ABSTRACT: The aim of this paper is to show the application of Ibibio (African) ethics in solving major moral problems in Nigeria's leadership crisis. In Ibibio traditional society, the shared norms are what define the culture of the Ibibio people. Prohibitions concerning issues like stealing, embezzlement of public funds, and corruption, among others attract societal disapproval and punishment, serving as a deterrent to others and thus engendering positive values through abstention. What held the nation back and has continued to do so is rooted in the lack of ethical leadership. The greatest issue in leadership in Africa, particularly Nigeria, is that of moral bankruptcy - a complete lack of ethics and ethical principles among leaders. African ethics was employed to achieve the purpose of the paper. This work argues that the non-existence of ethics in leadership promotes unethical behaviour among leaders and followers such as the present condition of uncommon looting and corruption in the country. This paper concludes that sustainable development would be illusive unless there is a paradigm shift from the present self-centred leadership paradigm to African ethics and principles as exemplified in Ibibio ethical leadership.

KEYWORDS: Ibibio ethics, Leadership, Nigeria's development, Corruption, Ethical leadership, Virtue-based ethics

INTRODUCTION

Sadly, in recent times, we have witnessed too many moral leadership failures in Nigeria. National newspapers and news magazines are awash with stories of alleged and proven cases of unethical conducts of leaders in every sector of the country. It has become necessary to question how immoral practices by Nigerian leaders have affected development challenges across all sectors of the country, and also exposing the damaging and injurious consequence of these practices on human and infrastructural developments. The proliferation of scandal concerning unethical behaviour of leaders in every sector of society - educational, governmental, business, political, institutional, and even religious bodies makes it seem like we are in a state of leadership crisis. The ethical problems of leaders often stem from abuse of power, greed, and selfishness. There is no doubt that one of the major challenges confronting Nigeria’s development is corrupt and unethical leadership.

One of the major hindrances to development in Nigeria is corruption by leaders. Among other things, corruption and other unethical practices understate democratic governance and stability, and scare away the needed foreign investment that would have conduced in reducing the rate of unemployment. For instance, within a span of twenty years, the country earned a total of USD 300 billion or NGN 46.5 trillion from the sale of crude oil in the international market. Yet, there are no corresponding human and infrastructural developments to show for it due to embezzlement of public funds by government officials (World Bank 38). One wonders how this monster called corruption made its way into our public life as a people in this country. The questions that are begging for answers are: How did we get here as a people? How can we get out?

This study is an attempt to answer these questions of importance; the study illustrates how ethical (Ibibio ethics) leadership can bring about the desired development in Nigeria. To achieve these purposes, we employ African ethics as a paradigm for ethical leadership. African ethics is defined by Kwesi Wiredu "as the observance of rules for the harmonious adjustment of the interest of the individual to those of others in society" (210). In order to avoid the accusation of over-generalization and to better place African ethics within a sociocultural context, the Ibibio cultural paradigm is our focus in this study. The Ibibio community is found in Akwa Ibom State, in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Although the paper is not based on historical accounts, a study of the historical background is necessary to trace the time of departure and neglect of the traditional cherished ethical values of the Ibibio society and Nigeria as a whole. But before that, it is imperative we start with the conceptual clarification of the three major terms: leadership, ethics and development.
Conceptual Clarification of Terms

For the purpose of conceptual clarification and to reduce the level of vagueness, which as a rule is the characteristic of academic research, it is vital to examine some of the concepts and terms that are used in this work: Leadership, ethics, development.

Leadership

The notion “leadership” is derived from the word “lead” which has its root from the Old English word laedan, meaning “cause to go with oneself; march at the head of, go before as a guide, accompany and show the way; carry on; sprout forth, bring forth; pass (one’s life)” (www.etymonline.com). Etymologically, leadership means the ability to guide, direct, or influence people. Oates and Dalmau maintain that leadership is “the act of helping, guiding and influencing people to act toward achieving a common goal” (20). Munroe (19) sees leadership as “the exercise of power and authority in mobilizing resources and influencing the behaviours of the followers to move towards a chosen direction and achieve the objectives and goals of the organization”. Similarly, Yukl defines leadership as:

the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives(8).

From the above definitions, one common theme that integrates these leadership definitions is influence. It then, can be surmised that the essence of leadership is to influence and direct people towards achieving a commonly shared goal or objective. Hence, anyone that can influence and direct people to achieve a collective or common purpose is a leader. Moreover, these definitions of leadership emphasize the role of leadership in the continued existence and development of any group, organization or society as a whole. The level of development achieved by any organization or society is determined by the quality of its leadership.

It is useful to state that leadership in the context of this paper refers not only to the political or governmental leadership, but embraces the totality of persons that have the capacity to exert influence on others, both in public Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and private organizations, to achieve the purpose of an organization, group or nation. In other words, no matter the way a leader emerges, through election, appointment, promotion, selection, or any other means, his or her job is to lead. There are different aspects of leadership. Leadership goes beyond political leadership to organizational, religious, traditional, institutional and even minor groups such as family, club and association.

Ethics

Ethics is derived from the Greek word ethos and is synonymous with “moral” because the Latin word mores, from which moral is derived, represents the Greek word ethos. They both connote “custom or way of life”. Ethics refers to the study of morals and relates to moral principles, values, and rules of conduct governing the individual or a community, whereas moral concerns the distinction between good and bad or right and wrong. In view of this, the terms “ethical” and “moral” are used interchangeably in this paper.

The meaning of ethics can be understood after its definition is clearly stated. Omoregbe defines ethics as “the branch of philosophy which deals with the morality of human actions; or as the branch of philosophy which studies the norm of human behaviour” (3-4). Lillie sees ethics as the “normative science of the conduct of human beings living in societies”(1-2). According to Lacey, ethics can be defined as “an inquiry into how men ought to act in general, not as a means to a given end but as an end in itself” (60). All these definitions imply that ethics concerns itself with the morality of human conduct; human actions and conduct form the core and subject matter of ethics. It helps human beings to decide what is right and good or wrong and bad in any given situation. In other words, ethics is basically the study of standards for determining what behaviour is good and bad or right and wrong.

Development

The concept ‘development’ has its root in the French word veloper meaning to wrap. To “de-velop” therefore means to “un-wrap” or to change and become larger, stronger or more impressive, successful or advanced. In general terms, ‘development’ means an “event constituting a new stage in a changing situation” (www.oxforddictionaries.com). Development is a broad concept that involves socio-cultural, economic, political and human development. This had led to an array of definitions from different scholars. From the liberal perspective, Meier sees development as “the maximization of the growth of GNP through capital accumulation and industrialization” (6). Similarly, Todaro defines development as “the capacity of a national economy, whose initial economic condition has been more or less static to generate and sustain an annual increase in its Gross National Product (GNP) at rates of perhaps 5 to 7 percent or more” (87). The notion of development in terms of Gross National Product is a one-sided and defective assessment of a country’s development. Development is not entirely an economic phenomenon but rather a many-sided process of improvement in the
entire economic and social system. Hence, the notion of development that fails to address poverty, unemployment and social inequality can hardly be considered as development.

Human development is the foundation on which other notions of development are based. Human beings are the agents of change in any society. From a human–centred development perspective, Korten (57) defines development as:

a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilise and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations.

This presupposes the fact that the essence of development is to create an enabling environment for the members of a society, to increase their potential capabilities for the purpose of improving the quality of human lives for both the present and future generations. Development is also associated with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with emphasis on the elimination of poverty, hunger, child mortality, good health and well-being, quality education, clean water and sanitation, among other factors that impede human development.

Ibibio Virtue Ethics and Ethical Principles

In normative ethics there are certain ethical standards of moral judgement that have been recommended as essential yardsticks for determining the rightness or wrongness of human action. The attempt by moral philosophers to determine the parameter for the rightness or wrongness of an action has given rise to three general types of ethical theories, namely, teleological (consequence-based theory), deontological(duty-based theory) and virtue-based theories.

The teleological theories focus on the consequences of action, their moral goodness and badness; whereas, the deontological theories focus mainly on the principles of action, on their universality and justification. Although teleological and deontological theories differ in many respects, they have one thing in common: they are concerned with principles and standards for evaluating moral behaviour. They focus on what humans should do, not on the kind of person humans ought to be. Rather than seeing the concern of ethics to be in actions or duties, virtue-based ethical theories focus on the moral agent, the character and dispositions of persons.

Ibibio ethics belongs to the category of virtue-based ethics/theories. Virtue-based ethics is sometimes called aretaic from the Greek arête translated as ‘excellence or virtue’ in which morality is internal and the key to good conduct lies not in rules or rights, but in the traditional notion of moral character. Hence, virtue-based ethics strives to produce excellent individuals who both act well out of unprompted virtuousness, and serve as example to inspire others.

What then is virtue? The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* defines virtue “as moral goodness of character and behaviour; a particular good quality in someone’s character” (1597). Virtue, then, has to do with conduct that show high moral standards in an individual. It refers to the characteristic of being morally good. How is virtue defined, conceived and explained in Ibibio culture? What are virtuous acts?

Ibibio virtue-based ethics stresses both positive and negative virtues. The Ibibio has an intuitive knowledge of goodness; s/he knows the difference between a good thing and a bad one. A good thing is eti nkpo while a bad one is idiok nkpo. S/he knows when his/her conscience pricks him/her hence, the saying: ama asin nkpo ke abek ifia, ame adunyene (when you carry a bundle of firewood containing an unlawful thing, you must be afraid to put it down). Edet Ukpong (95) presents a list of both the positive and negative virtues of the Ibibio. The positive virtues include chastity, hospitality especially to strangers, truthfulness, capacity to refrain from theft, respect for elders, humility, community fellow-feeling, live-and-let-live, altruism, fairness in judgement, moderation and so on. While, the negative virtues are “do not defame”, “do not gossip”, “do not laugh at a cripple, hunchback” and so on. Hence, for the Ibibio, virtue is the accomplishment of any good behaviour or moral conduct and the act of refraining from immoral conduct.

Going by the positive and negative virtues, we can determine what vices are for the Ibibio. They are the act of refraining from moral behaviour or conduct. Vices will include, but not limited to the following: selfishness, lying, falsehood, greed, avarice, theft, stealing, adultery, character assassination, dishonesty, witchcraft, fornication, pride, individualism and gossip. Virtues are values to be desired, encouraged and enforced, while vices are to be avoided for the good of every member of the society as a whole. A virtuous act benefits not just the individual, but the society; it engenders the spirit of oneness, solidarity and peaceful communal coexistence. A vicious act, on the other hand, is toxic to both the individual and the society. Hence, a moral life is a life commitment to the development of both the positive and negative virtues for the good of the individual and the society as a whole.

Deviance on the part of a member is very much discouraged among the Ibibio. The Ibibio traditional society, like every other human society, develops a set of norms and values against which behaviour within the society are judged. Social values and norms are therefore the primary sources of order in a society (Ekong 129). It is pertinent to examine how the Ibibio culture regards one or two of the vices mentioned above and how bad deeds were discouraged.

Ibibio Virtue Ethics and Ethical Principles

In normative ethics there are certain ethical standards of moral judgement that have been recommended as essential yardsticks for determining the rightness or wrongness of human action. The attempt by moral philosophers to determine the parameter for the rightness or wrongness of an action has given rise to three general types of ethical theories, namely, teleological (consequence-based theory), deontological(duty-based theory) and virtue-based theories.

The teleological theories focus on the consequences of action, their moral goodness and badness; whereas, the deontological theories focus mainly on the principles of action, on their universality and justification. Although teleological and deontological theories differ in many respects, they have one thing in common: they are concerned with principles and standards for evaluating moral behaviour. They focus on what humans should do, not on the kind of person humans ought to be. Rather than seeing the concern of ethics to be in actions or duties, virtue-based ethical theories focus on the moral agent, the character and dispositions of persons.

Ibibio ethics belongs to the category of virtue-based ethics/theories. Virtue-based ethics is sometimes called aretaic from the Greek arête translated as ‘excellence or virtue’ in which morality is internal and the key to good conduct lies not in rules or rights, but in the traditional notion of moral character. Hence, virtue-based ethics strives to produce excellent individuals who both act well out of unprompted virtuousness, and serve as example to inspire others.

What then is virtue? The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* defines virtue “as moral goodness of character and behaviour; a particular good quality in someone’s character” (1597). Virtue, then, has to do with conduct that show high moral standards in an individual. It refers to the characteristic of being morally good. How is virtue defined, conceived and explained in Ibibio culture? What are virtuous acts?

Ibibio virtue-based ethics stresses both positive and negative virtues. The Ibibio has an intuitive knowledge of goodness; s/he knows the difference between a good thing and a bad one. A good thing is eti nkpo while a bad one is idiok nkpo. S/he knows when his/her conscience pricks him/her hence, the saying: ama asin nkpo ke abek ifia, ame adunyene (when you carry a bundle of firewood containing an unlawful thing, you must be afraid to put it down). Edet Ukpong (95) presents a list of both the positive and negative virtues of the Ibibio. The positive virtues include chastity, hospitality especially to strangers, truthfulness, capacity to refrain from theft, respect for elders, humility, community fellow-feeling, live-and-let-live, altruism, fairness in judgement, moderation and so on. While, the negative virtues are “do not defame”, “do not gossip”, “do not laugh at a cripple, hunchback” and so on. Hence, for the Ibibio, virtue is the accomplishment of any good behaviour or moral conduct and the act of refraining from immoral conduct.

Going by the positive and negative virtues, we can determine what vices are for the Ibibio. They are the act of refraining from moral behaviour or conduct. Vices will include, but not limited to the following: selfishness, lying, falsehood, greed, avarice, theft, stealing, adultery, character assassination, dishonesty, witchcraft, fornication, pride, individualism and gossip. Virtues are values to be desired, encouraged and enforced, while vices are to be avoided for the good of every member of the society as a whole. A virtuous act benefits not just the individual, but the society; it engenders the spirit of oneness, solidarity and peaceful communal coexistence. A vicious act, on the other hand, is toxic to both the individual and the society. Hence, a moral life is a life commitment to the development of both the positive and negative virtues for the good of the individual and the society as a whole.

Deviance on the part of a member is very much discouraged among the Ibibio. The Ibibio traditional society, like every other human society, develops a set of norms and values against which behaviour within the society are judged. Social values and norms are therefore the primary sources of order in a society (Ekong 129). It is pertinent to examine how the Ibibio culture regards one or two of the vices mentioned above and how bad deeds were discouraged.
The Ibibio regard stealing as one of the worst vicious acts. No Ibibio person likes to be called a thief or be associated with a thief. Punishment for stealing was immediate, severe and public. The punishment was carried out on culprits based on their gender and depending on what they stole. This was so because the Ibibio had two clubs: one for men and the other for women. These clubs are called Nka for men and Ebre for women. For instance, a male culprit who stole was stripped naked, smeared with charcoal and flogged by men in the community while he is being taken round the community. However, a female was smeared with charcoal, stripped naked, taken to the community’s market, and made to go round the market with the item she stole. These punishments did not just end there, s/he was expelled from the club from that time and s/he was stripped off any title or position s/he held in the community, and his/her family/children were branded “thieves”. Consequently, members of the community denied him/her any form of association and s/he was banned from social gatherings. The traditional Ibibio society did these in order to discourage stealing at all levels. With the ushering in of the values of the West this custom has died away and thieves multiply in numbers and triumph in Ibibio land today (Udo 190).

Another vicious act that was always condemned and seriously discouraged by the Ibibio is falsehood or lie. Lie in the traditional Ibibio society was frowned at, and serious measures were taken to punish liars. The early Ibibio society devised means of detecting liars: these included Ukang or Afia (Ordeal). However, in extreme cases where the culprit refuses to admit that s/he is guilty, the community results to mbiam (oath taking). Mbiam, according to Ekong, was “the greatest instrument of justice and social control in the traditional Ibibio society…. By it people swear to proclaim their innocence and by it people are enjoined against deviant behaviours” (123). The Ibibio believed that a person could not tell a lie and get away with it. Mbiam, Antia (124) submits, was a potent liquid used in swearing oaths. It was more or less a magic liquid. It caused any one who swore falsely by it to fall sick, swell up and die. Each individual swore on “Mbiam” that he had not committed an offence or would refrain from certain offences on the penalty of sickness and death caused by the oath.

Usually the form of the oath was:

If I have done or if I do or if I will do such and such, 
“mbiam” kill me, if not so, mbiam protect and bless me and my whole house this and next generation and forever (Antia 124).

There was always time limit fixed, that is, the stipulated time the mbiam is expected to work on the person. If at the expiration of the time there was no adverse effect, that is, there was no swelling up or death, then the accused person is considered innocent. There are countless cases where alleged liars died within some days after swearing on mbiam.

Narrating the history and usefulness of mbiam, Abasiattai reveals that:

the use of Mbiam as oath was briefly adopted in the native Court’s procedure and both the judge and the litigant were required to swear by it – the one for the impartial dispensation of justice and the other for telling the truth. However, this practice was substituted by the Bible thereby restricting the fear of reprisal for either untrue evidence or unfair judgement, to Christians (101).

Mbiam was a very useful instrument of social control and it is believed to be capable of discerning between the innocent and the offender, even in judicial cases. Hence, bribing of judges and miscarriage of justice were uncommon and strongly discouraged.

It is quite obvious from our discussion of the two vices examined above that there is always a corresponding punishment for any wrong doing or action in the Ibibio traditional society. It is assumed by the Ibibio that punishment for wrong doing is necessary for the continuous existence of the society, to correct the culprits and to deter would – be ones. In other words, proscriptions regarding issues like stealing, telling a lie or falsehood, greed and other vicious acts, and disregarding the norms regulating relationships with Iman (kinsman), Ukot (in-laws), Esen owo (one’s visitors), and Eeyin (grandchild) attracts communal condemnation and punishment which serves as a deterrent to others and consequently bring about positive values through abstaining.

There is no culture or civilization that has no set of “dos and don’ts”. The ku or kunam “do not...” principle in Ibibio culture serves as vital regulator in inculcating commendable moral traits in individuals (Esema 103). And these moral traits are the result of an individual obedience and conformity to the Kunam principle and Mbet iduñ (laws of the community). This is what determines a person’s character. Ibibio morality is summed up by the word Edu (character). Edu is the overriding trait of a person’s life. It is that which distinguishes a virtuous individual from a vicious one in the Ibibio society. Hence, a person with good moral character is one that acts, behaves, and conducts him/herself in accordance with the positive and negative virtues or one that demonstrates virtuous acts.
Ibibio virtue-based ethics provides a workable foundation for developing appropriate moral principles and standards to judge morally right and morally wrong actions of leaders. Leaders need to act with conviction founded on moral principles. These moral principles provide a foundation for the development of sound ethical leadership. These principles include: integrity, honesty, service to others, justice, courage, respect for others and established norms, values and laws. Let us at this juncture examine the issue of development and the leadership question in Nigeria.

Development and the Leadership Question in Nigeria

Leadership, as we saw in the introductory remarks, is the problem with Nigeria. Unethical leadership describes major Nigerian schemes, plans and institutions, and it is the chief reason for the continuous underdevelopment of the nation. Development, as explained earlier, is all-inclusive and multidimensional in nature. In other words, it should be an encouraging change in all spheres of human endeavours. There is no doubt that leadership plays an important role in practically all spheres of human endeavours. Hence, no society or nation can develop, in the true sense of the word, without good leadership. The question that readily comes to mind is: why is there no positive change or development in Nigeria despite the huge natural and human resources available to it? Or what is the problem with Nigeria?

The renowned novelist, Chinua Achebe, attributes the root cause of the country’s problem to bad leadership. In his book entitled The Problem with Nigeria, he submits: the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership (1). On similar lines, El-Rufai (71) opines that: corruption is really only a symptom of Nigeria’s problems. The true culprit behind our country’s lacklustre progress is actually much deeper and even more difficult to identify… I refer to it as disastrous political leadership and bad decision making leading to a culture of impunity.

The implication of these assertions is that Nigeria’s developmental challenges and present situation is traceable to poor leadership. Leadership failure on a large scale is one of the fundamental setbacks of the Nigerian state. The emphasis here is political leadership, but if leadership is tied only to political office holders, that will be wrong. It is a fact that at the heart of any development sits leadership. Similarly, political leadership alone cannot bring about the desired development in Nigeria. Therefore, this paper does not confine the concept of leadership needed for Nigeria’s development to only ‘political leadership’.

Other scholars are also of the opinion that the factors responsible for the underdevelopment of Nigeria are bad leadership and corruption (Ebin 1; Ijewere and Dunmade 25; Ekwoonwa 165; Agbibo 474; Tom 92). Corruption is an unethical behaviour that has crippled development in Nigeria. One cannot deny the claim that Nigeria is a victim of poor leadership and compounded systemic corruption which has become persistent and cancerous in the country's national life (Imhonopi and Ugochukwu 78). Bad leadership and corruption can be said to be the two leading factors that are responsible for the poor state of the Nigerian social infrastructures: power and water supplies, public hospitals, transportation, road and rail networks and schools among others. Both factors have led to increased in poverty rate and unemployment rate. This is simply because money meant for creat

Moreover, bad leadership and corruption dissuade creativity, hard work and spirit of patriotism in the country. Accordingly, Oluwasanmi (100) submits that: accumulation of illegal wealth by stealing from the people commonwealth discourages hard and patriotic labour by others and put resources needed for community or national development into private hands where it is often just stashed away in foreign banks or lavished senselessly and unproductively.

The annual budgetary allocations for infrastructural development such as well equipped hospitals, roads, electricity supply and water supply among others are often diverted to meet the need of corrupt leaders, their cronies and their political parties. Indeed, where road contracts are awarded they are most of the times overestimated and sometimes the roads are not constructed leading to underdevelopment, poverty and increased unemployment (Adawo 46). The present state of poor infrastructure decay, rate of poverty and unemployment in the country are directly linked to bad leadership and corruption.

This unfortunate situation is well underscored by President Muhammadu Buhari in his inaugural speech: no single cause can be identified to explain Nigerians poor economic performance over the years than the power situation. It is a national shame that an economy of 180 million generates only 4,000 MW, and distributes even less. Continuous tinkering with the
corruption is deeply rooted in Nigeria. It should be successfully. For instance, the Shehu Shagari administration introduced Mass Mobilisation for Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), the Economic and Financial Crime Commission assembly as anti-indiscipline and corruption (WAI Self Reliance, Social Justice, and Economic Recovery (MAMSER) and Sanni Abacha launched War Against Ethical Reorientation as a way of changing public attitude toward unethical conduct. While, the Buhari/Idiagbon attempts to curb it but has been unsuc
despite the decade of democratic governance and the implementation of anti-corruption laws and agencies. The nation has not fared better either. The annual Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) report for the year 2017 of Transparency International (TI), ranked Nigeria as the 148 most corrupt countries in the world of 188 countries polled. The country, according to the CPI, scored 27 out of 100, a figure lower than the average in the Sub-Saharan region. The CPI uses a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean) (www.transparency.org). In previous rankings, Nigeria scored 27, 25, 27, 26 and 26 as the most corrupt country in 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 respectively. The nation was ranked the most corrupt country in the world in 2000 and 2003. In 2001 and 2002, it was ranked the second most corrupt country in the world. These are evidence that corruption is deeply rooted in Nigeria. It should be noted that corruption is not unique and inimitable to Nigeria. It is a common and universal phenomenon. However, the state of corruption and unethical conducts of leaders and followers in the country is disturbing.

From our discussion so far, it is obvious that the major impediment to Nigeria’s quest for development is extreme immorality of leaders. Many leaders are involved in unethical behaviours that are inimical to the development of the country. There is no doubt that the leaders in the country are aware of the implications of these unethical behaviours to its development and some concerted efforts have been made in order to reduce the menace of extreme immorality in Nigeria.

Since 1979, every administration in Nigeria has recognized the menace of extreme immorality and corruption, the devastating effects it has on the country in all ramifications of national life, and has made attempts to curb it but has been unsuccessfully. For instance, the Shehu Shagari administration introduced Ethical Reorientation as a way of changing public attitude toward unethical conduct. While, the Buhari/Idiagbon launched War Against Indiscipline (WAI). The Babangida Administration introduced Mass Mobilisation for Self Reliance, Social Justice, and Economic Recovery (MAMSER) and Sanni Abacha launched War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAI-C). These are indicators to the fact that there exists extreme level of indiscipline and corruption in the country.

Moreover, successive administration has established some institutions with enabling Act by the National Assembly as anti-corruption agencies and policies. These include Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB), the Code of Conduct Tribunal, the Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI), the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), the Economic and Financial Crime Commission
(EFCC) and the Treasury Single Account (TSA) policy was proposed by Goodluck Jonathan Administration, but fully implemented by Muhammadu Buhari Administration. The civilian government of Olusegun Obasanjo established ICPC and EFCC to confront the phenomenon of corruption in public and private lives of both the leaders and the followers. It is however regrettable to know that these leaders that openly declared to be fighting corruption and unethical practices ended up being more corrupt than their predecessors. In all the administrations, both civilian and military, evidence reveals that leadership and corruption are progressively connected.

For instance, it had been revealed that under the privatization programme of Obasanjo administration, state properties were handed to friends at give-away prices: “They gave away public property to people at prices that are not worth the money we give to beggars. That’s what Obasanjo did. So doing, he enthroned corruption more than any other government in Nigeria’s history while pretending that he was fighting corruption” (Iyayi 4). In the same vein, while examining the activities and failures of these anti-corruption agencies, Akanbi (126) notes that:

all these measures were ostensibly and apparently designed to infuse discipline in the subject and instill probity and transparency in the system. The sad irony of it all is that, apparently, corruption continued to escalate geometrically. These explain why we have not killed or minimize corruption because we have been fighting it the wrong way. It is time to think of a novel approach to this problem. There seem to be a missing link. It is a truism that both the preachment and legal prosecution approaches of leaders to curb corruption and unethical behaviour in the country are not yielding desirable results. All these approaches failed to achieve the desired objective of eradicating indiscipline and corruption in the country due to unethical conducts of the leaders. Unethical conducts by both leaders and followers keep increasing on a daily basis. No one will doubt the fact that there is a missing link between leadership and development in Nigeria. What could that missing link be?

Ibibio Virtue Ethics: Missing Link between Leadership and Development In Nigeria

It is obvious from our discussion in the preceding section that there exist a missing link between leadership and development in Nigeria. The missing link is ethics in leadership. There is no doubt that at the core of Nigeria’s underdevelopment status is unethical leadership in every sector of the nation. What has held Nigeria back and continues to do so has its roots in the lack of unethical leadership. Unethical leadership failure on a large scale is one of the fundamental setbacks of the Nigerians society.

Studies have attributed different factors that promote the moral depravity among leaders in the country (Tom 94; Maduagwu 1). For Tom (94), the factors responsible for the continuous increase of corruption by leaders are society’s attitude of accepting and approving wealth acquired illegitimately, and the arrival of foreign religions in Africa. Maduagwu, on his part, blames the increasing rate of corruption on the existing culture that condones and even encourages corruption. He contends that:

- corruption thrives in Nigeria because society sanctions it. No Nigerian official would be ashamed, let alone condemned by his people because he or she is accused of being corrupt. The same applies to outright stealing of government or public money or property. On the contrary, the official will be hailed as being smart. He would be adored as having ‘made it’; he is a ‘successful man’. And any government official or politician who is in a position to enrich himself corruptly but failed to do so will, in fact, be ostracized by his people upon leaving office. He would be regarded as a fool, or selfish, or both (1).

The implication of this is that many Nigerians have accepted depravity as a standard pattern of behaviour in the society. They condone, celebrate and endorse corrupt behaviour of leaders. For them, a leader is a failure if he or she fails to steal and embezzle while in the position of leadership. A leader is expected to divert funds meant for development and the common good to his or her private accounts. This faulty cultural norm shows a complete departure from the traditional Ibibio societal norms and culture. The traditional Ibibio society abhors corruption, selfishness, embezzlement or stealing of public property and had strong penalty against it. So, how did we get here as a people? We are where we are today because we abandoned the home-grown ethics bequeathed to us by our ancestors, due to the coming of western civilization and religions such as Christianity and Islam.

The traditional Ibibio culture has been severely interrupted by western culture that came through colonization and modernisation. The western culture ushers in individualism into our system and kick out the virtues of honesty, integrity, capacity to refrain from theft, and community fellow feeling among Nigerians. Subsequently, individualism sows the seed of selfishness, self-interest and excessive materialism that brought forth extreme immorality. It is unfortunate that the Ibibio positive and negative virtues are eroding from the present day Nigerian society, while vices such as materialism, nepotism, greed, avarice, impunity, stealing, lying and graft are the order of the day. A society that accepts these vices continues to decrease in all leadership challenges because leaders are creations of the society they live in. The consequential effects of faulty societal norms and values in Nigeria are the emergence of extreme immorality of leaders that is responsible for the underdevelopment of the country.
Arguably, one of the major impediments to development in Nigeria is corrupt practices by leaders. For instance, it was reported in a news report by Nwabufo, on June 03, 2017, that within the span of fifteen years the country earned a total of USD 592 billion from oil sector alone. According to him, this was revealed by Waziri Adio, Executive Secretary of the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI), at a workshop organized by “Publish What You Pay”, a civil society organization in the extractive sector. “NEITI’s presentation at the workshop disclosed that Nigeria earned a total of $ 592.34 billion from the oil and gas sector from 1999 to 2014”, the statement read (www.thecable.ng). It is a shame that these earnings fails to either translate to human and infrastructural developments or reduce the rate of poverty and unemployment in the country due to monumental embezzlement of public funds by leaders.

There is no doubt that many leaders seek leadership position mainly to enrich themselves, families, friends and their cronies. Some of the cases of moral leadership failure discussed above give credence to the fact that many seek leadership position for selfish reasons. Leadership position is seen as an opportunity for self-aggrandizement as against the privilege to serve others, promote the public interest and sustain the public trust. This explains the reason why leaders abuse the trust of their offices. The reason they seek leadership position is not to achieve a shared common goal but a selfish goal and interest. One wonders if there can be any meaningful human and infrastructural developments in a country that her leaders and citizens are not only condoning, but are also swimming and neck-deep in the ‘waters’ of corruption, greed and nepotism. The question that readily comes to mind is: what actually is the essence of leadership?

The essence of leadership is to influence and direct people towards achieving a commonly shared goal or objective either for a nation or an organization. Hence, leadership is relational in that there cannot be influence without relationships. Leadership relationships have to do with attributes such as influence, obligation, vision, responsibility, obligation, commitment and duty. Ethics, as earlier mentioned, is basically the study of standards for determining what behaviour is good and bad or right and wrong. These standards are determined in our relationships with others. Morality is essentially concerned with the effect(s) of our actions on other people. It entails a choice to influence oneself and others in doing the right thing over the wrong one.

Any society that lacks leaders with moral character and strong ethical principles pays dearly for it. For instance, Nigerian society is paying dearly for the actions and inactions of unethical leaders in every sector of the society. There is no doubt that country’s development challenge is traceable to moral bankruptcy in the society. Nigeria is not experiencing development due to corrupt and immoral practices by leaders. One problem Ibibio virtue ethics can deal with effectively and decisively is the problem of depravity in both public and private lives of Nigerians. The pertinent area where Ibibio virtue ethics and ethical leadership principles is in need of immediate use in Nigeria is in the area of moral bankruptcy of leaders. What accounts for the great and profound difference in our moral attitudes especially in public life, as against developed nations of the world, is the Nigerian awareness and understanding that our malevolent acts seldom come under inquiry and when they do, there is hardly any appropriate or suitable social sanction that follows (Oluwole 23).

The major difference between Nigeria and other developed nations that are perceived to be less corrupt, such as New Zealand, Denmark, Finland, Switzerland and United Kingdom among others, is the social consequence of being publicly castigated or chastised that scares the citizens of these nations from corrupt practices. There are suitable social sanctions in place to discourage moral offences in these nations. This was also the case in the traditional Ibibio society. Violation of moral norms attracted societal disapproval and punishment which serves as a deterrent to others and hence produce positive values through refraining. There was social consequence for bad behaviour. One can hardly doubt the fact that “a moral system that fails to account for an effective method of social sanction cannot expect to be useful in creating social cohesion” (Oluwole 23). The Ibibio traditional society was sustained by such moral values as integrity, honesty, justice, service to others, community fellow-feeling, moral courage, respect for others and established norms. Consequently, there is an urgent need for Nigerians and their leaders to go back to Ibibio virtue ethics and the Ibibio ethical leadership principles if Nigeria must surmount the leadership crisis and some other clogs bedeviling her human and infrastructural developments.

Nigeria is in this sorry state of underdevelopment not withstanding its huge human and natural resources mainly because of the lack of ethical leadership. The present approach to the war against corruption and its vices in the country is not yielding positive result because of our abandonment of our traditional moral values. To have a corruption free society, we must as a matter of necessity conquer lack of integrity, greed, avarice, selfishness and nepotism by imbibing the positive and negative virtues of Ibibio ethics and the ethical leadership principles. The Ibibio virtue-based ethics seeks to engender excellent persons who both act well and serve as example to inspire others. Nigeria leaders can stop and prevent corrupt practices by promoting ethical leadership and becoming an ethical leader based on Ibibio ethics and the introduction of Mbiam in administration of oath.

*Mbiam* should replace the Holy Books in the administration of oaths of allegiance and oath of office for all political leaders and institutional leaders in MDAs. It should be re-introduced into our judiciary systems. This is one major way corrupt practices by leaders can be dealt with in Nigeria. Using the Holy books - Bible and Qu’ran for the administration of oath is an abuse of the Holy books. For instance, the Bible is against
Christians swearing in Matthew 5:34 and James 5:12, Christians are admonished not to swear an oath. But, most of the leaders that claimed to be Christian are not actually Christians in the first place because a Christian cannot steal or loot the public funds. So, administrating oath with the Holy books is an exercise in futility; it would not stop or deter people from corrupt practices. The Christian and Islamic religions are not rooted in our culture. They have failed to raise the moral standard of the Nigerian people. In other words, they have failed to inculcate a high sense of morality in their members. Thus, proliferation of churches and mosques notwithstanding, there is still high rate of moral degeneration in the country.

II. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
From our discussion so far, it has been exposed that lack of ethics in leadership has become a major hindrance to sustainable development in Nigeria, because much of the earnings from the natural resources that would have been committed to human and infrastructural developments purposes are being looted with impunity by unethical leaders in every sector of the society. Nigeria’s moral leadership bankruptcy worsens its moral bankruptcy problem and its moral bankruptcy problem worsens its human, infrastructural and sustainable developments. The position of this paper is that sustainable development would be illusive, unless there is a paradigm shift from the present self-centered leadership paradigm to African ethics and principles based on Ibibio ethical leadership. Ibibio ethical leadership is geared towards the creation of a sense of community among citizens. Ibibio ethical leadership is centered on influencing followers to do the right thing against doing the wrong one. Consequently, Nigeria’s development is in the hands of Nigerians both leaders and followers.

In order to reduce, discourage and eliminate unethical practices among leaders in Nigeria, we wish to propose the following suggestions:

1. Establishment of the Institute for Ethical Leadership based on home-grown ethics for the grooming of every category of leaders in the country.
2. The creation of Ethics and Compliance Department in all organizations including the MDAs of both States and Federal Governments.
3. There is an urgent need for a radical paradigm shift which will involve a return to those moral values and principles that held and sustained the traditional Ibibio society and apply them accordingly in all ramifications of leadership in Nigeria.
4. The introduction of Mbian (and other traditional oaths in Nigeria such as Yoruba’s Ayelala) as an instrument of administering oath of allegiance and oath of office for all political leaders, public officials, and institutional leaders in MDAs of both States and Federal Governments. It should also be re-introduced into our judiciary systems.
5. Both leaders and followers should act, think and behave in line with the Ibibio virtue-based ethics and ethical principles.

Acknowledgement
This study was conducted with a Grant from the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND), Nigeria 2011 – 2014 (MERGED) TETFUND Research Project Intervention for the University of Uyo and released in 2016.

Works Cited
[7]. Buhari, M. “Inaugural Speech by His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari following his Swearing-in as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on 29th May, 2015”. 12 March 2018. www.vanguardngr.com/2015/05/read-president-buhari-inaugural-speech/


