THE FAILURE OF EDUCATION IN COMBATING CORRUPTION IN SUDAN: THE IMPACT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: The major question this paper addresses is why education has failed in combating corruption in Sudan and, as a consequence, obstructs sustainable development. Corruption is considered a threat to development in all countries. Education is key factor in curbing corruption. However, looking into the situation in the Sudan, corruption has become a phenomenon characterizing the public sector. It pervades almost in all aspect of life. In fact, Sudan is among the five top corrupted countries in the world. A major role of educational institutions is to provide the nation with knowledgeable and skilled manpower needed to contribute to the socio-economic and political developments. Educated government officials, who are the graduates of educational institutions, are expected to fight the abuse of public office not to exercise it and become corrupted themselves. The role and the power of education in shaping the values and building the morale of citizens are not disagreeable.

Face-to-face and telephone interviews were conducted to answer questions raised in this paper. Five Sudanese staff member at Sultan Qaboos University were interviewed using face-to-face interviews, and three faculty members at the University of Khartoum were interviewed using telephone interviews. The data collected provided answers to what needs to be done to allow education to fight the darkness of corruption for the sake of sustainable development in Sudan. Reforming the education system, developing anti-corruption education programs and raising public awareness are stated as important solutions to the problem.

Keywords: corruption, education, Sudan, sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION

Corruption has become a worldwide phenomenon. It exists in both rich and poor countries. Basu (2006) states: "The problem of corruption is neither new nor it is restricted to developing countries only". Transparency International (TI) reports show that corruption is a serious challenge to governments in both developed and developing countries. A World Bank report estimated that public officials worldwide received more than $ one trillion in bribe each year. In 2005, African Government Report identified corruption, poverty and unemployment as one of three topmost national problems in the continent. A study conducted by African Union in 2002 estimated that corruption costs African countries about $ 150 billion a year. (Blunt, 2002).

Fjeldstad (2003) studied the case of Tanzanian Revenue Authority in fighting corruption. He concluded that salary is one of the causes of corruptions and thus higher wages can be one of the factors that contribute to fighting corrupt behavior. He called for comprehensive administrative system reform to maintain sustainable development.

Klitgaard (1998) identified low level of accountability as one of conditions for corruption to take place. Hors (2001), investigating cases of corruption in custom administration and how to fight it, identified discretionary power and lack of efficient control. It is suggested that any anti-corruption strategy shall be developed in consideration of type and level of corruption, economic and political profile of the problem (Heineman and Heimann, 2006).

In Sudan, talks and gossip about, and discussions of, cases of corruption have become one of the main features of the society; corrupt actions have become a common practice in government offices in Sudan. This fact demonstrates the wide spread recognition of corruption as a serious problem that the government of Sudan need to solve. According to the 2010 Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, Sudan is one the five most corrupt countries, and ranks 172 out of 178 countries in the index, leaving only Iraq, Afghanistan, Myanmar and Somalia behind. (Transparency International, 2010).

Senior officials are awarded contracts in a corrupt manner. Few contractors known to senior government officials were awarded the bulk of government contracts without due regard to competitive bidding. Public servants are increasingly unwilling to perform their normal duties without some form of extra private inducement. And, unfortunately, those who are corrupt and able to embezzle public fund are considered as successful achievers.

The National Assembly, known as "parliament", announced it has received 65 reports on corruption but considers them as "exaggerated" talks of a rampant government graft. The state's general auditor reported in October 2010 that many government agencies refused to allow him to access their financial records. Instead of conducting clear and transparent investigation, parliament members and Sudanese government officials usually deny the existence of widespread government corruption despite public perception to the contrary. (Sudan Tribune, April 9, 2011)

The National Assembly also revealed that it possesses documents and evidences of abuses and corruption in the General Authority for Hajj and Umrah. The Assembly, therefor, asked the Ministerial Committee formed by the Ministry of Guidance to be independent and to disclose names of all of those involved.

The Deputy of the Parliament asked Parliament's Agriculture Committee to investigate and look into the amount of a financial hit of $ (10) million euros, which is the value of a transaction done between the Ministry of Agriculture and a company without bidding. He stressed the follow-up of payment of compensation to farmers, calling the deal "a great loss to the economy of Sudan".

Another form of corruption in Sudan involves payments of GHOST workers. These are payments made in the names of people who do not exist. The People involved could be children, old people, mere fictitious names, dead persons or people working in different ministries and departments or organizations (Barnabas (2007).

Some of the conclusions one might draw from the present situation in Sudan are: first, people expect and detect corruption in all aspect of the administrative systems in Sudan. Second, corruption has become an outstanding feature of Sudan's public sector. However, to be fair, a general statement claiming that the entire public sector is corrupt cannot be made. There are employees who resist corruption and any other form of immoral acts. So it is important whenever corruption is investigated to remember and salute the incorruptible, honest, God fearing, dedicated, ethical employees who are working hard to contribute to the wellbeing and development of their country.

Definition of corruption

In literature, the definition of corruption has been classified into three groups. First, public-office-centered definition, which takes form of deviation from legal and public duty norms for gaining private benefits (Werner, 1983). The often used definition for this type of corruption "… behavior which deviates from the formal duties of public rule because of private-regarding (personal, close family private clique) pecuniary or status gains; or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private regarding influence (Gaiden, 1977). According to Heidenheimer (1978), public-office-centered corruption includes "such behavior as *bribery* (use of reward to pervert the judgment of a person in a position of trust); *nepotism* (bestowal of patronage by reason of ascriptive relationship rather than merit); and *misappropriation* of public resources for private-regarding uses".

Second, public-duty-centered definition, which "emphasizes the betrayal of public interests by preference of particular to common interests (Werner, 1983)". This type of corruption takes place "whenever a power holder … or office holder is by monetary or other rewards not legally provided for, induced to take an action which favors whoever provides the rewards, and there by does damage to the public and its interests (Gaiden, 1977)".

Third, market-centered definition, which views corruption as a "maximizing unit". Klaveren states

that "A corrupt civil servant regards his office as a business, the income of which he will … seek to maximize. The office then becomes a maximize unit. The size of his income depends on the market situation and his talent for finding the point of maximal gain on the public demand curve (Heidenheimer, 1978). In Addition, Werner (1983) describes the market-centered corruption as "a special type of stock-in-trade by which public officials maximize pecuniary gains according to the supply and demand that exist in the market-place of their official domains". Gaiden (1977) suggested that this type of corruption takes place in when legal institutions are used by individuals or groups to gain influence over the actions of bureaucracy.

It has also been stated that: "Corruption while being tied particularly to the act of bribery, is a general term covering misuse of authority as a result of considerations of personal gain, which need not to be monetary … In its widest connotation, corruption includes improper and selfish exercise of power and influence attached to a public office or to the special position on occupies in public life (Heidenheimer, 1978)". Eker (1981) reserved the term corruption the "practice of using the power of office for making private gain in breach of laws and regulations normally in force". McMullan (1961) calls a public official corrupt "if he accepts money … for doing something that he is under duty to do anyway, that he is under duty not to do, or to exercise a legitimate discretion for improper reasons".

The UNDP (2004) defined corruption as the "misuse of public power, office or authority for private benefit – through bribery, extortion, influence peddling, nepotism, fraud, speed money or embezzlement". Likewise, Transparency International (2002) defined corruption as "an inappropriate or illegal behavior of the public sector official (politician or public officer) by misusing the entrusted power for private gain of the person or related people". The World Bank (1997) defined corruption as "the abuse of public office for private gains".

Idakwoji (2010) also defined corruption as "any form of anti-established behavior perpetrated by someone in authority with the intent to pervert roles or norms for selfish interest". Iheriohanma (2011) considered corruption as immoral, uncoordinated but conscious efforts by individuals or a group of people or institutions to amerce private wealth through illegal use of public resources.

Corruption has been described by many people in different ways. However, it seems that there is general agreement on the definition of corruption. All agree to label the use of public office for private advantage as corruption. Corruption is also described as a negative performance of the public sectors. The

working definition of corruption for the purpose of this paper will be: the use of power of public office for private gain.

Sources of corruption

There are three sources of corruption. The first holds that when a particular political system attaches a relatively high value to favors, personal loyalty and private gain; and relatively low value to probity and impersonal efficiency, corruption will take place.

The second theory holds that "corruption is the result of ordinary men facing extraordinary temptations". It is argued that corruption is not a result of defect in character; rather it is the inevitable sequence of a social system in which men hold power, wealth and status.

The third theory explains why corruption appears to be common in the Unites States. According to this theory, the executive and legislative branches in the U.S. are separated by constitutional checks and balances. Therefore, if anything is to be done, power holders must join together. The American administrative is "so constituted that it cannot be carried on without corruption".

McMullan (1961) argued that two factors contribute to the rise of corruption. First, the clash between old customs and attitude. The case of Africa is the best example for this factor. The customary gifts, the family and tribal loyalties and the extended family system as an element in African traditional life have led to the growth of corruption in the modern African administrative systems. Second, the operation of certain laws becomes a source of corruption in many countries of the world. Laws put certain groups or individuals under a disadvantage. Those groups or individuals are those who will then do what the laws forbid, and thus they become a source of corruption.

Studying factors that facilitate financial corruption in the Sudan, El-Nafabi (2010) identified weak and ineffective internal control systems, deficiencies in the accounting systems, the penalties are not harsh enough, very low salary levels, backlog of external auditing, and nepotism. He revealed that financial corruption in the Sudan is deeply rooted and is institutionalized.

Clarke (1983) has suggested three factors as circumstances which impel public officers to exercise corruption. These factors are "the salaries paid; the opportunities presented for illegal use of office; and policies, to mean both detection and punishment". These three factors are to be considered simultaneously, not individually. This means corruption occurs frequently when there are low salaries great opportunities and weak policing.

Gibson (2000) identified four types of excuses usually made to justify immoral actions: I was told to do it; everybody is doing it; my actions won't make any difference; and it is not my problem.

Hope (1997) has identified six factors that contribute to administrative corruption. These factors are as follows: (1) The absence of a civil service work ethics, which is witnessed in the behavior of civil servants. They arrive at work late and leave early, they take extra hour for lunch time, they steal public property, they accept bribes for performances that are part of their duties, and they alienate the public by losing files or pretending that they have not heard of the matter before. Unfortunately, lack of work ethics does not function as source of corruption only but also as obstacles for development. (2) Regression rather than progression in terms of economic development, which creates two classes in the society: the haves and the have-nots. This inequality forces public servants to not only to be corrupt but to initiate corruption when it does not exist. (3) Lack of leadership and discipline exhibited by politicians. Administrative corruption tends to be more widespread when the political system is weak and corrupt. (4) Large numbers of roles and regulations and government controls over a wide activities and services. Since regulations can be used as ways for bargaining, they provide greater opportunities for corruption. (5) Cultural norms. In many countries bureaucrats are faced with the choice of either accepting traditional standards or adhering to the standards of modern development administration. (6) Finally, corruption takes place when there is comparatively underdeveloped state of countervailing power. In other words, the public opinion does not exert forces against the corrupted party. When the public or any agency does not monitor the performance of the public sector, the bureaucracy is free to act in its own interest rather than the interest of the public.

Eker (1981) divides the conditions under which corruption flourish into two conditions, necessary and sufficient conditions. The necessary conditions are the existence of surplus national wealth, a high growth rate of national wealth and a great concentration of power in the hands of officials. The sufficient conditions are referred to as the moral code and the structure of authority.

METHOD

Informal conversational interviews were conducted to collect data needed for this research. This method was useful in eliciting information and exploring the views and experiences of research participants (interviewees). This technique allowed participants to speak freely and frankly about the research topic.

Interviews were collected from six Sudanese university staff members, three at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), Muscat, Sultanate of Oman; and three from University of Khartoum, Sudan. Telephone interviews were conducted with each participant in University of Khartoum; while face-to-face interviews were conducted with participants from SQU.

It should be mentioned here that participants interviewed via telephone, compared to participants with face-to-face interviews, were less engaged in the conversations and the interviews took shorter time. Because participants were present and reside on campus with the researcher, face-to-face were used and thus allowed for more time and longer interviews. However, both techniques were useful and appropriate to be used for the purpose of this research paper.

Participants were identified by their first initials. Participants (A), (O) and (M) are from SQU; and participants (F), (I) and (H) are from University of Khartoum.

RESULTS AND DISCUSION

Participants were asked to answer two main questions: why educated public servants, who are the products of the national educational system, become corrupt? And what can be done to fight corruption?

Participant (A) identifies lack of sense of belonging as one of the main reasons for being dishonest and vulnerable to immoral behaviors. The educational system is partially responsible for that. Graduates of educational institutions are not well disciplined and unequipped with ethics and skills needed in the work place. Recent university graduates want to get rich, so working for self interest comes before public interest; and personal gain is more important than serving the country.

Education seems to be no longer a priority or a concern for the government. There is cut in the education budget, teachers' salaries are low and school buildings are neglected. As a result, the quality of education is damaged and educational institutions produce low quality graduates. Once they enter the work force, such graduates think of making money by all means possible. The society does not question those who become rich and accumulate money soon after their graduation and in a very short period of time.

He suggested three solutions to the problem: include citizenship education in school curriculum, promote work ethics and make fighting corruption a top priority. The education system need to be reformed and enabled to teach children to love and be proud of their country, and become good citizens. A citizen

who is aware of his rights, duties and responsibilities towards himself and towards his community at large.

Participant (O), blaming the society members as well and not the public servants alone, explained that "the problem is that people are willing to bribe government officials in order to get their business done". Society members and public officers are both corrupt. This is a vicious circle where you have a corruptor who is ready to pay and a corrupted that is willing to receive bribes. Therefore, society members do not question those who become rich and accumulate money soon after their graduation and in a very short period of time.

The solution for such situation takes the two sides and both should be punished and prophet says "*God cursed the briber and the bribe*". The solutions lie in applying the laws and regulations. Best and effective approach in the fight against corruption, I believe, is to punish the briber (the person who bribes a public servant, to bend laws in order to speed completion of treatment, or a businessman bribing state officials to obtain government contracts or tenders).

Participant (M) stated that "Power combined with lack of accountability is the main reason for the existence of corruption in Sudan' public service". Using Lord Acton's phrase "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely", he argued that those who have power use it for private gain. He stressed that any person involved in corrupted behavior must be prosecuted. Anyone who embezzle public fund must return it and face the law. Another solution is to consider rotation of senior officers, not to stay in a powerful position for more than 3 or 4 years. Once they stay longer, they develop a strong network that is difficult to fight. Rotating the employees is important in fighting corruption, especially in departments where employees are subjected to a lot of pressure from other such as tender committees and audits. Transferring employees from one department to another and not allow them to stay in one department for long periods so as not to be subjected to blackmail and temptations by corrupt people. Similarity of work carried by these departments will smooth such rotations.

He suggested that development of anti-corruption program, reform of administrative system as most approaches to curb corrupt behaviors. The economic system needs to be developed as well. Most governmental operations are still cash based whish makes it hard to control and trace money paid in cash to officers. Salaries, not deposited to bank accounts, are paid through accountants. Checks and electronic banking must be the channel through which wages and payments are made. Thus, money can be controlled and corruptions opportunities can be reduced.

Participant (F) considers "low salary as the main reason for exercising corruption". He strongly believed that once salary provides the basic needs of a person, then that person will not need to accept bribes. But he added that "in addition to salary increase, enforcing the low on corrupted behavior is needed". Corruption occurs when workers receive low wages, and the problem is even worse when this low salary is delayed for days and weeks and in some cases for months. So how people provide for their basic needs, and how can they survive in such situations? In addition, low salary attracts unskilled and inefficient workers.

He added that corrupt public officers were neither corrupt nor do they seek corruption. But the system itself is corrupted, so once they join, then they are left with three options: join and become corrupt, resist and suffer sequences, leave (quit). In order to fight corruption, accountable and transparent leaders are needed.

Participant (I) sees lack of accountability and efficiency as the main source of corrupted behavior". This inefficiency is caused by political instability and civil war. Although Sudan has a very strong law against corruption and every Sudanese public official is required to declare his assets and the assets of his wife and under-age children, but we have not seen corrupt official brought to trial or being held responsible for their misuse of power.

He said that how can we fight corruption if some government officials still deny it exists. Thus protect those who practice it and embezzle public fund. Another point, he added, is that "our leaders do not practice what they preach. They say one thing and completely different things. Their intention is to stay in power for as long as possible". Corruption exists due to leadership crisis. Therefore, in order to fight corruption, we must start at the top. Only those who can set examples and models of honesty, responsibility, transparency, accountability and fear of God shall be placed in leadership positions.

Participant (H) said that "people, forgetting Allah and not feeling any guilt or shame, commit all different kinds of immoral act and not corruption only". They want to get rich as fast as possible. The solution is that people need to go back to Allah and remember that they are accountable to him for all sayings, actions and deeds. But, unfortunately, people nowadays are judged by how rich they are not by how much education they have. Thus, people become opportunistic.

Raising public awareness on corruption and how it damages the society is needed. The government alone cannot fight it, and the involvement and participation of people is crucial. In addition, laws and regulations

are enough to deal with corruption. Religious values must be taken into consideration if we want to win the fight against corruption.

THE IMPACT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Heineman and Heimann (2006) found that corruption restrain development programs and efforts. Corruption undermines social values and jeopardizes efforts for sustainable development. Abuarqub (2009) concluded that corruption has a devastating effect on the process of socio-economic development and on the prospects of achieving sustainable development.

Corruption damages societal values as well. Young and new generations will not see the importance of being ethics, morality and honesty. They well see that being honorable citizen takes them nowhere but bribe, cheating will. In his study on corruption in Negeria, Oshewolo (2011) states "The problem of corruption has eroded the moral fabric of our society. The socio-economic rights of the poor and vulnerable have been grossly violated. The menace has also undermined our democracy, subverted the rule of law and retarded political development".

In their analysis of impact of corruption on public provision of social services, Gupta et al. (2000) found that reducing corruption can result in significant social gains as measured by child and infant mortality rates and school dropout rates. The director-general of UNESCO, Koichiro Matsuura said "Such widespread corruption not only costs societies billions of dollars, it also seriously undermines the vital effort to provide education for all".

Agba (2010) identified corruption as a major impediment to sustainable development in Nigeria. It is considered most threating element to stability. In addition, Arowolo (2010) stated that corruption inhibits socio-economic development and denies equitable distribution of wealth and makes sure some sections of the country, which are considered 'ethnically disadvantaged' to remain worst off in the distributive arrangement of national resources.

Idakwoji (2010) stated that "no meaningful development can take place when the country and her citizens are swimming and neck-deep in the 'waters' of corruption". Therefore fighting corruption is a prerequisite for sustainable development. A BBC report showed that in Uganda leakages of funds in the process of transferring money from the Ministry of Education to schools was cut from 87% to 15%. This was due to war against corruption by providing information to local community and publicizing penalties taken against corrupt officials.

CONCLUSIONS

Corruption has become a serious challenge to sustainable development, and a real problem facing the government and people of Sudan. According to all those interviewed, the main causes of corruption in Sudan can be attributed to lack of accountability and transparency, inefficiency, concentration of power in hands of few people, low quality education, low salaries and weakness in faith of God.

The major problem is that corruption has huge negative impact on the country development programs. It hinders sustainable development efforts. The devastating consequences of misconduct and misuse of power is incalculable. As a result, curbing corruption should be of a high priority, and immediate actions need to be taken to minimize corruption.

In the light of information provided by the research participants, fighting corruption in Sudan will not be an easy task. Any anti-corruption efforts need to include, but not limited to reforming the general administrative system, apply the role of law, pay workers a decent salary, get community members and civil society organizations society members involved, enable the General Auditor Office to carry its duties independently and professionally. All of these efforts must be backed and supported by political commitment to minimize corruption.

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