

GOVERNMENT PROPAGANDA AND THE FUEL SUBSIDY PROTESTS IN NIGERIA: MATTERS ARISING

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria literally went up in flames in the first two weeks of January 2012, following the shocking decision by the Nigerian Government to increase the pump price of premium motor spirit, popularly known as petrol. In an effort to douse the tension generated by the decision, the government launched a spirited propaganda campaign to regain its place in the hearts of the people. This paper therefore assesses the government's propaganda and the matters that arose there from. It anchors its theoretical framework on the agenda setting theory in which the media are said to be stunningly successful in telling people what to think about even though they might not succeed in telling people what to think. The propaganda message centred on the need to trust President Goodluck Jonathan and support the withdrawal of petroleum subsidy. For this to be achieved, government deployed a huge financial outlay, buying premium spaces in the print media and making incursions in the electronic segment where it controls the two networks on radio and television. Some of the issues arising from the decision included accountability in public office, incoherence of government, corruption, inflation, credibility of government officials, among others. It was recommended that governments should take the social contract between them and their peoples seriously, with increased need for transparency and accountability while improving the mechanism for monitoring government activities.

Key words – propaganda, perception, credibility, public opinion, mass media

INTRODUCTION

Many commentators simply see democracy as “government of the people, by the people and for the people”. This simple but widespread appreciation of democracy came under great stress in Nigeria following the crippling national strike which occurred between January 9-17, 2012. The strike called by the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC) in addition to Civil Society Organisations was in reaction to the January 1, 2012 sudden withdrawal of petroleum subsidy by the Goodluck Ebele Jonathan government which instantly shot up the price of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) from N65 per litre to between N141-N150, well over 100% increase. The economy went up in flames literally as prices and consumer goods and, in fact, practically every product or service went up.

In reaction to the unilateral decision, the labour unions and civil society organisation gave government a one week ultimatum to revert to the pre-January 1 2012 price. But the government had obviously made up its mind on the issue and therefore stuck to its guns. By January 9, 2012 labour made good its threat and called out all Nigerian workers and business persons to down tools. The strike was devastating in its impact. Mass protests were organized in Lagos, former capital and epicentre of Nigeria’s radicalism; Ilorin, Benin, Abuja, Kano and other towns in the country. Even though the organizers had called for peaceful protests, it could not be said to be entirely peaceful as security agents overreacted here and there which led to the death of some persons.

In taking the decision to increase petrol pump price, the government displayed rare insensitivity towards the poor masses of Nigeria who struggle to eke out a living under very excruciating circumstances. Infrastructure remains in a terrible state of disrepair – electricity is practically non-existent; roads are in a pitiable state, potable water and basic facilities remain outside the purvey of the ordinary Nigerians. In fact, it is a sad commentary about the state of Nigeria that a citizen would have to provide housing for himself and this family. Besides, he has to provide a road or make the one that leads to his house possible; he has to provide water and worry about security. It is a nightmare!

Against this backdrop, and also the blood letting of the dreaded Islamic fundamentalist group, Boko Haram, it was most unexpected that the government would unleash a new price regime that was totally unacceptable to a vast majority of the populace. Many had thought that government would concentrate its energies on the huge security challenges on its hand, particularly the constant bombings by the Boko Haram and other security-related issues, so it was like throwing petrol at a burning house. The consequence was predictable.

As a commentator for *Daily Sun* (January 26, 2012) had noted, “if President Jonathan had listened sufficiently to radio and television or read the papers, he would have seen that there was, and still is, a strong though not necessarily substantial, number who saw the good intention behind his deregulation policy....” However, everybody, including more ardent supporters of the government, does not believe the policy has been well managed. Even till this day, the deregulation policy has remained inactive while the effects of the fuel price hike have continued to wreak havoc on the economy with the poor being in dire straits.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Given the fluidity in meanings, there is need to clearly define some terms as they are used in this work. The words of concern include; propaganda, perception, credibility, public opinion and mass media.

Propaganda: Propaganda has acquired several connotations overtime, even though it began rather innocuously as a means of ‘propagating’ information, ideas and viewpoints.

The word ‘propaganda’ could be said to even have ecclesiastical beginnings as Pope Urban VIII established in 1633 the congregatio de Propaganda fide, otherwise known as the ‘congregation of propaganda’ or simply ‘The Propaganda’, a committee of cardinals which had, and still has, charge of the foreign missions of the church (Brown,1963 p.10). Apparently, the essence of this committee was to evangelise areas that did not have the opportunity to receive the ‘civilizing’ influence of Christianity. Perhaps the use to which the Nazi Government put propaganda must have coloured, in important ways, the perception or propaganda and how people relate with the word.

Shultz and Godwon (1986:37) define propaganda as “written or oral information which deliberately seeks to influence and, or manipulate the opinions and attitudes of a given target grouping”. On his part, Qualter (1962) sees propaganda as “the deliberate attempt by some individual or group to form, control or alter the attitude of other groups by use of the instrument of communication with the intention that in any given situation the reaction of those influenced will be that desired by the propagandist”.

However, in its current usage, propaganda, still struggling to shrug off its negative perception, has to do with ‘bombarding’ people with certain messages in such a way and manner that the recipients are compelled to accept the message. In a way, it has to do with persuading people to accept positions; it deals with influence. The struggle to influence is not limited to individuals trying to influence friends, it also includes relatives or neighbours trying to persuade others to accept certain positions; it even extends to manufacturers seeking to influence consumers about their products; preachers working on their congregations and, of course, government trying to win the favourable opinions of their citizens. In all cases, while communication is important in propaganda it must be noted that action always reinforces or repudiates an earlier stated position. People tend to believe an action they have experienced rather than what they have only read or seen in the media. Propaganda, being interested in controlling the minds of recipients, necessarily works in concert with the mass media which, Folarin (1999 p59) sees as “mind controlling agents that would be used by media handlers to influence and sway peoples minds”. Apparently, this was the intention of the Jonathan administration when in launched its blistering propaganda campaign.

Perception: Perception, for our purposes, means the ways individuals view issues, personalities, organisations, governments, etc. Although it is not usually obvious initially, perception is a powerful force in relating and dealing with others. In fact, so powerful is it that conventional wisdom has it that perception leads reality by the nose! The way people perceive issues, events, organisations or even personalities has no known formula; it is an attempt to make sense of the world they live in.

Credibility: credibility is a major issue in communication as it is hinged on the idea of believability. Over time, a communication source through consistent provision of believable and honest information, establishes a podium for his information to be readily acceptable. On the other hand, dishonest and deceptive performance in communicating with various audiences, destroys all avenues for credibility. Many governments in developing countries, especially in Nigeria, have, through previous communication efforts, demonstrated gross dishonesty. The natural outcome is that most of their pronouncements are just taken with a pinch (perhaps, a handful) of salt!

Public Opinion: According to Best (1973) as cited by Blake Haroldson (1975 p.99) public opinion is more commonly regarded as “a mass phenomenon, as an aggregation and expression of individual opinions about a public concern, expressed in such a manner as to be perceived by public decision makers”. Indeed, public opinion, usually expressed in the mass media, is often in reaction to public policy decisions that have just been announced or are already being implemented. For instance, the January 1, 2012 announcement of fuel price increase in Nigeria instantly elicited a negative reaction across the country, culminating in a crippling eight-day national strike organized by the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) in cooperation with civil society organisations.

Mass Media: Mass Media have become so pervasive in our society that only a thoroughly illiterate person can legitimately lay claim to their non existence or total lack of impact. Uyo (1987, p.1), in an attempt to define media started by throwing light on ‘medium’, its singular form, as meaning “path, way or means”. Similarly, Defleur and Dennis (1981,p.4) see mass media as “devices for moving message across distance or time to accomplish mass communication”. From the foregoing, it is somewhat safe to state that the mass media are all the channels, avenues, means through which messages are transmitted to mass audiences, usually spread across long distances. The mass media opportunities or channels that are in common use at the moment include newspapers, magazines, radio, television, the Internet and a host of others.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The agenda setting perspective has become increasingly relevant on account of the citizen’s ever-rising expectations of the mass media. As Folarin has explained (2002, p.75):

Agenda setting implies that the mass media predetermine what issues are regarded as important at a given time in a given society. Agenda setting theory does not ascribe to the media the power to determine what we actually think; but it does ascribe to them the power to determine what we are thinking about.

In helping members of a society determine what they should be thinking about, the importance of the media tends to become apparent. In drawing attention to salient issues of the day, the mass media employ a variety of professional measures such as;

- the frequent reportage of certain news stories
- the treatment of such stories e.g. the placement and space allotted to such stories
- the airtime/space and frequency of commentaries or editorials accompanying or following quickly on the heels of the stories (Folarin, 2002).

Against the backdrop of the media’s availability to all who wish to use them, both as sources of information (hard news and persuasive messages) and as consumers of media messages, they become avenues or “theatres of war” in the struggle for the attention of the relevant publics. The mass media therefore provide a free market place of ideas where competing interests and positions are robustly canvassed. It was perhaps in this context that the Federal Government of Nigeria launched, through an organisation known as Neighbour to Neighbour (N2N), a blistering propaganda campaign to counter the ground swell of public opinion which suggested a near complete rejection of the new fuel price regime.

Government Propaganda:

If anyone had any doubt about the government's determination to counter the negative public opinion following the more than 100% increase in petrol price, that doubt must have disappeared following a huge media campaign to state and defend government's position. Just a week or thereabout after the imbroglio had commenced, government 'invaded' virtually all national papers with a wrap-around advertorial, obviously the most expensive advertising space in any newspaper. One of such messages was published in *Vanguard* of January 8, 2012.

Essentially, the message entitled 'The message of Transformation' and addressed to 'Dear Compatriots' went down the memory lane to recall how the candidate Goodluck Jonathan emerged and the overwhelming support he received from across the country. Perceiving that there might have been a negative change in attitude towards the President on account of the 'anti-people' policy of fuel price increase, the authors of the message reminded the readers that "the product, the man and the message have not changed"

Attempting to put the facts straight, the authors stated among others;

Recently, the President removed subsidy on Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), otherwise known as petrol. He did it not to punish us but to PROTECT US (emphasis mine) from the cabal in the oil sector that has fed fat for several years on our sweat, on your sweat. But most importantly, to free up resources that were hitherto channelled to fund fuel subsidy for investment in infrastructure, facilities and amenities that will guarantee the GOOD LIFE (again emphasis, mine), for a few, but for all of us. Interestingly, the President has not only spelt out in clear and unambiguous terms how the proceeds and savings from the removal of the subsidy would be utilized to facilitate the attainment of the good life we all so desperately crave and deserve. He also set up a Board made up of persons of unimpeachable character and integrity to manage the proceeds, to imbue confidence in the programme and enhance transparency and accountability (p.8).

Having stated the problem, the authors assiduously listed the benefits we all stand to gain by the reinvestment of the proceeds from subsidy e.g. – rehabilitation and reconstruction of roads across the country, improvement in power generation and supply, improvement in health care delivery, creation of conducive learning environment in our educational institutions through upgraded facilities, boost in agricultural productivity and job creation resulting from the value chain derivable from the huge investment in infrastructure, among others.

The authors, however, admitted the pains of the decision, which further impoverishes the average Nigerian in the following words; "we agree that the government decision is bound to come with some shock and initial pains.... we share your pains and anxieties; but we must trust the President when he says the pains will be temporary". But added the usual government blackmail that "this is the price we all have to pay now so that our tomorrow will be better". The author rounded off clinically by asking readers to "support the removal of fuel subsidy today..."

In another message from the same organisation painting the President and his government in bright colours, the authors adopted the question approach. Published in *Sunday Vanguard* of January 15, 2012, the half page advertorial on the front page entitled “Think About this...” posed the question: “With sectors that most affect the lives of majority of Nigerians in bad state and begging for a share of our resources, is spending 1.3 trillion Naira to subsidize the price of petroleum products the right thing to do?. We think not. Imagine how N1.3 Trillion would transform the critical sectors of Nigeria’s economy”. In that same edition of *Sunday Vanguard* were two other full page ads (pages 2&3) essentially urging support for the fuel subsidy removal (or more appropriately, fuel price increase). Besides, there were news stories and interviews supporting the government decision. Most of such supporters were government ministers, other appointees and similar other people who benefit or could be in a position to benefit from the policy or just those wishing to be supporters of the President especially in his period of difficulty.

Matters arising from fuel subsidy imbroglio

As soon as government announced the bombshell of higher petrol price, the polity practically went up in flames. The anger in the land was almost to the point of explosion. Since no one could match the government on account of its financial muscles, the masses appeared to have been subdued, before the crippling national strike commenced. In any case, the people were the apparent losers as the decision further impoverished them. Certain issues became apparent during the crisis.

- **The Role of the Labour Unions:** The labour movement in Nigeria has historically been against the oppression of the working class and the ordinary Nigerians by the ruling class. So, along with the coalition of Civil Society Organisations, the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and its sister organisation, the Trade Union Congress (TUC) gave a one-week ultimatum for the Federal Government to return petrol price to the status quo of N65 per litre. Government would not hear of that, as it simply stuck to its guns! Therefore, the stage was set for what was perhaps the longest strike against the Federal Government for quite a long time.
- **The Role of the Media:** Going by the slant and prominence given to the news stories pertaining to the strike action, it is easy to deduce that many media organisations were not in support of the fuel price hike. Apart from the need to be on the side of the people, the media organisations, many of which are privately owned and run, would have to contend with higher running costs as a resulting of the government decision. However, following the strike notice given to government by the labour unions, if it would not revert to the old price, the government had sought and obtained a court injunction stopping the strike in a desperate move to stop the labour unions from actualizing their threat. Labour ignored the court ruling, insisting the strike would go on as planned, commencing on January 9, 2012. In a lead story on Sunday January 8, 2012, the Delta State Government owned and operated newspaper *The Pointer* wrote: “Fuel Subsidy Protest: labour, others set to Defy FG, Court Order, As Nigerians stock up on consumables”. Another newspaper, the *Sunday Express* carried a shouting lead headline “Fuel Hell As Organised Labour Plans to Shut down Nigeria. Angry citizens battle ready for Monday’s Strike”.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** One of the issues that arose out of the fuel price hike was the question of transparency and accountability. The propaganda messages exposed in the media, must have cost the tax payer millions of Dollars which was not accounted for in anyway. Given the huge financial outlay involved in the propaganda outing no individual would be willing to put his or her money into the image laundering project unless such a person has assurances the government would directly or indirectly refund the money. In Nigeria, from the way government officials and their

agents spend money, one is tempted to think that government fund actually belongs personally to those in government!

- **Incoherence of Government:** With a crippling strike eminent in the first week of 2012, the National Assembly felt sufficiently worried and decided to do something about it. Nigeria operates the America-type bicameral legislature, comprising the Senate (the Upper House) and the House of Representative (the Lower House). Given the urgent national importance of the issue at stake, the two chambers were said to have decided to meet at the eleventh hour to avert the strike which could portend an obvious national catastrophe. But it was reported by some newspapers that the Presidency was not particularly comfortable about the reconvening and tried to scuttle it. The Senate succumbed to the Executive blackmail, while the House of Representatives went ahead against all odds to reconvene at a most inauspicious time, a Sunday. After an exhaustive debate, under the watch of its Speaker, Aminu Tambuwal, the House passed a resolution urging the President to revert to the former price of N65 per litre while labour should shelf its planned strike. This was accepted by labour but rejected by the Government who argued, (some say contemptuously), that the resolution was a mere advice which had no weight of law. It therefore ignored the decision of the House. This clearly showed the incoherence in government as the legislature was not even consulted in the first place before the decision was effected.
- **Corruption:** The subsidy imbroglio has again brought to the fore the issue of pervasive corruption in Nigeria. Nwanne (2011, p.11) had drawn attention to the link between corruption and stunted development in Nigeria, stating that “corruption is perhaps the single most important reason Nigeria remains largely underdeveloped”. As a follow-up to the January 8, 2012 Resolution of the House in which the executive arm was urged to revert to status quo with regards to fuel pump price, it decided to investigate the entire subsidy regime. The Committee Chaired by Lawan Farouk was later accused of accepting bribes from Femi Otedola, an oil magnate, found monumental corruption in the administration of the fuel subsidy funds which is very close to the heart of the average Nigerian who sees the relatively cheap fuel price as the only visible advantage of being a citizen of a major oil producing and exporting country. According to the report, many organisations, both public and private, including the Octopus Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Petroleum Product Pricing and Regulatory Agency (PPPRA) were involved in shady deals in respect to the management of the fuel subsidy regime.

Writing on the issue, *Sunday Vanguard* April 22, 2012, an independent newspaper, observed:

..... the Committee noted that the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation which had over the years gained notoriety for its penchant for graft and opaque dealings should refund N310, 414,963,613.00 (over three hundred billion naira) for subsidy it collected on Kerosine after the subsidy on the product had been outlawed in the country; another N285,098,000,000 for subsidy it collected above the PPPRA recommended amount and N108,648,000,000 for discount it granted itself, while marketing companies are to refund N8,664,352,554.00. Companies that failed to appear before the committee are to refund the sum of N41,936,040,005 while the PPPRA is to refund the sum of N312,279,000,000 being excess payment it made to itself. The refunds are to be made within three months.

Commenting further, the newspaper had expressed its utter disgust in the following words:

For a country that is struggling to fund its capital projects since the return to democratic rule in 1999, the realization that contrary to the official figures of subsidy payment of 1.3 trillion being bandied for the 2011 fiscal year, the discovery that what was paid out from the nation's treasury as subsidy for the year under review was actually N2,587,087 trillion was simply benumbing.

- **Inflation:** At the heart of the anti fuel subsidy removal movement is the question of the conditions of living of the average Nigerian who is believed to have one of the lowest standards of living in the world. A look at the human suffering index released annually would tend to point towards this direction. With quality and quantity of social infrastructure at its lowest ebb, even when compared with countries often described as 'developing countries' where Nigeria belongs, the country remains a laggard. Without doubt, therefore, poverty is a recurrent decimal in the country, a clear and present danger. A recent report in the politically vibrant *Punch* in its Sunday edition of April 1, 2012, says prominent economists had blamed successive governments for the rising poverty in the country. According to the paper, despite the modest growth of the economy "at a rate of over six percent in the past decade, it had not improved the welfare of Nigerians because of corruption, lack of people-focused economic policies and government's neglect of the manufacturing industry". In an opinion piece in the same edition of *Punch*, Obidike observed that Nigerians now paid more in virtually all areas of life.

Relying on a recent National Bureau of Statistics report, the newspaper noted that "the percentage of Nigerians living in poverty had risen from 54.7% in 2004 to 60.9% in 2010, translating into about 112 million Nigerians living in poverty, in spite of the fact the real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Growth rate has risen to 7.6%". Indeed, without any shred of doubt, the increase in fuel pump price has invariably worsened the poverty situation in Nigeria with the increase in the cost of living and a dwindling in the standard of living. In fact, the increase in fuel price elicited an immediate price increase in virtually all products and services nation-wide. The immediate beneficiaries were businessman and women who had stocked at old prices but now sold at new, often arbitrary prices. Under the new price regime, many could only afford a fraction of what their money would have demanded before the increase. Therefore, the fuel subsidy withdrawal policy further worsened the poverty situation in a well endowed but poorly managed Nigeria.

- **Credibility:** Over the years, governments in Nigeria have had severe problem of credibility. They say one thing but probably mean another. It was probably worse during the years of military rule. Dates given for the completion of projects were often unattainable. It was fashionable to mouth such platitudes as "Health for all by the year 2000". "Housing for all by the year 2000". Perhaps they thought that year 2000 would never arrive. But it did, with many unfulfilled promises. It seems that the Goodluck Jonathan administration is following on the heels of his predecessors in this regard. With about three years in the saddle, his promise to expeditiously and firmly solve the power problem has remained a mere promise.

Again, the fulfilment of his pledge to quickly put in place an effective palliative measure to soothe the pains of the fuel subsidy policy is still being awaited in many parts of the country, prompting many to ask the question: "why make some people sick only to prescribe drugs for them?"

At a point, many Nigerians thought that the issue of fuel subsidy riots was dying down and that people were beginning to forget it, but President Jonathan surprisingly and rather unwittingly, refreshed the memories of Nigerians about the painful incident of January 1, 2012. Rather than let sleeping dogs lie, on September 19, 2012 at the country's 52nd Independence Anniversary Lecture delivered by former Ghanaian President, John Kufour, Jonathan said inter alia according to Okah (2012, p.16):

...Look at the demonstrations back home, look at these areas these demonstrations are coming from, you begin to ask, are these ordinary citizens that are demonstrating? Or are people pushing them to demonstrate? Take the case of Lagos. Lagos is the critical state in the nation's economy. It controls about 53% of the economy and all tribes are there. During the demonstration in Lagos, people were given bottled water that people in my village don't have access to, people were given expensive food that the ordinary people in Lagos cannot eat. So even going to eat free food alone attracts people. They go and hire the best musician to play and the best comedian to entertain. Is that demonstration? Are you telling me that is a demonstration from ordinary masses in Nigeria who want to communicate something to government?

The 'whipping boy' posture of Jonathan differs significantly from his defiant attitude just before and immediately after the fuel subsidy withdrawal. Naturally, many reacted to the President's comment. Perhaps the most pungent must be from Africa's first Nobel Laureate in Literature, Professor Wole Soyinka who in a statement fired back at the President, accusing him of "suffering from a bad conscience" and "lamentably alienated from the true pulse of the nation...".

Soyinka recollected:

President sent in the Army and shock police squads to forcibly seize and occupy grounds from a demonstrating public, a violation of the people's rights as entrenched in the constitution, a right – as it happens – that has been further consolidated by a pronouncement of the court of law. This should be seen as a grave danger to democracy and a warning" *Sunday Vanguard* (2012, P.5).

Summary and Conclusion

Nigeria, Africa's largest population and the fourth largest democracy in the world, literally went up in flames on January 1, 2012, following a government policy which raised the pump price of premium motor spirit (PMS) popularly called 'petrol' pump price from N65 to N141, an over 100% price hike. In response, the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and its sister organisation Trade Union Congress (TUC) in association with Civil Society Organisations of Nigeria organized a nation-wide strike. The crippling nine-day strike apart from the economic loss, put the country in bad light as an unstable polity with all its consequences. Many were surprised at the decision and the timing, given the huge security challenges confronting government as a result of the insurgence of the dreaded Boko Haram sect.

In studying the propaganda aspect of the national crisis, it was found that Government put its huge financial muscle to work by 'invading' major newspapers and other media with its 'transformation agenda', urging the citizens to sweetly swallow the bitter pill of fuel subsidy removal. The agenda setting theory of the media was explored to explain propaganda.

The paper pointed out some of the issues arising from the fuel subsidy question to include the role of the labour unions and civil society groups, transparency and accountability in government, incoherence in government, corruption, inflation and the dwindling standard of living of the average Nigerian as well as the issue of credibility of government in Nigeria.

Essentially, though, the government propaganda onslaught, at least, is an acknowledgement of the need to explain its own position and seek the understanding and support of the people. It shows also that despite the often 'tough guy' posture of Nigerian governments, they, at times, invariably appreciate the need to win positive public opinion. As Abraham Lincoln is often quoted as saying: "what I want is to get done what the people desire to get done, and the question for me is how to find out exactly" Crespi (1989,p.1). But are governments, particularly the Nigerian government, doing so?

Recommendations

Arising from the foregoing presentation, the following recommendations are being put forward;

- (1) Governments, especially those of the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America must take the social contract between them and their people seriously. They should always, like Abraham Lincoln, worry about 'what the people desire to get done'. This often involves a rigorous and honest tracking of public opinion. A situation where a government wakes up and takes unilateral decisions is often not good for the greater majority who must have given 'birth' to the government in the first place, through their votes.
- (2) There is need for accountability and transparency in government. For this to take place, it is thought that there is need for effective and strong institutions which can stand the test of time. Apparently for the selfish interests of those in government, institutions in Nigeria are weak and often vulnerable to the whims and caprices of those in political power. The scenario extends even to the judiciary which should, ordinarily, be insulated from political interference. The result is that the 'rule of man' takes precedence over the 'rule of law'. In this scenario, corruption and abuse of power invariably result.
- (3) Somewhat related to the above, is the fact that the legislative arm of government must wake up quickly to its responsibilities of being a check on the excesses of the executive arm since it is often said that absolute power corrupts absolutely.
- (4) Also, a mechanism must be devised in which government activities are monitored by non-governmental organisations. In this context, labour, civil society organisations and other interested persons or groups must show more interest in governance. They must demand accountability and probity from government and its agencies. A situation where agencies of government act as though they were independent bodies – unaccountable to anyone, must be discouraged.

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