
**CORRUPTION ON SOCIAL SERVICE DELIVERY IN SIRONKO DISTRICT, A CASE STUDY OF
BUWALASI.**

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Abstract

The study was to investigate the effects of corruption on service delivery in social institutes for example health and education in Bwalasi sub county, Sironko district. It was guided by three specific objectives namely; to establish the relationship between corruption and social service delivery, to establish the negative impacts of corruption on social service delivery, and to identify the different measures put in place to combat corruption in Buwalasi sub county. The study involved fifty respondents and five key informants picked from the Buwalasi sub county community and the Buwalasi sub county headquarters staff. Questionnaires, interview schedule and observations were used in data collection. There was abundant evidence of embezzlement and diversion of public funds in the district. Approximately 46% of respondents surveyed reported the embezzlement, diversion and misuse of public money within the public institutions as a common practice, while 27% indicated the "interference of procurement process to be a common form of corruption affecting public institutions. Where corruption is systemic and entrenched, boldness is required-an incremental approach is unlikely to work. In these cases, an anti-corruption strategy must also go beyond first piracies, such as adopt market-friendly policies, reduce red tape or provide training, helpful though these actions may be.

Key words: corruption, community and social service delivery

Background to the study.

Corruption is the dishonest behavior of people in positions of power, such as managers and government officials (Paul et al., 2023). It can include giving and receiving bribes, inappropriate gifts, double dealing, diversion of public funds for personal gains among others (Christopher, Muhindo, et al., 2022). It is motivated by greed, a desire to maintain or increase one's power, or a belief in a perceived greater good, and is most often used in the abuse of public power by politicians and civil servants (Mercy et al., 2023). Corruption in public office is therefore considered one of the most serious ethical problems because it threatens the moral, political, economic and social well-being of nations, impairs service delivery, diverts and wastes scarce resources, and undermines the legitimacy of government. Internationally, corruption has become a major problem and a part of political-administrative everyday life in many countries (Alex et al., 2023). It has thus caused damage in the economy, politics and society, and has thus become one of the key problems of the international community (Ntirandekura & Christopher, 2022a). Sironko District Local Government is no exception to districts in the country, officials and councilors often engage in acts of corruption that range from tampering with tenders, manipulation of recruitment process (Ntirandekura & Christopher, 2022b), diversion and misuse of social funds and property, mismanagement and misappropriation of scarce resources sent to the district by donors and the central government to provide services to the people. This had an impact on the administrative development and performance of the district; economic efficiency, local initiative, output quality and effective service delivery (Christopher, Komunda, et al., 2022).

Following the high level of corruption in Uganda, key institutions such as the Inspector General of Government (IGG), the Directorate of Public Prosecutions and the Office of the Auditor General (Nsubuga, Uganda Debt Network) were established to fight corruption in the country. However, despite this, corruption continues to grow in all sectors of the country.

Statement of the problem.

Despite the fact that the Government of Uganda has put in place elaborate mechanisms and key institutions such as the Inspectorate of Government (IGG), the Directorate of Public Prosecutions (DPP), the Auditor General (AG) and the Management Code of Ethics to control the behavior and conduct of public servants, Sironko District Local Government continues experiencing high levels of corruption in the pandemic (Kazaara et al., 2023). There is a high level of diversion and misuse of public funds and assets, nepotism, mismanagement and misappropriation of the county's meager resources to provide services to people and interference with procurement and recruitment processes (Phionah et al., 2023). . This will result in high levels of poverty, poor human resources and underdevelopment. These challenged us to find out what factors contribute to the escalation of corruption in Sironko district local government despite measures to combat it. There is therefore a need for a researcher to conduct this sub-study.

Specific objectives

- To establish the relationship between corruption and social service delivery in Buwalasi sub county
- To establish the negative impacts of corruption on social service delivery in Buwalasi sub county
- To identify the different measures put in place to combat corruption in Buwalasi sub county

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Methodology

The research focused on the effects of corruption on service delivery in Sironko District Local Government. Qualitative methods were used because the analysis based on a non-statistical nature seeking to establish the effects of corruption on service delivery in Sironko District Local government. The research answered the following questions: How is corruption related to social service delivery, how has corruption negatively impacted on social service delivery, what measures have been put in place to combat corruption. The study was conducted in Buwalasi Sub County, Sironko District. The district has a total population of 239,600 (National Housing and Population Census 2012). There were ten sub counties and two town councils defining the administrative units of governance in the district. Non-random sampling was used. Purposive sampling was used to select knowledgeable respondents because the research was qualitative and the sample size was small. Cluster sampling was used to select respondents from the community because the samples were found within a cluster of villages, the area covered were big and therefore there was need to cluster the sample according to parishes and villages. Six public officers at the district were selected because they are linked to resources, private service providers and oversee the performance of other junior staff, ten local government staffs at the Sub County level were selected randomly using purposive random sampling because they were the direct implementers of services to the community, three members of the civil society were purposely selected using purposive random sampling because they were keen and concerned about how services were provided to the people, nine members of the Local Councils were selected using purposive random sampling including the District Councilors, Sub County Councilors and Local Council three because they are representatives of the people and responsible for monitoring the activities of the civil servants. 50 people were selected from the community using cluster random sampling because they were the beneficiaries of services provided. Eight Focus group discussions were conducted in the different parishes in Buwalasi Sub County. The researcher used the interview guide and questionnaires for key informants in the Sironko District Local Government and Civil Society Organization. The interview guide was administered to the respondents in the communities in the eight villages. Eight Focus Group Discussions were held in eight parishes. Qualitative data analysis was employed since the research was qualitative. Data was analyzed before, during and after collection in form of tables, frequencies and percentages using SPSS (Nelson et al., 2022). After data collection, information was coded, and information of similar code categories was assembled together meaningfully and used at the end for report writing.

RESULTS

Table 1: Shows the forms in which corruption takes place

Forms of corruption	Frequency	(%)
Embezzlement, diversion and misuse of social funds	68	46
Interference in procurement process	40	27
Interference in recruitment process	08	5
Bureaucratic corruption	20	14
Absconding duties by social Officials	12	8

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Total	148	100
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There is abundant evidence of embezzlement and diversion of public funds in the district. Approximately 46% of respondents surveyed reported the embezzlement, diversion and misuse of public money within the public institutions as a common practice, while 27% indicated the interference of procurement process to be a common form of corruption affecting public institutions. There is also evidence of bureaucratic corruption where the officials make the process of acquiring public service almost impossible and requires one to pay a bribe to access the service which is meant to be free. This is according to 14% of the respondents interviewed (Christopher, Muhindo, et al., 2022).

Abandoning duties and interference in recruitment process were also mentioned to be other corruption practices in public institutions. This is according to 8% and 5% of the respondents respectively.

Table 2: Shows analysis of the factors making public officials to engage in corruption

Factors making social officials to engage in corruption			Frequency	Percentage (%)
Inadequate implementation of criminal laws/ anti- corruption laws			40	27
Low salaries of civil servants			33	22.3
Political environment			28	18.9
Too much discretion of social officials			23	15.5
Poorly defined and rapidly changing rule and			14	9.5
General moral decay			10	6.8
Total			148	100

The analyses of the factors that exacerbate corruption in public service are numerous. However, this research found out the following to be the reasons why public officers get themselves into corruption. 27% of the respondents in this research pointed out that inadequate implementation of criminal/anti-corruption laws as the main cause of corruption. 22.3% pointed out low salaries of civil servants as 18.9% blamed Political environment for the continued corruption (Tasha et al., 2023). Too much discretion of public officials was identified by 15.5% while 9.5% and 6.8% pointed out poorly defined and rapidly changing rule and regulations without the people being adequately informed and general moral decay respectively.

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Uganda is credited for having comprehensive anti-corruption legal and institutional framework but poor/weak implementation. Where such laws are used, in many cases it has been done selectively targeting those regarded to have departed from the political line of thinking (Moses et al., 2023).

Effects of corruption on social service delivery.

Table 3: Shows the effects of corruption.

Effects of Corruption	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Economic wastage and inefficiency	58	39.2
Contributes to underdevelopment and poverty	40	27
Scares away investors	29	19.6
Distorts public decision on projects	21	14.2
Total	148	100

According to the findings above, 39.2% of the respondents reported that corruption leads to economic wastage and inefficiency while 27% noted that corruption contributes to underdevelopment and poverty in a country. 19.6% of the respondents were in a view that corruption scares away investors whereas the minority 14.2% acknowledged that corruption distorts public decisions on public projects (Christopher, Komunda, et al., 2022). As a result of such mismanagement of borrowed resources, a country continues to sink deeper into unsustainable debt which remains a yoke not only for the present generation, but for the future generation as well.

Table 4: Showing what government should do to combat corruption to enhance efficient service delivery.

Government interventions	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Undertaking investigations and persecuting high corruption	62	41.9
Reviewing penalties for violations or failure to comply	41	27.7
Declaration of assets by public servants	18	12.2
Reviewing and tightening the leadership code to include middle class managers/ civil servants	13	8.8
Public accountability brazes	10	6.7
Integrity workshops/ training on corruption, its dangers, mechanism on how to identify and report	4	2.7
Total	148	100

The research findings according to the above table 10 suggested a number of actions to be done by the government in order to fight corruption and enhance effective service delivery. 41.9% of the respondents said that the government should critically undertake investigations and persecute high level corruption;

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27.7% of the respondents pointed out the need for the government to review penalties for violations or failure to comply with the rules by public officials. 12.2% of the research respondents, 8.8%, and 6.7% noted that the government should ensure that it enforces the declaration of assets by public servants and extended to include the middle managers/civil servants, review and tightening the leadership code and conduct public accountability in every quarter of the financial year respectively. The minority of 2.7. Respondents said that the government needs to train or conduct integrity workshops to build the capacity of public servants on corruption, its dangers, and mechanisms on how to identify and report.

Service delivery

Table 5: shows social services mostly affected by corruption

Social services affected	Frequency	Percentage
Education	26	17.6
Health	38	25.7
Agriculture & livestock services	30	20.3
Road construction and maintenance	47	31.7
Security	7	4.7
Total	148	100

The highly affected service delivery in public sector according to the research findings were construction and maintenance of roads, health related services, Agricultural and livestock services (at 31.7%, 25.7% and 20.3% respectively). Only 17.6% of the respondents pointed out that education services are inadequate because of corruption. Minority of the respondents 4.7% noted that security services are hampered by corruption. The fact that the Gishu community attaches little value to education justifies the low rating of education services being affected by corruption. The above findings agree with Transparency international (2011) on transparency and accountability that states that corruption occurs in public service in all sectors; health, education, roads and transport, military, police and agricultures sectors (Allan et al., 2023).

Diversion and misuse of public funds and service delivery to the public

Table 6: Shows the effects of diversion and misuse of public funds on service delivery.

Effects of diversion of public funds	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Additional cost to service delivery	56	37.8
Substandard work	44	29.7
Scares away investors	30	20.3
Widens the gap between the rich and poor	18	12.2
Total	148	100

According to the table above, the findings show that diversion and misuse of public funds affects service delivery in various ways; according to 37.8% of the respondents, it leads to additional costs to service delivery. Other budgets are affected in order to provide the service whose money has been misused or diverted. 29.7% of the respondents also noted that, diversion and misuse of public funds leads to compromise in the quality of service or assignment of work (Christopher, Muhindo, et al., 2022).

Table 7: shows how interference on public procurement process affects service delivery

(Effects of interference in PPP)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Financial losses	60	40.5
Substandard services delivered	50	33.8
Additional cost to service	30	20.3
High cases of complaints and reviews	8	5.4
Total	148	100

The research findings state that interference in procurement process leads to financial losses to the procurement and disposing unit (PDU). 40.5% of the respondents noted that, the procurement malpractices such as conducting procurements that are unplanned, collusion with bidders to fix bid price, payment of contractors for service/work not performed leads to financial losses to the “PDU (Akankwasa et al., 2022). Of the respondents also reported that interference in public procurement process leads to substandard and shoddy service delivery (Gracious, 2023); 20.3% of the respondents on the other hand pointed out that interference in public procurement process leads to additional costs to service delivery. This is because of the percentages that are to be paid to the public officials by the contractors/suppliers (Faridah et al., 2023). High cases of complaints and administrative reviews were also cited as the effects of interference in public procurement process. This was according to 5.4% of the research respondents.

Interference in recruitment process and its effects on service delivery

Table 8: shows the effects of interference in recruitment and selection process on service delivery.

Category (Effects of interference in recruitment)	Frequency	Percentage
Poor quality of services	62	41.9
Bias service delivery	50	33.8
Low staff productivity	36	24.3
Total	148	100

The results findings according to table 8 above shows that the interference in recruitment and selection process will have impact on the quality of service delivery majority of respondents 41.9% pointed out that the quality of service delivery will be compromised due to the unskilled and unqualified staffs who will be recruited as a result of corrupt process followed. 33.8% of the respondents pointed out that interference in recruitment and

selection process leads to biasness in service delivery as the duty bearers will try reward their God fathers by serving their orders and requests. Low staff productivity according to the 24.3% of the respondents is another effect of recruitment and selection into jobs and public service positions.

Conclusions

According to the research findings also observes that there is lack of real political will to fight corruption. Despite good legal and institutional frameworks, the government uses them selectively on those who have shown some sign of disagreeing with the main stream political system, aid ideology. This has resulted into patronage and impunity which make some individuals and government beyond the arm of the law hence at liberty to misuse public funds without being held responsible. This kind of selective prosecution of culprits has set bad precedent and leaves the anti-corruption institutions powerless to act on the big shots, making them concentrate on small public officers who are within their reach. Generally, most of the anti-corruption actors have over concentrated on the public sector (demand side) and neglected the private sector (supply side) making them shoot in one direction. The involvement of the private sector is critical on the fight against corruption especially in the highly liberalized and privatized economy like the Ugandan economy.

Recommendations

Where corruption is systemic and entrenched, boldness is required-an incremental approach is unlikely to work. In these cases, an anti-corruption strategy must also go beyond first piracies, such as adopt market-friendly policies, reduce red tape or provide training, helpful though these actions may be. Entrenched and systemic corruption requires administering a shock in order to disturb a corrupt equilibrium. There are many ways to do this, but one way to rattle the system is, for a number of corrupt figures to be convicted and punished. Since a campaign against corruption can too often become a campaign against the opposition, the first few cases to be prosecuted could be from the ruling party.

While prosecuting offenders is necessary to demonstrate that impunity is at an end and the rules of the game are changing, it is also important to emphasize the preventive nature of anti-corruption efforts rather than the enforcement aspect.

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