

# CORRUPTION, THE ENIGMA OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS.

BY

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Psychologists believe that behavior is a factor of its consequence. Using this evidence based paradigm to explain corruption in Nigeria, the paper focused on the socio-psychological factors that induce, promote and sustain corruption in private and public spheres despite legal and institutional frameworks to curb corruption as a major cause of underdevelopment in Nigeria. While recommending inter alia, the strengthening of existing anti corruption institutions through proper funding, autonomy and access to information especially on public income and expenditure, the paper concluded that compulsory personality profiling, mental status examination and other personality information including integrity and competence of intending public especially political office holders may constitute critical prophylactic measures in ensuring sanity, transparency, best practices and development of Nigeria.*

**Key Words:** *Corruption, personality profiling, mental status examination, prophylaxis.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Just as insecurity prevents the evolution of congenial environment, ingenuity and creative thinking, corruption is an enigma that inhibits advancement of any human organization. As a clog in the wheel of progress, it is antagonistic; a bane of human civilization, it is retrogressive and as a catalyst for elite conspiracy; it is exploitative, coldly disappointing and cumulatively devastating in such a way that its level of perversity is inversely related to development- the overall quality of life predicted through such indices as citizens' confidence in the state, sense of security, freedom and access to information, functional social security, independence of the judiciary, employment, best practices in public sphere and the feeling of worth by the ordinary citizens.

The word corruption has been described variously: dishonest exploitation of power for personal gain (Microsoft Encarta, 1993-2007); extreme immorality or depravity (Microsoft

Encarta, op. cit, Hornby, Cowie and Gimson, 1974); decay, impurity (Hornby et al, 1974), efforts to secure wealth or power through illicit means for private gains at public expense or 'intentional' misuse of power by one in position of public trust (Obayelu, 2007). It is therefore an unwholesome antithetic act or neglect often with hidden intention to subvert due process to achieve idiosyncratic gains in material wellbeing, political power, social recognition or other obvious human benefits at the expense of the larger system.

## **BACKGROUND**

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa (It is believed that every fourth African is a Nigerian) and the eighth in the world with a population of *Over 140 million (140431790) as at 2006 (National population commission ; www.population.gov.ng see also Dike, 2005) Current (2012) population is estimated to be in excess of 170 million with an annual growth rate of 2% ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics\\_of\\_Nigeria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Nigeria)). The country has a large area, essentially arable land, covering about 923,768.64 sq km (Nigeria Yearbook, 1997) and a population distribution of 42.3% (0-14 years) and 54.6% (15-65 years) 2006, census figure).*

Economically, Nigeria is claimed to be the 6<sup>th</sup> largest exporter of petroleum and has abundant endowment of solid mineral deposits in commercial quantities scattered throughout the length and width of the country, many of which are yet to be exploited. Beyond the foregoing, she has highly fertile land, resulting in exportation of abundant agricultural products such as palm produce, hides and skin, groundnut, cocoa, rubber. These resources have largely contributed to Nigeria's production of huge number of highly qualified human capital scattered throughout the world in business and professional activities. All these have made Nigeria to be perceived as a rich and highly endowed country whose citizens are expected to enjoy high standards of living. In fact in 2003, *The New Scientist*, the world's topmost scientific magazine, reported that the happiest people on earth live in Nigeria while the least happy people live in Romania. The survey which covered 65 countries concluded that family life, values and culture prevalent in Nigeria were more important than other considerations. (See also BBC: Nigeria tops happiness survey. Thursday, Oct 2, 2003. retrieved on March, 26 2007).

## **CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA**

Ironically, Nigeria is often perceived as one of the most corrupt and poorest countries of the world. Indeed, given its abundance of natural and material resources, the source of poverty in Nigeria is possibly associated with mismanagement and corruption which create a big gulf between few very wealthy individuals that control the treasures of the state and very large majority that are very poor and weak. With corruption recycling itself in Nigeria where the wealthy becomes wealthier, the cumulative impact is resultant decay in public infrastructure, increased criminal activities, failure in government programmes, youth restiveness,

unemployment, election violence and rigging, kidnapping, organized crime, terrorism and get-rich-quick-syndrome. In this sense therefore, corruption is both a source and a consequence of poverty. Therefore, effective control of corruption will reduce poverty and not vice versa.

In a 1996 annual corruption perception index study conducted by Transparency International and Goettingen University, Nigeria was ranked the most corrupt, with Pakistan as the second highest, while Denmark was the least corrupt among the 54 nations sampled. In fact, Nigeria ranked highest in the corruption perception index study not only for 1996 but for 1997 and 2000. Being an annual study by Transparency International, the subsequent studies have consistently found Nigeria among the five most corrupt countries even when the sample size was increased to 91 in 2001. In 1988, she was 81<sup>st</sup> out of 85 countries; second from bottom in 1999; most corrupt in 2000; second most corrupt in 2001, 2002 and in 2003 despite the increase in sample size to 133. According to the same organization, Nigeria was 132<sup>nd</sup> out of the 133 countries in the study in 2004 and has remained almost at the bottom in many subsequent years.

It was believed that many officials of the government of Nigeria dismissed the report as misrepresentative of the situation in Nigeria in comparison with other countries. However, recent events in Nigeria have given cause to consider the report as credible. For example, after the death of General Sani Abacha as Nigeria's military Head of State (1993-1998), Nigerians began to have some details of the extent of corruption perpetuated under his administration. It was alleged that unspecified amounts of money running into billions of US dollars were stacked in many European banks particularly in Swiss banks some of which were repatriated to Nigeria after long expensive legal and diplomatic maneuvers. In fact, the amount of wealth illegally acquired by General Abacha kept becoming public information that the subsequent civilian administration was alleged to have gone into secret negotiation with the family. According to Dike (2005), Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007) had a deal with the Abacha's family to retain \$100 million of the money stolen by the late General in order to return about \$1 billion of the loot to the coffers of the federal Government ( see also Dan-Ali, BBC News, May 20, 2002).

In addition, many cases of sharp practices including human rights abuses, gruesome murder including that of Kudirat Abiola, wife of acclaimed winner of 1993 annulled presidential election in which personal assistants to General Abacha were prime suspects, took place under his administration. Also the controversial execution of the popular environmentalist, Ken Saro Wiwa under alleged controversial criminal charges pointed to the divergent nature of corrupt practices under Abacha's administration. Details of all these and many more became public only after the demise of General Abacha.

Independently of the foregoing, many past Nigerian political administrators have been accused or convicted of one corruption charge or another (Nnamdi Azikiwe and the African Continental Bank saga; General Gowon and the cement importation in which many of his cronies especially in the ministry of defense and the central Bank were alleged to have falsified, by inflation, the cost on the ships' manifest, (Dike, 2005).

Alhaji Shehu shagari's administration was believed to be largely corrupt. For instance election results were believed to have been manipulated in favour of his Party, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN); his controversial massive importation of rice was alleged to have been manipulated by government officials especially in favour of NPN stalwarts; contract figures were believed to have been inflated, largely unexecuted but paid for; the defunct Johnson Mathey Bank of London was alleged to have been used by cronies of President Shehu Shagari to transfer foreign exchange illegally outside the country (see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political\\_corruption\\_in-Nigeria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_corruption_in-Nigeria)).

General Babangida's administration was again believed to have divergently enthroned corruption in Nigeria. In fact, many Nigerians were so disappointed in the administration that it was allegedly described as "government of settlement" (*Chop I chop*) resulting in high level corruption, fraudulent practices popularly called "419" and heightened cases of drug trafficking. Many people believe that the wind fall from high crude oil prices during his government were not accounted for epitomized by Babangida's refusal to appear before the Justice Chukwudife Oputa (Retired Justice of the Supreme Court) panel ( a sort of truth and reconciliation board).

Few years back, the former Speaker of Nigeria's house of representative Alhaji Ibrahim Salisu Buhari was convicted with the offences of forgery and perjury. Ironically, the convicted speaker was granted state pardon by President Olusegun Obasanjo who campaigned vigorously to rid Nigeria of corruption without probably considering what impact such state pardon could have on promoting corruption in the citizens especially among the political class. A similar case happened in March 2013 under the leadership of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan with State pardon granted to former Governor of Bayelsa State G.P.I. Alamesia who was convicted of money laundering and official corruption (see Vanguard Newspaper of 14th March 2013)

Beyond the political class, corruption exists in alarming proportion in many other sectors including the educational system. There is now a common believe among students in collaboration with their parents, to use unethical means including intimidation, threat, violence, mercenary hirelings and bribery to obtain high grades in examinations. At primary schools, some parents collude with teachers to influence examination results including advance disclosure of examination questions to collaborating pupils thereby negatively socializing such pupils into examination malpractice culture (Ezenwa, 2008). At secondary

and tertiary levels, the development is more complex involving use of special centres especially for external examinations ( West African Examination Council, WAEC, and National examinations council, NECO, examination), 'sorting'(bribing) of lecturers, sexual overtures by students towards lecturers on one hand and sexual exploitation of students by lecturers on the other hand in exchange for high grades, sale of handouts at cutthroat prices, collaborative copying, use of secret cult activities to intimidate lecturers, admission racketeering among others.

According to available information (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia), a final report (June, 2003) by institute of Development Research, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaira Nigeria, on public institutions perceived as corrupt in Nigeria placed The Nigeria Police Force( here not including the traffic police) on top of the list. Other organizations perceived as corrupt in a descending order include political parties, National and State Houses of Assembly, Local and Municipal governments, Federal and State Executive Councils, Traffic Police, Federal Road Safety Commission and Power Holding Company of Nigeria.

### **CORRUPTION AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT (EFFECTS OF CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA)**

Corruption is an enigma in Nigeria's developmental voyage. A major effect of corruption is promotion of poverty in midst of plenty. The United Nations Human Development Report (United Nations, 2007) showed that Nigeria appears among the poorest nations of the world. Out of 177 countries grouped into high, medium and low human development, Nigeria falls within the low human development countries and occupies 158 position on the 177 step ladder. Most unfortunately, even sister African countries that have one major problem (civil or international war for example) ranked better than Nigeria. Eritrea, though in the low human development group as Nigeria, has been fighting a major international war with Ethiopia yet, it occupies 157 position ahead of Nigeria. Other less endowed African countries as Ghana, Congo, Sudan, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Togo, and Uganda among others are all in the medium development group. Some key issues considered in the study included human development indices namely Life expectancy at birth, gross domestic product per capita (GDP), adult literacy, gross domestic product (GDP), combined enrollment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary education. Other key poverty indicators considered by the survey are probability at birth of not surviving to the age of 40, population using an improved water source, children under weight at birth, public and private expenditure on health, full immunization against tuberculosis, measles, use of insecticide treated nets, population undernourished among others. Despite huge human and material endowments and over ten years of uninterrupted democratic rule in Nigeria, she ranks among the low human development group (that is, countries with least standards of living).

Beyond interfering with ethical (best) practices in public affairs, corruption promotes mediocrity, tribal loyalty, manipulation and inefficiency in management of public resources.

It breeds revenue leakages, makes nonsense of control measures, creates bad image for the citizens and the country, discourages foreign direct investment, creates credibility and acceptance problems for the government for international assignments of positions of thrust. In addition, corruption leads to unequal distribution of income, lack of confidence in the government by the citizens resulting in lack of cohesion and national insecurity. Furthermore, it predicts disregard for the rule of law, manipulation of election results with attendant legitimacy issues. Above all, corruption begets corruption making the problem endemic. According Obayelu (2007), 'corruption devalues the quality of human life, rubs schools, agricultural sectors, hospitals and welfare services of the much needed funds, slows down administrative processes making government policies ineffective'.

### **ASPECTS OF CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA (PERSISTENCE OF CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA)**

Perhaps no country in the world is corruption-free. However, the peculiarity of corruption in Nigeria is its perennial increasingly divergent characteristics. Some authors (Obayelu, 2007, Dike, 1999,2005. [www.AfricaEconomicAnalysis.org](http://www.AfricaEconomicAnalysis.org)) have isolated some factors that maintain corruption in Nigeria to include public sleaze and lack of decorum, ethnicity, customs and traditions, poverty, over concentration of power and resources at the centre, unemployment, under-remuneration of workers, late payment of contractors, unregulated informal sector, nepotism and lack of sincere leaders. However, other key reinforcers of corruption are:

#### **1. The end justifies the means principle.**

Nigeria operates a social system where recognition either in the form of honorary awards, chieftaincy titles or major social or political representations are often accessed based on material achievements (result) and not on virtues or the processes or even on track integrity of the individual. A case in point is Alahji Umaru Dikko who was a cabinet member of President Shehu Shagari' administration and in next administration was on the wanted list of the Federal Government for serious allegation of defrauding the government of huge sums of money through inflation of cost of importation of rice during President Shagari's administration. Few years later, another government appointed him into constitution review committee that generated materials for the 1999 constitution.

#### **2. Lack of policy consistency on corrupt individuals.**

There have been many cases where corrupt individuals are not typically made to face the full weight of the law in Nigeria. For instance, the first female Speaker of Nigeria's Federal House of Representatives, Mrs Patricia Ette, a strong member of the ruling People's Democratic Party that commands majority of seats in the house (since 1999 to date 2013), was impeached on corruption charges. Apparently most Nigerian believed that no legal action was instituted to its logical end against her. The only thing that happened was that she

was replaced thereby creating the impression of lack of commitment by Nigerian government to fight corruption or that some people are above the law in Nigeria.

Prior to that event, the former Speaker of Nigeria's house of representative, Alhaji Ibrahim Salisu Buhari, was convicted for the offences of forgery and perjury. Ironically, in a twinkling of an eye, the convicted speaker was granted state pardon by President Olusegun Obasanjo, a man that claimed to fight corruption in Nigeria.

### 3. **State support for ostentatious lifestyle.**

Government is the ultimate source of money all over the world. However, the manner in which governments spend public funds has implications for the perception and behaviour of the citizens. Today in Nigeria, the most expensive and newest cars are used not by captains of industries as found in other countries but by officials of the various tiers of government using tax payers' money. The effect of this practice in the psyche of the people is the unconscious association of public officers with wealth in such a manner that friends and relations of prominent public officers consequently press these officers for undue advantages. This usual intense pressure often compels many of these officers to subvert due processes in a drive to meet these demands or other personal /tribal gains culminating eventually in corruption.

4. **Political 'Fatherism':** Although Political mentoring has existed, a new form of it has evolved in recent times in Nigeria. Political fatherism describes an arrangement between a political mentor and a protégée wherein the former takes a foremost stride in securing an attractive situation (position of appointment or election, contract, favour or necessary contacts) for the latter who would usually pledge total allegiance to the former often with an oath or other threatening rites. Sometimes, the protégée is meant to sign some documents in advance indicating that he/she is indebted to his/her benefactor to huge sums of money or has resigned from the elevated office in case of a position of appointment or election or other forms of commitment. On assumption of duty, the protégée is expected to influence resources and power flow to the benefactor. One implication of this development is the corrupt manipulation of the protégée by the political father resulting usually in massive draining of public resources or other forms of corruption.

Political fatherism does not limit its existence to the political class but extends to other sectors. For instance, in the military and paramilitary services, it is believed to rear its head to influence postings to attractive/ choice locations or even rapid promotions to command positions.

### 5. **Selective Justice:**

This refers to a deliberate decision to use subjective considerations in the application of the laws of the State through manipulation of the executive, legislative or judicial processes

whichever is necessary and possible in such a manner that justice is not evenly administered among the citizens. Rather, ethnic, religious, political party affiliation, economic interest or other primordial considerations determine who gets what, how and where? For instance, President Olusegun Obasanjo was alleged to have used Nigerian Police under the command of Mr. Tafa Balogun as Inspector General of Police, to stop political campaigns organized by opposition political parties especially the Action congress, supported by his then arch opponent and Vice President, Alahji Atiku Abubakar.

President Obasanjo was also largely criticized for allegedly using State machinery to frustrate the implementation of some court decisions that were in favour of the then Anambra State Governor, Dr Chris Ngige, who was once abducted by people believed to be cronies of President Obasanjo. In fact, it was alleged that the refusal of Dr. Ngige to the corrupt requests of Mr. President's cronies provoked series of mayhem upon the good people and government of Anambra State that culminated in the abduction of a serving civilian Governor without any subsisting court order and in total violation of the immunity clause as provided by the constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria. This was believed to have been possible only with the implicit support of the security agencies which were directly under the control of Mr. President. Yet, Obasanjo campaigned against corruption as a cardinal goal of his administration, a regrettable paradox.

#### 6. **Lack of free access to information**

A major challenge to control of corruption in Nigeria is lack of free access to information. The way and manner in which government business is handled in secrecy at the moment leaves much to be desired. This has provoked many Nigerians to ask for **the freedom of information Act** currently (2012) passed by the national Assembly. This Act is expected to compel especially government officials to give information concerning government activities such as revenue and expenditure issues, budget implementation, and many other corruption prone issues which before now were considered classified and inaccessible to the interested public. The Nigerian public is figuratively watching to see the role this Act will play in reducing corruption in Nigeria. It is a popular statement that information is power. People can only ask questions concerning an issue if they know about it.

It is on record that public accountability demand increased in Nigeria during the administration of Olusegun Obasango (1999-2003) when the Federal Ministry of Finance under the leadership of Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala the publication of details of monthly allocation to the three tiers of government; Federal, State and Local Governments. In consequence, many civil servants that were held many months of salary, leave allowances and or other entitlements increased their demand on the appropriate governments. Also, many non-governmental organizations and the Nigerian press even held public accountability fora where key government functionaries were invited to give accounts of their activities.

## **7. Dependence of anti corruption agencies on the executive**

A major impediment to the activities of many anti corruption agencies such as Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), the Police and many others is the overbearing influence of the executive arm of government on the activities of these agencies. Apart from initial appointment of the chief executives of these agencies though with senate ratification in some cases, the executive can interfere with the activities of these agencies such as arrest, investigation or prosecution of persons suspected to be corrupt. For example, according to the relevant Nigerian law, the President can, through the Federal Minister of Justice, stop, delay or even completely withdraw interest in any criminal charge against any individual in Nigeria. In addition, through exercise of the prerogative of mercy, the president may decide to pardon any convicted persons. This was the case in 2003 when President Obasanjo in no distant time granted presidential pardon to the former Speaker of the House of Representatives who was convicted of corruption and perjury.

In addition, the executive also indirectly controls the activities of these agencies through manipulation of release of fund allocation to them. This often makes these agencies appendages of the executive usually the President and as such weakens their ability to check corruption in the ranks of the President and his cronies.

## **CONTROL OF CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA**

Many institutions and legal provisions exist in Nigeria to curb corruption. Some of these include the Criminal Code especially section 419, the Code of Conduct Bureau, The Recovery of Public Property Act of 1984, The Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), The Copy Rights Act, The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), yet corruption has remained a major problem that interferes with phenomenal development of the country.

Currently, the concept of pay bargaining has taken a centre stage in public discussion of corruption in Nigeria. This is a situation where a person charged with corruption, under certain application to the court of competent jurisdiction, embarks on out of court negotiated trial. Characteristically, the suspect is expected to confess through his/her counsel and together with the prosecuting counsel negotiate what quantity of wealth, be it property, money, stock or other interests that the accused will part with in order to have the sentence mitigated.

A major feature of pay bargaining is that the confessional evidence given during the negotiation is not tenable in a court of law. In addition, both prosecuting and defending counsels participate in arriving at the final decision which will be brought back to the court for ratification or rejection. In the case of the latter, the matter will continue as if no form of

intervention has been tried. Finally, beyond returning stolen assets, pay bargaining is believed to be time-saving to the bench and bar since otherwise longer period including that for appeals may be involved. Many observers believe that this approach has been used in many corruption cases involving some ex-governors during the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo. However, a good number of stakeholders have argued that adoption of pay bargaining as part of Nigerian criminal system will promote rather than deter corruption in Nigeria.

According to available records (EFCC Report, 2006, Okonjo-Iweala and Osafo-Kwaako, 2007, Obayelu, 2007) the anti corruption drive in Nigeria has led to conviction in 91 cases of corruption and recovery of property worth well over N55 billion which fund or property was either refunded the victims, governments or seized; government revenue was increased by 20% due to surveillance activities; drastic reduction in oil-related criminal activities following arrest and prosecution of those involved in oil bunkering and vandalism of oil pipelines and installations( see also Imohe, 2005).

In addition, many then serving Governors including Messrs G.P.I. Alamesia and J. Dariye; former Governors such as James Ibori (The Guardian, Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2008); judicial officers including Justice Egbo Egbo; Ministers including, Mr Kayode; a Senate President, Mr A. Nwabara and many presiding Officers of some State Houses of Assembly are some of the public officers that were either impeached, arrested, dismissed, tried or convicted for corruption charges, an unprecedented development in the political history of Nigeria. Beyond the foregoing, EFCC has raised the consciousness of Nigerians on the criminality of corruption.

However, a salient question that keeps recurring is why do people who are conversant with the provisions of the law on corruption still indulge in it? Let us look at a case in point.

Mr. Tafa Balogun was the inspector General of Police during the administration of President Obasanjo during which EFCC Act was enacted. He, on many occasions, approved the arrest of many public and private persons who were charged with different corrupt practices. As Inspector General of Police (IGP), Tafa Balogun facilitated the arrest and dismissal of many police personnel found collecting money from motorists. This gave the Nigerian public the impression of a corrupt-free IGP.

Surprisingly, IGP Tafa Balogun was suddenly removed from office, arrested, dismissed from service, tried and convicted for corrupt enrichment to the tune of some billions of naira. In addition, many of his assets were confiscated or forfeited to the government.

The puzzle in the above presentation is to unearth the driving motivation for such a highly placed officer, who witnessed what were done to many corrupt persons and still got deeply

immersed into corruption, with total disregard to his highly exalted position as the Chief law-executing officer of the country.

Our opinion therefore is that there is need to focus on other factors that determine behaviours other than legal provisions. We therefore propose a national focus on the personality of individuals before major appointments or elections into positions of public thrust are made.

### **HUMAN PERSONALITY, THE KEY DETERMINANT OF BEHAVIOUR.**

Psychologists believe that personality is the major determinant of human behaviour. In other words, people behave differently due to differences in their personalities in such a manner that one stimulus will evoke different reactions from different individuals. Personality refers to 'the characteristic patterns of behaviour and modes of thinking that determine a person's adjustment to the environment' (Hilgard, Atkinson, and Atkinson, 1979), 'an individual's unique, consistent pattern of thinking, feeling and acting, as well as other psychological attributes, which endure over time and across situations' (Smith, 1998), 'the characteristic behavioural patterns that distinguish a person from other human beings (Uwaoma, 1997); all those attributes like abilities, beliefs, habits, attitudes, emotional responses which distinguish one person from another' (Olatuwara, 2002); 'It is the aggregate characteristics of an individual that distinguish him from all others' (Ezenwa, 2004). Derived from the forgoing definitions, personality describes the uniqueness of an individual that determines his adjustment pattern to the continuously changing environment. This uniqueness extends to the physique, temperament, attitudes, belief and practices, motivation, interest, thought patterns and all those other points of differences among individuals. It is therefore critical in predicting human beings since it accounts for consistency of behaviour or traits of an individual over time. This key factor of consistency of traits over time in an individual is very fundamental to a systematic understanding, control and prediction of human behaviour.

#### **Personality Profiling**

The 2008 Encarta Dictionaries describes a profile in many ways including visibility, side view of face, short biography, and brief description. It goes on to describe profiling on the other hand as the classification and analysis of somebody based on personal information such as behavioural patterns, shopping habits and other variables that can enhance understanding of an individual. From the foregoing, it could be seen that personality profiling involves the collection of personality related information of an individual such as identity information, developmental information including attitude, previous roles and mannerisms, occupational, human and material management histories and all other information related to a person in such a way that the past is related to the present in making a comprehensive picture of the individual. This will provide relevant guide to predicting likely future behaviour of the individual both in his/her private and public life since human personality is more or less consistent over time as proposed by psychologists (Freud 1940, Smith, 1998).

### **Psychoanalytic theoretical explanation of personality as a predictor of behaviour**

According to psychoanalytic theory of personality (Freud, 1940), human personality is formed within the first few years of life (5 to 7 years) in such a manner that later developments represent only an unfolding of the behaviour matrices acquired at this impressionable period. This formation according to Freud, is largely a function of the extent to which the child perceives the adequacy or otherwise of environmental (usually epitomized by the parents especially the mother or her substitute) response to the needs (either of food, waste elimination, love and security) of the child. Whatever a child receives and internalizes at this stage forms part of the personality.

The obvious implication of this theory is the fact that a child who did not receive love or attention may not give or fear its loss in his/her later relationships both at home and in the public sphere and may likely see society as one that does not know or deserve love or attention. For example, an abused child will grow up to abuse other children or people on his/her way. A child brought up in a largely aggressive, manipulative or corrupt home will also grow to give same back to the society irrespective of any mediating impact of education, position, legal provision, experience or age. This is likely so since childhood orientation influences how later life experiences are interpreted, internalized and responded to. In fact it forms the personal value or individual-family culture. There is the tendency for people to perceive and evaluate life events from this personal value point which may be the only reality to the individual. This individual-family culture is formed at the impressionable period and may perceive changes as threatening and consequently resist them in very many ways.

### **Implications of personality profiling for elimination or drastic reduction of corruption in Nigeria**

There are two broad areas through which personality profiling can contribute to reducing corruption in Nigeria. These are in the areas of prediction and prophylaxis.

#### **A. Prediction.**

This refers to the capacity to use present information or other devices to predict likely future behaviour of an individual. Imagine what difference it will make in the life of an organization that wants to hire a staff say an executive director if she has accurate information on previous personal, career and management histories of the applicants. She will be more informed in her employment decision and this will have great implications for achieving the overall objectives of the organization. By understanding in a rather relatively comprehensive manner, the personality details of an individual, the society is much better placed to make informed choices in many ways.

In Nigeria today, there is no agency specifically charged with the duty of collecting information on personal histories of individuals. One consequence of this development is that people who commit serious crimes such as fraud, who ordinarily are prevented by law to

hold any other public offices, go in a roundabout manner (change of names, locations, or careers) to hold such offices. The result is that these individuals continue to corrupt fresh other individuals and systems, form new cronies and perpetuate corruption in the society. A case in point is a lecturer who was dismissed from one of Nigeria's Universities for examination and sexual malpractices. An appropriate panel found the lecturer guilty of writing and substituting examination scripts of students that sat for his course for certain amounts of money. The panel also found him guilty of sexual exploitation of female students. It took many months post dismissal of the staff to discover that the same person was previously dismissed as a local government secretary for financial fraud some years before the University unsuspectingly employed him.

### **B. Prophylaxis.**

Psychologists believe that behaviour is a factor of its consequence. People repeat behaviours that bring good results and avoid those with adverse effects. Therefore, if people know that proper public records are kept of them in terms of personal, occupational and other relevant histories, which will be consulted when decisions are being made about them in the future, they will likely conduct their present behaviours in line with prevailing rules and regulations. In other words, people are likely to avoid criminal behaviours for fear of future consequences and this will reinforce exhibition of civic conducts. Corruption and other criminal activities will therefore become unattractive and a new healthy culture will ensure in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

In line with the foregoing, there is a great need to institute major structural changes in Nigeria to aggressively tackle the problem of corruption and by extension underdevelopment.

There is the need to establish a commission to be known as **National Profile Commission**. This commission will have offices in all the states and local government areas across the country with staff attached to all the courts in Nigeria. Membership (staff) of this commission will be made of only professionals such as clinical psychologists, forensic psychiatrists, forensic psychologists and allied professionals who will be on oath to keep personal records of all persons in Nigeria including foreigners that live in Nigeria. Such records will include all persons who have especially criminal cases in courts and decisions of courts on such cases, all cases of change of names and careers, all cases of expulsion from schools be it at nursery, primary, secondary or tertiary levels, students expelled from schools for whatever reasons. The commission will maintain a central data system to be designed and managed in such a way that manipulation of data will be nearly impossible.

In addition, the commission will be charged with the duty of conducting mental status examination of all persons to be appointed or elected into positions of public thrust. This will be a legally mandatory process. **It is unfortunate that at the moment in Nigeria, there is**

**no legal provision compelling intending public officers to be mentally examined to determine their appropriateness to hold public offices.** The result is that many people who are probably unfit are in positions of public trust which portends great dangers to the integrity and future of many Nigerians under their care.

Above all, there is a great need for parents especially mothers to pay more attention to the development of their children especially at the formative period. A child who receives love not only in terms of material cares but more importantly emotionally will imbibe appropriate family values and defend the same as an adult. The current practice of leaving infants to the care of fellow infants as domestic assistants needs to be reappraised. Parents, especially child bearing mothers, need to consider what stage is appropriate to assume such employments that will keep them away from homes as long as 8 to 10 hours at a stretch. It might be important to consider such jobs after the 7<sup>th</sup> birth day of a last child. This is very important in view of future development of children, the family and the nation at large.

The Federal Government of Nigeria, the media and the non-governmental organizations in Nigeria are hereby urged to facilitate the effective implementation/operation of freedom of information Act to make government business open to interested members of the public for scrutiny. This will promote due process, best practices and value in public revenue and expenditure thereby reducing or completely eliminating corruption in public sphere in Nigeria.

It is also very important to apply corruption laws uniformly among all the citizens irrespective of political affiliation, tribal identity or other subjective consideration so that nobody will feel being above the law. The Nigerian public should view existing laws of the land as no respecter of persons. This is extremely important to ensure the rule of law which guarantees freedom, peace, justice and security of life and property.

Furthermore, governments at all levels are hereby encouraged to pursue policies that ensures equitable distribution of income not only as a means of reducing poverty but more importantly to reduce financial demand or other pressures on serving government officials who themselves should be banned from receiving awards of any kind, investitures, chieftaincies, or other such social recognitions which often come with overt or covert reciprocal demands.

Finally, there is the need to strengthen the independence of the anti corruption agencies in Nigeria. The Acts establishing these organizations need to be amended to allow them enjoy funding from consolidated revenue thereby eliminating executive manipulation. In addition, the law that allows the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federation to interfere with criminal investigation should be abrogated to make it impossible for anybody to stop

any criminal proceeding against any individual. People should be equal before the law both in practice and in law.

Moreover, there is the need for moral reorientation to guide the attention of the youth to the process of wealth creation through lawful means and not the deceptive temporal effects of ill gotten wealth.

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