

## THE IRONY OF NIGERIA'S FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION: AN APPRAISAL OF PRESIDENT MUHAMMADU BUHARI'S FIRST EIGHT MONTHS IN OFFICE

Charles E. Ekpo<sup>1</sup>, Jide Chime<sup>2</sup>, AND Frank N. Enor<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of History & Int'l Studies, University of Calabar, Calabar – Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Department of Political Science, Enugu State University of Science & Technology (ESUST), Enugu – Nigeria

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**ABSTRACT:** *Nigeria as a country is not only popular for its economic and man power potentials but also, for monumental corruption 'manifestations' that plagues its government and institutions. The country, in the past decades has been 'decorated' with top ten position among the league of corrupt nations by Transparency International and other international watchdog organizations. With anti-graft in his campaign manifesto, it was an 'easy' task for Muhammadu Buhari to succeed the government of Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan which was famous for corruption 'manifestations' and impunity in the 2015 presidential elections. This work appraises Nigeria's strategy in the fight against corruption under President Muhammadu Buhari's first eight months in office. The work argues that Buhari's anti-graft strategy in its first eight months is misguided and misconceived. A theoretical framework is adopted for clear focus and distinction between the blurred edges of corruption and its manifestation. Primary evidences in the form of interviews and official reports are complemented with secondary and tertiary evidences gathered from Newspaper reports, textbooks, publications from journals as well as internet sources in the course of carrying out this research.*

**KEYWORDS:** Corruption, Strategy, Fight Against Corruption, Corruption Manifestation, Root Of Corruption

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### INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is a country located in the Guinea Coast of West Africa between latitude 4° and 14° North and longitude 3° and 14° East. It is bounded by the republics of Niger, and Chad to the North, Benin to the West, Cameroon to the East and Atlantic Coast to the South. It covers a land area of about 924,000 square kilometers with diverse climates, soil types, ecological zones and natural resources (Uya, 1992). According to the National Population Commission (2006) figures, the country is unarguably the most populous black country in the world with about 140 million people.

Blessed with magnificent arable lands; forest resources such as timber, palm oil and kernel, cocoa, rubber, kola nuts, yams, rice, fruits and vegetables, carrots, onions, groundnuts, cotton, millet, wheat; semi-temperate climate suitable for the production of tea, coffee, as well as the breeding of cattle, sheep, goats and other livestock; mineral resources such as petroleum, coal, asbestos, clay, iron, marble, limestone, salt, tin, tantalite, uranium, gold and other precious metals (Uya, 1992), Nigeria should be a safe haven for its citizens and investors. The standard of living of its average citizens should be among the highest in the world. Poverty and illiteracy should be at its minimal.

However, the reverse has been the case. Every meaningful step taken to better the life of Nigerians is marred by corruption. To borrow from the words of Burke, Corruption ‘manifestations’ and influence has been the ‘perennial spring of all prodigality’ and of all disorder; it has loaded Nigeria with more than trillions of debt; taken away vigour from its arms, wisdom from its councils, and every shadow of authority and credit from the most vulnerable parts of its constitution (Burke cited in Edwards, 1977). Corruption has undermined good government, fundamentally distorts public policy, leads to the misallocation of public resources, harms the private sector and particularly, hurts the poor (Nwaobi, 2006).

The problem of corruption as observed by Majuk (2004) has defied all solutions. This perhaps, has been so because of the wrong strategies and approaches employed by various administrations to tackle the menace. This work aims at appraising Buhari’s strategy in combating corruption in his first eight months in office. A general conceptualization of corruption is examined; for a clear focus, we shall define a theoretical model which will serve as our framework for this paper. For better appreciation, an epochal synopsis of corruption manifestation shall be examined. The appraisal of President Buhari’s anti-corruption fight shall be followed by deduced recommendations.

### General Conceptualization

The word “corrupt” when used as an adjective literally means “utterly broken”. It was first used by Aristotle and later Cicero who added the terms bribe and abandonment of good habit. Corruption is a form of dishonest and unethical conduct by a person entrusted with a position of authority, often to acquire personal benefit. (Wikipedia; 2015). In an attempt to distinguish between ‘corrupt act’ and ‘corruption’, Amundsen (1999) submits that “corruption is when individuals misuse the public power they are bestowed with for private benefit” while corrupt act occurs “when a responsible person accepts money or some other forms of reward, and then proceed to misuse his official power by returning undue favours”. Nye defines corruption as a behaviour which deviates from the normal duties of a public role because of private relationship. This includes such behaviour as bribery (which is the use of reward to pervert the judgment of the person in position of trust); nepotism (bestowal of patronage by reasons of inscriptive relationship than merit); and misappropriation (illegal appropriation of public resources for private – regarding uses (Nye cited in Onuigbo & Eme, 2015).

Khan sees corruption as an act which deviates from the rules of conduct governing the action of someone in a position of public authority because of private regarding motives such as wealth, power and status (Khan cited in Amundsen, 1996). Corruption could also be conceived as pervasion of integrity or state of affairs through bribery, favour or depravity (Otite, 2000).

In a more holistic conceptualization, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) vignettes corruption as an abuse of office or trust for private benefit: and is a temptation indulged in by not only public officials but also by those in positions of trust and authority in private enterprise or non-profit organizations (IMF, 1998). Transparency International observes corruption to be the use of entrusted power for private gain; and is classified as either grand, petty and political depending on the amount of money lost and the sector where it occurs. **Grand corruption** – consists of acts committed at a high level of government that distorts polity or the central functioning of the state enabling leaders to benefit at the expense of the public good; **Petty corruption** – refers to everyday abuse of entrusted power by low and mid-level public officials in their interactions with ordinary citizens; **Political corruption** – involves manipulation of policies, institution and rules of procedures in the allocation of resources and

financing by political decision makers who abuse their position to sustain their power, status and wealth (Transparency International, 2015 ).

Lawal (2012) identifies types of corruption to include: Moral corruption – exhibited in sexual pervasiveness, greed especially in interpersonal relationship, loose tongue, indecent dressing, etc; Economic corruption – example include manufacturing fake drugs, adulteration of drinks, piracy, plagiarism, fraud at all levels, etc; Political and bureaucratic corruption – includes illegal, unethical and unauthorized exploitation of one’s political or official position for personal gain; Electoral corruption – has to do with electoral frauds such as election rigging, manipulations, ballot stuffing, registration of underage, etc (Lawal, 2012).

Corruption includes bribery, smuggling, fraud, illegal payment, money laundering, drug trafficking, falsification of documents and records, window dressing, false declaration, evasion, underpayment, deceit, forgery, concealment, aiding and abetting of any kind to the detriment of another person, community, society or nation (Mathew et. al., 2013).

The arguments and definitions by the authors affirm that corruption manifests for personal gratification, self-preservation and glory at the expense of general political and economic growth of a particular state, an organization or any establishment.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The concept “corruption” engulfs in it some levels of complexity and ambiguity both in its usage, interpretation and application. To adopt a working model as well as tackle the issue of the blurred disparity between corruption and its manifestation, the Hobbesian theory of man in its nature shall be discussed and applied respectively.

In his classical piece *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes painstakingly studied the human nature and gave his verdict on what he thought of to be natural, axiomatic, self-evident, and true of man’s behaviour without some forms of societal restraint. Hobbes averred that men are naturally equal in mind and body. Yet, the resources of which man depends on for sustenance are not evenly distributed but scarce and ferociously struggled for. This struggle foments competition. Competition on the other hand engenders strife and fear of extinction. This culminates in distrust or diffidence. Diffidence and insecurity incites invasion and conquest which yields glory to the victor (Hobbes, 1992).

Thus, men in their nature are in a condition of war, of every man against every man. In this state of nature therefore, there is no place for industry; agriculture, navigation, trade; no arts or letters, no society, no amenities of civilized life and worst of all, there is “continual fear and danger of violent death; and the life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short” (in Eyo, Udofia & Edo, 2011). However, the fear of death and the dire desire for commodious living drives men to give up on their inherent desperation for self-preservation and agree to live a harmonious social life. Since men are naturally prone to renege on promises which have no compulsions attached, there arises the need to create a sovereign authority to which power to enforce peaceful co-existence is transferred to. The sovereign is the Hobbesian Leviathan (Hobbes, 1992).

Drawing from the above, man’s quest for glory, fame, splendor and self-preservation at the expense of the other is innate, natural and congenital. It is an inherent attribute man would have naturally exhibited but for restraints and deterrence. Thus, selfishness, greed, wickedness and desperation for self-preservation at the expense of fellow mankind is congenital and inherent

in every man. Since corruption entails using entrusted public responsibility for personal selfish gratification, it is therefore an exhibition or manifestation of that innate attribute of man. Corruption therefore is that inherent selfish mind-set that compels man to worry about himself only. In an effort to bypass the acceptable norms, laws and regulations to self-preservation, this innate attribute of man is manifested in the form of corruption.

Therefore, corruption is innate, natural, congenital and inherent in every man but is however suppressed by the host for either some restraint factors like laws, punishment, good reputation, or perceived assurance of self-preservation with available resources. The inability of man to suppress these drives results in the manifestation of corruption.

The word “corruption” in this work shall reflect that inherent drive for abuse of bestowed public authority while its actual exhibition shall be labeled as “manifestation of corruption”.

### **Manifestations of Corruption in Nigeria: An Epochal Synopsis**

Manifestations of corruption in Nigeria could be traced back to the pre-colonial era when for the sake of self-preservation and glory, Nigerians accepted ‘bribes’ to sell out their brothers into slavery (Mathew, 2013). It was manifested also when the forerunners to colonial masters created Afro-European conservations that were premised on falsetto. In fact the colonialists established its empire in Nigeria on the foundation of scam and fraud through its “carrot and stick” approach which was itself manipulative and deceptive (Anene, 1966).

Manifestations of corruption had also found right footing in Nigeria even before independence and kept assuming different dimensions after independence. For instance, Nnamdi Azikiwe as Premier of Eastern Nigeria was exposed by the Foster Suffon Tribunal of Enquiry of 1956 into the African Continental Bank (ACB) to have abused his office and divert huge sums of Eastern Nigeria’s government funds into his own bank, the ACB. Similarly, the GBA Coker Commission of Inquiry of 1962 revealed how Obafemi Awolowo diverted huge sums of money and shared it with his colleagues and party members (Osoba, 1996).

The desire rid Nigeria of ‘corruption’ was part of the justifications the military gave for intervening in the democratic governance of Nigeria in 1966. Yet its anti-graft war was such that “corruption was used to check corruption by corrupting the system all the more” (Mathew et. al., 2013). For instance, in 1974, under the watch of Gen. Yakubu Gowon, 16.23 million metric tons of cement was imported at the rate of \$115 while its official market price was \$25. This means that someone stood to gain \$75 per ton for 16.23 million tons (Nwaobi, 2002).

On assumption of office in 1975, Murtala Muhammed set a panel that probed the assets of all the former governors, the administrators of Eastern and Western states and some federal commissioners. The confiscated assets stood at about ₦10 million (Nwaobi, 2002). Olusegun Obasanjo who emerged as Head State in 1976 following the assassination of Murtala Muhammed stimulated corruption manifestation by promulgating the Decree No.11 of 1976 (Public Officer Protection Against False Accusation). Public officers were now protected and shielded with the decree to exhibit their corrupt potentials. Obasanjo himself, inflated the cost of contracting the international trade fair complex in Lagos from ₦45,212,000 (which Murtala his predecessor considered to be inflated) to ₦95,820,000 and further revised it to ₦116,257,893. Obasanjo’s regime was also enmeshed in the scandal surrounding ₦2.8 billion missing from the coffers of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). This said money was refunded from a London bank to the coffers of the federal government of Nigeria

three years later (1977-1980) without interest (Nwaobi, 2002). President Shagari, who began his tenure in 1979, paid deaf ears to the ills, scandals and manifestations of corruption that defaced his predecessors' regimes.

According to Nwaobi (2002), President Shagari's tenure was

“marred by intrigues, smear campaigns, thuggery, violence and widespread rigging, repositories of power, the teaming citizens were cajoled, and brazenly bribed as the politicians took their campaign message to the people...the Shagari scorecard was a parchment of corruption and iniquities, a shocking and sad commentary on how unpatriotic leaders will sink a nation into an irredeemable abyss of perditions” (Nwaobi, 2002:34).

The Shagari regime (1979-1983) earned and squandered ₦40.5 billion, depleted external reserves of ₦2.3 billion and further incurred ₦10.21 billion as debt without anything to show for it. Shagari's rule was terminated by Muhammadu Buhari who through Decree 2 and others tried several politicians and recovered public funds and properties (Nwaobi, 2002).

**Table Showing Classified Looting of Nigeria Funds**

NAMES	Amount in London	Amount in Swiss	Deposit in USA	Deposit in Germany	Total Naira EQUIVALENT (1999 EX. RATE)
1. Gen Babangida	£6.256b	\$7.416	\$2.00b	Dm9,00b	₦2.4635 Tr
2. Gen A. Abubakar	£1.131b	\$2.33b	\$800b	Dm16	₦0.4938 Tr
3. Mike Akhigbe	£1.24b	\$2.426b	\$671b	Dm9,00	₦0.8059 Tr
4. Jerry Useni	£3.04b	\$2.01b	\$1.03b	Dm900m	₦0.8059 Tr
5. Ismaila Gowon	£1.03b	\$2.00b	\$1.03b	Dm700m	₦0.50176 Tr
6. Umaru Dikko	£4.4b	\$1.46b	\$700m	Dm345m	₦0.89465 Tr
7. Paul Ogwuma	£300m	\$1.42b	\$200m	Dm500m	₦35 b
8. Sani Abacha	£5.01b	\$4.09b	\$800m	Dm3.01m	₦1.2107 Tr
9. Mohammed Abacha	£300m	\$1.2b	\$150m	Dm535	₦0.2107 Tr
10. Abdu Abacha	£700m	\$1.21b	\$900m	Dm417m	₦0.3384 Tr
11. Wada Nas	£300m	\$1.32b	-	Dm300m	₦0.2374 Tr
12. Tom Ikimi	£400b	\$1.39b	\$153m	Dm371m	₦0.252553 Tr
13. Dan Etete	£1.12b	\$1.03b	\$400m	Dm1.72b	₦0.32743 Tr
14. Don Etiebet	£2.5b	\$1.06	\$700m	Dm361m	₦0.56747 Tr
15. Majial Mustapha	£600M	\$1.001b	-	DM210	₦0.199793 Tr
16. Bashiru Dalhatu	£2.9B	\$1.09b	\$360m	DM1.66b	₦0.68895 Tr
17. Wushishi	£2.3B	\$1.001b	\$161m	Dm1.43b	₦0.55549 Tr
18. Hassan Adamu	£300M	\$200m	\$700m	-	₦0.1305 Tr
19. T.Y Danjuma	£1.36B	\$1.02b	\$300m	Dm190m	₦0.3427 Tr
20. Ishaya Bamaiyi	£120M	\$800m	-	-	₦94.0 B

Sources: *Financial Times of London* [23 July 1999] in Nwaobi (2002:43)

The Babangida's administration (1985-1993) was indicted by the Pius Okigbo led panel to have embezzled \$12.4 billion from the “Dedication and other Special Account” and dumped it in the

Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), a bank for drug barons and money launderers worldwide.

The full details of Babangida's worldwide investments will never be known. While he is perhaps the richest Nigerian alive today with assets in excess of \$30 billion, proxy holds much of his holdings...the effect was clear (as) more than 3,000 officials now have Swiss Amounts totaling about \$90 billion and in Britain £75 billion (Nwaobi, 2002:38-39).

General Sanni Abacha's administration remains the most notorious in terms of corruption manifestations and autocracy. Abacha, through the Chagouri and Chagouri (an international consortium owned by five Lebanese brothers) embezzled Nigeria's funds and deposited in banks across the world. His loot is valued at over \$20 billion dollars (Nwaobi, 2002).

General Abdulsalami Abubakar who succeeded the Late Sanni Abacha is reported to have spent few weeks in power when the chairman of National Economic Intelligence Committee (NEIC) Prof. Aluko made the disclosure that \$50 million was missing in the national coffers. Gen. Abubakar awarded ₦15 billion for the construction of CBN headquarters and spent ₦19 billion hosting the World Youth Championship. He quickly privatized Nigeria's firms and used looted funds to purchase them through proxies. This is more so as these deals were consummated in utter negation of transparency and accountability (Nwaobi, 2002). General Abdulsalami Abubakar's administration which lasted for just eleven months corruptly utilized about ₦650 billion. During this period, he awarded 4072 new contracts, granted 576 new licenses, made 807 new appointments, gave 111 approvals and made 807 awards and honours (Edo, 2006).

Olusegu Obasanjo on his second coming to office as an elected president in 1999 pledged to fight corruption but yet, could not hesitate to share the ₦10 billion he voted for poverty reduction with his party members as booty (Edo, 2006). Under the disguise of hosting the Eight All Africa Games, Obasanjo is alleged to have inflated the cost of constructing the new ultra-modern stadium to ₦60 billion but still owed the contractors ₦500 million. In Edo's words, "there is no gain saying the fact that more than 50% of the cost of hosting the games was really fictitious" (Edo, 2006). Obasanjo was also alleged to have bribed the Nigerian Senate to further his Third Term quest. His government was also involved in the scandalous Harliburton bribe case in which about \$579 million was given as bribe to some top government officials to secure contracts in Nigeria. Other cases include the Siemens \$1.6 billion settlement scandal, Sillbros Inc's \$32 million, Panalpina's Nigeria's National Identity Card Scheme scandal, and Segem giving about \$200 million as bribe to senior government officials (Mohammed, 2013). Manifestations of corruption were also rampant in state and local government levels. For instance, the Bayelsa state governor Chief D. S. P. Alamiyesiegha was on September 15, 2005 arrested in London on arrival from Germany where he had gone to undergo surgery on tommy tuck. He was found to have about £2 million in his house. Similarly, Governor Dariye of Plateau was arrested and tried for money laundering in London in 2004 but he jumped bail before his next court appearance and travelled back to Jos as a Gambian (Edo, 2006). The list is inexhaustible.

Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's administration appears to have paid no attention to corruption and its scandalous manifestations. Jonathan's quest and ambition for second term in office beclouded his sense of judgment and totally bamboozled his political will from fighting corruption to cementing loyalists in all regions of the country through dubious transactions.

Scandalous cases of embezzlements, misappropriation, and diversion of public funds characterized his tenure in office. Jonathan was known to have pampered corruption and had once vindicated his cronies by stating that “stealing is not corruption”. Between May 6, 2010 when Jonathan stood in for late Yar’adua and 2012, over ₦5 trillion of government funds were stolen. According to the Nuhu Ribadu led Petroleum Task Force Report, Nigeria lost 250,000 barrels of crude oil daily at the cost of \$6.3 billion (₦1.2 trillion) a year. This puts the total amount lost through oil theft in the two years of Jonathan government at over \$12.6 billion (₦2 trillion). In July, 2012, The House of Representatives Committee on Environment discovered a tree seedling fraud worth ₦2 billion awarded by Ecological Fund Office. In the Nigerian telecommunication sector, the 450MHz frequency which was valued at \$50 million, was allegedly sold for less than \$6 million (a difference of \$44m or ₦6.9b) by Nigerian Communication Commission. Corruption manifested in Jonathan’s first two years in office such that KPMG, a global audit and financial advisory firm, resolved that Nigeria accounted for the highest number of fraud cases in Africa in the first half of 2012 (Adeyemo, 2012). Despite the evidence to prove the scandalous allocation of ₦255 million for two bulletproof BMW cars by the Aviation Minister Ms. Stella Oduah, nothing was done and the ‘honourable’ minister completed her tenure.

Under Jonathan’s watch, Alhaji Maina misappropriated ₦195 billion worth of pension funds which he claimed to have recovered from pension thieves. The NNPC also collaborated with the Independent Petroleum Marketers to fraudulently sell Kerosene to Nigerians at ₦170-250 when it was subsidized by the government to sell for ₦40-50. According to former Central Bank Governor Mr. Lamido Sanusi, over \$100 million was lost this way every month. Moreso, the Nigerian Parliament Report has disclosed that \$6 billion has been defrauded from the fuel subsidy fund between 2013 and 2015.

In February, 2014, one Muhammed Abacha was accused of unlawfully receiving about ₦446.3 billion from the coffers of the federal government between 1995 and 1998. The accused kept absenting himself from court but was present on the day a private prosecuting counsel, Daniel Enwelum, informed the court of Attorney General of the Federation’s instruction to discontinue with the case (Naij.com, 2015).

Still under the Jonathan’s tenure, the former governor of Central Bank Lamido Sanusi disclosed that \$20 billion dollars generated from oil sales were not remitted into the treasury. The federal government promptly sacked him, covered its tracks, yet, a staggering \$1.48 billion was disclosed to be missing by a foreign auditing firm.

With such manifestations, is it not folly or foolhardy to address high public functionaries as “Excellencies” or “Honourables”? Yet, the shamelessly insist that their subjects continue to be loyal. Several probes and trials are ongoing by the Muhammadu Buhari led administration aimed at recovering stolen public funds of which the most intriguing remains the \$2.1 billion arms deals scandal.

### **President Muhammadu Buhari’s Anti-corruption fight: An Appraisal**

It is pertinent to begin by stating clearly that President Muhammadu Buhari possesses the desire, inclinations and political will to combat corruption to a standstill in Nigeria. It has become exceedingly glaring that anti-corruption, as part of the All Progressive Congress’ (APC) manifesto, was solely the brainchild of President Muhammadu Buhari. He had averred in his campaign tours the ills of corruption and as well pointed out why it is pertinent to put an

end to such menace that has for decades perplexed Nigeria's growth. While in Chatham House in London in February, 2015, Buhari avouched that his utmost priorities if elected is to "tackle two ills that have ballooned under the present (Goodluck Jonathan) administration: waste and corruption". In fact, his election campaign speeches were incomplete without a mention of how 'corruption' had debilitated the country and its institutions and how he (Buhari) will turn things around. At one of his election campaigns at home, he affirmed that his administration plans to "put priority on tackling corruption which had become blatant and widespread". He was saddened by the fact that "the rest of the world looks at Nigeria as the home of corruption...where stealing is not corruption". He never hesitated to warn Nigerians that "if Nigeria does not kill corruption, Corruption will kill Nigeria".

After his victory at the polls, Muhammadu Buhari as expected inaugurated a Presidential Advisory Committee against Corruption in August 11, 2015 to advise his administration on how to reform the Nigeria's criminal justice system, and steps needed to fight corruption. This committee is (and is still) headed by Professor Itse Sagay, a prominent professor of law and a civil rights activist.

With a novel advisory body like this, Nigerians expected new strategies, techniques and legislations which will not just tackle the manifestations of corruption but deter further exhibition of such traits which according to our framework, is inherent in every man. However, the Buhari's anti-corruption fight tends to rather place more emphasis on fighting the manifestations of corruption, thereby negating the root and the vector of this germ. Just like his predecessors, the modus operandi of his anti-corruption war is to arrest suspected looters with any of its intelligence agencies, employ the antics of its anti-graft agencies for general probing and investigation, then charge the suspect to court for prosecution. Buhari has slightly deviated from his predecessors by placing utmost priorities on recovering looted public funds and even generating more funds through compromised court judgment and bail charges; while the much anticipated fight against corruption is negated. For instance, several top government officials of the Jonathan administration indicted in the \$2.1 billion arms purchase scandal have been arrested by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). Some adamant ones like Colonel Dasuki (former National Security Adviser) and Olisa Metuh (Publicity Secretary of the People's Democratic Party), were tried and remanded on several count charges. Olisa Metuh, though, accused of benefiting ₦400 million from the arms deal scandal was granted bail with the tone of ₦700 million by two separate courts. On the other hand, Lawal Jafaru Isa (former military governor of Kaduna State) who was accused of receiving ₦170 million from the arms deal was set free without trial when he returned ₦100 million and promised to return the remaining ₦70 million. Similarly, the presidency has advised those who looted public funds to quietly return them for "soft landing". It has also been made clear that a quota of the proposed 2016 budget will be funded with recovered looted funds.

Though the president has displayed the political will to combat corruption, his objective and intention appears to be misguided. Recovering stolen funds from corrupt public officials is not a fight against corruption but rather a fight against the manifestations of corruption. This can only culminate in public officials adopting more stringent measures aimed at covering their tracks while they keep on raping the country dry. In fact, Buhari's strategy can only encourage more manifestations of corruption as politicians will continue to loot public treasury hoping to go scot free if they are not caught or return such funds if they are caught. In other words, the reward overwhelmingly outweighs the punishment.



Buhari's decision to continue with the EFCC as his investigatory and fund recovery agency, in its obsolete and nontransparent structure has only enmeshed more woes on his ill-defined anti-corruption strategy. For instance, the immediate past EFCC chairman Mr. Ibrahim Lamorde was dismissed by Buhari in November 9, 2015, for allegedly diverting ₦1 trillion of recovered funds. When summoned by the Nigerian Senate, Lamorde refused appearing before the senate and subsequently disappeared from the country without trace. Similarly, the Senate has in January, 2016 summoned the current EFCC chairman Mr. Magu to come and give a financial statement sum or of what recovered so far. The structure of the EFCC is so vague and ill-designed such that there is little or no accountability. The irony is that this is the same agency which Buhari has depended so much on, in fighting "corruption" to a standstill.

Moreso, the generality of Nigerians perceive the anti-graft war to be targeted at the members of the former ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP). This insinuation is made more germane by the fact that several petitions written against top members of the Buhari led All Progressive's Congress (APC) such as Rotimi Ameachi (former governor of Rivers State) and Babatunde Raji Fashola (former governor of Lagos State) have fallen on deaf ears. Instead, the president has appointed this duo into his cabinet as ministers and as such shielded them with interesting portfolios.

It will therefore not be wrong to assert that Buhari's anti-corruption strategy in his eight months has been a misguided objective. Instead of tackling corruption, he has been busy running after the manifestations of corruption with so much enthusiasm that such actions will deter others from exhibiting such traits. President Buhari cannot achieve anything meaningful in his anti-graft war if nothing is done to restructure holistically, the existing political institutions and agencies to enforce transparency and accountability. President Mahammadu Buhari is even handicapped by the loopholes embedded in the Nigerian Constitution and the Criminal Acts which corrupt officials use to avert justice. One wonders why President Buhari will spend eight months in office without measures directed at correcting these loopholes so that looters of the public treasury could be deterred from doing so. How long will Nigeria, instead of preventing the manifestation of corruption, keep pursuing corrupt public office holders? Questions like this and more need to be given priority by President Buhari's anti-corruption team for a guided objective.

## CONCLUSION

Manifestation of corruption has remained the most notorious social menace threatening the general growth and development of Nigeria. Exhibition of corrupt tendencies by public officials have bastardized the pace of growth and development in all facets. Nigeria has lost an estimated fifty percent (50%) of what it has generated since independence to public office looters. The most frustrating reality is that these looted funds are not invested in Nigeria but are dumped in foreign accounts to the betterment of the economies of those states. Manifestation of corruption has broadened the gap between the rich and the poor. While the rich keeps living in affluence, the poor suffocate in abject poverty and illiteracy. The 'praetorian guard' who intervened in Nigerian politics had destroyed all forms of transparency and accountability and as a matter of fact, institutionalized corruption manifestations.

The aforementioned culminated in 'lip actions' and vendetta ranging from the military hypocritical initiatives such as the War Against Indiscipline (WAI) to civilian witch-hunt

through the apparatus of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and other related agencies. The irony remains that these institutions and agencies as well as policy programmes were never designed to prevent, tame, deter or kill the traits of corruption but to fight its manifestations. Even the so called ‘anti-corruption’ agencies were formed on corrupt foundation with vague legislations and structures devoid of transparency and accountability.

Moreso, Muhammadu Buhari envisaging the persistent escalation of corruption traits in public offices won the 2015 presidential election pools owing to his firm anti-corruption stands and inclinations to fight it to a standstill. However, he, in his first eight months just like every other Nigerian leader has failed to tackle the issue of corruption but its manifestation. It is more ironic and comic that to him, fighting corruption means “recovery looted funds”. Even in fighting the manifestation of corruption, he has failed to rid the Criminal Act and other anti-corruption legislations of their loopholes which looters use to avert justice. President Muhammadu Buhari in his first eight months in office is yet to tackle corruption but is however, doing well in fighting its manifestation. For Nigeria, under his administration to step up in its anti-corruption fight, it should consider the recommendations below.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is pertinent to note and understand that corruption is an aspect of that inherent and congenital greed and selfishness of man aimed at self-preservation and glory. It can neither be killed nor fought but can be successfully suppressed, tamed, controlled and deterred. Manifestations of corruption can therefore be reduced to its barest minimum if modalities are put in place to prevent and deter the manifestations of corruption rather than fight it. We therefore categorize our recommendations into two: prevention and deterrence.

### **PREVENTION**

The Merriam Webster Dictionary (2016) defines prevention as “the act or practice of stopping something bad from happening”. It is an act of forestalling and taking preemptive measures to avert any perceived harmful occurrence. Langseth (1999) proposed three ways of preventing corruption, thus: (a) improving public sector service delivery by focusing on public sector accountability and legal reform in order to reintroduce rule of law; (b) building integrity by promoting governmental accountability and transparency; and (c) building an anti-corruption capacity of the public sector – including parliament, watchdog and enforcement agencies, and the judiciary and of civil society, particularly by strengthening non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the media (Langseth, 1999).

Similarly, a more detailed preventive measure as experimented by Singapore and elsewhere is highlighted and recommended to include:

- a. Removing opportunities for corruption in government work procedures;
- b. Streamlining cumbersome administrative procedures;
- c. Slashing down excessive red tape which provides opportunity for corruption;
- d. Reviewing public officers’ salaries regularly to ensure that they are paid adequately and comparable to that of the private sector;

- e. Public officer should be barred from borrowing money from, or in any way put himself under a financial obligation to any person who is in any way under his official authority or has official dealings with him;
- f. Public official should be barred from using any official information to further his interest;
- g. Public officer should declare his assets at his first appointment and subsequently annually;
- h. Public officer should not engage in trade or businesses or undertake any part time employment without approval;
- i. Public officer should be barred from receiving entertainment from members of the public;
- j. Public official should be barred from accepting any share issued by a company offered to him through a private placement without the approval of the permanent secretary of either finance or public service ministries;
- k. Ensuring that besides routine checks, surprised checks are carried out systematically and regularly by senior officers as part of their duties (Muhammed Ali, 2000).
- l. The mass media should be granted access to top information in government ministries provided, such information will not compromise Nigeria's national interest and security;
- m. Procedures of awarding contracts and terms and conditions of every public contract should be made public;
- n. Financial statement of both federal, state and local governments should be published monthly;
- o. Relatives of those indicted in any scandalous case should only be entrusted with public offices if they pass a background integrity test;
- p. Those with despicable characters and reputations should be banned from contesting for or holding any public office.

## **DETERRENCE**

Though deterrence is wrongly applied to be synonymous with prevention, it represents a more radical and drastic measure aimed at discouraging rather than preventing targeted human actions. Deterrence aims at restraining, dissuading and inhibiting a rational being from executing intended actions for fear of counteractions. Since corruption is natural and congenital, it would rather be more productive to deter its manifestations through some draconian legislation. As earlier mentioned, what really encourages the manifestations of corruption is that "it rewards outweighs its punishment". For instance, there has always been anti-corruption legislations in Nigeria yet, the trait keeps manifesting in more notorious forms. This is more so because such legislations are not good enough to deter people from exhibiting such trait. Therefore, for Nigeria under the remaining years of President Buhari to make gains in its anti-corruption fight, "punishments against manifestations of corruption must outweigh its rewards". There will be nothing wrong for Nigeria to invoke capital punishment for looters of public treasury; after all, looters have indirectly sent thousands of Nigerians to their untimely sepulcher.

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