

# Effects Of Corruption On National Development: An Islamic Perspective

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*Abstract: Our country Nigeria is blessed with many natural resources that could lead to national development. History has shown that since independence each of the governments is involved in one form of corruption or the other. Materialism is now the problem of almost every officer both in the public and private sectors. Every person is busy devising means by which he can further his worldly fortunes. Commissions were set with the aim of probing and punishing culprits but the result is not very encouraging. Almost every sector is affected with the malice of corruption and that has led to insecurity, lack of Justice and prosperity. The ruin of corruption is apocalypse to the foundations of our government to the extent that there is no more powerful engine for justice. There is need to look at the provision made by Islam in terms of just leadership which will be fair and follow the rule of Law.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria since independence had witnessed different forms of administration. A country which is blessed with many natural resources is still counted among the first three poorest countries of the world. Materialism and lust for wealth has created an unhealthy politics and system of governance. Corruption has permeated to all parts of leadership. The paper intends to study how corruption affected the system of administering of the state, and consider the teachings of Islam on proper mode of holding public office and the evils of corruption both to the leaders and the led. Finally suggestions will be made on ways to improve the leadership of Nigeria for effective development.

## II. CORRUPTION

The word corruption has attracted many definitions by various scholars. The Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences (ICPC) defined corruption as *immorality, deprivation, bribery, dishonesty, false pretence, debased changes, gratification, rottenness* etc. This definition only parades a cluster of words that all put together could be regarded as mischievous acts that can prevent a person from rendering smoothly his official duties. In another definition the

word is defined as Using ones political or bureaucratic or otherwise position which in turn permits one's participation in social-political cum economic activities that are concerned with the well being of the generality of the citizens to corner or subvert the process for personal gains(Saliu 2012, . This definition further elaborates on the object of discussion, the subject and the recipient. In a more precise term, it is defined as *"the abuse of office for private gains."* This definition explains that public and private officers siphon funds and resources meant for provision of goods and services for their personal interest. Such acts result in investing capitals into areas that are no longer viable. Therefore corruption has eaten away the fabric of our national development. Sometimes our culture accepts exchange of gifts and according to some scholars that was how corruption has generated an acceptance syndrome which is now used in many disguises. The fifth schedule of the National constitution seems to agree with the exchange of gifts by public servants as a cultural and traditional act which may not hold any interior motive; but in this our generation, most of such gifts have hidden motives. Subair asserts that not all gifts come without strings attached.

The menace of corruption has a long history as far back as the 1960s. But it is now an epidemic that only a few persons can be free from it. The country was rated as the third most corrupt nation in the world as per the survey of Transparency International of 2004. If we critically look at the activities in

the public and private sectors, hardly can you find any that is free from corruption both at the higher and lower levels.

To buttress few examples, let us look at our educational institutions. It has become a scenario where students either bribe lecturers for higher grades or involve in examination malpractice. While on the part of the lecturers some intimidate female students or lure them into illegal acts. Recently the Adamawa State University sacked two lecturers for involving in examination malpractice. In a similar case a professor in University of Jos was suspended for involving in examination malpractice.

The police industry is not left out from the national problem. The junior officers were caution not to take bribe from motorists. But it was reported that a driver was shot to death because he refused to give a bribe of twenty (₦20.00)

The Judiciary should be the last hope for the aggrieved. But because the virus of corruption has become so widespread, even the Judges are not immune from it. They freely auction their judgments in favour of the highest bidder. A couple of weeks ago some High Court Judges were arrested on the charge of collecting bribe. The question one may not hesitate to ask is; who will be in charge of implementing the rule of Law in the country? Similarly the Executive arm of government – House of Representatives and the Senate are accused of Budget padding. They were described by former President Obasanjo as the “Den of Corruption”, a business enterprise who only aims at making money. On the part of the Army, investigation is going on in respect of the arms deal scandal. Millions of US dollars have been taken out of the country illegally to personal accounts. Investigation has shown that many people are involved in the case. On the oil sector the House of Representatives reported that 17 billion was stolen from the country. Individuals are having oil wells to themselves. Now the situation is civil servants are only struggling for juicy positions to perpetuate on destroying both human and natural resources of the country.

### III. TYPES OF CORRUPTION

There are many types of corruption but Agara enumerated three types. They are Political corruption, bureaucratic corruption and corruption of the bureaucratic process. These types of corruption are those that have badly affected the Nigerian system of governance. Let us consider them and see the ways they contributed to underdevelopment.

- ✓ Political corruption: This refers to a situation where politicians deliberately thwart accountability in the quest for getting to an office.
- ✓ Bureaucratic corruption: The higher bureaucrats were involved in policy making for states and the nation. It has given the civil servants a chance to assume the functions and roles of political parties in order to perpetuate their offices. This resulted in politicizing bureaucracy.
- ✓ Corruption of the bureaucratic process: This is the type of corruption where an individual employee delays the normal process and speed of work so that those who want to have their work to be completed quickly will offer a ‘gift’ in order to avoid the bureaucratic ‘red-tapism’. This is so rampant in the bureaucratic system that many middle class and junior staff are making money.

Corruption could be said to be institutionalized and has caused the following as put by Subair:

- ✓ Individual corruption is protected by colleagues
- ✓ It has caused the wide spread of dishonesty among employees
- ✓ Those who are honest amongst employees are victimized and seen as deviants, in some cases isolated and may receive harsh treatment from their bosses.
- ✓ Because people are accustomed to dishonesty, they don’t make any effort to control or curb such unethical activities.

Therefore the end product is that the whole social structure is pervaded and the society nowadays applauds the wrong doers. The situation now is selection of the best for employment or for awarding contracts is denied, because those who are not qualified find their way to bribe and pave way to their advantage. Suffice to say that corruption becomes the only means by which participation in the economic system of the country can be obtained.

### IV. CORRUPTION AND ISLAM

It is a fact that mankind is ravenous for the want of money to extent that if there is no control, it leads to the worst of mischief. Allah says “And you love wealth with much love”. No doubt money is an access for enhancing virtues. But Islam cautions that people must not totally devote to loving it or giving preference to it. The wise person in the eyes of Islam is that who protect himself from unlawful earnings. The Qur’an says:

Beautified for man is the love of things they covet; women, children, much of gold and silver (wealth) branded beautiful horses, cattle and well-tilled land. This is the pleasure of this world’s life; but Allah has the excellent return (Paradise with flowering rivers) with Him.

The verse teaches that the love of wealth is an instinct to man, but he should be guided by the teachings of the religion. In this regard another verse said:

Say: Shall I inform of things far better than those? For Al-*Muttaqun* (the pious) there are gardens (Paradise) with their lord... Thus the fear of Allah will keep away believers from such a heinous act that does not affect only the parties concerned but the whole social structure. Islam presents a social justice which aims at establishing a happy society. People of trusted integrity are to be appointed to public offices and they should be accountable of their acts. *Mu’adh ibn Jabal* as the governor of Yemen sent to Umar (*Amirul Muminun*) one third of Zakat. But Umar denied it and sent to him saying; “I did not send you as a tax collector or as a collector of *Jizyah*, because I sent you to distribute what you collect from the rich people of Yemen among the poor.” This shows that Islam prevent any officer from collecting gratification or any gift apart from his remuneration. The Qur’an says:

And eat up not one another’s property unjustly (in any illegal way e.g stealing, robbing, deceiving etc. nor give bribery to the rulers (Judges before presenting your cases) that you may knowingly eat up a part of the property of others sinfully. The verse categorically mentioned unjust behaviours that could be disastrous to social justice. In the process of

appointment, trustworthy people of sound integrity should be employed as against through bribe or nepotism. In the history of Yusuf A S, he requested for an office and described himself as knowledgeable that will take care of his office. Similarly, one of the daughters of Prophet Shu'aibu described Musa (AS) suitable for employment because of his strength and trustworthiness. In Islam appointment should be solely based on merit. That who has knowledge and posses the basic skills and is strong enough to execute the required job is hired. During the period of the Prophet one of his companions *Abu Dhar* requested for an administrative post but he was not given the office. The reason was that he would not be able to manage the affairs of people. The teaching of Islam aims at building people who are contented with their remuneration and guard against tyranny and cruelty that will lead to causing harm to its people by greedy longing to amass wealth. To reduce this ugly habit, Islam requires strict adherence to the rule of Law.

#### EFFECT OF CORRUPTION ON NIGERIA

- ✓ It has caused lack of effectiveness in rendering services by civil servants.
- ✓ Appointments are not made on merit
- ✓ No respect to institutions
- ✓ Wide spread poverty
- ✓ Lack of electricity supply etc.

#### V. CONCLUSION

The paper examined corruption in our political system and found that despite efforts to combat the menace, corruption is even growing stronger, involving sections of the government. It has led the country to high rate of unemployment and poverty. Many industries including small scale and medium enterprises have shot down while foreign investors are moving out of the country to other secured places. The paper suggests using the Islamic teachings where only qualified persons are appointed. Civil servants should be

contented with their legal earnings, and whoever is found wanting should be brought to book.

#### VI. SUGGESTIONS

The paper suggests thus:

- ✓ Appointments should be strictly on merit
- ✓ Whoever is found misappropriating his trust must be punished in accordance to the level of his offence.
- ✓ The general public should be sensitized to stop honoring those who amass wealth illegally.

The Islamic teachings on morality should incorporated in the curriculum of our schools.

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