



# Fighting Corruption in Nigeria for National Development: The Role of African Indigenous Education

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## Abstract

Nigeria, like any democratic country, detests corruption for what it represents, in her bid to promote national development. It is for this reason that several institutions are put in place by almost all government in the country with several stiff penalties to fight the menace over the years since independence with little or no tangible results as the cases of corruption are on the increase. It is therefore the opinion of these authors that having tried the instrument of the law as a check over the years with the challenge increasing and becoming much more depressing, that Nigeria's desire of minimizing corruption can be better pursued if the country resorts to the African indigenous education as a tool to fight the menace. This is because African indigenous education among others emphasizes the principles of honest labour, respect for constituted authority, moral rectitude, being one's brother's keeper among others. These if properly inculcated in the youths early enough would ultimately turn out to be agents in the fight against corruption. The result will be the country experiencing national rebirth and development in this twenty first century.

**Keywords:** Corruption, National Development, Role, Indigenous Education, Nigeria, Africa.

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## INTRODUCTION

National development which is an aspect of the whole process of development conceptually covers a wide range of positive and progressive changes in human activities and endeavours in the life of a people. As a concept, Ezewu (1991, pp. 3-4) sees it as "... the level of efficiency attained by a nation through the performance... of her social institutions".

Nduka (2006, p. 4) conceptualized national development from a nationalist's perspective when he argued that, it is:

the totality of the concerted efforts made by individual societies (nations) to overcome weaknesses by acquiring increasing control over the forces of nature thereby progressively eliminating the centuries' old scourge of poverty, ignorance and disease and making life on earth more worth living.

Buttressing this further, he contended that, countries that have achieved a certain degree of success in this direction are referred to as developed while the others are either underdeveloped or developing, otherwise called the 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries. This is where Nigeria comes in.

National development in the words of Okorosaye-Orubite (2005, p. 3), means "stages through which a nation (state) passes while taking a positive march towards quantitative and qualitative self-actualization by harnessing its human and material potentialities and using same to their maximum capabilities." The issue of harnessing the human potentialities to achieve the above is of paramount importance in this paper because education is one major tools in this process. Mezieobi (1994, p. 114) considered national development as:

a process of systematic transformation of the overall social, economic, political, scientific and technological life of a nation via effective, coherent, co-ordinated management system, result-oriented social mobilization strategy in which the citizens actually participate and exhibit positive attitudinal commitment in the overall reconstructional process for the improved human conditions of the people.

From the above, it is clear that national development is being symbolized by the presence of sustainable high literacy rate, qualitative and functional education, availability and provision of adequate medical facilities, food, housing, cultural perpetuation, respect for social justice and the laws of the land, commendable social behaviour, socio-political integration, cohesion and co-operativeness, political stability characterized by democratic reasonableness, rational mass political participation and representation, sensitivity to the yearnings and sufferings of the people, political efficiency, improved standard of living of the populace as well as a healthy and stable economy.

In spite of the many indicators outlined above, Ifemeje (1985, p. 47) is of the view that "no practical national development efforts would be divorced from attitudinal development or worthy attitudes of the individuals that make up the state". This is so because it is the worthy attitudes of the people that will make for the sane utilization of the material indices of development. This bit was confirmed by Ugwu (2007, p. 261), who argued that

the cardinal or focal points of national development are the individuals and positive societal changes (more than anything as being facilitated by a good functional education), adding that a nation cannot be said to have developed when a significant percentage of her population live without quality education, shelter, good food and worse still with their potentials not fully tapped and channeled towards fruitful enjoyment.

### **Role of Education in National Development**

Education according to O'Connor (1957, p. 7) is an elaborate social mechanism designed by any society to bring about in those submitted to it certain skills, values and attitudes that are adjudged desirable in that society. It is in the final analysis, therefore, a means to an end and not an end in itself (a means for the promotion of societal development).

Education and development are, therefore, related in the sense that states that do not invest in education cannot experience development, for education is the master key that unlocks the gates of development. Using Nigeria as a point of reference, Amucheazi (1980:9), had advised that "... for Nigeria to develop..., Nigerians must... evolve institutions which will enable the individual to find their fulfillment." One of such institutions according to Paulley (2010, p. 10) is education. This is so because education develops the individual by equipping him intellectually, emotionally and physically (cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains respectively) to face the realities of life in the larger society.

Citing the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) in its 2002 Annual Report. Ugwu (2007, p. 262), observed that:

education is the heart of development. The countries which made the greatest progress in reducing poverty in recent decades are those which have combined effective and equitable investment in education with sound economic policies. Education enables people to use and extend their capabilities, develop skills, improve their livelihood and increase their earning potentials.

Ngoddi, cited by Ugwu (2007, p. 262), amplified the above position by arguing that education is the single most important distinguishing factor between human beings and animals. Using building as a paradigm, he pointed out that:

because of education, human beings have passed through dwelling in caves to hut, shelters, mud houses and today man uses various kinds of building made of concrete blocks, iron, bricks, stones, glasses and woods. But because there is no education among animals, weaverbirds for instance, make the same kind of nest its ancestors made millions of years ago.

Ogunna (1981, p. 71) identified some specific roles of education in the national development agenda of any country, including Nigeria, they include:

- Cushioning the high rate of illiteracy which is the bane of national development in any country.
- Emancipating the masses from the shackles of ignorance by giving actual functional education, that equips them with the cognitive skills to rationally reflect on a country's developmental differences and through articulate thinking and creative inclinations thereby inducing national development.
- Enhancing the social, political and economic awareness of the people in a country.
- Developing the teeming human resources and producing the right caliber of personnel imbued with the skills to productively utilize the country's natural resources towards accomplishing rapid national development, adding that accelerated national development is a function of adequate skilled manpower attained through the process of education... (for) true development means the development of man.
- Facilitating the mass mobilization of the people at all levels including the grassroots, since mass mobilization is a necessary pre-requisite for national development.
- Propelling the practice of democracy which entails among other things rational political participation, constructive criticism of government activities leading to the achievement of national development.
- Understanding and sharing selfless interest in public questions and commitment to social responsibilities.
- Producing enlightened leaders at all levels of governance.
- Developing scientific and technological consciousness among the people, as well as
- Fashioning out the right type of values, habits and attitudes essential for national development.

Other roles include the creation of employment and income earning opportunities for people, including teachers, builders, paper printers to mention but a few. Through proper education, opportunity is, therefore, provided for a kind of training that would promote literacy, numeracy and basic skills that will encourage modern attitudes among the various segments of the population for effective national development efforts. This is so because an educated and skilled labour force is no doubt a *sine-qua-non* for any sustained national development effort. Education, therefore, creates a more productive, knowledgeable, skilled labour force, which is indispensable in any attempt at developing a given state.

The above shows the link between national development and education. In the Nigerian context, this link is very weak thereby frustrating the country's national development effort using the instrumentality of western education as the cases of corrupt practices reported in the country is on the increase on daily basis. This, in the thinking of these authors is due to the fact that the country's educational administrators at the level of implementing the various ambitious educational plans and schemes have not given serious attention to both the affective and psychomotor domains. In the implementation process, emphasis is placed basically on the cognitive domain to the exclusion or near exclusion of the other domains and leading to the many vices including corruption (which to a large extent is an issue within the affective domain) experienced in the larger society as the products of the educational system come to operate the apparatus of state. What then is corruption and what effect does it have on a country's developmental strides? What role will African indigenous education play to stem the tide so that the country like other countries will experience real development? These are the issues the remaining part of the paper shall be addressing.

## What is Corruption?

If there is anything that has ever threatened Nigeria's national development effort over the years it has been corruption. Corruption is a common phenomenon found not only in the developing countries and societies but also in the developed or advanced societies of Europe, America, Japan and Russia among other countries. Although the ubiquity of corruption is acknowledged, its magnitude and character are defined by different social and cultural context and time dimensions.

Corruption in simple terms means the perversion of integrity of the state of affairs through bribery, favour or moral depravity; a dishonest and improper use of one's power or position to acquire wealth (money or property) over others. Salisu (2011, p. 32) quoting Napal (2006) sees it as "a deliberate intent of subordinating common interest for personal interest". This implies an original state of expectation of an individual and societal purity. When two or more parties have interacted to change the structure or processes of society or the behaviour of functionaries in order to produce dishonest, unfaithful or defiled situations, we may say that corruption has taken place.

Corruption, therefore, involves the injection of additional but improper transactions aimed at changing the normal course of events and altering judgments and positions of trust. It consists in the 'doers' and 'receivers' use of informal, extra-legal or illegal acts to facilitate matters. It is the abuse or complicity in the abuse of private or public power by private employees, public officials, independent agents or other relationships of that kind that unlawfully or wrongfully confer on themselves or others some benefits.

This abuse or complicity in abuse of power include but not limited to *embezzlement* (which is theft of resources by people who are entrusted with its administration), *nepotism* (which takes the form of the appointment of relatives, friends, or political associates to public offices regardless of their merits and the consequences on the public weal), *bribery* (the act of giving and accepting gifts, traditional titles or favours offered, the object being to induce the bribe receiver to give special consideration to the interest of the bribe payer), *extortion* (which is money and other resources extracted by the use of coercion, violence or the threats to use force), *fraud* (an economic crime that involves intentional criminal deception, trickery and swindle for private benefit), influence peddling, or spend money among others. In sum, it is represented by what people do when they try to get what they do not deserve by using money, bribe, ethnic connections, religion, family name, threats, harassments and other bad influences. Corruption often occurs during elections, in offices, police roadblocks, customs and immigration check points, schools, colleges, universities, courts, petrol stations, banks, contracts, government operations and so on.

## Causes of Corruption in Nigeria

Corruption in Nigeria as it is in other countries of the world according to Asuka and Paulley (2013) is caused by:

- Great inequality in the distribution of wealth;
- Appointment/election to a political office (as the primary means of gaining access to wealth);

- Change in our African values. For instance, before colonialism, our people used to respect people who have good character, which is not the case today as people are largely respected because of the money they have, the houses and big cars they own. People of good character who have no money are generally no longer respected. As a result, many people prefer to be rich so that they will be respected even if it means getting rich through corrupt practices since wealth is being acclaimed, accepted and respected without an examination of the means by which such wealth was acquired. The guiding principle, therefore, is the Machiavellian assertion of “the end justifying the means”; and
- Weakness of social and government law enforcement mechanisms among others.

For a nation to become great there are some attitudes that the citizens have to cultivate. Great nations all over the world are built by citizens with right attitude to life. Nigerian traditional societies survived because the people cultivated the right attitude to life through its education as shown by Fafunwa (1995) as we shall see later in this paper. Decrying the decaying Nigerian value system due to corruption in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Adelus-Adeluyi (2013, pp. 18-19) submitted that:

Nigeria’s (indigenous) value systems have been damaged almost beyond repairs (in the twenty-one century). Information making the rounds show that Nigerians are daily shortchanged, getting less of ... their rights. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigeria, youths are jobless. Leaders are shameless. Relationships are meaningless. General attitude is careless. Wives are fearless. Men are heartless. Education is valueless. Children are mannerless. Every good thing is becoming LESS. In fact, most people are speechless. Ethics and good character have been thrown out of the window in the inordinate rush for material wealth. The greater the fraud, the lighter the sentence. In years gone by, crime used to increase by arithmetical proportions. Today, fraud gallops in geometric proportions. The environment has become toxic and confusing politically, economically and socially. People acquire and flaunt wealth in the midst of abject poverty. On the 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2012, a notable Nigerian had 133 full pages of congratulatory messages in one of the national dailies, as part of events marking his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday (a country where majority of the people are living on less than one USA dollar per day). We live in a nation where we over-celebrate and underachieve. We live in a nation where we are long on speeches and short in action. A nation of hypocrites at all levels. It is, therefore, urgent to have a turn-around strategy to achieve a sane environment. Quoting Mohandas Karamchand Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) he said “the things that will eventually destroy a nation are politics without principle; pleasure without conscience; wealth without work; knowledge without character; business without morality; science without humanity and worship without sacrifice” (And that), Nigeria is already showing most of these symptoms.

He concluded by appealing to Nigerians as rational beings to ensure that these cankerworms do not eventually destroy the country, Nigeria. The decay in the Nigerian social value system is so

glaring that everywhere one looks, it is mountain of dirtiness, virtually almost all politicians (as rulers) you meet appear to be a personification of corruption. Nigeria has reached the unenviable stage where corruption and the evils it begets seem to be self-perpetuating, for virtually all of us as the people being ruled by such corrupt leaders are in one way or another enmeshed in its suffocating web, either as perpetrators, collusive actors or morally unacceptable silent abettors. Corruption has been as it were successfully institutionalized in the country, such that the Prime Minister of Britain, David Cameron in 2016 did not blink his eyes when he asserted in an anti-corruption conference in London that “Nigerians are fantastically corrupt”.

### **Effects of Corruption on Nigeria’s National Development**

The negative prevailing social values in the larger society have found their ways into the country’s ivory towers as a sub system of the larger society thereby giving rise to a number of challenges, which confront tertiary education in Nigeria. These challenges range from negative value system, lack of staff and facilities to the dominance of political motives in the establishment of tertiary institutions. Commenting on this trend, OECD (2015) is of the opinion that any value system which lays undue emphasis on immediate gains and short-term benefits would promote various short-cut tendencies, which would have negative effect on the overall social welfare in the long-run. That value system would encourage bribery and corruption, misappropriation of public funds, and various forms of violence.

On its negative effects on a state, Asuka and Paulley (2013) opined that corruption is anti-developmental because it:

- Increases operational costs and reduces profits and benefits; as it drives investments and investors (both home and foreign) away from the country. Buttressing this, Lord Bishop of Guilford, David Peck as quoted by Abubakar in Daily Trust Newspaper, July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2002 opined that “corruption scares away British investors from Nigeria, adding that “those who fail to pay companies for services done seem to forget that the life blood of any company is its cash flow. He went on to observe that “the price of corruption is poverty”;
- Cripples government investment. Eleonu (2003) as cited by Orlumene (2007, p. 205) puts it this way: corruption is economically wasteful, politically destabilizing and mentally destructive of government capacity in economic development involving capital outflow which means economic waste. Economic waste leads to investment distortion because investments are channeled into unprofitable areas;
- It leads to brain drain in the educational sector, being the engine room of development, of talented professionals who in search of employment are not ready to drop money to bribe officials to get their files to be treated;
- It breeds inefficiency and nepotism, leads to possible information distortion as it cooks the books;
- It tarnishes the image of the country. Nigeria suffers more than most countries from an appalling international image created by its inability to genuinely deal with cases of corruption and bribery over the years;
- Creates unemployment and its attendant restiveness on the part of the youth which now manifests itself in kidnapping of people;
- Promotes general poverty;

- Is anti-government by creating distrust of bureaucrats and other corrupt functionaries by the people and hence constitutes social obstacle to the execution of projects;
- Weakens a government by making policy makers timid in taking bold steps to curb excesses of citizens or to reform the system;
- Creates unwillingness on the part of the people to make sacrifices such as the payment of taxes or the practice of compulsory savings schemes found necessary for social development in a situation where citizens become cynical and where immoral and self-seeking bureaucrats and political rulers display their ill-gotten wealth;
- Destroys the respect for merit, honesty, dedication to duty and sincerity. When these principles are abandoned, the country suffers, and does not progress properly;
- When it is widespread, people, including some honest ones, concentrate in developing themselves instead of developing the country. This happens because when an honest man dies, leaving his children and family poor, who will suffer due to lack of adequate care by government since there are no laid down social security welfare packages or by his poor relations. People, therefore, engage in corrupt practices in order to get some property and wealth for their families in case of ill-health, retirement, dismissal or even death.

All these have very dangerous effects on the country's march towards development. Corruption is, therefore, an undesirable cancer in any country developmental march including that of the Nigerian society. It pollutes the Nigerian politics, undermines its economy and it is a major factor for the ever progressive decay in the country. It has denied the Nigerian citizens the benefits of the huge amounts of natural resources in the country that should have been otherwise released for development. Besides tribalism, it is the biggest national problem that besieges the Nigerian nation as top government functionaries keep their proceeds through corrupt means in foreign bank accounts thereby denying the economy the necessary capital needed for development including education. It brings blights to the country as foreigners treat Nigeria and Nigerians with disdain. Putting this in perspective, Obasanjo (1999) as quoted by Chukwumezie (2006, p. 182) said:

...corruption is not only illegal; it is bad because it corrupts the very soul of our community. It makes nonsense of all planning and budgeting, and it wastefully depletes our inadequate resources. It breeds cynicism, and promotes inequality. It almost renders it impossible for (government) to address the objectives of equality and justice in our society with any seriousness. And finally, it destroys the social fabric of our society, leaving each individual on his own, to do only whatever is best for himself... (it is) a full blown cancer and one of the greatest tragedies of military rule.

Accordingly, Obasanjo went to state that corruption will be tackled head-on (as) no society can achieve its full potentials if it allows corruption to become the full blown cancer as it has in Nigeria. He vowed that there will be no sacred cows in the process to stamp out corruption in the society.

Ironically, same Obasanjo's government in 1999 disappointed the entire world by granting Alhaji Salisu Buhari state pardon after committing forgery and perjury (University of Toronto certificate scandal otherwise known as *Buharigate*), made money through corrupt

practices as a staff of the moribund National Electric Power Authority (NEPA), bribed his way to become the fourth highest person in the country as speaker of the Nigerian House of Representatives. This was a national shame that a crook was in charge of a body that made laws for the land. The question was what type of laws could he have made for Nigeria as a product of corruption?

Due to this unfortunate scenario, an African diplomat according to Dike (2001) was quoted as saying that “Eastern Europe is (now) the sexiest beautiful girl and Africa (nay Nigeria) is the old tattered lady. People are tired of Africa”. What is happening in Africa is a blueprint of the challenges facing Nigeria. To show how deep the country finds itself in the corruption mess, in 1996 a study of corruption by *Transparency International (TI)* and *Goettingen University* ranked Nigeria as the most corrupt country in the world among 54 countries listed in the study, with Pakistan as the second highest. As it were, this not bad enough, in the 1998 *Transparency International (TI)* Corruption Perception Index (CPI) of 85 countries, Nigeria was 81 out the number pooled. And in the 2001 corruption perception index by TI, the image of Nigeria slipped further down by occupying the 90<sup>th</sup> position out of 91 countries pooled, with the first position going to Bangladesh. With this in focus, then former British Prime Minister, David Cameron’s remarks in 2016 of Nigeria ‘*as fantastically corrupt*’ is well founded.

### **Nigeria’s Fight Against Corruption**

The recognition of the above facts has led the Nigerian government to establish several bodies to fight this menace. In fact, section 15, sub-section of the political objectives of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria states that “*the state shall abolish all corrupt practices and abuse of power*”. Asuka & Paulley (2013:399-402) listed the following as some of the bodies set up by various governments of Nigeria to fight the menace of corruption in the country over the years:

- ***Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau-*** was set up in 1975 to investigate reported cases of corrupt practices.
- ***Public Compliant Commission-*** came with the 1979 Constitution to deal with different aspects of corrupt practices; however with little success; since the task of eliminating corruption is similar to that of getting the Nigerian society to an impossible halt.
- ***Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal-*** were established to guard against officials of government unjustly enriching themselves while in office. The Bureau receives complaints from people about non-compliance with laid down procedures in trying to prevent corrupt practices, while the tribunal on the other hand tries accused persons and administers appropriate sanctions on offenders.
- ***War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAI-C)-*** established due to the escalation of the twin problem of indiscipline and corruption. It was launched by the government of General Sani Abacha on 4<sup>th</sup> May, 1994. Its objectives were to:
  - mobilize the nation to fight against corruption and economic crimes.
  - create a better and more humane society through the inculcation of such basic values as honesty, integrity, patriotism, respect for the sanctity of human life and respect for the rule of law.

- develop appropriate work ethics that would produce efficiency, effectiveness, high productivity and strong commitment to a culture of excellence in public service within the context of a just and fair reward system anchored on the principle of “dignity of labour”.
- instill in the business and industrial class, the value of honesty, trustworthiness, efficiency, patriotism, fairness and compassion.
- inculcate in the Nigerian youth, the values of patriotism, nationalism, integrity, honesty, positive work ethics, respect for elders and constituted authority; and
- promote a just, fair and peaceful society that places immense value on the dignity and sanctity of human life.

Unfortunately, the same government was caught in the web of corruption as its leader after his demise was subjected to intense probe leading to the recovery of so much ill-gotten wealth by the Obasanjo’s government that came on board on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1999.

### ***Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC)***

This was signed into law on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2000 by President Olusegun Obasanjo. It was set up to implement the anti-corruption law which was aimed at improving the moral quality of the society, creating an instrument for good government as well as making the country move forward as absence of corruption will make the country a better place for all. The ICPC under the law sought to:

- Educate and enlighten Nigerians over the evil effects of corruption and the merits of a corruption free society;
- Prosecute proven cases of corruption; and
- Recover all ill-gotten wealth.

The ICPC is ineffective in the fight against corruption. This in addition to other factors informed the Obasanjo’s government establishment of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

### ***Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC)***

EFCC is another body set up by the Olusegun Obasanjo administration to fight corruption. The law establishing it was signed on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2004 with the following as its mandate. To:

- Investigate any person, corporate body or organization that has committed an offence under this act or other related offences to economic and financial crimes.
- Investigate the property of any if it appears to the commission that the person’s life style and extent of the property are not justified by his sources of income.
- enforce the provision of the Money Laundering Act 2004, No 7 and 1995, No 13 the Advance Fee Fraud (419) and Other Related Offences Act 1995, the Failed Banks (Recovery of Debt and Financial Malpractices in Banks) Act as amended, and Miscellaneous Offences Act; and

- Investigate any other offence relating to economic and financial crime including enforcement of criminal code and penal code.

### ***Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit***

This unit was established by the Obasanjo's administration to promote transparency in government financial transactions and to establish open and competitive tender arrangements for government contracts through the 'due process mechanism'. Through a process of contract award review, oversight and certification, the government has reaped huge savings, extracted hundreds of millions of dollars. Several contracts that were awarded by spending units that failed to comply with open, competitive bid parameters have been canceled.

### ***Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative***

This agency was established by the Obasanjo's administration with the mandate of encouraging the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation and other oil companies to fully disclose revenue and cost of operations. The essence of all these is to ensure and enthrone probity, accountability, transparency, honour and creditability in both private and public sectors so as to promote national development in the country.

In spite of the seemingly spirited effort made by successive Nigerian governments over the years to fight corruption using the instrumentality of the law, it appears that the country is losing the fight to corruption as corrupt big cows are still walking freely on the streets of Nigeria probably because the state has not been monitoring the effectiveness of her many (but not serious) anti-corruption agencies and strategies until recently with the President Buhari's civilian administration of 2015 with the EFCC leading the war that has brought to the public domain startling revelations of looted monies recovered from past leaders of the state running into trillions of naira. The story became so sour in the mouth when it was alleged that some judges at the federal level including justices of the country's highest court of the land being the Supreme Court of Nigeria whose constitutional responsibility is to interpret the law to determine who is corrupt and dispense appropriate punishment are alleged to be involved in this business of corruption as arrest made on them in 2016 could attest to.

Any genuine and sustainable war against corruption must start with the leadership through good governance, transparency, accountability and above all respect for the rule of law. This is so because, as it is said in educational parlance, the teacher (here the leader) cannot give what he does not have; meaning that a corrupt leader cannot honestly wage an effective war against corruption. This is where proper functional education of the people becomes relevant in the country so as to ensure its development more so with a democratic government in place. This in the thinking of these authors can be achieved by embracing the time tested principles of African indigenous education with its many checks (as we shall see shortly in this paper) on its people, particularly the leaders, to be upright in their activities in the community thereby reducing corruption to the barest minimum.

## **Africa Indigenous Education and the Fight Against Corruption in Nigeria in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Fafunwa (1982, p. 11) defined African indigenous education as the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops his abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of positive value to the society in which he/she lives. It is, therefore, a process of learning which enables every African society to teach her younger generations the life patterns of the society. It is natural to every African society. It does not possess the art of writing. It is relatively informal in nature (even though some elements of formality is embraced in some cases such as the apprenticeship scheme).

It is an educational system that adequately provided for and implemented all the domains (that is, the cognitive, affective and psychomotor) that needed to be developed in an individual submitted to an educational system. Boys for example accompany their fathers for hunting expeditions, mending the family houses among others while the girls accompany their mothers to the farms, markets to buy and sell as well as help them cook. As parents perform, the young ones render helping hands and, in the process, learn or get educated. Even as children play with peer groups during the day or moon lit nights they sing new songs and tell new stories. The aim according to Kanga Kalemba-Vita of Zaire, cited by Fafunwa (1990:85), therefore, “is the preparation of the youth for their insertion and complete integration into the life of the community”.

Its content, according to Kosemani and Okorosaye-Orubite (1995, p. 7) and Taiwo, (1981, p. 179) is classified into three basic divisions namely:

- **Basic Education** which is education for living in conformity with the traditions of the community. The contents here include family history, geography of the environment, knowledge of plants and animals, proverbs, riddles, appropriate greeting for each occasion, etiquette, values, use of language and knowledge of counting numbers. It is called basic because it was obligatory that every child in Africa must be exposed to this type of education;
- **Education for Occupation and Economic Self Reliance** includes subsistence farming and craft related to community needs. Parents therefore directed their children early in life to some occupational training. Usually a boy follows his father’s occupation and a girl her mother’s. Many a time a child was sent to an elder relative who brought him up in his occupation much like the system of apprenticeship. Fees were not charged most of the time because in Africa the principle of being one brother’s keeper was held in high esteem due to the extended family system. Accordingly, it was seen as a responsibility on the part of the trainer to make the child, may be related to him, become a functional member of the society;
- **Education for Special Occupation** is usually secret and exclusive to particular families. The content includes such things as family craft, secret organization, religious priesthood, divination, medicine and surgery. Among the Ijos, according to Paulley (20 11:62), education for special occupation manifests itself in the activities of masseurs (massaging), bone setters and midwifery. Midwifery among the indigenous Ijo society, particularly the central and western Ijo, is not the exclusive prerogative of the women as there are trained men who are specialists in this art (*mid-husbands*). In most cases, the men in this trade provide referral services by attending to complicated cases that the

women (mid-wives) cannot handle. The men with their physical prowess and dexterity manipulate such cases to the amazement of expectant mothers and relatives. There are also the herbalists among both sexes. It also (as it is with other groups) provides for canoe carvers, black-smitters, diviners and juju priests who minister to the various gods to ensure peace and progress among the people through divination and incantations. Skill in oratory (*Bebefiewei*) as it was in ancient Roman education is also part of this component of African indigenous education. The act of adjudication was equally a component part of the Ijo education for special occupation. The adjudicators are usually meant to be principled and objective in the discharge of their duties as the *Izon* man believes in truth (which literarily is the meaning of Izon (Ijo) in addition to the fact that the ancestors are endowed with the ability to watch over every actions and intentions of the living and to reward such accordingly.

Buttressing the above, Buseri (2010), relied on education as the bases for transmission of the culture of a people from one generation to the other, and still using the Izon culture (Ijo) as example of what went on in the African indigenous educational setting argued that a lot of the Izon cultural practices have some positive contributions to offer in the Nigeria's fight against corruption. He identified some of these cultural practices/heritages that are favourable to national development as:

- **Tolerance**-readiness to allow others to believe or act as they judge best;
- **Critical mindedness**- making the people to seek answers through questioning;
- **Objectivity**- being unbiased over any issue or decisions, being impersonal, impartial and detached at critical issues;
- **Honesty**-not deceiving, lying, stealing, cheating or taking advantage of the trust reposed on one by others or the collectivity. In fact, this has being the hallmark of the Izon people;
- **Avoidance of dictatorial tendency**-respect and value for constituted authority provided such leadership is working in line with the time honoured values of the people, having the spirit of perseverance, the quality of continuing in a state of grace leading to a state of glory. In fact the ideal Ijo man distastes any form of sharp practice; and
- **Acceptance of societal responsibility**-being involved in the processes of development of the society/community, being truthful in relationship with others in society.

These cultural heritages/practices of the Izon people are without any doubt real ingredients for any fight against corrupt practice in any system. Due to the above, corruption had no place in the African educated man or woman which is what the modern Nigerian society needs for its sustenance of national development.

The African indigenous educational system is mapped out to fall in line with the development stages of life. Thus, children receive primary socialization; adolescents consolidate this and add on life skills, while adults consolidate these two, and add on organizational and social skills. In doing this, special needs are taken care of, as communal life did not allow for exclusion.

In identifying the generic goals of African indigenous education, Fafunwa (1995:7) listed seven cardinal goals. Interestingly, all of them have implications for Nigeria's fight against corruption for the promotion of the country's national development. These goals are:

- **Development of Character and Moral Upbringing:** Children are taught from the early stages of their life to respect their elders, a law that must be rigorously obeyed. It is the responsibility of every adult over every child. The child's behaviours are watched and moral lapses are punished. Children are expected to be of good character by exhibiting honesty in both private and public life, readiness to help the needy and the infirm, hard work and devotion to duty are emphasized. Severe punishments such as age grade beating which accompany offences like theft, adultery and fornication remind the child that he better behaves well at any point in time;
- **Development of Intellectual Skills:** Through these means indigenous society assured the child's intellectual and social development which are very important in the country's fight against corruption and promote national development. After all the developed countries of the world today are results of the products of their educational systems;
- **Acquisition of Specific Vocational Training and the Development of a Healthy Attitude Towards Honest Labour:** This according to Fafunwa (1995:19-20) is reflected in:
  - **Agricultural Education** – which include farming, fishing and veterinary science (animal care and animal rearing);
  - **Trade and Crafts** – weaving (baskets and cloth), smithing (iron, silver, gold, etc), hunting, carving (wood and bronze), sculpturing, painting and decorating, carpentry, building, barbering, drumming, dancing and acrobatics, hair plaiting, dress-making, boat-making, leather-working, soap-making, iron-ore working, threshing, glass-making, brass-working, dyeing, *Esusu*-collecting (banking), catering (frying, baking, grinding), food-selling, wine-selling, wine-tapping and trading in all kinds of merchandise (manufactured goods and agricultural products);
  - **Professions** - medicine (doctors), priesthood, witchdoctors, civil servants, village heads, chiefs and kings, tax-collection, heralds, judges, councilors, police and messengers, shrine-keeping, hunting, chieftaincy, kingship soldiers.

As a result of the above, the issue of corruption due to idleness was not heard of in Africa through its education:

- **Inculcation of Respect for Elders and those in Positions of Authority:** Respect for elders or those who are in authority, particularly the chief, the cult leaders, the diviners, relatives (especially uncles) and other neighbours constitute a cardinal point in African indigenous education. As a result of this, older members are willing to open up to the younger members the norms of the society which abhor corrupt practices as the system provided healthy attitude to honest labour;
- **Encouragement of the Active Participation in Family and Community Affairs:** In the indigenous system, the child is made to appreciate his role as a member of his immediate and extended family as well as that of community at large. The newly-born child immediately becomes the child of everyone in the household-uncles, aunts, cousins and even friends and neighbours. The child's early education is the responsibility of not only his mother but of everyone in his immediate environment as he is seen as a property of entire community with which he is been identified with. When he is old enough to

learn a specific trade, particularly in the field that is not a hereditary profession, he is sent out as an apprentice to a master tradesman who may or may not be a friend of the family. Even in a trade that is his family's specialty, he may be sent to another household in order to ensure that he takes his training seriously. The African parents realized long ago that they are not necessarily the best teachers when it comes to specialized vocational skills.

Age-groups are generally engaged in communal work. They may help other members of the group in clearing, planting or harvesting or help the community at large in road-building or the chief in performing a given task or assignment. A Nigerian youth is also expected to assist his relatives or neighbours when they are in difficulty. He does this by making the contribution levied by his age-group, extended family, chief or uncle as the case may be:

- Development of a Sense of Belonging and Cultural Heritage of the Community: The African child in an indigenous society cannot escape his cultural and physical environment as conformity to the cultural norms of the society certifies a child as well educated.

The overall purpose of African indigenous education is, therefore, functionalism and conformity to the values of the society as the child is made to grow to become a functional member of the society and conforms to its norms. In the words of Taiwo (1981, p. 179):

*the yardstick of an educated man in such a system was his morals, manners, obedience to authority and respect for the customs, conventions, superstitions and laws of the group; together with unquestioning acceptance of the group beliefs, values and religious practices... , conformity to the customs and indigenous religions of the group and the acceptance of its values and ethics.*

It emphasized social responsibility, job orientation, political participation, spiritual and moral values. Children learnt by observation and doing as everybody was engaged in participatory education. It is an integrated experience. It combined physical training with character building (affective) and vocational training-manual activity (psychomotor) with intellectual training (cognitive).

The society sets the goals, its normal and organizational patterns determine the mode, and its expectations of a cultured person are the yardstick for the outcome of education. This in principle is (or should be) the case in all human societies.

The African philosophical worldview and cultural heritage which determined its educational system according to Obanya (2007, p. 6), expects the following traits in the educated (or cultured) person.

- Spirituality (and leading the good life in order to be accepted in the life hereafter);
- Full integration into the community, by imbibing its cultural norms which abhors any form of corrupt practice as such was believed to be heavily sanctioned by the gods;
- Acquisition of the life skills necessary for earning a living and contributing to societal life; and

- Social and organizational skills, for interpersonal relations;

In sum, therefore, irrespective of the level of education and training given, education in Africa, was functional because the curriculum was relevant to the needs of the society which of course is the basis for assessing the worthwhileness of any educational system anywhere in the world. There are no surplus graduates as it is the case today with modern education. Accordingly, unemployment, according to Taiwo (1981, p. 179), was uncommon because everyone has one occupation or the other to keep the one busy for his or her sustenance. As a result, very few young (lazy) men roamed the streets of the villages and towns with nothing to do. This is very important to us in this discourse as unemployment is associated to many social vices committed by people in society including corrupt practices. *The objectives of this form of education are many and varied but the ultimate goal is to produce an individual who is honest, respectable, skilled, co-operative and conforms to the social order of the day. These no doubt are relevant tools for the present Nigerian society in her fight against corruption to ensure national development.*

Writing on the continued relevance of African indigenous education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigerian society and in her fight against corruption to ensure national development, Obanya (2007, pp. 3-4) argued that “indigenous African societies had their educational systems and whatever the form that education took... met the requirements of social cohesiveness and regeneration of the society”. Above all, he added:

(indigenous) African education had a lot in common with education everywhere else, in that it had a philosophical underpinning, a socio-cultural foundation, a psychological intent, an organizational set up, and societal determined outcomes.

The African child as a product of this education is made to imbibe the belief (which is the philosophical underpinning with direct link with the community’s worldview) that:

- First, there is the belief in a supreme being, as well as in an after-life. Thus, the earth is considered a mere market place while the true home is heaven.
- Second, that the ultimate goal of one’s stay on earth is the good life and that failure to lead the good life is punishable by our forbearers, to whom we all will return at death. Related to this is the belief that nature (the earth) has to be respected, and that the earth shall swallow up anyone who fails to respect nature (and the norms of the society one belongs to). Life and death are inseparable as the two constitute a continuum. Therefore, children are brought into the world to lead the good life (devoid of any form of corrupt practice) and that at old age one will return to their ancestors clean. African indigenous educational system, for this reason, placed a priority on preparing children for the good life, morality, adherence to societal norms (avoidance of corrupt practices) and group solidarity (being one’s brother’s keeper) among others. Each generation, therefore, makes it a bounding duty to transmit its cultural heritage to the next one.

The consciousness of the negative effect of one’s action in the life of an individual in the next world was enough to make one avoid involving himself in committing evil including being corrupt thereby making society a good place to live in. In indigenous African societies, culture

was therefore the cornerstone of education, and like in all other societies, the educated person was also the cultured person which again is essential for the country's fight against corruption to ensure national development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Buttressing the above position, Akinpelu (1981, p. 183), argued that the educated man in the African context is:

*one who shows evidence of a well-integrated personality, or who is fully developed as a person and in relation to other persons in his society. An integrated person will be one who is economically efficient, socially and politically competent, morally acceptable and intellectually and culturally sophisticated. By economically efficient we mean that he possesses skills and knowledge which earn him and his family means of survival as well as making a contribution to the common good. A socially and politically competent person is one who has the ability to participate and does participate in decisions that affect his life and in the interest of others in his community. Morality includes good character and happy relationship with others in one's society. Intellectual and cultural sophistication come in to lend colour and quality to his way of living.*

Describing the African indigenously educated man further, Akinpelu (1981, p. 178) said he is:

one who combines expertise in some specific economic skills with soundness of character and wisdom in judgment. He is one who is equipped to handle successfully the problems of living in his immediate and extended family, who is well-versed in the folk-lore and genealogies of his ancestors, who has some skills to handle some minor health problems and where to obtain advice and help in major ones; who stands well with the ancestral spirits of his family and knows how to observe their worship; who has the ability to discharge his social and political duties, who is wise and shrewd in judgment, who expresses himself not in too many words but rather in proverbs and analogies leaving his hearers to unravel his thoughts; who is self controlled under provocation, dignified in sorrow and restrained in success; ... finally and most importantly who is of excellent character. He is no sense an educated man if he has all other qualities and dispositions but lacks good character. Good character is of the utmost importance; a man without it, however otherwise distinguished, is only a carved wooden doll...

## **CONCLUSION**

Nigeria's human capital development is an indispensable requirement in fighting corruption so as to ensure its development. Education is the only credible means of empowering the people. However, the type of education that should be designed should be a functional type that equips the recipient with useable skills required in his society. To ensure the success of this particularly

in the fight against corruption, the need for functional education based on progressive values for officials, civil society actors and citizens becomes a necessity. Emphasis should be placed on technical and vocational education which African indigenous education is ready to provide so as to ensure the development of the Nigerian state.

It is a fact that the current educational system inherited from the colonial masters which we should have reviewed and updated as to stop blaming the colonial masters is inadequate in single handedly addressing the country's current challenge of fighting corruption in the country. As it is today, Nigerian educational institutions are characterized by poor quality and unequal access as well as poor funding making it difficult for education to provide the function it is expected to render. This is not the responsibility of the colonial masters who have since upgraded and modernized theirs. To compound its challenge corruption has equally added its own negative value to the education system thereby defeating its functional, universal and open system based on merit and not money.

What the country needs in this fight is to incorporate the indigenous thought system and modes that will replace the current negative values of corruption, selfishness and other social vices with moral values of honesty, respect, integrity, family and community ties as components of the African indigenous education system. These are sure tools for Nigeria to win the fight against corruption in the country to sustain its development in this era of globalization.

The low level of literacy particularly in the African context no doubt contributes to the many social vices including corruption, crime and the breakdown of law and order in the country. To solve these vices, the Nigerian society should return to the values of imbibing the tenets of the time hallowed principles of African indigenous education. After all, the strength or weakness of any educational system can be best judged by the relative happiness it generates in its recipients. The Nigerian child, as a recipient of the African indigenous education, was a happy and contented individual due to the benefits he got from the indigenous education which made him a functional member of his community. This indeed is a sure tool for the beneficiary of the African indigenous education to think less about corrupt practices as is seen in the present Nigerian society. This again was strengthened by the belief imbibed in the education system that the gods are there watching to faithfully reward everybody accordingly based on what one did while functioning in any capacity in the society. Indeed, there is so much the present Nigerian educational system can learn from our indigenous educational system in her social reconstruction process to reduce the debilitating effect of corruption on the Nigerian state in her march towards becoming one of the first top twenty economies in the world by 2020.

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