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**GOVERNANCE CRISIS AND STATE  
FAILURE IN NIGERIA:  
ARE WE ALL GUILTY?**

**By**

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# **GOVERNANCE CRISIS AND STATE FAILURE IN NIGERIA: ARE WE ALL GUILTY?**

**An Inaugural Lecture Delivered at Oduduwa Hall,  
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## GOVERNANCE CRISIS AND STATE FAILURE IN NIGERIA: ARE WE ALL GUILTY?

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, with gratitude to the Almighty God, I stand before you this evening to give the 299 Inaugural Lecture of this great University, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. This is the fourth inaugural lecture in the Department of Public Administration. I sincerely thank God for this honour and privilege.

A renowned Professor of Political Science, Sam Oyovbaire emphatically asserted that “there is crisis of governance in Nigeria,” it is “real, tangible, obvious and clear.” It is difficult to contradict this observation, because evidences abound that make governance crisis not only perceptible, but visible, touchable and solid. It is also a fact that Onanuga (2014) contends that “we are all victims of Nigeria’s governance crisis and we all experience its symptoms” in one form or the other. These symptoms include, among others – dysfunctional government, failed educational system, debilitated health system, malfunctioned transport system, deteriorated security system, epileptic power supply, food insecurity, defective socio-economic and political system. All of these, point to the incapability and helplessness of government to function well in these areas, which amount to government’s total or partial failure to perform its primary functions up to expectations. During an interview on Al Jazeera Television, Muhammadu Buhari (then as an APC presidential candidate) was quoted to have said that the “government has failed in its principal duty of protecting life or property of all beings inside its territory”.<sup>1</sup> It is rather disturbing to observe that the security situation has not dramatically improved since May 29, 2015 when he took over as the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria except for the gallant performance of the Nigerian security forces, which has increased our optimism that the Boko insurgency will ultimately be routed from Nigeria’s Northeast.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/02/nigeria-not-failed-state-omokri-tells-buhari/>

Let me assure you, ladies and gentlemen that we have to wait till the end of this lecture to be able to answer quite affirmatively the question on whether we are all guilty of the incidence of governance crisis and perceived state failure in Nigeria; this is because the answer is not as obvious and affirmative, which is the thrust of this lecture.

My early interest in Nigeria's governance crisis and the perceived failure of the Nigeria State in the discharge of its primary duties and statutory responsibilities to the citizens was spurred by late Professor (Emeritus) Vincent Ostrom of the Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis at Indiana University, Bloomington, USA. He challenged me to present a paper on African indigenous governance system in the face of dismal failure of the state-based institutions during the Mini-Conference organized by the Workshop in December 1993. In response to this, I presented a paper titled "Village Administration in Nigeria: A Case Study of Kabba Yoruba". This was followed by another paper titled "Village Administration in Nigeria: A comparative Approach" during the Mini-Conference in April-May 1994. This interest was boosted, expanded and sustained by my teacher, pastor, mentor and friend, Professor Bamidele Olowu, when he asked me to prepare a draft proposal on Informal Administrative System in Nigeria, which was adopted, modified and expanded for a group research on indigenous governance in Nigeria by the Research Group on Local Institutions in Nigeria (REGOLIN), also known as Local Institutions and Development Project (LISDP) under his able leadership. The outcome of this research gave birth to a special edition of *African Journal of Institutions and Development (AJID)* in 1996 with a focus on "Governance of Nigeria's Villages and Cities with case studies across the country and later a book titled *Indigenous Governance Systems in Nigeria*, edited by Dele Olowu and John Erero in 1997.

### **Nigerian Governance Environment**

It is pertinent at this juncture to ask: What do we mean by governance? The World Bank (1991) defines governance as "the

manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development". Within this general definition, the Bank distinguishes three distinct elements of governance. First, the form of a country's political regime; second, the process by which authority is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development; and third, the capacity of the government to design, formulate and implement policies and to discharge its core functions. The World Bank goes on to say that "governance is the process – by which authority is conferred on rulers, by which they make the rules and by which those rules are enforced and modified." Another World Bank document describes governance as consisting of the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised, which "includes the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them."<sup>2</sup>

In the view of Landell-Mills and Serageldin (1991)<sup>3</sup> governance is about how people are ruled; how the affairs of a state are administered and regulated. To Hyden (1992) governance is "the conscious management of regime structures with a view to enhancing the legitimacy of the public realms"; while Rosenau (1992:5) explains the concept to mean "a system of rule that works only if it is accepted by the majority (or at least, by the most powerful of those it affects, whereas governments can function even in the face of widespread opposition to their policies." To Nazrul Islam and Om Prakash Mathur (1995:3) "governance broadly refers to the system of government concentrating on effective and accountable institution, democratic principles and electoral processes, representative and responsible structures of government in order to ensure an open and legitimate relationship between the

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<sup>2</sup> <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#home>

<sup>3</sup> Cited from Nazrul Islam and Om Prakash Mathur (1995) "Urban Governance in Asia" in *Urban Governance* (Regional paper presented at the Second Urban Forum: November 27-29, 1995 at the UN Office, Nairobi.

civil society and the state." Fofana (1997) looks at governance from economic point of view, which he describes as "the process by which a society makes decision about the production and distribution of scarce resources." To Zartman (1997) governance is simply conflict management. To the UNDP, sound governance is participatory, transparent, accountable, effective and equitable, and promotes the rule of law.<sup>4</sup>

Crisis is defined as "a situation that is extremely difficult or dangerous, when there are many problems<sup>5</sup>" – such as serious economic, financial, or political crisis. Governance crisis is a situation that is characterized by political instability, poor management of resources due to lack of competent leadership resulting in corruption. Failed state is one of governance crisis' symptoms, where the state is "tense, deeply conflicted, dangerous, and contested bitterly by warring factions;" including "armed revolts and other hostile conflicts between the central government and one or more insurgencies, as in Afghanistan, the Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo", and currently in Nigeria (Rotberg, 2013).

To understand the Nigerian governance environment, recourse to her political history will be necessary. Nigeria came into existence on January 1, 1914 as a result of the Amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Protectorates and the Lagos Colony under the British colonial administration with its seat in Lagos. Various parts of the territories known as Nigeria today were ceded to the British imperialists at different times and dates. Lagos was ceded to Britain on 6th August, 1861. The Southern Protectorate was transferred from the Foreign Office to the colonial office in 1899. The Northern part of the country that was administered by the Royal Niger Company, whose sole interest was commercial, was taken over by the British colonial administration on January 1, 1900. Lagos remained the political capital of Nigeria until

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<sup>4</sup> Trevor Gordon-Somers "Statement on Good Governance" in *African Institute for Democracy*, April 1997, page 133. Mr. Gordon-Somers is Special Advisor, UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa.

<sup>5</sup> Please see *Cambridge English Dictionary*.

December 12, 1991 when the seat of the federal government was relocated to Abuja, the new federal capital.

Nigeria attained her independence on October 1, 1960. At independence, Nigeria operated a civilian Westminster Parliamentary system of government with three large and unequal regions (and four regions in 1963 with the carving out of Midwestern Region from Western Region) under a federal system. The country was engulfed in an unprecedented political crisis that led to the demise of the First Republic via the first military coup on January 15, 1966. The coup did not end the crisis as it eventually culminated into the thirty-month civil war from 1967 to January 15, 1970. From January 15, 1966, the military ruled the country until October 1, 1979, when it handed over power to the democratically elected president, Alhaji Shehu Shagari of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN). The civilian administration was terminated on December 31, 1983 in another military coup. This marked the return of the military to the country's political arena.

The new military regime headed by Major-General Muhammadu Buhari was in turn overthrown by Major-General Ibrahim Babangida – the Army Chief of Staff who then proclaimed himself 'President'. He led the nation through a convoluted political transition programme to civil rule, which he scuttled by annulling the June 12, 1993 presidential election that was apparently won by the late Chief M.K.O. Abiola of the Social Democratic Party (SDP). He then put in place an Interim National Government (ING) headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan whose government lasted until November 1993 when his Secretary of Defence, General Sanni Abacha removed him and instituted a full-blown Military Government of which he was the head until his death on June 7, 1998. The members of his Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) then selected the Chief of Defence Staff, General Abdulsalam Abubakar as his successor who embarked on the shortest transition programme in the country and handed over to Chief Olusegun Obasanjo on May 29, 1999. Ever since, the country is still struggling to get it right.

From the foregoing, it is clear that as at May 29, 1999, Nigeria had been ruled by the military for about 30 years out of 39 years of independence. It is to be pointed out that all the military regimes and civilian administrations have been characterised by high levels of corruption, political instability, social menace, poverty, lack of rule of law, violence and insecurity etc. This is clearly not an enviable governance environment and a clear indication of governance crisis and a state on the verge of failure!

### **What is State Failure?**

State failure refers to instances where “less than complete collapse” occurs (Doombos, 2001:5 as cited in Solomon & Cone, 2004). State failure in reality is not a sudden event but rather “a long term degenerative disease.”<sup>6</sup> State collapse can thus be viewed as a downward spiral inaugurated by a complex and conflict-ridden process of deterioration, decline and erosion of state functions. It is associated with certain concepts, including failed state, fragile state, collapsed state and weak state (which is the opposite of stable or state success). To Lambach (2012)<sup>7</sup> failed states are not necessarily sites of chaos and anarchy, as they are sometimes portrayed – “in fact, societies usually turn to alternative providers of governance in the absence of the state, such as traditional or charismatic authorities.” For the purpose of this lecture, state failure will be used as a synonym of failed state. Why? Both of them have similar characteristics in the literature, even though they differ in some degrees.

Rotberg (2013) explained that “a failed state is a country with a government that cannot or will not deliver essential political goods (public services) to its citizens.”<sup>8</sup> He argued further that “... failed states lack security, are unsafe, honour rules of law in the breach, are robustly corrupt, deny participation or voice most of the time to most of their people, discriminate within their countries against

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<sup>6</sup> See Zartman as cited in Woodward, 1996: 144.

<sup>7</sup>[http://www.exploringgeopolitics.org/interview\\_lambach\\_failed\\_states\\_definitions\\_causes\\_concepts\\_local\\_governance\\_authority\\_chaos\\_anarchy\\_features\\_scales/](http://www.exploringgeopolitics.org/interview_lambach_failed_states_definitions_causes_concepts_local_governance_authority_chaos_anarchy_features_scales/)

<sup>8</sup><https://robertrotberg.wordpress.com/2013/02/11/failed-and-weak-states-defined/>

classes and kinds of citizens, offer sustainable economic opportunity only to ruling elites and other cronies, and provide human development (educational and health services) sparingly or not at all.” Going by this definition, Nigeria perfectly fits into almost all the features that characterize a failed state.

### **Is Nigeria a Failed State?**

This is one of the most debated questions about the Nigeria nation-state. Some have argued that Nigeria is a failed state; others believe that it is in the process of failure, while some analysts even predicted the disintegration of the country in 2015<sup>9</sup>. Most of these opinions are, however, not based on tangible facts that can be substantiated with evidence, but on political sentiments, personal interests, ethno-religious prejudices and beliefs. A few, however, based their positions on situational analysis. Notably, the former US Ambassador to Nigeria, John Campbell, gave an in-depth analysis of how Nigeria was drifting towards a failed state due to inherent corruption, ethno-religious tensions, increasing Islamic radicalism, power tussles by elites and the tension of the 2015 presidential election.<sup>10</sup> This was responsible for his several predictions that the country would not exist beyond 2015.

To address the question, some indices will be used based on the understanding of the concepts of state success and state failure. According to Global Guerrillas,<sup>11</sup> a nation-state success can be measured by its ability to deliver political goods arranged in hierarchical order as follows: (i) security (the state's primary function that provides a framework through which all other political goods can be delivered; (ii) Law (a system of codes and procedures that regulate the interactions of the population and set the standards for conduct); (iii) medical and health care (this is central to the entire health of the country - social, political, economic as it is commonly said “health is wealth”); (iv) schools and educational instruction – no nation can develop beyond its

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<sup>9</sup> <http://intpolicydigest.org/2015/05/26/no-nigeria-isn-t-a-failed-state/>

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*

<sup>11</sup> [http://globalguerrillas.typepad.com/globalguerrillas/2004/05/failed\\_states.html](http://globalguerrillas.typepad.com/globalguerrillas/2004/05/failed_states.html)

level of educational system; (v) critical infrastructure (these are essential infrastructures such as good road networks, functional transportation system); (vi) money and banking system; (vii) business environment; (viii) a forum for civil society; and (ix) a method of regulating environmental commons.

In this Lecture, the success or failure of Nigeria nation-state is measured using the characteristics of failed states as outlined by Rotberg (2002). These characteristics include: rise of criminal and political violence; loss of control over borders; rising ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural hostilities; civil war; the use of terror against own citizens; weak (political, social and economic) institutions; deteriorated or insufficient infrastructure, inability to collect taxes without undue coercion, collapsed health system, rising levels of infant mortality and declining life expectancy, end of regular schooling opportunities, declining levels of GDP per capita (especially inflation), widespread preference for non-national currencies, basic food shortages – leading to starvation, leaders destroy the economic and political fabric of the country, questionable legitimacy.

### **Breach of Peace, Insecurity, Rise in Crime and Political Violence in Nigeria**

Nigeria has had her fair share in breach of peace, insecurity and rise in crime, political violence and political instability. The period (1960-1966), referred to as the First Republic,<sup>12</sup> witnessed several crises before its collapse on January 15, 1966. Prominent among these crises was the political turmoil in the Western Region, leading to the declaration of the state of emergency on May 29 1962.<sup>13</sup> The Prime Minister declared that “in pursuance of Section 65 of the constitution of the federation, it is declared that a state of public emergency exists and that this resolution shall remain in

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<sup>12</sup> The “First Republic” refers to the first civilian democratic polity - 1<sup>st</sup> of October 1960 to 15<sup>th</sup> of January 1966, when the first military coup took place; although the country only became a republic on October 1, 1963 when the nation finally broke the umbilical political cord that bound it to Britain and became a self-governing state in all legal and political ramifications.

<sup>13</sup> See [http://www.waado.org/nigerdelta/FedGovt/Federalism/emergency\\_rule/western\\_region\\_balewa.html](http://www.waado.org/nigerdelta/FedGovt/Federalism/emergency_rule/western_region_balewa.html)

force until the end of the month of December, nineteen hundred and sixty-two." He added that "No responsible government of the federation could allow an explosive situation such as that which now exists in Western Nigeria to continue without taking adequate measures to ensure that there is an early return to the region of peace, order and good government." There were also series of serious riots in Tiv land in 1960 and 1964. The cumulative effect constituted the remote causes that led to the first military coup on January 15 1966, while the immediate cause was attributed to the selfishness and corruption of the politicians. The coup and counter coups aggravated ethnic tensions and antagonisms that led to mass killings in July and September, 1966.

### **Civil War**

Another characteristic of a failed state is civil war. Nigeria was engaged in a 30-month civil war (2 July, 1967 to 15 January, 1970) resulting from various unresolved ethnic and political crises in various parts of the country and, in particular, the coup and the counter coup of 1966. The failure of Aburi Conference<sup>14</sup> to resolve the crisis and the creation of twelve states on May 27, 1967 from the four existing regions were perhaps the immediate causes of the war. The then Military Governor of the Eastern Region, Lt. Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu saw the act of the creation of states by decree "without consultation" as the last straw<sup>15</sup> and, thereby, declared the Region an independent State of Biafra on 30 May 1967, which the Federal Government considered as an act of secession and illegal. Efforts to resolve the issue peacefully failed; and to avoid total disintegration of the country, the federal government appeared to have only one choice of bringing back the Region to the main fold by force.<sup>16</sup> It was estimated that the war claimed about one million lives and unquantifiable loss of properties.

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<sup>14</sup>The Aburi Conference held January 4-5, 1967 at Aburi, Ghana was at the instance of Lt.-General J.A. Ankrah - the Ghanaian Head of State. The venue was chosen because the eastern delegates led by the Governor of Eastern State Colonel Ojukwu's felt their safety could not be guaranteed anywhere within the western or northern part of the country.

<sup>15</sup>Abubakar .A. Atofarati (1992) "The Nigerian civil war: causes, strategies and lessons learnt." <http://www.dawodu.com/atofarati1.htm>

<sup>16</sup><http://www.dawodu.com/atofarati1.htm>

## **Ethnic, Cultural and Militia Movements<sup>17</sup>**

The failure of the State to provide effective security services and ensure protection of lives and properties in the country and, particularly, the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the Nigeria Police and other enforcement agencies like the State Security Service (SSS) in carrying out their constitutional duties, made some communities and ethnic groups to establish for themselves what Chikwem (2005) called “Self Determination Groups” (SDGs). According to him, some were initially and genuinely formed “to assist the society and others, on self-enrichment strategies.” He argued that some of them, however, “have taken laws into their hands and are responsible for numerous human rights abuses, murder, execution, illegal detention, unlawful arrest, rape, extortions, illegal judgments, terrorist activities etc.” Prominent among these groups are the Area Boys (in Lagos), Bakassi Boys, O’odua People’s Congress (OPC), Movement of the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), Arewa People Congress (APC), Oodua Liberation Movement (OLM), Revolutionary Council of Nigeria (RCN), Igbo People’s Congress (IPC), Ijaw Youth Congress, Ijaw National Congress, the Hisbah Groups, Egbesu Boys, Delta People Volunteer Force (NDPVF) and, more recently, the dreaded Boko Haram religious terrorist Group in the North<sup>18</sup> and the Niger Delta Avengers who specialize in destroying oil wells and pipelines. These ethnic, cultural and militia movements have played prominent and mixed roles in either disrupting, or keeping, maintaining and building peace in Nigeria.

Apparently disturbed by the activities of the ethnic groups and the need to regulate their activities, former President Olusegun Obasanjo, sent a bill (The Prohibition of Certain Associations Act

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<sup>17</sup>These various groups cannot be discussed within the scope of this Lecture. Suffice to say that each of the groups can be a full lecture on its own.

<sup>18</sup> Boko Haram is not an ethnic or cultural group but an Islamic organization that has been active in Northeastern Nigeria since 2009. The name of the group literally means, “Western” education is a sin or an abomination. The group has launched violent attacks on churches and institutions especially schools and police stations and sometimes banks.

2002)<sup>19</sup> to the National Assembly, which if passed, would empower him to "dissolve and proscribe any persons, association of individuals or quasi-military groups, which in his opinion, is formed for the purposes of furthering the political, religious, ethnic, tribal, cultural or social interest of a group ... contrary to the peace, order and good governance" of the federation. The targets of the bill included "organizations led by prominent politicians, which purport to defend the interests of ethnic groups or sections of the country." Three of such groups, which he had accused of being catalysts of ethnic conflicts, included Arewa Consultative Forum, Afenifere and Ohaneze that respectively champion the interests of the biggest ethnic groupings - the Hausa-Fulani, the Yoruba and Igbo. Proscribing those groups was felt to be a violation of human rights and freedom of association and amounted to silencing those he perceived as opposing his administration. Chickweed (2005), however, suggested that Afenifere, Ohaneze Ndi Igbo and Arewa Consultative Forum, the apex body of the Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa-Fulani respectively should provide advisory support to genuine self-determination groups within their regions and reengineer their programmes to accommodate the Nigerian society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Insecurity in Nigeria from 1999-2017**

This period (1999-2017) has witnessed the highest era of insecurity and breach of peace in Nigeria. It is, perhaps, the most traumatic, distressful and lawless period that the country had ever witnessed. Thousands of lives are daily lost to insurgency, terror attacks, kidnapping, armed robbery, political thuggery and assassinations. According to the CNN, Boko Haram "killed 6,644 people in 2014, an increase of more than 300% from the previous year, according to the latest tally from the Global Terrorism Index."<sup>20</sup> Alongside are the Fulani herdsmen, who constantly terrorize many communities and farmers by destroying their farms and properties,

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<sup>19</sup> The Bill was sent on April 10, 2002. Please see <http://www.irinnews.org/report/31092/nigeria-obasanjo-proposes-law-to-ban-ethnic-militias>; <http://www.dawodu.com/chikwem1.htm>

<sup>20</sup> <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/02/13/africa/boko-haram-attack-nigeria/index.html> (Accessed on March 28, 2016)

burn their houses, kill and maim their victims in various parts of the country. No fewer than 300 persons were confirmed dead following a siege on Agatu Local Government Area of Benue State by Fulani herdsmen between February 22 and 24, 2016. Villages attacked and razed included Okokolo, Akwu, Ocholonya, Adagbo, Ugboku and Aila where decomposing bodies of those killed were seen littering the communities, and about 7,000 people were displaced. According to the Global Index Report (2015), Fulani militants killed 1,229 people in 2014 – up from 63 in 2013 – making them the fourth most deadly terrorist group in the world. While the federal government was trying to tackle the aforementioned problems, a new group known as Niger Delta Avengers emerged that specialised in vandalising oil and gas pipe installations resulting in loss of billions of naira on a daily basis.



**Figure 1: Boko Haram Attack in 2015**

**Source:** <https://www.thecable.ng/path-of-a-ruthless-killer-all-boko-haram-deaths-in-2015>

### **Causes of Insecurity and Breach of Peace in Nigeria**

Several reasons have been adduced for ethnic violence, insecurity, breach of peace and political instability in the country. These include among others, over-concentration of political power at the centre, weak judicial system, injustice, nepotism and a culture of impunity; high level of corruption; weak (political, social,

economic and traditional) institutions; unpatriotic, unscrupulous and greedy leaders; unemployment and underemployment; and lack of record/database of criminals, boundary disputes, ignorance, intolerance among various groups and communities, unequal distribution of resources among others (Okereke, 2012; Jimoh, 2013). Other factors include marginalization of minority groups, intolerant violent political activities, proliferation of small arms and ammunition across the country; porous borders, constitutional lapses like immunity for serving president, governors and their deputies; religious bigotry, corrupt, inefficient and ineffective as well as ill-equipped security outfits.

### **Deteriorated Infrastructure/Collapsed Public Goods and Services**

Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, in his inaugural speech as the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on May 29, 1999, lamented the state of the country's infrastructure: "Our infrastructures - NEPA, NITEL, Roads, Railways, Education, Housing and other social services were allowed to decay and collapse. Our country has thus been through one of its darkest periods". This description was not only apt, but a true reflection of the state of the country's infrastructural facilities in every sector even up till today. A few of them will be discussed in this lecture.

### **Collapsing Educational System**

I choose to use collapsing rather than collapsed educational system, because the deterioration is still going on. Education is in deep crisis in Nigeria which has been on high increase since the 1980s and it has continued unabated in a downward trend. The crisis manifests in several ways. These include poor funding, mismanagement of all resources (human, financial and material), large scale corruption at all levels of educational institutions and supervising agencies, inadequate and decaying facilities and equipment for teaching and research, vast brain drain, perpetual students' unrests, erosion of university autonomy and academic freedom, politicization of educational system, overcrowding in students' hostels and classrooms, dilapidated classrooms, pupils' learning under harsh

conditions, including learning under trees. Others include incessant closure of schools and massive failure of examinations, especially at the primary and secondary levels, examination malpractices, unemployable graduates from tertiary institutions (Okotoni, 1999). It is an open secret that the public school system in Nigeria is at the brink of total collapse. Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka at the opening of a two-day Education Summit organized by Osun State government in Osogbo in 2011 described the country's educational system as a colossal failure (*Nigeria News*, 2011). An analyst puts it simply, but sadly, "That Nigeria's education sector is heading for the nadir is not as scary as the fact that all hope of remediation is apparently vanishing" (*Guardian*, 2015).

On the question of who is responsible for the failure in Nigeria's education," the former First Lady, Dame Patience Jonathan, attempted to provide a partial answer. She argued that "the inability of leaders to channel resources towards helping the less-privileged get quality education is responsible for the mass failures of school children in examinations in the country." (Ajah, 2015). To Okwuchukwu (2016), the failure rate in public examinations is a failure, not only of the students, their teachers, the government and the parents, but also the society at large. All are guilty of the crisis in the country's educational system.

The failure of public education system in the country has triggered off an upsurge and proliferation of private educational institutions at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. At present, there is almost an uncountable number of private primary and secondary schools in Nigeria. As at February 2017, there are 68 private universities, while a total of 58 illegal universities were recently closed down by the National University Commission (NUC)<sup>21</sup>. Federal and States have 40 and 48 universities respectively to cater for the ever increasing demand for university education in a population of about 180 million. Those who can afford the high cost send their children and wards abroad to European, and American, African and Asian universities with about 75,000

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<sup>21</sup> National University Commission (NUC), [martinslibrary.blogspot.com](http://martinslibrary.blogspot.com)

Nigerians studying in Ghana alone. It was reported recently that Nigerian students studying in Ghana pay over N160 billion annually as school fees, accounting for 40 per cent of the 2012 Education Budget of Nigeria. It was also reported that in 2010 Nigeria fuelled the UK education sector to the tune of N246 billion that is, over 60 per cent of the 2012 education allocation.<sup>22</sup> This, calls for urgent remedies before the sector finally collapsed.

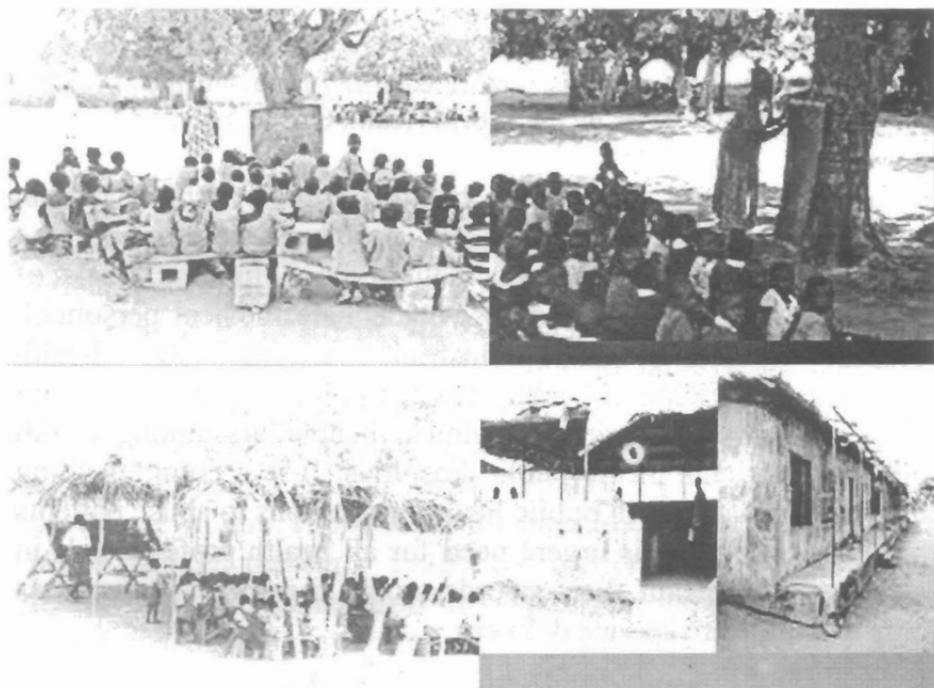
**Table One: Indices and Indicators of Education Failure in Nigeria**

S/N	Some Reports
1	In 2010, a joint UNESCO-UNICEF Report estimated over four million Nigerian girls between the ages of 6 and 11 of HAVING NO ACCESS to primary education.
2.	The former Education Minister, Dr. Sam Egwu gave statistics in his Ministry's 2010 ministerial press briefing, that 17 million Nigerian children had no access to education - made up of 11 million children who should be in primary school and six million who ought to be in Junior Secondary School (JSS).
3	Egwu added that the level of transition from JSS to Senior Secondary School (SSS) was put at 16%, while only 6% of applicants gain admission into universities, polytechnics and colleges of education, because of the crisis of access to the institutions.
4	Nearly 34.8 million adults in Nigeria are considered illiterate, according to 2009 data from UNESCO, which ranked it the highest in sub-Saharan Africa. Illiterate females outnumber males by nearly 2 to 1 – there are at least 12.3 million males without schooling, compared to 22.4 million females, around 64% of Nigeria's total illiterate population.
5	The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) lamented that almost 90% of Nigerian graduates cannot communicate effectively in English, which is the language of instruction

<sup>22</sup> Read more at: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/06/nigerians-pay-n160bn-tuition-on-71000-children-in-ghana/>.

	in schools.
6	Only 62,295 of the 310,077 candidates (20.04%) who sat for the Nov/Dec 2010 West African Senior School Certificate Examination obtained credit in English, Mathematics and three other subjects.
7	Results of 51,876 of the candidates (16.73%) were withheld for involvement in alleged malpractices.
8	May/June 2014 WASSCE – those with five credits plus English and Mathematics 31.28%
9	Nigeria was ranked 140th out of 144 countries in primary education enrolment, according to the World Economic Forum’s Global Competitiveness Report Index, 2011-2012.
10	NECO, failure rate was 98 per cent in 2008, 88 per cent in 2009, 89 per cent in 2010, 92 per cent in 2011 and 68 per cent in 2012.
11	Steady decline in budget allocation to the education sector:
12	Low access to education in the country

Sources: Muhammad Ajah “Whither Nigeria’s Educational system” <http://www.gamji.com/article9000/NEWS9533.htm>; Head of the Nigerian WAEC National Office, [www.nairaland.com](http://www.nairaland.com); Ladipo Adamolekun “Education sector in crisis: Evidence, causes and possible remedies” <http://www.vanguardngr.com>



Figures 2: Nigerian Pupils Learning under Trees and dilapidated buildings

### **Deteriorating Medical and Healthcare Facilities and Services**

The deplorable condition of the healthcare services in Nigeria was well captured by an editorial opinion titled “A State in Gradual Collapse”: state hospitals, which had “first degenerated into consulting clinics” but had become “places to die”. (*Guardian*, March 1, 1994 cited in Olowu, 1996:2). One and half decades later, the same Newspaper captured the deteriorating health situation of Nigeria in its Editorial of July 25, 2008<sup>23</sup>:

While most facilities are in various state of despair, with equipment and infrastructure being either absent or obsolete, the referral system is almost non-existent; the Primary Health Care is in doldrums and may worsen the already gloomy health profile of the country... Tragically, 20 years after, the health system

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.nigerianmuse.com/20080729204222zg/sections/health/the-collapse-of-primary-health-care-guardian-editorial/> (Accessed on March 31, 2016)

performance of the country does not give cause to cheer as the country is now ranked 187th among the 191 member states by the World Health Organization.

The analysis of the state of the health sector is rather pathetic, tragic and gloomy. Some of the problems confronting the healthcare services in Nigeria include poor funding, lack of adequate equipment and facilities, inadequate medical personnel, incessant strikes and industrial actions by health professionals/workers; unhealthy rivalries and disharmony among health professionals/workers, unethical behaviours among health workers to patients in the public hospitals. It is a common thing among health workers in public health institutions to abuse patients with impunity. There is urgent need for all health professionals in the country to sheath their swords, come together and work as teams in healthcare service delivery.

Commenting on a nationwide strike embarked upon by the resident doctors under the aegis of National Association of Resident Doctors of Nigeria (NARD) in 2010 in the Federal Teaching Hospitals and Federal Medical Centres (FMCs), Dr. Femi Akinwumi, of the University College Hospital, Ibadan, said "The Nigerian health sector was thrown into chaos. ...The sector, hitherto in a state of prostration, slumped into coma with very severe untold consequences on the health of ordinary citizens especially sick infants and children, pregnant women and the bed-ridden in the society."

The acute shortage of medical doctors is another problem area. Presently, in Nigeria, it is about 1 doctor to 4,000 patients as against the WHO recommendation of about 1 doctor to 600 patients. According to Folashade Ogunsola, a professor of medicine and chairman, Association of Colleges of Medicine of Nigeria, Nigeria needs no fewer than 237,000 medical doctors to meet the WHO standard (*Premium Times*, 2015). Other problems include the internal and external brain drain of medical personnel. Many Nigerian doctors and nurses migrate yearly to overseas countries in search of greener pastures. As a matter of urgency,

government must take proactive measures to stem the tide of brain-drain in this sector.

### **Malfunctioned Transport System**

To say the least, the transportation system in Nigeria has not only failed, but has collapsed in all ramifications. Nigeria Airways sadly is moribund. It is pathetic, that the most populous African country has no surviving national carrier due to large scale corruption, gross mismanagement, over-bloated staff and undue political interference among several reasons. The once thriving Nigeria Airways that came into being on August 23, 1958 had about 8,500 workforce in the 1980s with 30 aircrafts. However, from mid-1980s through the early 1990s, the carrier was plagued by huge debts and multifaceted problems leading to its collapse. It ceased operations in 2003 and was liquidated a year later. Ever since, several efforts have been made to revive it or at least put something in place, but have always failed up till June 13, 2012, when the new carrier was grounded by regulators for safety reasons (Echenim, 2012).

The Nigeria Railway Corporation (NRC) had not fared better. Trains, which used to be one of the best transportation systems in Nigeria, have also collapsed. The gory story below captures the pitiable situation of the Nigeria Railway and the excessive wastages with nothing to show for it.

Between 1995 and 1999, a whopping contract of \$500 million was awarded to a Chinese firm, China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation to rehabilitate the existing rail, supply 50 locomotives, 150 coaches, 400 wagons and 20 rail buses and provide technical training for the railways staff. The substandard rail locomotives, wagon and coaches supplied by the Chinese firm, however, were not fit for later use. The same China Civil Engineering Construction Company has again been awarded a whopping \$8.3b contract to rehabilitate the rail system. Despite the shoddy work done and substandard locomotives supplied, China continues to make inroad in the development of rail system. In 2006, a deal was struck

between Beijing and Abuja. Under this deal, China would provide a concessional loan of \$1 billion while Nigeria will come up with matching funds. The fund would be used to fix old lines and buy new rolling stock and equipment... Ex-President Olusegun Obasanjo flagged off the first phase of the estimated N325 billion or \$2.5b modernization and expansion programme for Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC), the one-century old hemorrhaging corporation would have gulped more than N400 billion in the last ten years of its operation (Arizona-Ogwu, 2008).

The outcome did not justify the huge sum of money put into it as the corporation remains in a comatose state. The only heaving of relief was the recent commissioning of the 185 km Abuja-Kaduna Standard Gauge rail track on July 26, 2016. The construction, which was carried out by China Civil Engineering & Construction Company (CCECC) commenced in 2009 under President Goodluck Jonathan. President Buhari, in his commissioning address, reassured Nigerians that due attention would be placed on pursuing the 25-Year Strategic Railway Master Plan, which is aimed at rehabilitating the existing 3,505 km narrow gauge rail line and developing and constructing new standard gauge rail lines across the country appears to be a ruse as there is no evidence of any work on ground.



Figure 3: Nigeria's battered old Train



Figure 4: Nigeria's newly commissioned Train

What can we say about the road transport? The *Kakaaki Magazine* (2016) describes the Nigerian roads below:

Many Nigerians are mauling the condition of our roads: experts, transporters, motorists, unionists, road users, armchair critics and all. Yet, these roads will not only continue to remain bad, many of them will, indeed, move from good to poor; poor to failed, failed to bad, and bad to collapsed if things remain as they have always been over several years; if we stick to our old fashioned attitude to road management and use.

Most of the Nigerian roads are in parlous condition due to poor maintenance and have indeed become death traps and in fact a “national shame and an unnecessary embarrassment as there is hardly any part of the country that can boast of motorable roads, be those roads Trunk A (federal), Trunk B (state) or Trunk C (local government) roads” (*Guardian* 8 November, 2015). It is even more worrisome when the Newspaper also reported that “since 1999, a whopping N1.4 trillion (\$8.5 billion) has reportedly been spent on road construction or maintenance with very little evidence of the money spent.”



Figure 5: State of Nigeria's Road

### **Power Supply Failure (Epileptic Electricity Supply)**

Another indicator of a failing state is the inability of government to provide electricity to citizens. Power failure is a household slogan

in Nigeria. The old Nigeria Electricity Power Authority (NEPA) was cynically branded by citizens as “Never Expect Power Always” because of incessant failure of power supply. Perhaps because of the stigmatised name, government renamed it Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN). The new name did not improve the performance. Members of the public once again pessimistically interpret it as holding power rather than supplying and distributing power. It is very pathetic to read the excerpt in *The Nation* Newspaper of April 1, 2016<sup>24</sup>:

The Nigerian Electricity Supply Industry (NESI) yesterday announced the collapse of the electricity system in the country, a development that led to zero allocation of electricity to distribution companies (DisCos). Due to this, the Nigeria Electricity System Operator (NESO) noted on its website that it generated nothing and allocated nothing at that particular time to the 11 DisCos across the country.

The situation deteriorated to the point that many manufacturing companies have relocated to Ghana as a result of cost of production especially diesel, to run the industrial generating plants. In 2008, Dunlop Nigeria and Michelin tyre manufacturing companies relocated to Ghana. It was reported that manufacturers spend N800bn annually on generators. It was also observed that there was about “70 per cent rise in cost of operations” (*The Sun*, 2016)<sup>25</sup>. Suffice it to say, that this is not a good omen for a struggling economy.

### **Food Insecurity**

One of the indices of a failing state is food insecurity, which is very much prevalent all over Africa and is a present danger in Nigeria in particular. In 2013, the former Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Akinwunmi Adesina, reported that “Nigeria still has 13 million people suffering from hunger and malnutrition”, which he

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<sup>24</sup> <http://thenationonlineng.net/nigerias-electricity-system-collapses/>

<sup>25</sup> See Bimbola Oyesola, Louis Iba, Uche Usim and Charles Nwaoguji “How epileptic power supply’s killing Nigerian industries” *The Sun*, 28<sup>th</sup> March 2016

considered as being high. This figure could not have been an accurate one. There is no doubt that over half of Nigeria's population is suffering from hunger and malnutrition. There is hunger both in urban and rural areas, arising from acute shortage of staple food like rice, yam, wheat and corn.

According to Wunderlich and Norwood (2006:44) "Food insecurity exists whenever the availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or the ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways is limited or uncertain." In other words, it is "the state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food"(*Oxford Dictionary*). Nigeria is said to be a food deficit country and is Africa's largest importer of rice. It was further said that "nearly half of women of reproductive age (48.5 percent) are anemic", ranking Nigeria 172nd best out of 185 countries. (World Food Programme, 2016).

It is not as if successive governments have not been making efforts to address the problem of food insecurity at different times by initiating programmes that were intended to boost food production in the country. In 1972, General Yakubu Gowon introduced the National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) - an agricultural extension programme to boost staple food production especially maize, cassava, rice and wheat in the Northern states through subsistent production within a short period of time.<sup>26</sup> The programme, however, failed to provide solution to food shortage in the country; his administration was overthrown on July 29, 1975 in a bloodless coup.

Brigadier (later General) Murtala Mohammed succeeded Gowon, but was assassinated on February 13, 1976 in a violent coup attempt. General Obasanjo who succeeded him launched the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) on 21st May 1976, as a means of boosting local food self-sufficiency as well as cutting down the rise in food imports. The programme, unfortunately, did not achieve its

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<sup>26</sup><http://www.agriculturenigeria.com/research/introduction/history-of-agriculture-in-nigeria>  
(Accessed December 11 2016).

objective before he handed over to a democratically elected government on October 1, 1979. His civilian successor, President Shehu Shagari, introduced the Green Revolution in April 1980 - intended to ensure self-sufficiency in food production. The programme encompassed a wide range of projects meant to develop the nation's agricultural sector. These included creation of 11 River Basin Development Authorities, the Ministry of Water Resources, National Food Production Programme, and the Agro Service centres.<sup>27</sup> Like the earlier programmes, these also failed to provide meaningful solution. On 31<sup>st</sup> December 1983, the military overthrew the civilian government. The new military government under the leadership of General Muhammadu Buhari introduced "Go Back to Land Programme". Needless to say that, the programme also failed to achieve its objectives. In 1986, General Ibrahim Babangida established the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) for rural development, a programme that gulped billions of naira, but failed woefully in the end to provide a lasting solution to food insecurity.

In more recent time, the Federal Government initiated the National Food Crisis Response Programme (NFCRP) and the Food Security Thematic Group (FSTG) in 2009. In 2013, the then Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, said that Nigeria had made good progress in the target set to produce an additional 3.2 million metric tons of rice paddy to attain self-sufficiency in rice by 2015. The 2015 target obviously failed since the country was far from self-sufficiency in 2017. All the efforts have not produced any respite to food insecurity in the country. The problem of food insecurity in Nigeria is further compounded by the insurgency in the northern part of the country, especially North-eastern Nigeria, where the Boko Haram insurgency has ravaged many farmlands, destroyed food crops and killed many farmers. The onslaughts of Fulani herdsmen on farmers in various parts of the country have further aggravated the problem of food insecurity in Nigeria.

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<sup>27</sup> Please see [http://nigerianwiki.com/Green\\_revolution\\_programme](http://nigerianwiki.com/Green_revolution_programme) (Accessed December 11 2016).

Over the years, the problem of corrupt leadership, political instability and the apparent abandonment of agriculture in pursuit of oil minerals did not help the situation. We cannot but agree with Azubuike's (2012) argument that "no country can truly be a sovereign nation if it is not capable of ensuring food security for its citizens". This is one crucial area where Nigeria is failing. It is pertinent to note that several of these programmes have failed due to policy somersault, that is the lack of policy continuity (Okotoni, 1996).

### **Declining and stagnated Economy**

Nigeria once had a vibrant and vivacious economy that was anchored on agriculture and sustained by it until the country joined the oil and gas producing countries in 1958. The agricultural sector began to witness steady decline beginning with the oil boom in early 1970s that eventually led to its almost total abandonment. Nigeria was once the world's lead exporter of cocoa. The country had several agricultural cash products such as groundnut, rubber, cotton and palm products. Gradually, the country became over-dependent on oil to the detriment of the country's socio-economic development and sustainability. At independence in 1960, the contribution of agriculture to the GDP was about 60%; this declined over time to only about 24% in 2016. In the good days of Nigerian economy, Nigeria currency (Naira) was stronger than the US Dollar, but at present, the exchange rate is over N500 to one US Dollar. Suffice to say that the large scale corruption in the oil sector is capable of crippling the economy. Only recently, precisely on February 10, 2017, that the EFCC recovered huge sums of \$9,772,800 and £74,000, from former Group Managing Director of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), which were hidden a fire proof in a mud-like house in Sabon Tasha, Kaduna State. The former Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Lamido Sanusi, accused NNPC under Alison-Maduake's watch (former Minister of Petroleum) of failing to account for \$20 billion in oil revenues.

## Corruption

There is no doubt that corruption is one of the greatest problems currently plaguing Nigeria, and has contributed largely to governance crisis and state failure. Shamefully and regrettably, that Nigeria is corrupt has been admitted by the high and the low in the society. Sometimes in 2013, former President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, publicly proclaimed that “the National Assembly is full of rogues and armed robbers.” In May 2016, it was widely publicized that President Buhari openly admitted before the Queen of England the allegation made by the former British Prime Minister, David Cameron, that “Nigeria is fantastically corrupt.” In October, 2016, at a function in Ado-Ekiti, Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, was quoted as saying that “All the institutions of government ... executive, legislature and the judiciary are corrupt” and that “what we need is serious re-orientation.” (*National Helm*, 2016). As if these were not enough, Mr. Shehu Sani, the All Progressives Congress Senator representing Kaduna Central, said that “With mountains of allegations of corruption in the kitchen cabinet of Mr. President; with mountains of allegations of corruption in the Parliament; with mountains of allegations of corruption in the Judiciary, now we are having a three Arms of corruption” (Adebayo, 2016).

Nigeria, the most populous Black Nation in the World has been at different times ranked high in corruption by Transparency International and other organizations. In 2000, Transparency International carried out a survey on the corruption levels of 90 countries, Nigeria was found as the most corrupt in that ranking, while in 2001, it slightly improved to occupy the second-most corrupt nation in the world out of 91 countries. There seemed to be an improvement in 2015, when Nigeria ranked 36 out of the 168 countries surveyed, meaning that it was the 32nd most corrupt country in the world in 2015.

Corruption has permeated all public sectors – the executive, the legislature, the judiciary, ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), health institutions, educational institutions (primary,

secondary and tertiary especially the universities), public corporations (notable are Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Nigeria Railway Corporation and Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN). Specifically, Mr. Yakubu Dogara, the Honorable speaker of the National House of Assembly, recently, queried what happened to the 2.74 trillion naira spent on power from 1999 to 2015 with nothing to show for the huge amount. (*Daily Post*, February 7, 2017). Sarcastically, Dogara queried “why is it that the more we spent on the power, the more darkness we attract?” All of these corporations are notoriously corrupt, and have directly and indirectly contributed to the governance crisis and state failure in the country.

Despite the various anti-corruption laws and agencies in Nigeria, the country is yet to heave a sigh of relief on the devastating effect of corruption. We can no longer treat corruption with kid’s gloves. This therefore calls for a more drastic approach. Even, the Buhari administration that seems to be making earnest effort fighting corruption has been heavily criticized. Since the inception of the administration in 2015, not a single case of corruption has been concluded. We may need to borrow from China, which is “arguably at the forefront of the anticorruption crusade and it is one of the few countries in the world that executes public officials convicted of corruption charges. Seven thousand and seventy (7,070) senior officials were prosecuted from 1992 to 2008, eighteen were executed, and another eighteen had their death sentences suspended, while twenty received life sentences” (Wedeman, 2012: 151). The death penalty law enjoyed overwhelming support by the Chinese as 73 percent of its citizens supported the death penalty in cases of corruption, according to a survey (Keck, 2014).

All said and done, it is clear that corruption is not only an index of a failed state, but a facilitator and promoter of a failed state. That is why everything must be done to fight corruption and wipe it out from our nation before it wipes out our nation! A disease requires a purposeful aggressive treatment.

## **Are we all Guilty?**

Mr. Vice Chancellor sir, I believe that the time is ripe to end the suspense and now critically take on the question—Are we all guilty? This is the thrust of this Lecture. A few analyses will be sufficient to guide our discussion. Individuals, ethnic, religious, social, economic political groups and institutions as well as professional bodies have played one role or the other in contributing to governance crisis and state failure in Nigeria. Let us now consider the level of culpability of each of the relevant institutions and actors.

## **The Political Class**

The political class has played a major role in governance crisis and state failure in many African countries, particularly Nigeria. Shortly after independence in 1960, the politicians failed to attain and maintain good governance in the country, which culminated in several political crises across the country and the ultimate demise of the First Republic that was terminated in the first military coup on January 15, 1966. The governance crisis of the First Republic can be described in the words of Usman-Janguza (2014):

By 1964, endemic corruption, ministerial profligacy, and the corrosive effects of ethnic politics had seriously eroded the First Republic's legitimacy. The "spreading virus of corruption and the enormous salaries at the bloated higher ranks of government" placed great strains on any "domestic capital that could be mobilised" for investment. In fact it got to a stage when the government swelled to a staggering eighty ministers. Bribes for government contract were rampant. The privileged flaunted their illegally acquired wealth – crystallizing the general sense of moral decay and social injustice.

Commenting on the political crisis in the country in 1964, Ibrahim (2015) referred to the *Daily Express* editorial of December 28, 1964, which had "argued that the crisis in the country was the result of inordinate ambition on the part of some politicians." This partly explains the violence and anarchy that greeted the Western Region elections in October 1965. As Larry Diamond in his book

*Class, Ethnicity and Democracy in Nigeria: The Failure of the First Republic* posits: "If various social elements had any faith left in the institutions of the First Republic, it was irrevocably shattered by the 1965 'election' in the West, which seemed to obliterate any remaining vestige of the Republic's democratic character."

It is an incontrovertible fact to attribute the collapse of the First Republic to political factors such as inappropriateness of political institutions and processes of the time, regionalization of politics, ethnic politics, electoral problems, self-aggrandizement of the political elite and poor political culture. There had been fundamental problems with the incongruous geographical, demographic and electoral imbalance of the three regional constituents of the federation created by the colonial administration (Okotoni, 2005; US Library of Congress). To this end, the colonial administration cannot be absolved from the governance crisis and state failure in Nigeria.

The political class in Nigeria's Second Republic (October 1, 1979 - December 31, 1983), headed by President Shehu Shagari of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) also contributed to governance crisis and state failure as well as the ultimate fall of the Republic in 1983. According to US Library Congress:

For political reasons, government spending continued to accelerate, and the frictions among the political parties and between the federal government and the states only reinforced financial irresponsibility. Nigeria's foreign debt increased from N3.3 billion in 1978 to N14.7 billion in 1982. By 1983 the nineteen state governments had run up a combined debt of N13.3 billion.

That period, like the First Republic, was characterized by electoral malpractices and violence, heavy corruption and financial recklessness among the political class as well as lack of accountability and responsiveness. According to World History, "the massive corruption of the Second Republic plunged the country into a

serious economic crisis, with Nigeria, which had an external reserve of 5 billion Naira in 1979, incurring an external debt of 20 billion Naira by the end of 1983”<sup>28</sup>. The collapse of the Second Republic was accelerated by the tension spawned by the 1983 general elections similar to those of 1964-65.<sup>29</sup>

When it became imminent that the political class had once again failed in ensuring good governance, probity, the military staged a coup on December 31, 1983 to depose the elected civilian government of Alhaji Shehu Shagari. Major-General Muhammadu Buhari, in his maiden Speech of January 1, 1984, said that “the change became necessary in order to put an end to the serious economic predicament and the crisis of confidence now afflicting our nation.” Furthermore, in defence of the military coup, he said that “the military came in when it was absolutely necessary and the elected people had failed the country.” The coup was greeted with jubilation because of deep governance crisis at the time. The euphoria of the new military regime soon vanished. The regime was overthrown in August 1985 by Major-General Ibrahim Babangida – the Army Chief of Staff who then proclaimed himself ‘President’.

The Nigeria Third Republic (1992-93) was an unsuccessful attempt to restore Nigeria to democracy through a political transition programme initiated by General Ibrahim Babangida, who allowed for elections of civilian governors for each state, taking office in January 1992, followed by that of the civilian President on June 12 1993, which was presumably won by Chief M.K.O. Abiola. General Babangida truncated the transition programme when he eventually annulled the election. That is how the Third Republic was aborted.

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<sup>28</sup> Please see [www.worldhistory.biz/sundries/27322-nigeria-second-republic-1979-1983.html#sthash.rpWs25Fk.dpuf](http://www.worldhistory.biz/sundries/27322-nigeria-second-republic-1979-1983.html#sthash.rpWs25Fk.dpuf)

<sup>29</sup> Please see [http://www.photius.com/countries/nigeria/government/nigeria\\_government\\_the\\_second\\_republic.html](http://www.photius.com/countries/nigeria/government/nigeria_government_the_second_republic.html)

The return of the country to civil rule on May 29, 1999 marked the beginning of the Fourth Republic, which was heralded in with fresh hopes, high expectations for good governance, accountability, transparency, responsiveness and efficient public services that had eluded the country for over one and half decades of continuous military rule (1983-1999), marked by economic hardship, dictatorship and deterioration of democratic institutions. In his Inaugural Speech, President Olusegun Obasanjo announced his determination to deal with the decay in the country's public administration; restore and enforce all the rules and regulations designed to help honesty and transparency in dealings with government as well as immediately reintroducing "Civil Service Rules", and "Financial Instructions" and enforcing compliance.

The Fourth Republic, which is so far the longest civilian administration since 1960, has prompted several economic and political reforms that would ensure good governance. Despite this, there were clear manifestations of continuing governance crisis and state failure including growing insecurity, insurgencies, large scale corruption, high rate of employment etc. In all of these, the political actors played a very important role.

Both the executive and the legislature are guilty for allowing constitutional lapses to promote executive corruption in Nigeria. An example of such constitutional lapses is the "Immunity Clause", as contained in Section 308 (1) (a) - (c); (2) and (3) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria that provides for the President, Vice President, Governor and Deputy Governor Immunity from both criminal and civil prosecution while in office. This is certainly an abuse of executive powers to perpetrate and perpetuate atrocities with impunity while in office.

Ayanruoh (2009) describes the immunity clause as "an albatross in the war against corruption" and that corruption and abuse of power by past and present members of the executive and other arms of government have hampered development and progress in the country. He pointed out further that, in the United States unlike in

Nigeria for example, “the Supreme Court has reaffirmed the principle that no person, not even the president is above the law. That all government officials, from the highest to the lowest, are creatures of the law and are bound to obey it.”

Although some have argued that the Immunity Clause is useful to prevent serving president and governors from possible distractions arising from litigations. Whatever the argument, it has led to serious abuses of power. In another breath, there are 21 former governors and deputies in the Senate and President Muhammadu Buhari cabinet who are on pensions and taking current salaries. (*Daily Trust*, April 7, 2016) Without going into details, the fact that political office holders (elected and appointed) have been apprehended, confirms that the political class has contributed in no small measure to governance crisis and state failure.

### **The Judiciary**

According to Article 6 of the 1999 Constitution, the judicial powers of the federation are vested in the courts, established by the federation; while those of states are vested in the powers established by the states. Section 6b summarises the judicial powers as stated in the constitution:

The judicial powers shall extend, to all matters between persons, or between government or authority and to any persons in Nigeria, and to all actions and proceedings relating thereto, for the determination of any question as to the civil rights and obligations of that person.

This provision is to ensure an independent judiciary that will serve as a protection for individual and corporate bodies against arbitrariness and intimidation whether from the executive or the legislative arms of government. This provision notwithstanding, there are numerous cases of arbitrary use of power by the executive and legislative branches without checks by the Judiciary. The judiciary has not only failed in its constitutional duties, but has

been accused of involvement in large scale corruption. Mr. Adoke, the former Attorney-General and Minister for Justice once observed that, the Nigerian Judiciary that is expected to be the last hope of the ordinary Nigerian has recently caved in to moral decadence and corruption, thus putting the hopes of the Nigerian masses in jeopardy.

On October 8, 2016, the agents of the Department of State Security (DSS) raided the homes of two Supreme Court judges and five other judges overnight, arrested them and recovered large sums of money. The DSS revealed that a total of 15 Judges were under investigation over allegation of corruption. In a statement, the DSS said it also recovered various sums of money from those arrested including over N93 million and \$530,000 in cash. A judge of a High Court and his wife were alleged to have collected N597m bribe between February 2014 and June 2016.

With these revelations, it is now abundantly clear that the judiciary has also contributed immensely to the governance crisis in Nigeria and the state failure. The devastating effect of corrupt judges was succinctly captured by the remarks made by a former Chief Justice of Nigeria, Justice Muhammadu Uwais when he said: “A corrupt judge is more harmful to the society than a man who runs amok with a dagger in a crowded street. The latter can be restrained physically. But a corrupt judge deliberately destroys the moral foundation of society and causes incalculable distress to individuals through abusing his office while still being referred to as honourable.” (Oparah, 2016). The Holy Bible warns against taking a bribe, “for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and corrupt the decisions of the godly.” (Deuteronomy 16:19; NIV, NLT). In a clear language, corruption perverts justice, which in effect erodes the foundation of good governance. President Buhari’s administration must be given the credit for the courage and political will to address judicial corruption in Nigeria, which successive administrations had treated as sacred cows. What has happened in the judiciary is a total betrayal of the nation. If the

fight against corruption must be won at all, the judiciary must not only stand upright, but be above board in all ramifications.

Mention must also be made of the celebrated “Police Pension Funds Scam” involving N32.8 billion purportedly diverted by some top civil servants. One of those involved in defrauding the Pension Fund of N27.2 billion and pocketing N2 billion of the amount, was handed a laughable jail term of two years with an option of N750,000 fine! This was clearly a signpost of the endemic corruption and rot in the country’s judiciary.

### **The Military**

Part of Sections 217-220 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria defines the constitutional role of the military as primarily to defend the territorial integrity of the nation. The Nigerian military has not only deviated from this primary duty, but has veered into politics through military coups resulting in governance crisis; a phenomenon that is common to many African countries. The military ruled Nigeria for about 30 years out of 57 years of independence. The regimes of most African military rulers were characterized by authoritarianism, socio-political crisis and terror. A few examples will suffice. Idi Amin Dada of Uganda (1971-1979), who seized power in the military coup of January 1971, sacking Milton Obote; Colonel Muammar Gaddafi of Libya (1969-2011), seized power in a bloodless military coup in 1969; Hissene Habre of Chad (1982-1990), seized power in 1982 from Goukouni Oueddei; Siad Barre of Somalia: 1969-1991 took power in a Coup d’état in 1969; Yahya Jammeh took power in a bloodless military coup in 1994. Jammeh got re-elected as the President of Gambia in 1996, 2001, 2006 and 2011, but was defeated in the most recent election; he has refused to abdicate office for the newly elected president. It took the overwhelming military intervention of ECOWAS ably led by Nigerian military might to send him packing and into exile.

Several factors have affected the image and the professionalism of the Nigerian military. These include involvement in politics,

politicization and most importantly corruption. All of these have had their direct or indirect bearing on governance crisis and state failure. Their involvement in politics has resulted in destroying many political institutions including the constitution, electoral bodies and political parties. On assumption of Office in May, 1999, President Olusegun Obasanjo attempted to address the problems of politicization of the military by carrying out a sweeping purge of officers “deemed political, on account of their previous political postings” (*The Guardian*, 2017).

Of all the problems confronting the military, corruption appears to be the most damaging to the nation with devastating impact on governance. The corruption in the military reached the peak during the administration of former President Goodluck Jonathan when \$15 billion of public money was stolen through fraudulent arms deals. According to Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, the money was lost to "corrupt practices in... security equipment spending" during the administration of former President Goodluck Jonathan. It was further revealed that \$2.1 billion budgeted for the purchase of arms in the fight against Boko Haram insurgency was linked to former National Security Adviser, Sambo Dasuki, which is just one transaction out of the \$15 billion arms deal fraud. It was further alleged that majority of the companies involved in the arms deal are owned by serving military officers who registered the companies using the names of their cronies. This singular act of corruption aided the Boko Haram insurgency in the North-eastern Nigeria. (Global Security.org, 2016). On the fight against Boko Haram insurgency, President Buhari said, “When we curbed corruption and removed the injustice in the military, we began to make progress.”<sup>30</sup> While still in the euphoria of the remarkable success of the military for taking over the dreaded Sambisa forest, the abode of the Boko Haram insurgents, the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) fighter jet mistakenly dropped bombs on some settlements harbouring internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Rann, Kala Balge Local Government Area of Borno State killing about 100

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<sup>30</sup> <http://punchng.com/corruption-stopped-military-defeating-boko-haram-buhari/>

people and no fewer than 200 others, including some humanitarian aid workers of the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC), were seriously injured.

The concern here is not to appraise or criticize the military, but to highlight its role in governance crisis and state failure in Nigeria.

### **The Police**

The Nigeria Police Force is charged with internal security, ensuring the maintenance and enforcement of law and order, preventing crime, community policing, among other duties. A primary responsibility of a police officer is to act as an official representative of government, who is required and trusted to work within the law, safeguarding lives and property, protecting the innocent, keeping the peace and ensuring the rights of all to liberty, impartiality, courtesy, dignity, equality and justice (Onibokun, 2013). Section 4 of the Police Act provides that the Police shall be employed for the prevention and detection of crime, the apprehension of offenders, the preservation of law and order, the protection of life and property and the due enforcement of all laws and regulations with which they are directly charged and shall perform such military duties within or outside Nigeria as may be required of them by, or under the authority of this or any other Act.

Nigeria would indeed be a great nation if the police would judiciously carry out their constitutional duties as rightly pointed out by Corinne Dufka, who said that, "good policing is the bedrock for the rule of law and public safety" and that "the long-term failure of the Nigerian authorities to address police bribery, extortion, and wholesale embezzlement threatens the basic rights of all Nigerians" (Ibukun, 2010). Human Rights Watch (2010) in its 102-page report, documented myriad forms of police corruption in Nigeria including institutionalization of extortion and duplicity. Most citizens believe that the police are the most corrupt in Nigeria; this has led many citizens to lose confidence in them despite their slogan: "Police is your friend." The inefficiency of the Police is clearly shown in the multiplicity of agencies (federal and

states) that perform police functions e.g. civil defence, vigilante, DSS, SSS as well as several private guards. Our concern here of course is not to commend or condemn the police, but to underscore how the police force has contributed to governance crisis in Nigeria and its failure as a state.



Figure 6: Police Extortions on the Road

Source: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2010/08/17/nigeria-corruption-fueling-police-abuses>

### The Bureaucracy

The role of the bureaucracy in governance and state building appears inexhaustible, covering a wide range of activities including “coordination of federal ministries, advising the political officials, formulation and implementation of government’s policies, gathering and supplying of data for policy makers, ensuring continuity of services and public relations services.” (Okotoni, 2001:87). The bureaucracy is so crucial and central to the smooth running of public administration to the extent that one may be tempted to conclude that bureaucracy is inevitable. Since the ultimate objective of any government is to serve its citizens through

effective management of the bureaucracy or the civil service, citizens measure the success of government, its overall efficiency and effectiveness of agencies and programmes through their impression of the bureaucracy. This point was underscored by Bureau of Public Service, which *inter-alia* stated that a “country is only as effective as its civil service and that the vision of a country can only be built through the reinvigoration of its civil service.” Put differently “the civil service is the first manifestation of government to the people” (Asiodu, 2015).

The public bureaucracy in Nigeria has at different times performed creditably well on national assignments. For example, it rose to the challenge of the political crises that engulfed the nation and held together and preserved the country’s public administration during the bloody Nigerian civil war (1967-1970), while the military, which was rather inexperienced in governance and administration, was busy prosecuting the war (Okotoni, 1995). Paradoxically, the military, which the bureaucracy assisted in its early involvement in governance, destroyed the once vibrant civil service and plunged it into deep bureaucratic corruption and stupor and from which it has not been able to recover till now.

The decline in the efficiency of the Nigerian public administration and public service was heightened as a result of the onslaught from the military administration of Muhammed/Obasanjo, which came to power in July 1975. The regime destroyed the public/civil service through massive retrenchments and retirements (referred to then as a purge) in which thousands of civil servants were removed for one reason or the other; an exercise that revealed the autocratic and authoritarian character of the military. Civil Service Rules and Regulations were not only flagrantly violated, but totally ignored with impunity in many instances (Okotoni, 1995). Most of the best and experienced civil servants were removed from the service, thus creating a vacuum that could not be filled for many years after. The sense of sanctity and security of tenure as well as loyalty gave way to laxity and uncertainty in the public service, making the public/civil service environment to become hostile to productivity

and efficiency. Whatever good the exercise was intended to achieve woefully failed as General Obasanjo, a chief actor in the drama, later came to realise that the “purge in the public service has not revitalised the service as envisaged.”<sup>31</sup>

The bureaucracy over the years cannot be absolved from contributing to governance crisis and state failure in Nigeria since “the success of a government rests as much as the way the public bureaucracy functions ...” The public bureaucracy in Nigeria has been involved in all manners of corruption that “undermines public services and democracy” especially, “when citizens have to pay bribes to get healthcare or fair policing, or contracts are awarded to those who pay bribes, it threatens society as a whole” (Hull, 2012). In the opinion of Saad (2015),

the public service has been wholly weakened and rendered irrelevant by politicians who entrenched the culture of bribery and corruption, a rather pathetic situation whereby a given public servant awaits some rewards or goodies from someone he has helped retrieved a file, minute on a file, prepared and processed payment voucher or whatever he has perpetrated that has, initially, been part of his duty and that’s just one of many jobs he has been employed and is being paid to undertake.

Going into specific cases of bureaucratic corruption in Nigeria can be an inaugural lecture in itself. Suffice to mention just one of the celebrated cases of corruption involving the Police Pension Funds (N32.8 billion) purportedly diverted by some top civil servants.

It is safe to say that the public bureaucracy in Nigeria has gradually declined over the years into a haven of bribery and corruption, inefficiency, incompetence and maladroitness, despite the various administrative reforms (Okotoni, 2001, 2016). The present state of

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<sup>31</sup> Extract from national broadcast by the Head of State, General Olusegun Obasanjo, cited in E.A. Ikoiwak (1980) *Bureaucracy in Development: The case of the Nigerian Federal Civil Service*, London, University Microfilms International, p.17.

Nigerian bureaucracy appears to lack the capacity to promote good governance and a stable state, and has contributed to bad and ineffective governance over the years.

### **Traditional Rulers and Institutions**

There is no doubt that traditional rulers and chieftaincy institutions play very crucial roles in Nigeria, especially in the area of socio-economic development at the grassroots as well as being custodian of culture and traditions. Traditional rulers and chieftaincy institutions in many parts of Nigeria represent an embodiment of rich culture, agent of development and catalyst of change; they complement efforts of government in their domains (Okotoni, 2013).

In recent years, the role of traditional rulers and chieftaincy institutions have been largely compromised in several respects including politicization of chieftaincy titles, involvement in partisan politics; financial misappropriation, taking government contracts, immoral dealings; erosion and loss of important traditional values; monetization of chieftaincy titles to corrupt public officials and people of questionable character in the society. All of these apparently make it difficult for them to be impartial and forthright. The direct and indirect involvement in corrupt and indecent activities by some traditional rulers has contributed to the governance crisis, especially in the area of breach of peace, caused by community opposition when important chieftaincy titles go to the highest bidders rather than consideration for merit and legitimacy.

### **The Media**

The press or media institution plays an important role in democratic governance, nation building and development. It is little surprise therefore that the media are referred to, as “The Fourth Realm of the Estate” - i.e. the fourth pillar in support of the essential tripod of government, the Executive, the Legislative and the Judiciary (Bamidele, 2015). In recognition of this, Chapter II,

Section 22 of the 1999 Constitution, (as amended) clearly states the role of the press:

The press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people.

By this provision, the press is supremely empowered to play the role of a watchdog over the activities of government especially as pertaining to the fundamental objectives in chapter II, including equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels; eradicating illiteracy; provision of free compulsory and universal primary education; free university education; and free adult literacy programme, when practicable. In order to ensure that government is responsive and accountable to the people the press is therefore, expected to do this through informing, educating, mobilizing the citizens as well as monitoring and criticizing government activities objectively. A major flaw that has been identified is the lack of objectivity in the reporting of electoral matters by the Nigerian media. For instance, there have been allegations of recklessness and partisanship on the part of the press during elections and that the principle of objectivity was always abandoned by the press in championing the cause of their masters' political struggles (Bamidele, 2015).

Although, the media have played this role well in sundry times, they have failed in some respects. Ogunleye (2015), expressing his disappointment queried, "How well have the media educated the citizenry on the obligations of the different organs of government?" Citing the example of when "members of the National Assembly, who have worked for only 15 days but gone on leave for 60 days..." He went further to ask: "But did the media educate the people on the condition precedent to performing their legislative duties? Furthermore, Ogunleye wondered what prevents the media from invoking the provisions of the Freedom of

Information Act to compel the Code of Conduct Bureau to disclose the contents of the asset declaration of public officers.

According to Agba (2007), as cited in Bamidele (2015), a European Union Election observation mission in respect of the 2003 general elections in Nigeria reported that media performance during the election was flawed as it failed to provide unbiased, fair and informative coverage of political parties and candidates contesting the elections. Federal and State-owned (and even private owned) media were found to be biased in favour of parties and candidates in power. Thus, their contribution to effective governance and to the democratic process was flawed and jaundiced.

### **The Academia**

Academia is commonly believed to be “the environment or community concerned with the pursuit of research, education, and scholarship.”<sup>32</sup> This is my own constituency, where intellectuals, scholars and serious-minded people are expected to provide solution to the nation’s socio-economic and political problems through research and policy advocacy that would promote good governance as well as setting the pace for national development. This role has not only been poorly played, academia has become a national problem. For instance, the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) recently “described the high volume of petitions alleging corruption in the academic community as worrisome” (Samson, 2015). Lamenting the situation, Akinrinade (2015) maintained that the high incidence of corruption in the university system threatens Nigeria's future, arguing that “corruption in any form is unacceptable, but corruption in our tertiary institutions strikes at the very heart of the future of this country,”

There are several allegations of high level corruption in the academia, especially in the universities. For instance, in November 2016, the Vice Chancellor of the Federal University of Agriculture,

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<sup>32</sup> *Merriam Webster Dictionary*

Abeokuta (FUNAAB), the Pro-Chancellor and the former Bursar of the institution were arraigned before an Ogun State High Court sitting in Abeokuta to defend themselves over N800 million fraud allegations against them. This was in response to a petition to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) against the three suspects, accusing them of fraudulent activities by some staff members of the university in August 2016 (Gyamfi, 2016; Kayode-Adedeji, 2016). They were arraigned before a High Court by the EFCC on 18-count charges. The charges included intention to defraud, conspiracy to defraud, stealing and conversion of 1.5 million property of FUNAAB and unlawful deposit of N442.8 million in fixed deposit account without due process.

The story in the Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA), where EFCC in October 2016 quizzed the Vice Chancellor in connection with allegations of abuse of office and misappropriation of funds levelled against him. The anti-graft agency equally stated that it was also interrogating the Bursar of the institution, for his alleged involvement in committing the offences. The EFCC stated that the two principal officers of the university were accused of “corruption, fraud, criminal breach of trust, unlawful enrichment and conversion of millions of Naira belonging to the university.” (Vee, 2016). It was also reported that the EFCC, on August 6, 2015 arrested the Vice Chancellor and the Bursar of Adamawa University for selling a 7-day old N13 million government-owned Toyota Land Cruiser as scrap to ex-FRSC boss for N150,000 (Isine, 2015). The Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, had its own fair share where the appointment of a Vice Chancellor in 2016 plunged the whole campus into an unprecedented crisis.

Where do we go from here if those entrusted with moulding and building of the lives and character of the nation’s youth are laying bad examples? Where is the future hope of the country? The ivory towers in Nigeria have not only failed to promote good governance, but have in several ways contributed to its failure through bad leadership, corruption and failure to live up to

expectations when appointed to positions of authority in the higher institutions and in government.

One of the greatest tragedies that have befallen the country's academia has to do with dwindling interest in research. Some academics have gone into politics, business and other lucrative sectors, while some have migrated from the four walls of the ivory towers in search of greener pastures. The brain drain has been due, in part, to the poor economic situation in the country. Many of those that remain in the system complain of being frustrated or incapacitated by inadequacies that are peculiar to each institution.

### **Leadership**

Nigeria is a country blessed with great and abundant human, natural and mineral resources with every potential to be a great country. Despite these abundant resources, the country suffers from the problem of good and effective leadership that can harness and manage the resources judiciously in order to facilitate socio-economic development. Thus, the country remains one of the third world countries with yawning deficit of basic social and infrastructural amenities. Nigerian leadership failure has manifested in poor governance, insecurity, electoral violence, policy somersault, high level of corruption, unemployment and underemployment and widespread poverty. In his book *The Trouble with Nigeria*, Chinua Achebe (1983) unequivocally and poignantly declared that:

The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, [and] to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership.

Almost two and half decades later, Agbobu (2009) corroborated Achebe's position by declaring that "All those who have ruled

Nigeria are dealers not leaders.” Although there may have been several factors that in different ways and at different times contributed to governance crisis in Nigeria, leadership is a very potent one that stands out. Leadership at every level of administration, from local to the national, has failed to translate the vast resources of the country into an enviable level of development. Two former Nigerian leaders have been reported to have openly and voluntarily admitted to have failed their generations. They are Dr. Goodluck Jonathan and Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. (*Leadership* January 9, 2015; *Nigerian Tribune*, February 28, 2017). One may wonder why the leaders should be blamed for the woes of the country. The remark of John Maxwell, a leadership expert, may provide an answer to the question. He contends that “Everything rises and falls on leadership.” Admittedly, leadership is crucial in any organization, but it does not tell the whole story.

### **Followership**

Literature abounds on leadership with little or no attention paid to followership, which is as serious as leadership when addressing organisational performance. Followership is the other side of the coin of leadership. Followership cannot be divorced from leadership as every society deserves the kind of leader it gets. There can be no leadership if there is no followership. This fact raises a serious challenge to the thesis or submission of Chinua Achebe that the problem of Nigeria is squarely the failure of leadership. Bad followership would probably engender bad leadership more than anything else.

Followership can influence leadership a great deal – either positively or negatively. Followers in Nigeria are rather gullible, docile, obsequious, sycophantic, flattering and unwilling to confront the leaders for their evil and atrocious deeds because of personal gains; they lack courage to demand accountability from the leaders. They make unreasonable financial demands and other difficult obligations that would require the leaders to compromise their integrity and standard; such that would make them to loot the

public treasuries in order to meet such obligations. Thus, my submission is that both leaders and followers are guilty in the case of Nigerian state failure and governance crisis; although the weight of responsibility and guilt will tilt rather precariously toward the leadership. Albeit, this is debatable, some believe that “the guilt weighs more on the followership, who have allowed themselves to be manipulated, deceived, abused, used and dumped by the leaders who should be there to protect their interest” (Elueze & Agunnia, 2014 ). It is my firm belief that to be out of the doldrums, we need responsive leadership as well as responsible and vigilant followership.

### **Religious Organisations/Bodies**

Many religious bodies and organisations cannot be exonerated from the crisis of the country. On many occasions, religious extremists have plunged this country into untold crises and hardships. The Boko Haram sect and Shites are current examples. In other respects, religious bodies and leaders have given awards, titles, honours and their blessings to corrupt and bad people in the society in exchange for huge donations. Such actions are tantamount to endorsements of their nefarious activities. There are hardly strong condemnations of their vices and anti-social behaviours, which are inimical to the wellbeing of the society.

There are several other State institutions such as the Nigerian Custom Service (NCS), the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), the Nigerian Prison Services (NPS), the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) and the Nigeria Port Authority (NPA) that are in no way less culpable in their contributing roles to crisis of governance in the country, but for constraint of space they are not discussed in this lecture.

### **The Society at Large**

Whatever in the world has happened to societal core moral, cultural and social values in Nigeria! How can we exonerate the society from the problem and burden of bad governance in Nigeria? A society that is corrupt, a society that celebrates

mediocrity, robbers and looters of public treasuries; a society that believes its own lies, and a society that has lost its core values of integrity, sound character, good name, morality, uprightness, honesty, respect for elders, family values, good neighbourliness, hard work, respect for law and human dignity, justice and fair play, etc., has in no little way jeopardized the success of democratic governance and national sustainable development. These values were the foundation on which many African societies were built and were the sinews that guaranteed their peace, harmony, sanity, security and development.

The absence of these core values has opened doors to many vices in the society such as violence, robbery, kidnapping, assassination, '4-1-9', get-rich-quickly syndrome, corruption, celebration of criminals with chieftaincy titles, special honours and awards by secular, academic and religious organisations; they are usually made to take the front seats in places of worship and occupy the 'high tables' at state and social functions. In the good old days in Nigeria, individuals who breached the societal codes of conduct were seriously sanctioned, denied the right to take wives in their communities; and in serious cases, banished from the community. The society therefore was sanitized and safe for good governance.

### **Concluding Remarks, Research and Community Service**

Mr. Vice Chancellor Sir, we have traversed quite a territory looking at the multiplicity of symptoms and veritable indicators of governance crisis and state failure. Most of these have remained so far as intractable problems. The presence of these symptoms and characteristics - which in broad terms, are social, economic, political, security, leadership, followership and development problems, is undeniable and require urgent steps to salvage the country from further degeneration and degradation with a view to averting total collapse. These will be addressed under the policy recommendations.

In the last two and half decades, my research focus covered human resources management and general administration with emphasis on

the Nigerian public bureaucracy and governance. Since the ultimate objective of any government is to serve its citizens, this subject becomes very crucial as this can only be achieved through effective management of the public personnel, otherwise referred to as the bureaucracy or the civil service. Citizens measure the success of government, its overall efficiency and effectiveness of agencies and programmes through their impression of the bureaucracy. To strengthen the bureaucracy, periodic administrative reforms are a *sine-qua-non*. I have looked into this area to draw lessons from Britain and the United States of America.

My interest in field administration is not a departure from this focus. The effectiveness of most public services is easily measured through the way the field offices are managed. The personnel in the field offices are those that have direct contact with the citizens who assess the speed and courtesy with which their problems and complaints are handled when they come into contact with them. I have carried out empirical studies on Nigerian field administration system, stressing the important role played by field administration as one of the main channels used by government to carry its policies to the citizens in their respective domains. To strengthen this aspect of my research, I did a comparative analysis of the practice of field administration system in Nigeria, France and the United States of America with a view to drawing useful lessons from the two countries, which have track records of effective field administration that could assist Nigeria to improve its field administration system.

Since public administration is about service delivery and good governance, I have shown interest in decentralization and service delivery, local administration as well as indigenous governance. I have sought to understand the ways African indigenous communities are governed and how an amalgam of formal state institutions and indigenous institutions can be harmonised to produce better ways of governance in the face of unabated governance crises in Nigeria and poor performance in the provision of public goods and services.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is apposite, at this point to mention that in the course of my research efforts and those of my colleagues, we observed that the pseudo federalism in Nigeria, has led to over-centralisation. This has not only contributed to governance crisis, but also to administrative failure in all ramifications. This has been well captured by Wunsch and Olowu (1992) in their book, *The Failure of the Centralised State*.

There is an urgent need for a re-appraisal of this especially in organizing the public service and decentralized structures -- both field administration and local governments -- building from the roots and effectively connecting to the centre, using basic institutions of governance of cities, towns and villages that are self-governing, empowered to organize their communities and local economies within the framework of a polycentric governance in which they can relate to other structures of governance, be it business, administrative or faith based organisations as they occurred in the First Republic. The First Republic operated a federal republican constitution that ensured a large measure of autonomy (e.g. reasonable level of decentralization) to the regions including education and health services. Chief Obafemi Awolowo introduced the first health care scheme in 1953 and pioneered free primary education (UPE) in 1955 in the Western Region. The latter graduated into the establishment of the first regional university in the country, the then University of Ife in 1962 (now, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, our own OAU - Oba Awon University)! There was also a decentralized security system especially the local police maintained by regional governments until 1966 when the military government disbanded the local police forces. The decentralized economy also allowed each region to develop its economic activities especially the regional governments' conglomerates such as the Northern Nigeria Development Corporation (NNDC), the Western Nigeria Development Corporation (later, Oduduwa Group of Companies) and the Eastern Nigerian Development Corporation. The Western Region also pioneered the Television broadcasting in Nigeria in

October 1959, known as the Western Nigerian Television (WNTV) in Ibadan, the first station in Africa.

Faith Based educational and health institutions also occupied significant place in governance especially in the areas of service delivery, which facilitated national development. Space will not permit me to elaborate on this. Unfortunately, the taking over of these structures through a process of centralization by the Federal Government and military governments totally destroyed these once great and vibrant institutions.

My submission therefore is an advocacy for interactions among these relatively autonomous institutions with one another especially in co-production, cooperation, synergy or competition to generate energy for change and increasing levels of social production that would facilitate effective and efficient delivery of public goods and services in Nigeria, which are hallmarks of good governance and a strong state.

Besides my teachings and research works, I have been privileged to mentor young academics. Altogether, I have successfully supervised twenty-three (23) M.Sc. students, thirteen (13) doctoral candidates and numerous DPA, MPA and MBA candidates; some of whom are in academics, senior administrators and managers in the public sector and captains of industry in the private sector. By the grace of God, some of my former students are professors and associate professors and I am still counting as I am still active in mentoring and supervising.

On the administrative front, I have served as the Acting Head of Department for four consecutive academic sessions from August 1, 2003 to July 31, 2007; as well as the Vice Dean Faculty of Administration during the 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 Academic Sessions. I have also served as Member, Faculty Research Committee; Member of Editorial Board, *Quarterly Journal of Administration* as well as the Editor-in-Chief, *Quarterly Journal of Administration*. My administrative services in the university

included serving in one of the most tedious committees in this university - the Postgraduate College Board for almost twelve years; pioneering member of Conflict and Peace Studies Group; Faculty Representative in the University Senate (2002 to 2008) and numerous statutory and other *ad hoc* committees. I am presently, serving as the Dean, Faculty of Administration and Editor-in-Chief, *Ife Journal of Humanities and Social Studies* (IJOHUSS).

Community services included the followings:

- Member of a Consortium to Lagos State Government Comprehensive Manpower Audit, 1990-1992.
- (Sabbatical) Professor of Public Administration, Adeleke University, Ede, October 2014 to September 2015.
- Dean, Faculty of Business and Social Sciences, Adeleke University, Ede, October 2014-September 2015 (Sabbatical Year)
- Co-authored a Report on Decentralization Programmes in Africa: The Nigeria Component submitted to the World Bank in 1998.
- One of the Principal Investigators, Research on Primary Health Care (PHC) in Nigeria sponsored by the World Health Organization (WHO), Geneva, 2000
- External Assessor to Universities and Polytechnics in Nigeria and Ghana.
- Guest Lecturer to State Civil Services; the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC); Induction Ceremony of the College of Health Sciences, Ladoke Akintola University Teaching Hospital, Osogbo.
- Reviewer for several international journals.
- One of the Principal Investigators, Research Group on Local Institutions in Nigeria, Sponsored by Ford Foundation West Africa Office.
- One of the Principal Investigators, Research on Property Taxation and Nigeria Local Government, Sponsored by IDRC, Canada.
- Pastor, The Redeemed Christian Church of God.

## **The Way Forward/Policy Recommendations**

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, we must look beyond the numerous woes that have befallen our great nation as a result of governance crisis resulting in state failure from which no sector of the society can be totally exonerated, and engage our minds with issues that will move Nigeria forward. Therefore, following our detailed assessment of the governance crisis and what we see as state failure in Nigeria, we must now consider the following strategies for coming to grips with these perceived problems and challenges in order to avert a total collapse of our national inheritance. The situation is not hopeless or irredeemable. Change is still possible.

## **Restructuring of the Federation**

As earlier observed, one of the fundamental problems of the country is the geographically lopsided structure of the amalgamated entity, the federal republic of Nigeria. The colonial administration paid scant attention to its ethnic diversity and therefore the need for honest and realistic attention to the principle of ethnic affinity in its administrative components. To address this problem, there is a need to revisit the restructuring of the federation. A restructured entity is one legacy this generation can and ought to bequeath to the generations to come. This is not a subterfuge for disintegration or secession. Far from it! It is an advisory to create a more perfect administratively more meaningful union that conforms to basic tenets of federalism. It is time for all the stakeholders to agree to sit down and map out the structure of the country as well as the modalities for staying together as a country. The restructuring would involve some merger and demerger that have created problems over the years. We all love our country-Nigeria.

Let us use just one example to underscore this point. As parts of efforts to address the imbalance, merger and demerge for instance, the Yoruba in Kwara and Kogi States should be moved to join their kinsmen in the southwestern Nigeria, with whom they share the same social and cultural affinities. This becomes necessary against the background that Kwara State created on 27 May 1967 by the

Military Government of General Yakubu Gowon was made up of the former Ilorin and Kabba Provinces, and was initially named the West Central State, but later changed to "Kwara", a local name for the River Niger. The Yoruba in these states, so addressed as northerners, not only that they have nothing in common whatsoever, they have been marginalized, frustrated and alienated socially, culturally and politically.

- **Reforming the Judiciary**

The counsel of President Buhari to the Judiciary is not only apposite, but timely: "the Judiciary must go the extra mile to sanitize itself and improve its capacity to act independently, courageously and timeously". Beyond self-reforms advocated by the President; government should ensure that the selection and appointment of judges is based strictly on merit, professional expertise, transparency, personal integrity and probity of prospective candidates to be appointed as judges in the country, while the place of affirmative action such as federal character, gender, religion and other considerations are played down, but not necessarily abandoned or disregarded. For the judiciary to act more independently as the President encouraged, the arm must be well funded. The current situation where judges' salaries and allowances are not paid for months will encourage them to be more prone to corruption. Until the judiciary is truly reformed and transformed, it will be difficult for the country to get out of the woods!

- **Reformation of the Political Class**

In several ways the political class has contributed to the governance crisis and state failure in the country. To get out of the crisis, the political class needs total reformation, self-cleansing and transformation. Efforts must be made to discourage politics as a business venture. Prospective aspirants to political office(s) (elected and appointed) must be people with good jobs, legitimate and sufficient source(s) of living. The Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC), which is constitutionally empowered to undertake a review of the

remuneration packages of political and public office holders must take urgent steps to review downward their packages to make them unattractive, so that only serious minded and patriotic citizens willing to serve will vie for the offices. Nigerian political office holders are about the highest paid in the world. How do we explain it in a country where the government approved minimum wage is N18,000 per month and legislators earn almost N10 million per month?

- **Combating Corruption Headlong**

President Buhari has repeatedly said that “if we do not kill corruption, it will kill us”. Corruption has done more damage and dealt debilitating blow to the country more than anything else. If corruption is that serious, then kid glove approach must stop; it must be tackled headlong. There must be stiffer measures. How ridiculous is it for an Abuja court to have handed a two year jail term (to run concurrently), with a N250,000 fine option, to one of six federal officials tried for stealing N32.8 billion of police pension fund?

Another aspect that requires urgent attention in combatting corruption is the slow pace of adjudication. Vice President Yemi Osinbajo who was represented by Prof. Itse Sagay lamented the low conviction rate in high profile corruption cases in Nigeria since the inception of EFCC in 2002. Of the eight cases, one was overturned by the Supreme Court on technical grounds, which implies that only seven major convictions have been secured after trial in 13 years. This observation came at a workshop on sections 306 & 396 of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) 2015 and Delay of Corruption Cases. Itse Sagay (SAN) added: “We must do more.” We must add: Expeditiously too!

How can we claim to be fighting corruption when we retain immunity clause in the Constitution? Section 38 of the 1999 Constitution that guarantees immunity from prosecution for the President, Vice President, Governors and their deputies, even on account of criminal charges. This must be expunged, amended

accordingly, if indeed we are serious about the fight against corruption.

In China, the use of the death penalty in corruption cases, setting the threshold at 3 million yuan, or \$463,000 for anyone found guilty of embezzlement or taking bribes of this amount or more - in what China's top court called "extremely serious cases" that have an "extremely vile impact" will face the death penalty (Hewitt, 2016). In 2015, it was reported that China punished almost 300,000 officials for graft as President Xi Jinping continued to wage a high-profile war against corruption. Nigeria can borrow a cue from China if we really want to fight corruption.

Beyond punishments and sanctions, an expert has advocated that "the single most important solution to the problem of corruption by public service workers is paying a proper living wage" (Hull, 2012). This should be critically looked into in a country where only N18,000 is the national minimum wage, which of course is not yet implemented by many state governments.

- **Reforming the Bureaucracy**

One of the greatest criticisms against bureaucracy is its inability to correct itself. I had argued earlier that the several reforms carried out in Nigeria had yielded little or no dividends. I am reiterating my earlier position that future reforms in the country should be more pragmatic, devoid of garrulity and loquacity (Okotoni, 2004). The Nigerian public bureaucracy is long overdue for a complete overhauling right from recruitment and selection to retirement.

- **Restoring Sanity and the core values of the Traditional Rulers/Institutions**

Once the chieftaincy institutions returned to their original traditional roles, they have great potentials to influence development greatly both at the grassroots, state and even at the national levels. By restoring the cultural, moral and society values; chieftaincy institutions have a lot to offer the society at large in terms of development, good governance and stable government.

Government should interfere minimally in traditional rulers' affairs and thereby de-politicize chieftaincy institutions.

- **Repositioning the Academia**

The question is who does the repositioning? Although, it will require all stakeholders, but the most assured way is self-reforming and repositioning. Government can play its own role by adequately funding the education sector as a whole, while those entrusted to manage the funds and train our youths, especially in the ivory towers, should be men and women of character and of unimpeachable integrity, managers of men and resources, endowed with a robust vision of the university as a centre charged with the onerous task of nation building through the training and development of relevant manpower resources for the nation. No task should be considered more sacred than the molding of the lives of our youths, the future leaders of Nigeria.

### **Genuine Leadership**

Genuine leadership cannot emerge in Nigeria without the willingness and readiness to pay the price especially change. A genuine leader is the one that is willing and ready to move away from the status quo. Of course, this will be vehemently and violently resisted. Such prospective leaders may be very few in our society that is full of praise-singers, men pleasers and eye-service men and women. The process of selecting leaders at the various levels of society needs to be reviewed. The idea of imposing leaders rather than allowing the people choose their own leaders must be jettisoned. All stakeholders must be involved in the process of selecting or choosing leaders at the local and national levels. It is only then genuine leaders can emerge who are not seeking self-aggrandizement.

- **New Orientation for Followership**

It is about time that the followership in Nigeria received new orientation; to stop being gullible and docile. Edmund Burke said, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." There are lots of "good men" – citizens/followers

in the country who have refused to do something. A time came when French citizens (followers) felt that “enough is enough”; “razed and redesigned their country’s political landscape, uprooting centuries-old institutions such as absolute monarchy and the feudal system.”<sup>33</sup> With the new orientation, Nigerian citizens will decide their own destinies and become responsible followers and cease to be gullible and manipulated followers.

### **Professionalization of the Military**

Military intervention and involvement in politics is not only a serious aberration, but a clear bastardisation of the military profession. On return to democratic administration, President Olusegun Obasanjo (1999–2007) embarked on series of reforms, including the professionalization of the Nigerian military, with key components such as prevention of coups, demilitarization of society as well as subordination of the military to civil authority. Apart from training, President Obasanjo took steps to remove officers who had held political appointments either as state governors or cabinet ministers in previous regimes and who may still be ambitious enough to try to seize power. Though commendable, other aspects of military professionalism such as discipline, loyalty, skills, commitment and institutionalization of ethics and accountability are still very much lacking; this explains the large scale corruption in the military, particularly, under President Goodluck Jonathan. What the current administration under President Buhari needs to professionalise the Nigerian Military requires much more.

### **Reforming the Police**

The image of the Nigeria Police has been dented almost beyond repairs due to its numerous nefarious and heinous activities, including extortions, embezzlements, brutalization and extra-judicial killings. The Human Rights Watch, in 2010, described the Police as the most corrupt institution in Nigeria. Information revealed that the history of police reforms could be traceable to

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<sup>33</sup> See, <http://www.history.com/topics/french-revolution>

1967, when a commission was set up by the military government. The commission concluded that the “despicable image of the police” was in part attributable to “bribery and corruption”. (*Vanguard*, March 7, 2012). Ever since, there have been several other reform panels and nothing concrete has come out of them. The recommendation is that the current administration should go into the archives and look into the various white papers and make serious efforts to implement them.

- **Restoration and Promotion of the core values of the Society**

Traditional African societies, in general, and Nigeria societies, in particular, cherished certain socio-cultural values, which constituted the social capital of these societies. Gradually, these core cultural values are being eroded, leaving many societies in the country morally bankrupt. Efforts must be made to emphasize these values as the active leaven of the society. This is where the National Orientation Agency (NOA) comes in.

- **Redefinition of the Role of Religious Organisations**

Finally, religious bodies and organisations have major roles to play in restoring sanity to the society. All religious organisations as much as possible should eschew violence; preach and embrace peace, tolerance, harmony and unity, not only among other faiths, but to the society. They must stop celebrating ungodly people in the society by conferring titles on them. More importantly, they should seek divine intervention. In the Holy Bible, God says: “If My people who are called by my name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wickedness ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:14. Whatever solution we proffer in this lecture, this is about the most potent.

### **Appreciation and Acknowledgement**

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Sir, permit me to conclude this Lecture by acknowledging and thanking all those who have in one way or the other contributed to what I am today and especially to my academic career. First, I must begin by thanking the Almighty God

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### **The Final Word**

Finally, ladies and gentlemen, perhaps, you are still not sure of the answer to the Question – "Are we all Guilty of the Nigeria's governance crisis and state failure?" The following story of a priest and his congregation may be useful. All his congregation members have complained that the church was a dead church. All the blame

was heaped on the priest. In frustration, he finally put up a notice of the funeral ceremony of the dead church with the casket inside the church. On the D-Day, everybody was eager to see the dead church in the casket before it was buried! The congregation all filed up to pay their last respect to the dead church. Apparently, the priest had placed a mirror inside the casket, and as everyone peeped into the casket to view the dead church, s/he saw himself/herself in the casket. At the end, they all resolved that the “dead church” must not be buried; but rather to jointly revive it. This evening, I do not have a better way of concluding this lecture than asking you to look in the mirror of this lecture, and let us jointly, like that congregation resolve to revive our ailing great country - Nigeria. The Eagle shall fly again! Nigeria shall be great again!

Thank you all very much for coming and for listening.

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