THE VALUE OF MORAL EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP IN FIGHTING CORRUPTION IN KENYA

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Abstract:
Corruption is not a new phenomenon in Kenya. Every year, audit records indicate the tendency to break the previous records of losses with impunity. Anti-corruption agencies are yet to succeed in accurately identifying the culprits, prosecuting them successfully and recovering the hard earned funds that have been stolen. Further, a moral culture and institutional contexts that would make corruption repulsive, unattractive and unrewarding have not been developed. Such a moral culture would help in fostering ethically sensitive and committed leaders and citizens who would recognize fighting corruption in all its forms as their rightful and honourable duty. This paper addressed the problem of corruption in Kenya utilising philosophical methods of reflective analysis, evaluation and prescription. The author argues that moral education and leadership have greatly been underutilized. Moral education and leadership, with reference to fighting corruption, are conceived as comprising of three elements namely: ethical awareness, ethical sensitivity and ethical commitment to action. The paper proposes how moral education and leadership can be promoted and the likely challenges that would have to be confronted in the process at individual and corporate levels.

Key Concepts:
Corruption, Moral education, Moral leadership, Ethical awareness, Ethical sensitivity, Ethical commitment to action

1.1 Clarification of Key Concepts

In this paper, corruption refers to abuse of a position of trust for personal gain. It involves compromising or sacrificing the common good for the sake of benefiting oneself or one's close friends and relatives. Corruption therefore reflects insensitivity and indifference towards the violation of the rights of other people. Moral education is a process that facilitates ethical reasoning as well as development of intellectual and moral virtues. Moral leadership refers to the embodiment and use of ethical competence in inspiring and guiding people towards mutually beneficial goals. Ethical awareness refers to a state of being morally informed. Ethical sensitivity involves an emotional response that accompanies ethical awareness. This emotional response motivates pursuit of what is considered right and aversion to what is considered wrong. Ethical commitment to action

refers to a practical response driven by ethical awareness and ethical sensitivity. Ethical awareness facilitates one to distinguish between right and wrong intentions, actions and habits. Ethical sensitivity makes one feel ashamed, guilty or remorseful upon being aware that his intentions, actions or habits are harmful and therefore wrong. It is also involves a desire and longing to set things right. Ethical commitment to action makes one to seek forgiveness from those he has wronged and do any other thing that is needed to restore cordial relations with the wronged party. Moral education should foster ethical awareness, sensitivity and commitment to action. Moral leadership should exemplify ethical excellence in thought, word, action and character. This paper argues that corruption can be fought more effectively through moral education and leadership.

1.2 Corruption in Kenya

Corruption is not a new phenomenon in Kenya. What is new are the ever mutating forms it is taking and the harm it is wrecking to the prosperity, security, reputation, and integral well being and survival of our nation. Githongo (2016) observes that despite the fact that institutions have been set up and allocated resources to fight corruption, corruption is getting worse and more widespread in Kenya. EACC (2015) reports that a survey conducted in 2014 among Kenyans showed that Kenyans perceive corruption to be endemic. They also perceive the government as unable to eradicate the vice because it lacks the commitment and will to do so and many of its officers are implicated in corruption. Transparency International (2015) ranked Kenya number 139 globally with a score of 25 on the corruption perception index. This was below the Sub-Saharan Africa region average score of 33 and also below the global average score of 43. A country with a score of 50 or less is considered to be having a serious corruption problem. Ombaka (2015) asserts that the systemic corruption in Kenya has compromised the integrity and security of the state thus putting the future stability, prosperity and survival of the nation at risk. According to Svensson (2005), corruption is an outcome. It reflects the nature and quality of a country's legal, economic, cultural, political institutions. Importantly, corruption reflects the general moral quality of a people. It reflects their dominant values and priorities. Corruption in Kenya, therefore, indicates an economic, cultural, political and moral crisis. As ISAR (2013) aptly puts it, corruption is an undeclared national disaster which ought to be handled as an emergency that requires genuine and sustained collective effort to resolve.

1.3 The Key Challenges in the fight against Corruption in Kenya

An effective strategy to fight corruption has two main dimensions: preventive and reactive. The preventive dimension involves anti-corruption awareness, identification and sealing of corruption loopholes and establishment of institutions and processes that promote integrity, transparency and accountability. All these measures are aimed at making corruption undesirable and unrewarding. They also strive to make integrity and ethical conduct attractive and rewarding. The reactive dimension addresses corruption when it happens. It involves setting up mechanisms, processes and institutions that facilitate successful detection, investigation and prosecution of corruption; punishment of corrupt persons, recovery of assets and resources acquired corruptly and collaborating with other parties in anticorruption activities.

While several corruption scams have been detected and reported, it is evident that given the systemic nature of corruption in Kenya, there are more scandals that may have not been discovered or reported. In addition most scandals that have been reported have not been investigated successfully and conclusively. Corruption investigations, especially those involving huge sums of public money have rarely yielded successful prosecution and punishment of offenders. Little if any stolen funds and assets have been recovered and there seems to be little evidence that collaboration and networking with other anticorruption agencies has yielded tangible breakthroughs in terms of successful prosecutions and recovery of stolen wealth.

The Chief Justice and the President of the Supreme Court of Kenya was reported to have confessed that corruption networks in Kenya have penetrated even oversight institutions that are created to fight corruption (Kadida, 2016). This means that corruption has permeated all organs of government making fighting corruption complicated and self-defeating. The institutions entrusted to drive the preventive and reactive dimensions of fighting corruption are themselves complicit and thus lack the authority, commitment and will to effectively execute the mandate. This is indicative of lack of moral leadership.

Adama (2015) aptly discerns that corruption has become so deep rooted that it has become a culture and way of life. He observes that 2015 appears to have been the year that Kenya broke all previous records in terms of losses alleged to have been occasioned by corruption. President Mugabe of Zimbabwe hilariously commented that Kenyans appear so well equipped in the art of stealing that one may think they all learn and are certified for the course "Bachelor of Stealing"! (Mbagazi, 2015). This indicates that our formal, informal and non-formal systems of education have failed to foster anti-corruption values, attitudes and habits. This is evident in corruption investigations and prosecutions. The accused persons always plead innocent. There are claims and counterclaims of false accusations all geared towards saving oneself at all costs. Officers implicated in corruption have to be forced to step down. We never hear any apologies to Kenyans, any taking of responsibility, any sense of remorse. In some cases, those accused of corruption appear to become celebrities who are adored and emulated. In case they vie for political positions, they easily get them. All these indicate insensitivity to moral obligations and principles. They exemplify vices such as greed, impunity, indiscipline and injustice. This culture undermines the fight against corruption.

If one thought that the anti-corruption war will be won by the Kenyan youth, research indicates otherwise. Githongo (2016) and Waweru (2016) report that a survey done by the East African Institute of the Aga Khan University revealed that half of the respondents believed it does not matter how one acquires wealth as long as one does not get in jail. 47% of the respondents admired those who had acquired massive wealth fraudulently, 30% regarded corruption as profitable, 35% were willing to give or take bribes and 73 percent were afraid to stand up for what they believed was right. Most respondents predicted that corruption, moral decay and substance abuse would mark the future of Kenya. Since the respondents comprise of the proportion of the population considered the most educated, one can safely assume that their views reflect the values and attitudes that they have been socialized into by their home, school, peers, religion, leaders, community and nation. The youth have learned and embodied self-centeredness, greed for wealth, moral cowardice,

aversion to honest and hard work, disregard for the law and moral apathy. This condition reflects the moral status of the society at large.

While it is true that not all Kenyans are corrupt and there exist genuine anti-corruption efforts by the government and other players, there is clearly a need for a more vibrant moral leadership in the fight against corruption. Moral leadership as conceived in this paper is a quality that every Kenyan can develop. It is not necessarily a trait for persons at positions of responsibility. It is a conscientious and consistent pursuit of integrity in thought, word and action that is distinct and unmistakable. As such it provides moral direction and insight. When persons in positions of trust provide moral leadership, they appeal to the moral resources in other people thus inspiring moral integrity. Moral leadership involves courage to stand up for what is right despite opposition, ridicule and intimidation. Such a moral culture would help us develop ethically sensitive and committed leaders and citizens who would recognize fighting corruption in all its forms as their rightful and honourable duty.

1.4 Fighting Corruption: The Place of Moral Education and Leadership

As demonstrated in the foregoing section, corruption in Kenya reflects among other things moral risks and deficiencies. For instance, corruption is driven by insatiable greed making Kenya risk losing huge amounts of public resources thus denying Kenyans much deserved quality service delivery. This leads to erosion of public trust which further undermines democratic institutions and processes. To address the moral risks and deficiencies that partly give rise to and also perpetuate corruption, the author considers moral education and leadership viable.

Moral education refers to the formal, informal and non-formal processes that foster ethical reasoning and formation of virtue. It is a lifelong process that is facilitated by diverse agents and contexts. The school, for instance, is a formal context in which moral education can be enhanced. In formal contexts, teaching and learning opportunities are deliberately and systematically planned and executed. Peer groups and friendships are informal contexts where moral education can also take place. Informal contexts for learning are not systematically or deliberately planned. Instead, learning takes place through association, interaction and imitation. Non-formal contexts such as trips and excursions are organized activities outside the formal programmes in which learning activities are systematically structured and evaluated. These activities may have learning objectives which are pursued in a less formal manner. The learning contexts described above provide contexts for social interaction, morals reasoning and character formation.

Moral reasoning involves reflection on the rightness or wrongness of human intentions and actions. This evaluation of human conduct is based on moral principles that one considers acceptable for guiding and assessing conduct. Moral reasoning presupposes basic moral awareness. One has to be aware about the social and rational nature of humans. As a rational and social being, a human person has purposes and interests which can be promoted and undermined by other people. Principles of right and wrong define how intentions, actions and habits of certain sorts either undermine or promote human well being. These principles cannot be mechanically applied into complex human situations. They require justifiable application thus the need for moral reasoning.

Moral education equips learners with moral information and moral reasoning skills that enables them to interrogate moral situations and problems and navigate their way out of them in ways that take into consideration human dignity as well as rights and obligations of the parties involved. This makes moral education necessary for responsible citizenship as affirmed by Althof & Berkowitz (2006). Repeated pursuit of right actions and avoidance of wrong actions leads to formation of habits and conscientious patterns of conduct that ultimately become stable traits of character that are embodied as states of being of an individual. Such an individual applies the moral point of view along with other points of view while making decisions about what to believe and do. This consistent use of the moral point of view, which is the desirable outcome of moral education, is what this paper defines as moral leadership. It involves being guided consistently by the moral point of view. It is reinforced by moral education which is a lifelong process.

Howard (2012) argues that humanity faces a crisis of moral leadership. He defines moral leaders as persons that are consistently and conscientiously guided by well reasoned moral principles. Such persons provide moral influence and examples in society. They exhibit intellectual, emotional and interpersonal capabilities such as truthfulness, reasonableness, commitment, integrity, humility and courage. Moral leaders, by example, communicate what they value and motivate others to adopt the moral point of view. When moral leaders assume positions of authority their influence has been found to impact on organisations and their members positively. For instance, Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Salvador (2009) found that managers who are perceived to be ethical influence productive employee behaviour. Their influence also discourages counter-productive employee behaviour. Schminke, Wells, Peyrefitte, &Sebora (2002) also established that employees tend to conform to the ethical values of their managers. Such research findings indicate that moral leadership has a positive influence on human conduct.

Moral education and leadership can make a positive contribution in combating corruption by enhancing preventive and reactive anti-corruption activities. By promoting moral awareness, moral education and leadership makes people appreciate the meaning, nature forms and consequences of corruption. People get informed about the implications of corruption on human relationships and wellbeing. They also get to know about the cost of corruption and its adverse effects on future generations. Moral awareness also makes people identify the influences that drive corruption in society. Moral awareness facilitates debate on corruption which is useful in promoting ethical reasoning. Moral debates on corruption provide opportunities for people to engage the arguments made in favour of or against corruption and take a reasoned personal position in the debate. Assumptions on which the arguments are made are exposed to scrutiny. The moral principles and evidence used to support positions taken are also examined. The values that guide conduct are made evident and the reasons that make corruption wrong are appreciated. Moral awareness facilitates responsible decision making. Even if it is still possible for people to make wrong choices as they indeed do, they are in a position (often times with some effort) to figure out that they are wrong and why it is so.

Awareness alone is not effective unless it is accompanied by appropriate sensitivity. Moral sensitivity is motivational and it inclines the will to respond to the awareness obtained. Moral sensitivity is fostered by imaginatively putting oneself in the place of others and thus empathetically

sharing their feelings and experiences. Without this empathic sensitivity, humans are indifferent to the suffering or happiness of their fellow beings and therefore do not feel obligated to alleviate or enhance it respectively. Moral sensitivity inclines one to action. This commitment to action is the concrete and explicit means of actualising moral transformation. In relation to corruption, knowing that bribe taking or giving is wrong is moral awareness. Feeling demeaned and degraded as a person when asked for a bribe is an expression of moral sensitivity. Declining to give a bribe and reporting the incidence to authorities is an effective moral action that explicitly demonstrates moral education and leadership.

1.5 Promotion of Moral education and leadership
According to ISAR (2013), the Ethics and Anti Corruption Commission (EACC) (2015) as well as the media need to target transformation of attitudes and values rather than merely provide information as the only way of educating the public about corruption. Anti-corruption successes need to be celebrated, discussed and publicized so that fighting corruption can be supported and portrayed attractively. This is an informal and non-formal way of shaping anti-corruption attitudes.
Moral education and leadership foster values such as accountability and transparency. Moral leaders are truthful and honest. They operate above board and are willing to answer for their decisions and actions. Corruption thrives where oversight processes and mechanisms are ineffective thus shielding decisions and actions from scrutiny. Criticism is considered offensive and intrusive and is thus discouraged or punished. Critical thinking needs therefore to be enhanced in order to enable people to question and call another to account for what is said and done.
Individuality, which is the independence of thought and action ought to be nurtured among Kenyans through moral education and leadership. Moral leaders are conscientious and principle. They take a firm stand on what they believe is right even though they face stiff resistance. A moral outlook provides one with a focus that distinguishes one from those who do not share it. The courage to stand alone hold one's ground when morality demands it is a strong anti-corruption virtue. Individuality, guided by moral competence needs to be supported and rewarded in a society that is keen on fighting corruption.
There needs to be an emphasis on development of moral habits and character in education rather than merely acquisition of knowledge and skills. Without moral reasoning and development of moral virtues, intellectual development alone is destructive. This is evident in the world today whereby well informed and skilled terrorists kill innocent citizens in the pretence of settling scores that the murdered citizens had nothing to do with. Intelligence and skill that are not tempered with a fair-minded sense of justice and care for human dignity ends up being destructive and dangerous.

1.6 Some Possible Challenges
One major challenge facing efforts to promote moral education and leadership is impunity. There are abundant examples that apparently demonstrate that corruption is condoned, even adored in our society. People have many cases to show of corrupt deals that have never been prosecuted successfully and many people accused of corruption that are wealthy and free despite frequent accusation. Evidence abound too that corruption has penetrated all sectors. This denies the sectors

the moral courage to confront one another. If members of the judiciary, police, parliament, private sector, clergy and other professions are increasingly being found to be corrupt, which is actually the case in Kenya, corruption increasingly becomes an entrenched way of life that is difficult to eradicate. What are needed are examples or models of integrity in the midst of corruption that will provide an alternative narrative.

Systemic corruption makes the moral and legal ways of doing things seem slow, unrewarding and ineffective. Illegal and immoral shortcuts appear prudent, faster and less costly. However looked at in the long run and considering the well-being of all involved, corruption is the less effective option for achieving objectives. In a country where inequality is glaring and unemployment and poverty pervasive, corruption is tempting to those who have strived long and hard to get out of the poverty trap in vain. Those who have acquired their wealth corruptly may also find it hard to revert to the moral and legal ways of life as this may provide an opportunity for an evaluation and punishment of their past conduct.

1.7 **Possible Remedies and Opportunities**

Educational reform is one remedy for corruption in Kenya. This reform needs to consider the formal, informal and non-formal contexts of learning. It also needs to engage the various agents that influence learning outcomes in the various contexts. Educational reform in Kenya needs to focus on the formation of moral attributes and virtues that facilitate moral reasoning and leadership.

Religion has some moral resources that can be used innovatively to promote moral education and leadership. Christianity, for instance, has some moral approaches that the present author finds potent in fostering moral education and leadership. The second mile approach involves pursuing a moral cause for its own sake rather than doing it for praise, pleasure or pay. It is doing it because it is right. This approach involves going beyond the normal requirements and expectations and expecting or demanding no external incentive. The fulfilment of doing the right thing, serving humanity or alleviating suffering becomes the internal reward. This approach is useful because some moral situations are unique and lack precedents or rules as guides for action. In some situations the average expectations or even rules may condone moral weakness or compromise that is injurious to human well-being. Such situations require the moral courage to transcend the norm and exhibit moral excellence and leadership.

The final judgment approach to moral living involves the conviction that human well-being is a sacred end that individuals, communities and nations are divinely obligated to pursue and for which they will ultimately be called to account by an all knowing, all powerful God. Humans can therefore neglect their moral duties and even escape accountability but this will not happen with God. Impunity is therefore short lived in the final judgment approach. This approach raises the moral bar higher and motives humans to elevate their aspirations as well. The approach is also optimistic and inclusive as it perceives even worldly powers as subject to moral standards. This approach emboldens moral leaders to persevere persecution and oppression meted them for standing firm for what is right.

The indigenous African moral approach is another rich resource for fostering moral education and leadership. This approach emphasised caring and sharing and pursuing the common good.

Indigenous African appreciated the interconnected of human beings. They perceived the suffering of one as ultimately capable of leading to the suffering of all and therefore individual weaknesses and faults were not ignored. There was a deep sense of mutual belonging accompanied by mutual responsibility. This community approach to pursuit of human well-being can be innovatively directed towards fighting corruption if fostered in our society today.

Finally, since endemic corruption implies many instances where people have betrayed public trust to the detriment of the well-being of others, truth, justice and reconciliation approach is a suitable way of taking stock of our corrupt past, confront the harm it has wrecked and attend to it and also restore relationships. This if done well may provide a needed closure and give rise to a new moral beginning.

1.8 Conclusion

Endemic corruption has been found to be a serious problem in Kenya. It threatens the prosperity, integrity and survival of the state. Institutions to fight corruption have been set up and resources allocated to fight corruption but research findings indicate that corruption keeps increasing making Kenyans pessimistic and apathetic. Massive financial resources have been chanelled towards fighting corruption without much success. However, this paper argues that moral education and leadership can complement existing anti-corruption strategies by fostering attitudes and virtues that empower people to interrogate and confront corruption. In addition, moral education and leadership can model integrity as an attractive and potent anti-corruption option.

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