

Socio - Economic Implication of Corruption and Corrupt Practice on Nigerian Educational System

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Abstract

Corruption is a general enigma, and it has assumed a dangerous and comical dimension across the globe. It is indeed a social problem that has ravaged the entire system in all facet of human endeavour. However, the level of corrupt practices has crept into the educational system and its consequence has bastardised the entire educational structures in Nigeria. The study proceeded to take a critical analysis of corruption, it measuring rod, such as corruption perception index of the Transparency International, Nigerian educational system and corrupt practices, factors responsible for corruption in education, which include government factor, parent factor, teacher/lecturer factor and administrative bottleneck. This study points out the socioeconomic effects of corruption on Nigeria education and proffers certain recommendations that could be a panacea to the problems. Government should set up a supervisory and monitoring group on educational projects, and other educational related programs. Independent Corrupt Practice Commission (ICPC), Economic Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) should also investigate corrupt practices in educational sector, so as to promote transparency, probity and accountability in educational sector in Nigeria, in view of this, the past and lost glory in the sector can be revived.

Keywords: Corruption, Corrupt Practice, Education

1. INTRODUCTION

Corruption in Nigeria has become severely endemic to public life; it has become contagious diseases, a treat and embrace to national life. The emergence of corruption on the shore of Nigeria has become troublesome as it has manifest in various forms such as, illegitimate and immoral use of political authority by politician thugs and party leaders. [3]. The issue of corruption in Nigeria has affected all area of human endeavours, ranging from election irregularities, police extortion, port congestion, ghost workers syndrome, examination malpractices, certificate racketeering, embezzlement.

It is unfortunate that a country with such abundant natural and human resources cannot compete favorably with Asian Dragon of Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan economy but still strive to stand on his feet. This is due to the commonness of incidence of illiteracy, malnutrition, disease, underutilization of resources and social insecurity which has been ingrained by corruption and poor management of natural resource & endowment[13]. The variable of interest called 'corruption' and its allies, have affected educational quality delivery, as such the realization of the goal of National Policy on Education is uncertain. In essence, the incidence of corruption in educational sector will eventually lead to "culture of corruption" if not properly examined [6].

"We must ensure that these are real consequence to corruption. 'No to impunity' cannot be a slogan – it must be carried out with all our combined strength and inspire citizens to speak up and to no longer tolerate corruption" [15].

2. CORRUPTION: DEFINED

Corruption in developing countries has become a serious problem and has continued to be one of the greatest factors of poverty, development and internecine conflicts. Many Africa nations are endowed with abundant natural resources, yet they continue to wallow in abduct poverty as a result of corruption and corrupt practices. With the large deposits of mineral resources in Nigeria and perhaps in most of the developing countries, this should have been tapped to improve their economy and their living standard. Yet corruption could not have allowed the majority of their citizen to enjoy the natural resources given to them by nature. The funny thing among the developing nations is that they still approach the developed or the industrialized nations for financial aids, may God help.

Corruption has pervaded every sphere of human activity in Nigeria to the extent that in every endeavour – economic, social, political, spiritual etc corruption is the determining factor in the relationship between the people involved [19]. Corruption were given different names in Nigeria, such names include kickbacks, kick front, egunje, favoritism, gentleman agreement. Corruption is a unified factor in Nigeria context; everybody speaks and understands the language of corruption, irrespective of their status and professions. A report by the International Human right organization came out with Nigeria taking the first position among the row of corrupt nation in the year 2010.

Also, corruption is ‘the abuse of public authority for private profit, [4] and such activities are described as (a) accepting money for granting contract; (b) transgressing certain conducts for personal interest; (c) using bribery to obtain legislative support; (d) utilization of public property for private use; (e) neglecting illegal activities and using filibuster to delay justice process; (f) tax evaluation fraud, among other types of corruption act [4]. Corruption act are also distinguished by position of the perpetrator and the amount of money on assets being manipulated, therefore *grand corruption* is the misuse of public money by head of state, senior officials and ministers. *Petty corruption* is dominated after much smaller sum of money but no less significant, precisely because it bears most heavily on the poorest and the weakest sectors of the society” [4].

Corruption consists of vices such as fraud, bribery and other related crime and offences as conceived by ICPC Act (section 2). Corruption is also perceived as the abuse of power and position of trust on collective or personal ground. In essence, corruption is unindicted attitude and manner within an organization setup that can falsify the integrity, purpose and goal of such organization. Corruption subverts justice and equality, erode confidence in democratic system and make development of patriotic spirit impossible. Corruption as equally manifested in many facets and has significantly contributed to the emergence of poverty & misery among large Nigerian populace.

TABLE 1: TOP NATIONAL PROBLEMS

Crime Rate %		Corruption Political Leader %	
S. African	92	Nigeria	82
Bangladesh	86	Czech Republic	78
Pakistan	85	Bangladesh	76
Chile	85	Argentina	75
Brazil	82	Indonesia	75
Nigeria	81	Lebanon	57
Puru	80	Pero	73

Source: Reference [16] 1st International Conference Proceeding of Adekunle Ajasin University.

The table [1] above shows the finding of Nigeria corruption index released by Independent Advocate Project and Anti – corruption group.

TABLE 2: TOP CORRUPT ORGANIZATION IN NIGERIA

Total	YEAR 2003 - 2005	YEAR 2005 – 2007
The Police	96	99
Ministry of Education (University, Poly and college)	63	74
Federal Road Safety Corp (FRSC)	42	51
Custom and Excise Duty	65	61
Power Holding Company of Nigeria	83	87
Immigration/Passport Office	56	48
Local Government Authority	47	56
Independence National Electoral Commission	-	38
Federal Inland Revenue Service	36	36
Ministry of Health	27	31
Presidency	24	29
Nigeria National Petroleum Commission	27	28
Federal Housing Authority	26	28
Nigeria Port Authority	33	24

Source: Refreence[16]

3. MEASURING CORRUPTION

The incidence and emergence of corruption and corrupt practices in national and international politics has made political actors, private and public administrator to develop a burning interest in eradicating the issues of corrupt practices. Due to the implication of corruption on sustainable development, the world has begun to show unlimited interest to quantify corruption [18]. In recent past, it was not possible to measure corruption but now there exist several survey based measure of ‘corruption perception’ as stated in [6]. They include the Transparency International Index (TII), Global Competitiveness Report Index (GCRI), Business International Index (BII) and International Country Risk Guide Index (ICRGI). Transparency International is a worldwide organization waging war against the incidence of corruption in all corners of the world and the international secretariat at Berlin [15]. The transparency International makes use of corruption perception index to capture the

level of public sector corruption. The index score ranges from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (corruption free). However, no country has scored 100 i.e. there is no country without corruption at least some corruption level. In 2012, the CPI claimed that 2/3 of 176 countries rank base on the corruption index is below 50. This implies that public institution and official and decision making processes must be brought to book or accountability [15]. The corruption perception index, make political actors in various nations to recognize our corrupt, they are and force them to search for a worldwide solution towards it eradication. This is owing to the fact that the index may affect the economic growth of highly corrupt nation. This perception is supported by [6] that on investment (Domestic and Foreign) found clear evidence that corruption discourage investment and economic growth.

4. NIGERIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM AND CORRUPT PRACTICES

The National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004) section 1, stipulate the goal of Nigeria educational system as:

1. Free and democratic society
2. Great and Dynamic Economy
3. Just and Egalitarian Society
4. A Land full of bright opportunity for all.

The aforementioned goal is the focus of Nigeria Primary, Secondary and Tertiary education. Also, the policy sees education as an instrument per – excellence for national development. In essence, the Nigerian educational system is entrusted with the goal of fine tuning the nation to it deserve direction in the area of socio – political, economic, cultural, religion, scientific and technological advancement. However, the goal seems unrealistic owing to the fact that education, which serves as means to an end, is being inflicted by corruption and corrupt practices.

Corruption and corrupt practices in the school system constitute a grave threat to attainment of sustainable development through education as point out by [6], Corruption has reduced the efficiency and effectiveness of resources available for education, bastardized the quality of education and limit opportunity to education especially on the disadvantage group.

Reference [8] defines corruption in education as “the abuse of authority for personal as well as material gain”. He considers education corruption in light of its detrimental effects on a country’s economic success, reasoning that countries whose leaders are chosen on merit will perform better than those that favour privilege. Reference [8] opines that an untrustworthy school system will adversely impact a country’s social cohesion. Reference [8] went further to clarify the features of a school system that is corruption free o as follows;

- a. equal educational opportunity
- b. equitable distribution of school materials and curricula
- c. fair & transparent criteria for selection of students for higher education
- d. fair judgment of institutions base on stipulated standard for quality assurance.
- e. Professional standards of conduct by educational managers & administrators in both public and private educational institutions.

Reference [8] concluded that any educational system that lacks any of these characteristics suffers from corruption.

‘Education is a service that transforms fixed qualities of inputs (i.e. individuals) into individuals with different quality attributes’ Although [6] agreed that countries with high level of corruption levels typically budget and allocate high amount on education but spend less on education due to the relatively high opportunities to extract bribe in the education sector, [6] note different reasons why this sector might attract corruption, these include the low salaries of public officials and teachers, wrong appointment of teaching and non-teaching staff into different offices.

African Union (AU) argued that corruption has eroded approximately 25% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of African countries [13]. Corruption in education is concerned as the use of public office & officials for personal benefit at the disadvantages of other that can significantly affect utilization and availability of educational facilities and man power which in terms affects equal opportunity to education & education quality and quantity [6]

Today in our school system corruption as take various forms such as sales of substandard text materials "handout", examination fraud and malpractice, admission and certificate robbery, sexual harassment between teacher and students [11] pointed out that the secret cult fraternities as spread beyond tertiary level to secondary level in Nigeria education [3].

TABLE 3: TYPOLOGY OF OPPORTUNITIES OF CORRUPTION IN EDUCATION

In the educational sector of an economy, if corruption & corrupt practices is not properly checked and scrutinize, the school system will develop "culture of corruption" in classrooms environment. Below are various forms of corrupt practices in the process of administrating and managing the 4ms (men, material, machine and money) and 2ts (time and technology) of the educational industry

Areas	Corrupt Practices	Impact on education
School building, rehabilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fraud in public tendering • Embezzlement • School Mapping 	Access Quality Example: bad location of schools; too high or too low use; demand for places unattended
Equipment, textbooks, food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fraud in public tendering • Embezzlement • Bypass of criteria 	Equity Quality Example: school meals free for the rich and not available for the poor; lack of consistency between textbooks and curricula
Teacher appointment/management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Favouritism • Nepotism • Bribes 	Quality Example: less qualified teachers appointed
Teacher behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ghost teachers • Bribes (for school entrance, exams, assessment, private tutoring etc) 	Equity Ethics Example: disparity in staffing by schools; discrimination against the poor
Examinations and diplomas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selling of information • Favoritism • Nepotism • Bribes • Academic Fraud 	Equity Ethics Example: unjustified credentials available to students who can afford to pay bribes.
Information systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manipulating data • Selecting/suppressing information 	Equity Ethics Policy priorities Example: omitting data on repetition/dropout; less priority on quality improvement
Specific allowances (fellowships, subsidies etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Favoritism • Nepotism • Bribes • Bypass of criteria 	Access Equity Example: inflating enrolment figures to increase financial transfers
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transgressing rules/ procedures • Inflation of costs and activities • Opacity of flow • Leakage of funds 	Access Quality Equity Policy Priorities Example: less resources for quality improvement: textbooks, materials etc

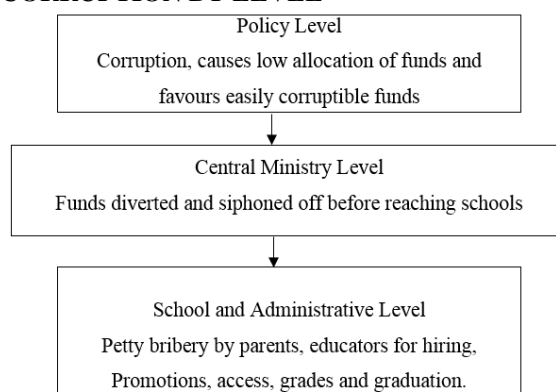
Source: Journal of Education for International Development; [7]

TABLE 4: MAJOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORRUPTION IN AREA OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING/MANAGEMENT

Areas of planning/management	Major opportunities for corrupt practices
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transgressing rules and procedures/ by pass of criteria. • Inflation of costs and activities • Embezzlement
Allocation of specific allowances (fellowships, subsidies etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Favoritism/nepotism • Bribes • By pass of criteria • Discrimination (political, social, ethic)
Construction, maintenance and schools repairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fraud in public tendering (pay offs, gifts, favoritism) • Collusion among suppliers • Embezzlement • Manipulating data • By pass of school mapping • Ghost deliveries
Distribution of equipment, furniture and materials (including transport, barding, textbooks, canteens and schools meals)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fraud in public tendering (pay offs, gifts, favoritism) • Collusion among suppliers • Purchase of unnecessary equipment • Manipulating data • By pass of allocation criteria • Ghost deliveries
Writing of textbooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fraud in the selection of authors (favoritism, bribes, gifts) • By pass of copyright laws • Students forced to purchase materials copyrighted by instructors
Teacher appointment, management (transfer, promotion) payment and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fraud in the appointment and deployment of teachers (favoritism, bribes, gifts) • Discrimination (political, social ethnic) • Falsification of credentials, use of fake diplomas • By pass of criteria • Pay delay, sometimes with unauthorized deductions
Teacher behaviour (professional misconduct)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ghost teachers • Absenteeism • Illegal fees (for school entrance, exams, assessment, private tutoring) • Favoritism/nepotism/acceptance of gifts. • Discrimination (political, social, ethnic) • Private tutoring (including use of schools for private purpose) • Sexual harassment or exploitation • Bribes or favours during inspector visits
Information systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manipulating data • Selecting/suppressing information • Inequality in producing and publishing information • Payment for information that should be provided free
Examinations and Diplomas Access to Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selling information • Examination fraud (impersonation, cheating, favoritism, gifts) • Bribes (for high marks, grades, selection to specialized programmes, diplomas, admission to universities) • Diploma mills and false credentials • Fraudulent research, plagiarism
Institution Accreditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fraud in the accreditation process (favoritism, bribes, gifts)

Source: [6] Corrupt Schools, Corrupt Universities: what can be done, Paris, International Institute for Educational Planning, 963 – 64

TABLE 5: TYPOLOGY OF CORRUPTION BY LEVEL



Source: U4 Resource Centre, Corruption in the Education Sector

Corruption in educational sector in Nigeria varies from one point to another, corruption in this regard

- (a) started from appointment of staff
- (b) School finance and funding policy that jettison school objective & goal for political and personal reasons.
- (c) Utilization of substandard educational facilitates & resources and inflating contract in the process of rebuilding and rehabilitating the school.
- (d) Monetization of accreditation process by head of public, private educational institution and accrediting bodies' officials.
- (e) Examination malpractices during written and oral test
- (f) Favoritism, nepotism and party politics in hiring & promoting educational officers at the expense of meritocracy

The incidence of corruption in Nigerian educational industry as made the country to become a “beggars” and depend heavily on foreign aid and assistant despite available mass of human and material endowment since the corrupt practices has badly affects all facets of life, which education sector is not left out, teacher collude with kidnappers to sell their students in a bid to get money. The quest to acquire material possession and position in all sector as entrench the attitude and value of “the ends just the means” [13]. Moreover, the zeal to excel in exams in order to gain paper reward (certificate) has led many students to jettison their integrity, honesty and value because “certificate” is the only seed that germinate in paper economy like ours in Nigeria [13]. It is worthy of mentioning that corrupt practices in educational sector is a reflection of change in society value of the people due to imperialist influence on Nigeria school curriculum and value orientation [13]. This was equally the position of [1], as argued by [13] in the area of examination practices in school. For instance, the basic cultural responsibility of the parent, teacher, public officials, students and educational administrator has been devalue which has promote the culture of corrupt practices and corruption in our society

5. FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR CORRUPTION IN EDUCATION NIGERIA

Spector [14] suggests the main factors that are responsible for corruption in education are as follows:

Government factor: government officials from all level of education manipulate contract and distribution of educational resources to schools for personal gain [14] support the above opinion. Also, lack of proper monitoring and supervision of educational project by government official, also enhance in promoting corruption.

Value displacement by government: Value displacement by government in allocating fund and project to various sectors of the country has made the government to place serious emphasis on welfare package of politician and party leader and redirecting of national revenue towards oil sector and neglecting school and agriculture sector. Despite the role of school as societal reformer and producer of human resources that propel national development and agricultural sector as sources of food for other sector, factor contribution, market contribution and foreign exchange earning potential of the nation was equally neglected. More so, when government strives to focus on educational sector, they place emphasis on paper rather than skills. Another area of government misplacement of priorities is uncontrolled importation of virtually everything such as school technology, idea, curriculum and concept that may not align with cultural and economic circumstances of our society. Also, policies inconsistencies by various educational administrators, improper or poorly planned curriculum by non-educationist and recommendation of test book to teachers and student due to political affiliation and instructional deficiency due to poor quality staff are also grave area of government displacement of value in educational system.

School personnel and officials: The process of monitory and supervising the school by some stake holders such as school inspectors, supervisors, head teacher, principal and other official has been subjected to bribing and

reward exchange at the expense of stated criteria. The corrupt practices in monitoring and supervising officials as led to excess enrolment of student through the use of kick backs, embezzlement of resources allocated for school project by government representatives, non-challant attitude to work by head teacher, principal and teacher and existence of ghost worker in the school system.

Student factor: corruption in education is sometimes induced by the student. Some female student tend to lure their male lecturer into sexual harassment, all in the name of passing his course or they sometime provide financial reward to some teacher/lecturer in each angle for marks even though the teacher does not request for it.

Lack of Quality Supervision

In order to achieve the robust goal of the national policy on education towards sustainable national development, the human resources or school personnel must be supervise effectively in order to ensure quality assurance in the school system. The NPE (2004) argued that the routine of effective supervisory process is aim at “ensuring quality assurance & control through regular inspection & continuous supervision of instructional process and educational variables

Parental factor: parents and guardian are one of the players in examinational malpractices in Nigeria. This is due to the fact that some parent instead of purchasing GCE or JAMB form at designated place like Bank; they patronize the black market form called ‘special Centre’ for their ward, were examination malpractices of it highest degree would be practices.

Teacher factor: many a times indiscipline teacher or lecturer lure their female students to sexual contract in which excellence in such examination would be the profit of students after the contract .Sexual gratification has been the hallmark of some of the male lecturers, while some female lecturers often collect cash or kind from the students to manipulate and upgrade results in favours of some students who can buy their way out.

Administrative bottleneck: many a times, educational administrators that are saddled with the responsibility of supervision and monitoring the standard of Nigeria education are not objective but they give room for nepotism and favoritism. Also, administrator of examination body like JAMB and WAEC do sell bulk purchase to some individual dealers in the black market and as such they give them room to practice corruption effectively.

6. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF CORRUPTION ON NIGERIA EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Reference [13] outlined the following as consequences of corruption and corrupt practices in Nigeria school system. They are:

1. corruption propagate a culture of corruption (6) the implication of which the youth as seen it that it is beneficiary to jettison integrity & honesty and uphold injustice, bribery, killing and other vices to achieve their career, social, personal and religious goal.
2. Favoritism, nepotism and party politics in promoting staff which give glory to mediocre at the expense of hardworking staff.

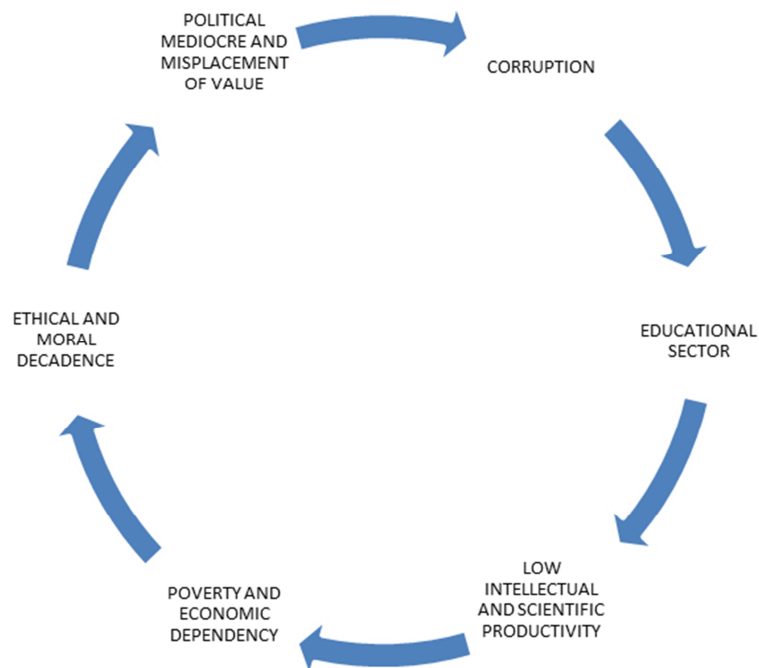
Also, the following are some implications.

1. It encourage embezzlement of fund earmarked to education
2. It promotes brain drain
3. Administrator influence policy, as such jettison appropriate policy and promoting of policy in congruence to their private gain
4. Emergence of corrupt practices in our education, make the certificate from Nigeria school lost it value, in terms of reliability in the international market.

7. CONCLUSION

In sum, corruption penetrate all facet of the society and if not check, it as a compounding effect as depict in the below cyclical mechanism.

THE CYCLICAL CORRUPTION MECHANISM



Nigeria and other developing nations undergo a cyclical process of corruption that affects all facet of the society directly or indirectly. The process begin when corruption and corrupt practice prevailing in any nation, it penetrate into the educational sector (school system) in the following manner; reduction and embezzlement of fund earmarked to educational sector, employment of unqualified teacher on the basis of nepotism, favoritism and party politics, unjust monitoring and supervisory education inspector, sexual gratification from male teacher/lecturer and female as a means to an end of excelling in a lecturers courses, presentation of cash and kind in form of bribe and kickback so that examination results can be manipulated and upgraded in favour of some students that can comply with their directive. The encouragement of examination malpractice by teachers and parents in special or miracle centers. The aforementioned corrupt practices impact negatively on the educational sector and affect the intellectual and scientific productivity of the products of the school system (input-output analysis), when a nation scientific and academic productivity of her educated citizen is low, it translate to poverty and unemployment at micro level of the society because the citizens is not fortunate to have a proper education that transform an educated fellow to become self-reliant and independent. Also, at macro level of the society, plummeting intellectual and scientific productivity of the educated elite affects the industrial and technological advancement of such society to become economically independence on international community in terms of importation of all consumable and capital products. This international dependence affects the balance of payment of affected countries and in turns worsens the financials status of this nation, and its results to financially dependency on foreign aid and assistance for survival. The existence of poverty in the society make citizens to trade their personal dignity and value for daily sustenance and relegation of ethical and moral value of the society, all in the name of earning a living. Society where her educated citizens trade their personal human value for daily sustenance, these affect their political value and orientation. That is why educated citizen from Nigeria and other developing countries sees political office as a remedy of finding solutions to the problems of poverty affecting their family and jettisoned the ideal philosophy of gaining power in order to be a servant leader. In essence, when citizens with wrong political orientation stir the affair of the state, they entrenched the spirit of corruption and corrupt practices in all sector of the society as such, making the process a continuous and cyclical in nature. The only means of breaking the cyclical movement of this corruption mechanism is to eradicate or minimize corruption in the educational sector because the basic function of ideal school system is to rebuild and transform a society to a greater height.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendation, toward eradication of corruption.

1. ICPC should point their torchlight to education sector, to bring to limelight corrupt practices in education.
2. Government should set up appropriate machinery for supervision and monitory of project allocated to education.

3. Introduce transparency and accountability in educational sector, particularly in all financial transactions.
4. Encourage a free press and electronic media to forcefully report to the public on corrupt practices in the school system.
5. Ensure that law enforcement is predictable and forceful.

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