

MORAL EDUCATION: A VITAL INSTRUMENT FOR CURBING CORRUPTION IN TEACHER EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

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Abstract

Morality is an essential ingredient in Teacher Education because it is a missing link that is breeding corruption in the educational system. Moral education inculcates good character or proper conduct such as honesty, fidelity in one's duty, love and self discipline. Corruption is one of the pervasive evil that pose great challenge to Nigerians. This paper therefore examines the concept of moral education as a means of curbing corruption in the society. A number of recommendations are made which include the inclusion of moral education in schools and increment of teachers' salaries for motivation and commitment to duty.

Keywords: Moral Education, Corruption, Teacher Education and National Transformation.

Introduction

It is also a global problem with certain destructive tendencies, hence the need for entrenchment of morality to salvage the nation from decay because corruption is the act that makes one to change from moral to immoral standards of behaviour. Morality plays a vital role in the social lives of individuals and society at large. This is because it deals with values, behaviours and attitudes exhibited and encouraged by members of the society. Thus, moral education is essential for curbing corruption in teacher education for national transformation. A morally corrupt nation is in all ramifications handicapped in all aspects of human development. Morality is an integral part of societal development and progress. It is also the life wire of any

successful society. In fact, a society that is faced with the problem of corruption is not only being inactive but indeed sick. Morality enables the teacher to be conscious of his duty by imparting the right knowledge into the students at the right time without cheating them. The alarming rate of corruption in Nigerian has become a source of concern hence the need for the entrenchment of morality to salvage the nation from decay. According to Ohwovorione (2013), a desire for an effective moral order has become an issue of both serious and urgent concern to all rational minds in recent times. The concern for a sound moral status is occasioned by the alarming rate of decline in the moral consciousness among youths and adults in the Nigeria society. Morality plays a very critical role in the social lives of individuals and the nation at large. This is because it deals with values, behaviours and attitudes exhibited and encouraged by members of the society. Therefore, moral education is essential for curbing corruption in teacher education for national transformation.

Okorodudu (2004) opines that moral education means any activity or process geared towards helping the individual imbibe the societal norms or moral values in order for such an individual to become useful to himself, others and the society in general. Since teacher education is geared towards preparing potential teacher, it is imperative that salient moral virtues are inculcated in them to enable them eschew corruption and impart positively on the nation. The aim of this paper is to examine the concept of moral education as a means of curbing corruption in the Nigerian society.

The Concept of Moral Education

Moral education can be regarded as the process of guiding the characters and development of an individual in the society in order for him/her to be able to do what is right or just. According to Lawal (2002), Moral Education is a process to teach standards of right or wrong as well as their application to individual lives.

Agha (2003) states that morality is concerned with the field of human value or with the right, the good and the desirable in respect to conduct. It is a term used to refer to the goodness or badness of a human act, or good behaviour.

Masquid (1994) opines that Moral Education should be able to produce an individual who could manifest the following behavioural traits:

- a. A positive commitment towards the value of morality
- b. Ability to communicate with others
- c. The ability to understand feelings of others and those of his own
- d. The Concept of Teacher Education

e. Okafor (1998) views Teacher Education as that form of education which is properly planned and systematically tailored and applied for the cultivation of those who teach in primary, post primary and tertiary institutions. It also encompasses the preparation of administrators, supervisors as well as guidance and counselors. Nwana (2006) regards Teacher Education as that aspect of education which produces teachers through professional training.

f. Transformation is a complete change in outward appearance of something or somebody (Hornby, 2005). It also means the change of the moral character for better through the renewal of the inner-most nature, Pfeiffes (2005). Deming (1993) remarks that national transformation happens when people managing a system focus on creating a new future that has never existed, based on continual learning and new mindset and apply various methods for its actualization.

The Concept of Corruption

Corruption is a social phenomenon which manifests itself in various human actions such as dishonesty, selfishness, embezzlement, moral degeneration, bribery, insatiability, covetousness and others. Corruption is also the abuse of public office for private gain. Della (2003), states that corruption is to encourage someone with

power to behave in a dishonest, illegal or immoral way. Ugwu (2002) asserts that corruption is a behaviour which deviates from the normal duties of a public role because of private gain. This includes such behaviours as bribery, nepotism and misappropriation. Osoba (1998) defines corruption as the benefits contrary to legal and moral norms which undermine the authorities to improve the standard of living of the culprit. For example, the official messenger who falls among the lower cadre of any ministry will not be interested in fetching someone's file, without first expecting a tip or gratification.

Causes of Corruption

Corruption has thrived persistently in Nigeria for several reasons. Osakwe (2002) enumerated some of these reasons as excessive materialism, bureaucratic bottleneck, poor leadership and non-existence of social services. For the purpose of this work, five causes of corruption will be discussed, viz: materialism, poverty, poor leadership, poor attitude to work and poor remuneration.

1. **Materialism:** The desire to get rich quickly in the present day Nigeria has resulted in the quest for material wealth. The youths, teachers, policemen, administrators, traditional rulers and others are not left out of this menace. This was re-emphasized/amplified by Eze (2002) who observed that the urge for material acquisition is so alarming that those who have wealth become recognized in the society while the have-nots are abandoned to their fate. Hence, they resort to join the bandwagon.
2. **Poverty:** There is a general notion that poverty is one of the major causes of corruption in Nigeria. It is true that a great deal of poverty exists among Nigerians in almost every sphere of life. Only a handful of Nigerians can boast of three square meals a day and enjoy the basic necessities of life. Sequel to this, every one takes to corruption no matter one's own small capacity as a way of

balancing inequalities. Thus, this nefarious act rightly explains the moral degeneration of the society. Okorodudu (2004) posits that the poor people who also indulge in corrupt practices, do so, not only to acquire the basic needs for economic survival but they too want to break the yoke of poverty and get rich like their counterparts in the society.

3. **Poor Attitude to Work:** Moral decadence in the Nigeria society has led to poor attitude to work by Nigerian citizens. Most of the workers in public service are highly unpatriotic. They come late to office and handle their duties with levity. Akunyili (2013) remarks that many people who have been privileged to get job are not willing to work. The situation is so bad that some persons who ordinarily would have loved to establish small scale industries and provide employment for the jobless youths are discouraged due to poor attitude to work. In her view, bad attitude to work and stealing work time by some employees is the order of the day especially in the public sector.
4. **Poor leadership:** Another agonizing issue of Nigeria that has given license to corruption is the problem of ineffective leadership. The dilemma of greed for money, power and glory has made some leaders to wreck havoc on the people and the society. In fact, the act of corruption is rampant with the educated and the rich who capitalize on their position to create fear and insecurity among the less privileged people thereby exposing them to all kinds of temptations leading to corruption and other vices. Thus, Omorogbe (1993) laments that injustice in any society results when "the equals are treated unequally and the unequal are treated equally".
5. **Poor Remuneration:** Nigerian workers especially the teachers are paid very meager salaries which are inadequate to cater for their numerous needs. In the bid to meet up, they take to corrupt practices. For instance, a teacher who ought

to be a role model accepts bribe from students for aiding and abetting examination malpractices, extort money from students for marks racketing and indulge in other dubious acts. The result is that the would-be-teachers emulate such acts and transfer same to the wider society thereby making corruption a national malady. According to Ugwu (2002), the level of corruption in our educational institutions has reached unprecedented heights. The teacher, instructor and professor come late to office as he has to engage in other business in order to keep "a float" before his official assignments. He further observed that salaries and other allowances are unnecessarily delayed or at times denied. It is therefore not surprising that corruption is rampant in the educational institutions and the entire nation.

Effects of Corruption

Corruption has become a common phenomenon among Nigerians to the extent that, it has sent a wrong signal to people that honesty, hardwork and obedience to constituted authority are no more cherished. In foreign countries like United State of America (USA) and United Kingdom (UK). Corruption is an ugly scar that has made Nigerians suspicious and vulnerable to arrest because of their dubious character. Based on this fact, Odey (2001) opines that in the present day Nigeria, corruption has become a structural sin, so contagious that it hardly leaves anybody without a smear. Since the country was justifiably stigmatized as a den of corruption, all Nigerians, both the guilty and the innocent, have been paying very dearly for it.

In addition, it scares foreign investors from investing in Nigeria because of the fear of fraudsters (419) who could dupe them of their hard earned income. This has thus affected the economy of the nation to remain stagnant and thereby widening the gap between the rich and the poor. Poor attitude to work and fraudulent acts have discouraged those that would have established small scale industries from doing so to avoid financial loss. It also causes a reduction in the quality of goods and services.

For instance, a company could bribe its way through in order to increase profit margins at the expense of the consumers.

Corruption has also contributed to mass unemployment in the Nigerian society. This is due to the insensitivity of the leaders who siphon the nation's wealth rather than establish companies that will absorb the teeming unemployed youth. Buttressing this fact, Eze (2003) asserts that young Nigerians keep roaming the streets without jobs while the pot-bellied politicians keep acquiring and siphoning the wealth of the country at the expense of their fellow Nigerians. Moreover, corruption increases the problems of National integration in Nigeria. The disadvantaged ethnic groups who are marginalized feel emotionally and psychologically bruised.

The Way Forward

Nigeria's image has been marred due to corruption which has become rampant in the society. It has become a way of life which is exhibited in various ways by Nigerians. Hence, it should be eradicated through reorientation which will bring about national transformation. To achieve this, moral education should be entrenched in teacher education. Morality is an integral part of societal development and progress. Therefore, a morally corrupt nation is in all ramifications handicapped in all aspects of human development.

Omorogbe (1993) asserts that the moral sickness of a society is the moral sickness of the individual members of the society and the cure has to start from the individual members. Certainly, morality is the life wire of any successful society. Thus, a society that is faced with the problem of corruption is not only being inactive but indeed sick. It is against this background that the school system should renew its efforts in handling moral regeneration with all sense of commitment.

Moral education exposes students to the norms, customs, values, skills and interrelationship that exist in the society, making social awareness possible when students are rightly directed and guided. Okwueze (2003) opines that morality

can also be seen as a form of social consciousness in which one relates to another in the society. The development of morality in any society is an attempt to map out life pattern to be followed. Indeed a transformation in teacher education is the transformation of the entire society. This is because education is a moral endeavour in which the role of the teachers is to create a just and caring environment. For teachers to help develop their students' moral capacities; they themselves must possess the knowledge, desire, skills, fortitude and moral competence to do so. Moral education can contribute to the transformation that the present government and the people of Nigeria desperately desire because it fosters love, nobility, high ideals, responsibility, consciousness, kindness and respect for others. More so, Moral Education produces transparent, accountable and honest people who shun corruption in public and private sectors. It also propels people to be committed to their duties.

If the character of students in Teacher Education is transformed, they will impact positively in the nation. A morally conscious individual thinks and acts better and is amenable to the dictates of conscience. Adewole (1990) says that an individual who increases consciousness of himself as a person with the awareness of the needs, problems and aspiration of others is an agent of progress in this society. Individuals serve as mirror through which the moral state of the society can be determined. Moral Education makes a good citizen and creates in him the awareness of his rights and duties in the society. A transformed teacher education would produce emancipated individuals who can best further the interests of the people and are prepared to champion the collective will of the people.

Conclusion

From the discourse so far, it has been argued that corruption is a canker-worm eating deep into the fabrics of the Nigerian society. For effective national transformation, moral education should be accorded a prominent status in teacher

Okobin, Faith. N. Okafor Mary L. & Osajie, Justina N

education. The paper articulates the potentiality of moral education to play some roles in national transformation. Moral education helps in disciplining the mind, life and character of individuals including the youths. Every player in the education sector should therefore be available to promote the teaching of moral education. This is because when the society gives the people proper moral education, their minds will be fine-tuned to achieve national objectives.

Recommendation

The paper recommends that:

1. To teach good moral in the school, moral education should be included in the schools' curriculum. In addition, parents should live exemplary lives and also inculcate moral virtues in their children.
2. Moral education teachers should prepare adequately for their lessons and be good models to their students
3. Those who have corruptibly enriched themselves should not be given primary place of recognition and respect in the society
4. All employers in public and private sectors should pay their employees reasonable salaries and wages and should not continue to be exploitative as they had been in the past.
5. Honesty, faithfulness and hard work should be rewarded greatly in the society. All men of honest reports who profess practical fear of God should be encouraged to serve the nation in positions of higher responsibilities.
6. Schools should establish bible and koranic clubs which can serve as a good medium for religious and moral teaching
7. Government should lay more emphasis on moral education by making it a compulsory subject in nursery, primary and secondary schools and a General Study (GST) course in tertiary institutions.

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