African Traditional Religion Oath Taking System for Achieving Resource Control in Nigeria

By

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Abstract

The peace and development of Nigeria as a nation is of paramount importance for the sustenance of Nigeria, as one indivisible nation. The picture usually painted of traditional African societies by foreign scholars was that of disunity, anarchy, insecurity, and confusion. And it is seemingly seems to be so, and on this, the study was necessitated by the fact that, there is corruption, marginalization of minority ethnic groups, uneven distribution of the Nation's resources by the government, and lack of resource control, which resulted to poverty, and high criminality rate in Nigeria today. The work looked critically into returning to African traditional religion oath taking system for achieving resource control in Nigeria, since every Nigerian is irritable on the general operative system of Nigeria government and her personnel. To accomplish this task, consultation of library materials, internet sources were engaged to descriptively analyze the power of traditional African religion oath taking system in the social transformation of human society and development. It also brought to bear how traditional African religion promotes social cohesion and gives people sense of belonging, by helping to maintain social solidarity and resource control, because it is a religion that does not accommodate falsehood. In this dispensation, corruption, hatred, wickedness, tribalism and greed have griped the nation and it seems as if there is no hope for the sustenance of the nation hence, the nexus of this work is to point to Nigerian people the factors that held societies together in trust and oneness during the pre-colonial era, since the imported foreign religions with their promises could not again perform the miracles they propagated. The work adopted Thomas Hobbe's theory that religion is a very powerful drive since it is rooted in fear. And therefore, recommends that order than using Bible and Quran for swearing in or giving oath of office to our elected and appointed public leaders which avail almost nothing, it should be better if Nigeria should return to the 'Traditional African Religion Oath Taking System' for achieving resource control in Nigeria, because, any defaulter of such oath will pay the penalty immediately with his or her life, without mercy. With this consequence in mind, every public office holder should be very careful in discharging his/her duty with fear, fairness and justice and equity.

Keywords: African Traditional Religion, Oath Taking, Resource Control, Restructuring, Corruption.

Introduction

Leadership in Nigeria as rendering service to humanity has been an irony. Judging from our history, the events that have been transpiring in the government may be said to negate the common good of every Nigerian. The leaders Nigerians entrusted their common mandate (their collective affairs, economy, property, and natural resources) to manage have turned against the owners of the property, and use their resources against them. The human, mineral, economic, political and sociological resources are not uniformly distributed. The country that is blessed with all resources by God is drained and nothing works for the majority of the citizens hence the corruption, marginalization of some minority ethnic groups in Nigeria. The leaders seize the opportunity given to them to control the general resources as avenue to amass wealth for themselves resulting to disunity, anarchy, insecurity, and confusion that have engulfed Nigeria today.

This work critically looked into returning to African traditional religion oath taking system for achieving resource control in Nigeria, since every Nigerian is irritable on the general operative system of Nigeria government and her personnel. Resource control saga in Nigeria is a social concern, since over the years the leaders have exhibited most at times elements of unfaithfulness, lack of trust in handling public property and resources. Nigeria is a country with much diversity; in religion, geographical locations, culture, philosophy and understanding (reasoning). To this effect, the diversity that was assumed that would be the strength of Nigeria as a nation has becomes her weakness, though many schools of thought presumed that it is still her strength, not minding the manifest human factors. The uneven distribution of national resources by the government to every ethnic group or states of the federation becomes a problem that brings corruption and dirty politics of the survival of the fittest practiced in Nigeria. Utre EnoIwara and Bassey Effiong (Sophia Vol.2.2007.164) said that there is need to re-examine the issue of corruption at the beginning of the reign of one who is said to be an honest and straight forward gentleman. It is against this background that it is necessary to know that the Christian God and their Bible, and the Muslim Allah and their Quran have failed this country because they have not performed any wonder in dealing decisively against any adherent that took an oath deceitfully to handle and control Nigerian Resources faithfully. The most importantly, this advocating to return to African traditional system of oath taking in swearing into office those who are pledging themselves to serve the public in any capacity of governance, in order to manage and control our common resources with fear and trembling, knowing very well that any act of unfaithfulness, will spell doom.

Today in Nigeria, there is a conflict in the teaching about traditional oath taking among Christians and Muslims. They see traditional oath taking as outdated, archaic, primitive and barbaric practice, while others see it as an inevitable tool for solving socio-cultural and religious problems (Kasomo Daniel 2010). Kasomo went further to say that African oath as a ritual has a causal power or efficacy beyond its subjective or psychological effects. He

vehemently opined that traditional oath is practiced in a traditional set-up for various reasons. Basically, he said that oath generally, is used in clandestine socio-religious and political movements to bind the adherents together under penalty of death. But for African traditional oath, it is used to the administration of justice as the highest arbiter of justice to a person who feels justice is denied him. Data were collected through library, internet, journals and other written materials from scholars of the different hues, which form the secondary source. Oral interview as primary source was also engaged. Historical and phenomenological method of data collection was adopted, while data were descriptively analyzed. Hobbesian theory that religion is a powerful drive that is rooted in fear is adopted to prove that for sincerity, verity, truthfulness, faithfulness and other virtues of trustfulness to be maintained, there must be phobia prone covenant anchored on a witness and arbiter of a powerful deity, against which nobody can keep his oath in the face of fanciful and promising opportunities.

Similarly, if the activities of the gods or God do not prove mystery to humankind, he or she cannot be curbed. The fearful vengeances, punishment and corrective measure of these gods or God as the case may be, are the only frightening measures that can keep human being on check. The gods or the God should always prove and remain a fearful mystery to human being should they want to be worshipped and be taken serious among people. In this understanding, this theory as it were, argued that for the leaders to maintain the oath they took at the assumption of office at the face of many attractive opportunities should be a product of fear emanate from the power of the god or God (to punish or strike down any offender) before whom they called for witness and promise to be faithful and upright in discharging their duties effectively. This shows how fear is a factor to maintain and keep the pledges of the oath taken, since they know the consequences of abrogating such vows will attract grievous penalty, like madness or death.

Conceptual Framework

African Traditional Religion

African Traditional Religion refers to the indigenous religions of the African people which deal with their cosmology, ritual practices, symbols, arts, society, and so on. Because religion is a way of life, it relates to culture and society as they affect the worldview of the African people (E.Idowu 1973.76). The traditional African religion is the traditional beliefs and practices of African people which is a set of highly diverse beliefs that include various ethnic religionshttps://ethincreligion.org.uk . Generally, these traditions are oral rather than scriptural, include belief in a supreme creator, belief in spirits, veneration of the dead, use of magic and traditional African medicine. The role of humanity is generally seen as one of harmonizing nature with the supernatural. According to Lugira Aloysius (2009.36) "it is the only religion that can claim to have originated in Africa. Other religions found in Africa have their origins in other parts of the world.

Oath Taking

Oath Taking is a solemn promise about your behavior or your actions. Often, when you take an oath, the promise invokes a divine being. For example, you might swear to God that something is true or swear on the Bible that something is true. A solemn appeal toa deity orto some revered person or thing, to witness one's determinat ion to speak the truth, to keep a promise, etc. Traditionally an oath is either a statement of fact or a promise with wording relating to something considered sacred as a sign of verity. A common legal substitute for those who conscientiously object to making sacred oaths is to give an affirmation instead. Nowadays, even when there is no notion of sanctity involved, certain promises said out loud in ceremonial or juridical purpose are referred to as oaths. "To swear" is a verb used to describe the taking of an oath, to making a solemn vow (Mole fiKete2009).The essence of oath taking is an invocation of divine agency to be a guarantor of the oath taker's own honesty and integrity in the matter under question. By implication, this invokes divine displeasure if the oath taker fails in their sworn duties. It therefore implies greater care than usual in the act of the performance of one's duty, such as in testimony to the facts of the matter in a court of law.

However, a person taking an oath indicates this in a number of ways. The most usual is the explicit "I swear", but any statement or promise that includes "with" as my witness" or "so help me", with " "the being" something or someone the oath-taker holds sacred, is an oath. Many people take an oath by holding in their hand or placing over their head a book of scripture or a sacred object, thus indicating the sacred witness through their action: such an oath is called *corporal*. However, the chief purpose of such an act is for ceremony or solemnity, and the act does not of itself make an oath.

Making vows and taking oaths became a symbolic concept in law practice that developed over time in different cultures. Definition of oath taking has been defined as a "statement or assertion made under penalty of divine retribution for intentional falsity. Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary of current English defines oath to mean a solemn undertaking with the gods' help to do something, solemn declaration that something is true and cannot be falsified. The Catholic Encyclopedia sees oath as an "invocation to God to witness the truth of a statement.

These definitions revealed the involvement of two principal characters: one who is taking the oath and the deity who acts both as the witness and the executor of the terms of the oath; to justify the truth or punish the one telling lies. The gods are regarded as impartial judges. Onunwa Udobata 1990) said in strong terms that the gods can punish the one who breaks the stipulations of an oath or justify the one who is innocent. It is only a superior power like the deity that can administer justice without fear or favour.

Oath in Christian tradition

Various religious groups have objected to the taking of oaths, most notably the Religious Society of Friends, known as the Quakersand Anabaptist groups, like Mennonites, Amish, Hutterites and Schwarzenau Brethren. This is principally based on Matthew 5:34–37, the Antithesis of the Law. Here, Christ is quoted to say "I say to you: 'Swear not at all'"https://bible.oremus.org/matthew .James the Just stated in James 5:12. "Above all, my brothers, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your 'Yes' be yes, and your 'No', no, or you will be condemned. "https://bible.oremus.org/james

Beyond this scriptural authority, Quakers place importance on being truthful at all times, so the testimony opposing oaths springs from a view that "taking legal oaths implies a double standard of truthfulness suggesting that truthfulness in legal contexts is somehow more important than truthfulness in non-legal contexts and that truthfulness in those other contexts is therefore somehow less important. Not all Christians interpret this reading as forbidding all types of oaths, however. Opposition to oath-taking among some groups of Christian caused many problems for these groups throughout their history. Quakers were frequently imprisoned because of their refusal to swear loyalty oaths. Testifying in court was also difficult; George Fox, Quakers' founder, famously challenged a judge who had asked him to swear, saying that he would do so once the judge could point to any Bible passage where Jesus or his apostles took oaths — the judge could not, but this did not allow Fox to escape punishment. Legal reforms from the 18th century onwards mean that everyone in the United Kingdom now has the right to make a solemn affirmation instead of an oath. The United States has permitted affirmations since it was founded; it is explicitly mentioned in the Constitution. Only President Franklin Pierce has chosen to affirm rather than swear at his inauguration.

As late as 1880, Charles Bradlaugh was denied a seat as an MP in the Parliament of the United Kingdom because of his professed atheism as he was judged unable to swear the Oath of Allegiance in spite of his proposal to swear the oath as a "matter of form".

Oath in Islamic tradition

Islam takes the fulfillment of oaths extremely seriously. God does not hold you responsible for the mere utterance of oaths; He holds you responsible for your actual intentions. If you violate an oath, you shall atone by feeding ten poor people from the same food you offer to your own family, or clothing them, or by freeing a slave. If you cannot afford this, then you shall fast three days. This is the atonement for violating the oaths that you swore to keep. You shall fulfill your oaths. God thus explains His revelations to you, that you may be appreciative (*Quran Chapter 5: Verse 89)*. In Islam as we can see here that oath taking and its abidance is not a serious business, since there are provisions for it in Quran. To violate an oath, one shall atone by feeding ten poor people from the same food he or she provides to one's own family or clothing the poor or free one of his or her slaves. And if the person

cannot afford this, then he or she shall fast three days. This is the atonement for violating the oaths swore to keep. This religious observance means little or nothing to any man or woman who is in control of national resources of any sort. Since there is a way of escape, Islam may by this be said to have nothing against those in public offices that were or are not able to keep their oaths.

Oath in Modern law

In the modern law, oaths are made by a witness to a court of law before giving testimony and usually by a newly appointed government officer to the people of a state before taking new office. However, in both of those cases, an affirmation can usually be replaced with a written statement, only if the author swears the statement is true. This statement is called an *affidavit*. The oath given to support an affidavit is frequently administered by a notary, who will certify the giving of the oath by affixing her or his seal to the document. Willfully delivering a false oath (or affirmation) is the crime of perjury. This crime of perjury is the bone of contention. The court should go extra mile to administer this oath before a fearful and powerful deity, and no longer a formality of a mere ceremonial affidavit; should they want the public servants to keep to the oath of their offices in discharging their duties with uprightness.

There are some places where there is confusion between the "oath" and other statements or promises. For example, the current Olympic Oath is really a pledge, not properly an oath, since there is only a promise but there is no appeal to a sacred witness. Oaths may also be confused with vows, but vows are really just a special kind of an oath. So oath is a serious endavour which should not be toyed with.

Resource Control

Resource Control is the process of allocating a system's resources in a controlled fashion. Resource control features enable a country's to be shared among the component the network states. You can also use resource control features to allocate and manage National resources on a physical interface without the county and virtual machines. Resource control features enable you implement a series of controls on an interface's available bandwidth. For example, you can set a guarantee of an interface's bandwidth to a particular consumer. That guarantee is the minimum amount of assured bandwidth allocated to the application or enterprise. The allocated portion of bandwidth is known as a share. By setting up guarantees, you can allocate enough bandwidth for applications that cannot function properly without a certain amount of bandwidth.

Resource control and allocation are an integral part of every federal system. But for Nigeria, stiff disagreements, regional, economic and political power game and controversies over the control and allocation have characterized and negatively affected the success of its federal*ism.* In Nigeria's practice of federalism for sixty-three years, various issues of resource control agitation, controversies, conflicts, disagreement over

vertical and horizontal allocation of revenue, corruption and excessive politicking have shaped and dominated the entire federal system. Resource and revenue control and allocation are (especially oil) very critical to Nigeria's federal set up. They have become tools of political and economic power game and everyone and level of government instigate it from a convenient angle as maintained by Akpata (2000), who added that most of such controversies, agitations and clamour are mainly selfish as some use control of oil resources and others use the platform of indigene and settler. One of such contentious issues in current Nigeria is the cry against marginalization by the oil producing minority groups which they seek to redress through resource control. Furthermore, what complicates the politics and controversy more is that the oil which sustains the Nigerian economy is so far only explored from the minority tribe area and in only one region of the country, the Niger Delta region (Onuoha and Nwanegbo, 20070). One obvious fact in Nigeria's politics of resource control and allocation, particularly the derivation principle is that it encompasses radical shift in revenue allocation from the majority region and groups that were hitherto powerful and influential to the minority, powerless groups and states thereby enabling a shift of revenue allocation in favour of the minorities' but oil rich states. Nigeria's dependence on oil is manifested on low rate of employed persons; operation of few industries in the economy; and rent-seeking elites and politicians.

Allocation of Revenue among Central and Other Component Governments

There has not in Nigeria been any time when a general consensus on a revenue allocation formula has been reached and with the discovery and exploration of oil as observed by Amuwo et al. (1998), the clamour for and opposition against the derivation principle increased with rapidity. There have also been intergovernmental frictions among all the levels of the federation. According to Azinge and Udombana (2012), the restless fleeing pull of political agitation and worrisome wave of violence in all tiers of Nigerian federation, have weakened the centripetal (center-seeking) agenda and necessitated the clamour for fiscal federalism, sovereign national conference, and new revenue allocation formula thereby occupying Nigeria's public discourse. The process of revenue allocation in Nigeria has been characterized by the establishment of several fiscal commissions on an ad-hoc, permanent, presidential and constitutional basis with varied and circumstantial recommendations and policies in order to arrive at acceptable formula and principles for national harmony.

Restructuring

Restructuring is the cooperate management term for the act of reorganizing the legal, ownership, operational, or other structures of a company for the purpose of making it more profitable, or better organized for its present needs. Other reasons for restructuring include a change of ownership or ownership structure, demerger, or a response to a crisis or major change in the business such as bankruptcy, repositioning, or buyout. Restructuring may

also be described as corporate restructuring, which involves debt restructuring and financial restructuring. Executives involved in restructuring often hire financial and legal advisors to assist in the transaction details and negotiation. The basic nature of restructuring is a zero-sum game. Strategic restructuring reduces financial losses, simultaneously reducing tensions between debt and equity holders to facilitate a prompt resolution of a distressed situation. This process tries to resolve the difficulties faced by the corporate sector and enables them to become viable again.

Steps to Restructuring

1. Ensure the company has enough liquidity to operate during implementation of a complete restructuring
2. Produce accurate working capital forecasts
3. Provide open and clear lines of communication with creditors who mostly control the company's ability to raise financing
4. Update detailed business plan and considerations

Corruption

BBC Dictionary defines corruption as dishonesty and illegal behavour by people in place of authority. Corruption could also be defined as the misuse of public power for private and personal benefit (Obasanjo, cited by Utre E. Iwara and Bassey Effiong, Sophia.2007).Utre and Bassey opined that a corrupt person is one who is generally immoral, depraved, and dishonest, especially through the giving and taking of bribes. Corruption can be seen as a concept that is capable of impending or hindering future development and erode the hope of prosperous future as a great nation like Nigeria. Offiong Asukwo sees corruption as a child of every age since its concept remains relative (Sophia, 2004).They quoted Brooks for defining corruption to mean, "the intentional misperformance or neglect of a recognized duty, or the unwarranted exercise of power, with the motive of gaining some advantage more or less directly personal." However, Offiong Asukwo agreed that corruption is a deliberate act of indiscipline against the legalized moral norms of the state, and the natural law of justice, as it affects the rationalization of the common good of the citizens, whereby an individual or a group of individuals, directly divert or misuse with the tool of political maneuvering, the wealth of the state to his/her personal use. Corruption is the cog at the wheel of progress in Nigeria; it is one of the parasites that is eating deep into the fabrics of trust and oneness that binds the Nigerian ethnic groups together. It is the factor that is seriously militating against the trust and oneness that bind together different ethnic groups that made up Nigeria as a country.

African Traditional Religion Oath Taking System for achieving Resource Control in Nigeria

Mohammed Isah Shehu, Muhammad Fuad Bin Othman, and Nazariah Binti Osman (2017) agreed that resource control and allocation are an integral part of every federal system. But

for Nigeria, Stiff disagreements, regional, economic and political power game and controversies over the control and allocation have characterized and negatively affected the success of its federalism. According to them, Nigeria's practice of federalism over sixty-three years ago, is characterized with various issues of resource control agitation, controversies, conflicts, disagreement over vertical and horizontal allocation of revenue, corruption and excessive politicking have shaped and dominated the entire federal system. So Uhunmwuangho and C Ekpu (2012) believe that Nigeria as oil producing country has many issues bothering on dimension and the process, politics, controversies and conflict of resource control and revenue allocation in Nigeria. Oil has become a problem rather than a solution to Nigeria; the process of oil revenue generation, allocation and resource control have in addition to the quest for development, remained tools for political accommodation, corruption, ethno-religiosity, achieving political ends, seeking relevance and resource misappropriation scheme; over dependence on oil is responsible for the incessant conflicts in the Niger-Delta and factoring more threats to Nigeria's unity (Samuel Oyedele 2015). The politics and controversy have similarly created an inferiority and superiority complex among the oil and non-oil producing states and regions, in addition to horizontal and vertical disagreements. This is further aggravated by abandoning the non-oil sectors of the Nigerian economy. Politicians contest only for a singular reason of amassing wealth which breeds corruption and mismanagement of public funds. Resources are not proportionally allocated to different states of the federation. Those at the government coming face to face with the reality of the immense wealth of the country, greedily and blatantly refuse to abide by the oath of allegiances of office they took. This leads to confusion, agitation, and conflicts in the country. Most of the crises, terrorism, and opposition or parallel governments ever witnessed in Nigeria were as a result of poor resource control by the leadership of our country at any given time. Our findings proved that the reason for this misappropriation or poor resource control and allocation of resources was due to disrespect to the oath of office they took since the divine or the sacred that was a witness and before whom the oath was taken was weak and powerless to act. How can those in government take precaution? The remedy seems to be found in one area for sanity and sanctity to be restored in the seat of governance in all arms and categories of government in Nigeria-traditional oath taking. Nigeria should return to African religion traditional oath taking if she wants to achieve resource control that has been the yarning of every Nigerian which was lacking.

Traditional Oath-Taking as an Anti-Corruption Strategy in Nigeria

Eghosa Ekhator (2018) quipped that in Nigeria, corruption is seen to be a negative part of the administrative or bureaucratic culture and a way of life, which results in institutional failures of the Nigerian state. The recourse to the 'traditional' oath-taking system to the swearing in of government official into different leadership positions will help check cases of corruption, greed and looting amongst many office holders in Nigeria. The use of

traditional oath is not strange in Nigeria. Many cultures and communities in Nigeria use the medium of curses or traditional oaths to deal with criminality in society even till date. However, it seems as customary (traditional) criminal law is not recognized by the Nigerian courts, and even when it is there, it is not taken serious by the government of the day. To this effect, corruptions, lack of resource control, marginalization of some ethnic components of Nigeria are going on unabated. This social malaise in Nigeria imposes a great challenge and this work advocates for the use of traditional oath-taking as one of the strategies to tackle the resource control in Nigeria.

M.A.O Aluko (2005) argues that Corruption has negative effects on productivity, growth and the socio-economic wellbeing of any organization or country. The manifestations of corruption include the use of less efficient providers and reduced taxes on Income, uneven distribution of national allocation, tribalism, nepotism, favouritism, bribery, graft and other unfair treatments on Nigerian populace.

There are some of the negative consequences or manifestations of corruption in the country. Political and military leaders in Nigeria have been said to have stolen or misappropriated $412billion since independence (Aluko2005)

Nigeria has been consistently ranked as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. Corruption has been endemic in the country during the colonial and post-colonial eras. For example, in 1970 the then Military Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon gave a speech at the 1970 convocation ceremony of the Ahmadu Bello University and stated that 'Nigeria has never had it soon corruption in the country." Arguably, till today, the scourge of lack of resource control has been a top issue yet to abate in Nigeria. The major of causes of lack of resource control in Nigeria include the following: poverty, bad leadership, prolonged military regimes. (Chijioke Iwuamadi 2016)

However,(Eghosa Ekhator, 2018.20) in his book, 'Regulating the Activities of Multinational Corporations in Nigeria' raised a pertinent reasons Nigeria is struggling for resource control of her economy: The flawed framework of the Nigerian federation, centralization of the economy at the centre (federal government), over-concentration of resources at the centre, and a culture of unregulated informal economy, disproportionate Federal involvement in corporate business enterprises, infective contract awards framework, standards and procedures. inadequate enforcement of existing laws, absence of the rule of law, and a culture of preferential treatment in the conduct of government business, nepotism and tribalism in the administration of justice, running of government and conduct of businesses, inefficient police force and police structure, low levels of civic education and civic responsibility among the populace, late or non-payment of wages to public employees, political instability and frequent military intervention in government.

Measures of Achieving Resource control in Nigeria

There are plethora of anti-corruption legislation and measures in Nigeria; for example, section 15 (5) of the Constitution of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) states that: 'The State shall abolish all corrupt practices and abuse of power'. Arguably, in line with this constitutional mandate, the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) Act was enacted in 2000 by the Obasanjo administration. Later the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) was adopted by the Federal Government of Nigeria. And most recently, the EFCC but unfortunately, the elected and appointed office holders did not respect the rule of law. The oath of allegiance which they took was not regarded as efficacious, because those who violated their oath before them went scout free without punishment by the authority, nor by the gods of the Bible or Quran by which they sworn. Ogaga Ayemo Obaro (2004) in his review of the sociological and legal issues of corruption in Nigeria, lamented over the plundering of national resources, the privatization of state institutions,

Oath -taking and the Power of the Gods

According to Onunwa Ubobata(1990) oath taking has for a long time escaped deep descriptive and analytical interpretation by many scholars of religion. The dynamic nature of African society is dependent on the people interacting with one another in every facet of life. This interaction has interplay between a man and his family, between one family and the other, between one village and the other, and between a man and the deities, etc. it is observable and obvious that in each relationship there is need for an establishment of the sincerity of each party involved in the contract. Similarly, if cordial relationship should be maintained, a form of agreement needs to be enacted, and a pact signed and sealed with the gods as a reliable witness. In a pre-colonial era, the pact took the form of swearing an oath in the name of a respected and feared deity which was believed to punish the one who would attempt to cheat or defraud the terms of the agreement.

Oath taking as social control mechanism

In African society, oath taking has an element of covenant attached to it, and can as well be seen as a covenant, since it involves the covenant between a person and a deity to perform certain duty faithfully. Scholars see oath taking as a mechanism for achieving social control. E.B. Idowu(1973) agreed that the essence of oath taking covenant is the sociological function oath taking performs, as means of social control in a corrupt society. In Igbo concept, an oath-taking is a solemn promise made, binding by a ritual which may be either a verbal formula or a symbolic action; which is recognized by both parties as a formal act which binds the actor to fulfill his promise.

Reason for oath taking:

As an Igbo adage says that 'there is no smoke without fire.' There must be reasons for the establishment of oath taking in the traditional African society. Some particular events

might have happened in the lives of individuals living together as a community which prompted oath taking as a means of achieving a better and conducive society.

i. Maintenance of trust and confidence.

Human societies are disturbed by lack of trust and sincerity. A country like ours is somehow much affected by distrust, and lack of confidence in one another, because of the inability of some people, especially, the public office holders to maintain the truth in discharging their duties effectively. To some of them, "public property becomes my property," "public fund becomes my fund." Nigerian citizens and different ethnics groups lack confidence and trust in one another because of their past experiences of lying and cheating. For trust to be maintained, ritual of oath taking was established by the name and symbol of a strong and fearful deity, which principle is that misfortune or death will befall anyone who violates the stipulations of the oath and swears falsely in order to deceive people. During the oath taking, the divinities are invited to intervene in human affairs, by inflicting heavy and adequate punishment on those who willfully and intentionally decide to tell lies, cheat and defraud.

ii. **To maintain Good human relations**:

In the environment of mistrust, suspicion and born-to rule concept, everybody becomes a suspect, fear grips everybody and good human relationships are hindered. In such environment, people may like to take a long term project with an oath, as one of the methods of establishing and maintaining good human relations becomes expedient. Similarly, in a country like Nigeria where all zones and ethnic groups do not trust each other, see each other as mischievous, suspect one another as a cheat and evil, and accusing one another of being tribalistic, the only thing that can bring the country to normal and peaceful co-existence will be the power of oath taking, because the gods are the moral arbiter and impartial judges who will inflict punishment on any false declaration.

Corruption seems to be synonymous to Nigeria in all spheres of life. As discovered earlier on, everybody longs for a corrupt free society. This seems to be far from being achieved, and this work is suggesting means of achieving a better Nigeria, a Nigeria that will be free from corruption and other evil practices. Nigeria as a country of freedom 'where anybody can do anything and go free' is no longer conducive place for people with different dispositions, languages, cultures and worldviews to live together. In this type of environment, the strong over power the weak, and the vulnerable lives in fear and dies in million every day. Should Nigeria continue like this? If she does, a time will come when there will no longer be a country called Nigeria. Corruption has a negative effect on Nigeria's national development. Nigerian government has tried in establishing anti-corruption agencies and none seems to address the issues of corruption. It marvels the well meaning Nigerians how the reign of a person who was said to be honest and straight forward gentleman can be affected with corruption. One wonders the reason for the

involvement of some Nigerians in corruption. Utre EnoIwara and Bassey Effiong (2007), quipped that the people think that the reason for corruption in Nigeria is material poverty, but it has been proved that majority of corrupt people in Nigeria are not from poor background, but well-to-do (Osuji 2005). In the same vein, (Paul 2005) reported also that "#60m fraud" in Kogi State scholarship board involved top government officials. Similarly, Osuji reported that EFCC arrested Kebbi State Commissioner over "#3b" scam. Can it be said that corruption starts from the top, among those who took an oath to justifiably control the national resources? Utre EnoIwara and others strongly believed that the attitude of some leaders at the top is behind the corrupt life style of some Nigerians.

Achieving resource control in Nigeria is a big problem because of corruption that stems from the top. The equation of corruption with the participation in the shearing of the national resources is a national and international issue that results in agitations seen at every zone, ethnic, and tribe of this country today. Orjinta (2011) noted that some Nigerians are lured into corruption of stealing public funds and property because they believe that when that happens, they are only collecting their own share of the "national cake." He lamented that the worst thing in it is that, during criminal investigations involving corruption, "there are sometimes mutual cover-ups that is, "cover me, make I cover you." Such practice is capable of blocking any ray of transparency required to get to the root of such cases. It is unfortunate that some public office holders would commit crime with reckless abandon without the authority doing anything. Most unfortunate in Nigerians situation today that any corrupt leader that cross-carpeted to the ruling party has automatically become a saint with purity and immunity. It is appalling that even the Gods before whom they took an oath to be faithful, truthful, trustful and transparent in their general dealings in their different offices of service could not raise a finger on them. That may be the reason it seems as if it is a culture in Nigeria for people to scramble for their turns to collect their portion of the 'national cake.' This may also be the reason Nigeria is yet to be developed, with the national wealth in individual pockets, and this paper is appealing for a return to the gods of our forefathers before whom there is no partiality, during administering oath of offices to public servants.

If this country Nigeria wants to achieve perfect resource control of national resources, the option is to return to the traditional African oath-taking system in giving the oath of allegiances to public leaders, because the African gods will kill any violator of such oath without looking back. Hobbesian theory of religion being rooted in fear will then apply because if one or two persons die in the office because of falsehood, corruption, and violation of his or her oath of office, others will learn fast and take precaution as they are planning to contest for any elected or appointed positions. It is only this that can guarantee this nation uprightness in governances. When this is done, perfect resource control management has been achieved and Nigeria will be a country where everybody will be happy and trust each other in sincerity and truth.

Conclusion

Nigerian leaders whose citizenry entrust the management of their collective mandates seem not to be fulfilling the expectation of the Nigerian populace. Some public servants become lords of their owners, who never allow the owners come close to what belong to them. The public fund as it were, becomes their personal fund. The state's wealth fall into the hands of merciless few who use public security agencies to safe guide themselves against what belongs to another; corruption, greed, tribalism, nepotism, etc, become the order of the day. Like the Igbo proverbial "dog and hunter," a hunter went to hunt antelope with his dog, and an antelope ran out from the bush and outsmart the hunter. His dog ran after the antelope and fortunately caught the antelope. The hunter picked the antelope and carried it home. There was joy in the hunter's home that they have killed an antelope. When the hunter dressed the meat, he gave strong instruction to his children, not to allow the dog come closer to the meat. Whenever the dog attempted going closer to the meat, the children of the hunter would pursue and threaten the dog, but it was the dog that killed the antelope. The truth remains that people, knew that it was the dog that killed the antelope, but the hunter and his family had claimed the meat. Who will solicit for the dog? That is the irony of Nigeria and the issue of resource control. These among others may be the reason for insurgencies, demonstrations, marginalization outcry, opposition government and counter authorities rising as days go by. The silent issues this work brings out is the role of the gods in maintaining the oaths the public servants take during their swearing in ceremonies into different offices of public service. It is disheartening to observe that these public officers betray the trust the public bestow on them and desecrate the name and personality of the god before whom the oath was taken, by not abiding by the covenant or the promises of the oath. The gods in their weakness or whatever reason are either blanketed from seeing the evil deeds of these leaders or are the gods powerless that nothing happens to the (declearant) defaulters of such oaths. The degree the God of the bible in his longsuffering or patience, and the God of Quran in his mercy could not see or lift hand against corrupt leaders who violate the oath of offices is worth rereading. One cannot imagine in the history of Africa where and when African gods are such weak and powerless as not to act as and when due. African gods do not take chances in discharging whatever duty assigned to it. Based on this, people, no matter who, do not take the African gods for granted. Such a person must fulfill all he said during oath taking or face the consequences of such action, which is always, either death or madness. Fear of such consequences could not allow any reasonable fellow to act contrary to his or her oath. Today, it is an aberration what is happening in our country. Some Nigerian public office holders are so corrupt, that they could no longer see public resources as belonging to the nation, rather their personal fund. Resource control in Nigeria could not be achieved due to the inability of some leaders to keep to their oath of office.

The Nigerian populace are confused and do not know again what to do. They have cried to the God of the bible, and nothing seems to happen. They cried to Allah of Quran, it is like water poured at the back of the duck, but these two religions had preached that their gods are more powerful than the gods of Africa. They have told the Africans to do away with their gods because, the African gods are idols, and they are no god. How can those that claimed to be gods refuse to act to liberate those they promised to protect? The gods of Africa had been protecting the Africans before the advent of these missionary religions. Depending on the missionary religions alone seems to have been a disappointment, because their Gods do not perform the wonders they claimed.

To achieve the resource control in Nigeria, there must be a return to African traditional religion oath taking system, since the African gods are the gods of justice, equity, and fair play. It is very comforting to observe that anybody who swore an oath falsely before the African gods or anyone who later goes against the oath he took will not live to tell the story. However, this work recommends that before any elected or appointed public officer assumes office, the traditional African oath taking system should be administered to him or her by the revered fathers of the land, the chief priests and other traditional practitioners before a powerful god to ascertain his or her sincerity, since he or she knows the consequences of such oath. It is only this that can cheek and enhance resource control in Nigeria.

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