

Africans and the challenges of corruption: An analysis of Achebe's *The Trouble with Nigeria*

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ABSTRACT: From the declaration of independence of African countries and up to date, many African countries struggle hard to tackle the problems of corruption in Africa. The challenge of corruption is considered as one of the greatest challenges that destabilizes, blocks and impedes the development of many African countries. There is no doubt, corruption is a subject-matter that can be regarded as one of key points in the struggle of many African leaders. In fact, some civil servants, political leaders and army officers themselves consider and embrace corruption as a way of life that facilitates easy earning. Moreover, the aim of the current paper is to demonstrate how corruption can be considered as a source of underdevelopment of Africa through depicting the types of corruption in *The Trouble with Nigeria*. The paper seeks to provide some examples, through *The Trouble with Nigeria*, on how corruption impacts Africa negatively. Finally, applying postcolonial theory, the paper concludes with some useful recommendations that can help reduce and alleviate the corrupt practices in Africa.

KEYWORDS: corruption, Africa, development, challenge.

1 INTRODUCTION

Corruption exists for centuries in other parts of the world before being introduced into many African countries. Corruption is one the greatest phenomena that impedes the development of many African countries. For instance, the essential point to retain is that corruption is not even an African word even though it becomes a key point in the struggle of Africans. Anazodo et al. point out that "the word "corruption" originates from the Greek word "*corruptus*" meaning an aberration or misnomer" (47). Following this, we should maintain that the word 'corruption' is a foreign word in Africa despite its aggravation and impacts on the whole continent.

For instance, corruption may be described as political, social, financial, religious, moral, and so on. These types of Corruption thrive in many African countries with the assistance of some corrupt leaders, recklessness, greediness of both political leaders and populations by holding corruption as their way of life at the same time a means of self-enrichment. Gradually, corruption becomes a routine and its rampage and omnipresence can be detected in every sector of African countries. Achebe assumes that "anybody who can say that corruption in Nigeria [Africa] has not yet become alarming is either a fool, a crook or else does not live in this country [continent]" (37).

Once again, the worse is that, in Africa, corruption does not concern only one country, regime, people, politics, but the whole African continent. Okorantah and Joseph believe that "corruption is found in democratic and dictatorial politics, feudal, capital, capitalism and socialist economics. And corrupt practices did not begin today; its history is as old as the world" (496). The point here is that, as said earlier, corruption is omnipresent and can be found in every kind of government whether it is a democratic, military or dictatorial regime.

Intensively, the corrupt practices continue to invade many African political arenas where the political leaders can embezzle, patronize, favorize and abuse without the interruption of anyone for their own interest by considering public funds as their own. Moreover, the misappropriation of public funds may be critically remarked from the days of independence of many

African countries to the present day where many post-independent leaders serve themselves instead of serving people. They just run for politics for self-enrichment by using corruption as a tool.

Furthermore, this bad practice allows many African civil servants to act corruptly by relying on corruption as a means of exploitation, manipulation, and as well as sources for satisfying themselves in many administrations. In fact, what is worrying about corruption, in African countries, is that the ones who are supposed to combat corruption take the lead. This is the reason why many individuals socialize corruption as the only way to easy earning. In the same purpose, some African leaders who try to combat corruption find it difficult to retrieve themselves from it as they are deeply involved. Ogbeyi says, "when the political leadership class of a country espouses corruption, it becomes difficult for it to act positively to the benefit of the states and its citizens" (5).

Along with corruption, many African writers and critics write to inform and warn their fellow Africans. To reflect that corruption is a source of impediment to the African development, Chinua Achebe writes *The Trouble with Nigeria* in which he depicts the attitudes of Africans towards corruption by focusing on Nigerian as a microcosm. Achebe tries to point out that corruption is a cancer even though it is combatable. To decorticate this situation of corruption, he uses a vivid example of goat and yam as yam is as a food to goat, it can be difficult to prevent a goat from eating yam. Indeed, there are many types of corruption but the main focus of the current study is on fraud and embezzlement as depicted in *The Trouble with Nigeria*.

The main objective is to bring to surface how corruption leads many African societies to be socially, economically, financially and politically underdeveloped. Despite the calls of African intellectuals, corruption is still like a center of gravity in African leadership in many countries. The paper provides also some useful recommendations that help reduce and alleviate the corrupt practices in Africa countries. To achieve this goal, postcolonial theory is applied.

2 AN OVERVIEW ON POSTCOLONIALISM

Postcolonialism is a theory often made for a specific purpose of analyzing or studying the colonial effects on a country that was colonized by European powers such as France, England, Portugal or Germany. Ashcroft Bill et al. explain that "postcolonialism (often post colonialism) deals with effects of colonization on cultures and societies. As originally used by historians after the second World War in terms such as The Post-Colonial state, 'post-colonial' had clearly chronological meaning, designating the post-independence period" (168).

In the same order, postcolonialism is nothing else but the period after the departure of the colonizers. It indicates the period in which the colonized people take charge of themselves as leaders of their new nations. In this sense, postcolonialism becomes a common and the most used in a study that deals with the impacts of colonization on a continent like Africa. Wang Yufeng mentions that "Postcolonialism has nowadays become a popular and important theory for literature research" (650). Thus, postcolonialism is not only important but the most appropriate in dealing with postcolonial studies. This is because the main concern of postcolonial theory is the study of the effects that colonizers left into their former colonies. Wang maintains also that "postcolonialism is concerned about the study of cultures formerly or (currently) colonized power, struggle between cultures, and interaction of cultures" (651).

Therefore, Postcolonial theory is now considered as the most important ingredient in analyzing the study of the so-called independent countries. Postcolonial theory stands as a salt in the food despite the presence of other ingredients it remains unavoidable. Jain Ruchika asserts, "the postcolonial studies also become indispensable in assessing the similar trajectories of colonization being traced around us in the political world today" (47). Postcolonial study is simply like a disenchantment, a struggle against bad governance, corruption, and many other bad things. Abrahams upholds:

an important text in establishing the theory and practice in this recently developed field of study was *Orientalism* (1978) by the Palestinian-American scholar Edward Said, which applied a revised form of Michel Foucault's historicist Critique of Discourse (see under new *Historicism*) to analyze what he called "cultural imperialism. (236)

Postcolonialism becomes one of the best theories in examining the effects of bad leadership which gives birth to corruption, terrorism, conflict etc. on colonized people. To do so, we first explain what corruption is, identify the types of corruption that exist, as well as demonstrating how corruption can be an impediment to the African development and its impacts on Africans before the paper closes with some useful recommendation that can help mitigating the power of corruption in African countries.

3 THE CONCEPT OF CORRUPTION

The term corruption has no exact or specific definition that reflects what it typically is. Corruption is one of the most complicated terms that everyone defines according to what seems to be appropriate to his own understanding. Anazodo et al. define corruption as “a perversion of or change from the general accepted rules or laws for selfish gain” (48). According to Sommer Udi et al., “corruption is the use of government powers by government officials for illegitimate private gain” (2). For Ateiah Gani, “corruption is defined as a bad behavior and functional behavior, aiming at deviation and unlawful gain, and breaking out of the system for a personal benefit” (15103). Therefore, all the above definitions can be considered as conceptual definitions of corruption. Corruption can also be defined as an act of negotiating to have something illegally for self-interest. Therefore, the current study relies on the definition of corruption as a pervasion of or change from the general accepted rules or laws for selfish gain.

4 THE CAUSES OF CORRUPTION IN AFRICA

At this point, many thinkers give their point of views about the factors that contribute to the existence and occurrence of corruption in African countries. Then, some of the scholars substantiate that the causes of corruption may be linked to the colonial effects, political system, greed etc. and it is acceptable but what we need to recall is that this may not be the only reason why corruption takes place in many African countries even though the system can be held as the main motivator.

According to Achebe, what contributes to the existence of corruption is nothing else but the systems. Therefore, what Achebe wants to demonstrate is that if the system makes it difficult for the corruptors to find their way, they will be obliged to reduce corrupt practices. In other words, if the laws and punishment are applied on the corrupt people, it will be difficult for others to get involved in the corrupt affairs. In the book, Achebe writes that “Nigerians [Africans] are corrupt because the system under which they live today makes corruption easy and profitable; they will cease to be corrupt when corruption is made difficult and inconvenient” (38). Commenting on the previous quotation, it is undeniable that the system allows both the administrators and populations to embrace corruption but self-interest is the main motivational factor that leads one to act accordingly.

Then, the rigid cause of corruption, as said earlier, is the system. It is crucial to acknowledge that the fragility of the institutions, the difficulty of living conditions can be held as factors that cause corruption. Progressively, this allows the propagation of corruption in many places in Africa. In the same purpose, many decisionmakers misallocate, misappropriate and steal or embezzle the funds entrusted to them for self-interest.

Medani Bhandari believes that “corruption can be influenced by a range of factors, including systematic issues, weak governance structures, cultural norms, and socioeconomic conditions” (5). To clarify this statement, it is important to understand that what can cause corruption is the system of a country, lack of structure of governance as well as the conditions of one’s society, pressure of both family and peer, and self-interest of the corruptor.

The causes of corruption can be placed at many levels, but the most important thing to retain is that corruption may likely occur where self-interest is at the first point, on one hand, and greediness on another hand. Similarly, Burak and Alghandouri assume that:

There are many causes of corruption such as weakness of ethical controls in state institutions and society, which leads to giving priority to an individual interest on the public interest, and the second cause is difficult economic and social conditions, with the growing influence of the physical impact on the community, the third cause which consider as one of the important cause is the reduction of the concept of integrity and righteousness and uprightness with repressive dictatorships in loyalty to the regime etc... (39-40)

The previous quotation demonstrates that the main causes of corruption are self-interest, economic difficulty and the reductions of self-integrity while the principal cause is self-interest. It means that in a place where self-interest is put before everything else, it is difficult to lead fairly whether it is in the political arena or in the administration.

In a country where the political leaders play their role and answer to the calls of their populations, corruption may not occur easily. In the same process, the culture provides meaningful contribution in fighting corruption if one can take into account the importance of his or her own culture as Usman Yusuf puts it, “the political system and culture of a society could make the citizen more prone to corrupt activities” (6). What is quite clear is that corruption can be influenced by culture of a society.

Along with corruption, many critics and writers themselves put the responsibility on the political leaders when it comes to the spread of corruption. They show that corruption always goes with power and the people in the position of power allow corruption to take place. What misses here is that the political leaders themselves apply corruption as a means of self-enrichment instead of fighting against it. Therefore, if those who are sensed and supposed to stop it practice it, this will motivate many other individuals to involve in the business. Achebe utters:

It will be impossible and, even if possible, of little value to attempt a comprehensive picture of the types and scope of Nigerian corruption. I would only say that most people agree that corruption has grown enormously in variety, magnitude and brazenness since the beginning of the second Republic because it has been extravagantly fueled by budgetary abuse and political patronage on an unprecedented scale. (41-2)

Within the context of *The Trouble with Nigeria*, saying that corruption has been encouraged by the second republic of Nigeria, Achebe wants the readers to realize the attitudes of military leaders in Nigeria and in Africa in general towards corruption. They pretend to take power to settle the problems, but the reality is that they just feed themselves. Thereover, talking about the cause of corruption, many African intellectuals rationalize about the cause or causes of corruption in the African continent. The well-known pan Africanist, PLO Lumumba, who is worrying about African situation in terms of development, provides the causes of corruption. Lumumba upholds:

Some of the identifiable causes of corruption include the negative colonial legacy, poor leadership, politics of the belly, omnipotent state, greed and selfishness, clientelism and patronage nepotism, absence of popular participation of the public in government, weak institutions of governance, lack of accountability and transparency, lack of political will, weak ethical values, centralist nature of the state and concentration of state power, weak judicial system and constant insecurity and conflicts. (13)

Furthermore, as there is no good system to fight against corruption in the governance, the context gives green light to many Africans to embrace corruption. In *The Trouble with Nigeria*, Achebe makes it clear in explaining how corruption can be caused and who can contribute to its occurrence. Achebe accordingly puts the matter where it is by holding the powerful or the people in the position of power as the main cause of corruption. Achebe describes that "corruption goes with power; and whatever the average man may have it is not power. Therefore, to hold any useful discussion of corruption we must first locate it where it properly belongs-in the ranks of the powerful" (38). Following the above quotation, one may understand that political corruption is the first to be condemned as political leaders are well armed and have the potential to prevent the diffusion of corruption but unfortunately it is not the case.

Similarly, Pilapitiya Thusitha assesses also how corruption can likely take place by providing some elements that are undeniable in contributing to the occurrence of corruption. She highlights that corruption may probably take place where greed, lack of punishment, lack of mentorship etc. dominate. Moreover, Pilapitiya mentions, "the causes of corruption can be listed as greed, need, opportunity, lack of punishment, lack of inquiry or fellow up, peer pressure, and habit" (12). Following the above quotation, it is significant to say that the cited elements can easily facilitate the corrupt practices.

As for Hyacinth, he describes also the elements such as the weakness of the institution as the main and principal cause of corruption in Nigeria or Africa in general. He insists that if the laws and regulations are well respected, corruption will not be energized. Hyacinth rationalizes, "several reasons can be adduced for the prevalence of corruption in Nigeria but principally weak institutions emanating from state fragility are largely responsible" (54). This means that corruption can be rampant if the States take the right decisions to stop it.

To sum up, the above cited elements are undoubtedly considered as the causes of corruption. It is significant to retain that there are other facilitators that can contribute to the spread of corruption like lack of experiences, incompetence of the actor, extravagancy, love of being promoted, self-centeredness of the actor, bad intention of the corruptor, carelessness to the consequences ect... Indeed, there is no doubt that the elements cited above may push one to be involved in the corrupt practices.

5 CORRUPTION AS AN IMPEDIMENT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA

Corruption is undoubtedly one of the greatest phenomena that impedes the African development for many decades. Many scholars prove that corruption is a source of underdevelopment of Africa. Suleiman Rafiu states that "the elites have been contaminated with the cancer of corruption and perpetuate the reign of corruption and slavish mentality which debilitate the people economically, socially, and spiritually" (264). As a result, corruption impedes African progress because some African

leaders consider it as a means of empowering one's families, friends and relatives. Corruption as a parasite to the African development is supported by Suleiman who puts forwards that "Africans are still forced to live in penuriously pauperized conditions without food, housing, accessibility to quality health care, affordable housing, quality but cheaper education at all levels of our education ladder" (264).

Ostensibly, Corruption under develops many African countries because their leaders do not only misallocate the funds destined for the development process but force their kinsmen to live under difficult conditions which can no longer allow them to think about development. The worst is that many African leaders consider the countries' wealth as their own by doing whatever they want with it. Then, the problem is that the misappropriation of funds has no specific regime, age or time. Every leader can embezzle the wealth for his personal gain. With such practice, many African countries will never reach the level of sustainable development.

Oladayo Awojobi supports the idea of corruption as an impediment to the development of African countries. He maintains that "new political thinkers in Africa have blamed corruption by African leaders for the underdevelopment of the continent. Huge sum of money that would have been used to provide infrastructural facilities are stolen by African leaders and send to Western countries for safe keeping at the expense of African development" (6). Without any shadow of doubt, corruption is one of the greatest causes of African underdevelopment. What worries in African politics is that many African people elect the individuals who are not morally equipped to govern the countries but to amass money in order to enrich themselves. Awojobi also adds, "corruption remains the cause of underdevelopment in Africa. This can be attested to by the massive looting of public funds by African leaders" (6).

Corruption is truly a cancer and pandemic to the African development because it is only in Africa that an individual can misallocate more than 200 billion dollars, naira or CFA or other currencies and stands as a candidate for the election. In *The Trouble with Nigeria*, Achebe states that "knowledgeable observers estimated that as much as 60 per cent of the wealth of this nation is regularly consumed by corruption. I have no doubt that defenders of our system would retort: mere rumors! Where is the proof?" (40). This misappropriation of funds can never allow African development.

Demystifying corruption as an impediment to the African development, it is crucial to remark that almost everyone acknowledges that corruption is a hindrance to the development of Africa countries. Muhammad et al. also put forward that "corruption acts as significant hindrance to good governance and sustainable development" (40). Corruption is a hindrance to both governance and development.

Moreover, the problem of corruption is not only the misappropriation of African funds but also the chances given to the hook and crook leaders to govern. In the political arena, the populations choose 'the thieves' to lead them as role model. The individuals who do not even know what their fellow Africans want but they govern to devastate public funds for self-desire as Lawal Gbenga puts it, "since the post-colonial Africa, corruption has been a cause for concern because it diverts already limited funds, undermines economic progressed and impedes policy changes required for development" (4). Corruption is undoubtably an obstacle to the African development.

As a matter of fact, in many African countries, corruption remains a barrier to the improvement of the living conditions. Corruption hinders African development because the majority of African wealth is being 'eaten' by the corrupt leaders who have no intention to develop the countries but to enrich themselves. It under develops African countries as the youth inherit nothing from old politicians who dilapidate public funds for self-interest. Similarly, Wokabi Francis argues that "the youth have learned and embodied self-centeredness, greed for wealth, moral cowardice, aversion to honest and hard work, disregard for the law and moral apathy" (6).

Corruption devastates African development because many Africans know that corruption is a cancer to the development as well as the source of underdevelopment of their countries but accept it as the only and fastest way for self-enrichment. In this particular racket, Armah also gives his view point on how young Africans accept corruption as the only way to live their life. In *The Beautiful One Are Not Yet Born*, Armah utters, "there would always be only one way for the young to reach the glean. Cutting Corners, eating the fruits of fraud" (95). Therefore, corruption is no longer an abstract practice in Africa.

Corruption is still a barrier to the development of African countries because both the politicians, civil servants and even the populations assume that corruption helps them have money and materials though illegally in a very short moment. What is more, many civil servants, in African countries, even forget about their salaries because they 'eat and drink' in the business of corruption such as bribery, favoritism, fraud that they have turned into a rule.

Achebe describes how corruption under develops African countries by pointing at the way Africans are tied to corruption. Achebe argues that "the weekly star 15 May 1983 has on its front page under the title The Nigerian and corruption: keeping an average Nigerian from being corrupt is like keeping a goat from yam" (38). Above all, it is undeniable that corruption in

Africa is a practice that is difficult to avoid despite its impacts on the development of many African countries. Therefore, in order to understand the way corruption haunts in the hearts and minds of many Africans, it is necessary to investigate how it occurs and what are the types of corruption expressed in the novel? Finally, how does it affect the African development? To answer these questions, it is crucial to analyze the different types of corruption in *The Trouble with Nigeria* and other related works by bringing out the negative impacts of corruption.

6 TYPES OF CORRUPTION IN THE TROUBLE WITH NIGERIA

As said earlier, corruption may have different types such as political, social, financial etc. The main focus of the current research is on political corruption in which we can have certain forms like Fraud, Embezzlement, bribery, patronage, favoritism or nepotism. In fact, Fraud and Embezzlement become a known practice that almost everyone may bear witness in many African countries. Fraud and embezzlement are the only ones to be discussed in *The Trouble with Nigeria*.

6.1 FRAUD

Fraud is a routine and known practice that takes place in almost every African country either publicly or privately. It mainly appears in the political arena where members of governments may act illegally for self-interest by relying on fraud as a means for achieving their goals. In this case, an individual may deviate from the norms or rules to misallocate the funds entrusted to him. For instance, fraud is another type of corruption which can be seen as crime in the political arena because many political leaders think that fraud stands as the only and the most appropriate way to become rich in a very short time. Amundsen Inge argues that "fraud" is an economic crime that involves some kind of trickery, swindle or deceit. It is a broader legal and popular term that covers more than bribery and embezzlement" (2). Indeed, fraud can be seen as a practice that many African leaders wish to apply in both politics and administrations.

In *the Trouble with Nigeria*, Achebe states that "The Concord carries a banner headline: FRAUD AT P and T, followed by a story with no less authority than that of the Federal Minister of communications, Mr. Audu Ogbe, that "the Federal Government is losing 50million Naira every month as salaries" to non-existent Workers" (39). What is significant here is that fraud, in the politics of some African countries, is accepted as the easiest way to become rich. Therefore, lack of transparency or lack of communication to inform the population what is happening in the governmental affair is one of the features of the fraud. Furthermore, fraud is a reality in almost every African country and the problem is that the population cannot tell where the money was invested. As Achebe explains, "and please Remember that Minister Audu Ogbe is not telling us about all the Fraud in the Post and Telegraphs department but only about one particular racket which has just come to light: payment of salaries to fictitious workers" (39).

Fraud may be detected in many ways. It may be detected, for instance, as the payment of the non-existent workers or else investing on something that was never realized. In the same process, Achebe maintains that "The Fake Importers brings us another revelation, this time at the ports-story of Nigerian importers who having applied for and obtained scarce foreign exchange from the Central Bank ostensibly to pay for raw materials overseas, leave the money in their bank abroad and ships to Lagos of muds and sand!" (40). One can understand through the above quotation how fraud occurs is quite manifest. Since fraud stands as a habit to many African leaders, it is significant to note that fraud can be exercised in both public and private sectors. In order to get rid of fraud, government should be strong enough to apply laws in every kind of act without tolerance as well as put transparency at all level.

6.2 EMBEZZLEMENT

Embezzlement is another form of corruption that occurs in the political arena of many African countries. In such a way, the political leaders use their position to embezzle public funds for selfish gain. This type of misappropriation of some African countries' funds is described by Achebe. Achebe depicts the attitudes of African leaders towards embezzlement by taking the case of Nigerian as a microcosm of the whole African countries. What one can also understand is that embezzlement of public funds becomes like a fashion and subject of competition to many African leaders in African politics.

In *The Trouble with Nigeria*, Achebe insists that "in the course of one year then Nigeria loses 600million Naira in this particular racket. a series of little comparisons may bring home the size of this loss" (39). The main idea of the quotation is to depict the way Africans lose huge amount of money as the result of embezzlement by some African greedy leaders. With such practice from different context of situation, development will never be a reality.

Thereover, Armah explains how some members of government dilapidate the public funds for self-interest. By doing so, Armah takes the fictional characters such as Abednego, Zacharias Lagos, Joseph Koomson to demonstrate that kind of

misappropriation of public funds. In *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, Armah mentions, “Abednego Yamoah, still free, perhaps never to be caught. Selling government petrol for himself, but so cleverly there is always someone else, a messenger, cleaner, to be jailed, never Abednego. The whole world says he is a good man, and the whole world asks why we are not like him” (96). What Armah wants to express is that the embezzlement of public funds becomes the only way for self-enrichment.

The surprising thing is, in the history of African post independent leadership, it is difficult to have a regime, democratic or military without the embezzlement of public funds. The crux of the matter is that those who embezzle are rarely to be jailed. What the government can do to them is just to change their political positions. The ideology embraced by many African leaders is that public funds are for everyone. They can eat and book for themselves without being arrested. In the same process, in the *Trouble with Nigeria*, Achebe depicts that many African leaders take countries’ resources to give to their friends and relatives in the name of contract, but in reality, they just want to enrich themselves as well as their accomplice. Achebe upholds:

Public funds are now routinely doled out to political allies and personal friends in the guise of contractors to executive public works of one kind or another, or licenses to import restricted commodities. Generally, a political contractor will have no expertise whatsoever nor even the intention to perform. He will simply sell the contractor to a third party and pocket the commission running into hundreds of the sands of naira or even millions for acting as a conduit of executive fiat. (42)

The above quotation depicts how some individual misallocates the funds of their countries for selfish gain. Embezzlement of public funds becomes a subject of contemplation in many African countries. Today, many individuals enter into politics just to amass money and buy many luxurious things because they see other people act accordingly. So, what is amazing is that it is only in the African countries that individuals can steal public money and be elected by people to govern them. This kind of practices is a drawback to the continent. Chinua Achebe writes another book entitled *A Man of the People* in which he depicts how some African post-independent leaders behave through the characters of Chief Nanga and Odili.

In the novel, Odili narrates, “the first thing critics tell you about our Ministers official residences is that has seven bedrooms and seven bathrooms, one for every day of the week. All I can say is that on that first night there was no room in my mind for the criticism” (36). Through the above quotation, it is significant to realize how African Ministers use public funds to build houses for self-interest.

The problem of embezzlement in most African countries is not only the stealing of money but also the monopoly of government officials in every sector which can cost more on the populations themselves. What hurts, the funds they steal can no longer satisfy them but they add with patronage in every share so that the people can notice that they are the ones who are powerful. In Addition, in *A Man of the People*, the narrator reveals, “that row of ten houses belongs to the minister of construction, ’ he said. They are all let to different embassies at three thousand a year each” (54).

As far as embezzlement is concerned, many political leaders forget about what they should do for the interest of their own people. They can just take public money to prepare for the next election. And he who thinks about the next election, rather than the next generation, will never have the idea of doing good to the people. Most importantly, in *The Trouble with Nigeria*, Achebe indicates that “alternatively he can raise cash not by selling the contract but by collecting a “mobilization fee” from the treasury, putting aside the contract for the time being or forever buying himself a Mercedes Benz car and seeking elective office through open and massive bribery” (42).

Embezzlement of public funds becomes a subject of competition from top to bottom. What worsens the situation is the behavior of some African post independent leaders who regard embezzlement as part of leadership. Scholars provide evidence of how members of parliament steal public funds for self-interest in many parts of Africa. Bopa points out that “it is alleged that p250million pula was embezzled by those who were supposed to safeguard it. The purpose of the funds, according to Mr. Merapelo Tautona (principal Energy officer), is to cushion the retail prices as government doesn’t give out money to cushion prices (qtd.in P Muton no and T Mikazhu78).

Similarly, several African intellectuals show their own discontentment about the way African leaders steal public funds for their own satisfaction. The ideology embraced by most of the leaders is to become rich with public office. Onyeashie James argues that “new leaders would simply take into their hands, new powers to steal the nation’s wealth for their own satisfaction” (144). Embezzlement which is regarded as one part of the attitudes of African leaders is without any doubt a financial crime that needs more efforts to be combatted both in politics and in the administrations by setting the laws and applying them on anyone who tries to embezzle.

7 THE CONSEQUENCES OF CORRUPTION IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

7.1 IMPACTS OF CORRUPTION ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The negative impact of corruption on African countries is not a speculation. It is a reality that can be noticed in every domain. Corruption undermines political leadership, annihilates the improvement of many people specially the poor. It disrupts the strength of many institutions. It destroys the economic growth, educative system and the independence of many non-governmental organizations. The effects of corruption harm everyone who lives in Africa whether he or she is in the villages or in the cities. Many empirical studies demonstrate the reality about the impacts that corruption has on the economic development of African continent.

In the book, Achebe explains that the money lost because of corruption can buy many things in terms of development. This is because the leaders do not only misallocate public funds destined for development but also refuse to take the direction that can bonify the economic development of Africa. By explaining this, Achebe describes how Nigeria loses an important sum of money due to corruption. Achebe writes, "with 600 million Nigeria could build two more international airports like Murtala Muhammed Airport in Lagos; or if we are not keen on more airports the money could buy us three refineries; or build us a dual express motorway from Lagos to Kaduna; or pay the salary of 10,000 workers on grade level 01 for forty years! (39). Wakobi Francis rightly maintains that "corruption leads to the erosion of public trust which further undermines democratic institutions and processes" (4). In this process, we may notice that corruption does not harm only one sector but the whole continent.

Once again, the impact of corruption in many African countries does not stand at politic or administration, but it goes beyond that. In many countries, corruption leads many African countries not only to be economically weak but also to be socially disorganized and democratically backward. Nuhu Ribadu reports that "corruption is one of serious challenges which undermine the effectiveness of institutions and entire governments in many African countries. It seems to be appropriate to hold it responsible for impediment investor confidence and depriving citizens of true governance, democracy and development" (1). Therefore, the above sufficiently depicts how corruption harms the entire country.

Identically, the evidence of corruption as a cancer, a danger to the development of a country, is substantiated by some scholars such as Kodah and Traore who state that "corruption is a phenomenon which is certainly the cancer of the developing countries, to such an extent that one can wonder if the so-called developing countries are rather not "under developing". Corruption takes several forms based on the society one is examining" (2). Interesting to retain, corruption can destroy everything and everyone.

In other words, corruption is not only a bane to the economic development but also antagonist of any vision about development of a country. Many people agree that corruption is what prevents many African countries to make progress. In this case, even the political leaders acknowledge there is no development with corruption though self-interest pushes them to use it as a means of becoming rich. Achebe maintains also in the book, "but be that as it may, we are living witness to the failure of helpless integrity to solve the problem of rampant corruption which threatens now to paralyze this country in every sinew and every limb" (43).

On the other hand, Ouarodima Maina explains the problem of corruption in the economic growth of African continent. Even though it is undeniable that many people know that corruption is what hampers economic potential in African countries. He asserts, "the battle against corruption must be given priority in any efforts to support Africa's growth and development because it has negative effects on the continent's politics, economy and society as well" (457). In this case we can say that the negative effect on the African continent is real and still alive and well.

Corruption is truly harmful to the sustainable development scales in many African countries. Appiah John points out that "corruption can hinder the achievement of all the seventeen (17) sustainable development goals in Africa" (111). The most difficult time for a country is when corruption goes beyond the limits and becomes a rampant. With such practice, a country or a continent will never reach its potential. This is the reason why many African countries remain backward in terms of development.

7.2 IMPACTS OF CORRUPTION ON SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT

Corruption affects societal development in many African countries. Corruption is one the greatest phenomena that prevents the majority of African societies to get access to the basic services such as housing, healthcare, education, watering and many other necessary things. Aattah Amana et al. mention, "other consequences of corruption in Nigeria includes unemployment and underdevelopment; infrastructure decay; poor quality and delivery of public projects; poor public service;

production and sale of substandard goods; incompetent political leadership; image and reputation bashing” (67). The above elements are considered as the main consequences of corruption on societal development.

To hold any useful debate about the impact of corruption, it is even painful to say that corruption is a poison to the societal progress. Therefore, Achebe tries to show that corruption does not only affect the population or country but the whole African continent. In the same process, in the book under analysis, Achebe maintains that “corruption in Nigeria [Africa] has passed alarming and entered the fatal stage; and Nigeria [Africa] will die if we keep pretending that she [Nigeria or Africa] is only slightly indisposed” (34). In other words, it is significant to remind us that if Nigerians or Africans keep watching corruption without doing something, the continent will die.

What is more, corruption engenders the misappropriation of funds estimated for the improvement of the societies’ welfare. Nmah states “other consequences of corruption include oppression of the weak, loss of public trust, adaptation of utilitarian ethic, destruction of the moral fiber of the society, poor productivity and incompetence, ineffective development and administration, limited foreign and domestic investment undermining of democracy, and general underdevelopment” (124). There is no doubt, corruption is a bane to the societal development.

Corruption is a danger to the development of the society as it prevents the main part of the societies to achieve meaningful development. Corruption does not only impact African people but also contributes to their marginalization. In the same manner, it exacerbates poverty as well as joblessness of the youth. Additionally, Aattah et al. maintain also that “the greatest consequence of corruption is one that affects individuals and in particular the poor members of the society. This because the poor solely depend on government for health care, housing security, welfare, education etc. when these are not provided, they are the most affected” (65).

Additionally, Oneyashie depicts that corruption affects the poor in African countries to the extent that they cannot afford toilet for themselves but use public latrines. Onyeashie states that “the poor have no decent toilet facilities rather they make use of latrines. The whole system is rotten and everywhere stinks while the politicians use public funds to enrich themselves” (141). Commenting on the above quotation, it is useful to notice how the system used by the leaders pollutes everything in the life of Africans.

In *The Trouble with Nigeria*, Achebe passionately explains how corruption undermines Nigerians and Africans to a larger extent. Achebe believes:

Although Nigeria is without any shadow of doubt one of the most corrupt nations in the world there has not been one high public officer in the twenty-three years of our independence who has been made to face the music for official corruption. And so, from fairly timid manifestation in the 1960, corruption has grown bold and ravenous as, with each succeeding regime, our public servants have become more reckless blatant. (42)

Therefore, corruption is no doubt a hindrance to the societal development as the leaders refuse to combat the bane of corruption which is now and then stagnating the progress of the society.

Indeed, one of the greatest critics on corruption, Tanzi Vito, scientifically expresses the problem of corruption on both societal and economic development. Since corruption becomes one of the worldwide preoccupations, Tanzi depicts the impacts that corruption has on societal development by pointing out the monopoly of the government officers that highly stagnate the development process. Tanzi asserts, “corruption is likely to increase income inequality because it allows well positioned individuals to take advantage of the government activities at the cost of the rest of the population” (28).

Further, corruption is against any good way that can ameliorate the life of many Africans. It leads to the excessive frustration and lack of understanding between the members of the society. The impact of corruption is heavy on the societal life. Faleye Olukayede says that “the misallocation of resources due to corruption is responsible for the teaming unemployed youths in the country” (181). Following the previous quotation, it is significant to say that the misallocation of the country’s funds may lead to the shutting of economic growth as well as the creation of the teams of area boys.

Furthermore, corruption becomes not only a subject matter but also one of the greatest enemies of the societal development. Because it creates difference within the people themselves, the poor and the rich. Karianga Hendra argues, “corruption causes sharp and significant differences between individuals and certain social groups, especially in terms of income, prestige, even power, etc.” (10). As a result, one can say that corruption opposes the societal development.

Unfortunately, corruption, in many African countries, can be a source of conflict, terrorism as well as other practices such as kidnapping. The funds destined to many areas are diverted and stolen by the decision makers which may lead to the unemployment of the country. Faleye demystifies that “these unemployed youths (Alma Jeri in the North, Agbero in the south

west, Bakassi boys in the south East and Niger Delta militants in the South- South) are often recruited as political thugs or terrorists by disgruntled politicians and opportunists' religious leaders" (181). To go further, corruption is a cancer to Africa.

The worst is that corruption can harm those who have not. This is because what is supposed to be given to them is used by the greedy leaders for their personal interests. This is because, if a society does not feel at ease, the country will never be at ease and if a country is not at ease, the whole continent will be underdeveloped. Lawal rightly points out that "there is increasing evidence that the social and economic cost of corruption disproportionately affects the poor, who not only suffer from the lack of services and efficient government, but who are powerless to resist the demands of corrupt officials" (4).

Assessing the impact of corruption on societal development, it is interesting to point out that the corrupt do not only impede the poor to progress but also push them to forget about any successful way that can help them to have primary services. Appiah, from his own perspective, depicts how corruption affects poor Africans by stating, "corruption in Africa deprives the majority poor of their essential needs for foods, health, education, housing, access to clean water, and sanitation in Africa" (111). What is more, corruption has so many consequences.

To end the section, it is good to hold the view that corruption is one of the greatest enemies of societal development which requires great attention to combat in order to reach effective development of the society.

7.3 IMPACTS OF CORRUPTION ON EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The problem of corruption is not only the misappropriation of economic or societal development but also the hampering of educational development in many African countries. This impact of corruption on educational development can be realized on the misappropriation of the funds allocated for the educational development. Basak Barun indicates that "research suggests that corruption in education can hinder economic growth by diminishing human capital accumulation and lowering ethical standards among professionals. This negative impact on education quality conclusively impedes total fatality productivity and hindered progressive" (9-10).

As a matter of fact, in the educational sector, corruption threatens any successful way for the improvement of the education. Corruption impedes the investment for quality education, infrastructures, state of meritocracy and the recruitment of teachers both in quantity and quality. Bhandari states that "corruption in education undermines the principles of meritocracy, equal opportunity, and quality education for all" (7). What we come to realize through the previous quotation is the way corruption devastates the whole educational system in many African countries.

What one should note is, in a country where corruption exists, the question of education will never be thrived in any way. If the corrupt leaders misdirect the funds to be supplied for education, then the school officials will also take something from what they receive for their own interests. This misappropriation, misallocation of the funds can hinder the whole educational system. As said earlier, corruption is a danger to the economic, societal and educational development of African countries.

Akinola et al. explicate the impacts that corruption has on the educational development by stating, "reduction of funds for school administration, inadequate of professional teachers, inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor quality education, examination malpractices, educational planning and poor implementation of educational programme, poor supervision, poor staff development, hindered achievement of educational objectives" (196).

Despite the elements considered as the negative impacts of corruption, corruption may also have certain impacts such as lack of freedom of speech in certain countries in Africa, misunderstanding between both the populations and the leaders, shutting of educative system and uneasiness of the populations in many African countries.

8 CONCLUSION

Being a threat to the betterment of a country, corruption is, no doubt, one of the greatest challenges that blocks the progress of many African countries to be autonomous. It disrupts many institutions. It undermines ruling systems of many African countries. It impedes the rights of many individuals by preventing them to get access to the basic services, both in the public and private sectors. The challenge of corruption is not a strange or a new phenomenon in many African countries. Its negative impacts have been dating for many years despite the efforts to eradicate it. Nevertheless, the corrupt practices remain the headstoned in many African countries unless the Africans change their ruling systems by putting transparency in every sector. The behavior of certain political leaders and administrators and government should also be redirected. The educational systems should be established in such way to teach both the heart and the mind.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

Adopting a ruling system that conforms to the realities of African countries can impede the corrupt practice in many places in Africa. Creating ombudsmen in many administrations can help the government to alleviate the diffusion of corruption both in the urban and rural areas. Riding the African Administrations by Putting civil servant in good conditions will prevent a civil servant to look for additional incomes to satisfy their selfish desires. Putting Transparency at all levels can contribute to decreasing corrupt practices in a country both in the villages and the cities. Prosecuting and punishing small act may also mitigate corruption. Applying the Laws and Equal Treatment can successfully reduce the misunderstanding that can bring conflict between the leaders and the populations.

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