

SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION: A VERITABLE TOOL FOR CURBING CORRUPTION AND VALUE RE-ORIENTATION IN NIGERIA.

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Abstract

Corruption is a major decimating factor that hinders development of any nation or society. Sadly, in Nigeria, corruption is reputed and normalized as inevitable experience in social interactions and human relationship; and this is engendered by the drastic erosion of our value system. Thus, considering the ugly manifestations of this social malaise in all spheres of our social behaviours, it is imperative to eradicate it by way of re-orientation through the medium of social studies education. This paper examines the potency of social studies education towards curbing corruption and value re-orientation in Nigeria. The paper identifies eroding values as a major discouraging factor to national development and progress. It further posits that teaching and learning of social studies education can be used as a medium to eradicate corruption. The emphasis is on preventive strategies through the transmission of what is worthwhile to the people in respect of our core values of integrity; contentment, discipline, service and good neighborliness. It is recommended that the teacher of this course should demonstrate his position as the one who should be looked up to for positive mentoring of the students.

Introduction

Corruption as a social phenomenon is universal and it is likened to a disease which has destroyed the fabrics of human societies, thereby hindering national development. In his submission, Agbu (2003) states that corruption has gone virile and contagious. Members of the public fail to see anything wrong with this social ill. Corruption affects all segments of society, and at different scales. It can be petty corruption; that is, corruption that appears to be a small favour shared among a paltry numbers of people, grand; and systemic corruption which affects the government or

the entire system of the society. Only corruption explains the reason why public servants brazenly steal public funds to enrich themselves. Lecturers, examination bodies like West Africa Examination Council and the National Examination Council among others compromise standards due to corruption while motorists drive against traffic cautions because of impunity. One can therefore conclude that corruption as a phenomenon is a social ill in the system. In Nigeria, corruption has consistently increased as statistics revealed that the Nigerian nation is the thirty-nine most corrupt countries in the world with a transparency index of 2.7 and confidence level of 2.1. This is further tabularized below.

Table1: Nigeria’s corruption perception index 1996-2014

Year	No. of Countries Evaluated	Rating	Position
1996	54	54	1
1997	52	52	1
1998	85	81	4
1999	99	98	2
2000	90	90	1
2001	102	100	2
2002	91	90	2
2003	133	132	2
2004	145	144	2
2005	158	154	4
2006	163	142	21
2007	183	127	56
2008	183	127	56
2009	180	130	50
2010	178	134	44
2011	183	143	40
2012	176	139	37
2013	177	144	33
2014	175	136	39

Source: Agu, 2014

In 2015, in London, David Cameron, the former British Prime Minister branded Nigeria as a very corrupt nation. Similarly, Yemi Osinbajo “the Vice President of Nigeria” subscribes to the above submission when he stated:

All the branches of government are beset with traces of corruption. Corruption is a fatal scourge and a crime against humanity and the reason behind abject poverty, an. fatality of the vulnerable people”. Vanguard, October, 22, 2016.

Affirming the position of Osinbajo, Agu (2016) stated that corruption results in loss of confidence in the Nigerian nation both at home and abroad. Rampant indices of corruption in Nigeria are activities of fraudsters, corrupt public officials and the general non-governance by the political leadership. Others include poverty, bad image of the country, underdevelopment, unemployment, crime, insecurity, loss of lives and inequality. These abysmal consequences of this social malady on our national life made the government of Nigeria to design several strategies, programmes, plans and policies which are designed to squarely fight the scourge.

These include the establishment of various institutions, organisations, agencies which include: “the Nigerian Police, Independent and Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), National Orientation Agency (NOA), Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB), Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), SERVICOM” etc. Other efforts employed by government include oversight function by parliament, a well performing judiciary, independent and properly resourced audit, vigorous law enforcement, space for independent and vibrant civil society and more openness in government to ensure accountability and transparency.

In spite of pretentious efforts of governments to stall corruption, corruption and corrupt practices continue to soar to the roof top and spread like wildfire. Hence the focus of this essay is on serious emphasis on our values of contentment, integrity, patience, hard work, positive attitudinal change, discipline, good name, neighborliness, dignity of labour, openness, accountability through the teaching and learning of social studies.

Meaning of corruption and corrupt practices
The effects of corruption have spread into every facet of the Nigerian nation. Corruption has been defined by many and given many interpretations. Sorkara (2002) sees corruption as an unethical or deviant behaviour. Corruption can also mean deviation from existing norm for personal benefit. This is why Bansal (2003) defines “corruption as the lack of integrity or honesty and the use of position of trust for dishonest gain or gratification. Furthermore, the World Bank (1998) sees corruption as “the use of public office for personal gain.”

This definition covers bribery, fraud, embezzlement, extortion, indiscipline etc. This is further accentuated in Black’s law dictionary (2009): “Corruption is defined as a process whereby a person unlawfully uses his status or character to procure some benefit or advantage for himself or for another person contrary to duty and the rights of others”.

Nigerian President, Buhari (2016) defines corruption as a form of human rights violation occasioned by the discovery of oil and natural gas in the country. This singular event led to the neglect of other commodities such as coal, cotton, oil palm, rubber.

Concept of values and value- reorientation

All human societies are guided by principles, standards, ideas, beliefs, attitudes, ideals, trait and practices considered worthwhile, acceptable and cherished. Benninga (1991) cited in Steffen Roth (2013) defines values as distinctive characteristics of a group or an individual that inform how one can conduct one’s life in a meaningful way. It constitutes the basic features of a person’s personality. It is worthy of note that all societies have core values which serve as the driving force for development and progress (NOA, 2009). Amidst the crisis of conceptualization, Ganguli, Beth and Chung-Chou in Iyamu (1992) holds the view that values can be described as beliefs or convictions a person or group or society holds, affirms and defends. They are principles, standards, or qualities that are considered worthwhile and desirable. Values therefore are measures applied in assessing the behaviours or actions and to choose among various possible goals.

Following the above scholarly assertion, the researcher postulates that values are widely acceptable approaches which are deployed in solving individual and societal problems in a diversified state with divergent, linguistic, cultural, religious, social, political, tribal and ideological milieu. In fact, the nation is facing the problem of corruption and only re-orientation of the values will serve as an antidote.

Value orientation is regarded as a standard of good behavior. In other words, it is the putting together of some basic values which feature as core ones that are cherished and upheld by a larger section of the Nigerian society include the following: laziness, dignity of labour, respect for parents and elders, hospitality, public-spiritedness, respect for authority, hard work, respect for sanctity of life, honesty and truthfulness (Bolarin, 2005). He went further to say that, when these values are grossly compromised, what you get is greed, corruption, dishonesty, violent crimes, political killings, kidnapping and different kinds of anti-social behaviours.

Social studies education: A veritable means of curbing corruption and value re-orientation

Prior to European and missionary incursion, in indigenous societies is the deployment of the informal knowledge of moral conducts, as well as to socialize the young. These were made effective through moonlight, folk narratives simply known as folktales. In such oral narratives, the “dos” and “don’ts” of the society were evidently fore grounded. The motive is to build a healthy society that is made up of individuals who abhor immoral indulgences.

However, social studies as a course of study was introduced into the Nigerian curriculum in 1963; and this was engendered by the European “civilizing mission” of westernizing the African nations. Social studies is a pragmatic discipline that inculcates attitudes, values, skills and competences into the learner with the aim of molding his character for effective citizenship (Okafor, 2010). No wonder, social studies is defined as a value free and value laden discipline with emphasis on producing effective citizens with desirable societal norms and values meant for the purpose of stability of the nation. The objectives of social studies education are in tandem with the goals of Nigeria education as entrenched in the Nigeria’s National Policy of Education (1998 revised 2000, 2004 and 2008) The policy is awash with provisions on values such as:

NPE-Sec5 (9) development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen

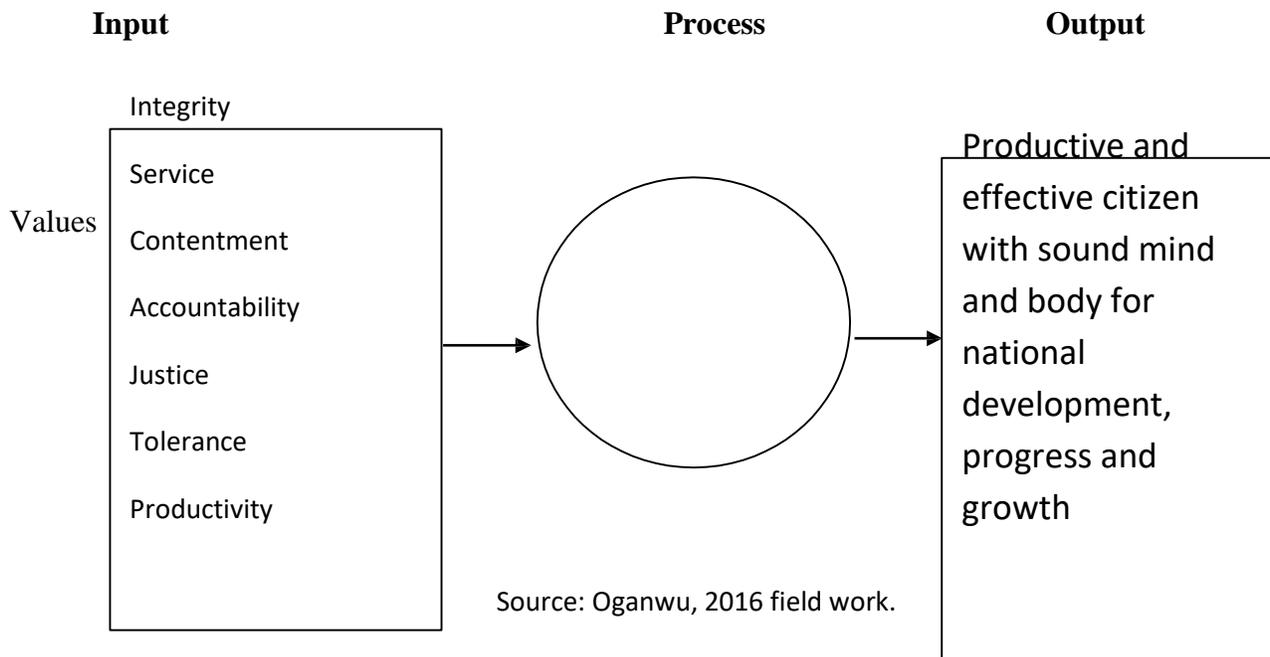
Sec7 (b) inculcation of the right type of values for the survival of the Individual and the Nigerian society

With emphasis on true national values, nations have been able to give their citizens prosperity and dignity as one can only live what he/she believes in. Thus, if one professes integrity, one’s tolerance level for corruption will reveal it. The goals of social studies education help to address the undue materialism and primitive accumulation of wealth, dishonesty, political killings, kidnapping, violent crimes, greed and other anti-social behaviours This is in line with the views of Osakwe and Itedjere (1993) that social studies is aimed at inculcating the right type of skills, values and competencies for the betterment of the citizens of Nigeria. Furthermore, the teacher of social studies is faced with such responsibilities as reinforcing

desirable values acquired and existing in the community through role modeling. A role model can be described as someone who strives to encourage others in order to realize their potentials. Role models are people who are called upon by others for guidance and advice. The teacher of social studies is a life changing and most influential role model as she follows her students through pivotal stages of life, spending about 6-8 hours a day, and 5 days a week taking students through the learning process of inculcating desirable values, listening to their problems and proffering solutions to them. Social studies invariably

become an instrument for conveying and reviving cultural values. Culture is defined as a way of life of the people. It includes norms, codes of manners, artifacts, mode of dressing and knowledge. Corruption thrives well when there is failed appreciation of the worth and regard for the dignity of other people, where cultural values have been eroded away. Value re-orientation campaign through the teaching and learning of social studies, the fight against corruption can be won and this will ensure a brighter future for the Nigerian people.

Value Re-Orientation Campaign Through Social Studies Education



Conclusion

There is no doubt that Nigeria's future really depends on the current successful efforts being made in the fight against corruption. Corruption can be fought through a re-orientation of values, development of positive attitudes that transform the moral qualities and consciousness of the individual and the entire society. More importantly, the role of the social studies teacher in curbing corruption cannot be underscored. The teacher is the most influential and life-changing model as she/he is practically with the students teaching them society core values. Like Germany, Singapore and America are built on trust, discipline, liberty, equality and free enterprise Nigeria cherished values include integrity, contentment, discipline and service. All of these can be inculcated into the learners through using the instrumentality of social studies.

Recommendations

The following recommendations will help halt this social malaise through value-reorientation and social studies:

1. Responsibilities of curbing corruption should be a collective one i.e. teachers, parents, religious leaders, governments etc.
2. Enlightenment of our youths to family values by social studies teachers
3. Social studies teachers to serve as role models to our youths inculcating desirable family values in them.
4. Social studies teachers to place more emphasis on affective outcomes during evaluation.

5. Teach social studies contents that are value laden with cooperation, citizenship and socialization.
- 6 Reward students who exhibit a high sense of integrity, honesty and trust.
- 7 Use of participatory model to teach social studies contents
- 8 Use of public opinion through mass media.
- 9 Social studies teachers can organize debates or stage dramas on some of our core values for the students.
- 10 And the enlisting of students as ambassadors in the crusade against corruption are some of the ways society can deploy to eradicate this social malaise

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