

THE IMPERATIVE OF CITIZENSHIP AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN CURTAILING CORRUPTION AND ENHANCING NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper discusses the causes and consequences of corrupt practices on national security. It observed that citizenship and religious education, are the forms of education that are concerned with the inculcation of morals, discipline, sense of patriotism and commitment to students. While it further added transmission as possible remedies in minimizing the scourge of corruption in enhancing national security in Nigeria.

Introduction

With a beautiful flora and fauna, abundant mineral resources, large landmass, heterogeneous languages, bright talents amongst others; Nigeria can be said to be a blessed country in all ramifications. Despite these blessings, corruption appears to be the major obstacle that has continued to hamper the development of the country. To buttress the fore stated point, Folorunsho (2013) avers that an opinion poll conducted on the causes of the nation's underdevelopment by The Guardian Newspaper in the year 2000 revealed that Nigerians picked corruption, unemployment and bad leadership as the worst problems hindering the country's development with 761 respondents or 70 percent of the respondents out of the total sample of 1,080 people, viewing corruption as the worst problem hindering the nation's advancement.

The problem of corruption is not new to mankind but the exponential level at which the malaise pervades virtually all aspects of the Nigeria's system especially in the last three decades is not only worrisome but quite alarming. This act has evolved from the position of obscurity to an alarming proportion because it has failed to yield to all forms of attempted medication. In fact, its pervasiveness has done an untold and incalculable damage to the country's socio-economic and political life. The corny and dastard problem has some basic components which include; dishonesty, unfairness, injustice, improbity, election malpractice, falsification of result, contract inflation amongst others and almost all facets of our national life has not been spared by this menace. To cap it all, even religious institutions are inflicted with the virus of corruption. Consequently, the prevailing massive corruption in the country has become a bane to good governance and a threat to national security.

Citizenship and Religious Education: What are they?

Any explanation on the concept of citizenship education and that of religious education may not be adequate without detailing the concept of citizenship and religion. Citizenship involves people acting together to address issues of common concern in order to maintain their democratic culture so as to improve the society. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (2010) asserts that citizenship education can be defined as educating children, from early childhood, to become clear-thinking and enlightened citizens who participate in decisions concerning society. Citing a final report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship 1998, The Network for Promoting Citizenship Education (2004), avers that:

"the purpose of citizenship education in schools and colleges is to make secure and to increase the knowledge, skills and values relevant to the nature and practices of participative democracy; also, to enhance the awareness of rights and duties, and the sense of responsibilities needed for the development of pupils into active citizens; and in so doing to establish the value to individuals, schools and society of involvement in the local and wider community."

However, the term "religion" refers to both the personal practices related to communal faith and to group rituals and communication stemming from shared beliefs. The British Broadcasting Corporation (2014) avers that religion can be explained as a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe, especially when considered as the creation of a superhuman agency or agencies, usually involving devotional and ritual observances, and often containing a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs. As such, religious education implies a form of training that aims

at developing factual knowledge of the essentials of a particular [religion](#), and its doctrines, beliefs etc.

Corruption in Nigeria: Causes and Consequences

The term 'corruption' implies any act of dishonesty especially when money or other item is used for the purpose of illegally getting what you want. The Corrupt Practices and other related offences Act (2000) defines corruption to include bribery, fraud and other related offences like gratification. Further, the Act gave a very wide definition of gratification to mean among other things the offer or promise or receipt or demand of money, donation, gift, loan, fee, reward, valuable security, property or interest in property with the intent to influence such a person in the performance or non-performance of his/her duties.

Okafor (2015), citing the United States circuit court in the case of U.S. V. Johnson (C.C) 20 Fed.082, defined corruption as, illegality; a vicious and fraudulent intention to evade the prohibitions of the law. Further, he argued that act of an official or fiduciary person who unlawfully and wrongfully uses his station or character to procure some benefit for himself or for another person, contrary to duty and the rights of others while the Political Bureau Report of (1987) avers some manifestations of corruption to include: the inflation of government contracts in return for kickbacks; frauds and falsification of accounts in the public service; examination malpractices in our educational institutions including universities; the taking of bribes and perversion of justice among the police, the judiciary and other organs for administering justice; and various heinous crimes against the State in the business and industrial sectors of our economy, in collusion with multinational companies such as over-invoicing of good, foreign exchange swindling, hoarding, and smuggling.

Going by the above definitions, it is obvious that corruption is an immoral and dishonest act that is antithetical to the positive virtues of the society. It has permeated every segment of the Nigerian society. It is

noticeable in our homes, market, government offices, religious institutions (Yahaya, 2013).

Sadly, the problem of corruption in Nigeria is one that has systematically eaten deep into the body fabric of all aspects of the country's machinery. The shameful act has cut

across our educational, political, economic, military, administrative, and even the religious circle. A better explanation of the gravity to this malaise which has penetrated the system can be seen as showcased in the table 1 below:

1.0 CORRUPTION PERCEPTION INDEX RANKINGS

Year	Corruption Perception Index Rankings	Human Development Index Rankings
2005	152 out of 158	158 out of 177
2006	150 out of 163	159 out of 177
2007	132 out of 147	158 out of 177
2008	121 out of 150	158 out of 177
2009	130 out of 150	158 out of 182
2010	134 out of 178	142 out of 169
2011	143 out of 182	156 out of 179
2012	139 out of 175	153 out of 187
2013	144 out of 175	153 out of 187

Transparency International, CPI, 2005 - 2013 and UNDP, HDI 2005 - 2014

Olotu and Godabe (2009) observed that materialism has become a key value in Nigeria and the progress and achievement among citizens are measured in terms of material value. This therefore account for the reason people go to any length in order to acquire wealth, not minding the ethical implications of their action. The much-cherished values of honesty, hard work and discipline have been eroded. More so, the lack of adequate pay for its work force and lack of meaningful system to keep the workforce honest exacerbate the problem of corruption in Nigeria. For instance, the minimum wage controversy in which some State governments are finding it difficult to pay the ₦18, 000 minimum wage to workers shows the insensitivity of such governments toward the welfare of their workers; consequently, exposing them to corruption.

It is therefore convenient to state that an employee with a meagre wage is vulnerable to corruption. Considering the fore stated, Odoja (2005) rhetorically asked thus: "can an employee who does not receive a living wage really be expected not to ask for facility payment"? We are all aware of the "grease

payment", yet the authorities pretend not to know. The self esteem of employees in Nigeria is abused with meagre pay. An employee who receives a minimal income finds it difficult to resist the temptation to demand for bribe. Such an employee could give in too easily to corruption simply because they find it difficult to make ends meet.

Ake, (1989), attributes the prevalence of corruption in Nigeria to over politicization of social life and the hegemony of politics. This is manifested in the use of political power to accumulate wealth and the tendency of the political leaders to survive and reproduce their domination. The resultant effects of sharing power by some few political cabals, be it military or democratic government engenders and promotes corruption. Since adequate measures will not be taken to tackle corruption rather only lip service will be given to reforms and the few that push for such reforms are merely making superficial changes so as to perpetuate the system a little longer for their parochial interest.

Nevertheless, a country with a significant proportion of the poor is vulnerable to all manner of insecurity. In view of the high

level of corruption and insecurity in Nigeria, the effects of corruption and that of insecurity are multidimensional. They have both political and cultural variables. The following effects of corruption and insecurity as highlighted by Olotu (2009) are adopted below:

- a. Corruption hinders economic development, reduces, social services, and diverts investment in infrastructure, institution and social services. While insecurity on the other hand leads to the relocation of many to places they consider as safe for doing business. Often times this relocation is based on ethnic and religious frontiers.
- b. Corruption scares investors. Investors are always reluctant to invest in development efforts in a country where there is a massive state and administrative corruption. In addition, international donors would not lend to a country where high level of corruption is affecting the human rights and social security of the people. Insecurity on the other hand drives away investors because no right-thinking investor will invest in an area of instability. For instance, in the peak of the Boko Haram insurgency, Ashaka cement factory in Gombe State was attacked by the insurgents.
- c. Corruption breeds political instability. There is a nexus between corruption and insecurity in the country today. The wealth of the state is being siphoned on a daily basis as a result, few continue to enjoy at the expense of a higher proportion of the populace. As a result, the gap between the rich and the poor continue to increase.
- d. Corruption and insecurity have also contributed to the weakening of the country's socio – economic and political development. A graphic breakdown of human and material resources wasted in crisis prone areas in the north provides a better insight into what has been lost over the years to corruption and insecurity in Nigeria.
- e. The image of a nation where corruption is prevalent is badly tarnished. Nigeria's

image has been badly affected even more than other African countries due to the appalling international image created by her inability to deal effectively with bribery and corruption. The protracted insecurity situation in Nigeria today has negatively elevated the country into a group of notorious countries such as Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, and Iraq, where the sanctity of human life is nothing but held at its lowest ebb.

Understanding National Security

Any attempt to explain national security without adequately offering a premise on the concept of security is likely to lead to an exercise in futility. Ibidapo-Obe (2008) defined security as “the situation that exists as a result of the establishment of measures for the protection of persons, information and property against hostile persons, influences and actions”. It embraces all measures designed to protect and safeguard the citizenry and the resources of individuals, groups, businesses and the nation against sabotage or violent occurrence (Ogunleye, et. al., 2011).

However, national security implies the general safekeeping of any given nation. It generally aims at protecting a nation and its people from attack and other external dangers. Brown (2008) articulated that national security implies: “the ability to preserve the nation's physical integrity and territory; to maintain its economic relations with the rest of the world on reasonable terms; to preserve its nature, institution, and governance from disruption from outside; and to control its borders.” El-Kalash, Mohammed & Ifeoma (2016) avers that the issue of security is far beyond the acquisition and use of Saladin armored cars, surface-to-air missiles, Ferret scout cars or simply trampling on kidnappings, Boko Haram,

cattle rustling, header/farmers clashes and militancy as most people seem to harp on a narrow dimension of military prowess, defense, and law enforcement whenever the issue of security is discussed while Iredia (2011) argued that while it is easy to see external coercion as a major challenge to national security because of its visible impact, there is doubt if it is more critical than the consequences of internal disequilibrium in a nation's social system.

The Need for Religious Education

The issue of religion is one that is very vast in scope. Given such a reason, the paper emphasizes on the religion of Christianity and Islam because both religions are not just recognized globally but also have quite a number of similarities. For instance, the holy Qur'an warns mankind not to indulge in bribery and corruption and inspires us to give charity to the orphans and the needy. In other words, any form of bribery or act of corruption is not just an unjust one but a harm to the community and nation. To buttress this point, Allah says:

"O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness and fear Allah; indeed, Allah is acquainted with what you do." (Q: 5:8).

From the biblical perspective, it is noteworthy to indicate here that it was God's displeasure with corruption on earth that brought about Noah's flood. God states it clearly in the bible: "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them" (Gen. 6:13).

Similarly, in the book of Exodus, Moses gives the following instruction: "Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds those who see and twist the words of the righteous"

(Exo. 23:8). There can never be true justice when corruption and bribery are involved because the eyes are closed to the truth.

With the quotes above, it can be inferred that corruption is a menace that is abhorred by the major two religions in the country and religious education is a sure means of making individuals to abide by the ethos of their respective religions because a proper glimpse on the religious education acquired by an individual is much likely going to guide such a person towards moral and ethical values. More so, adequate religious education can enhance national security because the basis of religious education is to assist an individual in the process of personal search for values and the purpose of being created which help him to develop himself spiritually.

Therefore, the need for religions education cannot be overemphasized. Corruption is one of the evil acts practiced by human beings out of selfish motives. It does not only create negative impact on the economy of the country but indirectly destroys the balance of the social order also. It involves injustice as well as display of might or administrative connection. That is to lay credence to the fact that every mortal being must test death and account for his/her deeds thereafter.

The Role of Citizenship Education in Curtailing Corruption and Enhancing National Security in Nigeria

Citizenship education has been considered to be the most appropriate strategy through which right values can be inculcated in an individual. Ezegbe (1988) observed that citizenship education is a medium through which Nigerian citizens could help become good citizens capable and willing to contribute to the development of the society. It is through this education that the individual become an active member of

the society with positive attitudes and dispositions to contribute towards the development of the society.

Ikumelu (1994) views citizenship education as the type of education that can transform a person into a citizen. It therefore means that citizenship education does not only prepare an individual to become an ideal citizen but also enables a citizen to exhibit his citizenship. By the time an individual imbibes the right values, behavioral orientations that are considered necessary for the sustenance and wellbeing of the nation and exhibited by such a citizen. Such individual will grow with the right attitude as well as positive disposition toward the growth and development of his/her society.

Citizenship education is said to provide knowledge of common historical experience of imperialism, colonialism and nationalist against alien forces (Uko and Okebe, 2011). Citizenship education provides us with the knowledge about our historical journey to nationhood, critically assesses and analyzes the historical benefits of our past failures and achievements, things that ought to have been done in order to make our country forge ahead, amongst others. The knowledge of a historical event via citizenship education is therefore imperative so as to nip in the bud such violence that has become a reoccurring decimal.

Nevertheless, citizenship education is a vehicle for value transmission. It is no longer news that corruption among our leaders and other public officers has adversely affected our socio-economic and political life and by extension, the future of the unborn. The unparalleled nature of corrupt activities in Nigeria has brought about low human and economic development despite the country's tremendous resources. The activities of government and obligation and duties of citizens are brought to light through citizenship education. Citizenship education

is a basic medium through which the government passes across to her citizens the dos and don'ts that are required for the citizens to effectively discharge their responsibilities based on mutual trust. By the time the government becomes responsible in discharging her duties, citizens on the other hand will equally live up to their responsibilities and or obligations to the state.

However, it is a truism that adequate citizenship education enhances human development, promotes the right values and morals that shapes responsible citizens. More so, it provides a wide range of avenues through which citizens gets adequately informed and equipped in order to enable them contribute positively towards the socio-economic development of a given society.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing discussion, the following recommendations are hereby suggested as a frame work for national security and curbing corruption in Nigeria:

1. There is the need to use citizenship education to bring about an improved quality of governance in the country. Through citizenship education, the increasing irresponsibility of the political class and political leadership can be addressed. Topics on political tolerance, values, accountability, and patriotism can be introduced in citizenship education. This will go a long way in solving the problem of political instability and corruption in the country.
2. There is the need for the restructuring of the nation's security architecture. Our national security apparatus such as the police, military paramilitary and intelligent agencies requires reforms such as commitment to professionalism, staff welfare, discipline etc.

3. The Nigeria government should continue to emphasis the teaching and learning of religious and moral education at all the levels of our educational system.
4. At home, parents and siblings should encourage folk stories that encourage the good values of hard-work, honesty, discipline, tolerance, justice and peaceful co-existence.
5. Dialogue between all the different religious groups in the country should not only be encouraged but adequate steps should be taken by government to bring adherents of all the major religious groups in the country together for the exchange of information and ideas that would be of mutual benefit towards the enhancement of peaceful co-existence.

If seriously adhered to, the above recommendations will go a long way in inculcating good moral values and enhance national security in the country.

Conclusion

From the forgoing discussion, it can be argued that one of the biggest threat to Nigeria's National security is that of corruption. As such, the country needs to remain steadfast in her struggle to fight the ugly menace via truthful and purposeful leadership, fighting poverty, reducing the unemployment ratio amongst others. That will go a long way in advancing the economic prosperity of the country. More so, it is clear that citizenship and religious education move hand in gloves toward not just limiting corruption but also enhancing National security. Considering how the fore stated forms of education places premium on the inculcation of positive attitudinal values, feelings, national consciousness and a greater sense of patriotism and commitment to nationalism however, it can be argued that adequately informed citizens are often times those citizens with citizenship and religious

orientation; having some basic social skills that can adequately guide them towards conducting themselves in a socially acceptable manner for the purpose of national advancement.

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