

**COUNSELING FOR EFFECTIVE CITIZENSHIP AND NATIONAL RE-BIRTH IN POST COVID-19 ERA
WITH SUBTHEME: IS RE-ORIENTATION AGAINST BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION**

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Abstract

This paper is titled: Re-orientation against Bribery and Corruption; It investigates the general situation of bribery and corruption in Nigeria. It identifies the unlawful acts of giving and receiving of gratification in government functionaries, political associations, academic institutions, contracting and merchandise business as bribery and it encourages corruption in our body polity. It also observes that bribery and corruption has become endemic such that, the citizenry are currently suffering its malaise, especially during the post COVID-19 era. For example; there is increase in drug abuse, kidnapping, violence, hunger, poverty, unemployment and insecurity. The paper highlights available strategies generally in place to tackle the challenges of bribery and corruption and viewed them as inadequate. It employed critical survey method based on interviews and interaction with others. It equally employed analytical method in reviewing approaches and strategies to checkmate bribery and corruption. The findings revealed evidence of orientation against bribery and corruption over the years but no proven successes have been recorded. It also discloses that, retreats, and counseling as a means of orientation against bribery and corruption had severally been conducted by institutions, and government yet the problem of bribery and corruption persisted in the society. It also reveals that, the subjects of bribery and corruption have severally been arrested and convicted, but bribery and corruption remained endemic in our body polity. It recommends a new re-orientation against bribery and corruption with the aid of moral theological and psychological anti-corruption and bribery tools, to inject a new moral order into the society. The paper further argues that, where retreats, counseling, arrests and conviction of subjects of bribery and corruption, have failed as a measure to stamp out bribery and corruption, the only moral approach is introduction of anti-corruption education in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in order to catch the subjects of future leadership young. The introduction of anti-corruption education coupled with the existing counseling units shall strengthen and inject moral and effective leadership. The paper recommends the course schedules namely; understanding the terms, causes, effects and solutions to bribery and corruption for the attainment of re-orientation against bribery and corruption.

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Introduction

The human nature is characterized by constant change in focus or direction in all aspect of actualizing responsibility. People take up responsibilities as leaders in families, while some people are entrusted with the responsibility of leadership in institutions,

corporate bodies, communities and Government. For those who take up responsibilities as leaders in families, they regard the family as a unit founded and nurtured by them. On account of this perception of family as solely theirs, they

scarcely allow bribery and corruption to be practiced in the family. Their effort to disallow bribery and corruption in their families could be viewed as individualistic. Their care is especially on account of the fact that the family belongs to them and they are leaders of the family.

On the other hand, those who have been entrusted with leadership roles of others outside the family through selective leadership, have different view of responsibility. They view the responsibility entrusted to them as leaders of other people, as a service that must be reciprocated with bribery and corruption. Whereas, the people who gave them mandate to be responsible for their wellbeing think and expect moral good and collective leadership, their leadership perception is different. By this difference in perception of responsibility as inherited and responsibility as selected, there appears a divergence in perception of their roles of responsibility. This results in bribery and corruption, unacceptable and unethical to moral living in the society.

Concept of Re-orientation against Bribery and Corruption

It is pertinent to examine the dimensions of bribery and corruption in this paper, and also the need for re-orientation against it in our contemporary times. The dimensions of bribery and corruption could be viewed in these perspectives, namely: Foundational and acquisition.

On the foundational aspect of bribery and corruption, the core root of it belongs to the "human act". The human act with its origin in the Latin word "actushumanus" is corrupt, and has a temperament nature. This corrupt nature is in-built in the human person from the blood lineage of parents, what one can call genes. Any human act tied

to thissenairo of nature is foundational from corrupt source and cannot be stamped out by any form of corrective measures of instilling morality. In the same manner, those who possess this negative foundational bribery and corrupt nature remain slaves to bribery and corruption; to them, it is the normal way of life.

Another dimension as earlier mentioned is the acquisitional bribery and corruption syndrome. Those found in the category of this lifestyle acquired it from those who practice bribery and corruption as their lifestyle because; they are the foundational subjects of this human act. Though both foundational and acquisition perception is human acts, the foundational perspective differs from the acquisition perspective. The fact is that, because the subjects of bribery and corruption by acquisition can easily change their attitudes towards bribery and corruption on hearing the word of a moral counselor. Those of the foundational bribery and corrupt nature will never change their mindset even after several counseling skills and training. There is therefore a divergence in the human act of bribery and corruption, when critically examined from the foundational and acquisition perspectives.

Consequently, we have introduced the changes that occurred on humans and divergence of human act of bribery and corruption, the nature and acquisitioned dimension. The causes of both shall be expatiated in the next segment of this paper.

Origin of Bribery and Corruption

The word bribery has its origin from the Middle English word "briber" meaning, "theft" which is an action of stealing. This means taking another person's life or property without the person's permission or consent, with the intent to deprive the

rightful owner of its possession. (www.antibribery.com).

When a case of offering, promising, giving, accepting or soliciting of an advantage as an inducement for an action is prevalent, it is illegal and unethical, and a breach of trust.

Bribery can best be described as an act of secret deprivation of the people of their belonging in both cash and kind. It is secret because the owners are not aware of such deprivation and when it is carried out, people will be suffering the effect of the deprivation of what belongs to them.

Corruption is defined as dishonest or fraudulent conduct by persons, (www.transparency.org). The word corruption originated from the Latin word "corrupter" meaning "to ruin". To ruin means, to break into pieces. Therefore, those involved in corruption are intent on scattering and dismembering of an organized institution and society

Causes of Bribery and Corruption

Bribery and corruption are identified as endemic moral problem in the society. Although, the subject of bribery and corruption are human beings and the endemic outcome is disastrous as it inhibits the course of progression and development of the body polity, these are causes and effects.

Hence, the call for re-orientation against this malaise of human society, and its negative effects to the existence of the moral order. The conduct of further exegetical study on these words, bribery and corruption will be of great help in understanding how re-orientation against them will be applied.

Effects of Bribery and Corruption

When bribery and corruption creep into a relationship, family, institution and

community, it is bound to break into pieces. Thus, bribery and corruption are enemies of a united institution, established in marriages, families, communities and Government. Take the case of a computer with good and efficient functionality and the joy and success derived from its excellent performance. Then compare the sadness and pain, the suffering and loss of saved document, and indeed the poor performance of the computer system, when it suddenly becomes corrupt as a result of theft. There will be countless losses, disruption of progress in the institution or any organizational secretarial department affected. This is what happens in a family, institution and Government when the structured system is functioning excellently, everyone is happy and success is assured. When the system becomes corrupt as a result of theft, the whole subject of the family, institution or Government suffers greatly.

Now it has become clear that, a departure from doing the right thing constitutes bribery and corruption. Yet this departure is categorized under what is called human act (a Latin phrase is *actushumanus*). This human act consists in the free will of man, and it comes under the moral order. The Pastoral Guide narrates this human act as follows; "All human acts, which proceeds from the free will of man, come under the moral order". These acts are neither good nor bad. For man is free, rather to direct them or not to direct them to God :(Pastoral Guide No 7. P.30). from the origin of creation, "God created man in His image and likeness" (Gen 1:26). At the same time God gave man the power "to govern the earth and subdue it" Gen 1:28) "Rather than giving human being rights over nature, this verse directs humanity to be alive to their responsibility of caring for nature, in a way

that is consistent with God's will (Liz Jakimow in religion and human rights). The Lord God gave man power and free will to do the moral good, to be virtuous not to live in bribery and corruption, because all things God created were so good (Gen 1:31). As such, badness being intertwined with bribery and corruption has nothing good to offer to the human being and even nature.

The nature of human act therefore reveals that all humans are made to belong to God the only "One that is good" (Matt 19:17). Man therefore sharing the nature of God, should exhibit the real virtuous attributes of God imprinted in him from creation.

Re-orientation/counseling intervention against Bribery and Corruption

The word re-orientation is defined by Oxford Advanced English Dictionary, as "Re-strategizing, to change focus, to try another style of approach of solving a problem". This re-orientation calls for charting a new way to combat bribery and corruption. Everyone has a burning passion for justice in the family, institutions and the global community. It does not matter where one is domiciled and the kind or quality of one's profession, the passion for justice remains a moral concern. The moral concern and burning passion for justice for all subjects metamorphosed in the choice of re-orientation against bribery and corruption as a Sub-theme, in the Counseling Association of Nigeria's, International Conference holding at Ibadan today. The central THEME says, Counseling for Effective Citizenship and National Rebirth in Post Covid-19 ERA.

There is of course a convergence in this Theme which demands effective Citizenship and National Rebirth in post national COVID-19 Era, with the Sub theme, which recommends "Re-orientation against

bribery and corruption". The great wisdom observed in this theme and Sub-theme is that there is a demand for effective citizenship and national rebirth and this can only be achieved by re-orientation against bribery and corruption.

The Apostle John in his biblical writing and teachings says; "You must be born again to enter the kingdom of Heaven" (John 3:7-8). This is a moral way to achieve National rebirth, to attain effective Citizenship through counseling. This paper presents the Counseling tips for our national rebirth, to enhance effective Citizenship in our body polity, taking a cue from the gospel of John "You must be born new" (John 3:7-8).

This rebirth taught by Apostle John has an undertone of natural law of justice. That natural law is concerned with what is good both of soul and body. Pastoral Guide defines justice as "a cardinal virtue which inclines one to give another his due. Denis O' Callaghay defines law as "a moral virtue which inclines one to respect other's personality and to grant one what is due to one as an individual charged with the responsibility of one's own destiny. Justice is the existence and co-existence of man as well as of communities, societies and people (p. 512).

Determinants of Re-orientation against Bribery and Corruption

The only way forward to achieve the set objective of effective citizenship and national rebirth and to prove that after COVID-19 pandemic, the great lessons we have learnt is to change our focus and direction towards education of the young. The combatant and confrontational attitude towards bribery and corruption will not result in achieving the set objective, namely solution, but re-orientation against bribery

and corruption. There is urgent need to change our focus. We seem to have lost in the battle with a particular method of fighting bribery and corruption. It is like one facing the North Pole only, instead of trying the South Pole also. So we need a change of strategy.

Change of Strategy on Combating against Bribery and Corruption

The new strategy is to incorporate “Anti-Bribery and Corruption Education Courses” in our primary, secondary and tertiary institutions as means of injecting national rebirth of new consciences, justice, moral virtues in our body polity. With this strategy, a re-orientation device will be actualized for a better and effective Citizenship.

The presenter argues that, the present method of setting up counseling units in the primary, secondary and tertiary institutions is inadequate and cannot be sufficient to impart ethical moral virtues on the citizenry. The Counseling units can continue to be a means of refreshing the minds of the students that during their primary, secondary and university levels, they were taught the positive and negative implications of anti-bribery and corruption in the school. The presenter further argues that, over the years there were counseling centers and professional counselors engaged in counseling of the present leaders in Government and corporate bodies and institution, yet the problem of bribery and corruption persists.

The presenter observes that there seems to be a lacuna in the moral and ethical teaching methodology in our educational institution, such that, morals and ethics were belatedly impacted on the citizenry. Therefore, the presenter advocates for the

early inclusion of these moral and ethical codes of living in the schools to suppress bribery and corruption mindset from infancy, stressing that Jesus was always found in the Temple even from 12 years old.

The Temple where Jesus was always found is an assembly where all families gather to learn about moral virtues of God. Therefore, the family which consists of father, mother and child, may not adequately impact moral and ethics upon the children alone, the Government should help to fine tune what the parents have begun on their children.

The presenter includes the guidelines for Anti-Bribery/Corruption education and suggests its implementation as an antidote to the daily rising moral problem of bribery and corruption in the society.

Establishing Anti-Bribery and Corruption Education; a Re-Oriented against Bribery and Corruption.

The Second Vatican Council on Children’s Education teaches that; “As it is the parents who gave life to their children, to them is laid the gravest responsibility of educating their offspring” (*Gravissimum Educationis* G.E.3). The quest for education is as old as creation itself. From the beginning of the world, education came into being. God the author and source of education was the first to impact education to mankind. When God said “let there be light and light appeared on earth” (**Genesis 1:1**). This is the origin and emergence of education that is, bringing into existence in the physical what does not exist. Education therefore is an act of the spirit from within, with its appearance made manifest through a being that came through the action of the Divine. It suffices to say that, teaching, learning and skill, all came from God the giver of wisdom, knowledge

and understanding. These are free gifts of the Holy Spirit of God. "But the counselor, the Ruach, Holy spirit, whom the Father will send in my name will teach you everything" John 14:26.

In this case, "everything" includes all revelation by utterance and prophesies all sums up the characteristics of education. Further education comes from teaching what has been in place. Scientists would like to know, even philosophers, psychologists, theologians, all will like to ascertain how, what and why certain things came into being in the physical. Even then, they need to consult God within "in whom we live, move and have our being" (Acts. 17: 28) in order to comprehend it clearly. Ultimately, God is the centrality of education and not man. He uses man as an instrument of education to teach people the power of knowledge.

In this presentation, we discuss anti-bribery/corruption education, not from human wisdom, but by God's wisdom and insight. This God's wisdom, hereby directs us to focus on the foundation of education impacted by the word of God Himself. Apostle John, said, "In the beginning was the Word, the word was with God, and the word was God" (John 1:1). The lesson here is that even in the Old Testament text, the same Word came from God the author of the Word and He brings to reality and makes what is in the spirit to manifest in the physical. That is to say, nothing in the physical can even appear without God's approval and seal. On this fact rests the frame work for achieving morality in our body polity, by implementation of anti-bribery/corruption education.

The goals we aim at achieving with this paper are teaching, and learning from what is being taught. Those who teach receives the mandate of the Holy Spirit, just like the apostles received in acts of Apostles

"you will receive power from on high, when the Holy Spirit comes upon you," (Acts 1:8). This power is still available today to our teachers in the family, churches, schools, mosques and traditional religionists. We can still use the services of the qualified counselors to teach others. When I say those qualified, it means those who have what should be offered to those who do not have it. The Latin proverbial word says "*Nemodat quod non habent*" meaning in English "you do not give what you do not have."

What is expected of the teachers to possess are already there within the counselors and moralists, such as wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counseling, piety, fortitude and fear of the Lord. In his epistle to the Galatians, St. Paul also enumerates the following as the fruits of the Holy Spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Gal. 5:22). Thomas Aquinas, a doctor of the Church and a Catholic Priest, Philosopher, Theologian and Jurist in the tradition of Scholasticism, defended the propositions of St. Paul in his *Summae Theologie* "It is therefore impossible for a teacher without these gifts to impact morality on the young since he needs to possess them in his character".

Anti-Bribery and Corruption education should start from the home, the school of human virtues. The parents should, prepare the children to undertake a formal education in the school. The Churches and, Mosques will also impact religious morals including the natural law as a means of preparing the brain of the child, make it fertile to receive formal education in the subject matter. Anti-bribery/corruption subjects being presented here-under, are to be introduced and included in the school curriculum as soon as possible, to ensure our

victory in re-orientation against bribery and corruption.

Achieving a Corrupt Free Society with the Foundation of Morality.

“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God and the authorities that exist are approved by God” (Rom. 13: 1 – 2)

Freedom is a right. Everyone wants to be free. Freedom from shackles of imprisonment, freedom from bondage, freedom from insecurity, financial freedom, economic freedom. Indeed freedom is a gift itself from the only one that is free from immoral, bribery and corrupt practices. The demand and quest for freedom remains unending to man. The term freedom is the power or right to think, act, speak, or think as one wants. “Freedom cannot be bestowed, it must be achieved” <https://www.goodnet.org>.

In this paper presentation for actualizing bribery/corrupt free society with the foundation of morality, we think about what morality is all about. It is the principle of study of right and wrong behavior. On this, we look at choices when we think of freedom. If freedom is simply as defined, that I should speak, think, act the way I like, without recourse to morality and who I am, as a human being, it is not a complete freedom. In Igbo language, human being is translated to mean “Mmadu.” That means the “beauty of life,” the “Mma” is beauty, while “Ndu” is life. It follows that God created the beauty of life from Himself who is all good, for “No one is good but God” (Matt. 19:17). Also from the beginning God created man and all the things He made and declared them “all good” (Gen. 1:31). It is therefore goodness that begets goodness, not badness coming from good. God is all good and made man to become good in him.

This is the truism of reasoning, not just freedom to do anything one likes to do or say, or think. This is the basic and fundamental truth that should guide our conscience, when we contemplate on the meaning of freedom also in a moral perspective. The above quotation, which says “all souls are subject to the ruling authority”. Of course, we know that authority is an entrusted power to act. It is the people that entrusted the rulers in a democratic setting, with the authority to rule and govern according to the dictates of the constitution. There is a saying in Latin “*Vos populus Vos Dei*” meaning in English “the voice of the people is the voice of God.” It follows that the people choose a leader. As a leader, he is the chief shepherd of the people. By right and by obligation, he must protect, defend their rights, from aggression; He will always provide for them, because he is accountable to them and God. To the followers, they have an obligation to remain submissive to their leader. It is their right to receive various rewards for being submissive to their leader. Such rights are education, health care, good water, food, good roads, accommodation, and effective agricultural support. When the followers lack those listed benefits they will complain of uncaring leadership.

However, certain obligations like payment of taxes, revenues, and being patriotic are some of the characteristics of followership. The citizenry must try to protect the infrastructures built by government for the good of the people, and not to destroy them. This is where morality comes into play, adequate payment of taxes, revenues and protection of government structures. The structures are the highways customs, energy sector, immigration, water ways, Ports authority and all parasites of government must be protected by the

people, by their refusal to indulge in bribery and corruption. They should also not propose bribery to secure contracts from governments officials because it will only jeopardize the effort of government towards meaningful development.

This is how; we can secure freedom for our society, refusing to do what is wrong, is what morality is all about. Being subject to the ruling authorities is to support the government in doing what is right and rejecting what is wrong and refusal to bring the people to corrupt practices.

Time has come when we, as a people must think of a way forward. The way forward is centered on doing what is right, to achieve freedom. In all, we take a close survey on the people who did well in the past, think of the saints, holy men and women of all races, the most humble of men, Abraham, and Jacob, our ancestors, and others whose names are not written down but we know them. The bible asks the questions "is there any man who lived uprightly, and seen begging food." (Psalm 37:5). It is our deeds that will surely judge us, not even our position or material wealth, but how we acquired them and used them.

Thinking about freedom from the slavery of bribery and corruption, through anti-corruption education is helpful, though, we need to reflect each day we rise in the morning, and say God has given us another opportunity to reflect and change our way of life, or our lifestyles. When we rise healthy in the morning, we think it is a right, or we have done good, the answer is that it is by God's grace. Let us utilize the opportunity of life we are enjoying to make a "u-turn" and embrace morality. This is to change within, and when we cannot change let us consult the unchangeable God or Allah to help us for "with God all things are possible (Luke 1:37).

Achieving a robust and free Nigeria society belongs to the people of Nigeria not to Nigeria. We have individual effort to change and renew the face of the earth by saying no to bribery and corruption, and we enjoy freedom. Let everyone in public office learn to say no, to bribery and corruption, just for a minute and see the difference. Let every businessmen and women learn to say no to bribery, corruption extortion, nepotism, and favoritism, just for a month and we can see a great difference. By so doing, we are preparing to send our children to anti-bribery/corruption educational institution, because we have started it in ourselves. Let all those in government, business, schools, armed forces, prisons, customs, churches, mosques, schools and all facets of institution in Nigeria make the new move to inject morality into our body polity and let us watch and see the difference. All international transaction through the banks and elsewhere should reject bribery and corruption so that we can fully secure freedom from slavery of bribery and corruption and enthrone good morals in our society, then our country will experience a national rebirth.

Conclusions

The inclusion of anti-bribery/corruption education in the curriculum of schools is not just good or necessary, but urgent to save our nascent democracy from social malaise of bribery and corruption and decay. If sex education has been introduced in the school curriculum, to educate the youths on moral, the anti-bribery and corruption education should be included as well.

Though education progresses gradually within the human person, it suffices to say that, a step forward is better than a step backward. The federal

government led by President Muhammadu Buhari, has set a moral code of conduct by initiating a proclamation of anti-bribery/corruption war and campaign against bribery and corruption in our body polity. This is a bold step and the counselors with all the legislative bodies in Nigeria, should support him to make this more achievable before 2030.

Recommendations

This paper recommends the subjects to be taught in Primary/secondary schools the federal and state universities including private schools and placed under civic education as follows:

Recommendation of Courses Designed For Inclusion in the Civic Education of Schools' Curriculum

Anti-Bribery/Corruption Education Courses for Primary Schools.

Primary 1	To study the meaning and implication of bribery and corruption
Primary 2	To study the consequences of giving and receiving gratification
Primary 3	To study the meaning of extortion of money and properties.
Primary 4	Seeking and offering of illicit sexual acts for passing examination,(implications)
Primary 5	Meaning of extortion and implication, management and settlement of disputes
Primary 6	Review and compulsory tests/exams on bribery and corruption – anti-corruption practices

Anti-Bribery/Corruption Education For Secondary Schools.

J.S. S. 1	Bribery and corruption and consequences – Anti-corruption exercises/punishment
J.S. S. 2	Receiving and giving of bribes and how to avoid it/ punishment
J. S. S. 3	Extortion, cronyism, nepotism – what they mean and how to fight against it. Also applicable government sanction
Junior WAEC Examination on Anti-corruption education, a compulsory seminar before a child is promoted to S. S. 1	
S. S. 1	Bribery and corrupt practices. Seminar on how to eradicate it
S. S. 2	Conspiracies, extortions, cronyism, nepotism. Seminar on its eradication
S. S. 3	Bribery and corruption, anti-corruption
Senior WAEC, Seminar scores must be credit not pass before a student is admitted into the higher institution.	

Anti-Bribery/Corruption Courses For Higher Institutions, Polytechnics, Universities

Level 1	Paper presentation on anti-bribery and corruption (Eradication)
Level 2	Paper presentation on anti-corruption/nepotism and other social ills
Level 3	Seminar on anti-corruption education, cronyism and graft, extortion
Level 4	Final work project on anti-bribery/corruption, score must be upper and 2 nd class upper

The table shows how the anti-bribery/corruption courses should be fully integrated in the core education curriculum of schools. As it is rooted in the school system, so shall it be rooted into the subconscious of our children from age 6 to 18, just before they graduate from the

university. This methodology of teaching will assist the youths in reshaping the country's moral values and our country shall be positioned positively in the committee of nations.

For now, the current effort by government to expose all acts of

bribery/corruption is an eye opener and a way forward to lay a foundation for anti-bribery corruption education in our body polity. All hands must be on deck to actualize this dream by government. The parents of children, families, churches, mosques and educational institutions should rise to adopt moral standard of living as fast as possible by enthroning morality in the society.

All schools, both private and public should work towards the actualization of this project by government. With such moral education, which helps us to discern between wrong and right behavior, we shall achieve a more lively economic growth in our country to the glory of God, and our nation shall be ranked among bribery and corrupt free nations in the world.

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