

Nigerian Education and its Commitment to Building a Corruption Free Society

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Abstract

Corruption as a term has been so negated nationally and internationally and been widely addressed as a cancer; “Cancer of Corruption”. The solution to it like scholars have rightly suggested lies in a concerted effort by all nationally and internationally. Indeed, it is an effort to eradicate corruption in Nigeria that called for the establishment of the Nigeria’s Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Act, 2004, so as to fit into the all-important United Nations Convention Against Corruption that has in recent times stood as a reference point for the anti-corruption fight world-wide. Indeed, corruption has continued to be recognized as a socio-moral bane globally. The reason is that it retards the progress of any society that allows its free play. It is on this ground that makes the study very relevance. An effective educational process ought to play a key role in the elimination of corruption in any given society due to its position in imparting knowledge and creating awareness among its citizens. An effective educational process transforms the lives of individuals; making them abhor what is evil and embracing what is worthwhile. Many have considered the Nigerian Education System as being far below what it ought to be, hence its ability to stand against corruption becomes a mirage.

Keywords: Education, Commitment, Building, Corruption, Free Society, Nigerian.

INTRODUCTION

The role of education in building an ideal society where everyone will live and contribute meaningfully to its development cannot be over-emphasized. It is generally believed that no one society can grow more than its educational height (level). Plato in his educational theory sees it as the panacea to emancipate the individual from the fetters of darkness to the world of light in his popular ‘Allegory of the Cave’. And in his book the ‘Republic’, Plato emphasized that a good education when used by the rulers shapes the human nature to the right direction which in turn produces a harmonious society.

The assertion can be deemed to be right when education of every member of the society shapes their behaviours to the right attitude of life; making them to abhor that which is wrong (immoral) and embracing what is ‘worth-while’ and of moral value. Amaele (2010, p. 115) revealed that; “any educational system which perhaps by omission or commission fails to produce morally upright citizens may be faulty and, therefore, requires very serious attention”. To Peters (1966), for one to have undergone the process of education simply

means that something worth-while is being or has been intentionally transmitted in a morally acceptable manner to him. Hence he argued that, “it would be a logical contradiction to say that a man had been educated but that he had in no way changed for the better” (1966, p. 25).

A good education as observed from the fore-going strips the individual of all “immoral acts garments” that had been on him and cladding him with that which makes him a moral and useful citizen, making him to contribute his quota to the development of the society which he belongs to. In achieving this, such societal vices as corruption, addiction to wrong behaviour etc. will cease to exist in any one society. In Nigeria for instance, when proper measure is put in place to enhance our education system, we are bound to achieve a corruption free society. For a good education they say is the strongest weapon that can guarantee a society free from corruption, and institute a state where the individuals will live uprightly. To this end, Abernethy revealed that; “Nation builders in the new states base much of their faith in education on the belief that it will be a horizontal integrator” (1969, p. 9). Consequently, if Nigeria as a nation can fortify our education system to head towards achieving its set objectives then building a corruption free society is destination at sight.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

Education

Many scholars have considered education as the key that unlocks the gates of modernization. They see it as the light that beams in the dark, making the inhabitants of such dark world to see clearly. Education brings the individuals to the state of awareness deterring from immoral acts. It is based on this that people of unquestionable character are described as educated people. It is of this truth that Ilueme and Kpokpo in Ibekwe (2017, p. 31) insist that “education is a total aggregate of all the processes by which an individual develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviours which are of positive value in the society”. The result of education or an educated person should be seen in his good behaviour and hatred for immoral acts. It is in line with this that Peters in Uduigwomen and Ogbinaka insists that “education must involve knowledge and understanding” and “such that the knowledge is not inert in that it characterizes a person’s way of looking at things and he is committed to the positive use of that knowledge”. (2009, p. 5). In fact it will be an anathema for us to say that an individual is educated yet he exhibits a questionable character. It is this view that Akinpelu describes an educated man as “one who combines expertise in some specific economic skills with soundness of character and wisdom in judgement” (1981, p. 178). It is expected that the experience received by such an educated individual should be able to make him eschew what is evil or not acceptable by the society. Affirming this assertion, Woodrow in Akinpelu (1981) established that:

The educated man is to be discovered by his point of view, by the temper of his mind, by his attitude towards life and his fair way of thinking. He can see, he can discriminate, he can combine ideas and see where they lead; he can have insight and comprehension. His mind is a practice instrument of appreciation. He is more apt to contribute light than heat to a discussion, and will oftener than not show the power of uniting the elements of a difficult subject in a whole view. He has knowledge of the world which no one can have who knows only his own genera (p. 179).

From this view of Woodrow, it becomes clearer that an educated man/woman is one that should not be mentioned among corrupt practices in any ‘Ideal society’ where he or she

belongs. And to Hirst & Peters (1970:19) Education “consists in putting people in the way of values of which they have never dreamt”. The point to note in Hirst & Peters understanding of education is that it elevates people from where they are to higher level or status in the society. They’re of the view that education promotes both individuals in particular and the society in general and fosters development.

Purpose of Education

Fostering development as one of the major functions of education is an acceptable fact by Raymont, a professor of Education, University College of South Wales, when he in Tibble (1966:23) stated that, “education means that process of development in which consists the passage of a human from infancy to maturity, the process whereby he gradually adapts himself in various ways to his physical, social and spiritual environment”. While to Plato, education brings such light that eliminates evil practices as corruption when adequately established in the life of any one person or society.

The fore-going construe the fact that education is such a vital instrument that propels both individuals and nations. And as Nelson Mandela in Durojaiye (2017) rightly mentioned, “Education is the most powerful weapon that can be used to change the world”. In fact it is due to this all – important role of education in engineering national development that many countries of the world make it compulsory and free to her citizens, especially for those below 16years of age. And of course like Durojaiye mentioned, “good education attainment is strongly correlated with fast economic growth and development of a nation”. He is of the view that on the individual level, education has immensely aided our growth and drastically reduced certain immoral and irresponsible character traits which would have been formed in us. However, the scholar is also of the opinion that this cannot be the case in the Nigerian system. The reason according to him is that corruption has bitten deeply into the fabric of the Nigerian society and has permeated even to the educational system. So the Nigerian education is far-from fulfilling its roles in the individual and the society at large.

Aims/Objectives of Nigerian Education

Peters (1966) is not quite palatable with the usage of the term ‘aim’ in speaking about Education. Rather, the term ‘aim’ should be used when we talk about training rather than Education. The reason, according to him is that, since education deals with the development of individual potentialities as in intellect and character, the use of the term (aim) will be ‘intrinsic’. Aims, as he puts it “mark out specific achievements and states of mind that give content to the formal notion of the educated man” (1966, p. 27). He argues that aim has to do with more precise specification of an action or an activity. It intends to figure out what an individual intend to do or achieve at the end of a particular action or exercise. And to education that is why the term is frequently used.

However, to use the term ‘Aim’ in education will mean to get a clear-cut direction and at the same time making people understand and get their attention on what is ‘worth achieving’. To this end, Peters suggest that the use of the term ‘Aim’ is to make the educational activities more structured and coherent.

Having looked at the concept ‘Aim’ as it has to do with education, we shall beam our light on the aims/objectives of Nigerian Education.

Writing on the aims and objectives of education Taiwo revealed that many are of the view that it is two-fold: to develop an individual to the fullest extent of his abilities and aptitudes; and, to the citizen, to be equipped fully so as to contribute to the social and economic life of his nation and to his own economic stability.

From the above objectives of education as established by Taiwo, it aims to fortify the individual with self-confidence, self-reliance thereby making him an asset to his society.

Back home in Nigeria, the aims and objectives of Nigerian education are enshrined in the National Policy on Education, 1977, as revised in the 6th edition (2014) which states that:

Nigerian education is based on the development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen and the provision of equal opportunities for all citizens of the nation at the basic, secondary and tertiary levels, both inside and outside the formal school system (p. 2).

Alongside the above stated philosophy on which Nigerian education is based are the goals of education which are also revealed in the National Policy on Education (2014, p. 2) as follows:

- Development of the individual into a morally sound patriotic and effective citizen.
- Total integration of the individual into the immediate community, the Nigerian Society and the world.
- Provision of equal access to qualitative educational opportunities for all citizens at all levels of education, within and outside the formal school system.
- Inculcation of national consciousness, values and national unity and
- Development of appropriate skills, mental, physical and social abilities and competencies to empower the society.

From the above goals of Nigerian education, it is pertinent that the education sector is seen as the pillar on which the Nation relies for its moral upliftment and development. Indeed, the country recognizes education as the instrument that can inculcate moral soundness and raise effective citizens. These citizens will in turn be instruments of national development. However, it will be worthy to note that these goals can only be achieved if and if only the educational institutions are well organized and every modality put in place.

An educational institution where all or most infrastructure are dilapidated, personnel not catered for and funds are not adequately provided will not stand to achieve such laudable objectives as stated above. A quality educational system will definitely yield a better result. The availability of competent man-power, the existence of appropriate accommodation, furniture and equipment for teaching, good library and laboratory are some of the conditions for quality education as proffered by scholars. According to Ezewu in Ololube et al. (2013, p. 121) “well designed and functional school buildings, with a wide array of teaching aids, enable the effective delivery of the curriculum and are positively related to academic achievement”.

So far, for Nigeria to achieve its educational set goals, our educational system should be upgraded, putting in place every necessary facility that will aid teaching and learning in our school system. As per the development of the individual into a morally sound and effective citizen which is the major role of educational enterprise, the school has this primary responsibility. Durkheim in Ololube (2012, p. 26) “feels that the schools exist to teach morals, values, beliefs and good behaviour to children and youth. These morals, values, beliefs and behaviours are those that society has identified as desirable for all individuals”. The school according to Ololube should be a better place to inculcate such moral values as doing it at home will amount to different interpretations and incidences of rule-breaking among families. The school harmonizes and makes out a uniformed moral standard for all citizens. So it then become obvious that the education institution is the bedrock for societal development.

Society

What makes man different from other creatures is that man is classified as a social animal. Man has an organised form of relationship and interaction with his fellow beings. It is on this note that the sociologist sees man as a social animal. We make policies, rules and laws that guide our conduct and relationship with our fellow humans and spell out sanctions for defaulters. In every set-up where human beings live and share the same aspirations, culture and value system, they are regarded as the society of people. To Ololube (2012, p. 37) “human societies are characterized by patterns of relationships between individuals who share a distinctive culture or institutions”. And in broad terms, he prefers society as an organised voluntary association of people for religious, benevolent, cultural, scientific, political purposes. Hence he went forward to deduce the following elements of what must consist of a society as; a defined territory, population, and inter-relationships.

- A society must have a location/territory where it can be located or identified;
- Again every being living in that locality for whatever reason must be regarded as a member of that society; and
- Such members of that given society must express social relationships which must take place through education, religion, agricultural, industrial activities as well as in domestic institutions.

Mondal (2013) revealed that man as a social animal lives in a society just as other creatures, such as ants, birds, monkeys, apes, etc. Meaning that as we have human society, so are bird society, ants’ society, ape society, etc. However, in comparison with other societies, the human society is unique in many ways. Mondal also outlines certain elements that characterize a society:

- Likeness: There is likeness of members; common lineage, tribal affinity etc. There is feeling of likeness among members of the group. He posits that likeness is the binding force that must stimulate the group feelings in bringing men, women as well as children together.
- Reciprocal Awareness: Such likeness exhibited by the people must be reciprocal; each member should respond to the good or bad gestures of another.
- Differences: There’s also the biological differences as in sex difference, difference in age, ideas, and viewpoints, etc. indeed no two individuals are the same in their nature. However the differences that exist don’t imply mutual conflict.
- Interdependence: Members depend on one-another. No one society can move forward – living in isolation. The reason is that no one person or country has all they need so it relies on the other for that product or services they cannot provide. Even among sexes; one often depends on another for mutual co-existence.
- Cooperation: This also is vital for the existence of a society, without which no society can exist.
- Conflict: Mondal posits that conflict is an ever present phenomenon in every human society; it sometimes comes through power struggling or economic struggle.

The Biennial Report (2018) has it that the Nigerian Society has a population density (per sq. km); 188 with life expectancy of 53years. The population of the country according to the report is 173,615,000 (2013) with about 46% of people living in urban areas.

Indeed, Nigeria is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. Records have it that Nigeria has 250 ethnic groups with the Hausa – Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo making

up 70%. English Language is the official language spoken in Nigeria. However, there are other major languages like the Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo languages used in the distinct regions. In addition to that, there are over 200 other languages and dialects in the country.

Concerning Religion, the Biennial Report also has it that the country has three (3) major religions viz; Islam, Christianity and Traditional Religion.

Ololube (2012) also identified three major components that characterize every society as; social network, criteria for membership and characteristic patterns of organization. In its social networks members of any given society are connected through interdependencies as kinship, friendship, sexual relationship etc. Also, members are absorbed in the existing rules and regulations of the society. And of course, the societies are often organised based on their primary means of subsistence.

Corruption

The Merriam Webster dictionary listed below what corruption is:

- That corruption is a dishonest or illegal behaviour especially by powerful people (such as government officials or police officers).
- That it's an inducement to wrong by improper or unlawful means (such as bribery).
- That it's a departure from the original or from what is pure or correct: as in the case of an accessory like computer, files etc.

From the fore-going, corruption can be seen as the abuse of public resources or power for personal benefit. Corruption can also manifest in the realm of personal business owners giving bribe so as to win a contract or supply goods. Government officials receiving bribe before carrying out their designated roles can be considered as corrupt.

A teacher who uses the official time that should be used to teach his students for his personal business is seen as a corrupt teacher.

In fact, corruption manifests in many phases and different styles. The bottom-line is that corruption is ill to any given society and should be abhorred. When a society is bedeviled by high rate of corruption, that society is doomed to collapse. No society develops in great measure in the midst of massive rate of corruption. It is of this understanding that many sees corruption as a cancer worm that eats up the fabrics of any given nation that is characterized by it.

Thompson (2010) in his seminar paper identified two concepts of corruption (individual and institutional corruption). He states that individual corruption occurs when an individual decides to take bribes from a person or a group before doing his or her legitimate duty or service. To Sheriff Folarin, it means people outside government, private individuals engaging in unethical acts. While institutional corruption comes into play when an institution or its agent receives a benefit that is directly useful to performing an institutional function, and systematically provides a service to the benefactor under conditions that tend to undermine legitimate procedures of the institution.

Corruption to Thompson is the absence of fairness in the discharge of one's duty. He also sees corruption as individuals or group not having equal access to what is meant for them. Hence the World Bank definition of corruption as the abuse of public power for private gains comes to the lime-light.

From the fore-going, corruption does not and cannot favour a group or a society but benefit only the individual accepting or transacting it. As a matter of fact, corruption is selfish and self-gratifying rather than for the common good of the people.

Corruption in Nigeria

In Nigeria, corruption has characterized every sector of the country's economy, and of course in recent time, it has been of high increase. President Muhammadu Buhari described it as the greatest form of human violation.

Sheriff posits that, corruption is the cause of the slow pace of development in Nigeria. And that corruption and other related acts would inevitably thwart democratic governance, pollute the political space and create spatial economy that leads to satisfaction of the poor. Sheriff traced that the Nigerian government has suffered lack of accountability, transparency as well as honesty for so long and advised that the various anti-corruption agencies set up by the government of various requires/administrations should "be controlled and answerable to the Judiciary (made up of people of integrity and unquestionable character).

Public corruption in Nigeria manifests in many phases of the economy as in the political bureaucratic, military and other areas of the institutions. And in each of these areas, the bite of corruption has been so much with a corresponding negative effect on the economy. Various Nigerian administrations and regimes (both military and civilian) have been bedeviled by corruption which according to Folarin has manifested in bribery, graft, treasury looting, subsidy and pension theft, money laundering, advance fee fraud, favoritism and nepotism. It is all these corrupt practices in Nigeria that have earned her diverse names and categorizations by various international anti-corruption organizations

Uzochukwu (2017) argued in his paper the information of Transparency International (an anti-corruption organisation) as follows; that in 2000, Nigeria was ranked 90th position in terms of transparency. Making Nigeria one of the most corrupt countries that year. In 2001, Nigeria was ranked as the second – most corrupt country after Bangladesh; thereby making it a step ahead (compared to the record of 2000). The Reports of 2002, 2003, 2004, up to 2014 seems not to improve either. In 2013 and 2014, Nigeria was ranked 37th and 38th respectively as the most corrupt country in the world. This sounds ridiculous.

Indeed, corruption has persisted in the country despite the existence of various anti-corruption agencies and laws in existence, many have argued that, it's because the perpetrators have no regard or fear for the consequences. More so, the system has been so bastardized that every sector has a feel of it, even the judiciary.

Despite the change-over of the governance baton in Nigeria, from the People's Democratic Party (PDP) to All Progressive Congress (APC) at the national level, and President Muhammadu Buhari's campaign promises of massive eradication of corruption in the country, Uzochukwu revealed that corruption in Nigeria has rather gained momentum as the country was ranked 32nd most corrupt nation in 2015. In 2016, Nigeria was rated as the 40th most corrupt country in the world. So where do we look next for remedy? It will be worth to mention in that both the military regime and the civilian administration in Nigeria are characterized by this epidemic – corruption.

Subsequently, governments of various regimes have in different measure been combating corruption in their own ways. What is not certain is to what extent has their fight against corruption been productive.

The War Against Indiscipline (WAI) of General Buhari and Idiagbon's regime of 1984 was a practical approach to corruption and immorality. However it was criticized for having been too harsh on the populace. The various military task forces were forcing market prices down, raiding illegal and informal "black markets", arresting and detaining corrupt politicians, and even sentencing them to life imprisonment or death. People were made to queue up at bus-stops, rail way stations and when making telephone calls.

The measures were not quite palatable with the people as they were stifling their social life. The military also went beyond boundary in exercising their power to loot the

markets, assaulting “bloody civilians” and intimidating their petty foes Uzochukwu (2017) revealed.

General Babangida’s administration that took over from Buhari mellowed down the harsh anti-corruption war of the Buhari/Idiagbon regime, but he also introduced the WAIC (war against indiscipline and corruption) and as well introduced a social and economic reengineering policy - Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP).

Osoba in Uzochukwu (2017) revealed that the programme was badly implemented, as it gave Nigeria away to foreign profiteers who collaborated with local capital cliques to make fortunes through deregulation. The effect was that the middle class went into extinction, which created a wide gap between the rich and the poor. Indiscipline re-awakened and crime rate was on the high side. People were into short-cuts to wealth, money laundering and advance fee fraud (419) became rampant in the country.

Consequent upon the high rate of corruption in the system, the Nigerian government under the administration Chief Olusegun Obasanjo in 2000 recommended the setting up of the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) which took effect on 29th September 2000. Its duties among others are to receive and investigate complaints of corrupt practices and in appropriate cases, prosecute offenders. Then the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) set up in 2002, but commenced operation in 2003. The commission among other functions is to investigate financial crimes such as advance fee fraud (419 Fraud) and money laundering. It was headed by Malam Nuhu Ribadu at its inception, under whose administration had dug into various crimes in the country.

The Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) is the pioneer anti-corruption agency in Nigeria. It was established in Nigeria in 1979 during the Second Republic after 13years of military rule by the founding fathers of the first post military constitution. The 1979 Constitution made a provision for a list of conduct for public officers in whose board the administration of Murtala/Obasanjo inaugurated before handing over power to the civilian government in July. They made no impact because the National Assembly of the Second Republic could not pass as embedded in section 6(a-f) of the ICPC Act 2000 from members of the public on allegations of corrupt offenders enabling law. Until ten years after (1989) that the Bureau got its legal mandate under the Babangida regime. Its mandate was to establish and maintain a high standard of morality in the conduct of government business and to ensure that the actions and behaviors of public officers conform to the highest standards of public morality and accountability.

With these anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria and the series of other efforts made by past administrations fighting corruption one would have expected that corruption will be a thing of the past or at least be reduced to the barest minimum in the country. But contrary to it, corruption has continued to breed in a very high frequency in Nigeria. It is on this premise that Jason in Folarin revealed that “the EFCC and the entire anti-corruption machine seem to overlook corrupt cases and corrupt persons and groups” but rather focus on other trivial matters. In most cases, the government in power used them to witch-hunt their opposition, and those against their policies.

The scholar cited the case of Obasanjo and his vice, Atiku Abubakar. It was when AtikuAbubakar opposed Obasanjo’s third term bid was when the later saw him as a corrupt person in office and began to chase him with the EFCC.

Mrs. Farida Waziri in her paper presentation to the Nigeria – British Chamber of Commerce on 7th May, 2011 acknowledged these critics when she made it clear that; “the commission is perceived to be a tool of any incumbent president in dealing with political opponents and it is invariably accused of selectivity in investigations and prosecution”. However, she insisted that most people who lay such allegations fail to bring forward defense that the suspect in a particular case is not corrupt. And to her making such allegation that

cannot be proved will appear to be focusing on side issues rather than the substance of the matter.

Like the pragmatists would have it, the proof of any good system or policies should be seen in its ability to deliver or bring forth positive results. It will not be an over-statement to say that most of the anti-corruption agencies have not made a remarkable impact in eradication corruption in the Nigerian society. Most times, we see the agencies fighting persons or individuals rather than going against corrupt practices. They focus on individuals rather than the acts, that is so and so person, from so and so party, and of so tribe and religion. What they are saying here is that the anti-corruption war in Nigeria had not recorded much success because it is influenced by the following; the person involved, party he or she belongs, his/her tribe and the religion of the person involved. It is on this wise that Oyinola in Uzochukwu (2018) posits that “corruption will continue in spite of the law because the perpetrators do not fear any consequences”. This argument may hold water because those who go on with corrupt practices do it without fear because of who they are, where they come from and the party, tribe and religion they belong to. This has continued to thrive in Nigeria.

In fact the situation becomes worse when the crime fighters are accused of being involved in corrupt activities. Adeyemi in Uzochukwu (2017) for instance cited the case of Ibrahim Lamorde, former chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), who was accused of fraudulently diverting over one trillion Naira proceeds from corruption recovered by the agency.

What is paramount here is that when the anti-craft agencies which we rely on begin to compromise or even get involved in corruption charges then our nation is doomed for destruction. It is obvious that the law enforcement agencies when their hands are soiled will not have the courage or moral standing to fight corruption and do other duties which they are created to carry-out. And like the general saying; “He who must come to equity must come with clean hands”. To have a clean sheet in our corruption table our anti-corruption agencies must try as much as possible to live above board in an attempt to carry on with the established duties assigned to them.

As mentioned earlier, corruption in Nigeria manifest in different phases. It is not only in the political scene, in our education institutions, corrupt practices are also noticed in our schools and universities. In fact, it’s not new to hear that lecturers and other universities staff collect money to pass students in their exams. It has even become rampant that female students give out their bodies to be used so as to get favour in their examination results, even some married ones are not left out of the men. Again, the corrupt procedure through which some students are admitted into the universities is unimaginable; many came in through bribery or sorting as they call it. Some through favour of ‘god-fatherism’, while others in some other heinous means. Indeed, when all these corrupt channels are computed, it become obvious that those who are more eligible to gain admission are deprived of their chances to be admitted because their positions have been filled by others through corruption.

Again, the bribery, embezzlement and other practices among the police force and other law-enforcement agents has been of great concern to many Nigerians. The concerned authorities seem not to be perturbed about these evil activities among the rank and file of the force. And the result of this has not been palatable for the entire system. It is against this backdrop that the Human Rights Watch (17th August, 2010) called on Nigerian authorities to take immediate steps to improve budgetary transparency in the police force and to investigate and bring to justice police officers at all levels implicated in corrupt practices. Like other suggestions proffered by many concerned citizens, the above statement sounds good and when executed will go a long way in amimorating the dangerous disease that has eaten up the fabrics of most individuals and institutions in Nigeria. But the question now is that; who will

start it, when and to what extent will it be taken to? Many policies of this kind has in the past been made, but its execution only ends in the pages of the Newspaper and in the radio.

Corinne Dufka in the Human Right Watch insists that; “Good policing is the bedrock for the rule of law and public safety”. So, the inability of the Nigerian authorities to address the corrupt practices of the police and other law enforcement agencies will amount to serious threat on the basic rights of the entire citizens of Nigeria.

We have from the above proceedings been able to establish that corruption as an epidemic has eaten up the fabrics of the entire system of Nigeria society. And to Charles C. Colton in Sam Okoye “It’s like a ball of snow, once it’s set a rolling it must increase”. Consequently, every sector of the entire Nigerian economy has been inflicted with corrupt practices in the course of carrying out their legitimate functions in the society. Again the system has been so bastardised that it often becomes a surprise to see or have dealings with one who is not corrupt. The analogy above shows that almost everyone is in the same bandwagon of corruption, hence the question one should ask in Nigeria is; who is not corrupt rather than; who is corrupt? This assertion is clear judging from what goes on in the daily life of the Nigerians and our various institutions today. Presently, with all the “serious” fight of the present Muhamadu Buhari administration the Vanguard daily News Paper (February 21, 2018) reviewing the report of the Transparency International revealed that Nigeria is ranked 136th out of 168 countries as the most corrupt country in 2015. What this means is that our so-called fight against corruption is a mere noise rather than war. Presently, with all the “serious” fight of present Muhamadu Buhari administration, the Vanguard Daily Newspaper (February 21, 2018) reviewing the report of the Transparency International revealed that Nigeria is ranked 136th out of 168 countries as the most corrupt country in 2015. What this means is that our so-called fight against corruption is mere noise rather than war.

The quest that tends to puzzle the mind of any concerned individual; what are the causes of corruption, and how do we get out of it? To these questions, we shall discuss below some likely causes of corruption and proffer steps that may eradicate or reduce the epidemic to the barest minimum in Nigeria.

Causes of Corruption

In the past scholars in dealing with issues of corruption in Nigeria have suggested different factors that may be responsible for the high rate of corruption in Nigeria. It will be pertinent to mention that whatever factor that will be given by any one scholar is subject to debate. However, for anything to exist there must be a cause. Consequently, there are certain factors responsible for corruption in any society. Marshal (2011), listed poverty, low salaries, weak legislative and judicial systems, poor laws and ethics, weak political will and instability are some of the causes of corruption in Nigeria.

While Domenece (2014) suggested; personal greed, low sense of service, regulation and inefficient controls, and reacting mildly to corruption charges among others as the causes of corruption in Nigeria. And to Ugochukwu (2017), unemployment stands as a vital factor that breeds corrupt practices. He made it clear that when people are redundant, they do everything possible in order to survive; and most of such actions they take are negatively inclined. He revealed that the high rate of unemployment in Nigeria has forced most of our youths into evil acts which if they were adequately employed (engaged) they would have avoided. And as the popular saying goes; “an idle mind is the devil’s workshop”.

Be it as it may, unemployment, poverty, greed etc. should not be an excuse for perpetrating evil in a society. We should have that ‘will’ power to shun evil and do what is right. If we conclude that poverty or unemployment is a reason for corruption, what then do we have the long list of great and wealthy corrupt politicians in Nigeria? We should rather

see corruption as an act of the mind (internal) rather than what emanates from the external. What we are trying to establish here is that if corruption has been considered as something negative and evil, then it should be treated as such.

Our moral obligation should come into play when it comes to exhibition of action. And our ability to do what is right makes us moral beings. After-all, there are people who have no job, poor and less influential yet, live a corruption free life.

Effects of Corruption

Since there is always cause and effect to every action, corruption has effect in any given society. The effect of corruption is negative and detrimental to the economy. Consequently, poor investment from internal and external investors, increase in poverty rate, poor national development and National crises coming from various quarters are being deduced as some of the effects of corruption. To Ranga Reddy (2012), corruption will among other things result in lack of quality in service, lack of justice as well as lack of faith and trust in the governments. Indeed corruption brings a set-back to the entire system as development continues to be retarded. The standard of living becomes so low in a deeply affected corrupt society like ours because the common national wealth is being trapped and cornered into the pockets/accounts of a few. Oladele (2013) affirms this when he posits that, “corruption promotes poverty”. The theft of pensions for instance will deprive the pensioners access to their pensions as at when due. This in-turn results to poverty on their part. In Nigeria the above situation has sent many to their early graves, because poverty and frustration has never in any way been friendly to man. Then, like a ‘multiplier effect’, the dependent of these victims – dead pensioners are also made to face hardship.

Corruption also reduces or retards development. This occurs when the amount budgeted for a particular sector or project is diverted for selfish interest. When a situation of this kind arises the development or project earmarked for will no more take place or will be poorly funded. Sometimes jobs carried out under this situation are sub-standard in value.

Another effect of corruption especially in Nigeria is that it has created political instability in the country. In Nigeria, any government that is corrupt is overthrown by another government (even though the new government often gets worse than the predecessor in later years). The bottom line is that corruption gives room and viable reasons for toppling of any government or regime. It is in line with that Oladele (2013) revealed that, “various military regimes that took over power from democratically elected representatives of the people had always justified their intervention on the ground of grand corruption and looting of state treasury by political state actors.

Above all these, corruption dents the image of the country. Today, the name – Nigeria is associated with corruption when it is being mentioned before the Western world. The image of the country has become so bad that when you say you’re from Nigeria at any foreign airport, you will be subjected to a thorough search. With the high rate of corruption, good health and education become far-fetched in the society.

Steps to Eradicate Corruption

Because corruption is evil, any right thinking government must look for measures to eradicate it from the system. Below are some measures likely to halt corruption in Nigeria:

- Electing good leaders into power;
- Establishing efficient administrative mechanism;
- Providing basic infrastructure;

- Provide workers welfare;
- Create avenues for employment and making provision for the unemployed;
- Offenders should be brought to book and adequately punished in-line with the laws of the land;
- The various anti-corruption agencies should be strengthened so as to work fully. They should be made to fight corruption rather than fighting individuals, there should be no interest of persons, party, religion or tribe; and
- Finally, there should be an awareness campaign showing the ills of corruption and inculcating morality to the conscience of the people. Such campaign will make the people abhor and possibly shun all corrupt practices.

For sure corruption has not done us any good but evil, and to a great extent, it has retarded our national development. Its existence in Nigeria according to Yusuf (2008) “posits a great challenge to any government or agency of government, which is determined to control and wipe out this evil to national progress”. To Yusuf, eradicating corruption should be a priority of any government, and it should be done urgently. In Nigeria most administrations on assumption of office make the eradication of corruption as their focal point, but to what extent has they been able to keep to their promises is another ball-game. Some at the end of their tenure are reported to be worse than their predecessor.

Currently in Nigeria, the present administration of Muhammadu Buhari has again in his electioneering campaign made the eradication of corruption a major point of his administration. Consequent to that, many measures has been introduced, among which is the ‘whistle-blowing’. Though this measure seems to be effective since its inception, some scholars have viewed it as an instrument to witch-hunt opponents. How many of such whistle-blowing has been directed to victims of the ruling party or could it be that there are no corrupt persons among them? It is of this back-drop that Eniola (2017) revealed that; “the present administration claims to have recovered billions of dollars in cash and assets in the last 18months but the anti-craft war is perceived to be one-sided.

Indeed, the ‘weight’ of corruption and its consequences in Nigeria is something any serious government who is out to eradicate it should look beyond party, tribe, religion and personal sentiment. When our fight against corruption begins to take cognizance of such factors as; party, tribes, religion and personal sentiments, then we are doomed to make no headway.

The Place of Education in Eradicating Corruption in Nigeria

Though as we have mentioned earlier, corruption finds its feet in all sectors of the economy in the Nigerian society, even in the education sector. Of a truth one would have reasoned that this sector would have been exonerated from the clutches of corruption. The reason is that the educational institution ought to be a place where morality should be inculcated to the entire citizenry. Of no doubt it should, but even the education sector of our society has been infected by the epidemic (corruption) so that the education sector has not in any way changed its course to build the individuals into a functional citizen of the society.

In the early parts of this study we viewed the concept of education and revealed that to be educated means to exhibit a life worthy of acceptance by the society. And that it will be anathema for one to claim to be educated and exhibit an immoral act. Consequent to this, a good education programme has the obligation, so to say, to eradicate corrupt practices from any given society. Okeke in Amaele (2000, p. 103) affirms this as he asserts that “all educational aims are regarded as valuable only to the extent that they are based upon the objective of meeting the needs of those being educated”. In education, we are being

inculcated with such moral values that make you live in accordance with the existing norms cherished by the society. For instance, the values of hard-work, sincerity, honesty, obedience, respect, charity, selflessness, patriotism, among others as listed by Amaele came to us as moral education through living an exemplary life. It becomes obvious that when a good educational system in line with the above mentioned values is being practiced and imbibed by the people, there will be no place for corrupt practices in the society. Subjects like civics, social studies, moral education appearing in our curriculum if properly enhanced, will stand as an anti-corruption curriculum. This kind of education (anti-corruption) in no small measure will stand as a great instrument to eradicate corrupt practices in the societal beliefs, decisions, and actions, including getting involved in corrupt activities. Carol in Dike (2007), did note that; “values define moral character and create justification for a person”. Again when learners adequately imbibe the teachings from such anti-corruption education, it will be useful to them in their ‘working lives’. Nyamsogoro (2015), advises that for institutions and businesses to reduce corruption, emphasis should be placed on ethical values and skill in their recruitments.

Most leaders undergo the four-walls of education, and if our educational system lives up to their set objective, it should be able to shape their attitude towards good living. And like the National Policy of education stated the goals of education in Nigeria as follows:

- The development of the individual into a morally sound, patriotic and effective citizen;
- Total integration of the individual into the immediate community, the Nigerian society and the world;
- Provision of equal access to qualitative educational opportunities for all citizens at all levels of education, within and outside the formal school system;
- Inculcation of national consciousness, values and national unity, and
- Development of appropriate skill, mental, physical and social abilities and competencies to empower the individual to live in and contribute positively to the society (FRN, 2004, p. 2)

A close look at the above goals of education in Nigeria as it is in other society is to build the individuals into upright citizens. Education should be able to equip one with such character to make meaningful contribution to the society. And one’s ability to imbibe all that has been inculcated in him/her in the process of being educated makes him embrace what is right and shun that which is evil, because the ultimate goal of education as clearly stated by Reed and Johnson (2000, p. 18) is to assist human beings in developing their unique capacity to contemplate the world and their role in it”. If this assertion is something to go by, then education should be able to wipe out corrupt practices from anyone society. For the fact that education brings about the development of good habits which is an upshot of moral excellence (based on Aristotle’s view) then corruption ought not to surface where an effective education is practiced.

A good education of an individual makes him/her see corruption as something that is evil and tantamount to ruining a society. Such an educated individual sees corrupt practices as unwanted attitude and will do everything within his reach to stop it.

It will be pertinent to understand that, education as used here does not necessarily mean acquiring diplomas or university degrees. It is not schooling, even though it has to do with it. But like the Dictionary.com has it; “the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life”.

When Nigerian education is viewed with this ‘spectacle’, then we should be hopeful that it is committed to building a corruption free society.

CONCLUSION

From all that the writer has been able to say here, it becomes obvious that no one nation can develop more than its education level. The reason as was made known is that education stands as a very vital factor in the entire life of a nation. It propels all other sectors of the economy. The education sector prepares the doctors, lawyers, accountants, engineers, politicians, architects etc., so, any failure of this vital sector, means the failure of the entire economy.

Be it as important as it should be, education should stand to its responsibility in fighting the ills of the society so as to move it forward. Corruption is one of such ills that education must stand to flush out from the society. A good education and its process should be able to reject any aspect of corruption practices in the society. This is because the essence of education is to purge out of the individual that which is not worthy, and imbue him/her with a worth-while behavior, acceptable norms and values obtainable in the society.

The Nigerian education has bright and charming objectives but it is far from implementation and realization of the set objectives. Indeed, should all the set educational objectives be put in place, the country would have been on a good match alongside other developed nations, consequently the high rate of corruption would have been a thing of the past or would have been reduced to the barest minimum. To achieve this, Edukugbo (2009) suggests among other things; “a systematic overhauling of the educational system by strengthening regulatory systems and management”. He also opt for re-introduction of subjects and courses that will boost citizen’s Morales and love for their country. Such are civic education, role modeling etc., and insisting that funds, incentives and basic infrastructure be improved.

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