



CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA: A CONSEQUENCE OF DISTORTED VALUE SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

There is abundant evidence in extant literatures which have documented the endemic nature of corruption and its devastating effects on the Nigerian socio-political structures. The colossal corruptions have resulted in the loss of the capacity to function. The structure of the Nigerian nation, as it is presently structured cannot evolve or at best maintain a sustainable development, unless we evolve a new order. The survival of Nigeria as an entity given the worsening/deplorable socio-political crisis depends, to a large extent, on the capacity of all citizens as stakeholders to evolve the Nigerian value system. The value-system must be agreed, accepted, and binding on all, devoid of any form of prebendalisation in our attempt to combating the depredation of corruption and be free from the usual false piety paid to issue(s) that have threatened our chequered national history. The authors in this paper presented a psychological analysis to explain the incidence and persistence of corruption and consequently viewed corruption as a consequence of distorted value-system. Against this backdrop, the authors in this paper recommend punitive measures to stem the damaging effects of corruption, Nigerians must also unite for the nation to attain a sustainable level of development, the authors concluded that there is an urgent need by all to embrace value-reorientation.

Keywords: *corruption, corruption and values, value- systems, distorted value systems, corruption in Nigeria.*

INTRODUCTION

Corruption in all its forms has a long history and has affected human behaviour in organizations (Alatas, 1991). It is surreptitious in nature and should be identified in terms of its constituents, capacity and character. According to Otite (1982), the scientific study of corruption has been plagued by slippery methodological and theoretical problems. These problems are compounded by the generally moralistic approaches used by some social analysts and other observers alike. It is quite diversionary to keep this critical phenomenon aside by regarding it as pathological without attempts to diagnose and to cure.

In Nigeria, corruption is not a series of accidental occurrences resulting from defective character; it is not the characteristic of any ethnic, cultural, or religious group. Since independence, corruption has been an essential tool in the hands of the ruling class in Nigeria, for the accumulation of wealth and for the seizure and sustenance of political power, Omotosho (2006) affirms that corruption in the country is perceptible to primordial accumulation by the elite.

The history of our country, both during the periods of military despotism (1966-1979; 1983-1999), and the civilian regimes (1963-1966; 1979-1983; 1999 – till date) is, in a major way, a history of progressive development of the culture of corruption (see for instance, Ibrahim, 2003). Anikpo (1982) opines that the term 'corruption' has become a cliché of political demagoguery and public gossip in the Nigerian society. Akindele (2005) sees corruption as a dangerous social ill, which is inimical to the systemic existence of any polity. Corruption, like a deadly virus, attacks the vital structures that make for society's progressive functioning, thus putting its very existence into serious peril. It has been a problem that everybody, ranging from the elites and layman alike, musicians, military and paramilitary personnel, politicians, civil



servants, the old and the young talk, write and sing about, in socio-political and academic discourse.

A perusal of extant literature revealed that there are abundant theoretical and methodological approaches developed by theorists (Anikpo, 1982; Akindele, 2005; Akinkoye, 1982), to understand the phenomenon of corruption. However, there is scanty or no evidence to show of any experimental investigation to unravel the extent and predisposing factors of this endemic phenomenon. Evidence from anecdotal and documented materials indicates that corruption is a serious problem in Nigeria. One is at a loss as to where to begin. From the numerous "white elephant" projects to the bribes received by the customs, immigrations and police officers on the road, or clerks in government offices, to academics and administrators in the University system. Other examples abound, ranging from Ajaokuta Steel Company, all form of shady deals that has made a mess of the privatization initiative of government owned enterprises, to the recent oil subsidy racket, and so on. There are all kinds of white elephant projects designed and beautifully packaged as drain pipes to siphon money from government treasury by politicians and government officials, examples abound from the local, state and the federal government levels. The effect of this systemic failure usually is borne by innocent Nigerian tax payers who denied themselves the immediate gratification of today for tomorrow's pleasure, who had to bear the burden of corrupt acts committed by reckless, greedy but significant few, who could not live within their means of livelihood.

Corruption cuts across historical, national, ethnic, class and occupational boundaries, hence its ubiquity (Lipset & Lenz, 2000; Alatas, 1991) and persistence (Akinkoye, 1982). Corruption obviously is a global problem. However, to put this paper in the right perspective the concern is, why is it that corruption has become a way of life and such a big problem in Nigeria?

The attempt to focus on corruption in this paper is primarily because of its notoriety, and its endemic nature to public life through its perennial and terminal contamination. The spate of corruption in Nigeria has led to a state of crises of underdevelopment, low technological development, debt peonage, endemic balance of payments crises, decaying infrastructure, decaying cities, continuously deteriorating capacity of managing external and internal conditions, continuous declines in living standards, as well as ever increasing crime profile. For some time now, Nigeria's corruption profile has become worrisome to the extent that the major way of determining and measuring success in Nigeria tends to be the acquisition and the inability to postpone gratification and the urge to acquire material possessions. Odugbemi (2000) emphasize that corruption is a "problem which diverts scarce resources away from development and eradication of poverty". This has been largely so in Nigeria, a country richly blessed with abundant human and natural resources but tormented by a privileged few who plunder the national economies for personal benefits, the effect of corruption in Nigeria, is, to say the least, incalculable. This is particularly true, in that, limited but valuable funds and resources that are initially earmarked for infrastructures in industries, schools, hospitals, and other public utilities are either publicly embezzled, misappropriated, or otherwise severely depleted through kickbacks and over invoicing. The multiplier effects of the problem of corruption in Nigeria is that it has stifled sustainable development be it social, economic, infrastructural or technological, all of these are interwoven with mutual causality. Tanzi, (1998) has opined that corruption is a debacle which has reduced public expenditure on education and health since these areas are not easily subject to corrupt practices.

According to Anikpo (1982) there are only few scholars that have attempted a close examination of what corruption really is, especially in terms of its origin and conceptual dimension. There are conventional notions about it, which tend to deride any scientific interpretations. It is obvious that the range of activities conventionally viewed as acts of corruption cover a wide spectrum of human conduct. They vary from seemingly legitimate and



morally obligatory reciprocities, as the awarding of inflated government contracts to political party loyalists who have pushed some money into the party's political machine, to such naiveties as receiving meager sums of money or manipulating kinship and friendship networks to circumvent the law or twist the arm of justice. Thus, commonsense notions of corruption have an undertone of bribery with which it is always associated.

In this paper, attempt is made to provide a deeper insight into the nature of corruption by examining, not only the existing notions about it, but also the social structures and interrelationships that generate corruption. It must be emphasized here, that the authors in this paper are largely concerned with establishing the general analytical properties of corruption and not necessarily with the actors or the empirical manifestations of corruption. The magnitude of corruption and corrupt practices observed in Nigeria on daily basis is no longer as issue for debate, as it is clear that this problem in on the increase with the same alacrity with which new legislations are enacted and backed by the instruments of the law.

The effect of corruption on sustainable development is calamitous when it is not suppressed or allowed to step up or for any reason become normalized. The normalization of corruption is upsetting to the honest persons. Corruption is detrimental; it is an undesirable cancer that has stifled development in all the strata of the Nigerian society, and therefore the main task in this paper, as psychologists is to discover the socio-structural basis that has reinforced corruption and thereby suggest/recommend strategies for its extermination. It is our responsibility to help put into practice apposite societal alternative value system that will hasten the cadence of our development and make us proud amongst the comity of nations.

Incidence, Persistence and Continuity of Corruption and Corrupt Practices in Nigeria.

The pervasiveness of corruption varies from one society to another; the level of awareness and sensitivity and tolerance account for this difference in different societies (Shoremi & Soley, 1974). In some of the developed nations, for instance, China, their socio-economic structure and processes have probably gained from the restraints which their systemic continuities and powerful traditions have exerted on the excesses of the contemporary world-wide socio-economic and socio-political systems (Oтите, 1982). However, this is not usually the case in most cancerous societies where corruption thrives and has been allowed to become the order of the day. There had been efforts by successive government in Nigeria towards dealing with the menace of corruption, as it is evident, there are many decrees and legislations that have been promulgated and enacted, but suffice to say that the same measures that have been in effect/ and effective in other countries have not been adequate to curb corruption in Nigeria. Efforts at cubing corruption and corrupt practices have led to the establishments of such anti graft institutions/establishment such as EFCC (Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and ICPC (Independent and Corrupt Practices Commission).

Corruption is widespread in Nigeria and it manifests itself in virtually all aspects of national life. Crippling corruption weighs down both the state and the society at large. Nigeria has been oscillating between the first and tenth place in the Transparency International index of corruption in the world. Useful points of entry into manifestations of corruption in Nigeria are quite many but an attempt is made in this paper to highlight quite a few of them. Firstly, between 1966-1976, the military government headed by General Gowon attempted to prevent the swearing of affidavits containing accusations of corruption against leading members of his regime. Secondly, there were monumental frauds before 1979 that led to the hasty return of power to the civilians. Thirdly, under military regimes between 1986 – 1999, what used to be known as corruption became the art of government itself (Ibrahim, 2003). There was a complete prebendalisation of state power and virtually all acts by public officials involving public expenditure of public goods of any kind led to the appropriation of state finances or property by



officials. Prebendalism as adopted in this paper was conceptualized by Young (1982), and it refers to patterns of political behaviour, which justify the notion, that the offices of the existing state may be competed for and used for personal benefits of the office-holders and other support groups.

Evidence abounds that during General Babangida's administration, Ologbenla (2007) observed that the regime's economic policy was hinged on the forces of market and the interface of Structural Adjustment Programme(SAP). The regime will be remembered for the complete personalization of state power and the institutionalization of corruption. There was, also of course, legendary historical specificity of gratuitous corruption and sharp corrupt practices between 1983-1993: and 1993 – 1999 which transformed corruption into *raison d'être* of state power (Ologbenla, 2007). The \$12.4 billion oil windfall was not accounted for as the Pius Okigbo Report had indicted the Babangida's regime. Between 1988 and 1993, \$12.2billion, 20% of total petroleum revenues, was diverted to extra-budgetary spending; most of the monies were simply stolen by regime loyalists (Lewis, 1996:16). In 1989, the President manipulated public law to allow unbridled corruption by enacting a degree restricting the Central Bank of Nigeria from monitoring oil sales. Another manifestation of corruption between 1983 – 1993 was the widespread advance fee scam, popularly known as 419. 419 is the section of the penal code dealing with such scam. It works through propositions sent from Nigeria to people all over the world about a deal concerning money laundering, debt swapping, over-invoicing, petroleum deals and so on.

Omotoso, (2006) reported that the regimes of Babangida and Abacha were keen competitors for the spot in the promotion of corruption in Nigeria. General Abacha stole a lot of money from the economy and stashed it in foreign banks; the irony of it all is the fact that, many years after General Abacha's death efforts to recover his loots have yielded efforts. What accounts for the difference in the institutionalization of corruption, is that of decentralization of corruption under Babangida, while the former centralized corruption.

Ibrahim (2003) provided a comprehensive account of the Anini saga which revealed a serious crisis which rocked the Nigerian state in the mid – 1980's. The Anini saga which at that time was one of the most public, most debated and most dramatic illustration of the growing corruption and criminalization of the Nigerian state and society at that time. Anini had a short, incredible career which span a three-month period during which he unleash terror, including killing police. He was acclaimed as Nigeria's Robin Hood, a revolutionary who would clean up the corrupt Nigerian system. Anini raided rich people and banks in broad daylight and distributed part of his booty to cheering crowds. He was nicknamed "Anini the Law". Anini wrote many letters to the press, (see for instance, *Sunday Tribune* of 14/10/96), presenting his case as against corruption and inequality in the Nigerian society. The Anini saga revealed a serious crisis, at that time it had become difficult to control crime because many top-ranking agents of the state were corrupt and were themselves involved in corrupt activities.

The persistence of corruption and corrupt practices has been re-enacted during the fourth republic as exemplified in the gross abuse of public trust.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Observation learning theory and the prevalence of corruption in Nigeria

Before critically considering the ways in which corruption can be effectively controlled, it is necessary to understand why it took hold in the first place. Corruption is not a new phenomenon in Nigeria; evidence of corruption predates the birth of the first republic in 1960 way into the colonial era but these were usually isolated cases. The question is: why did it take hold in Nigeria? It is the position of this paper that Bandura's observational learning theory can account for part of the riddle. In order to facilitate our discussion of the link between



observational learning processes and the prevalence of corruption, it is pertinent to give a brief description of the postulates of observational learning theory. According to Bandura (1986), much of what we learn is obtained by observing others, and that this is much more efficient than learning through direct experience because it spares us countless responses that might be followed by punishment or no reinforcement of any kind. The people whose behaviour is observed are referred to as *models*.

Learning through modeling involves cognitive processes and is not based simply on imitation since the learner adds and subtracts from the observed behaviour and generalizes from one observation to another. Certain factors determine whether we are going to learn from a model in a given situation or not. One of the key moderator variables is the characteristics of the model; we are more likely to model powerful people than inept ones, high status people rather than those of low status, and so forth. A second moderator variable concerns the characteristics of the observer. People of low status, education, or power are more likely to model than people who are high on these attributes. A third factor refers to the consequences of the observed behaviour on the model. If the person greatly values the behaviour being observed, there is greater likelihood that he will be modeled. But even of crucial importance for the paper is the impact on learning when a model is punished for a given behaviour. Observers learn to refrain from modeling a behavior that produces severe punishment to the model. For example, a person who sees another being punished for corruption might not wait to receive the same punishment before deciding to refrain from this activity (Gire, 2006).

Finally, Bandura (1986) identified four main processes that are crucial for observational learning: attention, retention/representation, behavioural production, and motivation. In order to learn through observation, you must attend to the model. Factors that regulate attention include the frequency with which we associate with people, whether or not we are attracted to them, and whether we think the behaviour is important and can yield some profit to us. Second, we must be able to make some mental representation of what we have witnessed in memory, since we may not have the occasion to use an observed behaviour for up to several years. Behavioral production involves the process of converting the mental representations into appropriate actions. For instance, one may remember that someone cheated on one's taxes or embezzled money that was entrusted under one's care, but can one perform the same feat? Lastly observational learning is most effective when observers are motivated to enact the modeled behaviour. Gire (2006) observed that one's motivation may depend on whether one encounters a situation in which one believe that the response is likely to lead to favorable consequences. So how does this explain the prevalence of corruption in Nigeria?

Beginning with the essential processes, it is obvious that many Nigerians see cases of corruption everywhere. Many of the bribes received by top officials go through mediators, some of who are collaborators to these officials. People who are hitherto living from hand to mouth often begin to build expensive houses and are commonly seen driving around in flashy cars shortly after being appointed to "lucrative" positions that grant them access to money or influence. Therefore, attending to the behaviour of the model is not a problem here. It is also certain that these people are able to remember the corrupt activities that they have observed. A number of instances have shown that they are able to reproduce the observed behavior (Bandura, 1986).

It is not difficult to see the motivation in modeling the corrupt practices that have been attended to, retained, and with which these people have an ample capacity to reproduce. These factors will be elaborated upon in the next section where we attempt an explanation on why the phenomenon of corruption has proliferated to new levels. Suffice it to say at this juncture that there is the obvious need to take care of the several demands of the immediate and extended family. There is also the factor of simple aspiration to be like other big shots and



generally get societal recognition through the award of traditional titles and other self aggrandizing projects. But even more fundamental than these factors, we believe, is the basic insecurity from not knowing whether there would be any other opportunity to place one in a situation where worrying about basic problems such as feeding the family or fulfilling other basic obligations would no longer be a problem. We will return to this factor later.

The second important issue about observational learning involves the factors that determine whether or not a particular behaviour will be modeled. As indicated earlier; one of the key determinants relates to the consequences to the model for engaging in a specific behavior. The question one may ask is: "what typically happens to people who engage in corruption in Nigeria?" The answer is, hardly anything at all. People clearly see individuals, especially Nigerians, whose only source of income is supposedly the salary, living up to several times above their means. Yet few, if any, of these people are ever questioned, let alone tried for these apparent corrupt practices.

Once in a while when top officials retired, rumours go on for some time that the retirement was due to embezzlement, but it remains at the level of rumours. The official announcements usually indicate something like "retired in the public interest", but these people are often allowed to keep their questionable acquired wealth. It is common knowledge today that the best time to embezzle money in Nigeria is during a military regime because the military is never probed. To the present day, no probe has covered an era in which the military was in power.

The wanton corruption in Nigeria between 1999 – till date may be unparalleled anywhere on the planet earth, as politicians brazenly mop up the treasury, and people once unknown in politics who could not even obtain elementary qualifications and even dropouts are now party financiers. There are even legendary examples where university undergraduates who were party faithful having been assisted by godfathers to win political offices had to give up schooling. More worrisome, also is the manner by which universities as a result of under funding has watered down academic standard and recklessly awarded unmerited doctorates to mostly politicians in a bid to raise funds for development in Nigerian universities resulting from government neglect and desire to make moribund the Nigerian educational system.

It is the position of the authors in this paper that a good deal of the prevailing corruption is due, at least in part, to the processes of observational learning discussed above, especially regarding the fact that this behaviour yields a high modeling rate owing to the absence of punishing consequences to the models.

Relating the theory of hierarchy of needs to the proliferation of corruption in Nigeria.

There is a general conviction that corruption in Nigeria is at an all-time high. It is common to hear people remark that one cannot trust anyone in Nigeria anymore. Why this dramatic increase in the rate of corruption in Nigeria? Although the prevalence of corruption can be explained in part by observational learning, this theory seems inadequate to explain this steep rise in corruption. It is the position in this paper that the concept of hierarchy of needs gives a better account of this proliferation as explained by Gire (2006). As with observational learning theory, a brief description of the concept might be necessary to effectively espouse this connection.

The concept of hierarchy of needs derives from Maslow's (1943, 1970) more general theory of motivation and is based on the assumption that people are persistently motivated by one need or the other. When one need is satisfied, it ordinarily loses its motivational power and is replaced by another one. Thus, as long as people's hunger needs are frustrated, they will strive for food, but once they have enough food, they move to other needs such as housing. According to Maslow, basic or lower-level needs must be satisfied at least to some reasonable



degree before higher-level needs become motivators. What this means essentially is that needs are arranged on a sort of a ladder, with each ascending step representing a higher need, but one less basic to survival. Lower needs must be satisfied in order for people to strive for higher needs. Thus, a person who holds an office job may be satisfying higher-level needs such as esteem, but if he becomes hungry, will leave his work in search of food. The following are Maslow's needs in order of prepotency (predominance): physiological, safety, love and belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization.

Physiological needs include food, water, oxygen, and so forth. They are the most basic or prepotent of all. People who are truly hungry are motivated to eat, not make friends or gain prestige. People from affluent societies have their hunger needs satisfied as a matter of course, so when they say they are hungry, they are really talking about appetite: a hungry person is unlikely to be fussy about the temperature or texture of food. Physiological needs are different from other needs in at least two important ways. First, they are the only needs that can be completely satisfied. However, they also have the attribute of recurrence. Even when we have had more than enough to eat, we will eventually get hungry and have to eat again. The other needs do not constantly recur.

When the physiological needs are fairly satisfied, we become motivated by safety needs, including physical security, law and order, freedom from threats of illness, danger, anxiety, and so forth. Love and belongingness needs are next after safety and include the desire for friendship, the wish for a mate and children, the need to belong to a club, etcetera. Once these are satisfied, people then move to pursue esteem needs, such as confidence, self-respect, and the esteem of others. The final step is the move to self-actualization which Maslow suggests is not an automatic step. In fact, he contends that very few people step over this threshold. A very essential component of this postulation relates to the fact that even if one attains the upper-level needs, once the lower, more basic needs are deprived, the person ignores the higher needs in order to address the basic one.

How does one apply this to the proliferation of corruption in Nigeria? Until a few years ago, most of the basic needs on Maslow's hierarchy were adequately satisfied by a majority of Nigerians.

People had enough food to eat, and could fulfill their basic needs. In fact, in the case of a majority of officer-level personnel, most of the safety and to some extent, belongingness needs were also met. A sizeable proportion of the people were striving for esteem needs, it would seem. Then, beginning gradually during the waning days of the Shagari regime in 1983, and through the various structural adjustment programs involving devaluation of the naira between 1985 - 1983, the resultant inflation, massive reduction in the work force, and so forth, the quality of life for most Nigerians reduced by a quantum leap.

Many senior civil servants and even people in the private sector could barely make ends meet. A good proportion of workers' salaries could not adequately cover the food costs, tuition fees, transportation to work, and other basic amenities. Prior to now, a good percentage of people had climbed up the ladder of needs and were striving for such upper-level needs as esteem and recognition. University lecturers could think of publishing and being competitively placed with colleagues at similar levels in other countries. People within the regular civil service could aspire to reach the top in their various areas of service in order to have that sense of fulfillment. It was conceivable then to see how these kinds of people would ignore the corrupt route to the top, because it would tarnish that for which they fervently aspired. It would appear that these most basic needs are now deprived and therefore, people are no longer worried about self-respect or recognition to the same degree, since the low needs must first be satisfied.

Compare this little scenario to the situation in Nigeria today. In addition to the salaries being inadequate for their current needs, most people do not feel secure about their jobs. Even



the most stable of civil service positions have become very unstable. People who successfully worked through the service, retired and were doing well during their early retirement are now seriously impoverished. Inflation has grown at rates way beyond the pensions. Therefore, even those not threatened in terms of job security do not find solace in the fact that they will work until they retire. It is the position of this paper that this kind of uncertainty has led to a perceived deprivation of the basic needs and has resulted in the very high rates of corruption that is being witnessed in Nigeria today. It is as if people working in jobs that offer some opportunity for embezzlement or extortive corruption reason that this may be their only chance and if not taken they will suffer deprivation of food and the other essential things basic to survival. And since these needs predominate over those of esteem, loss of self-respect is no longer a sufficient deterrent.

Some would argue that quite a few of those who indulge in corrupt practices are not impoverished, and might even be classified as well - to - do. How does the theory of hierarchy of needs account for the corruption among this segment of the society? There are two main responses to this query. The first regards the general misconception that corruption is more prevalent among high status members of the society. The reality is that a good deal of corruption goes on at the low levels – from local government employees to community-level personnel. The difference derives from access to the resources at their disposal.

Second, even the involvement of people who appear to be well-off can still be explained under this theory because of the perceived uncertainty of their situation. According to Maslow, thwarting of basic needs leads to some kind of pathology that can result in people lying, cheating, stealing, or even killing. It appears that what is important is not so much the availability of the resources necessary to satisfy the need in question, but the confidence that it will be there when needed. People who live in areas that are at war live in constant fear even when their homes are not in the process of being attacked because they know that this can happen at any time. In like manner, the person who seems to have enough money but continues to engage in corrupt activities may be doing so because of the uncertainty of his or her position and thus may want to accumulate as much as possible so that even when the job or status is no longer held, he may still have the means to support self, family and generations yet unborn. Thus, the accumulation constitutes a pathology arising from the fear of being deprived of physiological and safety needs. Since job security was high and pensions were adequate for the basic needs of most retirees in the era prior to the proliferation of corruption. The job insecurity and inadequate pensions after some time led to the observational learning process of the victims of these inadequacies and hence the proliferation of corruption as a safeguard mechanism. It is plausible that this factor may be responsible at least in part, for the current proliferation of corruption in Nigeria.

Theories of Corruption and Anti-corruption efforts

In what way can these approaches be helpful in the efforts to eliminate or, at least, control the level of corruption in Nigeria? Presently, when one is found to have engaged in a corrupt act such a person, if he or she is in the civil service or in government-owned corporation, is either retired or dismissed from service. Usually, that marks the end of official reaction. In some cases, people are tried by some special tribunals on charges of economic sabotage and sentenced to lengthy jail terms, sometimes in excess of 100 years. However, most of these people are released after serving only a fraction of their prison terms. Not only have most of the politicians who were sentenced in 1984 shortly after the coup d'état of December 1983 been released from jail but some of them held high level jobs in the Abacha regime, between 1999 till date most corrupt government officials and politicians who would have been committed to life sentences and outright forfeiture of their assets are shielded from trial through complicated



involvement by powerful people in government, as is the case reported by Alechenu, Josiah and Olokor (2013) of Abdulrasheed Maina, a Federal civil servant and the Chairman of the Pensions Reform Task Team who allegedly embezzled the national pensions money, corrupt former governors, who could not be convicted in Nigeria but got caught where they have laundered huge money abroad, in countries where there are stringent punitive measures to punish corrupt practices .

As indicated by the principles of observational learning, consequences of an act on a model are key determinants of whether or not a particular behavior will be modeled. When people who are seen to be glaringly corrupt go unpunished, there is no reason for others not to copy their corrupt activities. One of the ways of effectively combating corruption would be to render appropriate punishment for those guilty of this practice. However, for punishment to be effective, it has to be uniformly applied to all that are guilty of corruption and not limited to people of low status. If punishment is selective, people will likely note the exceptions and find ways to join this exclusive club, and not desist from corrupt behaviour.

Providing appropriate punishment for corruption is not sufficient to eliminate corruption. The phenomenon of corruption has multiple causes, and is determined by more than just seeing people go unpunished for engaging in corrupt behaviour. The theory of hierarchy of needs has shown that people have needs that range from basic survival needs all the way to esteem and self-actualizing needs. In order for the higher needs to be in place, the lower ones must be satisfied. A person who has no means to feed self and family is not likely to be worried about integrity. No matter how severally others are punished for taking bribes or embezzling money, this is unlikely to serve as a deterrent to a person who cannot fulfill his or her basic obligations of feeding, housing, and the means of getting to work. Most workers in Nigeria today can hardly keep up with these basic needs entirely from their salaries. To make things worse, the salaries are sometimes not paid for several months at a stretch.

Furthermore, the sometimes arbitrary manner in which people are removed from their jobs is likely to create a high level of insecurity among workers. When one combines the above factors with the reality that there are no existing social programmes such as unemployment benefits, it is easy to see why this might trigger the survival and safety needs on Maslow's hierarchy. Thus aroused, people will take any step necessary, including corruption, to satisfy these needs. To this end, government must put in place economic policies that can enable people to meet up with their basic needs and make honest work profitable. In addition, government should enact unemployment insurance programs that should be compulsory for most employees with the premiums deducted directly at the source. As it now stands, there is nothing for people to fall back on when they lose their jobs, nor a buffer for people during the times that they may need to look for new jobs. Also, pensions should be regularly reviewed to keep track with inflation and fluctuations resulting from such factors as currency devaluation. This will have the effect of allaying fears of those currently working as to the uncertainty of their situation after retirement and reduce the tendency to grab whatever they can now against a rainy day. This will readily explain why countries with high Human Development Index (HDI), people who are secure of their basic needs can look forward to attaining higher needs such as self-esteem, integrity and pursuit of excellence (Akano, 2005, Gire, 2006).

The Consequences of Distorted Value Systems

The theories reviewed in this paper have helped to explain why the incidence and prevalence rate of corruption is still high in Nigeria. It is not difficult therefore to tie this explanation to the early socialization of young Nigerians into corruption. What does this portend for our chequered value systems?



Values are not only individual but societal and generational. A value that “ought to be” should be transmissible to future generations, and since the present generation is the foundation of future generations, present values ought to possess transmissible qualities. Transmissibility is one of the yardsticks against which the values we pursue now ought to be judged. It may be argued that both good and bad values are transmissible. But transmissibility as it is meant to be understood here should possess qualitative durability of a kind that is likely to promote the social, psychological, moral and economic health of present and future members of a society. A bad value may be transmissible but is unlikely to be durable.

Jones and Gerard (1976), defined values as any singular state or object for which the individual strives or approaches, extols, embraces, voluntarily consumes, incurs expense to acquire, is a positive value. This definition according to Eyo (1995) may guide us in deliberating on our problems of national growth and development. The question is whether, in a developing nation in which there are myriads of problems, both infra – and super – structural in nature all clamouring for attention and all seemingly desirable as goals, reflection is brought to bear on the priorities chosen, such that the states or objects we approach, extol, embrace and incur expenses to acquire are durably positive. This implies, among other things, that values are both idealistic and realistic in nature. As ideals, values ought to inspire people, animate them and move them around their environment (for knowledge of what is required) so that they can reflect on the long-term attractiveness and repelling characteristics of the valued objects. Judgment of the values of a person, group or nation should, therefore, include considerations of the consequences for oneself and others of approaching, extolling and embracing such values.

In Nigeria, like most other societies with cancerous value systems, the parents, adults and even government, often delude themselves that they can insulate the young from societal ills that they either take part in or condone. Social psychological findings have totally neglected such belief. Available literature shows that children are products of the culture (healthy or unhealthy) in which they are born into. They learn their behaviours, attitudes, values and aspirations from the older generations they live with. These adults are model in a world which is the only one the children know. Through observing and imitating adults, they know about life more than during life long formal classroom learning. They prefer what adults do to what they say, because it is what adults do that brings what they have. What they learn include value-orientations which Inkeles, (1966) have used to distinguish modern man viz: readiness for new experiences and openness to innovations, disposition to form and hold opinion, democratic orientation, planning habits. Others are beliefs in human and personal efficacy, faith in science and technology, belief that the world is calculable, stress on personal and human dignity, and belief in distributive justice.

As things stand now, Nigeria, like any other society, has negative and positive value-orientations. The challenge before development planners is how to minimize negative value-orientation in the society. The effort must therefore be towards forging a national value-orientation that construes national development as liberation from dependency. Although, this position seem utopian because it is difficult if not impossible to eliminate dependency as an automatic precondition for development.

CONCLUSION

The setting up of the National Orientation Agency (NOA) and many other government agencies charged with the responsibility of forging a value-system by the Federal Government of Nigeria is laudable and indeed desirable. Additionally, the government should enforce the freedom of information bill and make the judicial systems and the anti-graft agencies truly independent if they have never been. However, this step, irrespective of its intrinsic importance



and value, would be lost unless we rise up as a country, bound together by a collective will that transcends ethnic, religious and regional loyalties.

If differences in culture and value-orientation are allowed to persist among Nigerians, so is the country likely to be plagued by epidemic of various forms of interpersonal, political economic and social crises. These crises have been blamed on a plethora of factors-leadership challenges, political alienation, religious crisis, unfulfilled promises for compensation, political marginalization, socio-economic inequalities, dishonest leadership, communication gap, inadequate research input and cultural disorientation. The search for what brings about unity and productivity with the multiplier effect that these portend for national development of the present and the future generations entails the following:

Reward for Anyone who reports corrupt practices: There should be a special award instituted for patriotic Nigerians who report corrupt practices

Anonymity and the confidentiality of information: Beyond the reporting of corruption and incidences of corrupt practices, the anonymity and confidentiality of those who volunteer information must at all times be guaranteed because of the sensitive nature of information provided (Media Rights Agenda, 2003).

Severe punishment for refusal to comply with the Declaration of assets by individuals seeking public offices: The Bureau of Code of Conduct must make sure that all public servants and public office holders must as stipulated (from level 7 and above) collect, sign as evidence of collection and return the code of conduct form in which they must be mandated to declare all their assets and return same to the Bureau either before assumption of duty or office. The Bureau must also develop a core of personnel skilled in verification, investigation and other operations

Unrestrained/Uncensored/ Unhindered Access to Information: Beyond the passage of the Freedom of Information (FOI), there should be unrestrained access to information as spelt out. Nigeria's experience of access to information illustrates a number of factors that have militated against, and may continue to militate against an orderly transition from a system where governments hoard information to one where they release information, and where citizens make effective use of such information to challenge and to change government actions and policies;

Forfeiture of all assets acquired through corrupt practices

Corrupt individuals should suffer total forfeiture of all assets acquired through corrupt practices.

Barred Corrupt Persons from holding Public offices: Anyone who has been found guilty or proven beyond reasonable doubt to have engaged in corrupt practice should also be barred from holding public offices, and also the imposition of prison sentence without option of fine. Objective and sustained inculcation in the citizenry of an appropriate Nigerian culture and value-orientation attuned to the attainment of national goals as opposed to the extreme individualistic orientations of Nigerians today

Identification and remediation of the non-productive and non-progressive sectors: There should be public acknowledgement and rewarding of objective and sustained productivity, at the individual and organizational levels of national economy

Mount Enlightenment Programmes: The need to mount programmes of enlightenment for mass education of the citizenry on the need to evolve a culture and a value system for productive and prosperous economy

Monitor attitude and Performance: There should be close monitoring of attitude and performance of amongst citizenry in all the strata of society

Impose stiffer penalties: Once the government and its anti-graft agencies promote the laws encouraging transparency, then series of actions against defaulters should include raising the level of penalty in Nigeria; and finally



Higher level of Independence to the Judiciary: There is the need to grant higher level of independence to the judiciary in the war against corruption. The war against corruption must ensure that at all times, the rule must be universally applied to all without any exemption or anyone treated as sacred cow.

Constitutional Empowerment and Autonomy of The Anti- Graft Agencies (ICPC and EFCC): Corruption has burgeoned in Nigeria not because of the absence of relevant legislations to tackle the problem, but essentially due to the weakness of key public institutions and lack of political will to enforce the laws. The two Anti- Graft agencies (ICPC and EFCC) should be totally independent of any of the other arms of government. The Anti – Graft agencies should be allowed to investigate corrupt persons, devoid of any form of external influence.

Value-Orientation- The Way Forward

According to Ojiji, Okediji and Ojo (2006), the inculcation of value orientation must begin from the family setting, this we can start with what little things children do with interest and total co-operation of their parents. When they succeed, the feelings of success should be reinforced. If they fail, they should be helped to start again and encouraged to initiate success. This process must be allowed to have a stronghold and be intensified in the school systems and be totally consolidated in the larger society where perceptible and honest priorities must exist. These steps presupposed that the mania of corruption will not be allowed to drown the Nigerian educational system and strive for technological training/excellence. This assumes that all hands must be on deck at all levels to financially empower the teeming population of Nigerians. The religious institutions must provide a framework for cultivating core values of honesty, integrity, hard work and moral rectitude and the avowal to cleanse the Nigeria of corruption. It must be the duty henceforth of all the agents responsible for socialization that the respect that we have for Nigerian culture and value-orientation will determine the prosperity of Nigeria, the states, the families and Nigerian children in the future. The major problem now is that the end of this hardship is not yet in sight. The hardships that Nigerians are experiencing today are the outcome of corruption, misguided values and misplaced priorities of yesteryears. The weapon with which to destroy or at least disable the burden which corruption has placed on Nigerians is within our confines: it is genuine inculcation of value-orientation.

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