



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### THE IMPACT OF POLITICAL CORRUPTION ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA, A STUDY OF PRESIDENT BUHARI'S ADMINISTRATION

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#### ABSTRACT

This study critically examines the impact of Political corruption on Nigeria's economic development during the administration of President Buhari (2015-2023). Despite coming to power with a strong anti-corruption mandate, the admission was plagued by persistent corruption, institutionalized weaknesses, and the politicization of the anti-graft campaign. The study highlights how high-ranking corruption cases and systematic mismanagement undermines growth, distorted resources allocation, and eroded public trust. Relying on secondary data, reports from anti-corruption agencies, civil society organizations and international bodies such as Transparency International bodies and the National Bureau of Statistics, the paper reveals that Nigeria experienced a decline in investment inflows, fiscal inefficiencies, and worsening socio-economic indicators despite anti-corruption rhetoric. The paper concludes that without institutional independence legal reform, and transparent governance mechanism, anti- corruption efforts will remain largely symbolic.

**Keywords:** Political corruption, economic development, Buhari administration, governance, transparency, anti-corruption policy.

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## **1.0. INTRODUCTION**

Corruption remains a fundamental challenge to economic development and governance in Nigeria. Since independence the country has struggled with endemic and system corruption that undermines public trust, deters investment and erodes the capacity of institutions to deliver development outcomes (Transparency International 2022). In response to these challenges, President Muhammadu Buhari's Administration (2015 – 2023) launched a vigorous anti – corruption campaign as one of its cardinal policy pillars. Buhari a retired military general with a reputation for discipline, was elected in 2015 on a promise to curb corruption, revive the economy and strengthen national security.

While some institutional reforms were initiated including the implementation of the Treasury Single Account (TSA), expansion of the Bank Verification Number (BVN) System and Support for Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), persistent reports of high level corruption selective prosecutions and weak judicial outcomes raised questions about the effectiveness of the anti – corruption drive (Adebayo 2021), (Oko & Eze 2020). Furthermore, despite these efforts, Nigeria's economic performance during Buhari years remained fragile, marked by two recessions (2016 and 2020), rising unemployment and a decline in per capital income (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS] 2022).

This study explores the relationship between political corruption and economic development during the Buhari administration. It critically assesses the extent to which corruption affected key economic sectors, evaluates the outcomes of anti-corruption polices, and examines whether the administration achieved its stated objectives. The study also considers the implications of political patronage, institutional weakness, and legal bottlenecks on economic governance in Nigeria.

## **2.0. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Conceptual Clarification**

Corruption is broadly defined as the misuse or abuse of public office for private gain (World Bank, 2000). It encompasses a wide array of unethical practices, including bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, kickbacks, favoritism, and fraud. Transparency international (2022) similarly defines corruption as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain”. “In the Nigeria context, corruption has become systemic embedded in bureaucratic routines, political processes, and institutional culture (Ogundiya, 2010).

#### **Political Corruption**

Political corruption refers to acts of corruption committed by public officials and elected representatives in the exercise of their duties. It includes the use of state resources to reward political allies (patronage), manipulation of public procurement processes, vote buying, appointment of unqualified individuals for political gain, and diversion of public funds (Lawal & Tobi, 2006). Political corruption differs from petty or bureaucratic corruption because it



typically involves high-level decision-makers and has broader implications for governance, public policy, and national development (Johnston, 2005).

### **Economic Development**

Economic development is more than just economic growth. It refers to sustained improvements in living standards, reduction of poverty and unemployment, infrastructure expansion, technological progress, and equitable distribution of wealth (Todaro & Smith, 2015). Economic development also involves institutional strengthening, good governance, human capital development, and inclusive access to public goods. In this study, economic development will be evaluated using indications such as GDP growth, foreign direct investment, poverty rates, unemployment figures, infrastructure quality, and the ease of doing business.

### **The Relationship between Corruption and Economic Development**

A wide body of literature suggests that corruption, particularly political corruption, negatively affects economic development. Mauro (1995) demonstrated that corruption reduces public and private investment, while Tanzi and Davoodi (1997) found that it results in lower quality infrastructure and inefficient allocation of public resources. Corruption increases transaction costs, discourages entrepreneurship, reduces tax revenues, and distorts market mechanisms (Kaufmann, 2009). In developing countries like Nigeria, these consequences are particularly severe, given the dependence on national resources and weak institutional frameworks.

### **Overview of political corruption in Nigeria before 2015**

Corruption has long been entrenched in Nigeria political landscape, dating back to the early years after independence. From the first Republic (1960-1966) to the military era and subsequent return to civilian rule in 1999, the manipulation of state resource for private gain has been a defining feature of governance in Nigeria (Ajayi, 2014). The oil boom of the 1970s, rather than bringing sustained economic transformation, created a rentier state dependent on oil revenues and vulnerable to elite capture and institutional decay (Ibeanu, 2008).

During the military era (1966-1999), successive regimes were marked by systemic looting of public resources. For instance, under General Sani Abacha (1993-1999), billions of dollars were embezzled and stashed abroad. The transparency international corruption perception index (CPI) regularly ranked Nigeria among the most corrupt nations globally during this period (Transparency International, 2004). These years entrenched a culture of impurity and weakened institutions like the judiciary, civil service, and law enforcement agencies.

The return to democracy in 1999 was expected to usher in greater accountability. However, the administrations of presidents Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007), Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (2007-2010) and Goodluck Jonathan (2010-2015) continued to struggle with endemic corruption. While institutions like the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and the



Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) were established, their effectiveness was hampered by political interference, underfunding, and selective enforcement (Akanbi, 2018, Omotola, 2010).

Under President Jonathan, several high-profile corruption scandals eroded public confidence in governance. The 2012 fuel subsidy fraud, in which over ₦1.7 Trillion was misappropriated, highlighted deep institutional rot in the petroleum section (Budget, 2013). Other scandals, including the missing & 20 billion from the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), raised concerns about transparency and fiscal discipline (Sanusi, 2014). The perceives inability or unwillingness of the administration to prosecute corruption office 2015 general elections.

Thus, by the time President Muhammadu Buhari assumed office in May 2015, corruption had become a systemic issue undermining Nigeria's development and international reputation. The expectation was that Buhari, with his anti-corruption credentials and military background, would lead a transformative fight against corruption and institutionalize integrity in governance.

### **The Anti-Corruption Agenda under President Buhari**

President Muhammadu Buhari's administration (2015-2023) comes into power with an explicit promise to combat corruption, revive the economy, and improve national security. Among these, the anti-corruption agenda become the hallmark of his presidency. Drawing his reputation and –nonsense military leader who once jailed corrupt politicians during his rule in the 1980s, Buhari's Presidency initially inspired strong public confidence and optimism (Adebayo, 2021). However, the outcome of the anti-corruption Campaign over his eight years in office reveal a compact mix of institutional reforms, big-profile prosecutions, and unresolved structural challenges.

#### **1. Institutional Reforms and Legal measures**

Upon assumption of office, President Buhari strengthened existing antic- corruption institutions including the Economic and Financial crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences commission (ICPC). Under Buhari's leadership, both agencies increased the number of investigations and prosecutions. For instances, between 2015 and 2020, the EFCC secured over 1,600 convictions, including some high-profile politicians, former governors, and corporate executives (EFFC, 2021).

In addition, the administration promoted the full implementation of the treasury single Account (TSA), a public finance reforms initiated in previous administrations but effectively enforced under. Buhari, the TSA centralized government revenue in a single account at the Central Bank of Nigeria, curbing leakages and unauthorized withdrawals from multiple agency accounts.



According to the office of the account –general of the federation (2020), the TSA saved the country over N3 trillion between 2015 and 2020.

The bank verification number (BVN) policy was also expanded to prevent identity fraud and reduce corruption in banking transactions. Furthermore, the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC) was established in 2016 to streamline regulatory frameworks and reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies that promote corruption in public service delivery (PEBEC, 2022).

#### ii. Legislative initiatives

The administration supported several anti-corruption legislative measures. Notable among them was the Whistleblower policy launched in December 2016, which incentivized the reporting of stolen public funds by promising informants between 2.5% and 5% of recovered through whistleblower tips (ministry of finance, 2020).

Other legislative attempts include the proceeds of crime (Recovery and management) Act, passed in 2022, which aimed to institutionalize asset tracing and recovering. While these frameworks were important steps forward critics argue that implementation remained weak due to judicial delays, limited transparency in asset disposal, and political interference (Akanbi, 2018).

#### iii. High profile cases and selective prosecutions

One of the most controversial aspects of Buhari's anti-corruption drive was the perceptions of selective justice. While some members of the opposition were prosecuted, many high-ranking officials within the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) who were accused of corruption appeared to be shielded from investigation or prosecution for instance, former secretary to the Government of the federation, Babachir Lawal, was dismissed over allegation of contract fraud but faced delayed prosecution. Similarly, the case involving the former head of the pension reform task team, Abdulrasheed Maina, raised concerns about institutional complicity

And weak internal controls (Ibrahim, 2020)

This pattern of selective enforcement undermined public confidence and raised questions about the sincerity of the anti-corruption agenda. Transparency International (2021) consistently rated Nigeria poorly in its corruption Perception Index (CPI) during the Buhari's administration, ranking Nigeria 149<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries in 2020 and 154<sup>th</sup> in 2021.

#### **Limitations and structural challenges**

Notably, despite the administration's reforms, several structural and institutional weaknesses limited the impact of the anti-corruption agenda.



These limitations include:

1. The Judicial system in Nigeria remained slow and prone to delays, with corruption cases lasting several years without resolution.
2. Political interference in the appointed and removal of EFCC and ICPC leadership reduced institutional autonomy.
3. Weak internal control systems within ministries and agencies allowed corruption to persist despite policy reforms.
4. Lack of co-ordination among anti-corruption agencies led to duplication of efforts jurisdictional conflicts.

Moreover, corruption remained pervasive at the state and local government levels, where oversight was weaker and institutional capacity lower. These limitations highlight the need for systemic reforms rather than ad hoc measures or personalized enforcement. The alleged politicization of the whole process was noticeable. Critics argue that enforcement was selective often targeting opposition politicians while shielding allies of of the ruling party (Uzochukwu & Chukwuemeka 2022).

### **Ranking Political Corruption under Buhari's Administration (2015-2023)**

Despite President Muhammadu Buhari's campaign promise to tackle corruption head-on, several high-ranking political figures within or close to his administration were implicated in major corruption scandals. These cases raised questions about the sincerity, impartiality, and sustainability of the anti-corruption war. While some political figures were prosecuted, many others faced allegations without substantive legal consequences, suggesting selective enforcement and political bias. Below are some notable examples.

1. Babachir Lawal and the grass cutting scandals in 2016, the then Secretary to the Government of the Federation. (SGF), Babachir David Lawal, was accused of diversity funds meant for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nigeria's northeast. An investigative panel uncovered evidence that a company linked to Lawal was awarded a N530 Million Contract to clear invasive grass in Yobe State, under fraudulent and irregular circumstances ( Premium Times, 2017).

Although Lawal was eventually relieved of his position will weakened the message of zero tolerance for corruption.

#### **2. Abdurashheed Maina and the Pension Scam**

Another high-profile case worth mention is that of Abdurashheed Maina, former Chairman of the defunct presidential Task Force on Pension Reforms. Though dismissed and declared wanted during Jonathan's administration for mismanaging over N2Billion in pension Funds, Maina was controversially reinstated into Civil service in 2017 under Buhari's government. His



reinstatement, which involved top officials in the ministry of interior and office of the Head of Service, created outrage and cast doubts on the Buhari administration's internal accountability system (Daily Times, 2017). Maina was later re-arrested, prosecuted and convicted in 2021, but the scandal exposed deep systematic weakness.

### 3. Military Procurement and Buratai's Dubai Property

Several senior military officers were accused of corruption, including former Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. Tukur Buratai. Investigative Journalism revealed that Buratai allegedly purchased multi-million dollar properties in Dubai while in office, raising questions about the source of his wealth (Sahara Reporters, 2020). Although the Nigerian Army defended him, no comprehensive investigation was undertaken, and Buratai was later appointed as ambassador to the Republic of Benin, thus, suggesting political protection despite public concern.

### 4. Allegation against the EFCC Chairman-Ibrahim Magu

Ironically, the head of Nigeria's foremost anti-corruption agency, Ibrahim Magu, was himself accused of corruption. In 2020, the Department of State Service (DSS) and a Presidential Panel accused Magu of mismanaging recovered assets and failing to account for billions in recovered loot (Punch, 2020). Magu was subsequently suspended and replaced. This event not only highlighted corruption within the anti-corruption established but also undermine public confidence in institutional integrity.

### 5. Niger-Delta Development Commission (NDDC) corruption

The interim management committee of the NDDC, which was under the oversight of the ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, was embroiled massive corruption allegations. A forensic Audit revealed financial mismanagement exceeding N1 trillion. The televised testimony of Joy Nunieli a former managing director of the NDDC, and the dramatic collapse of Prof. Pondei, the acting MD during a House of Representatives hearing, attracted nationwide attention (Vanguard, 2020). For sure, the President ordered a probe, no significant prosecution followed. These and many other high-ranking scandals during the Buhari administration suggest a mixed record. While some actions were taken to address specific instances, many cases lacked transparency investigations, timely prosecutions, or punitive outcomes. The perception that allies of the regime were shielded from justice undermined the administration's credibility and reinforced the view that the anti-corruption was politically selective (Ibrahim, 2020, Transparency International, 2021)

## 2.2. Theoretical Framework

Rent –seeking theory is adopted in combination with institutional theory which helped us to periscope into political corruption and its impact on economic development in Nigeria. the theory, Rent-Seeking was developed by Anne Kruegar (1974). Anna posits that individuals or



groups attempts to gain economic advantage without reciprocating any benefits back to society through wealth creation. In rent-seeking economics, individuals or elites use political connections to gain access to government contracts, licenses or public resources at the expense of economic efficiency and innovation (Tullock, 1967).

In the Nigerian context, rent-seeking behaviour is prevalent among political elites who manipulates state power for personnel enrichment.

During President Buhari's administration, several corruption scandals, such as inflated public procurement contracts, unauthorized withdrawals from public accounts, and selective prosecution-exemplify the rent-seeking patterns that undermine economic productivity. This theory explains why public sector investment especially in oil, infrastructure, and security, often yield minimal development returns.

### **Institutional theory**

This theory emphasizes the role of both formal and informal institutions such as laws, .....

Helped enhance revenue monitoring and reduce leakages. However, systemic corruption in revenue collection agencies like the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) and Nigeria Customs Service continued to affect government earnings. The mismanagement of COVID-19 Funds in 2020 also highlighted ongoing weaknesses in public accountability (ICPC 2021) Youth Unemployment and Human Capital Development.

Corruption in public service recruitment, education funding and small business support schemes undermined human capital development. Programs like N-power meant to alleviate Youth Unemployment failed accusations of favouritism and ghost beneficiaries (Premium Times 2020). Persistent embezzlement in education and health sectors reduced the quality of services contributing to brain drain and rising inequality. In short, corruption under Buhari's administration had the following economic effects;

- a) Reduction in government revenue and budgetary short falls.
- b) Decline in foreign investment and capital flight.
- c) Underdevelopment of critical infrastructure.
- d) Poor service delivery in health, education and security.
- e) Rising unemployment, inflation and poverty rates.

### **Impact of political corruption on economic development in Nigeria**

Political corruption significantly impedes Nigeria's economic development during President Muhammadu Buhari's administration (2015-2023). While the administration began with a strong anti-corruption mandate, corruption continued to manifest across key economic sectors, undermining productivity, discouraging foreign investment, distorting public spending and eroding institutional efficiency. Below are the effects of corruption on the country's key sector.



a. Oil and gas sector

The oil and gas sector, Nigeria's economic mainstay, remained one of the most corruption prime sectors under Buhari. Despite some reforms including efforts to pass the petroleum industry Act (PIA) in 2021, financial mismanagement and opaque dealings persisted within the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC). Reports revealed under-remitted oil revenues, inflated subsidy payments, and unauthorized withdrawal from the Excess Crude Account (ECA), which limited funds for public investment and increasing fiscal deficits (NEITI, 2021). In 2022, the Auditors- General's report uncovered that over N4trillion in oil revenue was unaccounted for between 2016 and 2019 (Budgji, 2022).

b. Public Infrastructure and procurement

Corruption also significantly weakened public procurement processes and infrastructure development. Budget padding, inflated contracts, and ghost projects were widespread. For instance, the ministry of works and Housing, and the ministry of Power were implicated in irregular contract awards, while the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) reportedly misappropriated over N1 trillion during this period (Vanguard, 2020). These practices resulted in the proliferation of abandoned projects and poor- quality infrastructure, especially in roads, rails, and power supply, thereby inhibiting economic growth.

c. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

Corruption contributed to a volatile investment climate. Nigeria's corruption perceptions index (CPI) scores during Buhari's administration remained low, ranking between 144<sup>th</sup> and 154<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries between 2015 and 2022 (Transparency International, 2022). The lack of transparency, policy inconsistency, and weak contract enforcement deterred many international investors. Foreign direct investment inflows declined from \$3.6 billion in 2015 to just \$ 458 Million in 2020 reflecting growing investor skepticism (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2023).

d. Public Financial Management

Efforts like the Treasury single Account (TSA) and the Bank Verification Number (BVN) system regulations, norms, and organizational structures in shaping human behavior and governance outcomes (North, 1990). The theory postulates that where institutions are weak or lack independence, they fail to hold political actors accountable, enabling a culture of impunity and corruption.

This framework is particularly relevant in evaluating Nigeria's anti-corruption architecture under Buhari. Despite institutional reforms such as the Treasury Single Account (TSA) and enhanced powers for the economic and financial crimes commission (EFCC), enforcement remained selective and political influenced. Weak judicial independence limited the effectiveness of anti- corruption initiatives, thereby diminishing their impact on economic development.



Institutional theory further clarifies how bureaucratic inefficiency, regulatory capture, and inter-agency rivalry impede transparent public financial management and economic planning. It suggests that unless institutional reforms and systematic and apolitical, corruption will continue to hinder long-term development.

By combining rent-seeking and institutional theories, this study provides a multidimensional explanation of how corruption persists and why economic reforms often fail in Nigeria. Rent – seeking identifies the motivations and mechanisms of corrupt actors, while institutional theory reveals why accountability and governance mechanisms struggle to curb such behaviours. Together, these frameworks illuminate the structural and political constraints that limit the impact of anti-corruption efforts on economic development.

### **Public Perception of the Anti-Corruption Campaign**

Public perception is a critical metric for assessing the legitimacy and effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts. Upon taking office in 2015, president Buhari’s administration embarked on a widely publicized anti-corruption Campaign, Public Opinion on the sincerity, consistency, and outcomes of these efforts remained divided. Drawing insights from public opinion polls, civil society assessments, and international corruption indices; the followings are public perceptions of the anti-corruption war during the period.

#### **f) Public Perception and trust in Anti-corruption institutions**

The early years of Presidential Buhari’s administration were marked by a strong sense of optimism regarding the possibility of curbing corruption. A 2016 Afrobarometer survey revealed that a majority Nigerians believed the government was making genuine efforts to fight corruption (Afrobarometer, 2016). However, subsequent years saw a decline in public confidence due to perceived selective prosecutions and lack of institutional reforms. Transparency International (2021) noted that public trust in institutions like the EFFC and ICPC waned due to accusations of political bias, inefficiency, and lack of prosecutorial consistency.

#### **Corruption perceptions index (CPI) Rankings**

Nigeria’s performance in Transparency International’s corruption perceptions Index (CPI) during the Buhari Administration paints a picture of stagnation and decline. In 2015, Nigeria was ranked 136 out of 168 countries.

By 2023, it had dropped to 150 out of 180 countries, scoring 24<sup>th</sup> out of 100 (Transparency International, 2022). These rankings reflect widespread perceptions that corruption is persistent at high levels despite the anti-corruption rhetoric. Public sector corruption, lack of judicial independence, and opaque government spending contributed to these poor rankings.



### Civil society and media Responses

Civil Society Organization (CSOs) and investigative journalist played a vital role in shaping public perceptions. Groups such as the socio-economic Rights and Accountability project (SERAP) and Budget frequently called attention to Opaque budgetary practices, questionable procurement processes, and unaddressed corruption allegations involving top government officials (SERAP, 2020). The media's uncovering of high profile corruption scandals –such as the Maina Pension fraud and the NDDC budget controversies further eroded public confidence in the administration's commitment to transparency and accountability (Premium Times, 2021)

### Youth and urban perception

Young Nigerians, who formed a sustainable base of president Buhari's 2015 electoral support, became increasingly disillusioned over time. Youth –led movement such as #EndSars indicated their frustration. According to a 2021 Nov Polls report, 72% of Nigerian Youth Between the ages of 18 and 35 believed that corruption had either remained the same or worsened under Buhari's government Polls, 2021). This perception was largely fuelled by growing distrust in the impartiality of anti-corruption institutions and the slow pace of judicial proceedings in high –profile cases.

Youth frustrations were further compounded by the lack of meaningful economic empowerment opportunities. The unemployment rate among youth (15- 35 years) rose to over 42% by 2020. (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2021), despite various government interventions such as N-Power, Youth Empowerment Schemes, and the Covid –19 survival Fund. Many young Nigerians viewed these programmes as politicized, short-lived, or riddle with favouritism, reinforcing the belief that corruption remained pervasive at all level of governance.

Urban Nigerians particularly those in cities like Lagos, Abuja, Enugu, Kano, Port-Harcourt and Onitsha were pivotal in shaping the public discourse on corruption during Buhari's tenure. These populations, often more educated and diligently connected, were exposed to national and global indices of governance performance. Platforms like Twitter (Now x,) facebook, and instagram became tools for exposing public sector malfeasance, organizing protests and sharing investigative journalism content. A key turning point was the 2020 EndSars protest, which although originally focused on police brutality, became a broader indictment of governance failures, corruption not just as an economic issue but as a moral and generational crisis.

The increased use of hashtags like #Bujaloot, \$Accountability Now, and #occupy Nigeria further exemplified the urban youth's demand for transparent governance and their readiness to challenge the status quo through digital activism (Iwilade 2022). For many, the failure to prosecute or convict corrupt officials despite media coverage and EFCC indictments was proof of the performance nature of the anti – corruption campaign.



## 5.0. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The administration of President Muhammadu Buhari's was ushered in with widespread hope for a transformative anti – corruption agenda and economic rejuvenation. His campaign promise to “kill corruption before corruption kills Nigeria” resonated with a populace fatigued by decades of graft, mismanagement and economic stagnation. However despite notable anti – corruption efforts such as TSA, BVN System and some high – profile prosecutions, corruption remained entrenched across multiple sectors of the Nigerian economy.

In essence, the Buhari administration's mixed record on corruption highlights the limitations of leadership driven anti-corruption efforts in the absence of structural reform, judicial independence and institutional accountability. Thus, the following recommendations:

### 1. Strengthen Institutional Independence

Anti- corruption agencies such as the EFCC, ICPC, and the Code of conduct Bureau should be granted full autonomy from executive influence. Their leadership appointments should be based on merit, with clearly defined, constitutionally protected tenure to avoid political interference.

### 2. Reform the judicial system

Nigeria's judiciary needs comprehensive reform to ensure timely, impartial and effective prosecution of corruption courts with trained judges, expedited trial timelines, and transparent procedures will improve the credibility of justice delivery.

### 3. Enforce Asset Declaration and public Transparency

Mandatory and publicly accessible asset declaration for public office holders must be enforced. The code of conduct Bureau should digitize assets registers and make compliances informational evaluable for civil society scrutiny.

### 4. Institutionalize fiscal accountability

Public spending should be guided by open budget processes, procurement transparency, and active legislative oversight. Agencies like NEITI and Auditor-General's office must be empowered to enforce their findings with legal consequences for defaulters.

### 5. Civic –Corruption and public engagement

Anti –corruption education should be embedded into civil curricula and youth programs. Active collaboration with the media, NGOs, and whistle blower protection initiatives will help foster a corruption intolerant society.



## 6. Technology and E-Governance

The integration of digital platforms for tax collection, budgeting, procurement and performance monitoring will reduce human discretion and leakage points. Systems such as the integrated payroll and personnel information system (IPPIS) should be expanded and rigorously maintained.

## 7. Depoliticize Anti-Corruption Efforts

The fight against corruption must be impartial. Selective prosecution based on party affiliation undermines public confidence. Equal application of the law should be the cornerstone of any anti-graft campaign.

It recommends a multi-pronged approach involving judicial reform, civic engagement, technological innovation, and political will to combat entrenched corruption and promote sustainable economic development.

Key words: Political corruption, economic development, Buhari's administration, Nigeria, governance, transparency, anti-corruption, public policy.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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