

# UTILIZING ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN CURBING CORRUPTION AND BAD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

*Saheed Badmus Suraju*

## **Abstract**

*Despite the literacy level of many Nigerians, the country is still struggling to establish good governance due to the high level of corrupt practices by the political leaders. Majority of the Nigerian leaders are religious by names and not by practice because of materialism. They neglected the religious education as one the means of preventing them from ludicrous acts like corruption, immoral acts and others. It is against this backdrop that this paper examines the possibility of using Islamic education to address, curb and control corrupt practices in the contemporary Nigeria system of governance. The paper adopts library and phenomenological method in its bids to source for information. The paper reveals that the most corrupt people in the country are the elites who are governing the affairs of the masses. The paper concludes by advocating for the introduction of Islamic education into the Nigerian educational system at all levels and that there should be curriculum integration of religious and modern education.*

**Keywords:** Corruption, Education, Islam, Governance, Nigeria

Education, which is meant to build individuals to become patriotic and the nation to be free from corrupt practices, has now become a tool of corrupting both individuals and the society. It is clear that the contemporary education in Nigeria is devoid of spiritualism which can only be acquired through religious education. This means that religious education is not given ultimate consideration and allowance to the Nigeria system of education. Education is expected to build and develop the three domains; cognitive, affective and psychomotor, before a man can be complete and useful to himself particularly and society generally. The absence of this development in man makes him resort to disorderliness and backwardness in all aspect of life be it social, economic, moral, political and intellectual (Bidmos, 2010:6).

It is apposite to note here that education can take different forms provided it is capable of developing the three domains. In fact, human being cannot effectively carry on personal activities, governmental duties and religious assignments and also earn a living without having passed through at least one form of education. It is on these bases that the Prophet reported Allah to have said in a *Hadith Qudusi* that: *Know Me before you worship Me, if you do not know Me, how would you worship Me.*

There is no gain saying the fact that Islam and education are inseparable. To buttress this the first revelation from Allah to the noble prophet Muhammad was centred on education as contained in Q 96:1-5 where Allah Almighty says:-  
“Read in the name of your Lord who Created, Created and from a claying substance. Recite and your Lord is the Most Generous who taught by the pen, taught man that which he knew not.”

From the above quoted Qur’ānic verses, it can be deduced that Islam as a religion emphasizes and promotes the acquisition of knowledge through deep research and meditation so as to bring out what is not known for the purpose of tackling not only spiritual but also Mundane affairs of man (Maigari, 2010:24). Thus, the kind of education promoted by Islam is for the benefit of individual, which will in turn develop the family and the society. It is believed that the development of individual educationally will bring about socio-political and economic development as bi-products. It is known fact that a society of well-educated and God-fearing people will have conducive and good governance.

However, where education fails to produce patriotic and God-fearing people then, series of corrupt practices will prevail in such society as is the case in Nigeria. It is against this background that

this paper examines the possibility of Islamic education being an alternative means of curbing corruption and other corrupt practices to bring about good governance in the country.

To achieve these set objectives, the paper has been divided into sections: the abstract, the introduction, the conceptual analysis, the Islamic concept of governance, selection, qualities and examples of leaders in Islamic governance, the historical background, aims and objectives of Islamic education, the modus-operandi of curbing corruption, the bad governance, conclusion and recommendations.

### **Corruption, Governance and Islamic Education:-A Conceptual Analysis**

It is very important at this juncture to concisely explain some concepts which are central to this discussion for proper understanding of the topic. These concepts are Corruption, Governance, Education and Islamic Education.

**Corruption :-** is a noun of the word corrupt which if it used as an adjective means “utterly broken” (Dictionary.com,2010). It is a concept that cuts across all aspect of human life. This is why its definition is not limited to any area of life but covers a wide range of dimensions depending on the context it is being used. According to the Criminal Code (1990), corruption takes place whenever a public officer corruptly asks, receives or obtains any property or benefit. It is also viewed by the corrupt practices Decree of 1975, as “the offer, promise or receipt of any gratification as inducement or reward”. In his own opinion, Myint (2000:35) defines corruption as “the use of public office for private gain or the use of official position, rank or status by an office bearer for his own benefit”. While the Transparency International (2002) takes it to mean the “misuse of entrusted power for private gain”.

From the above, it can be deduced that corruption not only involves public and private sector but also foreign enterprises. This cuts across economic, social, environmental, ethical and even educational and spiritual issues. In a bid to broaden its meaning, Shehu (2012) defines it as follows:- A spiritual or moral impurity or deviation from an ideal. In economy, corruption is payment for services or material which the recipient is not due, under law. This may be called bribery, kickback or baksheesh. In general sense, corruption is highly related to materialistic tendencies due to real needs caused by desire to live beyond one’s means, which tends to manifest in the desire to become distinguished among one’s peers.

From the above definition, it can be established that the low standard of living of the people is prompting the majorly to involve in corrupt practices which the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission has explained in its Act 2004 thus:

Money laundering, embezzlement, bribery, looting and any form of corrupt practices, illegal arms deal, smuggling, human trafficking and child labour, illegal oil bunkering, illegal miming, tax evasion, foreign-exchange, malpractices including counterfeiting of currency, theft of intellectual property and privacy, open market abuse, dumping of faeces, wastes and prohibited goods.

The above expansion by the EFCC has shown that corruption can be classified into public and private forms. In the case of public corruption, it involves public official who procures public contract as a favour to a preferred company in breach or in spite of rules guiding such contract. It can also be that the official secures it for himself or an associate by bypassing or manipulating the normal procedures for awarding such contract (Osipitan and Oyewo, n.d). Private corruption includes nepotism, conflicts of interest, embezzlement, bribery, theft of state assets and abuse of office.

In the Islamic viewpoint, corruption according to Shehu (2012:3) “is any action and deed of mankind that flout justice or rule of law at home, place of work, school premises, playground etc.

**Governance :-**The word “governor” derived from the Latin word “gubernarc” or the Greek word “kubernan” which means to steer or rule with authority or be at the helm of something (online Etymology,2016). Therefore, governance simply refers to, according to Bevir (2013);

“All processes of governing, whether undertaken by a government, market or network, whether over a family, tribe, formal or informal organization or territory and whether through law, norms, power or language.”

In the view of World Bank, governance has to do with the method through which power is exercised in the management of a country’s political, economic and social resources for development (World Bank, 1993). It can also be referred to as the activities of governing a country or controlling a

company or an organization (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1981:103-104). According to Luqman (2011), “governance has to do with the conduct of public affairs, management of public resources and guaranteeing the realization of human rights to all irrespective of their ideological and religious inclinations.

**Islamic Education:-**This concept is made up of two key words which are Islamic and Education. Education takes its origin from a Latin word “Educare” which means “to bring up”. This means that education has to do with the upbringing of an individual from the childhood. Hence, it is defined, according to World Book Encyclopedia (1992), as the ways in which people learn skill and gain knowledge and understanding about the world and about themselves. It is also a means of bringing out the best of individual talent and endowment through interactions to make learning experience (Sulayman, 2007). In Islam, education is known in Arabic as *Tarbiyah* which means systematic, conscious and rational activity aimed at nourishing and equipping the child about this life and the hereafter (Sulayman, 2007:10)

Islamic Education, therefore, is the process of transforming and preparing a man for real life situations based on Islamic ideology. According to Muhammed (1980), it is a process of self-discipline which ensures spiritual and intellectual growth of the individual. It is a system of education that aims at a balanced growth of the total personality of man through the training of man’s spirit, intellect, the rational self, feelings and bodily senses. It also caters for the growth in all aspects including spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, physical, scientific, both individually and collectively and incorporates all these aspects in a holistic system of education towards goodness and the attainment of perfection. Yunusa (2014) concludes that Islamic education therefore aims at developing people’s talent and inspiring lofty ethical values in them.

### **Islamic Concept of Governance**

Governance is not a new term in Islam as it begins with the coming of Islam. The prophet hood of Muhammad comes along with governance by transforming the then conducive environment of Makah and Medina into a habitable area for both Muslim and non-Muslims. It is worthy to note here that Islamic concept of governance goes beyond order and control as well as gathering wealth and luxury (Suraju, 2013). It entails all affairs of the masses including religious issues. This means that governance is part and parcel of the Islam as a religion and hence cannot be separated. Al-Ghazali says as quoted by Khan (n.d) that: *the state and religion are inseparable pillars of an orderly society. Religion is the foundation and the ruler, representing the state, is its promulgator and protector. If either pillar is weak, society will crumble*

Governance, therefore, has been defined from the Qur’anic view, according to Ahmad (2011), as the rule of justice, a just and ethical order and observance of rights and obligations in a society. This is based on Q22:41 which says: *Those when given authority in land, establish Salah, give Zakat and enjoin what is good (Ma’ruf) and forbid what is wrong (Munkar).* Also, in Q 5:8 which says:-

“O you who believe stand up as a witness for Allah is all fairness and do not let the hatred of people deviate you from justice. Be just, this is closest to piety.”

Also, in Q 4:58 which says:-

“Allah commands you to give back the trusts to rightful owners and when you judge between people, judge with fairness. Surely, excellent is the counsel which Allah gives you. Allah is He who hears and observes all.”

Based on the above Qur’anic quotations, it can be established that governance in Islam is all about justice, equality, discipline, accountability, transparency, socio-economic justice, moral value, participation and orderliness in the society between those in power and the masses. Therefore, these afore listed features are the foundation on which Islam, as a religion, bases its governance upon to ensure peaceful coexistence and smooth running of the public affairs.

### **Selection, Qualities and Examples of Leaders in Islamic governance**

Under Islamic governance, importance is attached to the selection of leaders who are going to be Allah’s vicegerency on earth. This is because it is counted as a responsibility and trust and not a

means of pleasure to gather wealth and property. According to Lukman (2011), it is beyond the pleasure of power and profit. Adebayo (2007:72) postulates that:

By virtue of being vicegerent of Allah on earth, man owns an obligation to Him by abiding by the instructions given to him on the one hand and also owes an obligation to deal justly with the members of the community within which he operates on the other.

Therefore, selecting a leader in Islam is by fulfilling certain conditions and by possessing certain qualities. Some of these conditions and qualities can be deduced from one of the sayings of caliph Umar bin Al-Khattab to one of his appointed leaders:-

Listen, verily I am not sending you a ruler and potentates, rather, I am sending you as the leader of guidance so that men may follow you. Render unto the Muslims their rights; beat them not, lest you humiliate them; praise them not lest you make them undisciplined. Do not shut your doors against them lest the strong among them devour the weak ones (IbnJawzi, 1987).

According to Yusuf (2010), the following, among others, are some of the qualities and responsibilities of a prospective leader in Islam:

- (a) He must refrain from injustice
- (b) He must discipline his servants, troops and officers and must not tolerate any unjust conduct by them.
- (c) He should avoid pride as pride gives rise to the dominance of anger and will make him to revenge.
- (d) He should understand the evil and danger in the authority entrusted unto him.
- (e) He should count himself as subject while others are in the authority.
- (f) He should not sanction for others what he could not sanction for himself.
- (g) He should not give satisfaction to any person against the dictate of Allah.

### **Aims and Objective of Islamic Education**

According to Jamjoom (1979), Islamic Education aims at creating a good and righteous man who worships Allah in the true sense of the term, builds up the structure of his earthly life according to the *Sharia* (Islamic Law) and employs it to sub-serve his faith. In their own submission, Hussain and Ashraf (1979) opine that Islamic Education aims at training these sensibilities of pupils in manner that in their attitude to life, their actions, decisions and approach to all kinds of knowledge are governed by the spiritual and deeply felt ethical values of Islam.

From the above submissions, it can be deduced that Islamic Education has both long and short term aims to be achieved in anybody that passes through it. These goals are multi-dimensional and directional as they are geared towards making a complete and perfect man to represent Allah on earth and be accountable to him on the hereafter. Some of these are:-

- i. To caters for both spiritual upliftment and mundane enjoyment of man without separating between them or preferring spiritualism to materialism and vice versa.
- ii. To build and instill in individual the culture of good moral, attitudes and behavior in line with the dictates of Allah.
- iii. To make individuals useful and functional in the society.
- iv. To cater for self-independent of individual by procuring for him means of livelihood.

### **Curbing Corruption and Bad Governance in Nigeria through Islamic Education**

Recently, Nigeria government has been battling with the increase in corrupt practices in the country. There have been cases of official misuse of public resources for personal enrichment by the Nigerian public administrators. This is why the country is ranked as number 33 in the world as among the most corrupt countries and as 136th among the least corrupt country in the year 2015 (Transparency International, 2015). The table below shows the rank of Nigeria as a country since year 2010:

**TABLE 1: Corruption Perception Index for Nigeria between 2010 and 2015**

| Year | Rank                     | Score |
|------|--------------------------|-------|
| 2010 | 134                      | 24    |
| 2011 | 143                      | 24    |
| 2012 | 139                      | 27    |
| 2013 | 144 out of 177 countries | 25    |
| 2014 | 136 out of 174 countries | 27    |
| 2015 | 136 out of 176 countries | 26    |

Source: <http://www.transparency.org/cpi>.

From the above table, it can be deduced that Nigeria has been ranked high among other corrupt countries in the world. In the year 2016, Nigeria has been referred to as being fantastically corrupt. This has affected the development of the country and the well-being of the masses as well as brought about bad governance in the country. To curb this, series of committees and commissions have been put in place but to no avail. It is against this that this paper presents Islamic Education, as a means of curbing corruption to bring about food governance.

With regards to corruption, Islamic Education promotes a moral frame work that can serve as a base and foundation against any act of corruption in the individual before assuming a position of authority. It teaches justice and equality in all ramifications which includes social justice. Thus, it lays down the principles of equality and justice to comprise the following:-

- i. Fair and equitable distribution of wealth.
- ii. Provision of basic necessities of life for both the poor and the needy.
- iii. Protection of the weak against economic exploitation by the strong (Sharif, 2003).

Another way is by accepting that human beings are stewards of God and thus, accountable to Him for all deeds and actions. By this, Islamic education instills in individual the feeling of being pious or God-fearing. This serves as a foundation for ethical transparency and accountability.

Furthermore, the concept of Islamic eschatology is another teaching in Islamic education to ameliorate the act of corruption in the mind of individual. Islamic Eschatology deals with the knowledge of the unseen which is part of a Muslim's belief. The belief in the reality of Hellfire, Paradise and the punishment in the grave will instill the fear God in the students of Islamic education and thus, keep them under control at all times.

Besides, it is one of the core teachings of Islamic education to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil in the society. Hence a student of Islamic education will advocate against the wrong of others in a polite manner and encourage them to do well. This will promote a more just and accountable society where anybody will not want to be labeled an evil doer. It will also combat indiscipline and social ills in the society.

In the case of curbing bad governance in Nigeria through Islamic Education, there is no gain saying that this life is a means to an end which has made every individual to believe that power is a do or die affair in this country. Islamic education provides for the hereafter and makes no separation between the state affairs and the religion. On the dichotomy created by the modern education, various Islamic scholars have written a lot. For instance, Afahur-Rahman (1980: 48) who postulates that: *If education is divorced from the religion and moral values, it will lead to the disintegration and destruction of the social fabric the society.* Also, Bidmusas quoted by Afahur-Rahman (1980:84) says:-

“Education has divorced itself from the spiritual heritage of the past but has failed to supply any adequate substitute. Consequently, even educated persons are left without convictions of a sense of values as well as without a consistent world view.”

Based on the above, it is Islamic education that will let the political leaders and public administrators be aware that the mantle of leadership is a trust to be discharged justly unto those who are entitled to it (IbnTaymiyyah 1971:3 and Adebayo, 2007:73). Through Islamic education, a leader is aware that he is to serve the masses and not to be served, to cater for them and not to be catered for, to listen to their cries and grant them requests before own requests are granted.

On the above, the prophet was reported to have said: “Surely! Every one of you is a guardian and is responsible for his wards. The ruler is a guardian and will account for his stewardship” (IbnHajar, 2007 vol. 9:344, Hadith no 5200). In another narration, the prophet said to Abu Dhar that: “indeed, it is a trust, and on the day of Judgment, it is a cause of shame and disgrace, except for one who fulfills his obligations and discharges the duties attendant there (Sahih Muslim, vol. 3 Hadith no 4492).

Moreover, Islamic Education teaches that a leader is responsible for the welfare of not only human being but also the animals. That is why Umar bin al-Khatab was reported to have said: “If a mule should travel and stumble because of bad road, I shall account before Allah”. Therefore, Islamic education is capable of bringing out good governance through its development of individual who are the leaders of tomorrow.

### **Conclusion**

So far an attempt has been made in this paper to discuss how Islamic education can be utilized to curb corruption and bad governance in Nigeria. The paper has revealed that corruption has affected the development of the country in all aspect of societal development. This has made the country and the citizens to experience all the characteristics of bad government. It has been stated that Islamic education has provisions for the development of individuals who will in turn, develop and make the society a habitable and conducive environment for living and investment through the establishment of good governance. These provisions are embedded in its aims and objectives to be achieved in training individuals. Among these aims are spiritual upliftment and mundane enjoyment, culture of good moral attitudes and behaviours, useful and functioning individual and self-independent.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the above discussions, the following recommendations are made:

- (a) The introduction of Islamic education at all levels of Nigeria education system should be considered.
- (b) There should be curriculum integration of both religious and modern education.
- (c) These should be constant religious training and camping for the public administrators before, within and after assuming position of authority.
- (d) The religious bodies and concerned education bodies should review the content of the religious education being taught so as to achieve its aims.
- (e) The public administrators should fulfill their promises as it is part of the religious education to fulfill promises.

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