

Enhancing Corrupt-Free and Secured Nation through Value Reorientation Counselling

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Abstract

Corruption and insecurity are global phenomena which have caused havoc to many countries of the world, especially developing countries such as Nigeria. The corrupt practices and insecurity in Nigeria have been institutionalized and taken a dreadful dimension that not only requires a wholesome approach, but also call for reorientation of national values. In Nigeria today, the vast corrupt practices have resulted in the loss of the capacity to function, and insecurity has destabilized the entire national development process. This paper argues that the main factor of heightened corruption and insecurity in Nigeria is neglect of national values. The high rate of violence and bloodshed as ways of expressing bitterness and dissatisfaction with government and corrupt behaviours of the generality of people in government may be an indication of neglect of national values thereby necessitating value reorientation for enhancing corrupt-free and secured nation. With value reorientation, the problems of corruption and insecurity will be minimized, if not eliminated in Nigeria. Among others, the researchers therefore, recommend the need for urgent national values reorientation to eliminate corrupt practices and insecurity challenges.

Keywords: corruption, insecurity, values, neglect, re-orientation

Introduction

Corruption and insecurity are global phenomena; they are neither new nor exceptional to any nation or continent. The level of corruption or insecurity is what differs from one nation to the other. Nigeria is one of the societies with high trace of corrupt activities and insecurity challenges, in spite of its level of religiosity and several efforts by previous administrations to tackle these challenges. In Nigeria, corruption and insecurity are two major challenges confronting the nation. These have destabilized all aspects of national development including social, political and economic.

According to Lawal and Victor (2012), corruption is an illegal, unethical and unauthorized exploitation of one's position for personal benefits. Abamara et al. (2015) viewed corruption as dishonest or illegal behaviour especially of people in authority, allegation of bribery and corruption in private, public and governmental establishment. Corruption is the abuse of entrusted power and position for personal advantage. The issue of corruption is not limited to people in authority but also the followers. In a legal term, corruption is the abuse of a trusted position in one of the branches of power (executive, legislative and judiciary) or in political or other organizations with the intention of obtaining material benefits which is not legally justified for itself or for others (Sumah, 2018).

Bankole (2007), in Chiazor and Abah (2015), identified corrupt behaviours to include bribery (use of a reward to pervert the judgment of a person in a position of trust), nepotism (bestowal of patronage by reason of inscriptive relationship rather than merit) and misappropriation (illegal appropriation of public resources for private use). Other forms of corruption as seen in the literature include examination malpractices, election rigging, vote buying, inflation of contract figures, frivolous award of allowances, budget padding, drug and human trafficking, production of counterfeit drugs and substandard goods, using proxy name to buy properties, adulteration of manufactured goods, baby factory, money laundering, bribery, embezzlement, diversion of funds, ghost workers syndrome, nepotism, parochialism, tribalism, piracy, plagiarism, blackmail, cyber crime, skewed admission criteria, dereliction of duties and responsibilities, armed robbery, oil bunkering and subversion of justice (Onyekuru & Njoku, 2017; Idris, 2013, Ngwube & Okoli, 2013)

Onyekuru and Njoku (2017) observed that corruption in schools can be seen in headteachers or school personnel extorting money from or imposing unauthorized levies on pupils/students and parents. Admission and job racketeering, prostitution, sexual harassment, trading of grades for sex and cash, cultism and high level examination malpractices are common in tertiary institutions. Idris (2013) and Shehu (2011) observed that corruption reproduces greed and creates incentives for unregulated competition for resources and power. It also undermines the capacity of Nigeria to mitigate normal social conflict and create avenues for redressing injustice as with the Boko Haram (Shehu, 2011) and has diminished the capacity of the Nigerian state to maintain effective law and order.

Security is the foundation upon which any meaningful development is based. Omede (2012) sees security as a dynamic condition which involves the relative ability of a state to counter threats to its core values and interests. When an individual is insecure, it implies that the individual is vulnerable to attack. Ezeani and Ezeibe (2011) reported that a nation is secured when it does not have to sacrifice its legitimate interest to avoid war and is able, if challenged to maintain them by war. Encyclopedia of social science defined national security as the ability of a nation to protect its internal values from external threat (Ezeani & Ezeibe, 2011 pp.231). National security connotes more than military defence or territorial defence by security forces; it includes food security, economic security,

environmental and life security. Insecurity is a feeling of being unsafe, insecure or in dangers in an environment. The hope of Nigerians in gaining the rewards of democracy has been dashed with the resent insecurity challenges in Nigeria such as armed robbery, kidnapping, banditry, ritual killing, and insurgency. Other forms of insecurity include election violence, communal crisis, pipeline vandalism and militancy.

One of the main objectives of government is the provision of security. Due to this, government expended a lot of funds even at the detriment of other sectors of the nation. Despite these expenditures in Nigerian security sector, the level of insecurity has deteriorated. This is due to the corruption in security sector of the nation; funds budgeted for purchase of arms are usually diverted or not utilized for its purpose, for instance, \$2bn (£1.3bn) appropriated for security in 2015. Shehu (2011) citing the UNDP 2006 Human Development report on the Niger Delta gives a graphic picture of how corruption in Nigeria intensifies desperate conditions of socio-economic exclusion as the cause of youth restiveness in the region. Despite the huge amount of money expended on security, lives are lost and properties are destroyed on daily basis,

In attempting to address the issue of corruption and insecurity as provided in section 15 sub section 5 of Nigerian constitution that “the state shall abolish all corrupt practices and abuse of power”, the government of Nigeria has made a lot of efforts in tackling corruption. These efforts include the establishment of Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Fiscal Responsibility Commission, the Bureau for Public Procurement, the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI), Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit (which handles a new process of contract award, otherwise known as due process) and Code of Conduct Bureau. To curb the challenges of insecurity, government established and funded several security agencies such as the Nigeria Police, State Security Service, Nigerian Armed Forces (Army, Navy and Air Force) and National Intelligence Agency. Despite all these efforts, why is the rate of corruption and insecurity high in Nigeria?

Causes of corruption and insecurity in Nigeria

There are several factors responsible for the increase in corruption and insecurity in Nigeria. Some of these factors have been identified as government related, community related, youth related and parent related factors. Abamara et al. (2015) identified unemployment, official alienation, political instability, inordinate ambition, hopelessness, inaccessibility to national cake, inequality in national cake sharing, official infantile witch-hunting, absence of infrastructural facilities, lack of concern for inordinate wealth accumulation, recycled corruption and reckless flaunting of wealth, as factors that induce corruption and insecurity in Nigeria. Unemployment, bad governance, lack of quality education or training, lack or inadequate basic infrastructures, corruption and corrupt practices of government officials, perceived victimization, arrant poverty in the midst of affluence, ethnic superiority, religious superiority, domination and exploitation,

materialism and the display of it with impunity, were identified by Omede and Omede (2015) as causes of insecurity in Nigeria.

Afe (2017) stated the absence of institutional capacity resulting in government's failure, government's failure to deliver public goods to its citizens, inequality and absence of fairness and justice, perception of marginalization by many Nigerians, ostentation showed by the political class and elite, poverty, ethno-religious conflict, failure of security agencies such as the police, the military, state security services and paramilitary units to share intelligence information, as factors contributing to insecurity in Nigeria.

Another factor is poor reward system. The Nigerian value system has decline so extremely that citizens who devoted and sacrificed their youthful age to the service of the nation are not rewarded rather thugs, fraudsters and corrupt leaders are more likely to be applauded and entrusted with traditional title. Nweneazizi (2012) observed that the problem of Nigeria is wrong or false values. Onyekuru and Njoku (2017) identify wrong value system, greed and selfishness, materialism, nepotism and parochialism, unemployment and weak institutions as major causes of corruption in Nigeria. The question now is how does value neglect or deficit affects corruption and insecurity in Nigeria?

Value deficit/neglect as factor of corruption and insecurity in Nigeria

Human society exists for individual and group life. No society is fit or strong unless it has a set of common values that give meaning and purpose to life. Values take a central position in human life. They form the basis for social interaction among humans. People differ on what values constitute. Individuals hold different values (e.g., achievement, respect, security) with distinct esteem. What is highly valued by an individual, a community or society may not be in another. Hornby (2010) defines values as belief about what is right and wrong and what is important in life. Values are standard used by either an individual, a group or society to indicate or decide what is good or bad, right or wrong, moral or immoral. Enu and Esu (2011) noted in Anzene (2014) that values are basic beliefs and attitude in society whether of individuals or groups which are considered worthwhile and serve as a guide to choices and behaviours in daily life. These are ideals that guide one's personal conducts and interactions with others in life.

Anzene (2014) cited some dominant values which formed the core values upheld by a larger section of the Nigerian society to include detesting laziness, dignity of labour, respect for parent/elders, hospitality, public spiritedness, respect for authority, hard-work, respect for sanctity of life, honesty and truthfulness. He expressed further that when these values are grossly compromised, what one gets is greed, corruption, dishonesty, violent crime, political killing, kidnapping and so many other antisocial behaviours. National values form the basis or principles upon which decision of good and bad is considered. It is based on this that Nigeria in section 1 subsection 9 of the National Policy on Education, (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) emphasized the inculcation of the following values:

- The inculcation of the right type of values and attitude for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian nation.

- The acquisition of appropriate skills and development of mental, physical and social abilities and competence to achieve these goals.
- Moral and spiritual principles in interpersonal and human relations and respect for the dignity of labour and hard work.
- Shared responsibility for the common good of the society.
- Honesty, reliability, trust, discipline, perseverance, truthfulness, integrity, hospitality, chastity, sharing and caring, strong pride for family and national identity (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004).

These values are invariably and concisely put together for easy learning and acquaintance. This is seen in the national identity and symbol of the nation such as Nigeria national anthem, pledge, coat of arm and currency. Onifade, Imhonopi and Urim (2013) stated that Nigerian society has become a theatre for the promotion of everything vice, immoral, venal and bloodthirsty. The absence of moral leadership (which is bent on moral value deficit or neglect) has contributed incalculably to the polluted environment of moral depravities. Thus, the quality and quantity of social deliverables the people are expected to get from government have plummeted while the transfer of a culture that lacks morality and virtues by military politicians that had occupied the Nigerian political space for almost four decades (Imhonopi & Urim, 2011) has continued to plague the moral sanity and integrity of the polity (Onifade, Imhonopi & Urim 2013). Odunayo and Olujuwon (2010) also stated that due to the degeneracy in ethical values, there has been a paradigm shift from the positive moral and religious values which held society together in the past to vices that have completely turned it apart now.

The unethical culture of get-rich-quick, flamboyant living, low civic culture and weird value system (Adagbabiri & Okolie, 2018) are contrast to the national values of Nigeria. The neglect of cultural and national value compounded the problem making people to do anything, whether good or bad, to get rich; such as robbery, kidnapping, killing or diverting government funds. As reported by Gistmaster in Vanguard Newspaper (2017, Nov. 18), an NGO (Ancestral Pride Foundation) blamed the neglect of cultural values for the rising rate of corruption and insecurity in Nigeria. The NGO said the failure of parents to inculcate cultural values in their children affects the nation.

According to National Orientation Agency (NOA, 2018), the rapid deterioration of the traditional value system has led to the institutionalization of a culture of greed, indiscipline and corruption and the escalation of all forms of violent crimes, such as armed robbery, kidnapping, hired assassinations, ritual killings, vandalism, ethno-religions violence, insurgency and banditry.

Consequences of corruption and insecurity in Nigeria

The twin evils of corruption and insecurity (Idris, 2013) have caused havoc on national development. The negative implication of corruption and insecurity is very obvious on social, economic and political development of the nation. The increased poverty rate in Nigeria is due to high rate of corruption and insecurity. Funds meant for infrastructural

development and purchase of arm for the security agents are pocketed by few which affects the development of the nation.

Corruption and insecurity have undermined the effort of government to address the challenges of infrastructural development such as road, hospital, dams and power. Corruption has led to the reduction in the quality of goods and services. Despite the fact that contracts awarded are inflated unnecessarily, poor or fake materials are used in the construction of projects such as roads and school. The education sector is worst hit by corruption and insecurity in Nigeria; the poor classroom conditions, inadequate teaching facility, employment of unqualified teacher, shortage of manpower, poor remuneration of the staff and so on. These result to poor performance of educational institution in producing qualified personnel for other sectors, thereby breeding quack doctors, engineers, accountants, and so on.

As put together by Umoh (2015), the effects of insecurity include uncertainty of human posterity, threats to environmental sustainability, increased number of displaced and refugee groups, non-improvement of life expectancy, dire implications for national socio-economic growth and development and tendency for society to degenerate to all out anarchy.

Corruption and insecurity have economically prevented foreign investment in Nigeria. The foreign investors are afraid of losing their wealth and lives. These two evils have also undermined good governance and rule of law. Many people have lost confidence in the government and taken laws into their hands thereby resulting into crisis and insecurity.

Value reorientation as a strategy for enhancing corrupt-free and secured nation

It is heart-breaking and discouraging that after 60 years of independence, Nigeria is still trapped in political intolerance, ethno-religious sentiments, communal clashes, robbery, kidnapping, banditry, insurgency and corruption. For meaningful development in Nigeria, corruption and insecurity need to be eliminated. Curbing corruption and insecurity is not a once and for all event, it involves processes; this is because many citizens consciously or unconsciously indulge in corruption and insecurity acts.

Successive administrations have made concerted efforts to address the challenges of corruption and insecurity in Nigeria. The efforts failed to achieve the expected desired result. This may be because the measures are short time or not addressing the issue from the root; there is therefore the need for a long term measure which will enhance attitudinal or character change. Value neglect has been explained as a factor of corruption and insecurity in Nigeria. Nigeria cannot effectively deal with corruption and insecurity by merely setting up probe panels, anti-corruption and security agencies and enforcing constitutional order, but neglecting the basis for all behaviour manifestations and dispositions. Efforts need to be made to educate and re-educate the general public concerning cherished national values which can help in reshaping national character and image. To be on top of the issues, the Nigeria national values need to be sustained and the

sustainability of these values does not only require effective transmission from older generation to the younger ones but also constant reminder (re-orientation) of these values. The reorientation of value system, according to Njoku (2015), is a conscious development of human resources through ideological appeals, planning, training, productivity and efficiency in achievements through corporate culture.

Hussein, Sarki and Amali (2015) assert that value re-orientation is simply re-educating person(s) on the principles about which or what is right or wrong to enable the person(s) to have an idea of what is important in life. This means that something important is what is worthwhile, which is inculcated to a person(s) through education in either a formal or an informal process. Value reorientation is a counselling strategy that assists in reshaping national character and image. This enhances, for examples, the promotion of love, respect, cooperation, faithfulness, hardwork, loyalty, honesty and unity. These values are identified and put together so that every citizen should follow and uphold them in whichever sector of the society one finds his or herself. In reality, if individuals can adhere to these values, they can enhance a corrupt-free and secured society and serve as a catalyst to the overall development of the nation. The regeneration of national values in every sector of Nigeria will be of great impact in the overall development of the nation because it will guide the actions and behaviours of every citizen in enhancing national development, promoting integrity and safeguarding the future.

Values are both positive and negative and not only personal but also societal in nature. An acceptable and positive societal value should be transmitted to the younger generation. For the fact that the present older generation forms the instructors for the younger ones, therefore, there is need for the present older generation to have a comprehensive knowledge of what to transmit. The consciousness of national values among people will help in reducing the manifestation of behaviour contrary to the values which inversely reduce corrupt practices and insecurity rates. This will help the nation to promote spirit of nationalism, patriotism, and an environment that is aware of their differences as an individual and group and learn to understand, relate, accommodate and live together. This is why Njoku (2015) stated that re-orientation for Nigeria is re-positioning of the country to where it ought to be in the future.

Value re-orientation should be structured in a way that provides every citizen with the chance of gaining the knowledge and it should have the following six structures:

1. **Family:** The family is the first agent of socialization and it is the foundation for acceptable behaviours. Charity, as commonly said, begins from the home. Family is known to be the custodian of moral values and virtues; it encourages hard-work, respect for elders, honesty and discipline. This system has changed tremendously in Nigeria due to factors of corruption, media influence and single parenting. Family values have been eroded and have deteriorated to the extent that families are no longer in control of their offspring. The responsibility of socialization in the present Nigeria has been delegated to peer and teachers. Sometimes, many parents do not have ideas of the whereabouts of their kids or wards and cannot vow for their integrity. The consequences of this breakdown in

family system are manifested in governance and stability of the nation. Parent should teach and train their children and wards, monitor and guide them appropriately because there is no better place than the home to teach these values and virtues.

2. **School:** School is the next institution for value re-orientation after the home. This is because it is a place where future leaders are built; it prepares children for future roles. The decay in moral values in Nigerian society begins from the family and school. According to Omede and Omede (2015), values such as honesty, obedience, discipline, hard-work, love for one another, and truthfulness are not consciously taught in Nigerian schools. They are only implied and are not distinctively included in the curricular as contents to be taught and learned under defined subjects of studies and disciplines. Teaching of these values as a subject in school would be a call for bringing back the worth of the society. Values education subject should be introduced into the school curriculum to teach issues concerning values such as honesty, obedience, hard work, discipline, respect, love, communalism, peace, integrity and patriotism.

3. **Religion:** Religion has great influence on the lives of people. Individuals could hardly go against what their clerics say. Religion as an instrument of value re-orientation is based on the fact that they are directly involved in behaviour modification and organizing and direction of social life.

4. **Media:** The media such as television shows, movies, music, magazines, internet and social media exert a great influence on the life of people especially the youth in Nigeria. Most of the immoral practices perpetrated by individuals in Nigeria, especially in the aspect of lifestyles, are emulated from the media. For instance, the 2020 Big Brother Naija television show propagates immorality and yet it is celebrated by many influential persons in Nigeria. This will rather increase laziness among individuals. Therefore, re-orientation should be enforced on the media; this will make them check the kind of television programmes to show.

5. **Community/society:** This is an informal and active institution of values re-orientation. Behaviours are modified in the community through social contact and group activities such as festivals and social conferences which helps in inspiring the people in the community to imbibe socially acceptable values, ideas and behaviour such as cooperation, tolerance, discipline and respect.

6. **Government:** The government has positive role to play in value re-orientation in Nigeria. Government is expected to empower institutions and agencies such as the National Orientation Agency to sensitize the public on national values through the programme of attitudinal reshaping and transformation. The value re-orientation needs to be structured to affect all governmental and non-governmental organizations through appropriate reward system. People should be appropriately rewarded for patriotism, truthfulness, hard-work, among others, in public offices.

Conclusion

Values take a central position in human life. They form the basis for social interaction among humans. Value deficit has contributed immeasurably to the increase in twin evil of corruption and insecurity in Nigeria. This has further infected the moral sanity and integrity of the environment. The setting up of anti-corruption and security agencies are

very important but cannot alone effectively deal with corruption and insecurity without considering the basis for all behavioural manifestations and dispositions. Efforts need to be made to educate and re-educate Nigerians concerning national values as it helps in reshaping national character and image; hence, promote spirit of unity, nationalism and patriotism.

Recommendations

The researchers therefore, recommend the need for urgent national values reorientation to eliminate corrupt practices and insecurity challenges and that:

- Value re-orientation counselling should be provided in all educational and non-educational institutions in both formal and informal setting.
- Counsellors should be employed in schools and organizations to constantly refresh the mind of citizens on the core national values.
- Government should introduce an effective reward and punishment system. Individuals who demonstrated good value system should be selected for reward and vice versa. The application of this in schools, work places and political settings will encourage desirable behaviour and enhance hard work and patriotism.
- The National Orientation Agency Strategic Plan objective 2 is to promote Nigerian core values and positive attitudes through programmes of value re-orientation. This objective is not achievable if the agency is not adequately charged, monitored and funded. NOA should be well funded and charged to achieve this objective.

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