

Accountability for Sustainable Development and the Challenges of Leadership in Nigeria, 1999-2015

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Abstract

Development of any society is meant to enhance the living standard of citizens. However, where there are challenges of accountability, development is more likely to be a mirage. Past studies in Nigeria on the challenges of leadership and sustainable development identified corruption and lack of required skills on the part of public officials to perform in terms of proper policy formulation and implementation among others. The main goal of this article is to explore the relationship between accountability for the sustainable development and the challenges of leadership in Nigeria. With the analysis of data obtained from secondary sources, this present study identified lack of accountability for sustainable development to include the challenges leadership, unethical behavior, poor maintenance culture, poor management of resources, corruption on the part of public officials, and inadequate funds to execute projects in Nigeria. This article therefore recommends, among others, the need for government to adopt a more practical approach to the promotion of accountability, a determined fight against corruption and unethical behavior, proper management of resources, and devotion of more funds to the execution of capital projects that could positively affect the lives of the people for improved standard of living.

Keywords

accountability, challenges, development, leadership, sustainability, Nigeria

Introduction

Nature provides man with resources, such as land, water, and air, which need to be harnessed, developed, and sustained for meaningful living in the society (Awosusi & Jegede, 2013). In a bid to achieve sustainable development in any society, projects are put in place as a strategy to realize the developmental goals of government. In a situation where these projects are not properly executed, either by reason of corruption on the part of public employees, poor maintenance culture of infrastructure, weak governmental institutions, inadequate funds to execute projects, poor management of public resources, high cost of governance, or a combination of these factors listed above among others, no doubt, a society, affected by these factors, is likely to experience the challenges of development (Akintoye & Opeyemi, 2014; Edoho, 2007; Kuada, 2010).

In this regard, Okebukola (2014) argues that no matter how endowed a country is, the harnessing of the natural resources for meaningful development is dependent upon the volume of the available brain power of the leaders and citizens. Therefore, brain power on the part of leadership and the citizens is identified as the propeller of societal

development. Research has shown that societies which subscribe to proper ethical behavior and transformational leadership that focus on innovative ideas are more likely to experience sustainable development in the area of adequate provision of infrastructure for the improvement in the citizens' standard of living (Agweda, 2007; Imhonopi & Urim, 2014; Nnabuife, 2010; Okebukola, 2014; United Nations Development Programme, 2001). The implication of the foregoing is that societies which exhibit the norms of unethical behavior and leadership with corrupt tendencies that lack innovative ideas are more likely to encounter difficulties. Such difficulties would prevent the accomplishment of the developmental goals and objectives of government, thereby leading to lack of sustainable development, and hence experience the pains and deprivation associated with underdeveloped societies.

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One of the root causes identified as responsible in the past for poor accountability in government, which has also prevented development in Nigeria was the emergence of the military in the country's political landscape on the January 15, 1966 (Asia, 2000). According to Kwanashie (2007), for most of the years between 1966/1979 and 1983/1999, the autocratic nature of government under military rule led to lack of accountability and transparency among public officials. This scenario undermined development and increased the level of poverty in the society. Research has shown that at the time the military handed over governance to civilians on May 29, 1999,

the proportion of the poor in Nigeria had doubled over the previous two decades, during which time the country received over USD300 billion in oil and gas revenue; if internal policies were adequate and the resources effectively utilised, the situation would have been far better than what obtained at the end of the military era in 1999. (Kwanashie, 2007, p. 16)

This is where transformational leadership, instead of autocratic leadership style becomes relevant to development in a society. Armstrong (2012) argues that “transformational leaders are able, by their force of performance, to make significant changes in the behaviour of their followers in order to achieve the leader's vision” (p. 574).

The foregoing brings to mind the following questions: How possible for transformational leadership that focuses on innovative ideas in the management of public resources lead to sustainable development? What are the major factors responsible for the unaccountable behavior of public officials since the emergence of democratic governance? How has unethical behavior among government officials inhibited sustainable development? What are the measures to be put in place to overcome the challenges of leadership, lack of accountability among public officials, and the problem of sustainable development in Nigeria?

This article argues that transformational leadership that focuses on innovative ideas and free from corrupt tendencies is more likely to engender accountability in governance and also brings about sustainable development in terms of adequate provision of infrastructure. Furthermore, this article is organized into five parts. The first part is the introduction; literature review and theoretical framework are addressed in the second part; the third part examined the research method adopted; challenges of accountability for development in Nigeria are addressed in part four; while part five is the conclusion.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The Concept of Leadership

Studies have pointed out the unique role of leadership in the promotion of enhanced performance in organizations and sustainable development of nations. In this regard, Stogdill

(1950) sees leadership “as the process (act) of influencing the activities of an organized group in its effort toward goal setting and goal achievement” (cited in Bryman, 1999, p. 26). In the same vein, Bryman (1992) argues that a leader either in an organization or nation has a unique role of steering members of that organization or nation toward a specified goal—achievement of enhanced performance in terms of increased profitability or development for an improved standard of living.

The role of leadership in an organization or nation for increased profitability and sustainable development could be anchored on the different theories of leadership. These theories gave an explanation to the behavior, orientation, and attitude of leaders in their quest to achieve specified goals. The theories include distributing, trait, situational, authentic, visionary, transactional, charismatic, and transformational leadership (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009; Bass, 1985; Bryman, 1992; Burns, 1978; Gbervbie, Shodipo, & Oviasogie, 2013). These theories on leadership have something in common—they explain how leaders in different sectors of society are able to realize outstanding goals (in terms of development in an organization or the nation at large) in the area of followership commitment, trust, loyalty, and dedication for performance (Hartog & Koopman, 2001).

Studies on transformational leadership for organizational performance dated back to the work of Bryman (1992). He argues that there is a positive relationship between transformational leaders' behavior, staff satisfaction, and organizational performance (cited in Padsakoff, Mackenzie, & Bommer, 1996, p. 260). To understand the concept of transformational leadership would require review of the work of Burns (1978) titled *Leadership*. Burns (1978) points out that transforming leadership is a situation that necessitates leaders and followers at various levels in an organization to help each other to advance to higher level of morale and motivation—toward achieving stated for organizational or societal development. Bass (1985) sees the concept of transforming leadership from the angle of transformational leadership to give an understanding of how to measure the concept. According to Bass (1985), transformational leadership has to do with the ability of a leader to influence followers to the point of trust and appreciation from subordinates, which is based on a leader's personal qualities that serve to motivate followers to work willingly to achieve organizational goals. Burns (1978) argues that followers are driven by a moral need—the need to champion a cause or the need to take a higher moral stance on an issue of importance.

Over the years, scholars have devoted time to analyzing and comparing different leadership theories. These include transactional, transformational, charismatic, authentic, servant, and responsible leadership (Abdollah, Masoud, & Mohammad, 2014). Bolden, Gosling, Marturano, and Dennison (2003) point out that the goal of transformational leadership is to

transform people and organisations in a literal sense—to change them in mind and heart; enlarge vision, insight, and understanding; clarify purposes; make behaviour congruent with beliefs, principles, or values; and bring about changes that are permanent, self-perpetuating, and momentum building. (Bolden et al., 2003, p. 16)

Transformational leadership is seen as a process in which the leaders take practical steps to increase their subordinates' views of what is needed to be done to raise their level of motivation to the point of moving them to perform beyond their own self-interests to achieve the overall goal of the organization (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Leaders in this situation help their subordinates to realize a sense of purpose for performance that goes beyond rewards for a job done. Under this condition, the transformational leaders are proactive in different ways in a bid to achieve the goal of the organization not only in terms of performance but that of continuous survival, growth, and development (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Imoke, 2014).

Development is vital and entails the contribution of everyone within an organization to achieve. In this regard, leaders are seen and act as prime movers and motivators of their subordinates to work willingly to optimize organizational development, thereby achieving high-performing individuals as workforce for the survival, growth, and overall organizational performance (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Ejere & Abasilim, 2013; Imoke, 2014).

The Concept of Accountability

Accountability is a concept that is so crucial to the successful implementation of policies and programmes of government by its officials. And it is seen a condition in which individuals who exercise governmental powers are constrained to act in accordance with laid down rules and regulations (Chandler & Plano, 1988). It is these constraints engendered by required norms by public employees that help them to carry out their prescribed duties properly to achieve set goals of government to protect the interest of citizens in the society. Odugbemi (2008) argues that accountability help citizens, civil society, and the private sector to scrutinize public institutions and officials to hold them accountable. Therefore, a society where leaders are not accountable is likely to experience mismanagement of public resources, exhibit corrupt tendencies, and hence be faced with developmental challenges.

Sustainable Development

Development has been seen by scholars in different ways. According to Sen (1999), development is visualized from the ends and means of freedom. He conceives freedom as a primary end and principal means of development. Also, Egonmwan (2001) sees development in terms of the condition of life, as a goal, and as the capacity to grow, change,

and finally develop. However, sustainable development refers to the continuous improvement in the living standard of citizens and the structural transformation/changes in the productive and distributive input and output systems of the economy (Ojobo, 2005; Ollawa, 1977). Furthermore, Adebayo (2010) argues that sustainable development is the efforts of government (federal, state, or local) to improve the environment and the living condition of the people in such a way as not to negatively affect generations to come.

Similarly, Mohammed (2013) sees sustainable development as “the ability to preserve the existing resources of the state for collective use of citizens while conscious efforts are made to conserve the resources for the future generations” (p. 121). Sustainable development is, therefore, likely to manifest in a country where the leadership is innovative in approach and action. According to Okebukola (2014), innovation is very important to the extent that it galvanizes socio-economic growth and development of societies. He argues that innovation in an irrigation system, for instance, has revolutionized the agricultural sector for enhanced food production in the developed world.

The foregoing points to the fact that sustainable development is about continuous harnessing of resources to enhance the quality of life of citizens. This is in addition to putting in place adequate provision to cater for future generations. This implies that sustainable development is able only if deliberate efforts are made by those who are entrusted to manage public resources in a competent manner and are willing to do so for the benefit of all in the society. This is where transformational leadership becomes imperative in the management of public resources for sustainable development. Bass and Riggio (2006) point out that transformational leadership helps to develop followers to be better contributors toward the realization of overall organizational or societal goals. As a result, transformational leaders could be termed, effective leaders. According to Johns and Saks (2005) “effective leadership exerts influence in a way that achieves organisational goals by enhancing the productivity, innovation, satisfaction, and commitment of the workforce” (p. 274).

The review of literature above shows the importance of leadership as a catalyst for development. In any society, therefore, leadership is a vital factor without which any organization or nation cannot experience sustainable development for the benefits of organizational ownership or that of the citizens of any nation. This implies that effective leadership for the sustainable development of an organization or nation is realizable but must be premised on ethical behavior and good resource management as a basis to the attainment of projected goals.

Theoretical Framework

This work adopts transformational leadership theory to analyze how to overcome accountability for sustainable development and challenges of leadership in Nigeria. Leadership

at different levels in Nigeria (federal, state, and local governments) is faced with the challenge of the inability to command respect and trust of the citizens required for successful implementation of government policies for development (Jimoh, 2007). Adoption of this theory is based on the assumptions that transformational leaders with innovative ideas and free of corrupt tendencies, which is currently lacking in Nigeria, are needed to overcome poor resource management, lack of accountability, unethical behavior in governance, and formulation and implementation of parochial ethnic and religious policies by the political leadership both at the national and state levels to the detriment of the overall developmental goals. Furthermore, an autocratic way of policy formulation without inputs from the people in a country like Nigeria would hinder sustainable development (Ejere & Abasilim, 2013; Ikelegbe, 2006; Imoke, 2014). The aim of this theory is to address accountability for sustainable development and leadership challenges in Nigeria because of its uniqueness, which emphasizes followers' input in reconsidering proposals and stimulates them to develop creative solutions to problems that could hinder the survival and growth of the organization or nation before they occur (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Egonmwan, 1991).

It has been argued by some scholars like Cacioppe (1997), Armstrong (2012), Imoke (2014) that innovative leadership is about change for sustainable development in organizations or nations, "it seems reasonable that innovation may be related to transformational leadership qualities" (Imoke, 2014, p. 52). Therefore, transformational leadership in Nigeria is likely to bring about good followership support needed to successfully implement policies and programmes of government for sustainable development.

According to Armstrong (2012), "transformational leaders are able, by their force of performance, to make significant changes in the behaviour of their followers in order to achieve the leader's vision or goals" (p. 574). In addition, Cacioppe (1997) argues that a leader is said to be transformational when he or she can inspire others to willingly contribute toward the good of the organization or nation. This implies that leaders who are transformational are likely to achieve the set goals and the value of the desired outcomes and provide ways of achieving the goals set, which is currently absent in the Nigeria's political leadership at all levels (Egonmwan, 2001). Under this condition, followers are motivated to think and act above their own self-interest and work toward the overall goal of the nation for sustainable development (Ejere & Abasilim, 2013).

Effah (2013), however, points out that "not everybody who is occupying a leadership position is a leader because some get into leadership positions by chance and lead by accident" (p. 23). The above reveals that effective leadership premised on accountability on the part of public officials is likely to enhance sustainable development in an organization or nation.

Research Method

Historical method was used in this study to analyze the data obtained from secondary sources on the relationship between accountability for the sustainable development and the challenges of leadership in Nigeria. These sources include the Internet, journals, books, newspapers, and magazines. The justification for the adoption of the historical research method in this work is based on the fact that it enables a proper analysis of data and interpretation of events to be realized (Gberevbie, 2014; Osunde, 1993).

Challenges of Accountability for Development in Nigeria

Challenges of accountability for development in Nigeria have become a thing of major concern to scholars and the citizens alike. This is particularly so, considering the enormous resources in both human and material at the disposal of government since political independence in 1960. For instance, between 1970 and 1990, the Federal Government of Nigeria realized the sum of US\$300 billion from crude oil and natural gas. This is without corresponding development and improved the living condition of the people (Kwanashie, 2007). Scholars have attributed different reasons for the nation's inability to experience sustainable development to include the following.

- a. **Poor Leadership:** Poor leadership at the various levels of government has been identified in Nigeria as a major hindrance to sustainable development. Studies have shown that successive political leadership in Nigeria—either military or civilians—lacked the capacity to perform, which manifest in low moral character, poor judgment, and knowledge of the society, lack of expertise in the management of resources available, and their inability to innovate (Obadan, 1998; Obadan & Edo, 2007). Furthermore, these leaders flagrantly disregard the tenets of good government—public accountability, transparency, the predictability of government behavior, and observance of the rule of law—which are the major factors that propel sustainable development in any society (Eneanya, 2008; Obadan & Edo, 2007). It has been argued that poor countries like Nigeria are poor because of poor decisions made by their leaders in the past (Olaopa, 2016). According to Obadan and Edo (2007), "corruption, lack of accountability and bad governance provided avenues for misappropriation of public resources at the expense of the poor masses of the people" (p. 38). Furthermore, Imhonopi and Urim (2014) argue that the lack of long-term perspective of development goals of leadership in successive governments over the years has made it almost impossible for industrial development to take place in Nigeria. This implies that where poor

leadership prevails, innovative ideas for development are likely to be absent, and the outcome is underdevelopment, resulting in the lack of adequate housing, clean water, good roads, hospitals, food, and electricity power supply for meaningful living in such a society.

b. Poor Resource Management: In a bid for the government to enhance the living standard of the people, Public Enterprises (PEs) were established in Nigeria. Unfortunately, the poor management of public resources has not allowed the people to enjoy the benefits these PEs should offer citizens. For instance, between 1999 and 2002, the total liabilities of 39 PEs were in excess of NGN1.1 trillion or US\$6.87 billion, with accumulated losses of NGN92.3 billion or US\$5.77 billion. In addition, these 39 PEs “consumed an average of USD3 billion annually in subsidies” (Chigbue, 2007, p. 427). Also, an investigation into the activities of the Bureau for Public Enterprises (BPEs) due to poor performance by the Nigerian Senate (Upper Legislative Chamber) in 2011 revealed that the Aluminum Smelter Company of Nigeria built by the Federal Government in 1997 at the cost of US\$3.2 billion was valued by the Bureau of Public Enterprises in-house consultants for just US\$250 million and was eventually sold to a Russian company for only US\$130 million in 2010 (Gberevbie et al., 2013; Philips, 2011). In the same vein, Okoh and Attama (2015) argue that it was the poor management of public enterprises by government officials that led to the formulation and implementation of public policy of commercialization and privatization of public enterprises to free government from the burden of financing nonperforming public ventures and make funds available for development by some past governments in Nigeria. The data presented above support the view that poor management of public resources has drained the country of the needed funds and infrastructure to attain the goals of sustainable development.

c. Poor Maintenance Culture of Infrastructure: Studies have shown that poor maintenance culture of infrastructure has contributed to lack of sustainable development in Nigeria. In the electricity power sector, for instance, research has shown that the nation’s power generation capacity is very low due to a combination of inadequate funds to build modern power generating stations and poor maintenance culture (Abiodun, 2014; Ayanruoh, 2013). According to Awosope (2014), poor maintenance culture in the electricity power sector in Nigeria “has hampered the industry from meeting the statutory obligation of providing a cheap, clean and efficient source of energy . . . thus, national development has been seriously slowed down” (p. 25). For instance, the electricity generation capacity in 1998 (just before the military handed over political

power to civilians) was 4,548.5 MW and rose to 6,130 MW in 2004, which however declined in 2005 to 2,687.1 MW. This nonetheless increased to 8,644 MW in 2013 but can only produce 3,718 MW, which insufficiently caters for the electricity need of over 160 million people in Nigeria due to poor maintenance culture (Abiodun, 2014; Ayanruoh, 2013; Central Bank of Nigeria [CBN], 2005, 2006). As a result of the shortfall of electricity power supply, it has been estimated that manufacturing companies (small, medium, and large scale industries) “spend an average of NGN2 billion or USD12 million per week on self-power generation” (Ayanruoh, 2013, p. 1). It has been observed that

South Africa with a population of 52 million has an installed electricity generation capacity of over 52,000MW. On a per capita consumption basis, Nigeria is ranked a distant 178th with 106.21 KWh per head, and a capacity electricity generation of 8,644MW, but only produces 3,718MW—well behind Gabon (900.00); Ghana (283.65); Cameroun (176.01; and Kenya (124.68). (Ayanruoh, 2013, p. 1)

Furthermore, research has shown that there is “a strong link between the per capita consumption of electrical power and the state of physical advancement of a nation” (Awosope, 2014, p. 5). Therefore, development is more likely to elude Nigeria with current electricity power supply situation, arising from inadequate funding of the sector and the prevailing state of poor infrastructural maintenance culture.

d. Challenge of Accountability of Public Employees: The Federal Government of Nigeria derives the bulk of its export earnings from the production and sale of crude oil and natural gas. This accounts for 95% and about 40% of government revenues of one barrel at US\$100 and daily crude oil production at 2.16 million barrel between January 2013 and September 2014 (Gberevbie, Ibietan, Abasilim, & Excellence-Oluye, 2015; Manuaka, 2014; Olaopa, 2016). Despite the fact that the Nigerian economy hinges on the revenue derived from crude oil and natural gas, the government has failed to put in place proper mechanisms to make those that work in the sector to be accountable in terms of revenue derived.

In a report on the nation’s company established to manage the production and sale of crude oil between 1999 and 2005 revealed that the total sum of US\$1.51 billion was unaccounted for in crude oil revenues and payments by the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). In addition, it was also revealed that 10 million barrels of crude oil were not accounted for during the period under review (cited in Aghalino, 2007, p. 228). In the same vein, the NNPC could not account for 327,480 tons of petroleum products and a total of 2.312 million barrels of crude oil in 2013 (Manuaka, 2014, p. 34).

The implication of poor accountability by public employees on the nation's quest for development is that public funds meant for development are diverted to private pockets and bank accounts, thereby hindering sustainable development and promoting poverty in Nigeria (Anyebe, 2015).

- e. Unethical Behavior of Public Officials:** The challenge among government officials in Nigeria bothers on behavior that is unethical, which is a common occurrence. This manifests in lack of adherence to simple rules and regulations for the promotion ethics and efficiency in the public sector (Anyim, Ufodiama, & Olusanya, 2013; United Nations, 2004).

Research has shown that one of the major challenges to sustainable development in Nigeria is the issue of unethical behavior among public officials in form of open abuse to rules and standards in the award of contracts for projects and their execution, overinvoicing, inflation of contract costs, proliferation of White Elephant Projects, and diversion of public funds to private bank accounts through the manipulation of contracts award (Adebayo & Arawomo, 2008). In a society or nation where awarded contracts are manipulated to favor those in government and their collaborators, sustainable development is likely to be a mirage. Unethical behavior of public officials in Nigeria manifests in governmental agencies like the NNPC saddled with the responsibility to handle the computation for payment of subsidy on petroleum products in the country by the Federal Government, through the Federal Ministry of Petroleum Resources (Agbo, 2012). To ascertain the claims of Oil Marketers as to whether they truly supplied petroleum products to the market, the government ordered an audit investigation into the activities of NNPC, which was carried out by KPMG. The investigation revealed that the cost of subsidy payment on petroleum products that was never consumed by end users due to losses from theft and even those not supplied between 2007 and 2009 stood at NGN11.8 billion or US\$76.13 million (Agbo, 2012). The funds that would have gone into the development of infrastructure by the government in its quest to improve on the standard of living of the people continue to be diverted into private pockets and bank accounts of public officials, thereby hindering sustainable development in the country.

- f. Weak Governmental Institutions:** Another major challenge to sustainable development in Nigeria is the issue of weak governmental institutions such as ministries and government departments. The challenge is that those heading these institutions that ought to implement government policies and programmes for development are not competent for the position they hold, yet they see themselves as *larger* than the institutions they are meant to head and as such are not

accountable for their actions (Oladoyin, 2006). As a result, public officials capitalize on the weak governmental institutions to defraud the people by taking decisions that are not in line with developmental goals of government (Awojobi, 2014; Olaopa, 2016).

For instance, the Federal Minister of Agriculture in Nigeria, Adamu Bello, ripped off the nation through the inflated price of fertilizer at NGN3.5 billion or US\$21.87 million from the award of NGN14 billion or US\$87.5 million fertilizer contract to two companies belonging to an Indian in 2004 (cited in Oladoyin, 2006, p. 127). Higher price for fertilizer means the higher farming cost for the ordinary farmer and higher cost of farm produce to the citizens. The high cost of farm produce is more likely to discourage people from buying the required quantity per household, which is likely to affect the income of farmers who would have brought about development by their contribution in agricultural production and by so doing deny Nigeria of the needed development.

- g. High Cost of Governance and Insufficient Funds to Execute Capital Projects:** High cost of governance in Nigeria is seen as a hindrance to sustainable development. It has been observed that 70% of the country's revenues are expended on less than 20% of the population (20% are members of the National Assembly, the executive arm of government, and other public sector workers) (Olaopa, 2016; Sanusi, 2012, cited in Iyoha, Gberville, Iruonagbe, & Egharevba, 2015). Also, on a yearly basis, it has been observed that the recurrent expenditure of the national budget of the nation keeps increasing while that of the capital expenditure meant for capital infrastructural development keeps decreasing (Awojobi, 2014).

Out of the total budget of NGN4.60 trillion or US\$28.75 billion in 2010, only NGN1.80 trillion or US\$11.15 billion, that is, 39% was set aside for capital infrastructural development expenditure. Of the Federal Government budget of NGN4.92 trillion or US\$30.75 billion in 2013, only NGN1.50 trillion or US\$9.38 billion, that is, 20.6% was set aside for the same purpose, and at the same time, over 79% of the national budget for the year was set aside for recurrent expenditure (Awojobi, 2014; Sanusi, 2012, cited in Iyoha et al., 2015). The amount set aside for recurrent expenditure in the nation's national budget is expended mainly on the maintenance of public officials, in particular, members of the legislative and executive at the national level. For instance, the House of Senate in Nigeria with 109 members has 54 standing committees, and the House of Representatives with 360 members has 84 standing committees. On the contrary, the United States of America with 100 Senate members and 435 House of Representative members have 21 committees each with four joint committees. Each

member of the Nigerian National Assembly receives NGN121,000 or US\$756.25 for daily lunch excluding other allowances such as tea and sitting (Nzeshi & Ogbodo, 2012).

h. Corruption and Mismanagement of Public Funds:

Studies have shown that corruption is endemic in Nigeria to the extent that government officials can no longer claim ignorance of its existence and devastating effect on the economy (Agbo, 2015; Awojobi, 2014). For instance, during the visit of the Nigerian President, General Muhamadu Buhari, to the United States in August 2015, he alleged that as much as US\$150 billion had been stolen from public treasury in Nigeria by officials of the immediate past President, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan (Agbo, 2015). He went further to state that some unnamed ministers under his predecessor (Dr. Jonathan) stole about 1 million barrels of crude oil daily. However, despite all the flurry of arrests, interrogation, and arraignments, Nigerians are still skeptical about the seriousness and ability of the government in power to get a conviction in the court of law (Agbo, 2015). Nigeria's corruption index from 1999-2014 is depicted in the below:

Table 1 shows the Corruption Perception Index (CPI). The CPI is a yearly assessment of corruption in different nations of the world. The perceptions outcome of CPI on corruption in countries all over the world ranges between lowest points of 0 (highly corrupt) to highest of 10 (highly clean). Corruption index in Nigeria is high as the country scored 2.7 out of 10 points in 2014, and placed 136th out of 175 countries in the CPI. Although, this may appear as an improvement compared with previous years, the fact still remains that more needed to be done. It is however too early to take President Buhari's antigraft war seriously because going down the memory lane reveals that it is the normal thing at the beginning of every administration, but the tempo is hardly sustained (Agbo, 2015).

The implication of the above situation is that little amount of money is spent on physical projects that could impact positively on the lives of the people. Also, no nation is likely to experience sustainable development where funds meant for development are diverted to mostly recurrent rather than capital expenses. Despite the high cost of governance, the Human Development Index (HDI) of Nigeria is about the least among Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) members and in West Africa. Therefore, the high cost of governance in Nigeria has become an obstacle to sustainable development. Tables 2 and 3 show the HDI trends of Nigeria among West African and OPEC member countries between 1990 and 2014.

Tables 2 and 3 show that the leadership in Nigeria has not done well to improve its HDI despite huge revenue from crude oil and natural gas exports. In addition, Nigeria's HDI position is very poor when compared with 18 other countries

Table 1. Nigeria's Corruption Index From 1999 to 2014.

Year	Rank	Number of countries surveyed	CPI
1999	98	99	1.6
2000	90	90	1.2
2001	90	91	1.2
2002	102	102	1.6
2003	132	133	1.4
2004	144	145	1.6
2005	152	158	1.9
2006	142	163	2.2
2007	147	179	2.2
2008	121	180	2.7
2009	130	180	2.5
2010	134	178	2.4
2011	143	183	2.4
2012	139	176	2.7
2013	144	177	2.5
2014	136	175	2.7

Source. Agbo (2015).

Note. Corruption Perception Index.

Table 2. Average Annual HDI Growth.

S/N	Country	2013 HDI rank	1990-2000	2000-2010	2010-2014
1	United Arab Emirate	40	0.94	0.39	0.21
2	Qatar	33	0.71	0.42	0.18
3	Saudi Arabia	39	0.76	0.79	1.00
4	Kuwait	47	1.18	0.06	0.23
5	Libya	83	0.75	0.34	-10.07
6	Venezuela	69	0.59	1.17	0.18
7	Ecuador	88	0.45	0.61	0.52
8	Iran	69	1.62	1.11	0.74
9	Algeria	84	1.09	1.26	0.35
10	Iraq	120	0.58	0.62	0.34
11	Angola	149	—	2.70	1.11
12	Nigeria	152	—	—	1.06

Source. United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report (2015).

Note. HDI = Human Development Index.

both in West African Subregion and OPEC member countries (OPEC). For example, in Table 3, out of 18 countries average annual HDI, Nigeria ranks third position, below Cape Verde that has 122 and Ghana 140 HDI. This implies that countries in medium HDI in West Africa are Ghana and Cape Verde, while Nigeria is among the countries that fall into the low-HDI group. Furthermore, in OPEC, Nigeria is at the 12th of all the 12 countries investigated. The situation depicted above could be attributed to poor leadership, corruption, and unethical behavior of those in government who use their privileged position to acquire illegal wealth (Agbo, 2009; Awojobi, 2014). According to former President, Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria (1999-2007), "at the root of corruption quagmire in Nigeria is the failure and virtual

Table 3. West African Countries: Human Development Index Trend Average Annual HDI Growth Percent.

S/N	Country	HDI rank	1990-2000	2000-2010	2010-2014
1	Cape Verde*	122	—	0.96	0.66
2	Ghana*	140	0.63	1.33	1.13
3	Cameroon	154	-0.36	1.07	1.32
4	Senegal	170	0.36	1.83	0.55
5	Nigeria	152	—	—	1.06
6	Mauritania	156	1.71	0.98	0.92
7	Togo	167	0.52	0.76	1.29
8	Benin	165	1.33	1.78	0.64
9	Gambia	173	1.55	1.38	-0.02
10	Cote d'Ivoire	172	0.23	1.12	0.98
11	Mali	179	2.97	2.73	0.61
12	Guinea Bissau	178	—	—	0.42
13	Guinea	181	—	1.83	1.50
14	Sierra Leone	182	1.32	2.63	1.59
15	Burkina Faso	184	—	—	1.58
16	Liberia	177	—	1.20	1.50
17	Chad	186	—	1.12	1.37
18	Niger	188	1.85	2.40	1.69

Source. United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report (2015).

Note. HDI = Human Development Index.

*The table 3 above shows that Countries in medium HDI in West Africa are Ghana and Cape Verde. However, Nigeria is among the countries that fall into the low-HDI group at 152 behind Cape Verde at 122 and Ghana at 140.

collapse of governance . . . the manipulation of existing laws and regulations, the erosion of accountability procedures and the prevalence of bad leadership” (cited in Onah, 2009, p. 48). In fact, it has been observed that “between 1970 and 2007, Nigeria lost a total sum of USD400 billion in oil revenue to official corruption” (Agbo, 2009, p. 55).

Conclusion

Development of any society is meant to enhance the living standard of citizens. However, where there are challenges, sustainable development is likely to be a tall order, and Nigeria is not an exception. Sustainable development is a major challenge in Nigeria based on the data presented above, which is due to lack of proper management of resources, corruption, and accountability of public officials arising from poor leadership. In this regard, it has been argued that “Nigeria is a rich country with poor people. Poverty is evident on the streets and this is said to be a function of leadership failure to follow through with developmental goals, side-by-side with leadership’s penchant for primitive accumulation” (Sanusi, 2012, cited in Iyoha et al., 2015).

From the foregoing therefore, it could be concluded that transformational leaders with innovative ideas and accountable mind-set at the federal, state, and local government levels are likely panacea to overcoming challenges of poor leadership, poor management of public resources, poor

maintenance culture of infrastructure, corrupt practices, accountability challenge of public employees, unethical behavior of public officials, weak governmental institutions, and reduction of high cost of governance for development in Nigeria. This is likely to be realized as the Federal Government of Nigeria adopts a more practical approach devoid of ethnic and religious sentiment to promote accountability through determined fight against unethical behavior and corruption in high places as catalyst for proper management of resources and devotion of more funds to the execution of capital projects that could positively affect citizens for improved living standard.

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