

# **‘A NATION BEWILDERED AND A STATE IN COMATOSE’: CORRUPTION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

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**Abstract:** *Tolerance for corrupt practices is gradually making the most populous black nation in the world- Nigeria becoming synonymous with corruption. The previous and the recent rating of Nigeria by Transparency International on the Corruption Perception Index between 2015 and 2019 greatly suggest Nigeria is enmeshed in corrupt practices. The prevalence of corruption in the country has constituted a clog that stifles the developmental efforts in the country. This paper explored the existing Nigeria-focused corruption literature and other scholarly works to dissect the impact of corruption on the socio-economic development of Nigeria. From the review of studies, it is revealed that corruption remains the biggest threat to socio-economic development in most countries of the world including Nigeria. The study also revealed that several developmental programmes in Nigeria have failed as a result of the high prevalence of corruption in Nigeria. Also, it was found that owing to years of corruption and the failure of the government to nip the menace in the bud, the poverty level is high, insecurity of lives and properties is alarming and infant and maternal mortality in the country is endemic and pandemic. Hence, Nigeria is described as a nation ‘bewildered’ and a state in ‘comatose’. The study recommends that appointment into various governmental institutions should be merit-based and democratization processes must be strictly adhered to in a bid to limit the corrupt act. Various governmental institutions should be strengthened in a bid to fast track other aligned institutions in the society such as the family, traditional and religious institutions.*

**Key Words:** *Corruption; Development; Economy; Insecurity; Poverty.*

## **1. Problem statement**

Among numerous other problems bedeviling Nigeria; the most populous black nation in the world is corruption. The prevalence of corrupt practices in the country is a complex cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of every sphere of private and public lives of the people. Successive governments in the past have taken diverse steps to nip the scourge in the bud albeit with debatable degrees of success. Today, Nigerians applaud and tolerate ill-gotten wealth, the menace has permeated into all facets of the society; the family, the church, and even the traditional systems are not left out of this preventable but highly contagious disease. Corruption, therefore, affects the developmental efforts of the successive government in Nigeria. This has been responsible for the non-completion of projects and programmes that would have helped in alleviating the sufferings of Nigerians. Like every other country, no quantum development can be attained in a country where corruption strives such as Nigeria. Considering the alarming level of looted resources currently experienced in Nigeria, as revealed by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC) one ponders whether

the menace can be stamped out of the country. Unfortunately, this seemingly unabatable act of corruption has submerged the social structure in Nigeria such that it makes it very likely to pervade the unborn future generation of Nigeria (Umah and Eboh, 2013).

Without much emphasis, the problem of corruption is arguably one of the most significant issues of developing and undeveloped countries throughout the millennia. The pervasive nature of corruption in most of these countries has stifled entrepreneurship, professionalism and erodes the values of hard work and honesty, and is one of the root causes of under-development in most of these countries. Without much ado, in Nigeria, the manifestation of the effect of corruption is evident in all sectors of society with collusion from the public to private sectors to sports bodies and even civil societies.

There is no need to emphasize that the much-celebrated anti-corruption crusade of this present government has nose-dived considering the recent rankings of Nigeria's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) by Transparency International. The CPI ranked Nigeria as the 135th, 144th, and 136th most corrupt nation in the world in 2012, 2013, and 2014 respectively. More recently, Nigeria, the largest economy in Africa was ranked 136<sup>th</sup>, 148<sup>th</sup>, 144<sup>th</sup>, and 146<sup>th</sup> position in 2016, 2017, 2018 & 2019 respectively ((Transparency International, 2019; 2018; 2017; 2016; 2014; 2013; & 2012) and the most corrupt nation in West Africa. Rightly or wrongly, the seeming failure of the war against corruption in Nigeria may not be unconnected with the epileptic nature of political will on the part of the political leadership as well as the weakness of relevant institutions saddled with the responsibility of being at the vanguard of combating corrupt practices. This probably explains why sceptical eyebrows are raised and considered a national embarrassment whenever the war against corruption is paraded as one of the success stories of the government. Owing to this ranking, Nigeria is still perceived most especially by the foreign countries and investors as a country deeply rooted in corrupt practices for condoling the menace.

Although corruption and development lie on a continuum but occupying opposite poles yet, it has been widely identified as a clog in the wheel of socio-economic development of any country. However, corruption serves the narrow interest of family allies, this assertion is hinged on clientelism and prebendal politics that characterized the Nigerian political culture. Development, on the other hand, with its end goal of creating advancement, serves the interest of the people.

Several studies have indicated that corruption is one of the biggest threats to socio-economic development in most countries of the world and its negative impacts on sustainable peace and development have made it an issue of universal concern (Igbuzor, 2008; Ikubaje, 2004). Alabi and Fashagba (2010), explicate that one major challenge to Nigerian search for enduring socio-economic, political, and technological development as well as efficient and productive utilization of allocated resources in the millennium is the pervasive corrupt practice in the polity. Paradoxically speaking, the prebendalization of state power in Nigeria has dire consequences on Nigeria's socio-economic development. The unprecedented and adverse effects of corrupt practices on Nigeria are evident in the unequal distribution of resources, epileptic state of infrastructure, and poor living conditions among the populace (Alabi and Fashagba, 2010). The severe crisis rocking the economic, socio, and political development in Nigeria cannot be disconnected from the problem of pandemic corruption.

Indeed, it is a paradox that a significant number of the Nigerian population, a country endowed with many resources (tapped/untapped), the world's eighth-largest exporter of crude oil, and acclaimed giant of Africa, still lives in poverty owing to its corruption and economic mismanagement. Pathetically, those who occupied the decision-making position in the country have resorted to the pursuit of personal aggrandizement at the detriment of broader national interests. Literature has shown that there is a synergy between socio-political development and selfless political leadership. This is largely because qualitative growth and socio-economic developments have always been an outcome of good governance.

The persistence, pervasiveness, and trends of corruption in the country have consequently suggested Nigeria as a nation 'bewildered' and a state in 'comatose', hence a failed state. This is because there are abundant reports on how billions of naira are siphoned and misappropriated in the country by public officials and private individuals through fraud, embezzlement, gratification, and all manners of bribes (Alemika, 2012; Charlie 2015) with its attendant effects on security of lives and property and socio-economic development of Nigeria.

The criticality of studying the impact of corruption on Nigeria's socio-economic development is not just academically important but politically, socially, and economically imperative. The discourse on the implications of corruption on Nigeria's socio-economic development has spurred a wave of interest which goes well beyond academic circles and reaches out to the public at large. It is because of these foregoing problems that this paper explored the impact of corruption on the socio-economic development of Nigeria. To put the discussion in a proper perspective, this paper is divided into segments. This segmentation includes Problem Statement, the concepts: corruption, and development; Theoretical platform; Methodology; Manifestation of Corruption in Nigeria and the impacts of corruption on Nigeria's developmental efforts, and lastly, the final segment of the paper concludes with recommendations on measures to combat corrupt practices in Nigeria.

## **2. Conceptual clarification**

### **2.1. On Corruption**

The study of corruption is hindered by the lack of adequate definition (Johnstine, 1991; Izbili and Aiye, 2007). The reason for this definitional fluidity cannot be farfetched as corruption comes in various forms and a wide array of illicit behaviours, such as bribing, extortion, fraud, nepotism, pilferage, theft, embezzlement and falsification of records, kickbacks, influence peddling, and campaign contribution (Klitgard, 1991).

The World Bank (2000) defined corruption as "the abuse of public office for private gains". This definition attributes corruption to the public sector alone neglecting the existence and prevalence of corruption in the private sector. Corruption also exists in other aspects of governance, such as political parties, the private business sector, non-government organizations, religious organizations, etc. Garner (2004:370) defines corruption as the act of doing something with the intent to give some advantage inconsistent with official duty and the right of others, a fiduciary's official use of a station or office to procure some benefit either personally or for someone else contrary to the right of others. Garner's definition broadens our knowledge of corruption as an act done with the intent to give an advantage not in line with the official duty and the

rights of others but for one's advantage. It includes bribery though more comprehensive because an act may be corruptly done through the advantage to be derived from it.

Nye (1967) defines corruption as "behaviour which deviates from the normal duties of a public role because of private-regarding (family, close private clique), pecuniary or status gains; or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private-regarding influence. This includes such behaviour as bribery (use of reward to pervert the judgment of a person in a position of trust), nepotism (bestowal of patronage because of ascriptive relationship rather than merit); and misappropriation (illegal appropriation of public resources for private regarding uses)" (p.419).

Nye's definition emphasized the introduction of arbitrariness and discrimination in decision makings so that rules, regulations, and procedures are circumvented within a course of action for selfish gains. Given the above definitions, this study defines corruption as behaviour that abuse societal legal or social standards, as well as public roles or resources, meant for public purposes for private benefits.

Over the years, the debate on corruption in Nigeria has taken a systematic and institutional dimension such that it is now publicly celebrated not only by the corrupt individuals but by the families, loyalists, and supporters of this set of people. Perhaps, corruption has deadened the sense of righteousness among the people. In Nigeria corruption appears in different dimensions ranging from bribery, contract fraud, embezzlement, public procurement abuse, influence trading, complicated money laundering schemes, coercion by superior powers, and the use of public office for personal aggrandizement among others. Corruption has become a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigerian social institutions (Adenike, 2013).

## ***2.2. On Development***

Development and its usage in contemporary social science disciplines are not only vague and nebulous but also polemical (Igwe, 2010:118). For example, such terms as "growth", "change" and sometimes "industrialization" often used interchangeably with development complicate the problem of providing a generally accepted definition for the concept.

To Gboyega (2003), development is an idea that embodies any attempt to improve the socio-economic wellbeing of people in all ramifications. This definition suggests that development constitutes both material and improvement in the sustainable wellbeing of citizens without fear or favour from any quarters. It seeks to improve personal physical security and livelihood and expansion of life chances.

Seers (1969) asserts that the concept of development must be conceived as a multidimensional process involving changes in structure, attitude, and institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality, and the eradication of absolute poverty. Hodder, (2000) also sees development as economic, social, and or political processes that result in cumulative rights in the perceived standard of living for an increasing proportion of a population. This definition suggests that an increasing standard of living involves socio-economic and political processes. Thus, the improvement of the standard of living must be durable and cumulative.

Development is considered to include not only economic growth, but also equitable distribution of healthcare, education, housing, and other amenities and services all with the view to improving the collective quality of life (Naomi, 1995). From

whatever perspective one might view development, it presupposes a process of societal advancement where improvements in the wellbeing of people are granted through equitable distribution of resources.

The above indices of development appear to be missing in Nigeria. The rate of unemployment is alarming and increasing, the state of health care facilities is appalling and education infrastructure in the country is dilapidated. Modern security apparatus is missing, maternal and infant mortality rate is high, and road facility is poor. All these are obtainable in the most populous black nation in the world that champions itself as the giant of Africa. Hence, Nigeria can best be described as a nation 'bewildered' and a state in 'comatose'.

### **3. Theoretical platform**

Several theories on African politics have helped in shaping the understanding of underdevelopment and the issue of pervasive and endemic corruption in Africa. Among these theories are the Prebendalism theory by Richard Joseph and Gurnal Myrdal's soft state thesis. This study explores the prebendalism theory as developed by Richard Joseph to explain the prevalence of corruption and its effect on Nigeria's development.

Joseph (1987), contends that "the National Cake" as popularly called in Nigeria has its most dire consequences, the transformation of the office of the state into prebend... "According to the theory of prebendalism, state offices are regarded as prebends that can be appropriated by officeholders to accrue material benefits to themselves and their constituent and Kin groups. The main thrust of this theory is that the prebendalization of state power makes it possible for the political elites to use state power for personal or group aggrandizement. In a prebendal society, corruption seems to be intrinsically part and parcel of the political culture. This informs why many Nigerians may not know the term "prebendalism" but they know the practice and attitude to which it refers (Steven, 2016).

In its application, prebendalism portrays corruption as a culture or common practice in Nigerian politics. Politicians see corruption as a normal practice as the state itself is turned prebend. This theory explains the pattern of political behaviour which reflects the office of the existing state as something worth competing for and utilize for the holders' benefit as well as that of their reference or support groups. To a significant extent, the "state" in such a context is perceived as congeries of offices susceptible to individual cum communal appropriation. The statutory purposes of such offices become a matter of secondary concern. In this sense, the private interest supersedes the public interest. Development is usually taken to be a primary concern of all states. However, in a prebendal state like Nigeria where state power is used for self-benefit, development becomes a secondary concern. This theory, therefore, explains corruption as a virus itching against Nigeria's development.

### **4. Methodology**

This study adopts the exploratory method. This method enables the researcher to use facts or information already available in the literature and review them to make a logical evaluation and arrive at a logical conclusion. This paper explored the existing Nigeria-focused corruption literature and other scholarly works seeking to categorize different types of corruption and their impact on socio-economic development.

Accordingly, secondary data are utilized. Facts and information were derived from textbooks, journals, articles, and other data depositories useful to the study. The gathered data are reviewed, while interpretations and generalizations are made through systematic qualitative content analysis.

**Table 1: Evidence of Corruption cases in Nigeria: The journey so far**

<b>Corrupt cases and cash involved</b>	<b>Personality(ies) involved</b>	<b>Punishment</b>
₦195 Billion Pension scam	Alhaji Abdulasheed Maina	Interim forfeiture of his property. The case is still ongoing.
\$6 Billion fuel subsidy scam	Mamman Ali, Mahmud Tukur and others	Ongoing court cases, no conviction
₦123 Billion Naira Civil service fraud	Mr. Stephen Oronsaye, a formal head of the civil service of the federation	No action is yet taken
₦32.8 Billion-naira police pension funds fraud	Atiku Abubakar Kigo, Mrs Uzoma Cyril Attang, John Yusuf, Egai Dangabar, Ahmed Inuwa Wadi, Mrs Veronica Ulonma Onyegbule, Sani Habila Zira, and Christain Madubute	Two years sentences or #750,000 fine
₦ 255 Million cars purchase scandal	Stella Oduah, a formal minister of aviation	None
NNPC Missing \$20 billion	NNPC personnel	The personnel were fired, the Federal Government ordered an audit of the NNPC
Immigration recruitment scandal	Abba Moro, a formal minister of interior and controller general of immigration services	None
\$1.1Billion Malahu Oil scandal	Private firms (a group construction Co. Ltd (\$157M), Mega-Tech, Engr Co. Ltd (\$180M), Imperial Union Ltd (\$34M), Novel Properties and Development Ltd.	None
\$2 Billion arms deal scandal	Sambo Dansuki, former national security adviser (NSA) and other chieftaincies' of the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP)	Trial ongoing
\$700 Million Raw cash found in the throne of former petroleum minister	Allison Madueke	Interim forfeiture of it to the federal government
Diversion of 60% of \$1Billion foreign loan obtained from the Chinese	Ministry of finance	None
Diversion of \$2.2 Million vaccination medicine fund	Ministry of health	None

N13 billion fraud	Nimasa	Patrick Ziadeke Akpogu-Lokemi, a formal D.G of Nimasa and 6 others		Trial ongoing
N200 million collected from the office of the former NSA	fraud	Uche Secondus		None
N1.4b collected from the office of then NSA		Olisah Metuh		Trial ongoing
N2.1 billion collected from the office of then NSA		Dr. Raymond Dokpesi, Chairman of DAAR Communications		Trial ongoing
N830 million kept in accounts of four different companies		Ex-SSA to former President Jonathan, Dudafa Waripamo-Owei		Trial ongoing
₦15 billion allegedly looted with the help of 18 co-accused.		Senator Abdullahi Adamu		The case continues to linger in court.
\$40 million collected from the office of then NSA		Ex-President Jonathan's Cousin Robert Azibaola		Trial ongoing
N544 Million grass cutting Fraud	naira	Babachir Lawal		Trial ongoing

Source: Compiled by the Researcher as Retrieved from Selected Newspapers/ Dailies.

From 2011 to 2019, there have been several alarming and scandalous cases of corruption in Nigeria. The most disturbing and perturbing ones among those cases are presented above.

### Results and discussion

The data presented in this section were gotten from national daily articles published between January 2015 to March 2020. The corruption cases were grouped according to themes and were synthesised with related corruption cases to make for the argument of the socio-economic effects of corruption in Nigeria.

### 5. An Over-reaching Impact of Corruption on Nigeria's Socio-Economic Development

The leading greatest obstacle preventing Nigeria from achieving its mammoth potentials is corruption. It weakens the social contract in the country; it leads to the loss of billions of dollars investment from the country's economy causing stymies development. The scope and complexity of corruption in Nigeria are immense. This is because corruption in Nigeria is a web of interconnected practices that cleave across sectors. There is no need to over-emphasize the fact that Nigeria is already drowning in many of the most devastating consequences of corruption such as youth unemployment, poverty, infrastructural decay, human capital deficiency, and insecurity.

According to Alemika (2012), corruption undermines society's capacity to provide opportunities for citizens to meet the necessities of life. This informs why Sakariyau and Abdulrahman (2014) link the high poverty range in Nigeria to corruption. They believe that diversion of the private fund by private individuals for

selfish interest has done more harm to the country's economy and the people's standard of living, an assertion that the theory of prebendalism contends with. Given the words of Alemika (2012), it is obvious that corruption renders the government ineffective in providing opportunities such as jobs, health facilities, etc, for its citizenry. These deprived opportunities no doubt necessitate the high rate of unemployment cum high poverty rate in the country.

The menace of corruption has also been linked to "damage of public interest" which includes security (Alemika (2012)). The pathetic state of security in Nigeria today is axiomatic as a result of the high rate of corruption that pervaded the Nigerian state. In Nigeria's security sectors, most especially in the police, corruption is destabilizing and compounding security challenges. In the northern part of Nigeria, the level of insecurity and the havoc wrecked by Boko Haram insurgents and banditry are inestimable. While in southern parts of the country, kidnapping, robbery, and pipeline vandalization are daily evident and the security agencies are handicapped logistically to nip the menace in the bud. This perhaps explained why Nigeria's defence and security sectors are considered as one of the most corrupt in the world (Transparency International, 2019). The personnel of the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) is considered to be endemically corrupt, poorly paid, and often predatory. Police officers are Nigeria's most-bribed type of official; they are often seen at the road check-points soliciting petty bribes from the motorists (UNODC, 2017). Decades of unchecked corruption in the security sector have hollowed out the Nigerian military and security services and rendered them unable to effectively combat Boko Haram, banditry, kidnapping, and farmer-herder clashes in the country.

The effects of corruption on human capital development cannot be overstressed. Corruption and corrupt practices have contributed to human capital deficiency in no small measure. Even though Nigerians recognize education as a key to socio-economic advancement, the country's education sector has been affected by years of corrupt practices and misappropriations of resources (Matthew, 2018). The enormity of corruption in the Nigerian education sector includes officials embezzling resources meant for equipment and facilities in schools, demanding money and sex from students for grades. The atomic effects of corruption have hollowed out mostly proud institutions in Nigeria where shreds of evidence abound on corrupt practices of both management and staff of major tertiary institutions in the country. Hence, educational corruption remains a nationwide problem and an impediment to the socio-economic development of the country.

Pathetically and more worrisome is the corruption in the judiciary and within anticorruption agencies which undermines the country's already wishy-washy accountability mechanisms, thereby fuelling corruption across the spectrum (Matthew, 2018). The seemingly un-abatable level of corruption in the educational, health, and humanitarian sector, has wrecked the country's social capital and has an outsized impact on its most vulnerable citizens. This corruption also reduces the impact of foreign aids, particularly in north-eastern Nigeria, wherein humanitarian crises of over 2 million people displaced by the Boko Haram insurgents are evident. Corruption is widespread across the country's economic sectors: petroleum, industrial, agricultural, infrastructure, power sector, and banking. Together, these forms of corruption erase billions of dollars from Nigeria's bottom line and prevent it from realizing its great human and economic potentials. This suggests that understanding



the pitfall of corruption, which have crippled the Nigerian socio-economy and thrown the Nigerian state into a state of 'bewilderment', 'comatose', and mourning requires a more nuanced and pragmatic analysis to dissect and unravel its socio-cultural, psychological, and political undertones to proffer appropriate solutions and strategies.

### ***5.1. The Reach for Corruption in Nigeria Political Sector***

Ogundiya (2012) observes that the experience in the Fourth Republic indicates that corruption has become a norm. In Nigeria, electoral corruption unlocks corruption opportunities across other sectors. Kleptocratic capture of political party structures is a sine qua non of gaining power and thereby unlocking corruption opportunities across a range of other sectors. There appears no difference between Nigeria's two main political parties - The all Progressives Congress (APC) and the opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP) in this regard. Perhaps, both are assemblages of national, state, and local elite networks that rely on misappropriated public funds to finance election campaigns (Adebowale, 2016; Matthew 2018). This observation solidifies the argument that the Nigerian political culture is hinged on prebendal politics where everyone sees corruption as normal and not amoral. The implication of this on Nigerian society is that corruption remains unmitigated. The Nigerian political sector remains highly laced with corruption and other negative vices, a review of reported cases continues to show the Political sector as the bedrock of corruption in Nigeria. Public office holders continue to siphon money from the corridors of power to personal pockets and only a few are brought to book.

Some of the high-profile corruption cases have no actions taken on them yet, while some have trials that are still pending. For instance, Mr. Stephen Oronsanye (Former head of federal civil service) has a case of ₦123 Billion civil service fraud, while a former minister of aviation (Mrs. Stella Oduah) has a case of ₦255 million car purchase scandal with no actions taken. Similarly, the federal ministries of finance and health also have within its threshold corruption allegations of a diversion of 60% of a \$1 billion foreign loan obtained from the Chinese Government and a diversion of \$2.2 million vaccination medicine funds respectively. Both accusations to date have no action taken on them and no newspaper is yet to report a worthy explanation for such corrupt practices. The Ganduje saga (Kano State Governor), which has been labelled Gandollar by social media observers displayed the cankerworm of corruption in the country. The Governor reportedly received dollars on camera from an unidentified contractor in order to implement a project; to date, no action has been taken to investigate the saga as the Governor got a court injunction to stop every enquiry (Toromade, 2018, December 14).

On the other hand, other corruption charges in the public sector have had mild punishments being melted out; a perfect example would be a \$700 million raw cash found in the office of a former petroleum minister (Mrs. Alison Madueke) and the only punishment given to her is an interim forfeiture of the cash to the Federal Government (Adegoke, 2017, January 7). Similarly, there is also a newspaper report of a \$195 billion pension scam attributed to Alh. Abdulrasheed Maina; the only resultant event for this act is an interim forfeiture of his property.

While many of the earlier cited cases either have no actions or mild actions taken on them, other cases of corruption in the public sector have their cases on trial for years. For instance, a \$2 billion arms deal corruption charge against Sambo Dansuki (former

National Security adviser; NSA) remains inconclusively on trial, while connected cases such as Olisah Metuh receiving N1.4 billion, Dr. Raymond Dokpesi receiving N2.1 Billion from the same money also remains inconclusive in court. The public sector is laced with corruption, this explains the low corruption index score Nigeria is always recording as Transparency International places Nigeria 146 out of 180 countries sampled in January 2020.

It is not all gloomy in the Nigerian fight against corruption, the early days of President Buhari in power communicated commitment to fight corruption as certain landmark corruption cases were investigated and eventually brought to book. For instance, Toromade (2018, December 14) reported the cases of Former Governors Dariye and Nyame who were jailed for corruption by Justice Adebukola Banjoko. Sen. Dariye (former Taraba State Governor) was sentenced to 14 years imprisonment in June 2018 after he was found guilty of criminal breach of trust and diverting N1.162 billion state ecological funds while he was Governor between 1999 and 2007.

### ***5.2 The Reach for Corruption in Nigerian Electoral Processes***

In Nigeria, electoral corruption is not merely the perquisites of public office, it is also a lucrative pursuit unto itself. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) estimates showed that it spent about \$1 billion on the 2015 and 2019 general elections while the country's political parties perhaps spent as much as \$5 billion campaignings (Queenesther, 2018; Emmanuel et. al., 2017). While corruption has been a defining feature of Nigerian electioneering processes since 1999, it rises to climax during the 2015 and 2019 general elections. As reported by EFCC prosecutors, the former petroleum minister was alleged to have spent \$115 million to bribe INEC officials during the 2015 election (Matthew, 2018). Over the years, reports from local and international observers concluded that electoral malpractices marred the 2015 and 2019 elections in Nigeria.

It is no gainsaying that electoral corruption is the most discussed and the least persecuted type of corruption in Nigeria. Many corruption cases about elections are usually reported in the dailies. For instance, a study conducted by Adeshola, Jamie, and Oliver (2019) found that corruption stories were more reported during the 2019 elections than in previous elections beforehand with about 200 articles across the nation monthly about corruption stories. In addition, the major themes of the stories bothered around fraud and misappropriation of election funds while graft and bribery ranked next.

In discussing the relationship between the electoral process and corruption, Adeshola et al (2019) noted that efforts were made by the presidency to water down the corruption allegations against Gov. Ganduje (Governor of Kano state) during the build-up to the presidential race. Their study found that the lack of interest in prosecuting the case is because the President considered Kano state as a key factor in his re-election bid and cannot afford to lose popularity in a state that eventually produced 10% of the total vote cast in his favour. Bringing a closer view also to the choice of President Jonathan to ignore corruptorial allegations levelled against Gov. Ayo Fayose in 2015 (an election year), shows that anti-corruption fights are usually tuned down during elections, allowing corruption to thrive during the period of elections.

The non-prosecution of election corruption cases have led to under investigation of these cases. Joshua, Richard, and Chinenye (2015, April 26) noted that corruption cases brought up during election periods against key stakeholders are intentionally watered down by paying editors to re-write the stories. This has made discussing corruption cases lined with election difficult to discuss as many offenders have not been pronounced guilty by any court of law.

### ***5.3. The Reach for Corruption in the Nigerian Economic Sectors***

The lifeblood of official corruption in Nigeria is petrol revenue because they constitute over 90% of government income. The revenue generated from Oil & Gas constitutes "national cake" often divided and shared by the federal, state, and local governments. The epicentre of corruption is the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) which shapes oil industry policy and regulations and spends lavishly without adequate oversight and auditing, and these are not in tandem with international best practices (Alexandra, Aaron, and Christina, 2015; Matthew, 2018). There are reported cases of how former petroleum ministers embezzled hundreds of millions of dollars, and how most of these ministers were accused of allocating oil bloc to the company they had an interest in (Agence, 2017; Will, 2016).

Similarly, Nigeria's industrial and manufacturing sector is not immune to the devastating effects of corruption resulting from misguided fiscal and trade policies. These sectors have nevertheless clung to loss-making and decline drastically simply because they are important mechanisms for distributing patronage and siphoning public funds. Evidence of these capital projects that gulp large quantities of public funds yearly despite incurring huge losses abound in Nigeria and constitute monuments of corrupt practices (James and Ragnar, 2005). Over \$5 billion is considered to have been spent by the federal government on Ajaokuta Steel Mill in Kogi State, spent ₦30 billion in worker salaries since 2010 and an additional \$1.2 billion investment is required to make the facility operational (Yekeen, 2018; Henry, 2018). Unfortunately, the moribund facility has never produced any steel since 1979.

The Nigerian Economic sector, which is chiefly administered by the private sector, has fewer reported corruption cases both in court and in media. However, a study conducted by Ufere et al (2012) cited by Gonzalo (2013) showed the pervasiveness of corruption in the private sector of the economy. They argued that the private sector is viewed as victims of corruption in the country when in an actual sense they are active bribers and have developed highly sophisticated bribery practices that are supported by the social norms and relations of production within the private and public sectors.

In any case, corruption in the private sector is usually not discussed as enormous attention is placed on the public sector. However, what is surprising is that many private sector corruption bears a relationship with the public sector, thereby making members of the government an ally to private sectors to win contracts from the public sector carry out corrupt activities such as money laundering, bribery amongst others. A perfect example here is a \$1.1 billion Malabu Oil deal was first initiated in 1998 by Dan Etete (the Minister for petroleum), who registered the company as a third party and then allocated a lucrative oil block to himself which he legally paid only 10% of the required fee. In furtherance, Malabu brought in Shell Petroleum as a technical partner in a deal that was now worth \$1.1 billion and is being

reported as a fraudulent move on the part of Malabu Oil and Gas and its principal actors by the EFCC (NAN 2020, January 20). Another example is Gov. Ganduje Saga, who reportedly receive dollars from a contractor in exchange for a government project in 2019 during the build-up to the general elections.

#### ***5.4. The Reach for Corruption in Agricultural Sector***

The agricultural sector constitutes the largest non-oil economy, accounting for roughly 30% of GDP. The corruption in this sector has disproportionate effects because of its outsized impact on the country's poorest citizens. Numerous, agricultural subsidies and grants by the federal government are either misappropriated by government officials or end up in the hands of the wrong people (Godson-Ibeji, Anyoha, Chikaire, and Ani, 2016). Out of ₦873 billion agricultural subsidies, an estimated ₦776 billion was lost to corruption between 1980 and 2010 (Bassey, 2013). Under Nigeria's constitution, farming is the only outside employment public officials are permitted to undertake and many political elites in the country used this provision to launder money from government coffers. This buttress efforts by the government to supply cheap fertilizer to smallholder farmers never reached the targeted people.

Corruption in the agricultural sector is usually underreported and under-discussed because of its close affinity to corruption in the public sector. Activities of public servants translate into corruptorial practices in the agricultural sector as earlier noted. The data gathered and analysed showed that efforts to empower and diversify the economy to grow agriculture are more of words than actions, as such efforts are sabotaged by those put in charge to manage them. A great example here is the ₦69 billion Edo Oil Programme Grant given to the Edo state by the Central Bank of Nigeria in December 2019; however, observers have reported that all of that money has not been translated into any meaningful growth in the Agricultural sector, they even speculated that the money has been embezzled by those put in charge of the programme (Chris 2020, May 7).

While allegations made against the Edo state government is yet to be substantiated, Aderibigbe, Oladuntan, Adetayo et al (2017) suggested that corruption exists in the agricultural sector; according to their study, corruption in agriculture is manifested through favouritism in distributing government-sponsored fertilizer, hoarding of farm produce, bribery and inducement. In practice, the news and national dailies do not report these happenings but instead, they are often left out of corruption stories.

#### ***5.5 The Reach for Corruption in the Nigerian Power Sector***

Nigeria's pathetically wishy-washy power sector has long been undermined by grand corruption. A study conducted by BudGIT (2017) & SERAP (2017), revealed that Nigeria has lost about \$64.7 billion to corruption in the power sector between 1999 and 2017. Indeed, the more money the government invests in the sector, the less power the country has. Nigeria with a population near 200 million when compared to Oman with about a 4.5million population currently generates roughly the same amount of power (4,500 megawatts) (Femi, 2018). In an attempt to revitalize the sector and root out corruption, 2013 unbundling and privatization of Nigeria's power generation and distribution networks were carried through poorly executed and did little to salvage mismanagement and chronic underperformance. This is because most of the winning

bidders are either former public officials or wealthy individuals who enjoy close ties with the ruling elite and had no prior experience in the power sector.

According to the Centre for Health, Equity and Justice (2019) cited by Olatunji (2019, September 19) Nigeria has lost a total of 11 trillion Naira to power sector corruption from 1999 to date, they further estimated that the losses may climb up to 20 trillion Naira in this decade. In substantiating their claims, they cited series of corruption cases that have been overlooked in the power sector and meant an immense loss to the economy and a crippled power sector.

## **6. Conclusion**

From the foregoing, it can be concluded that corruption has sent Nigeria into a state of 'wilderness' and plunged the country into a state of 'comatose'. It can be aptly argued that there is a critical link between corruption and development, though corruption tends to affect development negatively. With these negative effects, Nigerians have suffered series and serious setbacks in all ramifications of social, economic, and political development. The scourge of the damages done by corruption has a long term effect on the economy and more so, on other fabrics within the society as it is seen in the poor standard of living of Nigerians, dilapidated social infrastructures, food insecurity, mass rate of unemployment, social insecurity of life and properties, inadequate medical and health facilities, poor standard of education, bad road network to mention but a few. The damage of this scourge to the economy and other fabrics of the society is seen in the poor state of security, the hospital without medicines, the school without educational facilities or resources, the road that is not passable, and the failure of citizens to improve.

Corruption has become an anomaly in Nigeria in many aspects. It is described per administrative, cultural, social, political, and economic influences; it is local and international. Corruption is not an intuitive pattern of behaviour but rather, a syndrome of broad gestures. Its consequences come from strengths and weaknesses in socio-political structures, favourable circumstances, and interactive synergies. It juxtaposes for institutions, organizations, groups, and individuals that occupy the state, the public, and the private sector, and the civil society. Above all these, corruption is a result of influential connections between multiple actors. Hence, it is a generic problem that requires a generic solution.

### **6.1 Recommendations**

Corruption is a global phenomenon that exists virtually in most societies across nations and Nigeria is not exempted. In a bid to curb or reduce this vice called corruption in a contemporary society like Nigeria, some factors that enable systemic corrupt practices must be checked. Therefore, anaemic disengagement of the public and private spheres from the prevalence of private allotment of public assets should be strengthened. The supremacy of perpendicular (that is, patron-client) and particularity-based friendship (that is, religion, ethnicity, and kinship) over parallel and appropriate-based friendships should also be addressed. Emblematic or "big man" malady shown by the elites within the political terrain must also be checked. Democratization processes and electoral competition create dynamics that foster corruption. This dimension should be checked by the government in a bid to limit the corrupt act. Weak institutions: the various governmental institutions should be

strengthened in a bid to fast track other aligned institutions in the society such as the family, traditional and religious institutions. Anti-Corruption measures are most useful when backed by other notional factors and broadly interspersed as governmental reforms. Corruption is a collective approach rather than an individual challenge; it requires different interactions and interdependencies between multiple actors, institutions, and organizations at various levels. Therefore, corruption cannot be left unattended. The ministry of information and the National Orientation Agency (NOA) should embark on public orientation on the need for the fight against corruption. Corruption, like all other forms of behaviour, is sometimes influenced by an individual emotion, situation, and need to achieve. The Nigerian Government must be committed to curb corruption. The fight against corruption should not be sectional or directional. It should be a fight against all Nigerians who perpetrate corrupt acts irrespective of party affiliation or status. Also, the Money Laundry Prevention and Prohibition Bill of 2016 cum the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matter Bill of 2016 should be quickly passed into law as this will improve Nigeria's legal framework to combat corruption. Finally, the two anti-graft bodies (EFCC and ICPC) should be given full autonomy in the discharge of their duty(ies). Government interference in their affairs would make them inefficient, bias and subjective as the best result from these two bodies can be achieved through total autonomy.

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