

**LEADERSHIP CRISIS AND CORRUPTION IN NIGERIAN PUBLIC SECTOR:
IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
OF NIGERIA**

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Abstract

Nigeria, a country richly endowed with human and material resources critical for national development is yet to find its rightful place among the comity of nations. The major reason for her socio-economic development stagnation is leadership crisis and corruption. Since independence, Nigerian government is replete of clueless, parochial, uninspiring, attitudinal debauchery and selfish leaders. The kernel of this paper rest in the fact that leadership crisis and corruption were interwoven and it is against this background that it explored the leadership failures and corrupt tendencies of the leadership class especially at the National level in Nigeria since 1960 and its implication for socio-economic development. The paper concludes that for Nigeria to experience sustainable socio-economic development, responsible, credible and true leaders who will build strong and transparent institutions as well as leaders who are dedicated to how history will remember them for transforming the society rather than accumulation of private wealth must emerge to implant the act of good and selfless governance in Nigeria.

Keywords: Leadership Crisis, Corruption, Public Sector, Socio-economic Development.

Introduction

The extent of development of any nation globally is often been determined by the quality and selfless nature of its leaders. However, when there is a culture of impunity in any society and there is a wide spread of lack of leadership by example to enthrone transparent and qualitative public bureaucracy, a degenerated symptoms of underdevelopment continues to manifest as exemplified in Nigeria Public Administration. The manifestation of symptoms of underdevelopment does not imply Nigeria lacks quality and competent human resources to engender development, but the process of enthroning leaders is bedeviled with crisis and it does not provide room for morally upright, competent, visionary leaders to emerge. Imhonopi and Ugochukwu, (2013) aptly capture Nigeria situation thus:

Nigeria is richly endowed by providence with human and material resources critical for national development and advancement. However, since gaining political independence, Nigeria has continued to meander the path befitting failed, weak and “juvenile” states. A state that had very great prospects at independence and was touted to lead Africa out of the backwoods of underdevelopment and economic dependency, Nigeria is still stuck in the league of very poor, corrupt, underdeveloped, infrastructurally decaying, crisis-



riven, morally bankrupt and leadership-deficient countries of the South. Rather than become an exemplar for transformational leadership, modern bureaucracy, national development, national integration and innovation, Nigeria seems to be infamous for whatever is mediocre, corrupt, insanely violent and morally untoward (p78).

History has shown that no nation in the wide world grew and enjoyed steady development in almost all spheres of its national life without experiencing good and selfless political leadership (Ogbeidi, 2012). This is mainly because qualitative growth and development has constantly been a product of good governance. However, a renowned novelist, Chinua Achebe, in 1984 attributes the root cause of the Nigerian problem to bad leadership. "The trouble with Nigeria," Achebe argues,

is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land, climate, water, air, or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to their responsibility, to the challenge of personal example, which is the hallmark of true leadership (Achebe, 1984: 1).

Extant literature shows that Nigeria is fraught of poor leadership, corruption and weak bureaucratic institutions. It is an axiom that since attainment of political independent, Nigeria has never been governed by selfless, truly transformational and intellectually endowed leaders. That is, Nigeria has never selected its best sons to positions of leadership and mediocre leadership can only lead to mediocre government without any serious achievement. What has been common over the years in our governance is the enthronement of clueless, parochial, attitudinal debauchery and uninspiring leaders, with attendant formulation of series of ill-informed and poorly implemented policies/civil service reforms which decapitated the service, leading to the exit of dedicated, competent bureaucrats and provided incentives for corruption (Ogbu, 2013). Competent and morally upright leadership engenders strong bureaucratic institutions. The success or failure of any society depends largely on the attitude and competency of its leadership. Current debates rest on the conclusion that Nigerian leadership suffers from extreme moral depravity and attitudinal debauchery (Agbor, 2011; Agbor, 2012; Ezirim, 2010; Ebegbulem, 2009; Ogbunwezeh 2007).

Ineffective leadership and corruption have impacted negatively on Nigeria's democratic stability and her economic development (Ebegbulem, 2012). The majority of Nigerian elected office holders are product of political corruption, they got their party tickets through political godfathers and mandate through election rigging. Corruption is used to acquire and sustain political mandate in Nigeria, leading to grievous consequences of mass poverty, unemployment and insecurity.

The aim of this paper is to investigate the ignominious roles that leadership crisis and corruption have played and are playing in impeding national development in Nigeria. The paper will also attempt a historical analysis of leadership crisis and corruption in the Nigerian public sector since independence, with a view to revealing the implications of the twin problems of poor leadership and corruption in Nigeria on national development; identifying the causes of corruption and leadership crisis in the country and proffering solutions appropriately.

Conceptual Analysis



Leadership: The concept of leadership has been defined in so many perspectives that it is hard to come up with a single working definition. However, Ogbeidi, (2012) defines leadership “as a body of people who lead and direct the activities of a group towards a shared goal”. This implies the ability to lead, direct and organize a group towards achieving a mutually shared goal. Ubegbe (1999:282) defines “leadership as the process of creating the subordinates’ identification with the group’s mission and creating their desires to achieve the group’s goal”. In the light of this understanding, (Norman Schwarzkopf quoted in Ogbeidi, 2012) defines leadership as a potent combination of strategy and character and strongly stresses that, of the two elements, character is the most preferred for leadership. Leadership is a social influence process in which the leader seeks the voluntary participation of subordinates in an effort to achieve organizational goals (Graig, 2005). Similarly, John Gardener describes leadership as the process of persuasion or example by which an individual induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers (Weekly Trust, 2004: 11). Accordingly, leadership is a process of social influence by which a superior influences subordinates to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent (Chemers, cited in Ogbeidi, 2012). A leader therefore is expected to be visionary, selfless, tact, prudent, level-headed with good character, and must have ability to lead by example.

True leaders in any nation are the key to a new world. It is practically impossible for any nation to improve, change, and develop without true leadership. True leaders are selfless, they think more of the next generation. If Nigeria is going to be successful we need true leaders. Leadership is not measured by how many people serve you but how many people you serve and impacted positively. True leaders do not seek followers, but followers are attracted to true leaders. Leadership is not a right of the leader but a privilege given by the followers and the leader must respect the followers. Leadership success is measured by the success of your successor. No matter how great a leader may have been if he could not produce a successor, he is a failure. This is true of a parent, a teacher and a politician. A true leader must be able to mentor those who will succeed him so that his legacy will not be destroyed. True leaders do not have seat-tight syndrome.

However, leadership crisis manifests in any nation when the leaders are characterless, clueless, self-seeking, greedy, parochial, visionless, mission-less, uninspiring, attitudinal debauchery, unwilling to relinquish power, thoughtless, unfair, high-handed etc.

Corruption: Although there is no universally acceptable definition of what constitutes corrupt behaviour, the most prominent definitions share a common emphasis on the abuse of public power or position for personal gain. The UN Global Programme against Corruption (GPAC) describes it as “abuse of power for private gain”. Similarly, according to World Bank and Transparency International, corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain of the holder of the office or some third party. It can also be defined as impairment of virtue, moral principle and a perversion or change from the general accepted rules for selfish benefit. Corruption refers to “any action or omission enacted by a member of an organization which is



against the rules, regulations, norms and ethics of the organization and the purpose is to meet the selfish end of the member” (Azelama, 2002:90), at the detriment of the organization. Viewed from these definitions, corruption in the public sector usually encompasses abuses by government officials such as embezzlement, nepotism and cronyism; another abuses include over-inflation of contracts leading to kickback on contract; as well as abuses linking public and private actors such as bribery, extortion, influence peddling, payment for favourable judicial decisions, falsification of financial records and fraud; to mention but a few. In this regard, corruption threatens fair business practices, democratic process, good governance, sustainable development; it derails administrative goals, instigates organizational goals displacement, and it drastically reduces the image of Nigeria in the international communities.

Review of Existing Literature on Leadership Crisis and Corruption in Nigeria’s Public Sector

In his analysis on leadership, Lee Kuan Yew, the celebrated founding father of modern Singapore wrote in his book -“From Third World to First: The Singapore Story, 1965 – 2000” “we need good people to have good government”(Ebegbulem, 2012). This implies good political leaders will bring about good bureaucratic/civil service system. Lee Kuan Yen evolved a transparent bureaucratic system devoid of corruption. However good the system of government, bad leaders will bring harm and worsen the conditions of their people. On the other hand, evidence abounds in literature on several societies well governed despite poor systems of government, because “good, strong leaders were in charge” (Ebegbulem, 2012).

The Nigerian society has never been well governed because of leadership crisis and corruption since it gained its political independence in 1960 (Oluwasanmi, 2007; Ebegbulem, 2009). Oluwasanmi, (2007); Imhonopi and Ugochukwu, (2013) are of the opinion that: from the first democratic experiment in 1960 to military regimes and back to democracy as practised in the country today, Nigeria has unfortunately been managed by leaders who are visionless, weak, parochial, morally bankrupt, narcissistic, egoistic, greedy and corrupt. The leadership from 1960 has criminally managed the country’s affairs, accumulate wealth at the expense of national development and throwing the people over the precipice where they now wallow in absolute poverty, illiteracy, hunger, rising unemployment, avoidable health crisis and insecurity (Ebegbulem cited in Imhonopi and Ugochukwu, 2013).

Historically, the origin of unethical practices and corruption in Nigeria predates the colonial era. According to a Colonial Government Report (CGR) of 1947, “The African’s background and outlook on public morality is very different from that of the present day Briton, as the African in the public service seeks to further his own financial interest” (Okonkwo, cited in Ogbeidi, 2012). It is axiom that cases of official misuse of resources for personal enrichment existed before independence (Storey, 1953). Over the years, Nigeria has seen its wealth withered with little or nothing to show in living conditions of the citizens.

In analyzing the plethora of leaders that have governed Nigeria since independence in 1960, Imhonopi and Ugochukwu (2013) are of the opinion that selfish, mediocre, tribal leaders and opportunistic small money-minded people masquerading as leaders have continued to



regenerate over time. From Tafawa Balewa (1960-1966) to Goodluck Jonathan (2011- to date), leadership crisis and corruption in the country remain the same. In the literature, many scholars are of the view that Alhaji Tafawa Balewa who ruled Nigeria from 1960-1966 lacked the capacity to display any true vision and chart a progressive course for national development. Tafawa Balewa Government was formed through coalition government and by its nature was weak and the Head of Government – the Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa knew he had to compromise to be anywhere near effective. He hardly had any serious control over his cabinet ministers because of lack of consciousness of development. He uncritically supported one side in the power tussle in Western Region in the expectation that he would thereby destroy an intelligent opposition party headed by Chief Obafemi Awolowo. He did not show any critical leadership that was necessary during the western region crisis and he perished in the crisis. Government officials looted public funds with impunity. Tafawa Balewa did not take any policy position to wipe out the menace. Corruption, avarice and drifting of the country were said to be the reasons middle-rank army officers sacked the Nigerian First Republic politicians from power through a coup d'état on 15th January 1966.

General J. T. U. Aguiyi-Ironsi who ruled Nigeria from January to July 1966, neither understood the meaning of politics in general nor was he able to diagnose the specialties of the Nigerian political system whose leadership was placed on his shoulders (Ebegbulem 2012). He was neither confused nor misled; he was simply incompetent, ignorant and naïve. Uncritically and in a very uncertain situation he opted for a strong central Government through promulgation of unification decree (Unitary system of Government) in a heterogeneous country (Nigeria) where Federalism is most suited.

General Yakubu Gowon who ruled Nigeria from 1966 to 1975 was visionless, he had no plans, and he was apparently the only Head of Government anywhere in the world who had enormous wealth (that came from petroleum which became major source of Nigeria wealth), that he did not know what to do with it. The only vision he had, was of himself being head of state indefinitely and being a good boy all over the world – (He even paid the monthly salary of some islands in the West Indies while his people had epileptic power supply, no good roads, good water to drink etc.) (Oluwasanmi, 2007). Apart from the mismanagement of the economy, the Gowon administration was corrupt to the macro level. Thus, in July 1975, the Gowon administration was toppled by General Murtala Mohammed through a coup d'état. "The coup of 1975, among other things, was an attempt to end corruption in the public service" (Ogbeidi, 2012).

Murtala began by declaring his assets and asking all government functionaries to follow suit. He instituted series of probes of past leaders. Ten out of twelve military governors that served under Gowon were indicted (of corrupt enrichment) by the Assets Investigation Panel of 1975 General Murtala Muhammed instituted. The guilty governors were dismissed from the military services, and their asset seized with ignominy. Accordingly, Murtala's anti-corruption fight spread to the civil service, over 10,000 civil servants indicted of corruption nation-wide were dismissed. General Murtala Muhammed's emergence between (July 1975-February 1976) was revolutionary as well as challenging (Ebegbulem 2012). He brought a new sense of mission



and direction for the country. In fact, his approach to governance was radical. He was unfortunately killed in a failed coup carried out by young military officers, who could not understand his radical approach to governance. The administration was; however, short to provide room for proper assessment.

General Olusegun Obasanjo who succeeded Murtala did not show the same zeal, as his erstwhile boss, in the prosecution of wrongdoers. Although, he charted the path General Murtala drew - a new course for democratic governance and constitutional development. "General Obasanjo, however, has a pathological hatred for the intellectuals and did not see any intellectual dimension that is germane to national development" (Ebegbulem 2012). Ebegbulem further opines that "Obasanjo policy actions were frustrating the Ivory Tower as he starved the universities of funds and began the distortion of the educational institutions through untoward policy action" (Ebegbulem 2012). Obasanjo installed a second Civilian Head of State – Shehu Shagari. Shagari was mainly characterless. He wanted to be a senator and was given a job – headship of the Federal Government of Nigeria, which he did not actively seek (Oluwasanmi, 2007).

Shehu Shagari's administration (1979-1983) was visionless/mission-less, it also witnessed leadership crisis in all ramifications. His Government was noted for unplanned purchase of rice, of cement that the ports could not clear for long period of time (Oluwasanmi, 2007). It was claimed that over \$16 billion in oil revenues were lost between 1979 and 1983 during the reign of President Shehu Shagari (Ogbeidi, 2012). It became quite common, for federal buildings to mysteriously go up in flames, most especially just before the onset of ordered audits of government accounts, making it impossible to discover written evidence of embezzlement and fraud (Dash, 1983). It was apparent that President Shehu Shagari was too weak in his administration of the country, as he could not call his ministers and political lieutenants to order or stop them from embezzling state funds. Shagari was inept, clueless and his administration was characterized by a wild kleptomaniac.

Muhammadu Buhari led a popular coup that again rescued the economy from the grip of corrupt politicians of the Second Republic (Ogbeidi, 2012). Buhari came to power largely to rid the country of corruption. He launched War Against Indiscipline. Under this policy, eradication of corruption was vigorously pursued and consequent upon which many former public officers (state governors and commissioners) were detained, brought before tribunals of inquiry on suspicion of corruption (Aghayere, 1997). The Paul Omu-led Tribunal found most of the politicians guilty and sentenced them to long jail prison terms. Buhari, who ruled the Nigerian state from 1983 to 1985 – has found it difficult till this day to show that he possessed a sense of fairness and true nationalism (Oluwasanmi, 2007). He selectively prosecuted and imprisoned most Governors from southern Nigeria while those in the North (in his native region) who squandered money untouched. Buhari executed Bernard Ogedengbe, Bartholmew Owoh and Lawal Ojulope for an offence of drug trafficking in spite of public pleas. The execution was done under a retroactive decree courtesy of Buhari regime. Buhari regime was against the press for publishing critical statements against his government, making the report of truth a very serious offence in the country. He imprisoned civil society activists and critics for



making report on his government. However, he could struck fears in the people's minds and got then to behave properly in public places through the draconian decree – War Against Indiscipline philosophy (Oluwasanmi, 2007). Buhari was removed in a bloodless coup by General Ibrahim Babangida because of high-handedness.

General Ibrahim Babangida, who styled himself a military president, forced Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) on Nigerians, which virtually destroyed the naira and Nigerian economy (Oluwasanmi, 2007). Babangida administration encouraged, democratized and institutionalized corruption; and corruption became an art of state policy. Babangida came up with a grandiose political transition that was described as the most expensive in Africa and at the end annulled the best election Nigeria ever held and produced no democracy (Ebegbulem 2012; Ebegbulem and Imhonopi 2013). When the pressure of the international community and civil society to install the acclaimed winner of the annulled election, Chief MKO Abiola heightened, he decided to install a toothless Interim Government of Shonekan, a government that was easily removed by inscrutable General Abacha within a period of about three months of its existence. Though, Babangida made little effort in infrastructure development.

General Sani Abacha who ruled Nigeria from 1993 to 1998, governed with iron fist (Ebegbulem 2012), while the entire country became an extension of his personal estate within a space of five years. He stole the country blind; amassed so much wealth than most countries in Black Africa put together (Ebegbulem, 2012). In-fact, parts of Abacha legendary stolen wealth is still being recovered from his family till date. Abacha self-succession and transmutation agenda was however cut short by divine intervention in 1998 when he died in mysterious circumstances on the morning of the day he was to execute and dismiss some senior army officers (Ebegbulem 2012; Oluwasanmi, 2007).

Abacha was succeeded by General Abdusalam Abubakar. He was a gentleman, who faithfully restored civilian rule on schedule in 1999 handing over to the retired General Olusegun Obasanjo. The General Abdusalam Abubakar administration of 1998-1999 was not exempted from the mass looting of the public treasury. The Christopher Kolade Probe Panel set up after his administration indicted Abdusalam regime of high magnitude of contract related corruption – kickback on over-inflated contracts. “He emptied the foreign reserves of the country in the name of democratic transition” (Ebegbulem and Imhonopi 2013), and during General Abubakar administration, MKO who was in house arrest in the state house for declaring himself elected President of Federal Republic of Nigeria was served the historic tea that killed him (Oluwasanmi, 2007).

The transition process saw the second coming of President Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999, who did not remove military mentality of believing that he was above everybody else and the law. His self-opinionated rule was aptly described by Oluwasanmi, (2007) thus:

He was “all wise” while anyone disagreeing with him was “all foolish”. In his sole possession of wisdom he built check points at great public expense and pulled them down at great public expense. Corruption became all pervading; electoral fraud common place, personal insecurity and unresolved assassinations characterized his regime just as much as disobedience of court rulings. Many infrastructures were left to decay while he pursued an attempt to stay longer in office by trying to amend the constitution. He pursued to jail



or impeachment those governors who did not agree with him using corruption as the weapon: on corruption those who agreed with him were unscathed. Though, he tried to reorganize some arms of government – The civil service and finance.

Obasanjo assumed office 1999 poor (all his bank accounts amounted to about N20,000); but eight years later he had refurbished and expanded a derelict agricultural (poultry) farm at Ota to be now worth hundreds of millions of naira (Oluwasanmi, 2007). Obasanjo now possesses educational institutions that run from primary level to university: he now has over two hundred millions of shares in various conglomerates, most especially Transcorp Nigeria Limited (Oluwasanmi, 2007). His effort at combating corruption made little or no impact in the war against political corruption as his friends and officials under him were corrupt (Ebegbulem 2012; Oluwasanmi, 2007). He sold Government property to himself and his cronies below the cost price; and House of Representative probe revealed that his administration wasted 16 billion US dollar in power sector with nothing to show for it (Imhonopi and Ugochukwu, 2013; Aderonmu, 2009).

Obasanjo successor, President Umaru Yar'Adua was a weak leader who lacked the qualities of a good health and strong leader. Yar' Adua consistently preached his administration zero tolerance for corruption and determination to bequeath rule of law and due process for Nigeria, but his disposition and body language revealed the contrary (Aderonmu 2009; Ijewereme, 2013). Yar' Adua government through the office of Attorney General of the Federation made frantic efforts to prevent James Ibori, the former governor of Delta State (who is currently serving jail term on money laundry conviction by London court) from being prosecuted and jailed. James Ibori was a close associate of President Yar' Adua and a major financiers of Yar' Adua's election. Umaru Yar'Adua forced Nuhu Ribadu, the Economic and Financial Crime Commission Chairman, from office just two weeks after he tried to prosecute former Delta State governor James Ibori (Human Rights Watch, 2011).

Furthermore, leadership crisis has also been visible in the current administration. The people of Nigeria and the world have observed the cluelessness and low credibility of Goodluck Jonathan administration. New York Times Newspaper of May 6th 2014 describes him as "leading a corrupt government that has little credibility". In a similar vein, Jonathan government was also described by former US Republican presidential nominee, Senator McKay as a practically non-existing government that has lost credibility in providing security of life and property. In addition, Hillary Clinton, the former US Secretary of State in separate events in New York City said the Nigerian government under President Goodluck Jonathan, squandered its oil resources, and indirectly helps corruption to fester in the troubled country. Falana (2012) opines that, under president Goodluck administration: "some of the governors under investigation posted their orderlies and relations to man departments in the EFCC". Falana further posits that corruption is being carried out with impunity under current President Goodluck Jonathan administration to the extent that the war against corruption has been lost completely. The minister of petroleum, "Mrs Daziani Allison Madueke has been indicted of corruption by five different investigative panel Committees reports at different time, yet she confidently remains in charge of the Ministry unperturbed" (Melaye, 2013), without the



president demonstrating political will to bring the minister to book. Madueke has also being recently indicted (for squandering 10 billion naira on private jet maintenance expense) by the Nigerian National House of Representative. The house called her to defend the indictment, instead of giving account to the people's representatives she obtained infamous court injunction restraining the house from further investigation and indictment of her office.

The Causes of Leadership Crisis and Corruption in Nigeria

Leadership crisis in Nigeria is occasioned mainly by lack of intellectual training and discipline, on the part of leaders of our national government. This does not imply that, adequate intellectual training is necessarily a guarantee for good leadership, but it does help in most occasions. The main theme of Plato's Republic thesis is that for there to be a meaningful and sustainable development, a society has to be governed by people-men and women-who have, through careful training attained the proper knowledge of human life and know the meaning of goodness in all its forms (Ochulor, 2011). Such knowledge facilitates an appropriate comprehension of the purpose of government. Without it one will not be able to govern well. Good leadership demands unusual virtue, intelligence, education, discipline, selflessness and a great deal of experience. So leadership crises in Nigeria arise largely from the leaders' intellectual incapacity, lack of discipline and political inexperience, not so much from the political institutions, not so much from the system (Ochulor, 2011). Good leadership is a function of character, adequate knowledge and intellectual training on governance.

The causes of corruption in Nigeria are multidimensional. Corruption has political and socio-cultural variables. The root causes of corruption in Nigeria could be traced to the culture and weird value system of the society. It is almost impossible to see a corrupt-free Nigerian because of the deteriorated culture and weak value system of the society (Dike 2003). "Corruption has taught Nigerians wrong lessons that it does not pay to be honest, hardworking and law abiding because the culture has legalized illegality in the society" (Aleyomi, 2013). The struggle for survival in the society has become a race for everyone, and there is no longer room for morality in the society (Smith, 2008).

The social pressure which society exerts on some of its members is one of the causes of corruption in Nigeria. This is because those members under the societal pressure are conditioned to enact deviant behavior among which is corruption (Merton, 1957). The influence or pressure of polygamous household or extended family system, and obligations to meet the family needs in Nigeria, can be attributed to why public servants involve in corrupt practices. Family pressure is heightened on its member because there is no social security set up by Nigerian government for the unemployed people. Corruption is linked to the strong family values involving intense feelings of obligation (Merton 1968). A society that has citizens who are achievement oriented, but have relatively low access to economic opportunities will face family pressure (Aleyomi, 2013). Any society whose culture "stresses economic success as an important goal but nevertheless strongly restricts access to opportunities will have higher levels of corruption" (Lipset and Lenz, 2000). Nigerian society stresses economic success and many



people troop to miracle churches for economic success/breakthrough without the society providing access to opportunities.

Bad leadership and outrageous salaries of the public office holders, most especially the executives and legislature is another source of corruption in Nigeria (Aleyomi, 2013). The major means of living in flamboyant affluence and conspicuous consumption in Nigeria is to hold a political office. Government functionaries in Nigeria often involve in several dubious means to amass dynastic wealth which their generation born and unborn cannot finish. Billions of naira is often being misappropriated and looted by our leaders from public treasuries without anything been done by the government to track them down (Lotterman, 2002). Instead of addressing the problem of corruption, governments dissipate energy in castigating critics and oppositions. Bad leadership breeds corruption and ineffective taxing system, which makes it difficult for societies to track down people's financial activities (Lotterman, 2002).

However, excessive greed, urge for a shortcut to wealth by the general public, the absence of a strong sense of national community and giving out chieftaincy titles to corrupt persons by traditional rulers, are among the causes of persistence corruption in Nigeria (Ndiulor, 1999)

Implications of Leadership Crisis and Corruption on Nigerian Economic Development

Bad leadership and corruption are the bane of Nigeria's socio-economic development. There is a consensus among well-meaning individuals and foreign nations that corruption has largely retarded the quest for sustainable growth and development in Nigeria. It is the single most critical impediment to achieving the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs); and like a deadly virus, it attacks the vital structures and systems that engender progressive functioning of the Nigeria society (Ogbeidi, 2012).

The effects or implications of leadership crisis and corruption in Nigeria are outrageous. In the opinion of Aiyede (2006) "corruption poses a serious development challenge". An observation of the Nigerian political realm shows that the leadership crisis and corruption have undermined democratic values of trust, credibility of government, and good governance by flouting or even subverting formal process. Leadership crisis and corruption in the electioneering processes, and the executive and legislative bodies reduce accountability, transparency, integrity and distorts quality representation in policy making (Ebegbulem, 2012). Ebegbulem further deposits that "corruption in the judiciary compromises the rule of law; and corruption in public administration results in the unfair and inefficient provision of services". Moreover, corruption weakens or erodes the institutional capability of public bureaucracy as procedures are disregarded, resources are siphoned off, and public offices are bought and sold (Ebegbulem, 2012).

Corruption in Nigerian public service increases cost of running businesses as well as cost of governance. In any corrupt regime, a nation could lose billions of dollars into the pockets of the nation's leaders at the expense of National Development (Omar et al, 2001)

Leadership crisis and corruption in Nigeria slow down the pace of development because it weakens efficiency and effectiveness of public service and discourages genuine prospective

investors. It also lowers compliance with construction, building, traffic rules, environmental, or other regulations, reduces the quality of government services and infrastructure, and increases budgetary pressure on government (Ebegbulem, 2012).

Corruption aggravates poverty, eats up funds that would have otherwise been used to rescue a lot of people from the pain of starvation and want as it excessively pulls resources from the national treasuries, placing the money (for economic development) into the bank accounts of a few individuals who are politically powerful (Ebegbulem, 2012; Adebayo, 2013). Corruption and mismanagement of public funds have direct bearing on the Nigeria's collapsing infrastructure like potable water, good road networks, health facilities, standard of education, security, justice, employment, and other challenges which are interconnected (Ribadu, 2013). According to Adebayo (2013):

Corruption remains the biggest barrier to ending extreme poverty and stands in the way of progress in the development of all areas mentioned here; preventing funds reaching healthcare and education, limiting individuals' abilities to access jobs and social benefits, corroding systems of law and stopping aid working effectively in the poorest parts of the world.

Successive government in Nigeria syphoned money that would have been invested in the power sector, while those that invested in the sector misappropriated the money with nothing to show. For example, House of Representative probe revealed that Obasanjo administration wasted 16 billion US dollar in power sector with nothing to show for it (Aderonmu, 2009).

Mediocrity in leadership and corruption have led to cluelessness in professionalism, deficient leadership outputs, falling standards in students and teachers education as a result of poor funding of education in the country. Leadership crisis and corruption have direct bearing in Nigerian graduates becoming increasingly unemployable and may, sooner than later, lose the competitive edge for which products of the country's ivory towers were known for some years ago (Ebegbulem, 2012), as many products of the tertiary institutions now suffer from loss of self-confidence, hopelessness and loss of confidence in handwork and societal value.

Crisis of leadership and corruption in successive governments, most especially from Obasanjo administration have led to perennial insecurity situation in Nigeria. Though, Yaradua administration tackled insecurity in the Niger Delta, but the emergence of Islamic sect (Boko Haram) in the northern Nigeria has degenerated security into a morbid and porous security situation resulting in the wanton destruction of lives and property and a cortege of criminal sociopaths such as armed robbers, carjackers, kidnappers, ritual killers and assassins. In the face of these wanton killing, the current government of Nigeria headed by Goodluck Jonathan remains clueless, and not sensitive enough to the plight of victims of Boko Haram.

Leadership crisis and corruption are largely responsible for an embryonic economy that is said to experience growth without development. The recent rebasing of the Nigerian economy has put Nigeria in the position of the largest economy in African and twenty six largest in the world without development. Paradoxically, as the Nigerian economy growth/GDP increases, unemployment and poverty increase. For example, unemployment rate increased from 12.6 percent in the year 2002 to 23.9% in 2011 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). Similarly, in



2004 Nigeria's Relative Poverty measurement of Nigerians living in poverty stood at 54.4%, but increased to 69% (or 112,518,507 Nigerians) in 2010, while in 2004 Nigeria's Absolute Poverty measurement of Nigerians that were living in poverty stood at 54.7% but risen to 60.9% (or 99,284,512 Nigerians) in 2010 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). In-addition, using the Relative and Absolute Poverty measures, NBS estimates that poverty may have further increased to about 71.5%, and 61.9% respectively in 2011. The economy growth has not put food on many a Nigerian's table, has failed to create jobs for the unemployed and has failed to improve the human development indices that make for genuine national development (Imhonopi and Ugochukwu, 2013). The duos further posit that "the economic development in place has been plunged to the depths by the sustained thievery of public officials aided by their foreign allies and domestic private sector collaborators, fronts and cronies".

Concluding Remarks

Having investigated leadership crisis and corruption in Nigeria, it is evident that the twin problems have attained an unimaginable height and pandemic proportion since 1960 to date. Nigeria has never selected its best sons to positions of leadership. The lack of responsible leaders with integrity, vision, high moral values has been the bane of Nigeria development. It is totally appalling and disheartening that Nigeria, a country blessed with human and material resources critical for national development is now doomed with uncertainty where abject poverty, high unemployment rate, falling standard of education, avoidable health crisis, unresolved assassinations, insecurity, looting and squandering of public funds, etc, all as a result of bad leadership and corruption, have become the order of the day.

No doubt, Transparency International consistently rates the levels of corruption in Nigeria among the highest in the world. Corrupt practices among the political leaders undermine economic development. This is because it increases cost of running business, aggravates poverty, impedes the country's ability to attract overseas capital/foreign investors, and it reduces the credibility of democratic and bureaucratic institutions. Although the situation looks very bad, it is not insurmountable. To break the cycle, we are impelled to quote the opinion of Farida Waziri (2010):

The war against corruption like terrorism is a special kind of war. It admits of no conventional methods. It is a war against human selfishness and greed. It is a war against rapid and senseless primitive capital accumulation. It is a war against decadence of mind, ethics and morals. Because of these special characteristics of the war, it requires a strong and uncompromising political will. It must be approached holistically. Casual and superficial approaches will not work. Rhetoric must match concrete action. Like all wars on salvation and restoration, friends will be hurt; families and associates will equally be hurt. And above all, politics have no place in the war.

This implies that, there must be a complete attitudinal change on the part of the Nigerian political leaders, because no matter how excellent the constitution or other instruments for ensuring accountability, transparency and checking corruption in the Nigerian public sector might be, all will be fruitless except the political leadership class shows the political will to abide by and enforce them. Consequently, until political leadership and higher civil service



appointments ceases to be an avenue for easy accumulation of illicit wealth and a new political culture that abhors corruption in public life and humiliates corrupt public servant, the country cannot escape the unavoidable disastrous consequences that comes with pervasive corruption (Maduagwu cited in Gboyega, 1996).

It has been realized and generally agreed that government cannot legislate an end to corruption because punishment of wrongdoers, may not be sufficient to stop corruption. Therefore emphasis should be placed on civic education and the teaching of good character from elementary levels to higher institutions. Importantly emphasis should be placed on redistribution of wealth to ensure that the vast popular of the poor in the society are impacted positively. There is a need to build a culture of honesty, accountability, transparency, and establish a tradition of selflessness and patriotism in public service, and a culture where people can achieve good levels of investment and standard of living through hard-work.

Finally, Nigeria leadership class should turn a new leave by rejecting old habits of corruption which has impeded economic development. Nigeria needs leaders who are more interested in people than private ambition. Nigeria needs leaders who think more of the next generation than the next positions in the country they will occupy. We need leaders who think they owe a debt to the future. This country needs leaders who are more dedicated to how history will remember them for transforming the society than accumulation of private wealth. Leaders who have adequate knowledge and intellectual training on governance should be selected. Nigeria needs selfless leaders who will set up quality institutions and establish policies that eliminate incentives for corruption. That is, Nigeria needs transparent and strong institutions to deliver efficient and effective services and ensure sustainable socio-economic development. It is an axiom that no country can develop strong institutions without the benefits of good and great leadership. Therefore, good and great leaders who will create an enabling environment necessary for building and sustaining strong institutions should be voted for by the electorates through credible electoral processes.

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