

## CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA: TOWARDS A NEW PARADIGM FOR EFFECTIVE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**Dr Hussainatu Abdullahi**  
Department Of Economics,  
Usmanu Danfodiyo University,  
Sokoto, NIGERIA.  
[hussayabdul@yahoo.com](mailto:hussayabdul@yahoo.com)

**Dr Yahya Zakari Abdullahi**  
Department Of Economics,  
Usmanu Danfodiyo University,  
Sokoto, NIGERIA.  
[ayzakari@yahoo.com](mailto:ayzakari@yahoo.com)

**Dr Mohammed Yelwa**  
Department Of Economics,  
University Of Abuja, Abuja,  
NIGERIA.  
[Yelwa\\_mhmmmd@yahoo.com](mailto:Yelwa_mhmmmd@yahoo.com)

### ABSTRACT

*Corruption as a global phenomenon has remained a viable enterprise in the Less Developed Countries (LDCs), hence not new in Nigeria. While its causes are myriad, it is endemic in all systems of government (military or democracy), thus its history is as old as man's sojourn on earth. Democratic governance on the other hand is based on the will of the people and it is generally agreed that it is the best form of governance suited for allowing people to live in dignity and freedom, a point that was articulated in the Millennium Declaration by the international community. However, it has been a 12 boisterous years (May 1999 – May 2011) of shedding military rule for democracy in Nigeria, yet the journey for effective democratic governance that should usher in an era of sustainable development has so far not only been very slow, but the transformation has been hobbled by the culture of corruption of the highest order, thereby creating an atmosphere of widespread disillusionment and general neglect of the Nigerian masses. There is no doubt that new democracies naturally do face some setbacks as a result of high expectations, but the fast crash of confidence in Nigeria's new democracy is virtually unrivalled on the continent of Africa. Indeed, Nigerians were very eager for democratic dividends in 1999, with very high expectations too for more economic and development opportunities, as well as better and effective governance. However, today the story is different. The April 2011 general election is over, leaving in its trails political chaos and electoral violence. It is therefore, not an over exaggeration to observe that the major obstacle to the success of effective democratic governance, hence sustainable development in Nigeria is corruption. Consequently, the paper adopting the method of content analysis examines a new paradigm towards tackling the evils of corruption in Nigeria, hence effective democratic governance for sustainable development, with emphasis on competence, transparency and accountability, rule of law and getting value and quality for public expenditure, etc. The paper opines that there cannot be security of life and properties if the people's fundamental human rights in accessing the basic needs of life are not respected and protected by those in authority.*

**Keywords:** Corruption, Effective, Democracy, Governance and Sustainable Development.

### INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian civil war which was orchestrated by ethnic hatred led to the birth of a clique of Military and political adventurers whose combined efforts ruined the Nigerian State through sophisticated corrupt practices (Achebe, 2011). This situation has been further worsened in recent times by the culture of anti-intellectualism occasioned by gross under-funding of the Nigerian educational systems, the foundation for the development of any society in favour of primitive acquisition by office holders. The fact that the nation is still neck-deep in ethnic, religious and political rivalries has not augured well for sustainable development, especially for a nation that once had great potentials for rapid socio-economic development due to her stupendous wealth (both natural and vibrant human resources). Consequently, effective democratic governance has eluded Nigeria as a result of the hydra headed monster called "corruption".

Over the years, the Nigerian Mass Media have uncovered and revealed to the nation cases of corruption on a massive scale, a situation that is not only highly abhorred but reprehensible to well-

meaning Nigerians. However, the ugly practice persisted and has steadily made very deep in-roads in every spheres of our national life (Okonkwo, 2011). Virtually all private, public and political spheres have been permeated and contaminated by corruption. At this juncture, the peripheral and substantive questions are: How did Nigeria degenerate to this sordid state of affairs? How do we now begin to problematise the linkages between corruption, effective democratic governance and sustainable development? Are there any empirical evidences regarding these linkages in the Nigerian nation? What are the new approaches that could be adopted towards curbing the menace of corruption in Nigeria? It is in this perspective that the paper using content analysis has adopted the three (3) – Case – Model approach as a new paradigm (Human, Institutional and Immunity Factors) for curbing corruption, hence effective democratic governance for sustainable development in Nigeria. However, the paper is quick to observe without any over exaggeration that corruption is the most lethal threat to sustainable development due to the ubiquity and persistence in government’s sloppy approach towards combating the deadly scourge.

Arising from the above, the paper is divided into six (6) sections, including this brief introduction as section one (1). Section two (2) examines the basic concepts of the paper, i.e. corruption, effectiveness, democracy, governance and sustainable development, while section three (3) provides a general overview of corruption in Nigeria, i.e. its development, types, causes and effects. Section four (4) explains the linkages between corruption, effective democratic governance and sustainable development, while section five (5) highlights the new paradigm i.e. a three-case model for combating corruption for effective democratic governance for sustainable development in Nigeria. The final section concludes the paper with further recommendations.

## DEFINITIONS OF THE BASIC CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

In any academic discourse, there are terminologies that tend to elicit varying meanings according to each scholar’s perception of the issue. It is in this context that the need to clarify our usage of some concepts in the paper has become imperative. Each of the concepts used in the title of the paper are examined in brief as follows.

### Corruption

In its etymological sense, the concept of corruption was coined from the Latin word known as “*Rumpere*”, i.e. “to break”. In order words, it means breaking of societal norms and practices (Ifesinachi, 2003:25; Onuoha, 2009a:2). However, there has not been a consensus of opinions on what constitute corruption, though a number of useful clarifications have been provided regarding the concept. For instance, see Dwivendi (1967); Nye (1967); Otite (1986); Mushanga (2001), Amujirin (2003); Umaru (2004); Onuoha (2009b), Abdullahi (2010) and Akintola (2010), etc. According to the World Bank (1997:102) and Transparency International (2006:4), corruption is “*the abuse of public power or office for private gain*”. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on the other hand cited in Onuoha (2009a) defines corruption as “*the behaviour on the part of officials in the public or private sectors in which they improperly and unlawfully enrich themselves and /or those closely related to them or induce others to do so, by misusing the position in which they are placed*”. Nevertheless, this paper has adopted this definition, while trying to avoid the rigmaroles regarding the scholarly definitions of corruption, thus conceiving corruption as an issue that has become a major global, political and economic importance in recent times, hence the resurgence of interest in investigating its implications on sustainable development, taking into cognisance the fact that corruption is a lethal scourge that constitute a complex layer in the challenge of sustainable development matrix in Nigeria.

### Effectiveness

The Encarta Dictionaries defines this as “producing result, especially the desired or intended result; producing favourable impression, successful in producing a strong or favourable impression”.

### Democracy (Democratic)

This concept was coined from the Greek words “*Demos*” (the people) and “*Kratein*” (to rule). Thus, democracy is a political system whereby the people of a society rule through any form of government they choose to establish, hence it is generally regarded as the “*government of the people by the and for*”

*the people*". In modern democracies for instance, supreme authority is exercised for the most part by representatives elected by popular suffrage. The representative may be supplanted by the electorates according to the legal procedures or recall or referendum, and they are at least in principle responsible to the electorate. In many democracies like that of USA which Nigeria is imitating, both the executive and the legislature are elected, while in typical constitutional monarchies like UK and Norway, only the legislature are elected and from their ranks, a cabinet and a Prime Minister are chosen. Consequently, in a democracy, the officials directly reflect the known or ascertained views of their constituents, sometimes subordinating their own judgement (Encarta Dictionaries).

### Governance

According to Encarta Dictionaries, it means authority, the system or manner of government or state of governing a place. (For details, see section 4 of this paper).

## CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA: ITS DEVELOPMENT, TYPES, CAUSES AND EFFECTS

### Development of Corruption in Nigeria

While it is not possible to fully delve into the development of corruption in Nigeria, nevertheless studies on it dates back to the First Republic of 1963 to 1966. During this period, there were allegations of electoral malpractices, evidence used by the military as a justification to intervene in Nigeria's body politics in 1966. The anti-corruption crusade of the military interventionists notwithstanding, they too got entangled in the net of corruption. In addition, the oil boom which resulted into monumental increase in external revenue as a result of petroleum products exports fuelled the development of corruption under the various military regimes. For instance, the Gowon regime embarked on post-war reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation (the 3 Rs) with the monumental oil revenue of the war years. This fortune became a "minus" due to the "arbitrary and careless Udoji salary Awards that resulted into over-monetization of the economy, discouragement of rural farming and construction of spatial inflation" (Adele, 1998). This situation resulted to "over pricing of money ahead of social values, which caused infidelity of the market forces, embezzlement for increased financial capacity and gratifications" (ibid). It is useful to observe that the Gowon era witnessed serious decline in "national morality, with his Supreme Military Council members accused of unprecedented personal aggrandizement and arbitrary awards of jumbo contracts to friends, relations and foreign partners" (Diamond, 1998 cited in Folarin, 2009). Thus, the sudden petro-dollar which dominated Nigeria's external revenue gave rise to greed, avarice and corruption. This berthed a new trend among both the political and Military class to seek power at all cost as a result of the lucrative nature of power. For instance, in 1978 "about ₦2.8 billion of oil revenue was allegedly declared missing from the State affairs due to reckless spending (occasioned) by unaccountable governance" (Nwankwo, 1999 cited in Folarin, 2009). Obasanjo declared a battle against the creeping culture of corruption, bribery and indiscipline in 1977 at Jaji. Shehu Shagari's regime also waged "*Ethical Revolution*" to transform the society in which corruption and financial indiscipline had become pandemic as the era witnessed primitive greed and massive acquisition of wealth from public parastatals, boards, ministries as well as arson after-looting by officials, e.g. the burning of the Nigerian External Telecommunication (NET) building (ibid). The General Buhari regime took a more militant and practical approach to fight corruption and immorality in his "*War Against Indiscipline*", a measure considered too high-handed that prompted the overthrow of the regime, which ushered in the General Babangida era that relaxed the "War" in favour of social and economic reengineering policy, that later led to the extinction of the middle class as a result of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). The duo of Babangida/Abacha's rule no doubt galvanized the international position of Nigeria in 2000 as the most corrupt nation in the world. For example, the disappearance of the five (5) billion dollars Gulf Oil windfall in 1991. The one year regime of General AbdulSalami saw Nigeria's external reserve liquidated in the name of transition to democracy (Abdullahi, 2010).

In the same vein, in terms of its cultural connotation, the prevalent value system of public acceptance of corruption as a way of life fuelled the development of corruption in terms of its behavioural traits, as well as the erosion of the separation between legal and illegal daily activities through social pressures without consideration for barrier hence, creating a conducive atmosphere for generalizing and trivializing corrupt practices in the Nigerian society. Indeed, the constitutional and judicial

acknowledgment of corruption is a major challenge to effective democratic governance and sustainable development in Nigeria, a concern that led to the “Anti-Corruption Crusade” as a fundamental policy of the President Olusegun Obasanjo’s regime that was established by the 1999 Constitution. No doubt, Nigeria’s status as the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> largest producer and exporter of oil with enormous revenue generation capacity from oil and non-oil exports, woefully contrasts with its decaying infrastructural and institutional development. The effects of years of dictatorial and corrupt governance by successive military administration are glaringly manifest in the poor state of development in all the sectors of the nation’s life, especially the level of poverty and gross income inequality (very high Gini Index of 50.0) and general low quality of life of its people. Understanding the existence, development and impact of corruption in the Nigerian state, requires the conceptualization of its causes and effects to concretize the basis for a more effective criminalization policy and anti-corruption techniques or mechanisms in combating it in Nigeria. The “*Nigerian Factor*” is the acronym for the practice of bribery and corruption based on the general perception that every public official has a “*price*” at which he/she may be “*bought*”. It also translates into the general belief that public office/public service is for personal enrichment and accumulation of wealth, as part of every Nigerian’s share of the “*national cake*” for himself/herself and for his/her family, tribe/ethnic group (Oliver de Sardan, n.d). Alas! The whole result is the paling into extinction the middle class, while the gulf between the rich and the poor widened significantly, with the value of the Naira drastically reduced thus, making the situation so unbearable for the common man. The following table throws more light on Nigeria’s international position in the

Index of corrupt nations

**Table (1): Transparency International Annual Corruption Perception Index (2002 -2010)**

Year	‘02	‘03	‘04	‘05	‘06	‘07	‘08	‘09	‘10
<b>CPI Scores</b>	1.6	1.4	1.6	1.9	2.2	2.2	2.7	2.4	2.5

Sources: <http://www.fordham.edu/economies/vinod/cie/tin-cpi2khtm>

<http://www.transparency.org/cpi/2001/2002.06.28.cpi.en.html>

Yelwa (2011), “Economic Effect of Corruption in Nigeria”.

From the table, it is clear that corruption is still flourishing in Nigeria as the index reveals very low scores for the years under review, i.e. the lower limit is still maintained by Nigeria among the committee of corrupt nations.

### Types of Corruption in Nigeria

According to Abdullahi (2010), the types of corruption go beyond contract kickbacks to include among others:

- Resource Mismanagement.
- Advance Fee Fraud (419) and Cyber-crimes.
- Money Laundering and Financial crimes (embezzlement).
- Gratification, usually given such names as “Egunje”, “Goro or Kola”, “10%”, “Palm greasing”, etc.
- Contract over invoicing.
- Drug peddling, money rituals.

### Causes of Corruption in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the factors responsible for corruption are many and varied. While a lot of literatures have emerged on this issue (see, Dike, 2005; Abdullahi, 2010; Onuoha, 2009a; Akintola, 2010; Omonobi, 2008; Isiwu, 2008, etc), for our purpose in this write up, we will simply highlight them. The two (2) major dimensions are:

- Socio-political and cultural dimension.
- Ethno-religious fractionalization dimension.

These two (2) broad dimensions can further be collapsed into the following:

- I. Obsession with materialism and compulsion for a short-cut to affluence.
- II. Open display, glorification and approbation of ill-gotten or looted national wealth.
- III. Lack of ethical standards among government agencies and institutions.
- IV. Poverty, greed and poor reward system for hard work.
- V. Response to societal and extended family pressures and departure from old societal norms and value system.
- VI. Lack of access to economic opportunities.
- VII. Ineffective taxation system and bad rules and priorities.
- VIII. Lack of clear conception of ethical demands of official positions due to irreligiousness.

Consequently, these factors also have myriad effects on the generality of the population.

### Effects of Corruption in Nigeria

The effects of corruption in all its facets on effective democratic governance and economic development that is sustainable are many and varied. A lot of evidences abound to show the destructive nature of the monster and how it has devastated the Nigerian state and holding it backwards for many decades, consequently, making it impossible for the nation and her citizens to actualize their Divinely ordained potentials, despite her abundant resources, with just a few rapacious clique in control. Thus, among its effects are:

- I. Gross underdevelopment, retrogressiveness, poverty, ineffective governance (military and democracy), poor infrastructures, etc.
- II. The evil of tribalism, upsets ethnic balance, escalates problem of national integration, injustice, mismanagement and can alienate modern civil servants, hence brain- drain, etc (Adejumobi, 2007).
- III. Diversion of scarce public resources to private foreign and domestic bank accounts.
- IV. Wastage of skills and time resources (time wasted in setting investigation panels).
- V. Politically, it destabilizes the society as a result of social revolution and military takeovers (Welch, 1987).
- VI. Endangers effective democratic governance.
- VII. Reduces quality of goods and services available to the public due to low output (e.g. fake drugs and its attendant consequences on the health of the people).
- VIII. Discouragement of honest efforts and valuable economic activities.
- IX. It breeds inefficiency, nepotism, information distortions, etc.
- X. Renders public policies inefficient, ineffective, lack of policy direction.
- XI. It tarnishes the image of a nation. For instance, the international business community regard the whole of Africa as a “sinkhole that swallows their money with little or no return” (Callagy, 1994, cited in Dike, 2005).
- XII. Creates unnecessary bureaucratic delays and missing files.
- XIII. It erodes the social and national moral fabrics of the society, etc.
- XIV. Reduction in public spending on education, health, power supply, etc.

Indeed, corruption has been identified as the major obstacle to the success of (effective) democratic governance in Nigeria because it is a malaise to public life (Otaru, 2010). It distorts government's priorities because corrupt officials give priorities to development projects that bear no relevance to national development, thus portrays democracy as a bad system of governance in the sight of the common people.

According to Polgreen (2006), corruption has made public office so highly lucrative that the State House and spoils that arise therein are worth killing for. It was also observed that while new democracies suffer naturally from the let-down of high expectations, but the drop in Nigeria's case is virtually unparalleled in the continent because confidence in Nigeria's new democracy has crashed as a result of corruption. This is in view of the fact that in 1999, Nigerians expected dividend of democracy, more economic opportunities and effective democratic governance. However, what they got is violence of the highest order (Polgreen, 2006). Polgreen also observes that the deepest trouble for democracy in Nigeria is at the State and Local Government levels where most raw and bruising

contests for power take place in a bloody winner-take-all system in which voters are all but superfluous. At this juncture, the question is whether there is any linkage between corruption, effective democratic governance and sustainable development. The next sub-section throws more light on this.

### **LINKAGES BETWEEN CORRUPTION, EFFECTIVE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

While it has been a successful and boisterous twelve (12) years of civilian rule after shedding the garment of military rule (May 1999 – May 2011), the transformation has been very slow and stumbling, hobbled by political culture of graft and intimidation, the resultant effect of which is widespread neglect of the masses and disillusionment. No doubt, the common people are highly disappointed with how Nigeria had turned out (Polgreen, 2006).

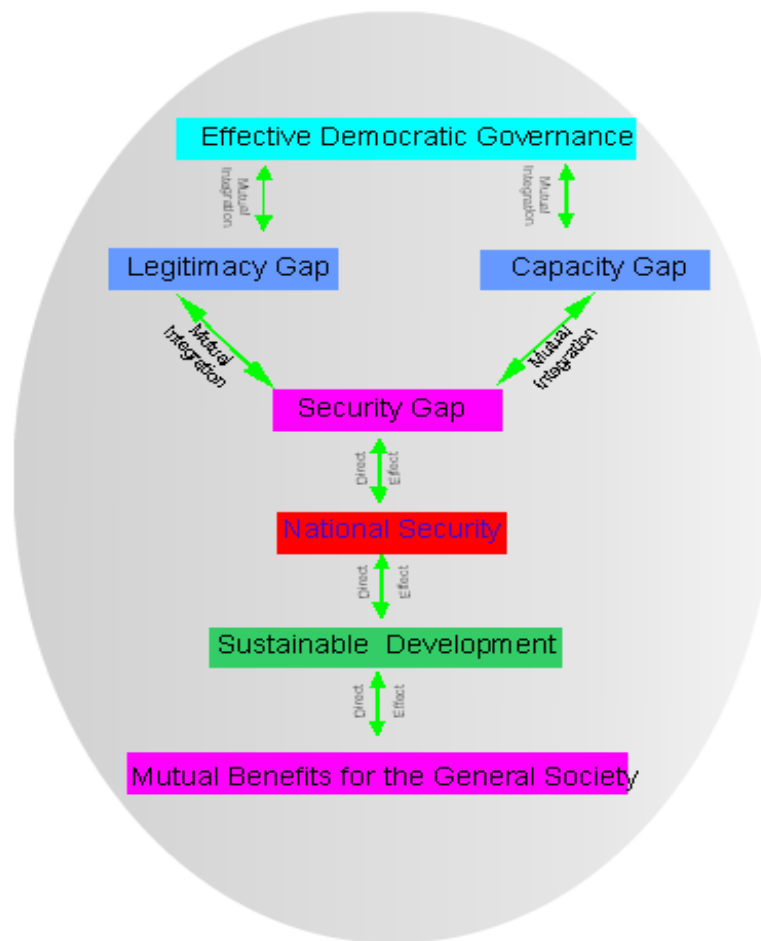
That Nigeria has been ranked as the number 14<sup>th</sup> most failed (weak) State in 2011 is not in doubt (Adebayo, 2011). Thus, in line with a Washington-based non-governmental advocacy organization, cited by Onuoha (2009a); Davis (2009), a failed (weak) state is identified with three (3) dysfunctionalities in the area of capability gaps such as legitimacy, capacity and security. In line with this framework and for our purpose, we shall explore the linkages between corruption, effective democratic governance and sustainable development in Nigeria by adopting and modifying Onuoha (2009a)'s diagram as shown below.

Before then, it is useful to note that governance refers broadly to the exercise of power through a country's economic, social, and political institutions in which institutions represent the organizational rules and routines, formal laws, and informal norms that together shape the incentives of public policy-makers, overseers, and providers of public services (UNDP, 1997). Governance in Nigeria dates back to the colonial period. However, good (effective) governance is a much recent and novel idea of democratic governance that found expression in the detailed provisions of the 1979 Constitution that contained the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy. Good (effective) governance became the reducible criteria for assessment of government under the 1999 Constitution, due to the negative effect of military rule, the activities of civil society and the pressures of international financial institutions such as the World Bank, IMF and UNDP (UNDP, 1998; Abdellatif, 2003 and Nwabueze, 2005).

Good (effective) governance is, among other things, participatory, transparent and accountable, effective and equitable, and it promotes the rule of law. It ensures that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus in society and that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of development resources (Abdellatif, 2003). According to UNDP (1998) report on Governance for Sustainable Human Development, the following have been isolated as the core features of good (effective) governance:

#### **Participation; Rule of Law; Transparency; Responsiveness; Consensus Orientation; Equity; Effectiveness and Efficiency; Accountability; and Strategic Vision**

Thus good (effective) governance as an element of constitutional government can be seen to be in its infancy in Nigeria's constitutional history and development. Good (effective) governance has been acknowledged as the term that symbolizes the paradigm shift of the role of governments (Kututiwa (2005). This paradigm shift is manifested in the role of government under the 1999 constitutional democracy of President Obasanjo and the challenges of corruption in governance.



**Figure 1: Linkages between Corruption, EDG & SD**

Source: Adopted and Modified From Onuoha (2009a)

From the figure above, it is easy to demonstrate the linkages between corruption, effective democratic governance and sustainable development. Starting with the *legitimacy gap*, using Onuoha (2009a)'s framework, legitimacy is the acceptance by the general population that the occupant of a public office is in accordance with the wishes, choices and expectations of the people, i.e. the ligament which supports the democratic frame in polity that brings about policy compliance without coercion or intimidation. From this vantage, when there is legitimacy gap, it creates underdevelopment due to fraudulent electoral malpractices which will make it difficult for election outcomes to reflect the true mandate of the electorates. In this regard, it leads to ineffective governance or government with no credibility and lack of trust by the general public. Under this scenario, autocratic rule will set in which will in turn lead to violence, anarchy, and general societal unrest. This will foster an unfriendly environment for investment, hence lack of progress and development. For instance, since 1999, all elections in Nigeria have been marred by gross irregularities as the various electoral petitions have demonstrated across the nation.

*Capacity gap* on the other hand show the level that institutions and agencies of government are able to judiciously utilize the nation's resources in providing effective and efficient essential needs and services which the general population require towards actualizing their full potentials. In this case, corruption in all its ramifications have/has made it totally impossible for the average Nigerian to access these basic needs principally due to government's incapacity to effectively provide them rather than lack of their availability. Without capacity, effective democratic governance becomes a mirage, hence corruption constitute the greatest challenge to effective (good) governance and sustainable development in Nigeria.

Lack of capacity on the part of the government creates an atmosphere of frustration, deprivation, disillusionment, etc (Onuoha, 2009a). The overall impact is insecurity, instability, conflict and

unhealthy business environment for both internal and external investments, a situation that naturally create serious national security dilemma, a feature that is very prevalent in Nigeria today, e.g. the Niger Delta crisis, the Jos crisis and Boko Haram crisis in Borno state, etc.

From the *security gap perspective*, the actions or inactions of the Nigerian security system and the corrupt practices of their personnel has caused serious threat to national development. In fact, all the security arms of government are not left out, i.e. the Military, Police, Immigration, Customs, State Security Services (SSS), the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, etc. There are empirical evidences to demonstrate the high level of decay among the government and her security agents in this country as a result of poor remunerations, decayed infrastructures and the general ill-equipment of the security sector. For the purpose of this write up, we mention just a few evidences of corruption against both government personnel and the security officials as follows:

- a. Between 1999 to 2006, out of Nigeria's 36 Governors, 31 were under federal investigation, while 5 were impeached, with very greedy politicians stealing the money for health care, school, clean water and everything which the State has jurisdiction to provide to the people (Polgreen, 2006).
- b. Tafa Balogun (the 21<sup>st</sup>) Inspector General of Police (IGP) misappropriated 17 billion Naira of Police fund and was convicted on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2007 by Justice Binta Nyako of Abuja High Court (Onuoha, 2009a).
- c. A Superintendent of Police (SP) was reported on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008 to have supplied AK 47 Rifles to notorious armed robbers in Jos (Omonobi, 2008).
- d. In the Nigerian Navy, 7 Admirals and 3 Captains were involved in the disappearance of oil-laden Ship NN African Pride and were retired (Ojiabor, 2007).
- e. It was reported in May 2008 that at the Army Central Ordinance Depot in Kaduna, 3 Colonels, 2 Lieutenant Colonels, one Major and 10 Non-Commissioned Officers were court-martialed for their roles in arms sales to Niger Delta Militants. In this discovery, it was revealed that the Major in-charge of the Depot had over ₦220m, one Colonel in the matter had ₦100m, 9 Non-Commissioned Officers had amounts in the range of ₦10m - ₦50m in their bank accounts respectively. By the time the Major and 5 others were jailed for life, about 7000 arms valued at over ₦100m had been sold to the Militants, i.e. between the year 2000 to 2006 (Onuoha, 2009a).
- f. Isiwu (2008) also revealed the involvement of the personnels of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), the Army, Navy and Police in the perennial pipeline vandalization in Nigeria. Indeed, the list is endless, but for paucity of space. Infact a trip to EFCC/ICPC offices will reveal more.

From the above, it is clear that the issue of corruption in Nigeria is endemic and it has linkage to effective democratic governance and sustainable development as a result of the tripartite gaps that mirrors them via legitimacy, capacity and security. Thus, an illegitimate government breeds nothing but incapability and insecurity, hence leading to bad democratic governance, underdevelopment and national insecurity in all ramifications and general disillusionment. The crucial question at this juncture is that: how can we devise a new paradigm (approach) for combating this hydra headed monster (corruption) in order to make our nascent democratic government effective for development that is sustainable? The next sub-section throws more light on this.

### **Towards a New Paradigm for Combating Corruption for Effective Democratic Governance (EDG) and Sustainable Development (SD) in Nigeria**

Corruption has been universally acknowledged as antithetical to any development that can be sustained. Nigeria's experience so far in effective democratic governance validates this statement because it has become very glaringly clear that to combat and prevent corruption in Nigeria, a multi-faceted three- model- approach must be adopted. In order words, for corruption to be combated towards ensuring effective democratic governance and sustainable development, it has to be anchored on a new paradigm that stresses the platform of rule of law, justice, equity, truth, honesty, virtue and integrity. Adherence to the rule of law is one of the basic features of effective democratic governance. This paper therefore contends that the evils of corruption can be combated by adopting the following



new paradigm, i.e. Human, Institutional and Immunity Models (the H.I.I Model). This is in view of the fact that in any society, the problem of corruption revolves round these three variables. Thus, corrupt practices in the context of Nigeria are the outcomes arising from human activities, as well as institutions in which they carry out a particular function, while immunity factor arise from the peculiar exemption accorded some “*sacred cows*” or the “*untouchables*” from penalties. We explain each of these variables as follows:

### **The Human Model for Combating Corruption in Nigeria**

There are a number of variables embedded in the model of human factors that inhibit combating corrupt practices in Nigeria. They include:

#### ***The Issue of the Environment and the People***

In any society, the people are human beings that inhabit the environment. The environment in the context of this paper can be viewed as all the prevailing socio-cultural, political, economic and educational conditions in which people operate in Nigeria. Consequently, as human beings, there are bad and good people in the environment that the members of the society are aware of. The bad eggs are the criminals that corner the national resources as a result of their positions of power. Thus, rather than celebrate such people for their ill-gotten wealth which rightfully belongs to all and sundry (the leaders and the followers) as in vogue in Nigeria today, they should be condemned, sanctioned and ostracized. Honour and integrity should be praised and rewarded, a feature that is totally absent in our nation today.

#### ***The Issue of Leadership and Followership***

Leadership and followership have symbiotic relationships in ensuring general societal benefits and growth. The followers play crucial roles towards the success of the leadership through constructive criticisms, thus, leaders should recognize this vital role of the followers and accept whatever lapses they observe. However, one of the main challenges of effective democratic governance in Nigeria is process of electing public officers into leadership positions. While all political positions are by elections, it is sad to note that the electoral processes and political party systems are highly corrupt and not sufficiently participatory. In fact, the elections are not only flawed but warped, while the political parties are dominated by money bags and ex-military leaders as political god-fathers, with their party primaries mostly selective, non-participatory and undemocratic, thus resulting in the corruption of the leadership, loyalty to god-fathers and patrons, and general indifference to the electorates and citizens (followership) in their style of governance (Ocheje, 2001). The issues of legitimacy and representative nature of leadership in the country is reflected in their lack of accountability to the followership. Thus, the genesis of corruption can be traced to the issue of poor leadership and lack of voice by the followership hence, the urgent need for a reform of the electoral process and the structure of the political party systems in Nigeria that will ensure good leadership selection by the followers cannot be overemphasized.

#### ***The Rule of Law, Cultural and Linguistic Identities***

One of the basic characteristics of effective democratic governance is the adherence to the rule of law. It is very essential that governmental and private sector actors in the democratic governance processes observe the laws and rules established for the administration of the government. Consequently, the system of administrative law, criminal justice administration and other mechanisms that are established against abuse of governmental powers that foster corruption is very crucial.

In the same measure, it is not easy to separate Nigerians as a result of linguistic and cultural connectedness. Consequently, the tendency to claim sameness create an atmosphere of non-challant attitude to the rule of law, hence corrupt practices go unpunished. On the cultural landscape, some go as far as invoking traditional deities to pervert the cause of law and justice, or even deliberately refuse or pretend not to know the rule of law (Idowu, 2009). Arising from the above is the absence of an effective governmental supervision and oversight of the public servants and their private sector collaborators resulting into too much reliance placed on police investigation, prosecution and sanction of corruption under the Criminal and Penal Code. The irony of it all is that the Nigerian Police that is charged primarily with policing the State is openly corrupt and thus highly very ineffective in policing

corruption. According to Transparency International (2007), the Prosecution Units and Office of Director of Public Prosecution are usually not independent and are obviously under the influence of the executive, while the judiciary system in Nigeria is plagued with corruption and susceptible to corrupting influence and miscarriage of justice. Thus, the need for a direct response in establishing an effective legal framework for investigating, prosecuting and sanctioning corruption in Nigeria is of utmost importance. In addition, there should be provision in all anti-corruption laws that will compel people, irrespective of sameness of tribe to report corrupt practices while failure to do so should attract stiff penalty for aiding and abetting corrupt practices.

### ***Political Violence and Youth Education***

Political violence is the act of political hostility, vicious attacks, destructive criticisms, political arithmetic, gymnastics and intrigues. Education on the other hand is the total human experience in all ramifications of human endeavours. Thus, in Nigeria, it is no longer news that due to high level of illiteracy among the youths, they have become the tools that politicians use to unleash violence against political opponents. It is high time the youths realize that they are gambling away their precious future and therefore question the god-fathers and ask them to channel the resources used to perpetuate violence in the society into useful investment ventures for gainful employment and scholarship for education.

### **The Institutional Model for Combating Corruption in Nigeria**

The following are the institutional factors which inhibit effective enforcement of laws against corruption in Nigeria, hence effective democratic governance and sustainable development.

#### ***The Government and Condition of Public Service***

According to Ocheje (2000), corruption in public office has existed in Nigeria since the establishment of modern structures of public administration in the country by the British Colonial Administrators. Nevertheless, its escalation has coincided with the expansion of administrative structures and the full development of the public sector (Ademolekun, 2002). Consequently, the administrative structure's development has been accompanied with lack of transparency and accountability arising from an over-bloated public service that is bedevilled with excessive bureaucracy and corruption. Thus, the national wealth always disappear into private bank accounts of leaders, both military, politicians, civil servants and their collaborators in the private sector (op cit).

The public service in Nigeria has been characterized by lack of culture of accountability and weak institutional structure; excessive centralization of administrative power; lack of access to citizens, and gross inefficiency (Ademolekun, 2002). These features have/has fostered the practice of barefaced "theft and stealing" of public funds and properties, waste and mismanagement of national resources and public assets. The resultant effects of which has been the phenomenon of inflated contracts, abandoned projects, lack of public infrastructures, poverty of the citizens and general poor standard of living (Ocheje, 2000). There have been efforts at reforming the Public Service. These have been usually accompanied by retrenchment of workers, reductions in the number of ministries and parastatals as well as changes in policies. All these have not been sufficient conditions for combating corruption and corrupt practices, because these methods have failed to attack the fundamental causes of corruption in the public service, especially the conditions of service of the public servants and the establishment of transparency and accountability procedures for the public service (op cit).

It is useful to note that due to faulty salary structure and retirement benefits, many honest civil servants are compelled to dip their hands into government coffers in attempt to plan for retirement without payment of benefits. This issue will continue to create serious obstacle against combating corruption if the government remains adamant in overhauling the general welfare package for public servants both in active service and at retirement.

#### ***Faulty National Constitution***

The 1999 Constitution and its legitimacy and effectiveness have over the years prompted agitations for its amendments and reforms. It is useful to observe that Constitutions do not necessarily guarantee constitutionalism, thus the practice of the 1999 Constitution has been observed not to foster rule of law

and constitutionalism as the whole reform process was corrupted by the “*third term agenda*” of President Olusegun Obasanjo which was terminated by the Senate of the National Assembly. In Nigeria, the constitutional framework for combating corruption is not only very weak in practice, but highly selective (Umar, 2004). To effectively combat corruption for effective democratic governance and sustainable development, there is need for legislative oversight to be enhanced and the independence of the judiciary system bolstered to check gross abuse of power and high level of executive lawlessness.

### ***The Porous Nature of the Security System and Crime Prevention***

While various methods have been embraced by Nigeria in the area of crime prevention and control, it is sad to note that the structure and operation of the law enforcement agencies are incapable of doing their jobs effectively due to high level of corrupt practices in the area of faulty recruitment process, poor training, lack of necessary equipments and remunerations, etc. This situation has resulted into cases whereby the law enforcement officials were found to be the principal perpetrators of crimes (Idowu, 2009). This therefore calls for a new modus operandi that will overhaul the general structure of the security system for effective law enforcement against corruption.

### ***Fraudulent Political and Electoral Processes***

Over the years, experience has revealed that all is not well with the country’s electoral process hence, smooth political transition became a herculean task. For instance, during the 2007 election that ushered in a civilian to civilian regime, i.e. from Obasanjo to late Umar Yar’adua, it was acknowledged that the elections were massively rigged and the political parties’ primaries were characterized by high level of corruption and intimidation. Indeed, the late President Yar’adua affirmed this and even called for urgent reforms of the electoral and political party system at the G8 – Summit, when he met with the UN Secretary-General in 2007. This scenario creates a culture of political instability that does not give room for effective democratic governance that will usher in sustainable development. Therefore, the need for the reform of the electoral and political systems aimed at achieving transparency and accountability of the leadership to the constitution, political party and the electorates has become an imperative.

### ***Mass Media and Domestication of International Charter***

The Media is constitutionally responsible for educating the general public on governmental activities both internally and at the international plane. In this respect, Nigeria as a player in the global economic circle is a signatory to many international charters on corruption which have not been sufficiently domesticated, while the Media remains silent on this. It is useful to observe that if there is adequate domestication of legal framework criminalizing corrupt practices, then international assistance regarding recovery of foreign assets stolen from the country becomes handy. Consequently as a signatory to various international instruments like: The United Nations Convention Against Corruption (2003), The United Nations International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights (2002), etc, it is therefore of paramount necessity for the government to exert the political will to domesticate all these international instruments to enable the Nigerian Courts extend their frontiers in the recovery of ill-gotten wealth abroad. In this regard, the Media must be in the fore-front to champion the crusade. This being the case, the quest for effective democratic governance and sustainable development would be actualized as ill-gotten foreign assets could be used to enhance the development process of the nation, or better still added to the nation’s foreign reserve.

### **The Immunity Model for Combating Corruption in Nigeria**

Immunity can be defined as “freedom from duty or penalty” (Taiwo, 2009:71). The Nigerian 1979 Constitution section 267 and that of 1999 Constitution in its section 308 provides immunity to some special public office holders such as the President, Vice-President, Governors and Deputy Governors who are also constitutionally the custodians of government fund. According to the 1999 Constitution Section 308 (2):

*“No civil or criminal proceedings shall be instituted or continued against a person to whom this section applies during his period of office; a person to whom this section applies shall not be arrested, or imprisoned during that period either in pursuance of the process of any court, or otherwise;*

.....*this section applies to a person holding the office of President or Vice President, Governor or Deputy Governor; and the reference to this period of office is a reference to the period during which the person holding such office is required to perform the functions of the office.*”

However, experience has revealed that these leaders have milked the nation so dry such that they have literally turned her into the poorest nation in the world. According to Taiwo (2009:69), “despite the glaring corruption and embezzlement of public fund by its major functionaries, i.e. the Executive arm of government, section 308 of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria makes it impossible for such functionaries to be brought to book as they are immune from both criminal and civil prosecution while in office”. Cases of money laundering have been levelled against serving executive Governors, like Joshua Dariye of Plateau State who was found with the sum of £300,000 in his London Hotel room in September, 2004. Also, Diepreye Alamiyeseiga of Bayelsa State was found to have laundered the sum £1.8 million between September 2001 and September, 2005. Arising from the above, it is clear that the Constitution needs total annihilation of Section 308 if the series of events in terms of executive corruption is going to be curtailed. This is in view of the fact that the section negates the doctrine of the rule of law as well as equality before the law (Taiwo, 2009).

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is useful to observe that corruption has four (4) constituents which include economic, social, political and environmental. That corruption is a serious menace to effective democratic governance and sustainable development is an understatement. Indeed, corruption is a major factor responsible for the nation’s comatose state of underdevelopment despite the abundant wealth. It is the reason why policy makers with executive immunity divert scarce public resources to uneconomic high profile projects that are detrimental to the provision of simple basic and highly essential projects like investment in education, health and other infrastructures such as good roads, portable water and power supply. The resultant consequences include an impoverished economy with enormous negative impact on the poor. Indeed, because of corruption, the citizens have lost trust in the political system, its institutions and leadership hence the violent clashes and litigations that usually trail election results. All these have led to the drainage of the nation’s most honest and able citizens to foreign lands (brain-drain). Arising from the above, this paper further proffers the following recommendations:

Firstly, accountability, transparency and responsive policies should be backed by legislative enactments in order to make them more enforceable. In this respect, electoral and Political Party system reforms are not only very urgent but needed in Nigeria to address the issues of legitimacy, accountability and effectiveness of the government.

Secondly, the Nigerian value system that makes the officials and citizens prone to corrupt practices should be addressed with enlightenment campaigns and mass education of the public.

Thirdly, foreign countries who aid and abet corrupt practices in the area of money laundering should support Nigeria in its fight against this activity by confiscating such monies and returning same to the country. Also, legislative enactments that will domesticate the international charters, convention and protocol on corruption in Nigeria should be passed by the National Assembly without delay.

Fourthly, constitutional provisions which fosters constitutionalism, rule of law should be effectively enforced, as well as the need for the various arms of government, especially the legislature and the judiciary to be alive to their constitutional responsibilities.

Fifthly, the reforms of the Public/Civil Service should be implemented genuinely instead of the present window dressing policy issues. In this regard, the involvement of the civil Society becomes imperative. The Nigeria’s value systems that promote corruption go beyond the frontiers of legal normative propositions to the need for socio-cultural normative standards that will correct the existing value systems. Therefore the civil society’s involvement in the anti-corruption crusade must go beyond the formal engagement of government and its officers in effective governance issues into the arena of challenging the cultural practices and values that “communicate” or “facilitate” corrupt practices. For example, permissible practices like giving and receiving of “gifts”, conferment of chieftaincy titles and responsibilities on serving Public Officials and Political Office holders, payment of expenses and underwriting of costs of activities of office holders and public officials, e.g.

endowment of public trust, library, book launch, socio-cultural activities, etc, must be made both socially unacceptable, hence banned or prohibited.

Finally, the anti-corruption agencies such as the ICPC and the EFCC should be further strengthened in direct response to the need for an effective legal framework for investigating, prosecuting and sanctioning corrupt practices in the country for all and sundry, especially when in service rather than after leaving office.

In addition, the government must exert the political will to eradicate all corrupt practices and abuse of power, while imposing an obligation on the Mass Media to highlight the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people as at when due. In the light of this, leadership and followership must consult and dialogue on a platform that drives away general ignorance, conflict and poverty. We all owe it a duty to fight and win the war against corruption having behind our minds one hope for one future and one Nigeria. Therefore, all Nigerians must demonstrate genuine courage, resilient, zeal and will to confront the evil of corruption, if the nation is going to overcome the risk of abject poverty in the midst of stupendous opulence, preventable diseases, insecurity of lives and properties, overwhelming misery and disillusionment, as well as international disrespect, etc.

## REFERENCES

- Abdullahi, H. (2010). "The Challenges of Corruption in Nigeria: The Role of EFCC and ICPC", in *History and Structure of the Nigerian Economy: Pre: Colonial Period to 2007 and Beyond*. Kaduna-Minna, Nigeria: Halygraph Publications. Revised Edition. P. 316-331.
- Abdellatif, A.M. (2003). "Good Governance and its Relationship to Democracy and Economic Development", a paper presented at the Global Forum III on *Fighting Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity*, in Seoul May, 20<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> (GF3/wa/iv – 3/S1). P. 4 – 6.
- Achebe, C. (2011). "How Ethnicity, Graft, Others Ruined Nigeria", *The Guardian*, Thursday, September, 15<sup>th</sup>, P.1.
- Adele, B.J. (1998). *Fundamentals of Nigerian Politics*. Lagos, Ijede.
- Adejumobi, A. (2007). "Democracy, Corruption and the Rule of Law in Nigeria" <<http://www.nigeriavillagesquare.com/articles/akintokumbo-a-adejumo/democracycorr>> August 28,2011
- Adebayo, I. (2011). "Nigeria is 14<sup>th</sup> Most Failed State in the World", 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Failed States Index Report: Fund for Peace, an American Independent Non-Profit Research and Educational Organization, Georgia, USA, June, 22<sup>nd</sup>. <http://234next.com/esp/ems/sites/Next/Home/5720078-146/story.esp>
- Ademolekun, L. (ed.) (2002). *Public Administration in Africa*. Spectrum Books Limited.
- Akintola, A. (2010). *Corruption and the Rule of Law: Wither Nigeria*, University of Ibadan Alumni Association (U.I.A.A.) 2010 Annual Alumni Lecture, Guest Lecturer. (SAN)
- Amujiri, B.A. (2003). "The Phenomenon of Corruption in Nigeria: Implications for Public Accountability, in Ezeani, E.O. (Ed). *Public Accountability in Nigeria: Perspectives and Issues*. Enugu: Academy Publishing Company.
- Aniagolu, A.N. (1993). *The Making of the 1989 Constitution of Nigeria*. Safari Books, P.156-157
- Billy, J. D. (1998). "An Introduction to Nigerian Government and Politics: The Tragedy of a Value System in Nigeria. Theories and Solution", in Diamond, L. (1998), "Building a Democratic Africa". *Hoover Digest*, No. 3.
- Diamond, L. (1998). "Building a Democratic Africa", *Hoover Digest*, No. 3.
- Dike, V.E. (2005). "Corruption in Nigeria: A New Paradigm for Effective Control", in *Africa Economic Analysis*. <[http://www.africaeconomicanalysis.org/articles/ Gen/corruptiondikehtm.html](http://www.africaeconomicanalysis.org/articles/Gen/corruptiondikehtm.html)> 24/08/2011.
- Dwivendi, O.P. (1967). "Bureaucratic Corruption in Developing Countries", *Asian Review*, April.
- Folarin, S. (2009). "The Anti-Corruption War in Nigeria: A Critical Appraisal of the Role of ICPC and EFCC. *Nigerian Journal of Economic and Financial Crime (NJEFC)*, Vol.1, No. 2. Harmattan Edition, Jan-April, P. 14-36.
- Idowu, A.A. (2009). "Human and Institutional Factors Affecting Effective Enforcement of Laws against Economic Crimes in Nigeria", in *Nigerian Journal of Economic and Financial Crime (NJEFC)*, Vol.1, No. 2. Harmattan Edition, Jan-April, P. 50-67.
- Ifesinachi, K. (2003). "The Political Economy of Corruption in Africa: a Focus on Nigeria", in Ezeani, E.O. (Ed), *Public Accountability in Nigeria: Perspectives and Issues*. Enugu: Academic Publishing Company.
- Isiwu, C. (2008). "Bound by Common Interest", *The Business Eye*, July, 21<sup>st</sup> -27<sup>th</sup> Lagos.
- Kututiwa, N. (2005). "African Anti-Corruption Commitments: A Review of Eight NEPAD Countries", *African Human Security Initiative, AHSI Paper 7*. January, 1<sup>st</sup>, P. 3 – 7 at <http://www.1SS.org.za/pubs/other/ahsi/Paper 7 Jan 05/ Kututiwa pdf>.

- Mushanga, A. (2001). "Problems in Defining Corruption". *Southern African Political and Economic Monthly (SAPEM)*, Vol. 14, No. 3
- Nwabueze, B.O. (2005). *Constitutional Democracy in Africa*, Volume 4.
- Nwankwo, A.A. (1999). *The Stolen Billions*, Enugu, Fourth Dimension.
- Nye, J.S. (1967). "Corruption and Political Development: A Cost-Benefit Analysis. *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 61, p. 417-427.
- Ocheje, P.D. (2001). "Law and Social Change: A Socio-Legal Analysis of Nigeria's Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act 2000" in *Journal of Africa Law*, Vol. 45, No. 2, P. 174 – 177.
- Ojiabor, O. (2007). "Missing Ship, Seven Admirals, three Captains Retired", *The Punch*, February, 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Omonobi, K. (2008). "Nigeria: ASP. Inspector, Three Other Corps Arrested for Supplying Guns to Robbers", *Vanguard*, January, 11<sup>th</sup>.
- Onuoha, F.C. (2009a). "Corruption and National Security: The Three-Gap Theory and the Nigerian Experience". *Nigerian Journal of Economic and Financial Crime (NJEFC)*, Vol.1, No. 2. Harmattan Edition, Jan-April, P.1 – 13
- Onuoha, F.C. (2009b). "Corruption and Economic Development in Nigeria: An Expose of the Power Sector (1999 – 2007)." *Integrity Journal*.
- Otaru, T. (2010). "Nigeria Must Fight Corruption for Democracy to Thrive", *National Daily* <[www.nationaldailyng.com](http://www.nationaldailyng.com)> 24/08/2011.
- Otite, O. (1986). "The Sociology of Corruption", in Odekunle, F. (Ed), *Corruption in Development*, Ibadan: NISER Publication.
- Okonkwo, V. (2011). "Let's Rethink". *A Bi-Annual News Magazine of the University of Ibadan Alumni Association (U.I.A.A)*, From the Editor's Desk. Vol.10, No. 1, June.
- Olowu, D., Eloho, O. and Okotoni, M. (2001). "Issues in Nigeria Public Administration System".
- Polgreen, L. (2006). "Nigerian Democracy Marred by Corruption", in *The New York Times*, <<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/24/world/Africa/24iht-nigeria.3660236.html>> 24/08/2011.
- Transparency International (2006). Corruption perception Index (CPI).
- Taiwo, E.A. (2009). "Executive Immunity and the Fight against Corruption in Nigeria: The Legal Issues Arising". *Nigerian Journal of Economic and Financial Crime (NJEFC)*, Vol.1, No. 2. Harmattan Edition, Jan-April, P.68-83.
- Tignor, R. (1993). "Political Corruption in Nigeria before Independence". *Journal Modern African Studies*, P. 175 – 202.
- Umar, A. (2004). "Corruption, Democracy and Development", in Gidado, M.M.Anyanwu, C.U., Adekunle, A.O. (Eds), *Nigeria Beyond 1999: Stabilizing the Polity through Constitutional Re-Engineering*. Constitutional Essays in Honour of Bola Ige. Enugu: Chenglo Ltd.
- UNDP (1997). "Governance for Sustainable Human Development", A UNDP Policy Paper, P.2-3.
- UNDP (1998). "Fighting Corruption to Improve Governance". *A Publication of Bureau of Development Policy, UNDP*, 13 November.
- Yelwa, M. (2011). "Economic Effects of Corruption in Nigeria", a Postgraduate Seminar Paper presented to the Department of Economics, UDU, Sokoto, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of PhD degree in Economics, 5<sup>th</sup>, October.
- Welch, C. (1987). "The Military and the States in Africa: Problems of Transition; in Zaki, E. (Ed), *The African States in Transition*. NY: St. Martins Press.
- World Bank (1997). <http://www.worldbank.org/publicsector/overview.htm>