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Towards the Entrenchment of *Ọmọ̀lúàbí* Concept for Social Justice and Best Practices in Nigeria

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Abstract

The term *best practice* is a technique that is always reliable, leading to the attainment of a desired result in various human endeavours. It is such a laudable effort that the global village is considering this concept towards achieving a universal progress for proactive leadership to correct human lost values. Following from a Yorùbá adage, *Ohun tá a ní làá náání ...* ‘what we have is what we cherish’, attempt is made in this paper to examine the intellectual basis and antiquity of best practices in Yorùbá world-view, culture, and renditions. Deserved emphasis is placed on the four key elements of *ayé* ‘world’, *ori* ‘head’, *iṣẹ* ‘work’, and *iwà* ‘character’ around which the Yoruba concept of *ọmọ̀lúàbí* revolves and explained as basis for best practices in civic/public administration, justice system, education, inter-personal relationship, and social network of the Yorùbá. Given the fact that the application of what is considered to be morally right and socially acceptable has always been the yardstick for measuring

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best practices, the paper explores the thoughts, belief system, and the *omolúàbí* concept to suggest that the ideology is resilient in Yorùbá language orature and culture. It further posits that the application of best practices has produced an atmosphere conducive to peaceful co-habitation and promotion of the virtue of selflessness. The paper concludes that the concept of *omolúàbí* be rekindled among Nigerian administrators and globally, and a rebirth of culturally determined best practices be made the basis of public administration in building a just and egalitarian society where the rights of man will not only be protected but further enhanced.

Keywords: Omolúàbí concept; Yoruba; best practices; orature; culture.

1. Introduction

Ìròrùn eku, nìròrùn ẹyẹ,
Ìròrùn ẹyẹ, nìròrùn ité,
Ìròrùn igi, nìròrùn ẹyẹ tó bà lé e ...

The tranquility of the rat informs the
peace of the bird,
The coolness of the nest informs the
calmness of the bird
The calmness of a tree brings about a
peaceful co-habitation of the bird on it ...

This opening expression is one of the highly philosophical statements among the Yorùbá people. The statement further gives clue to the fact that the people prefer to live together in peace, showing love to one another and allowing the law of social justice to thrive among them. Justice is often thought of as something higher than a society's legal system. However, in its

narrowest sense, justice is all about fairness. It is an action that pays due regards to the proper interests, property, and safety of other fellows in the same environment. A web-based encyclopedia defined justice thus:

The conception of justice applied to an entire society. It is based on the idea of a just society, which gives individuals and groups fair treatment and a just share of the benefits of society ... Social justice derives its authority from the codes of morality prevailing in each culture.

By inference, therefore, the idea of justice is a shared notion based on the norms and customs of a given society. The rules governing the Yorùbá people allow for the prevalence of justice at different levels of their relationship between children and their parents, the leaders and their followers, the bosses and their subordinates etc. In essence, the society is often controlled on the basis of a long-tested acceptable norm which allows for punishment to be meted on erring personality or a collective entity. The punishment due to anyone who refuses to conform to the norms of the society is most time not unilateral but a product of collective decision by all members of the society ranging from men, women, adult and children that are in the community. Hence, the saying, “*Omọ̀dé gbọ̀n, àgbà gbọ̀n, la fì dá Ilé-Ifẹ̀*” (Ilé-Ifẹ̀ is created based on collective wisdom) summarises the idea of collectivism among the people for proper governance and relationship.

The use of collective wisdom and unity in the manner in which the people live together among the Yorùbá has been on for decades and it has informed the various ideologies that the people have continuously imbibed and inculcated in their

children right from childhood to adulthood. They have come to accept such imbibed attitudes and techniques as best practices. The view of Elmore (1996) becomes instructive on the need for the entrenchment of social values for good leadership:

As in the military and the church, one does not get to lead in education without being well socialized to the norms, values, predispositions, and routines of the organization that one is leading.

The above excerpt is true of the Yorùbá. It is their belief that no one should aspire to leadership position if an individual or groups of individuals are not well socialised in the norms and the values of their environment. This submission is buttressed with a view that people are not likely able to conduct themselves within the frame of acceptable norms of the society when they are or have never been part of that society. For the emergence of leadership at local level, it is generally construed that there is the need for a level of native intelligence for whoever should be a leader, to enable such a leader harness the values of the people governed. One could then ask: what are the values of the Yorùbá people?

With reference to our quest in this paper, we shall be exploring the values of the people within their expected roles at the local government council in making life dwell-able for people at the grassroot vis-à-vis the issue of gender and justice. This is with a mindset of examining the leaders' competence and their readiness in accepting and rekindling the concept of *Ọmọlúàbí*, towards achieving the best practices sellable to the international world especially in these hue and cries of "Change" clamored for by most Nigerians. It is in this vein that we shall be

examining the concept of education and its relationship between governance based on Ọmọ́lúàbí concept with its four pillars as evident in the culture of the Yorùbá people. This paper is of the view that when our society respects and accepts that which we have with a conviction of redefining them properly within the acceptable frame of international best practices, the society is bound to develop better.

2. The Concept of Ọmọ́lúàbí as an Imitable Best Practice

Best practice is simply a term which expresses the idea that success is ensured at various human professions such as in the fields of healthcare, government administration, the education system, project management, hardware and software product development, and other fields. Best practice, therefore, is an ideology that speaks to using all the knowledge and technology at one's disposal to ensuring accomplishment.

The thrust of this paper is hinged on the concept of Ọmọ́lúàbí for its universality in application to the theme of a conference focused at a search for best practice. One may then ask, what are the qualities and significance of the Ọmọ́lúàbí concept? We shall explore some historical documentation of the Yorùbá people in order to x-ray the meaning, qualities and the expectations of Ọmọ́lúàbí especially in relation to local leadership.

As shared by Adéoyè (1979), and generally in the Yorùbá popular notion *orúkọ ọmọ ní ro ọmọ* (one's name informs his/her behaviour) is an essential tool to becoming a leader among the people. The belief system of the Yorùbá people is such that, it shares the notion that God remains the only personality whose good nature should be emulated. We can then say that the nomenclature, Ọmọ́lúàbí is derived from “Ọmọ-Olúwa -bí”, meaning, “the child that God begat”. Or if we allude to a name in the Holy Bible, with reference to the story about

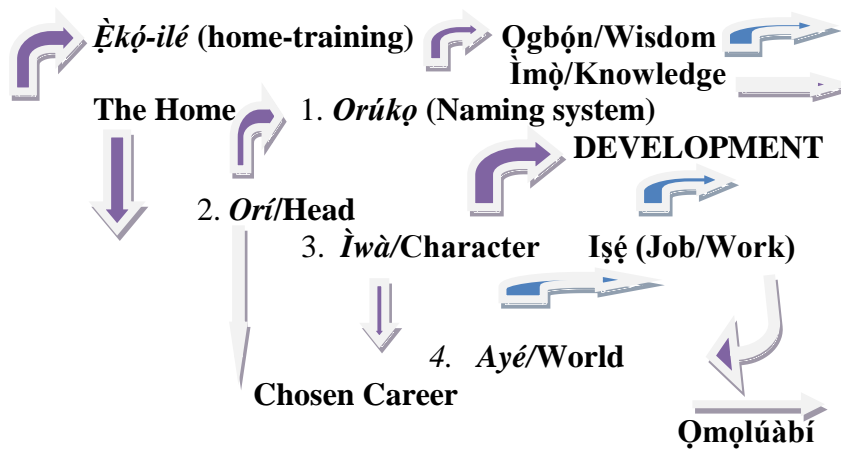
Noa- which then states that “Ọmọ-Olúwa -bí” means "child of someone with good character as in the Noa's case". Hence various interpretations to the names that people give to God as found in the lyrics of some artiste such as in Bùkólá Akinadé's, Eji Òwúrò's compositions; thus: *Olódùmarè*, *Onínú-ire*, *Aládé-àlàáfíà*, (see also Fálẹye, 2011) etc. Our understanding of Ọmọlúàbí's concept among the Yorùbá hinged on the four pillars that we shall be discussing below.

In our observation, the principle of naming is a phenomenon that has marked the Yorùbá people out as a set with unique culture. The principle creates a form of knowledge for people about their identity and valued norms. From childhood, it is expected that the *do's and don'ts*, of a society is well mastered. This notion aligns with the universal knowledge acquisition that ignorance is not pardoned in court of law. On another note, ignorance is considered as “*Òmùgò, baba ọbọ*” (mediocre, a father of all fools). So, through parental care and tutelage, it is expected that the first pillar of Ọmọlúàbí, called *Ogbón*(wisdom), which sits in the hub of “*orí*” (the head) accommodates that individual person receive proper training to enable a child acquire *ẹkọ-ilé* (home-training), which gives birth to many other opportunities in relating with other fellows in the community and beyond. Hence, it is through *ẹkọ-ilé* (home-training) acquired at the elementary age to tertiary level of education (be it formal or informal) within the society that an individual understands what knowledge to apply at various steps in future. This is in line with the view of Hunger (2014) who posits that knowledge is knowing what to say and wisdom is knowing when to say it.

Basically, the idea of retaining meaningful name patterns among the Yorùbá people, suggests a strong element for proper identity. Therefore, the Yorùbá people are identified by individual names, lineage names (Babalọlá, 2002), and above all,

characters earn people some other types of nomenclature which goes a long way in ones' life. It is imperative therefore, that since the society holds so much of importance to names and character for identity which propels and command a level of respect in the society, no leader can emerge without a track record of keeping a good name, good character and having the right knowledge of his/her society. This often informs the essence why the Yorùbá say: *Orúkọ rere sànjú wúrà òun fàdákà lẹ* (Good name is more valuable than silver and gold) to caution the wrong doings and excesses of their kinsmen. Therefore, such carefree impression of being indifferent to a nomenclature given to any personality in the indigenous Yorùbá society does not arise. It is often, the nature of an Omolúàbí to be cautious of such name(s) given to him/her by his or her parents, by friends as nick names and generally following his/her acclaimed character. The diagram below expatiates more on the links of the first pillar to the end and how revolving they are to each other.

Figure 1:



We must state that the above diagram is transformative, in that one affects the other. However, the entirety of the sub-sections as seen above rest on the oasis of the concept of Ọmọ́lúàbí.

The second pillar of Ọmọ́lúàbí from the diagram above and our analysis is based on the belief that one's knowledge could make or mar one's character. So, the knowledge acquired have always assisted each child in the society to protect his/her character, by being careful and dutiful in any chosen career, and to be obedient to the rules and regulations guiding the co-existence of people in any given community. This is where most folktales/folklores and traditional songs of the Yorùbá come to play vital roles in encouraging or warning children and adult inclusive of the dangers in being disobedient, or defiling ones society as a result of carelessness or lack of adequate knowledge. Therefore, the names, which give birth to character, or vice-versa, the acquired knowledge *ẹ̀kọ́-ilé* which improves *Ọgbón* (wisdom) in the seat of *orí* (head) which also affects *èrò* (thoughts), and these are two of the primary basic pillars holding that valued and virtues in Ọmọ́lúàbí in the society. The importance of wisdom as emanating from knowledge acquired subsists in the Yorùbá saying thus: "*Ọgbón la fi ñ gbélé ayé ẹni ní ọ̀rùn*" (Wisdom is required to live successfully).

The third pillar is therefore called "*Ìwà*" (Character). "*Ìwà*" is often interpreted to mean character/behaviour. There is a belief that if ones' behaviour is acceptable in any society, it is agreeable that such a personality would have positive traits towards achieving that which will make the society proud of him/her. This is why Májàsán (1967 & 1975), Awóníyì (1978) and Yòlọ̀yè (2009) succinctly submit that any educated member of the Yorùbá society whose educational background is premised on Ọmọ́lúàbí concept would promote such positive behaviours in the society. In fact, Yòlọ̀yè (2009) identifies some attributes of an Ọmọ́lúàbí as that which exist in:

... hospitality, avoidance of wickedness, trust and rectitude. Avoidance of stealing, kindness and generosity, avoidance of selfishness, chastity in sexual matters, straight-forwardness, avoidance of hypocrisy, honour and due respects to elders, parents and people in authority.

Character/*Ìwà*, as the third pillar to the concept of *Omolúàbí*, is expected to guide and pave ways for fruitfulness in ones endeavours. This is why an average Yorùbá man would echo: “*ìwàlẹ̀wà ọmọ eniyàn*” or “*ìwà ọmọ ló n mú ọmọ jẹ òkígbe*”/literarily meaning that “character is human's beauty” or “character makes or mar one in life”. The indication is that where knowledge is lost, wisdom is somehow affected and character or behaviour becomes assassinated. The pillars are so intertwining in nature.

The last pillar is *ayé* “the world”. As explicates in one of the poems of Ògúnṣínà (2006), the world is a complex setting - *Ayé ibi àiyéni*- a world that is incomprehensible by the people that dwells in it. As believed that character begat all good things towards achieving that which are impossible within this complex world: *Ayé*, therefore, for an individual to exist within this very complex setting of the world called *Ayé* “the world”, the Yorùbá people belief that one’s *Orí* “the Head” which houses *Ogbón* and *ìmò* “knowledge”, is the one very important at taking good/bad decisions, (also, sometimes *Orí* connotes the creator/*Ẹlédàá*) and it has to be at work all the time for survival and achievement. This is so, in that, when an individual is deciding on what *iṣẹ*/work to choose, the *orí* helps here. It is essentially believed among the Yorùbá people therefore that before an *Omolúàbí*’s *Ẹlédàá* resumes work, the personality involved, must strive to desist from all forms of negative attitudes. That means, an *Omolúàbí* must be skillful, dutiful, honest, be law-abiding and

fair in his/her dealings with others in the society and in particular on the *iṣẹ́*/work that he/she has chosen.

3. Essentials of Choosing and Maintaining a Career

Despite the fact that an average Yorùbá person, would have been made to know that the world is such a complex stage from childhood, it is expected that leaders should be ready to face challenges to survive the various manifestations of the complexity of *ayé* 'the world' when he or she attains the leadership age. This attitude is the fourth pillar that holds the concept of *Ọmọ́lúàbí* as best candor to emulate, universally, when getting ready to choose a profession in life. The underlying point here, is that, the Yorùbá people, make sure that their wards are properly exposed and trained to become useful to themselves, to the society and to the nation with a mindset that one must live by choosing a particular profession that would be able to cater for ones needs, as well as giving back what is commensurate to what that job offers. This is why it is often echoed thus: To whom much is given, much is expected. This is why most of the traditional occupational skills are in fact located in the arm and hand like farming, hunting, dyeing, cooking, building, smiting, carving, weaving, etc. This is not to say that we are against other nature of profession that people get involved in, in this century such as teaching, and all other various profession of the white collar job. But majority of the job in Yorùbáland and as history informs, is that most leaders in the very indigenous settings do have one type of vocation apart from politics as a profession.

Our point is evident in the oral and written account of history of the past leaders of Nigeria for instance. History revealed that some African leaders were into buying and selling, carving, designing, rearing, and farming; etc. Good examples of such leaders that readily come to mind are: Madam Tinúbú, Pa

Ọbáfẹmi Awólówò, Pa Adékúnlé Ajásin, General Olúşégun Ọbásanjó, and even the incumbent President (General) Muhammadu Buhari and many others. In essence, skill and competence on the chosen job is also respected as right virtues contributing to one becoming an Omolúàbí. This appears to be what informed the most popular poems penned by two great Nigerian poets; Joseph Fọláhànmí Ọdúnjọ and Adébayọ Fálétí. One of the poems of Joseph Fọláhàn Ọdúnjọ (1978:1) *in poem (1)* reads:

1.

Işẹ ẹni, ni işẹ ẹni,	Your job/occupation is your job/occupation,
Tẹpá mọ işẹ rẹ ọré mi,	Be diligent at work my friend
Işẹ ló n sọni di ẹni gíga	Your work makes you an important personality
Bí a kò bá rẹni gbékẹ lé	When there is no one to rely on
Bí a kò bá rẹni fẹyìn ti	When there is no one to offer the needed support
Bí ọlẹ là n rí	One appears like an indolent
Bí a kò bá rẹni gbékẹ lé	When there is no one to rely on
A tẹra mọşẹ ẹni	that's when to work harder
Apá lará	the arm is the kindren

Èjìká niyekan ...	the shoulder is the marternal family member ...
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Similarly, *in poem 2* below: Adébáyò Fálétí reinforces the need not to be ashamed of one's occupation :

2.	
Mọ tìjú iṣẹ rẹ	Don't be ashamed of your occupation
Iṣẹ ẹni, ni iṣẹ ẹni,	One's occupation is one's occupation
Mọ tìjú iṣẹ rẹ	Don't be ashamed of your occupation
Ikán kì í tìjú à ń mọlé	The termite is never ashamed of building
Èèrà kì í tìjú à ń yènà	The ant is never ashamed of paving ways
Alágbààmù kì í...	The agama-lizard is never
tìjú à ń tọ ògiri.	ashamed of treading the wall in public
Mọ tìjú iṣẹ rẹ ...	Don't be ashamed of your occupation ...

The two poems as observed are highly topical and philosophical. While the poets are encouraging individuals and collective beings to sit up and be thoughtful of their chosen career, the poets also exemplify from the lower animals that are not relent in carrying out their duties as expected to the applause of all. The inference from the poems is that the Yorùbá people condone no laziness, and once a career is identified, a proactive yielding

result from the chosen profession to make one proud is expected of that individual or collective group. This is also why other traditional performers among the people would painstakingly create with words, full of imagery to disabuse the minds of youths who tends to be lazy. Such creative expression for the purpose discussed is found in the poem 3 below thus:

3.
Òlẹ̀ nàpòin-napòin!
Òlẹ̀ afàjò!
Òlẹ̀ kòráyẹ wá
Èní bí òlẹ̀ lómọ
Kò rómọ bí o ...

What an indolent fellow!
The sluggish indolent one!
The indolent is an unfortunate being
The one who begat the indolent
Is, alas, an unfortunate parent ...

The above excerpt is also to discourage laziness and other acts of negative characters that anyone in the society may want to imbibe. In essence, a growing adult understands the essence of choosing a good career, to survive and to become an important personality in his/her society and beyond. So, without the presence of the four pillars in ones' life and perfect grasp for understanding, becoming a leader at the grassroots, even to the federal level is a waste to the society and to the international world.

While it is expected that an Omolúàbí gets a dynamic, lucrative job to make end means, it is also expected that such person does the work with all sense of honesty and commitment. This is why statement such as *Òtító ní í gbéni lékè*

ìṣòro is often said to inform that there may be challenges at any chosen career, but also, such sentential utterances encourages an *Ọmọ́lúàbí* that even when challenges and oppositions come ones way, there is a force powerful enough to exonerate one. The application of *Ọgbón* “wisdom” which is situated in the hub of the *orí* “head” is all that an *Ọmọ́lúàbí* needs to survive the odds.

Finally, a chosen *ìṣẹ́* “work” must be jealously guided as an *Ọmọ́lúàbí* while relating with others who may pose difficult as deviants in any complex *ayé* “world or society”. Therefore, the significance of being an *Ọmọ́lúàbí* is to be able to shape other lives within the acceptable and emulative nature bearing in mind the four pillars that reinforces the concept. All these are the best practices rooted in the culture of the Yorùbá people.

4. Synergizing *Ọmọ́lúàbí* Concept and Leadership Demands

History is the school of wisdom. As earlier stated, history informs us that among the Yorùbá people of the very indigenous settings, serious consideration of certain issues comes to mind before one can emerge, or be nominated as a leader. One has to be an *Ọmọ́lúàbí* personified. Leadership to the Yorùbá nation is the ability to understand and cope with the complexities of the *ayé* “the world”, which is a very strong pillar to the acceptable best practice situated in the concept of *Ọmọ́lúàbí*. Since no one lives in isolation, the grass root leaders and the led must be able to relate symbiotically for the benefit of each other.

It is a phenomenon among the people that as complex as the world is, leaders must not forget the rules of co-existence and complementarities of existence to which they must adhere for justice to prevail. For instance, from the celestial point of view, it is opined that the daylight is meant for the ordinary people i.e. *Ènìyàn* the benevolent, while the deep midnight and most sunning daylight periods are, and should be reserved for the

Eníyán the malevolent; although, we share in the view that supernatural beings belonging to the noon and night exists. Further explanations are provided in one of the *Eṣẹ-Ifá, Odù Ọ̀wọ̀rínsogbè* corpus (Eḷẹ̀bùú-Ìbọ̀n 2008:17). Should any *Ènìyàn* 'the benevolent' take to neglecting the norms of referencing certain ungodly period for the *Eníyán* 'the malevolent', the usual repercussion is often not affable and it is usually frowned at, hence the saying, *igbọ̀ràn sà̀n ju ẹ̀bọ̀ rírú lọ̀* 'obedience is better than sacrifice', summaries our submission on the need to review roles and significance of Ọmọ́lúàbí in leadership as a perspective through which the society should begin to redefine governance at the grassroots. For the support of a global quest for positive and proactive leadership at local levels, the excerpt in (4) culled from Fálẹ̀yẹ (2010) expresses the need and the value of the Ọmọ́lúàbí concept adopted for our analysis in this paper.

Náání, nààní, náání,
Ohun tá a ní làá náání,
Ọmọ aṣẹgítà ní í náání è̀̀po o igi
Ọmọ ọ̀ḍẹ ní í náání apó
Ọmọ onílùní í náání kọ̀ngó/ọ̀pá-ìlù
Ọmọ́lúàbí è̀nìyàn ní í náání àti to ilú rẹ̀...

Audio CD: Fálẹ̀yẹ (2010)

Value, value, value
What we have, we value
The child of a plank seller values the worth of the
plant cover
The child of a hunter values its pouch
The child of a drummer values the drumming
stick

An Omolúábí values the purpose of building
his/her environment/society ...

Audio CD: Fáléye (2010)

Leaders must value the led and be committed to giving the best to the people that are so close to them in the community, and inclusive of people who are ordinary members of the society without any political bias.

In the same vein, it should be reminded that, the Yorùbá saying thus: *Ogbónkógbón máa n ba iwà rere jẹ* 'Negative wisdom pollutes good character' and another that: *Agùntàn tó bá bá ajá rìn, dandan ni kó jẹ ìgbé* meaning 'sheep that moves in the company of dog will definitely at feaces'. Leaders who believe in taking undue advantage of the led are not fit to be elected into office(s). A review of the local government setting in Nigeria would be necessary here before further analysis and recommendations.

5. The Local Government Setting in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the structure of governance is such that the three tiers strata of governance are the Federal, State and Local Government. Researches to date also show that there are 774 local government areas in Nigeria while agitation for more is recurrent. These local governments are being managed by a crop of leaders that are referred to as the Local Government Council consisting of a chairman; who is usually the Chief Executive officer. The other members of the council are referred to as Councilors, and they are usually the ones in charge of the four arms of the local government units. The Chairman, as the most senior and executive officer in the setting, emerges by election while the other four members heading other various units are either by nomination or also by election. Because, the 774 Local

Governments Councils in Nigeria are at the closest level of contact with the people of the nation, there is a bye-law in print, which spells out the limitations and powers of the Council in harnessing their roles to the Federal level, through the State and to the people in their constituency. For instance, the bye-laws accommodate the following four sub-sections:

1. Works, Planning and Survey (rural development: building roads)
2. Health Unit (Health service provision)
3. Education Unit (supervision of tutors and payment of teachers' salaries, etc.).
4. Agricultural Unit (provision of subsidized fertilizers, tractors etc. for farmers)

As indicated in the constitution of the State, the local government is detailed to be responsible for the followings, among others:

- ✓ Economic recommendations to the State;
- ✓ Collection of taxes and fees;
- ✓ Establishment and maintenance of cemeteries, burial grounds and homes for the destitute or infirm;
- ✓ Licensing of bicycles, trucks (other than mechanically propelled trucks), canoes, wheel barrows and carts;
- ✓ Establishment, maintenance and regulation of markets, motor parks and public conveniences;
- ✓ Construction and maintenance of roads, streets, drains and other public highways, parks, and open spaces;
- ✓ Naming of roads and streets and numbering of houses;
- ✓ Provision and maintenance of public transportation and refuse disposal;
- ✓ Registration of births, deaths and marriages;

- ✓ Assessment of privately owned houses or tenements for the purpose of levying such rates as may be prescribed by the House of Assembly of a State;
- ✓ Control and regulation of out-door advertising, movement and keeping of pets of all descriptions, shops and kiosks, restaurants and other places for sale of food to the public, and laundries.

No doubt, if the officers at the local government level are given free-hand with adequate monitoring to work contentiously, they should be able to generate income for their constituencies, improve the lots of their environment etc; Also, if the appointed officers at all the times robe in the garment of *Ọmọlúàbí*, their importance would be felt and positive results experienced by the community. Most roads are blocked carelessly for lack of proper monitoring and uncaring attitude of their leaders without any check and balance. However, in most cases, the rules as listed above are just their in paper, without leaders and followers to execute them for the benefit of the masses.

5.1. Why the Local Government Councils are Not Meeting Constituency's Needs

We must put it on record that except in few local government council areas in Nigeria, where sanity have been put in place in the nation, majority of the governed (masses) are still suffering as the impacts of the Local Government Councils and the dictates of the law are not felt by their immediate constituencies. Following the properly laid down guides to enable functionality of the local government council in Nigeria, one would expect that there are good foci/focuses in actualizing the needs of the people that are so close to the council. However, the opposite is the case. Our view is that various factors are responsible for the

observed lapses. The foremost of all, and which keep recurring in other areas of life of the leaders and the led is the abandonment of the concept of Ọmọ́lúàbí in the administration of governance in Nigeria which has given room for the display of under-development at that level of government. This paper highlights some of these areas that need urgent attention especially in the current dispensation to actually have real structural change required at the grassroots and generally in uplifting Nigeria as a nation. These are:

The choice of leadership is no more based on the criteria for selection as it was in the indigenous setting whereby whoever emerges as leader would be based on integrity, honesty informed by background of the imbibed nomenclature pattern and character of Yorùbá society. The Yorùbá people do not get crazy about money in the choice of their leaders. A leader's source of wealth is in fact, often critically investigated before encomiums can be passed on such an individual or the family. Most leaders now, even when claimed that they have openly declared their assets, are not truthful. The wave now is giving priority first to money, affluence, god-fatherism and people prefer to choose the richest on the platform of party-nominations. As good as this may be, caution should be applied to tracking the records of people before re-election into office.

In fact, some elected leaders get to the top and forget that the people who vote them into office would have to be compensated through being truthful and accountable to the allocations remitted to their local government for the purpose of providing required amenities such as linking roads, hospitals, markets, water and other essential needs of the masses. That is why most of the *trunk C* roads are not properly tarred, schools are yearning for competent teachers and markets are begging for attention. How do such leaders leave in peace? In our own opinion, without necessarily cursing any leader who rules and

do not consider the well-being of the masses, should consider that the ayé 'world' would remain uninteresting and ungovernable for such a leader. Bearing in mind, the saying thus: *Bí eégún bá mò pé òun yóó padà di èniyàn, iwòn ló yẹ kó rorò mọ* 'Should the impersonating man thought of the ephemerality of his role-play as a masquerade, he would have been elastic at his act of wickedness'. This proverb should be a template to remind all leaders that one day, the tenure of their position would come to an end, which in effect should be a template towards making the leader work as an *Ọmọ́lúàbí* that is equally accountable in the end to the masses and to the creator who made him.

We are of the view that most leaders should learn from past leaders who eventually live an uncomfortable life after governance. This view is buttressed by several attacks on leaders as recorded by dailies in Nigeria. The notion which gives birth to such statement: *kaka kéku má jẹ sèsé, a fi sàwàdànù* 'destructive tendencies in people' becomes the order of the day, when they assess the level of corruption which some leaders are involved in; forcefully acquiring wealth which should have been jointly utilized for the masses which voted them into power. This is not an attitude to practice if we all imbibe the concept of *Ọmọ́lúàbí*.

6. The Pros and Cons of Effect of Wrong Career and Governance

In the traditional setting, the youths are rather encouraged to channel their productive energy into farming, through *Ọwẹ/ààró* 'a source of collective assistance locally', such as building of community hospitals, roads and others. But the situation today is that the youths are wrongly influenced and employed as body-guards, assassigators, contrary to the concept of *Ọmọ́lúàbí*

handed over to the generations of our leaders. Why? It is indeed so disheartening. No wonder, many youths of today are only interested in being voted for as leaders with the mindset that they can be rich from politics even when they have nothing to offer to their community.

A couple of misappropriation of funds, mismanagement of people and misdirection that are found at the local government level have hindered development. This is because both the leaders and the led have abandoned one of the pillars of the concept of Ọmọ̀lúàbí which is the dignity of labour and hard work. Most workers at the local government level are not working with the zeal expected to improving their community, but they concentrate more on self-centeredness. Leaders are not living live that is commensurate to the development of their society. This is alien to the Ọmọ̀lúàbí concept. Where the leaders understand that the mandate given him/her by the society is not to steal, not to be self-centered and not to turn the position to a business venture where he makes personal money for his families, they would perform better and retain their seats peacefully, and be welcoming to the masses year-in and out. In other words, the concept of Ọmọ̀lúàbí is a cultural ideology of the Yorùbá people with its very broad elements; and it enables any individual among the Yorùbá to create what is known as the *ìkọ̀là àyà* or *Ifá àyà* meaning ‘conscience’ or ‘oracle of the heart’. It is opined that most of the crop of local government leaders and other employees of the level lack conscience. It is opined that most of the crops of local government leaders and other employees of the level lack conscience. This is why some women are so carefree to an extent that they discard their responsibilities of training their children and monitoring their units. They shy away from cautioning the leaders of their excesses, and they even dance at political rallies for stipends.

Let us remind ourselves of the important and key roles played by some Nigeria historical women like Mòrèmi of Òfà and Ilé-Ifẹ̀, who stood firm to overcome the traitors disturbing the peaceful settlement of Ifẹ̀. Another woman in history is the Iyoba Èdẹ of Uselu in Benin, the mother of King Eresonyen of Benin (1735-50), who successfully fought the rebellious chiefs and restored power and legitimacy to the Benin Monarchy, and Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti who led a revolt against misrule in Abẹ̀òkúta. Another important example is the Aba riot women of 1929, against excess tax levied on women. There are several other women that have touched lives and continued in their own little ways to affect lives positively, if we have not forgotten the late Dr. Dora Akunyili, among others in meaningfully politics of the nation. These are practical examples of women that should be in politics and should be emulated by the crop of leaders in recent age for better achievement and development of the nation.

We must create a selfless heart to work for the development of others. We are very supportive of the fact that women should be encouraged and empowered to participate in active and meaningful and transformational politics. But this can only happen when people make their leaders accountable right from the lower level of governance. As stated earlier, the *Ìkọ̀là àyà* along with the four pillars of *Ọ̀mọ̀lúàbí* concept are essentially required for social justice in our quest for a peaceful cohabitation and sustainable government; by both men and women of the nation. Each and everyone must be reminded that women in other climes are not passive; they are rather taking bold steps to make sure that their voices are heard productively. Examples can be drawn from Ghana, the Kumasi traders, Madam Koble Gulama of Kaiyamban (1992-2006) from Sierra Leone, who worked hard to promote the education of girls and to improve the lot of women as president of the federation of

women's organizations in Sierra Leone and many other cities of African continents. Nigerians should stop the idea of seeing Nigerian women in politics as an ideology that is out of context. All hands must be on deck to achieving the universal best practice through the entrenchment of Oṃolúàbí concept.

7. Conclusion

As enumerated in the core discussion of this paper, the local governments is expected to feel the pulse of the society that it manages and ensure that the national strategic development goals are met. This is simply because the local government council is the closest organ to the people. It is not expected that the council will be the one to undermine its people or otherwise by making life difficult for them. Agriculture and food security, health, education, infrastructure, housing and energy remain essential infrastructural needs that should be provided for the masses before acclaiming achievement of good governance at the lower arm of governance. Therefore, governance and development is about people. Every society develops by using their national skills in harnessing their God given human and natural resources. These resources will however remain untapped for the development of the society if the Oṃolúàbí concepts of honesty, integrity, hard work, selflessness and conscience are not properly integrated into the day-to-day activities of governance. In the constitution of the nation, a review to codify these concepts as some form of act, and enforce it should be actualized.

We have strongly recommended in this paper that the local government which is closer to the people should entrench this concept into their operational frame work. It is by so doing that third tier of government will be imbibing the international best practices for social justice and equitable distribution of resources. We conclude that for Nigeria to have an exportable

package for the international world, as the world sees Germany, Japan, America and other European countries capable of being emulated following some of their best principles that have form part of their practices, Nigeria as "the giant of Africa", also have an ideology best enough, to affect other citizens of the world towards a positive and universal advancement.

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