



Impact of Corruption on National Development: The Nigerian Experience

Ije, O. Jairus;¹ Garba Andrew Yawa¹ & Kayode Olumuyiwa Ebenezer²

¹Department of Political Science, Bingham University, Karu

²Department of Sociology, Bingham University, Karu, Nasarawa State

Email: dominionbizz@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The study examines the impact of corruption on national development the Nigerian experience. The study relied on secondary sources of data as veritable tools for its analysis. . Findings reveal that corruption is a social menace and a cankerworm that has eaten deep into socio-economic and political fabric and life of Nigeria, the most populous black nation in the world. Further findings revealed the pervasive phenomenon of corruption and its practice as systematic and endemic in both public and private sectors of the Nigerian economy. The broad objective of the study is to stamp out corruption from Nigeria and to make Nigeria stand tall among comity of nations. Further findings revealed how the attendant and devastating consequences of corruption affect the routine processes of governance, pollutes business environment, creates poverty, unemployment and general underdevelopment in society, loss of respect among comity of nations, lowers standard of living of citizens, makes Nigeria a dependent and beggar nation. The theory is anchored on Dialectical Historical Materialist approach. The gap of the study is to have a corrupt free Nigeria where the yearnings and aspirations of Nigerian citizens will be met. The paper concludes that in Nigeria, we have not been able to mobilize our energies, through purposeful and accountable leadership that will transform our enormous human and material resources toward uplifting our peoples' condition. The study recommends that since corruption is primitive accumulation and crime against humanity, government should ensure that only men and women of proven integrity, with the fear of God and love for their people should be given positions of responsibility in Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is the most populous and the biggest economy in Sub-Saharan Africa and is well known for corruption. The global perception of this social menace and cankerworm that has eaten deep into the socio-economic and political fabric of the economy of our dear country is of pervasive phenomenon. Indeed, corruption and its practices are endemic and systemic in the public and private sectors of the Nigerian economy. The overwhelming and devastating consequences of corruption affect the routine process of governance, pollutes business environment, undermines integrity of government and public institutions, creates poverty, unemployment and general underdevelopment in society, loss of respect for Nigeria amidst comity of Nations, lowers the standard of living of citizens and makes Nigeria a dependent and beggar nation. (Rufia, 2014) In the words of Obasanjo (2009) "Corruption has been responsible for the political instability of successive governments since the First Republic. Every coup since then has been in the name of stamping out the disease called corruption, unfortunately, the cure turned out to be worse than the disease and Nigeria is worse for it. Nigeria's external image took a serious bashing as our beloved country began to fixture on every corruption index. With over four decades of colonial rule in most African countries, development became stagnant yet, a cursory examination of endowment of African states revealed that in both human and natural resources and other conventional prerequisites for



growth and development, African cannot be said to be a cursed continent (Obansanjo, 2009). The paradox of Nigeria's condition with respect to development is that we have not been able to mobilize our energies through purposeful and accountable leadership to transform the enormous resources towards improving the condition of our people. One crucial factor that has therefore continued to hamstring development in Nigeria is the pervasive phenomenon of corruption. As a result of corruption, much of Nigeria's wealth continues to be concentrated not only in the hand of tiny elite, but evidently responsible for the plundering of resources that are stashed away in foreign accounts by unscrupulous leadership. As a socio-economic and political malaise, corruption has conditioned development in a number of ways; it undermines the rule of law and legitimacy of the state. It destroys confidence in the integrity of institutions. It accelerates crimes, halts investment and stalls economic growth. It bleeds the national budget, burdens the poor disproportionately and diverts scarce resources from basic human needs. It concentrates wealth in the hands of the majority groups in society. It creates classes in society wherein they have and they have not's conflict endlessly. It encourages antagonism between the rich and the poor, the rulers and the ruled, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the end result of which is general underdevelopment. It creates unemployment the unemployed youths roam the streets and constitute public security nuisance (Rufai, 2014)

Objectives of the Study

The Study is predicated on the Following Research Objectives

Ascertain the relationship between corruption and good governance in Nigeria.

Examine perception index of corruption in Nigeria between 2011-2015. Determine impact of corruption on socio-economic and political development in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The study made use of secondary data to analyse the impact of corruption on National development the Nigerian experience as it outlines the step-by-step details of the procedures followed in carrying out the study. The choice of this method was informed by its outstanding qualities and expert submissions that enhance efforts of finding and obtaining understanding of people's opinions and beliefs (leaders and the led) about the menace, cankerworm or this pervasive phenomenon called corruption. The data for the study therefore come from textbooks, published articles, dictionaries, encyclopedias, newspapers, journals, periodicals, internet seminar papers, quoted materials such as speeches magazines etc. All these sources alluded to the fact that there is complete correctness to say that the impact of corruption on national development is destructive and has resulted in the socio-economic and political underdevelopment of the country.

Conceptual Clarifications

The concept of corruption originated from the Latin verb "vumpere" which means to break. Corruption is a complex, omnipresent and multifaceted phenomenon with multiple causes and effects which take various forms and functions in different contexts. It ranges from the



single act of payment contradicted by a law to an endemic malfunctioning of a political and economic system. Corruption is a structural problem of political, economic, cultural and individual malaise. Dike (2010) posits that corruption is a problem that confronts all nations of the world; the only difference is that its prevalence, gravity and persistence vary from one country to another. According to Morris (1994:416) corruption is "behavior that deviates from the formal duties of a public role (elective and appointive) because of private regarding (personal, class, family, private, clique wealth or status". According to Aluko (1999:3) corruption is anti-social behavior conferring improper benefits contrary to legal and moral norms, and which undermines the capacity of authorities to improve the living conditions of the people. Transparency International, The World Bank and Human Right Watch (1989) define corruption simply as the abuse of public power for private gains. Ayua (2001) view corruption as involving the behavior on the part of officials in the public and private sectors in which they improperly and unlawfully enrich themselves and or those close to them, or induce others to do so, by misusing the position in which they are placed. Development on the other hand is a concept that has been surrounded by a lot of controversies in an attempt to define it. Given the general character of the concept of development, arriving at its precise and universally acceptable definition is always not easy in all its complete ramifications. According to Todaro (1985) development is a multi-dimensional process involving the re-organization of the entire economic and social systems. It involves in addition to radical changes in institutions, social and administrative structures as well as in popular attitudes, customs and beliefs. To Thiesenusen (1975:82) Development is bound up and necessitates the general improvement of human capacity and a general reduction of mass poverty and un-employment together with enhanced security. It is obvious that development cannot be equated with mere increase in output of growth measured in gross national product (GNP). Such indications are though being increasingly recognized, do not tell us anything about the composition or its distribution, or who benefits, who does not, as well as employment and unemployment situations.

Theoretical Framework

This work is informed by the dialectical historical materialist approach which traces important political and cultural processes, contradictions and problems to their roots in the conditions and processes of material culture. (Toyo, 1975) The reason for adopting this method is to save us from the confusion, irrelevance, eclecticism and frivolous concern with the inconsequential and superficially typical of the bourgeoisie functionalist method. (Toyo, 1975) Dialectical materialism believes that in life nothing is static rather, everything is in perpetual flux and that society continues to change for good from time to time. Marxist perspective believes that in all capitalist societies of the world, Nigeria inclusive, there are classes that these classes are social groups, and it is through their conflicts that society changes or develops. According to Shanin (1984), classes are large groups of people in a society that are distinguishable by their relative position in a historically determined economic system. According to Swarz (1982) dialectical materialism is the philosophy of Karl Marx that he formulated by taking the dialectic of Hegel, marrying it to the



materialism of Feuebach, a German philosopher, abstracting from it the concept of progress in term of the conflict of contradictory interacting forces called the Thesis and Anti-thesis culminating at a critical nodal point where one overthrows the other, given rise to the Synthesis, applying it to the history of social development, deriving there from an essentially revolutionary concept of social change.

Review of Related Literature

The Concept of Corruption

Otite (1986:12) see corruption as perversion of integrity or a state of affair through which bribery, favor or moral depravity occurs. It involves the injection of additional but improper transaction aimed at changing the normal course of events and uttering judgments and positions of trust. It consists in "doers and receivers" use of informal, extralegal or illegal act to facilitate matter. Corruption is a world-wide phenomenon which has been with societies throughout history. It has caused political and economic instability in societies and depending on the scale, it has led to social conflict and violence, as competing groups vie for state power which is the source of distribution of resources and other amenities in society.(Olopoenia, 2000).

The Concept of Development

According to Marx (1869) development is a uniliniable transformation from low to a higher level of an organization. The essence of development consists in resolving contradictions through revolution which produces change. Classical thoughts on development advanced liberal-capitalist strategies while Marxists largely offered socialist alternatives. Neo-liberal like Todaro (2000:134) emphasized a development that has efficient distributive mechanism. Other neo-liberals like Ake (1985:97) argued for a development that promoted a more equitable distribution of the benefits of the economic growth and development. Yet other neo-liberalists like Kukah (1993) pushed for a term of development that is participatory in nature.

Types of Corruption

Corruption occurs in both public and private sectors. It is a pervasive phenomenon that has permeated socio-economic and political life in contemporary world which could be divided into forms and sub-forms as follows: Bureaucratic Corruption: It arises when for example; underhand deals are made between public authorities and elements in the private sectors in order to get special fiscal favors. Examples include: the design or selection of uneconomical projects because of opportunities for financial kickbacks, procurement fraud, including payments, collusion, overcharging, misrepresentation, the delivery of substandard goods and services, illicit payment and or receipts of goods and services which are not needed at that particular point in time. Bureaucratic corruption also includes extortion, misappropriation of funds, nepotism and favoritism, personal use of official and government secrets to advance personal gains or fortunes. (Ayua, 2001) Political Corruption: This is the use of political power for financial gain, or the use of financial power to buy political



power. The manifestations of political corruption include: vote buying in an election, illegal campaign by the wealthy and other special interest groups to influence public policies, laws and regulations, election rigging, the creation of certain government jobs to enrich individuals or to reward incompetent political loyalists at the expense of the general population etc. Political corruption is very dangerous as it transforms into a means not of governing for common good but of enriching those in power and loyal supporters. Political corruption involves all the arms of government (the executive, legislative and the judiciary). (Ayua, 2001) The Political Bureau 1987 identifies the following forms of corruption. The inflation of government contracts in return for kickbacks, frauds and fabrication of accounts in the public service, examination malpractice in our educational institutions, the taking of bribes and perversion of justice among the police, the judiciary and other organs responsible for the administration of justice and the various heinous crimes against the state, and in the business and industrial sectors of our economy, collusion with multinational companies such as over-invoicing of goods and foreign exchange swindling, hoarding and smuggling. Corruption in the private sector which include bribery by multinational companies, serious fraud in financial institutions like banks, insurance companies, illegal and disinformation by companies about non-existing products and services in order to make profits, payment of bribes in order to get contracts from public works and exception from regulations and so forth. (Ayua, 2001).

Electoral Corruption: According to Ike (2009), this includes rigging and the use of thugs to intimidate people during elections. Electoral corruption is usually counter-productive because it is used to entrust power to unqualified people in politics. **Systemic Corruption:** This occurs when corruption is integrated and accepted as an essential aspect of the socio-economic and political life of a group of people. A situation in which major institutions and processes of the state are routinely dominated and used by corrupt individuals and in which most people have no alternative but to engage with those corrupt officials while performing official duties or civic responsibilities. (Morris, 2008) **Individual corruption:** This is the opposite of systemic corruption. Its occurrence is irregular in nature and therefore does not threaten the mechanism of control nor the economy as such. However, because of its crippling nature it can equally sap economic resources, seriously undermine morals, lowers personal and state integrity, creates poverty and unemployment and pollutes business environment. (Morris, 2008)

Causes of Corruption in Nigeria

Unemployment: It exposes the unemployed to the risk of making money illegally out of desperation. In Nigeria, today most internet scammers, fraudsters engage in this business because they lack the opportunity of making money legitimately. (Morris, 2008) Unemployment in Nigeria according to Human Rights Watch (2007) posits that many people would want to use their loved ones such as father, mother, brothers, sister etc. for ritual purposes to amass wealth. Also many young girls resort to prostitution and boys engage in other criminal activities such as thugery theft, kidnapping, abduction, cybercrime,



cultism to mention just a few. Weak Government Institutions Aluko (1999) contends that corruption tendencies are greatly enhanced when institutions of government are weak and government policies generate economic vents. For example, highly diversified trade tariff rates create conditions for corruption as public officials with discretionary powers may threaten to miss-classify goods into more heavily taxed categories unless importers pay them bribes. Sarkar (2003), identified other factors such as dis-functional legal system, extended family system, premium on the acquisition of wealth for recognition in society, ethnic considerations which promote processes of sharing resources among different groupings and political patronage or support, all encouraged corrupt practices. Praise Singing: Political praise singers according to Manro (1995) usually push politicians into corrupt practices. They often divert the attention of the electorates from non-performance, bad governance to pouring encomiums on corrupt politicians who impoverish them which has the tendency of making them become more corrupt. More often than not, praises are poured on public office holders who cannot pay salaries of staff working under them. Also politicians who divert constituency money meant for development into private pockets as well as councilors who cannot adequately represent their wards at the local government level are also praised. This is because in the Nigerian experience corruption is seen as a share of the national cake but not as an offence or anything evil. Greed or Selfishness: There is an instinct in a man that makes him want to think that he is better or more important than all others. Thus, whenever he is given a position of authority or responsibility, he tries to unlawfully, unjustifiably and criminally amass wealth to himself, his kit and kens and tries to consolidate such a position. This is corruption and in Africa where capitalism is practiced, this is primitive accumulation. It is greediness that makes a leader want to be in power for life (sit-tight leadership). Greed as an act of corruption in Nigeria is chronic and endemic, it is worse than Ebola virus. It has disrupted and destabilized development process and efforts as well as distorted and disarticulated the economy of many societies in the world.

Hardoon and Hrienrich, 2013

Godfathers and Impunity Clause: Those who sponsor others into politics become their Godfathers and they apply the principle of who pay the piper dictates the tune they control and give directive on virtually everything including how to govern the electorates. Most times money meant for development is diverted and given to them as monthly honorarium to the total neglect of the electorates. Also, payment of wages and salaries are considered secondary instead of primary. According to Igbinavia (2007) godfatherism has become a serious problem to many societies because of the way they hijack governance and halt development. They have the power to influence public policy as well as laws and institutions at the expense of the general public. Impunity clause also enables political office holders to divert funds meant for development into private pockets. This impunity clause enables them to commit any crime against the state, such as embezzlement, misappropriation of funds misrule etc. and go scot free while a common man is punished even for a trivial or minor offence. Favourism and Nepotism: these are mechanisms for



abusing power or position implying biases in allocation of jobs, positions of authority, and resources to people, kinsmen, family members, society and country while nepotism is favourism shown to the relatives or friends. Nepotism enables wrong people to be employed in any established without proper qualification or wrong appointments offered to politicians who do not merit them. Favoritism brings about low productivity in many organizations as incompetent employees are well protected and so they can do anything and scot free without being quarried. This type of corruption has a multiplying effect especially as the culprits go unpunished. (Igbinavia, 2007) Ostentatious Living: This is a veritable tool for corrupt practices in Nigeria today. Everybody wants to be known, addressed, identified and recognized as number one and nobody wants to be second in command. There is competition among public office holders as to the quality of cars they ride, houses they live in, clothes and the school their children and wards attend. The masses of the people who voted them into power suffer at the expense of these few privileged Nigerians. This show of wealth perverts the cause of good governance, halts development, creates unemployment and poverty and affects the living standard of the less privileged. (Otite, 1986)

Impact of Corruption on National Development

The impact of corruption on the socio-political and economic development in Nigeria is myriad. According to Toke (2009:16) corruption has impacted negatively on national development by reducing the level of investment, as it adds to investment risk; it has promoted poverty and income irregularities. Development projects and infrastructure (roads, schools, electricity supply, water supply, sanitation, industry, healthcare facilities etc. have been abandoned. Corruption according to Obadan(Obadan,2004)) has led to the undermining of the legitimacy of the state and reduction of its power to play its intended and presumably correct role in the economy and so cannot meet its functional target for the citizens This occurs when entrenched corruption diverts development resources and saps the vitality of the state to manage resources effectively and efficiently. When corruption permeates a government and its administrative machinery, public trust is violated and social capital corroded (Mbaya, 2006) Systemic corruption distorts incentives, disarticulates economies, undermines institutions and redistributes wealth and power to the undeserving. Those who pay and receive bribe expropriate a nation's wealth, leaving little for its poorest citizens. For instance, as a result of corruption, Nigeria, despite her enormous wealth is ranked among the poorest nations of the world. The tendency frequently is that, when corruption is well entrenched, even countries with extensive resources may fail to develop in a way that benefits ordinary citizens. That is why the challenge of economic development has remained daunting for many developing countries of Africa such as Nigeria, to the extent that even among those of them that are highly endowed with human, natural and financial resources, some have not been able to break the vicious cycle of poverty and are not able to meet the felt needs, yearnings and aspirations of their citizens (Sorkaa, 2003)



Nigeria's Corruption Perception Index (2011-2015)

Public concern about corruption in Nigeria extends beyond the shores of the country. One of such global bodies which have shown continues interest in corruption profile of Nigeria is the Transparency International (TI). This is Non-Governmental Global Civil Society Organization (CCSO) leading to the fight against corruption. It was founded in May 1993 through the initiative of Peter Elgen, a former Regional Director for the World Bank. With its international secretariat at Berlin, Germany, the organization which is headed by Huguette Labelle has more than 90 chapters worldwide. It monitors and publicizes corporate and political corruption in international development. It also raises awareness about the damaging effect of corruption by collaborating with partners in government business and civil society to implement effective measures to tackle corruption. In 1995, the TI developed the Corruption Perception Index (CPI), a blueprint which contains a comparative listing of corrupt nations worldwide. To form this index, the TI compiles surveys that ask business men and analysts both in and outside the countries that are analyzing their perception of how corrupt these countries are. The CPI which is the most commonly barometer for corruption in all the country of the world is published annually.

Transparency International, 2011

The index draws on different assignments and business opinion surveys carried out by 13 reputable institutions. These are: the World Bank Economic Form, Freedom House, and Price Waterhouse. Coopers, Institute of Management Development, Lausanne, Political Risk Consultancy, World Business Survey, State Capacity Survey, Columbia University, Gallup International, Multilateral Bank, Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey, World Market Research Centre and Information. The survey and assessments used to compile the corruption perception index include questions relating to bribery of officials, Kickbacks in public procurement, embezzlement of public funds and questions that strength and effectiveness of public sector anti-corruption efforts. Since its establishment in 1993, the agency has consistently investigated corruption in Nigeria and elsewhere. To underscore the depth and pervasiveness of corruption in Nigeria, the TI in its CPI ranked Nigeria as the second most corrupted nation in the world for three

Consecutive years, 2001, 2002 and 2003 (TI, 2011).

The table below shows Nigeria's ranking on Transparency International Corruption Perception Index from 2011-2015

Table 1:1

S/N	Year	No of Countries Surveyed	Nigeria's Ranking	Nigeria's CPI Score
1	2011	183	143	
2	2012	178	139	
3	2013	177	144	
4	2014	175	136	



5	2015	168	136	
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Source: Transparency International Corruption Perception Index Report 2011

As with previous years, according to Akosile (2015), there seems to be no let off to Nigeria's apparently steady decline on the global corruption perception index. The report of the 2011 CPI released by the global anti-corruption watch dog in December 2011 showed that Nigeria emerged 143 among the 183 nations covered by the survey with a score of 2.4 on the scale of 10 points. By this ranking, Nigeria dropped nine places from its 2010 position of 134. The 2011 CPI also showed that Nigeria trailed behind other seven West African nations namely; Cape Verde, Ghana, Mali, Senegal, Niger, Cameroon and Sierra Leone on the global corruption survey. Like in previous years, Botswana continued its impressive showing on the global corruption ranking as the 32nd nation with a score of 6.1, while at the West African sub-regional level, Cape Verde emerged the best perceived corruption-free nation with a global ranking of 41 and a score of 5.5. New Zealand, one of the three consistent top-runners on the corruption perception index, emerged first with a score of 9.5; followed by Denmark and Finland which came second and third with 9.4 points on a scale of points. Somalia and North Korea jointly emerged as the two most corrupt nations in the world for the period under review. The two nations ranked 182 with a score of 1.0. Like the 2011 ranking, Nigeria did not fare any better in the CPI for 2012. The CPI report for the year 2012 released on Wednesday December 5, by the Global Anti-Corruption Police ranked Nigeria as the 135 most corrupt nation out of the 178 countries surveyed, scoring 27% of a possible 100%. The report showed that in Africa, countries like Botswana and Cape Verde took the 30th and 39th positions, scoring 65% and 60% respectively. The countries of Rwanda, Ghana and South Africa scored 53, 45 and 43% respectively on a global CPI ranking of 53, 66 and 69 out of the 178 countries covered in the survey for the period under review.

The 2012 CPI report showed that at the global level, Denmark, Finland and New Zealand emerged first, second and third in the ranking as the least corrupt nations tying on 83% out of 100%. In 2013, out of 177 countries surveyed, Nigeria ranked 144 most corrupt nations in the world. The report showed that in Africa, countries like Botswana, Cape Verde and Ghana ranked 30, 41 and 63 respectively. Denmark, New Zealand and Finland emerged 1st, 2nd and 3rd in the ranking as the least corrupt nations while Afghanistan, North Korea and Somalia ranked 175 being the most corrupt nations in the world. 175 countries were surveyed in 2014 corruption perception index. Nigeria ranked 136 alongside Cameroun, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon and Russia. Denmark, New Zealand, Finland, Sweden and Norway were the top five with a score of 92%, 91%, and 89%, 87% and 86% respectively. The worst and the most corrupt nations of the world as at 2014 were; Sudan being 173rd 11%, North Korea 174 8%, and Somalia 174, 8%. The 2015 CPI report is not different from that of 2014 in the Nigeria's ranking. 168 countries were surveyed, and Nigeria still remains at 136th position. Although there was a recorded decline in score of 1% from 27% in 2014 to 26% in 2015, Denmark, Finland and Sweden were the top three least corruption countries while Afghanistan, North Korea and Somalia remained the top 3 most corrupt nations. Apparent from table 1.1 is the fact that Nigeria's corruption index has oscillated between a perceived



range of being highly corrupt and relatively corrupted, with her worst score being 27% in 2012 and 2014; her best score being 2.4 in 2011 and 25% in 2013. (Akosile, 2015).

Anti-Corruption Crusades in Nigeria

In order to fight corruption and bring about needed development in both public and private sectors of the Nigerian economy, past and present governments in Nigeria initiated and vigorously pursued some anti-corruption crusades as follows: The "Corrupt Practices Decree" of 1975, War Against Indiscipline of 1984, Advanced Free Fraud and Other Related Offences Decree of 1995, The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission Act of 2004, and some anti-corruption agencies like the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission(ICPC). The Technical Unit on Governance and Anti-Corruption Reforms (TUGAR), the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). All these are put in place to combat corruption but corruption is on the increase. If in countries like Denmark, Finland, Sweden, New Zealand corruption is almost non-existent, Nigeria should apply their strategy of combating this social menace that has eaten deep into the socio-economic and political fabric of this great country, it's only then that development can take place or else it will elude us forever. (Akindele, S.T. and Adeyemi, O.O. (2011).

CONCLUSION

The main objective of the study has been to determine the impact of corruption on national development the Nigerian Experience. Consequent upon the findings of the study the following conclusions have. That corruption is associated with slow economic growth, reduced investment, low public revenue, feeble property and contract rights, ineffective institutions, limited social interactions and weak rule of law, poor economic competitiveness, deep ethnic divisions and conflicts, social and political tensions, low popular participation in politics and low educational attainment. Corruption has led to bad roads and decaying infrastructure. Corruption creates artificial need for external assistance to compensate for corrupt and irresponsible management of local resources. Corruption has led to mass poverty and lower standard of living of Nigerian citizens. Corruption has earned Nigeria a highly dis-respected position among the comity of nations as one of the most corrupt nations in the world. The exact position is determined by the number of counties surveyed in the time under review.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the discussions involved and conclusion thereafter drawn, the following recommendations are proposed: There should be promotion of transparency and accountability in governance. Reforming the legal and law enforcement systems in order to ensure credible and effective administration of justice and punishment of crimes. Promotion of moral regeneration and cultural change and instill a new order where criminality is punished and hard work is rewarded. The principle of the rule of law, family values, honesty and the concept of self-determination should be inculcated into the minds



of all Nigerians particularly the youths and the ruling class. The punishment for corrupt public office holders in Nigeria should be stiffer and this should be embedded in the constitution of the land.

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