
THE MANIFESTATIONS OF GRAND CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC AND ITS IMPLICATION ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT: *The central aim of this paper is to highlight how grand corruption is manifested in Nigeria and its implication for national development. This is based on the premise that there has been tendency for literatures on corruption to propose solutions to combat corruption without considering the context and form which corruption takes place. It achieves its aim by first clarifying the concept of corruption and grand corruption. It also adopts the neo-patrimonial theory to explain how grand corruption are manifested in Nigeria. The study analyses secondary and empirical sources of data through qualitative methods. It argues that in spite of Nigeria's transition to democracy, cases of grand corruption have been reported in the different governments. This has left devastating consequences in the country such as slow economic growth, mass poverty and unemployment, political and social instability, a recycled culture of corruption, diminished national prestige and loss of government legitimacy and national assets. It recommends a strong political will to fight corruption beyond propaganda and a radical sanitization of the political system in Nigeria.*

KEYWORDS: manifestations, corruption, grand corruption, national development, fourth republic

INTRODUCTION

Corruption is a global problem and no country in the world is completely free of corruption. It is however a major development and governance challenge confronting African counties including Nigeria. These challenges of governance have produced an environment that causes political instability, increasing unemployment and poverty, and series of social and economic crises. Although corruption is a major challenge for several other developing states very few countries have been so affected by graft as Nigeria (Sateolu, 2004; Enweremdu, 2010; TI, 2015 Global Financial Integrity, 2017).

Nigeria is endowed with abundant natural and human resources, including petroleum, natural gas, tin, coal, a large arable land and an estimated population of 188, 621, 425(UN, 2016; World Meters, 2016). In spite of these resources, the Nigerian economy has not witnessed a corresponding growth and improvement in the living standards of its people (Diamond, 1995; Bello-Imam, 2005; Ikubaje, 2013; Gashinbaki, 2016). The report of the UNDP (2004) noted that by the year 2000, Nigeria was heavily indebted and her per capital income was 20% less than the 1975 level despite earning about \$3000 billion of exporting oil since the 1970's. It is also estimated that between

2005 and 2014, about \$ 182 billion was lost through illicit flows from Nigeria. The stolen wealth represents the investments gap in building and equipping modern hospitals to reduce Nigeria's exceptionally high maternal mortality rates estimated at two of every 10 global maternal deaths in 2015, expanding the failing educational sector and procuring vaccinations to prevent regular outbreaks of preventable diseases (World Health Organization, 2015; Global Financial Integrity, 2017; This has largely been attributed to corruption and several years of mismanagement of the country's resources. Similarly, the National Planning Commission of Nigeria identified systemic corruption, which produces low levels of accountability and transparency, as the major source of development failure in the country (National Planning Commission, 2005). In their report for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Hoffman and Patel (2019) maintained that though corruption is openly acknowledged as a destructive and complex practice in Nigeria, it still remains pervasive in the functioning of society and economic life.

Thus, the history of Nigeria has been tainted by various cases of grand corruption in the military and civilian regimes with devastating consequences on the nation's development (Dike, 2005; Fagbadebo; 2007; Ogbeidi, 2012 Ikubaje, 2013). After dismantling the colonial structure, African leaders maintained the structure that was in existence in the colonial era. A structure that had been a matter of few benefitting at the expense of others. Since there was no system of accountability put in place, the privileged few who were bequeathed political power began to engage in pilfering of state resources and cases of corrupt practices by the post-colonial leaders were reported in different parts of the country (Adedeji, 1989; Akintola, 2002; Bayart, 2009). Owing to the ethnic suspicion that was growing among the ethnic groups after independence, the leaders started whipping such sentiments to protect their political careers. This sparked further crises and political instability in the country and military takeover (Akintola, 2002; Nwadu, 2012; Akinnola 2013). Most of the military coups in Nigeria were justified on an anti-corruption mandate. In spite of military intervention in politics, corruption still blossomed during the military era. After about twenty-nine years in government the military also siphoned and mismanaged Nigeria's oil resources which had become the country's primary source of wealth (Obeigdi, 2012; Okon et al, 2018). In spite of the growing optimism in the late 1990's that democratic transitions will enhance socio-economic growth, Nigeria's new democratic regime which commenced in May, 1999 was also bedeviled by ethnic and religious crises and widespread corruption. (Fagbadebo; 2007; Bamgbose, 2010; Enweremdu, 2010; Ogbeidi, 2012; Hoffman and Patel, 2017).

The pervasive nature of corruption in Nigeria, led to its infamous rating as most corrupt country by Transparency International in 1996, 1997, 2000 and the 2nd most corrupt country in 1999, 2001, 2003, and 2004 (CPI, Transparency International 1995-2015; Global Integrity Forum, 2017). Though the country has shown a slight improvement in the CPI, it still scores poorly on the corruption index and cases of corruption are still persistently reported in the country in through embezzlement of public funds, awarding contracts by public officers to friends and families, bribery, fraud, nepotism, ethnicity, rigging of elections, extortion, manipulating procurement procedures, misappropriation and diversion of funds through manipulating or falsifying financial records.

Considering the broad nature of corruption and how public funds are persistently perpetuated by senior political office holders, this paper interrogates how grand corruption is manifested in Nigeria and its resultant impact on national development. This also takes into cognizance that there has been tendency by many literatures on corruption to propose solutions and strategies for corruption without necessarily taking into consideration the context in which corruption takes place.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Corruption

The meaning of corruption varies from one place to another and what is considered as corruption in a particular society may be considered as an acceptable practice another. There is therefore no consensus on the definition of corruption. While corruption is sometimes explained in a legal manner and defined by relevant laws and regulation, it is also utilized in a wider context to refer to social and political grievances that may not be included in legal classifications.

The Transparency International defined corruption as "behaviour on the part of officials in the public sector, whether politicians or civil servants, in which they improperly and unlawfully enrich themselves, or those close to them, by misuse of public power entrusted to them" (TI, 2007). The World Bank defined corruption as the abuse of entrusted power for personal gain (World Bank, 1997; Johnston 1996; Heywood 1997). This definition of corruption differentiates it from other types of societal crimes. For instance, armed robbery is considered a serious and punishable crime in every society but it is not classified as corruption. However, when a public office holder official inflates a contract sum with the aim of gaining some advantage, he has betrayed the public trust entrusted on him. In the case of the armed robber, the element of betrayal of public trust is missing but present in the case of the public office holder. According to Ikubaje (2013), corruption is abuse of entrusted property for private, personal and collective gain without accountability. This paper will adopt for its use the definition of corruption as misuse of power by senior public officials or prominent persons in position of authority. These include acts such as embezzlement of public funds through money laundering, procurement of contracts and tenders, grabbing of public land, rigging of elections, non-remittance of payment of government revenue or payment of non-existence funds.

Despite the different explanations given on the concept of corruption, they all involved acts that deviate from a certain moral standard and are widely perceived negatively. It connotes that a perceived act of corruption cuts across the countries and there is an acceptable standard of morality expected in any society. The commonly utilized standard is the law of a nation which contains the provisions against acts of corruption.

Forms of corruption

Corruption can occur in different forms. However, most literature exploring corruption fail to differentiate forms of corruption. Therefore, corruption is treated generally as a singular class of

behavior. Though studies on corruption have attempted to categorize corruption into different groups, the numerous types of corruption render generalizing it difficult. Kenny and Soreide (2008) asserted that categories are simplification because various forms of corrupt acts sometimes interlink through other forms of crimes. Morris (2011) argued that an easy means to differentiate forms of corruption is by identifying the institutional location of the official involved in corruption. He categorized corruption into two broad forms. The 'upper level' and 'lower level' corruption. The upper level involves Presidents, Ministers, Members of Legislature and other high-ranking officials while lower level corruption relates to corruption by civil servants. According to Abu and Stanieswski (2019), the forms of corruption vary only in terms of the individual who engages it. Anassi (2004) maintained that institutional corruption; political or grand corruption and bureaucratic corruption could be identified as the main types of corruption in Africa. He described institutional corruption as corrupt practices involving a group of syndicates known and approved by all of them. To him, bureaucratic corruption is where individual public officers systematically and consistently solicit or receive money in return for services rendered. Grand corruption on the other hand is where politicians are involved in fraudulent or morally unacceptable financial and political deals intended to benefit them financially and politically.

Dike (2003) opined that corruption in Nigeria occurs in diverse forms. This includes political corruption which occurs place at the highest level of political authority and electoral corruption involving the buying of votes, special favors or promises of votes. He defines bureaucratic corruption as the low levels or street level corruption. He notes that this type of corruption is what the citizen's experience in schools, hospitals or interaction with the police. For Mbama (2010), the forms of corruption in Nigeria consist of financial corruption, political corruption, religious corruption and educational corruption. He explained that political corruption occurs when a public officer lacks integrity and abuses his offices for private gains. Mbama also noted that political corruption comprises of bribery, election rigging, as well as nepotism. He concluded that controlling other forms of corruption would be less tasking if political corruption is minimized.

Grand Corruption

Elliot (1997) defined grand corruption as corruption at the highest level of government where political leaders, the bureaucracy and the private sector all interact. She argued that grand corruption is usually carried out during procurement of big-ticket items such as civilian aircraft, military equipment or infrastructure or broad policy decisions about allocation of industrial and credit subsidies. At this level, distortions usually arise from economic influences such as bribe or from personal allegiances such as tribe, family ties or friendship. Expressing similar views, Morris (2011) opined that grand corruption could be defined as corruption involving presidents, ministers, members of legislature, governors and other high-ranking officials. The above definition of grand corruption limits the vice to the public sector. It is however relevant to the study as high-level corruption outside the public sector would be difficult without government decisions and high-level political involvement.

On the other hand, some scholars associate grand corruption with private sector corruption. In her studies on corruption in South Africa, Vuuren (2004) defined grand corruption as kickbacks paid to officials by opportunistic business people who are keen to access government funds to build houses, schools and deliver services at the local and provincial level. She added that it is increasingly also the payment of bribes between companies. In a similar vein, Njoroge (2003) stated that grand corruption is a form of corruption that usually involves the payment of a huge commission to win major contracts or concession. He added that grand corruption also involves the provision of consumer goods because it is conveniently difficult to assess whether the goods were delivered in the intended quality or quantity. Sommer (2017) defined grand corruption as bribe and embezzlement that occurs at the level of the rulers and cabinet and public sector. It also involves the bribing of an executive officer by a company to enact a concession that allows logging in a previously protected area. The above definitions noted that grand corruption could occur at the public level or private level. The scholars however tend to limit grand corruption to only bribery and kickbacks without encapsulating other corrupt activities that this study covered.

Kenny and Soreidi (2008) defined grand corruption as corruption that occurs when politicians or high-ranking officials manipulate a country's management to gain exclusive benefits. This could be a public-sector phenomenon or one that involves both the private and public sectors. They asserted that:

“in the first case, state owned public service providers serve as a tool for politicians who usually benefit through personal revenues, bolstered contributions or party contributions. In the case of the public-private sector interactions, private sector use bribes to influence the form of the market or contractual terms at the cost of consumer welfare”.

Amundsen (1999) argued that grand corruption involves corruption that occurs at the highest levels of authority and it takes place when legislation and formation of policies are designed for the benefit of the legislators and politicians. These also include acts such as bribery, embezzlement, extortion, fraud, nepotism and favoritism. He further argued that grand corruption is synonymous to political corruption since the state is often involved in most definitions of corruption.

Grand corruption in this study is defined as the abuse of high-level power (public or private) for the benefit of few at the expense of many. It includes corrupts activities such as embezzlement, award of contracts by public office holders to personal companies, to friends and family, fraud, bribery, nepotism, ethnicity, rigging of elections, extortion, diversion and misappropriation of funds and manipulating procurement processes. Considering the rampant cases of corruption reported in the country from 1999 to date, the paper rather attempted to cite some of the major corrupt practices perpetrated by political leaders in the different administrations of the fourth republic. It focused on corrupt practices involving government officials because of the central role the state plays in the economy of Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

There are different theories that explain corruption in societies. These include the Marxist theory, the elite theory, the game theory and the neopatrimonialism theory. The Marxist theory maintains that the manner in which society organizes the production, exchange and distribution of goods and services determine its material conditions and social consciousness. It argues that corruption is an elite affair (Nkom, 1982). The game theory argues that people are likely to shun corruption and fight it if they know they are not alone and will not find themselves losing out to those who are corrupt (Nagano, 2009). The paper however adopted the neo-patrimonial theory in explaining grand corruption in Nigeria.

Neo-patrimonial theory is a multidisciplinary and multidimensional approach which emphasizes the process of patrimonial practices taking place in a modern state (Hyden, 2000). The ideas of Neopatrimonialism originated Max Weber's rational-legal bureaucratic systems and patrimonial systems. The rational legal authority is defined by formal and impersonal democratic institutions with clear separation between public and private sectors (Erdman and Engel, 2007). On the other hand, however, decisions in neo-patrimonial systems are highly politicized with the domination of personal relations and political connections involving characteristics that includes clientism, rent seeking and corruption (Bratton and van de Walle, 1994; Medard, 2002; Pitcher et al, 2009). Hence, the distinction between the public sphere and a private sphere in neo patrimonial societies exists in theory but this distinction is blurred in practice.

Neopatrimonial systems are characterized by the privatization of public affairs with corruption and patron client relationships being endemic in such societies. Clapham (1985) defines neopatrimonialism as a type of organization where relations of a broadly patrimonial form pervade a political and administrative system that is formally built on legal and rational lines. Positions in bureaucratic organizations are occupied with powers that are formally defined, but those powers are exercised as far as possible as a form of private property not public service. Bayart (1993) described this form of rule as the 'politics of the belly' whereby there is an intense struggle at all levels of society to gain access to state resources referred to as the 'national cake' which is ultimately controlled by 'big men'. This approach is useful in understanding the nature of corruption in Nigeria and the manner in which state resources are used for personal and political gains.

Manifestations of Grand Corruption in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

The transition from military rule to a civilian rule in Nigeria generated high expectations for good governance and improved economic development. It also ignited hope that the new democratic regime will promote greater participation in government and minimize the prevalent corrupt activities during the military era. An Afro barometer report at the onset of Democracy in Nigeria revealed that 84 percent of Nigerians believed that democracy is the best system of government for the country (Afrobarometer Survey on Attitudes Towards Democracy and Markets in Nigeria, 2002). However, within a few years of Nigeria's democracy, the country was plagued with persistent religious, ethnic crises and pervasive corruption. (Bambose, 2010; Iyaniwura, 2014;

Okolo et al, 2014). Hence, the new civilian regime in Nigeria started to reproduce many cases of corruption carried out by politicians who were elected to represent the people. Several cases of grand corruption were reported from the legislative, judicial and executive arm of government. When Former President Olusegun Obasanjo assumed power in 1999, one of his foremost policies on assumption to office was the fight against corruption. He had noted during his inaugural speech in 1999 that the impact of corruption during the military regime has earned Nigeria a very bad image and that there was need to set Nigeria on a path of accountability and transformation (Enweremadu, 2010; EFCC Annual Report, 2012).

Despite his anti-corruption stance, several cases of corruption were reported in the country at the executive, legislative and judicial arms of government. At the state government level, a number of ex-governors who served during his tenure were indicted by EFCC for corrupt practices involving the embezzlement and diversion of funds, mismanagement and misappropriation of funds, inflation of contracts amongst others. By 2006, 24 governors in the country were already charged with cases of money laundering and award of fraudulent contracts (Kofarmata, 2005; Tell, 2012; EFCC Zero Tolerance Report, 2013). The EFCC also revealed a corruption scandal of about N50 million which indicted the former Minister of Education Professor Fabian Osuji in allocation deals that eventually led to his resignation. Another major case of public corruption in Obasanjo's government was that involving a serving Inspector-General of Police, Tofa Balogun who was exposed and arrested on multiple charges, including using his office to embezzle \$128 million dollars (EFCC Report, 2013). Furthermore, a report of an audit released by the Former Auditor General of Nigeria in 2005 showed loss of about 23 million dollars in the Presidency and National Assembly, with financial frauds that included over-invoicing, payment for jobs not done, and inflating contract figures to release money without approval and due process in ten major ministries (Adesote & Abimbola, 2012).

With the rebirth of Democracy, the judiciary in Nigeria was re-invigorated as the arm of government responsible for upholding the rule of law. However, many cases of corruption specifically involving bribery to influence the administration of justice were reported. A report by the International Commission of Jurists on Nigeria stated that judicial corruption remains a major concern, and between 2002 and 2005, not less than 6 superior court Judges, including 2 Justices of the Court of Appeal, were removed from their posts on charges of corruption, while a number of other judges are under investigation (Report of International Commission of Jurist in Nigeria, 2007; Ugochukwu, 2009).

This unfortunate scenario thus corroborates the view of Bayart, Ellis and Beatrice, (2009) that: "diversion of funds to private accounts, the failure to allocate resources to the designated target areas, the utilization of institutional resources for private gain, and the utilization of an enterprise's borrowing capacity for improper purposes are the various methods employed by African leaders to enrich themselves" (Baryat et al, 2009).

Since Politics in Nigeria is an easy means of acquiring wealth, corruption scandals were also reported during Late Former President Umaru Yar'Adua's brief government. Few months after he was sworn in, reports of alleged misappropriation and inflation of funds for the renovation of official residences of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the house were released. Following the reports, the First Female Speaker of the House of Representatives in Nigeria, Mrs Patricia Etteh resigned over her indictment for misappropriating public funds worth US\$ 5 million dollars in renovating two residential apartments and purchase of 12 official cars (Adesote et al, 2012) Having served as the Vice President of Nigeria, Former President Goodluck Jonathan formally assumed leadership as president after the demise of Yar'Adua in 2010. He also contested in the 2011 presidential elections and was elected President from 2011-2015. Like in previous administrations, cases of grand corruption leading to loss of billions of dollars were reported in his administration. The fuel subsidy corruption scandal was revealed in 2012 after a set of audits, investigations, committees were set up to investigate the fuel subsidy policy of the government within 2009-2011. The findings revealed that the implementation of the subsidy policy was characterized by endemic corruption and inefficiency involving fuel importers and senior government officials which cost about \$ 6.8 billion dollars (Ogbeidi, 2012; Iyaniwura, 2014; Bolu, 2016).

In 2013, the Central Bank Governor, Sanusi Lamido informed the President that the government-controlled oil company, NNPC did not remit \$2 billion dollars in revenue owed to the state. The President dismissed Sanusi's claim but after an audit was completed on NNPC's account, it was discovered that 1.48 billion dollars was found missing or misappropriated. The amount was truly close to what the CBN governor had disclosed (Bolu, 2016) The foremost corruption scandal during Goodluck Jonathan's administration was revealed by the new government of President Buhari when a Committee was constituted in August 2015 to investigate the management of funds for the procurement of ammunition to fight insurgency during Goodluck's era. The Committee's report revealed that despite the disbursement of 2.2 billion dollars to tackle insurgency, little or nothing was spent on the procurement of arms. Rather the money was spent on fictitious contracts and campaigns for the 2015 elections (Akinwumi, 2016; Soniyi, 2015; BBC News 2015).

Though President Buhari's government had been accused of disregarding court orders and witch-hunting the opposition in the Dasukigate scandal, evidences from investigations and court proceedings of the scandal still showed that the 2.2 billion dollars for the procurement of arms was mismanaged during Jonathan's regime. After his re-election in 2015, President Buhari made the fight against corruption in his ten-pint agenda. He vowed to fight "the pervasive corruption which had crippled Nigeria's infrastructural development for decades. While the regime arrested and detained some high-profile officials on allegations of corruption, it also has got engulfed in major corruption scandals. (Kazeem, 2017; Okon et al, 2018).

Among the major cases of grand corruption was the revelation of a monumental corruption at the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). During a forensic audit of the commission and a subsequent hearing by the House of Legislatures, it was revealed that the Management of the NDDC mismanaged the sum of 81.5 billion in 5 months on frivolous activities such as

condolences, community relations overseas, travel community relations, lassa fever, covid 19 take home pay etc. This was in addition to fraudulent awards of contracts by the commission without any meaningful impact on the people of the Nigeria Delta (Alkali, 2020; Idowu, 2020; Eberi, 2020).

The Head of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Ibaharim Magu was also recently suspended in a secret tribunal following allegations of fraud involving the diversion of funds and seized assets. Ironically, the appointment of the embattled EFCC Chair was rejected twice when it was brought before the Senate. He was still however appointed the acting Head of the Commission by the President (Adeshokan, 2020). The incidences of grand corruption in Nigeria tend to be in-exhaustive. When it seems the most brazen instance of corruption has been reported, the next few weeks' bulletin reports another instance of corruption on a much larger scale committed by persons occupying position of power, influence, and public trust.

Implication of Grand Corruption on National Development

The misappropriation and diversion of state resources by senior political office holders in Nigeria has negatively affected the economic growth of the country by diverting resources that should be invested in productive sectors such as manufacturing, production, agriculture, power and domestic savings. It has also affected the provision of social amenities leaving the country with bad roads, erratic power supply, ill equipped hospitals. This has consequently deepened unemployment, inequality and generated abject poverty among majority of the population. The British Department for International Development noted that poverty still persists in Nigeria due to corruption particularly in the public sector manifesting itself in different ways, from mismanagement of resources, bribery, nepotism, to abuse of office (International Journal of World Peace, 2012). Similarly, A Brookings institute in 2018 named Nigeria as the poverty capital of the world taking over India. The findings were drawn based on a data drawn from the World Poverty Clock. Though the report was rejected by the Nigerian government, incidences of mass poverty and desolation are evident in the country. A study carried out by the Price Water Coopers in 2016 on the impact of corruption on Nigeria's economy showed that corruption could cost up to 37% of the GDP by 2030 if it is not curbed immediately.

Grand corruption tends to foster more corruption, entrenches social injustice in everyday life and creates an environment that weakens values of integrity, and fairness. (Hoffman and Patel, 2017). In situations where those in positions of power engage in corrupt practices with impunity, the moral responsibility of citizens to obey laws that relate to honesty will also be eroded. Corruption has therefore become like a culture in Nigeria. While senior government officials and politicians loot state coffers, the citizens who complain of corruption also engage in corrupt activities at a lower level by putting pressure on their kinsmen for favours in cash or kind. Diamond (1995), described the cycle as a dense network of vertical ties joining political patrons to clients that sustain the system but with great instability. The implication of the network described by Diamond is that corrupt politicians have also compromised part of the society by sharing part of the loot. Thus, where public officials have not fully imbibed ethical values given the social

pressures on them to provide for family members beyond their legitimate income, the temptation to resort to corrupt means to get things done or undone becomes more pressing. However, while a junior public official who engages in petty corruption can blame the offence on poverty and the demands of the extended system, the scale of graft by top political elites is principally propelled by greed.

The high incidence of conflict, violence and instability in Nigeria are also resultant negative conditions of grand corruption. According to the EFCC Annual report (2012), the persistent phenomenon of corruption in the country has led to the loss of the government's legitimacy, increase in insecurity especially in the forms of kidnapping, robbery, ethnic and religious violence, deterioration in the standards of living and political instability. The level of insecurity in Nigeria has increased over the years due to lack of productive opportunities for the youth and the antagonistic struggle for scarce resources and basic necessities of life. Job opportunities for the many graduates have become dimmer and it is common to see many young people fighting against all odds to leave the shores of the country for greener pastures. The endemic corruption by some senior public officials has also escalated insecurity in the country by disempowering security agents who have to confront criminal gangs and insurgents with more sophisticated weapons. (Adebakin and Raimi, 2012; Odeh and Umoh, 2015). This has plunged the country to a state of lawlessness where life is nasty, brutish and short

Corruption has tarnished Nigeria's image and diminished her national prestige. Nigeria has been infamously popular for corruption after being rated by Transparency International as one of the most corrupt country in the world. Institutions like Fund for Peace and Harvard University have sighted Nigeria as a case of a failed state in Africa (Kinnan et al, 2011; Sunday, 2018). This perception creates a situation where many Nigerians are treated with suspicion in the international community. It also negatively affects hardworking and honest Nigerians in securing business, jobs and immigration offers abroad.

Nigeria has lost substantial national assets and money to foreign nations through transfer of looted public funds by the political leaders with the collusion and connivance of banking industries in Europe and other developed countries (United Nations, 2002; Enweremadu, 2012)). The Global Integrity Forum, (2009) revealed that the proceeds of corruption constitute the main predicament for money laundering and a major obstacle to development in Africa. It noted that Africa has lost an estimate of \$854 billion in illicit financial outflows from 1970-2008. An amount greater exceeding its development aid (Global Integrity Forum, 2009; 2017). The Global Financial integrity forum also maintained in (2009) that Nigeria had the highest financial outflow in Africa with an estimated value of \$ 89.5 billion dollars followed by Egypt, Algeria, Morocco and South Africa respectively. According to a United Nations study, most of the looted funds and assets in landed property from Nigeria are in foreign accounts (United Nations, 2007). Because of the lengthy court processes, inadequate policy and the unwillingness of foreign financial institutions and their governments to cooperate with the anti-corruption agencies, some national assets and monies are sometimes forfeited or frozen (Farida, 2011; Gashinbaki, 2016). Among the popular

and publicized setbacks EFCC encountered in the recovery of assets was its battle in the recovery of the “Abacha’s loot” and recently the Alison Deizan- Madueke’s loot. Except a concerted effort is made to recover and appropriately utilize the recovered funds, the masses will continue to suffer the brunt of corruption perpetuated by senior public officials.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Despite Nigeria’s enormous resources, it has been unable to translate the potential to any meaningful development and improvement in the standard of living for its people. Most of the country’s resources are being consumed by corruption particular by senior public officials who use their positions in power to amass wealth for themselves and cronies.

Nigeria’s return to democracy which signaled hope for improved governance has also ushered in cases of corruption by officials elected to represent the people. This has slowed down economic growth and other devastating consequences such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, political and social instability, a corrupt culture and a diminished national image.

In order to salvage Nigeria from total collapse due to corruption, political leaders must have the political will to fight corruption beyond propaganda and witch hunt. There is need strengthen the anti-corruption institutions to insulate them from being used as political tools. Anti-corruption laws should be amended to allow speedy and efficient trials and prosecution of offenders. The punishment of offenders will restore confidence of citizens in the government and reduce corrupt practices.

The political system in Nigeria should be sanitized through radical change in values and behaviors. Public office has to be viewed as an avenue for public not a platform for material acquisition.

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