

## Roles of Adult Education in Minimizing Corruption in Nigeria

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### Abstract

*Corruption can be regarded as an illegal, immoral or dishonest behaviour. Corruption in Nigeria has reached a very high degree of prevalence. The endemic state of corruption therefore warrants concrete action by all stakeholders in the fight against it. The purpose of the study is to evolve a permanent mechanism, through which corruption could be minimized or completely wiped out in the society. The study was aimed at creating an awareness of the evils of corruption in Nigeria. Another important purpose of the study is to discuss the methods that could be used to reduce corruption through adult education. The paper therefore examines the concept and how it is carried out in the Nigerian society. It looked at the different forms of corruption in the society and went ahead to discuss the effects of corruption as it affects both individuals and the society. The paper also focuses on the causes of corruption and the roles of adult education in minimizing corruption in Nigeria. Adult education in this paper, is regarded as all forms of education provided to adults and is obtained through formal, informal and non-formal situations.*

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**Keywords:** corruption, adult education, Nigeria, role model, minimizing

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### INTRODUCTION

Corruption refers to illegal, immoral or dishonest behaviour. This type of behaviour is mainly related to people in positions of power. Corruption is a common phenomenon in Nigeria which has eaten deep into Nigeria. In the Nigerian traditional society, there was transparency among people. Omolewa (2001) observed that the traditional society was well known for the respect it had for truth, honesty, transparency, commitment and dedication. People did not often engage in acts of fraud, forgery or manipulation. There were few cases of falsification of figures- where 2+2 for instance was changed to 2+20. Omolewa further stated that the judicial system was functional and fast; cases did not take too long to be disposed of, whenever there was a problem to resolve, the court came in session, the judges- the elders or the chiefs listened to the parties and pronounced judgement. Majority of the cases were handled fairly and honestly with prescribed punishment for the guilty party.

When civilization came, it came with corrupt practices. Abimbola (2011) wrote that Nigeria was ranked 143<sup>rd</sup> out of 183 surveyed countries in terms of public perception of corruption, in a detailed assessment carried out by Transparency International. Past administrations had made efforts at curbing corruption in Nigeria but it had yielded no fruitful results. For example, on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2000 chief Olusegun Obasanjo who was the president signed into law the Independent Corruption Practices and other Related Offences Acts 2000. The main thrust of the Act is to prohibit corruption and other related

offences. The Act also enjoins the commission to educate the public on and against bribery, corruption and related offences and to enlist and foster public support in combating corruption. Institutions like the Code of Conduct Bureau which made it mandatory for public officers as well as political office holders to declare their assets on assumption of office and on their way out, was established. Also the public complaint commission, the War Against Indiscipline (WAI) and the War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAIC). All these were all mechanisms through which government made frantic efforts to wipe out corruption in Nigeria. The International communities also made efforts to curb corruption. For example, the United Nations General Assembly on January 28, 1997 adopted a resolution requesting that the Secretary-General should help member States to design strategies to prevent and control corruption all over the world. Aderinoye et. al (2001) quoted UNESCO (2000) supported this action when it included in the Dakar framework for action on the promotion of good governance and condemnation of corruption. The same document also recommends the strengthening of moral values in the basic education curriculum, stressing the importance of democratic values such as justice, fairness, tolerance and respect for diversity and equity for teachers and students. Idowu (2012) stated that the war against corruption in Nigeria has continued to elicit the confidence of International organizations and agencies as the European Union (EU) votes the sum of 34 million Euro (N7 million) to support the anti-corruption war in the country. Despite all these

efforts by the government and international community, corruption still continues.

The word corruption means the destruction, ruining or the spoiling of a society or a nation. Aderinoye et al (2001) explained corruption as inducement or persuasion to influence people to do things that are contrary to laid down rule or norms and values of a society. Corruption is also a behaviour which deviates from the normal moral role that one is expected to display as a result of undue influence. According to Sen (1999), corruption or corrupt behaviour involves the violation of established rules for personal gain and profit. Corruption is efforts to secure wealth or power through illegal means privates gain at public expense or a misuse of public power for private benefit (Lipset & Lenz 2000).

Corruption comes in form of embezzlement, bribery, deceit and extortion to mention a few. Corruption can be seen in every areas of our society. In the home, public offices, market places, religion organizations, educational institutions, government institutions and parastatals, the armed forces and so on. Aderinoye et al (2001) discussed how corrupt practices show up in each of the levels:

1. In the home- Where parents encourage their children to tell lies. For example, telling children to say "tell him I am not at home" when actually they are at home. Indirectly the parents are teaching the children how to tell lies and thereby sowing seeds of dishonesty in their home. Other corruption practices in the home include parent who give money or material gifts to their children so that they can run errands for them.
2. Parents who involve their children at a tender age in their businesses. Through this, children will see business transactions as the only legitimate things to do and thereafter rate education as either unimportant or secondary to business.
3. Parents who neither scold or discipline their children whenever they come home with strange (stolen) items.
4. In the market place – Hording of goods and selling inferior goods. Excessive increment in the prices of goods and adjusting and reducing of measuring utensils.
5. Corruption among Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) – Diversion of organization's fund to personal use. For example, using fund in support of motherless babies to provide water for the community.
6. In religious organizations – Illegal and unofficial diversion of money, embezzling mosque or church fund, appointment of influential members to head positions or chair committees without considering their spiritual values.
7. In educational institutions - Buying admission letters, examination results and certificates. Lecturers engaging in illicit affairs with female

students with the aim of assisting the female students to pass by upgrading their marks.

8. In the government parastatals – Bribery in the award of contracts embezzlements of public funds by official, misappropriation of public funds, up-front payment of contract awards without execution of such contracts, the demands of ten percent from contractors by officials.
9. In the Armed forces – Recruitment and promotion of officers based on connection or ethnic consideration rather than on merit.
10. In politics –Bribery of the electorates to influence votes and gain upper hand over opponents, bribery of electoral officials to rig election, falsification of election results to favour a particular candidate.

Bayart (1997) listed other forms of corruption which include:

11. Bribery: This is the payment in money or kind that is taken or given in corrupt relationships. Examples include kickbacks, pay-off, sweeteners and greasy palms.
12. Fraud: This involves some kind of trickery, swindle and deceit, counterfeit, racketing, smuggling and forgery.
13. Embezzlement: This is theft of public resources by public officials. It is when a State official steals from the public institution in which he/she is employed.
14. Extortion: This is money and other resources extracted by the use of coercion, violence or threats to use force. The police and custom officers are the main culprits in Nigeria.
15. Nepotism: This is a special form of favouritism in which an office holder prefers his/her kinfolk and family members. Nepotism occurs when one is exempted from the application of certain laws and regulations or given undue preferences in the allocation of scarce resources.

### **Effects of Corruption**

The effects of corruption on the nation's economy are many. On the home front, it breeds irresponsible and undisciplined children. In educational institutions, it lowers the standard and reduces our level of competence of the output and this leads to the production of half-baked graduates and ill-equipped manpower. It impedes the growth and development of our economy. Religiously, moral values will be relegated and immorality will be practiced in broad day light. Politically, the right and dedicated candidate will not be elected or appointed into offices. The implication of this is that mediocre and unqualified people will continue to be relevant in the society(Aderinoye, et al, 2001). The consequences of corruption for social and economic development are bad. Corrupt hinders economic growth and deters investment. Resources are diverted from sectors such as education and health to less important sectors or

personal enrichment. The rule of law is eroded and the people no longer respect or trust the State.

### **Causes of Corruption in Nigeria**

Poverty: Aderinoye et al (2001) defined poverty as a state of being poor or is the condition that exists when people or human beings lack the means of meeting their basic needs of life. Poverty occurs in a situation where there is low, unstable and imbalance economic status of the people. Aderinoye et al further traced poverty to problems associated with unemployment or lack of job opportunity, under-employment, low income, irregular source of income, lack of basic needs. For example, if there are no job opportunities or fewer job opportunities, individuals in the society will not be able to provide for their basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing. So also, if the level of income of people is low or the source of such income is irregular, people will not be able to purchase most of their basic needs. Consequently, people will be living below poverty line. A man who has no job or whose income is very low can easily be influenced with any inducement of whatever form so as to satisfy his/her needs. Poverty can therefore accelerate the rate of corruption in the society.

### **Roles of Adult Education in Minimizing Corruption in Nigeria**

Adult education has various meanings by different authors but the one that seems all embracing is the by UNESCO (1971) which defined adult education as:

*The entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content, level or method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools or colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications, or turn them into a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviour in two-fold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced, independent, social, economic and cultural development.*

Adult education defined as the provision of all forms of education to the adult is obtainable in both formal, informal and non-formal situations. Formal education takes place in a school where there must be a teacher or teachers and learner or learners. Informal education involves the inculcation of societal values at home and in age-grade organization for example, home instruction remains most vital to the development of habits and attitudes. Under the

informal education the centre of the learning process of education was the home. This was where everybody learnt the basic requirements of life. According to Ojo (2000), each member of the society took it upon himself or herself to teach, train or sensitize a new member to the demands of the society. The Yoruba call it *eko ile* (home training), the Hausa call it *tarbiyya* and the Igbo call it *ozuzu ezi-n'uno*. Anyone deficient in it was and still treated with contempt and described as *marar tarbiyya* by the Hausa, *onye eweghiya* by the Igbo and *alaileko* by the Yoruba (Omolewa, 2001). Thus in the home, parents continue to serve as a force advising, counselling and guiding the children. This will not allow the child to be corrupt or engage in any corruption practices. Sarumi (2001) supported this by stating that children, adolescents and adults learnt the geography and history of their community. They were taught topics like local hills, valleys, rivers and plants, the time to expect rain and drought as well as the right time to plants, hunt, fish and reap.

Another area whereby corruption can be minimized is by looking up to role models in the society. A role model is a person who serves as a model in a particular behaviour or social role for another person to emulate. Each role model teaches a person about themselves. Thus a role model is someone that is honest, trusting, and most of all open-minded. Parents usually are the first role models their children have or come in contact with. Children are a reflection of their homes and their parents. Children are easily influenced by what they see and hear. They tend to copy and imitate their parents in their first few years of life. It is what is imparted into these children that they grow up with. There are good role models in Nigeria in the past that people could imitate. For example, people like Obafemi Awolowo and Nnamdi Azikiwe. Women in the pre-colonial history of Nigeria also played very significant roles worthy of emulation. They are Queen Amina of Zaria, Moremi of Ile-Ife, Emotan of Benin and Omu Okwel of Ossomari.

Adult education is for both literate and illiterate adult persons and it helps bring about changes in them for their personal development and for the development of the society where they live in Ani (2003). In minimizing corruption in Nigeria, the poverty level of the people should be reduced. This could be done if the people of Nigeria are empowered with vocational skills. This is a non-formal education which is one scope under adult education. If people are empowered with one skill or get jobs, their level of income will increase. If their income is regular, there is the tendency that people will shun corrupt practices. One of the objectives of Millennium Development Goals is to reduce extreme poverty. Nigerian government had sponsored a number of poverty alleviation programmes. These include Better

life for rural women, the National Poverty Eradication programme (NAPEP), Mandatory Attachment Programme (MAP), Capacity Credit Programme (CCP), Keke NAPEP, Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES). Despite all these programmes, there is poverty in Nigeria. The role of adult education in this aspect is to mobilize, create awareness, education and training for youths, men and women that are unemployed, unskilled. Pastors and Imams in churches and mosques who act like facilitators should endeavour to preach against corruption. They should be leadership by example and they should shun corruption among their members. The youth in the church and mosque should be economically empowered.

In the government of Nigeria, the government should make use of the Mass literacy in educating the populace about their intended policies. For example, how many people especially those in the rural areas understand the Act of corruption in Nigeria? Government should therefore intensify more in educating the populace through radio and television about the Act of corruption. The educating the people of Nigeria, all the agencies for adult and non-education should be engaged. They should translate the Act of corruption in the three major languages in Nigeria (Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo) and even the pidgin English so that every Nigerian in rural and urban areas would be able to understand.

The Non-governmental organizations can also help educate the populace on the need to shun corrupt practices. They can organize seminars, workshops and conferences in order to pass the message against corruption to the public. In the formal school, transparency and accountability should be added to their curriculum from basic to tertiary institutions.

## CONCLUSION

According to Ani (2003), the state of corruption in Nigeria today started after the colonial administration and still continues despite efforts of individuals, organisations and the government. This paper has tried to examine the roles of adult education in minimizing corruption in Nigeria. The government of Nigeria should use adult education as a means of curbing corruption in Nigeria because it is through adult education that the rural population and urban people in Nigeria would be reached and educated about the menace of corruption

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