

The Role of Media in Curbing Corruption in Nigeria

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Abstract: The study examines the role of media in curbing corruption in Nigeria as well as the problems encountered in the process of performing this role. The study revealed that corruption has been and continues to be a destructive element in the governance of Nigeria and perception of the country in the comity of nations. The study showed that poverty, threat to life, undue interference by government, harassment, injury and lack of laws to protect journalist are the major obstacles to media in their fight against corruption. Passage of freedom of information bill, training in investigative journalism and good remuneration are recommended for media to be effective in the fight against corruption.

Key words: Code of conduct bureau, corruption, media, press freedom, transparency international index

INTRODUCTION

The paper examines different ways in which journalism serves as an impediment to corruption. It also considers how the media can be strengthened, to enhance their role in curbing corruption. Corruption remains a symptom of a poorly functioning state as witnessed in most developing countries such as Nigeria. Indeed, those who give and receive bribes can expropriate a nation's wealth, leaving little for its poorest citizens. Highly corrupt countries often face particular challenges even when controlled by reform-minded rulers. Reforming public institutions and government policies is essential but poverty limits available options. Policymakers, however, can arrive at plausible solutions only after understanding corruption's effect on the efficiency and equity of an economic system (Nwaobi, 2004).

Investigations into corruption in public life in Nigeria began in 1950's when the first panel of inquiry was set up to look into African Continental Bank (ACB). The charges were that the highly revered politician abused his office by allowing public funds to be invested in the bank in which he had an interest. The allegation proved to be a big scandal, a tour de force that led to the institution of Justice Stafford Forster – Sutton Commission of enquiry on July 24, 1956 to investigate the above allegation. The subsequent indictment of the politician in the commission's report (as at January 6, 1957) led him to transfer all his rights and interest in the bank to the Eastern Nigeria Government (Nwankwo, 1999).

Moreover, in 1962 another strong political personality in the west was dragged to the court of accountability. This led to a call for an investigation of the

relationship between the erstwhile politician (then the premier of western region) and the National Investment and Property Company, a private enterprise said to be indebted to the western regional government to the tune of £7,200.00. On June 20 1962, the Federal government appointed a commission to investigate the allegations and later the commission indicted the said politician in its report. Consequently, the western regional government acquired all the property owned by the National Investment and Property Company. In 1967, another commission of enquiry was instituted to investigate assets of fifteen public officers in the defunct mid –western region. At the conclusion of the panel's report, all the public officers were indicted for corruptly enriching themselves. The panel recommended that they should forfeit such ill-gotten wealth to the government. Corruption was one of the reasons adduced for the military take - over of power by Major Kaduna Nzeogwu and colleagues in 1966.

The history of corruption in Nigeria is strongly rooted in the over 29 years of military rule, out of 46 years of her statehood since 1960. Successive military regimes subdued the rule of law, facilitated the wanton looting of the public treasury, decapitated public institutions and free speech and instituted a secret and opaque culture in the running of government business. Corruption became the dominant guiding principle for running affairs of state. The period witnessed a total reversal and destruction of every good thing in the country (Ribadu, 2006a). The military took corruption to its highest levels ever. Ironically, as previously stated, when military seized power from democratically elected governments, pervasive corruption was cited as the justification. It is

clear that military regimes were worse than the civilian regimes as far as corruption was concerned. This explains the reasons for the multiplicity of corruption and the further decimation of available resources and potentials for national development (Akinseye-George, 2000). Decrees were promulgated by military government to frustrate and censor the media and suppress the masses.

Malunzen (1995) recalls that past military governments enacted various decrees to check and suppress the press. These decrees include the Newspapers Prohibition of Circulation Decree 1967; The Newspapers Public Official Reporting Act, 1976; Public Officer's Protection Against False Publication Decree No. 4, 1985 (Now repealed); Detention of Persons, Decree No 2 (as amended); The Treasonable Offences Decree No 35 of 1993; The Newspapers Registration Decree 43 of 1993; The Newspaper (Proscription and Prohibition from circulation Decree 48 of 1993. "The government of General Abacha also promulgated Decrees in 1994 to proscribe Nigeria Newspaper Decrees 6, 7 and 8 of 1994. According Malunzen (1995), perhaps the harshest decree ever promulgated by the military in Nigeria was Decree 4 of 1984, which succeeded in rolling up - defamation, sedition, and proscription laws - all in one. According to Obi (2009) in *businessday* online Official Secrets Act of 1962 was established which aims at, among others, prohibiting the transmission, reproduction, and retention of classified matters by unauthorised persons. It also prohibits entry or inspection protected places and the making of a record of the description of such places or anything situated there in. Malunzen (1995) said adventurous investigating journalist have found this Act as a steel wall. "Worst, under the Act, definition of 'classified matters' was so wide that the government could hide easily under the umbrella and invoke this law against journalists," he maintained. Apart from other laws such as defamation, sedition and contempt of court, which the "successive governments in Nigeria have used to put criticising journalists at bay," there were other laws against the practice of journalism that are contained in the penal code.

Political activities assumed a dangerous dimension as contestants see their victory as the ticket to loot and amass wealth. Specifically, corruption became legitimized, especially during the Babangida and Abacha regimes (1985-1998), with huge revenues, but wasteful spending, and nothing to show in terms of physical developments. The culture of corruption through what Nigerians have come to know, as settlement syndrome became part of the country's political culture. All the positive values for development were jettisoned. Governmental agencies that were the pilots of socioeconomic developments were decimated. The decline in the education sector today has its roots in this period (Nwaka, 2003).

The past and present civilian governments have their own share of corruption in Nigeria. Fagbadebo (2007) opined that Nigeria presents a veritable case for understanding the connection between corruption and political malaise. Ribadu (2006a) gave a graphic summary of the situation. He termed the period between 1979 and 1998 "the darkest period" in Nigeria's history of corrupt regimes. The civilian administration of 1979 - 1983 was bedevilled with profligacy, wanton waste, political thuggery and coercion, disrespect for the rule of law, bare faced and free for all looting of public funds through white elephant projects. Corrupt public servants and others in the private sector bestrode the nation, masquerading as captains of business and power brokers with tainted and stolen wealth and demanded the rest of us to kowtow before them.

A critical element of a country's anticorruption program is an effective media. The media has a dual role to play: it not only raises public awareness about corruption, its causes, consequences and possible remedies but also investigates and reports incidences of corruption aiding other oversight (and prosecutorial) bodies. The persistence of Transparency International (2002) in setting Nigeria among the bottom five nations in its annual Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) since 1995 is an indication that media has not performed this role effectively. This study is of relevance not only because it brings to the fore the role of media in curbing corruption in Nigeria but it also identifies the obstacles being faced by media in fight against corruption.

RESULTS

Meaning of corruption: According to Stople (2008), United Nations Convention against corruption recognised corruption as a multi-faceted, dynamic and flexible phenomenon, and therefore does not define, but describe corrupt practices. Corruption may not be easy to define but, according to Tanzi (1998), it is "generally not difficult to recognize when observed". Corrupt acts require a minimum of two individuals from one or more communities, and either exchange or the promise of an exchange of money or services takes place; typically secret, the pact benefits the dyad to the detriment of everyone else. According to Salisu (2000), the simplest definition of corruption is that it is the misapplication of public resources to private ends. For example, public officials may collect bribes for issuing passports or visa, for providing permits and licenses, for authorising passage of goods at sea/air port, for awarding contracts or for enacting regulations designed to create artificial scarcity.

Macrae (1982) defined corruption as "an arrangement that involves an exchange between two parties (the demander and the supplier) which (i) has an influence on

the allocation of resources either immediately or in the future; and (ii) involves the use or abuse of public or collective responsibility for private ends." Konie (2003) identified two types of corruption, these are:

- Vertical corruption, which involves managers and decision makers. This is more common in less developed countries and
- Horizontal corruption, which involves the entire official, informed, and laymen groups in the countries. The two types of corruption should be seriously addressed and eradicated if any meaningful economic or political progress is to be made.

Sternberg (2000) states that a "bribe is an incentive offered to encourage someone to break the rules of the organization he nominally represents and deliver an (unfairly) favorable outcome." Corrupt acts are increasingly regarded as "unfair" and indeed criminal by many high-income countries because the bribe-recipient's betrayal of trust with his employer, when practiced systemically by high-ranking public officials, compromises the "development of fair and efficient markets" (Boatright, 1999). Acts of bribery are passive in that their voluntary acceptance offers an assurance of personal advantage (but misuse of public responsibility) whereas extortion is proactive (aggressive) in its demand for something of value under threat of non-cooperation. In broader terms, corruption has been defined as "socially impermissible deviance from some public duty or more generally some ideal standard of conduct" (Windsor and Getz, 2000).

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Section two of the paper discusses literature review and theoretical framework. Section three is devoted to discussion, which includes anti-corruption crusade and constraints of media in the fight against corruption. Section four peeps into conclusion and recommendations.

Literature review and theoretical framework: Scholars like Callaghy (1986), Nukunya (1992), Groenendijk (1997), Ruzindana (1998), Waliggo (1999), Osei (1999) and Rossouw (1999) traced the root causes of corruption in Africa to: prevalence of dictatorial rules, monetized or materialised economies, poor economic and educational empowerment of the citizenry, the "politics of the belly", making the public sector as the "prime mover" of economic development and the absence of national ethical and moral values and true patriotism. Appropriate measures, no matter how bitter, have to be adopted to root-out these causes of corruption, if Nigeria and indeed other African countries are really serious about the fight against corruption.

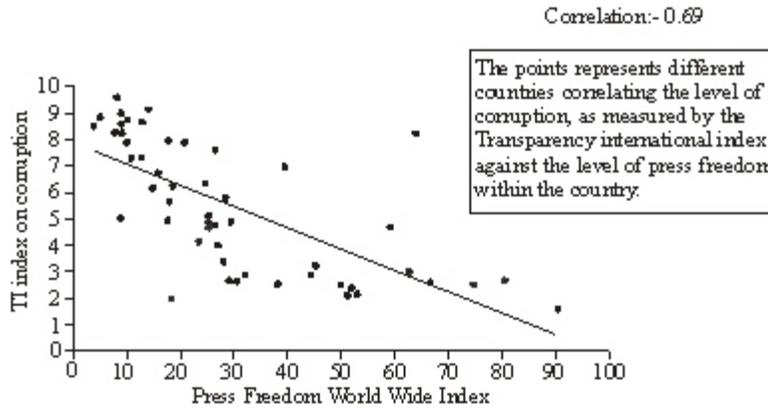
There are many branches or dimensions of corruption in Nigeria, which need stringent measures in practice for effective prevention and control. Auyo (1998) highlights

some of them to include: abuse of power; ill-treatment of subordinates and indecent treatment of people's needs; self-award of contract; malicious withdrawal or 'carpeting' of personnel files; unnecessary delay of actions on certain demands; fraudulent distortion of facts and figures; nepotism; embezzlement and other financial misappropriation; ghost worker systems; 10% syndrome; transfer of public funds to private accounts; over-invoicing; over-pricing of contracts; and arson, usually to cover-up corrupt practices.

The role of the media is critical in promoting good governance and controlling corruption. It not only raises public awareness about corruption, its causes, consequences and possible remedies but also investigates and reports incidences of corruption. The effectiveness of the media, in turn, depends on access to information and freedom of expression, as well as a professional and ethical cadre of investigative journalists (Stapenhurst, 2000). Ayoola (2008) opined that if democracy is to survive and be a fruitful concept, the role of the media in sustaining it through anti-corruption crusade couldn't be overemphasized. He stated further that certain issues must be placed at the forefront of such endeavour. Primary of these is the proper understanding of the concept of democracy by all, and the nature of the media practice that can nurture democracy and create favourable environment for it to thrive. He further noted that the immediate challenges before the media right now was to crave for a conducive environment for democracy to take root and become sustainable through the enthronement of a culture of freedom of speech and freedom of expression; government accountability and qualitative civil society indirect participation in governance.

The fight against corruption in Nigeria one must acknowledge, is one of the most daunting and challenging task to embark on, but with political will and commitment by her leaders and the right attitude by all Nigerians there is no doubt that some day, the Transparency International will in her report rank Nigeria as one of the least corrupt countries in the world (Ameh, 2007).

Each of the past regimes contributed to the problem of corruption. Nwaka (2003) stated that corruption became legitimized, especially during the Babangida and Abacha regimes (1985-1998), with huge revenues, but wasteful spending, and nothing to show in terms of physical developments. The culture of corruption through what Nigerians have come to know, as settlement syndrome became part of the country's political culture. All the positive values for development were jettisoned. Governmental agencies that were the pilots of socioeconomic developments were decimated. The decline in education sector today has its roots in this period. According to Ribadu (2009), "the African Union has reported that corruption drains the region of some \$140 billion a year, which is about 25% of the continent's



Source: World Bank Institute, "Core Course in controlling corruption," 1999.

Fig. 1: Correlation between Corruption and Press Freedom

official GDP. In Nigeria alone, we had a leader, General Sani Abacha, who it was believed took for himself between \$5–6 billion and invested most of it in the western world." He claimed that between 1960 and 1999, Nigerian officials had stolen or wasted more than \$440 billion. That is six times the Marshall Plan, the total sum needed to rebuild a devastated Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War. He further stated that when you look across a nation and a continent riddled with poverty and weak institutions, and you think of what this money could have done – only then can you truly understand the crime of corruption, and the almost inhuman indifference that is required by those who wield it for personal gain.

Gray and Kaufmann (1998) posited vigorous war against corruption in order to promote good governance) and their agencies, were surreptitiously engaging in corruption on a grand scale in the developing countries. This is an absurdity. Ake (1981) believes that this type of corruption was caused by the promotional activities of unscrupulous multinationals, with the active connivance of local politicians, to encourage useless industrial ventures in order to sell plants and machinery.

Klitgaard (1996) developed a simple model to explain the dynamics of corruption:

$$C \text{ (Corruption)} = M \text{ (Monopoly Power)} + D \text{ (Discretion)} - A \text{ (Accountability)}$$

According to him, the extent of corruption depends on the amount of monopoly power and discretionary power that an official exercises. Monopoly power is large in highly regulated economies, whereas discretionary power is often large in developing countries and transition economies where administrative rules and regulations are often poorly defined and which are plagued by a weak rule of law. And finally, accountability may also be weak, either as a result of poorly defined ethical standards of public service, weak administrative and financial systems

and ineffective watchdog agencies. Successful strategies to curb corruption will have to simultaneously seek to reduce an official's monopoly power (e.g. by market-oriented reforms), his/ her discretionary power (e.g. by administrative reforms) and enhance his/her accountability (e.g., through watchdog agencies). Such strategies comprise a system of checks and balances, designed to manage conflicts of interest in the public sector and limit situations in which conflicts of interest arise or have a negative impact on the common good. They embody a comprehensive view of reform, addressing corruption in the public sector through government processes (leadership codes, organizational change) and through civil society participation (the democratic process, private sector, media).

A complementary schema, focusing on knowledge and data as a prerequisite for anti-corruption strategies, has been proposed by Kaufmann (1999), who states that:

$$AC \text{ (Anti-corruption Efforts)} = LE \text{ (Leadership)} + CA \text{ (Collective Action)}$$

In other words, successful anti-corruption programs (AC) are dependent on knowledge and information (KI) plus leadership (LE) plus collective action (AC). Here again, the importance of information and the involvement of civil society, including the media, is central. Reform is initiated and supported not only by politicians and policy makers, but also by members of civil society and by the media. Indeed, the World Bank has stated, "civil society and the media are crucial to creating and maintaining an atmosphere in public life that discourages fraud and corruption. Indeed, they are arguably the two most important factors in eliminating systemic corruption in public institutions (PREM network, 1997).

Specifically, while the role that a free press can play in investigating, reporting and thereby helping combat corruption is now well recognized, assessments and

descriptions of the precise means by which news media can perform this function appear to be scarce-despite the fact that there is a strong correlation between the incidence of corruption and the extent to which the media is free (Fig. 1) The figure above shows a strong negative relationship between Transparency International Index on corruption and Press Freedom World Wide Index. The two variables move in opposite direction. As Press Freedom World Wide Index increases, the Transparency International Index on corruption decreases.

Causes of corruption in Nigeria: Several reasons have been adduced for corruption in Nigeria, one of which is the sudden disappearance of good moral and ethical values. Nwaobi (2004) posited that Nigeria must be one of the very few countries in the world where a man's source of wealth is of no concern to his neighbours, the public or the government. Wealthy people who are known to be corrupt are regularly courted and honoured by communities, religious bodies, social clubs and other private organizations. This implies that people who benefit from the largesse of these corrupt people rarely ask questions.

Sociological and/or cultural factors such as customs, family pressures on government officials and ethnicity constitute potential causes of corruption. In Nigeria, although traditional values of gift giving and tributes to leaders often lead to what Brownsberger (1983) describes as "polite corruption", the extent of such corruption is relatively small. Dandago (2008) revealed that traditional chieftaincy titles and membership of boards of directors of government-owned corporations are only for the 'influential' individuals in the society who have 'made it' economically or politically. Most of those people 'made it' through enriching themselves fraudulently, but enjoy public respect and accolades. The most annoying thing is that honest and dedicated public servants, who have not accumulated dirty wealth, do not command much respect from the society. These attitudes serve to encourage a new-breed of public servants who engage in corrupt practices.

A number of authors (Wraith and Simpkins, 1963; Llyod, 1967; McMullan, 1961) have pointed out that Africans know the difference between a polite gratuity and a bribe and that traditional (Nigerian) culture does recognize that the community leader has a duty to his people, and that this bars systematic exploitation of office. Chabal and Daloz (1999) reasoned that in Africa, such factors as the obligations of mutual support, the imperatives of reciprocity, the importance of gift exchange, the payment of tribute, the need to redistribute, even the habits of cattle rustling, or, more generally, of plundering others, all have a bearing on the phenomenon of corruption on the continent today. There are also those who believe that modern bribery may not be seen as

cognate with traditional gift giving since it takes place outside the context of a patron-client relationship. Ethnically, the poor man's bribe to the faceless power he will never meet again is completely distinct from his traditional gift to a patron.

A weak enforcement mechanism (e.g. lack of judicial independence; weak prosecutorial institutions) is another major cause of corruption in Nigeria. The forces, which deter corruption, are often weak as some, if not most, of the law enforcement agencies are themselves corrupt. In addition, rulers, politicians and civil servants are highly corrupt, and professional organizations may be incapable of sanctioning their members.

According to Maduegbuna (2005) the benefits of corruption are greater than the consequences of being caught and disciplined. High incidence of poverty, which according to National Bureau of Statistics (2005) is put at 54.1% contributed in no small amount to the desperation of Nigerian to acquire wealth through any means. While the few employed received low wages, unemployment is high. The unemployed are mostly youths engaged in antisocial activities, such as cyber crime, drug peddling, prostitution, political thuggery, paid assassins, oil bunkering, kidnapping, militancy (Niger delta) among others; all in the name of money. Dandago (2008) observed that the poor salary levels of most public servants have not kept pace with inflation, which has eroded their purchasing power. It is also clear that the process of gaining power in Nigeria is either by armed force or the influence of money. Jimo *et al.* (2001) attributed corruption within the [African] region's public administrations to over-centralization of power, lack of media freedom to expose scandals, the impunity of well-connected officials, and absence of transparency in public fund management, clientalism and low salaries.

The Factors influencing corruption according to Van Rijckeghem and Weder (1997) are presented in the Table 1.

Johnston (1997) identified weak political competition as a strong factor that helps to sustain corrupt practices. He opined that this has generally plays a role in sustaining most serious cases of entrenched political and bureaucratic corruption. He submitted that stronger political and economic competition could enhance accountability, open up alternatives to dealing with corrupt networks, and create incentives for political leaders to move against corruption.

Effects of corruption in Nigeria: Corruption has been and continues to be a destructive element in the governance of Nigeria and the perception of the country in the comity of nations. According to Maduegbuna (2005) effects of corruption in Nigeria include loss of government revenue, negative national image, poor governance, brain drain, electoral malpractices, poor

Table 1: Factors influencing corruption

1. Wage Considerations:	a) inadequate pay b) fringe benefits and other financial incentives
2. Inefficient internal control:	a) inadequate supervision and control systems b) lack of explicit standard of performance for employees and organisations. c) poor recruitment and selection procedures for personnel d) too few or too many (non-transparent) rules and procedures (red tape)
3. Insufficient external control:	a) law and order tradition, checks and balances b) lack of information made available to the public and freedom of press c) mechanisms for citizens' participation and complaint d) difficulty of proving cases in court e) high social acceptance of corruption
4. Statutory penalty rate:	a) amount of fine, prison sentence b) administrative sanctions c) prohibition of being ever re-employed in the public sector d) penalties for relatives
5. Amount of distortions or opportunities in the economy:	a) pervasive government regulations b) high statutory tax rates, non-transparent tax regulations c) provision of government services short of demand (government monopolies)
6. Other factors:	a) cultural factors b) culture of bureaucratic elitism and education of civil servants d) leadership e) ethnic diversity

Source: Van Rijckeghem and Weder (1997)

investment climate, business failure, unemployment and poverty.

Dandago (2008) stated that corruption in Nigeria, just as in most other African countries, has currently become the greatest challenge to leaders and citizens, threatening to undermine effective governmental financial management. It is also a threat to both economic development and the process of establishing an enduring democracy in developing countries, like Nigeria. Nigeria's widespread corruption has historical roots that we should critically reflect on if we are to succeed in controlling and gradually eliminating it. Ribadu (2006b) opined that corruption is responsible for perpetual collapse of infrastructure and institutions; it is the cause of the endemic poverty in Africa; it is behind the underdevelopment and cyclical failure of democracy to take root in Africa. Corruption is worse than terrorism. Public officials who are corrupt should receive worse treatment than that reserved for terrorists.

Stople (2008) opined, "We need to pay attention to corruption because of its devastating effect on the economy". The cost of corruption exceeds by far the damage caused by any other single crime." He stressed, "Corruption worsens the investment climate, undermines competitiveness of national economies. Corruption's impact on foreign investment is considered to be particularly harmful for a developing economy. Corruption not only raises the initial costs of investment but also, by increasing risks and uncertainty, can reduce the incentive to invest. Foreign direct investment is vital to a developing country and it is crucial to provide a climate for investments. Corruption makes it difficult for a low-income country to establish and maintain trustworthy and consistent economic conditions (Zero Tolerance Campaign, 2008).

Corruption also reduces economic growth, enhances inequalities, and reduces the government's capacity to respond to people's needs. All these swerve down to create poverty in the society." Corruption distorts economic and social development, by engendering wrong choices and by encouraging competition in bribery rather than in the quality and price of goods and services and, all too often, it means that the world's poorest must pay for the corruption of their own officials and of multinationals' agents (Langseth *et al.*, 1997).

Corruption leads to a growing gap between the rich and the poor and deepens poverty by enriching a few at the expense of fellow citizens. Under a corrupt system, there is a concentration of wealth in the hands of a tiny minority of the population. Resultantly, income distribution becomes highly skewed. Closely associated with the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, a distorted consumption pattern, aimed at meeting the luxurious lifestyle of the urban elite, emerges (Zero Tolerance Campaign, 2008).

Past and present anticorruption efforts: Successive governments in Nigeria have put in place several anticorruption measures and strategies such as Ethical Re-orientation Campaign of Shagari's Second Republic, War Against Indiscipline (WAI) of the Buhari/Idiagbon regime, Babangida's Committee on Corruption and other Economic Crimes and War Against Corruption (Diamond, 1991; Bello-Imam, 2004). Other efforts include setting up of probe panels, commission of enquiry and tribunal (e.g. Failed Bank Tribunal) to try corrupt individuals. By laws such as Money Laundering Act 2003, Advance Free Fraud and Fraud Related Offences Act of 1995, Foreign Exchange Act of 1995, Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act of 2000 were also enacted to back probe panels and tribunals.

Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) was established in 2003 to complement the zero tolerance for corruption crusade of Obasanjo's administration. The anti-graft body was established by Economic and Financial Crimes Commission Establishment Act (2004). The Act mandates the EFCC to combat financial and economic crimes. The Commission is empowered to prevent, investigate, prosecute and penalise economic and financial crimes and is charged with the responsibility of enforcing the provisions of other laws and regulations relating to economic and financial crimes, including: Economic and Financial Crimes Commission Establishment Act (2004), The Money Laundering Act 1995, The Money Laundering (Prohibition) act 2004, The Advance Fee Fraud and Other Fraud Related Offences Act 1995, The Failed Banks (Recovery of Debts) and Financial Malpractices in Banks Act 1994, The Banks and other Financial Institutions Act 1991; and Miscellaneous Offences Act.

The involvement of media in anti – corruption crusade cut across the public and private sector of the economy either directly or indirectly as listed below:

Public anti-corruption initiatives:

Legislation:

Government strategies:

- The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission
- Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)
- Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB)
- Office of the Ombudsman
- The Auditor General
- Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI)
- Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit (BMPIU)
- E-Governance
- Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC)
- Public Procurement
- Whistle-Blowing

Private Anti-Corruption Initiatives:

- Information Network
- Media
- The Convention on Business Integrity (CBI)
- Zero-Corruption Coalition (ZCC)
- Independent Advocacy Project (IAP)
- Transparency International Nigeria

According to Kew (2006), all these efforts are a facade of genuine measures to promote good governance through the eradication of corrupt practices. Despite all these measures, corruption continues unabated with its adverse effects manifesting on the economy despite the abundant resources.

DISCUSSION

Recent reported and investigated cases of corruption

in Nigeria: This study was carried out in Abeokuta, 2008. Generally, media in Nigeria as in every other country has continued to inform the populace on government programmes and policies, on erring institution and member of the public (private or government employee). Government projects that involve huge some of money are not only reported to the public but also monitored and reported in both print and broadcast media. Any noticeable mismanagement of resources during or after the completion of such project is reported mostly in newspapers with different front-page headlines. They also ensure that such a misdemeanor is not only reported but it is also given necessary follow –up. For instance, the monthly held Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting in Nigeria usually ended with government approving multi-billion naira projects that will impact positively on the life of the populace; such as rehabilitation of railway, construction of roads, and power generation among others. The following day, the media will be flooded with the news on these projects – the location, the amount involved as well as the contractor engaged. Such media reports include:

- Olukoya (2009) reported in the Nigerian tribune that SPEAKER, House of Representatives, Honourable 'Dimeji Bankole, on Monday, said N200 million has been released as part payment for the Adatan-Asero (Abeokuta) road dualisation, being handled by the Federal Road Maintenance Agency (FERMA).
- Oladimeji and Ossai (2009) reported in the Nigerian Compass Newspaper that members of the house of representative were shocked when the house committee on customs disclosed that over N16.2billion was embezzled by some officers of the Nigerian Customs. The headline reads Custom Embezzle N16billion in one year.
- A report credited to Okpole (2009) in the Nigerian Compass Newspaper has it that Federal Government issued two off grid generation licences for the supply of five and 20 megawatts of electricity.

Not all reported cases of corruption involved only Nigerians; there are other cases with foreigner's collaboration. A very good example is the award of contract on LNG to Halliburton, a US construction firm by the Nigerian government. This Day Newspaper (Adebowale and Ali, 2009) reported that the firm won the contract after given \$180 million bribes to top Nigerian politicians and government officials, including those of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). Three former Nigerian presidents were also said to have benefited, allegedly spanned the period from 1995 when the nearly \$7 billion contract was awarded to 2004 and possibly beyond. After more than five years of

investigations covering half a dozen countries, a man named Tesler was arrested early year (2009) at the behest of US authorities and accused of being the "bagman" who conveyed the \$180m in bribes to the Nigerian officials.

Cellular News (2009) reported that a court in Munich found Siemens guilty of bribing officials in Nigeria and two other countries for lucrative contracts for telecommunications equipment. The Oct. 4 ruling named four former Nigerian telecommunications Ministers as well as other officials in Nigeria, Libya and Russia as recipients of 77 bribes totalling EUR12 million, or about \$17.5 million. The Munich court ruling said EUR10 million went to Nigerians, including Cornelius Adebayo, Mohammed Bello, the late Alhaji Haruna Elewi, and Tajudeen Olarewaju, a retired army major general.

Moreover, Vaswani brothers from United Arab Emirate were recently deported from Nigeria and are currently being investigated for tax evasion, economic sabotage and money laundering (NgEx, 2009). It was reported in The Guardian Editorial and Opinion (Wednesday, April 29, 2009) that in 2003, the government of former President Olusegun Obasanjo drove the Vaswani brothers out of the country for alleged criminal conspiracy and economic fraud. Then in 2007, President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua invited the brothers back. Yar'Adua must be biting his fingers in remorse as he has now been forced to expel the Vaswanis yet again for unethical business practices including tax evasion and money laundering. A follow up to this story was reported in The Nation Newspaper by Ikhilae (2009) that a Federal High Court sitting in Lagos yesterday quashed the deportation of the Vaswani brothers and some of their foreign workers. Despite the verdict, the brothers risk being tried for alleged N2.5 billion tax evasion, if they return to the country.

According to The Economist (2002) in a report on how big multinationals sidesteps laws against bribery, the Shell chart shows no reported cases in 2000 of "bribes offered and/or paid by Shell company employees directly or indirectly to third parties". In 1999 there was one case (of a bribe of \$300)-exactly the same number and amount as in 1998. The company also says that in 2000 "Shell companies reported four instances in which a total of seven employees were detected soliciting/accepting bribes directly or indirectly. The total financial value was estimated to be \$89,000.

The media played a significant role in the success achieved so far by EFCC most especially during the leadership of Nuhu Ribadu. Apart from keeping the public informed about the activities of the antigraft body and giving clues about corrupt individuals and organizations; the organization was seriously criticized by the press that there are many corrupt member of the ruling party that EFCC intentionally refused to beam their search light on. Kew (2006) observed that the rules were not observed by

the leaders except when applying to frustrate the opposition. Sowunmi *et al.* (2009) opined that recent revelations in the ongoing probes, especially the N1.3 trillion power and the aviation probes are strong indications that the last civilian regime (1998-2006), which claimed zero tolerance to corruption, may not after all be free from corruption.

The Nigeria Port Authority (NPA) probe report submitted in 2004 indicting close allies of the past civilian administration was an exception. The consistence of media led to the eventual prosecution of those indicted in the NPA probe. The chairman of the NPA board then along with other members was recently sentenced to 2.5 years imprisonment. According to This Day newspaper (November 4, 2009), "George's travail began in 2003 when Mr. Adebayo Sarumi, the then newly appointed Managing Director of the NPA alleged the violation of procedural law in the award of contracts at the NPA during the era of George as the Chairman of the Board. Consequently, professionals who audited the activities of the institution when George was in office discovered how items running into millions of naira were ordered repeatedly within a short period of time. The exercise also revealed a huge differential pricing within the Authority such that different departments purchased the same items at vastly different prices. For instance, the five departments purchased berets (caps) at a unit price of N11, 804.77 while the police department bought same item at a unit price of N750."

In politics, Osundefender (2009) an internet based newspaper reported that Nigeria's tainted electoral umpire (INEC), got another reeling blow to her struggling image when the Nigerian Police Force yesterday dug deeper into the bribery scandal that rocked the the last inglorious rerun governorship election in Ekiti State. 11 collation, and 20 presiding INEC officers on duty at Ido-Osi were 'invited' afresh by the police to give account of how they got monetarily induced by PDP Chieftain, one Hon. Olumide Yomi, to 'change the electoral game' in favour of Segun Oni in the controversial Ido Osi local government during the rerun. Furthermore, in Oct 20th - 26th edition of Beam Newspaper, Agbada, (2009) reported that the account of Brass Local Government Council of Bayelsa State has been frozen by the State House of Assembly. Reports reaching Beam Checks had it that the lawmakers took that decisive action because of alleged administrative lapses, diversion of N27 million capital project finances...

In all these cases any many others, journalists are constantly threatened, harassed and while some have been killed. Steve Uzoechi, the Imo state (southeastern Nigeria) correspondent for the privately-owned "National Daily" newspaper, is concerned over a possible threat to his life relating to a news story he investigated and wrote. The story in question concerned an investigation into the roles

of two government consultants, Chief Zeek Martins Nnadozie, of Zeekford Consultancy Services, and Chief Dan Okechie, of Brick-Red Financial Consultancy Limited, in an alleged N6 billion (approx. US\$40 million) buyback scandal in the settlement of debts involving former Imo local government officials from 1999 to 2002 and 2004 to 2007 (International Freedom of Expression Exchange, 2009). The southwestern Nigerian state is no friend to journalists. Writing in the press freedom news of committee to protect journalist, Rhodes (October 6, 2009), he reported that during the April state elections, Peoples Democratic Party members beat three journalists and confiscated their equipment within the Ekiti State Government House. The journalists have filed a court case against their perpetrators and actually have a video recording of the incident. In a story titled "a litany of unresolved murders" by Ogunlesi (2009) in an internet based newspaper, he gave the list of some unresolved murder of journalists in their fight against corruption as shown below:

- On Sunday, September 20, 2009, the list of murdered Nigerian journalists grew with the shooting, in Lagos, of Bayo Ohu, an assistant political editor with The Guardian. The assailants invaded Mr. Ohu's home early in the morning, shot him several times, and waited to make sure he was dead before they left, taking his laptop and cell phone along with them.
- In October, 2006, Omololu Falobi, former features editor of The Punch who was until his death the executive director of Journalists Against AIDS, JAAIDS, was killed in his car while going home in the Alakuko area of Lagos.
- On December 22, 2006, the chairman of the editorial board of This Day newspapers, Godwin Agbroko, was shot and killed in Lagos, on his way home from the office. Barely two years after, on the night of August 17, 2008, another member of This Day's editorial board, Paul Abayomi Ogundeji, was also shot dead as he returned home.
- A month from now, Nigerians will mark the 23rd anniversary of the assassination of the founding editor in chief of Newswatch magazine, Dele Giwa. On Sunday October 19, 1986 an explosion tore through the dining room of his Number 25, Talabi Street, Ikeja residence, seriously injuring the editor. The explosion was from a bomb, delivered to him as sealed parcel. Giwa died soon after.
- In early 1996, Bagauda Kaltho, senior correspondent for The News, disappeared. The government of General Sani Abacha later claimed that Kaltho mistakenly blew himself up while trying to plant a bomb at Durbar Hotel, Kano, on January 18, 1996.
- Also on February 26, 1998, Tunde Oladepo, senior correspondent with The Guardian was killed in his

home in Abeokuta, in the presence of his wife and two daughters. The masked attackers waited to be sure he was dead before they left.

Ogunlesi (2009) submitted that it is this tragic fact – that violent attacks on journalists will not elicit much more than verbal denouncements – that remains a cause for great concern. As the UNESCO statement said: "Impunity only makes the situation worse. As long as perpetrators know that they will not be held accountable for the crimes they committed, journalists remain easy targets."

Factors affecting media performance in combatting corruption: How effectively media work and report on corruption depends on a number of critical factors such as freedom of media professionals to access, verify and publish accurate information, and independence of media houses and their ability to access independent sources of financing. Competition, outreach and credibility of media are other important factors affecting media performance (Nogara, 2009), each of these are examined accordingly by her as shown below.

Freedom of expression: Media freedom of expression is essential to investigate and report incidences of corruption in a professional, effective and ethical manner. Freedom House, which monitors the free flow of information to and from the public, measures press freedom in terms of the degree to which laws and government regulations influence news content; the degree of political influence or control over the context of the news system; the economic influences on the media exerted either by government or private entrepreneurs, and the degree of oppression of the news media (Brunetti and Weder, 2003). Cross-country data measuring the effects of press freedom on corruption have found that press freedom is positively correlated with lower levels of corruption (Brunetti and Weder, 2003; Ahrend, 2002).

Governments use a broad range of laws and actions aside from coercion to censure journalists, close publications, hamstringing finances, or simply encourage a culture of self-censorship. Old colonial laws such as sedition and libel laws are frequently used to limit press freedom and discriminate against journalists in court cases. Under these laws, media often come under fire from government officials allegedly for giving a platform to "terrorists" and "enemies" of the state. Governments also exercise control over the media content through the licensing requirement, existing in many African countries, which imposes conditions on media conduct and can be easily revoked. The fear of being put in jail or the threat of expensive and damaging libel suits, the risk of the license being revoked or of losing advertising revenue and other financial resources all impose a burden on

journalists and media houses, encouraging a culture of self-censorship.

Access to information: Access to information is at the heart of transparency and public accountability. Information flows may facilitate public oversight of government and increase the accountability of politicians for bad conduct. In most countries, citizens receive the information they need through the media, which serve as the intermediaries that collect information and make it available to the public. Without reliable access to information, the media are severely limited in their capacity to exercise their public accountability function. Laws and regulations, such as “Official Secret Acts” and similar devices, are often used by governments to limit press access to sensitive information for reason of national security in order to balance the citizens’ right to know and the State’s right and duty to protect its security. Under these laws and regulations, however, governments often enjoy considerable discretion to define what constitutes national security, which can easily be abused by governments to prevent opponents from expressing views through the media. Criminal defamation and libel laws, justified as necessary safeguards to privacy and security, are other legal instruments often used to provide special immunities and special rights to politicians and senior public servants, which prevent the media from doing their job.

Ownership: Private ownership is often associated with higher levels of government accountability and performance. A study carried out by Djankov (2000) in 98 countries researched the effects of media ownership on a variety of social and economic policy outcomes, including government accountability and corruption. The study found strong correlations between media ownership and a whole range of policy outcomes, with a greater negative correlation between state ownership of newspapers and “good” outcomes. Countries with higher state ownership of the media also exhibit lower quality of regulations, with government media monopolies associated with particularly poor outcomes. The study concludes that government ownership of media restricts information flows to the public with negative effect on citizens’ rights, government effectiveness, and corruption; alternatively, increased private ownership of the media-through privatization or encouragement of entry - can advance political and economic goals. Competition from private media assures that alternative views are supplied to voters and prevents state-owned media from distorting the information they supply too heavily so that voters obtain, on average, unbiased and accurate information.

Private ownership of media, however, might not always produce the desired results on corruption, particularly when media privatization takes place in a

poor country with small, entrenched business elites and where the state is the only source of advertising revenue. In Nigeria, private radio (Ray Power, Star FM, Brilla FM, Cool FM and Rock City FM among others), television stations (African Independent Television, Silver bird, Galaxy, Channels and MITV) newspapers (Guardian, This Day, The Nation, Nigerian Tribune, Compass) and Magazines (The News, Tell and Newswatch) owners, are often businessmen closely associated with the government, former presidents, ministers, ambassadors, commissioners and other ex-government official, who one way or the other still maintain their loyalty to the government in power. Among these private ownership of media, radio and television stations often difficult for private radio stations to expose corruption in public offices and perform an accountability role in the country because of their reliance on government patronage for revenue and the closeness of their owners to the government. Newspapers and magazines, on the other hand, tend to be more financially independent since they can also count on revenue from sales. This often leaves them with more resources to finance investigative research and to survive court battles defending against sedition or libel charges.

Competition: Intense competition in the media industry can also be a strong determinant of its effectiveness to combat corruption. An empirical study carried out by Suphachol Suphachalasai, (Suphachalasai, 2005), found strong evidence that competition in the media has a significant impact on the reduction of corruption, and competition can even be a stronger determinant than freedom of expression. The assumption of Suphachalasai’s model is that profit-maximizing media houses seek to print and sell corruption news. The greater the freedom and competition in the media industry, the more media houses will seek to print corruption news, and the higher the probability that a corrupt bureaucrat will be caught by media. Suphachalasai’s study also found that greater freedom and competition in the media industry might also have an indirect effect on corruption by influencing government’s behaviour and affecting its decisions on the rules and regulations that ultimately determine the level of corruption. Consistent with Suphachalasai’s empirical evidence, Tell and The News magazines have been in the forefront of reporting corruption in Nigeria. Many of the daily newspaper are fond of reporting corrupt act perpetrated by those they perceive, as enemies while corruption cases involving the close allied of their owner are not reported in the dailies Generally.

Outreach: Media outreach, the ability of media to reach and inform the public, is also critical to the effectiveness of media reporting on corruption. In African countries, the

outreach of independent media is generally smaller than that of government-owned media, especially in rural areas. High publication and distribution costs and literacy barriers make it more difficult for private newspapers to circulate up-country. Newspaper readership, in general, is small and confined to the main urban areas. In Uganda, only 10-25% of the population, mainly urban, reads newspapers. Radio has a hundred times wider penetration than newspapers, especially in remote areas, since nearly every home has access to a short wave radio set. Private radio outreach, however, tends to be local. In Uganda, only government-owned Radio Uganda broadcasts nationally through subsidiaries using 19 different frequencies. The outreach of private radio as a news provider is also limited by the type of programming. A majority of private radio programmes in Africa tends to focus on entertainment and religious contents rather than news, which limits the role of radio as instrument of public accountability. Recently in Uganda, as in other African countries, call-in radio talk shows have become very popular. These programmes air discussions on a broad range of issues of public interest, including corruption, and have stirred unprecedented levels of public debate in the country. They have the potential to promote greater public accountability, but their format of free-flowing discussion is not conducive to investigative reporting

Credibility: People's trust in independent media is essential to compel action against corruption from the authorities or the public. Media reputation in this regard is hard to establish. Journalists need to earn public trust and confidence by demonstrating their independence, objectivity and professionalism each and every day. Private media have an especially hard time to establish their credibility in Africa where people are more reluctant to trust new sources of political information. Government-owned media have historically a wider access, especially in remote areas, and a well-established reputation. Private media, on the other hand, struggle to access important and reliable political information and have not always the freedom to publish it. The reluctance of government officials to cooperate with independent journalists makes it difficult for media professionals to check the accuracy of their stories. This is often compounded by limited newsroom budgets and capacity of media houses to carry out thorough investigations. The low pay of journalists often discourages the best qualified professionals to stay in the media or tempts some journalists to accept bribes to supplement their extremely meagre salaries, significantly affecting the quality of their reporting (Balikova, 1995; Vogl, 1999).

The private media's primary aim to publish and sell news also feeds the public perception of a media bias against the government, especially in cases of corruption.

In Uganda, for example, private media have often been associated with the political opposition. A growing number of policymakers, officials and media practitioners are increasingly concerned that commercial and potentially corrupt media outlets in Africa might become a source of sensationalist, inaccurate and even false reporting, conducive to inflammatory sectarian or political tensions. A Afrobarometer (2004) survey carried out in 15 African countries (Afrobarometer, 2004) shows that 53% of respondents expressed trust in the government broadcasting service and only 43% in private FM radio or television stations, while public and private newspapers scored 37 and 36% respectively.

Media tools used for anti-corruption crusade: According to United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2004) office on Drugs and Crime report, the following tools can be used by Media to fight corruption:

Internet: The potential impact of the Internet on awareness-raising is huge. It is an inexpensive medium and global in readership. Its wide appeal, influence and use is evident. Even though totalitarian Governments, aware of its potential to carry news that cannot be censored, have tried to find ways to restrict Internet access, their efforts will probably be unsuccessful, as technology seems to outpace such efforts. Governments should post their National Integrity Action Plan, together with regular updates on implementation and results to Internet web sites. That would not only allow the plan to be widely broadcast, but it would also allow the public to monitor implementation. Survey and Integrity Workshop results should similarly be published on web sites. Such data provide the public with information regarding public perceptions about corruption and the training measures used to prevent it. The Internet can be used to facilitate broad participation of interested parties in the dissemination of important and timely information and thereby strengthen awareness globally. In that regard, the Internet can contribute to minimizing duplication and sharing relevant experience.

Yet, as much as the Internet can serve as an extremely efficient and cost effective means of raising awareness and fostering discussion around the globe, a huge target audience of key stakeholders has no access. The Internet remains primarily a utility of the North with very few people from the South and from poor developing nations having ready access. There is still the need to use printed media, radio and television to reach those people.

Media campaign: In addition to the Internet, media campaigns should be used to disseminate anticorruption information. A typical media campaign would include advertisements in newspapers, journals or magazines on posters, radio and TV. Leaflets could be handed out in

highly frequented areas, such as pedestrian precincts, mass meetings and sporting events. Just as with any other type of advertising, short sentences and easy-to-remember phrases can help make people more aware of the issues. The Nigerian writers are not left out in the anticorruption crusade. Griswold (2000) revealed that the reading class is painfully aware of how its hopes have been dashed by corruption. Novelists have represented this erosion of confidence especially as the first and second generations give way to the third. Corruption has gone from being a theme to the theme of the novel, regardless of the writer's literary talents or aspirations. Of the 128 novels published before 1980, 48 dealt with corruption, of the 348 novels published later, 169 dealt with corruption."

Public education programme:

The public must learn:

- Not to pay bribes themselves;
- To report incidents of corruption to the authorities;
- Not to sell their vote; and
- To teach their children the right values.

To inform citizens about their rights to services and their responsibility to avoid and report corrupt practices, the public-education programme should include detailed information about free access to information, existing complaint mechanisms and results of anti-corruption efforts.

Media and anti-corruption crusade: Staphenurst (2000) opined that a critical element of a country's anticorruption program is an effective media. The media has a dual role to play: it not only raises public awareness about corruption, its causes, consequences and possible remedies but also investigates and reports incidences of corruption aiding other oversight (and prosecutorial) bodies. According to him, the way in which media serves as an impediment to corruption can be divided into tangible and intangible effects. Tangible effects is made up of the readily identifiable way in which the news media perform these functions include those in which some sort of visible outcomes can be attributed to particular news story or series of stories on such subjects as: launching of investigation by authorities; scrapping of a law or policy that foster a climate ripe with opportunities for corruption; impeachment or forced resignation of a crooked politician and firing of an official; launching of judicial proceeding and issuing of public recommendation by a watchdog body like transparency international. He referred to intangible effects as those checks on corruption, which are inevitably the by product of hard hitting independent news and can be characterised by broadened sense of accountability amongst politicians, public bodies and institutions.

The tangible ways in which journalism serves as an impediment to corruption: The tangible ways in which media can serve as obstacle to corruption can take a variety of forms. Most spectacular among them is when corrupt bureaucrats or public office-holders are impeached, prosecuted or forced to resign after their misdeeds are exposed to public light. However, journalism also acts directly to curb corruption in other, less spectacular but, arguably, equally important ways. Reporting, for example, may prompt public bodies to launch formal investigations into allegations of corruption. Furthermore, news accounts disseminate the findings of public anti-corruption bodies, thus reinforcing the legitimacy of these bodies and reducing the ease with which interested parties who hold power can meddle in their work. Conversely, when journalism exposes flaws and even corruption within the various bodies of the state (the courts, police and anti-corruption task forces) corruption is put on check. If the resulting public pressure leads to a reform of those bodies, the long-term effectiveness and potential of the media to act as a counterweight against corruption is strengthened.

There are cases when reporting on corrupt or ethically questionable behaviour does not result in immediate investigations, prosecutions or resignations, but does arouse the ire of the public, which exercises another form of sanction: electoral defeat at the ballot box for a single elected office holder or an entire government. Hard-hitting journalism can also expose flaws in policy, laws or regulation that foster a climate ripe for corruption, thus creating pressure for reform. And even before anything has been published, mere inquiries by reporters about apparent wrongdoing can elicit pre-emptive responses by authorities eager to protect the public image of their institution before any allegations have been aired.

The most obvious examples of media potential for curbing corruption can be seen when politicians or other senior public officials lose their jobs as a consequence of the public outcry or legal proceedings that follow the fearless reporting on corruption. Examples of this kind of outcome are not hard to find-particularly from Nigeria where a surge in media reporting on corruption charges (certificate forgery) has helped to force former speaker of house of representative - Ibrahim Salisu and former President of senate - Evan Ewerem to resign their positions.

Sometimes, too, journalists' stories can play a critical role in reinforcing the effectiveness of public anti-corruption bodies like EFCC and ICPC-even when the stories in question are not, strictly speaking, investigative reports that reveal wrongdoing of some kind. Simply reporting in a regular, detailed way on the work and findings of these bodies can reinforce public scrutiny of them and, hence, the independence of such bodies from vested interests within the power structure that might otherwise be tempted to interfere in their work. The

speculation about government interference in the activities of EFCC was prominent in the dailies and magazines during the last civilian regime (Obasanjo regime). Journalists and the news media, it must be stated, often have a symbiotic relationship with the official bodies that investigate or prosecute corrupt officials. Journalists' immediate interests are served by their work in that they provide reporters and their outlets with strong, dramatic stories to pursue and publish. The interests of the anti-corruption bodies are equally served because reporting on their activities builds public support for their work-and, hence, reinforces their legitimacy-creating a climate that may make politicians who are the subject of their inquiries less inclined to meddle in or undermine their operations. Another beneficial side effect of the publicity that journalists bring to the work of such bodies is that it may encourage witnesses to wrongdoing to step forward and testify about what they know.

Notwithstanding the absence of a Freedom of Information law the media in Nigeria have actively pursued the values of transparency and disclosure. Media are at the forefront of independently sourcing stories about corruption in Government. It was the media that exposed the intricate web of corruption in the banking sector, compelling the Central Bank of Nigeria to carry out its own investigation. The media built the requisite public pressure for the CBN to institute punitive measures against erring banks and initiate the reforms that resulted in the much-acclaimed reforms in the banking sector.

In 2005, a newspaper report revealed alleged impropriety by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development in the sale of government houses in Lagos. First published by a local tabloid, the story gained prominence when other more influential newspapers picked it up. This resulted in direct intervention by the President, who cancelled the allocations. Denying any involvement in the scandal, the President took action and ordered that the process be started all over. The legislative arm of the government has not been spared media attention and exposure with some losing their seats following media campaigns (Egbuna, 2007).

In addition to information from anti-graft agencies, the media are encouraging public participation in the fight against corruption. The restoration of democracy has been the wakeup call for the media to recognize human rights as fundamental and they have ever since been playing a captain's role in safeguarding it. They have popularized the notion of people's right to information and creating opposition to all forms of secrecy and immunity for government officials. Because of the work of the electronic media, the citizens are becoming increasingly aware of their rights and how the Constitution protects these rights. Through constant vigilance and reports on cases of infringement of these rights, and by exposing brutality and repression, the media have caused a

significant rise in public awareness of these issues. Of particular relevance is the focus on the abduction and rape of some female undergraduates in Enugu in 2005. The tenacity of Radio Nigeria through its human rights programme, Know Your Rights, put pressure on the police to investigate the report and bring charges.

Specifically, Radio Nigeria has another programme designed to fight corruption and encourage service delivery in the Police Force; called Police Diary. The live, interactive programme takes telephone calls from members of the public from across Nigeria on illegal activities of the police. The complaints are addressed immediately on the programme by the relevant police commissioners or Divisional Police Officers. Until December (2006) the programme was for the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja audience only but because of its popularity it became a network programme available at the same time to listeners on all thirty-five Radio Nigeria stations (Egbuna, 2007).

Constraints of media in anti-corruption crusade:

Although the media in Nigeria are given the constitutional duty of upholding the responsibility and accountability of Government to the people, they lack the power to carry out this function as the Constitution grants the media no specific freedom other than the right to freedom of expression enjoys by every citizen. On the other hand there exist several laws that have negative effect on the functions of the media. Among these are the Official Secrets Act, Sections of the Criminal Code Act and the Defamation Act. Laws establishing many public institutions also provide secrecy clauses that insulate such institutions from public scrutiny.

It is in the light of this that the media and Civil Society in Nigeria are demanding enhancement of the information climate and a guarantee of the right to seek information without inhibition and to publish or broadcast news safely and effectively. This right, they believe, can be guaranteed by a Freedom of Information law. It is argued that this will give legal cover to the media's contributions towards the anti-corruption campaign in the country. Reporting corruption involve threats, harassments, injury, even death

High incidence of poverty has made many journalists to seek for financial gratification before they perform their duty. Adesina (2008) reasoned that this group of journalists/media houses often tilt stories to favour those who have compromised them. They deliberately leave out the other side, or give the preferred side more prominence. They do hatchet jobs, writing and reporting deliberate untruth." He urged journalists to be honest and ethical. He also wanted them to learn to have professional detachment in writing a story. Tanzania Guardian (2006) lamented that under pressure of 'envelope' journalism, media houses have found themselves putting under carpet,

important stories which would have unearthed and fought against acts of corruption. Owners of media houses most especially the privately owned media often interfere with free reporting of corruption cases where such involve their highly placed friend in public or private sector.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The role of the media is critical in efforts against corruption. As a result, there must be careful structuring of the relationship between anti-corruption officials and, in many cases, there must also be efforts to develop or enhance the capabilities of the media to ensure that they can function effectively as recipients of information about corruption, appraise such information in an independent manner, use it meaningfully as the basis of further communications and disseminate it to the general public. In addition to independence and credibility, critical functions of the journalistic media include their ability to digest and render detailed technical materials accessible to the general population. This is essential to general awareness raising and public education, but also entails a high degree of responsibility and the exercise of discretion, since it necessarily involves editorial or “gatekeeping” exercises, in which the media must decide which information to report and which to leave out. Some of the critical issues that will enhance the role of media in curbing corruption are as follows:

- The autonomy of the media is essential to enable it to assess Government information critically and objectively and to ensure its reports are credible to the population as a whole. Thus, Government contacts with the media must be transparent, and they must not compromise the essential autonomy of the media, either in practice or in public perceptions. Also critical to autonomy and objectivity is the separation of media ownership from Government or political factions or, if this is impossible, ensuring that there is a diverse media to represent a full range of political opinion. Similarly, the staffing of individual media should be multi-partisan, if possible.
- For the media to assess anti-corruption efforts critically and independently they must possess adequate technical, legal, economic and other expertise. In many cases, other sources, such as retained professional or academic experts, can supplement the knowledge of general media reporters. Training, awareness-raising and technical briefing of media personnel in anti-corruption efforts may also be useful.
- Passage of Freedom of Information Bill by the National Assembly will guarantee the right to seek for information without inhibition and to publish or

broadcast news safely and effectively. The passage of this bill will give legal cover to the media’s contributions towards the anti-corruption campaign in the country.

- The media should be encouraged to develop and enforce adequate standards of conduct regarding their professional competence and their objectivity.
- Owners of media houses most especially private owners should be explicit with their interests to their editors so the latter would make good use of their profession to fulfill their roles in the society including that of fighting against corruption and any other practices related to it. Also they should enable their journalists to perform their duties effectively so that they would avoid any temptations of accepting gifts, envelopes, fare or any other support that would interfere with their free reporting.
- Media presentations should clearly distinguish between factual and fictional programmes and between news reporting, which reports fact, and analysis or editorial commentary, which comments on facts.
- The media should be able to reach as much of the population as possible. Where that involves use of public resources, for example to enable coverage of remote areas, there should be controls in place to ensure that the Government cannot withhold such resources to exert influence on the media. The media not only raises public awareness by disseminating information regarding the misuse of public power, but it can influence civil society to support Government anti-corruption initiatives. Moreover, journalists, editors and newspaper owners can take on an active role against corruption by facilitating public debate on the need to introduce anti-corruption policies and measures.
- It is essential to raise awareness on the part of the media of the causes, costs, levels, types and locations of corruption in their country, as well as to explain the on-going efforts of all stakeholders against corruption. Furthermore, journalists should be taught how to evaluate and monitor Government activities, and informed about the achievements and standards of anticorruption work in the region and at the international level. If journalists are to compare the validity of the policies of their own Government with others and to report on them in the proper perspective, such background information is essential. Internal diversity and pluralism within the media community also develops a capability whereby the media can report on corruption in their own profession.
- Media training should also focus on building an effective information network. That includes informing journalists about governmental and non-

governmental institutions active in the field of anti-corruption, about specific areas of responsibility, contact addresses and all other available information. If possible, representatives of those institutions should be chosen to inform journalists about their work, both the successes and the failures. Creating a continuing and interactive exchange of ideas will contribute towards building trust, and that should ultimately guarantee unbiased reporting and encourage Government institutions to ensure an open information policy. Moreover, training in investigative journalism as area of specialisation is imperative for journalist in the war against corruption.

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