

Open Government and Nigeria's National Development: A Critical Evaluation

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Abstract

Every society seeks constant improvement of quality of life of its population and enhancement of its environment. For Nigeria, achieving national development has been a goal of successive governments, both military and civilian administrations. But that aspiration is yet to be achieved. Extreme poverty, unemployment and inequality have remained high. In fact, Nigeria currently has the largest extreme poverty population in the world. The worry is even whether Nigeria will ever overcome its current state of underdevelopment without government's transparency. Interrogating the role of open government in achievement of national development was the task of this paper. Thus, it adopted development communication theory as theoretical framework. Data was collated from secondary sources while qualitative descriptive approach was adopted for analysis. The paper found that failure to make government dealings open in Nigeria has deepened corruption. This has, in turn, hindered national development. It also found that the goal of attaining national development will continue to experience challenge if those in power continue to shroud government activities in secrecy. The paper therefore recommended a paradigm shift towards greater openness in government as a way to achieve national development. It equally recommended citizens' participation in governance as prerequisite for national development.

Keywords: national development, open government, corruption, poverty, underdevelopment

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1. Introduction

Every society strives for development. Obviously, governments within the international system and irrespective of their ideological inclination are in constant struggle to achieve cumulative betterment of the lives of their people as well as improvement of their environments.

Particularly and as Ijomah (2008) emphasizes, the best way to assess African States on democracy and development is to score them based on the demands of their people and the responses of the governments towards such demands seen as performance. Knowing that citizens will always ask for a better and rewarding life, it implies therefore that any attribution of development in Africa which fails to take into account fundamental change for the better in the lifestyle of the ordinaries in the society is grossly faulty. Same also applies to any ascription to democracy in Africa or anywhere else for that matter which extricates the wishes and interests of majority of the people from its reason for existence.

However, that is just one side to the coin. The real worry is why the standard of living in Nigeria has remained poor. It is more of concern when one recalls that different policies and programmes said to have targeted ending the current state of underdevelopment had been formulated and implemented by successive governments.

But in view of the prevailing situation, a pertinent question that has often been asked is, can sustainable improvement in human condition be achieved through governance that is not transparent and by extension unaccountable? If the answer is no, then can't the problem of under-development in Nigeria be blamed on the failure by her leaderships to adopt open government approach in their dealings?

It is this bog or difficulty in achieving improvement in the life of the Nigerian populace when the government lacks openness that necessitated this paper. The paper therefore studied the linkage between open government and national development in Nigeria. It examined lack of transparency in national leadership of Nigeria and how it had hindered achievement of sustainable development in the country. But it is imperative at this juncture to establish the theoretical framework which guides the paper.

2. Theoretical Framework

In this paper, the development communication theory was adopted as framework for analysis. The theory is anchored on communication for social change and participatory community. It refers to a gamut of communication processes, strategies and principles within the field of international development aimed at improving the conditions and quality of life of people struggling with underdevelopment and marginalization (Hasan, 2013).

It is a theory that seeks application of communication techniques in a flexible and diversified manner. Its central concern is ending the problem of underdevelopment and betterment of the society through the employment of instruments such as media advocacy and education.

Idowu (1999) outlines some of the principles of the theory to include using the media in carrying out special development tasks of national integration, socio-economic modernization, promotion of literacy and cultural

creativity. According to him, the media should accept and carry out positive development task in line with nationally-established policy without prejudice to their traditional functions.

Ideally, the emphasis of the theory is on the use of the media in building a better society. The aim of the theory is the realization of an inclusive development through openness and using the media as a veritable tool. This is what makes the theory apt for the paper.

Having established the theoretical framework of the paper therefore, the next task is to offer conceptual perspectives to the variables of the study. And to do that, it serves to commence with an inquiry into what development actually entails.

3. Conceptual Perspectives to Development

Arriving at a universally-accepted definition of development is difficult (Ijomah, 2008). Evidently, the concept has been discovered to be not only problematic in terms of operational definition but also too argumentative in nature (Udenigwe, 2010).

Perhaps, the reasons for the complexity in evolving a single definition for the concept of development are not far-fetched. Part of the reasons is what Rodney (1972) argues about in contending that development consists of many sided process. Apart from that, the divergent views expressed by liberalists and radical Marxists on the concept has not equally helped to pull us out of the enigma.

As Udenigwe (2010) notes, the liberalists perceive development as economic development interlinked with the structures and natures of the growth of the Gross National Products (GNP). Thus, development to them entails maximization of GNP growth-rate through the instrumentality of capital accumulation and industrialization.

Put in simple term, the liberalists or economic internationalists as they are often referred to view development from the standpoint of quantitative increase in things (such as infrastructural and industrial life of the people) made possible by the capacity of national economy. They place extensive emphasis on economic growth or capital accumulation, accentuated by massive physical infrastructure.

However, this perspective has been heavily criticized by radical Marxists as inadequate and short-sighted. They also brand a conscious and erroneous marketing of philosophy that leads to faulty policy options and consequent development of underdevelopment in underdeveloped regions of the world.

The Marxists vehemently maintain that the persuasion by liberals cannot solve the problem of underdevelopment wherever the problem is found. They are united in tagging the liberals' view as imperialists' gift, as well as a standpoint that is utterly unrealistic.

Ijomah (2008) echoes the view of the Marxists when he avers that development does not just refer to growth in the infrastructure but includes building of institutions that create the values and norms and the way of life that hold the institutions together. He is emphatic that the linear growth of infrastructures and institutions and industrialization is not maturity, as development rather represents a major transformation in the social life of the people. According to him, when a system is developed, there is an increase in human productivity.

Be that as it may, the intervention by Nnoli (1981) is even more striking. He observes that the view of a developing country which the leaders share is one of a country that is increasingly acquiring more and more artifacts of the type found in the Western countries and Japan and which are created by the financial and industrial leaders of these foreign countries. He cautions that development is neither catching up with the advanced countries nor the procurement of artifacts.

To him, artifacts are not development itself and in certain cases may have no relationship whatever with that process. Thus, he contends that they reflect development only when they are the end-product of the efforts of the population to apply their creative energy to transformation of the local physical, biological and socio-cultural environments as is obtained in the advances Western and Eastern countries.

In his book, *Path to Nigerian Development*, Nnoli (1981) argues that development is first and foremost a phenomenon associated with changes in man's humanity and creative energies, not in things. He says:

Development is a dialectical phenomenon in which the individual and society interact with their physical, biological and inter-human environments, transforming them for their own betterment and that of humanity at large and being transformed in the process. It is the unending improvement in the capacity of the individual and society to control and manipulate the forces of nature as well as themselves and other individuals and societies for their own benefit and that of humanity at large. It is a process of actualizing man's inherent capacity to live a better and more rewarding life. It implies increasing skill and capacity to do things, greater freedom, self-confidence, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility, and material well-being.

(Nnoli, 1981)

Supporting his viewpoint, Ezeibe (2015) argues that development involves the use of people's physical and mental energies to conquer and transform their environment. Accordingly, development of man should translate into increased productivities, improved living and conquering of the forces of nature in his environment.

Certainly, development is an all-round interconnected progressive transformation of man, society and nature, made possible by his incremental mastery over them (Igwe, 2007). It is a steady movement towards a better graduation (Njoku, 2009).

However, Seers (1969) maintains that in determining development, focus should be on the following: What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? In fact, he contends that if all three of these have become less severe, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned but if one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all the three have, it would be strange to call the result “development,” even if per capita income has soared.

Going by his position, three major purposes of development are therefore identified. They are eradication of extreme poverty, reduction of unemployment as well as guarantee of equality among citizens of the society. Using the criteria, a critical question then is, where is Nigeria in terms of development?

3.1 Nigeria in Development Equilibrium: Facts/Myths

Situating Nigeria’s development using the incidences of poverty, unemployment and inequality is quite revealing. The three indicators are all high in the country and are ever increasing as the population increases.

For instance, World Bank (2019), Dangana (2011), Asogwa and Okoli (2008) and Okoye (2002) all affirm that poverty in Nigeria is high, ravaging, real and pervasive. Also, NBS (2010) affirms that the proportion of Nigerians living in poverty is increasing every year despite the fact that Nigerian economy is paradoxically growing.

This is even as World Bank (2019) describes Nigeria as a lower-middle income country that is large and richly endowed but which hosts more of the world’s extreme poor today than any other country, and fares poorly in multi and conflict dimensional poverty measures, with high inequality across regions. According to a projection by the Bank, the share of Nigeria’s population living in extreme poverty will have risen from 42.8 percent (in 2016) to 45.0 percent by 2030, representing about 120 million people living on less than US\$1.90 a day.

In its own assessment, the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (2017) reveals that 53.3 percent of Nigerians were categorized as multi-dimensionally poor in 2017. The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) adopted by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative uses 10 indicators to measure poverty in three dimensions: education (years of schooling and school attendance), health (child mortality and nutrition) and living standards (electricity, sanitation, drinking water, floor, cooking fuel, and assets).

The level of poverty in Nigeria is so bad that the World Bank (2019) warns that if not addressed, the duo of high level of extreme poverty and the low levels of human capital in Nigeria have consequences that extend beyond its borders.

It said:

Despite being a middle-income economy, Nigeria fares astonishingly poorly in poverty and human capital related outcomes. The number of people living in extreme poverty has gone up from 2011 to 2016, and many more are vulnerable to falling into poverty, especially in the Northern regions of the country. Nigeria ranks among the worst seven performers in the World Bank Human Capital Index and the poor lag far behind the rich in every human capital outcome.

(WB 2019:5)

In May 1999, the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo acknowledged that the incidence of poverty and unemployment had assumed a dimension that is socially, economically and politically unacceptable. It then went ahead to earmark the sum of N10 billion for the creation of 200, 000 jobs in the year 2000 in demonstration of the government’s desire to eradicate poverty (Okoye, 2002). Okoye equally has this to say of poverty in Nigeria:

About 60 percent of Nigerians live below the poverty line. Data on poverty are staggering and reveal that only 50 percent have access to primary healthcare while most Nigerians consume less than 1/3 of the minimum required protein and vitamins intake because of low income...the overall situation now is that most Nigerians go hungry because they cannot afford to buy food.

(Okoye, 2002:232-233)

Statistics by NBS (2010) shows that poverty incidence in Nigeria rose from 27.2 percent in 1980 with an estimated population of 65 million, representing 17.1 million as population in poverty, to poverty incidence of 69.0 with estimated population of 163 million representing 112.47 million as population in poverty in 2010. On the other hand, the proportion of extremely poor jumped from 6.2 percent to 38.7 percent within the same period. IndexMundi (2018) puts the population below poverty line in Nigeria from 2010 to 2019 at 70 percent.

Beside the NBS’s data, in June 2018, the World Poverty Clock in its own data quoted in Guardian (2019), reported that Nigeria had the largest extreme poverty population in the world as 86.9 million Nigerians lived in extreme poverty. In another data released in February 2019, the same World Poverty Clock which uses publicly

available data on income distribution, production, and consumption provided by various international organizations, most notably the United Nations, World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund in its works further reported that the number of extremely poor Nigerians stood at 91.16 million. In June that same year, it published that the figure increased to 93,720,530 people.

But poverty is also closely related to inequality (Inam, 2015). Inequality refers to the relative welfare of different groups (Perkins et al, 2001).

Affirming the assertions by Inam (2015) and Perkins et al (2001), Todaro and Smith (2009) disclose that the magnitude and extent of poverty in any country depends on two factors; the average level of national income and the degree of inequality in its distribution. Specifically, they contend that income inequality refers to the existence of disproportional distribution of total national income among household whereby the share going to rich persons in a country is far greater than that going to poorer persons (a situation common to most less developed countries).

In his contribution, Ucha (2010) affirms that poverty in Nigeria is caused by incidences of unemployment, corruption, non-diversification of the economy, income inequality, laziness and a poor education system. Ajakaiye and Adeyeye (2002), Kolawole and Torimiro (2006) and Adeyemi (2012) in their contributions also identify certain factors that contribute to global poverty crisis to generally include low or negative economic growth, corruption, unemployment, poor infrastructure, hash economic policy, poor governance or poor leadership, low productivity and a lag in human resources development. Others include increase in crime and violence, environmental degradation, retrenchment of workers, a fall in the real value of safety nets as well as changes in family structures.

In fact, Inam (2009) maintains that for any given level of national per capita income, the more unequal the distribution, the greater the incidence of poverty. According to him, for any given distribution, the lower the average income level, the greater the incidence of poverty. His contention is that in most developing countries, the income share of the rich people increases with every increase in national income compared to the income share of the poor, explaining that that is how the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Table 1 shows the relative poverty headcount from 1980 to 2010 in Nigeria.

Table 1: Relative Poverty Headcount from 1980-2010

YEAR	POVERTY INCIDENCE %	ESTIMATED POPULATION (MILLION)	POPULATION IN POVERTY (MILLION)
1980	27.2	65	17.1
1985	46.3	75	34.7
1992	42.7	91.5	39.2
1996	65.6	102.3	67.1
2004	54.4	126.3	68.7
2010	69.0	163	112.47

SOURCE: National Bureau of Statistics. HNLSS 2010

From the table, the poverty incidence in Nigeria rose from 27.2 percent in 1980 to 69.0 percent in 2010. That means that whereas a total of 17.1 million Nigerians were in poverty in 1980, the figure rose to 112.47 million in 2010. The sharp increase, no doubt, shows how much poverty had become a problem in the country.

But another dimension to the poverty-problem in Nigeria is that the scourge varies by region, sector and gender. As NBS (2010) puts it, poverty impacted more on Nigeria youths, children and mothers than the male adult population by 2010.

Table 2 shows the poverty numbers for absolute, relative, dollar/day and food poverty in Nigeria according to NBS.

Table 2: 2010 Poverty Numbers for Absolute, Relative, Dollar/day and Food Poverty

		Food Poverty		Absolute Poverty		Moderately poor based on 2/3 of the weighted mean household per capita expenditure regionally deflated (Relative poverty)		Dollar per day based on an adjusted PPP	
		Food Poor	Non Poor	Poor	Non Poor	Poor	Non Poor	Poor	Non Poor
Sector	Urban	26.7	73.3	52.0	48.0	61.8	38.2	52.4	47.6
	Rural	48.3	51.7	66.1	33.9	73.2	26.8	66.3	33.7
	National	41.0	59.0	60.9	39.1	69.0	31.0	61.2	38.8
Zone	North Central	38.6	61.4	59.5	40.5	67.5	32.5	59.7	40.3
	North East	51.5	48.5	69.0	31.0	76.3	23.7	69.1	30.9
	North West	51.8	48.2	70.0	30.0	77.7	22.3	70.4	29.6
	South East	41.0	59.0	58.7	41.3	67.0	33.0	59.2	40.8
	South South	35.5	64.5	55.9	44.1	63.8	36.2	56.1	43.9
	South West	25.4	74.6	49.8	50.2	59.1	40.9	50.1	49.9
	State	Abia	30.5	69.5	57.4	42.6	63.4	36.6	57.8
	Adamawa	55.4	44.6	74.2	25.8	80.7	19.3	74.3	25.7
	Akwa ibom	35.6	64.4	53.7	46.3	62.8	37.2	53.8	46.2
	Anambra	34.2	65.8	56.8	43.2	68.0	32.0	57.4	42.6
	Bauchi	54.1	45.9	73.0	27.0	83.7	16.3	73.1	26.9
	Bayelsa	23.3	76.7	47.0	53.0	57.9	42.1	47.0	53.0
	Benue	48.5	51.5	67.1	32.9	74.1	25.9	67.2	32.8
	Borno	33.2	66.8	55.1	44.9	61.1	38.9	55.1	44.9
	Cross-Rivers	46.4	53.6	52.9	47.1	59.7	40.3	52.9	47.1
	Delta	42.8	57.2	63.3	36.7	70.1	29.9	63.6	36.4
	Ebonyi	63.5	36.5	73.6	26.4	80.4	19.6	73.6	26.4
	Edo	39.4	60.6	65.6	34.4	72.5	27.5	66.0	34.0
	Ekiti	35.8	64.2	52.4	47.6	59.1	40.9	52.6	47.4
	Enugu	52.7	47.3	62.5	37.5	72.1	27.9	63.4	36.6
	Gombe	71.5	28.5	74.2	25.8	79.8	20.2	74.2	25.8
	Imo	33.3	66.7	50.5	49.5	57.3	42.7	50.7	49.3
	Jigawa	71.1	28.9	74.1	25.9	79.0	21.0	74.2	25.8
	Kaduna	41.7	58.3	61.5	38.5	73.0	27.0	61.8	38.2
	Kano	48.3	51.7	65.6	34.4	72.3	27.7	66.0	34.0
	Katsina	56.2	43.8	74.5	25.5	82.0	18.0	74.8	25.2
	Kebbi	47.0	53.0	72.0	28.0	80.5	19.5	72.5	27.5
	Kogi	50.1	49.9	67.1	32.9	73.5	26.5	67.3	32.7
	Kwara	38.1	61.9	61.8	38.2	74.3	25.7	62.0	38.0
	Lagos	14.6	85.4	48.6	51.4	59.2	40.8	49.3	50.7
	Nassarawa	26.8	73.2	60.4	39.6	71.7	28.3	60.4	39.6
	Niger	20.4	79.6	33.8	66.2	43.6	56.4	33.9	66.1
	Ogun	41.8	58.2	62.3	37.7	69.0	31.0	62.5	37.5
	Ondo	36.1	63.9	45.7	54.3	57.0	43.0	46.1	53.9
	Osun	19.5	80.5	37.9	62.1	47.5	52.5	38.1	61.9
	Oyo	24.6	75.4	51.8	48.2	60.7	39.3	51.8	48.2
	Plateau	44.0	56.0	74.1	25.9	79.7	20.3	74.7	25.3
	Rivers	26.3	73.7	50.4	49.6	58.6	41.4	50.6	49.4
	Sokoto	56.6	43.4	81.2	18.8	86.4	13.6	81.9	18.1
	Taraba	45.2	54.8	68.9	31.1	76.3	23.7	68.9	31.1
	Yobe	58.5	41.5	73.8	26.2	79.6	20.4	74.1	25.9
	Zamfara	44.4	55.6	70.8	29.2	80.2	19.8	71.3	28.7
	FCT	32.5	67.5	55.6	44.4	59.9	40.1	55.6	44.4

SOURCE: NBS 2010

The table reveals that the North-West and North- East geo-political zones recorded the highest poverty rate in the country with 77.7% and 76.3% respectively in 2010, while the South-West geo-political zone recorded the lowest at 59.1%. Sokoto State came top among the states with poverty rate at 86.4% while Niger had the lowest poverty rate at 43.6%.

From the foregoing therefore, it is safe to say that the poverty-scourge in Nigeria is distressing. It is more so with a revelation by the WB (2019) that the number of people living in extreme poverty went up from 2011 to 2016 and many more are vulnerable to falling into poverty. Its statistics shows that based on the national poverty line, the rate of poverty increased from 35.0 to 38.8 percent of the total population from 2011 to 2016 while between 2011 and 2016, the total number of people living in poverty increased from 57 million to 74 million, which was both fueled by rise in poverty incidences as well as rapid population growth rate.

Be that as it may, it is important at this juncture to interrogate the characteristics of development. Put into question form, what indicators portend development?

3.2 Characteristics/Indicators of Development

Okereke and Ekpe (2002) and Udenigwe (2010) have outlined the features of development. These indicators divided into economic, political and socio-cultural are used to determine development in any given society.

The economic indicators of development, therefore, include the growth rate in the areas of the GNP, the measure and levels at which incomes are equitably distributed in any given society, the high rate of poverty reduction and eradication, the level and natural labour output per man and the extent and level of agricultural development. Others are the level of industrialization, the amount and level of steel and iron consumption in any country, the growth rate of technological development, advancement and transformation; the growth rate of capital formation, the extent to which the economy is diversified, increasing physical infrastructure (example: improvement in its transportation system, increase in electricity supply, extent of its telecommunications system, increase in water supply and waste management system), increasing industrial production and increasing agricultural production.

Political indicators of development, on its own, include a clearly-defined process of power succession, the level of integration, the level of political tolerance and compromise, the extent to which fundamental human rights are recognized and enforced, and the level of mass mobilization and participation in policies. Socio-cultural indicators entail the level of social mobilization, the extent of cultural socialization, the prevalence of universalistic norms and the extent to which recruitment is based on achievement rather than ascription

But a critical question is, how does open government help in achievement of sustainable development in societies? This requires us to interrogate the concept.

4. Open Government and Sustainable Development: An Organic Linkage

According to World Bank (2015), open government characterized by increased transparency, citizen participation and collaboration between government and citizens is a key driver of development in the 21st century. The Bank affirms that governments that are more open are better positioned to act effectively and efficiently to foster private sector growth and to respond to the true needs of all citizens.

Citizen-centric governance, with openness as a central pillar, improves the use of public resources, facilitates inclusive decision-making processes and increases trust between governments and citizens (World Bank, 2015). The conviction which the Bank has on the important organic linkage between open government and sustainable development, no doubt, explains why it has, over the years, shown commitment in helping governments become more open and by doing so achieving inclusive and sustainable development.

In general term and according to Transparency International, open government entails high level of transparency, government accountability and enablement of citizens to consequently scrutinize governance processes and participate in governance. Generally speaking, the greatest purpose which open government serves is its ability to engender citizens' participation in governance as well as their collaboration with government.

Through open government, the public gets more and more connected to their government. Dialogue and collaboration between citizens and their government is an all-time product of open government. This fruit, no doubt, comes when citizens get unfettered access to government's information and proceedings.

Sadly for Nigeria, less-than transparent governance, corruption, poverty, unemployment, inequality and attendant apathy of citizens remain the hallmark of the socio-political and economic system. This has remained, irrespective of types and shapes of regimes so far witnessed in the country since its political independence in 1960.

Lack of openness in government remains an energizer for corruption which in itself perpetuates underdevelopment in the country. This is responsible for ranking of Nigeria as the most corrupt country in the world at a time. Table 3 shows how Nigeria fared in corruption perception between 1996 and 2014.

Table 3: Nigeria's Ranks in Corruption Perceptions Index, 1996-2014

Year	Country Rank	CPI Score	Surveys Used	Confidence Range
2014	136/175	NA	NA	NA
2013	144/175	NA	NA	NA
2012	139/176	NA	NA	NA
2011	143/183	2.4	1.7	NA
2010	134/178	2.4	7	2.2-2.7
2009	130/180	2.5	7	2.2-2.7
2008	121/180	2.7	7	2.3-3.0
2007	147/180	2.2	8	2.0-2.4
2001	90/91	1.0	4	-0.1-2.0
1999	98/99	1.6	5	NA
1998	81/85	1.9	5	NA
1996	54/54	0.69	4	NA

Source: Transparency International quoted in Ezeibe (2015), page 257

As can be seen from the table, Nigeria was ranked the most corrupt country in 1996 and second most corrupt country twice in 1999 and 2001 by Transparency International. The ranking is what can only be obtained in a government that is not transparent.

Table 4 below further reveals the level of corruption in Nigeria. It presents summary of Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC) enforcement data from its inception to December 2017.

Table 4: Summary of ICPC Enforcement Data from Inception to December 2017

ACTIVITY	FIGURES
Number of petitions received	15, 129
Number of petitions assigned	7, 389
Number of petitions fully investigated	3, 657
Number of on-going cases in Courts	304
Number of convictions in determined cases	93
Record of Assets and Cash recovered (2006-2017)	http://icpc.gov.ng/download/5982/
List of funds recovered and returned to victims	http://icpc.gov.ng/download/5979/
Photographs of some properties recovered	http://icpc.gov.ng/photo-gallery-2/nggallery/icpc/photographs-of-properties-recovered-by-icpc-from-2016-march-2017
Photographs of 72 vehicles recovered from retired government officials and SURE-P	http://icpc.gov.ng/photo-gallery-2/nggallery/icpc/icpc-hands-over-40-recovered-vehicles-to-the-federal-ministry-of-water-resources

SOURCE: <https://icpc.gov.ng/downloads-beta/>

The table shows that ICPC received a total of 15, 129 petitions bothering on corruption by former government officials within the period. The number of ongoing cases in courts stood at 304 while 93 convictions were recorded in determined cases from the inception of the commission to December 2017.

On the other hand, another anti-corruption agency, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) secured a total of 38 convictions on corruption-related cases in Abuja in 2016 alone. The convicted persons included public servants who exploited the rot in the system to corruptly enrich their pockets. Table 5 presents details of the convictions.

Table 5: EFCC Abuja Convictions in 2016

S/N	JUDGE	ARRAIGNMENT DATE	OFFENCE	CONVICTION DATE	NAME OF PARTIES	VERDICT
1	Hon. Justice Akin-Davids	20/09/2013	Stealing	25/01/2016	FRN v Olorunfemi Emmanuel Obaje	Sentenced to a prison term of three (3) years without an option of fine
2	Hon. Justice Salisu Garba	25/04/2007	Criminal conspiracy, theft of four cheque leaflets, forgery, and using as genuine	29/01/2016	FRN v Tunde Oreniga	Sentenced to two (20) years imprisonment on the three counts of criminal conspiracy and five (5) years imprisonment on the counts of obtaining money by false pretence
3	Hon. Coram Longi	23/11/2015	Criminal breach of trust	19/02/2016	FRN v Olukunle Ajayi	Sentenced to six (6) months in prison with an option of fine of N10,000 (Ten thousand naira only). His house was also forfeited and is to be sold and the proceed restituted to the victim
4		08/03/2016	Forgery	15/03/2016	FRN v Iliya Bako Dawuda	He was convicted and sentenced to five years imprisonment without option of fine
5	Hon. Justice Lawal Akapo	24/06/2016	Conspiracy to defraud, impersonation, forgery and using of false document	16/03/2016	FRN v Joseph Onoja Gabriel	Sentenced to two (2) years imprisonment commencing from the date of sentence
6	Justice Valentine Ashi	18/01/2016	Forgery, using as genuine and obtaining money under false pretence, conspiracy and cheating		FRN v Chibueze Enudi & Monday Adewale Lawal	On Count 1, the 1 st and 2 nd defendants were sentenced to a term of six (6) months imprisonment each with an option of fine of Two hundred thousand naira (200,000) each. On Count 2, the 1 st and 2 nd defendants were sentenced to a term of six (6) months imprisonment each with an option of fine of Two hundred thousand naira (200,000) each.
7	Hon. Justice Olukeyode A. Adeniyi	25/09/2013	Attempt to obtain and obtaining by false pretence	03/02/2016	FRN v Vincent Bulus Venman	
8	Hon. Justice Rabi Mustapha	29/04/2011	Conspiracy and forgery		FRN v Muhammad Salisu Mohammad	The two accused persons were sentenced to 3 years imprisonment each
9	Hon. Justice A.I.Kuti	14/06/2012	Conspiracy and criminal breach of trust		FRN v Adegboyega Lomdon & 1 or	The court sentenced the accused persons to 2 years imprisonment or an option of fine of N100,000 (One hundred thousand naira only) each, and also ordered each of them to reconstitute and pay the sum of N2,400,000 to the Federal Ministry of Mines and Steel Development.
10	Hon. Justice F.A. Andetur	21/04/2016	Conspiracy to induce the delivery of money under false pretences		FRN v N.Zhema and Adamu Umaru Jalo	The 1 st accused person was sentenced to 7 years imprisonment on each of counts 1, 2 and 3 with option of fine in the sum of N300,000.00 three hundred thousand naira only. The sentence is to run concurrently. The 2 nd accused person was sentenced to 7 years imprisonment on counts 1, 4 and 5 with option of fine in the sum of N300,000. The sentence is to run concurrently
11	Hon. Justice Ipaye	24/04/2015	Conspiracy and obtaining under false pretence	18/02/2016	FRN v Elvis Ezeani	Sentenced to 10 years imprisonment without option of fine. The sentences are to run concurrently.
12	Hon. Justice Abdulgafar	14/07/2015	Criminal misappropriation	27/04/2016	FRN v Oladimeji Moh Eduh, Zarab Ventures	The 1 st accused person was sentenced to 6 months imprisonment and also ordered to refund the sum of N14,000,000 (fourteen million naira)
13	Justice Aladetoyinbo		Criminal breach of trust	25/04/2016	FRN v George Ubob	The accused was sentenced to 3 years imprisonment on each of the above counts with option of fine in the sum of one million naira (N1,000,000). The convict was also ordered to pay twelve million naira (12,000,000) as compensation to Police Foundation.
14	Hon. Justice M.T.M Aliyu	14/11/2008	Theft	26/04/2016	FRN v Bitrius Mallam	The accused was sentenced to twelve months imprisonment and a fine of N100,000 (one hundred thousand naira) in the event that the accused is unable to pay the fine, he shall spend an additional 12 months in prison.
15	Justice M. Anenih	05/11/2013	Obtaining money under false pretence	19/05/2016	FRN v Sunday Chukwu	The accused was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment on each of the above counts. The sentence is to run concurrently from the 5 th of November, 2013 when his bail was revoked as he earlier jumped bail
16	Hon. Justice Umar Sadia	08/12/2011	Conspiracy and criminal breach of trust	28/06/2016	FRN v Elisha Gyang & Laide Omotosho	The 1 st defendant was convicted for the offence of criminal breach of trust as charged and sentenced him to two years imprisonment on each of the counts of criminal breach of trust (which is to run concurrently or the option of fine of N500,000.00 (Five hundred thousand naira) on each count.
17	Hon. Justice Musa		Criminal breach of trust	28/06/2016	FRN v Abiodun Oyebanji Yahaya	The defendant pleaded guilty to all the counts and was sentenced to two years imprisonment with the option of the fine of N500,000
18	Hon. Justice A.S. Umar	19/01/2011	Forgery		FRN v Barr. George Ihejirike Okechukwu	He was sentenced to 6 years imprisonment
19	Hon. Justice U.P. Kekemeke	25/02/2015	Obtaining money under false pretence	23/06/2016	FRN v Gabriel Olugbenga Charles	On count one: 6 months imprisonment with an option of fine. On count two: 7 years without an option of fine. The court ordered the terms to run consecutively and the convict is to refund to the complainant the sums of N880,000 fraudulently obtained from her and N60,000 paid to him as fare to and fro Abuja to Port-Harcourt
20	Hon. Justice Banjoko	20/04/2016	Conspiracy and obtaining under false pretence	30/06/2016	FRN v Igbinkhwo Nelson	On the strength of his plea, he was found guilty on the two counts and sentenced to a prison term of 1 (one) year with an option of fine of N250,000 only. No monetary benefit accrued to the convict from the crime.
21	Hon. Justice Sabiu B. Shuaibu	2014	Criminal conspiracy and aiding	03/05/2016	FRN v Alh. Muhammed Arzika Dakinggari and Musa Yusuf	The Hon Justice in a well considered judgment discharged and acquitted the 1 st accused person of the charges in counts 6, 8, 12, 14, 16, 18 and 20. He convicted 2 nd person (Musa Yusuf) on all counts and sentenced him to six months on each count. The Hon. Justice also ordered the restitution of 25 units of IVECO trucks to the injured victims or its monetary value of N7,000,000 per truck which adds up to N175,000,000.00 (One hundred and seventy five million naira only). He was not given an option of fine.
22	Hon. Justice Muhammad Lawal Bello		Conspiracy to obtain money under false pretence	09/06/2016	FRN v Abdullahi Bayero & 2 ors	The 1 st and 2 nd accused persons were sentenced to 3 years imprisonment with an option of N500,000 on count 4 and 5 to run concurrently. The third accused person was discharged and acquitted.
23	Hon. Justice Ajilleye		OBT	25/07/2016	FRN v Abdulraman Jamu	Seven years imprisonment on each count to run concurrently and to pay N7,360,000 to the victim
24	Hon. Justice Inyang Eko	31/3/2010	Money laundering and conversion	25/04/2016	FRN v Gabriel Daudu	Sentenced to 2 years imprisonment on 75 counts to run concurrently.

25	Hon. Justice A.A.I. Banjoko	06/06/2007	Conspiracy, forgery and fraudulently using as genuine	27/09/2016	FRN v John Jacob, Mohammed Ndakupe, Sadiq Ibrahim and Abubakar Ismail	Sentenced to 7 years imprisonment & option of fine of N500, 000
26	Hon. Justice Christopher Auta & Hon. Justice Aliyu Mayaki		Obtaining under false pretences	29/09/2016	FRN v Ndagba Ibn Muhammad & Lanle Travels & Tours Limited	Sentenced to 7 years imprisonment & restitution to be made to victims from the sum of N680, 000.00 to N780, 000.00.
27	Hon. Justice Adam O. Onum	21/11/2013	Conspiracy, obtaining under false pretence	10/07/2016	FRN v Engr. Busari Akeem & Engr. Ogbonna Irenaeus	Sentenced to 7 years imprisonment without an option of fine.
28	Hon. Justice A.S. Umar		Issuance of dud cheque		FRN v Daria Gilmaska & Icon Media and Marketing Agency Limited	Sentenced to 2 years imprisonment on 1 count charge
29	Hon. Justice Evelyn Anyadike		Conducting banking business by collecting deposits from the public	27/10/2016	FRN v Moses Samanja Audu & Anor.	Sentenced to 5 years imprisonment, closure of the venture and all accounts of the accused persons be forfeited to the Federal Government for restitution to depositors
30	Hon. Justice A.O. Ebong	13/10/2016	Cheating by impersonation	20/10/2016	FRN v Salisu Sambo Goni	Convicted and sentenced to pay a fine of N50, 000 only
31	Hon. Justice M.T.M Aliyu	13/10/2016	Conspiracy, forgery, fraudulently using as genuine of forged document and obtaining by false pretence	21/10/2016	FRN v Aku Ben Aku & 1 or	The accused persons were sentenced to 7 years each on the counts and with fine of N500, 000
32	Hon. Justice Aliyu Mayaki	21/04/2016	Attempted theft	28/10/2016	FRN v Abdulakeem Abdulrahman	Sentenced to 2 years imprisonment with option of fine of N400, 000
33	Hon. Justice Mojebi	13/03/2012	Conspiracy and criminal breach of trust	05/05/2016	FRN v Joseph Agbo, John Ekele & 1 or	The accused persons were sentenced to 2 years imprisonment on each count
34	Hon. Justice M.E. Anenih	04/04/2012	Stealing	12/05/2016	FRN v Babatunde Abisuqa	Following a plea bargain, the accused was sentenced to 1 year and six months imprisonment
35	Hon. Justice U.N. Agomoh	03/11/2014	Obtaining money under false pretence	21/10/2016	FRN v Chief Felix Amadi	Sentenced to 7 years imprisonment without an option of fine
36	Hon. Justice Bello Kawu	14/05/2015	Criminal breach of trust and misappropriation	15/11/2016	FRN v Emmanuel Ade Toluhi	Sentenced to 2 years imprisonment to run concurrently
37	Hon. Justice S.P. Gang	July 2012	Criminal breach of trust	27/10/2016	FRN v Kingsley Uche Ezeji	The accused person was convicted and sentenced to one year imprisonment. In addition, he is to pay Twenty Thousand Naira fine. The court also granted the prosecution's application and ordered the convict to pay compensation of MN3, 200, 000 (Three million, two hundred thousand naira) to the victim but that this sum is to be recovered through civil suit.
38	Hon. Justice Filibus B. Andetur	03/03/2013	Conspiracy, inflation of contract and award of contract above approval limits under the relevant laws	22/11/2016	FRN v Bawa Piyiki and Luka Rimamnde Mbokun	The accused persons were to be remanded in prison custody in Jalingo, Taraba State till 13 th December, 2016 when they will be sentenced

SOURCE: <https://efccnigeria.org/efcc/public-notices>

As the table shows, some of the convicts were public servants who committed offences ranging from criminal misappropriation, criminal breach of trust, theft, obtaining money by false pretence, money laundering, forgery to stealing. Their conviction confirms the depth of corruption in Nigeria. It is such corruption that develops underdevelopment in the country.

5. Conclusion

There is an organic linkage between open government and achievement of national development in any society, including Nigeria. What this means is that Nigeria's quest for sustainable development can only be realized when national leadership makes open government a matter of national interest.

A government that is transparent and accountable to citizens effortlessly attracts citizens' participation in governance. It is through such participation that needs of citizens are clearly identified. Harnessing creative energies for improvement of living condition of citizens is equally guaranteed when citizens so become critical stakeholders in governance.

Failure to adopt open government by successive leaderships in Nigeria is the very reason high rate of corruption thrives in the society. That has also kept underdevelopment of Nigeria in an interminable cycle. Upturning the trends of extreme poverty, unemployment and inequality in Nigeria requires a paradigm shift towards greater openness in government dealings.

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