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Corruption Prevention in Malaysia's Education Sector: A Case Study

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Abstract

Cultivating integrity and fostering a hatred of corruption are important elements that must be emphasized in the national education system. Anti-corruption awareness must be instilled not only in school pupils and students of higher learning institutions but also in teachers and lecturers. They are important individuals who can shape the future of our young generation. Currently, programs on anti-corruption are jointly carried out by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), and the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE), based on the requirements of the National Anti-Corruption Plan (NACP) 2019-2023. Therefore, the objective of this article is to explain the definition of corruption in the context of Malaysian law; identify the main initiatives in cultivating integrity and anti-corruption through education, and analyze corruption cases related to the education sector. The research methodology employed is a case study, which looks at real cases of corruption involving educators. Findings show that educators' position is not immune from engaging in acts of corruption. Besides, corruption is a 'sharp thorn' that can damage the good name of the education sector in the country. Therefore, educators need to increase their knowledge of corruption crimes and appropriate preventive measures.

Keywords: Corruption among Educators, Prevention of Corruption, Macc Act 2009, Real Corruption Cases, Inculcate Integrity.

Introduction

The crime of corruption is a major threat to the world. Uncontrolled corruption will bring disaster to a country. Many examples of countries that were in turmoil and eventually destroyed because of this heinous crime. The unmanageable administration of the Roman Empire, the Ottoman Empire, and the Ming Dynasty caused its army and civil servants to practice corruption. Eventually, the empires were destroyed (Hussein, 2009). While in

Malaysia, corruption occurred since the days of the late Malacca Sultanate. The nature of greed, revenge, envy, and power struggle among the king and his nobles, until willing to sell principles, dignity, and self-esteem. Because of corruption, they provide confidential information to the Portuguese, which led to the fall of the Malacca Sultanate (MACC & UPSI, 2020).

Efforts to fight against corruption in Malaysia are led by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC). The three main strategies used by the MACC in performing its functions are enforcement, prevention, and education. Prevention of corruption is conducted based on the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2009 (MACC Act, 2009). The principal objects of the MACC Act 2009 are to encourage the integrity and accountability of public and private sector administration; and to educate public authorities, public officials, and the general public about corruption and its adverse effects. The responsibility to fight corruption lies with all parties, not just the MACC alone. Recognizing the importance of preventing corruption in an integrated manner, the Malaysian Government introduced the National Anti-Corruption Plan (NACP) 2019-2023. The country's anti-corruption policy entrusts various ministries and agencies to implement the initiatives that have been set.

Anti-corruption education and fostering integrity are the keys to success in curbing the spread of corruption crimes. Educators are the most important individuals to instil hatred among young people towards the crime of corruption. They must also show high integrity as an example to their students or pupils. It is unfortunate when there are a handful of educators involved in corruption, malpractice, and abuse of power. This matter tarnished the image of educators who have a high position in society.

As such, this article will discuss the anti-corruption agenda involving the field of education. The main thing explained is the form of cooperation between the MACC, the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE), and the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) in implementing various initiatives to cultivate integrity among school pupils and students of higher learning institutions (HLI). Also explained is the meaning of corruption in the context of Malaysia, corruption offences based on the provisions of the law in force, and punishment for those involved in corruption. To highlight the issues of corruption among educators, this article contains the actual situation and cases of corruption involving educators. This matter of fact can give a better picture of the corrupt practices that occur in the field of education.

Statement Problems

Federal Court Judge, His Royal Highness, Raja Azlan Shah while deciding in the case of PP v Dato' Harun Idris (1997) defined corruption as, "Corrupt means doing an act knowing that the act done is wrong, doing so with evil intention... purposely doing an act which the law forbids. Corrupt is a question of intention. If the circumstances show that what a person has done or has omitted to do was moved by an evil intention or a guilty mind, then he is liable under the section" (Abdul Manaf, 2013).

From this statement, it can be concluded that corruption is an act committed by individuals with malicious intent. The perpetrator of corruption is aware and knows the effects and consequences of his actions. However, the individuals involved are still willing to commit corruption, for their benefit.

Anyone can be involved in the crime of corruption, regardless of position, the field of employment, race, or religion. Educators are also no exception to being caught up in the crime of corruption. Based on statistics, in a period of five years (2018-2022), 50 school teachers and 15 HLI lecturers were arrested by the MACC. Although the arrests involving educators only

represented 1% of the total arrests (for the same period) which was 4,753 people, this should not be the case. Educators should have high integrity because they are role models to young people (MACC Records and Information Management Division, 2023).

Objectives, and Methodology

This article has several objectives, namely to explain the meaning of corruption based on the law in Malaysia; to explain the policies and actions of the Malaysian Government in handling corruption; to identify MACC cooperation with the education sector in implementing various initiatives in cultivating integrity and anti-corruption education; and analyzing corruption cases in the field of education.

Therefore, to achieve these objectives, the methodology used for this research is a case study focusing on the analysis of cases related to corruption for the scope of the education sector. Jupp (2006) defined a case study as an approach that uses an in-depth investigation of one or more examples of a current social phenomenon as a means to utilize a variety of sources of data. A 'case' is referred to the event or activities related to research conducted by the level of a single person, a social group, an organization body, or an institution.

Passer (2014) described a case study as an in-depth analysis of an individual, social unit, or event. Thus, Blatter (2008) suggests that this approach uses in-depth idea with rigorous discussion, that generates practical and detailed knowledge, draw reasons, and analyse cases. Moreover, Jupp (2006) outlined a case study that begins with a simple narrative description to a very rigorous study that is based on multiple sources. Cresswell (2013) identified several case study flows which are identifying problems, observing cases relating to the topic, gathering multiple information, and generating a holistic analysis.

The method of analysis will depend on document analysis which is one of the methods of data collection in a qualitative method by analyzing documents in the form of notes, physical or digital sources. According to Given (2008), analysis of documents such as photographs, clothing, books, tools, etc., can come from archives or the personal property of individuals or collections of private or public institutions.

To examine the document, the specific analytic approach called content analysis shall be used in the research study (Ary et al., 2010). Thereby, any concepts regarding bribery in education can be studied as comprehensively as possible through themes and categories. So, the researcher can spend time and time through depth revision on categories and concepts by combining or dividing them into analytical ideas whereby able to come out with a matter of resolving the contradiction.

Findings

The word bribery comes from the Arabic word 'risywah' which means bribery or persuasion (Ibn Manzur, 1414H, vol. 14, p. 322). In the Malaysian language, corruption is also known as bribery. According to the Fourth Edition of Kamus Dewan, 'korupsi' (corruption) means wrongful or untrustworthy practices or acts (such as breach of trust, accepting bribes, etc.). Generally, bribery refers to the act of accepting or giving a bribe intended for a person to commit an act related to his or her official duties. Definitions of corruption are also given by various international organizations. For example, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) defines corruption as, "misuse of public power, office or authority for private benefit - through bribery, extortion, influence-peddling, nepotism, fraud, speed money or embezzlement" (UNDP, 1999).

In Malaysia, there are several terms, nicknames, or names that refer to corruption. Among them, 'tumbuk rusuk' (mashed ribs), 'duit minyak' (oil money), 'pelincir' (lubricant), 'kawtim' (compromised), 'under table money', 'duit kopi' (coffee money), 'duit Panadol' (paracetamol money) and 'makan soap' (feeding money). Similar things also happened in other countries. Bribery had been spoken of in many different terms. For example, bribery referred to as 'pungli' or 'pungutan liar' (wild collection) in Indonesia, 'tangentopoli' (Italy), 'sleaze' (UK), 'black mist' (Japan); 'air supply' (Uganda); 'les affaires' (France), '409' (Nigeria) dan 'than wu' (China) (Abdul Manaf, 2020).

Forms of Bribery

In the context of the offence of giving or receiving a bribe, five main elements must be present to make an act corrupt. These elements are (1) the bribe giver; (2) the recipient of the bribe; (3) the bribe or gratification; (4) favour i.e. the purpose for which the bribe was given or received; (5) and 'mens rea' or evil intention (Abdul Manaf, 2020).

Referring to the third element, namely bribes (or gratification), is not limited to cash only. Forms of gratification are specified in Section 3 of the MACC Act 2009. The following are among the common forms of bribery in acts of corruption (Abdul Manaf, 2020). The forms of bribery with examples are as follows:

1. Gift - Supplier A gives a gift in the form of golf set to B, a financial officer to expedite the payment of his claim.
2. Bonus - A, the managing director of the company promises to give a bonus of five months' salary to his accountant, B. Provided, B hides the misappropriation of company money committed by A.
3. Services - A, a contractor offers bribes in the form of GRO sex services to B, the procurement director of company XXX. In return, B will make sure A gets the project from company XXX.
4. Loan - A supplier lends money to a university laboratory administrator (who is short of money). Provided that the officer in question accepts and certifies the supply of imperfect laboratory equipment.
5. Promotion - A, a company manager offers a promotion to his accountant as a favour not to report to the police his act of stealing company money.
6. Discount - A, the owner of a luxury car dealership gives a 75% discount on a BMW car to B, an enforcement officer. This extreme discount is intended so that B does not take action against A who is being investigated for engaging in drug-selling activities.

Initiatives to Cultivate Integrity and Hate Corruption

Fighting corruption is one of the country's priorities. NACP 2019-2023 introduced by the government is the country's main policy in fighting corruption, cultivating integrity, and improving governance in various sectors. This plan replaces the National Integrity Plan (PIN) and the National Key Result Areas (NKRA) in achieving the national vision of making Malaysia a corruption-free country with high integrity values. Through the NACP, the government is committed to achieving the aspiration of Malaysia being known for its integrity and not corruption. NACP provides a comprehensive plan and can make a lasting positive impact. The development of this plan has taken into account the views of various sections of society on sustainable anti-corruption efforts in the country for a period of five years (BH Online, 2019). As a sign of the government's seriousness, this plan was launched by Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia on 29 January 2019. NACP has 115 initiatives covering

six priority areas namely political governance, public administration sector, public procurement, legal and judicial, law enforcement, and corporate governance.

Strategic Objective 2.4 NACP is related to improving the effectiveness of education and continuous professional development among public officers through programs based on human governance. Under this strategic objective, eight specific initiatives in the field of education are set. The initiative targets education and cultivating integrity in pre-service and in-service teachers (initiative 2.4.1); university lecturers (initiative 2.4.2); educators and administrators in MOE (initiative 2.4.3); university educators and administrators (initiative 2.4.4); preschool students (initiative 2.4.5); primary school students (initiative 2.4.6); high school students (initiative 2.4.11); and the introduction of integrity, governance and anti-corruption-based subjects in universities (initiative 2.4.7). As stated earlier, the NACP does not place the responsibility on the MACC solely for the prevention of corruption. Various agencies are tasked with implementing these pre-determined initiatives. Eight education-related initiatives are implemented jointly by the MOE, MOHE, MACC, and the Malaysian Institute of Integrity.

Putting efforts to cultivate integrity and hatred of corruption at the school level is very apt. It does not end at the school level. This effort is continued for HLI students. They are the 'professionals in the making' who will lead the country in the future. Through effective anti-corruption education, these young people can create an environment of integrity and be free from corruption in the future.

The collaboration of MACC, MOE, and MOHE has taken an important step in anti-corruption education and cultivating integrity for young people. Several anti-corruption programs have been and are being implemented at the school and HLI levels. Among the programs are

1. The offering of the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Course (Kursus Integriti dan Antirasuah or KIAR) in HLI - In February 2018, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) offered this course as a pilot project in Semester 2 2018/2019 session. The first batch to register for this course comprised 67 students. After the success of the pilot project, several other universities offered this course, namely Kolej Universiti Islam Melaka (2019), Universiti Putra Malaysia (2020), and five campuses of Universiti Kuala Lumpur (2021). On 19 April 2021, the Special Cabinet Committee on Anti-Corruption (JKKMAR) chaired by the Prime Minister agreed that the KIAR is offered in all HLIs (certificate, diploma, and bachelor levels) as elective courses in 2021, then as a compulsory course starting in 2023.
2. Anti-Corruption Student Force (Angkatan Mahasiswa Antirasuah or AMAR) - AMAR is a student club in HLI, started in public universities in 2007 under the name of the Anti-Corruption Secretariat. AMAR implements anti-corruption activities at the HLI level. From time to time, more HLIs set up AMAR. As of 31 December 2022, a total of 117 AMARs have been established nationwide. The details are 20 AMARs at public universities, 27 AMAR at the Institute of Teacher Education, 55 AMAR in HLIs under the People's Trust Council (Majlis Amanah Rakyat or MARA), and 15 AMARs in private HLIs. Some of AMAR's activities that are seen to have a big impact are the Walk Stop Talk: Six Hours Quarter Million Messages program which has been recognized by the Malaysia Book of Records; a series of Anti-Corruption Student Conventions (KoMawAR) that brought together thousands of student leaders; and various anti-corruption themed competitions to unearth the talents and creativity of HLI students

such as debate competitions, short video competitions; poster design competitions; and so on.

3. Anti-corruption elements in school textbooks - Anti-corruption elements were introduced in school textbooks in stages starting in 2016. This initiative allows early exposure to school children on the importance of integrity in life and the dangers of corruption can be made comprehensive. To date, textbooks that have anti-corruption elements are Moral Education Standard 3, Malay Language Standard 4, Malay Language Standard 5, Moral Education (Malay) Standard 6, Moral Education (Chinese) Standard 6, Moral Education (Tamil) Standard 6, Islamic Teaching Standard 6, Moral Education Form 1, and Moral Education Form 2. Anti-corruption elements are also included in the Civic Education Exemplar Module: Primary and secondary schools.
4. Anti-Corruption Warriors (Wira Anti Rasuah or WAR) Program in schools - This program started in 2014 as an effort to instil hatred towards corruption among primary and secondary school students. To make this program more strategic and high-impact, its implementation also involves teachers and parents of students. In addition to the talks, activities conducted during the WAR program included video screenings, integrity games, quizzes, and distribution of campaign materials to school children. During the WAR program, three important values are emphasized to school children namely the values of honesty, trust, and not taking the rights of others. As at 31 December 2022, the WAR program has been held in 162 schools nationwide, involving 28,096 students and 3,677 teachers. During pandemics (2020 and 2021), MACC and MOE (collaboration) conduct various online WAR competitions for school students.
5. Honest Shop/Kiosk Project in schools - MACC's latest program is implemented in collaboration with MOE. In 2020, the Honest Shop/Kiosk pilot project has been conducted in five primary schools and five secondary schools around Putrajaya. In 2021, additional 20 schools have established Honest Shop/Kiosk. The main objective of this project is to instil the value of integrity practically among students. Using the concept of a shop without a seller, this project can measure the practice of three main values that must be present in every student, namely honesty, trust and not taking the rights of others. MACC and MOE are committed to expanding this project to more schools in the future.
6. Anti-corruption education through popular animated series - Awareness campaigns will be more effective when using various approaches and platforms. Thus, the MACC is always exploring new initiatives to educate the community and instil hatred toward corruption. The anti-corruption message through the popular animated series targets primary school students, preschoolers, and children. This approach is particularly effective because of the charm of the characters and the compelling animated storyline. Among the animations that promote the integrity and anti-corruption agenda are 'Boboboi: Sahabat Cilik SPRM' (Boboboi: Little Friends of MACC), 'Upin & Ipin: Perangi Rasuah' (Upin & Ipin: Fight Corruption), and several animated series produced by The National Film Department of Malaysia.

Corruption in Education

Cultivating integrity must begin at a young age. Children need to be trained in a good environment at home and school. Besides parents, educators play a very important role in producing Malaysians who are not only skilled in certain fields but have high integrity and identity. Educators must set the best example because, in addition to parents, they are also

role models to students. Bad behaviour of educators will affect their pupils or students. The involvement of educators in corrupt activities, malpractices, and abuse of power is something that should not happen. This is not mere perception. Reports in the media regarding arrests of educators prove that this issue is something of a bit of concern.

The first bulwark that can prevent corruption among educators is a good understanding of the crime of corruption based on the law in Malaysia. Referring to the MACC Act 2009, corruption offences do not only involve the offence of giving or receiving bribes. Briefly, there are four main offences of corruption namely, soliciting and accepting bribes; offering and giving bribes; false claims; and offence of using office or position for gratification.

Here is a brief explanation of each offence. Included are examples of cases involving educators to provide better explanations

1. The offence of soliciting and accepting bribes - offence occurs when a person solicits or accepts a bribe as a reward for doing something wrong or not in accordance with the rules. This offence is provided under Sections 16(a) and 17(a) of the MACC Act 2009. Many civil servants are caught up in this offence. The main reason is that they have the power and opportunity to do so. Educators are also at risk of being involved in this offence. Examples of cases are as below:

Example 1: A Mathematics lecturer accepts bribes to add marks

IPOH, 3 July 2014 - A court sentenced a Mathematics lecturer to one-day jail and a fine of RM25,000 after he was found guilty of five corruption charges. He received a bribe of RM1,130 in total to raise the marks of two of his students in Mathematics and Statistics. The act was committed in 2011 and 2012 (MStar, 2014).

Example 2: A headmaster solicits a bribe from a canteen operator

SHAH ALAM, 6 February 2017 - A headmaster was sentenced to eight-month jail after being found guilty of two corruption charges. He received RM4,400 from a canteen operator on 30 January and October 2014. The bribe was an inducement to obtain a letter of support to extend the canteen contract at his school (Astro Awani, 2017).

Example 3: A former lecturer accepts bribes to give diplomas to students

KUALA LUMPUR, 3 January 2013 - A former Kuala Lumpur Metropolitan University College (KLMU) lecturer was sentenced to two-month jail and fined RM10,000 after pleading guilty to corruption charges. The lecturer obtained RM1,500 from a Kuala Lumpur Metropolitan University College (KLMUC) student on 13 July 2012. In return, the student will be given a diploma in the culinary field without having to attend lectures and sit for examinations (MStar, 2013).

2. Offences of offering and giving bribes - Offence occurs when a person offers or gives a bribe intending to get something in return through the wrong path. This offence is provided under Section 17(b) of the MACC Act 2009. Usually, this offence is committed by the private sector and the general public. Examples of this offence are offering bribes to law enforcement to avoid legal action; bribing procurement officers to obtain projects/contracts; offering bribes to financial officers to expedite the process of claiming project payments and more.

This offence is rarely committed by civil servants, especially those with the title of educator. However, in 2021, there was a case involving a teacher as follows

SHAH ALAM, 5 January 2021 - A primary school teacher was charged with six counts of giving bribes every month amounting to RM9,000 to a police officer with the rank of

Assistant Superintendent Police (ASP) and two police officers with the rank of Sergeant. The teacher, who owns a foreign labour supply company, gave the bribe in return for the Police not taking action against his foreign workers who did not have valid travel documents. Bribery payments were allegedly entered through the account in stages between 7 March 2019 to 15 June 2020 (BH Online, 2021).

If educators are offered bribes, what should be done? For example, being offered bribes by students to raise exam scores; offered a bribe to be accepted for admission even though he was not eligible; or offered a bribe to pass without having to attend an examination.

Legally, if a person is offered or solicited bribes, he must make a report to the MACC. The act of failing to report an offer, giving, solicitation, or receiving of a bribe is an offence under Section 25(2) and Section 25(4) of the MACC Act 2009. If found guilty can be imprisoned or fined or both.

In fact, the public can even arrest those who commit corruption. Corruption is an offence that can be arrested without a warrant (seizable offence) as provided under Section 49(1) of the MACC Act 2009. Arrest by the public is allowed as per Section 27 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

3. Submitting or using a false claim - An offence occurs when a person submits a claim document containing false or erroneous or defective information to an office (either a government or private agency), with an intention to deceive. False claims are made for personal gain. This offence is provided under Section 18 of the MACC Act 2009.

Simply put, an offence occurs when a claim for payment for goods or services is not the same as the actual supply or work. False claims can occur in several circumstances, whether the goods or services are not supplied at all; supplied in lesser quantities; or not following the specifications as stated in the claim document. Educators are at risk of being involved in this offence. Here are some examples of cases involving educators.

Example 1: A dean is imprisoned for certifying a false claim

PUTRAJAYA, 30 January 2012 - The Court of Appeal sentenced the Dean of the Faculty of Sports and Recreation Science, Institut Teknologi MARA (now Universiti Teknologi MARA) to one-year jail and a fine of RM10,000. He was found to have certified the supply of Multi-Joint 2 AP equipment priced at RM138,600. The actual equipment sent was Multi Hip which only cost RM27,965 (MStar, 2012).

Example 2: The manager and CEO of Yayasan Pelajaran MARA conspired to make a false claim

KUALA LUMPUR, 6 September 2013 - The CEO of Yayasan Pelajaran MARA (MARA Education Foundation or YPM) was sentenced to one-day jail and fined RM300,000. The decision was made after he pleaded guilty to abetting to make false claims. Prior to that, on 17 April 2012, he and the Manager of the YPM Program Management Division were charged in court for verifying the completion of nine Excellence in Knowledge and Student Personality Programs for the Perak Education Department, despite knowing the programs were not conducted. Each program is worth RM33,850 with a total of RM304,650 (MStar, 2013).

Example 3: A teacher is jailed for false claims related to the supply of uniforms

KOTA KINABALU, 11 October 2016 - A former teacher was jailed for three years and fined RM10,000 after being found guilty of making a false claim regarding the supply

of uniforms to Taman Bimbingan Kanak-Kanak (TABIKA) students, Community Development Department (KEMAS). The teacher is alleged to have submitted a Government Purchase Order to claim the expenses of KEMAS Kindergarten students' uniforms and sports, which were not actually supplied (MyMetro, 2016).

4. The offence of using office or position for gratification - This offence is also known as an abuse of power by public officials. As the name suggests, it only involves officers of a public body. Section 3 of the MACC Act 2009 defines 'officer of a public body' as any person who is a member, an officer, an employee, or a servant of a public body. A public body includes the federal government, state government, local authorities, and their departments, services, and undertakings. Also included are companies or subsidiaries over which a public body has controlling power or interest, and various registered societies and trade unions. An offence of abuse of power occurs when a public official makes a decision or takes any action that could benefit himself or his relative or his associate. This offence is provided under Section 23 of the MACC Act 2009.

A simple example of this offence is a director of a government agency appointing or recommending a company owned by his family members to be awarded a project. Educators (in government schools or public universities) need to be careful not to get caught up in this offence. If a family member enters a tender or quotation at your university or school, two things must be done. First, declare your interests and relationships. Second, not involved in any selection and decision-making process. The following are some cases involving educators who have been charged and convicted of abuse of power:

Example 1: The headmaster chooses his own sister company

ALOR SETAR, 27 January 2014 - A former headmaster was sentenced to two-year imprisonment and fined RM148,500 by a court on five charges of abuse of power. He is alleged to have used his position to select ZNR Kuala Nerang Enterprise company to supply Scout uniforms, Crescent Society, and School Youth Cadet Buds worth RM32,400. In fact, the company belonged to his sister. The offences were committed around 2008 and 2009 (MStar, 2014).

Example 2: The principal appoints his own company

SHAH ALAM, 27 July 2017 - The principal of a secondary school in Port Klang was sentenced to three-month jail and fined RM40,500 for abuse of power. He was found to have chosen his own company, Orea Collection, to supply teaching aids amounting to RM2,091.65 as well as equipment and stationery amounting to RM4,500 (Borneo Post Online, 2017).

Example 3: Lecturer couple guilty of abuse of power

ALOR SETAR, 9 January 2017 - A married couple, both lecturers at Padang Terap Community College pleaded guilty to abuse of power. In this case, the wife had prepared a Government Purchase Order for the supply of spare parts for electrical equipment worth RM34,250.25 to a company owned by her sister. Next, the husband has endorsed the Government Purchase Order. The court sentenced the husband to one-day imprisonment and a fine of RM170,251.25. Meanwhile, his wife is required to behave well for three years with one surety (BH Online, 2017).

Discussion

It is not difficult for all of us to understand the heinous crime of corruption. Although the definitions given by various world organizations are different, the interpretation of corruption offences in Malaysia must be understood based on the MACC Act 2009. This act does not limit corruption offences to the act of giving or receiving bribes. The act also interprets various forms of bribes or gratification, including gifts, bonuses, services, loans, positions, discounts, and others.

Efforts to fight corruption cannot be left entirely to the MACC. All parties have a role to play in preventing corruption. The simplest role that each individual can perform is, not to give bribes, do not accept bribes, and report any acts of corruption. The community must also place their trust in and support the MACC in its efforts to fight corruption. The government's determination in cultivating integrity, improving governance, and fighting corruption through the NACP must be supported by all parties, whether government agencies, the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and political leaders.

Awareness programs to cultivate integrity and instil a hatred of corruption are very important initiatives. This effort must be ongoing and executed at all ages. The most strategic is that its implementation starts at the preschool, primary school, secondary school, and HLI levels. The understanding of school teachers and lecturers on corruption crimes also needs to be improved. They are among the key players who can succeed in making Malaysia a country with high integrity and free of corruption.

MACC's enforcement of those involved in corruption crimes does not choose who the perpetrators are, whether they have high-profile or low-profile status. No one is special and no one is exceptional. Even so, some people still do not understand the limits of the MACC's powers in enforcing corruption crimes. Especially when the MACC investigation against certain individuals, is not continued with the prosecution, or not convicted of the offence committed. The fact is, in the criminal justice system in Malaysia, the MACC only conducts investigations. While the power to prosecute rests entirely with the Attorney General as provided by Article 145(3) of the Federal Constitution of Malaysia and Section 58 of the MACC Act 2009. The court is responsible for determining who is guilty or not guilty.

It is common knowledge that corruption is a serious crime that can lead to the collapse of a country. Yet, why are there still individuals entrusted with a certain responsibility and power, choosing to abuse it to get a bribe? Most unwarranted is the involvement of ingenious people in corruption crimes, especially educators. Are they not afraid of the effects of corruption on themselves and their families? Facing a trial in court is already burdensome and shameful. Not to mention if those involved in corruption are found guilty by the court. Punishment for corruption offences is imprisonment for a term not exceeding 20 years and a fine of not less than five times the value of the bribe or RM10,000, whichever is higher. For civil servants, imprisonment can disqualify them from pensions. This matter is provided under Section 21(1) of the Pensions Act 1980, "... if any person who has been granted a pension or other benefit under this Act is sentenced to death or imprisonment for a term by a Court, then the pension or other benefit shall cease immediately."

In addition, all property and proceeds from corrupt activities will be confiscated and forfeited by the Government of Malaysia. This is a stern action against those involved in corruption. For the record, in 2020, the total value of properties forfeited from corruption was RM14,331,914,169.18. This amount is the highest record for the value of forfeiture of property since the establishment of the MACC (MACC Annual Report, 2020, p. 49).

Not only that, the transaction of illegal proceeds (bribery) is a crime of money laundering under the Anti-Money Laundering, Anti-Terrorism Financing and Proceeds of Unlawful Activities Act 2001 namely AMLATFPUAA 2001 (Government of Malaysia, 2001). Money laundering means the activity of transforming money or other property derived from illegal activities (such as drug trafficking, corruption, illegal arms trade, human trafficking, robbery, and other crimes) into money or investments that appear to be legally valid (Khalijah et al., 2017). If found guilty under AMLATFPUAA 2001, those involved can be jailed for not more than 15 years and fined five times the value of proceeds from illegal activities or RM5 million, whichever is higher. To be clear, examples of money laundering cases are as follows:

MELAKA, 5 July 2018 - The former Director of the Public Works Department (PWD) Melaka was sentenced to 22 years and six-month imprisonment and fined RM36 million on 15 charges of corruption and money laundering. For 13 corruption charges, the accused was found to have received cash bribes amounting to RM196,200 at the Melaka PWD office between March 2014 and August 2016. Meanwhile, for five money laundering charges worth more than RM5.2 million, it involved transactions: (a) RM206,396.16 investment in ASB; (b) savings of RM506,735.92 in Tabung Haji; (c) cash of RM375,200; (d) investments of more than RM1.98 million in ASW 2020; and (e) investments of more than RM2.13 million in Amanah Saham Didik (Awani, 2018).

Conclusion

Corruption is an obstacle to national progress. People must learn from the story of the fall of several governments as a result of this crime. Cultivating integrity and prevention are two things that need to be made a priority for the country. This effort is not confined to one particular agency alone. The government has put in place a comprehensive policy through NACP 2019-2023. Now it is the role of every layer of society to implement the initiatives laid out under the plan.

Anti-corruption awareness campaigns and educational activities at the preschool, school, and university levels must be strengthened from time to time. Cultivating integrity and anti-corruption must be a key element in the country's academic system to form Malaysians who practice high moral values in daily life.

Educators must acknowledge the fact that their position is not immune from engaging in acts of corruption. The case studies that have been mentioned prove that corruption is a 'sharp thorn' that can damage the good name of the education sector in the country. Therefore, educators need to increase their knowledge of corruption crimes and appropriate preventive measures. Knowledge and awareness planted in the heart can be a strong bulwark to avoid getting caught up in the temptation of corruption. At the same time, educators must always exhibit high integrity and take care of their behaviour. This will be an example to young people.

Finally, the anti-corruption agenda must be borne by all parties. Corruption must be considered the number one enemy of the country. We are all determinants of the seriousness of corruption in this country. Integrity must be cultivated in daily life. Corruption must be hated and society must ensure that corrupt people are punished.

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