

# **Curtailling Corruption in Nigeria: The Need for Political and Social Orientation through Social Education**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Values serve as standard for political and social interaction among members of a particular group of people. They are manifested in the attitude and behaviour of the people. This study discusses corruption and how it has eroded the core values in Nigeria. The aim is to suggest ways of curtailling the menace through social education. The causes of corruption such as crave for political power, pauperism, the desire to acquire material wealth among others were discussed. The study also x-rays the efficacy of the role of social education as a means of curbing corruption in Nigeria. The shortfall of the subject are identified to include the methodology or approach adopted in transmitting the right information to members of the society, the use of non-specialist among others. Against this backdrop, the ministry of education should ensure that only those who specialized in social studies should teach the subject at all level. Ethical issues should be emphasized during the teaching and learning process. Other members of society should undergo social education through well organised seminars and workshop, which should be transmitted in the language of the people for quick assimilation. Essentially, the teacher or instructor should see himself as a role-model.*

**Keywords:** *Corruption, Political and Social Orientation, Social Education.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

No man is sociable or in a relationship in isolation of others. So, it takes two or more people to be sociable. With this ideology in focus, it is therefore not debatable that in the cause of this relationship, consciously or unconsciously, one party or both will seek self-satisfaction first against that of another. Where this happens, corruption sets in. Having this notion in mind, the big question in

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context is who is not corrupt? Every person in society is a victim of corruption in one way or another. It is not when only money or property is involved that it is corruption. Corruption involves any selfish desire directed at cheating or gaining undue advantage of someone else whether in the workplace, church, mosque, social gathering, government business and family, among others. Therefore, corruption is a controversial, contemporary and obstreperous global phenomenon that have entrapped man in his economic, political, cultural and social milieu. Its effects on man's activities have been so devastating that man has vowed to deal with the menace across board. The world leaders in Anti-corruption summit held in London which was reported by Vanguard Newspaper of Friday 13, May, 2016 identifies corruption as the bane of world's numerous problems. This implies that corruption is not peculiar to one nation. It is ubiquitous. In other words, it has become a cancerous disease and synchronous discourse among nations, various societies and even household members. A precipitous look on daily newspapers would persuade you of the contemporaneous and efficacy of the menace in ruining and retarding economic growth of many countries of the world; especially the underdeveloped and developing countries. The consequences are always astronomical. For instance, unemployment, poverty, kidnapping, insurgencies among others are synonymous with corruption in most part of the world. Certainly, the magnitude of fraud, embezzlement and other forms of corruption appears to be on the increase. This assertion is obvious in Okobia (2015) who observes that corruption is a daily occurrence in most part of the world especially in Latin – America and Sub-Sahara Africa.

Igwe (2010) notes that corruption is one of the numerous contumacious social ills annihilating Africa. Nigeria is not an exception to this assertion. Otoja (2005) has noted that the pervasiveness of corruption in Nigeria since independence has done incalculable damage to the economy. There are also myriads of social problems which seem to have manifested from corruption. Boko-haram insurgency, Niger - Delta militants/Avengers, kidnapping, unemployment among others are symptoms of corruption. In the view of the researcher, it may not be an exaggeration to insinuate that almost every page of Nigerian Newspapers report corruption issues, taking into cognizance the magnitude in which the issue appears. Corruption issues are reported daily and they dominate the front page of most newspapers.

Consequently, the image of the country seems to have been shattered

as a result of the level and caliber of people who are always involved in the act. Integrity, honesty, transparency and other forms of African traditional values which are necessary for sustainable development have been supplanted by the quest for wealth. The enormity of corruption syndrome is so conspicuous that the former Prime Minister of Britain, David Cameron describes Nigeria alongside Afghanistan as a fantastically corrupt nation (Vanguard Wednesday 11, May, 2016). The incidence of corruption in Nigeria is so pronounced that most of the leaders have no fear to loot. Fund meant for development are sometimes diverted and siphoned to other countries by corrupt leaders. For instance, Vanguard of Tuesday 19, May, 2016, allegedly reported that N1.34 trillion was stolen by some Nigerian's prominent leaders between 2006 and 2013. This is money that could have been used for sustainable development. The sombre enormity of corruption in Nigeria therefore cannot be over-stressed.

However, various governments had made concerted efforts to curb the rot. But the measures have not yielded the desirable behaviour of the citizenry. For instance, the military government of Buhari/Idiagbor used War Against Indiscipline popularly known as (WAI), Obansanjo civilian government established economic and financial crimes commission (EFCC) and the independent corrupt practices which were used by the immediate past government and are also being used by the current leaders. Olaya (2015) observes that although both institutions have made mid-size achievements, they have been hindered by lack of political will to prosecute top gun politicians. He stresses further that most anti-corruption institutions and organs have become toothless bull-dogs that only bark without biting due to their involvement in corrupt practices. This implies that most of the law enforcement agents are also corrupt. The Nigerian society therefore appears to be ethically adrift. The need to sensitize the people to change their negative attitude and mindsets and embrace positive value therefore cannot be overemphasized. How can this be achieved? The focus of this study therefore is on how social education could be used to curtail corruption.

## **Conceptualizing Corruption**

The term corruption is etymologically extrapolated from a Latin word "corruptus" which means to break, spoil or destroy. This infers that corruption has the power to exterminate lives. This is perhaps one of the reasons why Tell Magazine

edition of August 31, 2015 describes corruption as a monster that should be immured. This description depicts its monstrous nature. Igwe (2010) describing the monster, analogizes it to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) which has the power of destroying inbuilt immune capacity of a body system. This analogy further delineates its monstrous nature. Vocabulary.com Dictionary (2016) defines corruption as dishonest action which has the prowess of destroying people's trust. Irikana and Awortu (2013), Olori (2015), Ethical alliance news (2016) conceptualizes corruption as dishonest or fraudulent conduct by people empowered with authority which prevalently involves pecuniary gains, bribery or gratification. Transparency International (2017) describes corruption as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. Aghulor (2015) perceives corruption as any act of dishonesty, illegality or immorality which manifests in the usage of power in ones possession to get an advantage for oneself. Wall (2014) citing Friedrich (1989) conceptualizes corruption as a type of behaviour which deviates from the norms. Wall's definition is apt in Nigeria situation. The ways of life of the people have been so distorted that corruption seems to be normal. Positive values have been relegated because of the quest for wealth. Most parents no longer play their roles of inculcating the right types of values and disciplinary role because of their busy schedules. The Nigerian child therefore seems to have been alienated from the core values of the society.

### **Causes of Corruption in Nigeria**

The following but not limited to these are causes of corruption in Nigeria:

- (i) ***Crave for political power:*** This is one of the major causes of corruption in Nigeria. Most political leaders have the tendency of retaining power. Elections in Nigeria are very expensive; to this end, many political leaders steal money meant for development for the purpose of contesting subsequent elections.
- (ii) ***Pauperism:*** Poverty level in Nigeria is very high. The astronomical incidence of poverty level in the mist of abundance has severally been linked to autoch-tho-nous corruption in Nigeria.
- (iii) ***Desire to acquire material wealth:*** Those who acquire wealth especially through corrupt means are highly esteemed in Nigeria. No one cares how you made it. Consequently, many Nigerians have no regard for their integrity when it comes to material wealth. Essentially,

most Nigeria leaders want to have property in all parts of the world. The tendency to siphon money therefore cannot be overemphasized. Ownership of most expensive buildings and other property in United Kingdom, United States of America and most developed world have severally been traced to Nigerians who looted their employers treasury.

- (iv) ***Ostentatious lifestyle of political office holders:*** It appears that Nigerian politicians earn the highest salary in the world. Most of them buy expensive cars, live in expensive environment such as Banana Island, Victoria Garden in Lagos and also send their children to abroad and very expensive private schools. Iyamu (2016) notes that the need to loot to be able to feed the new lifestyles has continued to fuel corruption in Nigeria.
- (v) ***Pressure from family and well-wishers:*** The tendency to meet family and friends responsibilities has also been linked to corruption in Nigeria.
- (vi) ***Culture of impunity:*** The culprits have always maneuvered their ways through courts and other means and this gives the impression that corruption is normal.
- (vii) ***Bad leadership and followership:*** Most leaders in Nigeria lack vision.

### **Consequences of Corruption**

- (i) Corruption scares foreign investors
- (ii) It retards economic growth
- (iii) It creates room for destruction of existing infrastructure by aggrieved youths. For instance, Niger Delta Militants/Avengers. Most offices are also burn down sometimes to cover-up fraud.
- (iv) It leads to military intrusion in the political democratic process; for instance, the 1966 Coup and some other military intrusions have been linked to corrupt politicians.
- (v) Corruption creates room for insecurity, dishonesty and destruction of public trust.
- (vi) It begets stagnation and destituteness for the less privilege
- (vii) It gives opportunity to mediocre to become leaders.
- (viii) It leads to policies summersault as most of the policies are distorted through padding.
- (ix) It leads to inflation
- (x) It heartened negative value system.

## Social Education Orientation

To have a good grasp of the society in which we live requires social education. Since corruption, a social vice is one of the behavioural patterns common among individuals especially in modern society; it requires a platform of social orientation to address. This platform is what is termed in this study as social education. It is an education that penetrates deep into the behavioural root of a person with the aim of correcting some anomalies. For the purpose of this study, this term is used synonymously with social studies. Passing through social education orientation exposes an individual to the core value system that nurtures a person's conduct and behaviour in society. Orientation is putting in the right perspective and perception, the demands of a system. When such an individual is acclimatized with the values and principles of the environment or system, he stands a better chance of withstanding the ensuing storms that might subsequently arise in the environment. It must be noted that it is not the government or organization as an institution that gets corrupt but the parties constituting the institution. Attempts therefore, have to be made in order to address the dynamic nature of members comprising that institution. Hence, Social studies is a concept which encompasses other disciplines, especially the social sciences and the humanities. The concept integrates the ideas borrowed from other disciplines. In the view of Iyamu (2016), social studies or social education is a behavioural science, interdisciplinary, elective, value-based, and environment-sensitive and dynamics. What could be deduced from this definition are:

- (i) The concept is about human conduct.
- (ii) It has relationship with other disciplines
- (iii) The ideas, style and concepts are drawn from a broad range of sources. This also implies that the curriculum is flexible, extensive and it accommodates new knowledge and ideas
- (iv) It deals with the societal values which enable the learner acquire knowledge of decision making on why different people behave in certain ways
- (v) It begets opportunity for the learner to understand his environments and
- (vi) It is ever-changing with the environment. Man is the pivot on which the concept swirls.

Obebe (2005) conceptualizes social studies as the study of man and his physical and social environments, of the problems and issues disguised by

these interactions and the way by which man seeks solution and clarification to them. Ezegbe (2012) notes that man's environment affects his behaviour. He stresses further that man's occupation, activities, working periods, socio-economic relations, political behaviour and cultural traits could to a large extent regulate and determine the environment within which he dwells. This infers that man's problems are peculiar to his environment, and there is need for him to acquire skills that would help him solve these problems.

Consequently, Osakwe and Itejere (2005) describe social studies as problem-solving matter which deals with how man regulates his physical, social, political, religious, economic, psychological, cultural, scientific and technological environments to his comfort. Kissock (1981) defines social studies as a programme which a society uses to instill in its subjects the knowledge, skills, attitudes and actions it considered sacrosanct concerning the relationships human-beings have with one another, their world and themselves. The implication of this definition is that social studies has the efficacy of equipping the learner with coping strategy to survive in his environment. The subject assists the learner to acquire political skills, social skills, knowledge of the culture, norms and tradition, values, rules and regulations of the people.

### **Political and Social Orientation of Society**

Political and social orientation involves political education of the citizenry of a particular nation to enable them acquire the desired political culture. Ikelegbe (2005) notes that political culture determines acceptable moral behaviours and sanctions in a nation political process. Political culture therefore is hinged on political values such as loyalty, tolerance, ideologies, honesty, awareness, cooperation, self-discipline among others. These values are manifested in attitude and behaviour of the people. The process of transmitting the acceptable values to the learners therefore, is referred to as orientation.

### **Political and Social Orientation through Social Education**

Many scholars including Otoja (2005), Osakwe (2009), Salau (2013), Iyamu (2016) conceded that social education is a veritable instrument for curbing corruption. This is clearly evidenced in the teaching and learning processes. During this process, learners are engaged in activities that are capable of promoting the achievement of corruption free society. Social education like the rubber industry aids the learner to process the human – mind from its tabularasa

(raw mind) state to a well refined state. The mind appears to be raw because the culture of a particular group of people is not known to a child until he learns the way of the people. Thus, the child's fountain of information emanates from the environment in which he is born. Through the transmission of social education, members of the society are exposed to positive values such as honesty, hard work, co-operation, obedience, transparency, orderliness and sincerity, among others, which are necessary for character and nation building (Ogheneakoke, 2013). Accordingly, one of the major functions of social education is socialization process. Social education prepares the child to be responsible and a prospective member of the society.

The subject is also capable of producing people who are socio-civically suitable. Consequently, high caliber of leaders who have vision to move the country forward could be produced through teaching of the subject for sustainable democracy and development. Social education as an instrument also has the efficacy of imbuing into the learner knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, beliefs patterns of behaviour which are essential element of national integration. In other words, the spirit of national consciousness is inculcated into the youths through social education. Esu and Enu (2010) have also corroborated that social studies is an efficient and powerful tool for realizing the five cardinal goals of education. These goals as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (2014) include:

- i. A just and egalitarian society
- ii. A united, strong and self-reliant nation
- iii. A great and dynamic economy
- iv. A land bright and full of opportunities for all citizens

Achievement of the above educational objective requires a well-articulated and sound educational system that could lead to achievement of society free from corruption. This is exactly what social education is designed to achieve. However, most people have negative attitude towards the subject. Some Nigerians see social studies as duplication of the social science, while some others perceived it as Jack of all trade and master of none. Consequently, the subject is to some extent loosing popularity among the Nigerian youths.

### **Shortfalls of Social Education in the Nigerian Educational System**

- (i) *The methodology used for teaching the subject:* Ogheneakoke (2010) citing NTI (2007) advances reason why Nigerian youths have



not imbibed desirable and acceptable values through the teaching of social studies in our educational system. He maintains that the methods used in teaching the subject are inappropriate. They are inappropriate because the teaching of social studies requires activity approach and not passive which is the upshot of these methods used by most social studies teachers. He stresses that most social studies teachers are still teaching social studies with traditional methods. Ogheneakoke (2014) and Iyamu (2016) assert that most social studies teachers in Nigerian schools still maintain their aptness to the use of expository teaching method which is teacher-centre oriented and one of the traditional way of teaching the subject. The method emphasizes more of cognitive domain which requires memorization of facts. This perhaps is the reason why NTI (2007) emphasizes that the Nigerian youths have in-depth knowledge of social studies concept and facts but deficient in desirable values, attitudes and behaviour that characterize socially responsible citizens. Iyamu (2016) notes that the affective domain which is the main cynosure of the subject is always discarded by most social studies teachers in Nigerian schools. Consequently, the subject has not been able to realize it stipulated objectives.

- (ii) ***The use of non-specialist social studies teachers:*** It has been observed by the researcher that most of the teachers who teach social studies in Nigerian schools are not specialist in social studies. There is a general belief that everybody can teach social studies. This belief, according to Ogheneakoke (2014), is erroneous. This is because every subject has its peculiarities in its methodology; the teaching of social studies requires problem-solving approach which also needs some technical skills a teacher must possess. Thomas and Olugbenga (2012) opine that teachers with professional training background in a particular subject demonstrate in-depth knowledge in the subject than non-specialist. In other words, social studies teachers who have training background seem to be more competent. Against this background, the subject seems to be incapacitated in achieving its goals.
- (iii) ***The teacher:*** The teacher has a crucial role to play in the moral upbringing of the child. The teacher is seen as the surrogate of the

parents. What the child could not acquire morally from home, he/she makes it up from the school. The teacher's behaviour therefore is a strong determinant of acquisition of right types of values. The teacher is a model through which the child learns most of the values of the society. Sadly, it seems most Nigerian teachers are deficient in desirable and acceptable moral values.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study discusses corruption and how it has eroded our core values. The causes and consequences of corruption were x-rayed. The work pointed out the role of social education in curbing the corruption menace. The shortfalls of the subject in actualizing its goals were as well discussed. Consequently, it is recommended that:

- i. Ethical issues should be strongly emphasized among members of a given society.
- ii. Corruption of any dimension does more harm to the society than good, therefore, one of the basic core values of considering others to be important should equally be emphasized among members of society.
- iii. As corruption is a social vice, social education is the right tool that is capable of handling successfully the problem of the menace in society.
- iv. Every institution or organization in Nigeria should incorporate curtailing corruption as a concept in public enlightenment for political and social orientation.

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