

The Challenges of Democracy in Nigeria

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Abstract

Democracy as system of government in Nigeria calls for sober reflection and rethinking. While it is true that democracy is about peoples' welfarism, popular participation and decision-making process, and smooth transfer of power from one regime to another. Yet, the operators failed to provide the basic necessities of life for the citizens, and this has worsened the living standard of the peoples. The government at all levels, including elected representatives, has neglected their basic functions and the trust reposed on them by the electorate. They continue to neglect various calls to close the gap and to provide jobs, electricity, security, good roads, etc. This paper argues that since 1999 when democratic government was re-institutionalized in the country, the citizens are not better-off and more poverty driven. All levels of government have remained moribund despite the over-bloated government officials in all strata. The elected representatives' see their elections as a mean to loot the treasuries, whereas their elections were supposed to reflect attitudinal changes in the art of governing the Nigerian people based on liberal democracy.

Keywords

Democracy, Corruption, Nigerians, Leaders, Amenities, Federalism, Civil Society

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1. Introduction

Democracy is now a global concept even among the Arab world. It has its origin in Greek City states especially in Athens (Gauba, 2010: 472). This concept finds meaning in a system of government that accepts democratic principles and its mechanisms. Included in these principles is participation by the people in the running of government at all levels i.e. local, state and national. It is this participation that makes liberal democracy significant and possible.

However, the success of democracy or 'demos', or "the people", "cracy" or "rule" or government became significant in Western political thought since the ancient times (ibid) and now. Its significance is that it allows citizens' participation in the election of government officials. It makes the elected representatives to be responsible, transparent, and accountable since the winners are determined by the citizenry

through voting. Elected government in a free and fair election makes the representatives to be conscious of their actions or inactions while holding public offices. Stable polity, predictability and social well-being are some features of a democratic government.

In a democratic government, both the states and citizens rely on the rule of law which guarantees their liberty, freedom and fundamental human rights, and limited functions, etc. The spirit of constitutional government and constitutionalism is enough to guarantee liberty, equality, fairness, and food on the table of citizens. Thus, democracy has become a culture. And culture as a way of life of people conscientize them on the ethos of the state. Homogenous culture which democracy portrays or stands is to create political consciousness and political participation. This attitude of political participation

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is the *sine qua non* of democracy.

Therefore, democracy as a rule by the people becomes a common parlance among the industrialized countries that had found solace, sustenance, values and virtue. The democratic virtue claimed by the Western scholars is what makes democracy successful and helpful to the rulers and ruled. This becomes useful and relevant in non-democratic states that are consistently engulfed in one crisis after another in relation to state projects. Such crises have crippled and balkanized many states in developing countries.

The African states, at the dawn of political independence inherited liberal democratic government through facade elections organized by the colonial governments to appease or assuage the quest for political independence. Democracy was therefore institutionalized as a way of life in some new independent states. Since then democracy has been up and down in the continent or what Shively (2008: 151) described as “the coming and going of democracy”.

Indeed, in Africa, democratic governments have not been consistent going by the liberal democratic principles as a result of ever-present pushes and pulls of military vulnerability. Thus, one rarely finds a country in Africa that has not experienced the military adventure in politics. For instance in Nigeria when the military junta instituted and ushered in civil rule (Akinboye and Anifowose, 2008), it was hoped that democracy will lead to national development just like in other democratic societies but has continued to be elusive in Africa.

The prospects and hopes of a new dawn was cut short. The ruling elite failed to deliver on their promises given in rallies, in speeches and in debates after elections. What the citizens gets instead of basic amenities like good water, good roads, energy (electricity), employment, security, affection, love, care, qualitative education, equitable distribution of wealth, fairness, is “zero sum” politics i.e. a situation where the elected representatives shared, expropriated national wealth to themselves being the fact that they had been elected to be the custodians of the national wealth. To this end, democracy which was hoped to be a ‘healing’ balm or what the people in African had accepted as a way out of social, economic lacunas has turned out be a cause rather than a blessing. Is democracy a blessing or a cause in Nigeria?

The above illustrates the scenario of democracy and at the same time is not different from what the elected representatives stood for. Since the beginning of the Fourth Republic in 1999, democratic government has lost its meaning as far as the term – democracy is concerned for the electorates who queued in the rain and the sun to elect them. The elected representatives largely benefited from the people’s government because it made them what they are

today. The democratic dispensation had swelled their pockets, and increased their wealth and fortunes. Now the country’s notion of democracy, coupled with unbearable living standards and other vices are worse when compared to where they (citizens) were before 1999, even with other emerging democratic countries.

The fact that Nigeria is an importer and exporter of democracy (Omotola, 2008: 33 – 51), has not made the Nigerian leaders to practice and imbibe ‘true’ practice of democracy, which would lead to free choice of party’s candidates, and free choice of electorates during election/s. In addition to this, is non-provision or non-availability of common good or what Nigerian elected officials called “the dividends of democracy” to the peoples. What the people experienced and the available facts and figures have shown is that the nation’s current democracy is the worse type in the history of First, Second, and aborted Third Republics that the country had witnessed. Some of these evidences will be revealed in this document. These facts and figures are necessary to buttress or substantiate our arguments that the leaders and office holders pay insignificant attention towards public interest.

The socio-political effect of the challenges confronting the state generated uncertainties, or ‘unknown’ and unpredictable future on the part of the citizenry. Even the elected officials are convinced that the future is very bleak and uncertain. Small wonder that public treasuries are daily looted, and no one has been convicted in Nigeria except abroad where, for example, the former Governor of Delta, James Ibori was convicted for stealing and money laundering.

Related to corruption is the problem of insecurity in all the areas of national life. How can we avoid these challenges? These challenges have continued to perforate the minds and create fear within and outside the polity. Then, if democracy going by the original definition as articulated by Lincoln is really the “government of the people, by the people, and for the people” (cited in Johari, 2011: 330), what hope does the present government offers? Thus, the notion of democracy in Nigeria is contrary to Seeley’s argument that democracy is “a government in which everyone has a share” (ibid). Do averages Nigerians have any share in current dispensation?

Indeed, the dividends of democracy have not been accrued to the Nigerians who toiled day and night for good governance and voted for these so-called “Representatives” at all levels of government in Nigeria to represent them adequately. How, then can citizens benefit from the current dispensation? The rest of the paper addresses the theoretical framework, Nigerian state as colonial creation, assessment of democracy in twelve years of Fourth Republic, panaceas to heal Nigerian state, and related conclusion.

2. Conceptual Issues

The term democracy means different things to different people. Literary meaning connotes “the government of the people, by the people, and for the people”. So the notion of democracy as a government of the people, by the people, and for the people ensures that the people are the stakeholders and at the same time the people determines the polity and who-will-rule them both at the micro and macro levels. Thus, Johari’s (2011: 329) democracy includes the government, and people.

If “political participation is the *sine qua non* of democracy” (Anifowose, 2004: 205) then, elections which guarantee people’s participation cannot be separated from democracy. Anifowose’s (2003: 24) identified the following as the basic functions of elections: recruitment politicians and public decision-makers; making governments, providing representation, influencing policy decisions, educating voters, building legitimacy, strengthening elites, providing succession in leadership; and extension of participation to many people. In a ‘true’ democratic system, the election process is the opportunity to make democracy work. It is the process when all citizens of a country or locality have an equal say over who their representatives’ in government should be. In the words of Richard;

The vote of an Internet millionaire counts the same as a *Big Issue* seller. It is the moment when the governed can change their governments, when politicians can be held to account, when the people – the *demos* – speak (2001:3).

Thus, elections have been described as “the feat of democracy”. It allows the recruitment of representatives through the choice of the eligible voters. Elections are the essential component of a democracy and this distinguishes democratic government from non-democratic systems of government. It confers legitimacy upon the representatives - the authority in the form of a democratic mandate. For elections, therefore, to be free and fair, all the rules regarding such an election should be adhered to strictly; An election is free if the electorates are allowed to make their choice without being intimidated or victimized. On the other hand, an election is said to be fair if the procedures for conducting the elections are made public and applied equally to all the parties without fear or favor. A free and fair election therefore refers to an election which is based on secret voting and whose rules are known and uniformly applied to all the parties (Akinbade, 2008: 174).

The features of free and fair elections are: existence of electoral law; establishment of electoral commission; secrecy of voting; absence of violence, intimidation and victimization; date of election; location of polling stations; availability of

information on location of polling stations; availability of up-to-date voters register; non-restriction of candidates for election; access of parties to the media; frequency of elections; impartiality of law enforcement agents; and enforcement of electoral laws. Thus, democratic “participation denotes the active involvement of individuals and groups in the governmental processes effecting their lives” (Gaubu, 2010: 499). The citizens (themselves) are expected to play an active role in the process of formulation and implementation of public decisions.

Therefore, the liberal view of democracy is unique in characters, principles, procedures, organizations and institutions, and is distinct from other forms of political system in orientation, and operation. Governments in liberal democracies are by consent, public accountability, majority rule, recognition of minority rights, constitution and constitutional government, with principles on which democracies operates and subsists. “These five principles throw sufficient light on the nature of liberal democracy” (Gaubu, 2010: 478).

Apart from these five principles which make democracy significant, there are essential mechanisms that anchor on this type of government. These mechanisms distinguishes liberal-democracy from other forms of government i.e. dictatorship or totalitarian or autocratic regimes. The mechanisms contain / harbour institutions and procedures and, without which, such a government may be doubtful. The presence or absence of these characteristics will determine whether a system is democratic or not. The liberal democracy firmly upholds that a government can be conducted according to the will of the people only by adherence to these institutions and procedures. Similar form of government may exhibit such qualities, but it will not qualify as a democracy without the identified characteristics (ibid, p. 479). These mechanisms are operational licenses of liberal democracy. They include: more than two political parties freely competing for political power, political offices not confined to any privileged class or opening political space, elections base on universal adult franchise, periodic elections, protection of civil liberties i.e. freedom of association, freedom of assembly, personal freedom, etc.

Indeed, the democratic license makes democracy admirable, interesting, and ‘best’ form of government because it rested on the people’s choice, equity, liberty, and freedom. At the same time, it makes the government responsible, accountable, and transparent. In all, it produces orderliness, purposeful, and ideological leadership and followership, and checks and balances with a view to bring about an ideal society devoid of corruption, unfairness, and uncertainties. In fact, such a polity will bring to light equality, equity, justice, fairness, liberty, and freedom. It will right the wrong.

3. The Nigerian State as a Form of Colonial Creation

The Nigerian state has its roots in the British Government that colonized different groups in the country. They lived separately before the penetration and formal colonization and the naming of these heterogeneous entities as Nigeria in 1914, a political amalgamation conducted by Lord Lugard (Coleman, 1958; Dudley, 1968; Osuntokun, 1979; Ijalaye, 1979; Olaniyan and Alao, 2003). Since then, these mosaic people through the colonial influence had remained and continued to live together, despite some challenges, such as - the civil war, national question, census crises, military rule, economic woes and misrule in all the strata of governments, marginalization, politics of divide and rule, financial and political corruption, etc.

However, before the mosaic amalgamation, the Nigerian colonial rulers had defaced, de-phrased, and devalued the people through exploitation and exportation of Africans including Nigerians. According to Coleman “by 1455 more than 700 slaves were being shipped annually to Portugal from the West Coast of Africa...” (1958: 39). The exportation which was enforced for four centuries denied the continent of manpower and other resources for development;

Not only were tribal institutions disorganized, but the energies and talents of the people were consumed either by raiding or being raided in order to meet the great demands for slaves. Hundreds of thousands of the most virile members of their race were physically withdrawn from African society over a period of 400 years (ibid, pp. 40 – 1).

The effect of exportation was what Coleman called “a psychological legacy of suspicion, servility, or hostility” which led to other mechanisms that were used and cemented the colonial rule. These mechanisms included: imposition of five constitutions within the space of 36 years (1914 – 1960), the creation of two citizens in one country, division and rule antics, political regionalism, and the bitter side of federation. The British Government’s inability to resolve some of these colossal effects before her departure in 1960 were transferred into post political independence.

The political elites that inherited political power from the British Government were more brutal than the colonial masters who at a certain time treated the colonies with passion and love. For instance, Nigeria achieved political independence in 1960 without a drop of either a bomb, or bullet. Ologbenla (2004: 165) commented that “Nigeria received her independence from the British on a platter of gold”. The euphemism that followed the country’s political independence led to misdirection, misappropriation, and maladministration in all the spheres of national life to the

point that the country and its leaders have been regarded as a failure or has failed to perform both the legitimation and accumulation functions.

All the national governments in the country and both the Military rule and civil rule crippled the expectation of the citizenry, and the international community. The military rule though regarded as an aberration between 1966 – 1979, and 1983 – 1999 had perverted the national resources through maladministration, corruption, annulment of election, assassination of political opponents and other political means available to the various military regimes the country has experienced.

On the hand, the civil rule in 1963 to 1965 and 1979 to 1983 (Akinboye and Anifowose, 2008) which people had hoped would cover the deeds melted on them during the military eras soon disappeared because the civil rule collapsed as a result of heavy corruption, squandermania of national resources. Akinboye and Anifowose (2008: 251) had this finding about the collapse Second Republic.

The Shagari regime was deeply engrossed in excessive acts of corruption, impropriety, mismanagement and squandermania. The Second Republic also became a victim of massive electoral malpractices as witnessed during the 1983 general elections. These were clear manifestations of how the Second Republic was truncated by the excessive and public indiscipline of the political class.

Therefore, when the military staged a comeback into the political scene after only four years of experimenting the presidential system of government by the civilian administration, was no surprise, particularly to the articulate citizenry (ibid).

This statement summarized the porous condition, anxiety, and uncertainty brought about by those elected in 1979 and the present fourth Republic to preside over the Nigerian state. The problems were not only applied to the national government, but to all other levels of government i.e. state and local governments respectively. The governments became moribund to the extent that the governments in the country failed woefully to provide the necessity like basic amenities and structures in form of good waters, housing, good roads, and employment. Corruption perverted the polity and the minds of the politicians became corrupted that they looted treasuries at will without caution.

4. The Assessment of Democracy in Nigeria Since 1999

Nigeria returned to democratic governance in May 29, 1999

after many years of military rule. The journey started in 1998 by General Abdulsalami Abubakar after the demised of General Sanni Abacha (Akinboye and Anifowose, 2008: 257). The regime handed over to Retired General Olusegun Obasanjo, a former Head of State between 1976 – 1979 (ibid, 259). President Olusegun Obasanjo after eight years (1999 – 2007) handed power to late Alhaji Musa Yar’Dua. President Yar’Adua died in office after a protracted illness in 2010. The Vice – President, Dr. Goodluck E. Jonathan took over as Acting President and later became the President of Nigeria. The 2011 general elections returned Dr. Goodluck Jonathan back to the Aso-Rock as the president in May 29, 2011. Governors, national and state lawmakers, chairmen and councilors were as well elected (Ogunwa, 2013).

This section of the paper assesses Nigeria’s democracy in the last 12 years. It is argued that “free election of masters does not abolish the masters or the salves” (Marcuse, 1964: 7).

4.1. Federal Performance

The Department of Public Affairs in the presidency in a publication signed by Media Director, Olusanya Awosan enumerated some projects that have been completed by the Jonathan administration in the last 14 months (*The Punch*, August 13, 2012: 60 – 1)

4.2. Power

The following were 10 NIPP projects completed.

Table 1. 10 NIPP Projects.

S/NO.	LOCATION	TOTAL INSTALLED POWER OUTPUT
1	Ihovbor Edo State	451mw
2	Omosho Ondo state	451mw
3	Olorunsogo Ogun state	750mw
4	Sapelle Delta state	451mw
5	Geregu Kogi state	434mw
6	Egbema Imo state	338mw
7	Gbarain Bayelsa State	225mw
8	Omoku Rivers state	225mw
9	Calabar Cross River	561mw
10	Alaoji Abia State	1074mw
	Total	4960mw

Source: *The Punch*, Monday, August 13, 2012: 61.

4.3. Agriculture

In the area of agriculture the Federal Government claimed to have completed the following to drive agricultural transformation at the state level. They include: establishment of 10 export crops, preservation and conditioning centers located in Kebbi, Kaduna, Cross River, Nassarawa, Gombe and Enugu states; the establishment of 8 agro processing centers; completion of 10 additional silo complexes with total capacity of 550,000 metric tons; 100,000 metric tons capacity

silos located in FCT, Borno, Zamfara and Kebbi states; and 25,000 metric tons capacity located in Taraba, Osun, Akwa-Ibom, Bauchi, Katsina and Sokoto states (*The Punch*, August 13, 2012: 90 – 61).

In addition to these the Federal Government “has elevated the living standards and income of farmers and rural dwellers through the free distribution of several millions of improved seedlings including cotton, sorghum, rice and cassava. Today Nigeria is the world’s largest producer of cassava and is on its way to becoming the largest exporter of cassava products globally (ibid). The agricultural transformations agenda will double cocoa production from its present 250,000mt to 500,000mt/annum by the year 2015. The flour millers, who initially resisted the primary directive from government for 3% local substitution, have since on their own increased the substitution ratio to 20%; on the PPP initiative of the Federal Government, foreign investors have invested \$40million on rice production and milling in Taraba State (*The Punch*, August 13, 2012).

This will be the largest rice farm project in Africa. The expected production is 300,000 metric tons of rice (which accounts for 15% of the national rice import) while at the same time creating 15,000 jobs. The administration is facilitating the establishment of the largest high quality rice processing mills with an overall installed processing capacity of two million tons per annum which will also be the largest installed milling capacity in Africa. It will be private-sector driven and established in rice producing states. Presently however three new rice processing mills in Ebonyi, Niger and Kebbi states with combined 90,000 tons of milled rice per annum are already completed (ibid, p. 60).

4.4. Water Supply

The Federal Government claimed to have completed the following: Northern Ishan water supply project in Edo State with a plant capacity of 9 million liters per day to serve communities of Uromi, Ubiaja, Ugenlgu, Ugboha and Igueben, with a total projected population of 500,000 by 2012 at a cost of n2.5billion; 10 million liters per day Mangu water treatment plant at the cost of over 1billion to serve communities of Gindiri and Mangu townships in Plateau state; the Federal Government and Benue State Government have completed and commissioned 50 million liters per day capacity the greater Majurdi water supply scheme; 545 new hand pump schemes completed (*location not mentioned*); 1,000 hand pumps borehole in 18 states across the six geopolitical zones rehabilitated (*the states were not mentioned*); 836 new motorized boreholes completed (*location not mentioned*); and the rehabilitation of Oyan dam in Ogun state at a cost of 650m (ibid, p. 61).

4.5. Transportation

In the transportation sector, the Federal Government claimed to have successfully rehabilitated 3,000km out of 3,505km of existing narrow gauge rail lines. 180km of rural roads and 77km of feeder roads completed. It also can be argued that some rail lines are near completion while others would be completed next year (ibid).

4.6. Aviation

According to the Federal Government massive rehabilitation of airports nationwide is taking place; and, for the first time ever there is 100% total radar coverage of Nigeria's airspace. This is the largest radar coverage project in black Africa (ibid).

4.7. Ports

The Federal Government claimed that cargo clearing time has been reduced from one month to seven days and is expected to be reduced to four days within the next few months (ibid).

4.8. Infrastructure

In this area, the administration impact has been felt in all nooks and crannies across the six geopolitical zones of the country. The projects commissioned in 2012 were: Enugu-Abakaliki road; Ogoja junction Ikom road; Gombe to Biu road; Akure-Ilesha road; Kurfi-Charancha in Katsina; Taka-Alabaju-gaya road in Kano; Dingaya-Galambi road in Jigawa; Nafada-Gombe-Abba road in Gombe state; Hong-Mubi road in Adamawa state; Doma-Lafia road in Nassarawa state; Rumukurshi-Chokoho road Rivers state; Akure-Owo road in Ondo state; Ado-Ilumoba-Agbado road; Lafia-Mokwa road; East-West Odi road; Okpala-Igwurita road; and Jebba-Lafiaji (ibid).

Completed projects on infrastructure included: seven presidential initiative projects; 15 highway road projects; 24 street lights projects; 36 road consultancy projects; 16 weight bridges; seven traffic census road projects; seven road inventory projects; renovations of central workshops; 92 national road rehabilitation projects; 59 zonal intervention projects; six access road to refineries; and four roads under the Nigeria/Niger joint commission for cooperation (ibid).

The presidency listed the following as the ongoing projects: Abuja-Lokoja dual carriageway; Kano-Maiduguri dual carriageway; Onitsha head bridge upper Iweka junction; Apapa-Oshodi expressway; 9th mile to Otukpo-Iweata road in Benue; Gombe-Potiskum road; Auchu-Ikene expressway; Biliri highway; Sokoto-Ilela; and Km 30 Onitsha-Enugu road (ibid).

4.9. Independent Assessors

In spite of the completed and uncompleted projects, the FSI report indicated that Nigeria is a failed state with "12 indicators that qualified a state as failed". In the six consecutive years of the assessment of Nigeria's governance, the indicators for a failed state were divided into three categories: social indicators, economic indicators, and political indicators. The Fund for Peace (FFP) a nongovernmental organization, independent, non-partisan, non-profit research and educational organization is aimed to prevent violent conflict and promote sustainable security in Nigeria.

The social indicators included: demographic; massive movement of refugees and internally displaced persons; and legacy of vengeance-seeking group grievance based on past injustices. In the assessment of the top 20 countries including Madagascar, Comoros Island, Djibouti, Libya, Zambia, Burkina Faso Togo, Mauritania, Malawi, etc, Nigeria was rated on a scale of 10, 8.4 in demographic pressures; 6.5 in refugees and IDPs, and 9.7 in group grievance. The report made reference to the Boko Haram saga, and other skirmishes in the Niger – Delta region and 7.6 in human flights (National Mirror, July 5, 2012: 14).

The economic indicators are: uneven economic development along group lines; and/ or severe economic problems. In area of underdevelopment and economic index, Nigeria scored 8.9 and 7.5 respectively. In public services Nigeria scored 9.1. The issue of security and human rights is appalling. She had 8.6 and 9.2 respectively. The country also scored 9.8 (highest rating), 6.6 in fractionalised elites and foreign intervention respectively and scored a total of 101.6 points (ibid, p. 15).

The political indicators according to the Failed States Index (FSI) report included criminalization and/ or de-legitimization of the state through endemic corruption or profiteering by the ruling elites and resistance to transparency, accountability and political. Others are: progressive deterioration of public services signaled by the disappearance of basic state functions that serve the people; widespread violation of human rights; security apparatus as the "state within a state personified by the emergence of elite or praetorian guards that operate with impunity; rise of fractionalized elites along group lines; and intervention of other states or external factors in the internal affairs of the state as well as intervention by donors (ibid, p. 14).

In the area of capacity indicators measured by leadership, military, police, judiciary, civil service, civil society, and media, the report indicated that "Nigeria was adjudged weak in all areas with the exception of civil society where it was rated moderate" (ibid, p. 15). The judiciary which happens to be the hope of the common man was "rated poor" (ibid).

Furthermore, performance by pressure indicated that Nigeria was second in the worst performances in group grievance, sharing the position with Iraq behind Sudan. Also, Nigeria occupied the same position “under uneven economic development sharing the position with Democratic Republic of Congo and Zimbabwe” (ibid).

The current problems the country is facing are as a result of the failure of social infrastructures, such as power, health and education coupled with the endemic corruption in high places without attendant efforts at curbing the same and the larger-than-life styles of those in the corridors of power are indicative of Nigeria become a failed state. The same problem was reported by *The Guardian* June 25, 2012 on the country’s economy concerning relevant data. The data on the state-of-the-economy is very shocking. It revealed that;

The poverty index in Nigeria is 60.9 percent (placing the country 156th out of 187 countries), the current exchange rate of the naira to the dollar is N162, foreign reserves are below \$38 billion while inflation stands at 12.7 per cent up from 10.3 per cent level in 2011. The lending rate is 22 per cent, unemployment is at 37 per cent (over 40 million Nigerians jobless), domestic debt is N56 trillion, foreign debt is \$5.9 billion, while allocation to the states from the Federation Account in the first quarter of 2012 was N705.77 billion (*The Guardian*, 2012: 2).

The latest on domestic debt is now put at N6.153trn (*The Guardian*, August 2012: 2).

The problem of the Nigerian state and her people is traceable to the door step of political elite or better addressed as the Nigerian politicians. The politicians once elected are constantly embezzling monies meant for development. The monies were taken away on daily basis, since money that should have been used for human and infrastructural development is being stolen and frittered away on a daily basis, the bottom is knocked off the implementation of fiscal policy (ibid).

One problem manifested through corruption is on the area of investments in the country. Mr. Michael Wong, the Lead Private Sector Development Specialist, on the World Bank assessment on the country’s investment climate in 26 states of the federation for the 2011 fiscal period lamented that;

The poor performance of Nigerian firms reflected on constraints in the business climate and the serious costs they impose on Nigerian firms. Taken together, the total indirect cost or poor quality infrastructure, crime and security, and corruption amount to over 10 per cent of sales for Nigerian firms. This is twice as high as in South Africa, Brazil, Russia and Indonesia (*The Punch*, August 10, 2012: 2).

The problem with business owners according to him;

Nigerian businesses’ biggest reported problem is the unreliable power supply. About 83 per cent of all managers surveyed considered electricity outages to be a serious problem more than any other constraints. Firms of all sizes, in all states and sectors, report average power outages equivalent to eight hours per day. The average time reported that outages cost them money equivalent to more than four per cent of sales. No country losses related to the power supply (ibid).

Thus, the problem of power supply to the Nigerian people and its economic sector had suffered despite the dollars spent. In its editorial comments “since 1999 over \$16 billion of our foreign reserves has been spent on dubious power contracts. Hundreds of billions of naira more of taxpayers’ money has also been committed to the sector. Yet, there has been no commensurate improvement in the power output while transmission capacity has actually dropped to below 4,000mw, less than the rather optimistic figures bandied by the power ministry” (*The Punch*, June, 27, 2012: 15).

Despite the fact that power is not available for businesses and private lives to go on, the increased in the new electricity tariff has been described by the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry as exploitative. The new fix charge ranging from N500 to over N100,000.00 is cause for worry, as the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) charged consumer whether there was power supply or not. LCCI commented that consumers should not be made to pay for inefficiency or corruption costs. It is important to evaluate the elements of the current costs, especially the integrity of procurement processes and other operational expenditure under the current dispensation (*National Mirror*, Tuesday, June 19, 2012: 6). The increase has pushed inflation to 12.9% in the 3rd Quarter of this fiscal year. The National Bureau of Statistics stated that;

The CPI which measures inflation, rose to 12.9 percent year-on-year in June 2012. The year-on-year change could be partly attributable to persistent increase in the prices of some farm produce such as Yam tubers as well as the increase in the electricity tariff. This was in addition to the increase in the cost of some other recreation and sporting services, catering services, and miscellaneous services (*The Punch*, Thursday, July 19, 2012: 23).

The urban and rural inflation, according to NBS;

The urban All Items Index increased by 1.5 percent month-on-month, while the corresponding rural index increased by 0.8 per cent, when compared with the preceding month. The percentage change in the average composite CPI for the 12 month period ending June 2012 over the previous

twelve month period was 11.3 percent. The corresponding 12-month year-on-year average percentage change for urban and rural indices was 11.1 and 11.6 respectively (ibid).

Related to the issue of corruption and inflation is the growing rate of unemployment in the country. The Trade Union Congress at its NEC Session noted the worrisome state of unemployment;

The nation's unemployment index is worsening. The Federal Government needs to create an enabling environment for businesses and industry to thrive. This will create new work places. Thus, there will be a greater opportunity for employment (*The Punch*, Wednesday, August 8, 2012: 31).

The Congress advised "the Federal Government to arrest the situation by paying its huge debt to deserving contractors" (ibid).

Another dimension to social phenomenon in Nigeria is the Boko Haram unbearable activity that have crippled businesses and social gathering even in the churches and mosques, institutions, parks, joints in the Northern part of the country. This has created insecurity, fear, arson, uncertainty in minds and properties of people and foreign investments as well. For instance, an oil industry watchdog commented that Shell Nigeria paid Nigerian soldiers and policemen for guarding their oil facilities over two years the sum of \$65m. This payment show, how bad security failure is in the country "we have always acknowledged the difficulties of working in countries like Nigeria" (*The Punch*, Tuesday, August 21, 2012: 13).

The Boko Haram phenomenon is gradually turning, if not the entire country, but the Northern part into the "state of nature", which was described as "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short" (Hobbes, cited in Enemu, 2008). The problem of insecurity in the nation led to the question that "where is the huge allocation to security"? In the national budget by this administration "Nigeria has not witnessed bloodletting like it is doing now since the civil war ended in 1970. There are fears that the things that led to the outbreak of the civil war in 1967 are now resurfacing" (*The Punch*, Monday, July 23, 2012: 15).

The inception of democratic government in 1999 and now have witnessed unprecedented shedding of the blood of innocent Nigerians, including armless worshippers in churches and mosques. This is coupled with the religious crisis, ethnic strife, kidnappings, ritual killings and other form of extra-judicial killings across the country. The inability of the government to pronounce decisive action on this group, question the incompetence of government of state

is to state the obvious. We have reached the precipice. If we don't reverse the current direction then we might as well say goodbye to the nation as we know it (ibid). Dauda commented further that "today Nigerians are refugees or internally displaced persons in their country". The problem of leadership failure is related to government inability to persecute allegations of judicial impropriety and corruption against the judiciary, inability to probe subsidy saga, mis-governance, institutional injustice and corrosive corruption by government officials.

5. Corruption

The issue of corruption in Nigeria among the political classes did not just start in this present dispensation, it has its origin in Alhaji Shehu Shagari administration in 1979 when Pa Adisa Akinloye;

Celebrated his first billion in 1982 with a champagne. He was neither an industrialist, a manufacturer nor a man with immense commercial ventures, but a politician who, like people in his class, lived on peoples' common wealth" (*The Punch*, June 18, 2012: 16).

He argues further that;

Since then, Nigeria has produced many billionaires from the political class that no politician or even productive person can brag about being a billionaire in Nigeria (ibid).

The issue of corruption among the political classes is now rat race;

The present magnitude of stealing, fraud, or corruption as a general term, indicates that the rat race is towards the first politicians to celebrate entry into the 'trillionaire' group!" (ibid).

Thus, stealing in Nigeria cuts across all the levels of government. This is right from the presidency to the state governors to the local government chairmen including the councilors. They stole billions of naira through the award of contracts' inflation.

Chief Edwin Kiaghodo Clark, speaking as a guest lecturer at the 2nd State of the Federation Lecture organized by the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (NIALS) in Abuja, quoting from the EFCC statistics, listed corrupt politicians or what he called "big thieves" in the country. These politicians were the governors in the present Republic who ruled between 1999 and 2007 and were among the 52 the EFCC said looted over N243bn during their tenure as governors of their respective states (*Sunday Mirror*, August, 2012: 3). The politicians include: James Ibori (Delta), Senator Saminu Turaki (Jigawa), Dr. Peter Odili (Rivers), Joshua Dariye (Plateau) and Michael Botmang (acted –

Plateau), Boni Haruna (Adamawa), and Rasheed Ladoja (Oyo). Others include: Jolly Nyame (Taraba), Attahiru Bafarawa (Sokoto), Adamu Abdullahi (Narawawa), Lucky Igbinedion (Edo), Ayo Fayose (Ekiti), Chimaroke Nnamani (Enugu), and Orji Uzor Kalu (Abia). Also mentioned were two Federal Ministers: Chief Femi Fani-Kayode and Babalola Borishade (ibid). The table below shows the amount stolen by the ex-governors and the Ministers.

Table 2. Amount Ex-Governors and Two Federal Ministers Misappropriated.

S/No.	NAME	AMOUNT	STATE/MINISTRY
1	Saminu Turaki	N36 billion	Jigawa
2	Rasheed Ladoja	N6 billion	Oyo
3	Babalola Borishade	N5.6 billion	Minister of Aviation
4	Chimaroke Nnamani	N5.3 billion	Enugu
5	Orji Uzor Kalu	N5billion	Abia
6	Michael Botmang	N1.5 billion	Acted – Plateau
7	Femi-Fani Kayode	N250 million	Minister of Aviation
8	Jolly Nyame	N180 million	Taraba
9	Boni Haruna	N93 million	Adamawa
10	Joshua Dariye	(amount not stated)	Plateau
11	Ayo Fayose	N1.2 billion	Ekiti
12	James Ibori	(over a billion dollars)	Delta
13	Dr. Peter Odili	N100 billion	Rivers
14	Adamu Abdullahi	(Not stated)	Nasarawa

Source: *Sunday Mirror*, August 12, 2012: 6.

How do governors or ministers steal or loot the treasuries? In a publication entitled “How Governors steal your Money” by the *Historical Flashback* Newspaper (a monthly publication), the newspaper gave a vivid report on how the states’ governors in Nigeria steal the tax payers’ monies.

The State Governments’ Appointees

In Nigeria, the state governors entrenched corruption through the various appointments into the governmental ministries under their purview. This is in the area of appointments of the cabinets e.g. Commissioners, Senior Special Advisers, Assistant Special Advisers, Special Advisers, aides, etc. We sojourn into appointments of governors’ appointees because this is;

Where the problems of Nigeria started. A country that was once run by less than 300 people is now being ruled by over 100,000 politicians. Every official must use a car or two; he must live in government accommodations or have the government to pay for his accommodations; free food and electricity, in some cases. In fact, government will pay for everything and yet, none can do without stealing when the opportunity comes. And, when it is recalled that when these people are outside the civil service, it can then be imagined what Nigeria has got itself into (Historical

Flashback, Wednesday, July 31, 2012: 17).

The whole North Central States that was administered by Col. Abba Kyari. This is now divided into Kaduna and Katsina states respectively. Kaduna state has 23 commissioners, and 22 Special advisers, while Katsina has over 40 members of the executive. In addition to this, there were special assistants and senior special assistants. The office of First Lady is not included in this number. Accordingly, the old North Central state that was previously governed by about 20 people is now being governed by over 500 people (ibid, pp. 13 – 14). In 1972 there was the East Central state. This was balkanized into Anambra, Enugu, Akwa Ibom, Ebonye, Abia, and Imo states respectively. “And it will be on record that the state of Asika governed with about 20 officials is today parading over 3,000 personnel” (ibid, p. 14).

The old Western region was administered by Brigadier Olurole Rotimi now has Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo and Ekiti states. These states now have about 2,500 government officials as compared to the 25 personnel that Brigadier Rotimi used (ibid, p. 15). The old Rivers state was governed by Lt. Comdr. A. P. Diете-Spiff. The state was divided into: Rivers and Bayelsa. The old state was governed by 20 officials, and now, both have 2,000 staffers are on the payrolls (ibid, p. 16). Colonel Musa Usman was the former administrator of the old North Eastern state. The state was divided into: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe respectively. This was a region that was previously governed by about 20 officials; but, these states are now being “controlled by over 3,000 political office holders” (ibid.).

The Mid-Western state was once ruled by Colonel Samuel Ogbemudia with 12 commissioners. This state was balkanized into Edo and Delta. The two states today have over 2,000 commissioners, special assistants, and the offices of the First Ladies function like a beehive (ibid). A former Police Commissioner, Audu Bako, administered the old Kano state with 11 commissioners. The state was split into: Kano and Jigawa. These states now have over 2,000 aides, commissioners, etc. (ibid). Mobalaji Johnson administered Lagos state with 8 commissioners, but today Lagos has 21 commissioners, about 16 special advisers, and numerous special assistants. The office of the First Lady remains very active; but, there are many other offices you may not be able to analyze with specifics (ibid).

The old North-Western state was administered by former Chief Superintendent of Police Usman Faruk. The state has been divided into Kebbi, Niger, Sokoto and Zamfara. These states now have on it payrolls 300 commissioners and special advisers, not less than 2,000 are in various political appointments. Surprisingly, the state that Faruk governed

with 25 others, now has over 2,500 personnel running its affairs (ibid.). Brigadier U. J. Esuene was the administrator of old South Eastern state. The state now changed to Cross River state. At present the state has 28 commissioners and 30 advisers. Those are the ones you can count; you may not know the number of the special assistants and the senior special assistants not to mention the First Lady and her retinue. In all you may hazard here, about 1,000 political appointees are helping Imoke to run his state, which once had a 20 man cabinet that called the shorts (ibid, p. 17).

Colonel David Bamigboye administered old Kwara now divided into – Kwara and Kogi states, respectively. The state was formerly run with 11 commissioners and the administrator. Kwara now has about 19 commissioners, 11 special advisers, 11 senior special advisers and 36 special assistants. The Kogi state, on the other hand, has 60 aides outside the commissioners' list. But, there are many officers hidden, most especially when it comes to personal assistants as different from special assistants. The two states would have not less than 1,000 political and sinecure appointees" (ibid, p. 17).

6. Nigeria Federalism

The 1999 Constitution, Second Schedule, Part I provided the Exclusive Legislative List. The list contained 68 items as prerequisite functions of the Federal government of Nigeria (1999 Constitution: 170 – 175). In Part II of the same Constitution listed Concurrent Legislative functions "Extent to Federal and State legislative powers" (ibid, p. 175). This list contained 30 legislative items. The Fourth Schedule of the Constitution contained two legislative items, but with subsections. It is tagged as the "functions of a Local Government Council" (ibid, p. 196). The Constitution has the features or characteristics of a federal government. This feature of federal government has, however, been substituted by the successive governments in Nigeria. Asobie capture this trend.

The federal government has, beginning from 1963, but especially since 1976, demonstrated an increased capacity to alter unilaterally and in its own favour, the existing distribution of power between it and the regional governments and, indeed, among the various levels of government; there has been an increasing accretion to the federal governments of functions previously allocated to the regional (or state) governments; and the resources – coercive, bureaucratic, ideological and financial – directly available to the components units (or states) for carrying out their constitutional functions have steadily diminished in range and quantum while those at the disposal of the federal government have increased (1998: 18).

Babawale (1998: 78) avers "as the strength of the federal government increased, it assumed the status of a *Frankenstein* with its fingers in every pie" emphasis in original. This indeed, led to overcentralization of power at the centre.

Indeed, the 1979 constitution altered, drastically, the balance of power in the federation in favour of the government in several ways. First, many matters which were previously in the concurrent list were transferred to the Exclusive list. Second, even some of the matters still retained in concurrent list were treated in such a way as to make them, to all practical purposes, exclusive to the federal government, well to a large extent. Third, federal power was, under the 1979 constitution, extended, too, to certain matters hitherto under the exclusive competence of the regional governments. Fourth, under the 1979 constitution, the federal government acquired new powers. These were powers over the direction and management of the whole of the Nigerian economy and the promotion and enforcement of the observance of the fundamental objectives and directive principles of the Nigerian federation (Asobie, 1998: 27).

The consequences of this include:

Concentration of power in Nigerian federalism has facilitated the private accumulation of capital in Nigeria. It has led to the concentration of the surplus appropriated and its easy privatization by a few members of the Nigerian bourgeoisie in alliance with the metropolitan bourgeoisie. Capitalist growth has not however, accompanied increased primitive accumulation partly because the centralization of political authority has produced increased bureaucratization, stifled initiative and result in wasteful application of resources;

Two, concentration of power in Nigerian federalism has, however, on the positive side tended to promote the development of national outlook by the Nigerian bourgeoisie, it has attenuated fractionalization among the Nigerian bourgeoisie. The Nigerian bourgeoisie remains factionalized by ethnicity and is still fractionalized into the national comprador and petty-bourgeoisie bits. Incoherence in the Nigerian ruling class has been reduced partly by centralizing trends but not wiped off; and Finally, concentration of power in Nigerian federalism has tended to promote authoritarianism in both civilian and military regimes. The process of asserting federal authority and building up central institutions has been accompanied by a tendency to discourage the existence of independent centers of power both geographically and sociologically. The result has been narrowing of democratic space and the intensification of political repression in Nigeria. Centralization of power has brought with it the constriction of opportunities for popular participation in the government and politics of Nigeria.

Premium is placed on forging of compromised among a *few* leaders rather than encouraging nation-wide discussion and debate to reach popular and durable consensus on national issues (Asobie, 1998: 51 – 52).

The above exposed the precarious position of Nigeria federation. The fact that fifty-two years after the political independence the country is still locked under the crisis of underdevelopment because the “classes that benefit most from centralizing trends also happen to be the classes in office, and in power, in Nigeria the exploiting classes” (ibid).

The nation’s mode of federalism under this dispensation needs restructuring or redesigning or “refederalization” (Suberu & Agbaje, 2003) to reflect the desire and to accommodate the nature and different peculiarities of the political configuration of the Nigerian peoples, based on the notion of ‘true’ practice of federalism. In doing this, Babawale (2000: 51) advised that the powers of the states to take independent decisions ought to be strengthened; the preponderance of power exercised by the federal government over the state governments would have to be reversed if Nigeria is to attain true federalism; the present democratic experiment must be sustained so that the state can dispense justice, promote accountability and practice good governance, and we can only practice true federalism when the powers of the central government to take arbitrary decisions are severely curtailed and devolved to the component units.

The import of devolution of power to the states would ensure competition, which will lead to a heavy rivalry in terms of revenue generation and development (Ogunwa, 2013). The argument that when power is devolved to the various units may create parallel or a threat to the federal government is not an issue that should be celebrated in this age of globalization. This fear is unattainable in the face of the fact that the Nigerian federal government is too bloated with several challenges and functions as contained in the provision cited above. Babawale commented that the power devolution would strengthen the Nigerian federalism;

Far from being a threat to Nigerian unity power devolution would help to create a sense of identity among the component units of the federation and ultimately strengthen Nigerian federalism (2000: 54)

and this democratic dispensation. The same argument was collaborated by Elaigwu (2000: xxii – xxxiv) that “co-existence, accommodation, participation, and equitable distribution of resources” would ensure lasting nationhood. This to a large extent is in relations with what Amuwo (1998: 1 - 13) termed devolution of power “behaviourally”. The Nigerian political elites must change positively to reflect commitment to the Nigerian state and the peoples’ welfare

7. Conclusion

The social, economic and political indicators facing the Nigerian state in the last 14 years remain unresolved. These problems have consistently plagued the people to extent that the people abuse and cheat the state because elements of prosperity and development cannot be located or identified in the body polity.

The state through the governments have shown uncaring attitude to the plights of the citizens facing them day-in and day-out. The state continues to create an unhealthy environment through extra-constitutional means that authorizations increase in prices of unavailable goods. These unpopular actions of government generate an alienation between the government and the citizens. Thus, today’s democracy in Nigeria entrenches inequality, corruption, contracts inflation, unemployment, subsidy removal on all essential commodities. These commodities are unavailable and at the same time unaffordable by the ordinary citizens on the streets.

Yet, the politicians match-on to their various banks, palacious buildings, radiating in their investments both in Nigeria and over the seas. They use the looted funds from the treasuries to purchase the government-owned enterprises in the name of privatization and commercialization, etc. Indeed, democracy is for the Nigerian politicians not for the ordinary people, but powerful individuals in the country.

Finally, a government that claims to exist through the votes of the people without the people’s policies, will collapse. This is the trend of liberal democracy in the country. However, for democracy to be meaningful and successful, the common good must be made to spread to all. When this is done the people will accept democracy as a good form of government, and such a government should really belong to them at the present time and the future to come.

Recommendations

Since independence in 1960, Nigerians are yet to enjoy fully their governments. During the military rule, the citizens were worse-off. The regimes were partially/relatively brutish and poor. On the other hand, the democratic government became affirmatively unacceptable going by the actions and inactions of elected leaders who citizens’ believe should be responsible, accountable, and transparent to them. Today’s democracy is absolutely solitary, shortish, brutish, nasty, poor, uncertain, and zero-sum. For the Nigerian state to be better off, it is important the following will help to rebrand the country and the citizens about their elected and appointed officials.

The Malawian President Joyce Banda during the African

First Ladies' Summit in an interview with Nigerian journalists commented that misunderstanding, greed, poverty, and lack of transparency and accountability are the problems facing African countries including Nigeria nation. The issued raise by Malawian President led to conflicts and destruction of lives and properties. The problems can only be resolved through eradication of poverty, through economic growth, through wealth creation, through job creation and incorporation of private sector (*The Punch*, Wednesday, August 1, 2012: 17).

Furthermore, she advocated for structures that will serve as the watchdog. When instituted will know ahead possible areas of conflicts and arrest them before they begin to spread out like plague. If structures are established specifying the roles expectation and back up by constitutions and institutions, it will indeed reduce conflict and if there is conflict, it will resolve them before they become complex to handle.

Transparency in governance is another area that Nigerian leaders had taken for granted. This has created wide gap between the rich and the poor. According to her;

I think the problem mainly is lack of accountability. When the gap between the rich and the poor is so wide and the rich are the ones in the leadership, the leaders won't want to inform their people what is going on. The people will start asking questions such as 'where is the money? Why are many languishing in poverty, while others are rich beyond imagination? ... (ibid).

These unanswered questions by African governments including Nigeria governments had led to demonstrations, strikes, conflicts, coups and counter coups, even revolution leading to political, economic, social, and cultural cleansing when the intransigent ruling elite insist to silence the citizens. Sometimes, it led to "pathology" of many countries (Watts, 2008).

Another area that needs solution in governance is the necessity of constitutional amendment. President Goodluck Jonathan while receiving the former Chief Justice Alfa Belgore's report of the Presidential Committee on the Review of Outstanding issues in the 1999 constitution commented that the constitutional amendment "signals a seminal defining moment in Nigeria's quest for the consolidation and entrenchment of democratic ideals in our nation's political and governance processes" (*The Guardian*, Wednesday, July 11, 2012: 1). The areas which Committee recommended for review include: provisions to strengthen fundamental rights as well as legal protection for all citizens, especially children, women, and the physically challenged, security of life and property, the protection of the law, speedy and fairer administration of justice and the local council administration.

Also included are: the strengthening of the legislature at all levels and to demand conformity with extant national regulations in the conduct of their affairs and the granting of the executive more responsibility in policy-making, like the removal of the Land Use Act from the constitution but retaining it as a national Law (ibid, p. 2).

Still on the constitutional amendment, the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN) submitted to the Leadership of House of Representatives, Honourable Aminu Tambuwal a Bill containing 52 Constitutional Amendment Proposals. While presenting the Drafted Bills said;

This Bill is an important step in our comprehensive plan to reposition and reform the judiciary to meet the expectations of Nigerians. The on-going judicial reforms have been aimed towards clear objectives – a justice system that is simple, fast and efficient... responsive to the needs and yearnings of the citizenry (ibid).

Some areas identified for revision include:

- a. The appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court has been altered by providing that appeals from the Court of Appeal on interlocutory decisions and other matters shall only be by leave of the Supreme Court;
- b. The composition of the National Judicial Council and the Federal Judicial Service Commission has also been altered to ensure greater balance;
- c. The process of removal of judicial officers has also been streamlined to ensure a greater degree of fairness;
- d. The old Section 295 regarding reference on questions of law has been deleted as it has been identified as a means to stall the swiftness of the trial process; and
- e. The jurisdiction of the Supreme Court was also expanded to include an advisory jurisdiction on application by the president or a governor on questions of law or fact that are of such importance that it is expedient to obtain an opinion of the Supreme Court on it (ibid, p. 4).

However, the issue of true federalism or a 'thorough' devolution of powers among the component units seems to escape the purview of Justice Belgore's Committee and CJN – Dahiru Musdapher demands. It is very important and necessary that there is need for devolution of powers to the component units so that they can discharge their constitutional responsibilities and mandate given to them by the electorates.

The problems of uneven development, and dependency on month subvention by the states and local governments is a major reason that powers should be decentralized so that the state government will not attribute their laziness to inability

of Federal Government holding allocation for development. The state governments should use resources at their disposal to bring about social infrastructure, and wealth development.

The Federal Government of Nigeria is too powerful and at the same time too weak to execute many gigantic projects. For instance the Minister of Works, Mr. Mike Onolememe commented that "I inherited a portfolio of 168 projects requiring over N1tn to complete" (*The Punch*, Monday, August 13, 2012: 52).

The 168 projects cut across the breath and length of Nigeria, and they are on the national roads alone, and not on the other national needs like health, water, foods, shelters, etc. These uncompleted projects, the Minister stated that the Ministry will now focus on the important but dilapidated roads;

We are focusing on priority projects like Abuja-Abaji-Lokoja Road, Onitsha-Enugu dual carriageway, Enugu-Port Harcourt dual carriageway, Benin-Ore-Sagamu dual carriageway, Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, section two of Ibadan-Ilorin Expressway and Kano-Maduguri Expressway, in addition to the Second Niger Bridge in the road sector. In the transport sector, the rehabilitation of the Western and Eastern rail line is also added (*ibid*).

The complexity of the Federal Government made it to embark on elephant projects that many of these projects are later abandoned for lack of money and resources and political will. Thus, if the Federal government with all its mighty powers abandoned or inherited unfinished projects as the minister confessed to the Nigerian people, definitely the Nigerian Federal Government should as a matter of urgency, quickly put in motion areas it should devolve powers to the federating units. Through this process, projects would no longer be abandoned for incoming government to complete. Through the devolution of powers the units will generate enough resources and revenues that will make them to provide essential needs like good water, good housing, good health facilities, create employment and empowerment of the populace.

Similarly devolution of powers is related to the issue of local government autonomy. Over the years, the various states in the country usurped the powers of local governments making the Nigerian local governments system inefficient and ineffective. The fact that the 1979 and 1999 constitutions recognized the Local Government as the Third Tier of Government, with many responsibilities, should make the Local governments to stand (Olanmi, 2006: 498 – 499). The Local governments have remained subservient and a tool use by various state governments in the country. The Governors determines their projects, their budgets, their chairmen/chairpersons, their councilors, and other aspect of its existence. The need to remove the local governments from

the whims and caprices of the state governors and to grant the Councils full autonomy is long overdue.

The existence of EFCC and ICPC and other organs of governments like judiciary, legislature over the years to curb the menace of corruption in the country have not yielded positive dividends across the country. Daily reports of criminal activities by political leaders and appointed ministers are alarming and shocking to Nigerians and the country's friends abroad. For instance, Oba Abiodun Ajayi advocated death penalty for those found guilty of corrupt practices. His words;

All those who stoled-money in this country are still moving around. The only person who was punished was Bode George. Of all the probes they have conducted, which one has succeeded? The solution is that any-body found guilty of corruption should be sentenced to death. The death penalty is the solution to the problem (*The Punch*, Wednesday, July 25, 2012: 10).

Beyond the death penalty, the federal government needs to further strengthen these agencies so that they will not only bite but chew what they have bitten.

All existing cases in various courts across Nigeria should be dealt with, and without further delay. The persecution of those arrested by the EFCC and ICPC should serve as deterrent to others. And, these cases should be persecuted promptly. Criminal courts may be established at all levels of government and at each local government councils to ensure quick dispensation of justice for those apprehended or being apprehended. Furthermore, retired judges of proven integrity may be appointed to serve in these courts when established.

On the part of the National Assembly, if the solution to corruption is to remove immunity or impunity clause in the 1999 constitution, the same should be expunged. This will serve or open the way for the judiciary to prosecute erring or treasuries looters even, if they are serving.

To the state governments across the federation, if, indeed they have the mandate of the people to rule and development of their respective states is paramount in their hearts. As a matter of necessity they should spend the tax payers' monies judiciously and use such funds to embark on developmental programmes. Such programmes will serve the needs of the people across the country. Similarly, the states' governors at least see their elections as a clarion call to serve their people and not to loot the treasuries entrusted to them.

At the local government councils where the dividends of democracy begin, the elected representatives' serves as vanguard of democratic government and ensure that there is zero-tolerance for corruption. If not, the development envisaged or anticipated to begin at this level and to spread to

other segments at large would be a mirage and defeat the purpose of local government which aims to achieve accountability, transparency and control.

To complement the efforts of these levels of government in Nigeria, the civil society organization as mobilizer, educators, socializer, aggregator and articulator (Onuoha, 2002: 353) should continue to sensitize Nigerians on both the positive and negative sides of governments. Essentially, bad policies and other ills of government should be alerted to the people of Nigeria. While the civil society is expected to mobilize and sensitize Nigerians, the mass media should as well through their news reportage ensure that they dig deep into governmental functionaries and report their investigations to all and sundry. The reports will no doubt energize the populace to protest and denounce malignant in the country. In this way, erring government officials either elected or appointed would be removed and prosecuted by the state.

Taking this step is important in the sense that Nigeria will not be the only country that have taken such a step in the past in redefining and curbing the menace of corruption by the public and elected officials. Former Ghanaian President Rawlings was able to stabilize his country when he publicly arrested corrupt officials and executed them.

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