

Strategies for Restoration of Moral Health in Nigeria Organizations: A Path to National Development

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ABSTRACT This paper presents research-based solutions to the multi-dimensional problems of indiscipline (immoral or unethical behaviour) in Nigeria today. Nigeria is now deeply infected by the deadly disease called indiscipline (immoral or unethical conduct). All Nigeria's institutions including, political, social and economic institutions manifest this symptoms of indiscipline. The results presented in this paper represent the summarized analysis of responses contained in 604 useable questionnaires gathered in a field study and based on the experience and perceptions of the respondents. These respondents were both contributors to and victims of the processes of perpetration of acts of indiscipline. Overall 15 global causes of indiscipline were provided. These were accompanied with 17 global suggested solutions to the national disease of moral decadence. These solutions require the involvement and commitment of social groups, leadership, government, economic programme planners, value systems mandators and several other related groups and issues. The paper concludes that the path to real national development in Nigeria rests in the restoration of moral values in Nigeria organizations which will provide foundation for moral health. The suggested solutions for restoring disciplined behaviour in Nigerian organization constitute elements of this path.

INTRODUCTION

The present democratic government is poised to wage "WAR" against corruption and other forms of acts of indiscipline in Nigeria. Can this nation win this war without a carefully planned strategy for fighting the war? The answer to this question is a resounding "NO". Thus, there is the need for planning how to fight that war. Here is presented strategies for fighting this "WAR" based on the perception and experience of Nigerians.

The authors' interest in the study of the nature and management of unethical conducts or acts of indiscipline was spurred by the findings in the preliminary analysis of earlier work done by one of the authors. In the said work by Ogundele (2000), it was found that acts of indiscipline in various forms were the second most important problem, confronting and inhibiting the performance of the indigenous entrepreneurs. The first most important problem in the study, were several aspects of the economic factor. As a prelude to the presentation of the empirical study the theoretical framework and the models of the discourse will be presented.

Ethical Problems in Nigeria

Ethical problems have forced various governments at the Federal level, in Nigeria, since 1975 to introduce one form of legislations or the other to curb the monster of general indiscipline in the society.

General Murtala Muhammed administration at States and Federal levels, 1975 – 1976, backed by the forces of Decrees and Edits, carried out massive dismissals and compulsory retirements of people alleged of corruption in one form or another. Such people were not given fair hearings or tried before the forces of Decrees and Edits were applied on them. So concerned about the problem of ethics were the formulators of the 1979 civilian constitution in Nigeria, that the constitution contained a six-page schedule setting forth a code of conduct for "public officers". A code of conduct Tribunal was put in place.

President Shehu Shagari administration, 1979 – 1983, came up with a programme designed to put corruption in check called, Nigerian Ethical Revolution". In 1984 General Muhammadu Buhari fashioned out a Decree on War Against Indiscipline (WAI). This was intended to be used

to fight all forms of indiscipline which were exhibited by Nigerians. In 1985, General Ibrahim Babangida, terminated WAI. He came up with a programme tagged Mass Mobilization for Social and Economic Recovery (MAMSER). He established Directorate of Social Mobilization for the execution of the programme. The MAMSER programmes were more of cosmetic approaches to very serious national ills. General Sanni Abacha, in 1993, replaced MAMSER with National Orientation Agency (NOA). This was merely a change in name of a body that was supposed to fashion out new sense of direction and orientation. There were no positive changes (Oluwole 2000).

President Olusegun Obasanjo administration (between 1999-2000) engineered the corrupt practices and other related offences act. This was backed by an act of the National Assembly in 2000. Consequently he established the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related offences Commission (ICPC). When the ICPC started investigating the principal officers of the National Assembly in 2003 this highest law making organ in the country passed a bill repealing the ICPC which the President refused to sign. The behaviour of the legislators further confirms the extent of corruption among the ruling elites. A closely related agency to the ICPC is the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) which performs functions similar to that of ICPC. Both agencies play major roles in the regulation of the affairs of both private and public organizations in Nigeria with a view to ensuring that transparency reigns supreme in Nigeria organizations' dealings (Ogunde and Opeifa 2004c).

Several concerned writers had expressed one view or the other against the general lack of ethics in Nigeria. Osahon (1981) examined the multi-dimensional aspects of unethical acts in Nigeria. Oji (1982) described it in the context of the need for ethical revolution in Nigeria. Nwankwo (1985), Bolaji (1985) stressed the needs for, economic and political nationalism, moral leadership and requirement of education for new leadership in Nigeria respectively.

Nzeribe's (1986) focus was ethnic and economic origin of Nigeria ethical problems. Ayagi (1990) blamed the economic and social problems of Nigeria on leadership indiscipline. Arene (1990) presented the personality models as means of solving the complex social, economic and political problems of Nigeria. Ekpo-Ufot (1990) found that

several acts of indiscipline were the major factors that inhibited organizational and national goals attainment. These were confirmed by Oseni (1993) Ogunde (1999) findings. Oseni (1993) carried out a study of high level forms of corruption in the Nigeria Police Force which was and still is a product of the larger society. Ogunde (2000) found that acts of indiscipline, (unethical behaviour), including bribery, robbery, fraudulent practices and corruption were the second most important inhibitors, of the performance of two groups of indigenous entrepreneurs in Nigeria.

Therefore, unethical behaviours have negative effects on performance of business organization in Nigeria. The same can be said for other Africans countries and business. In Nigeria and other black African countries the situation are serious based on the nation's inability to identify and thread the appropriate philosophical and developmental paths much less on ethical values (Aina 1992). In contemporary African countries, the fashion is to get rich quick through fraudulent means rather than by hard work.

The preference of youths is for leisure than work, more interest in exciting jobs than boring, routines jobs and kindred observations. Added to these are problems created by tribalism, lack of respect for age and authority, poor applications of concept of time and large scale bribery and corruption. Omotunde (1982) noted that the hardest job for the Nigerian child is *having to learn morals where none exists*.

Many scholars have adduced various reasons as the cause of unethical behaviour especially in African. Muganda (1999) discusses a number of factors that produced corruption in Africa. These include several political factors, patronage and societal pressures, lack of transparency and proper enforcement of rules on regulation and government intervention in several spheres of public life and the expansion of the public sector Raditchokwa (1999) attributes the cause of corruption in Africa to the crisis of leadership, which is exhibited in lack of discipline on the part of political elites, lack of meaningful participation in the policy making process, poverty, underdevelopment and bureaucratic inefficiency. Aniele (2004) attributed the causes of corruption in Nigeria to value-orientation in the society, underdevelopment, lack of sanctions against identified corrupt individuals, ethnicity, and the psychological mechanisms of individual members that forces them to strive relentlessly for material success.

Conceptual Framework

Discipline and indiscipline are demission of ethical behaviour. Disciplined behaviour is a sine qua non for individuals, small group, organization and national health and survival. Discipline in a broad sense means orderliness the opposite of confusion. It is a fundamental requirement for every segment of the society. Discipline and indiscipline can directly be linked with ethics. Ethics being discipline dealing with what is good and bad, right or wrong. Omoregbe(1990) notes that ethics is concerned with the studies of human behaviour in relationship with others on the basis of rightness and wrongness. Velasquez (2002) also notes that ethics are the principles of conduct governing behaviour of individuals and groups. They relate to accepted standards in terms of personal and social welfare.

Two models have been developed to give explanation to the consequences of selected factors that affects ethical and unethical behaviour of individuals, groups and society. Figure 1 presents a model that shows the consequences on the society where factors affecting behaviour are grounded on ethical bases.

Figure 1, shows clearly the consequences in terms of development and prosperity for a nation where ethics dominates, leading to orderliness and societal well-being which will ultimately produce effective performing organization and national prosperity and development.

Figure 2 show the consequences of unethical

conducts in a society on organization and national development.

As in the case of figure 1, the consequences of unethical conducts are clearly shown in figure 2 and they require no further elaborations. The sceneria in model of figure 2 best reflect Nigerian situation and this require necessary measure, that with restore moral health in the society unhealthy

METHODS

The literature review shows that the society is immersed in several act of indiscipline. There is need to curb these acts of indiscipline in Nigeria. Based on this, the author carried out an Exploratory Action Research on it. The research activities were focused on Schools in Oyo and Lagos states of Nigeria. The targeted respondents were classroom teachers, schools administrators, lecturers and post graduate students. The period of the research activities spanned December, 2002 to September, 2003. Structured questionnaires were administered to convenient samples of respondents.

A total of 1,520 questionnaires were administered. These were in selected, primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions in the two states mentioned above. There were 667 returned questionnaires. Out of which 604 were found useable for analysis.

It is to be noted that the concept “Acts of Indiscipline” used in the research covers all forms unethical and negative behaviours. They include corruption, smuggling, armed robbery and indeed

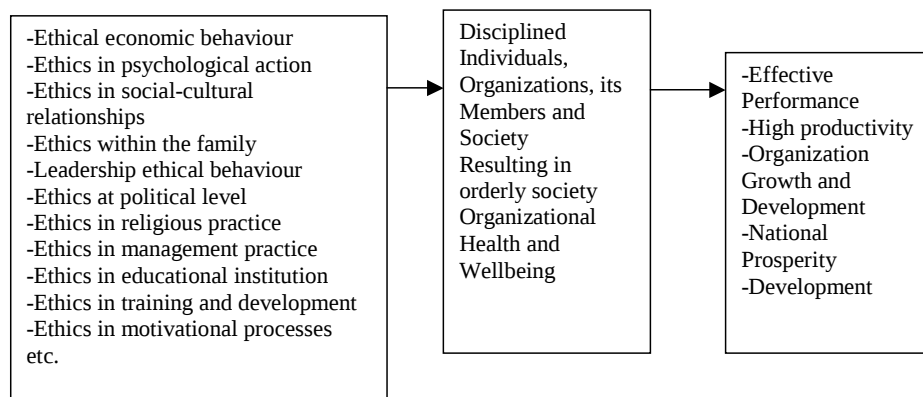


Fig. 1. Model of society where selected determinants of behaviour are based on ethical conduct

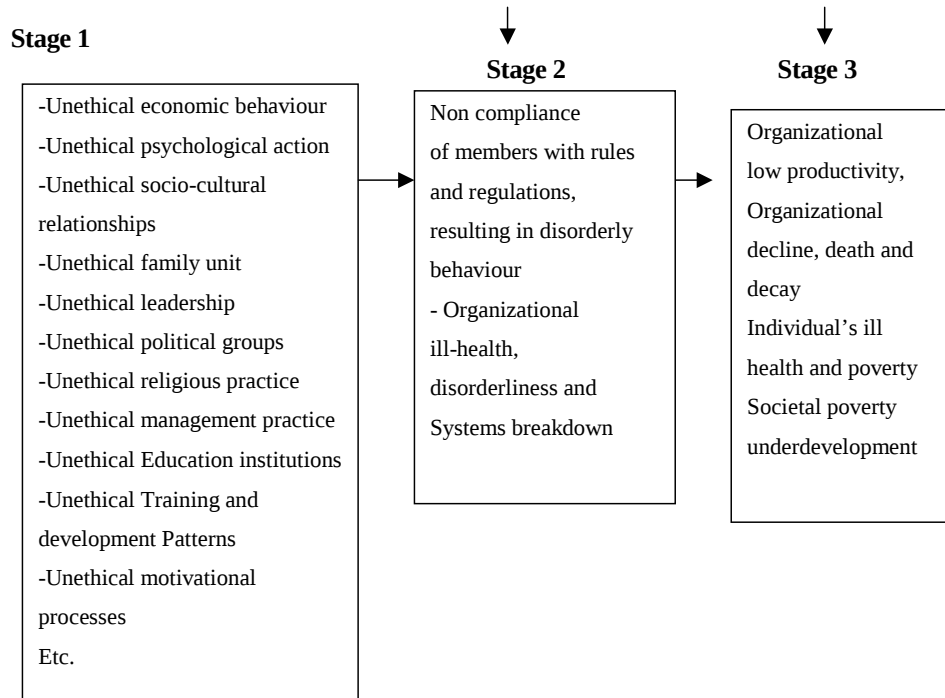


Fig. 2. Model of society where unethical conducts affect selected determinants of behaviour

all-imaginable sets of immoral and unethical behaviours.

Overall, the questionnaire was divided into twelve sections. However, only two of these sections are summarized here. These are:- (1) That on listing of causes of indiscipline in Nigeria presently and (2) Suggested methods to be used for solving the problems of indiscipline in Nigerian society. The data were analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics and content analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

All possible causes of indiscipline listed by respondents were captured, summarized and labeled global causes of indiscipline. The respondents' perceptions of the causes of indiscipline in Nigeria were content analyzed. The result was a list of 106 global causes of indiscipline. These were further rearranged to fit into a neat structure. This produced 15 combinations of several major causes of indiscipline. These are shown in Table 1.

The global cause of indiscipline as contained

in Table 1 are of two categories. The external causes emanate from the environment in which the individual lives. They are the environmentally generated causes of indiscipline in Nigeria. The individual causes are those that emanate basically from the individual members of the society. The causes listed in the 2 broad categories in Table 1 are examined below.

Leadership Based Causes: The leadership in a normal society is expected to be role model of behaviour. The causes of indiscipline based on leadership include: poor or weak leadership, corrupt leadership, lack of disciplined leadership, leaders attitudes towards indiscipline, hero-worshipping, and lack of accountability by leaders.

Political Causes: They relate to actions and in-action on the part of those who are in authority. The listed items include: Continuing military interventions or rule in Nigeria, lack of action by government and its agencies on reported cases of act of indiscipline, corrupt government officials, political fanaticism, lack of concern for people's welfare, Conflicting rules and regulations, Poor management of resources and Lack of good government.

Table 1: Global causes of indiscipline in Nigeria

<i>Causes</i>	<i>No. of issues listed</i>	<i>Frequency of listing</i>	<i>Frequency in %</i>
<i>I External Causes</i>			
1. Economic cause	20	587	21.15
2. Psychological causes	12	415	14.90
3. Socio-Cultural causes	15	249	8.94
4. Family background causes	7	218	7.83
5. Leadership based causes	6	213	7.65
6. Multi-dimensional causes	2	212	7.61
7. Political causes	11	169	6.07
8. Values related causes	10	147	5.28
9. Religious causes	6	140	5.03
10. Legal/Judicial causes	5	120	4.31
11. Civilization/Modernization causes	4	-74	-2.66
12. Motivation cause	1	27	0.95
13. Management slacks cause	1	12	0.42
Sub Total	100	2,585	92.82
<i>II Individual Causes</i>			
14. General Educational causes	5	140	5.03
15. Training & Development cause	1	60	2.15
Grand Total	106	2,785	100.00

Neglect of Societal Values and Norms: These include the following:- Gross unfaithfulness, dishonesty, laziness, lack of commitment to organization and nation, anxiety to attain great height without works worth unnecessary haste going to nowhere, lack of trust.

Religious Causes: Religion is supposed to teach moral and decent behaviour to its adherents. Causes of indiscipline that are linked with religion included: lack of proper religious moral teachings, lack of fear of God, lack of commitment to religious tenets, lack of disciplined religious up bringing, hatred of rival religious or religious sects member and religious fanaticism.

Legal/Judicial Cause: They relate to the functioning of the legal and judicial systems in Nigeria. Lists issues, based on the legal/judicial environments are as follows: lack of independence of the judiciary, lack of proper enforcement of laws, corrupt law enforcement agents, corruption in the judicial system, and very slow process of trial.

Civilization/Modernization Causes: There are acts of indiscipline whose commission is attributable to civilization or modernization. They include:- Foreign influence encroaching on our moral and cultural values, Imitating indecent foreign behaviours, showing films that are advertising indisciplined behaviours.

Management Slacks Cause: Poor management on the part of those at the helm of affair is another cause of indiscipline (Ogundele 2004).

Motivational Causes: Here lack of motivation of all types in work organizations is listed as a cause of acts of indiscipline.

All the causes discussed thus far are the environmental causes of indiscipline. The personal or individual level causes are examined below.

Individual Causes

General Educational Causes: Education is supposed to impart knowledge, to broaden the outlook of an individual. It is also intended, to make him/her a better behaved member of the society. Listed educational causes of indiscipline are:- Lack of formal education, poor education, inadequate education, ignorance, wrong educational upbringing, lack of moral up bringing in schools, inadequate preparations for examinations and emphasis on paper qualifications (Ogundele 2004).

Training and Development Causes: Closely linked with education is training and development. It's purpose is to build in the individuals, various manipulative and intellectual skills and insights. This is to enable them to contribute meaning to the development of the society. Lack of training and development is listed as meaningfully one of the causes of indiscipline in Nigeria today.

Multi-dimensional Causes: These relate to situation where a combination of two or more factors work together to lead to the commission of acts of indiscipline. They include: Lack of concern by government, parents, school and in addition various forms of acts of indiscipline, producing further acts of indiscipline.

The data contained in Table 1, and the accompanying explanations show that Nigerian organizations are morally sick. These findings

were similar to Ekpo-Ufot (1990) findings in respect of three groups of respondents: namely seminary, prisons and general public in Lagos State. In many respect of the study being reported here, it is to be noted that educational institutions like their religious counterparts are suppose to provide role models in ethical behaviour through their training programmes. The fact that people in these institutions across levels as shown in Table 1 above exhibit unethical conduct is a mirror reflection of societal behaviour as reported in the literature. Therefore, there should be concerted strategies for restoring moral health in our organizations. This is to move from the sceneria depicted in model 1 which best represents Nigeria's present situation to a more morally healthy state.

Suggested Solutions to Indiscipline in Nigeria

The research based suggested solutions for dealing with moral problems in Nigeria organisation are the strategies for restoring moral health in Nigerian organizations and their implementation will serve as foundation for a path to national development. If we want Nigeria to depict the picture contained in model 1 above the suggested strategies that follow should receive willing cooperation from all relevant segments of the society.

The causes of indiscipline as discussed based on Table 1 are multi-faceted. Solving these problems require multi-directional approaches. The analysis of the suggested solutions to the problem of indiscipline in Nigeria resulted in a list of 145 issues. These were again, grouped into 17 major approaches to produce a compact list as shown in Table 2. These are the strategic areas to which action are to be directed in solving indiscipline problem in Nigeria

Just as the problems of indiscipline are multi-faceted, their suggested solutions are complex in nature. The suggested solutions correspond with the identified causes of unethical conduct. They are to be incorporated into any strategy designed to solve the moral problem of our society.

Political Approach: The politically based solutions to the societal indiscipline in Nigeria dominate other suggested solutions. This is in terms of the listed issues and the frequencies of their listing. Respondents listed twenty issues. These include amongst others:- (a) Prompt actions by government in punishing offenders, (b)

Government to improve the welfare of workers and the masses, (c) Government to deal sternly with law breakers regardless of their individual positions in the society, (d) Commitment on the part of the government – a committed government can find solutions to the many faceted problems of indiscipline. (e) Entrenchment of anti-indiscipline acts in the constitution and (f) Government should enforce rules and regulations, (g) there should be no sacred cows or selective application of sanctions etc.

Values Related Approach: Next to political solutions are values related ones. Some of the suggested solutions are:-

- (a) Faithfulness in obeying laws, regulations, procedures and even God's laws
- (b) Honesty in all respects and aspects of the society, especially starting from leaders.
- (c) Reorientation towards valued behaviour
- (d) Need to reshape values, behaviour and patterns of relationships and
- (e) Truthfulness by all and to all especially starting with leaders.
- (f) Upholding the principle of accountability, etc.

Economic Approach: This comes third in term of frequencies of listing. The following are some of the suggested economic solutions, on which actions are to be taken. (a) Provision of employment for the unemployed but employable, (b) Creation of job opportunities for individuals (c) Improvement in the standard of living (d) Positive government policies in creating enabling environment for private investment (d) Strict financial accountability to be enforced and (e) Evolve more equitable formula in sharing the national cake. (f) provision of necessary infrastructures (g) designing programmes targeted at alleviating problems of the poor etc.

Legal/Judicial and Sanctions Approach: The suggested solutions in this combined areas include:- Stiffer penalties to be applied against offenders on some offences, Independence of the Judiciary in the true sense is necessary, Corrupt officials should be made to face the consequences of their corrupt acts and Law enforcement agents to be disciplined, prompt action on cases in our courts etc.

Religious Approach: The religious solutions proffered include the followings:- We should be penitent and return to God, Proper religious up bringing is imperative, Fear of God in people's minds and doing His wills in their actions, strict adherence to religious moral principles and values

Table 2: Classification of suggested solutions

S. No.	Solution to external causes	No. of issues listed	Frequencies of listing	Frequencies in %
1.	Political approach	20	473	13.25
2.	Values related approach	17	440	12.32
3.	Economic approach	13	416	11.65
4.	Legal/judicial sanctions approach	16	408	11.43
5.	Religious approach	12	366	10.25
6.	Managerial approach	18	283	7.93
7.	Leadership approach	5	246	6.89
8.	Family approach	7	233	6.53
9.	Socio-cultural	10	166	4.65
10.	Educational approach		121	3.9
11.	Training & Development	5	120	3.36
12.	Psychological approach	4	87	2.44
13.	Police/Armed forces approach	3	74	2.07
14.	Multi-dimensional approach	5	68	1.90
15.	Motivation approach	2	36	0.98
16.	Modernization or Environmental development approach	1	2	0.06
	Sub Total	144	3498	99.13
	<i>Solution To Individual Cause</i>			
17.	Self or individual approach	1	31	0.87
	Grand Total	145	3570	100.00

Source: Respondents from primary and Tertiary Educational institutions, Oyo and Lagos states of Nigeria.

in the society and Prayer to God to provide good leaders.

Management Approach: The management solutions that were suggested include:- Reward disciplined behaviour, launching massive campaign against the act, good management of national resources, establish panel or board to handle cases of indiscipline and establish trust committee to monitor government activities.

Leadership Approach: Suggested solutions to indiscipline, based on leadership approach include: leaders should be models of disciplined conducts, leaders should be honest, faithful and disciplined for their society to have no problems, our leaders need to be reoriented to show good example. Put disciplined men and women at the head of nation's affairs and at all levels of institutions.

Family Approach: The family based suggested solutions are as follow: Parents should be discipline parents should take proper control and care of their children, proper training of children at home and good up bringing of children right from birth (Ogundele and Balogun 2005).

Socio-cultural Approach: The suggested socio-cultural solutions to the acts of indiscipline include, among others, the following:- Teaching of moral values at all levels of the society generally, traditional value of self discipline should be reawakened and practiced. Sanction

or discourage careless display of wealth, members of the public to cooperate with law enforcement agents and encourage detribalization in social relations.

Psychological Approach: The psychological approach based suggested solutions are:- Practice of contentment by individuals and groups. Adopt measures that will reduce boredom and frustration, stop committing or engaging in acts of indiscipline, selflessness, show concern for common goods, commitment to conscience by individual and groups.

Police/Armed Forces Approach: The police/armed forces suggested solutions are:- Police should stop harboring or covering up bad members of the society, Law enforcement agents should be alive to their responsibilities, Regular patrol team on high ways to combat robbery, Police should stop receiving bribes. The police and armed forces should work to change the present negative image in the eyes of the public.

Motivational Approach: The motivational solutions that were suggested are:- Reward exemplary positive behaviour, adequately equip law enforcement agents and provide necessary tools and equipment for tasks at all levels of organizations. Skilled personnel should be adequately rewarded.

Modernization Approach: The listed suggested solution are:- Provide decent

environment in term of infrastructures of all types and Provide public conveniences – toilet, bathrooms and urinaries. Discourage unethical films, promotional items and advertisement.

Educational Approach: They include:- Teaching or moral values in schools, Free education at all levels, formal and informal education on disciplined behaviour, schools to revive proper religious up bringing and give schools back to religious organizations that establish them.

Training and Development Approach: Suggested solutions based on training and development are as follow: Continuous training and development of people generally, positive training and development through sound education, inculcate decent work ethics through training, training and development where disciplined acts are brought into focus. There is need for training the trainers for the ethical crusade.

Self or Individual Approach: The self or individual suggested solutions are:- Individuals should prevent orders from committing indecent acts and report offenders known to them. Individual should practice self-discipline. If every body practices self-discipline the problem of indiscipline in the society will be solved automatically.

Multi-dimensional Approaches: The multi-dimensional approaches emphasized the following issues:- (a) Several approaches such as, home, schools, religious houses, mass media, committees on indiscipline and various institutions should be employed to fight indiscipline. (b) Members of the public need to cooperate with themselves and the law enforcement agents. (c) It could be solved through honest, sincere, serious, objective and realistic planning and execution of plans.

CONCLUSION

Findings of this study were similar to Ekpo-Ufot (1990) findings in his study of indiscipline in Lagos State. Mxumalo (1999) discussion of some of the corrupt practices which government officials commonly indulge in without fear of being apprehended confirms the finding of this study. Isa (2005) highlights the poor state of science equipment in Federal Government Colleges across the nations and fraud being committed by government officials who either

supply substandard equipment or award contracts to themselves that are highly above economic profit level. It is to be noted that the efforts of the ICPC and EFCC reflect the good intentions of their initiators. Nigerians hear and read from the mass media and events happening around show that majority of people in positions of influence don't take moral issues seriously.

The mass media on daily basis provide several evidences of unethical conduct in our society. Recently, based on personal contact a friend informed one of the authors of this paper that his organization carried out a training and development programme for a federal agency. The estimated contractual cost of the training programme was N26,000,000.00 based on the estimated cost put forward by the consultant. But when approval was given for the release of funds only N4.6 million reached the table of the organization that was to carry out the training programme. It later discovered that several successive levels in the awarding organization had slashed their "*dues*" from the approved total sum of N26,000,000.00. The quality of training programme that will flow from the amount made available for the execution of the organization's training programme is anybody's guess. This type of corruption occurs in various arms of government as well as publicly owned organizations. There seems to be a mentality of *sacred* cow for some individuals while others are witch hunted and penalty applied against them for utterances or stand against some influential individuals in government. This must stop at all levels of government and private organizations for Nigeria to move forward and develop in this 21st century.

On the whole most effective strategies to solving the problem of indiscipline are composite not unidirectional. They therefore, require packaging treatments. In the packaging approach, the government and individual organizations are completely free to start with any of the issues listed above in this paper. The respective individual organization and government should be in the best position to know where the shoe pinches most at any point in time. It is best to start from the most threatening ones. The hopeless situation can be transformed to hope through human resources development. This will involve two broad methods. These are the *jihadist* and *evangelistic* treatments, which have to be simultaneous, in execution. The *jihadist* approach

is applications of strict sanctions on offenders. The *evangelistic* treatments involve massive training and development and effective propaganda against negative behaviours and positive rewards for exhibiting desired behaviour.

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