

# THE ROLE OF MUSEUM IN CURBING CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

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## **Abstract**

Corruption is a scandal that has been with human beings from antiquity to the present (Tylor, 1871). It pervades and permeates society. Corruption in Nigeria has assumed a enormous proportion and has constituted a serious national problem. Government put in place some machinery to fight corruption but to no avail. This paper looks at cultural education and the teaching of the history of peoples as a weapon of overriding strategic importance. The role of museum as the promoter of cultural education for combating corruption was studied. Evidence from various researchers such as Okolo (2008), Muthoga (1994), Musheshe (1994) and Cockfort (1994) on the subject of corruption indicate that corruption is embedded in every society. This study examined the nature and types of programmes the museum undertakes and those that would be suitable and more effective in educating the different members of the public against corrupt practices. The study looks at museum tools such as mass media campaign, mobile public awareness, youth education, children enlightenment, anti-corruption workshops and seminar series, advocacy and effective use of cultural resources in public lectures, and exhibitions. Finally it recommends the use of cultural education as effective tool for combating corruption and evolving new orientation for society.

**Keywords:** Combating corruption, Museum role, Cultural education, Advocacy programmes and options, Public reorientation

## **Introduction**

Tylor (1871) in his book on "Primitive Cultures" defined culture as: knowledge, belief, art moral, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. Ancient communities knew about corruption and they were readily taken care of through swearing of oaths and for fear of reappraisal by deities and gods of the land. Native laws and customs put in check intended corrupt practices hence community members were careful in their actions. The tendency to behave badly was carefully avoided. It therefore means that culture includes our attitude to life, be it positive or negative. Nigeria as a nation with well over three hundred and fifty (350) ethnic groups has its culture and tradition that determine the way of life. This line of thought shows that Nigeria has a diverse culture with some practices that include

corruption and corrupt practices. Such negative practices have gone through our psyche as a people, despite our level of enlightenment and exposure. Corruption became heightened even when Christianity and Islamic religions were introduced to replace the so called paganism. Today corruption has become a trend in Nigerian society, open secret trend in doing business, or in getting one's way through a deal, in being smarter than the other counterpart. Making it big in the end, at the expense and detriment of others and Nigeria as a whole.

### **Meaning of Cultural Education**

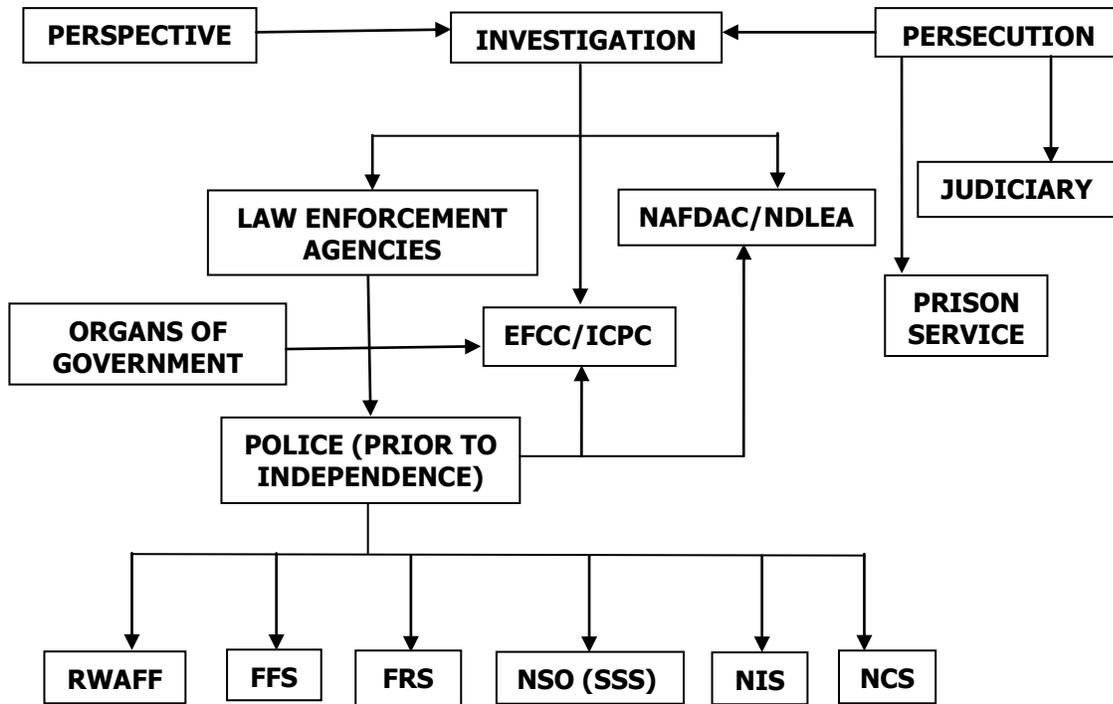
Cultural education is a discipline that facilitates being in possession of accurate cultural information, leading to a productive psycho-social orientation to a culture or cultures. Cultural education implies intra and/or inter cultural competence sufficient to produce effective cross-cultural communication in society. On the national level the focus is on sufficient cultural literacy about the values, interests and principles of the ethnic group, nation, a person or group, interact with or lives in (en. Wikipedia.org/wiki/cultural...). Cultural education curricula have relatively recently been implemented at United States, United Kingdom Colleges and Universities. The paradigm shift taking place indicates that cultural education programmes will deliver more effective traditional learning that can best help society better understand the phenomenon and events that happen and reduce unenlightenment, ignorance and incognizance of what is happening in society. It will revamp processes and system of learning and enhance better enlightenment services even at grassroots level.

Cultural education may be only one of the many vehicles for promoting awareness and understanding of the dangers of corruption on society. This channel and of course the most important is definitely a significant step in disseminating information and bridging citizens together and creating positive impact. The power of education can change irreversible situations and bring about peace and stability to a striving nation like Nigeria. Countering high levels of corruption in Nigeria has become a serious and central focus of government policy. Okolo (2008) asserts that corruption increases dramatically in Nigeria from the mid-1980s, peaking in 1996, and then stabilizing at high levels. He expressed that a key component of the government's policy focuses on corruption control and should be on preventive actions that aim to undercut the causes at all levels and perspectives. In this context, corruption prevention measures refer to those activities that are intended to reduce or prevent the occurrence of and specific types of corruption related issues. This can be achieved by educating the citizenry. Reducing corruption also requires that effort is directed towards providing support, advice and counseling for those who are offenders rather than jail sentences that could do more harm than good. This will enhance public enlightenment, and also seek to ensure peace and stability among the citizenry. Preventing corruption demands a process of cultural education on the causes of corruption and educational programmes of prevention. These requirements mean that corruption prevention programmes are most likely to be effective if properly developed. It is my opinion therefore that museum has a key role to play. This paper aims to provide a practical framework in relation to corruption prevention through cultural education programmes.

While successful cultural education may render acute a person's faculties and sharpen his intellect. It also bestows on man the understanding of physical nature and provides him with the traditional and technical knowledge to subjugate it for his benefit. This process of cultural education has been in human being ever since man knew his environment and his community to communicate his thoughts and ideas in speech, music, drumming, dancing and affect an organized society where the norms and ethics are human guidelines to life and living. This forms the body of knowledge transmissible from generation to generation passed on in an organized or unorganized form. A good museum programme is that which seeks to combine the best in cultural and religious education provided the programme is sensibly conceived, realistically planned and successfully implemented.

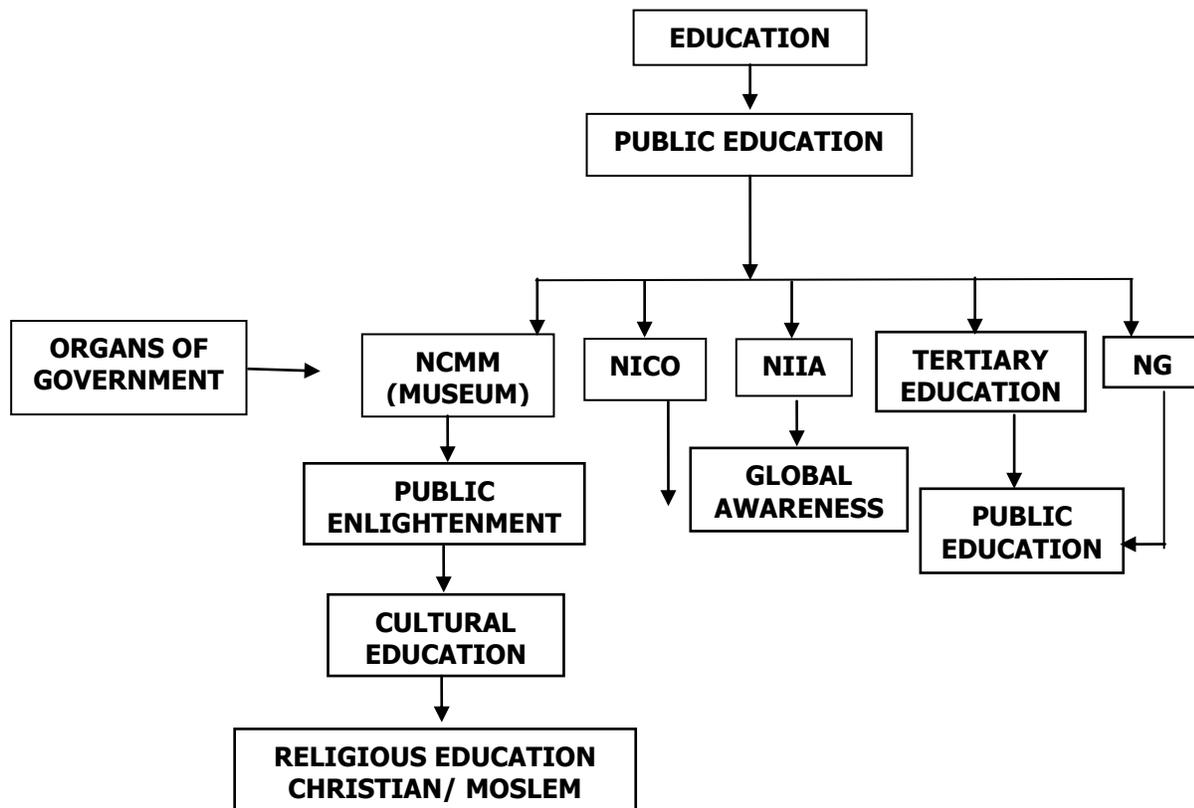
### **Five Decades of Previous Actions on Corruption by the Government**

In the last fifty years, governments have established different organs, at different times, to tackle corruption, through investigation and prosecution of offenders, with the intention that these processes will deter people from such crimes, cause fear, that punishment will follow consequences of the crime committed and that people will think before they act. Figure 1 shows the diagram of government historic development of investigative and the judiciary organ to persecute offenders. Government organs such as EFCC and ICPC were established to investigate, prosecute and punish offenders with the sense that it will prevent and restrict the crimes on corruption for example, bank fraud, stock exchange fraud, money laundering, business deception, improper accounting, misappropriation of funds etc. Government actions and interventions by establishing investigation agencies such as mentioned above and the prosecution agencies such as special courts and new laws for effective prosecution seemed not to be very effective, rather it prolonged and widened the financial crimes in Nigeria. Since the inception of the investigation agencies in Nigeria, the effective investigation and prosecution of corrupt practices are yet to succeed. The success is hampered by lack of sincere cooperation between the agencies – the police, EFCC, ICPC, NDLEA, NAFDAC etc; transparency and competency of investigators handling cases, quality of prosecuting counsel, the sincerity of the judge who presides over the cases between the prosecution, defense and the accused, the gaps in the law of the land, the inadequacy of existing procedural and evidence laws for the prosecution of offenders, the congestions of cases in court and slow pace of court proceeding, cost of investigation and prosecution, and management challenges (Uchenna, 2010). A new look blames government and those operating the anti-corruption agencies. Before deciding what to do about the high level of corruption for more than five decades, policy makers ought to have answered some questions: what caused it? Why is it happening? It is necessary to look at its causes in order to proffer appropriate and adequate solutions, one of which is public education.



**RWAFF:** Royal West African Frontier Force, **NSO:** Nigerian Security Organization, **FFS:** Federal Fire Service, **FRS:** Federal Road Safety, **NAFDAC:** National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control, **NDLEA:** Nigeria Drug Law Enforcement Agency, **NIS:** Nigerian Immigration Service, **NCS:** Nigerian Custom Service

**Fig I: Institutions for Curbing Corruption in Nigeria**

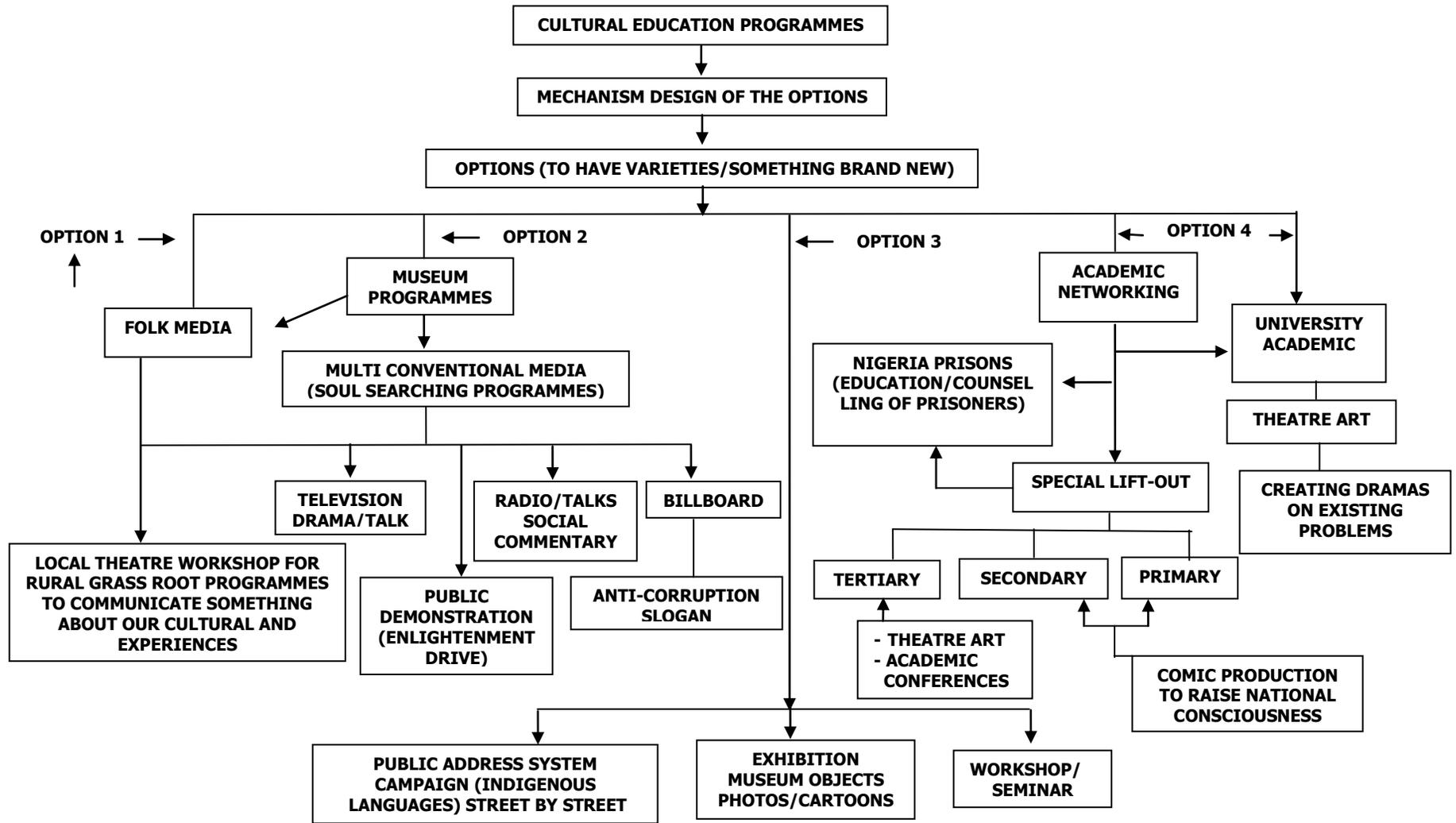


**NCMM:** National Commission for Museums and Monuments,  
**NICO:** Nigerian Institute for Cultural Orientation,  
**NIIA:** Nigerian Institute of International Affairs

**Fig: 2: Curbing Corruption in Nigeria: The Historical Perspective**

### **Museum and other Agencies Involvement in Corruption Prevention**

A number of reasons for the need for museum involvement in corruption prevention and public education is x-rayed. Prevention of corruption demands a process of analysis to determine the causes of specific types of corrupt practices. These requirements mean that corruption prevention programmes are most likely to be effective if developed at national level. They require a targeted approach that focuses on various activities towards multiple corruption problems. Specifically they also suggest that cultural resources management institutions such as the National Commission for Museum and Monuments, National Institute for Cultural Orientation and other related institutes of learning have key roles to play in all fronts. Broad overviews of a framework are considered in this paper. Fig 2 shows organs in tackling corruption through public education, the need for multi-media programme through television, radio, bill boards, public address and public enlightenment drives, mobile public exhibition for all categories of citizenry and the need for the use of indigenous Nigerian languages for the programmes for effective coverage. Actions involving school contact, with programmes on cultural and religious education for both Moslems and Christians. The NGOs sector also is encouraged to look at corruption at the individual family, societal, national and international levels. Musheshe (1994) asserts that corruption is not an isolated phenomenon, fighting against it is a part of the bigger battle. Other organization including NGOs also should consciously get involved in the fight against corruption in all its forms.



**Fig. 3: Options for Curbing Corruption through Educational Programmes**

## **Framework and Category of Educational Programmes for Curbing Corruption**

Deciding on educational programmes, there is the need to determine programmes that would be good enough for gender and generation. There must be an overall plan throughout in advance. The reason is that there are alternative ways of educating the different members of the public that would be suitable and effective. Fig. 3 shows the programmes and the options. The programme has four main options

### **1. Option 1. - Folk Media Option**

The use of folk media as options one in developing local theatre for rural people can enhance effective communication of current or past events or phenomenon about a particular culture. This option will suffice for a situation where the mass media for other forms of mass communication are not there to reach the people. Awareness can be created with the use of folk media such as local theatre workshop in creating drama out of existing problems thereby making people more conscious of such problems and how to solve them for their socio-economic and/or political development.

### **2. Option2. - Multi Convention Media Option**

The development of a multi convention media option are in four main areas – television, drama and talk show, radio talk show and social commentary, billboard and poster, carrying anti-corruption slogans and public demonstration funfair to promote enlightenment. These go a long way as soul searching programmes to educate and raise awareness on the evil of corruption.

### **3. Option3. - Use of Indigenous Language Campaign Exhibition, Workshop and Seminar Option**

The museum can also conduct cultural education from the viewpoint of how to use the museum collections to develop storylines on themes that reflect events in society. Workshop and seminars conducted in indigenous languages will also serve to contribute towards the realization of a sustainable society. The idea to use indigenous language in campaigns is supported by Njemanze (2008) who opines that the only meeting point between culture and communication is language. Language shows the importance of communication and culture (Njemanze, 2008)

### **4. Option4. - Academic Networking and Special Lift-out Option**

This amazing academic networking programme gives a comprehensive education to tertiary, secondary and primary. This programme seeks to have problem solving skills through academic and multicultural interaction between Nigerians in tertiary, secondary and primary categories, while helping out on adhoc programmes of educating prisoners and the youth in remanded homes. Such lift-out programmes are designed to sensitize Nigerians in the context of the challenges and complexities of Nigerian society.

## **5. Local Tradition, Ecumenical and Islamic Programmes**

The three pronged programmes aim to provide the general public with a variety of opportunities to acquire experience in various settings at schools and communities. The programmes are expected to deepen knowledge and understanding of the various religions and cultures.

### **Programmes for Women**

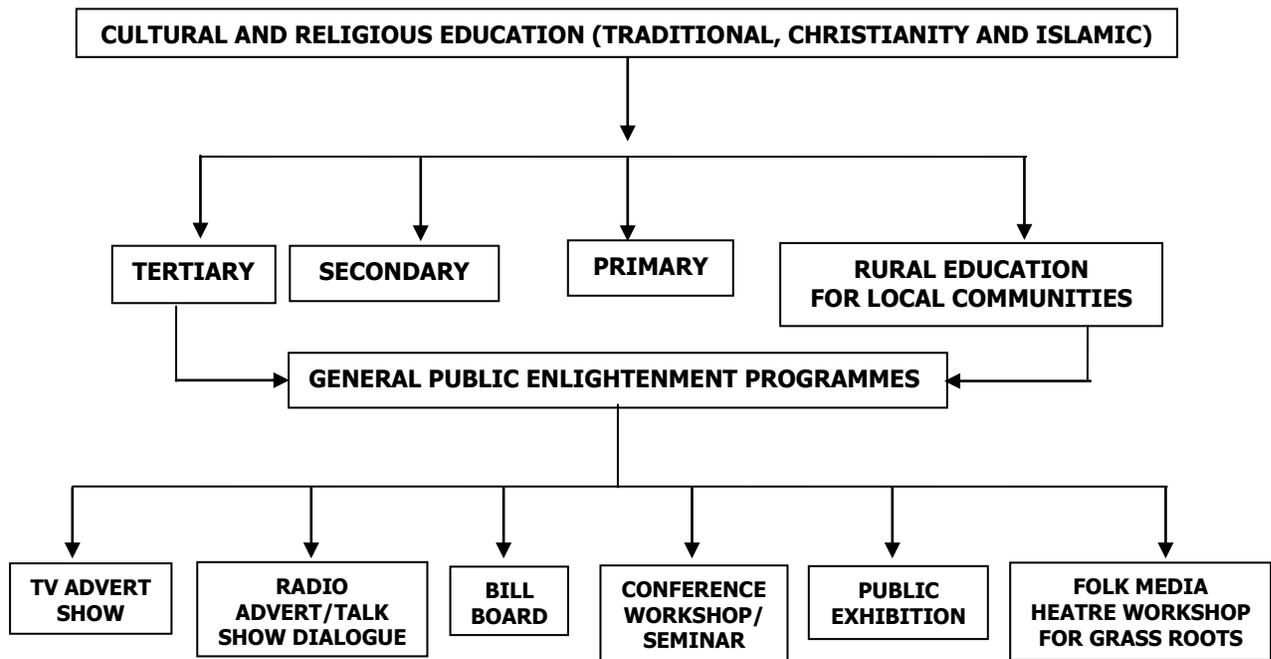
Low level of corruption is assumed to be common with women, they easily develop confidence and certainty to make and accept strong decisions and leadership. Women advocacy programmes would be most suitable for change. They are known for the giving of support to a cause. There are prominent Nigerian women that are known for their advocacy of women's rights. They often speak publicly in favour of good cause. Museum should therefore develop such programmes for women. The benefit from such a process would be the fostering of direct linkage between the various levels of women. The nation needs more mothers to participate in such programmes as they will be expected to lead other categories of women and the various partners in developing a level playing field on anti-corruption advocacy for utmost and best achievements. The main development partners should include women leaders in civil society and non-governmental organizations. Museum being the agency and main organizer and representative of government in developing programmes, one of the main objectives for such corroboration would be the sharing of information and ideas with other organisations on the development of anti-corruption awareness programmes especially in educating the women.

### **Programmes for Youths**

Many children were born to poverty stricken parents; many were born during the civil war, and in life threatening environment. For many of them, their memories are of violence and suffering, horrible memories of tears, death and destruction. Many lived in constant dread of the worse to come. Many grow up into a hostile life Nigeria has nurtured for them through their secondary schools and university academic activities; there they meet other youths with similar background to theirs. Many end up in cults, secret societies of different orientations where they learn how to foment trouble, cause many harm and fuel riots. They come out with corrupt mentality coupled with wide-spread unemployment, poverty and life threatening uncertainties. Teaching the children history of great leaders, great and successful leaders in Nigeria and the world successful people, the qualities of leaders that had good influence on Nigerians, and their achievement will enhance their mentality to think positively and aim at becoming great someday. There is need to create comedy cartoons and stories of Nigeria, create anti-corruption code or rules existing in our traditional culture; these are so wise and reasonable to learn from and develop programmes that will help the youth conquer bad habit. Primary and secondary school pupils and students are in the better position to imbibe cultural education since they are in their formative years. A – catch – them – young – and – build – their – minds programmes are best suited for this category of citizenry.

### **Tertiary Institutions Programmes**

For the tertiary institutions, workshop, seminars and advocacy programmes are most suitable. Edward de Bono in his wisdom asserts that wisdom is not just a clever way of deciding between the obvious options. Wisdom is much more concerned with the “design” of options. There may be ways of combining options which seem different and it may be possible to design totally new options in developing programmes of public education (de Bono, 1997). The overall goal of museum is to develop a cultural and anti-corruption consciousness in the different categories of Nigerians including Nigerian adolescents (NA) (Male and female), Women’s Group (WG), Children’s Group (Ch.G), Traditional Leaders (TL), Community Leaders (CL), Religious Leaders (RL), Secondary School Students (SSS), Primary School Pupils (PSP), as well as Tertiary Institutions (TI), and Market Men and Women (MMW). The framework for action consists of a wide range of awareness programme and schemes. Fig. 4 shows the different design options and their characteristics.



**FIG. 4: Design of Option**

## **Methods of Programme Development**

Enlightenment schemes and programmes are developed based on the level of education, exposure and comprehension for each category. The methods to adopt may be as follows:

(i) **Dialogical Approach**

Dialogical approach is useful especially where the subject of discussion is technical or new or where the knowledge sought is specialised and therefore demands the presentation of facts which can come only through expert. Television and radio programmes in official and mother languages can be beneficial.

(ii) **Production of Comic Books**

In Nigeria little attention is given to the production of comic books. More ambitious initiatives in this area are urgently needed. For example, we need to introduce a culture of reading comic books targeting primary school children, the innocent minds, the secondary school and general public on different public issues such as corruption. Such comic books will be useful for children to prepare their minds for the future.

(iii) **Folk Media Theatre**

Encouraging local artistes in the production of satiric programmes will develop in the sense of the individual the consciousness of the magnitude of corruption at all levels.

(vi) **Billboard**

Billboards may capture the minds of average Nigerian. Production of billboards on the advocacy of anti-corruption and slogans can be effective means on the promotion of anti-corruption campaign.

(v) **Theatre Workshops**

Our education system does not place enough importance on theatre art which takes into account the practice of our cultural norms and values, the promotion of cultural knowledge, creativity and intercultural understanding through education and social challenges can prepare young Nigerians.

In this sense, theatre arts are indispensable tool for a comprehensive education, the objective of which is to achieve through dramas and concerts the maximum benefit for and best possible development of each and every individual and thus enable every individual to participate actively in society as a constructive member of the community.

## **Public Exhibition**

Museum of ethnography and cultural history has collections that serve as traditional instrument to put in check bad behaviour and commitment of any corrupt practice. Public exhibition of such collections with unique storyline to communicate and inform the public is inevitable in promoting our unifying values and attitudes against corrupt practices. Using story-board, hot-spot, temporary exhibition, talk show, comedy and side programmes enhances information dissemination in public exhibition.

## **The Benefits of Educational Awareness Programmes**

- The ability of museum to design its own programmes suitable for their public interests.
- Access to a wide variety of options.
- Wide multimedia selections.
- Programmes that allow museum to discuss its audience from multicultural vantage point.
- The use of communities' mother language of expression to reach out to the public through the various options.
- Programmes developed and made assessable to various ethnic groups, especially the youth
- Programmes aimed at human well-being.

## **New Direction**

Museum is a vital interface between government policies and national action. It works in three main interlink phases. It generates and analyses wide range of cultural, educational and social data and information through field research, its collections, on which it draws to review common problems and take educational options. It facilitates the causes of actions to address on-going or emerging national challenges. Museum advises government on the ways and means of translating policy frameworks into programmes at national, state and local government levels particularly through museum located around Nigeria to help build national capacities. For this reason such programmes like public education on anti-corruption can be fairly well handled by the museum whose mandate is to enlighten members of the public. National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO), a sister institution to museum, has as part of its mandate, to promote the cultural mind management of Nigerians. NICO is responsible for the promotion of Nigeria's intangible heritage which includes the traditional values of the diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria. In 2003, NICO organized a public lecture on "The Anti-corruption Crusade: The Cultural Perspective". The lecture aimed at complementing government's efforts in the on-going war against corruption in the Nigerian polity. There must be collaboration between National Commission for Museum and Monuments (NCMM) and NICO on educating the different members of the public that would be suitable and more effective. The museum can help with programmes for new directions: programme for making changes to soften youthful personalities who have long been engaged in hostile and unfriendly environment, preach the gospel of a clean and honest society if and when museums are consistent with such programmes positive impacts

will be made. Of course, one of the most important preparations for any of such programmes is to obtain adequate programmes facilities and training. To that end, museum must renovate existing children facilities and train staff locally and abroad on defined training programmes. Why are such measures necessary? It is important for museum to recognize the fact that rigorous and sustaining anti-corruption programme requires extensive training of staff. The programme will be less organized and less fulfilled if training is not taken seriously. Training goals must be based on a balanced view of our local traditional culture and recreation embedded in our ancient tradition of wisdom and Islamic or biblical teaching on morals of those religions. There is a serious demand for high caliber workers who understand trends and strategies in museum and cultural education, those who can speedily fashion out programmes and appropriate response to any new development and the strategies to counter it. The new working environment demands more knowledgeable people. This calls for training and retraining of staff at local and international levels. This vision for new challenges and the inspiration that goes with it cannot be met without considering hard work, scholarship and determination.

## **Conclusion**

Museum is a custodian of the nation's antiquities. It performs three functions. The first is to preserve the collections of objects from all ethnic groups of Nigeria and this is done basically through systematic ethnographic collections, archaeological excavations and research studies. Largely through its public exhibitions and lecture series, the second function is to enlighten the public on the Nigerian cultural education with a view to creating an informed public understanding of the ethnic relations in Nigeria and the cultural history of Nigeria. The third is to disseminate research findings on the ethnographic and archaeological studies of Nigeria and importantly promote cultural education through publications, workshops, seminars and conferences, so as to provoke public response appreciation and discussion that enhance the cumulative advancement of knowledge particularly those that will unite Nigeria.

In performing all these functions, Museum is conscious of the fact that, as a public office financed by the Federal Government of Nigeria, it is expected to carry out its duty in the interest of the Nigerian nation. Its activities must, not only be congruent with the overriding goals of the country's internal problems such as political instability but must also enhance the capacity of the Federal Government to combat social problems such as corruption which is endemic in our society. Therefore the relevant and most appropriate of museum's three roles is that of enlightenment. This explains the objective of this paper on some issue-areas in the conduct of public enlightenment by museum. It is hopeful that this paper will contribute to make museum and other practitioners to bring sanity to the Nigerian public and to be very active and resourceful in curbing corruption.

Museum is making worthwhile efforts to provide leverage to cultural education. It will be essential to develop on these based on African cultural education where our norms, ethics and etiquettes are developed and duly included in Nigerian school curriculums; and protected from undue foreign influences. Our cultural education,

including their forms and philosophies from the past have indeed a message which museum is best suited to process and deliver. China as a country today is in the lead on cultural education which contributes to the economic and social development and advancement of China as a nation and people. Cultural norms and etiquettes are now taught in schools in China.

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