

## The Role of Adult Education in Fighting Corruption in Nigeria

<sup>1</sup>Ozurumba Iheanyichukwu Godwin, <sup>2</sup>Bassey Ubong Ibongudo and <sup>1</sup>Echem Chidimma Chinasa Goodness

<sup>1</sup>Department of Adult Education and Extra-mural Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Department of Political Science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** Corruption can be seen as an illegal, immoral or dishonest behaviour. Corruption in Nigeria has reached a very high degree of prevalence. The endemic state of corruption in Nigeria 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 study, therefore, examines the concept of corruption 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 study also focuses on the causes of corruption and the roles of adult education in minimizing corruption in Nigeria. Adult education in this study is regarded as all forms of education provided for adults and is obtained through formal, informal and non-formal situations.

### Corresponding Author:

Ozurumba Iheanyichukwu Godwin  
Department of Adult Education and Extra-mural Studies,  
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or adult develops the abilities, the attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of positive value to the society in which he lives. That is to say, it is a process of disseminating knowledge either to ensure social control or to guarantee rational direction of society or both<sup>[1]</sup>.

Education has been conceptualized in various ways by scholars. Education is seen as the light that drives away the darkness of ignorance and enables mankind to find its ways through the tortures and labyrinth of development and civilization.

According to UNESCO<sup>[2]</sup>, “education refers to the total process of developing human ability and behaviour”. It is an organized and sustained instruction designed to communicate a combination of knowledge, skills and understanding value for all activities of life. Education refers to what can be used by man to solve his problems to improve his life and make it comfortable. It is one of the several ways that man employs to bring change in to his all round development. Education demands efforts and discipline. It is also a formidable tool for man’s survival.

Boyi<sup>[3]</sup>, conceived education as “what brings about the moral development and spiritual upliftment of the human personality and of the community as a whole”. He

stressed further that education makes mankind more creative and enables him to live a more fulfilling life through interaction.

Fafunwa however, defined education as “the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviors which are of positive value to the society in which he lives”. He stressed further that education is a process of transmitting culture in terms of continuity and growth and for disseminating knowledge to ensure social control or guarantee rational direction of society both.

Education has been defined as a systematic procedure for the transfer and transformation of culture through formal and informal training of people in a society; it deals with mental, physical, psychological and social development of citizens in a given society.

Asemah<sup>[4]</sup> sees education as a process whereby society inculcates the worthwhile things of the society into its people to be better able to cope with the problems of the society and contribute meaningfully to its well being and development. Ajaegbo and Ibezim<sup>[5]</sup> defines education as the training of the mind and character for effective performance. Ortyoyande views education to include all experiences and knowledge, acquired through formal (Schooling) or informal (folk stones) settings. According to Aliu education is said to be the method by which a society transmits from one generation to the next its knowledge, culture and values. He further stressed that education in the eye of an individual is the process by which people learn facts, acquires skills and develop abilities and attitudes necessary for the work place and survival.

According to Olayiwola<sup>[6]</sup> educational programmers could be said to be functional if it consistently justifies that purpose for which it was adopted, despite all odds. From the foregoing, it can be inferred that education is necessary for economic and social development.

From a global view, economic and social developments are increasingly driven by the advancement and application of knowledge “successful development entails more than investing in physical capital or choosing gap in capital, it also entails acquiring and using knowledge as well as closing gap in knowledge”<sup>[7]</sup>.

We have earlier seen the perception of this study on Education, the need of discussing corruption comes into focus. Tikumah<sup>[8]</sup> asserted that the term Corruption comes from the latin word *Corruptus* which literally means “to destroy”. Thus a practice or an action is labelled as corruption because of the destruction it causes to the moral, political or socio-economic being of the society.

Corruption refers to illegal, immoral or dishonest behaviour. The word corruption means the destruction, ruining or the spoiling of a society or a nation<sup>[9]</sup>. Aderinoye *et al.*<sup>[10]</sup> 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.

Although, there is no single generally accepted definition of corruption, the following are some common features of the various definitions of the term corruption:

- Abuse of public office for private gain
- Confusion of the private with public spheres or an illicit exchange between the two spheres
- Acting in a way inconsistent with official duty and the right of others
- Living to or accepting by a public official undue advantage that is intended to influence the official decision or behaviour of the official
- Dishonest or breach of trait by a public officer of his duty

Corruption is also a behavior which deviates from the normal moral role that one is expected to display as a result of undue influence. According to Sen<sup>[11]</sup>, corruption or corrupt behavior 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<sup>[12]</sup>. Corruption comes in form of embezzlement, bribery, deceit and extortion to mention a few. Corruption can be seen in every areas of our society. Ekiyor in his broad view of corruption defined it as the unlawful use of official power or influence by an official of the government either to enrich himself or further his course and/or any other person at the expense of the public, in contravention of his oath of office and/or contrary to the conventions or laws that are in force. It is very unfortunate that this menace knows not any time nor period; it happens anytime or period of any nation’s history. This monster called corruption has now been nick named in most Nigerian languages especially in the three major languages!.

Ndokwu says the Igbos call it *Igbuozu*, the Yorubas call it *Egunje* while the Hausas call it *Chuachua*. People no longer frown or feel ashamed to engage in corrupt practices! *Chuachua/Egunje* or *Igbuozu* is now acceptable and it is possible to hear someone openly complaining that there is no *Chuachua, Egunje* or *Igbuozu* at his or her place of work and as such a person might quickly resign if he or she finds another work where there is opportunity for corruption practice It is as bad as that! In the home, public offices, market places, religious organizations, educational institutions, government institutions and parastatals, the armed forces and so on. 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.*<sup>[10]</sup> discussed how corrupt practices show up in each of the levels:

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.

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. Parents who neither scold nor discipline their children whenever they come home with strange (stolen) items.

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. 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. 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.

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. In the government parastatals- Bribery for 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. In the Armed forces - Recruitment and promotion of officers based on connection or ethnic consideration rather than on merit. 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<sup>[13]</sup> listed other forms of corruption which include.

**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.

**Fraud:** This involves some kind of trickery, swindle and deceit, counterfeit, racketing, smuggling and forgery.

**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.

**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.

**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 giving undue preferences in the allocation of scarce resources. This situation calls for adult education programmes that shall be directed towards addressing these problems and challenges facing human beings. Adult education is very vital to addressing these problems because it provides adults with the necessary skills, attitudes, knowledge, values, beliefs required to trigger social and economic development of any society. It is important to target adults because they, rather than children hold the destiny of modern society in their hands. In support of Anyanwu’s view, maintains that adults are those who are already working and participating in development efforts. Obi further emphasizes that adult education programmes unlike education for children and adolescents, centre on the immediate needs and problems of the adults in their homes, social and occupational roles, civic and economic interests and therefore have immediate direct positive relationship with development objectives. Nzeneri<sup>[14]</sup> opined that “living in Nigeria is becoming more and more difficult” not because of inflation, not because of armed robbery, not because of the new political system we are experiencing but mainly because the individual in Nigerian does not understand himself adequately well” for Nigeria to move meaningfully forward, her adult population must be educated.

Adult education means learning that takes place among adults. Scholars in adult education refer to it using different terms and concepts. These necessarily depend on who they are the culture they represent, whom they are writing for the social economic and political prevalence at the time of their writing and the context in which their terms and concepts are used<sup>[15]</sup>. Thus, Sarumi<sup>[15]</sup> defined adult education as a product of culture. He noted that adult education is a process which is part of cultural development, primarily the establishment of a means of communication between the cultural systems of the transmitters (inventors, research workers, creative minds) and the cultural systems of the receivers (i.e., groups for whom adult education is intended). Some scholars in developed countries tend to define adult education as the kind of learning that is expected to be undertaken by those who need to catch up

on their formal education or who need to use their leisure purposefully or who need to upgrade their skills and knowledge in the face of changing technology. These scholars residing in or writing for the developing world conceptualized adult education in terms of the circumstances prevailing in the developing countries such as high illiteracy, the problem of free and compulsory education and the need to catch up technologically among others. Nwagbo Ebiringa and Nzeneri referred to adult education as “education for people (young and old) who missed formal education for one reason or the other”. They went on to elaborate that these are people who are old enough to work, vote, fight and marry and who are now desirous to make up for their lack of formal education. Adult education tends to teach, train or sensitize a new member to the demands of the society. 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 thereby reducing corruption.

Thus adult education can be seen as a lifelong education for the purpose of human and national development. This study aims at revealing how adults education can be a powerful tool in eliminating or highly reducing corruption in Nigerian society.

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

**Poverty:** Aderinoye *et al.*<sup>[10]</sup> 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.*<sup>[10]</sup> 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.

**Effect 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<sup>[10]</sup>. 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.

#### **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<sup>[16]</sup> 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 can be 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<sup>[17]</sup>, 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 *ekoile* (home training), the Hausa call it *tarbiyya* and the Igbo call it *ozuzuezi-n’ulo*. Anyone deficient in it was and still treated with contempt and described as *marartarbiyya* by the Hausa, *onyeeweghiya* by the Igbo and *alaileko* by the Yoruba<sup>[18]</sup>. Thus in the home, parents continue to serve as a force advising, counseling and guiding the children. This will not allow the child to be corrupt or engage in any corruption practices. Sarumi<sup>[15]</sup> 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 plant, 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 by Ani<sup>[9]</sup>. 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. Moreover the workforce in Nigeria are adults and when they are free from corrupt practice, Nigeria will be a better place to live in.

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