

Inculcating Moral Values: A Sustainable Strategy for Combating Corruption in Nigeria for Effective Citizenship and National Rebirth

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Abstract

Corruption in Nigeria is deep-rooted, occurring in all sectors – public and private, and in several forms. Problems such as abject poverty, unemployment, poor infrastructural facilities, ill-health, poor quality education, and so on, are known to be fallouts from corruption. It has continued unabated despite numerous efforts by the government and other anti-corruption institutions to combat it and mitigate its detrimental effects on nation-building. There are still high incidences of corruption, which adversely affect service delivery, impede national development, and increase public mistrust. This paper, therefore, discussed how inculcating moral values/education can be used as a sustainable option to combat corruption in Nigeria for effective citizenship and national rebirth. Specifically, the concept of morality and moral education, the concept and nature of corruption, forms/types of corruption, causes/factors promoting corruption, consequences/effects of corruption, strategies for combating corruption, and the role of moral values in combating corruption were discussed. By inculcating moral values in the citizens, Nigeria will not only be scaling down corruption but proactively attacking its root cause. It was suggested, among others, that moral education should be imbued into the school curriculum, starting from the basic level to the tertiary level of education.

Keywords: morality, moral education, corruption, citizenship, national rebirth.

Introduction

Moral education has always been the ultimate goal of education at any level. It is also a general belief that schools were not established only to make learners skilled and smart, but also – and most importantly – to make them good citizens. National Policy on Education

(FRN, 2014) mentioned the moral development of children among the goals of Nigerian Education. However, with industrialization, the moral aim of education receded to the background as the demands of capitalist markets centred mainly on the provision of skilled manpower, which is ready to be integrated into the labour market. However, it is not enough to know the good; one must equally be committed to it. One must not only know, but one must also have the conviction that a particular course of action is the right one to take.

For education of any kind to be more than a system of instruction, one must make a total response with the whole personality. It must entail comprehension and commitment. If either is lacking, then the process becomes incomplete (Ayeni, 2012). Accordingly, the development of moral habits and character in education, rather than merely the acquisition of knowledge and skills, needs to be given more emphasis. Without moral reasoning and the development of moral virtues, intellectual development alone is destructive. This is evident in the world today, whereby well-informed and skilled terrorists kill innocent citizens in the pretext of settling scores that the murdered citizens had nothing to do with. Intelligence and skill that are not tempered with a fair-minded sense of justice and care for human dignity end up being destructive and dangerous (Wokabi, 2019).

Unarguably, the most destructive and dangerous moral and ethical problem bedeviling the Nigerian nation is corruption. Endemic corruption has been found to be a serious problem in Nigeria. It threatens the prosperity, integrity, and survival of the nation. Though institutions to fight corruption have been set up and huge resources allocated to curtail it, corruption keeps on increasing, making Nigerians pessimistic about achieving the quest to build a new Nigeria. As such, this paper believes that inculcating moral values through moral education can complement the existing anti-corruption strategies by fostering attitudes and virtues that empower people to interrogate and confront corruption.

The concept of morality and moral education

Morality generally refers to attitudes and predispositions that foster respect, responsibility, integrity, and honesty. Lickona (1996), cited by Mariaye (2009), argues that respect and responsibility are the two core components of morality from which any other principle derives. The term ‘respect’ includes two aspects: that is, respect for oneself and respect for others (their beliefs, opinions, and culture). “Responsibility” involves an acceptance of one’s own life and deeds and the commitment to the welfare of society generally through an active participation in the socio-economic, political, and cultural activities of the community.

According to Sanders (2026), Kohlberg's fifth and sixth stages of moral development asserted that any act that is marked as moral must be in the interest of the individual and the generality of the people. The act must, however, pay respect to the humanity of the person who is to be at the receiving end, his freedom, and autonomy. He must be treated, in the words of Immanuel Kant, as "an end in himself and not only as a means to an end." To be described as moral, an act must be tested under the golden rule, that is, do unto others as you would like them to do unto you. And when someone acts in a particular way, he does so under a principle, and he is implicitly prescribing that all other people in circumstances similar to that should do the same (Ayeni, 2012).

Education is defined according to Fafunwa, as cited by Denen (2020), as what each generation gives to its younger ones, which makes them develop attitudes, abilities, skills, and other behaviours that are positive values to the society in which they live. In fact, education develops and instills in individuals those values which make good citizenship, such as honesty, selflessness, tolerance, dedication, hard work, and personal integrity, all of which provide the good foundation for veritable leadership.

Hence, moral education, according to Wokabi (2019), refers to the formal, informal, and non-formal processes that foster ethical reasoning and the formation of virtue. It is a lifelong process that is facilitated by diverse agents and contexts. Moral education refers to the processes through which the relevant knowledge, attitudes, values, and skills are transmitted and developed in children. As such, it focuses on the development of the cognitive, social, and emotional skills that are necessary for moral thinking, action, and feeling.

Moral education concerns, thus, the practices and strategies that socializing agents use to equip children with the resources to address issues about right and wrong in their everyday lives. The aim of moral education in the school is thus to help students become autonomous decision makers, but, at the same time, to create an attachment to fundamental values like respect and responsibility (Mariaye, 2009). Unarguably, there is a strong connection between morality and education, because it is through education that people understand the difference between right and wrong, between good conduct and bad conduct. That is why every society generally agrees that morality not only can but ought to be taught. However, in schools, there is little or no specific moral education or moral instruction existing as an examinable curriculum unit. And where moral education is said to exist, the subject usually referred to is Religious Education.

The need to inculcate moral values in Nigerian citizens

Fraudulent practices in Nigeria are too numerous, so much so that people are at a loss on what to do. When one reads through the highlights of newspapers and magazines as well as watches television, one reads and sees stories of the many crimes that Nigerians indulge in. The decline and fall of Nigerians in behaviour is a well-known fact all over the world. Countries such as Britain and the United States of America have lost faith in Nigeria to the extent that the former British Prime Minister, David Cameron, declared Nigeria a “fantastically corrupt nation”, leading to total loss of confidence. This decline is rooted in the family and school setup, where many parents and teachers are failing in their responsibilities of bringing up children. Once the right upbringing is not received at the initial stages of a child's development, then many things will go wrong later in life (Denen, 2020).

Moral education equips learners with moral information and moral reasoning skills that enable them to interrogate moral situations and problems, and navigate their way out of them in ways that take into consideration human dignity as well as rights and obligations of the parties involved. This makes moral education necessary for responsible citizenship, as affirmed by Wokabi (2019). Moreover, repeated pursuit of right actions and avoidance of wrong actions leads to the formation of habits and conscientious patterns of conduct that ultimately become stable traits of character that are embodied as states of being of an individual. Such an individual applies the moral point of view along with other points of view while making decisions about what to believe and do. Thus, this paper believes that moral values, if well inculcated, have the potency of reorienting and transforming Nigerians to become better citizens and contribute to building a new Nigeria devoid of corrupt practices and other social vices.

The concept and nature of corruption

Many researchers have found it difficult to give a comprehensive definition of corruption due to the complexity and multifaceted nature of its forms, causes, and manifestations. However, many researchers have defined or adopted simply the definition of corruption as the “abuse of power by a public official for private gain”. For instance, Transparency International defines corruption as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain” (Transparency International, 2021). Others defined corruption as

the illegal, dishonest, or wicked behaviour, which is destructive, as it entails the conscious and well-planned act by a person or group of persons to appropriate by unlawful means, the wealth of another person or group of

persons, and may even cover the act of turning power and authority into ready cash (Okolo & Akpokighe, 2014).

Accordingly, being a complex social phenomenon and, consequently, a difficult concept to define, corruption is not exclusive to any one definition or typology. Understanding corruption requires a multi-disciplinary approach. As such, definitions of corruption vary according to the approaches, aims, and needs of policy-makers. The legal approach, for example, requires accurate, explicit, and definitive recognition of corrupt offences to construct legal frameworks that inform individuals, states, and the international community of what constitutes prohibited acts. Socio-economic approaches tend to focus on the behaviour and economic interactions of the individual and their decision-making, while anthropological approaches are more analytical, nuanced, and focus upon social systems (European Commission, 2011). In addition, corruption can be conceptualized according to psycho-social and moral approaches focusing on people's behaviours, values, and ethics. Understandably, how corruption is defined affects how it is viewed, which policy approaches are adopted, and which approaches are deemed to be legitimate and predominantly adopted in the process of preventing and/or fighting against corruption in a given society (European Commission, 2011). Considering its multifaceted nature, corruption can involve anyone (politicians, government officials, public servants, businessmen or members of the public) as it can also happen anywhere (in business, government, the courts, the media, and in civil society, as well as across all sectors from health and education to infrastructure and sports) (Transparency International, 2021).

Forms/types of corruption

As noted by Vargas-Hernández (2009), corruption takes many forms. Because there is no commonly accepted definition of corruption, there is no universally valid typology of corruption. The way people classify corruption highly depends on how they conceive and experience it in their socio-economic and cultural context. According to Transparency International (2021), corruption can take many forms, and can include behaviours like public servants demanding or taking money or favours in exchange for services, politicians misusing public money or granting public jobs or contracts to their sponsors, friends, and families, and corporations bribing officials to get lucrative deals. Hanna et al. (2011) noted that corruption can take many forms, from bureaucrats asking citizens for bribes to perform basic services, to hospital employees stealing medicines that were meant to be distributed to the poor, to bureaucrats receiving salaries for jobs that they carry out inadequately or do not complete, and so on. The forms of corruption are specified depending on how it is

defined and approached or fought against, and the nature of the agent (institutions) that is involved. Basabose (2014) highlighted some of the forms of corruption, including:

i. Bribery: It is the most common form of corruption, and it involves giving some form of benefit to unduly influence some action or decision on the part of the recipient or beneficiary. It is generally an illegal payment given or requested personally to or from a power-holder in exchange for their use of official powers. Bribery can be initiated by the person soliciting the bribe or by the person offering the bribe; the bribe can be active or passive.

ii. Embezzlement and theft: This consists of taking or converting money, property, or other valuables for personal benefit. These forms of corruption might involve diversion of public funds to one's own bank account or stealing equipment from the utility's warehouse. This often happens by colluding with the subcontractors who are employed to perform some services, such as maintenance work (Vargas-Hernández, 2011).

iii. Fraud: Fraud refers to the various, often complex and imaginative, schemes orchestrated by public office holders to appropriate public funds, often with non-official accomplices. These may include establishing fake companies, listing ghost workers to pad payrolls, overbilling the government on contracts, or otherwise fixing the books to hide the disappearance of public funds (Morris, as cited by Basabose, 2014).

iv. Extortion: The solicitation of bribes is the act of asking or enticing another to commit bribery. It becomes extortion when this demand is accompanied by threats that endanger the personal integrity or the life of the private actors involved.

v. Favouritism: This form of corruption is the tendency to favour friends, family, and anybody close and trusted. Nepotism, cronyism, and clientism are the most well-known forms of favouritism, which include favouring relatives (nepotism), personal friends of an official (cronyism), and/or focusing on serving particular client groups linked to them by ethnic, geographic (regional), political party, religious group, or other ties (clientism).

vi. Money laundering: This form of corruption mainly consists of obscuring, confusing, or disguising the origins of money obtained through illegal activities so that it looks like it was obtained from legal sources.

vii. Abuse of discretion: This is when officials utilize their vested authority to give undue preferential treatment to any group or individuals, or to discriminate against any group or individuals for personal gain in the name of being accountable and taking his/her responsibility (European Commission, 2011).

viii. Collusion: This is the arrangement between two or more parties designed to achieve an improper purpose, including improperly influencing the actions of another party. The most common form of collusion is when bidders agree among themselves on prices and who

should win. This may or may not involve paying bribes to government officials so that they will turn a blind eye to the practice.

ix. Patronage: Patronage is the principal characteristic of patrimonialism, where a system of rule in which all governmental authority and the corresponding economic rights tend to be treated as privately appropriated economic advantages, and where governmental powers and the associated advantages are treated as private rights. In this context, the state institutions become “personalized” or privatized: power and authority are situated in the hands of one person and not in the office.

x. Gift: To some extent, a gift can be considered as disguised corruption. Normally, and in private contexts, gifts are not requested and are meant to convey a feeling, such as gratitude, on behalf of the giver. There is no expectation of repayment. Gifts given in a purely private context are not considered corruption. It is not easy to distinguish between a gift and a bribe, but it can be questionable and regarded as corruption when gifts are offered to individuals in the course of business relationships. Such gifts are usually given to create a feeling of obligation in the receiver.

xi. Kickback: A “Kickback” is viewed as the seller's return of part of the purchase price of an item to a buyer or buyer's representative for the purpose of inducing a purchase or improperly influencing future purchases.

xii. Grease money: This is money that is paid to an official to facilitate the rapid processing of bureaucratic paperwork. Such a payment is known as grease or facilitating payment, and the legality of such payments varies, depending on the laws that govern the activities of the official and the person or company offering the payment.

As mentioned earlier, to effectively combat corruption, one must have some clear understanding of the different forms and manifestations displayed by corruption.

Causes and factors promoting corruption

Most researchers who have studied the causes of corruption have difficulty in clearly distinguishing the causes and factors of corruption. People from different contexts tend to have different ideas about the causes of corruption. According to Basabose (2014), a comprehensive understanding of the causes of corruption tends to suggest that it has its root causes in what Gandhi called the seven sins of the world, which include:

i. Wealth without work: This, according to Covey (1990), refers to the practice of getting something for nothing - manipulating markets and assets so the person does not have to work or produce added value, just manipulate people and things.

ii. Pleasure without conscience: This refers to the immature, greedy, and selfish acts of those who seek only what pleases and benefits them. In his point of view, Covey (1990)

cited by Basabose (2014) notes that the ultimate costs of pleasures without conscience are high as measured in terms of time and money, in terms of reputation and in terms of wounding the hearts and minds of other people who are adversely affected by those who want to indulge and gratify themselves in the short term.

iii. Science without humanity: In her comments, as quoted by Basabose (2014), Ela Gandhi noted that Gandhi strongly believed in two important factors when engaging in science, namely, that science must have ethical controls such as not harming others or animals or plant life. There must be rules set down to this effect, and science should produce items of benefit to humanity and not to its detriment.

iv. Knowledge without character: Welch (2010) asserts that intellectual development without an equally strong, principled character is dangerous. For Gandhi, the accumulation of knowledge should be aimed at building character and not destroying character. Therefore, knowledge should be acquired alongside inculcating sound morals, good character, and a dignified manner for the benefit of society and the people (Jimoh, 2009). Knowledge without these characteristics leads to corrupt practices.

v. Politics without principle: Politics itself is not a “dirty game,” but it can be made “dirty” by many of its players. To build a clean and uncorrupt political system, it certainly requires politicians committed to the principles of trust, efficiency, effectiveness, integrity, fairness and impartiality in the performance of public duties, avoidance of conflict of interest, disclosure of assets, non-acceptance of (corrupting) gifts, confidentiality of information, and avoidance of political activities that may impair public confidence in the service (Alabi, 2010).

vi. Commerce/business without morality: This refers to all efforts to make money without morals. It consists of conducting business without any sense of right and wrong or ethics, regardless of societal conventions. Regardless of socio-cultural schemes and transcending societal conventions, a business without morality certainly generates corruption.

vii. Religion/worship without sacrifice: A healthy religion is marked by love, which expresses itself through applied compassion, courage, and readiness to confront systems whenever there is injustice to be righted. A religion without sacrifice is senseless and useless and leads its followers to cowardice. A religion without sacrifice creates a context where preaching does not match with practices. The followers of such a religion unarguably cannot resist corrupt practices, so a context is created where corruption is easily generated, flourished, and becomes the normal way of living.

According to Basabose (2014), it is undeniable that the seven sins above deteriorate the dignity of human beings and create a ground for corrupt practices. When a human being is captured by one or more of the sins, he/she will observably commit corrupt practices. The degree of captivity determines the extent of corrupt acts committed. A corruption-free mindset will be constructed through equipping human beings with the capacity to resist and disassociate themselves from the “sins.”

As for the factors affecting corruption, however, three elements of the formula proposed by Klitgaard (1998) are convincingly considered as the key factors of corruption. The formula is stipulated as follows: $C = M + D - A$, which stands for Corruption = Monopoly + Discretion – Accountability. This famous formula has been considerably influential in designing far-reaching public sector reforms to address corruption (European Commission, 2011).

Myint (2000) suggests that a fertile ground for growth of a thoroughly corrupt system will emerge in a country if it satisfies the following three conditions, namely, (i) It has a large number of laws, rules, regulations, and administrative orders to restrict business and economic activities and thereby creates huge opportunities for generating economic rent, and especially if these restrictive measures are complex and opaque and applied in a selective, secretive, inconsistent and non-transparent way; (ii) Administrators are granted large discretionary powers with respect to interpreting rules; are given a lot of freedom to decide on how rules are to be applied, to whom and in what manner they are to be applied; are vested with powers to amend, alter, and rescind the rules, and even to supplement the rules by invoking new restrictive administrative measures and procedures; and (iii) There are no effective mechanisms and institutional arrangements in the country to hold administrators accountable for their actions.

Besides, corruption may be triggered and promoted by several factors ranging from psychological, economical and socio-cultural in nature. Some of these factors mostly outlined by researchers, according to Basabose (2014), include: weak economy and unemployment, capitalistic and liberalized economic system which is turning into feudalism, poorly administered state budget, interference of stronger states and corporations, civil servants demoralized by small salaries, peer-pressure and peer-comparison, unclear rules, purposes, objectives and procedures of public institutions or an organization, lengthy time of service enjoyed by managers, lack of decision-making procedures, excessive control, on one hand, and where there are inadequate and ineffective controls, on the other hand, centralized and monopolized power, lack of independent think

tanks and watchdog organizations that can constructively challenge and advise governments, where the media are controlled and are highly censored, poorly defined, ever-changing and poorly disseminated rules and regulations, immaturity of the legal system, lack of internal systems to assure relative transparency, monitoring and accountability in the design and execution of public policies and projects.

Effects/consequences of corruption

Corruption has multiple economic, political, and socio-psychological negative effects and threatens human lives. Economically speaking, corruption reduces public revenue and increases public spending, contributing to larger fiscal deficits. It increases income inequality because it allows certain individuals to gain at the cost of the rest of the society. Corruption distorts markets and resource allocation, and therefore growth, because it undermines the government's proper regulatory role, distorts incentives, arbitrarily taxes those who must pay bribes, distorts the government's role in protecting property rights and enforcing contracts, reduces the legitimacy of the market economy and democracy, and is likely to increase poverty (USAID, 2005).

In the political sphere, as highlighted by Transparency International (2021), corruption impedes democracy and the rule of law. In a democratic system, public institutions and offices may lose their legitimacy when they misuse their power for private interests. Corruption may also result in negative consequences such as encouraging cynicism and reducing interest in political participation, political instability, reducing political competition, reducing the transparency of political decision making, distorting political development, and sustaining political activity based on patronage, clientelism, and money, among others. The negative impact of corruption is often manifested through political intolerance, problems of accountability and transparency to the public, a low level of democratic culture, principles of consultation and participation, among others. In a society where corruption predominates, there is less involvement in public and civic activities and less interest in the work of democratic bodies. Corruption is said to have been the main factor in the downfall of past regimes by way of undermining the legitimacy of the governments and weakening their structures, reducing productivity, hindering development, worsening poverty, marginalizing the poor, and creating social unrest.

Socio-psychologically speaking, a corrupt system (for example, a system where a totalitarian ideology dominates) implies a significant cleavage between stated and real values and therefore forms a "dual consciousness" among its beneficiaries and the public.

As a result, information flows and power relationships are distorted, and people are hired not for their business qualities but for their ability to fit into the system. Members of society, especially those from younger generations and ordinary rural citizens, lose the meaning of life and become confused in having a model where their leaders, those holding power and to whom they have given their trust and considered as a model, are corrupt. This kind of psycho-moral and socio-political destruction caused by corruption is immense, immeasurable, irreparable, and seriously detrimental to the soul of the society.

Corruption instills fear within and between members of a society. As corruption obscures transactions, it generates unhealthy relationships. Those who try to break the corrupt relationship may face a variety of threats, including the threat of violence (Evans, n.d.). Such a society is marked by pessimism, suspicions, divisions, gossip, prejudices, and lack of social cohesion amongst its members. Thus, corruption discourages people from working together for the common good. It generates frustration and general apathy among the public, resulting in a weak civil society. Where demanding and paying bribes becomes a tradition of life, jealousy, hatred, and insecurity dominate interpersonal relations. It is difficult or even impossible to measure the immensity and depth of the psychological loss of self-esteem, self-respect, integrity, and innocence, as well as the guilt engendered by corruption, especially for the younger generations who are forced to grow up and live in a corrupt environment. To succeed in life, they feel compelled to learn to manipulate the system. Corruption obstructs social and personal well-being. It jeopardizes the common good and ultimately inflicts pain on a very large number of people, if not the whole nation (Ocholor, 2011).

Strategies for combating corruption

Due to its complex nature and different manifestations, it is needless to say that combating corruption requires applying different strategies and approaches. Attempts to combat corruption generally follow one of three strategies, which include: (i) The reactive (also known as punitive legal), (ii) The preventive, and (iii) The proactive (also known as ethical values-based) strategy.

i. The punitive legal strategy: This strategy involves all the reactive responses put into place to penalize corrupt practices. According to Miller et al. (2005), “the rationale for the reactive response for dealing with corruption is threefold: offenders are held to account for their actions, offenders get their just deserts, and potential offenders are deterred from future offenses”. This approach encompasses criminalizing corrupt acts, establishing laws and regulations that define and punish them, undertaking investigations, and prosecuting and sanctioning the acts.

ii. The preventive strategy: This consists of all the measures undertaken, mechanisms established, and strategies formulated and effectively implemented to promote an environment in which national integrity is recognized, corrupt behaviours are discouraged, opportunities for corrupt deals are limited or eliminated, and corrupt acts are exposed through increasing transparency and accountability (Basabose, 2014).

iii. The proactive/ethical values-based strategy: Ethics refers to principles that define behaviour as right, good, and proper. The ethical values-based approach is made up of those components of an anti-corruption system that engage with the individual's desire to do what is morally right and avoid what is morally wrong, and to be morally approved of by others for so acting (Miller et al., 2005).

In the Nigerian context, the reactive or punitive legal strategy to deter corruption and many of the preventive strategies to respond to corruption (like ICPC, EFCC) have been effectively established. However, intensive work still needs to be done regarding the proactive or ethics and value-based strategy to deal with corruption. The current review considers that the ethical value-based strategy should occupy a central place in efforts to combat corruption. The ethical values-based approach has the merit of being considered the principal strategy for rooting out corruption. It is a proactive anti-corruption system and has the potential to help develop people with constant respect who are committed to anti-corruption ethical values. Constant respect for people here means treating others with dignity, as one would like to be treated. Constant respect applies to every individual one interacts with around the world (Miller et al., 2005). Although the ethical approach to fighting corruption is not a panacea (Habtemichael & Cloete, 2010), it is a vital approach to responding to corruption; it should be complemented by other anti-corruption strategies (legal and preventive frameworks) and work in tandem with them (Basabose, 2014).

The rational for emphasis on moral values/education in combating corruption

Wokabi (2019) noted that moral education can make a positive contribution in combating corruption by enhancing preventive and reactive anti-corruption activities. By promoting moral awareness, moral education makes people appreciate the meaning, nature, forms, and consequences of corruption. People get informed about the implications of corruption on human relationships and well-being. They also get to know about the cost of corruption and its adverse effects on future generations. Moral awareness also makes people identify the influences that drive corruption in the society. Moral awareness facilitates debate on corruption, which is useful in promoting ethical reasoning. Moral debates on corruption

provide opportunities for people to engage in the arguments made in favour of or against corruption and take a reasoned personal position in the debate.

In addition, anti-corruption strategies, according to Doig (2009), work better when the ethical environment is positive – that is, where the awareness of acceptable and unacceptable, and legal and illegal conduct is known and followed by all public officials and the public, thus removing ambiguity and uncertainty for them and citizens. Thus, building a strong anti-corruption system requires a well-built and planned education on ethical values. Such an education, as Habtemichael and Cloete (2010) maintained, has a prominent role in the fight against corruption if holistically implemented.

Accordingly, Nigeria would be rapidly transformed if it embraces good moral values, which have the potential to reorient the attitude and behaviours of Nigerians and to bring significant reduction in corruption, indiscipline, immorality, terrorism, kidnapping, and other social vices. Habtemichael and Cloete (2010) observed that unless the paradigm at the heart of the entire culture is changed, sustainable change will remain elusive. Combating corruption requires bringing about change in people's minds. Such a change must be from within. It requires the enhancement of moral development and ethical values at an individual level and the reformation of social, political, economic, and administrative structures at systemic levels. Similarly, as society is the source of public servants, it is necessary to instill ethical behaviours in the whole range of the society, from the family to the school, and filter at the recruitment stage. For building a strong foundation where other anti-corruption efforts lie, there is need to invest much more in developing anti-corruption ethical values (Basabose, 2014).

Conclusion

Corruption is prevalent and is increasing at an alarming rate despite the efforts the government is making to curtail it and bring it to the barest minimum level. Corruption is a serious threat to the growth, prosperity, and progress of the Nigerian citizenry. Though institutions to fight corruption have been set up and resources allocated, research findings indicate that corruption keeps increasing, making the vision of building a new Nigeria just a mere dream. However, this paper argues that inculcating moral values through moral education has the potency of complementing the existing anti-corruption efforts by fostering attitudes and virtues that empower people to interrogate and confront corruption. In fact, the paper argues that, for Nigeria to have effective citizens who are capable of building a new Nigeria, the ethical and moral values should take the initial and perpetual central role in fighting corruption.

Suggestions

i. Education has been described as a powerful tool for change and transforming people's mindsets as well as societal constructs and beliefs. Corruption has been presented as a moral and ethical issue. As such, moral education should be made mandatory at all levels of the educational system.

ii. The nation has to rethink, re-strategize, reorganize, and increase its investment in an ethical values-based strategy through instilling moral values and promoting anti-corruption education in order to penetrate the Nigerian society's soul.

iii. Anti-corruption successes need to be celebrated, discussed, and publicized so that fighting corruption can be supported and portrayed attractively. This is an informal and non-formal way of shaping anti-corruption attitudes. Also, the Nigerian society should desist from conferring honours on people whose wealth is questionable.

iv. Religious institutions should take it in their stride the task of inculcating desirable moral values in their members and preach against corruption and illegal acquisition of wealth.

v. Charity is said to begin at home. As such, parents should imbibe and practice desirable moral habits, and special anti-corruption initiatives should be provided for them to help them become a good example to be imitated by their children.

vi. An ethical and values-based anti-corruption curriculum for children should be designed and implemented to help them grow up with a mindset that condemns and resists corruption. It is necessary to involve children in the combat not only because they constitute the majority of young societies, as is the case in Nigeria, but also because they are potential agents for social transformation and are easy to prepare for the national rebirth.

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