



Grappling with Corruption in Democratic Nigeria: A Paradigm of Felix Akinsipe's Dawn of Awareness

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Abstract

Nigeria, especially since its return to democratic governance in 1999, has been inherently laden and plagued with the malady known as corruption. Corruption remains the greatest undoing and bane of the nation's socio-economic and political development as well as democratic consolidation. Evidently, the menace of corruption in a democratic ambience as Nigeria corrodes public trust in the system, magnifies unemployment and intensifies underdevelopment in all sectors of the economy. It is akin to a cancerous disease that spreads very rapidly through the host, destroys cells, weakens the body and in the process of time kills its victim. Although it pervades every strata of the society, this study is an exploration of the concept and context of political corruption with regards to political elites who hold positions of authority and in control of the society's common wealth as exemplified in the play, Dawn of Awareness by Felix Akinsipe. This paper argues that sustainable development and political stability in Nigeria will remain a mirage for as long as political corruption continue to hold sway and remain unimpeded by not curbing the impunity with which political office holders indulge in corrupt practices. The paper recommends that stringent punitive measures must be put in place as well as value re-orientation for all public officers holding leadership positions.

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1.0 Introduction

There is no gainsaying that since Nigeria returned to civilian rule and a government modelled on democracy, corruption has continued to thrive and remained the bane of national development, democratic stability and life of the citizenry. Corruption is an age old phenomena which constitutes a limp in the walk of human and societal progress. As a global phenomenon, it is not an uncommon sickening word that has remained a major cause for concern and a topic of endless discussions in almost all aspects of our daily lives, and virtually across the globe. Corruption like pride, which is a disease that gets everyone sick except the one that has it, is not peculiar to any country of the world for the simple obvious fact that every country has people of questionable characters. It transcends national boundaries, ethnic, regional and/or religious barriers. It is ubiquitous and exists under different specific circumstances in various societies but its occurrence is more grave in developing nations like Nigeria where it has somewhat become a culture – a way of life. At the heart of Nigeria's existential crises are corruption and bad governance in which John Sani Illah philosophically expressed on Facebook with the caption *Nigeria's Corruption*:

Corruption is a global enterprise with deep roots! It is like Ebola. It destroys the moral fabric of a nation. It is only different because it is able to launder itself, that is make itself palatable, make itself the norm, rather than an aberrant. It does this by franchising itself, by building schools, by hiring spokesmen, by enlisting professors to speak on its behalf, even theorise about it giving it legitimization; by owning media houses, sponsoring editorial opinion and journalistic reportage, by masquerading itself in the dialogue of the social media, making a fetish of evil! Everywhere you look, those who speak against it appear strange! Try to unmask it and clergy race to the pulpit, raise militias, run errands for buying ammunitions, serve as decoy, rent a crowd to protest, enlist ethnic jingoism and bombast, engage in smear campaigns! Look at FIFA, IAAF, look at Syria, look at the gun lobby in the USA, look at the budget paddings in the National Assembly, criminals appearing in court in wheel chairs or hospital beds, lawyers in starched wigs; Governors who pay workers quarter salaries, and the road to Imane is still a patchwork, pensioners are dying lining up in the sun, Ministers are on the take... It is an exceeding evil... It is a goat song..! (www.facebook.com/JohnSaniEgwugwuIllah)

Corruption has, hitherto, had negative colossal impacts on the lives of many Nigerians and, as such, provoked their resentment. It permeates all spheres of the country, deeply rooted in the Nigerian government, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and both public and private sectors. The Nigerian climate stinks with sores of corruption which has apparently afflicted the political entity of the Nigerian state. This corroborates the constant rating of Nigeria as one of the topmost corrupt nations in the world by

Transparency International (TI) which is the global watchdog on corruption. Consequently, corruption is widespread and not lacking in places of worship, family institutions, academic institutions (primary, secondary and other higher levels), markets, traditional village gatherings amongst so many other setups. Where and when the menace of corruption is unchecked, it certainly becomes a clog in the nation's wheel of progress.

It is evident that political corruption is more prevalent in Nigeria and accounts for why past leadership failed to sensibly consolidate on the gains of democracy. Although several efforts and strategies have been made in the past to grapple with this malady called corruption, it still lingers. According to Onuigbo and Eme:

The institutional model started in 1977 by the Jaji declaration by president Olusegun Obasanjo; the Ethical Revolution of Shagari in 1981; War Against Indiscipline by Buhari in 1984; National Orientation Movement by Babangida in 1986; Mass Mobilization for Social Justice by Babangida in 1987; War Against Indiscipline and Corruption in 1996 by Abacha to the Independent Corrupt Practices (and Other Related Offences) Commission by Obasanjo in 2000 and the Economic and Financial Crime Commission 2002 by Obasanjo (7).

Despite these efforts, the present administration of President Muhammadu Buhari is still battling to curb corrupt activities although huge progress are being made in the operation to level down the mountain of corruption. This paper pays primary attention to political elites at the helm of affairs in government with regards to the socio-political vice of misappropriation/mishandling of values and resources at the expense of the needs of the masses as mirrored in the play, *Dawn of Awareness*. Also, with regards to combating corruption for a better society and democratic consolidations, allusion is made to the present administration of President Buhari.

2.0 Overview of Historical Development of Democracy in Nigeria

Democracy in Nigeria did not just begin in 1999. The journey has been for long although the longest stint democratic governance has had in the country has been from 1999 hitherto – spanning over sixteen years. Since independence from Britain in the year 1960, it has been a peregrination from civil to military rule, military to civil rule, and even an interim government did surface in the process. According to Ige, cited in Onolememe (44), after independence in 1960, ethnic tensions and bitter disputes ensued and escalated rapidly following the censuses of 1962 and 1963 as well as the trial and imprisonment of leading politicians whom the Prime Minister – Tafawa Balewa – accused of treason. On January 15, 1966, a group of army officers led by Gen. Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi led a coup that killed Balewa and several others. They succeeded in overthrowing the central and regional governments, and replaced the federal system of government with a central government. Riots broke out as a result with so many persons reportedly killed. On the

29 July of 1966, a group of northern army officers dissented and staged a countercoup that killed Agui-Ironsi, leading to an appalling history of military coups in the country. The then army of Chief of Staff, Gen. Yakubu Gowon was appointed as the head of the military government. Between 1967 and 1970 Nigeria suffered from the civil war which was between Biafran agitators and the remainder of Nigeria. In 1975, there was yet another coup that overthrew Gowon and ushered in Gen. Murtala Muhammed as new military head of the country. His tenure did not last very long as he was assassinated on February 13th, 1976. Next to steer the military ship of state was Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo from 1976 to 1979 when he eventually resigned (*Political History of Nigeria*).

By 1979, the country returned to civil rule and elections for the second republic took place in July with Shehu Shagari emerging as the president. A bloodless military coup on New Year's Eve in 1983 ended the democratically elected government of Shagari and ushered in another military regime headed by Major Gen. Muhammadu Buhari. His administration was somewhat widely acclaimed for his blunt condemnation of economic mismanagement and indiscipline. However, with a rigid policy of economic austerity and other strict measures, Buhari's support waned and in August of 1985, Gen. Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida toppled his government. In 1993, Nigerians returned to the polls in June to elect Social Democratic Party candidate, Moshood Abiola, who, according to reports, secured 58 per cent of the general votes to be the winner. But on the eve of the election results, Babangida annuls the election. However, in August of the same year, Babangida steps down and appoints an interim government headed by Ernest Shonekan that lasted just for about three months before Gen. Sani Abacha seized power in November (Ogbeidi 9). Abacha, who suddenly died in 1998, was the last major military ruler. It is noteworthy that for most of Nigeria's independent history, the country was ruled by series of military juntas. Abacha's successor after his demise, Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar, promised a transition to democracy and, as such, a new constitution was adopted on May 5th, 1999. Subsequently, elections were held and retired Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo, who had previously governed Nigeria as a military ruler, was elected the first president of the fourth republic. This was the beginning of a new era of democratic governance as well as regular elections in the country and also marked the end of harsh military regime. So far, in the course of this present democratic journey which began in 1999, Nigeria has had four presidents—Olusegun Obasanjo, Umaru Musa Yar'adua, Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, and presently, Muhammadu Buhari.

3.0 Theoretical Framework

Amongst the several theories on politics in Africa with regards to the quagmire of endemic corruption, the theory of two publics developed by Peter Ekeh (1975) is more suitable to this study as it provides credible insight into the subject. According to Ekeh, the emergence of two publics is as a result of colonialism. The two realms - the primordial and civic public realms – are related differently with the private realm in terms of morality. His theses are that only rights (i.e. benefits) are expected from the state by its citizens, who

owe duties (responsibilities) to a native sector. The former (being the state) forms the basis of an “amoral civic public realm,” while the latter (citizens) a “moral primordial public realm.” In so doing, the civic public realm was associated with illegitimate and exploitative colonial rule and had no moral linkages with the private realm. It was an amoral public realm in which cheating the system was considered a patriotic duty (Ifidon 102). The implication of this, in the view of Osaghae, is that as the same actors operate in the two realms, the state apparatus is employed to stuff and make plump the nest of the primordial public, thereby making corruption, nepotism, ethnicity and the likes the hallmark of the civic public (303). In the words of Ekeh:

A good citizen of the primordial public gives out and asks for nothing in return; a lucky citizen of the civic public gains from the civic but enjoys escaping giving anything in return whenever he can. But such a lucky man would not be a good man were he can channel all his lucky gains to his private purse. He will only continue to be a good man if he channels part of the largesse from the civic public to the primordial public. That is the logic of the dialectics. The unwritten law of the dialectics is that it is legitimate to rob the civic public in order to strengthen the primordial public. (108)

Furthermore, there are two dimensions to corruption in Ekeh’s “acme of the dialectics” namely the embezzlement of public fund from the civic public and the solicitation and acceptance of bribes from persons in search of services provided by the civic public by those who administer these services. Nonetheless, given Ekeh’s pertinent exposition on corruption in Africa, Ogunديya stresses that the robbery in the civic public was not and is not being presently employed to reinforce the primordial public but rather further pauperize it. Clearly, the primordial sentiment is only a tool of political deception, trickery and manipulation in the hands of the privileged political and bureaucratic elites for personal aggrandizement, the selfish advancement of their course and not for group benefits. Retrospectively, these stolen state wealth are being siphoned abroad by the political class to acquire estates in developed countries, buy chieftaincy titles across the country and establish a “political empire” (283-284). This is evident of the state of Anjuwon community in the play, *Dawn of Awareness*, as with most societies/nations of the African continent like Nigeria where political elites and representatives like Ibukun divert public resources for personal enrichment at the expense of the people’s well-being and development. As a result, soaring level of illiteracy, crippling poverty, perpetual hunger, the prevalence of avertible diseases and the likes turn out to be the miseries of the primordial public which is often at the receiving end of all corrupt practices.

4.0 Summary of the Play, *Dawn of Awareness*

The play centres on Ibukun's favoured rise from zero to hero and his eventual fall from a hero to a villain. Ibukun is a beneficiary of his community's sponsorship to further his education abroad after losing both his parents tragically when he was about completing his post-primary education. After several years of study, he returns with a doctorate degree in Mechanised Agriculture to a rapturous reception from the people of Anjuwon. This marked the beginning of his rise from relative obscurity to the forefront of political leadership. Kabiesi and the chiefs, who are convinced beyond all doubts that Ibukun would be a great asset to the community, deems him to be "reasonable, responsible and ready" to represent the people. Besides being appointed Councillor to represent the community at the Local Government Secretariat, he was well taken care of with one of Kabiesi's bungalows specially prepared for his accommodation just as the people also provided him with the necessary food items for comfort. But, as is the case with most unscrupulous representatives/leaders in positions of power in Nigeria and Africa generally, Ibukun turns his back on the community and decides to enrich himself at the detriment of the people's well-being and development of the community. Charmed by the colossal sums of money in his grip as a result of greed and selfishness, Ibukun goes on an embezzling spree as he bamboozles the people and diverts resources/projects meant for the community for personal benefit. He sees and uses the various projects introduced by government – the pipe-borne water, electricity and government-and-people-farming projects – as an opportunity to exploit and diddle the community of millions of naira. Even those he employed to work on the community farm land which he deceitfully made his own are sacked without three months' pay. Eventually, judgement day awaits Ibukun with the dawn of awareness on the part of Kabiesi, his chiefs and the people as they get to know that Councillor Ibukun had, all along, been "dribbling and drilling the village in silence." Cleverly, Kabiesi tricks Ibukun with the promise of a chieftaincy title which prompts him into inducing some of the chiefs with huge sums of money for endorsement. Ibukun also ingratiates himself with Kabiesi by giving him millions of naira and an expensive car each for him, his wife and daughter, Fadeke, whom he is made to believe would become his wife. With these significant recoveries, the "ayogan" calabash which contains the supreme power of the land and used to banish evil persons from the land was swiftly invoked on Ibukun. One of the calabashes was buried on the farm and the other in his apartment. In so doing, the community is liberated from the strangulating representative leadership of Ibukun the councillor.

5.0 Corruption and 'Politricks' Representation in View

Ibukun's return to his village, Anjuwon, from overseas brings to mind the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem which was commemorated by celebration and great enthusiastic reception from the people. Ibukun, like most would-be politicians who would later transmute into unscrupulous ones, arrived as a vibrant and learned innocent young man to the euphoric admiration of a people believed to have been blessed with a true leader who

will advance the course of the community towards positive development. Both the Kabiesi and his chiefs are convinced that Ibukun is the right choice to represent the community:

FIRST CHIEF: We want somebody who is reasonable, responsible and ready to defend our unity at all times.

SECOND CHIEF: If we must confess the truth, you possess these qualities. We can see them clearly in you. (p.18)

Accepting this noble leadership responsibility of representing the people at the Local Government Secretariat as a Councillor, Ibukun, in what looks like the everyday sugar-coated empty campaign promises of most politicians and also oath of office which they do not revere, emphatically avowed, “I promise before God and man to do my duties faithfully and diligently” (p.21). Besides being well paid as a councillor, the community caters for everything Ibukun needs – food and shelter – just to make sure he is comfortable enough to represent the people well and effectively. It is therefore no surprise today to see politicians make promises of all sorts to the people during campaigns but only to get into office and keep the people aloof. The people are thereby denied the necessary basic amenities/development and are further pushed down the line of impoverishment and backwardness while these gluttonous politicians enrich themselves and their households. Likewise, Ibukun wasted no time at all to selfishly renege on his promise at the cost of his community. He turned out to be a schemer who resorted to bamboozling and diddling the community out of huge amounts of money and the very much needed developmental projects. Senators get constituency allowances to develop their constituencies, Governors get subventions for their states, Chairmen also get subventions for the improvement of their communities, and so did Ibukun get funds from the government for developmental projects secured. But like most political leaders, these projects are subverted as funds are slyly siphoned for personal aggrandizement and other resources diverted for selfish course. Ibukun already traded the pipe borne water project awarded to Anjuwon yet deceived and tricked Kabiesi and the Chiefs into raising some money as a necessary measure if they are to edge ahead of Councillors from both Agere and Ejofi to get the project. He lies to Kabiesi and the Chiefs:

IBUKUN: There are some conditions that we have to satisfy before we can have the project.

KABIESI: What are these conditions? We must meet them.

FIRST CHIEF: Are they so high that they are beyond our reach?

IBUKUN: They are not so easy but not very difficult. I think we should be able to make it.

THIRD CHIEF: Let's hear them.

IBUKUN: For this project, the government is going to spend a total sum of ninety million naira.

SECOND CHIEF: Hun?

IBUKUN: Yes, so they need us to provide only one third of it which is thirty million naira. (p.44)

Although the money callously quoted is raised with the help of voluntary donation even from surrounding villages, Councillor Ibukun has another idea in place to perpetuate milking the people to fatten up as he pretentiously whimpered before Kabiesi and his Chiefs:

IBUKUN: We lost the pipe-borne water project (he sobs loud; nobody tries to stop him) I have failed.

IBUKUN: The people from Ejofi Local Government Area brought thirty-five million naira; the government thus broke their promise and gave it to them... (Exaggeratedly) Oh my life, I have failed. (54).

More so, the government-and-people-farming project, which only requires the awarded community to provide the farm land with the government providing the seedling and tractors, is never executed for the community but craftily carried out as a personal project. He claims the government had dropped the idea of the farming project but is quick to cunningly request taking over the cleared land for personal farming under the pretext of giving employment to those who will be working on it for him. Again, Ibukun lies to the people on account of the electricity project:

IBUKUN: I have started the negotiation for the electricity project which is the only thing left that the government is proposing to embark on for now, if not for its condition that are more than that of the pipe-borne water project I should have boasted that I will never fail again. (55)

This time, he wants to diddle the people out of a whooping sum of seventy million naira. Though a mountain task, the Kabiesi is ever determined to raise the amount in order to improve on the lot of his community without realising that Ibukun is actually having an ulterior motive. It is even more painful to see that the voluntary donation approach is no longer applied but compulsory donation with severe penalty for defaulters. In the words of Narrator, "...the villagers were molested. The respect for human rights, old age and womanhood was forgotten. This is a thing that has never happened in our village" (p.60). Besides these intentional and consciously worked out evil scheme and heinous trickery to drain the people into perpetual abject penury and underdevelopment, Ibukun sacks all one hundred and twenty workers on his farm without three months' pay over some flimsy excuse of the theft of two bags of fertilizers. It has often been said that "you can fool some of the people all the time but you cannot fool all the people all the time." This is corroborated by Narrator when he says, "you cannot always be wiser than everybody

every time. If you have a wise idea on a matter, there will be a wiser one and the wisest one but they may not come when yours is rated to be the wisest” (p.67). In no distant time, the scenario becomes a case of ‘ninety days for the thief, but one day for the owner.’ Kabiesi’s chiefs have gone to the secretariat to find out things for themselves and, now, know the truth that councillor Ibukun “has been dribbling and drilling the village in silence” (p.66) The Kabiesi, unlike some leaders today, now has a wiser and better idea to recover most if not all the stolen funds without the option of a ‘plea bargain’ or the promise of clemency as a *quid pro quo* for returned loots. Even more so, a stringent retributive action is taken to serve as deterrent to others that would come on board. At the promise of a chieftaincy title and conjugal ties to Fadake (Kabiesi’s daughter), Ibukun ignorantly buys a sumptuous car each for Kabiesi, Fadeke and her mother. Additionally, Kabiesi is given a huge sum of forty-five million naira. Desperate for the chieftaincy title, he extends this ignorant benevolence to the chiefs as well. First Chief is given two million naira; Second Chief gets forty-five million naira, same with Third Chief but in addition with the promise of insecticide for his cocoa farm. The die is cast, the pendulum has swung, and the hunter has become the hunted. Two “ayogan” calabashes which contains the supreme power of the land are invoked against Ibukun with one buried on the farm land and the other at his residence. He knows too very well and answered perfectly when he is made to believe he is being asked a chieftaincy prerequisite question on the significance of the “ayogan” calabash:

IBUKUN: It is used to expel notorious people from some palaces. It will be invoked against the person and then buried right where the person is forbidden to step. If he treks over it, that person will become mad and nothing on earth could cure him for life. (84)

He is later distressed and agitated to realise that the calabash of “ayogan” has been invoked against him. Beyond that, he is a broken man to imagine forfeiting all that he has sordidly amassed and are in the house. Ibukun’s mind is made up to go into the house and get them but is, in good conscience, reminded of the risk by Narrator. With Ibukun’s fate clearly sealed by greed and selfishness, Narrator candidly voice out:

Narrator: No use, the decorations on a pig, it will carry it to the swamp. The man that deserves to sleep on the floor, if put to bed, he will fall. There he goes to his final end. Whose fault? So, those of you like Ibukun today, just note; our people are no more blind, the great dawn has brought with it a total awareness. (90)

6.0 Effects of Corruption on Nigeria’s Democratic Objectives

Basically, selfishness, greed, lack of positive values and porous/weak legal system/institution are some of the main causes of this proliferated trend called corruption. This is evident of many African leaders like Ibukun who, as soon as they assume office, neglect services to their country or community while indefatigably serving their own personal interests. The consequences of corruption, whether political, judicial, economic or bureaucratic, in any given society for socio-economic and even political developments are gravely bad and astronomical. It has the capacity of impeding the process and progress of development in societies where such practices flourish. Corruption does no good to Nigeria's democracy as it erodes the meaning and true essence of democracy. In the words of Canice Esidene Erunke, "...corruption is a deviant behaviour that inhibits the rules and tenets of democracy, it also poses dangerous threat to the consolidation and objectives of democracy in Nigeria" (6). Corruption hinders economic growth and deters investment, brings about decline in social responsibilities just as the impact of development assistance is reduced and natural resources are over exploited causing further harm to a country's environmental assets. Resources are diverted from sectors such as education and health to less important sectors or personal enrichment. The rule of law is eroded and the people no longer respect or trust the state or nation. Unfairly, a handful of people manage to get rich and those already rich get richer at the expense of the entire society while the helpless and hapless poor citizens continue to wallow in abject penury and misery. In the long run, unchecked corruption which often destabilizes a society further pushes more and more people into this valley of the shadow of death to battle for survival.

Atelhe and Agada expressly remarks in bluntness:

The menace of political corruption leads to slow movement of files in offices, police extortions at tollgates and slow traffic on the highways, port congestion, queues at passport offices and petrol stations, ghost workers syndrome, election irregularities, among others. Thus, it is believed by many in the society that political corruption is the bane of Nigeria. It brings about fundamentally distorted public policy, and governance, and adversely harms the poor masses. It further misdirects investable capital, and budgetary resources away from the provision of health, education and social amenities etc. Clearly corruption has eaten deep into the Nigerian public lives (305).

7.0 Corruption and the Anti-Corruption Combat in Nigeria

Nigeria is a very 'religious' society where so many are proud and would scream aloud their faith. Yet, the country is not in short supply of persons who do not value integrity, virtue or moral principles. As a result, the nation has, for so long, derailed and wallowed on the path of decay, setting itself on self-destruct. The characterisation of corruption in Nigeria today will be for different people different things; different strokes for different folks. Based on the evident socio-political and economic realities of the society, the idea of corruption amongst Nigerians will certainly differ:

It means that thousands of infants die before their first birthday due to poverty, hunger and poor ante-natal care.

It means that millions of Nigerians survive on less than a dollar per day.

It means that the life expectancy of the average adult Nigerian is less than fifty years.

It means that malaria is on the rampant because so many people do not have access to the supposedly free insecticide treated nets.

It means that majority of students have no choice but to learn under an unpleasant structure and non-conducive atmosphere while the leaders/administrations take a cavalier attitude towards educational decay in the country because their children all study abroad.

It means that our roads have become death traps because somebody somewhere, who does not ply the road, has refused to fix them.

It means that relief materials and monetary aid meant for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are eventually distributed but not to them.

It means that farmers, most of the time, do not get desired harvest because fertilizers meant for them are hoarded and diverted.

It means that a lot of graduates remain unemployed for the rest of their lives just because they know no one to pull the strings for them even when they merit the jobs.

It means that job seekers do not get jobs because they do not speak the same language or share the same ethnic background with employers or because a job seeker refuses to succumb and satisfy the depraved sexual appetite of an employer.

It means that shameless politicians and unethical rich men take iniquitous delight in sleeping with other people's daughters who are young enough to be their grandchildren.

It means that the price a student must pay to pass an examination is sleeping with the lecturer in charge.

It means that pensioners are left to die of hunger and ailment because payment of their gratuities/retirement benefits is often delayed owing to pension funds diversion.

It means that *monkey dey work baboon dey chop*.

It means that money meant for the procurement of arms and ammunitions to combat insurgency are misappropriated.

Ultimately, it means that the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer.

For so long now, Nigeria has continued to drown in the ocean of corruption with so little or no serious measure taken to extricate the country from such precarious quagmire which is a setback to the general productive cohesion, growth and development of the

nation and its resources. Literally, the stench of corruption which seems to be everywhere continues to choke us despite the 'scary' presence of EFCC (Economic and Financial Crimes Commission) and ICPC (Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offense Commission) – two 'powerful' anti-graft agencies established to clamp down on activities or persons emitting corrupt odour. So pungent is the stench of corruption such that a foreigner, on first visit, could tell the very moment he/she steps foot on the Nigerian soil even when blindfolded. The signs and images of corruption are so unambiguous and not obscured to prove, in any way, a test to neither the visual acuity of the blind nor that of the mentally deranged. From the pastor/priest who steals church money or sacrifice the truth on the altar of personal aggrandisement, the trader in the market who exploits the consumers/buyers, the witness in a court room who perverts the truth after swearing an oath/affidavit, the student who cheats to pass exams or the parents who consent to their children going to 'miracle centres,' both the policeman who collects bribe and the citizen who willingly gives it, and to the man who opts for shortcuts rather than go through due process, corruption pervades every sector and segment of our lives. It runs deep and wide. Understandably, the spotlight is often brighter on top government officials and public office holders given the reality that the head of a human being, which is at the top, is most conspicuous. Every other part of the body could easily be seen but the face which is an integral part of the head is primary to one's identity. This goes to show why the photograph of a human face is all that is needed to reveal identity in the case of a missing or wanted person. Be that as it may, with the present administration of President Buhari which has as its guiding philosophy the *Change* mantra, perhaps all hope is not lost. Fully aware of the threat that stealing and other forms of corruption pose to national development (because it is often public funds that are stolen/syphoned), Buhari has often, even before his victory at the polls, lamented that "if we don't kill corruption in Nigeria, corruption will kill Nigeria" in the nearest future. So far, given the rugged and dogged anti-corruption crusade of this administration, the expectations of many Nigerians for an unprecedented reform that will possibly purge the society of corrupt public office holders or curb the scourge of corruption have gained colossal momentum. However, this fight against corruption has not failed to spark off ambivalent reaction from Nigerians on the grounds that the effort is one-sided, inequitable and prejudiced against members and all those having ties with the opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP) – the erstwhile ruling party. Democracy in Nigeria, after over sixteen years of its return, and still believed by many to be a baby to be looked after, has been under the tutelage of too many 'honourables' lacking in moral honour. Although difficult to exhaustively recount past incidences of corruption in the country, one too many such cases of treasury looting have remained stamped indelibly on our memories because they were swept under the rug with justice either served with underserving leniency or never served at all. These include but not limited to: The \$620,000 bribery scandal involving Femi Otedola and Farouk Lawan which was loaded with strange models of misconduct (*This Day Live Online* 2 Nov. 2012); the N469 billion Police pension fund scam/Alhaji Abdulrasheed Maina's case of financial

rascality with ridiculous undertones and an alarming degree of wantonness (*The Sun Online* 15 Feb. 2013). Maina is one of the most notorious public servants in the history of contempt of constitutional authority in Nigeria. He holds the record of being the first to push the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to a compelling level of issuing an arrest warrant on a public servant after he flouted and refused to appear before two senate committee the six times he was invited; the N628 million house renovation scam involving Nigeria's first ever female Speaker of the House of Representatives, Patricia Olubunmi Foluke Ete. She remained a 'distinguished' and 'honourable' member of the House of Reps even after she was eventually forced to relinquish her position as speaker following weeks of pressure characterised by chaos and commotion on the floor of the house. In another development, the outgoing members of the House, in 2011, exonerated her of alleged wrongdoing in the saga of 2007 (*Daily Trust Online* 2 June 2011); the missing N16 billion allegedly recovered from ex-IGP, Mustafa Adebayo Balogun. Balogun who was arraigned before a Federal High Court in 2005 on charges which involved obtaining massive sums of money through theft, money laundering and other sources, made a plea bargain in exchange for returning 'much' of the property and money. He was then sentenced to just six months in prison and released on February 9th, 2006 after serving his sentence, part of it in Abuja National Hospital. Yet, the EFCC stated that it had no records of the exact properties recovered from the IGP (*Guardian* 4 April 2005); or the 'master of deception' – Diepreye Alamiyeseigha – who mastered and perfected the art and act of costume and make-up so well that he gave it the much needed verisimilitude. Although no more today, he leaves behind memories of his alleged disgraceful heroics in absconding and jumping bail from the United Kingdom with his astute sense of transvestism – perhaps a performance that prompted the immediate past President to grant him state pardon on the 12th of March 2013.

In more recent times, still a bitter pill for a lot of Nigerians to swallow is the mind-boggling purchase of two armoured cars worth N255 million by the former 'honourable' Minister of Aviation, Stella Oduah, in the immediate past administration (*Daily Independent* 6 Nov. 2013). Even though the President left it too little too late before having her replaced in the manner of cabinet reshuffling, it continued to stir up mixed reaction from Nigerians because no obvious appropriate action was taken in the face of an apparent case of misappropriation of public fund that has no iota of justification. Today, she is a 'distinguished' and 'honourable' Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Unfortunately, this is the case with so many other instances which has continued to encourage others to audaciously follow suit knowing also they stand the chance of escaping the sword of justice. If it were to be in a developed country, such people would have resigned honourably and voluntarily.

In light of the above and many other of such scenarios, it is clear that previous governments in the country have always taken cavalier attitude to the problem of corruption. To most Nigerians, the shilly shallies of these past administrations to resolutely halt the scourge of corruption is tantamount to government acquiescence with

it. The rigmaroles are purely reflective of the pervasive nature of corruption under those administrations and how they made corruption triumphant/celebrated in many ways; a virtue instead of a vice and an instrument for becoming government's "sacred cow." The recent 2014 chaotic and failed nationwide Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) recruitment says it all. As widely reported, over 6.5 million Nigerians applied and paid a fee of N1, 000 each for a handful of 4000 NIS vacant positions (*Vanguard* 28 Mar. 2014). What a sheer camouflaged extortion! Currently, one corruption case that has stunned the country is the Dasukigate saga which is filled with realisations of shady activities in the immediate past administration. With revelations continuing to be made on the mind-boggling \$2.1 billion arms deal involving former National Security Adviser (NSA), Colonel Sambo Dasuki (*Vanguard* 9 Dec. 2015), Nigerians have been left flabbergasted at the level of theft in the immediate past administration. This suspense-filled epic Dasukigate episode is apparently far from over because it just might have popped open a Pandora's box. Nigerians should therefore fasten their seatbelts and get their shock absorbers greased because it is likely going to be a real rollercoaster voyage of startling revelations and outrageous twists and turns. The fight against corruption by this administration is on and in full force. It must continue without the momentum waning if the country is to be salvaged from the insidious and corrosive effect of corruption on its integrity, dignity and identity before the eyes of the world. Hopefully 'the fear of Buhari and his administration will be the beginning of sanity and order.'

8.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Corruption is akin to a cancerous disease and has prevailed in all tiers of government hitherto with all its various sordid forms which include extortion, graft, bribery, scam, money laundering, cronyism, nepotism, favouritism, embezzlement, fraud amongst many others. A cure from an advanced form of cancer such as corruption in Nigeria, which has long reached an outrageous apogee and epidemic proportion, has become a rarity in the number of cases that it happens. It requires a dire surgical and other scientific or medical intervention with some large dose of divine succour. Where cancer is treated with levity or laxity, the patient is a living dead. Democracy has really not thrived in Nigeria as a result of corruption even though a democratic government is originally an anti-corruption design. Corruption is responsible for the dearth of human development and citizen's happiness which are all important goals of democracy. Worst still, in the immoral eyes of corrupt politicians like Ibukun, political offices are avenues of oppression and selfish wealth accumulation. Anazodo, Igbokwe and Nkaiya notes:

Corruption in Nigeria has become so pervasive to the extent that young men and women do not see the essence of doing the right thing or going to school to learn because they see daily how illiterates and half-baked educated ones control billions of naira while the highly educated once conducting research that is contributing to advancement of knowledge and the society are looked at with scorn (51).

Fundamentally, for corruption not to become a de facto way of life, the cost of corruption should be made to be higher than the gains. Stringent punitive measures must be put in place if we must absolutely or significantly excise from the land or curb the malignant tumour called corruption which has eaten deep into the fabrics of our efficiency and effectiveness. As an “ayogan” measure that indicates a round peg of solution in a round hole of problem, this paper strongly recommends that political office holders found guilty of corruption should be jailed for years corresponding with their age. They should be made to spend half of those years doing community service in their respective constituencies/communities so that the people can, on frequent basis, behold the justified humiliation and dishonour of a crook son/daughter. The other half they must spend in prison. It is because the impunity with which political office holders indulge in corrupt practices is not tackled, such that they do not get the deserved comeuppance for crimes committed to serve as deterrent to all and sundry, that corruption has continued to gain more grounds and spread like wild fire. More than a warning sign, this “ayogan” measure would become a dreaded sign for intending perpetrators to have a rethink. Those who would not budge and desist from corrupt acts will only have themselves to blame like Ibukun and the proverbial stubborn fly that will always go with the corpse to the grave. In this regard, suffice to say that the man who decides to close his eyes in prayer while driving on the highway should not be mad at his God when he finds himself in the land of the great beyond, perhaps in hell, because that is a wilful idiotic suicide in every sense of it. Additionally, we recommend that the country’s anti-graft agencies – Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) – should be fortified and turned into an independent body but not in the manner of INEC’s autonomy which is largely only theoretical. Rather than be under the control of government even at various levels, these agencies should be regulated by civil society organisations, religious bodies, professional bodies and other pressure groups. The media also has a huge role to play in the fight against corruption. As a matter of necessity, the mass media must rise to the occasion as watchdog of the society and uncompromisingly engage in investigative journalism so as to continually blow its whistle against corruption and bad governance before the public. Value re-orientation of leaders and followers alike remain sacrosanct and should be made a constant exercise in the body polity. Finally, it is imperative we all go through a process of self and individual conscience trial, spiritual and moral rebirth. When we look at ourselves in the mirror, let our reflection become an accused standing trial and our true being the judge of our moral uprightness. Until our minds are re-directed in the right perspective with utmost reverence for God and humanity and our consciousness re-awakened to serve as the seat of God’s essence and mercy in our lives, we might all in one way or another, someday and somehow, be caught in this atrocious web of corruption.

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From Primary Orality to Secondary Orality: Internationalizing Eggonyum Onzho Theatre in the Age of Globalization

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Abstract

There are two sides to the phenomenon of globalization: the positive and the negative. On the negative side, it is apparent that indigenous cultures and performances are being dangerously diluted and annihilated due to the unprecedented proliferation of globalized values and norms. On the positive however, globalization has opened up many cultures to the world by removing physical distances and space, creating a phenomenon of cultural syncretism evident in information and communication technologies. In this paper, the researcher tries to examine the possibility of internationalizing *Nyum Onzho* and some aspects of the theatre in order to promote, showcase and project its theatricality across the world through the instrumentality of the variables of globalization such as the television, video-film format and internet sources. Among the Eggon, a story is called *Onzho* and the art of the storytelling itself is called *Nyum Onzho*. Hence, *Nyum Onzho* is the art of storytelling. The aim of this performance is to produce an individual who is transparent, honest, respectful, skilful, and cooperative and one who could conform to the social order of the society. This art of storytelling is central to the life of every Eggon person. It is largely secular and the most eclectic and dynamic in form and content. This paper also explores the proposition for a paradigm shift from primary orality to secondary orality. That is, from its original face-to-face format into the digital format. It also examines how *Nyum Onzho* performance and the indices of globalisation could be adapted to each other and harnessed in the service of development objectives of the Eggon people. This paper concludes that, despite the challenges, losses and treat inherent in globalization, there are also significant gains, opportunities and benefits the advent of globalization has offered. It therefore becomes imperative for the Eggon people to key into these numerous benefits and opportunities globalization has provided to internationalize, promote and showcase their culture and cultural performance to the global community.