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## **Corruption and Regional Integration in Africa: the West Africa Experience**

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### **Abstract**

Corruption across the world has indeed become a hydra-headed challenge to the issues of regional integration and development most especially amongst the developing nations. Several attempts to curb this menace in some cases have met unprecedented setbacks. The setbacks unfortunately are orchestrated by “Corruption” itself. This study therefore, made attempt to critically review the phenomenon in Western African countries as developing nations, vis-à-vis the degree of integration and development To that, a thematic or content analytical method was adopted. The findings amongst others showed that; Indeed corruption is dangerous for any nations socio-economic development. We therefore, recommend thus, that efforts to curb corruption should be intensified and be made more effective and to cut across all spheres of life.

**Keywords:** *Corruption, Regional integration*

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## **Background to the Study**

*Corruption represents a threat "...to the stability and security of societies, undermining the institutions of democracy, ethical values and justice and jeopardizing sustainable development and the rule of law". – Preamble to the UN Convention on Corruption*

Corruption has always existed in different forms, and is not determined by politics or geography. It exists in rich and poor countries alike, it involves both individual States and international organizations and its costs are borne by the citizens. It affects the proper running of governments, distorts the correct functioning of economic and political institutions and hampers transparency, exploits the human person for selfish interests, renders respect for rules obsolete and is a manifestation of structural sin (Nduku, 2014).

Illas (2006) Clearly affirmed that corruption is presently one of the major challenges facing the human race. The world over, corruption is increasingly being seen as a threat to human existence to the extent that some commentators have called for it to be recognized as a 'crime against humanity

**It** is indeed very worrisome to realizing that after over 50 years of independence coupled with the tremendous technological increase across the world, West African States still heading from bad to worst. The situation has come to a point where everyone now knows that there is a problem but indeed nobody provides an answer. Yes, as a proverbial lyric has it, "there is indeed fire on the mountain, but no one is running". Nobody is taking responsibility for the happenings, not even the leaders. West Africans are disillusioned by their leaders who have failed to deliver the good governance, secure the welfare of persons on the principles of freedom, equality and justice and for the purpose of consolidating the unity of the people. The heterogeneity that ought to be our major uniting force has become the saddest omen. Scholars across the world have hinged the major cause of the poor situation in West Africa today to corruption. In fact, it is the bane of every development in any that nation that wants development in all sincerity. There is absolutely no way a nation that thrives in corruption, can succeed in the journey to greatness.

However, we have followed the trend in West Africa and even across the world and even the developed economies of the world. While condemning the menace of corruption, one would sometimes may need to ask, do we really need a zero corruption?. While we await the answer to this question, an attention should be taken more on the ills the nation has been as a result of corruption then marry it in line with the previous regimes where we felt that corruption has taken over the country and then the outcome will give us the needed answer.

This paper therefore, made that attempt to review the concept of corruption, regional integration and make present a modest approach of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the effort towards a better Economic development of the West African States as well as its challenges vis-à-vis corruption and thus, make conclusions and recommendations.

## Conceptual Clarifications

### Corruption

Atuobi (2007) aptly noted that, there is no universally agreed definition for corruption. The difficulty in coming up with a universally accepted definition is due to the fact that what constitutes an act of corruption differs from state to state and culture to culture. The most acceptable definitions of corruption had come from the legal realm. But legal-based universally accepted definition of corruption has also been challenged on account that “legal traditions also change over time and are highly inter-related with the socio-political and cultural context.” The danger in the lack of universalized but culture-relative definition of corruption is the tendency for corrupt individuals to hide behind the cultural antics to perpetuate corrupt practices at the expense of society in general.

The lack of consensus on a common definition of corruption as a social, political, security and development issue has led to the outpouring of several definitions. The United Nations Manual on Anti-Corruption (UNMAC) (2001) defines corruption as:

*“An abuse of public power for private gain that hampers the public interest. This gain may be direct or indirect.... Corruption entails a confusion of the private with the public sphere or an illicit exchange between the two spheres. In essence, corrupt practices involve public officials acting in the best interest of private concerns (their own or those of others) regardless of, or against, the public interest.”*

The above definition falls short in several respects. One, it does not capture private sector corruption which is equally distractive to investment and economic growth. Secondly, it refrains from naming what constitute an act of corruption. Thirdly, the definition does not mention who the holders of “public power” are.

However, Iyanda (2012) noted that, corruption is a common word used by both adults and children because it is found in every aspect of Nigeria. This monster called corruption has now been nick named in most Nigerian languages especially in the three major languages! Ndokwu (2004) says: the Igbos call it Igbuozu, the Yorubas call it Egunje while the Hausas call it Chuachua. People no longer frown or feel ashamed to engage in corrupt practices! Chuachua/Egunje or Igbuozu is now acceptable and it is possible to hear someone openly complaining that there is no Chuachua, Egunje or Igbuozu at his or her place of work and as such a person might quickly resign if he or she finds another work where there is opportunity for Chuachua. It is as bad as that!

Also, Aluko (2009) opined that the menace of corruption, has led to situations like slow movement of files in offices, police extortion of toll fees, port congestion, queues at passport offices and petrol stations, ghost workers syndrome, election irregularities, among others (Dike, 2005, Ihenacho, 2004, Oliyide and Odeku, 2002 and Oloja 2002 in Aluko, (2009).

Ekiyor (2005) in his broad view of corruption defined it as the unlawful use of official power or influence by an official of the government either to enrich himself or further his course and/or any other person at the expense of the public, in contravention of his oath of office and/or contrary to the conventions or laws that are in force. It is very unfortunate that this menace knows not any time nor period; it happens anytime or period of any nation's history. According to Gould and Kolb (1964) in support of the above contend that corruption is not a

characteristic of a one period in political history nor of any one country....it is endemic in both authoritarian and party systems of government. Further still as an evidence that the history of corruption is as old as the world, Scott (1972) is of the view that corruption 'must be understood as a regular, repetitive and integral part of the operation of most political system'. Another view about corruption is that it is intentional. This view was heralded by Brooks in (1970) who believed the corrupt official knows his duties "but it is neglected or mis-performed for reasons narrower than those which the state intends. He went further to say the difference between a corrupt official and inefficient one is that "the corrupt official must know the better and choose the worse (but) the inefficient official does not know any better".

Interestingly, Minakimes (2009) observed that corruption still as a common phenomenon found not only in the so called developing countries and societies, but also in the developed societies such as Europe, America, Japan and the former Soviet Union regardless of their structural and cultural differences. Some authors have argued that corruption is prevalent in third world countries however; evidence has shown that corruption is even prevalent in developed countries and each country be it in developing or developed world devices suitable method to deal with corruption. For instance a U.S Fluor a multinational construction firm according to Minakimes (2009) was quoted to have said that:

*Fighting corruption and bribery, CEO Allan Boeckman helped developed a cross industry sharing program of best practices, along with a set of strict principles to follow. Fluor uses a combination of an ethics hotline for reporting crime, an open door policy to encourage managers to consult with executives for guidance, anti-corruption training sessions, a "zero-tolerance" policy for infractions and overall transparency in its operations to minimize inappropriate behaviours.*

However, the above asserts the crux of this paper in that a society without corruption would not have put in place an anti-corruption training session. This further proves that corruption does not know boundary, culture, society and that there is no human occupation that is immunized against its practices.

Obasanjo (2004) as reported by Afolabi (2007) enumerated the various forms of corruption to include fee fraud (known as 419), money laundering, unconventional and fraudulent trade practices, misappropriation or diversion of funds, kickbacks, under and over invoicing, bribery, false declarations, abuse of office, and collection of illegal tolls. Other contextual meanings include the impairment of integrity, virtue or moral principles, and an unauthorized use of resources for private gain. Adigun (2004) by way of contextualizing corruption within the territory of public service listed such factors as pervasion of public rules and misuse of official power for selfish motive, and the frustration of electoral process to make free and fair election impossible. Other forms of corruption to him are the deliberate refusal to declare one's assets on the assumption and expiration of public office and of course using one's official status to prevent the administration of justice which is common by the executives (past and present) of different capacities in Nigeria.

Alanamu (2009) succinctly noted that corruption is like a disease that can cause total pathology for an organization and in relation to society, corruption can affect the economic, social, political and the moral aspect of the society as it is the case in Nigeria. The assertion invariably summed up the entire issue. It pointed out the salient view clearly.

### **Types of Corruption**

Ahmad (2011) identified three types of corruption in a democratic society: They are;

- i. Grand Corruption
- ii. Bureaucratic Corruption
- iii. Legislative Corruption

**Grand Corruption:** It generally refers to the acts of the political elite (selected officials) by which they exploit their power to make economic policies (Krugger 1993). A corrupt political elite can change either the national policies or the implementation of national policies to serve its own interests at some cost to the populace; public spending is diverted to these sectors where gains from corruption are greatest; also little attention is paid to whether the needs of the collectivity are served by those works or services (Porta and Vannucci 1997). This type of corruption is difficult to identify and measure especially when at least some segments of the population will gain. This type of corruption may have very serious consequences for a society. To study the link between this type of corruption and the cost of misdirected public policies is difficult because of the lack of precise measurements tools.

However, the extreme situations of this type of corruption are somewhat easier to study where a dictator makes no distinction between his own wealth and that of the country or makes policy decisions that serve exclusively his own interests.

**Bureaucratic Corruption:** This is the corrupt acts of the appointed bureaucrats in their dealings with either their superior (the political elite) or with the public. In its most common form, usually known as petty corruption, the public may be required to bribe bureaucrats either to receive a service to which they are entitled or to speed up a bureaucratic procedure. Corruption in the judiciary, where bribes can lower either the costs or the chances of legal penalties (Rose-Ackerman 1998) is another form of this type of corruption. Models for this type of corruption have relied on equilibrium in markets for supply and demand of services which in turn leads to the analysis of costs and revenues associated with these services.

**Legislative Corruption:** This refers to the manner and the extent to which the voting behavior of legislators can be influenced. Legislators can be bribed by interest groups to enact legislation that can change the economic rents associated with assets. This type of corruption would include "vote-buying". (Rose-Ackerman 1999)

### **Causes of Corruption**

Osegbue & Madubueze (2017) have argued that, the causes of corruption revolves around these three key issues such as; Failure of leadership, - Poor political ideology, - Ethnocentrism, - Religious belief. To them, these issues are germane as they constitute over 53% of the reasons why people engage in corrupt activities.

Also, Mauro (1996) in Ahmad (2011) identified the following as the root causes of corruption. They include;

1. Motivation to earn income is extremely strong due to:
  - a) Poverty.
  - b) Low salaries (wages).
  - c) High risks of all kinds (illness, accidents and unemployment); (lack of insurance).

2. Opportunities to engage in corruption are numerous, more regulations lead to higher opportunities for corruption.
3. Weak legislative and judicial systems:
4. Law and principles of ethics are poorly developed.
5. Population relative to natural resources is large.
6. Political instability and weak political will.

### **Effects of Corruption**

We can summarize the consequences of corruption as follows according to Ahmad (2011):

1. Lower investment, including foreign direct investment.
2. Reduced Economic growth.
3. A shift in the composition of government spending from more productive to less productive activities.
4. Greater inequality and high incidence of poverty.
5. Reducing the efficiency of aid.
6. Exposing the country to currency crises.

### **Regional Integration in West Africa: the Issue of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)**

West Africa, also called Western Africa and the West of Africa, is the western most sub region of Africa. West Africa has been defined as including 18 countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, the island nation of Cape Verde, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, the island of Saint Helena, Senegal, Sierra Leone, São Tomé and Príncipe and Togo. The population of West Africa is estimated at over 349 million people as of 2015. Islam is the predominant religion of 70% of the population, with smaller amounts practicing Christianity and Traditional African religions. The history of West Africa can be divided into five major periods: first, its prehistory, in which the first human settlers arrived, developed agriculture, and made contact with peoples to the north; the second, the Iron Age empires that consolidated both intra-Africa, and extra-Africa trade, and developed centralized states; third, major polities flourished, which would undergo an extensive history of contact with non-Africans; fourth, the colonial period, in which Great Britain and France controlled nearly the entire region; and fifth, the post-independence era, in which the current nations were formed.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in its 2015 report on an “assessment of progress towards regional integration in the economic community of West African States since its inception” noted that one of the most compelling justifications for regional integration in the continents is a key desire for greater economic independence and development. Balassa (1961) identifies five different meanings or degrees, ranging from the lowest to the highest free trade area, customs union, common market, economic union, total economic integration. This last degree, or final phase, of the process requires the creation of a common entity which will make decisions on several domains, mainly in the economic, political and social domains, on behalf of the group and in compliance with modalities agreed upon beforehand.

According to the UNEC Report (2015), ECOWAS is the main regional economic community in West Africa wherein the continental integration process, as advocated by the African Union, should take shape. All 15 countries of the sub-region are members. In view of the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of ECOWAS in 2015, the Sub-Regional Office for West

Africa, working within the scope of its 2014-2015 biennial programmes, decided to carry out a critical study on the status of regional integration within this sub-region.

The pursuit of the goal of integration in West Africa can be seen as a process which is at once legitimate and natural. It is abundantly justified by reasons that are both theoretical and practical. West Africa is indeed composed of regional ethno-linguistic settlement areas that political borders resulting from colonization came to divide up in an entirely artificially manner. In fact, West African people are historically integrated and it is the States which stem from the colonization that have set up barriers to this integration. Moreover, in a context of increased globalization, integration also remains a powerful means for economic and social development, especially for low-income countries. Thus, several historical attempts were made to integrate the countries of the sub-region, particularly in the period around independence in 1960. To crown it all, an Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established, on 28 May 1975, by the Lagos Treaty (Nigeria), which brought together all the countries of West Africa.

The objectives assigned to the Community by this initial treaty (article 2) were, at the beginning, essentially economic: to promote co-operation and development in all fields of economic activity, accelerated and sustained economic development of Member States through effective economic cooperation and progressive integration of economies. Several initiatives undertaken after the establishment of ECOWAS have helped to strengthen its institutional architecture and to deepen its common policies, thereby generating significant achievements in the sub-regional integration process. Signed on 24 July 1993 in Cotonou, the revised Treaty goes well beyond economic matters: establishing cooperation notably in the political and security domains, granting the Community powers to sanction, which demonstrates the desire to make ECOWAS an active player in international law in Africa and worldwide.

To achieve these ambitious goals and enable ECOWAS to assume all its responsibilities, it is not surprising to observe that the institutional arrangements of the Community have evolved significantly from one treaty to the other. Thus, in addition to the Authority of Heads of State and Government, the Council of Ministers, the Executive Secretariat and Specialized Technical Commissions, institutions which already existed in the 1975 Treaty, four (4) new institutions were added in the 1993 Treaty, as follows: (i) The Community Parliament; (ii) The Economic and Social Council (which is yet to be set up); (iii) The Community Court of Justice, which replaces the Community Tribunal in the initial Treaty; (iv) The Fund for Co-operation, Compensation and Development, established by the initial Treaty, but without the status of a Community Institution and which has now been raised here to that rank.

Moreover, in 2007, building on 32 years of the Community's existence, the Authority of Heads of State and Government decided to transform the Executive Secretariat into a Commission, with larger prerogatives and leeway for more active role in the integration process. In accordance with this structural change, the Commission, headed by a President and assisted by a Vice-President, also comprises seven (7) Commissioners who head the seven Departments which correspond to the activity sectors of the Community. In 2013, the Commission was restructured, with the number of Commissioners increasing from 9 (including the President and the Vice-President) to 15; thus each Member State has one Commissioner. From a legal point of view, progress will be considerable as community law



becomes directly applicable in the territory of Member States, in respect of the following Community Acts: (i) Supplementary Acts passed by the Authority of Heads of State and Government ; (ii) Regulations, Directives, Decisions and Recommendations passed by the Council of Ministers.

Today, ECOWAS is an international sub-regional organization, which ranks among the most important ones in Africa, and which, other than its Commission composed of eight (8) Specialized Agencies. Originally established as an organization for purely economic cooperation, the Economic Community of West African States has transformed itself into a real integration organization, with what this entire concept entails from a legal perspective, notably the partial abandonment of sovereignty. The various member countries of ECOWAS, through acts and decisions passed during Conferences of Heads of State and Government and at ministerial meetings, have continually reaffirmed their attachment to deepening regional integration (see Table 2 below) and their total ownership of the regional integration project in West Africa.

However, this political will, though manifest, did not match the high expectations, thus reducing the effectiveness of the measures taken. Several examples can be cited to illustrate this: (i) delays in the ratification and implementation of Community instruments; (ii) Member States partial compliance with the rules established in the Protocol on the Community levy; this partial compliance is linked to practices border on the estimation, the collection and payment of the proceeds from the levy, which leads to accumulation of arrears by Member States vis-à-vis ECOWAS.

ECOWAS activities are monitored in countries through National Coordinating Committees and National Units, and sometimes by special representatives (appointed to countries in conflict and post-conflict situations, ECOWAS has chosen not to have Permanent Delegations in Member States). All these structures contribute to strengthening the sense of community in member countries. These units which play a crucial role in building a sense of community, within ECOWAS, often face several difficulties as observed during visits to countries. ECOWAS will also gain by improving its website and enriching its content by posting a large amount of information on instruments, community budgets, policies and initiatives taken by ECOWAS. ECOWAS has been designed as a means of ensuring development through economic and social integration. In general, implementation levels widely differ from one domain of integration to another. Three classes may be defined for this purpose. The first class includes domains in which regional integration is particularly advanced. This is notably the case with the free movement of persons and right of residence which, roughly speaking, works relatively well. The domain of peace and security can also be included in this class, although efforts are still needed to strengthen the operational and rapid response capacities of ECOWAS forces. It is the same for the supervision of electoral processes for which the credibility of ECOWAS is now without a shadow of a doubt. This set of domains that show good performances together constitute the strength of ECOWAS and deserve to be consolidated constantly, in a bid to avoid losing the gains made.

The second class includes domains in which real progress has been made in terms of the integration of policies of the Member States but where huge constraints remain on the ground as a result of practical realities, sometimes for reasons related to the lack of capacity or the behaviour of government employees. This class includes the domain of the free movement of

goods, services and capital. This class also includes the domain of monetary union which, despite some progress in terms of institutional reforms, is still struggling to win the full support of member countries, which are unable to meet the convergence criteria considered as prerequisites for monetary unification. It also includes the domain of governance where ECOWAS has no genuine mechanism for monitoring the conduct of its members.

Lastly, the third class includes integration domains in which ECOWAS performs only marginally, mainly because of a lack of funding for ECOWAS programmes (case of the Common Industrial Policy) or of insufficient political will shown by the Member States (as in the Mining Policy). Concerning the continental integration project, in its Revised Treaty of 1993 (Article 54), ECOWAS set out to achieve the status of an Economic Union within a period of fifteen (15) years from the start of the trade liberalization scheme in January 1990, that is by 2005 and twelve (12) years ahead of the target date set by the Abuja Treaty, which is in 2017. In Article 55 of the Revised Treaty, ECOWAS goes further by aspiring to establish an Economic and Monetary Union, thus in 2010, in other words, eighteen (18) ahead of the establishment of the African currency (scheduled in 2028).

Indeed, the policies of ECOWAS have inspired many programmes of the African Union. With regard to trade liberalization, ECOWAS witnessed a ten year delay at the regional level in achieving its planned Customs Union, whose initial target date was set for 2005 and is now targeted to start in 2015. The Regional Community thus fulfills the continental objectives of setting up a Customs Union in the RECs latest in 2017. The same ten-year delay has been recorded in the ECOWAS plan to achieve an *Economic and Monetary Union*, endowed with a single currency and a single Central Bank. The target date of 2010 has thus been pushed to 2020. But, at present, nothing guarantees that this objective can be achieved, given the difficulties encountered in the implementation of the Community convergence programme and the obstacles to real ownership at the political level.

Concerning the *free movement of persons*, ECOWAS, is well ahead of all the other regions and the system works relatively well, although there some implementation difficulties observed sometimes. Concerning *sectoral policies*, ECOWAS has established Community policies in all sectors mentioned in the Revised Treaty of 1993. However, their real impact on the field is still mixed.

### **Critical challenges of ECOWAS**

Since its inception in 1975, ECOWAS has made several achievements in the various fields of integration identified in the initial Treaty as well as the revised Treaty. At the same time, it has faced a number of constraints, which constitute challenges to be met, and which have hampered the implementation of common sectoral policies and programmes:

- i. The challenge of Community discipline in the Member States;
- ii. The challenge of creating value and ensuring effectiveness in ECOWAS programmes;
- iii. The challenge of good coordination between ECOWAS and sub-regional IGOs;
- iv. The challenge of Community project ownership by the populations ;
- v. The challenge of successfully integrating ECOWAS into the global continental integration project.

### ECOWAS and the Challenges of Corruption in Western Africa

Western Africa in contemporary times has continued to lag behind other regions in the world. The grim situation of West Africa can be summarized in the words of Rwekaza et al (2006) who observed that 'while other regions increased per capita, raised literacy rates and improved healthcare, per capita income in Africa was roughly the same in 1990s as it was at independence in the 1960s'. West Africa's development has stagnated and declined significantly over the years, with nearly half of the region's population living on less than a dollar a day, thus representing 30 percent of the world's poor in the 1990s and even the first decade of 2000. West Africa persistently ranks at or near the bottom in global comparisons of social indicators. This state of affairs is mainly attributable to the culture of impunity, corruption and bad governance.

According to the Ghana Governance Survey (2007) in Atuobi (2007), Until independence, the opportunities for self-enrichment were limited; the principal beneficiaries of colonial rule were the European elite, officials and businessmen, enjoying a lifestyle which the Africa elite aspired to emulate but were largely prevented from reaching. Independence unlocked the floodgate [of corruption]. Politicians used their public office to extract 'commissions' at every available opportunity. The common cut on government contracts in West Africa was 10 per cent. In numerous cases, prominent politicians simply looted the state treasury, transferring money to their private accounts.

Fanon (1961) observed that scandals in West Africa are numerous, ministers grow rich, their wives doll themselves up, the members of parliament feather their nests and there is not a soul down to the simple policemen or the customs officer who does not join in the great procession of corruption. Also, Lewis (1965) stated that corruption in West Africa existed through the vast pickings in bribes, state contracts, diversion of public funds to private uses, and commissions of various sorts. He added that "to be a Minister in West Africa at the time was to have a lifetime's chance to make fortune. In time, bribery and corruption became a way of life, accepted as a means of getting by, earning a living, obtaining a service or avoiding hassle.

**Table 1 Ranks and Score of West Africa Countries – Corruption Perception Index 2006**

| World Rank | Africa Rank | West Africa Rank | Country                | Score |
|------------|-------------|------------------|------------------------|-------|
| 1          | -           | -                | Finland <sup>57</sup>  | 8.0   |
| 37         | 1           | -                | Botswana <sup>58</sup> | 5.6   |
| 70         | 7           | 1                | Ghana                  | 3.3   |
| 70         | 7           | 1                | Senegal                | 3.3   |
| 79         | 10          | 2                | Burkina Faso           | 3.2   |
| 99         | 19          | 2                | Mali                   | 2.8   |
| 121        | 24          | 3                | Benin                  | 2.5   |
| 121        | 24          | 3                | Gambia                 | 2.5   |
| 130        | 28          | 4                | Togo                   | 2.4   |
| 138        | 33          | 5                | Niger                  | 2.3   |
| 142        | 35          | 6                | Nigeria                | 2.2   |
| 142        | 35          | 6                | Sierra Leone           | 2.2   |
| 151        | 40          | 7                | Côte                   | 2.1   |
| 156        | 42          | 9                | D'Ivoire               | 1.9   |
| 160        | 45          |                  | Guinea                 |       |

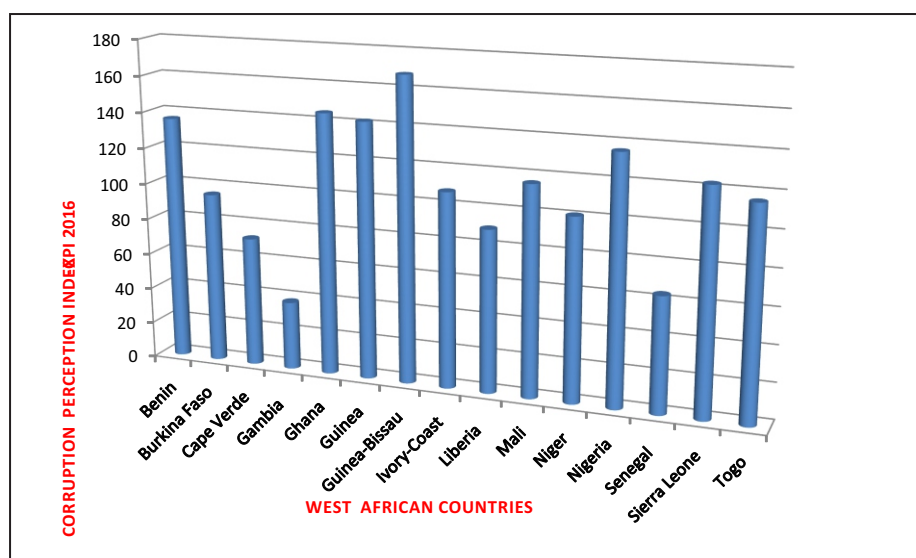
**Source:** Transparency International CPI – 2006: Culled from Atuobi (2007) - KAIPTC Occasional Paper

**Table 2 ECOWAS Countries and their Corruption Perception Index - 2016**

| S/N | Country       | World Rank        | Rank in Africa   | Percentile Score |
|-----|---------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1   | Benin         | 136 <sup>th</sup> | 12 <sup>th</sup> | 3.6              |
| 2   | Burkina Faso  | 95 <sup>th</sup>  | -                | 4.2              |
| 3   | Cape Verde    | 72 <sup>nd</sup>  | -                | 5.9              |
| 4   | Gambia        | 38 <sup>th</sup>  | 21 <sup>st</sup> | 2.6              |
| 5   | Ghana         | 145 <sup>th</sup> | 7 <sup>th</sup>  | 4.3              |
| 6   | Guinea        | 142 <sup>th</sup> | 14 <sup>th</sup> | 2.7              |
| 7   | Guinea-Bissau | 168 <sup>th</sup> | 6 <sup>th</sup>  | 1.6              |
| 8   | Ivory-Coast   | 108 <sup>th</sup> | -                | 3.4              |
| 9   | Liberia       | 90 <sup>th</sup>  | 2 <sup>nd</sup>  | 3.7              |
| 10  | Mali          | 116 <sup>th</sup> | -                | 3.2              |
| 11  | Niger         | 101 <sup>st</sup> | -                | 3.5              |
| 12  | Nigeria       | 136 <sup>th</sup> | 18 <sup>th</sup> | 2.8              |
| 13  | Senegal       | 64 <sup>th</sup>  | -                | 4.5              |
| 14  | Sierra Leone  | 123 <sup>rd</sup> | 24 <sup>th</sup> | 3.0              |
| 15  | Togo          | 116 <sup>th</sup> | 21 <sup>st</sup> | 3.2              |

**Sources:** Compiled by Authors from Transparency International – CPI -2016

**Table 3: Bar Chart Illustrations of Corruption Perception Index – CPI- 2016.**



**Sources:** Computed by Authors from documents from Transparency International CPI- 2016

From the above tables, in Table 1.1 it indicates that out of the 160 countries polled in 2006 no West African state ranked among the first 50 states, only 4 (Ghana, Senegal, Burkina Faso and Mali) appeared in the next 50 (51-100). Nine (Benin, Gambia, Togo, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Côte D'Ivoire and Guinea) fell among the last 60 (100-160) most corrupt countries. None of the West African states featured in the 2006 CPI scored a pass mark of 5 points or above: rather their scores ranged between 3.3 (highest) to 1.9 (lowest).

West African States do not perform well on the Africa rankings either: Only three countries – Ghana, Senegal and Burkina Faso – are ranked among the first ten least corrupt countries in Africa; one country (Mali) featured in the next ten (11-20). Three countries (Togo, Gambia and Benin) are ranked among the third tens (30-39) and the next three (Cote d'Ivoire, Chad and Guinea) are among the last four tens (40-49). Previous CPIs (2001 – 2005) have also ranked most West African countries among the most corrupt in the world: Chad, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Niger scored below 2.5 out of the highest score of 10. Apart from Nigeria, CPIs before 2001 did not include any West Africa country.

Although a recent report by the World Bank praised Ghana, Liberia and Niger for making gains in the fight against corruption, it however, added that “some West African countries ... are more corrupt than ever”. The report identified Nigeria and Cote D'Ivoire as worse cases of corruption in West Africa (UNRIN Report, 2007). The prevalence of corruption in the sub-region has become a great source of concern due to its negative impact on the social, political and economic health of states in the region.

In Table 1.2, arising from the study conducted in 2016 by the same body (Transparency International), the situation of most West African Nations are worst than they were in 2006. Ghana for examples in 2006 were is at the 70<sup>th</sup> least corrupt country in the World but in 2016, Ghana is currently at 145<sup>th</sup>. Countries that are seemed to be fairly doing averagely well are Gambia, Cape Verde, and Senegal. The implication therefore, suggests that the West African countries are nothing to write home. It therefore, behooves on ECOWAS to seat up to her responsibility in West Africa.

### **Consequences of Corruption in West Africa**

Lawal (2007) noted that in the words of Chinua Achebe are very clear on the effects of corruption in Africa, when he said: “Without doubt, corruption has permeated the African society and anyone who can say that corruption in Africa has not become alarming is either a fool, a crook or else does not live in this continent.

Also, Lumumba (2014) observed that, there is abounding evidence in developing countries indicating that corruption negatively affects growth and development. In the words of Kofi Annan, the former United Nations Secretary General, 'corruption undermines economic performance, weakens democratic institutions and the rule of law, disrupts social order and destroys public trust, thus allowing organised crime, terrorism and other threats to human security to flourish, and it is always the public good that suffers.

The cost of corruption can be classified into four factors according to Okolo & Akpokighe (2014) which are;

- i. Political,
- ii. Economic,
- iii. Social, and
- iv. Environmental.

On the political front corruption constitutes a major obstacle to democracy and the rule of law .In a democratic system, offices and institution lose their legitimacy when they are misused for private advantage. This is harmful to our democracy. Our democracy and political leadership cannot develop in a corrupt climate.

Economically, corruption leads to the depletion of our national wealth. It has led to the use of scarce projects such as power plants pipelines that cost billions whereas if these were channel towards building schools, hospitals and roads or the supply of Electricity and water to rural areas which are basic needs of life. This has hindered the development of fair market structures which has led to job losses and also affects investment.

On the social ladder, the people have lost their trust in the political system. In its institutions and leadership, they have developed non-chalant attitude and general apathy towards government policies resulting in a weak civil society. Environmental degradation is yet another consequence of corrupt systems. The non enforcement of environmental regulations and legislation has led to the pollution of the environment in Nigeria. Careless exploitation of Natural resources from oil and minerals by domestic and international agents hassled to ravaged natural environments affecting the health of her citizens .Most environmental devastating project are given preference in funding, because they are easy target for siphoning of public funds into private pockets.

### **Suggestions**

Corruption as at today is a global phenomenon and therefore Countries are struggling to get rid of it in all standards. As a region, we therefore, recommend as follows;

ECOWAS as a matter of exigency is in need of restructuring refocus and a renewed commitment to a select and achievable list of goals with a clearly definable plan based on simple principles that the average citizen can understand, take part in and benefit from. Mingle (2003) and Geda and Kibret (2002) all argue that meaningful development within ECOWAS will be illusive if numerous legal instruments and Structures are not in place to address conflicts by the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government.

Restoration of indigenous values and institutions: West African indigenous values and systems were for the most part debunked by first, the missionaries, and then the colonialists in a much more forceful manner. Indigenous solutions to corruption must once again be explored followed by the rediscovery of indigenous systems of administration. Rwanda has successfully done the latter through the Gacaca, Abunzi, Umuganda, Umudugudu and other indigenous systems. The above is by no means a call for West African Christians and Muslims to revert to African traditional religion as is often perceived whenever the indigenous is mentioned. Far from it. The merging of West Africa's social, cultural, and moral values with its religion was the handiwork of some over-zealous missionaries and racist colonialists. West Africans have come of age to separate between religion and other causes and to realize that one can be fully functioning in his chosen religion and still abide by several positively rewarding indigenous values.

Regional assistants from ECOWAS member States in strengthening of anti-graft institutions: Strong anti-graft institutions are a necessity across the West African States, as in any other part of the world. Governments across West African nations should appoint credible and determined individuals who may even be nationals of other African countries, to take up the fight against corruption in the high and low places. A strengthened judiciary is a necessity in this respect.

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