DOCUMENTATION OF AFRICAN TRADITIONS: THE EXAMPLE OF IGBO TRADITION IN NATION-BUILDING

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ABSTRACT: *Documentation of African traditions has become a major concern not only to the Afro-centric scholars but also to the teeming Africans home and abroad who have come face to face with the reality of the need for the revival of African cultural values. The general feeling and opinion is that even though western culture, intellectualism and economics have contributed immensely to the civilization of Africa, their shortcomings have had a far-reaching impact on African traditional life and values. Indeed, African countries including Nigeria have been affected especially in the area of nation building. They have lost a substantial number of their best brains to Europe and America which could have been harnessed for national development. This problem came up because nations all over the world are now getting increasingly unified in a network of relationships called globalization.it is against this background that this paper proposed the documentation of African traditions. Descriptive method was employed for this study. It was discovered that corruption, acts of savagery, new trends in science and technology, insincerity of our leaders, brain drain and brainwashing by foreign cultures are some of the major challenges facing nation building and documentation of African traditions and culture. The paper concludes with a suggestion that the practice of liberal democracy, African languages, fundamental human rights, documentation of African technological heritage, transparency, accountability, establishment of museums at grassroots and protection of archaeological sites should be entrenched in African polity for the revival of African culture and national development.*

KEYWORDS: Documentation, Tradition, African Traditions, Igbo Tradition, Nation-Building

INTRODUCTION

The question of nation building in Africa has become a very hard nut to crack. This is because most African countries were the creation of colonial enterprise. These countries were not created along ethnic or tribal lines or divides; rather, they were lumped together in various countries in Africa. In other words, the general feeling and interests of the various heterogeneous ethnic groups in Africa were not taken into consideration before such ventures. The ugly result now is violence, war and crime all over Africa from Rwanda to Sudan, from Angola to the Central African Republic, from Kenya to Uganda, from Liberia to Nigeria the list is endless. This could explain why several measures adopted in these countries aimed at fostering national integration and nation building have failed. Rivkin (cited by Obasi, 2001) sees nation building in Africa as the process of defining the geographic area in which a particular state is to be built and developing the constitutional structure to give the state form and shape, the political system to give it life, provide the name for the population to relate to the state and the economy to sustain the state structure and political system all with a view to wielding the multiple disparate, non-cohesive and unrelated population groups to be found in all the new states of Africa into identifiable and integrated nations within the respective borders. A first necessity in African nation building as Emerson (cited by Obasi, 2001) put it, is to deal in some fashion with the problem of tribalism which has proved to be a disruptive force. Before the dawn of colonialism and westernization, Africans had developed their own form of government, high discipline, matters of morality, positive self-concept, and the importance of integrity and dignity. They had a very rich cultural heritage depicted in the fading African cultural values such as proverbs, folktales, arts, artifacts, festivals, ceremonies, moral checks and balances, respect for elders, social justice and sacrosanctity of human life, community consciousness and solidarity. All these values assisted in maintaining unity and brotherhood, community spirit and cooperation and invariably promoted national development among Africans.

As Duverger (1978) pointed out, a society without conflict is not really integrated if the individuals composing it are simply juxtaposed like a crowd in which each individual is isolated from his neighbors, having no real link between him and them. Even now in Nigeria, there is little or no horizontal link between the various ethnic groups. The situation is not helped by the fact that the educated elite in general and the governing elite since independence have been in the grip of what can best be termed liberal ambiguity, that is, lip service to national unity but actual attachment to primordialism. This explains why in the words of O'Connell (1967) elite interests whether political, economic, educational, bureaucratic or military continue to be dominantly aggregated and articulated in the context of ethnic solidarities. In this global time, when cultures are collapsing and new trends emerging, the documentation of African traditions could serve as a template for nation building. There is the need to go back to the past in order to recreate the present for the survival and future development of African nations.

In this sense, our traditions can be harnessed in order to create viable institutions and new value systems that can win the loyalty and cooperation of individuals and groups and can function without more institutionalized violence than the majority will accept and remain formidable.

The Term Tradition

Tradition is a phenomenon that is connected with the past. It has to do with beliefs and practices, ideas and norms that have been there through generations. It could be seen as a laid down procedure or due process bequeathed to a people through experiences of the past. Tradition according to Gross (1992) is an existing set of beliefs, practices, teachings and modes of thinking that are inherited from the past which may guide, organize and regulate ways of living and of making sense of the world. The term comes from the Latin verb trader meaning to transmit or to give over. The noun traditio shows the process by which something is transmitted or handed down. The central responsibility involved in tradition is receiving something valuable or precious, preserving it and passing it on to those who come after. Fay (1987) captured the essence of tradition when he said that in the past, tradition provided cohesion that held social life together and by indicating what was culturally normative, tradition established a framework for meaning and purpose. As human beings, we are embedded in our cultural traditions. Therefore, tradition cannot be treated as something purely external which can be simply accepted or rejected on the basis of rational analysis neither can it be treated as something which is wholly other as if one could continue to be a person even if tradition were entirely rejected.

African Traditions

Every human society all over the world has its own traditions. And Africa cannot be an exception. African tradition is the indigenous African way of engaging in certain human activities such as beliefs and practices and their whole life arrived at according to Madu (1997) from undergirding African normative norms, values, ethos and customs. Okpuku (cited by Madu, 1997) observed that the word traditional or tradition is not to refer to African traditions as something of the past but only to indicate that it is undergirded by a fundamentally indigenous value system and that it has its own pattern with its own historical inheritance and tradition from the past. These are the types of traditions that are indigenous to Africa. It is something that is interlaced with the entire culture of African people. African tradition embraces that whole way of life of the people. It is situated or located within the framework of African cosmology. This indicates that there is a unified view of reality which underscores the fact that the three compartments of the world, that is, the heaven, the earth and the underworld interact in a web like manner and that there is a sense of community or community consciousness. Of the highest value is human life and its preservation.

However, with the advent of Islam and Christianity and other forces of globalization such as colonialism, intellectualism and westernization, these traditions have been seriously eroded and are gradually disappearing. As Gross (1992) observed, it is simply no longer able to provide the thread needed to keep the fabric of social life from unraveling and its demise should be seen as an opportunity for newness, creativity and modes of individualism hitherto impossible or unimaginable. There are dangers inherent in retreating to an allegedly better past rather than creatively responding to the world as it comes to us. But we cannot ignore the whole realms of experiences and meanings that have been nourished for generations and on which we can draw for insights about nourishing our lives. Therefore, there is the need for a return to tradition; there is the need for a return to what was deemed and still deemed to be valuable in traditional African education so as to engender nation building and national development in Africa. Aldridge (2003) in his analysis of the sankofa, the Akan concept of returning to the past stated that, we must go back to our roots in order to move forward, that is, we should reach back and

gather the best of what our past has to teach us, so that, we can achieve our full potential as we move forward. According to him, sankofa looks at history as a circular process rather than the linear construct of time prevalent in western culture where we think of the past not as events frozen in time but rather as occurrences that are at one with the present and the future. Tedla (1995) further added that sankofa implies that to initiate a progressive civil social existence, one that preserves our humanity, we would have to reach back into the past for the wisdom of our ancestors, the best of our traditions and renew and refine these traditions for new meanings that are relevant for the present. This is quite relevant to a heterogeneous society like Nigeria where human dignity, justice, fairness, honesty, equity and the rule of law have been replaced by unafrican practices such as injustice, disregard for human life, misrule and all manners of corrupt practices. Therefore, there is the need Nigeria to adopt those indigenous practices which Gross (1992) calls substantive traditions, that is, those long standing modes of thought or practices that for centuries have organized social and cultural life, that is, to bring these traditions forward in a manner that disturbs and challenges some of the complacencies of present day curricular and pedagogical conceptions and practice. From the past, Achebe (1958) mirrors cultural aspects shared by the Igbo and other Africans. He draws immediate parallels and reveals the multiple similarities between the Igbo people and other ethnic groups in Nigeria and Africa. The traditions which binds our people and which elicited by instant response range from the organization of the Igbo society, the various festivals and religious worship, the folklore especially proverbs, the dances and masquerades, the marital rites, the belief in ancestral spirits among other things. Among the Igbo, a lot of these cultural attributes applicable to African communities have changed and modified as a result of the interference of western Christianity and global force of intellectualism, economics and modernism in the traditional African setting. In the leadership or administrative circles, the Igbo community was ordered around a hierarchy of male elders who serve as collective leaders in both the secular and spiritual realm. These elders Ndichie consist of respected men and achievers in the land. They were very conspicuous and rare. The ancestral spirits command respect and fear from members of the community. Rather than centralizing power in an individual in the community such as the king, chief etc, a council of elders vested with the responsibility to preside over and direct affairs affecting the community was constituted. This was based on certain criteria which became part of the community's statues.

As among the Igbo, the influence of European colonialism introduced a new element into the ordering of affairs in the African traditional set-up. So, nowadays, we have in addition to the council of elders, token chiefs (figure heads) who superficially are in charge of their communities and whose loyalties to their people remain questionable. In the traditional past, the elders presided over the community effectively and power was not vested in an individual. Masquerades played a prominent role by fostering cohesion and space in the community. When the environment is perceived to be infested with evil or nocturnal practices such as witchcraft, an alarm was raised by the council of elders or other concerned members of the community. Thereafter, the elders met and mapped out strategies to curb the perceived menace in order to restore trust and tranquility. Although masquerades serve to purify or cleanse the society at specific periods such as the periods preceding the new yam festivals, they also manifest themselves in moments of calamity or perceived threats or danger to the existence of the community or of its individuals. They are essentially viewed as spiritual essences largely representing departed ancestors who intervene benevolently in the community because they are perceived to be custodians of such societies and are therefore keenly interested in whatever happens to their people. The folk tradition which embraces folktales, proverbs and parables

though anchored in the rural past serves to advise, forewarn against or preempt ugly situations and it is only the discerning that can read and interpret the handwriting on the wall. As Mogu (2013) put it, Okonkwo was sufficiently advised and warned to desist from self-destruction by not taking part in the killing of Ikemefuna the ransom lad from Mbaino. However, he refused to heed the advice and suffered the consequences. He was banished from his father land for seven years, thus, his pride precipitated his disaster. Such tales serve to warn other people of the danger inherent in excessive pride, what one may term" being full of oneself" to the point that one ignores other people's good counsel in the vain belief that one has ample answers to all problems within the vicinity. This is probably the reason politicians and political office holders in Nigeria do not bother about the common good of the people but rather indulge in acts that undermine fair play, justice and sincerity. They ignore the plight of the people in the vain belief that nobody will dare them. Traditional folktales are common and appear to reinforce or draw from the Christian biblical account of the creation and the fall to warn against pride and disobedience.

And in any case, every aspect of the African worldview tends to embrace aspects of religion, worship and veneration. Every activity seems to be carried out with the prevailing realization that the spiritual realm is actively present and determines the course of events. Without the tacit approval of the ancestral/spirit world of the departed ancestors and the gods, nothing gets done in the human realm.

The Challenges of Nation-Building

Many years after independence, many African countries including Nigeria have not made any meaningful progress especially in the area of nation-building. Nation-building is the process of creating unity and a sense of belonging among heterogeneous groups in the state.It involves attempts at integrating the various groups in order to build a nation out of the state. The major problem facing Africans irrespective of tribe or ethnic affinity is the issue of insincerity on the part of those to whom the affairs of African states are committed. Because of insincerity of those in government, any plan, concept or project which worked in other countries when introduced in Nigeria, Nigerians would say "e no go work" not because they don't want it to work but because if you follow up that project, plan or concept, you will find out that it did not work.

Those in whose hands such projects, plans or concepts are committed end up pursuing personal interests above corporate or collective interest and expectation of Nigerians. The pursuit of personal interest and the negative mentality of letting me get enough out of this position before my term runs out is one of the motivations for self-seeking and corruption among those in authority. Africans have no iota of trust in those in positions of authority. Besides corruption, thievery, robbery and embezzlement, the practice of nepotism, tribalism and ethnicity are the main factors hampering the development of nations in Africa. Nigeria has hundreds of ethnic groups, three of which dominate specific zones of the country, Hausa/Fulani in the North-West, Igbo in the South-East and South-Central and the Yoruba in the North-Central and South-West. Ethnicity in Nigeria has a significant impact on a person's experiences, perception of injustice, social and educational opportunities and much more. Nigerians in general are very obsessed with a person's ethnic identity. Politicization of ethnic consciousness emerged under colonial rule which resulted in ethnic-based political competition after independence in 1960. Ethnic groups engaged in competition for power to advance their group and parochial interests as against national interest or public good. State laws and policies thus reflected ethnic interest.

In fact, ethnic identity impacts on the daily life of the people throughout the country. All official papers and documents identify a person's place of birth, any form that a person needs to fill e.g applying for a driver's permit or university admission, opening a bank account, leasing a home etc. requires him to indicate his place of birth. Awolowo (1947) lent credence to this when he wrote that all these incompatibilities among the various people in the country militate against unification. For one thing, they are bound to slow down progress in certain sections and on the other hand, they tend to engender unfriendly feelings among the diverse elements thus forced together. The biggest stumbling block to Nigeria's much awaited change is disunity. All the tribes and ethnic groups are pitched against one another, creating division and lack of trust. This is the room temperature required by the political class to grow corruption and bad leadership. Adebisi (2014) admits that the greed manifested in African politics by the elites have destroyed the fabric of the community. Bound by chains of their own making, the African continent parades and represents some of the worst forms of man's inhumanity to man, a continent ravaged by disease, squalor, poverty, death and destruction. The disturbing truth is that many members of Africa's political class particularly by their dazzling display of obscene and often ill-gotten wealth represent negative examples that encourage extreme and unrestrained quest for materialism and acts of savagery in the society. It is a sad and thought-provoking illustration of the dangerous degeneration of values that those within and outside the government trade in human parts for the acquisition of power and wealth showing no regard for human life. This could be why it is said that Africa is a place where people stifle good and encourage savagery.

Despite the trappings of democracy and dubious claims to modernity, the African elite has left his people largely in a state of nature whereas Hobbes (cited by Adebisi, 2014) argued, life remains solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short. All these came about because there is no sovereign authority to exercise restraint. The law of the jungle literally takes over. But human beings are encouraged to surrender their rights so that in exchange, peace, harmony and the common good can be pursued as institutions are created to regulate human behavior. When a leader allows personal interests and to some extent pride to override the common good as was the case in the dilemma of Ezeulu, the chief priest, the likes of Good country, the catechist will offer new alternatives that will challenge the sense of community loyalty.

The inability of the government to provide jobs coupled with their lack of interest in the welfare of Nigerians has foisted sustained brain drain of their best brains to other countries especially Europe and America thereby restraining them from contributing to nation-building. This explains why people like Philip Emeagwali, the renowned computer wizard have become American property. So many professors who should have been contributing their quota to the development of their nations in Africa are the ones responsible for the economic and technological development of the western world. Corruption is by far the greatest challenge to nation-building. Because of endemic corruption, the security system is compromised. The traditional means of detecting crime such as oath taking has been abandoned. The sacred system has also been compromised because the sacred specialists such as the priests, diviners, medicine men etc who are the harbingers of African traditions now take bribes. The elders and traditional rulers who are next in rank to the ancestors and who are by this, the custodians of the tradition and culture of the people have compromised their sacred functions because they now take bribes and pervert justice.

Brainwashing is one of the most effective means of enslavement and devaluation of Africans. In view of this, Ashimolowo (2007) observed that in order to control the mind of Africans, it

was necessary to brainwash them so that they will be put in a condition to believe that they deserve whatever they were experiencing. Africans are so conformed by this brainwashing that nothing is thought to be superior or good enough unless it is imported or brought from the west. This has dislocated Africans from their roots and cultural values. Sacrificing one's individual interests for the sake of the community is typically African but this tradition of community consciousness has almost disappeared as a result of brainwashing. As Madu (1997) saw it, man is the center of everything. But, he is not alone. He exists for the community and the community exists for him. He relies on the patronage of the gods and his neighbors. This underscores why neighbors help one another to build a house, to cultivate the yams and harvest crops. This is the same consciousness among the Igbo. But, this is no longer the same because the political and intellectual neo-colonialism have disrupted organization and unity in the African communities and fostered myopic and irresponsible individualism amongst Africans. In the view of Akinpelu (cited by Iwe, 1991) over concern with one's self importance and preoccupation with self-aggrandizement naturally lead to total indiscipline starting from self to the society. Preoccupation with the accumulation of wealth, the get-rich-quick syndrome, bribery and corruption to maintain and increase the level of one's affluence, conspicuous consumption and profligate lifestyle, unconscionable display of wealth to the annoyance and deliberate spite of the laboring masses are vices which are traceable to the breakdown of social conscience and the age-long principle that, the good of the individual is a function of the good of his community. Africans were so free from the shackles of holy books or scriptures to kill and die for. But this status quo was tampered with by the coming of Christianity, Islam and such globalizing agents as science and technology. What Africans view and read on the internet about other people's culture tend to affect them seriously as they have abandoned their own culture to embrace these alien cultures. Today, Africans kill and die for holy books or scriptures and this has in a most despicable manner disrupted nation-building in Nigeria and Africa.

The example of Igbo Tradition in Nation-Building

African traditions lack scriptural documents in the form of revealed truths. Instead of written documents, African traditions are built on oral traditions. And since oral traditions as Madu (1997) put it, have the tendency of falsifications, additions and subtractions as it undergoes transmission from generation to generation, they are not reliable. Just as we have the bible and Koran as reference documents for Christians and Muslims, we can fashion out a document for African traditions which will serve as a reference document for the traditionalists. But more than being a document for the traditionalists, this will help to foster national unity and development as all tribes and ethnic groups in Nigeria will come together under this document to forge a common front and to pursue the common good of its citizens. The role of traditionalists in the emergence or selection of leaders in the society, especially elective offices, is very important, but it has been jettisoned because it will easily expose corrupt officials. Our leaders are aware that through traditional religion, the truth is always known and that is why the practice of choosing leaders through tradition has been sidelined because of their unbridled quest for money.

In the days past, when an individual was about to be enthroned the *Ifa* or *Amadioha* oracle would be consulted to choose leaders who would be responsible and active to positively impact on the people. But today, selection of traditional leaders, chiefs and political office holders is now based on the highest bidder. If political office holders are made to take oath before the deities, that they will not steal money, they will be checked because they know that the repercussion is instant death. If we want sanity in the communities and our country, African

traditions, value reorientation and regeneration should be enforced to make oaths which entail the use of symbols such as gun, cutlass or other implements efficiently. If this is done, our society would be better for it. But our leaders won't allow this because they know if they misbehave, they will be exposed. The side effect of taking oath with the Bible or Koran may take some time but the repercussion of taking oath through the god of thunder is instant. Nigerian leaders are no longer afraid of embezzlement because the oaths have become a routine exercise which has no effect on them, but if African tradition is allowed to take the center stage in the selection of leaders in Nigeria, we would use *Ifa* or *Amadioha* or any other deity to choose a governor or any elective post holder. Traditionalists can be used to consult the oracles to find out if the individual is the right person to occupy the position or not. This is the way Nigerians can contribute meaningfully to good governance and selection of good leaders in Nigeria and invariably national development. Other tribes and ethnic groups can learn from the Igbo example. As Ezeani (2013) wrote, despite being regarded as proud which is not a justification to hate and persecute any people, the Igbo nevertheless were believed to be one of the most welcoming, friendly, hospitable and tolerant people. They are renowned for their hospitality and their hospitality and friendship are encapsulated, defined and given cogent identity and expression in the kola nut which they present to a visitor. Ndukaihe (cited by Ezeani, 2013) adds that a stranger finds shelter readily in an Igbo family and family members may often not mind days of inconveniences caused by an unexpected visitor. The philosophical background to the Igbo idea of hospitality relates to the common blood flowing in humanity. The main emphasis is hospitality to those without kinship in the areas they find themselves. A religious hallows surrounds visitors whether they are known or unknown. Ezeani (2013) further observes that Igbo people (*Ndiigbo*) easily accept and mix with other people. They comfortably and easily adopt other people's way of dressing, eating and speaking without bothering. Where a stranger may be suspicious of an Igbo person as a potential enemy, the Igbo on the contrary would see the stranger as a brother or sister from a far and as a friend. The Igbo have a view of universal brotherhood of everybody. This belief is found in their sayings and adages such as *nwanne di namba*(a stranger from a foreign land is also one's brother or sister i.e. universal brotherhood) and *ojemba weilo* which means a stranger has no enemy as everybody is a friend, brother or sister. Acholonu (cited by Ezeani, 2013) sees the Igbo among the few groups of people in the world whose core traditional philosophies of life consists of virtues rather than vices, that is, justice and fair play (*ikpekwuoto*) impeccability (*ikwubaakaoto*) peace and brotherhood of man (*ijideogu*) live and let live (*onyebiriibeyabiri*) right action and right judgment (*ofonagoro*) right is might (*omeihe jideofo* or *ofokansi*).

The Igbo philosophy of *nwannedinamba* which makes them take and settle everywhere as their home and to offer special welcome to anybody in their midst is so ingrained in Igbo life that it could be misconstrued as an anomaly or illness by a non-critical observer. This is why Igbo people through individual efforts have more than any other group of people in Nigeria developed in different parts of Nigeria even at the expense of their own states in Igbo land. They build modern houses and modern market stalls in different parts of Nigeria. The Igbo people are nation-builders although other Nigerians seem not to acknowledge this. In the words of Ojukwu(cited by Ezeani, 2013) the future generations and all those who like us and even those who do not like us shall appreciate the fact that *Ndiigbo* are nation-builders not nation-wreckers but the strong Igbo moral sense handed down to us by our ancestors will always resent and rebel against injustice, inequity and mindless bloodletting. There is chaos in African communities because Africans seem to have lost touch with their tradition. They no longer consult nor commune with their Gods. Elders are becoming youths and youths are becoming

elders. Honesty and sincerity that make elders what they are, that is, the custodians of our culture have long been discarded. People no longer have respect for the sacrosanctity of life. There is a total breakdown of conscience and morality which are the essential values of African tradition. This is the reason, the oath-of-office taken by African leaders are not kept. It is the reason politicians now patronize secret societies for the purpose of consolidating and perpetuating themselves in power. It is the reason there is oppression, exploitation and subjugation by cruel African rulers. In a continent where the constitution of political parties have become the constitution of their respective countries, the plight of the poor and downtrodden is no longer the concern of political leaders rather, their concern is how to lay a stranglehold on power which they use to further the underdevelopment of Africa by perpetrating and perpetuating bribery and corruption, economic and financial crimes, ethnic cleansing, injustice, insecurity and imposition of unpopular government. In support of this, Nwabueze (2004) states that the fusion of government, tradition and morality in indigenous African societies enable the stability and harmony of the community to be maintained by means of ritual action of a regular kind performed by the family, village or community head in his other capacity as chief priest of the family, village or community. The oath of office in Africa has proved utterly meaningless and without effect to secure adherence to the constitution and the laws. Those who take it regard it as but mere formality of which no account should be taken as soon as the ceremony is over. The basic reason for this must lie in the nation's lack of legitimacy as well as in the objects used in swearing it such as the Bible or the Koran. A nonbeliever in the Bible or Koran merely affirms. What this suggests is that those swearing by these objects simply do not believe that the Bible or Koran can do any harm to them if they violate their oaths. Their conscience is not engaged by a belief in the power of the Bible or Koran to harm or the fear instilled by such a belief. Swearing by affirmation is totally devoid of even the slightest compunction the Bible or Koran is supposed to exact. In contrast, a traditional oath sworn on a *juju* or other fetish object is respected because the society believes it to be sanctioned by supernatural forces with power to harm by causing sickness or death and which for this reason strikes almost mortal fear into anyone swearing by it that none is ever willing to disrespect it or to break the oath. Some of these *jujus* are known to hold sway in many communities. They have remained the objects used for oath taking not only in traditional affairs and relationships but sometimes even in political relationships of the modern state.

Documentation of African Traditions

African traditions and patterns of behavior will be difficult to mutilate or change if properly documented like the Bible or Koran. And can be referred to from time to time to settle issues that have to do with traditions, leadership, dispute etc. This way, the traditional life and values of the Africans will be regenerated and as leaders are made to swear oaths of office, they will abide by it. Fair play, justice and good governance will be the order of the day as African leaders will strive for the common good of the people. This kind of document will also help to preserve African cultural heritage and will eventually serve as a template for nation-building. In doing this, we need to go back to the past because the past holds some important lessons for us. When African traditions are documented, the African will begin to think for everyone rather than himself. A mind revolution will occur whereby we will begin to understand that we need to stop being backward so that Africa will rise from its doldrums of hate, war, division and embrace productivity. Africans will stop using God and religion as escape routes from their regressive reality. They will also understand the need to go back to their valued ancestry and retrace their history according to the words of their fathers not according to western provided

analogies and falsities. They will rediscover those potent values that humanize them and the histories that define them. They will also come to understand that westernization is not something favorable as it means forgetting our culture, our tradition, our norms and adopting western culture completely forgetting who we are and what our roots are. It is vital for us to condemn western culture and stick to ours if we want to be able to teach our future generations where we belong.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are a number of things that should be done if African traditions are to be documented. There is the need for government and community participation in the documentation of African traditions. It is within the communities that shrines, caves, rocks, grooves etc which are very important cultural heritage sites are found. The communities should be made to realize that cultural heritage sites and other components of culture generally belong to them and therefore, they should be important stakeholders in the effort to document them. By ensuring community participation, the government creates a sense of belonging in the communities which will facilitate the documentation of these traditions. There is also the need to document African technological heritage. Through research, a lot of data could be gathered on traditional technology and technical know-how. Such knowledge could be documented and preserved to form the platform for the development of handicrafts, small and medium scale enterprises.

There is the need for value reorientation and regeneration. This way, good values such as honesty, sincerity of purpose, dedication to duty, justice, fairness, accountability and the rule of law will be encouraged and practiced. The state of awareness on the need for documentation of African traditions is low. Therefore, it is important for the government to embark on a massive sustainable programme of public enlightenment. Such programmes must permeate the grassroots and must embrace a wide variety of data on for instance textile technology, linguistics, photographic images, the economy and traditional systems of knowledge which must be codified or written down. These forms of knowledge continue to exist as long as they are useful and new methods have not been found to replace them.

There is also a need for documentation of African languages. Every ethnic group in Africa should write down its language from where a common African language will be fashioned out. This, like the example of the South East Asian countries popularly known as Asian Tigers, will help Africa to make progress in science and technology as the language will be used in teaching.

The liberation of Africa is a task which every african must undertake in order to foster african unity and cooperation. This can only be achieved through the pursuit and practice of liberal democracy, fundamental human rights, freedom, transparency and accountability.

The establishment of museums at the grassroots is also necessary. Individuals should be encouraged by the government to establish museums by giving them grants and technical expertise. This will also assist in the documentation of African traditions.

CONCLUSION

African traditions are prone to alterations, falsifications, subtractions and additions. This is because; they are neither documented nor written down but based on oral traditions. African traditions cannot be relied on when issues bothering on dispensation of justice, fairness and accountability come up. With the writing down of these traditions, all the ethnic groups in Nigeria and Africa will have one reference document just like the Bible or Koran which will foster African unity and cooperation. This will also check the recession of African culture precipitated by globalization because the gods who have gone on retreat will come back to take their rightful place in their respective communities for African traditions to survive. Some of the challenges facing nation-building such as corruption, acts of savagery, insecurity, insincerity, brain drain and brainwashing by foreign cultures will be taken care of. All these will make for the revival of African culture and national development.

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