

Corruption: A Threat to Sustainable Socioeconomic Development in Nigeria

Osuji Gregory Ekene (Rev. Br)

Department of Curriculum Studies & Instruction, Faculty of Education
The Catholic University of Eastern Africa, P.O Box 62157 Nairobi, 00200, Kenya

Abstract

Nigeria, a country highly favoured by God is blessed with both human and natural resources. She has a population of over 170 million people and can boast of abundant crude oil and gas reserves, large mineral deposits, a large expanse of fertile agricultural lands, and an enabling environment conducive for the propagation of biodiversity. However, corruption is her disease and it has a long history since her independence in 1960. The military junta that lasted in Nigeria for years brought the economy of the country into ruins. The extent of Nigeria's socioeconomic failure due to corruption can be easily recognised when we compare her with other huge, populous, ethnically diverse oil-rich nations. The idea of sustainable socioeconomic development is conceived to help create healthy societies that can sustain the present generation as well as those that follow through the judicious use of economic, environmental and cultural resources. This study is exclusively a qualitative one based on content analysis of secondary data; information has been extracted from already available sources like books, previous research studies and journal articles. From the findings of the study, it is revealed that corruption is a canker worm in the whole spheres of life of Nigeria. The study strongly recommends that in order to get rid of corruption in the society, there is need to change the mindset of the public. It agrees with Dhull (2014) who states that the resistance to commit offences should be developed from one's conscience; hence inculcating moral values in people right from infancy. This candidly would provide remedy to corruption leading to increased quality of life of the people; hence, sustainable socioeconomic development.

Keywords: Corruption, threat, sustainability, socioeconomic development, Nigeria

Introduction

Nigeria, one of the most populous, populated and one of the big economies in sub-Saharan Africa is notoriously known for corruption. Travelling outside the borders of Nigeria has become a nightmare because at the instance of the presentation of the green passport (Nigerian Passport), you are immediately 'isolated and quarantined' as if you are suffering from Ebola. This is as a result of endemic corruption inherent in almost all the spheres of life of the country. Olaifa (2012) supports this idea by emphasizing that corruption in Nigeria is an all-pervasive phenomenon that is prevalent in all spheres of the Nigerian life; both public and private. It is worth to mention that the average Nigerian believes that no one achieves anything unless he/she bribes, extorts, or robs another of his/her right and possession. In the education sector for example, to gain admission to the university requires you to give a bribe of more than a semester's school fees before your name could be shortlisted in the school you chose for your academic programme. It would be rather naïve to claim that corruption is an emergent phenomenon in Nigeria when in the pre-colonial days there were stories of sell-outs by traditional rulers of their subjects based on gifts of hot drinks, mirrors, umbrellas, walking sticks and some money. The so called traditional rulers exchanged their able-bodied youth to the western slave traders because of material gains. In the world in general, corruption is not a new phenomenon; Judas Iscariot in the Bible betrayed his master Jesus Christ with thirty pieces of silver (Matt 26:14-16, 47-50 The African Bible) and James and John, the sons of Zebedee came to influence Jesus so that they could sit one at his right hand and the other at his left hand in heaven (Mk. 10:35-45). Thanks to God that Jesus did not succumb to their crazy request.

Corruption is not an emergent phenomenon in Nigeria because it has a long history since her independence in 1960. The military junta that lasted in Nigeria for years brought the economy of the country into ruins. The extent of Nigeria's failure is brought into bold relief when we compare the country with Indonesia, another huge populous, ethnically diverse oil-rich nation. Both countries have suffered military rule and at times massive bloodshed, also, at independence, both countries were nations of subsistence farmers. Despite the fact that Indonesia has not been a model of good governance, her average incomes are higher than that of Nigeria (Agbibo, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

Corruption is an endemic disease that has frequently emerged as a critical obstacle to sustainable political and socioeconomic development in Nigeria. Her economic performance reflects deep psycho-structural conditions that hinder her development. In 2000, Transparency International reported that Nigeria was perceived to be the most corrupt among 90 countries rated based on the organisation's Corruption Perceptions Index (Smith, 2001). No wonder Nigeria's famous writer, Chinua Achebe has noted that the country is 'no longer at ease,' and things have 'fallen apart' (Achebe, 1958, 1960).

Purpose of the Study

This study therefore sought to explore the challenges that corruption poses to sustainable socioeconomic development in Nigeria. The discussion is done under the following sub-headings:

- i. Definition of Concepts
- ii. Corruption Perceptions Index of Africa
- iii. Prevailing Culture of Corruption in the Nigerian Education Sector
- iv. Corruption in the Nigerian Political Sector and the Emergence of Boko Haram
- v. Moral Education; a Response to Corruption in Nigeria
- vi. Conclusions and Recommendations

Definition of Concepts

In order for us to delve into this discussion effectively, it is of paramount importance for us to look at the meaning of two main concepts; corruption and socioeconomic development.

Corruption

There is no rigid definition of corruption because many people look at it in different ways. What is considered as corruption in Kenya may not be the same in Nigeria due to the fact that ‘one man’s meat is another man’s poison.’ A public leader or officer for example who aids friends, family members and supporters with public funds may seem praiseworthy in some societies and corrupt in others; a youth who indulges in pornography might be regarded as corrupt in the Nigerian society and not in South African society, just to mention a few. These cultural differences with regard to the definition of corruption made some scholars to resort to defining corruption in political terms restricting the definition to describing the behaviour of public functionaries who overrule due processes (Olaifa, 2012).

Etymologically, ‘corruption’ is in the Latin adjective ‘corruptus,’ meaning spoiled, broken or destroyed (Hodgson & Jiang, 2007). Corruption as used in the Holy Bible implies total moral, socio-political and economic decadence which permeates an entire system. According to the concise Oxford English Dictionary, the meaning of ‘to corrupt’ in the social context is to bribe and corruption amounts to ‘moral deterioration.’ Transparency International (2000) defines corruption as the abuse of public office for private gain.

With the above background, we can emphatically say that corruption is deviation from the ideal; that is, the abandonment of good habits. It mostly involves bribery, embezzlement and the use of position power to influence decisions in order to benefit the selfish interest of those involved in it. Corruption is typically contagious and does not respect sectoral boundaries. It involves duplicity and reduces levels of morality and trust and once levels of morality and trust are lowered, it becomes more difficult to resist corrupt practices (Hodgson & Jiang, 2007).

Socioeconomic Development

Many a time, people express their concerns with regard to how things are in their various countries. Matters like poverty, unemployment, health facilities, schools, dilapidated infrastructures, political instability, just to mention a few always take a centre stage. Politicians always use this as their manifesto in order to woo their electorates. However, when they are voted into office, some of them forget the promises they made to their electorates. Improvement in the quality and standard of life is what every citizen needs and sustainable socioeconomic development which also considers the future generation is the answer to this.

In order to understand what socioeconomic development means, it is imperative to note that development is defined in a layperson’s ideas as a state in which things are improving. In the socioeconomic context, development means the improvement of people’s lifestyle through improved education, incomes, skills development and employment. It is the process of economic and social transformation based on cultural and environmental factors (National Institute of Open Schooling, 2014). Social development implies a qualitative change in the way the society shapes itself and carries out its activities. That is, it is the process that results in the transformation of social institutions in a manner which improves the capacity of the society to fulfill its aspirations. Economic development on the other hand is the qualitative change in the economic wealth of a country for the wellbeing of her inhabitants. Here, the economic, political and social wellbeing of the citizens are always taken into consideration.

WiseGeek(2015) views socioeconomic development as a process that seeks to identify both the social and economic needs within a community and seeks to create strategies that will address those needs in ways that are practical and in the best interests of the community over the long run. The general idea in this definition is simply finding ways to improve the standard of living within the area while also making sure the local economy is healthy and capable of sustaining the population present in the area. Development according to Olaifa (2012, p.88) involves “the progressive improvement on the existing socioeconomic status of a people based on a cohesive effort of the political class, the elites and the entire polity.” He further looks at it as an all-inclusive movement which aims at improving the lifestyle and the quality of life of citizens in a creative manner

We summarily define sustainable socioeconomic development as the quantitative and qualitative

changes in the social and economic dimensions of the present and future society measured with indicators such as life expectancy, personal dignity, personal safety, freedom of speech and participation in the society, literacy level, freedom of worship, levels of employment, respect for rule of law and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or Gross Domestic Income (GDI).

Corruption Perceptions Index of Africa

Corruption is a global problem and it is a factor which is a hindrance in the development of most African nations. The root causes of corruption vary from place to place depending on the political, social, economic and cultural circumstances. As Lumumba (2011) expressed;

In Africa, 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 (p.8).

In view to this, the Transparency International has been publishing the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) of the world since the turn of the new millennium. The CPI is an indicator of perceptions of public sector corruption; that is, administrative and political corruption. If a country has a CPI of 100, that country is very clean and if the score is 0, then that country is highly corrupt. Furthermore, the CPI ranks countries and territories based on how corrupt their public sector is perceived to be. It combines polls; surveys and assessments drawn on corruption related data collected by a variety of reputable institutions specialising in governance and business climate analysis, e.g. African Development Bank, World Bank, World Justice Project, World Economic Forum, and Political Risk Services, just to mention a few. The index reflects the views of observers from around the world, including experts living and working in the countries and territories evaluated. The Transparency International tries to show how effective prosecutors, the courts or the media are investigating and exposing corruption. The table 1 below shows some African nations and their Corruption Perceptions Index score, and the prevalent areas of corruption;

Table 1
Corruption Perceptions Index of Africa

Position	Country	CPI Score	Prevalent Areas of Corruption
1 st	Somalia	8	Public funds
2 nd	Sudan	11	Top ranking government officials, construction and transportation sectors
3 rd	South Sudan	15	Political sector
4 th	Libya	18	Weak rule of law
4 th	Eritrea	18	Members of the ruling party
6 th	Guinea Bissau	19	High ranking officials
6 th	Angola	19	All sectors
8 th	Burundi	20	All sectors
9 th	Zimbabwe	21	Political, private and civil sectors
10 th	Democratic Republic of Congo	22	Violence, instability and entrenched corruption at all levels
10 th	Chad	22	Irresponsible expenditure on revenues from oil
12 th	Republic of Congo	23	Oil wealth and indebtedness
13 th	Central African Republic	24	Timber and diamond industries
14 th	Kenya	25	Political sector and bribery in all sectors
14 th	Guinea	25	All sectors
16 th	Uganda	26	All sectors
16 th	Comoros	26	Lack of rule of law, coups and coup attempts
18 th	Nigeria	27	Political sector and public administration
18 th	Cameroon	27	Civil service
20 th	Madagascar	28	All sectors
21 st	Togo	29	Prison and police officers and members of the Judiciary
21 st	Gambia	29	Judiciary and many parts of the government
23 rd	Mauritania	30	Local companies
24 th	Tanzania	31	Bribery in the business sector
24 th	Sierra Leone	31	All sectors
24 th	Mozambique	31	Public and donors who support half of the nation's budget

Source: *Richest Lifestyle (2015)*

As shown in table 1, all the African countries listed have a Corruption Perceptions Index of less than 50. This really shows that there is rampant corruption in Africa. Nigeria, for example is the 18th corrupt nation in Africa with a Corruption Perceptions Index score of 27 as at 5th January, 2015. Richest Lifestyle (2015) records that political corruption pervades Nigeria; that the rise of public administration and discovery of petroleum and natural gas have led to corrupt practices. Is it real? Nigeria would have ranked from numbers one to three due to the fact that corruption is prevalent in all spheres of life of the country.

Prevailing Culture of Corruption in the Nigerian Education Sector

As stated in the introduction of this paper that the education sector has been grossly affected by corruption, giving and taking of bribes for one kind of favour or the other has become the order of the day. Education is the bedrock of development in any nation and sustainable educational development is the foundation and building blocks for sustainable socioeconomic development (Osuji, 2011). With regard to this statement, it is worth to mention that where the educational sector is characterized by corruption, it may spell doom for the nation. For instance, if students who are used to examination malpractice eventually graduate and enter into the labour market, what type of productivity will accrue from them?

In Nigeria today, corruption has resulted in the failure of the education system. Some teachers no longer pay attention to students and every effort in the education system is now turned and focused towards making easy money and other means of personal satisfaction instead of productive activities and environment. It is quite unfortunate to bring this to the awareness of the public that respected teachers, examinations supervisors and school authorities make a lot of money from students during standardised examinations with the view to help them to cheat in examinations and come out with 'good grades.' Osuji (2011), in his ethnographic study about the forms and extent of examination malpractice in Imo State, Nigeria found out that the involvement of teachers, supervisors and school authorities in helping students cheat in examinations was outstanding. Also, that every student was forced to pay as much as five thousand naira (\$25) for 'cooperation' in the examinations' hall. Unfortunately, if a student was unwilling for this 'cooperation,' he/she would fail the entire examinations.

Anukam and Anukam (2006) narrated a life story where an honest candidate who found himself in this type of incident due to good family upbringing refused to pay and tried working on his own. When he was discovered in the examination hall, he was punished severely and he failed that examination because he was not given the opportunity to use his brain since he failed to succumb to the pressure of examination malpractice. We may not continue to persecute the teachers, supervisors and school authorities only in this mayhem, reason being that sometimes, students organise this mass cheating with the school. The lazy ones always influence the bright ones and with this, they give corruption a chance in the education sector. If corruption is learnt in schools, when these students graduate and enter the labour market, what actually will be the fate of the socioeconomic development of the nation?

Awuzie (2010) views corruption as any deviation from the societal accepted standard of behaviour for the purposes of aggrandizing one's personal interest as opposed to the interest of the collectives. Can his view of corruption really apply in the Nigerian context? We may boldly say no; reason being that a very high percentage of Nigerians do not see anything wrong with corruption for it has become an accepted standard of behaviour. For instance, there is no public office you can enter for your work to be done as a bona fide citizen without being coerced in one way or the other to give a 'tip' in order to speed up processing your documents.

Corruption is a daily food in Nigeria which has infiltrated in all spheres of life of the country even in the church. A well known corrupt politician visited one of the Dioceses in Nigeria during the 2011 election and donated a huge sum of five million naira (\$25,000) under the pretense that it was for charity; not knowing that he was trying to buy the consciences of the faithful through the Bishop. The bishop hurriedly took the money and started singing the praises of this man; what a shame! Torulagha (2013) records that if a careful observation is made of the social and political behaviours of the current crop of politicians and public figures; it is possible to say that the current state of corruption and lack of moral consideration originated partially from the educational environment. He strongly believes that Nigerian institutions of learning could be partially responsible for breeding the kinds of Nigerian public officials and public figures. Can you imagine that in the universities, a lecturer needed to have sexual intercourse with his/her student before the student could perform in the examinations? How also can you describe a research project supervisor who before reading any chapter of a student's work demands a 'fat envelop' (money) from the student despite his/her salary? What about a student who never attended lectures getting a first class honours and the one who has been attending; graduating with a pass? Corruption is a reality that is inherent in Nigeria today and if the educational sector is corrupt, then, the society will be corrupted since many graduates would end up becoming men and women of different walks of life and continue to perpetuate this heinous act. Looking critically at Torulagha's assertion, it is a reality that many individuals who hold positions of power in the country today went through the educational system in an environment in which corruption, exploitation and immorality were rampant. They survived the educational system by doing whatever was deemed convenient; even cheating in examinations.

To be candid, the Nigerian educational environment, due to corruption, is turning many young men and women into an uncaring, unnecessarily aggressive and the devil-may-care kinds of individuals. They have been socialised to believe that might is preferable to civility, that morality and ethics are not important virtues, and that it is important to win at all cost (Osuji, 2011). However, there are also some serious and morally committed citizens in the educational sector. They are against the ills in the sector, but they are of the minority. Many a time, they suffer for their uprightness and refusal to 'cooperate' with the villains who terrorise the sector. The youths are the life wires of any nation and the future leaders. This means that the national security of the nation depends greatly upon the educational system to produce able leaders. If the educational sector fails to produce able leaders, then the country is doomed.

Corruption in the Nigerian Political Sector and the Emergence of Boko Haram

According to Achebe (1983), "the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character" (p.1). Achebe continues that:

If indeed there is any such a creature as an average Nigerian, he is likely to be found at a point in social space with limited opportunities for corruption as we generally understand the word. 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 (p. 38).

Chinua Achebe was correct in his claim because the main problem of Nigeria is poor leadership and power intoxication. This has made Nigeria to be a failed state. Since the discovery of oil in 1953 around Oloibiri, Bayelsa State, the political game of Nigeria changed especially during the military junta till date. The oil wealth which was supposed to bring development to all corners of the country has now brought enmity because some greedy politicians pocket the money for their selfish gains. Following Olaifa (2012), development involves the progressive improvement on the existing socioeconomic status of people based on a cohesive effort of the political class, the elites and the entire polity. However, many politicians in Nigeria do not consider Olaifa's

assertion. The issue of sustainable development which is a state of maintaining and ensuring constant political, religious and cultural survival of a nation from one generation to the other does not bother them at all. What matters to them are their pockets and their immediate families; this is one of the reasons the political sector is seen as one of the most 'oily' sectors in the country. A lot of people struggle to get into elected offices; they even go to the extent of eliminating their opponents or anybody who could block their way in their search of climbing the political ladder. They see politics as the easiest way of grabbing the oil money through dubious means. Their actions led to the underdevelopment of some parts of the country especially the north-eastern part; the base of Boko Haram.

Boko Haram (Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-jihad – people committed to the propagation of the prophet's teachings and jihad) an Islamic sect in north-eastern Nigeria has thrown the nation into confusion through its unceasing suicide bombing and deadly bomb attacks, rape, abduction and maiming of innocent citizens. The name Boko Haram is derived from the combination of the Hausa word for book (as in 'book learning') *boko*, and the Arabic term; *haram*, which designates those things which are ungodly or sinful. This Boko Haram means 'western education (and such product that arises from it) is sacrilege (Bamidele, 2013). Maiangwa, Uzodike, Whetho and Onapajo (2014) identify two theoretical approaches to explain Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria. These theories are state failure theory and frustration-aggression theory. They used these theories to underscore the grievances of Boko Haram members that make them to be involved in terrorism. In the state failure theory, they argued that a country exists to cater for her citizens; that every citizen has the right to enjoy the dividends of democracy and share in the national 'cake.' These dividends of democracy or 'political goods' as they rightly put it include security, education, health care, infrastructures, employment opportunities, and a legal framework for law and order. If these political goods are not provided, they asserted, the country loses its legitimacy in the eyes of the citizens who will now naturally transfer their allegiances to more responsive authority groups or figures; for example religious, clan or group leaders, while others will go even further to become terrorists. This theory really makes sense because Nigeria has been involved in bad governance since the military junta up to date. The basic necessities for the common citizens are either lacking or inadequate, corruption is at its peak, the rich become richer on daily basis and the poor; poorer, and those with political muscles act with impunity.

The frustration-aggression theory can also be used to explain Boko Haram's grievances on the Federal Government of Nigeria. Adibe (2012b) clearly puts it that frustration, precipitated by factors such as severe poverty, unemployment and elite corruption, causes aggression within the affected masses who feeling alienated, frustrated and abandoned, either find refuge in their religious groups or are manipulated to wage insurgency against the State. The relevance of the frustration-aggression theory is underlined by the fact that Boko Haram members are on a revenge mission due to bad governance in Nigeria. No wonder the general election was postponed from February 14 and 28 to March 28 and April 11 because Boko Haram is still aggrieved with the state of the nation and it is ready to disrupt the election. Did the federal government really contain Boko Haram before the general election? It was not possible! The government tried containing them; however, there were still pockets of bombing even on the election day and after the election. The 2015 general election that we saw as a two horse race between Dr Goodluck Jonathan's Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and General Muhammadu Buhari's All Progressive Congress (APC) was full of violence and rigging. However, the international observers acknowledged it as free and fair; what a shame and corrupt society in which we live in? How can you use people below the voting age for election? How can you also be sharing money in the election booth for people to vote for you? This actually is against election ethics. There is need for the government to rid itself of corruption so that the right to life and pursuit of happiness which has long been denied in the country could be restored.

Moral Education; a Response to Corruption in Nigeria

A lot of people in the corridors of governance in Nigeria are united on the importance of societal ideals and their capacities to strengthen governance and stimulate development; their actions, however, negate such unity in practical terms. What the ideals are and how they must operate for socioeconomic development are never in doubt because according to Akanle (2014), "Nigerians; leaders and followers alike are socialised into such ideals across social institutions from birth until death" (p. 40). It is interesting to mention that every political office holder in Nigeria; especially the presidency introduces a slogan of governance that reinforces known values and ethics and makes wonderful promises that will never be matched with actions. The contemporary ones are: zero tolerance for corruption; a slogan that led to the establishment of the economic and financial crimes commission (EFCC) by the Olusegun Obasanjo's administration (1999 – 2007), rule of law; the slogan of the Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's administration (2007 – 2010) and equal opportunity; the slogan of the Goodluck Jonathan's administration (2010 - 2015). Beautiful slogans; are they not? Let us watch and see the one that Muhammadu Buhari's administration will come up with. With all these, where is Nigeria today in its sustainable socioeconomic development? Once national visions, values, norms, beliefs and ethics are established across levels of governance, it takes only a few actions to disregard them. For example, Obasanjo's administration

introduced EFCC and used it to witch-hunt only those who were against his third term agenda. Yar'Adua's rule of law was a laughing stock because there were many 'sacred cows' in his time that had no respect for court orders. Is it Jonathan's equal opportunity? Why Boko Haram, insecurity, massive youth unemployment, dysfunctional education and health sectors, constant outage of national electric power, dilapidated infrastructures; just to mention a few? No wonder he asserted few weeks ago that the incoming administration would persecute him and his ministers due to their lack of seriousness in governance and their greedy and corrupt nature. This therefore calls for transformative moral education.

Based on the fact that successive leaders have been unable to deliver a corruption-free system in which socioeconomic development initiatives are successfully implemented and the citizens enjoy relative peace in the areas of employment, social security, rule of law and social justice, and economic emancipation, it is high time that Nigerians and their leaders reappraised their value system. The issue of corruption is a function of a defective conscience and for any meaningful systemic reconstruction and transformation to take place, morality which is a crucial element in conscience building needs to be tackled. Agreeing with Olaifa (2012), "any youth who imbibes morality is bound to be a leader of a high integrity. Effort should therefore be made by the entire organs of the society to infuse these sterling values into our children and youth so that they become permanent features of their lives" (p. 95).

A good leader is someone who is humane, reasonable, responsible and loving; someone who possesses natural instinct for the protection of the vulnerable: the aged, women, children and those living with disabilities. Can we find such a leader in Nigeria today who is morally upright and promotes sustainable socioeconomic development in order to protect these vulnerable ones? One of the past Governors of one State in Nigeria once made a public statement in 2012 with regard to senior citizens of the Country; that is, the pensioners. When people complained about the type of ill treatment given to these citizens especially in the area of their pension; their right and what they toiled for during their youthful days, the Governor openly said that these senior citizens are 'dry woods.' Why? This is because he did not want to release their money; he was only interested in embezzlement. What a shame for a high ranking government official; the number one citizen of a State to make such a statement and to act in such a manner! He forgot that his teachers and parents were part of that group. This is simply a sign that he is not reasonable and he has not imbibed any African value; also it is the height of lack of respect for the elders and his non-commitment to the socioeconomic development of his State. A Nigerian political observer would wonder if morality has any bearing in politics because looking at the nature of immorality that characterises political activities; e.g. assassination, thuggery, embezzlement, just to mention a few which are all hallmarks of corruption, one could conclude that there is no clear-cut demarcation between immorality and the Nigerian brand of politics; and this poses a lot of threat to sustainable socioeconomic development of the Country.

What then is the role of moral education in this whole saga? The Bible categorically states that, 'virtue exalts a nation, but sin is a people's disgrace.' (Proverbs 14:34). This simply expresses that if Nigerians truly desire sustainable socioeconomic development, then all citizens must rise to the task of shining as the light in the midst of the darkness of corruption. There is little doubt that Nigeria is a country that is highly blessed and favoured by God; she is a nation well endowed with both human and natural resources; a nation of over 170 million people with abundant crude oil and gas reserves, large mineral deposits, a large expanse of fertile agricultural lands, rivers and seas in which fishing activities take place and rich forest areas which serve as reserves for wild animals and all species. However, these resources need good stewardship in terms of accountability for them to be harnessed efficiently and effectively; this is a clarion call for moral education. In Christian education for example, Christians are taught to be good stewards of God's resources (Ajani, 2013). What Ajani is trying to illustrate is that stewardship is a sense of accountability to God and people. This means that if Nigerians would rightly appropriate in their lives and activities the ideal of Christian stewardship, the probability is higher that, in whatever position they find themselves, they would manage well the enormous resources of the nation and such good management would foster the socioeconomic development of the Country and consequently assist in building the nation.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The epidemic of corruption has eaten deep into the fabric of the Nigerian society like a cancerous worm. Corruption is found in all spheres of Nigerian life; politics, health, education, civil service, just to mention a few. It is not surprising that corruption in Nigeria has gone to the extent of receiving baptismal names like *kola*, *brown envelope*, *egunje*, and so on; and this has actually slowed the pace of sustainable socioeconomic development of the Country. However, why is corruption so prevalent in Nigeria? This is because the level of poverty is very high in the country. Here, the rich keep growing rich and the poor; poorer. Another reason is that people who have been accused and arrested for corruption and corrupt practices by the famous EFCC have often escaped punishment or have been meted with punishment that many consider to be non-commensurate with their offences. Hence, many Nigerians feel they can be corrupt since the punishment is mild.

What then is the way forward for speedy and sustainable socioeconomic development? We strongly recommend that in order to curb the mayhem of corruption in the Nigerian society and boost sustainable socioeconomic development;

1. The government should urgently address the issue of poverty, the issue of failed legal, health and education sector, the issue of bad governance in all spheres of the Nigerian life and take stricter measures against people who involve in corrupt practices as a deterrent to others.
2. All citizens of Nigeria should exercise godly contentment, self-discipline and restraint in the face of corrupt practices.

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