

Public Perception on Corrupt Practices in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic: A Study of Ogun State, Nigeria

OLAWALE OLAPADE, ABIDEMI ABIOLA ISOLA
Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria

Abstract. Without mincing words, it remains an incontestable point of fact that Nigeria as a nation, which is greatly and bountifully endowed with natural resources and uncommon workforce is yet to find its rightful place among the comity of nations. A major reason that has been responsible for her socio-economic stagnation is the phenomenon of corruption. Corruption is a hydra-headed monster, which has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigeria, though, it is a global challenge that needs to be fought head-long collectively with the universal approach, but it seems to be more pronounced in Nigeria than elsewhere in the world. What is worrisome therefore is the delicate and pernicious twist and dimension it takes in the present day Nigeria. It is on this premise the researcher of this work centres this finding and contribution to knowledge around. It is noteworthy, that the scope of this dissertation largely covers the menace of different forms of corruption and its implications, and the devastating effects of high profile corrupt practices on Nigeria’s socio-economic and developmental growth, vis-à-vis the general public perception of corruption in Nigeria: A Case study of Ogun State, in the South-West of the Country. This research work also recognizes the fact that political leadership and corruption are synonymous in Nigeria’s context today, as they are inextricably intertwined and inseparable in the contemporary Nigerian democratic governance. By way of submission, this work draws an inference that for Nigeria to have a sustainable socio-economic development, a responsive, responsible, credible and selfless political leadership must come on board to truly adopt a God-centred approach in politics, instill an act of discipline, societal and moral values in the citizenry of this country. Selfless services and good governance with the tenacity and sincerity of purpose should be its golden rules and watchword in piloting the affairs of this great nation, called Nigeria.

Keywords: Corrupt Practices, Public Behaviour

1. Introduction

It would tantamount to an exercise in futility going into the nitty-gritty of the obscure political interplay that bedeviled each of the phases of Nigeria’s political histories; these histories have been well documented and discussed in several books and are well known to those with a conscious interest in the history of Nigeria. Available records on the history of the political development of Nigeria since independence have shown that the reins of government have always fallen into the hands of a political leadership class that showed more interest in private, group or ethnic gains than in the general wellbeing of the Nigerian state. In all, political power has alternated between the civilian and the military since independence and neither of the two categories that ruled the country has done better in terms of corruption ratings. Indeed, the political leadership class has succeeded in entrenching corruption by providing a fertile ground and an environment conducive for the phenomenon to thrive gravely at the expense of national socio-economic, cultural and political development (Ogbeidi, 2012).

Historically, the origin of corruption in Nigeria predates the colonial era. According to a Colonial Government Report (CGR) of 1947, “The African’s background and outlook on public morality is very different from that of the present day Briton. The African in the public service seeks further his own financial interest.” (Okonkwo, 2007, quoted in Ogbeidi, 2012:1). Before independence, there have been cases of official misuse of resources for personal enrichment (Storey, 1953). Over the years, Nigeria has seen its wealth withered with little to show in living conditions of the citizens.

Therefore, there is need for immediate assessment, examination and exposition of those tricks to the generality of Nigerians, so, as to be out of shackles of corruption in Nigeria. Hence, need for the study of

'Public perception and Corrupt Practices in Nigeria's Fourth Republic', with a view to identifying the threats and implications of corruption to Nigeria's development and democratic governance by way of proffering possible solution to its ferocious existence in Nigerian polity. The study focuses on the following research questions:

- What are the different types of corruption that can be found in selected few of political offices and ministries in Nigeria, Ogun State as a case study?
- What are the direct rationales for the remote and immediate causes of corruption in Nigeria, Ogun State as a case study?
- What are the modalities and techniques involved in perpetuating these different types of corruption, as a way of putting an end to it?
- How can we identify ways and manners by which corruption can be curbed to its barest minimum, if not possible to completely eradicate in Nigeria, Ogun State as a case study?

The objective of this research is to investigate Public Perception and Corrupt Practices in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: A Case Study of Ogun State.

The Study has the following primary objectives, viz:

- To investigate different types of corruption in selected few of political offices and ministries in Nigeria, a case study of Ogun State
- To examine the remote and immediate causes of corruption in Nigeria, a case study of Ogun State;
- To expose the modalities and techniques involved in perpetuating these different types of corruption as a way of putting an end to it;
- To identify ways and manners by which corruption can be curbed (if not possible to eradicate) it in Nigeria, a case study of Ogun State.

The study is qualitative in nature and employed the exploratory research design through the use of unstructured interview method as primary sources of data and extant literature as secondary data. This study covered as its geographical capacity, principally selected few of ministries at the selected few of ministries both at the Ogun State and Federal Government Secretariats in Abeokuta, Ogun State.

2. Theoretical Framework:

2.1 Institutional Theoretical Approach to Understanding Individual Public Behaviour in Nigeria

Institutional theorists believe that institutions not only offer and constrain behavioural alternatives, but they also, up to a certain extent, model individual preferences (March & Olsen, 1995). This means that institutions, directly and indirectly determine the motives guiding individual behaviour. There are many approaches to institutionalism; the rational choice approach was adopted. The rational choice institutionalism is that institutions are arrangements of rules and incentives, and the members of the institutions behave in response to those basic components of institutional structure (Peters, 2000a, 2000b). The preferences of the members are not modified by their membership in the institution. The critics would argue, however, that even if institutional theory does constitute a good place at which to begin the analysis, they are not such a good place to end it. There are a number of problems in the theory itself, and in its ability to provide coherent explanations of political phenomena, that limit its utility as a central framework for the discipline

In the rational choice approach, institutions are conceptualized as exogenous to the values of the individuals functioning within them. This statement means that it is assumed that individual values will not be altered by involvement with the institution (Peters, 2000a, 2000b). Behaviour will change in response to the assortment of opportunities and constraints presented by the structure, but the values that condition behaviour are assumed to be unaffected by the institution (Lawton & Macaulay, 2009: pp. 23-34). In Nigeria, there are several institutions such as ICPC, EFCC, Public Complaints Commission, NAFDAC etc. as earlier enunciated and exhaustively discussed in this work that work differently in ensuring high standards of behaviour in public service and position. These institutions are supposed to affect and influence the behaviour of individuals working with them and the public service. However, from the rational choice approach, the values of the individuals are not altered by the institution.

3. Literature Review

In this work's attempt of identifying and itemizing different types of corruption found and inextricably inherent in various sectors of public space in Nigeria, what readily comes to mind is what the corruption is,

per se. According to a prominent Nigerian, late Dr. Abdul-Lateef Adegbite, who once stated that the meaning of corruption varies, and depends on the context in which it is used. It could denote moral depravity and perversion of integrity through bribery or favour, or 'a conscious and well-planned act by a person or group of persons to appropriate by unlawful means the wealth of another person or group of persons'. Some other people see it as the act of converting power and authority into ready cash. Another school of thought sees it as 'the diversion of resources from the betterment of the community to the gain of individuals at the expense of the community' (Aluko, 2006).

In the same vein and to further testify to the open-ended nature of the corruption's definition, the United Nations Organisation (UNO) also has the following to say about corruption:

Through experience, observations, information, discussions, reports, newspapers, findings of commissions of inquiry and of limited social-scientific studies, one can make an endless descriptive list of instances of corrupt conduct or practices. One can also give these various instances assorted labels: bribery; abuse and or misuse of office; illegal payments; kickbacks; tax, credit, and customs fraud; misappropriation and embezzlement; currency violations; forgery; false accounting; real estate swindles and land speculation; abuse of public grants; environmental damage; smuggling; violation of labour regulations; over-invoicing, over-pricing; and transfer-pricing; illegal/illegitimate monopolization, and restraints of trade; hoarding; illegal flight of capital; exploitation of labour; fraudulent sales; adulterated food or hazardous drugs; acts of constrain or distortion of development plans, etc- (Aluko, 2006: 2).

As it is relevant to this research work, corruption can be defined as the act of illegally diverting resources (particularly financial resources) meant for the good of the citizenry in a given geographical area by a privileged individual or a group, for personal use, presumably for self-aggrandizement. In this sense, corruption means the use of public resources for the achievement of personal ends.

3.1 The Dynamics and Acts of Corruption in Nigeria

Corruption manifests itself in various ways. According to the Political Bureau established in Nigeria in 1987, the manifestations of corruption include:

The inflation of government contracts: In return for kickbacks; frauds and falsification of accounts in

the public service; examination malpractices in our educational institutions including universities; the taking of bribes and perversion of justice among the police, the judiciary and other organs for administering justice; and various heinous crimes against the state in the business and industrial sectors of our economy, in collusion with multinational companies such as over-invoicing of goods; foreign exchange swindling, hoarding, and smuggling. The African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption and Related Offences lists acts of corruption to include:

a. The solicitation or acceptance, directly or indirectly by a public official or any other person, of any goods of monetary, or other benefit, such as a gift, favour, promise or advantage for himself or herself or for another person or entity, in exchange for any act or omission in the performance, of his or her public functions;

b. The offering or granting, directly or indirectly, to a public official or any other person of any goods of monetary value, or other benefit, such as a gift, favour, promise or advantage for himself or herself or for any person or entity, in exchange for any act or omission in the performance of his or her public functions;

c. The offering or granting, directly or indirectly, to a public official or any other person for the purpose of illicitly obtaining benefits for himself or herself or for a third party;

d. The diversion by a public official or any other person, for purposes unrelated to those for which they were intended, for his own or her own benefit or that of a third party, of any property belonging to the state or its agencies, to an independent agency, or to an individual, that such official has received by virtue of his or her position;

e. The offering or giving, promising, solicitation or acceptance, directly or indirectly, of any undue advantage to or by any person, who directs or works for, in any capacity, a private sector entity, for himself or herself or for anyone else, for him or her to act or refrain from acting, in breach of his or her duties;

f. The offering, giving, soliciting or accepting directly or indirectly, or promising of any undue advantage to or by any person who asserts or confirms that he or she is able to exert any improper influence over the decision making of any person performing functions in the public or private sector in consideration thereof, whether the undue advantage is for himself or herself or for anyone else, as well as the request, receipt or the acceptance of the offer or the promise of such an advantage, in consideration of that influence, whether or not the influence is exerted

or whether or not the supposed influence leads to the intended result;

g. Illicit enrichment

h. The use or concealment of proceeds derived from any of the acts referred to in this article; and **i.** Participation as a principal, co-principal, agent, instigator, accomplice or accessory after the fact, or in any other manner in the commission or attempted commission of, in any collaboration or conspiracy to commit, any of the acts referred to in this article (Ayawei, 2015).

The Corrupt Practices, and Other Related Offences Act 2000 lists offences, which are punishable by the Act to include among other things gratification by an official, corrupt offers to public officers, corrupt demand by persons, fraudulent acquisition of property, fraudulent receipt of property, making false statement or return, gratification by and through agents, bribery of public officers and using position for gratification (Ayawei, 2015).

3.2 Assessment of Corruption in some Advanced Nations and Third World Countries

Looking at it from the global perspective and comparatively speaking, it is necessary to mention here that the political leadership class in Nigeria is not alone in enwrapping themselves in corrupt practices. Many other nations, both in the developed and emerging markets/economies are also entangled in this quagmire. Few and key examples shall be discussed. The first is the incidence that undermined the national economy of Indonesia. In this case, state banks channeled money to projects involving former President Suharto's family and friends. In the 1990s, Indonesian banks allowed arrears on loan repayments to mount unchecked and circumvented rules to prevent excessive foreign-currency borrowing. Consequently, when the value of the Rupiah fell in 1997, the entire financial system began to collapse. Bankruptcies and massive layoffs took place and returned as many as half of Indonesia's over 200 million people to extreme poverty (Atwood, 2000: 11). Secondly, for instance, Singapore has been identified as one of the top ten least corrupt countries in Asia according to the annual surveys recently conducted by the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy and Transparency International. However, this framework deals with the major causes of corruption in Singapore during the colonial period; it describes the features of Singapore's anti-corruption strategy, and identifies six lessons to be learned from Singapore's experience in fighting corruption.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines corruption as 'the misuse of public power, office or authority for private benefit through bribery, extortion, influence peddling, nepotism, fraud, speed money or embezzlement' (UNDP, 1999: 7). This definition is useful because it includes not only bureaucratic and political corruption, but also private sector corruption as 'the private sector is involved in most cases of government corruption, which includes the misuse of money or favours for personal gain, abuse of official authority or influence in exchange for money or favours and violation of the public interest to acquire special personal advantages' (UNDP, 1999: 7). Corruption is a serious problem in many Asian countries, but Singapore is the least corrupt country in Asia according to the annual surveys conducted by the Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy Ltd (PERC) and the Berlin-based Transparency International (TI) in recent years. In 1996, PERC ranked Singapore as the third least corrupt country in the world, after Switzerland and Australia, and the least corrupt of the 12 Asian countries in the study. According to PERC, all countries have laws aimed at fighting corruption, but very few governments apply such laws as strictly and consistently as Singapore. Corrupt officials, particularly high-ranking ones, are dealt with in Singapore with a severity rarely seen elsewhere (Straits Times, 1996: 3). During 1996, Singapore's seventh ranking on TI's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) made it the least corrupt of the 13 Asian countries in the 54-nation study, with Pakistan (ranked 53rd) as the most corrupt Asian country (Transparency International, 1997: 65). Even though Singapore's ranking on the 1997 CPI dropped to ninth position, it was still the least corrupt of the 13 Asian countries in the 52-nation survey, with Pakistan (ranked 48th) retaining its position as the most corrupt Asian country (Transparency International, 1998: 195). In the 1998 and 1999 CPI, Singapore's seventh ranking confirms its status as the least corrupt of the Asian countries, while Indonesia (ranked 80th and joint 96th) has replaced Pakistan (ranked joint 71st and joint 87th) as the most corrupt country in Asia (Transparency International, 1999a: 13; 1999b: 2). Table 1 below shows the average ranking of 12 Asian countries on the CPI from 1996-1999. However, the situation was quite different in Singapore during the British colonial period, when corruption was a way of life as it was perceived by the public as a low risk, high reward activity since corrupt officials were seldom caught, and even if they were caught, they were not severely punished. Average Ranking of 12 Asian Countries on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, 1996-1999:

COUNTRY RANKING (From least to most corrupt)

Singapore 1	Hong Kong 2
Japan 3	Malaysia 4
Taiwan 5	South Korea 6
Philippines 7	Thailand 8
China 9	India 10
Indonesia 11	Pakistan 12

Source: Transparency International (1997: 65; 1998: 195; 1999a: 13; 1999b: 2)

4. Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

4.1 Introduction

Qualitative design with an interpretative and naturalistic approach was adopted in the analysis of the data gathered by the researcher from the targeted population of ten respondents each from Federal and State Secretariats, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. The main concepts in the discussion of the findings were based on interviewees’ responses and documented facts.

The four research questions were analysed using content analysis with main emphasis on the conceptual type of content analysis. The conceptual type focused on the word ‘Corruption’, which has high frequency in all the respondents’ statements, establishing the existence of corruption in political offices and ministries, in Ogun State, Nigeria.

4.2 Data Analysis Based on Unstructured Interview

Twenty (20) respondents were drawn from the cross section of the staff of few selected ministries in Ogun state and Federal Government Secretariats in Abeokuta. Interviewees shed more light on different types of corruption in Nigeria; the direct rationales for the remote and immediate causes of these different types of corruption; modalities and techniques involved in perpetuating these different types of corruption.

From the interview, out of 20 respondents 16 (80%) respondents stated categorically the different types of corruption which were in existence before and those that were not seen as an act of dishonesty, but are corrupt practices. These were stated in Appendix 2. 4 (20%) respondents supported the argument of the 16(80%) respondents. The implication is that, corrupt practices which unfold in daily activities in ministries and parastatals portray lack of integrity and transparency which is a menace to the national development in Nigeria. This has greatly contributed to the backwardness and failure of good governance in Nigeria. This hinders democratic process that leads to transparency in governance.

From the interview, 20 (100%) respondents stated different causes of corruption with different perspectives. This was clearly stated in Appendix 2. It has been discussed at length in the discussion of findings. The implication of the 20 (100%) respondents having different perspectives of the causes of corruption show that this malaise is a wide spread phenomenon in most government in Nigeria and it indicates that the society is conducive for it. This is so, because leadership style in Nigeria governance encourages corruption, stricken poverty, unemployment, among other causes also aid corrupt practice in Nigeria.

As regards the modalities and techniques involved in perpetuating these different types of corruption, 8 respondents (40%) explained that the techniques and tactics involved or adopted in perpetuating the heinous crime of corruption by the perpetrators can hardly be ascertained and pinned down to a particular description, while 8 (40%) respondents quite agree, but argued that situations and circumstances at hands at that given time dictate the modalities and gimmicks involved in carrying out any corrupt act. The remaining 4 respondents (20%) were neutral to the question raised. The implication of this is that corruption is difficult to eradicate from the root, but with the recommendation that is given in this research work, it can be curbed.

5. Discussion of Findings

5.1 Research Question 1: What are the different types of corruption found in selected few of political offices and ministries in Nigeria, Ogun State as a case study?

Corruption has always been in existence for a very long time and it is an ethical and moral problem, which varies from place to place, time to time, culture to culture (Abimbola, 2012; Aluko, 2008). It is a global phenomenon that affects development everywhere in the globe. According to the interview conducted, **Respondents A and F** were of the opinion that corruption is an open-ended phenomenon, which is of different dimensions that are numerous and can be hardly pinned down to a particular type. The interviewee further stated that any type of corruption depends on the circumstance that surrounds it. They strongly believed that any act, action or inaction of an individual or a group of people that falls below moral standard can be regarded as corruption.

From different perspective, but in close response to Respondent A, **Respondents B and E, G** affirm that, corruption comes in different forms and tactics,

particularly in both private and public sectors of the Nigerian political economy. In actual fact, according to the respondents, they were of the belief that all said and done, corrupt practices are more rampant and pronounced in public spaces, in Nigeria. This documented fact was long-established by the United Nations (1990).

Although, they unarguably believed that corruption remains a global challenge. They were able to identify some of the corrupt practices found and inherent in virtually all the Government ministries, commissions, agencies and parastatals in Nigeria as follows: The inflation of government contracts in return for kickbacks; frauds and falsification of accounts in the public service; electoral fraud; examination malpractices in our educational institutions including universities; cloning and forgery of certificate; aid and abetting; the taking of bribes and perversion of justice among the police, the judiciary and other organs for administering justice; and various heinous crimes against the state in the business and industrial sectors of our economy, in collusion with multinational companies such as over-invoicing of goods; foreign exchange swindling, hoarding, round tripping, smuggling, racketeering, gratification by an official, corrupt offers to public officers, corrupt demand by persons, fraudulent acquisition of property, fraudulent receipt of property, making false statement for returns, gratification by and through agents, bribery of public officers and using position for gratification, ill-gotten of wealth and self-aggrandizement among other corrupt acts.

Respondent C lamented same way as respondent B. She was of the view that corruption could come in different forms, depending on the situation and circumstance, which surrounds it. For example, she said it could be in form of bribery, forgery, libel, slander, sedition, rabble-raising, defamation of character, backbiting, bad-mouthing, deliberate unkind remarks about someone or group of people even, according to her fornication and adultery are equally corruption in practice. Furthermore, **Respondent D** shared similar line of thought with respondent A. Believed that classification of corruption might not be hundred percent accurate, as corruption is broad in nature that can hardly be narrowed down to a specific type or form. Be it government ministries, agencies, commissions and parastatals, type or form of corruption depends on the transaction, situation or circumstance that is playing out at that material time.

Beside, **Respondent H** reacted same way and manner to the research question as respondent C, but further expatiated that there are more to those earlier enunciated by respondent C. The interviewee said for instance, what are more rampant in the government circle, be it ministries, agencies, commissions parastatals, even within the executive arm of government are the deep-seated syndrome of favouritism, nepotism, ethnic sentiment, religious bigotry among other things in our political system and mode of governance in Nigeria. He went further and reiterated that those aforesaid and highlighted factors are the most critical corrupt practices that are really being perpetuated and perpetrated by many heads of government agencies, ministries, commissions, parastatals even among our so-called bigwig politicians within the various political parties in this country.

The respondent also buttressed his point by saying that even the present and serving administration of President Muhammadu Buhari has been alleged of many of those articulated factors in the way and manner he is piloting the state of affairs in Nigeria, principally in terms of his various political appointment with absolute no regard for the quotal system or the principle of Federal Character in all political appointments as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria, as amended. Also, said that President Muhammadu Buhari has been presumed and alleged to be a religious chauvinist and sectional minded leader, especially with the way and manner he is handling the current clash and lingering crisis between the notorious Fulani Herdsmen and the Farmers across Nigeria.

The respondent in his own opinion said that, nothing can be more severe and regarded as corruption than all these factors inherent in the ongoing civil administration, which unfortunately came to the hem of affairs by stated fighting corruption as one of her major objectives and cardinal principles of being voted into power by the patriotic and right thinking Nigerians.

5.2 Research Question 2: What are the direct rationales for the remote and immediate causes of corruption in Nigeria?

Different scholars and Organization like OECD,2016 Okwu,2007, Abimbola and Adesote,2012 and Okwu,2007 have broadly classified corruption into different types in which causes of each type of corruption in Nigerian state can be identified through

investigation. According to the interview conducted, **Respondents A, D and G** were of the view that most Nigerians are only religious, but not truly God fearing. The respondent made an assertion that, it is this their impious and ungodly tendency, which is largely responsible for all sorts of corrupt and immoral acts that majority of people engage in today in this country. Their position is that what is known and what is used to be a societal value and human dignity has long been eroded in our cultural ways of life and values system. They further stated, in today Nigeria, there is no longer dignity in labour as we used to hear and believe in few decades back. The sharp and corrupt practices remain the order of the day, cyber crimes, such as “Yahoo-yahoo plus”, Advanced fee fraud, otherwise known as 419 and the like. In a nutshell, that respondent was able to identify the following key factors as the direct rationales for the immediate and remote causes of corruption in Nigeria, namely: lack of proper home discipline or training, flagrant disregard for the religious doctrines and lessons, People’s blatant refusal to embrace our societal and cultural values system in their various civic conducts in the larger society.

Similarly, Respondents B,C,E and H were of the belief that Nigeria as a nation is bedeviled and inextricably entangled in corruption due to the following factors, which have been identified as the direct rationales for the remote and immediate causes of corruption in Nigeria: bad leadership, high rate of unemployment, especially among youths, Nigeria as a poverty stricken State. Said in actual fact, Nigeria has once been described in some quarters as poverty capital of the world, owing to the high level of poverty rate in the country.

Additionally, **Respondent E:** The respondent in question actually shared similar opinion with respondent **B**, but further stated that in addition, to his own profound thinking and understanding the rationales for the remote and immediate causes or causal agents for corrupt practices are: lack of self contentment among many Nigerians, desperation and morbid desire for acquisition of sudden wealth, ‘I want to belong syndrome’ incessant financial demands-cum-undue pressure from families, relatives and well-wishers alike, especially among the Nigerian politicians, top shots in the civil services and eminent political personalities. Moreover, **Respondent G** identified the incessant incursion and long stay of the military rule in Nigeria, prior to the ongoing 4th Republic and their proclivity and penchant to acquire sudden wealth in illicit and ill-gotten ways as the major factor responsible for the

direct rationale for the remote and immediate causes of corruption in Nigeria.

5.3 Research Question 3: What are the modalities and techniques involved in perpetuating these different types of corruption as a way of putting an end to it?

The techniques and tactics involved or adopted in perpetuating the heinous crime of corruption by the perpetrators can hardly be ascertained and pinned down to a particular description. Respondents A, H and J affirmed this statement. To their understanding, the modalities or gimmicks involved in carrying out any corrupt act is usually determined by the situations and circumstances at hands at that given time. They made the interviewer to understand that the issue of tactics, techniques, the ways and manners by which corrupt practices are being perpetrated by the corrupt individuals and personalities are definitely best known and well understood to them alone, because according to that respondent, it is an open-ended dimensional, which differs from one circumstance to the other. Oni and Isola, (2014: 436) shared similar view. Conversely, Apathetic, indifferent and adversely was Respondent B, to the same research question posed to him.

However, **Respondent C and G** shared similar opinion with the first group that the tactics and strategies adopted by this corrupt practice perpetrators are vary from one another, depending on the individuals’ experiences and circumstances. The two respondents averred that the techniques and tactics these sharp practices perpetrators would adopt while engaging in contract price inflation is quite different from the one corrupt politicians would use in electoral manipulation. The method corrupt civil servants would adopt in taking kickbacks from public might likely differ from tactic a police officer would use in his/her attempt to collect bribe from the crime suspects or criminals. Similarly, the corrupt techniques adopted in examination malpractices might slightly differ from the ones that would be adopted between the boss and the subordinate relationship in an office environment. The respondent said he could go on and on like that in citing various dissimilar and disparate instances unlike **Respondents D,E ,F** and I who were adversely indifferent to similar research question.

5.4 Research Question 4: How can we identify ways and manners by which corruption can be curbed to its barest minimum, if not possible to completely eradicate in Nigeria?

According to Dike (2003) the key to effective managing corruption in any society are honesty and integrity, effective leadership and governance, transparency and accountability, because corrupt leaders cannot wage effective war against corruption. Respondent's submission as regards this research question is that for corruption to be curbed or possibly put an end to there must be a severe or capital punishment in place by the government for any erring or corrupt personalities and individuals. This is related to Dike's argument that effective leadership can only wage war against corrupt practices in the society. The respondent was of the opinion that it is the lack of punitive, stringent measures and capital penalties in place for corrupt individuals that is largely responsible for the high rate of corrupt practices, which is bedeviling our dear country, Nigeria. He cited instances of what obtains in some advance countries in tackling corruption headlong, especially in the Asian continent of the globe, namely China, Indonesia, Singapore, Japan, Philippines etcetera.

He said all these aforementioned countries took the matter of corruption very seriously, such that, they put capital punishment in place as a penalty for the corrupt citizenry including government elected officials. The respondent made the assertion that all what it takes to curb or put an end to the issues of corruption is absolutely the political will and the sincerity of purpose on the part of government. Further explained that if the unprecedented high rate of corruption in this country in recent time till date is anything to go by, there is a clear indication that the existence and the establishment of various anti-graft agencies, such as Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) etc. has really not made any meaningful or significant impacts in curbing the corrupt practices in Nigeria. According to Oni (2007:272), the births of the two agencies have not significantly impacted on the conquering of corruption in Nigeria. The author argued further in agreement with the interviewee that ICPC and EFCC are not the messiahs to checkmate corrupt practices in Nigeria.

Respondents A, D and I strongly believed that the adoption and application of capital punishments to the corrupt individuals and politically exposed personalities is only the way out to possibly put an end to corruption in Nigeria or bringing it down to its barest minimum.

Respondents B, E and G, H were of the view that the only way and manner by which corrupt practices can

be eradicated in Nigeria is through provision of adequate employments and job opportunities, particularly among youths. According to them, the present administration is gradually working in that direction by their proposed and ongoing programme of 774,000 of jobs creation opportunities across the 774 Local Government areas in Nigeria. A corollary to this is Buhari administration's intention and plans to lift 100 million Nigerians out of poverty within the next 10 years, with the formation and the official launch of the Alliance for Poverty Eradication (APE), which took place in June 2020, at the high-level meeting of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly on poverty eradication. The respondent shared the view that it is majorly when the people are jobless and idle that they engage and preoccupy in corrupt thinking of how to cut corners in many of their dealings and endeavours. As for the corrupt influential people and eminent personalities, the interviewee's suggestion and opinion is that there is absolute need for the adequate and regular civic orientation and enlightenment regarding the menace of corruption and its adverse effects on Nigeria as a nation and unarguably her image as a leading country in the continent of Africa.

Respondent C held a strong view that one and only way we can either curb or put an end to corrupt practices in Nigeria is by painstakingly tracing our steps back down the memory lane to really know where we have really gotten it wrong over the years as a country and actually ready to swiftly mend our ways in order to have a corrupt free nation that we can all proud of in the comity of nations. He opened up that the only way and the most feasible way to put an end to corruption in our day-to-day activities in Nigeria is by our ability to collectively adopt and embrace a God-centred approach in all our endeavours. Oni and Isola, (2014) quite agree with Respondent C in the book chapter entitled "Reinventing Preventive Measures Checkmating Corrupt Practices As Against Curative Measures" that moral value taught at religious institution are to be enforced by family and the society to help train our youth in the fear of God by knowing what is right from what is wrong.

Respondents C, F and J belong to the rare school of thought, which believe that the only way to be out of corruption shackles is by always embracing the religious sanctity, moral rectitude, our societal values and the due recognition of our ethno-cultural dignities, such that we do not drag our natural and sacred self-esteems and respects into a mud by engaging in any act of corruption that could dent our image as individuals and by extension tarnishing the

reputation of our dear country, Nigeria in the comity of nations.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusively, the study established that, though, the corruption is a global phenomenon, which is prevalent in virtually every country of the world, but it is relatively more pronounced here in Nigeria than many other countries on comparative analysis. For example, on Corruption Perception Index (CPI), Nigeria was recently ranked by Transparency International (TI) to be 149 out of 179 countries that were rated globally in the year 2020 global rating. This rating shows a decline in ranking by Nigeria, comparing her 146 ranking position in the year 2019 by the same organization. To this end, for Nigeria to be successfully out of this problem of corruption, this study posits that Nigerians must thoroughly understand Nigeria as a sovereign entity with her own peculiarity of corrupt practices by proffering peculiar solutions in order to get it surmounted.

Thus, It is high time we all cherished and embraced our human dignity, cultural and national values as patriotic and genuine Nigerians by restraining from all forms of dirty deals and corrupt practices that are capable of tarnishing our individuals' reputation and dent the good image of our dear country, Nigeria; Need for constant and regular civic enlightenment, education and re-orientation via both printing and electronic media about corruption and its dire consequences or grievous implications on the economy by the Nigerian government; Government should adopt and introduce a more punitive and stringent measures as penalties for anyone found wanton or culpable of corrupt practices in Nigeria, as it obtains in many Asian countries of the globe; It is a must for paradigm shift in modus operandi of both EFCC and ICPC, particularly as the new substantive chairman for the EFCC has recently been confirmed and appointed into the office by the government. The holistic rejigging of the two anti-graft agencies mode of operations for better performance and the productive output can never be overstressed.

References

Abimbola, J.O and Adesote, S.A. (2012). Good governance and national development in Nigeria: A Critical Analysis in Adesote and Abimbola (eds). Corruption and national development in Nigeria's fourth republic. A historical Discourse, *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa. Vol. 14, No.7 (Pp 81)*

- Aluko, J.O. (2006). *Corruption in the Local Government System in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Oluben Printers-Book Builders.
- Aluko, S.A (2008). Corruption and national development in Adesote and Abimbola (eds) Corruption and national development in Nigeria's fourth republic. A Historical Discourse, *Journal of sustainable Development in Africa. Vol. 14, No.7 (Pp 81)*
- Atwood, J.B. (2000). *Corruption: A Persistent Development Challenge*. Working Paper-published by Information Agency for International Development, Mexico (originally published in 1998, Washington DC)
- Ayaweh, P. (2015, August 25). *Corruption and corrupt practices in Nigeria: An agenda for taming the monster*. Conference Paper, Abuja, Volume: 44.
- EFCC official website: www.efccnigeria.org (2013). *For the Records: 2013 CONVICTIONS-EFCC*
- Lawton, A. & Macaulay, M. (2009). *Ethics Management and Ethical Management*. In R. Cox (Ed.), *Ethics and Integrity in Public Administration: Concepts and Causes*. New York: Sharpe, Inc.
- March & Olsen (1995). *Public sector and corruption in Nigeria: An ethical and institutional framework of analysis*. LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, USA.
- Ogbeidi, M. (2012). Political leadership and corruption in Nigeria since 1960: A Socio-Economic Analysis, *Journal of Nigeria Studies Volume 1, Number 2*.
- Oni, M.A and Isola, A.A.(2014). *Reinventing preventive measures: Checkmating corrupt practices as against curative mechanism in Nigeria*. In Ako-Nai, R, Omotosho, M. and Omotuyi, S. (ed) *One hundred years of Nigerian nationhood. governance, foreign policy and development*.
- Peters, G. (2000a). *Institutional Theory: Problems and Prospects*. Political Science Series. Vienna: Institute for Advanced Studies.
- Peters, G. (2000b). *Institutional Theory in Political Science: The New Institutionalism*. London: Continuum.
- Straits Times, (1996). April 9
- Transparency International Report 1997, Berlin.
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), (1999). *Fighting Corruption to improve Governance, New York*.