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## Nigerian football federation, corruption and development of football in Nigeria

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### Abstract

The study was aimed at x-raying corruption and Football Development in Nigeria focussing on the Nigerian Football Federation. The study contends that football development in Nigeria anchored around the Nigeria football federation faces challenges of corruption, which is at alarming rate, and the real culprits and the actual perpetrators of corruption are not tried and thus, has led to under development of the round leather game in the country. The study suggested eradication of corruption in football as a major surgery that must be undergone, for effective development of football in Nigeria. This can be achieved among others by strengthening all the anti corruption agencies such as the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and Economic Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) by providing them with all the necessary facilities that will assist them in discharging their duties effectively as well as isolating them from undue interferences by politicians. The former status of the commission as toothless bulldogs should hence forth be strengthened and anybody who commits any financial crime in the NFF should be made to pay for the consequences of his/her actions. Similarly, security agencies must be made to become alert towards their responsibilities by investigating any NFF official suspected to have circumvented the law.

**Keywords:** Nigerian Football Federation, Corruption, Development, Development of Football in Nigeria, Corruption in Nigeria Fourth Republic.

### Introduction

Corruption refers to the use of the advantage of one's office to illegally enrich one self either through plunder, fraud or receipts of gratification for the performance of what should have been one's normal assignment. Corruption has for many years been the bane of the Nigerian public and private life. It is an indisputable fact that corruption has eaten deep into the fabric of the Nigerian society so much that it has come to be accepted as a way of life. In Nigeria corruption has come to assume different meaning whereby only those who were caught in-the act of stealing are being labelled as corrupt<sup>[1]</sup>. Despite the enormous human and natural resources that Nigeria is endowed with, the country still remains in a sorry state as a result of corruption. Nigeria started on equal footing with the "Asian Tigers" (Hongkong, Taiwan, Korea and Singapore) Today Nigerians can only glance at the successes of the Asian Tigers economy and can recall with nostalgic feelings how the country started on the same note with them.

So widespread is this vice that successive governments in Nigeria have not been able to get rid of it. In Nigeria, nobody is exempted from corruption including the past presidents. They have succeeded in draining the country's foreign reserves. Nigeria's presidents do not travel with passenger aircrafts. They concentrated on buying presidential jets. They do not live in conventional houses. Corruption is embedded in Nigeria seat of power situated at Abuja (Aso Rock). Other government arms and agencies in Nigeria are not left out. They are borne of corruption and live in perpetual corruption. There is no guilt or remorse in being a looter of treasury and there are no consequences for severe corrupt practices in Nigeria. Phone calls from the so called people of high places have annulled a lot of judicial processes. The judiciary is a big joke as seen in the then governor of Delta State, James Ibori's case who was found guilty of money laundering by a foreign court. Ibori was declared innocent in Nigeria because he stole to bank role the campaign of the elections of Obasanjo, Yar Adua and Jonathan<sup>[2]</sup>. Many reasons have been advanced for the prevalence of this vice in the Nigerian society but

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the most common ones are those that bother on poverty and greed. Hero worshipping which is one of the retrogressive aspects of our culture and the desire to live ostentatious life are other reasons. Corruption is most noticeable in schools, banks, the ports, government offices, the security agencies, the courts and the sports sector. In the public service, corruption is perpetrated through inflation of contracts and granting favours to unqualified persons. Among the security agents and in the courts, corruption is used to pervert justice. In the sports sector, especially football, corruption is perpetuated through award of contracts, appointment of coaches, in the field of play by referees, election of board members, selection of players etc. All these revolve around the Nigerian Football Federation (NFF), which was formerly known as the Nigerian Football Association (NFA) it is a federal government organ under the sports ministry saddled with the aim of football development in Nigeria. Football development refers to growth, progress and advancement from one stage of vibrant football administration to another utilizing and manipulating the physical environment to advantage of set goals.

Going by the perception of stake holders in football sector, corruption has inflicted a lot of havoc on football development in Nigeria, it has become so endemic, which has prompted former Nigerian senate president David Mark in one of the sittings in the house in 2013 to describe the Nigeria Football Federation as the most corrupt government agency in Nigeria. This is because he was frustrated with the misfortune of the Nigerian Super Eagles that even failed to qualify for the 2015 Nations Cup in Gabon/Congo, the non qualification of the Nigerian team according to Mark was occasioned with corruption in the NFF [3]. This study, thus, is saddled with the aim of x-raying corruption and Football Development in Nigeria focussing on the Nigerian Football Federation.

### Corruption

Corruption can be described as a deceptive, improper or crooked conduct by an individual authorized to run public office and such individual uses that position to acquire personal gains. Corruption, which has bribery and embezzlement as its component parts, when employed as an adjective directly or literally means "Utterly Broken" [4]. The word corruption was first passed down by Aristotle and subsequently by Cicero who included the words bribe and abandonment of good habits [5]. Ian Senior, an Economist provided a wonderful channel of flow of corruption, in his definition of corruption. He stated that corruption as an action to secretly provide a good or a service to a third party, so that he or she can influence certain actions which benefit the corrupt, a third party, or both in which the corrupt agent has authority [6]. Ikejiani sees corruption as the inducement by means of improper considerations to commit a violation of duty, an inducement in cash or kind to secure services or goods from public officials or agencies through illegitimate or unlawful or irregular means. Corruption also includes nepotism and misappropriation. In both cases, there is an inducement by means of improper consideration. Hence, corruption in general meaning, includes the misuse of authority as a result of considerations of personal gain which need not necessarily be monetary [7].

Some scholars have all defined corruption in ways that have enough in common, that is, departure from accepted public roles and standards. Huntington defines corruption as "the behaviour of public officials which deviates from accepted norms in order to serve private ends" Heidenheimer, breaks down corruption into three categories, namely, nepotism, spoil

and misappropriation. Nye, defines corruption as "behaviour which deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private retarding (personal, close family, private, clique) pecuniary or status gain, or violates rule against the exercise of certain types of private regarding influence". Bayley opines that "corruption ... is a general term covering misuse of authority as a result of considerations of personal gain". Udeaya stated that "corruption is an extra-legal institution used by individuals or groups to gain influence over the action of the bureaucracy" [8].

Corruption can be looked at on different scales it occurs. The individualistic approach looks at corruption as the entree or gaining of position of power and trust by evil and dishonest persons. A corrupt and fraudulent individual is one who abandons the prevailing norm of official public behaviour. Corruption is then seen as incidental to the working of society which might be safeguarded by appropriate laws and exhortations. The extent of petty corruption is low and it takes place at the implementation stage of public services when public officials meet the public. Instances are the reciprocity of minor awkward gifts or use of personal connections to get favours or a fast completion of routine government procedures. This type of corruption is normally pursued by low and average level officials, who are extremely underpaid. Grand corruption is corruption occurring at the topmost levels of government in a way that requires considerable subversion of the political, legal and economic systems. Such corruption is usually associated with countries with authoritarian or dictatorial governments and also in countries without proper policing of corruption. Systemic corruption which can also be described as endemic corruption is corruption which is fundamentally as a result of the weaknesses of an organizational setup. It can be contrasted with individual officials that act corruptly inside the system [9]. Factors that stimulate or revitalise systemic corruption are monopolistic powers, institutionalised impunity, discretionary powers, lack of transparency, conflicting incentives and low pay [10]. In her opinion about systemic corruption Ikejiani stated that systemic conception recognizes corruption as a social fact. It describes more accurately a situation where wrong-doing has become the norm, and the standard accepted behaviour necessary to accomplish organizational goals according to notions of public responsibility and trust, has become the exception rather than the rule. In such a situation, aberrant behaviour has become so regularized and institutionalized that the system or organizational support prop up and sustain wrong-doing and actually penalise those who live up to the old norm [11].

To this end Ikejiani summarized and highlighted the effects of corruption to include:

Non-achievement of goals; diversion of resources from public purposes to private ones; weakens public bureaucracy; exerts a corrupting influence on other members of the administrative apparatus; lowers respects for authority; diversion of energy into lobbying, fiddling etc., resulting in inappropriate criteria for arriving at decisions; slows down the pace of economic development through manipulation of funds for projects; dilutes individual and group commitment to national values and civic responsibilities; destroys or weakens efficiency and effectiveness of public services (both civil service and the corporations); endangers national security internal and externally, e.g., (a) Officials selling state secrets or bargaining with foreign bodies on terms detrimental to Nigeria, and (b) Members of the police force taking bribes to subvert justice; detracts from the sovereign of Nigeria and its international standing, especially when foreigners distrust Nigerian

nationality for acts that are unspeakable; endangers national priorities and fairness if people in key positions promote projects or schemes in which they have personal or financial interest against that of the nation; detracts government from giving priority to the areas of income and social inequality, poverty, malnutrition and other areas of need. The net impact of corruption on society is negative; concentrates wealth in fewer hands and hence widens the gap between the rich and the poor creating discontent among the people, a situation which also has larger implications for political development; distorts political participation, stultifies the development of strong political institutions and weakens the national economic base and distorts the functioning of an economy because it leads government officials to take actions that are not in the general interest <sup>[12]</sup>.

### **Corruption in Nigerian Fourth Republic**

Nigeria's democratic dispensation otherwise known as the fourth republic that kicked off in May 1999 was born with corruption. A survey that was conducted by Transparency International on corruption showed that in all the countries, statistical information showed that Nigeria and Tanzania occupied the fifth position. Between 1999 and 2005, Nigeria was ranked the third most corrupt country in the world by the same Transparency International. Close observers to Nigerian issues have rated Nigeria as one the most corrupt nations in the world. Former head of the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) Alahaji Nuhu Ribadu, once informed Nigerians that no fewer than 31 former state governors out of 36 are waiting to be invited for cases with the EFCC based on corruption. In another development, Ribadu also alerted the nation on how politicians embezzle more than \$10bn from Nigeria monthly <sup>[13]</sup>. Obasanjo thus, stated how endemic corruption has permeated every nook and cranny of the nation before his ascension to civilian leadership of the country:

*Corruption exists in almost every society. But in Nigeria and particularly with the advent of SAP it has become uncontrolled and uncontrollably pervasive. Anything and anybody can be settled <sup>[14]</sup>.*

Being aware of this, President Obasanjo in his inaugural commemorative speech in 1999 stated that there would be no sacred cow, everybody will face the consequences of his/her action. In furtherance of the above statement, Obasanjo established the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). However, despite these precautions against corruption, Obasanjo's administration became victims of corruption, as corruption was noticed in every sector in Nigeria for instance, a case of scandal in the Petroleum Technology Development Fund" (PTDF) involved the former President and his deputy Atiku Abubakar, a scandal that almost crashed the 2007 general election. Moreover, the senate was converted into a place of awarding dubious contracts. This informed a lot of revelations indicating that most of the contracts were awarded at highly bloated costs. Other senators did not find this funny and they asserted that a probe must be carried out. This gave birth to Senator Idris Kuta panel, which revealed corruption of unimaginable magnitude. This is just to mention but a few <sup>[15]</sup>.

Corruption persisted throughout Obasanjo's regime and extended under Yar'Adua's administration. In one of his speeches, President Yar' Adua declared:

*I promise this nation that once we have a response, those names in response will be made public and we will take action and direct that the names should be forwarded to the EFCC and those officials and former officials involved will be arrested and prosecuted <sup>[16]</sup>.*

However, President Yar'Adua could not march his words with action. Yar'Adua's administration became saddled with corruption. Shortly after he was sworn in, there were insinuations that contracts were awarded for the renovation and furnishing of official residences of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker as well as the procurement of 12 vehicles for principal officers at #628 million an amount which was later corrected by the Senate President, David Mark as #579 million. This called for the setting up of a nine-man independent ad-hoc committee to deliberate on the matter. However, the ad-hoc committee found out that due process was not followed in the awards of the contracts <sup>[17]</sup>. Furthermore, there was an outrageous purchase of 380 Peugeot 407 cars from Peugeot Automobiles Nigeria (PAN) Ltd by the House of Representatives with some principal officers incriminated. An investigation was carried out by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and a 14-page report dated February 20, 2009, was forwarded to the then President, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, the EFCC affirmed that some officers and members of the House of Representatives had questions to answer in respect of the asserted fraud in the procurement of 380 Peugeot 407 cars from PAN <sup>[18]</sup>.

Allegations of financial misuse were also levelled against the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Dimeji Bankole and the leadership of the House raised by the "Progressives" during the regime of Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua. This claim reversed the floor of the House into a battle field leading to the suspension by the Speaker of the House of Representatives of eleven members that formed the "Progressives" so as to attempt to conceal the embarrassing and scandalous alleged scam <sup>[19]</sup>.

The administration of President Goodluck Jonathan is not left out as his tenure was saddled with a lot of corrupt practices. Jonathan sacked the then central bank Governor Sanusi after Sanusi stated that the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) had not transferred close to \$20 billion revenue accruable to the government. The NNPC denied the claims. Finance Minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala could not account oil receipts that stood at a staggering amount of \$10.8 billion. Stella Oduah, former Nigeria's aviation minister, testified before the then House of Representatives Committee on Aviation on 31 October following revelations that the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority, NCAA, procured two BMW bullet-proof cars for her at a huge amount of N255 million. Oduah denied allegations against her, but evidences are clear that she approved the procurement of the costly vehicles that were not appropriated for and that more than doubled her approval limit of N100 million. Nigeria's former Petroleum Minister, Diezani Alison-Madueke, was accused of embezzling millions of dollars of public funds to rent private aircrafts for actualization of her official programs. Mrs. Alison-Madueke has regularly gallivanted around the world in private aircrafts when she was a minister, Moreover, she most often than not moved her family members in private aircrafts. Sanusi pointed out massive looting that took place in the oil and gas sector during Jonathan's regime <sup>[20]</sup>.

## **Nigeria Football Federation and Development of Football in Nigeria**

No one can accurately state when football started in Nigeria, but one thing is certain, Nigerians started playing the game on recreational and relaxation basis prior to the emergence of Nigeria Football Association (NFA). It is widely assumed that the game of football was ushered into Nigeria by former British colonial masters, as far back as 1914 after Lord Lugard's amalgamation of Northern and Southern protectorate. Baron Mullford, a Briton, was the person associated with initial or early football games in Nigeria. The formation of the Nigeria Football Association was initiated in 1938, but did not materialize till after the Second World War in 1945. The Nigerian Football Association (NFA) formally emerged in 1945. Mr A.G. Marshall (O.B.E) emerged as the first chairman. In 1945 also, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, the first President of Nigeria, then a member of NFA, led a delegation of committee members to the then Governor General of Nigeria, Sir Author Richards, appealing to him to donate a cup that would be competed for by the teams nationwide, Sir Author Richards obliged and that was the birth of the GOVERNORS CUP, which was known as the CHALLENGE CUP and now the FA CUP. The first national team was formed by NFA in 1949. Subsequently, NFA joined or got an affiliation with the African Football Confederation (AFC), now Confederation of African Football (CAF) and Federation of International Football Association (FIFA) and in 1959. Nigeria got her independence in 1960, it was then that administration of football changed over to Nigerians with Mr Godffery Amachree surfacing as the first domestic and aboriginal chairman of the NFA <sup>[21]</sup>.

Nigeria made her first appearance at the Nations Cup in Ghana in 1962. Nigeria also made her first entrant at the Olympic games that was hosted by Mexico in 1968. In 1971, under the promulgation of Decree 34, the former National Sports Council was adjusted to become National Sports Commission, thus, bringing the NFA under absolute jurisdiction of the commission, a situation that heralded government entanglement with football administration in Nigeria. Prior to this time, the NFA was self-governing or independent as the then national council was saddled with the responsibility of controlling sports, with the exception of football. In 1972, the National Stadium Surulere was opened. In 1972 also, the Nigerian National League was launched beginning with an initial 5 club-sides, and in 1973, the Green Eagles won the Gold medal at the second All African Games in Lagos. Nigeria's first medal (bronze) at the Nations Cup was won in 1976 in Ghana, and another Silver medal was realized at the third All African Games in Algeria. In 1978, Nigerian National League grew to 12 club-sides. Nigeria's first Nation's Cup victory came in 1980 at the National Stadium Surulere, Lagos. The junior National team (Flying Eagles) emerged champions consecutively in the Tessema African Youth Cup in 1981 and 1983 <sup>[22]</sup>.

Nigeria won a Silver medal in Cote-d'Ivoire in 1984, followed by the Flying Eagles bronze medal at the FIFA world Youth Cup in Russia, In 1985. That same year marked the first time Nigeria won the National U-16 tournament in China. Eaglets won Silver at the Canada FIFA U-17 tournament in 1987. The Super Eagles got a Silver medal at the 1988 Nations Cup in Morocco, and also qualified for the Seoul-Korea Olympics. In 1989, the Flying Eagles secured another Silver lining at the FIFA U-20 competition in Saudi Arabia. In 1990, NFA registered another achievement through the introduction of professional football in the country, a move that have given

Nigerian youths the opportunity to earn a living through football. In addition, in 1990 also, Super Eagles retained her Silver medal at the Nations Cup in Algeria. On Saturday 12 may 1990 at the Onikan Stadium Lagos, the League was renamed "Professional League". In Senegal Nations Cup in 1992, Super Eagles won a bronze medal.

1993 and 1994 were all victories for the NFA as the Eaglets won Gold medal at the FIFA U-17 cup in Japan in 1993 while Nigeria appeared at the World Cup for the first time in 1994. Earlier in the same year, Super Eagles had won the Nation's Cup for the second time in Tunisia. In 1996, the National U-23 Team (Dream Team) won the Gold Medal at Atlanta USA Olympics. At the Nation's Cup, co hosted by Ghana and Nigeria in 2000, Nigeria won yet another Silver medal. The Eaglets secured a Silver medal at the FIFA U-17 Championship in Trinidad and Tobago, in 2001, and subsequently in 2002, the Super Eagles qualified for Japan /Korea World Cup. The Premier League period started in 2003 under Ibrahim Galadima as NFA chairman. In 2007, Nigerian team yet again won the FIFA U17 championship hosted by South Korea. In 2008, during the NFA Annual General Meeting (AGM) held in Makurdi, Benue State, under the chairmanship of Sani Lulu Abdullahi, the Nigeria Football Association (NFA) was changed to Nigerian Football Federation (NFF) and the designation of Chairman was also changed to President <sup>[23]</sup>. The League Management Company (LMC) emerged in 2012 following the collapse of the professional league <sup>[24]</sup>. Nigeria lifted the African Cup of Nations for the third time in 2013. In 2013 and 2015 Nigeria won the National U-17 tournament in United Arab Emirate and Chile respectively. In the female category, the National Team known as the Super Falcons are doing well in Africa, and have represented the continent, at all the Women World Cup Championships, and the Olympics, although they have been eliminated in 2016 Olympic games scheduled to take place in Rio de Janeiro Brazil. Samson Siasia's tutored under 23 team otherwise known as the dream team lifted the under 23 African Cup of Nations hosted by Senegal, thus qualifying as one of the three African teams to represent Africa in 2016 Olympics scheduled for Rio de Janeiro Brazil.

## **Discussion**

In Nigeria, corruption is like a curse bestowed on us by unknown persons. Even in football, corruption has continued to rear its ugly head and this has led to under development of the round leather game in Nigeria. Players are not chosen by merit. It is all about who you know in top political offices or society. In the Nigerian Football Federation (NFF), corruption is the reason why somebody is elected as the leader of the group today and tomorrow the election is nullified and another person is chosen. Everybody wants to be at the head so that he will fill his bag with the national cake. People do not fight to work because it is stressful, so whenever people fight for a particular position, there is every possibility that they are there to clean out the organization. Reports and evidence have shown that there are corrupt practices in Nigerian football. <sup>[25]</sup>. In the history of Nigerian football, it is a known fact that former NFF leaders have been using the pretext of hiring foreign coaches to embezzle money in Nigeria and at the end, they will have nothing to show for it. Nigerians are well aware of what is going on, corruption has been institutionalized in the NFF that everybody in the glass house is corrupt and this has not helped our football to grow in spite of the array of good footballers that abound in every nook and cranny of Nigeria. The people that vie for positions in the NFF do not

have the interest of the game at heart. They go for such positions for selfish interests or for self aggrandizement. Our NFF leaders usually embark on pleasure trips outside the country in the name of searching for coaches. It is only in Nigeria that our administrators go to foreign countries to conduct interview for coaches instead of the coaches that want the job coming to Nigeria. Ogunleye-Bello in his opinion while discussing the various magnitudes that corruption has erupted Nigeria football stated that financial corruption in football management has obviously assumed cancerous magnitude. With 260 million people playing active football all over the globe, it seems to be a rain of arrests and scandals when it comes to the political aspect of the game. Nemesis caught –up with the Nigerian/African representative in FIFA, Dr. Amos Adamu, and was banned from all football related activities for demanding bribe <sup>[26]</sup>.

NFF is so much engulfed in corruption of age cheat when it comes to youth football development and this had led to the under development of Nigerian football. Do not be deceived about the number of football laurels won in under 17 soccer fiestas. What should be considered is the effect at the long run. Amiesimaka is an ex-international for the Nigerian Green Eagles. He wrote about the Nigerian under-17 team and that there were overage players in the Nigerian team. Supporting Amiesimaka, Adeola Aderounmu, stated that Nigeria always field players who are older than 17 and that is why many of the boys disappear into thin air after the competitions. Only a negligible percentage of them play football for 5 or 10 years more after the age competitions <sup>[27]</sup>. This has made the country not to have a developmental program that will mature these youths into forming the nucleus of our National team.

Former president of Nigeria Football Federation, NFF, Sani Lulu and three others namely Amanze Uchebulam, a former first vice president, Taiwo Ogunjobi, a former executive committee member and NFF former secretary-general, Bolaji Ojo-Oba are currently facing trial in the nation's capital city of Abuja for mismanaging N1.3 billion. Some of the charges leveled against them include the asserted unofficial or illegal payment of estacodes/allowances of \$800,000 to two hundred and twenty (220) delegates to the World Cup in South Africa as against forty seven (47) delegates made available for the journey. They are also accused of misusing N900 million World Cup funds meant for the NFF, procurement of two Marcopolo luxury buses for the Super Eagles without following due process and at over-inflated costs and acquiring a fine of \$125,000 in South Africa over a fumbled deal with a hotel <sup>[28]</sup>.

In the last senate early in February 2012, during the consideration of a motion on the dwindling trends of sport in the country sponsored by Senator Adamu Gumba and 15 others, he said corruption in NFF was responsible for the total decline in football, lamenting that Nigeria which was once the football giant of Africa now quivers before smaller football nations during matches. We have failed woefully; corruption is not just financial corruption alone even the way the players were brought in is another form of corruption. We play Rwanda and we are worried, everybody is jittery, instead of us talking about how many goals that we will be scored against Rwanda. It is as bad as that. NFF is the center of corruption in the country, there is no running away from the fact. Senator Gumba while moving the motion noted that the Senate is concerned with the sorry state of Nigerian football, the game that unites all Nigerians together in spite of her diversity. The Senate, in entirety further noted that Nigerian football over the years has continued to slide despite the huge resources the

Federal Government is investing in the game. Senators who spoke on the motion blamed maladministration, incompetence, poor infrastructure, lack of grass root support and most importantly corruption, as the bane towards development of sports and football in particular in the country. Senator Heineken Lokopobiri, who was former chairman Senate Committee on Sports, in his contribution stated that corruption in Nigerian football is being spearheaded by the NFF. In his contribution, former senate president, Senator David Mark described the Nigerian Football Federation, NFF as the most corrupt government agency in the country <sup>[29]</sup>.

Match-fixing, a component of corruption is another problem in Nigerian football and has led to sanctions against number of club sides, referees and football officials. Cases that will continue to ring bells in the ears of Nigeria's are the scandalous cases of huge defeats involving four club sides. The four clubs were suspended early in 2013 after the two teams struggling for promotion won 67-0 and 79-0 respectively with the NFF referring to it as a "scandal of huge proportions". Also analyzing corruption as the bane for football development in Nigeria, with focus on Nigerian Super Eagles non qualification of the 2015 African Football Cup of Nations, a referee (name withheld) an Anambra state Catholic Priest who doubled also as a referee gave his experience on the level of corruption in football. According to the priest, who narrowly escaped death when he officiated a match in the local league. He stated: "After the first half of the match, none of the two sides scored any goal. Before the beginning of the second half, some officials and young youths who were supporting the club at home side came and said to me: if you want to leave this pitch alive, make sure that you do everything possible to see that our club win this match." The young referee was scared of the treat and finally the home side won the match with a lone goal. The inability of Super Eagles of Nigeria to qualify for 2015 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) can be attributed to corruption <sup>[30]</sup>.

Some notable football administrators in the NFF have received one type of ban or the other as a result of corrupt related issues, for instance, former Secretary General of NFF, Taiwo Ogunjobi was banned for 10 years. Another senior Nigerian football official Leye Adepoju was banned for 10 years also for corruption, A Nigerian Football Federation (NFF) emergency committee handed the sanction excluding him from all football-related activities following an investigation. Adepoju was a member of the NFF executive committee and also the chairman of the football association in Oyo state, Southwest Nigeria. He was alleged to have received a cash payment of 1.5 million naira (\$9,400) before a disciplinary hearing against Shooting Stars, from the Oyo state capital Ibadan, after they abandoned a league match against Sunshine Stars earlier this year.

President Muhammadu Buhari administration's anti-corruption war has exposed corrupt practices inherent in the Glass House of the nation's soccer governing body, NFF. Security agents are currently investigating how the current board of the soccer federation led by former Delta State FA chairman, Amaju Pinnick won the September 30, 2014 election in Warri. It would be recalled that the Warri election, apart from raising a lot of dust that are yet to settle, was one in which monies running into millions of naira were alleged to have exchanged hands, with delegates said to have smiled to the banks. The election was simply a cash and carry affair where money exchanged hands in Ghana-must-go bags. Beyond the Warri election, since coming into office, the NFF leadership had engaged in a lot of financial dealings that were not too tidy and

the security operatives are digging into all that. It was recalled that the NFF recently signed a new sponsorship deal with American sportswear manufacturing outfit, NIKE, with details of the deal shrouded in secrecy. The soccer federation had also come under fire over the contract it awarded for the furnishing of the Sunday Danko House built for the federation by the now dissolved Presidential Task Force on football. The soccer federation has also not accounted for the financial largesse that came the country's way after the Brazil 2014 World Cup. It would be noted that all the countries that qualified for the 2014 mundial pocketed eight million dollars from FIFA. Nigeria got additional one million dollars for reaching the second round. While the soccer federation of Nigeria's West African neighbor, Ghana, promptly confirmed getting her FIFA largesse and paying same into the coffers of Ghanaian Government, the Federal government got nothing from the NFF<sup>[31]</sup>.

### Conclusion

The major problem of football development in Nigeria is that corruption is at alarming proportion and the real culprits and the actual perpetrators of serious crimes of corruption in Nigerian Football are not tried. In order to greatly minimize or reduce corruption in the NFF to the barest minimum one of the designs or methods that should be employed is by revamping meditations or reasoning and opinion, thus, the development of ethics to echo accountability, furthering a sense of sovereign resoluteness, faithfulness and loyalty which may result to the corrupter to be despised or treated with disdain and the potentially corrupted to be substantial. This strategy which is psychological will represent the substitution of one set of operational values for another. It must be real social change. All this depends on the character of the regime which should be strong, as well as the exhortation and revival of the fading national morale. The current administration of President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria, should at-least be hailed towards this agenda.

Moreover, there is the need for the present administration to strengthen all the anti corruption agencies such as the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and Economic Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) by providing them with all the necessary facilities that will assist them in discharging their duties effectively as well as isolate them from undue interferences by politicians. The former status of the commission as toothless bulldogs should hence forth be strengthened and anybody who commits any financial crime in the NFF should be made to pay for the consequences of his/her actions. Similarly, security agencies must be made to become alert to their responsibilities by investigating any NFF official suspected to have circumvented the law. Furthermore the President should continue to remain firm in the maintenance of high moral pedestal in all public dealings.

For these moves of stemming corruption in the country's football administration to be successful, all Nigerians should join hands with the present administration to fight and wage frontal war against corruption. In the same vein, journalists who are seen as the watchdogs of the society should intensify efforts in exposing corrupt practices in football related activities. Above all, any official of the NFF found guilty no matter his status in the football federation should be punished without delay. It is the candid opinion of the researcher that Nigerian football will reclaim its lost glory when issues discussed in this study is strictly adhered to.

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