzlement, fraud, extortion and nepotism (Amundsen, 1999). Given the elusiveness of the definition of corruption, some scholars, perhaps in recognition of the vast meaning that can

be ascribed to corruption have agreed that the term is best treated as the illegitimate use or appropriations of the public votes or resources for private parties. Yelwa (2011:2) defines it thus:

Corruption is a multi-dimensional phenomenon and hence has been defined in multiple ways. Generally, corruption in public sector is simply the abuse of authority by the public officials to make personal gains in the discharge of their official duties. It encompasses activities ranging from bribery, embezzlement, extortion, fraud, favoritism, dishonesty to related illegal or unauthorized behaviors in pursuance of personal objectives.

Exploring further, Chukwu (1998) views corruption as a chronic and recalcitrant rat-race like attitudes of people to grab instant money and material possession irrespective of the means, characteristically for self glorification without the slightest compunction. The laying of greater emphasis on corruption which yields quick-money without an equivalent emphasis on institutional means finds relevance in the work of Merton (1958) that explains the phenomenon of corruption via corruption as a result of the lack of integration between what culture calls for and what the structure permits, the former encouraging success rather than preventing it such that it leads to a strain in the society and can no longer serves as effective guides to behaviour.

Corruption covers a broad spectrum of activities and is by far the greatest problem that has over the years threatens good governance, stability and socio-economic development of any country. It has eaten-deep into the fabrics of the Nigerian society that hardly does a day passes without corruption being discussed. Adetoro (2012) asserts that virtually all the Nigerian ministries and agencies are enmeshed in corrupt practices with the police ranked as the

most corrupt among them. The police have advanced further with specific terminologies for each of the country's denomination. For them, "roja" and "sky" represent twenty Naira and fifty Naira (Nigeria currency) respectively. Thus, it is a common sight at every police roadblock. Interestingly, motorists tend to understand the basic requirement of every roadblock mounted by officers of the Nigeria Police; they stretch out their right hands confidently with squeezed naira notes concealed in folded palms into the waiting palms of the Police officers (collectors).

Concurring with the above assertions, Madike (May 3rd, National Mirror, 2013) further avers that the scandalous revelations that emerged from the defunct Senate Committee Investigation on Pensions was one case too many. Apart from revelations from the Senate committee, a report submitted to the United States Congress by the erstwhile Secretary of State, John Kerry, also alleged massive corruption at all levels of the Nigerian government. The document entitled: "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2012" was prepared by the Department of State using information from US embassies and consulates abroad, foreign government officials, non-governmental and international organizations, and published reports. Under the chapter on Nigeria, Section 4, which dealt with "Corruption and Lack of Transparency in Government," the report stated: "Massive, widespread, and pervasive corruption affected all levels of government and the security forces." Human Rights Watch (HRW) (2012) released *Everyone's in on the Game*, a report on corruption and human rights abuses by the police. The document contained information from 145 interviews, and documented pervasive police extortion with impunity committed by its officers throughout the country. "Police demanded bribes, threatened arrest and physical harm, and enforced a system of 'returns' in which

officers were compelled to pay up the chain of command a share of the money they extorted from the public. This system undermined the rule of law and created a large disincentive for superior officers to hold their subordinates accountable for extortion and other abuses. In the words of Archbishop Peter Akinola, the former Primate of Anglican Communion:

There are indeed Nigerians who are struggling every moment of their life to "gain," to "acquire", to "possess" to own the whole world and in most cases, at the expense of not only of their own life but also of others.

In essence, one could contend that the motive behind this odd desire to own the whole world is borne out of greed. Greed, that excessive, rapacious desire and uncontrolled, burning passion to have more of anything than one really needs or deserves is really disturbing.

From the foregoing, it is clear that every Nigerian person determines what is right or wrong. This argument extends further that each individual person should love life to its fullest and does whatever his heart tells him to do at any moment of his life as long as his appetite is satisfied. In so doing, no one should bother about the rants of the so-called moralists either today or later in life because the same will raise the horn of sycophancy, to praise-sing and glorify anyone when riches come. The promoters of this teaching contemptuously maintain that the so-called moralists in Nigeria are propelled more by their survival instinct than showing commitment to their personal character and integrity. In conclusion, they blame the self-styled moralists for having to create a lot of socio-economic problems for mankind with its ever-static moral system, which too rigid in form creates avenues for poverty to thrive.

From all ramifications, the proponents of corrupt practices advocate

the utilitarian principle, which guarantees their well being and also makes the comfort of any given individual the sole determinant factor of what is right. Ernest Hemingway's manifesto, "what is moral is what you feel good after, and what is immoral is what you feel bad after", may well sum up the attitude of those caught up in corrupt practices.

The poverty of thought of Nnamdi Azikiwe and Obafemi Awolowo

Prior to the inception of democracy, Iwe (1987) argues that, materialism, and breaches of confidence and betrayal of trust for money, have become the order of the day that nothing is so valuable, or so precious or so sacred that it cannot be sacrificed to amass quick wealth in the society.

While it is generally agreed that it is difficult to present a coherent picture of the Nigerian past, one can add that the present is even more confounding and the future very uncertain. Nevertheless, get - rich quick syndrome via corruption has reached a critical turning point, what is not clear is in which direction the country is moving - toward legalizing the craze for instant riches, or toward the reaping of the dividends of democracy. Whichever side the dice falls, it remains an irrefutable fact that the Nigerian society is one that, unfortunately, has taken leave of its conscience, decency and morals. As a result, several empirical research works have been carried out on corruption and democratic rule since the inception of the civilian rule in 1999. The findings have resulted in the generation of several debates and expositions. It is in view of this that Adegbite (n.d.) bluntly averred:

The moral standards of the average Nigerian are very low indeed. Our society is corrupt to the core and that is an open secret even to the outside world that knew us much better than we know ourselves. This

is the present state of our public morality.

However, it is atrocious to observe that new sets of vocabulary have been developed from the Western world to weaken the concept of corruption in the Nigerian society. For example, when individuals take money (it could be anything else) that do not belong to them by means of altering figures, the term defraud is employed. When they spend money or something that is different from what the money is meant for, they are said to have misappropriated. If we could travel back in time and speak with Emile Durkheim or Max Weber, they might be puzzled by this psychosis about corruption in the Nigerian society. Durkheim (1961), after all, once declared that:

If there is one fact that history has irrefutably demonstrated, it is that the morality of each people is directly related to the social structure of the people practicing it. The connection is so intimate that, given the general character of the morality observed in a given society... one can infer the nature of that society, the elements of its structure and the way it is organized (1961 [1925]:87)

Weber (1932), from a different angle, also sees moral action as a vital force in social life and argues that the analysis of such action is an integral part of the existence. In his most famous work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber described it as a study of "the motives of moral action" (Weber, 1932). For all their differences, Durkheim and Weber - along with many other classical theorists - would have considered the separation of the moral from the social unthinkable.

Sustaining the views of Durkheim and Weber, the genesis of this scandalous crave for, and indulgence in corruption which have permeated the Nigerian society over the years, can be

located in the poverty of thought exhibited in the biographies of two of the founding political fathers of modern Nigeria, Dr, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Chief Obafemi Awolowo. Ever since their biographies came to the public domain, Nigerian intellectuals, for fear of some ethnic bigots, seemed to have acquiescence on the over concern for self importance including the preoccupation with self-aggrandizement and the preoccupation with the accumulation of wealth, even the conspicuous proposal for profligate living contained in these biographies. This poverty of thought in Azikiwe (1937) reads: *that henceforth I shall utilize my earned income to secure my enjoyment of a high standard of living and also to give a helping hand to the needy*. Ordinarily, one would have expected a Pan Africanist in the mould of Azikiwe to have de-emphasized his desire for enjoyment of a high standard of living at independence, and bequeath a sound philosophy which would have placed Nigeria on the podium of great countries, but that was never to be. In a similar vein, Chief Obafemi Awolowo inscribes: *I was going to make myself formidable intellectually, morally invulnerable, to make all the money that is possible for a man with my brain and brawn to make in Nigeria*. Ever since these respective lines came to the public domain, Nigeria, from independence, has known no sleep. One question that readily comes to mind is: why this legacy? It is this kind of poverty of thought that in a way prompted a group to merge Christian Religious Knowledge with Civil Education and christen it: Religious and National Values.

The frustrations and disappointments that have tried many a soul for admitting that these unethical philosophies really came from these renowned founding fathers clearly explain why between 1960 and today, a gap of over five decades plus seven, Nigeria has grown to become one of the most corrupt countries in the world. As expected, Nigerian politicians are not

relenting in enjoying a high standard of living at the expense of the electorates that voted for them as was at independence. There has been this consistency amongst disciples of these founding fathers in maintaining such high profile lifestyles and flaunting their corrupt wealth in a way that makes political positions more attractive than any other job in Nigeria. Yet these Nigerian leaders care less about the implication of such lifestyles on the economies of their countries (Dumont, 1998) Sustaining this position, Dumont (1998) also pointed out that the amount of money controlled and the liberty to spend money makes political office holders envy to their civil service counterparts. For instance, the amount of money spent during tours is enough to carry out some major projects in their different constituencies. In addition to their salaries, Nigerian politicians, both by design or crook, receive jumbo allowances and therefore are stinking rich. This has increased the inequality gap in the society while politicians are swimming in affluence; the masses they govern are wallowing in poverty. Basically, the absence of a formidable philosophy from two of the country's most prominent founding fathers has birthed corrupt practices in every nook and cranny of the Nigerian society.

Upholding this position, Achebe (1983) argues that the basic element of this misfortune is the seminal absence of intellectual rigour in the political thought of our founding fathers - a tendency to pious materialistic wooliness and self-centered pedestrianism. Furthermore, Dumont quoted Frantz Fanon to buttress the fact that:

The national bourgeoisie, which takes power at the end of the colonial regime, is an underdeveloped bourgeoisie with practically no economic power... not oriented towards production, invention, construction, work... it enters, soul in peace, on the terrible

anti-national path of a bourgeoisie flatly, stupidly, cynically bourgeois (Dumont, 1998:83).

Dumont (1998) sees the formation of a bourgeois civil-service, characterized by jacket and tie as status symbol, as a culture inherited from the colonial times. So, also is the culture of diverting public funds to buy imported luxuries, like cars for government officials. The granting of excessive privileges and salaries to the elites of the newly independent African states has been passed on to the political officer holders today. These privileges and jumbo salary packages have today become a negative culture which makes public office holders to hold tenaciously to power without a desire to relinquish their seats on the expiration of their tenure.

In examining the implications of the excessive privileges and salaries to the elites of the newly independent, a Nigerian columnist, Osi Momoh (n.d.), in one of his papers indicts the Nigerian society with his characteristic humour:

For the Nigerian, greed is the propelling haft that rotates his compulsive lust for money while ambition continuously provides the lubricating oil for the shaft. To the Nigerian, nothing is more gratifying than the ambition to amass wealth. That is why he arms himself with a fierce determination to succeed.

Osi-Momoh (n.d.) argues that there is an undeclared but clearly maintained race to get-rich-quick regardless of the means. This implies simply that it is all dreams of great expectations by the average Nigerian, dreams of a modern home with all sorts of domestic conveniences and comfort. These include the newest factory customized luxury car or two, possibly a Rolls Royce or Limousine (or both), fleet of domestic vehicles, private homes with a distinct architectural design, commercial estates all over the country,

digital air-conditioner, satellite telephones, satellite dish, high-tec musical equipment, uninterrupted power supply, etc. Supporting this assertion, Enahoro (n.d.) writes a well laid out satire on the wealth acquisition instinct of the Nigerian:

We rejoice when our man is made a minister, Commissioner, Board member, etc not because we hope to share his salary with him, but because we expect him to play his card well,... if after relinquishing his office he fails to erect for himself a row of mansions, own some fleet of cars and maintain a healthy balance in the bank both in Nigeria and Overseas, we shall regard him as a failure. But there is no way he can perform these feats by merely relying on his salary alone. He must look elsewhere

In Nigeria, a political office holder who goes back home at the end of his/her tenure with empty pocket is scorned by his people for missing the opportunity to take a sizeable part of the National Cake (embezzle public funds) - government money, fat bank account; cars on the road and in the parking lots, and in addition, a housing estate are proof of a successful politician (Oyavbaire, 2001). Wealth becomes a criterion for chieftaincy award, honour, respect and recognition (Charles and Ikoh, 2011). As a result, cases of corrupt practices abound despite outcries from many Nigerians, usually those referred to as the "old school" against the continued decline in our unique ways of life to no avail. Succinctly put, scores of Nigerians are today are inflexibly engaged in the business of corruption as a profession. Dishonest practices that were condemned in the past are often winked at today. Thieves and swindlers are frequently being glorified and romanticized in the media.

In turn, many Nigerians fit the description found in the bible: "*where you saw a thief, you were even pleased*

with him" *Psalm 50:18*. For example, an investigation by a US legislative body released in February 2010 showed that former vice president and now, a power broker in All Progressive Congress (APC), Atiku Abubakar, and his wife, Jennifer Douglas Abubakar, removed more than \$40 million in suspect funds from the country between 2000 and 2008. The sum reportedly included at least \$1.7 million in bribe payments from a foreign corporation. Up till now, the EFCC took no action on this published report. The same year, the EFCC authorities arrested Adamu, on allegations of the fraudulent award of contracts and stealing of public funds estimated at N15 billion (\$100 million) during his eight years in office, which ended in 2007. The court granted him bail and ten years after the alleged crime was committed, the case still being investigated. More still, on May 3, 2010, the EFCC also arraigned former PDP National Chairman, Vincent Ogbulafor, on 17 criminal counts of corruption and money laundering in the amount of N2.3 billion (US \$15 million). Ogbulafor filed a petition to dismiss the charges. The case is still in coma till date. Also, the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) board had fired its executive director over allegations including double payment of salaries, expense account payments for trips not taken, and payments of honoraria and other allowances not authorized for government. The report came from an employee, who was later dismissed. No charges were filed. In November 2011, the EFCC detained 10 expatriate and Nigerian employees of Halliburton and its subsidiaries in connection with the \$180 million bribery scandal occurred between 1995 and 2005. While the home country of those expatriates punished their citizens, their Nigerian counterpart was allowed freedom to enjoy their loot. And in August of same year, the then Attorney General of the Federation, Mohammed Adoke, announced that government could not authenticate the Pius Okigbo Panel report that indicted

the former military President, General Ibrahim Babangida, for mismanaging N12.4 billion (\$82 million) during his administration. SERAP later accused Adoke of a cover-up and forwarded to him the original copy of the Pius Okigbo Panel report after he said he was unable to locate it.

Nuhu Ribadu, President Obasanjo and History

In the midst of all these, Nuhu Ribadu in one of his outburst against corruption (*News Magazine, June, 23rd June, 2003*) lamented thus:

There are a lot of things going wrong in this country... there are powerful people who are frustrating the course of justice. There are very extremely powerful, wealthy and important lawyers who are aiding and abetting these crimes. People like these should reconsider what they are doing. Please, have pity on the country. Look at the bad image the country has... they should not just be concerned with what goes into their pockets. People should inject a little moral to what they are doing. People should be a bit fair to the rest of us. What they are doing is extremely unfair to us and to their children... we have no honour, no dignity, and no respect all over the world. This disturbs our entire polity. They are well learned, well placed and well informed people who have taken it as a vocation to be protecting criminals just because they are getting some small portion from the lot. There are a lot of them around and they know that this man clearly stole this money, but they are ready, begging to take part of it in order to protect and help him escape justice. They should please in the name of God, in the name of our country, reconsider their steps. (*News Magazine, 23rd June, 2003*).

From our perch in the 21st century, however, it is clear that aside from the faulty foundation of the Nigerian society from independence, we

have also gone ahead to remove the teaching of History and Social Studies as subjects in our educational curriculum in our quest to grow rich without reflecting on the dire consequences for tomorrow. The realization of the dire consequences of the removal of these subjects by a few, which of course, also prompted this work, might be troubling under any circumstances, but it is especially disconcerting given the explosion of interest in our past by all and sundry, but without any to study and know. As a result, we have too little systematic guidance in our day to day life. Hence, the Nigerian society today is rapidly and surprisingly developing into that of Sodom and Gomorrah or the like. And painfully, one, therefore, watches the Nigerian society these days with intense disgust as it has all of a sudden become a fertile breeding ground for almost all nefarious, despicable and unholy practices one can ever imagine, aimed at guaranteeing quick wealth with little or no toil. The uneven moral terrain that arises there from, besides the conscious lavishing of money on sycophants has had a sedative or hypnotic effect on most, if not all concerned citizens. Consequently, the situation grows worse daily as source of the wealth of dubious individuals is neither questioned nor traced. Today, sensitive appointments are still being made without considering the educational background and area of specialization of such appointees to ensure effective contributions in the discharge of their duties; people simply clap and drum to the high heavens for those who corruptly enrich themselves including ex-convicts who had been jailed previously for corrupt practices to accept many chieftaincy titles. It is indeed disheartening and appalling to note that corrupt enrichment are currently making many Nigerians to display shocking callousness and sadism in their actions, coupled with gross indiscipline and selfishness, thereby bringing misfortune to some families because man's inhumanity to man makes

countless people mourn. Olusegun Obasanjo, then Nigeria's Military Head of state amplifies the menace of this social ill during his first outing as military Head of State, (HOS) at the formal opening of the Command and Staff College, Jaji on Monday, 12th of September 1977, thus:

A nation where the indolent, the dishonest and the inefficient can get to the top or become excessively wealthy is a nation fit for destruction. It will, in fact sooner than later bring destruction on itself.

The Nigerian society, according to him, is not sufficiently disciplined, fair, just or humane". Twenty five years after this famous statement, Obasanjo, now elected civilian president contradicted his earlier stance against corruption. In what appeared like a trance, Obasanjo dropped all charges of financial crimes against Muhammed Abacha, the scion of the Abacha dynasty, especially in the case of the stolen sum of \$ 1.2 billion said to have been misappropriated from the nation's treasury. The government instead of continued prosecution gave the Abacha's family \$100 million in appreciation for their return of the stated stolen sum (Plea bargain). Understanding the grievous implications of his action, President Obasanjo again in the August 12, 2002, lamented thus:

That is one of the hardest decisions I've had to take in my life because I know what the Abacha family hadn't legitimately done any work to deserve \$100 million.

In his broadcast to the nation on the 42nd independence celebration, President Obasanjo came up again:

The real opponents of our Government are those who previously enjoyed, or who are currently enjoying enormous and inordinate economic..., and who now sense the closing down of the avenues from which they have

hitherto amassed or are presently amassing ill gotten wealth.

Ironically, the arrest of former Minister of Works and Housing; Hassan Lawal, for 24 counts of fraudulently awarding contracts, money laundering; and embezzlement of N 75 billion (\$ 480 million); arrest of Dimeji Bankole, former speaker of the House of Representatives, and Deputy Speaker Usman Nafada, for the alleged misappropriation of N 1 billion (\$ 6.4 million) and N 40 billion (\$ 256 million), respectively, occurred during Obasanjo tenure as president. Similarly, the corruption levied against former governors of Otunba Gbenga Daniel (Ogun State), Chief Adeboye Alao-Akala (Oyo State), Alhaji Aliyu Akwe Doma (Nasarrawa State), and Muhammed Danjuma Goje (Gombe State) also took place same tenure. The four (governors) allegedly misappropriate or stole N 58 billion (\$ 372 million), N 25 billion (\$ 160 million), N 18 billion (\$ 115 million), and N 12.8 billion (\$ million), respectively. With these facts happening under his administration, does President Obasanjo, the country's erstwhile leader deserves any positive compliment?

Unfortunately, it is maddening to observe how during the court sessions, hordes of cameraman are struggling to take pictures or record the visual of how suspects are being escorted to the court room by officials of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), in most cases, that is where the trail ends. Nobody cares whether the EFCC prosecutes the case to the end or not (National Mirror Newspaper; May, 5 2013). For example, the corruption case involving a former national legislator, Farouk Lawan is almost forgotten. According to the Sunday Mirror (May, 5 2013), Farouk Lawan, a House of Representatives Committee chairman, investigated the fuel subsidy programme from 2009 to 2011, released a report showing massive fraud, corruption, and inefficiencies in the operation of the

programme. The report alleged misappropriation of nearly half the subsidy funds, with poor or non-existent oversight by government agencies. It estimated government money lost to endemic corruption and entrenched inefficiency to an estimated N 67 trillion (\$ 6.8 billion). The committee recommended reform of the oversight and enforcement mechanisms and further endorsed investigation and prosecution culpable officials. But later, the chairman, Farouk Lawan, was caught on tape collecting \$ 620,000 out of \$ 3 million bribe money from oil mogul, Femi Otedola. The House of Representative referred the bribery allegation to its committee on ethics. But no report has been issued till date.

There was also the stealing N 32.8 billion (\$ 210 million) Police Pension Fund, which led to the arraignment of six suspects including a director at the Police Pension Office, Atiku Abubakar Kigo, who later rose to become permanent secretary in the ministry of the Niger Delta. Five people, including former Director of Police Pension Fund, Esai Dangabar, were accused of misusing N 32.8 billion from the Police Pension Fund. Mr. Dangabar accused some committee members of the Senate of benefiting from the loot. The senate denied the allegation without ordering an investigation. The world may never know whether indeed the Senate joint Committee on Establishment and Public Service Matter, and State and Local Government Affairs indeed took bribes from the pension thieves.

Aside the above, Abdulrasheed Maina, the Chairman of Pension Reform Task Team, accused of looting N 195 billion is yet another corrupt case still awaiting the usual ineffective prosecution. Admittedly, the Senate set up a committee to investigate the matter. During investigation, Mr. Maina alleged that Senator Etuk, representing Akwa Ibom State, demanded \$ 100,000 dollars from him as bribe. A former director of pension in the office of the Head of

Service of the Federation, Sani Shuaibu Teidi, prosecuted along with 31 others, also alleged that Senator. Etuk and other members of the committee collected a bribe of N 3 billion from him. Although the Senate seemed furious about the allegation, it did not take decisive steps to investigate. While the corruption charge remains unresolved, Senator

Aloysius Etuk has since deflected from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to All Progressive Congress (APC) where he has been appointed Special Assistant to the President on National Assembly Matters without recourse to the corruption charge against him by Abdulrasheed Maina, the Chairman of Pension Reform Task Team.

Table 1. Showing N 469 billion pension cash scandal against Abdulrasheed Maina, the Chairman of Pension Reform Task Team.

N 469 billion	Total pension cash allegedly mismanaged.
N 273.9 billion	Pension cash allegedly diverted (2005-2011).
N 195 billion	Pension cash discovered missing in December 2012.
N 221 billion	The cash that Maina claimed to have saved for government.
N 71,135 billion	Ghost pensioners Maina claimed he saved from the system.

Source: Daniel and Omonobi (2013).

It is most disheartening to observe that the electronic media, tabloids and periodicals, which have as one of their primary functions the education of the masses, especially on the evils that accompany this negative trend have simply become cold and indifferent in spite of the moral rot inherent in the menace. Earlier, the former British Secretary, Jack Straw, has urged Nigeria to copy the British model by meting out stiffer penalties to corrupt officials, adding that allowing for transparency in governance and having clean courts to handle corruption related cases in the land, would go a long way in reducing corruption in the country (Eme et al., 2015). Quoting Straw et al. (2015) aver:

There's need to raise the penalty for corruption in Nigeria. You have anti-corruption laws, you have great laws and you jail people on corruption and you ensure proper transparency; then, it's safe to say that people would stop being corrupt. You've got to change the quality of your public

administration. One of the encouraging signs about Nigeria is the fact that you have effective and viable opposition because democracy requires that there's change. In democracy, there are alternatives. What message can I give you about opposition? Well, first of all, you can change the weather in opposition. Although you've not got the votes, you've got the voice. As you make the better use of the voice, you get public support then you start to unnerve the government (Eme et al., 2015: p. 71-72).

Still exemplifying the views of Eme et al. (2015) state:

Leadership is about character, but if you don't have the right leaders, who have the right characters, the right backbone, then, it won't work. He won't have the qualities to bring out the best in people who would work with him. Of course, elections are fought through the prisms of leaders...don't mistake quantity of policies for quality of policies (Eme et al., 2015: p. 84-85).

Unfortunately, the inability of Nigeria to curb this monster called corruption has earned her an appellation as one of the most corrupt nations in the world. According to Transparency International, Nigeria was, in the year 2000, the most corrupt country. Transparency International, a Berlin based organization monitors corrupt practices around the world. During the period under review, the organization carried out a survey on the corruption levels of 90 countries, including Kenya, Cameroon, Angola, Nigeria, Côte-d'Ivoire, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Ghana, Senegal, Zambia, India, Venezuela, Moldova, and others. At the end of the ranking, Nigeria came first from the rear. She occupied the 90th position out of 90 countries surveyed. In 2001, Nigeria was ranked the second-most corrupt nation in the world out of 91 countries, falling only to Bangladesh. This shows that corruption in Nigeria improved by one step when compared with that of 2000. Thirteen years later, the Corruption Perceptions Index 2013 showed that corruption remains a global phenomenon. In 2014, Nigeria was ranked 136 out the 174 surveyed countries meaning that she was ranked the 38th most corrupt country in the world. However, in 2015, Nigeria came 26th out of the 100 surveyed countries. Transparency International Result (TIR) results are a product of interviews with respondents. The Berlin-based organization said the primary aim of the GCB report is to explore respondents personal experiences of paying bribes for government services on one hand' and on the other, to gauge perception of the integrity of major public institutions.

Conclusion and recommendations

This paper has attempted to demonstrate that the relentless pursuit of corrupt practices is pouncing on the Nigerian society with the velocity and ferocity of a starved lion. Corruption is blossoming well in Nigeria without

signs of letting up because it seems to be everywhere. Without a halt, this leaves many wondering why the Nigerian society is irresponsibly being destroyed by the absolute devotion to corrupt practices. The wild chase for corrupt practices through any means has been felt and continue to be felt so much that, among human desires and passions, legitimate or otherwise, the love for corruption ranks higher than one could ever imagine. In other words, the persistent pursuit of corrupt practices has indeed been cryptic, defiant, bold, and audacious and without pretences such that, it has reached the level where it is supported by avarice, thus becoming unending unlike the desire for sex.

As a way of remedying the ugly situation, this paper proffers the following recommendations to checkmate this hydra-headed syndrome of corruption in Nigeria's democratic governance since 1999,

1. First and foremost, all pensions accruing past leaders who are currently senators and ministers should be stopped forthwith. After all, Section 14 of the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) law exempted lawmakers from the above provisions thus: "In its application to public officers -(a) members of legislative houses shall be exempted from the Provisions of paragraph 4 of this Code; and (b) the National Assembly may by law exempt any cadre of public officers from the provisions of paragraph 4 and 11 of this Code if it appears to it that their position in the Public Service is below the rank which it considers appropriate for the application of the provisions." By extension, all past military officers currently holding one office or another should not be spared.

2. Despite the above stated law, a coalition of Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) should go a step further by suing the 36 state governors, 36 state assemblies,

RMAFC and the attorney general of the federation seeking to nullify the various pension laws enacted by some of the 36 States Houses of Assembly. Aside from this, organized civil societies should also play active roles by monitoring government officials, programmes and policies with a view to reviewing their activities and know if any unethical practice has taken place.

3. The immunity clause in the constitution generates conflict of values, as certain political leaders based on 'life situation' are immune from the corruption law. The gospel of 'do what I say and not what I do' has long failed to create virtuous citizen. There is need therefore to amend section 35 of the Nigeria's constitution, which houses the immunity clause. According to Charles (2011), there is convergence of opinion that what makes corruption in Nigeria a peculiar mess' is that no one in high places ever get caught and punished, until recently. Even at that, it was what they call "plea bargaining; give us part of what you have stolen, plead guilty and be sentenced for less than a year, thereafter, go and take the rest of the stolen money".

4. The government should de-emphasize money politics and make legislative duties part-time basis as is practised in other developed countries. Also former governors aspiring for any other elective office should forfeit their pension on assumption of office in another capacity.

5. In addition, there should be mass mobilization against corruption, such mobilization will not only help in creating awareness against corruption, but challenge bodies such as ICPC, EFCC and other related agencies, in the struggle to checkmate corrupt practices. Succinctly put, there should be a corrupt free value re-orientation as this border on moral regeneration of the social norms and mores of the

Nigerian people towards materialistic life as well as greediness. This can be done through the use of governmental and non-governmental bodies like the National Orientation Agency (NOA), Campaign for Democracy (CD), etc.

6. There should need to sustain value re-orientation crusade against corrupt practices. Hard work and honesty should be recognized and rewarded. When Nigerians are made to realise that honesty can lead them to reach their goals with dignity; they will be inculcated into that belief.

7. There is also need to restructure the caliber of people in government. Many of those in government and other political appointees – are those recycled from the past corrupt civilian and past military regimes. They have been socialized into the different techniques of corruption.

They now find hard to break away from the past and are also teaching others to take corruption as way of life.

8. The fight against corruption require direct, clear and forceful support of the highest political authority. In this instance, the EFCC should stop playing the ostrich and quicken the prosecution of all corrupt offenders without fear or favour such that stiff and enforceable punishment be fully applied upon offenders such as long jail terms, life ban from political activities, forfeiture of assets of officials who have been found guilty etc. Furthermore, the media should be encouraged to report to the public, corrupt Practices in the society.

9. Finally, the judicial system of prosecuting corrupt officials should be made more resulted oriented and effective. Prosecution of corrupt individuals should be done without being selective. In addition, there should be adequate personnel and technological capacity for fighting

corruption in the various anti-corruption institutions in Nigeria.

Conflicts of interest

Authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

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