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## **TOPICS:**

MEDIA OBJECTIVITY AND PARTISANSHIP  
IN NATIONAL ELECTIONS

*G G Darah*

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CORRUPTION, DEMOCRACY AND  
DEVELOPMENT: FIFTY YEARS ON

*Fatile Jacob Olufemi & Adejuwon Kehinde David*

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TRADITIONAL AFRICAN IDEOLOGY  
AND THE CHALLENGES OF  
DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

*Emmanuel J. Ibuot*

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RELOCATING NIGERIA'S CAPITAL TO ABUJA  
1976 - 2007: AN APPRAISAL

*Julius Unumen*

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## **DIDACTIC MATERIAL**

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# CORRUPTION, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT: FIFTY YEARS ON

*Fatile Jacob Olufemi & Adejuwon Kehinde David*

## Abstract

*This study deals with corruption in Nigeria. Corruption is a complex and persistent cancerous global phenomenon which bedevils Nigeria. This pervasive and endemic virus has been the bane of democratic stability and socio-economic and political development in Nigeria since independence. The study reveals that many scholars have traced the roots of this social malaise to military incursion into politics. But recent events, particularly under the present democratic rule have shown that corruption is not limited to a particular regime type, but it is endemic in the Nigerian society. The effect of corruption on the nation's democratic process is myriad. The study reflects on the nexus between corruption, development and democracy in Nigeria. The study argues that as long as corruption continues in the Nigerian system, it would be difficult for the country to achieve sustainable democracy and development. Finally, it makes some recommendations for combating this ugly monster.*

## Introduction

Corruption is a complex, multifaceted and persistent cancerous global phenomenon, which characterises the global economy. Although corruption is a global problem the attitude of many

countries, especially developed countries is to bemoan the practice of corruption in developing countries and ignore the role of foreign officials who give bribes and public officials who hide corrupt proceeds in foreign financial institutions<sup>1</sup>. Corruption as one of the

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oldest phenomenon in human society has endured to date. Corruption exists throughout the world, in developed and developing countries alike. In recent years there have been significant increase in the attention paid to corruption, in part due to series of high level corruption cases in industrialised countries and due to an increasing awareness of the costs of corruption throughout the world and due to the political and economic changes many countries are undergoing.

Corruption in Africa is a development issue. African countries cannot bear the cost of corruption, which impedes development and minimises the ability of government to reduce poverty. Effectively addressing corruption in African countries has become a development imperative<sup>2</sup>. Thus, within the last one decade or so, the issue of corruption has taken the centre stage in development discourse and Africa being the poorest and most under developed continent, despite its immense human and natural resources, is the laboratory for those discourses<sup>3</sup>.

Nigeria is one of the countries in the world that have been identified as being the most corrupt. Indeed, at the heart of the

litany of Nigeria's development problems is a fundamental crisis of corruption. Corruption is a complex and persistent cancerous global phenomenon, which bedevils Nigeria. In Nigeria, as in many African states, corruption is a malaise that afflicts the society. Corruption drains from African countries over \$140 billion per year<sup>4</sup>. It deters investment because it is disincentive to potential investors; it distorts public expenditure, increases the overheads of running businesses, and diverts resource from poor to rich countries. Corruption as viewed by Ogundiya<sup>5</sup> has been the bane of legitimacy, democratic stability and socio – economic and political development in Nigeria. Indeed, any attempt to understand the tragedy of development and the challenges to democracy in Nigeria must come to grips with the problem of corruption and stupendous wastage of scare resources. All attempts by successive regimes to nip the problem in the bud have failed. With the benefit of hindsight, virtually all the Nigerian leaders who have come in as physicians have left office as patients.

A bit more on the traumatic political and economic background of Nigeria might also help us to analyse the lingering crisis of democracy and corruption in the country. Nigeria is one of the world's most endowed nations, with abundant human and natural resources. There is practically every vital mineral deposit in all the states of the federation; from crude oil to gold, cocoa to coal, uranium to gypsum, palm oil to rubber, coffee to timber, cattle to fish, all in commercial quantities. However, Nigeria remains one of the developing but under – industrialised nation of the world. Many observers see Nigeria once the “giant of Africa” now economically bankrupt as a result of the way the leadership has mishandled the economy<sup>6</sup>. In Nigeria, the revelations of corrupt practice coming out of the various probe panels are so mind-boggling. This serves as a confirmation that corruption is a way of life in Nigeria. In fact, it seems to many that with democracy all the nation's problem would be solved. This was partly created by the politicians who made all manners of promises as they woo potential voters in the various constituencies<sup>7</sup>.

The phenomenon of corruption in Nigeria can be further explained by the twin concepts of prebendalism and clientilism in the politics of the nation. Joseph<sup>8</sup> argued that clientilism and prebendalism are two fundamental elements of the socio-political system which affect and determine, to a great extent, the allocation of public goods in Nigeria. However, this paper interrogates corruption in Nigeria through the prisms of Clientelism, Prebendalism, and Neopatrimonialism. It argues that rather than fattening the primordial public, the ‘robberies’ that have taken place at the civic public have further pauperised the primordial public, if fattening in this sense is taken to mean social and economic development. The paper also provides some further explanation for the endemic corruption in Nigeria and its effect on sustainable democracy and development. It concludes that sustainable democracy and development have been eluding Nigeria due to corruption. Different corrupt practices continue to exist as normal way of life in Nigeria due to the attitudes and commitment of the governments which have not

transcend the realm of sloganeering and rhetoric.

### **Conceptualising Democracy, Development and Corruption**

The central concepts in this paper include democracy, corruption and development. This section therefore aims to operationalise these concepts in order to give an in-depth appraisal of democracy and development under the shadow of corruption in Nigeria.

Democracy has been an object of diverse interpretations, depending on people's political persuasions and ideological leanings. Democracy is a relative and elusive concept. The concept of democracy has been subjected to infinite debates over the centuries<sup>9</sup>. To some people, it means giving equal and political rights to the citizens while to others, it is only achieved when the aspirations of the masses are no longer thwarted by powerful elites. The obvious alternative to authoritarianism is democracy. To some democracy is reflective of the political climate of our time, The word is used to signify the desirable end state of so many social, economic, and political pursuits, or else to self-designate and presumably legitimise so many existing structures<sup>10</sup>. To Ogunsanwo<sup>11</sup>, democracy can be defined as a series of processes and cultural values which relate to the

election of leaders at all levels of society, the behaviour of groups and individuals vis-a-vis those who hold different views on issues under consideration, as well as the use of power by those the process placed in decision making positions. According to Osaghae<sup>12</sup>, democracy is "how to govern the society in such a way that power actually belongs to the people". To Schumpeter<sup>13</sup>, democracy is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the people's vote, independent judiciary, bill of fundamental human rights, a free market economy and a two or multi-party system in which every party has a chance of coming to power through periodic elections.

According to Sadeeq<sup>14</sup>, from the Socialists and Marxist school of thought, democracy is tantamount to all power belonging to the people, which can only be ensured if they collectively own and control the means of production, thereby depriving the bourgeoisie of all power. Marxist scholars have argued further that the minority capitalists who own the means of production in capitalist democracies actually rule, while creating an erroneous impression that they can do a great deal, whereas, in actual fact, it is nothing more than a deceit. They (the masses) can do nothing because all the wealth, all the power of capital is in the hands of their enemies. In his own view, Chafe<sup>15</sup>

contends that democracy means, among others, the involvement of the people in the running of the political, socio-economic and cultural affairs of their society. Democracy in Freire's philosophy of conscientization is basically defined as the government in which the ruled have absolute say in their own government<sup>16</sup>. The Nigerian state, given its origin and nature, has never been conducive for democracy. This is because it was a state created by force, domination and imposition, rather than by consensus.

Another concept central to this paper is development. Development is a complex and multidirectional concept. It has many facets, social, political, economic and cultural. It suffices to say that development as a phenomenon affects all aspect of the life of individual and the society. Development has been very important in the last two hundred years; it has acquired greater importance since the end of the Second World War<sup>17</sup>. To Omotola<sup>18</sup>, development is conterminous with "capacity expansion" and freedom. As capacity expansion, it requires adequate empowerment of the state and society such that they can adequately distil their complimentary responsibilities. It also requires enhanced state capacity as well as institutional and government stability. As freedom, development demands great latitude of autonomy for the

political community and its constituent parts, as well as the individual member of such community.

Thomas<sup>19</sup> provides some views about development. One is seeing development as an all-encompassing change, and not just an improvement in one aspect. Two, it is not just a one-off process of change to something better, but also a process which built on itself. There, it involves changes occurring at the level of social change and level of individual human being. He also distinguishes three main senses in which the term development is used. Firstly "as a vision, describing or measuring the state of a desirable society". Secondly, as an "historical process of social change in which societies are transformed over long periods". Thirdly, "as deliberate effort aimed at improvement" on the part of various agencies, including governments, all kinds of organisation and social movements.

Development, no matter how it is conceptualised, is people centred. It is about putting human face to human affairs. In the context of this paper therefore we define development in its broadest sense as a sustainable multi-pronged process of good governance and socio-economic progress that has the integrity, well being and security of the individual and the society (as well as state and nation) at large as its core<sup>20</sup>.

Recently, development literature has come to emphasise sustainability of development. Sustainable development connotes developments that endures or lasts; one that will not roll back or recede even in the face of threatening reversal waves. This according to Omotoso<sup>21</sup> is the development that can guarantee the protection of the environment and resource today and tomorrow. It is also one that is self-sustaining and meets the needs of present and future generations.

Essentially, to understand the state of development in Nigeria, one must be able to understand the value attached to development in the country and indeed its politics. This is particularly necessary when it is realised that for five decades (50 years) of pursuing development agenda since Nigeria is independence, little could be shown for it. In fact, Ake<sup>22</sup> noted that African economies have been stagnating or regressing, by and large; one can say that great difficulty trails the use of the concept of development as an analytical tool in the study of African situation. This is because development is often used both from ideological and political perspective.

Democracy and development therefore share in common attributes such as popular, empowerment, participation and freedom. Development is continuous as no nation, even the so-

called developed countries, can be said to have attained the highest stage or level. Development must be viewed as a process. Thus, no nation has ever said or can say with complacence that development is finished. For, in the process of meeting the old and current needs and with different challenges in the economy, political administration and governance, and organising the civil society, new needs arise and new challenges are thrown up<sup>23</sup>. The point must be emphasised that the possibilities for furthering development, for moving society forward are inexhaustible.

Thus, the basic problem of democracy and development in Nigeria is the nature and orientation of the political actors as framed by the nature of the Nigerian state. The political actor, either as a ruler or an opposition member, is concerned with his selfish interest<sup>24</sup>.

Scholars have reviewed corruption from different perspectives. In fact, there is a substantial body of literature on corruption. Corruption is an inappropriate or illegal behaviour of the public sector official who misuse the entrusted power for self-aggrandisement. It is usually outside of constitutional framework, which involves the sale of publicly produced goods and services by public officials for illegal gains. Corruption is a form of rent-seeking enterprise or activity, which is illegal, or an unauthorized transfer of

money from one person to another (or group to group), or an in-kind substitute<sup>25</sup>.

As one of the oldest and most perplexing phenomenon in human society, corruption exists in every country in the contemporary world and it is not exclusively a problem of developing countries. The World Bank<sup>26</sup> defined corruption as “the abuse of public office for private gains”. This includes, when public officials accept, solicit or extort bribes; and the private actors offer bribes to subvert or circumvent public policies for competitive advantage and profit”. Similarly, the UNDP<sup>27</sup> defined corruption as the “misuse of public power, office or authority for private benefit – through bribery, extortion, influence peddling, nepotism, fraud, speed money or embezzlement”. Obasanjo<sup>28</sup> defined it as, “..the misuse of public power for private and personal benefit...”.

Broadly speaking, corruption is an illegal act, which involves inducement or/and bad undue influence of people either in the public setting or the private sphere to act contrary to the extant rules and regulations which normally guide a particular process. It not only perverts justice, it compromises it<sup>29</sup>. According to Akanbi<sup>30</sup> corruption equals monopoly

plus discretion minus accountability. It is given by the following equation:

$M + D - A = C$ , where M = Monopoly, D = Discretion, A = Accountability and C = Corruption. The key element of accountability refers to the extent to which government officials are subjected to oversight and held to standard information is available to measure performance against the standard, and as a result discretion has limits.

To Anifowose<sup>31</sup>, corruption, viewed from different perspectives by scholars, share some common concern: it is a serious societal problem about which something has to be done to reduce its occurrence and prevalence.

From the above descriptions, it is clear to us that there is a linkage between corruption and development. In other words, corrupt practices impact directly on development. If, for instance, development is conceived to include the capacity of a government or system to manage resources efficiently to improve the well being of the citizens, then corruption can be thus regarded as one of the main obstacles to good governance and development. In Africa, therefore, the system lacks the capacity to manage its resources effectively and improve the quality of life of the people



because corruption poses a major threat to good governance and expected development<sup>32</sup>.

The relationship between corruption and democracy is noticeable in government's transparency that is becoming an increasingly important topic in both stable and new democracies. Measuring the level of corruption in public office is central to the question of good governance. Today, the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) by Transparency International (TI) is becoming of great value. Most societies have a certain degree of corruption permissiveness, with some of them being on the average likely to justify corrupt practices than others<sup>33</sup>

### **Corruption and the Nigerian State**

Post-independent Nigeria has been grappling with the monster of corruption. This situation is not peculiar to Nigeria, as other less developed countries and even the developed ones are caught in this web. Government departments (both local and international), international financial institutions and supranational political agencies and bodies have taken up the gauntlet through various publications and policy statements denouncing corruption in Africa, particularly

in Nigeria<sup>34</sup>. Nigeria is not significantly dissimilar to many developing countries. It has been acknowledged in many quarters that corruption is Nigeria's worst problem, which is responsible for its social problems, such as the instability in the Niger Delta, the debt overhang, barriers to democratic elections, and impediment to flow of foreign direct investment<sup>35</sup>.

Nigeria has been variously classified as a "failing" or "fragile" state in which there is a consistent failure by the governments to honour the social contract made with the people and where practices have adversely affected its development<sup>36</sup>. In fact, corruption has become a way of life in Nigeria which the government in power cannot ignore. To be sure, corruption and cronyism have long haunted Nigeria<sup>37</sup>.

The first and second republics failed essentially due to corruption which the political gladiators relied upon. Besides, military appetite for greed and power also contributed to the continuous rise in corrupt practices in the country. There is no doubt that the scope of corruption in Nigeria has

expanded significantly since the administrations of Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha.<sup>1</sup> For Omotoso<sup>38</sup>, corruption in Nigeria has moved from prebendalism to predation in which office holders and public officials try to repay their supporters, family members, cronies, ethnic group members etc with sums of money, contracts or jobs.

In virtually all the institutions of the Nigerian state, corruption rears its ugly head as the hallmark of official business. Virtually all government agencies ranging from federal ministries to national, state and even at the local government levels, have recorded one case of corruption or another<sup>39</sup>. The severity of corruption in Nigeria informs Olarinmoye<sup>40</sup> to assert that, "corruption has become the major export apart from oil". Part of the reason for the burgeoning of corruption is the reliance of the economy on oil, which encourages rent-seeking and corrupt activities<sup>41</sup>. Also there are reports that about £212bn oil money has been looted from the country's treasury by the past and present leaders. Past bitter experiences in Nigeria revealed that, we are yet to learn from the

past as the effect of corruption soars by the day. A recurring issue in Nigeria's political formation in the post-colonial period is the monopolisation of the political field by corrupt, self-conceited leaders<sup>42</sup>.

Corruption has therefore assumed a normal pattern of life in Nigeria. A way of getting "everything" done and a norm in the land. Consequently, the situation has rendered the Nigerian state – a non delivery state. Corruption has denied the Nigerian people the beauty of good governance. This as a matter of fact, has already been identified with all administration since independence in 1960<sup>43</sup>.

Within the context of the Nigerian state, it is not as if successive governments have not realised the problem posed by corruption to the socio-economic and political development of the country. Without doubt, successive government at one point or the other have been making series of attempts at combating corruption through series of anti-corruption campaigns. What is in doubt however is the impact of the anti-corruption campaigns on society<sup>44</sup>.



Historically, large scale corruption began with the advent of military rule in Nigeria in 1966. There was looting of the Nigeria treasury as well as the bastardisation of public institutions and civil morality by successive military administrations, especially those of Ibrahim Babangida, Sanni Abacha and Abdulsalam Abubakar. Succeeding military regimes have been more corrupt than those they toppled and which they had initially accused of corruption<sup>45</sup>. It is instructive to note that over the years, various administrations in Nigeria have articulated policies and measures designed to combat corruption. Under the Gowon administration, the cry against corrupt practices in Nigeria became disturbing as a result of alarming rate of different forms of scandals resulting from the importation and exportation of goods particularly in relation to port congestion. No wonder, Maduagwu<sup>46</sup> stated thus:

Gowon's regime was unashamedly corrupt to the macro. Everyone knew it. They did not hide it from public gaze. His pledge to enact an anticorruption decree like other promises was never fulfilled. And

when an attempt was made to expose these evils, he suppressed the attempts with the very weight of his high office.

When General Muritala became the head of state, he set up Assets Investigation Panel which confiscated assets illegally acquired by Nigerians. The panel indicted ten (10) of the twelve (12) Governors and subsequently had their assets confiscated. The total value of assets confiscated from Governors in 1976 was over N10million. Shehu Shagari set up code of conduct for public servants to combat corruption while General Buhari initiated the War Against Indiscipline. Though General Ibrahim Babangida set up ethical and social mobilization crusade. Indeed, there was no serious commitment to the anti-corruption drive of its predecessor rather he launched Nigeria to eight years of Kleptocratic rule characterised by corrupt practices of different shapes<sup>47</sup>. For instance the following according to Maduagwu are some of Babangida's corrupt practices.

- \$12.2 billion Gulf war wind fall in 1991.
- 30% of oil revenue diverted to frivolous uses throughout the time.

- Huge extra budgetary spending
- \$200 million siphoned from Aluminium Smelter project
- \$400 million wasted on Better Life project.
- Colossal corruption at the NNPC e.g. \$101million for the purchase of strategic storage facilities.

The Abacha administration set up Okigbo panel which indicted General Babangida and the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria of frivolous and clandestine spending. However, his regime was to follow the pace set by the Babangida administration in looting from the treasury a total sum of N64.25billion. The Christopher Kolade panel set up to review contracts licences and appointment made under the Abdulsalam administration came out with shocking revelation. The Abdusalam administration made mockery of any sense of discipline and probity and at a scale that practically made saint of his predecessors. The Abdusalam administration cannot be absolved of mass looting of the public treasury<sup>48</sup>.

In its effort to fight corruption and create credibility to attract

international investments, the Obasanjo government among other things established the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices (and other related offences) Commission (ICPC) and the Code of Conduct Bureau. Successive governments, both civilian and military, have attempted stemming this ugly tide. Yet, this ugly situation persists. Even under the Obasanjo administration and the ongoing political dispensation, in spite of the anti-corruption crusade, cases of corrupt practices involving key political officers have been revealed.

The foregoing shows the depth of corrupt practices in Nigeria. All efforts made to address the problem that is rooted in the fabric of the country have been largely cosmetic. The failure of these efforts is indicative of the inability of our leaders to handle state affairs and as a consequence threatens democratic rule and sustainable development. It is clear therefore that corruption engenders the enthronement of bad and corrupt political leadership, poor governance, ineffective administration and pauperisation of the people. It divert scarce

resources into private pockets and thus undermines effective governance, hinders democracy and erodes the social and moral fabric of nations<sup>49</sup>.

### **Corruption, Democracy and Development in Nigeria**

The dialectical relationship between corruption and development has over the years attracted the attention and exploration of scholars and international development agencies and institution. Corruption is a plague, a disease, spreading itself throughout developing nations including Nigeria, and the world needs to inoculate these nations against this infection<sup>50</sup>.

The problem of corruption in Nigeria is real, deep rooted and severe. No meaningful solution to the state of infrastructure, mass unemployment, urban vagrancy, homelessness, increase deterioration of the standard of living underlined by the absence of good nutrition, health care and educational facilities without dealing with the scourge of corruption<sup>51</sup>. Corruption leaves ordinary people without essential service, such as life – serving medicine, and deprives them of access to sanitation and

housing. It increases the cost of basic social services<sup>52</sup>. No wonder, Kenneth<sup>53</sup> argues that;

corruption has led to bad roads and decaying infrastructures, inadequate medical services, poor schools and failing education standards and disappearance of Aid and foreign loans and of entire project without a trace.

It diverts resources from the poor to the rich, increase the cost of running businesses, distorts public expenditures, and deters foreign investment. In short, corruption cost lives<sup>54</sup>.

In Nigeria, billions of naira has been diverted into foreign accounts by political office holders. The implication of this is that the resources that ought to be used for development projects are diverted into private accounts thereby stunting development. This abuse of office has been identified for Nigeria's long – term economic retrogression and decay. Which in the opinion of Ologbenla<sup>55</sup> have fundamentally led to the underdevelopment of the Nigerian state since independence.

On the political platform, corruption poses a serious developmental challenge. It

undermines democracy and good governance by flouting or even subverting formal processes. It erodes the institutional capacity of government as procedures are disregarded. Corruption distorts democratic procedures. It impedes democratic aspirations, and popular participation. It also undermines the legitimacy of government and democratic values such as trust and tolerance<sup>56</sup>. For instance, Agbalajobi<sup>57</sup> points out that Nigeria and other African countries lacked structures with adequate autonomy and strength to check not only corruption, but other abuses of power as well. The electoral institutions have been heavily penetrated by partisan and corrupt pressures in most African democratic experiment. In a nutshell, corruption has the capacity for engendering political instability, breaking down of law and order and causing inefficiency of public service among others<sup>58</sup>.

Despite return to civilian rule, corruption has remained pervasive across Nigeria, and has effect on the process of building credible, viable and strong democratic institutions in the country. Democracy is seen as the only avenue corruption could be

checked but, instead of such happening in Nigeria corruption is becoming a household way to wealth accumulation. The problem of corruption in Nigeria is real, deep rooted and severe. The electoral institutions have been heavily penetrated by partisan and corrupt practices. The seemingly corrupt management of the National Assembly finance has also eroded the powers of the legislature to check effectively the executive. It has also become a source of discord among legislators disposed to financial profligacy within the House resulting into fractionalisation. Olojede<sup>59</sup> observed that the legislative activities for the most part of 1999 – 2003 focused on convocation of executives sessions, party and zonal caucuses to ensure the survival of legislative leadership against the onslaught of exposition of corrupt practices in the management of the House Finances. Several cases of financial abuses were levelled against the National Assembly leadership.

Since the coming to power of the current democratic government, scandals upon scandals seem to be the order of the day. From the

leadership, electoral body, civil service, financial institutions, military, police and other para-military groups, the story is the same. Obasanjo<sup>60</sup> has judged that corruption's pernicious effects are more debilitating, more oppressive, more corrosive, and more of a hindrance to democracy, human rights, good governance and development in Africa than elsewhere. In the same vein, the organisation of Catholic Bishops in Nigeria states that "Corruption is an affront on human dignity, as assault on human conscience, and a negation of the Christian vocation to build, here on earth, a kingdom of truth and justice.

Without doubt, corruption as noted by Lawal<sup>61</sup> has eaten deep into the fabric of the Nigerian people. However, the next section suggests ways of dealing with the plague of corruption.

### **Combating Corruption: The Way Out**

Corruption poses a greater challenge to democracy and development in Nigeria. It is a scourge negating democratization process and development. Eradicating this ugly monster is a task that must be done and

urgently too. It would be presumptuous and reductionist to suggest that corruption cannot be combated, just as it is unrealistic to think that we can create a corruption-free society. Corruption is man-made. It is not a natural condition. Consequently, it is possible to reduce its prominence to a scale when it no longer acts as a threat to good governance and national development<sup>62</sup>.

Fighting corruption is not the task of government alone; but a joint effort of all in the country. In order for Nigeria to successfully combat corruption there is the need for mechanisms that will transform dramatically the culture and legacy of corruption. The way forward is breaking the bondage of bad governance and mismanagement and anti-social attitudes. Combating corruption requires a popular participatory democracy able to monitor and hold to account those in charge of the state and treasury. As noted by Obayelu<sup>63</sup>, positive transformation of Nigeria can only occur through addressing the root causes of corruption and through effective application of extant legal mechanisms for combating corruption in the country.

Participatory democracy is a necessary requirement in

combating corruption, it facilitates monitoring and holding to account those in charge of affairs of state. Government should demonstrate the leadership and political will to combat and eradicate corruption in all sectors of government and society by improving governance and economic management striving to create a climate that promote transparency, accountability and integrity in public endeavour. The issue of corruption should be taken as a security threat to the nation; hence ethical standard/values should be revisited.

Government implementing anti-corruption measures has to demonstrate seriousness and achieve results to build public confidence." As noted by Akanbi<sup>64</sup>, the government should not use the anti-corruption commissions for arrest and prosecution of suspected culprits alone but also to provide a mechanism to prevent the malaise from spreading in our society. In addition, government should remove all the legal, political and social constraints that hamper the effective operation of the anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria. The anti-

corruption agencies (EFCC and ICPC) more than ever before should step up its campaign against corruption with the objective of implanting transparency, honest living and fiscal discipline in the heart of the citizens. While the country must continue to seek international cooperation on issues related to corruption so that funds wrongly acquired by corrupt Nigerians cannot be easily transferred abroad. Public officials at all levels of government should serve as role models to others in curbing corruption in Nigeria. As noted by Olurode;<sup>65</sup>

our political actors and public officials are not helping matters if we go by their life style which includes opulence living style, high tastes and their indulging in conspicuous consumption amidst excruciating poverty, destitution and dependency. The need for moral re-orientation is now. Nigerians are in need of a philosophical direction that would redefine their concept of the good life as not essentially synonymous with a chain of cars, houses in the world major capitals or children educated abroad and in expensive schools locally or receiving

treatment for headache overseas.

Furthermore, government must seriously address the issues pertaining to the salaries, wages, pensions and gratuities of public officers. These should be paid promptly to make citizens resist corrupt practices.

Corruption cannot be seen in isolation. Its effects permeate societies. Therefore a proper role must be created for the civil society. Without the active involvement of civil society, including the private sector and the population at large, it will not be possible to combat corruption. As argued by Lawal<sup>66</sup>, societal attitudes can either encourage or discourage corruption. The government should encourage the more the participation of the civil society in its anti-corruption crusade. Deliberate and conscious efforts, borne out of patriotism, are needed to ensure the emergence of a virile civil society. An informed civil society as noted by Fagbadebo<sup>67</sup> is necessary to balance the power of the Nigerian state. This could be a solution for ending the brazen abuse of powers and privileges by public officials and stimulate a psychological

reorientation towards meaningful development. A genuine monitoring of government policies and programmes by the civil society could lead to detection as well as combat corrupt practices.

Provision of appropriate punishment for corruption is not sufficient to eliminate corruption. There is the need for enlightenment in discouraging excessive materialism and the culture of "get-rich-quick", employment for the teeming youths and incorporation of human rights and development perspectives into anti-corruption work. In this direction, Yinusa and Basil<sup>68</sup> are of the opinion that the role of the media is indispensable. It is essential to raise awareness on the causes, costs, levels, types and locations of corruption in the country as well as to explain the on-going efforts of all stakeholders against corruption through intensive media campaign<sup>69</sup>. The media owe the nation a responsibility to expose any corrupt agency or official. The civil society's involvement in the anti-corruption crusade must go beyond the formal engagement with government and its officers on good governance issues into the area of challenging the cultural practices and values that



“communicate” or “facilitate” corrupt practice. Such currently permissible practice in Nigeria such as the giving and receiving of “gifts”, conferment of chieftaincy, socio – cultural and religious titles and responsibilities on serving public officials and political office holders, and payment of expenses and underwriting of costs of activities of office holders and public official (such as endowment of public trust, library, book launch, socio-cultural activities, etc) must not only become socially unacceptable practice but must be prohibited.

All the above panaceas are in line with Professor Adebayo’s opinion that, corruption can only be eradicated in a just and egalitarian society, a land of bright and full of opportunities for all its citizens. Not a country engulfed by poverty, deprivation and disparity; not a polity where to survive is becoming increasingly a miracle; not a political economy where life is uncertain and there is a dangerous regression to parochialism<sup>70</sup>.

Above all, democratic ethos must be enthroned. Democracy emphasises accountability, good

governance probity and transparency. These invariably will bring about sustainable democracy and development in Nigeria.

## Conclusion

In this paper, we have discussed critically the issue of corruption and the challenges it poses for the attainment of sustainable democracy and development in Nigeria. We have identified the nature, causes and manifestations of corruption and how the nature and character of the Nigerian state encourages corruption. Our attention was also focused on various efforts instituted by various regimes in Nigeria to combat the scourge of corruption and failures of such efforts in ensuring corruption-free society in bringing about sustainable democracy and development.

The paper shows that there is a link between corruption and development crisis in Nigeria. It concludes that corruption is central to the problem of development in the post-independent Nigeria to the extent that it inhibit democratic ethos in the country. It has undermined the normal functioning of social,



economic and political systems. It literally undermines effective governance, endangers democracy and erodes the social fabrics of the country<sup>71</sup>.

Combating and preventing corruption has become imperative for Nigeria's development because the roots of corruption are deeply embedded in the Nigerian society. Fighting corruption at all levels is a priority. Corruption is a serious barrier to effective mobilisation

and allocation, and it diverts resources away from activities that are vital to poverty eradication, socio-economic development and sustenance of democracy. The problem of corruption is too serious to be unattended to if we are to make progress and achieve development in Nigeria. Thus, uprooting corruption will require the application of all the available anti-corruption mechanisms in the country. Certainly, the political will of the leadership will be invaluable.

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