

TOWARDS THE ENHANCEMENT OF MORALITY IN THE NIGERIAN POLITICS

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ABSTRACT

The manifestation of immorality in Nigerian politics has been rationalized by some people with the notion that politics is inherently dirty, consequently separate morality from the practice of politics in the country. This has led to the appearance of vices in Nigerian politics. The effect is not far-fetched as we have killing, electoral malpractices and corruption as the by-products of immoral politics. Therefore, this piece investigated the nature of Nigerian politics, by considering the meaning of morality and politics and the relationship between the two concepts. Many ways by which immorality manifests in Nigeria politics and its effects on Nigerian politics and the citizens are given vehement attention in the work, while ways by which we can inculcate morality into Nigerian politics are suggested in the piece, before recommendations are made.

Keywords: Morality, Politics, Nigerian, Corruption

Introduction

The common slogan of some people in Nigeria that, “politics is a dirty game” needs moral evaluation. The simple clause has a lot of social, religious and moral implications in the country. The direct or indirect meaning of the statement is that by nature, politics is dirty in itself. This suggests that politics has nothing to do with morality, since it is claimed to be dirty. The political affair and activities of the nation have been running with this wrong political notion and ideology. The effect of this is obvious in form of corruption, Machiavellianism, kleptocracy, embezzlement, rigging, and killing¹

It is now very difficult to believe that politics could be practiced without immoral acts, because an average Nigerian politician believes that politics and morality are two opposing terms that have no relationship with each other. We have successfully separated the two from each other and thereby produced a society that is void of justice, equity and respect for rule of law. This erroneous political worldview has created justification for immoral behaviour in Nigerian politics, where anything inimical to the welfare of the society can be done all in the name of the dirtiness of politics. In short, to the developed nations, another name for African politics in general and that of Nigeria in particular is corruption. It is obviously recognized that corruption is the bye-product of the Nigerian dirty politics.

However, can we justify the notion of the dirtiness of politics? How dirty is politics, especially in the Nigerian context? Is it possible to remove morality from politics? All these and similar questions are what this paper concerns itself with. We shall carry out the task by paying special attention to the relationship between politics and morality, the current political experience in Nigeria shall be considered and the effect of the removal of morality from Nigerian politics will be given consideration. The paper will be concluded by recommending useful and effective methods of inculcating morality into Nigerian politics as a way of giving meaningful governance that will deliver the dividends of democracy to the citizens of the country.

Conceptual Clarification

The two major concepts in this paper that we need to shed light upon to get their deeper meanings are morality and politics. Therefore, we will try to explicate the meaning of the concepts in order to have better understanding of the relationship that exists between the two.

Morality

Virtually all the moral Philosophers agree that morality has Latin etymological background. According to Agulanna, morality comes from the Latin word, *moralis*, a word which he held to have been coined by Cicero in order to translate the Greek word *ethos*, which means habit or custom.² Ekwealo supports this view when he argues that ethics and morality are synonymous, he further submits that the difference lies in the fact that whereas ethics comes from a Greek word *ethos* meaning character or customs; while morality is derived from a Latin word *mores* meaning custom, habit and way of life.³

From the foregoing assertions, it is now obvious that morality as a concept in its etymological sense is referring to conduct, principles, rightness and correct ordering or living. Thus, we can define morality as the standard and principle that guide and judge human conducts. It guides human behaviour in the sense that morality, as also known of ethics, sets out to explain what we ought to do in a particular point of time in relation to the place and the receiver(s) of the action performed. This makes Omoregbe to submit that ethics as a branch of philosophy is a study which deals with the morality of human conduct.⁴

Human conduct in this sense connotes human actions that are performed voluntarily in form of enterprise, effort, exploits, undertaking, work or activity carried out by a person or a group of persons at a given period of time. Morality comes in to the issue of human action when we consider the nature of the action in relation to what is obtainable as the standard of behaviour in the society, in order to determine the goodness or badness, rightness or wrongness, correctness or incorrectness of the action; especially in relation to the performer of the action and its effects on the people in the environment where the action is being performed.⁵

It is very important that the action of every individual of the society is conformed to the standard of morality that guides the community. This is because man is a social being, who cannot live a solitary life; therefore, his action has effects on the people of the society. If he does good thing the society will be peaceful and people will live in harmony, but if he does evil or wickedness, it will also have negative effect on the society. A society that has no sense of morality is not worthy of living, and it cannot be referred to as a society, for the activities of the people in such a society can only be likened to that of the state of nature as described by Thomas Hobbes, where everybody performed actions as he or she pleased.⁶ It is through the establishment of the moral system of rules that people are able to treat others “in ways that make for harmonious living”⁷ in the community.

In his bid to give what the meaning of morality should entail, P.H. Nowell-Smith opines that morality or moral system contains or consists of the following⁸:

1. Beliefs about the nature of man;
2. Beliefs about ideals, about what is good or desirable or worthy of pursuit for its own sake;
3. Rules laying down what ought to be done and what ought not to be done; and
4. Motives that incline us to choose the right course of action.

From the above assertion, Nowell-Smith gives what morality portrays. Man by nature is egoistic and pleasure loving animal, in the course of satisfying his urge for pleasure, man, if not checked, would exhibit behaviour without considering the effects of his actions on the environment and on the people around him. Hence, there is a need for moral principles that will be guiding human conduct in the society that will incline him to choose right course of action. The rule that guides human conduct is known as moral law. This is different from legal law that is written and codified. It is natural law that man is aware of through natural inclination.

Scholars have different opinions concerning the source of the moral law. Some Philosophers championed by Immanuel Kant hold that it comes from human nature. Kant maintains that the moral law comes from man's rational will, thus Kantians hold that moral law is self-imposed law. However, other set of Philosophers argue that society is the source of the moral law, Thomas Hobbes leads this school of thought, when he submits that society sets rules through the contract that brings man together as a community. It is also believed that since *mores* and *ethos* can be interpreted as '*customs*'⁹ which refers to a traditional and widely accepted way of behaving or doing something that is specific to a particular society, the moral law is set by society. Another group of Scholars like St. Thomas Aquinas, John Locke, etc. submit that the moral law is an expression of God's will for men, indicating the way he wants them to behave; this is technically known as Divine Command Theory.

Irrespective of the source of the moral law, one cannot deny the reality of its existence; this is obvious in the natural inclination of man to recognize what is good from what is bad. Man is obliged to obey the law by doing what is good in order to live peacefully even from within, while there is natural condemnation in the mind of anybody who chooses to act contrarily to the dictates of his conscience about morality. Omoregbe buttresses this view when he rightly opines that:

There are no cultures, no people in any historical epoch who are not obliged by this law. This law- the Moral- comes to man through his reason and every man feels its obligation through his moral conscience. It is a universal law about which no normal person who has reached the age of reason can claim to be ignorant.¹⁰

The submission of Omoregbe about moral law suggests that nobody in any part of the world can claim that he does not know that he ought to avoid evil, or that he ought to do good. The good characters are the virtues, qualities and principles that can promote the welfare and development of the society. Examples of these positive principles or standard as given by Ayantayo are justice, responsibility, equity, fairness, truth and impartiality, while the negative principles include injustice, self-centeredness, intolerance, wickedness, discrimination, coerce, lie telling, corruption, etc.¹¹ Thus, anybody that exhibits the features of good principle is morally upright while those who are exhibiting the principles that are inimical to the welfare and peace of the society are morally deficient.

Politics

According to Yusuf, politics can simply be referred to as the art and science of governance.¹² It is the activities associated with the governance of a country or area, especially the activities that aimed at improving someone's status or increasing power within an organization. Politics involves theory and practice that guide the making of a common decision for group of people; it is the system that unifies the society together, especially, in the area of public affairs, welfare, social amenities and exercising of power to organize and control a particular community or state.

The ancient meaning of the concept can best be explained in Plato's *Republic* as well as in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*, as given by Akinwale, Politics in its traditional Greek sense, is employed to refer to that quest for what is good in the governance of the *polis*; namely the city or the society.¹³ In the modern meaning, politics cannot be totally separated from its traditional sense, but modification through quest for political power has given the concept a different interpretation. This makes Manus to opine that:

In the contemporary age, people look upon politics as either the art or science of government or as the competition between competing interest groups or individuals for power and leadership in a polity.¹⁴

From the above assertion, it is obvious that the competition that exists between two interest groups is not always in the interest of the society, but many a time, it is for selfish interest of the individuals concerned. Manus further supports this view when he considers Nigerian politics and opines that "in our case here in Nigeria, people have jettisoned the traditional ethical dimensions and responsibilities of politics that Greek civilization had bequeathed to

the world.”¹⁵ This suggests that the original intention of the Greek politics, which was later adopted by many modern nations, was to provide a comfortable society for the members of the community. This is what he refers to as ethical dimension and responsibilities of politics. Thus, we need to consider the relationship between morality and politics which is the major concern of this paper.

The Interrelation of Morality and Politics

Though we cannot deny the fact that morality and politics are two different concepts that concern themselves with human society, the reality that they have something to do together is also obvious. The two aim at how to make the society peaceful and accommodative for the humanity. Politics sees to how the community can be governed meaningfully and effectively, also morality is concerned with how members of the society can live together in harmony through the exhibition of positive characters. Agulanna believes that morality and politics aim at similar goals when he submits that:

While ethics aims at determining how people ought to behave in striving for what is good over what is bad, politics on its part aims at determining what the government of a political society ought to do and how it ought to be constituted in order to achieve socially worthy goals.¹⁶

As to how politics determines what government ought to do in the society as we see from the above assertion, only those projects and programmes that will benefit the society must be embarked upon, while how people who are ruling the society get to the corridor of power must conform to the constituted arrangement of the state. The present situation of African politics especially that of Nigeria has made the possibility of moral politics seems unattainable. The orientation that politics is a dirty game that has nothing to do with morality has landed the nation in a critical stage where politicians are using dubious and immoral means to gain power, they also employ fair or foul methods to maintain and sustain their positions.

The separation of morality from the practical politics will definitely produce a society where the rights of the members are not respected. There is always a grievous danger in any art of politics jettisoning morality, putting it in Ekeh’s words “any politics without morality is destructive.”¹⁷ The interrelation of morality and politics is a matter that must concern all those who are seeking for a better society, where the government caters for the welfare of the

populace. The leaders have the moral duties to play politics according to the rules and they are also enslaved with moral obligation not just to lead but to lead well in order to have a state where equity reigns. This fact makes Afolayan to argue that “in order to succeed in building a virtuous society and not just a formal or legal one bereft of vitality, politics must parlay morality.”¹⁸

However, we have school of thought which argued that morality has nothing to do with politics. It is held that political immorality is a social norm in the society, and that politicians should not subject themselves to the rules and regulations that govern the political process of the nation, instead, one should try to grab power by all means fair or foul, and having been able to grab it, all means – fair or foul – must be used to retain it. The proponent of such political idea is the fifteenth century Italian thinker, Niccolo Machiavelli.

In his book *The Prince*, he argued that rulers must ignore morality if they want to be successful politicians or rulers. According to Machiavelli, the ultimate goal of all political activities is to grab political power; any means used to achieve this is justified. The sum of Machiavellianism is given by Agulanna as follow:

The sum of Machiavelli’s ideas is that the leader is not bound by the norms of traditional morality in the discharge of his duties or in the dispensing of social advantages of his subject. All that matters in politics is the maintenance of the ruler’s political estate against opponents who are at all times changeable, dissimulators and ever “eager for gain.”¹⁹

The elevation of political immorality as we observed in the above assertion has given room for vices such as election malpractice, corruption, embezzlement, killing, political gerrymandering, and different forms of manipulation of democratic process by politicians in African continents. The endorsement of immoral acts in the politics as suggested by Machiavelli cannot produce a kind of governance that will bring about social, economic and political growth in the society. This is because the values of morality are not regarded by the ruler who only aims at satisfying himself through the grabbing of political power.

Many of the politicians in Africa countries especially, Nigerian politicians adopted Machiavellian principle in their pursuits of political offices. The political experience in the Nigeria has obviously shown that these erroneous principles are incompatible with democracy. Trying to combine Machiavellian principles with democratic principle,

Omeregbe asserts, is like trying to combine fire with water.²⁰ He further submits that, removing morality from democracy equals to removing democracy itself because democracy presupposes morality, justice, fairness, peaceful and descent behaviour, openness of mind, and readiness to step down if one loses which are not part of Machiavellianism.

It is herculean to regulate human political behaviours. This is because man has the tendency of lording it over his fellow men; therefore if he gains absolute power, he could make life miserable for his subjects. Power, as Afolayan has asserted, excites different emotions in us, according to him, it inspires pride in those who wield it, and instigates fear in those who must bear its imperatives.²¹ Since there is different view about how governance of the society should be carried out and what constitutes good governance in the public sense, morality must necessarily regulate the political ideologies of those who are in the corridor of power in the country.

For politics to be meaningful and effective in any given society, the place of morality cannot be replaced with immorality, not even intellectualism. If we try to remove ethical teaching from governance, our result cannot be different from that of Europe. This fact is obvious in the statement made by President Prodi as reported by Ukpokolo:

We need to establish a link between ethics and politics. Intellectual expediency and indifference have already done too much damage to politics for us to avoid the task.²²

From Prodi's assertion we can infer that Europe has a tragic experience of the wrong relationship between morality and politics, and this can be traced to the elevation of intellectualism above morality in that part of the world. This can be further buttressed by the former president's view when he opined that "we can no longer allow politics to be devalued through skepticism, pragmatism or nihilism."²³ We can logically submit that the Europeans separated morality from politics as a result of intellectual enterprises and philosophical ideologies, but the story is different in the African shore, because the separation of the two concepts, in practical sense, is done not for intellectual or philosophical reasons, but for selfish reasons.

Therefore it is imperative to pay attention to the experience of Africans, especially, Nigerians, in separating politics from morality. This will help us to determine how

progressive the nation is politically, and also give the idea of the effects of wrong political ideologies on the economic and social lives of the citizens of the country.

Manifestation of Immorality in Nigerian Politics

Since Independence, Nigeria as a country has witnessed different forms of government led by different leaders, both in military regimes and in the democratic system of government. Judging from the number of years of independent ruling, it is expected that the nation supposed to have experienced development politically, economically, socially and technologically. It is saddened to note that the country has only witnessed retrogression and under-development under the regimes of the political champions of the state. This pathetic experience has been traced to immoral and wrong political ideologies. The ‘political diseases’ is contagious and communicable as it has affected virtually all other aspects of Nigerians’ lives.

The Nigerian politicians have separated ethical virtues from politics; they have made us believe that politics and morality do not go together. The notion is that once a person starts playing politics he must jettison morality, hence the statement “politics is a dirty game.” They hold that what matters is to grab political power by all means fair or foul, and sustain it the same way. The focus of any government is to cater for the citizenry, but this is not the aim of Nigerian leaders, for the means of acquiring political power explains their selfish objectives. This can best be explained in Kantian theory on ethical philosophy which is based on the view that the only intrinsically good thing is a good will; therefore an action can only be good if it is principled on good intention.

Unlike what obtains in Europe, Nigerians separated morality from politics not because of intellectualism, but because of selfish interest and egoism on part of the major political players in nation. The celebration of materialism and position in Africa has blindfolded us to the extent that we are not ready to question the morality of the source of people’s wealth or the means through which they get to the position they occupy. The celebration of corrupt leaders and their wealth in the society has been the impetus for immorality in Nigerian politics. Acts of immorality manifest in Nigerian politics, some these will be considered here.

Electoral Malpractices

The election processes in Nigeria have not been able to free and fair since the inception of democracy in the country. Nigeria is a country where the elected politician would confess through media that the election that brought him to the position was full of abnormalities without resigning from that office and nothing will follow his confession. Familusi asserts that elections in Nigeria since her independence has been fraught with all manner of irregularities ranging from malpractices to violence. He identifies immorality, political illiteracy and monetization of politics as the factors responsible for the deplorable state of elections in the country.²⁴

Electoral malpractice is inimical to the democratic development of any nation and it is a sign of lack of respect for the will of the electorates to choose who is to lead them. It is not a new thing to record ballot box snatching, killing, militarization of election, inflation of number of the cast votes and many other immoral activities in Nigeria elections, and this has been identified as one of the cog in wheel of progress of the nation.

We cannot but condemn the immoral act of purchasing votes that is common in Nigerian politics. It is more or less a normal practice in Nigeria politics to influence the voting decision of the electorates by offering them money or material things like food items, clothing, electronics etc to purchase their votes. The level of poverty in the country allows this, because somebody who has no hope of what to eat will quickly embrace whatever is presented to him without actually considering the moral implication of his action. Such a step is rationalized by the Yoruba sayings like *Kila o je ni agba kila o se* meaning that “what to eat is older than what to do,” or *Ti ebi ba kuro ninu ise, ise buse* – literally put, “Removing hunger from suffering, you are left with superficial suffering.” We cannot justify such immoral act on the basis of poverty, because such a step will only contribute more to the level of poverty. This is because the politician who is sharing money to the electorates in order to have their votes has only invested the money; he will be expecting his ‘capital’ to yield profit when he eventually grabs the political power. This explains why such a politician will not perform his political duty, instead, he will embezzle public fund in his bid to have profit on the money invested.

The ethical question that will come to mind is that: Do the electorates have the moral right to challenge any politician who embezzles public fund after purchasing the votes that took him

into the office? We must know that both the offer and the acceptance of money or materials for the purpose of voting are morally wrong. The offer is wrong in the sense that it is a move to reduce man as a means to an end instead to be treated as an end. This is against the Kantian categorical imperative that insists on using humanity as an end, never simply as a means.²⁵ The means here is the voters while the end is the political position that politician is aim at. Again the acceptance of the offer is morally wrong because it makes the political posts belong to the highest bidder among the contestants, who may not be the right candidate for that particular position. It is also wrong because the receiver has contributed to the problem of the country by not voting for the candidates who are morally upright that can turn around the fortunes of the nation. If he collected the money or materials without voting for the giver, it is immoral as against the views of many Nigerians, that hold that one can accept the offer and still go ahead to vote for the candidate of his choice. This is nothing but immorality, it is better to let the giver know that exchanging of vote for money is corruption, which is ethically wrong.

Political Godfatherism

Godfatherism in politics could be referred to the phenomenon that occurs when someone hides under the influence of a powerful or wealthy person to achieve his political ambitions which he would not have been achieved ordinary without the support of the godfather. According to Ayoade, godfatherism is the practice of political office seekers getting connected to an individual who is believed to have the ability to deliver desired outcome of electoral contest.²⁶ The influence of the political godfather in Nigeria has won them some titles such as kingmakers, boss, mentor and principal, while the godson is seen as the beneficiary and recipient of the legacy of a godfather.²⁷

The effect of godfatherism on the political system in Nigeria has not been profitable to the electorates and the society at large. This is because the godson will not be able to do anything that is against will of his master, and many a time, the master's will is always against the will of the populace, therefore, democratic system will now be a dictatorship in disguise. It also deny the electorates to choose their leaders, this made Gambo to argue that when individuals in the society become too powerful to dictate for the rest, the integrity of the process of choosing leaders is compromised.²⁸ There are many devilish and immoral acts that are carried

out by the godfathers in order to remain relevant in the political process of the country; this has negative effects on the development of the country.

Political Gerrymandering

In a bid to achieve their personal and selfish ambitions, Nigerian politicians especially those who are in the corridor of power employ undue methods to win elections in the country. One of such methods is gerrymandering, which is the changing the size and borders of an area for voting in order to give an unfair advantage to one party in an election. Politically, the term is technically employed to describe unfair changing of the rules of political processes to favour one's personal agenda. Agulanna recognizes this in the leadership of some African leaders which were characterized with tyranny, ineptitude, despotic and ineffective governance. He mentions Idi Amin of Uganda, Eyadema of Togo, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and Sanni Abacha of Nigeria as some of the African leaders that are faulted with gerrymandering in the continent. He further submits that "it is this leadership deficit as well as political gerrymandering that accounts for all the social ills taking place in the African continent."²⁹

The idea of changing the post of the rules of a game suddenly for selfish reason is not ethical, it amounts to cheating on others, but many leaders are doing this because they have political power of the country in their possession. We also have those who are not in power but who are wealthy and strong enough to influence the decision of those who are in charge of electoral matter for their favour. For instance, some members of the losing party have read gerrymandering to the use of Electronic Card Readers in the 2015 general elections in Nigeria as a measure to defeat the incumbent president. Again, the sudden announcement of the postponement of the date of the said election by the former President Goodluck Jonathan on the ground of insecurity was also interpreted as a move to favour himself in the electoral contest.

Sit-tight-in-office Syndrome

The political dirtiness is not manifesting only in the electoral process, it also features when a leader who has completed his tenure based on the constitutional stipulation of the country refused to leave the position or when he is doing everything possible even including the alteration of the constitution to favour his agenda. The attachment of authority, wealth and other benefits to political positions tends to make common man to desire to occupy the

position for the rest of his life. It is morality that will help man to tame his desire in order not to violate the constitutional order. Due to the lack of this morality in Nigeria politics, many of the leaders have developed many dubious methods to actualize their undue overstaying in the political office. The phenomenon is well explained in the words of Adeogun:

Quite a number of African leaders do not have decorum of being sincerely benevolent and quitting the stage of governance when the ovation is loudest, if at all there is ever any ovation. They are known for being despotic and their sit-tight-in-office syndrome.³⁰

Nigeria particularly has experienced the activities of such a leader both in the military regime and the democratic system. The nullification of June 12 election of 1993 by the then Head of States General Ibrahim Babangida was a step by the President to extend his staying in the office. The alleged Third Term Agenda of the former President Olusegun Obasanjo could also be seen as step towards the unconstitutional extension of tenure in the office of the president. We need to note that many immoral acts were perpetrated to achieve such unlawful ambitions by many leaders, and many innocent people fell victim of the stealthy agenda, especially those who developed scurrilous feeling about the move. The obvious evidence of immorality in Nigerian politics has made many citizens of the country to lost confidence in the government and in the future of the nation.

Effects of Immoral Politics in Nigeria

The havoc that immoral politics has wreaked and is wreaking cannot be over emphasized. Its effect is evident in the level of corruption in the country, especially on the part of the political office holders. Many Nigerians have seen politics as a lucrative business through which they can gather wealth within very short period of time.³¹ The public funds that are meant for the developmental projects are diverted to their personal purses just because this was their target of seeking political post in the first place. The citizens that supposed to enjoy those facilities will continue to suffer because those who are the custodians of public fund have decided to embezzle the money. The fact that many of the Nigeria political office holders are leaving the office with robust bank accounts and many properties as well as series of cases of financial misconducts leveled against them before the appropriate agencies shows that the majority of the Nigerian politicians are kleptocratic leaders.

The increasing rate of the unemployed in Nigeria is also traced to immoral politics in the country. The various institutions of learning in the country are turning out graduates every year without the creation of employment to engage these numerous youths. This is because the politics of the nation is not producing visionary leaders who could plan towards the creation of industries and diversification of economy of the country that can bring about creation of employment. The immoral politics has only been producing self-satisfying, selfish, egoistic and kleptocratic leaders who are into politics because of personal interests. Nigeria is a country where human and natural resources are greatly available, but poor orientation about leadership has led to the mismanagement of these resources thereby leaving the country in an undesirable and deplorable state that makes the citizens of the country to be looking for a way of escaping from the land to another 'promising pasture' through any means.

Another undeniable effect of immoral politics in Nigeria is the alarming rate of poverty in the country. As identified earlier, Nigeria is a country richly endowed with resources, yet the nation is a beggar-country today, this is because as the country acquires money from her resources, the money goes into private accounts and she gets poorer while very few of her citizens especially political leaders get richer. The effect of poverty on the nation is greatly provoking, where people are not able to get the basic needs of life. According to Uniamikogbo, we have levels and types of poverty in Nigeria; he submits that "poverty has many dimensions, such as inadequate income, malnutrition, lack of access to social service, and lack of social and political status."³² Familusi and Oke who identify the manifestation of poverty in Nigeria report that the phenomenon is greatly disheartened that many Nigerians cannot afford balance diet, good shelter, qualitative education and good health services. They further point to corruption in politics as one of the major causes of poverty in Nigeria.³³ The majority of the citizens of the country are dying of hunger; ironically we have few individuals who are stinking rich by sucking from the abundant wealth of the nation to the disadvantage of the majority.

One of the by-products of immoral politics in Nigeria is insecurity. Seeking for political positions by all means has driven many Nigerians to employ the services of hire assassins to eliminate their opponents. Little is to be mentioned about the distribution of illicit weapons to political thugs during the electoral processes by the wealthy and popular politicians which would never be retrieved from them after their evil assignments have been completed. The

thugs would now be using the same weapons to terrorize both the donor and the innocents of the country. We need to allude to the argument of a moral political Scholar who asserts that injustice, corruption and insecurity are Siamese triplets that are inseparable in Nigerian politics.³⁴ This implies that the removal of one will invariably lead to the removal of all. One can interpret fight against injustice to the some of the insurgencies in the nation. A very good example of this is the Niger-Delta Militancy that Nigerian government battled for a very long period of time. Where injustice is enthroned equity will never be allowed to have its way, and the denial of the people of their rights could lead to insecurity in any given society.

The image of the nation as whole is tainted because of immoral acts that have been incorporated into the national politics. The indigenes of the country are facing embarrassments outside the nation because Nigeria is taking a very strong position in the list of the world corrupt nations. The objective assessment of the Nigerian politicians justifies the ignominious comments about the country's political system. On the poor image of African democracy which is not different from what is obtainable in Nigeria, Agulanna is emphatic that:

There is so much criminality, roguery and political indecency among African leaders that nobody pays serious attention to African politics any more. Election rigging and vote buying are now trite issues in the African version of democracy.³⁵

The above assertion further establishes the fact that Nigeria has lost her place of honour among the comity of nations. It is very imperative to have a change of orientation about politics and governance in order to be able to redeem the image of the nation. This redemption would not come suddenly except Nigerians learn to inculcate morality into the politics of the nation.

Towards Inculcating Morality into Nigerian Politics

It is not enough to recognize the problems and the implication of the practice of immoral politics in Nigeria; it is also good to suggest the way out of the problems. This is very important because the future of the country is greatly depended on the ability of her citizens to get it right politically. Therefore some useful suggestions on how to inculcate morality into the Nigerian politics will be offered in the section of the work.

Change of Political Ideologies

Nigerians got it wrong politically because of the poor orientation and ideology on the acquisition and retention of political power. An average politician in the country believes that the purpose of political power is to amass wealth for personal interests, while others also find relevance and fulfillment in the absolutization of power and authority without necessarily realizing that possession of power and authority is never an end in itself, but a means to an end. Thus, the end, which is equally the ultimate goal of politics, is the rendering of service to the people. When we see politics as a way of serving people in the political capacity we occupy, the idea of getting it by all means, fair or foul, will be removed. The aim and objective of seeking political posts must base on the service unto humanity, and the means to get to the position must be morally acceptable, for it is not reasonable to use dubious means to get political power because you want to serve people.

De-monetization of Politics

The huge amount of money and other benefits attached to the political posts in Nigeria must be revisited if we are ready to inculcate morality into our political system. We cannot deny the fact that democracy is the ideal system of government, at the same time; one cannot equally deny the truth that it is too expensive to run. It is this kind of government, especially in Nigeria context, that every political office holder, including a Councilor of a ward, gets handsome salary, robust allowances, official cars and security guards, whereas his counterparts in civil service is facing difficulty because he is financially incapacitated. The benefits are too much that is why people turn politics to do-or-die affair in the country. Therefore, we suggest that government should demonetized politics and also reduce the benefits attached to political offices. We are not saying politicians should not be appreciated for the services rendered to the people of the society, but not to the extent of becoming stinking rich just because they occupy political posts.

Waging War against Corruption

Another way to ensure morality in Nigerian politics is by launching total war against corruption in the country. Though we have some government agencies that are dealing with any corrupt political office holder, like Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), the fight against corruption should not be done with sentiment, partiality or injustice. The agencies should not be used against the corrupt leaders who belong to opposition party as it is allegedly

reported of the Agencies; rather every kleptocratic politician must be severely dealt with. The nation should adopt Deterrent Theory of punishment which says that the purpose of punishing wrongdoers or criminal is to deter other people from doing the same wrong or criminal acts.³⁶

Corruption in politics has been viewed by Oke as a violation of moral code or normative standard within the society.³⁷ He explains further that is anti-social behaviour conferring improper benefits contrary to legal and moral norms, and which undermines the authorities to improve the living condition of the people.³⁸ In other words, we cannot play dirty politics without its unavoidable consequence inform of corruption which will invariably deny the common people of their rights and benefits in the governance.

Therefore, the search light of the concerned Agencies should not spare any corrupt politician irrespective of his position, political affiliation and affluence, in order words, the war against corruption should not be selective. The discrimination informs of impunity or sacred *cowism* should be avoided in an effective and serious fight against corruption in the country. The era whereby someone would be in prison custody and contest and win an election should be a thing of the past, whosoever is not having clean record should not qualify to contest an election let alone being appointed to occupy any political post. Nigeria should stop celebrating corruption and corrupt leader; instead they should be exposed to great ignominy. The properties of the guilty politicians should be confiscated, this will put end to the shameful idea of plea bargain, that is, paying little amount of money as ransom out huge amount they have stolen. If this is done, other politicians will sit tight, at least, for the sake of the fear of public humiliation.

Intensified Religious Moral Teaching

Since it is believed that Africans including Nigerians are “*notoriously*”,³⁹ “*incurably*”,⁴⁰ and even “*in all things*”⁴¹ religious, it is relevant to use religious tool to tackle immorality in Nigerian politics. This is because every player of the game of politics in the country has affiliation with one religion or the other which preaches morality in every sphere of life. The increasing level of immorality in the country generally shows that religious institutions have been failing in this regard. Record even has it that many of the religious leaders are celebrating the corrupt politicians because of the financial help they are getting from such politicians, while little is to be mentioned of the religious leaders who are supposed to be the custodians of morality who are partaking in the sharing of the stolen money brought by

immoral politicians. Thus, Nigerian religious leaders should rise up to the task of preaching morality to their followers; telling them that politics and governance is a chance to serve the people of the society and not an opportunity for personal aggrandizement of political leaders, this will go a long way to influence them positively. The idea that each human life is imbued with value is one that is deeply rooted in the teachings of the major religions of the country.

Introduction of Political Ethics as a General Studies Programmes

Experience has indicated that not all who have the opportunity of occupying political posts are fully equipped with the knowledge that enhances excellent performance in the posts. Many of the Nigerian politicians are from other fields of discipline who know little or nothing about the idea and purpose of governance. This lack of political knowledge actually denies many of them the political ethics that would have helped them. Therefore, we want to make remark here that government should mandate higher Institution of learning to introduce politics related courses to the General Studies Programmes, this will make all the students, who are the country's future leaders, to have basic idea of what politics and governance are all about. Again this will prepare them for the tasks ahead while disallowing leaders who are not prepared enough for social political and economic responsibilities of the offices they occupy.

Concluding Remarks

It is now obvious that it is not that politics as a game is dirty, but that dirty politicians make it dirty. We must also realize that it is not in politics alone that we can find immorality; we have immoral acts in other professions, inasmuch that these professions are also practiced by man. This implies that the immoral acts found in politics are only reflecting the nature and level of corruption in our society at large, because the politicians are products of the society of where they play their game. If the society is morally inclined, we are going to produce moral politicians. Therefore, morality should be the concern of the all Nigerians and not the politicians alone.

The dirtiness in Nigerian politics has affected virtually all other aspects of the nation's affair, therefore if our economic will resuscitate from the poor condition we find it today, our politics must be played by moral players through which visionary leaders can be allowed to take the country to the next level of development. The country can redeem her image among

the comity of nations if the citizens are ready to inculcate morality into the politics of the country at all levels.

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