



## **The Deepening Culture of Corruption in Nigerian Society: Implications for Governance, Development and Stability**

Adeola, Gabriel Lanre (Ph.D)

Lecturer, Department Of Social Sciences, Political Science An International Relations, Crawford University,  
Faith City, IGBESA, OGUN State, NIGERIA.

**Abstract:** *Nigeria is a country with inherent contradictions and paradoxes exemplified by robust religious adherents and followers which should be a God fearing society and which the inhabitant should demonstrate an epitome of uprightness, trustworthiness, accountability and honesty. Albeit, Nigeria could not be ranked a corrupt nation, a century ago but since independence and the present dispensation of presidential system of government synchronizing with the oil boom and military rule, the country has systematically and increasingly become a corrupt society that international behavioural agencies such as Transparency International has labeled her among the most corrupt nations in the world. Since 2008, corruption has been on the ascendancy and every day, the nation is plunging into even deeper corruption which has been so widespread and assumed alarming proportion that every Nigerian is regarded as corrupt. The intensity and dynamics of the cankerworm has touched the fabric of the society such that it has taken the insignia of culture. Everybody, from the top to the downtrodden, and every aspect of the society, be it private or public sector; is infested by this cancerous and contagious attitude which is the bane of good governance and progress. The saddest thing now is that all over the world, Nigeria is perceived as a corrupt nation which speaks volumes to national integrity. This is the greatest threat facing the country and this is the focus of this paper anchored on the deepening state of corruption which has become a national stigma, a completely anathema that remains a singular impediment to the nation's development. this paper therefore virulently posit a radical approach compelling the society to embrace a totally new culture geared towards fundamental attitudinal change that embodies accountability, probity, honesty, virtuous life style, including a conscious mindset and perception of abhorrence and negation of corruption and corrupt practices in order that the country can be on the path of real development, good governance, stability and progress.*

### **I. Introduction**

Corruption as a phenomenon has metamorphosised from an inconsequential, an insignificant attitude or behaviour that can be tolerated to a mammoth, a gargantuan enigma that has become an institution and even a culture going by the theme of this paper: a deepened and profound culture in some societies across the globe with particular reference to Nigeria. The yearly empirical study by the Transparency International since 1993 gave credence to this assertion. (Adeola et al: 2013, Toerell: 2005, Diamond, 2004...). Corruption which though has been argued by great many scholars, private and governmental officials some years past as a necessary transitory mechanism in the process of economic development and nation-building which they agreed would fade away as the society advanced better, educated and prosperous. (Diamond: 2004), Hellas, this perception or thinking may be true to some extent in developed economies (Tanzi, 1998). In developing countries it has not been the case. Take the example of Nigeria, a great many scholars and researchers have found a trend that had begun at an almost zero tolerance for corruption and rising to an over blotted proportion. Infact, the contention was that even though corruption had been in existence in Nigeria even before independence, it was indeed at a minimal scale that its prevalence synchronized with the military usurpation of power. But became full blown during the era of Babangida's leadership. During this period, it was so pronounced, profound and widespread that it became almost a state policy or institutionalized that the scenario of that time was as if government existed so that corruption can thrive (Gboyega: 1996). The advent of democratic governance since 1999 has exacerbated the plague called corruption in the society that it has become synonymous with Nigeria and therefore a culture per excellence (Ogundiya I.S., 2009). Nigeria remains a startling paradox and contradictions by virtue of the religiosity of the inhabitants who in their majority are either Christians or Muslims. A society which should foremost be a God-fearing nation exhibiting such virtues as holiness, trustworthiness, uprightness, honesty and accountability. Unfortunately, she has earned the acronym of one of the most corrupt nation on this planet.

Secondly, Nigeria possess great wealth naturally and humanly speaking that should place her among the foremost developed countries yet, in the midst of these vast endowments, Nigeria ranks as one of the countries with the largest number of poverty – stricken population as a result of corruption (Bakare, A.S. 2011; Ogundiya, I.S. 2010) and has continued to be deepened, and affecting every fabric of the society with enormous implications for development, governance and political stability. Table 1, Pg 5

This introduction shall be followed by examining conceptual and theoretical framework. Section two shall focus on the causality of the penetration of corruption in the society. Section three shall examine the implications on economy and development while section four will analyse its implications on governance and political stability. The paper shall be rounded up with concluding remarks.

## II. Conceptual and Theoretical Considerations

The emphasis of this paper: the deepening culture of corruption presupposes corruption to have gravitated so pervasively that it can be found in virtually every segment of the society, that its absence has become an aberration and inconceivable such that it has become a way of life, a culture. This is indeed an unenviable label for a nation but that is the position of corruption in the society today. This is a perspective that is shared by scholars and writers on corruption in Nigeria. Among the myriads of

**Table 1: Poverty Profile for Nigeria**

Factor	1980	1985	1992	1996	2004
National	28.1	46.3	42.7	65.6	54.4
<b>Geopolitical Zones</b>					
North East	35.6	54.9	54.9	70.1	72.2
North West	37.7	52.1	36.5	77.2	71.2
North Central	32.2	50.8	46.0	64.3	67.0
South East	12.9	30.4	41.0	53.5	26.1
South West	13.4	38.6	43.1	60.9	43.0
South Central	13.2	45.7	40.8	58.2	35.1
<b>Sector</b>					
Urban	17.23	7.8	37.5	58.2	43.2
Rural	28.2	51.4	46.0	69.3	63.3
<b>General of Head of Household</b>					
Male	29.2	47.3	45.1	66.4	NA
Female	26.9	38.6	39.9	58.5	NA
<b>Size of Household</b>					
1 Person	2.0	70.0	29.0	13.1	12.6
2-4 People	8.8	19.3	19.3	59.3	39.3
5-9 People	30.0	50.5	51.5	74.8	57.9
10-20 People	51.0	71.3	66.1	88.5	73.3
More than 20 People	80.9	74.9	93.3	93.6	90.7
<b>Education of Head of Household</b>					
None	30.2	51.3	46.4	72.6	68.7
Primary	21.3	40.6	43.3	54.4	48.7
Secondary	7.6	27.2	30.3	52.0	44.3
Post Secondary	24.3	24.4	25.8	49.2	26.3

**Source: Adapted from the National MDGs Report 2005, National Bureau of Statistics 1999, 2005 and NEEDS, 2004.**

*The table is very instructive, it can be seen at a glance the level of poverty in the northern parts of the country with high profundity in the North West and the north east. The south is not exempted as there is also very severe poverty in the south west. It can also be seen deep poverty in the rural areas compared to the urban areas. The greatest lesson of this statistics is when viewed vis-à-vis house hold, one can see that as the number the household increases, the greater the poverty. For instance, a household made up of between 2 – 4 people records 57.9 per cent poverty while that made up of 10 – 20 people records 73.3 per cent and a house hold comprising over 20 people records 90.7 percent. In this part of the world the tendency to have large family compounds the incidence of poverty. The level of education also has direct influence on poverty whereas the head of household possesses post secondary qualification, the poverty rate is 26. 3, while no education the rate is higher, 68. 7 percent and primary school holder is 48.7 per cent.*

Scholars that have viewed the deepened crisis of corruption as a great impediment to national development are for instance, Onyemachi et al (2012) viewed corruption as *the most conspicuous impediment to the political, economic and social development*. In the same vain, Akindede (2005), Bakare (2011) Amodu (2012) identified corruption as *a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigerian society, assuming a national proportion that is no longer a threat but the singular impediment to social and economic development responsible for the underdevelopment of the economy*. Others see *endemic corruption as a result of poverty and bankrupt leadership* (Ajibewa, 2006; Achebe, 1983; Alanamu et al 2006; Seteolu2004; Fagbadebo 2007 etc.).

In fact, Alanamu (2008) sees it as the single most important social problem in contemporarily Nigeria. Yet, other schools of thought viewed Nigerian brand of corruption as a behavioural act that has developed and become a mindset (Akinsola, 2004) to the extent that it has become the normal way of doing things. This perception of corruption at a very early stage of Nigeria's nationhood gained prominence among the opportunistic leaders who wanted to be rich at all cost and whose normal income was insufficient to accomplish their dreams resulted to corrupt practices, as a means of private accumulation. These leaders adopted various strategies at pilfering state resources meant for development and this act of kleptocracy became a norm and so corruption in Nigeria has become a culture, a way of life as noted by Osoba (1996) and has deepened, permeating the entire social structure consequentially and gradually breeding a culture of impunity. This is the height of corruption where the cankerworm has been institutionalized to an "hobbesian state" whereby both high and low in the society are involved. It has become the norm tolerated, accepted, standardized even demanded such that people who give and receive bribes have assimilated that behaviour (Helman and Ndumbaro 2002, 2; Nkemdili et al 2013: 182; Osoba, 1996 etc). However, the greatest casualty is the masses whose supposedly leaders have squandered or looted the scarce resources planned to better the lots of the people. On the other hand the state has lost legitimacy also because of the leadership's complete disregard for the rule of law, absence of independent judiciary and uncommitted legislature has turned the polity into a battle ground of the fittest. The system we now witness is one which can aptly be described as where nothing works, where everybody does what he likes because of this entrenched culture of impunity characterized by the phenomenon of a failed state.

How then do we conceptualise this scenario theoretically? Fundamentally, the point of departure cannot but debut with the state or its mechanism. On this premise, the historical descriptive approach adopted by Osoba (1996) is instructive. But quickly let's settle on a guiding definition. The reason being that corruption has been defined from various stand points. For instance as identified by Peter (1978) quoted by Ogundiya (2009) that the political corruption can be approached from three angles, which are the legal, public opinion and public interest. But these perspectives cannot be all embracing as there still exist the historical, cultural, social, economic that may not be covered by such approach as corruption has permeated and affected the entire human affairs and involves the high and low; the powerful and the masses in the society. From the perspective of this paper, we shall begin by employing the definition of El-Rufai (2003) quoted by Adeola et al (2012) from social impropriety as encompassing massive fraud, extortion, embezzlement, bribery, nepotism, influence peddling, bestowing of favours on friends, rigging of elections, abuse of public property, leaking of official government secrets, sale of expired and defective goods like drugs, food, electronics and spare parts to the public and many more vices that cut across the high and low such that no class or segment of the society is spared. Viewed from a more encompassing way taking cognizance of all the social strata, Ojaide (2000) quoted by Ajie and Wokekoro (2012) identified such corruptive tendencies as favouritism, nepotism, tribalism, sectionalism, undue enrichment, amassing of wealth, abuse of office, power, position and derivation of undue gains and benefits. It also includes bribery, smuggling, fraud, illegal payments, 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. According to Ajie and Wokekoro (2012), the situation has become exceedingly bad that since the 1990s, *keeping an average Nigerian from corruption is like keeping a goat from eating yam* (Achebe: 1988). It is ubiquitous, going worse day by day to the extent that there are no holy sites or reserved areas; the entire Nigerian public service is a haven for corruption. *Dividends of democracy are nothing but dividends of corruption*. The truth is that corruption has become the norm.

There are other definitions which try to point to the genesis of this monster called corruption. If we consider that of Osoba (1996) accordingly, he stated that *corruption is a form of anti-social behaviour by an individual or social group which confers unjust or fraudulent benefits on its perpetrators, is inconsistent with the established legal norms and prevailing moral ethos of the land and is likely to subvert or diminish the capacity of the legitimate authorities to provide fully for the material and spiritual wellbeing of all members of society in a just and equitable manner*. He went further to analyse this view point in three ways. The third explanation will suffice for this work; it viewed corruption as a kind of social virus which is a mixture of traits of fraudulent anti-social behaviour derived from British Colonial rule and those derived from and nurtured in the indigenous Nigerian context. Corruption viewed this way portrays it as partly an imported legacy of the British imperial power with admixture of indigenous proclivity. However, in a more radical submission from a political economy stand point, Oni and Onimode (1975) explained that the basis of corruption is the system of bankrupt capitalist values that are fundamentally materialistic, selfish and exploitative. A perspective buttressed by Ogbonna (2004) quoted by Onimajesin (2008) who stated that every capitalist society is corrupt because of its selfish and exploitative mechanism. And Nigerians of today are inexplicably obsessed with material acquisition, influence and social arrival without anybody frowning at the suddenness of such windfall. And like a bush fire the cancer has overtaken the entire society imported but has been systematically embedded in the culture.

Theoretically, the historical dimension cannot be overlooked; the cultural aspect in which case, the perspective of two publics as propounded by Peter Ekeh (1975) brings out the interconnectedness and the contradictions between the civics public and the primordial public. The contagious dimension can be perceived from the organizational culture theories, which focused on the culture, structure and environment (Gjalt de Graaf, 2007). Theorizing corruption in Nigeria from historical dimension, Osoba (1996) pungently examined corruption in six phases: the first three phases beginning from the colonial period through decolonization to independence portrayed the stinginess and the almost exclusive domination of capital by the British colonialists denying, sapping or marginalization of African leaders in the decolonization period, when eventually a clique of the Nigerian ruling class was recruited into the government, they maximized their position by increasing their take-home salaries through corrupt activities such as the kickbacks sarcastically called the *ten per cent*. From independence to the first coup, the phenomenon of pilfering and outright looting of government treasury for primitive accumulation was the order. The advent of the military rule exacerbated this culture of kleptocracy. During the regime of Gowon which corresponded with petroleum boom in which case Nigeria was awash with petro-dollars and according to Osoba (1996) the phenomenon of corruption attained a higher stage during the nine years of Gowon's regime. It however reached its peak during the Babangida – Abacha regime.

By this period, Nigerian Government could well be described as *thievery* or a system of *kleptocracy* or to employ the term of Stanislaw Andreski (1966) quoted by Osoba (1996) as *institutionalized robbery of state by its very custodians* which has thrown Nigeria into a deepened crisis of kleptocracy, pillage and profligacy with no end in sight. The outcome is the pervasiveness of corruption and the complete reversal of erstwhile African culture which frowns at stealing, cheating or unwholesome demeanor either private or public but are manifestly conspicuous in modern art of governance which brings the link or synergy between the historical theory and the two public theses. As noted by Ekeh (1975), Ogundiya (2009) and Osoba (1996) a notable impact of colonialism on African culture was the two public domain, the civic public sphere and the primordial sphere in which case, an actor operates simultaneously in the two publics but derives his livelihood from the public sphere where he uses his position to rob or pauperise the public sphere to fatten or strengthen the primordial sphere. The opposite is now the case, as contrary to that thesis, the political class instead of strengthen the primordial public, the stolen wealth is now being siphoned abroad and so leads to deprivation of the wealth that would have been used for the benefit of the masses. The cross of the matter is the generalization of this culture of illegal wealth acquisition. As noted by Osoba (1996: 383) the fraudulent accumulation process has resulted in the progressive and phenomenal enrichment of Nigerian rulers, the emptying of the national treasury and the indebtedness of the country almost to the point of bankruptcy; hence the critical scarcity of resources for social, economic and political development of the Nigerian masses. To employ the language of Keeper (2010) and Ajie and Wokekoro (2012: 92) the resources meant for water supply, roads, education, health, agricultural expansion and other basic and social services that are stolen by a handful of Nigerians through corrupt activities have crippled economic and social development causing untold hardship and poverty. As a result, the message to those who are still struggling or have not made it is simple: just be rich, the ways and means are irrelevant (Ubeku, 1991 quoted by Ajie, 2012) and so, the proliferation and generalization of corruption among the ruling class, the bureaucrats and those in government has taught a damaging lesson to the populace that being honest and law abiding does not pay (Osoba, 1996) and the ordinary people now replicate this attitude which has become common place.

It is this pervasive nature of corruption that the organizational culture theories are based. The theories are centred on the culture, structure and the environment where the worker is located. The hypothesis is based on a causality that a certain group culture leads to a certain mental state. According to Gjalt de Graaf (2007) and Punch (2000). The mental state leads to corrupt behaviour. In essence, failure on the part of government to provide adequate amenities (not imperfect character) leads official to be corrupt. These theories are related to other theories that see corruption as contagious. These theories posit that once an organizational culture or country is corrupt every person who comes in contact with it also runs the risk of becoming corrupt (Gjalt de Graaf, 2007; Adeola and Amuno: 2012). The corruption becomes so pervasive that not becoming corrupt in certain organizational culture means betraying the group (Gjalt de Graaf 2007; Adeola and Amuno, 2012). The state of corruption in Nigeria at the moment is more identical to these theories though some very limited people may still have the fear of God.

Despite that the thesis of patrimonialism and neopatrimonialism give credence to legality or the spread of corruption among the populace. Accordingly, the theory of patrimonialism is such that there is no demarcation between public and private domain and power which controls the state wealth has become personalized; in this perspective, it is easy for political elite to corner state resources for personal and group aggrandizement. This is the case in African society which is patriarchal while political power is personalized. The political elite employ social identities such as ethnicity or tribalism as a mobilizing force to capture political power and thereby have unlimited access to state wealth (Seteolu, 2005; Dudley, 1973; Osaghae, 1995 – quoted by Ogundiya 2009). Corruption is hereby wittingly embedded in the system. Neo-patrimonialism has deepened and worsened the widespread of corruption (Theobald, 1999) which has made it a structural problem firmly rooted in the socio-economic system of the Nigerian society (Metiboba, 2002). According to Ogundiya (2009), Neo-patrimonialism

is a term used to explain relationship between patron and client. In particular, patron (political elite) in the informal sector using state resources to secure the loyalty of the general populace. It is always a vertical relationship, from the very top in state structures down to the individual in the lower levels, the grassroots in the villages. As a result, the privileged political mandarin and opportunistic bureaucrats hide under this primordial neopatrimonial affinity to rob, pauperize and perpetuate corruption. Contrary to the belief that these opportunistic elements trickle down their looted wealth to fatten the primordial public, they rather amass this wealth to enlarge and enrich their corrupt empire at the detriment of the primordial and the modern public. In reality, their actions are the result of lack or dilapidated infrastructure, unemployment of youths with particular reference to the rural areas leading to a kind of forced migration to the urban centre with all the attendant socio-economic problems such as slums, prostitution, armed robbery and a host of other social vices. It is in fact, the implications of this entrenched corruption that has become a norm in the Nigerian society the focus of the next section

### **III. Implications of Corruption on Economic Development**

The implications or consequences of corruption and corrupt practices on economic development and society are unquantifiable. The foremost implication is its psychological effects on the morality of Nigerians to creativity and productivity which are the basis of invention and economic development. This threatened cankerworm has dampened morale of many people to systematically and intelligently employ their innate creative ability, devalued hard work, weaken diligence, destroy efficiency, eroded effectiveness, debase obedience and emasculate loyalty. The political economy is stunted and plagued by underdevelopment as corruption has hindered the employment of honest and brilliant individuals. The reason most able and talented individuals are lured from pursuing socially beneficial and productive activities and turn to rent seeking occupation which is damaging to the society (Tanzi, 1998). And so, this morally psychological effect is the core reason upon which others gravitate such that nothing in the system works. Thus, forcing African economies to be a liability, underdeveloped and plagued with unending crisis.

Closely associated with this problem is the undeniable fact that corruption has weakened the institutions and organs charged with implementation and even formulation of policies which have translated in the roads not constructed, pipe-borne water not provided, electrification projects abandoned, hospitals not constructed, salary of teachers not paid, half-baked graduates and incompetent professionals seen all over the place (Rose Ackerman, 1999) quoted by Bakare (2011).

As a result of this attitude of impunity, the process of economic development is totally handicapped, despite the vast human and material resources, the giant, Nigeria remained crippled and a pariah state in the comity of nations. It does no matter which sector is concerned, corruption is the bane. It becomes herculean task for such an economy to grow as there is underutilization of both human and material resources which leads to severe reduction in domestic output. This has a direct consequence on investment and employment. The capacity to employ remains slim giving rise to severe unemployment especially of graduates in an economy boasting of hundreds of Universities and other tertiary institutions with additional crop of young graduates every year, it is a devastating scene for the economy. We read every day how big companies that are the back bone of the economy and key employers of labour are relocating to other countries in the West African sub-region because of the exorbitant capital they invest on energy to power their plants. This is inadmissible in a country with a government that has the interest of the people at heart cannot damn the consequence and get to the root of the problem hindering adequate power supply and find a lasting solution. Instead, what we see and which is the hallmark of the state is the massive importation of generators of all kind such that in the whole world Nigeria is virtually the prime consumer. Maybe government is not aware that no country develops without industries and industries are the engine of growth. Without industries, therefore, the country is indirectly increasing the army of unemployed school leavers. Even those currently employed, a good percentage are underemployed because they could not be fully utilized; a situation that increases the rate of poverty. At the same time, the country is faced with capital flight. Any entrepreneur or investor wants to maximize his profit and no investor wants to be trapped in an economy where there are no infrastructures for the kind of investment planned for, infact talking of industrialist, availability of necessary infrastructure determines location. The reality is that a lot of investors locate their industries outside the country and import the finished product back to the country. Others simply take their money abroad even among those that have plundered the wealth of the nation, thereby compounding the effect of capital flight in the economy.

The medium/small enterprises which are the main engine of economic growth in Nigeria face a particularly bureaucratic corruption. There are myriads of unscrupulous local government and state government officials that perennially harass or impose unlimited taxes and levies, extort these illegal fees from unsuspecting owners or entrepreneurs. Many a times, they threat with locking of shops, confiscation of equipment and machineries. The whole facet of the economy is invaded by corruption from high and low. As a result, these obstacles and many more have hindered the effectiveness and growth of these enterprises. Whereas, obstacles to the creation of these enterprises could be damaging to the economy especially in Nigeria where they are the saving grace to the chronic unemployment and scandalous poverty ravaging the economy.(Tanzi, 1998). From the effects of

corruption on the economy, the analysis shows that the state is at the core of corruption directly and indirectly since it is the state that creates the avenue for corruption while Bakare (2011) believes that government creates incentives for corruption.

No wonder today, corruption has marred the authority and effectiveness of the state even its legitimacy which has serious implications on the pursuance of market economy and the process of democracy in the developing country, which makes Tanzi (1998: 27) to suggest that the monster cannot be fought without simultaneously overhauling and reforming the state with a rider that if some specific reforms are not effected, corruption may continue to pose serious challenges irrespective of action taken to eliminate it. This perception is poignant when we examine its implications on governance and political stability.

#### **IV. Implications of Corruption on Society, Governance and Political Stability**

In the growth of modern state, corruption has become an important variable of study by scholars, policy makers, governmental and non-governmental donor organizations. The reason is partly hinged on the fact that corruption could seriously impact negatively on the legitimacy and democratic stability especially in developing economies just emerging from totalitarian regimes. Regrettably, most countries in Africa and Nigeria in particular is plagued with severe corruption exhibiting all the symptoms of the crises such as rentier, weak economic base, fragile political institutions, volatile democracy, inadequate and ineffective control mechanism (Ogundiya, 2009; Bakare, 2011).

The prevalence of corruption in the society these days is the lack of civil spirit among civil servants and the general public. This poverty of civil spirit, the ethos, codes and principles embedded in the promotion and protection of the common wealth is the major reason for the spread of corruption. This attitude of stealing, mishandling and misappropriation of public funds and state resources overtime have spread even to the private sector such that no sector or human endeavour is not infested with corruption.

From the theoretical exposition, this lack of civil spirit has its genesis in the pre-colonial administration; it only deepens in the colonial and post-colonial period such that the political and bureaucratic elites that assumed the position of power virtually institutionalized and elevated it since the aborted 3<sup>rd</sup> republic to a state of culture. This is the greatest disservice those leaders of yester years either by omission or commission have done to Nigeria. Apparently, it is the same story in almost all the states of Africa and most developing countries. Every other reason that can be adduced to the cause and effect of corruption takes its origin from this lack of civil culture. This reason is so incisive in Nigeria that a scholar Ogundiya(2009) observes the obsession of the political and bureaucratic elite to stealing public fund. According to him, the ideology and philosophy of these political gangsters is wherever you see the state wealth, steal it. They are bonded and cemented by common atrocities and fierce contest in the bid to outsmart one another in the pilfering business and in the process generate conflicts and instability in the society.

This looted money is partly used to fund political parties with all the attendant inbuilt violence making political violence one of the greatest threats to democratic stability. The contest for political power is extremely fierce, not so much for the love of the country but for power since political power is tantamount to the control, usurpation and unlimited access to state fund and resources. The political elite and would be are bent in employing any means to obtain party tickets just to get elected. This craze has brought to the scene, the phenomenon of godfatherism and motherism. These are money bags who have in the past looted the common wealth but are not tired in amassing more wealth knowing fully well that election is a huge investment, so when they sponsor these “godsons” they employ all manner and tactics imaginable, legal and extralegal including violence where possible to ensure the godson eventually wins the election. Once this is achieved it is the “godfather” that dictates the tune and imposes his will on the state indirectly, the reason there is tension everywhere and nothing works.

The process breeds bad governance which is the bane of development and the attendant socio-economic and political problems. Corruption has been completely entrenched in the fabric of the society to the extent that no sector nor leader can be exonerated which is why all the efforts so far adopted cannot yield tangible result as noted by Toerell (2007) that it is difficult to uproot corruption with a corrupt legal system. The more reason that today with the present crop of political leadership, as remarked by Osoba (1996), the war against corruption and the twin sister, indiscipline was more noisy than effective and in actual fact, has always been drummed up more for the administration’s self-promotion than out of concern for public morality and morale of the Nigerian state. This view also corroborates views of other researchers. Bakare (2011) summing up such views writes that with the persistent ranking of Nigeria as one of the notorious corruption laden state in the world by the Transparency International, Nigerians have begun to express doubts about the genuineness of the recent crusade and campaign against corruption. Such campaigns are seen as political instrument to witch-hunt political opponents or perceived enemy of the government rather than bring sanity and orderliness to the polity. And the question really is, as posited by Nkemdili and Co (2013). How serious or honest are Nigerian leaders to rid the society of corruption. Given the manner in which political contest has degenerated in Nigeria and how leaders are elected, can the ruling class in Nigeria support any genuine anti- corruption drive? Those who go to equity, as the

lawyers would say, must go with clean hands (Nkemdili & Co: 2013). As a result, the current Nigerian leadership lacks the moral fibre or the locus stand; to champion the cause of corruption in Nigerian society (Ogundiya, 2009). The reason the country is heated up, faced with one crisis or the other; with the army of unemployed rising, the situation is compounded by insecurity and war cries from insurgency all over the land. The people are disenchanted calling to question the legitimacy of state and leaders. The praetorian state is haunted by parallel locus of power that portends great danger and instability in the system.

In the present circumstances, the fight against corruption will have to begin from every Nigerian from the moral and ethical stand point. The questions are, how has corruption impacted negatively on social, economic and political values of Nigeria? Since we cannot exhaust the impact of corruption on the democratic process, we present a kind of summary of the views of some scholars on the consequences of corruption on the polity.

### V. Impact of Corruption on the Political Economy

In this section, the objective is to do a kind of summary on the implications of corruption on the political economy from perspectives of various researchers and scholars such as Tanzi (1998); Ogundiya (2009); Bakare (2011) Toerell (2007) among others;

From the perspective of Tanzi (1998), corruption

- Reduces public revenue and increases public spending.
- Distorts markets, prices and the allocation of resources.
- Increases poverty because it reduces the income earning potential of the poor.
- Reduces investment and as a consequence, reduces the rate of growth.
- Reduces expenditure for education and health
- Increases public investment in infrastructure because public investment projects lend themselves easily to manipulations by high level officials to get bribes. In the case of infrastructure they are awarded but never built.
- Reduces the productivity of public investment and of a country's infrastructure.
- Reduces tax revenue, as officials aid tax payers to evade it by taken token from them.
- Reduces foreign direct investment.
- Reduces economic growth.

Ogundiya (2009); Ajie & Wokekoro (2012);

- Political and bureaucratic corruption threatens democracy.
- Robbed Nigerians benefit of economic development.
- Severely affected economic performance.
- Breeds crises.
- Accentuates violence.
- Corruption and godfatherism as the greatest danger to democracy.
- Threatens political and democratic stability.
- Destroys value system.
- Stunted growth.
- Contributes to mass poverty, unemployment and illiteracy.
- Government domination of economic sphere enhances corruption.
- Corruption impaired hard work, diligence, obedience and efficiency (Bakare 2011).
- Subverts honest selection process.
- Breeds lack of civil spirit among civil servants
- Weakens institutions.
- Roots of decayed, poor or lack of infrastructural facilities
- Promotes capital flights
- Leads to capacity underutilization in both human and material resources
- Promotes bribery, embezzlement, fraud, election rigging, examination malpractice, forgery and misappropriation of national wealth.
- Root causes of lack of accountability and lawlessness.
- Worsen debt situation.
- Accelerates brain drain.
- Hinders political participation of honest people.
- Institutionalize robbery, kleptocracy and thievery
- Breeds racketeering and culture of impunity.
- Distorts social equity.
- Discourages political participation.

The foregoing itemized implications show the danger inherent in the culture of corruption to render a state ineffective and unworkable. It also shows that the major causes emanate from the state. As a result, the Nigerian state needs to be critically overhauled and the ongoing sovereign national conference needs to beam its searchlight on this singular cankerworm called corruption that threatens the corporate existence of Nigeria

## VI. Concluding remarks

We have endeavoured to make an investigation on the implications of corruption on the society from the perspectives of governance, development, political stability and democratic sustainability. It cannot be overemphasized the devastating and debilitated consequences of corruption on the state. It is a unique and singular phenomenon that can grind the wheel of the state to abrupt end; what in literary parlance is the failure of state. From the investigation gathered even though from secondary sources, reveals that the deepened and severity of corruption with its pervasiveness and ubiquity from a minimal stage to an institutionalized one, becoming a norm that have assumed the acronym of culture is indeed a monster and a serious issue.

At its present stage, cannot be confronted by fiat, rather a holistic strategy involving multiple actions concurrently. Fundamentally, it is an act perpetrated by human beings which means it is a conscious and deliberate act. The first thing is a conscious education of the mind possibly with a jingle to disabuse the minds of Nigerians of the danger of corruption to our collective heritage and the need to salvage this threatened heritage and wealth from disintegration. From the historical trajectory, of the coming on stream of privileged Nigerian elites, corruption according to Osoba (1996) was learnt or instigated by the paucity of fund to build political parties and later they became master of the act which over the years became part and parcel of their behaviour. At this point, they have thrown integrity to the winds. Akinsola (2006) corroborated this behavioral pattern in her submission that corruption is a behavioural act acquired through learning; that results from gradual decay and decomposition of moral principles and values and the extinction of parental and societal conscience and integrity. And in the Nigerian context with particular reference to the privileged class, corruption grows out of the constellation of social values and the power relations or material basis that underpins them. (Helman and Ndumbaro, 2002) quoted by Nkemdili et al (2013), it is primarily a governance issue, this administration must entrench good governance in all facets of the political economy. Our leaders must imbibe the spirit of equity and shun this craze for materialism, ensure that the national wealth is equitably distributed so that poverty which begat crime in all its manifestation, violence, kidnapping, prostitution, insurgency, smuggling etc. can be eradicated. Hence, in the fight against corruption, the political class and bureaucratic elite whose obsession for wealth, frugality, kleptocracy is despicable must be made to see reason and be accountable to the plight of the nation. Instead of some privileged few wasting and siphoning the wealth of this nation illegally abroad, the government must plan a grand social security programme and a retirement benefit for all kinds of work and trade in such a way that the mechanics, tailor, plumber even market women are included in that programme, then this administration would have solved one of the greatest fear of average Nigerian which is poverty, the fear of tomorrow and what to eat today then corruption would have been greatly dealt with. The plea therefore is that it is high time we democratised wealth in Nigeria than for a privileged few corruptly amassing and squandering the collective scarce resources.

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