



INTEGRATING ANTI-CORRUPTION EDUCATION IN NIGERIA CURRICULUM: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract

This paper seeks to identify the need for integration of anti-corruption education in Nigeria curriculum of Basic Education. The authors traced the challenges of Nigeria economy and education to lack of ethical values and anti-corruption education. The paper made emphasis on corruption as attitudinal and can only be treated with anti-corruption education as a long term approach to fighting corruption. Finally, the authors recommend that; Anti-Corruption Education should be added in the curriculum of Basic Education, and that teachers should be well paid to avoid them engaging in some form of corruption such as examination malpractice.

Keyword: *Anti-Corruption, Education, Ethics, Values, Prospects*

Introduction

Nigeria economy has been facing challenges in the recent time as a result of negative or poor growth; it became much open to the common man on the street in the last quarter of 2016 when Nigeria economy was declared to be in recession. A number of questions were asked by ordinary people on the streets; these questions centred on what caused the recession in Nigeria? And what are the possible way out. These questions have generated lots of controversies from the social media down the traditional media. From the different opinion being conversed it was believed that one of the causes as observed by several people is the lack of ethical values and conduct among Nigerians, particularly political office holders and civil servants. Unethical conduct eventually promoted corruption, laziness, selfishness, lack of initiative and sincerity (Ssonko, 2010).

As a result monies appropriated in the budget are reportedly stolen by either political leaders or civil servants and stashed in foreign banks (Igbuzor, 2008). In the light of these views, the ordinary people on the street of Nigeria suffer set back in infrastructures, education, welfare, health care and security etc. As it were, hunger and lack has also become the talk of the time, as inflation is in double digit and the effect of recession continues to affect a number of businesses.

Education sector is not exempted as Nigerian universities ranked low in the world universities ranking. This has been cumulative problem as the national budget for education is far below the UNESCO approved 26%, on the other hand, the Basic Education and Senior Secondary Education has been said to have lost standard. These problems were basically by product of unethical conduct exhibited by Nigerian officials. The lost of value system through the desire for riches and wealth could be regarded as one of the major causes of educational and economic challenges in Nigeria. It will interest you to note that in Nigeria, parents influence their ward on the choice of carrier because of the quest to getting rich (money) and some cases show or pave way for illegal short cut which erodes hard work, integrity, accountability and transparency etc. It is worth stating that when education midwives mediocrity, the result will be nothing less than corruption, so one can quietly trace the unethical values experienced in Nigeria to family brought up, environmental influence and the educational system that is in place. Therefore, if corruption would be nabbed, then the introduction of anti corruption education should be accommodated starting from basic education to tertiary institutions. Anti-corruption education is a conscious and deliberate effort to realize the learning process critical of the anti-corruption values. In the process, the Anti-corruption education is not just a medium for the transfer of knowledge, but an emphasis on character formation, through anti-corruption values and moral awareness in the resistance against corruption. Anti-corruption education is also an instrument to develop study skills in capturing configuration problems and difficulties of nationality issues that triggered the corruption, the impact, prevention, and resolution. The education system participating to combat corruption is the education system that departs from simple things, such as not cheating, discipline, and others (Idawati, 2015).

Anti-corruption education is expected to instill and disseminate anti-corruption values to the children, so they understand about it early that corruption is contrary to legal norms or religious norms. Therefore, children need to be socialized to be honest, not cheat, and not to take anything that is not their right as early as possible. It is clear that government establishment of educational institution or incorporating ethics and values system in educational institutions' programmes shall aids the repair, building the nation's morality and frontline the formation of national character through building national ethics that will engender corrupt free society.

What is Ethics?

Ethics in a simple term means a sound culture based on ethical values and principles. Such values and principles include: efficiency, professional discipline, dignity, equity, impartiality, fairness, public – spiritedness and courtesy in the discharge of duties. Therefore public service ethics are broad norms that delineate how public servants – as agents of the state and ,where applicable, as members of an established profession such as accounting, law, human resource management, etc should exercise judgment and discretion in carrying out their official duties (UNDESA, 2000). According to Gitonga (2016), ethics deals with what is good, right, proper and just versus what is bad, wrong and unjust. At the heart of ethics is a concern about something or someone other than oneself. So ethics is concerned with conduct, relationships, decision making process that take into account other people and societal interests. Therefore, ethical behavior would refer to acting in ways that are consistent with what society and individuals typically think are good values. On the other hand Unethical behavior is an action that falls outside of what is considered morally right or proper for a person, a profession or an industry. Unethical behavior can also be said to be floating moral norms and rules. Examples of unethical conduct could include cheating, stealing, use of abusive language, bad mouthing or slandering others, cutting corners, deceit, calling in sick, failure to honour promises and or commitments, sabotaging others, lateness to work or appointments, absenteeism, infighting, deliberate delay in provision of service among others.

It is clear that any behaviour that accommodates the negatives character which the society rejects is unethical, and if such character is allowed to spread particularly among young people it will definitely create a serious challenge of value system. This means teaching values system to curb corruption will definitely need mixture of ethics build on anti-corruption education. Because, **the sole purpose of anti-corruption education** is to build values and develop capacity through direct engagement of pupils /students against corruption. Since the key target of anti-corruption education is molding civic awareness. The most favourable environment for such is social disciplines' including civic education, history, political science and ethics, because the problem of corruption is discussed using legal, political, historical and economic terms (Ministry of Education and Science of the republic of Lithuania, 2006).

Meanwhile, Abduhzen (2010), argues that our educational strategies at various levels are less concerned at the development of reasoning as the basis of attitude and behavior. Learning in our schools is more likely in charge or indoctrinate the mind. Consequently, what is gained in such schools does not correlate with real life. Education should be able to create a balance in the lives of the students and the peoples. Indeed, the main purpose of education is to create a change in behavior to suit what the needs of the society, where the society needs are not met through education, to some extent such education becomes a waste. Thus for Civic Education to achieve the desired objectives, it must be reviewed to give room for the inclusion of Anti-Corruption instruction.

Concept of Corruption and Anti-Corruption Education

According to Grosse cited in MESRL (2006), there are many forms of corruption, the types of corruption are difficult to put into one closely link classification because they overlap. What makes the task more difficult is that in different countries different crimes are considered corruption (bribery is probably an exception). MESRL (2006), stated that Crimes of corruption included in the legislation of different countries are the following; taking, extorting, or giving bribes; mismanagement or embezzlement of state assets; unlawful use of confidential state information; trading in influence and using it for personal benefit; elections' fraud and interference with elections;

dissemination of erroneous information or its provision seeking to mislead investigators; illicit enrichment; obstruction or interference with the market of state orders; punishment of persons who inform about improper conduct of public officials; non-feasance; damage to the public service.

Transparency International (2011), also defined corruption as the misuse of public power for private benefit. So corruption is all about taking what belong to all for ones selfish interest and usage. Falade (2008), opined that public officers and political leaders in Nigeria are in the habit of corruption, disregard to public opinion, selfishness etc. Falade (2008), stressed that the Nigerian Police and other law enforcement agents practice extrajudicial killing, extortion, bribery and denial of human rights. This previous reports was seen as one of the basis for Mr. David Cameron former British Prime Minister when he said Nigeria and Afghanistan were fantastically corrupt countries (*Vanguard News May 15, 2016*). Transparency International scored Nigeria in corruption perception index 26 ranking Nigeria 136 corrupt country in 2015. This is shameful and unacceptable for a developing country like Nigeria.

Explaining further Falade (2008), stated that there are some basic values of civic responsibilities that are not displayed among Nigerians. Some of these values are patriotism, obedience, tolerance, honesty, morality integrity, accountability and discipline. The author maintained that indiscipline and intolerance have caused a lot of socio-economic and religious problems in Nigeria. Okam (2001), revealed that in Nigeria there prevails a low level of national identity amongst many of her inhabitants including students. In the comparative study conducted amongst students in African countries by Klineberg and Zavalloni cited by Okam (2001), the study revealed that ethnic identity is higher, rather than national identity amongst Nigerian students than other students. All these challenges contributes to political leaders being tribal centered, engaging all manner of corrupt practices in the name of our turn as it is been portray in Nigeria.

These problems are traceable to lack of adequate knowledge on social responsibility among Nigerians, so how do people get involved in both social and political activity, take on their civic responsibilities? The answer is simply engaging the people in Civic Education, ethics and anti-corruption education. Because citizens who are not informed are not just victims of corruption, they

often contribute to corrupt practices by offering bribes, evading taxes, expecting relatives in the public sector to get jobs and money for family and relatives etc. Civic education that is designed with anticorruption education can help citizens to understand how their own actions contribute to a wider culture of corruption, something that is not simply limited to the upper echelons of power (Heather 2006). Ismail (2011) succinctly stated that “the national civic, political and economic landscape has remained beset by the same age-long problems that have always, hindered national development in Nigeria”. In fact, the author specifically stated that; the decision to solve some of these civic problems was the outcome of the concern for the development and transformation of Nigerian youths into effective and responsible citizens who will be able to productively contribute to the attainment of the millennium Development Goals (MDGS). In other word, Anti-corruption education is a conscious and deliberate effort to realize the learning process critical of the anti-corruption values. In the process, the Anti-corruption education is not just a medium for the transfer of knowledge, but also an emphasis on character formation, anti-corruption values and moral awareness in the resistance against corruption. Anti-corruption education is also an instrument to develop study skills in capturing configuration problems and difficulties of nationality issues that triggered the corruption, the impact, prevention, and resolution. The education system participating to combat corruption is the education system that departs from simple things, such as not cheating, discipline, and others (Idawati 2016). Saripudin, 2010 cited in Kokom ,& Didin (2015), Anti-corruption Education in school’s habituation is a process of acculturation, institutionalization and strengthening the anti-corruption values in accordance with the school climate. This reinforces the fact that habituation is the process of creating a variety of situations and conditions (persistent-life situations). The situations and conditions contain a variety of reinforcement, which allows learners at their education unit, home and communities, to behave appropriate values and to make the value internalized and personalized as a character or a nature.

Indeed, the introduction of Anti-corruption education in Nigeria is key to solving the challenges associated with economic recession, poor standard of education, nepotism religious bigotry etc. Tirtarahardja et al.,2005 cited in Idawati, (2015), stated that good education should be able to demonstrate a

meeting point or a bridge between theory and practice. Transparency International also notes that “education is central to preventing corruption;” clear laws and regulations as well as well designed institutions will not be able to prevent corruption unless citizens are educated, to demand accountability from government and institutions.” It further notes that if the fight against corruption is to be successful, youth must grow up believing that their talent, effort and merit count more than favoritism, manipulation and bribery (Hallack and Poisson, 2007).

Integration of Anti-Corruption Education in Schools

School is one of environments influencing the success of anti-corruption values customization on the students’ self. Positive modeling of anti-corruption by school management includes good modeling of school principal, administration staff and teachers as effective means to develop expected anti-corruption value, attitude and behavior. Anti-corruption behavior and attitude modeling that should be developed in school management are honest, hard working, discipline, brave, responsible, independent, simple, fair, care, open-minded and transparent values, these are the example of the anti- corruption values and Patterns of habituation in Schools (Komalasari & Saripudin 2015).

According to Enu, & Odey (2017), Civic Education seeks to expose our pupils and students to the tenets and rudiments of citizenship education. It is envisaged that the teaching of the subject in our schools will lay a strong foundation for effective citizenship education and public participation in governance and other ethical issues that affect our lives. In the view of Azebamiran (2010), the subject teaches young people how to get the best out of their world. It teaches them to stand up for their rights and opinions and how to help other people to do so. It teaches tolerance of opposing viewpoints and that there is no such thing as the right answer”. It teaches them to recognize their responsibilities to the government, other individuals and the environment. It covers areas of life like voting, taxes, the justice system, prisons, other peoples and their cultures, international relations, etc. Civic education has the good aims and purposes. It is the education which aims to help people learn how to become active, informed and responsible citizens. More especially, it aims to prepare them for life as citizens of a democracy. Based on these aims and the curriculum itself,

emphases were not made on anti-corruption education. In fact, this calls for a review of the curriculum to accommodate anti-corruption education.

Challenges of implementation of a full-bodied Anti- Corruption Civic Education

There are a number of challenges that actually hinder the success of Civic Education in Nigeria, some of the challenges includes;

1. lack of anti-corruption units in the existing basic curriculum of Civic Education;
2. Lack of resource person for the teaching;
3. Insufficient material that will encourage the teachers and keep the lessons lively;
4. Challenges of attitudes; where some already corrupt teachers will be the one teaching the students not to do what they know he/ she is doing;
5. The high interest of government on fighting corruption through ant graft approach of recovery of stolen money without long time plan of putting an end to this mess called corruption;
6. Inconsistency in government public and Educational policies.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Anti-Corruption education is key to ensuring that value system is revitalized, it is clear character are usually developed over the years, and to develop a canter attitude it demand training that will instilled better understanding of what individuals should be focusing on. The more interest on wealth, possession and selfishness leads to corruption. Couple with no clear cut punishment for those that commit crime or corruption. There may be no good example to show the learners on the negative parts corruption creates for those that engage in graft except the negative effect on the generality of Nigerians. This paper re-emphasize the need to review the civic education curriculum to incorporate Anti-corruption education as a strategy for catching the youth, and instilled anti-corruption ethics in them for long them solution. The authors thus recommend the following;

1. The curriculum of Civic Education be reviewed and incorporate anti-corruption education as part of the curriculum;

2. Materials for the learning of Anti-Corruption education should be developed and provided.
3. Education should be properly founded to enhanced better salaries and good working conditions for the teachers and to help stop teachers engagement on corrupt practices especially examination malpractices;

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