



Effective Conduct of Government Business in a Trust-Deficit Environment

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Abstract

In the third world countries, mechanisms for checks and balances are very weak leaving room for unnecessary manipulations and wanton circumvention of ground rules and regulations necessary for regulating public morality and crusading against corruption. In this paper, we adopted a new approach to tackle the menace of corruption so as to manage effectively government business. We opined that the management of government business boils down to the management of the synergy and the work arrangement among the executive, the legislature, the judiciary and the Public service that serve them all. Whenever, work arrangements strike any major problem, the overall performance of the government will suffer in respect for the other. This paper examined the management issues that may influence performance of the organization and observed inter alia that public officers may have wide discretion but little accountability where policies may be poorly designed and implemented with manifest indifference in Nigeria. Thus, we concluded that, to tame and/or minimize corruption and effectively manage government business; Government has to adopt a multifaceted approach by using words as well as actions. Thus, we recommended inter-alia that policies should be reviewed periodically to close any gap and to catch-up with events in the society and the strategy for communicating and managing the reform process must be robust and people centered. Hitherto, a strong national oversight structure should be established to ensure accountability and performance at all levels of governance.

Keywords: Corruption, Government Business, Management, Performance, Public service.

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INTRODUCTION

It is important to characterize the trust-deficit environment that exists in Nigeria where poor implementation of policies is evidenced by poor budget performance and elite corruption have been pervasive and where credibility and often legitimacy of the government have always been questioned. This environment is characterized by weak electoral processes that disfranchised many; producing a weak responsive government. According to Idumenge (2012), the trust deficit index of leaders in Nigeria is so high that the best of government intensions are misconstrued. This is because of ideological bankruptcy at the level of politics, self-aggrandizement at the level of managing the economy and dishonesty at the level of policy implementation. Today, Nigeria is full of probe panels and more than 30% of former public officers either have cases with the anti-graft agencies or the people they served. Some of them run away days before their official tenures expire. The institutional mechanisms for checks and balances are very weak leaving room for unnecessary manipulations and wanton circumvention of ground rules and regulations necessary for regulating public morality and crusading against corruption.

Let us begin by positing that there are many unresolved problems in Nigeria, but the issue of Effective Conduct of Government Business in the face of corruption is troubling. The damages corruption has done to the polity are astronomical. The menace of corruption leads to slow movement of files in offices, police extortion tollgates and slow traffics on the highways, port congestion, queues at passport offices and gas stations, ghost workers syndrome, election irregularities, ineffective power supply, among others. Even the mad people on the street recognize the havoc caused by corruption - the funds allocated for their welfare disappear into the thin air. Thus, it is believed by many in the society that corruption is the bane of Nigeria irrespective of the efforts to end the menace by President Goodluck Jonathan. Consequently, the issue keeps reoccurring in every academic and informal discussion in Nigeria as it affects the effective management of government business!

Some writers say that corruption is endemic in all governments, and that it is not peculiar to any continent, region and ethnic group. It cuts across faiths, religious denominations and political systems and affects both young and old, man and woman alike. Corruption is found in *democratic* and *dictatorial* politics; *feudal*, *capitalist* and *socialist* economies. *Christian*, *Muslim*, *Hindu*, and *Buddhist* cultures are equally bedeviled by corruption. And corrupt practices did not begin today; the history is as old as the world. Ancient civilizations have traces of widespread illegality and corruption. Thus, corruption has been ubiquitous in complex societies from ancient *Egypt*, *Israel*, *Rome*, and *Greece* down to the present (Lipset & Lenz, 2000, pp. 112-113). This does not, however, mean that the magnitude of corruption is equal in every society. Some countries are more corrupt than others! As *George Orwell* notes in his widely read book, *Animal Farm*: All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others (June, 1996, p. 109).

This paper, therefore, adopts a new approach to tackle the menace of corruption so as to manage effectively government business in Nigeria. What then is government and its business in the face of corruption? Government is best viewed as an organization that exists to achieve certain objectives. When the organization is well managed, it will function well in its corporate approach to the fulfilling of its objectives. Thus, government includes all the agencies through which the program of government is operated.

CORRUPTION DEFINED

Perhaps, because corruption has received an extensive attention in communities, maybe, due to the fact that it has been over-flogged in the academic circles, it has received varied definitions. Corruption has broadly been defined as a perversion or a change from good to bad. Specifically, corruption or corrupt behavior involves the violation of established rules for personal gain and profit (Sen, 1999, p. 275). Corruption is efforts to secure wealth or power through illegal means private gain at public expense; or a misuse of public power for private benefit (Lipset & Lenz, 2000).

In addition, corruption is a behavior which deviates from the formal duties of a public role, because of private [gains] - regarding (personal, close family, private clique, pecuniary or status gains. It is a behavior

which violates rules against the exercise of certain types of [duties] for private [gains] - regarding influence (Nye, 2007). This definition includes such behavior as bribery--use of a reward to pervert the judgment of a person in a position of trust; nepotism--bestowal of patronage by reason of ascriptive relationship rather than merit; and misappropriation--illegal appropriation of public resources for private uses (Banfield 1961). To the already crowded landscape, Osoba (1996) adds that corruption is an anti-social behaviour conferring improper benefits contrary to legal and moral norms, and which undermine the authorities to improve the living conditions of the people. Corruption is probably the main means to accumulate quick wealth when managing government business in Nigeria. Corruption occurs in many forms, and it has contributed immensely to the poverty and misery of a large segment of the Nigerian population.

THE NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF CORRUPTION

Some studies have taken a *holistic* (broader) approach in the discussion of corruption by dividing it into many forms and sub-divisions. These are:

- i) Political Corruption (*grand*);
- ii) Bureaucratic Corruption (*petty*); and
- iii) Electoral Corruption.

Political corruption takes place at the highest levels of political authority. It occurs when the politicians and political decision-makers, who are entitled to formulate, establish and implement the laws in the name of the people, are themselves corrupt. It also takes place when policy formulation and legislation is tailored to benefit politicians and legislators. Political corruption is sometimes seen as similar to corruption of greed as it affects the manner in which decisions are made, as it manipulates political institutions, rules of procedure, and distorts the institutions of government (NORAD, 2000; The Encyclopedia Americana, 1999).

Bureaucratic corruption occurs in the public administration or the implementation end of politics. This kind of corruption has been branded low level and street level. It is the kind of corruption the citizens encounter daily at places like the hospitals, schools, local licensing offices, police, taxing offices and on and on. Bureaucratic petty corruption, which is seen as similar to corruption of need, occurs when one obtains a business from the public sector through inappropriate procedure (see NORAD, 2000).

Electoral corruption includes purchase of votes with money, promises of office or special favors, coercion, intimidation, and interference with freedom of election [Nigeria is a good example where this practice is common. Votes are bought, people are killed or maimed in the name of election, losers end up as the winners in elections, and votes turn up in areas where votes were not cast]. Corruption in office involves sales of legislative votes, administrative, or judicial decision, or governmental appointment. Disguised payment in the form of gifts, legal fees, employment, favors to relatives, social influence, or any relationship that sacrifices the public interest and welfare, with or without the implied payment of money, is usually considered corrupt (The Encyclopedia Americana, 1999). Other forms of corruption include:

- a) *Bribery*: The payment (in money or kind) that is taken or given in a corrupt relationship. These include *kickbacks, gratuities, pay-off, sweeteners, greasing palms*, etc. (Bayart, Ellis & Hibou, 1999, p.11).
- b) *Fraud*: It involves some kind of trickery, swindle and deceit, counterfeiting, racketing, smuggling and forgery (Bayart, et.al 1999, p.11).
- c) *Embezzlement*: This is theft of public resources by public officials. It is when a state official steals from the public institution in which he/she is employed. In Nigeria the embezzlement of public funds is one of the most common ways of economic accumulation, perhaps, due to lack of strict regulatory systems.
- d) *Extortion*: This is money and other resources extracted by the use of coercion, violence or threats to use force. It is often seen as extraction *from below* [The police and custom officers are the main culprits in Nigeria] (Bayart et. al 1999, p.11).
- e) *Favoritism*: This is a mechanism of power abuse implying a highly biased distribution of state resources. However, this is seen as a natural human proclivity to favor friends, family and anybody close and trusted.

f) Nepotism: This is a special form of favoritism in which an office holder prefers his/her *kinfolk* and family members. *Nepotism*, [which is also common in Nigeria], occurs when one is exempted from the application of certain laws or regulations or given undue preference in the allocation of scarce resources (NORAD, 2000; Amundsen, 1997; Girling 1997) also see Fairbanks, Jr. (1999).

For effective control of corruption in Nigeria, the society must develop a culture of relative openness, in contrast to the current bureaucratic climate of secrecy. And a merit system (instead of the tribal bias, state of origin and nepotism or favoritism, which has colored the landscape) should be adopted in employment and distribution of national resources, etc. More importantly, the leadership must muster the political will to tackle the problem head-on (see report on Second Global Forum on Fighting and Safeguarding Integrity, May 28-31, 1999). Regardless of where it occurs, what causes corruption or the form it takes, the simple fact remains that corruption is likely to have a more profound and different effects in less developed countries like Nigeria, than in wealthy and developed societies like United States of America. This is due to a variety of conditions, which cannot deviate significantly from the nature of their underdevelopment (Kolade, 1999). Because of the corrosive effects of corruption in national development, and given the relative limited resources or poverty in the region, Africa, and indeed Nigeria, can least afford to be corrupt.

THE CAUSES OF CORRUPTION

Why is corruption a viable enterprise in the Third World, nay, Nigeria? The causes of corruption are myriad; and they have political and cultural variables. Some evidence points to a link between corruption and social diversity, ethno-linguistic fractionalization, and the proportions of country's population adhering to different religious traditions (Lipset and Lenz, 2000). Some studies noted that corruption is widespread in most non-democratic countries, and particularly, in countries that have been branded neo-patrimonial, kleptocratic and prebendal (NORAD, 2000). Thus, the political system and the culture of a society could make the citizens more prone to corrupt activities. However, we shall focus on the fundamental factors that engender corrupt practices in less developed nations, including Nigeria. Some of the factors include:

- 1) Great inequality in distribution of wealth;
- 2) Political office as the primary means of gaining access to wealth;
- 3) Conflict between changing moral codes;
- 4) The weakness of social and governmental enforcement mechanisms; and
- 5) The absence of a strong sense of national community.

The causes of corruption in Nigeria cannot deviate significantly, if at all, from the above factors. However, obsession with materialism, compulsion for a shortcut to affluence, glorification and approbation of ill-gotten wealth by the general public, are among the reasons for the persistence of corruption in Nigeria (Ndiulor, 2009). It has been noted that one of the popular, but unfortunate indices of good life in Nigeria, is flamboyant affluence and conspicuous consumption. The lack of ethical standards throughout the agencies of government and business organizations in Nigeria is a serious drawback. According to Thom-Otuya and Tamuno (2011), ethics is action, the way we practice our values; it is a guidance system to be used in making decisions. The issue of ethics in public sector [and in private life] encompasses a broad range, including a stress on obedience to authority, on the necessity of logic in moral reasoning, and on the necessity of putting moral judgment into practice (Bowman 1991). Unfortunately, many officeholders in Nigeria (appointed or elected) who should be in better position to effectively manage government business do not unfortunately, have clear conceptions of the ethical demands of their position. Even as corrupt practices are going off the roof, little attention, if any, is being given to this ideal.

Other factors are poor reward system and greed; Nigerians reward system is, perhaps, the poorest in the world. Nigeria is a society where national priorities are turned upside down; hard work is not rewarded, but rogues are often glorified in Nigeria. The trouble with Nigeria is not that our capabilities are inadequate. It is that our priorities are wrong (Lipset & Lenz, 2002). Peer community and extended family pressures, and

polygamous household are other reasons (Onalaja & Onalaja, 1997). The influence of extended family system and pressure to meet family obligations are more in less developed societies. Harrison (2005) acknowledged that “the extended family system is an effective institution for survival, but notes that it poses a big obstacle for development” (p.7).

THE MISSION OF GOVERNMENT

Our preferences for democratic governance mean that government is put together via a political process. This has definite implications for the structure that emerges, and for the approach that government takes in seeking to fulfill its mission. In Nigerian democratic experience so far, we have tried the Westminster model and the executive version of the Presidential model. We have discovered that each one has specific implications for the internal management of government. For instance, the role of the Civil service in the management of government business is addressed differently in each model, and the operating conditions of that service have witnessed ups and downs that have come partly from those differences. In this paper, government is viewed as an organization that exists to achieve certain objectives. When the organization is well managed, it will function well in corporate approach to the fulfilling of its objectives. When government is functioning well, this fact will become evident from the result that it registers. In particular as pointed out by Kolade (1999), the performance of the national economy is a reliable yardstick for measuring the performance of government and confirming its success. Under a well-managed government, society will be provided with an economic and social environment that enables and empowers citizens to express their productive potential to the full. The signs should be clear for all to see.

Government as an Organization

Government is aimed at establishing conditions which citizens are enabled to give full expression to their productive resources. What then is our assessment of the capacity of government, as an organization, to achieve this objective? Two arms of government, the executive and the legislature, shares the responsibilities of formulating the nations’ objectives, and establishing the strategies and policies is carried out by the officials of the public service under the direction of the President, Ministers and other members of the executive team. The judiciary, the third arm of government, has the adjudicator’s job of providing comfort to the rest of us that the laws passed by the legislature are, indeed, just and appropriate. Everyone should have access to the judiciary whenever it becomes necessary to resolve a dispute in this regard.

Thus, the management of government boils down to the management of the interrelationships and the work arrangement among these four – the executive, the legislature, the judiciary and the Public service that serve them all. Whenever, those interrelationships and work arrangements strike any major problem, the overall performance of the organization (i.e. government) will suffer in respect for the other a case in point is the crisis beclouding the appointment of the Chief Judge in Rivers State since 2013. So it is important to examine the management issues that may influence performance of the organization. Public officers may have wide discretion but little accountability. Policies may be poorly designed and implemented with manifest indifference. Formal rules are in place, but they may be superseded by informal conventions. Even where a code of conduct is supposed to exist, hardly anyone may read it or refer to it. There may be multiple layers of red tape causing delays and increasing levels of insecurity for stakeholders. The consequences of been caught and punished for corrupt behavior may be low relative to the benefit. Leaders and supervisors may shy away from asserting their proper disciplinary authority.

Individuals wanting to carry out their functions with efficiency and integrity may find themselves isolated and endangered; they may be perceived as potential whistle-blowers. External instruments restraint such as, for instance, an independent judiciary, may be deliberately marginalized and weakened. These practices and others create confusion in the management of government business and disable it in such a way that the capacity for managing the economy towards a positive turnaround becomes a dare dream.

Accountability: the Key to Success

The most powerful key to open the door of success is accountability. Indeed, we may go so far as to suggest that a government that does not pay topmost attention to being accountable organization cannot be justified in claiming to be well managed. Regrettably, Nigeria has had more than its fair share of governments that were either accountable to the wrong people, or to no one at all! The people must be able to insist on proper accountability from office holders; otherwise, even a well-managed government cannot fully succeed in its governance assignment. Good governance requires a competent government that respects the constitution and the rule of law, and that practice sound leadership. It also needs institutions that counterbalance governmental power and hold office holders accountable. Above all, there should be a strong body of public opinion that is consistently and dynamically expressed, such that it becomes the main element that keeps office holders faithful to their responsibility. A virile public opinion should be effective in educating public figures to understand that they have no choice but to obey the laws for which they are elected guardians, and to take the oath of honor without any prolonged prompting from members of the public. In truth, the failure or inability of public opinion to insist on a culture of accountability from public office holders has been a larger contribution to the under-performance of our national economy.

The Effects of Corruption on Effective Management of Government Business

The effects of corruption on a nation's socio-political and economic development are myriad. The negative effects impact economic growth as it, among other things, reduces public spending on education (Mauro, 2007 and 2005). Lipset and Lenz noted that the effect on growth is in part, a result of reduced level of investment, as it adds to investment risk. The effect of corruption on education comes from the fact that the government spends relatively more on items to make room for *graft* (Shleifer & Vishny, 1993; Lipset & Lenz, 2002). And corrupt government officials would shift government expenditures to areas in which they can collect bribes easily. Large and hard-to-manage projects, such as airports or highways, make fraud easy. In addition, poverty and income inequalities are tied to corruption (Lipset & Lenz 2000). Development projects are often made unnecessarily complex in Nigeria to justify the corrupt and huge expense on it.

Despite the immoral aspect and pernicious effects of corruption, some scholars have argued that corruption can be beneficial to political development or "political modernization" (Mauro, 2007). Political modernization or development means growth in the capacity of a society's governmental structures and processes to maintain their legitimacy over time (presumably in time of social change) by contributing to economic development, national integration and administrative capacity, and so on (Lipset & Lenz, 2002). We would not get entangled with the different scales used for measuring political development. Nevertheless, *Max Gluckman* opined that scandals associated with corruption sometimes have the effect of strengthening a value system of a society as a whole. This is probably true in relation to Nigeria.

The Evils of Corruption

Many studies have been conducted that show the evils or consequences of corruption. And corruption has taught the Nigeria a dangerous and wrong lesson that it does not pay to be honest, hardworking and law-abiding. Through corrupt means many political office holders acquire wealth and properties in and outside Nigeria; and many display their wealth (which is beyond the means), but the society does not blink. This has made politics a big business in Nigeria, because anything spent to secure a political office is regarded as an investment, which matures immediately one gets into office (*The Guardian*, July 14, 2002).

Corruption wastes skills as precious time is often wasted to set up unending committees to fight corruption, and to monitor public projects. It also leads to aid forgone. Some foreign donors do not give aid to corrupt nations. For instance, the *International Monetary Fund* (IMF) has withdrawn development support from some nations that are notoriously corrupt. And the *World Bank* has introduced tougher anti-corruption standards into its lending policies to corrupt countries. Similarly, other organizations such as the *Council of*

Europe and the *Organization of American States* are taking tough measures against international corruption (OECD, 1997). Corruption is politically destabilizing, as it leads to social revolution and military takeovers. Most "post-coup rationalizations" in less developed worlds point to corruption.

Corruption causes a reduction in quality of goods and services available to the public, as some companies could cut corners to increase profit margins. Corruption affects investment, economic growth, and government expenditure choices; it also reduces private investment (Mauro 1997). Bribery and corruption, the culture of late payment, delays or refusal of payment for services already done, are according to the Lord Bishop of Guilford, David Peck, scaring away British investors from Nigeria. He noted that those who fail to pay companies for services done seem to forget that the life blood of any company is its cash flow. And rightly points out that the price of corruption is poverty (Daily Trust, July 9, 2002).

Corruption discourages honest effort and valuable economic activities; and it breeds inefficiency and nepotism. Corruption leads to possible information distortion as it cooks the books; and a high level of corruption can make public policies ineffective (Sen, 1999). Above all, corruption can tarnish the image of a country. As we have seen, Nigeria suffers more than most nations from an appalling international image created by its inability to deal with corruption and bribery.

Corruption is also destructive of governmental structures and capacity. Corruption can destroy the legitimacy of a government. Corruption may alienate modern-oriented civil servants and may cause them to reduce or withdraw their service or to leave the country. Corruption is one of the reasons for the '*brain drain*' phenomenon in Nigeria (talented professionals leaving the country in search of employment somewhere else). In Nigeria, you can hardly enter an office and get your 'file signed except you drop' some money. Even the security personnel at the door of every office will ask for tips (bribe). In other words, corruption leads to slow moving files that get through the desk of officers once the interested parties have compromised themselves. It also leads to missing files that (would) resurface immediately the desk officer is settled...' (Oloja; 2002).

Succinctly, corruption diverts scarce public resources into private pockets, literally undermines effective governance, endangers democracy and erodes the social and moral fabric of nations. As it has been noted the lust for power and corruption (and *dash*) as gift known in Nigeria, is not strictly a Nigerian problem. Corruption is a global phenomenon and manifest in both *Petty* and *Grand* forms. Will it be possible for Nigeria to effectively tame the scourge of corruption in the society and manage effectively government business?

Effective Control of Corruption and Management of Government Business

Some human ailments could require many doses of medicines to be treated. Similarly, the menace of corruption, which has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigeria, would require all the necessary *medicines* to effectively control it. In other words, no single and simple remedies will do it; and the problem cannot be solved overnight, because, as we have noted, corruption has been ingrained into the fabric of the society. Nigeria has, in theory, the solutions in the book to tackle corruption; but like other issues (poverty, etc) bedeviling the nation, *implementations* of the laws are the *Achilles heel* (a vulnerable point) of the society (*The Guardian*, July 10, 2002). Osoba (1996) noted that one of the reasons why the measures against corruption have not been fruitful in Nigeria is that they have operated at a level [of mere] symbolism. Yes, corruption has defied all measures adopted to combat it in Nigeria, apparently, because those warring the corruption-wars are themselves corrupt. In the name of turning Nigeria into a corruption-free society, the nation has experimented with many policies. It has tried the judicial commissions of enquiry, the *Code of Conduct Bureau*. It had wrestled with the *Public Complaints Commission* to no avail. Also it fiddled with the *Mass Mobilization for Social Justice and Economic Recovery* (MAMSER), and the *National Open Apprenticeship* (NOA), but corruption instead blossomed. Then, *General Buhari* clobbered Nigerians with his horsewhip branded the *War Against Indiscipline and Corruption* (WAIC), without success. The civilian administration of President *Olusegun Obasanjo* instituted an *Independent Corrupt Practices Commission* (ICPC), which seems to have power only over the corrupt poor.

Any society faced with the challenges of corruption will continue to find ways to break the circle. Dike, (2002) has argued that Nigeria cannot effectively control the menace of corruption in the nation by merely instituting probe panels. It was suggested that to tame the surge of corruption in Nigeria, the general population should be re-orientated to a better value system. This is because Nigerians have for long been living on the *survival of the fittest* and *grab-whatever-comes-your-way* mentality (Dike, 1999). The re-orientation of the youth in Nigeria to a good value system could help in the war against corruption. The *World Values Surveys* of 1990-1993 had a lot of attitudes and values information, which notes a relationship between values and corruption (*World Values Study Group*, 1994). Preaching the gospel and practice of virtue is the ultimate solution to behavioral change and reduction in corruption. Their productivity could increase, which would mean enough goods and services, prosperity and economic growth, and which would in turn allow the citizens the *freedoms* to live a meaningful life. Some of our leaders are doing everything they can to make the work of the police impossible. Big men are the greatest criminals and except you go after the big criminals and bring them to book, the rate of crime may not reduce.

To effectively manage government business and win the war on corruption, adherence to ethical standards in decision-making must be the foundation of the nation's policies. Without ethics –i.e. set of moral principles or values or principles of conducts governing an individual or a group (*Websters New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1980, p. 389), in the conduct of the affairs of the nation (public and business), the apparent wars on corruption in Nigeria will not be successful. In other words, without ethics, any money budgeted toward fighting corruption in Nigeria is a thing cast to the *wild cat*. Nigeria has to make laws and implement them to the letters. As *Aristotle* insists, the aim of ethical philosophy is practical - to make us better men - (*The Philosophy of Aristotle*, *Bambrough* (ed.), p. 280; *This Day*, May 26, 2002). And to win the war on corruption, Nigeria has to fortify the institutional checks and balances among the country's major social forces and the separation of powers within the government (Dahl 1998). The nation has to make sure that those entrusted to execute the war on corruption are men and women who recognize and always do what is right.

Armed with ethics and virtue, the nation should then set out to reduce personal gains to corrupt behavior with tough penalties on the culprits. Making tough rules with vigorous enforcement can deter corrupt behavior. The nation should not grant too much discretionary powers to officers who are in position to grant favor to others (businessmen in particular), such as officer who issue out licenses and passports (These officers often create artificial scarcity to attract bribes from the desperate public). There is the temptation to be corrupt when the officials who have a lot of power are themselves poor (Sen 2000, pp. 275-276). The Nigerian police should be upgraded in status, and be well trained, well equipped and well paid (and on time too). The police should become an *elite profession*, which would be open only to those with good moral character. If the police and other security agents (for instance, customs and the military), will learn and understand their limits (not to harass and kill innocent citizens) and follow the rules, things might improve in Nigeria.

This is not to suggest that upper level officers could not be corrupt. Top bureaucrats with excessive powers could abuse them. The effects of power on those who wield it are well stated in 1887 by *Lord Acton*, who noted that Power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely (Dahl 1998, p. 73). Before this time a British statesman, *William Pitt*, observed in a speech that *unlimited power*, is apt to corrupt the minds of those who possess it (Sen, 2000, p. 73). The *mass media* has a crucial role to play in the campaign to educate the people of their rights as citizens, and in exposing the rogues. Nothing chills *nonsense* more than exposure to thin air. The nation should erect permanent structures in the society to constantly tackle corruption, instead of setting up *ad-hoc* corruption-panels here and there. The citizens have a role to play in the war against corruption so as to effectively manage government businesses: they should always try to resist the temptation to offer bribes to corrupt government officials, as it takes two to tango.

To deal with corruption in ancient, many bureaucrats were paid a corruption-preventing allowance *yang lien-* as incentive to remain clean and law-abiding (Alatas, 1980; Klitgaard, 1988). To *Amartya Sen* a payment system of this kind can help reduce corruption through what he calls its income effect, as the officer who gets this payment may be less in need of making a quick buck. This type of payment will also have

what he calls substitution effect. The officer receiving the payment would know that corrupt behavior may involve serious loss of a high-salary employment if things were to go bad (that is, if he or she is caught with his or her hand in the *cookie jar*) (Sen, 2000). In some cases, how people behave in a society depends on how they see and perceive others behave. If the prevailing behavior in a country is bad, others could imitate the behavior. However, the *lousy* argument would be that others do the same. This was one of the cited reasons for corrupt behavior when the Italian parliament investigated the linkage between corruption and the *Mafia* in 1993. Thus, corrupt behavior encourages other corrupt behavior, moreover when the culprits go unpunished. But respect for rules, honest and upright behavior is certainly bulwark against corruption in many societies (Sen, 2000).

Sadly, corruption is now a high-profile issue in Nigeria; and those who are to manage the government business and have political power are the main culprits. News of corruption always oozes out from the National and States Assembly, but nobody has been prosecuted. And many of them often engage in frivolous oversea trips while civil servants in their states go for months without getting paid their salary and lecturers are persistently on strike for non implementation of agreements. It is appropriate to emphasize the importance of good and enforceable policies toward controlling corrupt behavior and manage effectively government business. Policies should be reviewed periodically to close any loophole and to catch-up with events in the society. Toward this, *Robert S. McNamara*, former presidents of the *World Bank* and *Ford Motor Corporation*, has argued that for any campaign against corruption to be successful in Sub-Saharan Africa, certain characteristics should be common in the plans against corruption. His suggestions on how to control corruption in the region include to:

- 1) Require direct, clear and forceful support of the highest political authority: the president or prime minister;
- 2) Introduce transparency and accountability in government functions, particularly in all financial transactions;
- 3) Encourage a free press and electronic media to forcefully report to the public on corrupt practices in the society;
- 4) Organize civil society to address the problems of corruption brought to light by the process of transparency and the activity of the media;
- 5) Introduce into government watch-dog agencies - anti-corruption bureaus; inspectors general; auditors general and *ombudsmen* [*government official appointed to receive and investigate complaints made by individuals against abuses or capricious acts of public officials*, etc] - which will identify corruption practices and bring them to public attention;
- 6) Minimize and simplify government regulations, particularly those involving the issuance of licenses, permits and preferential positions, thereby restricting opportunities for rent seeking by corrupt means.
- 7) Insert anti-bribery clauses into all major procurement contracts and with the assistance of both international financial institutions and bilateral aid agencies insist that international corporations, bidding on African procurement contracts, accept such clauses and the penalties associated with their violation.
- 8) Introduce similar anti-bribery clauses into contracts relating to privatization of government enterprises, and the development of natural resources.
- 9) Ensure that enforcement is predictable and forceful;
- 10) To criminalize the acts of bribery; prohibit the deduction of bribes for tax purposes; and erect barriers to transfer to western financial institutions of financial gains derived from corrupt practices
- 11) *Declaration of Assets*: The state should require that all high-level Nigerian officials (Presidents, Ministers, Legislative officers, Central bank governors, Police and Customs Chiefs, Military Generals), sign a statement granting permission to banks (both local and foreign), real estate or investment house to disclose any personal assets they may hold. Breaking this veil of secrecy, it has been argued, is crucial if assets declarations are to be verified and accountability enforced (Diamond, 1992);

- 12) *Withholding of Aid*: International donors (the *IMF* and *World Bank*) can be helpful by cutting off completely distribution of assistance to any country marked for high-level corruption;
- 13) *Scrutiny for sources of income*: As was pointed out above, scrutinizing individual depositors of huge sum of money, by financial institutions for sources, would go a long way to curbing looting of national treasury by civil servants.

CONCLUSION

Radical approach to policy-making in a trust deficit environment is not likely to be successful. In such an environment, policy reform should follow a process of open consentience building with a leadership that understands citizens' rights. Nigeria cannot be seen as secure and free until the people's human rights are respected and protected by the government. Thus, the world cannot be considered secure if many people lack the elementary condition for life worthy of man. Similarly, Nigeria cannot be considered secure if millions of people go hungry, do not have a roof over their heads and to be jobless and sick indefinitely, with the most basic human right, the right to life is disregarded. Through it all, to tame corruption and effectively management government business, Nigeria has to use *words* as well as *actions* as a multifaceted approach. Finally, good governance, transparency, accountability and the rule of law are the keys to tackling corruption in our society and effectively manage government business in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Nigerians can still reduce the trust deficit index in governance by emphasizing accountability of public office holders. Policies should be reviewed periodically to close any loophole and to catch-up with events in the society. Thus, Accountability in any society begins by holding institutions and their leaders' accountable, building mechanisms to comply with the terms of accountability and transparently reporting on performance. Accountability is a necessary adjunct to the power that government exercises in our society. If corruption is the most damaging disease that any organization must confront, then accountability and transparency are the major cures. In the practical operation of governance, accountability connotes that government should be run in such an open manner as to encourage participation seen as the competitive tendering of government contracts. The success of public governance will ultimately be judged by the citizens not by those in governments. It is people (citizens) who are demanding greater transparency and accountability from government as well as greater public participation in shaping policies that affect their lives. The strategy for communicating and managing the reform process must be robust and people centered. That in a federation a strong national oversight structure should be established in order to ensure accountability and performance at all levels of governance.

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