

# Social Studies, Economics and Political Science Education: Vital Tools for Revamping Corruption in Electoral Process of African Democracy and the Nigerian Perspective

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## Abstract

*A critical look at the democracy in some African nations including Nigeria reveals that some African nations with Nigeria inclusive have been faced with several challenges in the electoral process of their democracy which include corruption in the electoral process. Many people have attributed this corruption to lack of adequate political education on electoral process by political institution for success in African nations and Nigerian democracy. The problem of corruption in electoral process of African nations including Nigeria democracy if not tackled has the potential to derail African nations and Nigeria quest for conducting free and fair election without corrupt influence towards choosing their leaders. It is in this regard that this paper examines education as a credible tool for revamping corruption in electoral process of African nations and Nigeria. The paper discusses what corruption in electoral process in African nations and Nigerian democracy is. It further highlights different forms and shapes of corruption in African nations and Nigerian perspective as well as portray training and retraining of officials and contestants that partake in electoral process by political institutions, especially Institute of Political Administration and Management (IPAM) and universities as institutions that will through their education revamp corruption from the minds of the officials for success in electoral process. The paper concludes that political education by educational institutions like IPAM and others in Nigeria and Africa be giving to officials that will partake in election so as to revamp corruption in electoral process, consequently African nations with Nigeria inclusive will take their position of pride among the continents and nations of the world. Among the suggestions proffer are that institutions of learning should withdraw the certificates of citizens found or reported with concrete evidence indulging in corrupt practices during electoral process, since certificate of institutions are awarded based on Character and learning. The ill of indulging in corrupt practices during electoral process be included and expanded in school curriculum, by curriculum developers, for university subjects especially social studies, economics and political science since these subjects deal with human beings and the environment.*

**Keywords:** Africa, Nigeria, Education, Corruption, Electoral- process, Democracy.

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## Introduction

Education is an instrument for harnessing good virtues and strengthens personal integrity. It shapes the various aspects of man's existence. Education is meant to tackle societal problems (Audu, 2015) that keeps on emerging in the society like corruption in electoral process of democratic government whereby political leaders in Africa emerge as winners through rigging of election by either falsifying figures, using thugs, snatching election voting boxes to thumbprint to their favors, killing or using other fraudulent means to be declare a winner. Since these new problems keep on emerging and resurfacing in African society including Nigerian society on the daily basis, it calls for urgent address through our educational system. Therefore, education must respond to keep being relevant.

Corruption is any dishonest or fraudulent act, practice or behavior in which someone that is entrusted with the position of power uses it to benefit themselves at the expense of others as it is witness in the same African countries that operate democratic system where some incumbent governments use their power and more to rig election to their favor and retained their political position. Ocholi and Wilfred – Bonse (2014) see corruption as any decision, act or conduct that subjects the integrity of the people in authority or institutions charged with promoting, defending or sustaining governance thereby undermining its effectiveness in performing assigned roles, be it in administering political offices in democratic system of government or performing assigned roles during electoral process. An election process is usually a competition between different parties (Anyam & Anyam, 2020).

The existence of corruption in electoral process of democracy system in some African nations including Nigeria is undisputable. Amini-Philip and Ogbuagwu (2017) observed that in recent time this menace has assumed a household word in some nations of Africa and its prevalence is assuming a worrisome dimension. A situation that results to creeping one party dictatorship and ferocious acrimony, which resembles warfare in our polity. A situation by which electoral process in African democracy is corrupted by issuing the voters some benefits like money, cloth, salt, maggi, indomie and other food stuff to corrupt their minds towards voting wisely and voting a credible leader to power. People ought to choose their leaders freely without corrupt influences if not achieving real democracy in African nations especially in Nigeria becomes a mirage.

Ocholi and Wilfred – Bonse (2014) noted that the imperative of democracy is allowing the will of the majority masses to prevail and rigging of elections a serious crime, because it subverts the will of the people and aborts democracy. The authors further asserted that the real enemies of democracy are those who indulge in rigging elections and that if there is one serious danger that our democracy faces today, is the issue of corrupting the electoral process. For electoral process in African democracy including Nigeria to succeed, the citizens should be willing to tolerate and accommodate opposing views and respect the lives and opinions of other citizens. While the majority must act in a tolerant way, the minority should learn to tolerate and accept the decisions of the minority.

Furthermore, for the electoral process of African nations including Nigeria to excel, it is important that the people be broad-minded, accommodative and have a liberal disposition with an educated sense of political responsibility. There should be outlawed laws, rules, regulations, and principles that guide election processes. Principles, rules, regulations and the outlawed laws should be inculcated as electoral procedures of the bodies that man electoral processes and enforced irrespective of who indulge in electoral malpractices. People ought to be encouraged to choose their leaders freely during electoral process without corrupt influences. The focus of education especially social studies, Economics, Political Science and other related education to expose participants (African and Nigerian citizens) to carry out credible election that is devoid of corruption in African democratic system of government with Nigeria inclusive is the focus of this paper.

## **Corruption in Electoral Process of African Democratic System and Nigerian Perspective**

One of the challenges that African nations including Nigeria face in their democracy is corruption in the electoral system. Such corruption has been so much pronounced in some parts of African nations that it is no longer news to everyone. Nigeria as one of the countries of African, the giant of Africa for instance started her 2023 electoral process on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2023 to elect her leaders into power. According to report from CNN news , 25<sup>th</sup> feb, (2023), the electoral process seems to be marred with all manners of flaws ranging from non- collection of voters cards from registered members on time , misplacement of voters cards, non- arrival of officials on time at the voting centers, inability of some registered members to have access to vote, snatching of ballot boxes, destruction of ballot boxes, under aged voters were said to be found voting in some places, delay in uploading of result in BVAS, Network issue and delay in announcement of result and so on. These if proven to be true seems to be corruption in the electoral process in disguised. The extent of corruption in the electoral process of African nation's democracy with Nigeria inclusive seems to be announcing itself to everyone that cares to listen.

Saniwoliba and Boahene (2015), commenting on administrative corruption state that any administrative act on behavior in breach of the rules, processes and regulation that designed for private gain would be deemed as an example of administrative corruption. People ought to be allowed to choose their leaders freely without corrupt influences as earlier stated. Also, World bank and transparency (2020) International defines administrative corruption as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain or for family relations or interest. The gain here might be assuming unmerited political position through corrupt electoral process. The increasing rate of corruption in the electoral process of some African nations' democracy with Nigeria seems to be stirring everyone at the face. This in recent times has taken different forms and shapes.

### **Forms and Shapes of Corruption in Electoral System**

Corruption in electoral system has taken different forms and shapes and is manifested in different forms of rigging of election during electoral process in democratic government of nations of Africa including Nigeria. Mohammed (2013) pointed out that corruption is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon with multiple causes and effects, as it takes on various forms and contexts.

Forms and Shapes of corruption practices in electoral system of some democratic government in Africa including Nigeria include:

1. Unjustly using public office for selfish gains (World Bank 2020). This is seen when the government in power or incumbent government uses government money in their position to bribe others into rigging of election and retaining their power or voting other members of their party into power.
2. Private agents actively connive to accept bribe from others to circumvent public policies and processes for competitive advantage and profit (Uzo & Okwori). The circumvention of public policies and processes for competitive advantage and profit can be in form of gaming the network of electoral processes whereby the results of election that are supposed to be uploaded and declared to the voters seems to be delayed in pretence on network issue while falsification of figures may likely be ongoing to favour one political party against others. This is witnessed in some electoral processes in some African nations' democracy.
3. Misuse of authority, power or trust for personal benefit by both public officials and others holding trusted position (Edinyang & Usang, 2012). This is obtainable when individuals in authority, power or trusted position for instance overseeing ballot boxes during election use that position to manipulate figures or deprive a particular group of people or party that does not favour their party from voting as it is obtainable in electoral system in some African countries.

Uzu and Okwori (2021) noted that when an individual in authority deviates from carrying out his duties which he swores by oaths of office and allegiance and engages in acts which solely benefits him especially during election, he is said to be corrupt. Corruption happens to be reducing the electoral system of democracy in some African countries including Nigeria to public mockery. Corruption in electoral system in Africa especially Nigeria distorts and disrupts the efficiency and quality output of democracy in Africa and Nigeria in particular. Corruption according to Yomere, (2010) kills innovation, creativity, compromises public morality, contaminates individual and collective dignity and distorts the dignity of labour. This is because in democratic system of government, individuals whom the citizens feel that when voted into power during election could innovate and create to move the nation forward in terms of development are being deprived and denied of such political position because of corruption. In so doing their innovative and creative power are being killed.

Corruption in electoral process of democracy in African and Nigeria inclusive can take multiple forms in all areas of the system and can summerily be categorized into three as follows:

Pre- election process corruption, Election – process corruption and Post – election process corruption.

Pre- election process corruption consist of restriction of some political parties to carry out campaign freely in all parts of the country. In some parts of the countries restrictions are place by individuals who acts as thugs resulting to none properly circulations of voting cards to voters, killing and assassinations of some party members, bribery of some political members to rig election on election day. Deceitful and fake promises are made to the masses to vote the party in power as well as kidnapping of some politicians.

Election- process corruption has to do with the day of election whereby some electoral officers are delayed from conducting election in terms of arrival on the voting centers on time, not giving access to all citizens to vote freely. Thus, some selected parties are marginalized or not allowing to vote ,shooting to scare voters from coming out to vote, snatching of voting boxes and scattering of voting papers to disallow other parties from winning especially when it is suspected that other parties are winning, omission of some parties names into the ballot papers to deprive voters from voting such parties, thumb printing of voting papers outside the voting centers by aged and under-aged voters voting, under –aged voters voting in some areas.

Post- election period include delay in the announcement of the result, network problems that result to non- uploading of result on time, any acts that looks like falsification of figures and result by the electoral body in charge of announcement of result in any democratic system of any African countries among others.

As earlier on indicated by the Labour News (2004) that in a political system where court orders are disregarded by the executive, public opinion ignored and the national Assembly constitutional checks and oversight prerogative increasingly been eroded, the danger of dictatorship is real. It is certain that indulging in the above listed forms of corruption is as a result of lack of proper education on what democracy stands for. Both the electorate and electoranees need to go back to the four walls of classroom to be educated on what democracy is and processes of electoral system. There are some political bodies like IPAM as well as other institutions of learning like universities through their courses that have the functions of educating politicians for success in politics.

For corruption to be revamped in African society in general and Nigeria in particular, proper education on democracy has to be given. The Global corruption Report (2013) compiled by Transparency international, stated that education sheds light on the many shapes and forms that corruption can take. These perhaps to enlighten the learners to avoid such in electoral process. However, many seem to be involved in these forms and shapes, hence the need for proper education of citizens and further education to those who have once been enlightened using specialized bodies on electoral process like IPAM and some Universities courses in the case of Nigerian nation. For any African country that practice democracy

to fight corruption in their electoral system, both the leaders and the led (followers) should be purged of corrupt practices right from the grassroot.

One of the credible ways to achieve this is to be train and retain on the principles, procedures, laws that guide electoral processes by the educational bodies with Institution of Political, Administration and Management (IPAM) and Universities in Nigeria inclusive. The extent that the elects and the electorates indulge in corruption during electoral process is an indication that there is a gap between the contesters, voters and the kind of education received. This might perhaps be due to the fact that individuals concern does not undergo adequate or appropriate training on the issue that concern electoral processes or there is a missing link between the education received and the character manifested during election that result to election rigging.

The African nations involved have to go back to the drawing board, starting from the grass root. Thus, citizens as earlier highlighted have to be educated adequately on what democracy entails and electoral process in democratic system of government involves, as well as giving the kind of education that will erase corrupt minds towards success in electoral process and success in democracy. All hands must be on deck such as Universities, Institute of Political, Administration and Management in Nigeria whose duties are to educate people on political, administrative and management matters to revamp this virus (corruption) that have eaten deep into the root of African democratic system which corrupt the electoral process and result to what looked like inadequacy in electoral process and failed democratic system.

### **The Place of Institute of Political, Administration and Management (IPAM) to Electoral Process in Democratic System**

The institute of Political, Administration and Management (IPAM) was birthed out of the need to have a three –fold mandate for training in politics, administration and management in Nigeria which is the need of the hour in African nation's political/democratic system with Nigeria inclusive. It is an institute that is engaged in giving training to professionals in politics, administration and management which constitute the tripod of profession globally (Chilebo,2021).

### **The IPAM Statement**

Ochohu (2020) in his statement highlights that with the leadership of the larger parts of the world becoming democratic, IPAM need professionally and ethically competent leaders with the general and skills in the professional administration and management of policies. Ochohu added that as the name implies, IPAM is a professional body that is covering the fullness of administration and management of politics in Nigeria and further stressed that the institute is highly equipped with well formulated and diversify human capacity building and development program, not only to fast –track good adminintration that would enhance better quality of decision in the entire economy of our dear nation, but also meet the aspirations and development demands of the masses, largely in the areas of election processes and public governance which entirely constitute our democratic leadership.

Ochohu finally explained that the courses would not only expose participants to the practical and technical skills and knowledge of the new order of democratic/political administration and performances of participants would be positively transformed to the required standard within a short time. The IPAM according to Ochohu (2020) has two specialized courses, namely:

1. Election Administration & Management
2. Public Administration & Management.

Election administration/political strategies are specialized courses designed for those serving and aspiring staff of the electoral bodies, members of political parties, members of election monitoring bodies and so on who may wish to acquire the professional skills and knowledge of the courses.

Government administration/management professionalism and governance to have the knowledge of the governing mechanism of an organization (government tools/system), deepen the nexus between professionalism and governance. This and many other institutions that offer political education with Universities as the leading institution will go a long way to provide adequate training that will enable the citizens of African nations including Nigeria into conducting elections that are free and fair without flaws in the election process, so that African nations with Nigeria inclusive can take their position of pride among the continent and nations of the world, reinstate and rebuild confidence, dignity and trust in the electoral process of African/Nigeria democracy.

One of the ways the writers also point out that these should be achieved is to ensure that every participant as officers in electoral process and the contestant should provide a training certificate that indicate that they have undergone training in any of the political institutions with an oaths of complying with the principles of conducting free and fair election that ought to govern electoral process of any democracy without corrupt influence.

### **The Place of Social Studies, Economics and Political Science (University Courses) in Electoral Process in Nigeria**

Social Studies, Economics and Political science are parts of school subjects that are offered in the University which are able to inculcate in the learner the right attitudes for becoming good citizens towards revamping corruption in the electoral system of Nigeria as well as the knowledge, attitude and skills towards becoming good citizens for success in electoral process in any democratic system and is expected to be acquired in the University besides other political institutions like IPAM.

Social Studies according to Zaria and Bulya (2011) is a discipline of study which a society uses to instill in the students the knowledge, skills, attitude and actions it considers relevant concerning the relationship human beings have with one another, the world and themselves. As regards the electoral process in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular, the knowledge of what should be, the skills or expertise of how it should be done and the attitude and actions that depicts the behavior that the participants should put on that portray them as good citizens as they relate with one another, the world and themselves. These are inculcated during curriculum implementation. The objectives of social studies is geared towards inculcating the knowledge, attitudes and skills that will make the learner a wholesome person to adjust and contributes positively in the environment. It focuses on developing the right values, attitudes, and ability which help the child to get on well with others as he grows up to become a responsible citizen with a system such as education, government or law for the good of all (Wilfred-Bonse, 2018). Social studies offer citizenship education that will enable the recipient to be a good citizen towards participating in electoral process in Nigeria without corruption.

Economics on the other hand is a university course that deals with human expenditure, scarce resources and want, as well as the need and demands of people among others. One of the problems of political parties in Africa and Nigeria in particular seems to be money laundry and money politics. A situation where people seem to assume power and end up syphoning the wealth of their nations abroad or join politics for monetary gain, interest other than having the interest of the people at heart.

Economics is a subject that can educate people to manage their scarce and limited resources, draw scale of preference to meet the most pressing needs, be selfless and assume political position with the interest of people at heart towards revamping corruption while political science deals with everything about politic including electoral process. For the fact that there is still seems to be corruption in the electoral



process of African nations with Nigeria inclusive indicate that there is still gap that political science need to fill in producing citizens that are devoid of corruption.

Thus, the curriculum should be revisited to expand more on the qualities and mindset the learners should have towards participation in politics that is devoid of corruption (Ocholi & Wilfred-Bonse, 2014). Therefore, using social studies, economics and political science as university education subjects (viable tools) to revamp corruption in electoral process of African and Nigerian democracy is worthwhile.

## Conclusions

The paper submitted that education is a credible tool to revamp corruption in electoral process of democracy in African nation with Nigeria inclusive. The paper describes what corruption in electoral process of democracy is and that of African nations and Nigeria perspective as well as categorizes of various forms and shapes of corruption in electoral process of democracy in African nation with Nigerian perspective. An awareness is created on the paper on the duties of political body like IPAM and some University courses like Social Studies, Economics and Political Science that will move the democracy /political system of African nations including Nigeria forward so that African nations with Nigeria inclusive will take their position of pride among the continent and nations of the world. Based on the discussion in this paper, the following suggestions are proffered:

- i. African citizens in general and Nigerian citizens in particular should be trained and retrained by the institutions like university through their courses and political bodies like IPAM on the laws, rules, regulations and principles that govern electoral process.
- ii. Institutes of learning should withdraw the certificate of any person found or reported with evidence indulging in such corrupt practices during elections. Certificate of institutions are said to be awarded based on the graduates the institutions found worthy both in character and in learning. The withdrawal of such certificate will serve as a penalty to others who may think of indulging in such acts in electoral process to preserve the image of our democracy.
- iii. Societies such as urban and rural should banish such persons found in such act so that the image of democracy in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular should be upheld.
- iv. The ill of indulging in such acts should be expanded further in school curriculum by the body in charge of developing curriculum for schools for all subjects especially social studies, economics and political science since these subjects deal with human beings and the environments and the penalties meted should be stipulated in the curriculum of schools right from the grassroots: primary to university or any other institutions for this purpose in other African nations, as well as the names of the persons and the penalties involved be included in the curriculum and taught by schools so that others will not emulate such persons.
- v. The electoral officials who are to man electoral process should be made to take an oath of non-involving in corrupt practices during election.

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