



## The Imperative of Institutional Approach to Combating Corruption in Nigeria

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### Abstract

Arguably, corruption has been identified as one of the major stumbling blocks to Nigerian quest to sustainable democracy that guarantees mass participation and people-oriented leadership. Today, institutions and public office holders that are supposed to serve the Nigerian people are enmeshed in corruption. This ultimately poses grievous threat to economic growth and development of Nigeria. The recent monumental corruption cases and recovery of huge amount of money from public officers are pointers to the fact that the institutions charged with the fight against corruption and good governance find it difficult to rise above their individual or groups' gains. They are unable to discharge their functions effectively leading to pervasiveness of corruption in the country. It is against this backdrop that this study evaluated the factors responsible for the successes and failures of the major anti-graft agencies as well as the general impact of these on the polity. The study adopted content analysis of documentary data sourced on the subject. The findings of the study revealed that although there have been media awareness on anti-graft war in the country, little or no impact has been made except for some recovery of public funds looted by some public officers. The paper, therefore, concluded that although in this part of the world, strong institutions need a strong personality to make them work; anti-corruption agencies should be developed in such a way that they will be able to use the powers provided for them by the enabling laws and effectively fight corruption, irrespective of who heads the presidency.

**Keywords:** Nigerian polity, Corruption, Presidency, anti-graft agencies, Institutions

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### 1. Introduction

Arguably, corruption has been identified as one of the major stumbling blocks to Nigeria's quest to sustainable democracy and development. It comes in many guises, ranging from the familiar experience of administrative bribery in daily encounters with public officials to clandestine grand corruption schemes to misappropriate public funds (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNODC, and National Bureau of Statistics, NBS, 2107) making the country losing "up to 40% of its oil revenue to corruption" (Ikpeze, 2013:148). This has hindered mass participation and people-oriented leadership. It has turned the country's democracy into *moneycracy* and

*Nairacracy*— only those who are rich or those supported by moneybags can vie for public offices and they buy the support of those (the majority of the electorate) who have been 'crippled' to vie for elective positions. Most often, the moneybags and most of the Nigerian politicians got their money through corruption; either as former public office holders or as godfathers. They are the "daring "political entrepreneurs"" (Adetula, 2008: xxviii).

Even though since 1960 and before 1999, Nigeria has been alternating between civilian and military regimes, corruption has been one of the country's greatest challenges. One of the central reasons adduced for military

takeover during the era was corruption. Political history of Nigeria reveals that sometimes Nigerians preferred military dictatorship to civilian administration only to find out that men in uniform were not better. Consequently, anti-graft war is usually instituted by every government in the country. However, the fight against corruption has been made either ad-hoc or not properly institutionalised. They were either ethical revolution, war against indiscipline or just mere media campaign and usually ended alongside the respective administrations that inaugurated them. The turning point was 1999.

Having observed that corruption is endemic in Nigeria, the former President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo created two major anti-graft agencies during his tenure that began in May 1999. He created the Independent Corrupt Practice and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) in 2000 and the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) in 2002. These bodies were expected to play complementary role in the fight against corruption in the country. They are to help delist Nigeria from global corruption index and help restore the country's lost glory. The ultimate aim of this is to help the government deliver the dividends of democracy to Nigerians as corruption is reduced to the barest minimum.

However, since the establishment of these agencies corruption is still prevalent. Ikpeze (2013) notes that large body of legislation and several institutions notwithstanding, corruption remains a cankerworm of gargantuan proportions that has eaten very deep into the fabric of Nigeria. Apart from other identified challenges, "there are uncertainties and conflicts about the dividing line between the roles, functions and powers of EFCC, ICPC, etc. on investigation, handling and documentation of fraud or corruption" (Ikpeze, 2013:161) in relation with other agencies of government, especially with the Ministry of Justice and the State Security Service (SSS). This makes the anti-graft war herculean task for the institutions established to fight it. Instead of reducing, it seems the situation is getting

worse by the day; if the revelations and discovery of looted public funds are anything to go by.

Therefore, this study examines the imperative of institutional approach to combating corruption and instability in Nigeria. The first section of the study, after this introduction, focuses on the theoretical framework adopted for the study. The second deals with conceptual analysis where the basic concepts in the study are put in their correct perspectives. The third section takes a historical excursion into corruption in Nigeria. The fourth examines how an institutional approach to fighting corruption in the country can be achieved. The fifth and last section is the concluding remarks.

## **2. Conceptual Analysis**

It is fundamental to put the two main concepts, corruption and institution, in this study in their correct perspective in line with the objective of this study. This will not only help to understand what these concepts stand for but also to operationalise their usage in the study.

Due to its pervasiveness in the Nigerian society, the word "corruption" is one of the most defined words. The attention the concept has attracted from scholars makes one to be lost in what the word really stands for. In fact, reading through literature reveals that unless one is 'selective', one may miss the essence of the word. Notwithstanding, what is noteworthy is the fact that corruption is the act of doing the wrong thing. According to Usman (2008), corruption is much more than public officers taking bribes and gratification, committing fraud and stealing funds or assets entrusted to their care. It is the deliberate violations of rules and procedures for gainful ends, either in private and public affairs. These gains may be in cash, kind, or it may even be psychological or political, but they (gains) are made from the violation of the integrity of an entity and involve the subversion of its quality and capacity.

From the perspective of gains corruption accrued to the perpetrator, World Bank and Transparency International (TI) define

corruption as abuse of public office for private gains for the benefit of the holder of the office or some third party (cited in Ogbeidi, 2012). Therefore, Ogbeidi (2012) argues that viewed from these definitions, corruption can be broadly understood as unethical behaviour. He argues that corruption can be perpetrated for private and group enrichment and for power preservation purposes, especially when it takes political dimension (political corruption). In this regard:

*Political corruption usually encompasses abuses by government officials such as embezzlement and cronyism, as well as abuses linking public and private actors such as bribery, extortion, influence peddling, and fraud, to mention but a few. In this regard, corruption threatens good governance, sustainable development, democratic process, and fair business practices (Ogbeidi, 2012:5).*

In this state of affairs, the political leadership and the entire state function abnormally causing the underdevelopment of the political system, and development becomes elusive.

In his submission, Walecki (2008) argues that illegality is crucial to many definitions of political corruption. He opines that some legally sanctioned but dubious uses of state resources in semi-authoritarian and authoritarian regimes, which are not defined as corruption by the state, amount to corruption. Thus, Walecki (2008:2) argues:

*The law is not a proper guide (to defining corruption) not only because it is not perfect with regard to encompassing all cases widely perceived as corrupt, but also because the law itself may be a result of political corruption.*

Since the ruling class can easily use laws to justify the use of the state resources, it will be improper to define corruption from the law perspective. It will be easy to justify the

selfish uses of public resources by the ruling class for personal gains.

From the institutional perspective, "corruption can definitely be related to the quality of governance" (Enwereonye, Christopher, Egbeh and Ibe, 2017:41). It is argued that weak state institutions, characterised by inadequate capacity to manage society, through a framework of social, judicial, political and economic checks and balances, creates a breeding ground for corruption to flourish (Enwereonye, Christopher, Egbeh and Ibe, 2017). This is the case in Nigeria. The inability of the institutions of the Nigerian State to effectively guide, regulate (excesses) and direct the affairs of the citizenry leads to corruption. Little wonder, Achebe (1984) as cited in Enwereonye, Christopher, Egbeh and Ibe (2017) submits that Nigerians are corrupt because the system under which they live today makes corruption easy and profitable. This is unavoidable because the institutions of the state that should punish and regulate excesses leading to unethical behaviours are powerless and inept.

From unethical behaviours perspective, corruption according to the (Independent) Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences (ICPC) Act are actions that result into bribery, fraud and other related offences. Offences punishable in this regard include wilful giving and receipt of bribes and gratification to influence a public duty, fraudulent acquisition and receipt of properties, deliberate frustration of investigation by the anti-corruption commission (ICPC), making false returns, making of false or misleading statements to the anti-corruption commission, attempts, conspiracies and abetments of offences under the Act (cited in Ikpeze, 2013). The manifestations of these corrupt practices and offences punishable under the law are arguably pervasive in Nigeria. This has become the bane of sustainable democracy and development in the country.

In fact, Lawal and Victor (2012) opine that corruption is the biggest problem Nigeria has, a bane to good governance, which has

invariably translated into corrosive and perpetual poverty among the citizenry. This is as a result of the fact that the money that is supposed to be expended on social needs and infrastructures to engender development circulates among and within the few privileged and thereafter, taken abroad for investment. It is the most serious developmental challenge to Nigeria and driven by official tolerance for illicit enrichment, concentration of wealth and economic power in the hands of a few, blending of political and economic interests (Ikpeze, 2013). This is all because of weak institutions.

Institution is any persistent system of activities or any patterns of group behaviour (Enemu, 1999) and the glue that holds society together with system of constitutive rules (Searle, 2005). The history of the usage of the term in social sciences dates back at least to Giambattista Vico in his *Scienza Nuova* of 1725 (Hodgson, 2006), and has been conceived as offices and agencies arranged in a hierarchy, each agency having certain functions and powers (Enemu, 1999). They play a pivotal role in the overall development of any nation. While some institutions are revenue generating, others can be rule making, distributive or watchdogs to forestall any form of systemic abuse and failure.

Noteworthy is the fact that institutions are the kinds of structures that matter most in the social realm: they make up the stuff of social life (Hodgson, 2006). It is argued that the increasing acknowledgement of the role of institutions in social life involves the recognition that much of human interaction and activity is structured in terms of overt or implicit rules. Institutions are thus defined "as systems of established and prevalent social rules that structure social interactions" (Hodgson, 2006:20). They constrain and enable behaviour. The existence of rules implies constraints; constraints on what could lead to Hobbesian state of nature, when everyone does what pleases him/her leading to "the situation (where) humans are paralysed by existential fear" (Keizer, 2008:2). Thus, the existence of institutions is

sine qua non to living a peaceful life. Therefore, institutions are not only fundamental to good (democratic) governance but are also crucial for guaranteeing economic development, not matter the society; be it developed, underdeveloped, traditional or modern.

Consequently, institutions matter when explaining economic performance (Keizer, 2008). This is because:

*In an interactive process between individual and group institutions are developed that mould human motivations and channel human actions in such a way that basic needs can be satisfied more efficiently (Keizer, 2008:5).*

And as soon as an institution becomes established, it then provides a structure within which a society can create (Searle, 2005) the reality it desires. And in fact:

*The essential role of human institutions and the purpose of having institutions is not to constrain people as such, but, rather, to create new sorts of power relationships. Human institutions are, above all, enabling, because they create power, but it is a special kind of power. It is the power that is marked by such terms as: rights, duties, obligations, authorizations, permissions, empowerments, requirements, and certifications (Searle, 2005:10).*

The essential role of anti-graft institutions and/or agencies in Nigeria is congruent to the argument of Searle (2005). The EFCC and ICPC, two among the anti-graft institutions of government in the country, are essentially established to ensure compliance to official rules and regulations on the use of public resources in the country. They are created to monitor how public officials go about their duties, fulfilling their obligations, using public resources in line with the public authorisations and permissions as it is required of them. However, how have has this manifested in the country?

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is system theory. David Easton is usually credited with pioneering the application of this theory to the analysis of political process (Enemuo, 1999). As cited in Enemuo (1999), Easton defined political system as the system of interactions in any society through which binding or authoritative decisions are made and implemented. It is argued that every political system exists within an environment of other systems – physical, biological, social, psychological, etc., which affect it and are in turn affected by the political system. This is through continuous transactions and exchanges.

In the terminology of the system theory, the political system receives inputs from the environment in the form of demands and supports; it produces outputs in the form of policies and decisions (Gaubá, 2003). The outputs are said to flow back into the environment through a feedback mechanism, giving rise to fresh demands. It is important to note that:

*Feedback is essentially a communication process which produces action in response to information about the state of the political system, or some part thereof, or its environment, to structures within the system in such a way that the future action of those structures is modified in consequence (Gaubá, 2003:94).*

Noteworthy, in line with the tenets of the system theory, is the fact that the feedback from the Nigerian society, which is the environment of the political system, on the pervasiveness of corruption in the country proves that anti-corruption needs urgent attention. It is arguably correct to state that this led to the establishment of the EFCC and ICPC for anti-graft war in the country. However, the outputs (in form of the ability of the EFCC and the ICPC to decisively fight corruption) have not met the demand of Nigerians that brought them to existence. Therefore, according to system theory which states that feedback leads to modifications of future action of structures of political system

in order to meet the further demands from the political system, the EFCC and the ICPC need institutional modification for them to function more effectively. This is line with the proposition of the theory, as cited in Gaubá (2003), that the Nigerian people (and the authors of this study) have appraised the position of the goal of these institutions, their distance from it, and the changes this distance brought to their performance leading to the conclusion that the EFCC and the ICPC needs institutional strengthening.

#### 4. Results

##### *Corruption in Nigeria: Then and Now*

It is unfortunate that the available records on the history of the political development of Nigeria since independence have shown that the reins of government has 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 (Ogbeidi, 2012). This, however, was a departure from pre-colonial Nigerian society when accountability, transparency and good governance were the hallmark of political leadership. Okolo and Raymond (2014:31) argue that:

*Pre-colonial Africa, for the most part, was founded on strong ethical values sometimes packaged in spiritual terms, but with the end result of ensuring social justice and compliance. In both centralized and decentralized pre-colonial African communities, governance was conducted with the utmost seriousness. As the laws were mostly unwritten in nature and therefore prone to being easily forgotten, they were often couched in supernatural terms to instill fear and be instilled in the subconscious. Examples abound of the heavy emphasis on accountability and good governance across several pre-colonial African communities.*

The reverse has been the case since European forms of government were introduced in Nigeria. Even before independence, corruption cases were rife.

According to Storey (1953), before independence, there have been cases of official misuse of resources for personal enrichment (cited in Ogbeidi, 2012). The First Republic under the leadership of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Prime Minister, and Nnamdi Azikwe, the President, was marked by widespread corruption (Ogbeidi, 2012). During the time, government officials looted public funds with impunity. Federal Representative and Ministers flaunted their wealth with reckless abandon. In fact, it appeared there were no men of good character in the political leadership of the First Republic. Politically, Ogbeidi (2012) argues, the thinking of the First Republic Nigerian leadership class was based on politics for material gain; making money and living well.

The reckless lifestyle of the public officials and the widespread of corruption were part of the reasons adduced by the military for taking over power in 1966. However, the political history of the country also reveals that even the military did not fare better. From Gowon administration to Babangida Administration and to Abdulsalam Administration, there were cases of misappropriation and embezzlement of public funds. For instance, ten of the twelve state military governors in the Gowon regime were found guilty of corruption and were dismissed from the military services with ignominy (Ogbeidi, 2012). In addition:

*For no explicable reason from 1977 the Obasanjo government stated (sic) borrowing heavily on the Euro-dollars market at exorbitant interest rates and at a time when Nigeria's crude petroleum was in excess of 2 million barrels per day and petroleum sales revenue was more than \$20 billion U.S dollars per annum. In this way, Obasanjo's government succeeded in inflating Nigeria's external debt stock from the modest level of \$560 million U.S dollars in 1975 when Gowon was overthrown (CBN, 1975:8a) to \$6.8 billion in 1979 "Prior to the change of government (Okigbo, 1986) (cited in*

*Austine, Charles and Raymond, 2013:23).*

Since Second Republic up till the dawn of Fourth Republic, corruption seems to have become culture in Nigeria. In Second Republic, for instance, "It was claimed that over \$16 billion in oil revenues were lost between 1979 and 1983 during the reign of President Shehu Shagari" (Ogbeidi, 2012:8). Shagari Administration was full of over-invoicing, contract inflation, rice importation, deliberate sabotaging of every conceived policy in order to profit (Enefe, 2008). The administration placed personal interest over the collective interest of Nigerians which encouraged corruption. The hallmark of corruption in Second Republic was frequency of federal buildings mysteriously going up in flames, most especially just before the onset of ordered audits of government accounts, making it impossible to discover written evidence of embezzlement and fraud (Dash, 1983 cited in Ogbeidi, 2012). And when General Muhammadu Buhari took over from Shagari (through coup d'état) he observed that:

*The corruption, inept and insensitive leadership in the last four years has been the source of immorality and impropriety in our society. Arson has been used to cover up fraudulent acts in public institutions. I am referring to the fire incidents that gutted the P & T building in Lagos, the Anambra State Broadcasting Corporation, the Republic Building in Lagos, the Federal Ministry of Education, the federal Capital Development Authority account office at Abuja and NET at a time when Nigerians were being apprehensive of the frequency of fraud, scandals and government's apparent incapacity to deal with it (cited in Rinji, 2001:166).*

The economic and development situation of the country was in bad shape when Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was elected the President of Nigeria in May 1999. This was due to bad leadership and widespread of corruption. As

Chief Olusegun Obasanjo captured the situation in his inaugural speech:

*...Instead of progress and development, which we are entitled to expect from those who governed us, we experienced in the last decade and half...deterioration leading to instability and weakening of all public institutions...The citizens developed distrust in government, and because promises made for the improvement of the conditions of the people were not kept, all statements by government met with cynicism...government and all its agencies became thoroughly corrupt and reckless...the impact of corruption is so rampant and has earned Nigeria a very bad image at home and abroad (Obasanjo, 1999).*

Even though Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was able to establish the EFCC and the ICPC for anti-graft war in the country, his administration was not also immune from corruption. One thing common to all the regimes, whether military or civilian (except Generals Murtala and Buhari's regime) is the fact that they took their ritual bath in the pungent water of corruption (Enefe, 2008). Obasanjo has been described as the father of corruption in Nigeria, sitting on stolen wealth of the country (The Vanguard, 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2017) and grandfather of corruption, the most corrupt Nigerian that ever held public office (The Punch, 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2016). The level of success he attained on anti-graft war was only based on his personality. This is despite the many cases of corruption during his presidency.

Therefore, the fight against corruption in Nigeria has been determined by the personality of the individual in power. This is because, from the beginning of their creation till today, the success achieved by the EFCC and the ICPC are based on the level of the commitment by the sitting president. However, scholars like Ogundiya (2009) as quoted in Adu (2013) has noted that the greatest challenge to anti-corruption in Nigeria is the purported reformers. He added that in a situation of prevalent

corruption among state managers and the top echelon of the Nigerian bureaucrats and public office holders, the initiators and implementers of anti-corruption reforms are archetype of corruption. As such, he argued, anti-graft agencies such as the EFCC and ICPC are only used as instruments of oppression and intimidation in the hands of the executive.

Today, the fight against corruption is tied to the personality of the current President Muhammadu Buhari, who is determined to stamp out the vices. The present administration has uncovered huge sum of money misappropriated and embezzled in the last administration. Only the office of the National Security Adviser (NSA) stole \$2 billion in funds and another \$148 billion missing that were meant to purchase weapons and other equipment to fight Boko Haram terrorist (Foreign Policy, November, 15<sup>th</sup> 2015). The same is arguably the case in every sector of the Nigerian economy and national life. However, corruption is not only identifiable with the last administration; it is common to most governments that have ruled the country.

According to Senator Shehu Sani (the Chairman Senate Committee on Foreign and Domestic Debts and Vice Chairman Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs), over \$200 billion has been stashed away from Nigeria to Dubai in the United Arab Emirate (UAE) alone in the past 20 years (The Vanguard, 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2016). This is excluding estates, bonds and other securities bought with Nigeria stolen money. In 2013 alone, an estimated 57 pounds was laundered within and through the United Kingdom (UK) representing 3.6 per cent of that year's national real gross domestic product (The Vanguard, 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2017). In fact, according to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federation, Abubakar Malami (SAN), the exact figures of looted funds outside the country is difficult to ascertain (cited in This Day, 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2016). Although according to Mathew Page, the former United States (US) intelligence community expert who was a senior policymaker at the White House State Department (Defence Department), the US and the UK are the biggest recipients of funds

looted from Nigeria (Vanguard, 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2017), Nigerian politicians keep stolen money, including Switzerland, and in any country they think it is safe. And accordingly, this chunk of Nigeria's wealth which has been stocked and hidden in foreign countries by highly placed persons is adversely affecting the economic growth and advancement of the country (Daily Post, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017). The personality of no president has been able to put a stop to it. Even though each of this administration put strategies in place to fight corruption in Nigeria, these strategies, at best, lead to either recovery of stolen funds or jail sentences for few public officers.

Even though the watchwords of the Muhammadu Buhari Administration is public officers must account for what they own (The Guardian, 26<sup>th</sup> May, 2016) and this has led to the scoring of the Administration high on anti-corruption (The Sun, 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2017), it is not yet *uhuru* in anti-graft war in Nigeria. In fact, the manner in which some corruption cases involving senior public officers in the Administration were handled proves that only the personality of even the widely acclaimed incorruptible Muhammadu Buhari is not enough to solve challenges associated with corruption in the country. The *grasscutting* corruption scandal of N233 million contract to clear invasive plant species in Yobe State involving the former Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Mr Babachir Lawal (The Sun, 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2017) and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) \$25 billion contract award scandal (Nigerian Tribune, 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2017) are enough evidences that institutionalisation of anti-graft war is the way out. With institutional approach to fighting corruption, even when President Muhammadu Buhari leaves office anti-corruption will still continue.

#### *Combating Corruption Using Institutional Approach*

The institutionalisation of anti-graft agencies becomes imperative based on the identified challenges with anti-corruption efforts in Nigeria. Also, this is fundamental due to the fact that the negative impact of corruption on

sustainable democracy and economic development in Nigeria cannot be overemphasised. To institutionalise anti-corruption in the country, the fight should transcend only public sector. It should involve the private sector. This should begin with the operationalisation of the National Code for Good Governance developed by the Financial Regulation Council (FRC) of Nigeria. Although the hurried implementation of the Not-For-Profit Organisations part of the National Code generated heated controversies in the religious circle, especially as it affected the Nigerian Church, the Code should not be left to gather dust. The Code generated controversies basically because the Nigerian people were not involved and the FRC, perhaps, wanted to fill the vacuum the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) created in 2003 when it developed only the Code of Corporate Governance for Public Companies. The controversies led to the President Muhammadu Buhari removing the Executive Secretary of FRC. However, the careful study of the National Code shows that it is a document (if duly implemented) that can help fight corruption both in the public and private sectors in the country.

Consequently, anti-corruption in Nigeria should permeate all the sectors, segments and layers of the Nigerian society. Until the fight is owned by Nigerians, the government is just chasing a shadow. Public officials that are mostly the focus of anti-corruption in the country are, first of all, Nigerians. To successfully fight corruption, therefore, the government should encourage all and sundry to be involved. This can begin with campaigns by the National Orientation Agency (NOA). NOA should intensify her efforts to make Nigerians see anti-corruption as theirs. This can be done by strengthening the Whistle Blowing Policy. The effort of the government is commendable in this regard especially as it paid the whistle blower who helped in the recovery of Ikoyi Mansion loot. If government pays all the whistle blowers and the NOA keeps on encouraging other Nigerians to 'blow more whistles', anti-



corruption will be more successful in the country.

Anti-corruption in the country will be a fruitless effort if the anti-graft agencies are corrupt. The leadership of the EFCC and the ICPC should get rid of the bad eggs among them. Some of the members of staff of these agencies are corrupt. Recently, the acting chairman of the EFCC, Mr Ibrahim Magu, confirmed this as he said, "There is corruption everywhere, every institution, including the EFCC. We are battling with internal corruption" (The Premium Times, December 12, 2016). "You cannot give what you do not have" goes the popular saying. Therefore, these anti-graft agencies cannot fight any corruption if they are infected with corruption. There should be internal purging of the EFCC and the ICPC for proper institutionalisation of anti-corruption in Nigeria and for sustainable anti-graft war in the country.

The seemingly battle of supremacy, conflict of interest and confusion about who is responsible for what between the EFCC and other related agencies, especially the Ministry of Justice and the SSS should be done away with. The battle of superiority between the former Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Chief Michael Kaase Aondoakaa, for instance, did not augur well for anti-corruption in Nigeria. In addition, the recent inter-agency fight and contradiction between the EFCC and the SSS, especially the scenarios that played out in the National Assembly over the confirmation of Ibrahim Magu as the substantive chairman of the EFCC was antithesis to war against corruption in the country. Instead of working together, these agencies of government, especially their leaders, are working against the success of each other. The pitiable part is the fact that the headship of these government institutions are appointed by the same President, who they are supposed to work for to fulfill his anti-corruption agenda.

To complement this, governance in the country should take the form of anti-corruption. What this is meant is that there

should be value re-orientation in the public service; that access to the state resources does not mean primitive accumulation. One begins to wonder how an individual will possess eight-six (86) luxury cars and drive them. The demonstration of this kind of primitive accumulation by one Mr. Ibrahim Tumsah, a Director of Finance and Account in the Federal Ministry of works, Power and Housing, who was ordered to forfeit the cars, four houses and a quarry plant in Abuja (The Punch, 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2017; the ICPC, 2017) is just one of such examples in Nigeria. There are so many of such revelations in the recent time. This goes to prove that good ethical value has been eroded in the country. Therefore, honesty, transparency and probity should be entrenched in governance through the observation of due diligent rules governing official conducts. This should be entrenched by strict observance of due process in governance and enforcement of law against public officials who go contrary to the law. Consequently, public officials at all levels should be made to account for their stewardship during and after their tenure of office.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendation**

### *Conclusion*

The task in this work has been to examine the importance of institutional approach to anti-graft war in Nigeria. The study has identified that corruption is endemic in the country. The widespread of this social vice has led to economic underdevelopment of the country. It is the contributory factor to the inability of the country to deliver the dividends of democracy to the majority of Nigerians. In addition, it has limited political participation in the country; those who have accumulated wealth through politics, at the expense of the masses, edge the masses out by even buying their votes and subjecting them to abject poverty in the process. This is no thanks to corruption and primitive accumulation by some public officials. Some examples of these are given in the work.

Noteworthy is the fact that corruption in Nigeria has assumed an unprecedented

height where political office holders as well as top bureaucrats abuse the trust conferred on them through mismanagement, embezzlement and siphoning of public funds for their private use. Consequently, efforts have been made to get rid of corruption in the country. However, it seems the efforts are not yielding the commensurate results. Some of the efforts by various governments are merely cosmetic, media campaign or at best based on the strong personality of the Mr President. This is especially the case since the establishment of the EFCC and the ICPC by the then President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. The same applies to the present efforts by President Muhammadu Buhari.

Therefore, the imperative of institutional approach cannot be overemphasised because it makes anti-graft agencies not to be tied to the presidency. It grants the agencies autonomy of action and deeds within the laws establishing them. In other words, it will assist to insulate the anti-graft agencies from the overbearing influence of the presidency, ruling party's members and civil/public servants. Although, this study acknowledges the fact that in this part of the world, strong institutions need a strong personality to make them work; the argument of this study is that anti-corruption agencies should be developed in such a way that they will be able to use the powers provided for them by the enabling laws and effectively fight corruption in Nigeria.

#### Recommendation

Arising from the foregoing, the study makes the following recommendations with a view of not only insulating the anti graft agencies from the whims and caprices of the personality in power but to also ensure that that the war on corruption is institutionalized to outlived the administration of president Muhammadu Buhari.

- 1 The Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) should be alive with its responsibilities by ensuring that all extant laws regarding

corruption and mismanagement are fully enforced to the latter.

- 2 The institutionalization of the fight against corruption requires that all hands must be on deck fight the scourge both in public and private endeavours for Nigeria to overcome her developmental challenges.
- 3 Both ICPC and EFCC must play a complementary role in the fight against the scourge for optimal result.
- 4 Reducing/minimising corruption in Nigeria can only achieve a significant success when stiffer penalties are invoked on culprit as paltry punitive measures cannot halt the spread of the menace.

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