



## ABSTRACT

This paper investigates Anti-Corruption, Democracy and Development; an Exploration of Buhari's Administration. Corruption has eaten deep into the fabrics of the Nigerian society and no economy thrives in it. The question, therefore, is whether the fight against corruption and corrupt practices in Nigeria by President Buhari is a reality or mere rhetoric, a gimmick to deceive the populace again like his predecessors. And, what would

# ANTI-CORRUPTION, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT: AN EXPLORATION OF BUHARI'S ADMINISTRATION

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## Introduction

Corruption has eaten deep into the fabrics of the Nigerian society and no economy thrives in it. It involves the violation of established norms and rules for personal gains and profit. According to President Buhari, "corruption is the greatest form of human right violation" (Buhari, 2015). Notably, before the Buhari's administration, preceding administrations have instituted various legal instruments, measures and policies designed to combat corruption in the country. Some of these include the criminal code, The Penal Code (applicable in the North); The criminal justice (Miscellaneous Provisions) Decree 1996; The Corruption Practices, Decree 1975, which established the Corrupt Practice Investigation Bureau; The ethical Revolution of President ShehuShagari; The War Against Indiscipline (W.A.I) of Buhari/Idiagbon; Mass Mobilization for Social Justice, Self-Reliance and Economic Review (MAMSER) by General Babangida; The code of conduct Bureau and Tribunal Act (Cap 56, Law of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990); The Recovery of Public property (Special Military Tribunal Act (Cap. 387, Law of the Federation of Nigeria) as amended in 1991; The War Against indiscipline and Corruption of Late Gen. SaniAbacha; The Failed



be the impact of this war on the masses who have been impoverished by the political leaders through the act and science of corruption that made him, President Buhari to state that "if Nigeria does not kill corruption, this number one enemy may eventually kill Nigeria." The causes of corruption are from various institutional and political factors stemming from the flawed structure and monopoly of the economy by the federal government. Its effects on the nations socio-political and economic development are numerous and devastating. It has damaged the image of the country abroad to the extent that Nigeria is tagged as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. This has discouraged foreign investors and caused inflation and the depreciation of our currency. On a final note, the fight against corruption in Nigeria by the Buhari administration is being encouraging indeed; but it should be holistic and transparent, not targeting only a section of the country, a particular political party members and or his passive enemies if he wants Nigerians to believe and have faith in his war against corruption.

**Keywords:** Anti-corruption, Corruption, Democracy, development, Buhari Administration.

Banks Recovery of Debts and Financial Malpractices in Banks, Decree 1994 as amended in 1999; The Recovery of Public Property Special Military Tribunal Act, Cap. 389, laws of the Federation of Nigeria 1990, as amended in 1999 by Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar, and many others.

However, the massive corruption allegations that characterized President Goodluck Jonathan's administration in Nigeria from 2010-2015 prompted President Muhammadu Buhari to declare in his inaugural speech that "he belongs to nobody and he belongs to everybody". The President has vowed to combat corruption in Nigeria no matter whose ox is gored. Indeed, his perceived stand by Nigerians as a strong character made his victory and that of his party possible in the 2015 general election as the then President, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan was accused of timidity and lack of will to solve Nigeria's problems especially corruption.

Thus, Nigerians believe that the "national ethics" as itemized in section 23 of the Federation of Nigeria, 1999 constitution that deals with discipline, integrity, and dignity of labour are all characteristics that are antithetical to corruption and which, if imbibed and practiced by Nigerians will check corruption and restore the nation to path of greatness could have been one of the legal frameworks among others-like. Moreover, the Nigerian Constitution of 1999, section 88 and 89 that empowered the National Assembly to expose corruption, inefficiency and waste in government through probe and



investigations; The Nigerian extant Constitution of 1960 section 15(5) that deals with abolishment of all corrupt practices that was assumed to have influenced Buhari's formation age, are indeed the legal frameworks that made President Buhari to declare war on corruption as vowed. In addition, the constitution of his ruling party - All Progressives Congress (APC), in item No.4 takes a clear position to fight corruption if voted into power as it is now. Albeit, after a year of President Buhari's administration; war against corruption and corrupt practices, Nigerians are beginning to ask questions if the policy is a reality or an illusion?

The question, therefore, is whether the fight against corruption and corrupt practices in Nigeria by President Buhari is a reality or mere rhetoric, a gimmick to deceive the populace again like his predecessors. And, what would be the impact of this war on the masses who have been impoverished by the political leaders through the act and science of corruption that made him, President Buhari to state that "if Nigeria does not kill corruption, this number one enemy may eventually kill Nigeria" (Buhari, 2015).

### **Conceptual Clarifications**

#### **a. Democracy**

The word democracy has been conceptualized by scholars and statesmen alike from different perspectives, which had tended to emphasize different aspects of the process. Democracy as a form of government holds a strong appeal among countries of the world. It possesses certain basic elements without which no society can truly call itself democratic. These include the principle of equality; sovereignty of the people; respect for human life; the rule of law; and liberty of the individual. Democracy is a concept that in theory and practice holds the right of the people to choose their leaders who in turn, must be accountable to the people as of right (Orasanye, 2016).

According to Omoleke (2018), democracy is a system of government, a set of institutions that fulfill at least two essential requirements, which are ability to elicit as accurately as possible the opinion of as many people as possible on who shall be their representatives and on how the country ought to be governed. This means that democracy connote universal suffrage, institutionalization of free and fair election at frequent intervals; and the elected representatives must be accountable to the electorate. The essential condition of democracy is that there shall be a consensus on the rules of the political game. Democracy therefore, entails a system of governance that is accountable and guarantees a wide range of social, economic and political rights.

#### **b. Development**

Development as a concept is a victim of definitional pluralism. It is a difficult word to define. However, attempts have been made by erudite scholars to



conceptualize development. Some of these definitions will be explored for the purpose of this study. Gboyega (2013) captures development as an idea that embodies all attempts to improve the conditions of human existence in all ramifications. It implies improvement in material well-being of all citizens, not the most powerful and rich alone, in a sustainable way such that today's consumption does not imperil the future, it also demands that poverty and inequality of access to the good things of life be removed or drastically reduced. It seeks to improve personal physical security and livelihoods and expansion of life chances.

Naomi (2017) believes that development is usually taken to involve not only economic growth, but also some notion of equitable distribution, provision of health care, education, housing and other essential services all with a view to improving the individual and collective quality of life. Chrisman (2016) views development as a process of societal advancement, where improvement in the well-being of people are generated through strong partnerships between all sectors, corporate bodies and other groups in the society. It is reasonable to know that development is not only an economic exercise, but also involves both socio-economic and political issues and pervades all aspects of societal life.

c. **Corruption**

The term corruption is one of the most common terms in discussion today. Yet, it eludes a one sentence definition. However, when seen it is easily identified even when it is not crafted in conceptual terms. According to President Buhari (2015), "corruption is the greatest form of human right violation" while to Oxford Learners Dictionary, corruption means "dishonest or illegal behaviour, especially of people in authority". It connotes a behaviour which deviates from the formal duties of a public role, because of personal or private gains. This behaviour includes bribery, use of a reward to prevent the judgment of a person in a position of trust, nepotism and misappropriation or illegal appropriation of public resources for private uses. It implies any act of wrong doing, act of violating public norms or deviation from honesty to dishonesty. For example, examination malpractice committed by invigilators, parents or students is regarded as corruption, irrespective of the level of involvement.

**Level of Corruption and its Prevalence in Nigeria**

Corruption is a bane to all facet of Nigerian development (Liman, 2017). Moreover, Chucks (2002) also submitted that, Nigeria is in a state of disequilibrium as activities in various political, economic and social institutions have become rather unethical and synonymous with decadence. In fact, the Global Financial Integrity (GFI) estimates more than US\$157 billion in the past decade has left the country illicitly. Furthermore, the global anti-corruption watch dog, Transparency International (IT), ranked Nigeria low in its 2017



corruption index (CPI). The latest ranking has Nigeria in the 148<sup>th</sup> position out of 180 countries. The country, according to CPI, scored 28 out of 100, a figure lower than the average in Sub-Saharan region.

Consequently, corruption has hit hardest at the poor Nigerians; for it causes poverty and drives away investment. Nonetheless, it is injurious to the Nigeria's rule of law and political processes; all of which have a bearing on democratic governance. Agreeably, it also incapacitates the judicial and the political system that should be working for public good. Thus, corrupt practices in Nigeria has become common on streets, highways, boarders and port entry, educational sectors, health establishments. Also, federal government, state governments, Local governments, parastatals and government ministries, banks and other financial institutions, markets and even religions houses (Peter, 2003).

### **Theoretical Framework of Analysis**

The problem of corruption in Nigeria is a complex and sad one: it can be analyzed from diverse perspective of morality, values and conscience. Theories of moral development have been well postulated by such notable scholars as Jean Piaget (1968) and expanded by Lawrence Kohlberg in 1971 and Kohlberg L, & Candee, D. (1984). These scholars' position shall be used for the analysis of this work.

By definition, morality simply refers to the relative goodness of people as it is reflected in their behaviour and beliefs. From Piaget (1968) and Kohlberg L, & Candee, D. (1984) submitted that, individuals redefine their behaviour towards good and bad, as they grow. It therefore means that societal conditions and influences affect people's behaviour and perception of corruption. For instance the Nigerian society's perception of success has changed from what it used to be in the past when people worked hard to earn it.

Today honour is given to those who can make it by all means (usually dubious means) and red-carpet receptions are given to undesirable men with questionable characters in society. This has adversely affected the citizen's perception of life. Indeed, the decline of morality at the expense of hard-work, honesty and integrity can be adduced to be facilitator of corruption in Nigeria. This is why Oyebode (2006) concludes that corruption connotes impropriety and therefore encompasses all forms of reprehensive, indecorous and in famous conduct of some officials and performance of judicial responsibility while Adekunle, F. (1991) concludes that a society's social and moral values reflect are firmly anchored on specific material conditions.

### **Impacts of Corruption to Nigeria's Development**

**i. Undermining the Sustainable Development Goals:** Corruption hampers the attainment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are





comprehensive and their susceptibility to be undermined by corruption is unsurprising: it is entirely conceivable that "a better and more sustainable future for all" often runs counter to the interests of a few and can be derailed through many forms of corruption (Abiodun, 2015).

**ii. Economic loss and inefficiency:** Although obtaining exact figures on the economic costs of corruption is difficult, a 2016 report from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimated the cost of bribery alone to be between \$1.5 to \$2 trillion per year. This represents a total economic loss of approximately 2% of global GDP.

**iii. Poverty and inequality:** Corruption is generally not the weapon of the weak. In Nigeria, an (in)famous bribery case, involving the international oil company Shell, deprived Nigerian people of over \$1.1 billion as the money went to corrupt officials instead of to the national budget (Global Witness, 2017). Meanwhile, according to the World Bank (2019), more than 50% of the population of the oil-rich country live in extreme poverty. This form of corruption has been one of the major reasons for the structural inequality in Nigeria which has led to more poverty, impoverishment and inequality.

**iv. Personal loss, intimidation and inconvenience:** When people experience corruption, it is rarely a positive experience. A bribe must be paid to receive medical attention, obtain a building permit, pick up a package, or enjoy phone services. A judge rules against a party, not based on the facts of the case, but because the opponent paid a bribe, knows a power broker, or comes from the same racial or ethnic background (Abiodun, 2015). All of these together can seriously hamper democratic consolidation and development.

**v. Public and private sector dysfunctionality:** The cumulative effect of individual corrupt acts is dysfunctionality. Whether offered by the public or private sectors, the quality of goods and services decrease, and the process of obtaining them becomes more expensive, time consuming and unfair (Abiodun, 2015).

**vi. Failures in infrastructure:** When a bridge collapsed in Genoa in August 2018, killing at least 39 people, there were many possible causes to consider (Herald, 2018). Corruption was not the most obvious one, but subsequent investigations have found that a Mafia-controlled construction company appears to have used "weakened cement" in the building process. It is widely known that the construction industry is a valuable source of profits and a channel for money-laundering operations by the Mafia (Abiodun, 2015).

**vii. Rigged economic and political systems:** What is described as dysfunctional above is actually functional and profitable for corrupt actors. Whether falling under the label of political cronyism, crony capitalism, political party cartels, oligarchy, plutocracy and even kleptocracy, widespread patterns of private and public corruption construct social systems that are rigged in the private interest. Citizens with strong ethical principles (and citizens who lack significant funds, connections, favours to dispense, "hard power" over others such as guns or private enforcers) lose representation, influence and power (Abiodun, 2015).



**viii. Impunity and partial justice:** When corruption pervades the justice system, people can no longer count on prosecutors and judges to do their jobs. The powerful may escape justice. And citizens, especially those with few resources or few powerful allies, may be unfairly accused of crimes, deprived of due process, and wrongly imprisoned (Abiodun, 2015).

**ix. Organized crime and terrorism:** Nefarious elements in society thrive as proceeds can be laundered, funding disguised, and judicial officials and politicians corrupted through bribes (including gifts, favours and other benefits). Levels of violence, illegal drugs, prostitution, sexual slavery, kidnapping and intimidation rise accordingly. The causal arrow goes in both directions. Not only does organized crime cause corruption, but opportunities for corruption left open by a weak, negligent or incapable State can also lead to organized crime (Abiodun, 2015).

**x. Diminished state capacity:** Even if citizens were to adamantly demand that the problems listed above be addressed, corruption undermines the power of politics. For example, to the extent that bribery, trading in influence and state capture are widespread, political systems become incapable of addressing social problems whose resolution would threaten vested interests (Abiodun, 2015).

**xi. Human rights violations:** The observation that corrupt rulers tend to view civil liberties as obstacles to the consolidation of power can be traced back to many historical sources, including the collection of eighteenth century essays on corruption and tyranny known as Cato's Letters. Most recently of all, perhaps, the United Nations Office of the High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR) has noted significant connections between corruption and human rights violations (Abiodun, 2015).

### **Evaluation of President Buhari's Anti-Corruption Policy**

When President Buhari took over the mantle of leadership on May 29, 2015, he vowed to combat corruption in Nigeria no matter whose ox is gored. This was clearly indicated in his inaugural speech when he said, "I belong to everybody and I belong to nobody", (Buhari, 2015). Immediately, according to Campuswaka (2015), he started by arresting Colonel Dasuki (rtd) the then National Security Adviser of President Jonathan who was as at 1983 a young Nigeria Army Colonel that arrested the then General Buhari when Buhari's government as Military Head of State was overthrown on December 1983 by General Babaginda. Dasuki's accomplices that are of the opposition party, People's Democratic Party (PDP) and those in the military were arrested and charged to court by Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) over the massive scam in weapons and defence procurements that led to the misuse of three trillion naira defence budget since 2011 under the guise of fighting the notorious Boko Haram menace.

The NNPC investigation where the former minister of petroleum Mrs. Diezani Alison-Madueke was asked to give holistic account of her stewardship while in office could have



been one of the reasons why President Buhari vowed to combat corruption in Nigeria no matter whose ox is gored. The investigation exposed several oil deals committed in the NNPC. Among these are: (1) The \$2.2 billion USD illegal withdrawal from Excess Crude Oil Account according to ([www.punchng.com](http://www.punchng.com)) of which \$1 billion USD supposedly approved by the then President Jonathan to fund his re-election campaign without the knowledge of National Economic Council. (2) The investigation of the discovered \$11.6 billion USD (NLNG) dividend payments that is missing according to NEITI, Izeze (2015). (3) The non-remittance of \$11.63 billion USD paid to NNPC on crude swaps due to subsidy and domestic crude allocation that was not remitted to the federation account from 2005 to 2012, Izeze (2015). (4) The stealing of sixty million barrels of oil valued at \$13.7 billion USD under the watch of NNPC from 2009 to 2012, Izeze (2014). (5) The invasions of tax by Oil Prospecting Licenses (OPL) and Oil Mining Licenses (oML), (Daily Sun, 2016).

Other cases investigated outside NNPC were: (6) Diversion of 60% of \$1 billion USD foreign loan obtained by the Federal Ministry of Finance from the Chinese, Izeze (2015). (7) Diversion and mismanagement of \$2.2 million USD meant for vaccination of children, Siteadmin (2014). (8) Diversion of N1.9 billion Nigeria naira being payment for Ebola fight, Abiodun (2015). Federal Ministry of Finance hurried payment of \$2.2 million USD to Federal Ministry of Health contractor in disputed invoices, Punch (2015). (8) NIMASA fraud that the investigation is ongoing ([www.punch.com](http://www.punch.com)). (9) The NDDC scam of N27 billion Nigeria naira contract award, Premium Times (8th August 2015). (10) The Police Service Commission scam investigation of N150million Nigerian Naira, Premium Times (2015). (11) The security contracts of the militants on oil and gas pipeline, Africa Oil and Gas Report (2016). (12) The alleged down payment of N50 billion Nigeria naira for the N1 trillion fine slammed on MTN by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) for a breach of thenation's laws on Subscriber Identification Module (SIM) registration which was allegedly diverted by government agencies involved (Daily Sun, 2016).

Broadly speaking, there have been attempts by the administration of President Buhari to investigate several cases of corruption during President Goodluck Jonathan's administration. However, some critics of Buhari's anti-corruption war have accused him of not being sincere and holistic in the fight against corruption as virtually all the people and corporate organizations investigated are all of the opposition party – PDP, and his perceived enemies. Worse off, to them, none of the cases so far investigated and charged to court has been clinically concluded. This school of thought is also of the opinion that President Buhari has no moral pedigree to fight corruption because he, Buhari is corrupt. Cases such as the following were cited to drag home their points: (1) Buhari as Minister of Petroleum: Two Hundred and Eighty Billion United States of America Dollar (\$2.8b) Oil Money was unaccounted for in 1977 under the watch of Buhari as the Petroleum Minister that led to the then Military Head of State Lt. Gen Obasanjo to set up a “crude oil sales





tribunal” to investigate the operations of the then Nigeria National Oil Company (NNOC) now known as Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC).

The tribunal found out that in three years, the then NNOC has failed to collect its equity share of oil produced by Shell, Mobil and Gulf, which amount to \$2.8b USD ([www.thecable.nigerianmonitor.com](http://www.thecable.nigerianmonitor.com)). (2) Buhari as Military Head of State: The story of the fifty three (53) suitcases “filled with cash” that his Aide-de-Camp (ADC) then Major Mustapha Jokolo and his soldiers forcefully passed through Muritala Mohammed Airport (MMA) Lagos without security check after Gen Buhari as the Military Head of State announced a change of Nigeria currency and gave an order that all luggage entering or leaving the country borders, seaports and airports should be searched to ensure no currency was being smuggled. However, there seemed to be one rule for all and another for a privileged few as the 53 suitcases forcefully passed through without security checking. According to AtikuAbubakar, Nigeria’s Fourth Republic Vice President and the Controller of Customs as at the time of this incident at MMA Lagos, “he was pressurized by Buhari’s government to deny that the smuggling didn’t take place, but he refused and told the truth” ([therainbowonline.net](http://therainbowonline.net)). (3) Buhari as Petroleum Trust Fund Chairman (PTF): Mismanagement of Twenty Five Billion Seven Hundred and Fifty Eight Million Five Hundred and Thirty two Thousand Four Hundred and Forty Eight Naira (N25,758,532.448). On July 7th 1999, the then President Obasanjo instituted Petroleum (Special) Trust Fund Interim Report and the report revealed that the committee had advised President Obasanjo to set up a high powered judicial panel to recover the huge public fund and to take necessary action against any officer, consultant or contractor such as the Afri-Project Consortium (APC), a company contracted by the Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF) as management and project consultant that the report indicated that the sum of N25,758,532.448 was mismanaged when Buhari was the Chairman ([www.naij.com](http://www.naij.com)). (4) Buhari’s Certificate Forgery: Nwokocho-Ahaaiwe, an Abuja legal practitioner has charged President Buhari to court for an alleged certificate forgery. He alleged that President Buhari is unqualified to aspire to the office of the President of Federal Republic of Nigeria because President Buhari did not sit for Cambridge West African School Certificate (WASC) in 1961 as claimed.

However, President Buhari’s hiring of the services of twenty three best Senior Advocates of Nigeria (SAN) on this certificate forgery allegation is a proof according to his critics on this subject that indeed, President Buhari has no Cambridge West African School Certificate (WASC) as he claimed thus, has no morality to fight corruption ([www.post-nigeria.com](http://www.post-nigeria.com)). (5) President Buhari Harboring Corrupt Ministers in His Cabinet: The Lagos State chapter of People’s Democratic Party (PDP) has faulted the claims by President Buhari that his Ministers are not corrupt. According to the party, President Buhari was obviously shielding some of his corrupt Ministers because of their financial contributions to his election. They accused President Buhari of pretending to be



corruption-free, stating that he should make himself available for live question and answer if indeed he was very confident none of his Ministers are corrupt ([www.informationng.com](http://www.informationng.com)).

The corruption crisis rocking Buhari's ruling party, All Progressives Congress (APC) in recent time seems to be proving Buhari's anti-corruption war critics right. Cases like (6) The Party's National Leader, Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu's accusation that the National Party Chairman, Chief John Oyegun is corrupt and Oyegun's hitting back at Tinubu, describing his allegation of corruption as personally insulting, reckless and baseless according to This Day (2016) points to the illusion concept of this subject as none has been invited or interrogated as at the time of writing this paper. (7) The confessional statement made by Hon Abdulmumin (Ph.D) of APC, Former Chairman of Appropriation Committee representing the people of Kuru-Bebeji Federal Constituency of Kano State in a press conference after being relieved of his position by his colleagues, stated categorically how the "House of Representative is a den of systemic corruption", (Punch, 2016).

To further proof this, Hon. Abdulmumin listed in the first release how they shared Nigeria money. He confessed in the following order starting with him: (1) Hon Abdulmumin Jubrin got N650 million (2) Speaker Yakubu Dogara got N1.5 billion (3) His Deputy Yusuf Lasun got N800 million (4) House Majority Leader Femi Gbajabiamila got N1.2 billion (5) Deputy Majority Leader Buba Jubrin got N1.2 billion (6) House Whip Alhassan Ado Doguwa got N1.2 billion (7) Deputy House Whip got N700 million (8) House Minority Leader Leo Ogor got N1.2 billion (9) Deputy Minority Leader Onyema got N800 million (10) Minority Whip got N700 million (11) Deputy Minority Whip N700 million, and he concluded by saying that he has documents to back up all these.

This neo overt concept of President Buhari's ruling party-APC bigwigs accusations of each other on corruption in recent time and yet no invitation or arrest has been made by the anti-graft agencies, indeed, shows that Buhari's anti-corruption war is one rule for all and another for the privileged few. However, it is apt at this time to note the Ekpeye ethnic nationality's saying of the Niger Delta Region that "if it smells like a fish and looks like a fish, it is possibly a fish". Thus, this brings us to the questions being asked covertly and overtly by Nigerians, if President Buhari is sincere in his fight against corruption or if the fight against corruption is a vendetta, a reality or an illusion?

### **The Achievements of Buhari's Anti-Corruption Policies**

Accordingly, Liman (2017) stated 5 achievements of Buhari's Anti-Corruption Policies:

- i. Perhaps more than any of his predecessors, President Buhari has consistently and repeatedly stated his government's commitment to fighting corruption. In a country where politicians euphemistically promise to 'carry along' their supporters and give 'juicy appointments' to their supporters if they 'show gratitude', President Buhari's uncompromising rhetoric sets the right tone.



- i i. President Buhari has mandated all government ministries, departments and agencies to use the TSA under the watchful eye of the Accountant General of the Federation, rather than maintain their own corruption-prone bank accounts. Over the decades, such off the-radar accounts had proliferated uncontrollably, allowing corrupt officials to siphon public funds with ease. President Buhari has likewise pushed for tertiary educational institutions to join the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) that other government entities are already required to use. Improved Financial Centralisation.
- i i i. President Buhari has mostly appointed experienced practitioners to lead Nigeria's anticorruption bodies. EFCC chairman Ibrahim Magu is an experienced anti-corruption law enforcement officer. ICPC chairman BolajiOwasanoye is a policy expert and veteran legal scholar. Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) head WaziriAdio—a respected journalist—has also performed well. Such appointments are important because the capacity and effectiveness of government agencies often depend on skill and integrity of their senior staff.
- i v. Although caveats apply to this achievement, President Buhari has recorded more corruption convictions during his tenure than any of his predecessors. The EFCC claims to have secured over 2,000 convictions since 2015. It is important to note, however, that in 2019 alone—it won over half of these convictions due to a sharp increase in successful cybercrime prosecutions. In other words, these laudable gains do not translate into a spike in high-profile corruption convictions under President Buhari, a fact which government press releases touting this achievement fail to mention.
- v. President Buhari's direction, anti-corruption agencies have made the recovery of stolen assets one of their top priorities. They have increasingly used these innovative legal tools to seize suspected proceeds of corruption from former officials who would be difficult and time-consuming to convict. As a result of this strategic shift, more stolen assets are being recovered than ever before. Without greater transparency, however, it will continue to be difficult to assess the quantity and type of assets seized, their final forfeiture status and how they are reallocated. In June 2016, for example, the information minister claimed the Buhari government had seized \$9.1 billion during its first year in office: an astronomical sum that has still to be independently verified.

### **The Shortcomings and the Weaknesses of Buhari's Anti-Corruption Policies**

Moreover, Samuel (2016) mentioned the 5 weaknesses of Buhari's Anti-Corruption Policies Below:



- i. **Questionable Senior Appointments:** Although President Buhari has appointed some capable technocrats to top jobs, he has also appointed many individuals of questionable integrity to key positions.
- ii. **Failure to Make Petroleum Sector Reform:** President Buhari who is dual-hatted as Minister of Petroleum bears personal responsibility of his government's failure to undertake basic, and long overdue, reforms to the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). Widely seen as one of the most corrupt and mismanaged national oil companies in the world, the NNPC continues to conceal illicit financial outflows from public or legislative scrutiny, inflate internal administrative budgets and withhold oil revenues from the national treasury.
- iii. **Turning a Blind Eye to Political Corruption:** Under President Buhari's leadership, the APC has demonstrated the same toxic behaviours and corrupt norms that have characterised Nigeria's post-1999 electoral politics. Its modus operandi both in governing and while campaigning is indistinguishable from its predecessor.
- iv. **Tolerating Security Sector Corruption:** Despite President Buhari's promises to curtail it, security sector corruption which was rife under the Jonathan administration persists. Defence and security expenditures continue to escape public and legislative scrutiny, and mostly occur under emergency procurement processes that lack basic anti-corruption safeguards.
- v. **Corruption Prone Economic Policies:** Many of President Buhari's statist economic policies have allowed corruption to undermine his government's efforts to develop power and transportation infrastructure, and to boost trade and investment. His administration has done little to reform the country's anemic power sector which, according to a recent study, lost (N) 11 trillion to corruption between 1999 to 2017.

### **The Way Forward**

- i. The war against corruption should be holistic and transparent. Nigeria requires good and virtuous leaders who are men of proven integrity. Leaders who are disciplined, honest and trustworthy.
- ii. The agencies of the anti-graft should ensure the immediate prosecution of people who are involved in corrupt practices. There should be no sacred cows and prosecution should not be on “one rule for all and another for the privileged few”.
- iii. The government should fund the agencies adequately so that they can carry out the processes of prosecuting culprits without hindrances
- iv. The income of every public official should be thoroughly scrutinized by the code of conduct Bureau before and after office to avoid falsification of claims.
- v. There should be a special court for prosecuting people involved in corruption charges. This will reduce the cumbersome and delayed processes of the conventional court.



- vi. Capital punishment should be clearly spelt out for offenders as it is obtained in other developed countries. Possibly death or life imprisonment should be meted as in the case of China and most Asian countries.
- vii. The anti-graft staffs and the Nigerian police officers should be trained and equipped to carry out investigations without compromise
- viii. The public servants should be well remunerated and motivated with improved staff welfare packages to have job satisfaction
- ix. The Federal Government should endeavour to create employment opportunities to reduce the rate of unemployment and crime in the society.
- x. The Federal Government should jail past corrupt leaders to serve as deterrence to others. This will infuse fear in the system and reduce the act and science of corruption in Nigerian government and politics.

### **Conclusion**

President Buhari's fight against corruption in Nigeria should not be a mere rhetoric as corruption is a cankerworm that has eating deep into the fabrics of the Nigerian society and endemic, ravaging the nation's economy. The causes of corruption are from various institutional and political factors stemming from the flawed structure and monopoly of the economy by the federal government. Its effects on the nations socio-political and economic development are numerous and devastating. It has damaged the image of the country abroad to the extent that Nigeria is tagged as one of the most corrupt countries in the world and made stunted the democratic growth and development of the country. This has discouraged foreign investors and caused inflation and the depreciation of our currency. On a final note, the fight against corruption in Nigeria by the Buhari administration is being encouraging indeed; but it should be holistic and transparent, not targeting only a section of the country, a particular political party members and or his passive enemies if he wants Nigerians to believe and have faith in his war against corruption.

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