

# **The Role of Social Studies Education in Stemming Corruption for National Transformation in Nigeria**

***Edinyang, Sunday David Ph.D***  
*Faculty of Education, University of Calabar*  
*Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria*

***Usang, Eteng Eloma Ph.D***  
*Faculty of Education, Cross River State University of Technology*  
*Calabar, Cross River State – Nigeria*

## **Abstract**

Corruption is a serious cankerworm that has eaten deep into our private and national economy. The damage it has caused in our political, economic and social spheres can only be imagined than told. Social studies were introduced into our school curriculum in order to help in the production of responsible citizens who will help to eschew some of the vices in our nation, one of which is corruption. This study is therefore aimed at exposing the causes of corruption and why the fight against this monster is fruitless. The role of social studies education in stemming corruption for national transformation is also discussed.

## Introduction

According to the World Bank (2006) about 25 percent of procurement cost in Africa and other under developing countries is wasted on corruption, while the figure could be less than 10 percent in developed countries. Corruption is a household word dangerously expressing itself in diverse social institutions in Nigeria. Osakwe (2010) is of the view that Nigeria is a failed state because of endemic corruption and inability to control poverty in the midst of abundant national resources. The political bureau established in 1987, attributed the failure of politics, governance and national development in Nigeria to corruption.

As Mezieobi (2012) clearly stated, aside our cultural pluralism, disintegrative forces, socio-cultural impediments, insecurity, apathy, political recklessness, sycophancy, ethnic rationality and loyalty, directionless and technological backwardness, political instability and other instabilities-socio-cultural, economic, educational and food instability. Corruption is the worst evil that is standing on Nigeria's path to grandiose national development. In the words of Ekwonwa (1995:69) "Nigeria has the potential and must be directed against those factors (which is corruption) that offset the living conditions of the people" on their efforts to national transformation. This work is therefore targeted at analyzing the reasons why the fight against corruption in Nigeria is a fruitless fight and so states the role of social studies in stemming corruption for national transformation.

## Clarification of the concepts

Corruption: Igbovojah (1998), Adigun and Akinloye (2008), all see corruption as dishonesty or fraudulent conduct by those in power. Meziobi (2012) see corruption beyond this to cover other outsiders government circles either in private organizations or self-employed and unemployed, the receivers and givers of whatever gratifications or inducements. Corruption encapsulates in addition, the one being swayed from honest practices and acquiring in it; and the honest practice deflector. These imply that corruption is found in both public and private sectors.

Social studies: There are many definitions of social studies as there are many writers and authorities in social studies. Be this as it may, it can be defined as man in his environment. According to Mezieobi (2012) it is man in his environment, pitched knowledge integrative discipline in which man is involve with the critical cognition, affective wherewithal and socio-civic competences to make his environment worth living by conquering all disabilities and problems.

Transformation: This refers to a total change in something. Thus national transformation can be seen in the words of Mezieobi (1994, 1995 and 2010) as a systematic (complete but qualitative change or overhaul) of the overall social, economic...nation for the improved human conditions of the people.

## Causes of Corruption

Corruption which has cut across all areas of endeavour in Nigeria today is a recent and temporary development. It is not indigenous and deadly emphases on wealth, affluence, individual and materialism which encourage corruption were not there in the pre-colonial era.

According to Akinpelu (1983),

*The (indigenous Nigerian) society or group...had the pre-eminence and the superior claim. The social conscience was at its highest... since the interest of the individual was attuned to that of his community. There was none of the present pre occupation with individual and personal wealth, comfort, security and affluence" p.43.*

The story now is quite different. According to Ajayi (2001), Transparency International and the World Bank have proclaimed Nigeria to be the most corrupt nation in the world. This assessment has serious implication for the country's drive for increasing foreign investment and socio-economic development. Besides, beyond the immediate shores of Nigeria, Nigerians travelling abroad are stigmatized as dubious and fraudulent p153.

In the words of Chukuezi (2000: 18) “In Nigeria, corruption (has) become...socially institutionalized”. According to Tite (2003), Alam, (2005) and Buhari (2004) Nigeria has been ranked as the most corrupt nation across the globe thus supporting what Ajaji (2001) and Akinpelu (1983) Muazu (2000) have earlier said. The big question to be answered in the next paragraph is, what therefore are the causes of corruption in Nigeria? Generally speaking, the causes of corruption in Nigeria include the following:

- Weak government institutions
- Poor pay incentives
- Lack of openness and transparency in public service
- Absence of key anti corruption tools
- Ineffective political processes
- Culture and acceptance of corruption by the populace
- Absence of effective political financing poverty
- Ethnic and religious differences and
- Resources scramble (bribenigeria.com).

### **Reasons why the fight against corruption in Nigeria is not working:**

Writing on “repositioning social studies education: a fight against corruption for national transformation” presented at the first South-South Conference of Social Studies and Civic Educators Association of Nigeria (SOSCEAN), Salau (2012), quoting bribenigeria argued that the fight against corruption is fruitless because of the following reasons:

- Insincerity of the government itself acting in concert with several of its agencies.
- Pre-bargaining and negotiation, highly placed officials caught of corrupt practices are made to part with some of their looted funds and are thereafter set free.
- Low deterrent: The punitive measures for corrupt practices are not strengthened
- Lack of virile political and social movements to tackle corruption. The mass of the people are yet to be members in the fight against corruption.
- Lack of access to public information. A lot of secrecy still pervades government documents and this underlies the need for the passage of the freedom of information bill presently before Nigeria’s National Assembly.
- Insecurity of informers, there is the need to enact laws to protect informers as well as reward them.
- Low public participation in governance
- Corrupt electoral system
- Nepotism
- System disorder
- Weak government institution

Added to the above long list of reasons why the fight against corruption is an abortive attempt is the fact that in Nigeria the quality of her judiciary, law enforcement agents, the state security services and even the economic and financial crime commission operatives are very poor and prone to corruption.

Although several attempts has been made by the government to eschew corruption in Nigeria, with the establishment of economic and financial crimes commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and other related offences commissions. All these attempts seem to be fruitless. The monster has continued to blossom at both the private and public sectors of our economy (Osakew, 2011). Akanbi in Balogun (2012:30) gives a summary of why the fight against corruption in Nigeria is not working.

*...you find people who are supposed to fight corruption wanting to intervene on behalf of culprits, trying to plead with you and giving all sorts of excuses. You will be amazed at the level, even the law enforcement agents are trying to intervene on behalf of suspects. You need courage to resist them.*

### **The role of social studies education in stemming corruption for national transformation.**

Corruption is a very serious problems that can destabilize any developing nation not Nigeria alone. Social studies according to Makinde (1979) is a “Problem-solving programme” and is expected to help learners solve their societal.

According to the National Policy on Education (1985) the philosophy and goal of Nigerian education for social studies is the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live and contribute to the development of the society (by fighting societal vices such as corruption). The aim of establishing social studies in the post primary institutions is therefore, to develop in the student an appreciation of his cultural heritage and a desire to preserve it and not to destroy it with social vices.

Briggs (1930,) stated that education is a long-term investment by the state to make itself a better place in which to make a living” (p.85). What this statement simply means is that education is an instrument of change and transformation in order not to lag behind in changing times and changing conditions. This is what social studies as a subject was established to achieved.

Social studies as a value free and value laden subject has the capacity to build sound morals and integrity in all facets of the society, It serves as an aid to changing the value system the people and as a means of re-appraising undue obsession to materialism and primitive wealth accumulation which is the mania that is somehow responsible for corrupt practices in the society which invariably thwart national transformation.

Aside the above measures that social studies can help in putting an end to corruption in Nigeria, Mezieobi (2012) outlined the understated as ways social studies can bulldoze corruption impeding Nigeria’s national transformation:

1. The study of social studies, particularly some of the new frontier areas i.e civil education and citizenship education, will expose its beneficiary to all socio-civic competence and effective citizenship such as inspiring feelings of patriotism, and these will make them socially distant from corruption and corrupt induced practices, temptations, incentives and circumstances.
2. The study of social studies will inculcate worthy attitudes and habits (worthy character development) that will go a long way in eliminating corruption and instituting needed changes for national transformation.
3. Through the enter-educate instructional mode in social studies, corruption inhibiting educative content can be taught in an informal entertainment looking situation through educational miming, entertainment oriented, students’ group, social-drama or creative dramatic, storytelling, music, songs, dances, playlist, role – playing, educational simulation, recorded video films or tapes as used in Venezuela and Hong Kong which can be replayed from time to time at the relaxation whims of the students. The effects of the language vision-oriented enter educate instructional mode in social studies delivery with regard to arousing emotions, inner conviction, feelings and resistance against temptation to indulge in corruption and all it is synonymous with such as moral decay or depravity, organized begging, chameleonic praise signing, lasciviousness and squander mania and enhancing interest and acceptance of positive change and tremendous.
4. The social content area of social studies curriculum debunks social maladies such as corruption.
5. Social studies education in its integrated holistic frame, as against the other subjects in their separate fragments, is in a better positions to analyze the parameters of massive corruption in

Nigeria viewing it as an integral whole and equipping the learner with cognitive skills to proffer well thought out recommendations that will defuse corruption and place national transformation on the right pedestal.

Social studies education by virtue of its nature and content is able to bring about the desired change and national transformation because it places premium on corruption prevention, avoidance, resistance, non indulgence or abhorrence via right character propelled self discipline as against coercive discipline of the anti-corruption efforts or commissions.

According to Sand, (2001: 34) curbing corruption in Nigeria requires the following steps:

- i. Develop a culture of openness, merit system, and strong leadership and political will.
- ii. Effort to address corruption should be holistic-embracing good governance, accountability, transparency in government ministries and parastatals, and entrenchment of the rule of Law is important.
- iii. The judiciary should stop treating charges of theft and corruption as political issues, but should adhere strictly to the provision of the constitution.
- iv. The problems of corruption should bitter Nigerians, and this should definitely agitate the minds of our anti-corruption crusaders.
- v. We should all have the spirit of being nationalist for the love of the country and shun away all forms of corruption for national development.

### **Summary/Conclusion**

This paper has successfully discussed the role of social studies education in stemming corruption for national transformation in Nigeria. In doing so, the causes and reasons why the monster—corruption is seen as an incurable disease in Nigeria was analyzed. Ways social studies can help in stemming corruption for national transformation was also discussed. The need to teach social studies education in all levels of education and make it compulsory for students is very pertinent. This is a sure way of stemming corruption in Nigeria. The tenets of the subject if well taught will play the role of the Holy Bible to the students.

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