

## **POVERTY, CORRUPTION AND THE CHALLENGES OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract:**

*The history of education in Nigeria, no doubt, is fraught with myriads of problems. These systemic problems, contrary to arguments by some scholars, have rather dragged education in Nigeria to the mud. The resultant effects of such dilapidation can be seen in the constant attempt by young Nigerians to acquire education outside the shores of Nigeria, underdevelopment, inequality etc. The reality of the Nigerian society has rendered the post independence educational policies incapable of addressing the challenges of Nigeria's educational system. Being that the cogs in the wheel of educational development in Nigeria is systematic; an attentive mind is therefore compelled to ask: how does corruption and poverty affect education in Nigeria? What is the role of politics in the degradation of education in the present day Nigeria? Apparently, is the certificate of greater value than knowledge? Using the method of analysis, this work brings to limelight and lucidly portrays that corruption and poverty play significant role in the state of education in Nigeria in the same way poor funding, poor parenting and background amongst other factors contribute to the downward plunge of our educational system. This work, conclusively, recommends that conscientious effort be made towards the eradication of poverty and corruption amongst others substructures militating against educational development in Nigeria.*

**Keywords: Education, Corruption, Poverty, Development.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Education is undoubtedly, the cornerstone of any nation. It is the foundation upon which any nation that wishes to develop builds. It is the fundamental means of cultivating positive value in the lives of individuals in any given nation. It is one of the largest industries that drive economic development. According to Ilechukwu (2014, 93), "education is the bedrock of economic development."<sup>1</sup> Education is an essential determinant of economic development as it is the training ground for the manpower and skill necessary for the acceleration of production and labour output. Globally, education is considered as a fundamental human right due to the critical role it plays in the global fight against ignorance, poverty and disease. It is that facilitates sustainable development. Pierre du Plessis (2014, 1302) asserts the role of education thus:

It is the key to next generation's future, particularly for the poor. It equips young citizens with the knowledge and skills to thrive in the country's economy and to participate fully in society. It is a cornerstone of economic and social development, a human right under international law and a constitutional guarantee in

most countries.<sup>2</sup>(Plessis, 2014, 1308).

Regrettably, education in Nigeria lacks good footing and continued to dwindle and decline both in quality and otherwise. The deplorable state of education is as old as Nigeria itself. It can first be attributed to the western-oriented kind of education which our forefathers received. Education that failed to put into consideration the aspiration of the African. Education then was more or less for exploitative purposes, for easy governance of Africa, and for social, economic and political benefit of the imperialists. The post-independence educational policies were also unable to address the unique and peculiar problems of the new Nigerian state. The population explosion experienced in Nigeria is also another challenge that confronted Nigeria towards the late 20th century. The upsurge in population exposed how inadequate Nigerian government provided for educational development. The lack of sufficient infrastructure was key to determining the number of applicants who gained admission. Iruonagbe et al (2015, 51) citing Obasi and Eboh reported thus:

In 1990 about 250,000 candidates applied for admission and less than 50,000 constituting 20% of the candidates were admitted. In 1992, close to 300,000 applied for admission and about 30,000 amounting to 17% got admitted while in 1994, out of 400,000 that applied for admission, less than 50,000 totalling 13% got admitted into different universities in Nigeria.<sup>3</sup>(Iruonagbe, 2015, 51).

It has not been any different since then as Premium Times newspaper reports that "between 2010 and 2015, of the 10 million applicants that sought entry into Nigerian tertiary institutions, only 26 per cent gained entry" (Adedigba, 2020).<sup>4</sup> Sadly, they added that "this is not because they did not pass but because there is not enough room for all of them" (Adedigba, 2020).<sup>5</sup> This still remains the case even in the present day Nigeria as it is witnessed during accreditations by Nigeria Universities Commission (NUC), students study in poorly ventilated classes, environmentally depressing and disabling situations. Even lecturers lack offices (Asiyai, 2013, 165).<sup>6</sup>

The condition of education in Nigeria is critical and worrisome. Education is deteriorating on daily basis, losing both its value and quality. As Odia and Omofonmwan (2007, 81) put it, "when the issue of Nigeria's educational system today is raised, the first set of thoughts that comes to mind are: decline in standard, deterioration of facilities, examination malpractices, mass promotion syndrome and the like before any other thing else."<sup>7</sup> Education in Nigeria is in fact in comatose. In what follows I shall expose how the twin problems of corruption and poverty, prevalent in the Nigerian state, have persistently remained the enabler of the sorry state of education in Nigeria. This paper shall as well examine how other problems resulting from corruption affect teaching and learning. It also calls on all stakeholders to put hands on deck to jettison corruption which has proven to be the root cause of poverty pandemic in Nigeria.

## **2. CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS**

### **2.1 CORRUPTION**

Corruption derives from the Latin word, 'corrumpere' or 'corruptio' meaning mar, bribe or destroy (Wikipedia).<sup>8</sup> According to Ayobami (2011, 2), "corruption is the abuse or misuse of power or position of trust for personal or group benefit (monetary or otherwise)".<sup>9</sup> Macrae, quoted by Salisu (2000, 3), defines corruption as "arrangement that involves an exchange between two parties (the demander and the supplier) which (i) has an influence on the allocation of resources either immediately or in the future; and (ii) involves the use or abuse of public or collection responsibility for private ends."<sup>10</sup> Corruption is the deliberate use, misuse or abuse of public office or responsibility, fund or property for ends that, instead of serving the public, harms them, directly or indirectly. It is the diversion and use of public goods for personal or group benefit. According to Ilechukwu (2014, 94), corruption is "the dishonest and illegal behavior exhibited especially by people in authority for their personal gain."<sup>11</sup> Corruption has many dimensions in which it's carried out. It can take the form of bribery, fraud, or embezzlement. Corruption is a virus that destroys the vital organ of a group, organization or a nation. It steals the future of the nation, it strangulates, retards or halts developmental strides. It is a cog in the wheel of social, economic and political progress. Corruption is a global challenge. It is been battled by developed and developing nations.

### **2.2 POVERTY**

Poverty is a social, economic and political condition of lack. It is a condition where an individual lacks resources with which to meet the individual's basic needs of shelter, clothing, good food and healthcare. According United Nations:

Poverty is a denial of choices and opportunity, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and cloth(e) a family, not having a school or clinic to go to, not having the land to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living, not having access to credit (UNDP, 1998).<sup>12</sup>

Poverty is a dehumanizing condition that reduces the dignity of man. It denies one the capacity to live a life of dignity befitting humans. It affects one's participation in one's society. Edokpolor and Egbri, citing Ogbuanya and Izuoba (2017, 44), defines poverty "as a state of living where basic need of people are grossly inadequate."<sup>13</sup> Poverty can be extreme, moderate or relative. The World Bank defines extreme poverty as "living on less than US\$1.90 per day, and moderate poverty as less than \$2 or \$5 a day" (Wikipedia).<sup>14</sup> while poverty is a global challenge, it is prevalent in the 3rd world nations. In those countries, it is made manifest in the unemployment rate, poor access to education and healthcare, lack of modest shelter and good nourishment.

## **3. CHALLENGES OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

Nigeria has faced myriads of problems in its social, economic and political life. Nigeria

seems to be immersed in endemic problems that have retarded growth in the country. Such problems are evident in all sectors including education. Education in Nigeria is under serious threat by a number of common problems prevalent in the nation. Among the problems that are undermining education in Nigeria are corruption and poverty. Though corruption and poverty do not account for all the challenges confronting the education system such as poor infrastructure, instability, insecurity etc., they serve as the parent stock from which all other problems bud from.

### **3.1 CORRUPTION IN EDUCATION**

Corruption is a constant topic of discourse in Nigeria because of how endemic and legendary it has become. According to Omebe and Omebe (2015, 7), "the Nigerian society is morally corrupt to the extent that it has become extremely difficult for many Nigerians to live and survive through an honest means."<sup>15</sup> Data from Transparency International, as reported by Premium Times indicates that Nigeria ranks 149 out of 180 countries (Sanni, 2021)<sup>16</sup> and apparently seated as the second most corrupt country in West Africa. Like every other area, though it is rarely taken serious, corruption is deeply rooted in the education system with its disastrous effects. Yushua laments that people hardly "think of the type of corruption that destroys the mind of our children and siphons the mira value of the society- the monumental corruption that is taking place in our education system."<sup>17</sup> "These type of corruption," he added, "is more dangerous and more serious threat to the future of Nigeria."<sup>18</sup>

In Nigerian schools today, especially tertiary institutions, gaining admission is highly dependent on one's pocket. Vibrant and scholarly candidates lose admission on yearly basis for failing to engage in corrupt practices that has become the order of the day. Admissions into schools are no longer based on hard work and merit but the volume of brown envelope that exchange hands. Plessis (2014, 1308) observed that "when it comes to higher education, access in many countries depends more on the parent's purse and social status than the talent, effort and merit of the students."<sup>19</sup> He added that "between 80-84% of university students... are aware of illegal bribes to gain admission; between 28-36% think that admission test scores can be changed" (p. 1310).<sup>20</sup> Omebe and Omebe(2015, 3) posit that "the single biggest problem (in Nigerian universities) is the abysmal quality of the intake; the vast majority of my students barely know their grammar, never mind the poor quality of their knowledge."<sup>21</sup> Corruption in admission process undermines hard work and effort of many candidates. This affects the quality of students that graduate yearly to join the labour market. It also accounts, shamefully, for the inability of some university graduates to read and write coherently. According to Omebe and Omebe(2015, 5) "the most ridiculous indication of the rot in our universities was the recent reported dismissal of three graduates of the Enugu State University of Science and Technology from the National Youth Service Corps scheme for falling below the standard expected of graduates."<sup>22</sup>

In addition, corruption in the education system also encourages cheating, examination malpractice, sorting, bribery and allotment of unmerited grades. Examination malpractice and all forms of cheating erodes the value of education and defeats its aims. Omebe and Omebe(2015, 6) clearly states that "examination malpractice constitutes one

of the greatest problems that... threatens the very foundation of the education system."<sup>23</sup> Examination malpractices is one of the reasons there is high dependency ratio in the country. Many students, other than work hard to pass, embark on 'hustle' to make money with which to bribe lecturers for grade they do not merit. Corruption does not only affect the students or graduates it also haunts the education system as such graduates will in turn become teachers. It affects the quality of teachers and learning. It has been established that the recruitment exercise is always marred by fraud and bribery. Bribery in the recruitment process hampers the quality of teachers. As Plessis (2014, 1308) puts it, "...bribes and pay-offs in teacher recruitment and promotion tend to lower the quality of the public school teachers..."<sup>24</sup> Not only does it lower the quality of teachers, it lowers the quality of knowledge impacted on the students. No one gives what he does not have. Omebe and Omebe(2015, 6) sums it up thus: "when educators do not understand the nature of learning and knowledge, both the teacher and the student are trapped in a futile struggle."<sup>25</sup> In teacher's recruitment, the intellectual quality as well as the moral quality of candidates should be paramount.

The scramble to loot and embezzle educational fund by stakeholders is yet another way that corruption harms educational development in Nigeria. It is sad that the heads of ministries and parastatals see their position as a lifetime opportunity to steal from the public treasury. Misappropriation of educational fund is one of the primary causes of inadequate infrastructure in schools today. Fund meant for educational projects are diverted for personal use by those in authority. While this is done, in most cases, students are compelled to cough out money. This has landed many students into immoral behaviours such as stealing and prostitution in order to meet of with the financial demands of higher institution.

In a nutshell, corruption enables the by-pass of set standard for admission, lowers the quality of teachers and learning, encourages cheating and examination malpractice, and breeds poor students who depend on the government for job. The high number of half-baked graduates, who lack creativity, explains why there is high rate of youth unemployment. This cripples the economy and undermines the aim of education - economic revamp and finally degenerates into poverty.

### **3.2 POVERTY**

Nigeria has consistently moved down the poverty index. According to CNN report, "Nigeria has overtaken India as the country with the largest number of people living in extreme poverty, with an estimated 87 million Nigerians, or around half of the country's population, thought to be living on less than \$1.90 a day" (Adebayo, 2018).<sup>26</sup> Apparently, Nigeria is described as the poverty capital of the world. The country's rich endowment hardly reflects on the living standard of the citizens. Notwithstanding the country is rich in mineral and human resources, the people still live in penury. This is because the country is still unable to utilize its resources so as to raise the living standard of its people.

Consequently, poverty has persistent as an impediment to quality education. A recent study reveals that there is a considerable gap in human capital investment in education between poor countries and rich countries. Poverty stricken nations like Nigeria invest poorly in education. A look at the budgetary allocations for education in Nigeria over the

years will reveal that Nigeria has been unable to meet with the UNESCO 26% benchmark. In 2014, Premium Times reports that Nigeria allocated 10.63 of the budget to education, the highest since the return to democracy in 1999, it allocated only 7.05% to education in 2019. It is also reported that 6.7% and 5.6% was allocated to education in 2020 and 2021, the lowest since 2011 (Olufemi, 2021).<sup>27</sup> Investments in education has been on the decline in Nigeria.

Evidence from around the world reveals that there is gender bias in educational investment and educational attainment. According to World Bank (2001) report, "while gender equality in education has increased considerably over the last three decades in low income countries, disparities in male and female school enrollment are still greater in those countries than in middle-income and high-income countries."<sup>28</sup> Ololube et al (2013, 123) maintain that "for most part, Nigerian women are not given the same preference or opportunity as their male counterparts. This is particularly common in the Northern part of the country where girls and women are prevented from attending higher education for early marriages."<sup>29</sup> It is revealed that such bias is more overt in impoverished countries because of their believe that male children are more economically viable and more advantaged in the labour market and output. Similar pattern is noticed when comparing poor households with rich households. Poor households are more likely, for lack of fund, to send their male children to school while their daughters are kept to assist in household chores. This poverty-induced low educational attainment of women results in unsavory vicious circle of poverty. Poverty tends to beget poverty. As Beneria and Bisnath (1996) observed that women's fundamental challenges and their limited capabilities such as illiteracy or low educational attainment tend to negatively lock them in the vicious circle of poverty and economic and material deprivation.<sup>30</sup> More elaborately, their low educational attainment lock society in a vicious circle of poverty.

Poverty and non-education of the woman or mothers is a hindrance to the academic achievement of the child. Lacour and Tissington (2011, 522) argues that "poverty directly affects academic achievement due to lack of resources available for students success."<sup>31</sup> They further maintain that "the mother's educational level has effect on student academic achievement" (p. 524)<sup>32</sup> In addition, Peters and Mullis(1997) state that the mother's educational level had a considerable higher effect on the academic outcomes of adolescents than the father's education level.<sup>33</sup> This is as a result of the specific ways educated mothers talk, play, interact and read with young children (Lancour and Tissington, 2011, 524).<sup>34</sup> Poor family background has adverse effect on the academic life of the child. An impoverished parent lacks the resources with which to provide shelter, good food, clothing, healthcare and other essentials necessary for the school readiness of the child. Ferguson et al, (2007, 702) states that poor family background affects the child's readiness for school. According to them:

A child's home has particularly strong impact on school readiness. Children from low-income families often do not receive the stimulation and do not learn the social skills required to prepare them for school. Typical problems are parental inconvenience (with regard to daily routines and parenting), frequent change of primary caregivers, lack of

supervision and poor role modeling. Very often, the parents of these children also lack support (Ferguson et al (2007, 702).<sup>35</sup>

Poor family background also has negative impact on the cognitive abilities of the child. Such effect may continue from infancy to adulthood. According to Guo and Harris (2000, 431), "an impoverished family has fewer material resources, and children growing up with fewer resources tend to do less well in education and other aspects of life."<sup>36</sup>

Persistent poverty has become a dominant determinant of who goes to school and who does not. In a country like Nigeria where admission, like in a bazaar, goes to the highest bidder, the poor is locked out of attaining sound and high academic level. This does not only affect educational development, it changes the perception and moral beliefs of the individual. It encourages vice. Education in Nigeria is said to not be made for the poor. It is the prerogative of the rich. As Amzat (2010, 56) rightly captures it, "poverty has ripped the process of education apart and deprived people from getting proper access to education. Poverty has become the 'boss' with the help of corruption determining who should go to school and who should not."<sup>37</sup>

In the same vein, education is highly inaccessible in rural areas that are more economically disadvantaged. Most schools in rural areas because of poverty are poorly equipped, they lack basic teaching and instructional materials. According to Amzat (2010, 57), "the effect of poverty leads to a lack of educational resources in poor schools and sometimes could hinder learning."<sup>38</sup> He rightly added that "without providing good facilities, teaching materials, textbook and classroom resources, it becomes hard to facilitate good learning and quality teaching" (p. 57)<sup>39</sup>

Poverty has a wide range of effect on education, and has continued to threaten the system. It has been discovered to be a determinant of who goes to school and who does not, whether one gender or the other should be educated and the school readiness of children born into poor homes. It also plays significance role in deciding who gains admission and who does not in a corrupt Nigerian education system.

Education in Nigeria is facing myriads of challenges. Some of the major challenges are corruption and poverty. However, there are other problems that have continued to downplay the education sector and what it is intended for. Let us consider some other challenges facing education in Nigeria.

### **3.3 POOR FUNDING**

Funding is essential for educational development. It is the crux of development in education. However, education in Nigeria receives little attention from the government. It is grossly under-funded. One of the reasons Nigeria has not made laudable progress in education is because of inadequate funding. According to Asiyai (2013, 163), "the problem of inadequate funding has been the bane of educational development in the country."<sup>40</sup> Despite that education is the launch pad for social, economic and political revamp, the government has failed to invest enough in it. There is a steady decline in Nigeria's budgetary allocation for education. While UNESCO recommends 26%, Nigeria budgets 5.6% for education in 2021.

Poor funding leads to poor staffing and unfavourable condition of work. It also accounts for poor infrastructure that characterizes Nigerian school. Lack of fund is why "students of institutions of higher learning in Nigeria are learning in dilapidated buildings which are poorly ventilated, illuminated, furnished and environmental depressing and disabling situations. Even some lecturers share small offices" (Asiyai, 2013, 165).<sup>41</sup> There is also no fund to maintain available structures. Cases abound of collapse of school buildings. In 2019, BBC News reports that a school building collapsed in Lagos leaving at least 10 people dead and many trapped<sup>42</sup> while in September, 2020, the Business Day Newspaper reported the collapse of 3-storey school building in Lagos (Basset, 2020).<sup>43</sup>

Inadequate funding of education is the root cause of high fees and charges that students are compelled to pay in schools and colleges. This contributes to the hike in the cost of education, making it harder for an average Nigerian to afford.

### **3.4 POOR REMUNERATION**

Poor salary and low incentives also contributes to education decadence in Nigeria. Teachers are poorly remunerated for their services. Poor salary kills teachers' motivation. It demoralizes the teacher and discourages him from going extra mile. It kills enthusiasm. Many university lecturers are denied research grant which would enable them embark on research, learn new knowledge and widen their horizon. A poor and ill-equipped teacher will likely produce a poor student.

Poor paycheck leads to other vices bedeviling Nigerian schools. Many teachers struggle to live above the poverty line. With a minimum wage of less than \$100, teachers are constantly exposed to challenges that test their moral rectitude. Sadly, a good number of teachers end up in fraud and bribery in other to make ends meet. Ayobami (2011, 4) made it clear that "when public wages are low, public servants may be compelled to use their official positions to collect bribe as a way of making ends meet, particularly when the chances of getting caught are low."<sup>44</sup>

### **3.5 INSTABILITY**

This is yet another serious challenge to education in Nigeria. Instability in the form of change of power and labour strikes keeps taking education backward in Nigeria. Education in Nigeria has been characterized by instability. According to Ololube et al (2013, 123) "since Nigeria's independence in October 1960, although political instability has been the order of the day, higher education reforms started by one administration are brutally interrupted by the next and the difference between federal and state government higher education policies can also be quite challenging."<sup>45</sup> The persistence of labour strikes such as ASUU strike is another setback that is confronting educational development. Premium Times Newspaper reports that "Nigerian lecturers had gone on strike 15 times since 1999 (till 2020) the entire period they embarked on such strike spanned about 50 months" (Yusuf, 2020)<sup>46</sup> That is to say that since the return to democracy, the education sector has lost over four years to strike. This is devastating on both the students and the economy which education is meant to rejuvenate. Such strike has continued to place Nigeria as a whole at economic disadvantages. As Business Day reports, "Nigeria may have lost an estimated #1.2 trillion to strikes embarked upon by



Academics Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) since 1999 when the country embraced democracy" (Osadolor, 2020).<sup>47</sup> Aljazeera also reported that "Between June 2011 and March 2020, at least \$18m was paid to kidnappers as ransom" (Armed Group, 2021)<sup>48</sup>

### **3.6 INSECURITY**

The rising cases of insurgency, banditry and kidnap are another challenge that is destroying the education system in Nigeria. In the past few years there have been attacks targeted at school children, especially in the Northern part of the country. National Geographic Magazine reported the kidnap of 276 Chibok schoolgirls, some of whom are still missing after 7 years (Strochlic, 2020).<sup>49</sup> According to Premium Times, the Nigerian government confirmed that 110 schoolgirls went missing on February 20, 2018. The abduction of 300 schoolboys in Kankara, Katsina State December 11, 2020, the kidnap of 42 persons including students and teachers in Kagara, Niger State on February, 17, 2021, while on February 26, 2021, another 317 schoolgirl were reportedly kidnapped in Jangebe, Zamfara State (Yusuf, 2021).<sup>50</sup> Aljazeera reported the kidnap of 39 students on March 12, 2021, and 3 school teachers on March 5, 2021 both in Kaduna State (Armed Group, 2021).<sup>51</sup> Such attacks are making access to education difficult as parents and guardians continue to live in fear. This has resulted in the closure of many schools in the North.

## **4. THE EFFECTS OF CORRUPTION AND POVERTY ON EDUCATION**

Corruption, poverty and other menaces that are confronting education in Nigeria portends great danger to the education system and Nigeria as a whole. Corruption is a virus that has eaten deep into the very cell of Nigeria. It is a cankerworm that is aggressively devouring the future of education in Nigeria. Corruption erodes value. The primary objective of education is the cultivation of positive value that would sustain the individual and society. However, corruption that pervades the system makes it questioning whether education has been able to achieve such feat. Corruption encourages mediocrity. Corruption in the education system leaves many graduates worse than they came in, more morally bankrupt than when they have not gone to school. It has lowered the quality of education thereby lowering the quality of skilled manpower needed to drive the economy forward. This affects the spending of government and agencies that keep spending all over to re-train their worker. It affects production and labour output. It encourages dependence. Corruption in education, instead of lifting people from poverty, engenders and perpetuates poverty.

Poverty reduces or slows down academic achievement. It affects the mindset of the child. This does not only hinder academic success but success in all aspects of life. It has been discovered that children born into poverty are more likely to develop a fixed mindset which hinders success. According to Claro et al (2016, 8667), "economic disadvantage may lead to poorer academic outcomes in part by leading low-income students to believe that they cannot grow their intellectual abilities."<sup>52</sup> Such mindset creates inferiority complex which may be passed on to the child. Poverty and corruption is also a breeding ground for insecurity tormenting Nigeria and the education system. It is also the root cause of brain drain in the country. People want a better pay, a better life which Nigeria doesn't seem to offer, hence they go overseas in search of it.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to combat corruption, it is pertinent that emphasis be laid on accountability, transparency, and integrity in both private and public institutions. Public office holders must be accountable as a steward should be. All stakeholders, including law enforcement agencies must be committed and sincere in the fight against corruption. There should be no political interference in the activities of the crime fighters. This would help limit how these agencies are used for vendetta. The government should in fact declare a state of emergency on corruption. This will in the long run alleviate poverty. Poverty alleviation will translate to more access to quality education for both genders.

For an effective educational development, the government must as a matter of national importance review its funding of education. As Ajayi and Ekundayo (2008, 232-3) suggested, "adequate finance will help solve the problem of infrastructure"<sup>53</sup> which is an impediment to learning. The government should as well grant autonomy to universities so as to end incessant strike going on in Nigerian schools. They should, as a matter of urgency, tackle terrorism and insecurity in the North. Parents would be more confident in sending their children to school when they are guaranteed of their security.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Like many other developing countries, Nigeria faces a lot of challenges that threatens her corporate existence. Though corruption and poverty pervades and is prevalent in Nigeria, it is not peculiar to Nigeria. Countries as developed as USA, Britain and others are still fighting corruption in its different manifestations. Also, Nigeria is not alone when issue of corruption in education is raised. However, this is no excuse why it should be allowed to thrive, unchecked. For so long the country has been the ghost of itself because of corruption in high and low places.

While education is considered a veritable tool in the fight against poverty, its efficacy and potency has been jeopardized by the systemic corruption in the country. Education is a *conditio sine qua non* for escaping poverty and as a fundamental human right, it should be made available to all, the poor and the rich alike. Leaving corruption unchecked in our system does not only breed poverty but also water the ground for mistrust and mediocrity. Such loss of confidence, erosion of value, and poor education is a great danger to the life of society. When our lawyers, doctors, religious leaders, accountants and other professionals are raised in a poor environment that encourages cheating and corruption in any form, then our society is at great risk. As the inscription at the gate of a South African university reads:

Destroying any nation does not require the use of atomic bombs or the use of long range missiles. It only requires lowering the quality of education and allowing cheating in the examinations by the students. Patients die at the hands of such doctors. Buildings collapse at the hands of such engineers. Money is lost at the hands of such economists and accountants. Humanity dies at the hands of such religious scholars. Justice is lost at the hands of such judges. The collapse of education is

the collapse of the nation (Gaji, 2018).<sup>54</sup>

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