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CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

Meaning, causes, effects and ways of eradicating corruption.

Corruption is Nigeria's biggest challenge. It's clear to every citizen that the county has an extremely high level of corruption. Corruption is found in every sector of society. Critical examination of both small and large sectors reveals corrupt practices at every level.

What is corruption?

It is a dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, typically involving bribery. It is the illegitimate use of power to benefit a private interest (Morris 1991). Corruption is the offering of a bribe to an official so that the truth will be hidden. It involves the embezzlement of public funds for personal use, and any act that is considered to be criminal in nature according to the law of a particular society.

Nigeria, which is the most populated country in Africa, has consistently been ranked high in corruption by Transparency International and other notable organizations that monitor corrupt practices around the world. High corruption rankings affect almost all Nigerians who migrate to foreign countries, as foreigners have the perception that since Nigeria is corrupt, so too are all its citizens. In 2001, Nigeria was ranked the second-most corrupt nation in the world out of 91 countries, second only to Bangladesh. This shows that corruption in Nigeria improved by one step when compared to its ranking in 2000.

Causes of Corruption

A number of issues cause corruption, and among them are:

Greed

Poor youth empowerment

Poverty

Unemployment

### Greed

Greed has caused a lot of crises in the world, including in Nigeria. It is because of greed that political leaders embezzle the funds they are supposed to use for national development for their own selfish needs.

### Poor Youth Empowerment

Poor moral youth empowerment is a contributor to corruption. Internet fraud, sexual harassment by male CEOs, and other bad acts occur because Nigerians lack understanding of the importance of youth empowerment. When parents and governments empower youths both financially and morally, the level of corruption will diminish.

### Poverty

According to international standards of poverty, a person is said to be poor when he lives under $1.25 (₦210, although it varies) per day. There are many poor people in Nigeria, and poverty pushes them into corruption. According to World Bank Group, in 2004, 63.1% of Nigerians were poor. The poverty level increased in 2010. In 2010, 68% of the Nigerian population was estimated to be poor. A person can take bribes to commit crime because he is poor. It is one of the reasons why the poor youths in the country collect bribes to work as thugs for Nigerian politicians.

### Unemployment

Unemployment is one of the major challenges in Nigeria and does not need much explanation because it has broken the hearts of many citizens. People are pushed into corrupt practices because of the high unemployment rates. An unemployed citizen can indulge in corruption to make money and live better.

The youths, fathers, and mothers are seriously concerned about the negative impact of unemployment in their lives. Some have said that it is better to die than to suffer the torment of unemployment in the country. Words cannot explain the level of punishment the citizens of this country face as a result of this menace.

## Effects of Corruption

The negative consequences of corruption are many, and among them are:

Poor investment

Rise in poverty

Poor national development

National crises

### **Poor Investment**

Unemployment in Nigeria would have been eradicated to some extent if only investors were attracted to doing business in the country. Companies that would have invested in Nigeria are afraid because they do not know if the corrupt practice will ruin their industries over time. Because of this concern, they refuse to invest in Nigeria.

### **Rise in Poverty**

When the heads of public service are busy laundering the money that is supposed to be used to create employment for the masses and reduce poverty, what happens is a rise in the poverty level of the country, just like the rise in poverty shown by the statistics between 2004 and 2008. Since the government is selfish and does not want to help the poor, poverty continues to rise in Nigeria.

### **Poor National Development**

Any country with high corruption levels is likely to experience developmental bankruptcy. When some CEOs indulge in corrupt practices to make their money, economic development will suffer. When Nigerians keep on shifting the country’s currency to foreign countries, there will be less economic development in Nigeria.

### **National Crises**

So many crises in Nigeria today are a result of corruption. The insecurity in Nigeria brought about by Boko Haram is a consequence of corruption. Corrupt politicians are fighting the government of President Goodluck Jonathan using Boko Haram as their agent because they do not want him to succeed. The attacks by Boko Haram have caused disorderliness in Nigeria and seriously affected the country's economy.

## Eradicating Corruption

Corrupt Nigerians do not truly understand the harm they are causing to other citizens. Corruption could be reduced by these potential solutions:

Self-satisfaction

Institution of strong anti-corruption groups

Employment generation

Proper government funding of schools

Treating all citizens equally

**Self-Satisfaction**

Self-satisfaction in this context implies being content with what one has. When the leaders of Nigeria are satisfied with the salary they are paid and use public funds in a proper manner, the issue of embezzlement and money laundering will be history. Managers who are satisfied with what they are paid will not have time to indulge in corruption to make more money.

### **Institution of Strong Anti-Corruption Groups**

Creating strong anti-corruption institutions is another arsenal to win the fight against corruption. This group is to work independently with the government to ensure transparency. Anyone who is caught engaging in corrupt practices by the group should experience the consequences decided by the anti-corruption agency. That he is a minister or governor of a state should not be an excuse from facing the punishment he is to receive according to the Constitution of Nigeria.

### **Employment Generation**

The unemployed in the country find themselves involved in corruption mainly because they want to make money to meet the demand of the day. Governments and capable hands should endeavour to generate more jobs for citizens to get employed and paid in return. A busy mind may find it difficult to indulge in corruption because he is being paid adequately.

### **Proper Government Funding of Schools**

Understanding the importance of skill acquisition will go a long way to propel them to develop all the schools in Nigeria. When more attention is paid to the tertiary institutions in the country, it will produce graduates who are employable. Installation of the necessary machines needed in universities will help Nigerian graduates acquire skills and use them to generate income, even if no company employs them after graduation.

Self-employment will make graduates more determined in the work they do and will prevent them from corruption like Internet scams, kidnapping and the rest.

**Treating All Citizens Equally**

Treating any offender in the country equally will help reduce corruption. Nobody is above the law and any who acts contrary to it should be given the punishment that he or she deserves. That she is the Minister of Aviation or Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria should not count in this case. If any minister or head of state is given the punishment he deserves for corruption, others will learn and separate themselves from any corrupt practice.