

SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION FOR ERADICATING CORRUPTION, GREED AND BAD GOVERNANCE

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Abstract

For many years, the world over it is believed that for any community to develop there must be good leadership and transparency by the leaders. There must be equity, fairness, justice, fraternity and the fear of God. The most developed nations today reached their present position due to good leadership based on the interest and consensus of the majority of the people. The third world countries or the under-developed nations found themselves in their present economic, social, political and spiritual predicaments because of greed and lack of good leadership. This paper focused attention on Social Studies education for eradicating corruption, greed and bad governance of some leaders in some communities, especially in the African continent. For some communities to develop economically, politically, educationally and morally, the leaders and followers must fight corruption and bad leadership.

Social Studies is a problem solving subject. It studies man in his environment. Ololobou (1989) conceptualized Social Studies as “ an organized, integrated study, of man and his environment, both physical and social, emphasizing on cognition, functional skills and desirable attitudes and actions for the purpose of production of an effective citizenry”. It is clear here that Social Studies education will make the individual to be useful to himself and the society.

In any organization there must be a leader and there can never be leadership without followership or followership without a leadership. Nwachukwu (1988), said a leader is the most influential person in an organization who provides direction, guides group activities and ensures that group objectives are attained. Ezeocha (1985), viewed leadership as an authority, injunction given to an individual or a group of individuals to exercise a definite measure of power within a specified organizational context.

Corruption is a dangerous social ill in any society. It is a deadly virus, that attacks the vital structures that make the society progressively functional. It is a wrong doing by those in position of trust when the leaders are so corrupt and greedy, then there is no transparency in the governance and this will retard progress and development.

Corruption and Greediness

Corruption is a deadly virus which attacks our country today. It is a dangerous social ill to our country. It stiffens business and destroys the progress of a country. Corruption has many definitions. Lip set (2000), defined it as effort to secure wealth or power through illegal means, private gains, at government expense or a misuse of public power for private benefit. Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) (2005) defined corruption as behaviour which involves individual or group violating rules against the exercise of certain types of right and duties for personal and private gains. This includes such behaviour as bribery (use of reward to prevent judgments of a person in a position of trust), nepotism, (bestowal of patronage by reason of relationship rather than merit) and misappropriation (illegal appropriation of public resources for private use). It is a wrong doing by those in position of trust. It is commonly applied to self-benefiting conduct by public officials and others dedicated to public service.

Types of Corruption

The desire to have too much has thrown many people into corruption. Corruption brings about bad leadership in a country. Corruption can be categorized as follows:

1. **Bribery:** this can be in money or kind. It is taken or given in a corrupt relationship and this includes kick backs, gratitude, pay off, sweeteners, greasing palms etc.
2. **Fraud:** this involves some kind of trickery, smuggling and forgery.
3. **Embezzlement:** this is stealing public resources by public officials. It is very common in Nigeria.
4. **Extortion:** this is money and other resources extracted by the use of forced violence, or threat. It is often seen as extraction from below (the police and custom officials are the main culprits in Nigeria, but things are changing now).
5. **Nepotism:** it is a special form of favoritism in which an office holder prefers his/her kinfolk and family members. This occurs when one is exempted from the application of certain laws on regulations or given undue preference in the allocation of scarce resources.

Characteristic and Qualities of a Good Leader

Dare (2000), defined a leader “as one who moves in a particular direction and succeeds in moving others towards the same direction in order to accomplish the desired objectives”. Leadership qualities vary widely according to personal characteristics. The followers are attributes of a leader.

1. He should have the ability to motivate people to work.

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2. He should be willing to learn in order to improve himself and should also encourage others to learn.
3. He should be sincere, straight forward and easy to be approached by his staff and other people.
4. He should exhibit the spirit of humility.
5. He should respect other peoples ideas and beliefs.
6. He should possess intellectual qualities such as sound judgment, resourcefulness, broad mindedness, ability to foresee etc.
7. He should be interested in the welfare and problem of his staff.
8. He should be creative, innovative and take initiative.
9. He should try to be guided by sound democratic principles.
10. He should plan well in advance, budget his time and work in systematic manner to achieve his goals.
11. He should create a conducive atmosphere that will make people work with him.
12. He should be patient, preserved, painstaking and dedicated.

Solution to the Problems of Corruption in Nigeria

1. With the knowledge of Social Studies education, corruption can be drastically reduced with change in attitudes and the determination of the governance to champion the crusade against the pandemic.
2. Welfare packages should be provided for civil servants in the form of increased basic salaries and various allowances for health, transport housing leave, meal, utility and training. Loan facilities should be made available and timely payment of retirement benefits should be strictly adhered to. If this is done there will be a decline in the rate of corruption in Nigeria.
3. More anti-corruption organs should be established by the federal, state and local governments and to strengthen the existing ones such as Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). Independent Corrupt Practice Commission (ICPC), Code of Conduct Tribunal, Code of Conduct Bureau, Public Complaints Commission, Community Re-Orientation Programmes, National Orientation Agency (NOA). For this fight to be meaningful, the entire citizenry must be mobilized to participate in the crusade. The participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the traditional institution, the religious bodies, pressure groups etc makes it easier to disseminate information, educate the people about their right, duties and obligations on the issues of corruption.

4. The immunity enjoyed by the chief executive needs to be removed unconditionally. This will make them liable to all forms of litigations whenever they misappropriate public funds. There should be introduction of transparency and accountability in government functions, particularly in all financial transactions.
5. People should be recognized based on their personal character i.e good conduct not just for their wealth. A rich man should not be given public recognition just because of his wealth but because he has served his community honestly. Declaration of assets by high level government officials such as presidents, ministers, legislative officers, central Bank governor, police and custom chiefs, military generals is very important. By doing this, it will reduce the rate of corruption and good governance will stay.

Conclusions

From all indications one can see that good governance comes about when the leaders are transparent and there is fairness and justice. Social Studies as a problems solving subject is helping to fight corruption. A good leader should be sincere, straight forward and easy to be approached by his staff and other people.

Corruption is a dangerous social ill plaguing our nation, and as such it needs to be addressed immediately.

Recommendations

Base on the discussion so far, it is clearly known that Social Studies is a problem solving subject. The subject will make the individual useful to himself and society. To make the country move forward one need to adhere to the following recommendations.

1. The attitude of people toward “get rich quick” must be stopped.
2. Those who misuse public funds should be punished.
3. Good welfare packages should be given to civil servants in the form of salary increase.
4. Nigerians should come closer to God.
5. Nigeria should think of what they can do for their country rather than what they can get out of their country.

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