

## **BOOK REVIEWS**

**David U. Enweremadu, *Anti-Corruption Campaign in Nigeria (1999–2007): The Politics of a Failed Reform* (Leiden: African Studies Centre, 2012), xx, 198.**

There is no gainsaying the obvious fact that corruption is the bane of Nigeria's developmental challenges. It is at the very heart of our country's failings in every sphere since its emancipation from colonial rule. The cancerous rot that has continued to impair the growth potentials of the country seems to have defied every therapy. It was estimated that Nigeria had lost to corruption as much as \$400 billion in a period from 1966 to 1999. Yet, corruption in Nigeria preceded 1966 and has continued ever since, even beyond 2007 with greater ferocity and intensity.

This book chronicles the major steps taken by the Nigerian leadership under the Obasanjo Administration (1999–2007) to deal with corruption in the country. Essentially, according to the author, the book sought to answer the five questions: i) How effective have market and institutional reforms been in checking corruption in Nigeria since 1999? ii) Why has corruption remained pervasive in Nigeria under the fourth Republic (1999 to date) despite an avalanche of policies and programmes designed to fight graft and the often-restated commitment of Nigerian Presidents to bring corrupt officials to book? iii) What else could be done to achieve a significant reduction in the level of corruption in Nigeria? iv) Given the plethora of failed anti-corruption programmes around the world, what factors could have led to the success of the anti-corruption battle in Nigeria? v) Was President Obasanjo's anti-corruption campaign genuine or mere political grandstanding?

It is interesting that the author did not provide any direct answers to the above questions. He rather chose to analyze the circumstances that predisposed President Obasanjo to the anti-corruption campaign, which he vehemently prosecuted. Situating the anti-corruption campaign of the Obasanjo years within the context of its historicity, the author is of the belief that President Obasanjo being a rational leader assessed the benefits of embarking on such

campaigns – in terms of the instant and enduring legitimacy it confers on his regime, the international credibility and recognition of his administration as well as the intrinsic personal satisfaction he derives from such venture being a co-founder of Transparency International – and opted without hesitation to wage the anti-corruption war. The motif force of the anti-corruption crusade notwithstanding, the post-Obasanjo years have vividly portrayed the arduous and daunting nature of the task of sustaining and institutionalizing that crusade.

The book under review contains eight chapters in all. The first chapter provides the background to the study, summarizing the historical import and underpinnings of the anti-corruption drive of Obasanjo Administration. The second chapter analyzes the processes and the politics that culminated in the establishment of anti-corruption agencies while detailing the powers and responsibilities of the two agencies (ICPC and EFCC). The third chapter highlights the series of Judicial and Public Service reforms implemented by the administration. The fourth chapter analyzes the efforts of the administration in effecting the recovery of the country's looted funds from their international safe havens. The fifth chapter identifies the challenges militating against the effectiveness of anti-corruption agencies including limited capacity, strong opposition of state governments, and weak engagement of civil society. The sixth chapter chronicles the conceptual confusion that federalism throws-up when the national import of the anti-corruption pursuit of Obasanjo Administration was considered against the backdrop of the presumed autonomy of state governments. The seventh chapter examines the roles of the Nigerian civil society in the anti-corruption fight; noting that even though non-state actors often play marginal roles in the formulation of anti-corruption policy, they are key players in its execution. The eighth chapter which concludes the book is an elaboration of the author's submission on the compelling need to strengthen anti-corruption agencies, to deepen engagement with the civil society, and to broaden the collaboration among all public institutions with the responsibility of fighting corruption.

This book is a clarion call, or better still a wake-up call, on the anti-corruption agencies to beef up their capacities and rejuvenate the confidence of Nigerians in their effectiveness. The author presented his facts thematically and in an orderly manner that makes for easy comprehension of the book. This is one of the most lucidly comprehensive books on the anti-corruption crusade of Obasanjo years. It is a systematic rendition of the politics and the policy of anti-corruption campaign of the Obasanjo Administration. The author's objective for writing this book, which might have not been expressed in words but deduced by logical inference, was to instigate critical reasoning by wielders of authority in our anti-corruption agencies about the prospects of institutionalizing anti-corruption reforms in the face of all the attendant challenges.

The book focuses extensively on the strategies for curbing corruption in the public sector cutting across federal, state and local government administrations. But, our recent history has shown that the private sector of the country's economy could be the agent provocateur, instigator, or mastermind of corruption as exemplified by the cases of Cecilia Ibru, Erastus Akingbola, etc.

Corruption in the public sector has taken on new forms and this requires our anti-corruption agencies to match-up with the new manifestations of corruption. In the Public Service, for instance, aside from outright embezzlement of funds, budgets are often not implemented as approved. The accounting officers erroneously believe that they have the right to implement the Annual Appropriation Act of their MDAs the best way that suits their fancy. The illegal virement of funds from one vote head to another in criminal breach of the Appropriation Act is a recurring phenomenon in most MDAs.

Another form of public sector corruption is the willful abuse of office by unscrupulous heads of government agencies and parastatals. There had been reported cases of people being offered employment only after they had paid bribes to some syndicates. In some other instances, some public servants were reported to have paid for their promotions, postings/deployment, and every other thing that ordinarily ought to be determined by merit. These and

other new forms of corruption are dangerous as they are beginning to worsen the decadent state of our public sector administration.

If our country will be great again, we need to prosecute this anti-corruption war with renewed vigor. I agree with the author that our anti-corruption agencies must deepen their collaborative efforts and be proactive in all ramifications. They should frustrate the plan of culprits to impede the wheel of justice through frivolous court injunctions. It is not enough to commence prosecution of culprits; our anti-corruption agencies should be persistent in pursuit of justice until convictions are handed down to the offenders.

Dr. David U. Enwerenmadu's book, though a historical treatise on the challenges of implementing anti-corruption policy in Nigeria's complex federal system of government, is a scientific piece on account of the incredible capacity demonstrated by the author in systematizing and analyzing historical facts on the subject of his preoccupation. The book is a detailed literature on anti-corruption efforts in Nigeria during the Obasanjo years. I, therefore, recommend this book to all Nigerians that are interested in seeing a better Nigeria devoid of corruption, especially our anti-corruption agencies which have the challenge of convincing Nigerians that they are capable to rout corruption to its marrow.

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