

SPECIAL EDITION



AFRICAN JOURNAL
OF **STUDIES IN**
EDUCATION

VOL. 9, NO. 2, NOVEMBER 2013

ISSN: 0189 - 241 X

CURBING CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA FOR NATIONAL TRANSFORMATION: SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION AS A VERITABLE TOOL.

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Abstract

This article examined the roles of social studies education in curbing corruption in Nigeria for national transformation. This study is therefore aimed at exposing the nature, causes and effects of corruption in Nigeria and how social studies education could be a veritable tool for eradicating it. The nature, content and scope of social studies makes it a veritable tool for solving social problems like corruption. The subject is geared towards building individuals and thereby building the nation. Hence, it is opined that the enlightenment of every Nigerian citizen through social studies education, will help to widen their horizon and also make them to be well cultured and refined in their approach to life and national issues. The authors identified the need to teach social studies education at all levels of education. The paper concluded that with the efficient and effective implementation of social studies curriculum, our desire for national transformation through education will be a reality.

Introduction

Corruption has been identified as one of the greatest challenges in pursuing national transformation. It is a deviation from the set down moral standards to hold society together and these are trust, rectitude, honesty, discipline, right attitude to work, courage, national consciousness (Ighuwojah, 1998). The upsurge of corruption in Nigeria in recent times is disturbing. It seems the menace has defied all previous treatments and the damages it has done to the national life cannot be quantified.

According to Dike (2011), the menace of corruption leads to slow movement of files in offices, police extortion at toll gates slow traffics on the highways, port congestion, queues at passport offices and gas stations, ghost workers syndrome, election irregularities, among others. Even the handicapped and mad people on the streets recognize the havoc caused by corruption as funds allocated for their welfare disappear into the thin air.

The potentials of social studies education are yet to be fully exploited in our quest for a desirable socio-political and national transformation. Mezieobi (2012) clearly stated that cultural pluralism, disintegrative forces, social-cultural impediments, insecurity, apathy, political recklessness, sycophancy, ethnic rationality and loyalty, directionlessness and technological backwardness, political instability, socio-cultural, economic, educational distortions and food insecurity constitute the major draw backs of Nigeria. Corruption is the worst evil that is standing on Nigeria's path to viable national development. As asserted by Ekwonwa (1995) "Nigeria has the potential and must be directed against those factors that offset the living conditions of the people" in their quest for national transformation. This paper is therefore targeted at analyzing the roles of social studies in curbing corruption that is bedeviling the nation's efforts towards national transformation.

Nigeria is one of the richest and seventh most populous country in the world, blessed with a variety of mineral resources (especially petroleum products), agricultural products, good weather and climate, and near absence of natural disasters. All these factors have their advantages but also give rise to a number of problems in our national life. Social studies education is a basic necessity for any country's development and that it is tremendously beneficial in terms of the institutionalization and promotion of culturally inclusive behaviour, cross cultural understanding and a movement toward promoting a culture of peace and national development.

The necessity of access to education is echoed in the millennium development goals, whose aim is to ensure that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls alike will be able to complete a full course of primary school. The usefulness of social studies education necessitated its inclusion as a core subject in the programme.

Recently, some Judges of the appeal court were sanctioned by the national judicial commission for corrupt practices (Punch of 8th February, 2011). Corruption indeed is the bane of any nation. It is like cancer that contaminates all strata of the socio-political and economic structure of any society. All attempts to solve the problem of corruption in Nigeria have not yielded much fruit. Hence a problem-solving discipline like social studies education will be a veritable tool for eradicating corruption for national transformation.

Clarification of Concepts

The following concepts are clarified:

Education: The term, education, has no one universally accepted meaning. But we do know and agree that it is derived from the Latin word *educare*, meaning "to raise", "to bring up", "to teach". Hence, education is defined as a systematic training and instruction designed to transmit knowledge and develop skills in individuals. It is a process of changing the behaviour patterns of individual in the desired direction. Education is defined as a range of activities and experiences varying from formal teaching to the building of underlying understanding and knowledge. This implies that education is a life-long process, leading to bringing out the best in every human being". Education is a weapon for combating ignorance, poverty, disease, social vices etc, in our society (Peretomode, 2012).

Social Studies Education

Social studies specialists like Adaralegbe (1975), Osakwe (2005), Ukadike (2006) and Mezieobi (2012), have written extensively on the meaning of social studies. Although, presently, there is no definition of social studies that is universally acceptable or applicable, social studies is an inter-disciplinary subject, which cuts across several other disciplines or subjects particularly in the social sciences and the humanities.

Social studies can simply be defined as the study of man and his environment. It studies the reciprocal relationship between man and his environment. Hence, Adaralegbe (1975), described social studies as a study of how man influences and is, in turn influenced by his physical, social, political, religious, economic, psychological, cultural, scientific and technological environments. In their view, Osakwe and Itedjere (2005) stated that "social studies should be seen as a subject concerned primarily with the study of people, their environment, the society in which they live and the resultant interaction of these elements"

According to Ukadike (2006), in social studies, it is understood that man does not live alone. If his needs are to be met, man must live in society with other men. In interacting with his physical and social environment, man will continually encounter problems and in his efforts to make life more comfortable, and meaningful man has to continually find solution and clarification to those problems and issues.

National Transformation

According to the oxford advanced learners dictionary, transformation means a complete change in somebody or something. National transformation describes changes, growth and evolution that is concerned with the transformation of the traditional fabrics of the societal ethics and norms for national unity and development.

The Nature of Corruption in Nigeria

Corruption has been defined by many social scientists and institutions. The most relevant definitions to this paper are those given by the following:

The World Bank (2006) defined corruption as the abuse of public office for private gain. According to the World Bank, about 25 percent of procurement cost in Africa and other under developing countries are wasted on corruption, while the figure could be less than 10 percent in developed countries

Akindele (1995) defines corruption as any form of reciprocal behavior or transaction where both the power/office holder can respectively initiate the inducement of each other by some rewards, to grant (illegal) preferential treatment or favour against the principles and interest of specific organization (or public) within the society. Osoba (1996) defines corruption as benefits contrary to legal and moral norms, and which undermine the authorities, to improve the living conditions of the culprit(s). Dike (2011) observes that corruption is probably the main means of accumulating quick wealth in Nigeria. Corruption occurs in many forms, and it has contributed immensely to the poverty and misery of a large segment of the Nigerian population.

Obi and Obikeze (2006) described corruption as a situation whereby government officials and private economic agents allow personal interests to override considerations of public interest. Corruption has been so much practiced in Nigeria that it appears to be part of official policy in public and private transactions. It involves both the high and the low and covers all areas of the people's life. Radio and television stations, news-papers and magazines are awash with stories about corruption manifesting in cases of illegal acquisition of wealth through public office, misappropriation of public funds, profiteering, gratification and all manners of bribe (Akpochafo, 2010).

The following list contains the institutions perceived as the most corrupt. It is said to be culled from the Nigeria corruption survey study, final report (2003) by the Institute for Development Research, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Table 1.1: Public institutions perceived as corrupt in Nigeria, 2003.

Rating	Institution
1	Nigerian police
2	Political parties
3	National and State Assemblies
4	Traffic police and Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC)
5	Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN)

Source: Wikipedia, The Force Encyclopedia (2010)

Corruption makes nonsense of all people's transformation and development efforts, wastes national resources, promotes inequality, injustice and leads to under-development.

Causes of Corruption in Nigeria

A number of factors have been identified as being responsible for corruption in Nigeria. Some are discussed below:

First, there is the desire in many Nigerians to fulfill the cultural expectation of their people. A "successful person" apart from marrying and having children, ought to own a personal house, a car, indulge in flamboyant life style, carryout expensive burials, marriages and chieftaincy installation etc. Inability to do these may be regarded as failure or "having not arrived". It is even argued that the desire to achieve the above has led people into ritual murder and kidnapping.

Second, there is great inequality in the distribution of wealth in Nigerian society.

Too few own too much while too many own too little. Those who do not have much struggle to meet up with their responsibilities at home and in society. They struggle to provide the basic necessities of life like food, shelter, education, health care, etc. Added to this is the problem of the extended family that throws so much responsibility on the working Nigerian. To avoid failure or being ridiculed, the individual resorts to corruption as a way of helping himself to cope with responsibilities.

Third, some political office holders see politics as a quick means of acquiring wealth. This is why they indulge in electoral corruption which is expensive—they buy votes, prevent voting in some places, arm youths with weapons to intimidate opponents or even kill or maim, and all these cost money. As soon as they get into political positions, they plunder the office and amass wealth for themselves, more so, when there are little or no checks and balances.

Fourth, government also by its action or inaction creates room for corruption to take place. The supply of basic necessities of life is sometimes of low quality or irregular. Facilities like water, electricity, schools, hospitals, roads and so on are usually provided by government. The provision of these public utilities is either irregular or sub-standard. It therefore puts the responsibility on the worker to provide superior or alternative services to his family. Meanwhile, the worker is either on a low or irregular pay and, worse still, if he is a pensioner, widow/widower and the like. These situations push people to look for extra means of survival and when opportunity comes, they resort to corruption.

Fifth, it is also argued that the socio-economic system we practice contributes to corruption. We practice capitalism which is exploitative, materialistic, competitive, egoistic and full of greed. It is a game of "winner-takes-all". Under such an economic system as the one we practice, loyalty, integrity, honesty and job

satisfaction are ignored and people are more concerned about economic survival. This leads to plundering and embezzlement of public funds to take care of personal problems.

Effects of Corruption in Nigeria

Many studies have examined the evils or consequences of corruption and Dike (2005) had summarized or drawn conclusions as itemized below.

1. Corruption has taught the Nigerian a dangerous and wrong lesson that it does not pay to be honest, hardworking and law abiding.
2. It leads to loss of foreign aid as some foreign donors do not give aid to corrupt nations. For instance, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has withdrawn development support from some nations that are notoriously corrupt. The World Bank has introduced tougher anti-corruption standards into its lending policies to corrupt countries.
3. It is politically destabilizing as it leads to social revolution and military takeovers; Corruption was one of the reasons given for the 1966 and 1987 military coups in Nigeria.
4. Corruption causes a reduction in the quality of goods and services, a company could cut corners to increase profit margins.
5. It scares foreign investors since bribery and corruption, the culture of late payment, delays or refusal of payment for services already done do not make for a good business environment as cash flow is the life blood of any company. Investors now prefer Eastern Europe to Africa.
6. Corruption discourages honest efforts and valuable economic activities, breeds inefficiency and nepotism, information distortion as officials cook the books

7. The image of the country is tarnished and Nigerians, once outside Nigeria, are viewed with suspicion. Nigeria in 1996 was ranked by Transparency International as the most corrupt nation among 54 nations studied. In 1998, Nigeria was placed 81 out of 85 countries; in 2001 she was 90 out of 91; and in 2003, she was ranked 132 out of 133 countries.
8. Corruption upsets ethnic balance and increases problems of national integration in Nigeria. Those disadvantaged feel emotionally and psychologically bruised and the cry for one Nigeria becomes unappealing and unacceptable.
9. It destroys the legitimacy of a government. Many saw the Yar'Adua government coming into power through electoral corruption and were unwilling to accord it the recognition. He knew this and promised in his inaugural speech to effect electoral reforms.

The Role of Social Studies Education in Curbing Corruption in Nigeria Various attempts have been made to curb corruption in Nigeria, but have not yielded the desired result. The norms and values concerning acquisition of wealth should be re-examined. Social studies according to Mankinde (1979) is a "problem – solving programme" and is expected to help learners solve their societal problem. Nigerians need a new social orientation. From the primary school to tertiary levels, social studies through its core component of civic education and sub component of moral and ethical education can re-orient the people to walk through the path that leads from shame to fame. Social studies is geared towards building individuals and thereby building the nation (Osakwe & Itedjere, 2005). The world is constantly undergoing changes and social studies remains a veritable instrument for examining these changes, be they positive or negative. According to Osakwe (2009), social studies examine issues and problems from a holistic viewpoint. He further observes

that social studies education is an avenue for providing young people with a feeling of hope in the future and confidence in their ability to solve the social, political and environmental problems of individuals, their community, state or nation.

Social studies is known for the teaching of morals, honesty, values, norms, citizenship education, religious tolerance e.t.c. According to Ade (2002), social studies, if appreciated and well taught, is a school of morals for all men. It describes vices, it unmask false virtues, it exposes errors and prejudices. It shows by several examples that there is nothing great and laudable except honesty and uprightness. Thus, social studies provide a better ground for moral training especially in countries undergoing development like Nigeria. No society will thrive except its members behave in ways that will further development. Social studies also is an informative subject that has to do with development within a society. The information obtained through social studies education is usually current and up-to date. The information so gathered are expected to be used in fostering national transformation.

According to the FRN (2004) the philosophy and goal of Nigerian education for social studies is the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies, both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live and contribute to the development of the society (by fighting societal vices such as corruption). The aim of establishing social studies in the post primary institutions is therefore, to develop in the learner an appreciation of his cultural heritage and a desire to preserve it and not to destroy it with social vices (Edinyang & Usang, 2012). Briggs (1930) stated that education is a long-term investment by the state to make itself a better place in which to make a living". What this statement simply means is that education is an instrument of change and transformation not to lag behind in changing times and changing conditions. This is what social studies as a subject was established to achieved.

Social studies as a value laden subject have the capacity to build sound morals and integrity in all facets of the society. It serves as aid to changing the value system, the people and as a means of re-appraising undue obsession with materialism and primitive wealth accumulation which is the mania that is somehow responsible for corrupt practices in the society and which invariably thwarts national transformation. In addition to the above measures that social studies can help put in place to end to corruption in Nigeria. For national transformation, Mezieobi (2012) outlined the understated as ways social studies can bulldoze corruption that is impeding Nigeria's national transformation:

1. The study of social studies, particularly some of the new frontier areas i.e civil education and citizenship education, will expose its beneficiary to all socio-civic competence and effective citizenship such as inspiring feelings of patriotism, and these will make them socially distant from corruption and corruption induced practices, temptations, incentives and circumstances.
2. The study of social studies will inculcate worthy attitudes and habits (worthy character development) that will go a long way in eliminating corruption and instituting needed changes for national transformation.
3. The social content area of social studies curriculum debunks social maladies such as corruption.
4. Social studies education in its integrated holistic frame, as against the other subjects in their separate fragments, is in a better position to analyze the parameters of massive corruption in Nigeria, viewing it as an integral whole and equipping the learner with cognitive skills to proffer well thought out recommendations that will eradicate corruption and place national transformation on the right pedestal.

The various attempts to curb corruption in Nigeria (such as war Against indiscipline (WAI), Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), etc) have not yielded much fruit. But we can defeat this worst enemy (corruption) that has crippled our nation, reduced our citizens to paupers and deprived our nation of our dream for national transformation. I expressed optimism that social studies education, by virtue of its nature and content is able to bring about the desired change and national transformation because it places premium on corruption prevention, avoidance, resistance, non indulgence or abhorrence via right character and propelled self discipline as against coercive discipline of the anti-corruption efforts or commissions.

Summary and Conclusion

Our desire for national transformation will be achieved if Nigerians will understand and appreciate the usefulness of social studies education to the society. National transformation is fundamental prerequisite for the success and sustainable development of Nigeria as a nation. National transformation is possible, continuous and sustainable national transformation is also possible through quality social studies education. Social studies education is very concerned with national transformation and national unity. Infact, it will greatly contribute towards the realization of national transformation, if given a right place in our education programmes. Social studies education is a sure tool for curbing the tide of corruption in Nigeria to actualize our dream for national transformation all things being equal.

Recommendations

The paper recommends that social studies education curriculum should be efficiently and effectively implemented at all levels of our school system. Aspects of social studies should also be made compulsory for all students at all levels of education because of their roles in building the individual and the nation. Infact, the

teaching of social studies should be intensified in our schools.

There is need to re-orientate the generality of Nigerians towards a better value system. Nigerians require better attitudes and values in their relationship and workplace. For corruption to be unattractive, the norms and values concerning acquisition of wealth should be re-examined. Hard work, honesty, Integrity, moral uprightness should be rewarded while greed, selfishness, ethnicity, favoritism should be condemned.

The government should intensify her fight against corruption, injustice, indiscipline, tribalism through the anti-corruption agencies. The anti corruption agencies should be well financed to achieve optimum performance. On their part, the judiciary should stop treating charges of bribery and corruption as political issues, but should adhere strictly to the provision of the constitution

The Ministries of Education at all levels should organize seminars, workshops and refresher courses for social studies teachers, to improve and update their knowledge in the teaching of social studies.

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