

# WOMEN AND CORRUPTION IN SIERRA LEONE



By

## A Study on the Effect of Corruption on Women



TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL  
SIERRA LEONE

## EXECUTIVESUMMARY

Corruption has become very prevalent worldwide inspite of numerous efforts made so far to curb it. In view of this, anti-corruption actors and institutions continue to seek various mechanisms and strategies to make the anti-corruption campaign more effective and result oriented. In view of this, Transparency International Secretariat in Berlin, Germany, the leading global anti-corruption coalition engaged Transparency International Sierra Leone and the Ghana Integrity Initiative it's national chapters in Sierra Leone and Ghana respectively as part of a three-day Meeting in Accra, Ghana in March 2013 to devise ways in which to empower people, mainly women and youth in the fight against corruption.

At the meeting in Accra, Ghana it was decided that there was the need to conduct a Research in order to come up with empirical evidence of the nature and extent of Corruption on Women and the Way Forward in addressing it in Ghana and Sierra Leone.

In Sierra Leone, Transparency International Sierra Leone conducted the research using two main tools: A Research Questionnaire and A Focus Group Discussion. The Research Questionnaire was administered at district level targeting five hundred respondents, of which four hundred were women and one hundred were men in each of the five districts: Bombali, Bo, Kenema and the Western Urban and Rural Districts. The Focus Group Discussion was conducted in Freetown, targeting twenty women mainly from various works of life: Parliament, the Media, Civil Society, and the Business Sector, school and university students amongst others. The Research was conducted between December and April 2014 and the Focus Group Meeting in April 2014.

Some of the main Findings and Recommendations of the Research and Focus Group Meetings are as follows:

- What constitutes corruption is mostly thought to be bribery, and bribery is the most common form of corruption and it is prevalent in the public sector.
- Corruption is prevalent in the country mainly as a result of selfishness, the need to facilitate the speedy completion of a process especially to secure services and the quest to acquire more wealth.
- Gender is a key factor in determining the prevalence of corruption as women are thought to be less corrupt especially if they are in position of authority.
- The education sector is most prone to corruption mainly in terms of accessing services.
- Women are highly likely to be faced with corruption issues when accessing basic services and most often they are expected to pay in kind (through the body currency) than in cash.
- Women can make a huge difference in the anti-corruption campaign as they are most vulnerable to corruption.
- There is the need for a coordinated movement by women to address: the corruption concerns facing women in particular and that facing the country in general.

The findings and recommendations have provided empirical evidence of the nature and extent of corruption mostly faced by women and how this adversely affects women's dignity, and empowerment and consequently national development. It also reveals that women are vulnerable to corrupt practices and suffer most as a result of corruption. They have provided vital information and strategy that will form the basis for advocacy efforts, through a coordinated approach for women's active engagement in the anti-corruption campaign In Sierra Leone.

## INTRODUCTION

Though Sierra Leone is richly endowed with mineral, marine and natural resources ranging from gold, diamond, bauxite, rutile, iron ore, oil, arable lands to name a few, the country continues to rank among the lowest in the UNDP Human Development Index. There is widespread poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, marginalization, neglect and deprivation of citizens. This situation culminated into the decade long civil war from March 1991 to January 2002.

After the war, efforts made to delve into its causes to prevent a further re-occurrence, specifically through the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, revealed in its report of 2001 that Corruption was one of the main causes of the war. This led to the enactment of the Anti-Corruption Act in 2000 and the establishment of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) in 2002.

Since then the ACC has employed several means and approaches to curb this menace. Some of the approaches are public sensitization of the citizenry on the causes and effect of corruption, review of systems and processes in government establishments, the formulation and monitoring of a National Anti-Corruption Strategy, prosecution of culprits and the review and strengthening of the Anti-Corruption Laws in 2008, making it one of the most robust laws to fight corruption in Africa.

Though it can be said that significant efforts have been made especially since 2007 in the fight against corruption due to the President's Zero Tolerance stance against Corruption and the enactment of the Asset Declaration Law in 2008, corruption especially in the public sector seems to have continued unabated as is evident in the recent Auditor General's Report from 2011 to date which reveals the huge sums of monies that are unaccounted for.

This has created a general feeling of despair, hopelessness and mistrust and has posed a major threat to the consolidation of peace, democracy and stability. Amidst this the citizenry has desperately called on all integrity and anti-corruption agencies/organizations in the country to intensify the fight against corruption.

Fortunately, it has been acknowledged that in the fight against Corruption there are no quick fixes, it requires the strong and persistent engagement and pressure of a critical mass of the citizenry for meaningful and sustainable progress to be made.

In view of this, TI-Sierra Leone has recognized the need for the involvement of women as key stakeholders in the fight against corruption in Sierra Leone. This is due to the fact that women constitute more than half of the population (approximately 52.2%) and as such can largely contribute to form the critical mass required. In addition women in Sierra Leone have proved to be of a stronger will and resolve to stand against the ills in the society as evidenced in the stance they took to bring peace to the country at the height of the rebel war, to also resist the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) Junta rule in 1997 and to ensure that women have equal opportunity to participate in politics and leadership.

Notwithstanding, in order to ensure the strategic and proactive involvement of women in the anti-corruption campaign to make it more effective, productive, sustainable and impact oriented, there is the need to conduct a thorough analysis of the trends, manifestation and impact of corruption on women which will serve as a basis and impetus for their engagement.

The research therefore sought to delve into the specific causes, trends, manifestations, effect and impact of Corruption on women in Sierra Leone as well as discerning the most effective ways in ensuring that they become very vital instruments in promoting the anti-corruption campaign in the country.

## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To document women's knowledge and perception of corruption in Sierra Leone
- To assess and document the effect of corruption on women
- To identify and document areas where corruption is perpetrated most against women
- To identify and document methods and approaches in curbing corruption perpetrated against women
- To promote the development of specific roles women could play in curbing corruption perpetrated against them
- To identify and document possible areas where women can collaborate with their male counterparts to curb corruption perpetrated against them

## **METHODOLOGY**

The Research Exercise took place from September 2013 to May 2014. It was led by the Executive Director, Mrs Lavina Banduah supported by TI-SL's Programme Officer, Mrs Adenike Temple and Research Officer, Mr Abdulai Koroma. The relevant data was collected through the following: Desk Review, Survey and Focus Group Discussion.

### **Desk Review:**

A Desk Review was conducted to ascertain the existence of related information/statistics on Women and Corruption in Sierra Leone.

### **Survey and Key Informant Interviews**

The Survey was conducted through the administering of a Questionnaire and a Focus Group Discussion. The Questionnaire was jointly developed by TI-SL and GII and administered to five hundred (500) identified respondents, of which four hundred were women from different age range and vocation. In addition, a cross section of one hundred men of a similar age range and vocation different were also targeted. The respondents were between the following age ranges: 15 to 25 years, 26 to 35 years, 36 to 45 years, and 46 to 60 years.

The Questionnaire was developed comprising both open ended and close ended questions were deemed necessary. The Research Questions were divided into three parts:

The first part focused on the respondents' general knowledge of Corruption: Definition, Causes and Impact. The second part focused on the respondents' experience of Corruption personally or as a witness. The third part focused on the respondents perception of what should be done to further intensify the fight against corruption, specifically what role women should play and what would be their contribution to the campaign.

In order to ensure a wider reach and coverage of the target respondents, the Research was conducted at provincial level, specifically in the Bombali District for the Northern Province, Bo District for the Southern Province, Kenema District for the Eastern Province, Western Rural District and Freetown for the Western Urban District.

Ten Junior Female Researchers were identified and trained to conduct the data collection exercise. The data collection exercise took place from November 2013 to January 2014.

In the course of administering the questionnaires, the junior researchers also conducted key informant interviews.

## Focus Group Discussion

In order to ensure the viability of the information collected, a Focus Group Discussion was conducted with heads of women's group and women's activists and other major actors such as government officials, NGOs, community workers, teachers, traditional and religious leaders. The focus group discussions were conducted with different representatives of women's groups reached during the data collection exercise.

Following the completion of the data collection process, four data entry clerks were also contracted to input the data and this was followed by the analysis of the data by a Consultant, Mr Abu Bakarr Kamara. An initial draft report was compiled and reviewed at a Validation Meeting of key stakeholders. The final report has been compiled and will be launched in November 2014.

The result of this exercise has provided measurable estimates on the nature, extent and depth of problem of corruption and its effect on women.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

### DESK REVIEW

The Desk Review revealed that there exist no specific literature on Women and Corruption in Sierra Leone. There are a few Paper Presentations that have been prepared by a few women to deliver in Workshops.

### SURVEY

The data collected from the administering of the questionnaire revealed the following:

#### Questions 1 and Figure 1: Respondents Definition of Corruption

Respondents generally defined corruption as the engagement in illegal acts for personal gain.

Response	Number	Percentage
Demand for and giving of bribes	314	40.31
Demands for and giving of sexual favours	93	11.94
Unnecessary bureaucratic processes	82	10.53
Demand for and giving of other favours	139	17.84
lack of transparency and accountability	151	19.38

Respondents were also asked to give their opinion about what corruption is.

In response, 40.31% of those interviewed stated that the demand for and the giving of bribes is what best describe corruption. 11.94% sees corruption as the demand for and the giving of sexual favours. 17.84% define corruption as the demand for, and the giving of other favours. 10.53% define corruption as the unnecessary long bureaucratic processes in public institutions. 19.38% sees corruption as the lack of transparency and accountability.

This indicates that corruption is generally seen as acts that are done for personal aggrandisement and specifically Bribery is considered as the highest form of corruption followed by lack of transparency and accountability, then the quest for incentives given for or demanded in turn for access to opportunities and services, followed by sexual favours.

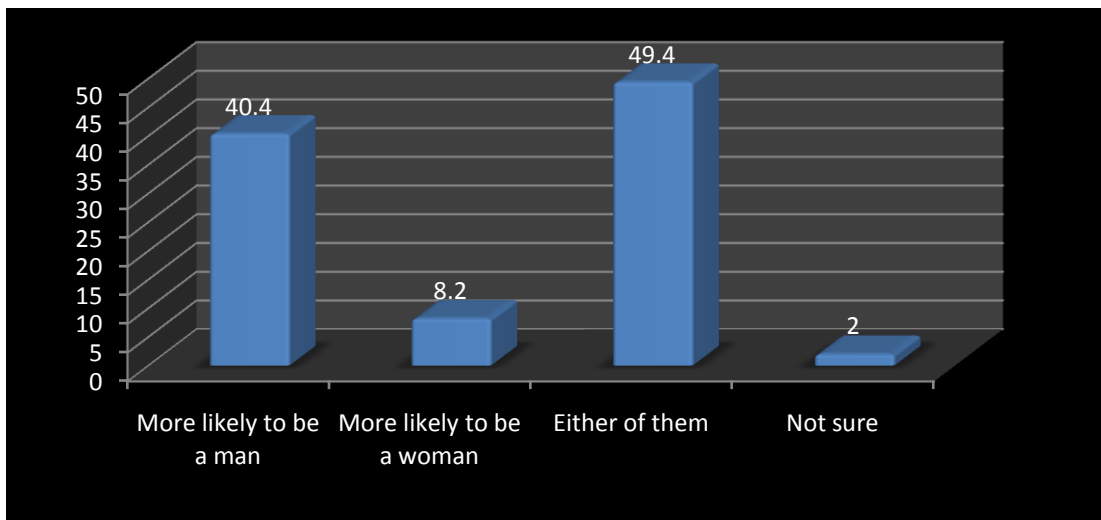
**Figure 2: In your opinion, is there a link between corruption and the sex of a person in Sierra Leone?**

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Yes	296	59.2
	No	174	34.8
	Do not know	30	6.0
	Total	500	100.0

Figure 2 shows that 59.2% of the people interviewed believed that there is a link between corruption and the sex of a person in Sierra Leone while 34.8% are of the opinion that there is no link between the two. Only 6% stated that they do not know whether there is a link between corruption and the sex of a person.

This indicates that the likelihood of corruption becoming an issue depends on an individual's sex.

**Figure 3: A person who wants to corrupt another person is generally**



The survey depicted that men are more likely to corrupt another person (40.2%), than woman (8.2%). However, 49.4% revealed that either a man or a woman can corrupt another person. This indicates that men are prone to engage in corrupt acts than women.

**Figure 4: In your opinion, who is most difficult to be corrupt?**

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Men	84	16.8
	Women	281	56.2
	Both	122	24.4
	Don't know	13	2.6
	Total	500	100.0

Most respondents largely believe that women are more difficult to be corrupt than men.

This indicates that women are less prone to be corrupt.

**Figure 5: In your opinion, what would corruption be like if more women were in positions of trust in society?**

	<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Valid	More likely less corruption	365	73.3
	More likely more corruption	45	9.0
	No difference in corruption levels	75	15.1
	Don't know	13	2.6
	Total	498	100.0

More than two thirds (73.3%) of the respondents believed that if there are more women in position of trust in society, there would be less corruption, while 9% said the opposite. 15.1% stated that whether or not there are more woman than men in positions of trust, corruption will still be prevalent.

This indicates that respondents feel that if women were in positions of trust there will be less corruption in the society.

**Figure 6: Do you know any woman who has paid a bribe recently and have you also offered to pay a bribe to anyone and under what circumstance.**

	<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Valid	Yes	221	44.2
	No	241	48.2
	Not sure	33	6.6
	No response	5	1.0
	Total	500	100.0

48.2% of the respondent said they have not offered a bribe to anyone in recent times nor do they know of any woman who has offered to pay a bribe, while 44.2% said they have offered a bribe and know of a woman who has also done the same. Of those who said they have offered a bribe or know of a woman who has done the same, 33.7% stated that it was done to facilitate a process. 29.3% said it was to get quick access to services. 17.7% said that it was to make things easier for them. Less than 10% said it was offered to get contracts. 9.6% said that it was to avoid being arrested or to get out of police net.

This indicates that women largely would not want to offer to give a bribe under any circumstance. However, when faced with a critical situation they have had to offer to pay a bribe to get access to an opportunity or services especially if their personal or family welfare was at stake.

**Figure 7: In your opinion, what is the primary reason why someone may want to corrupt another person**

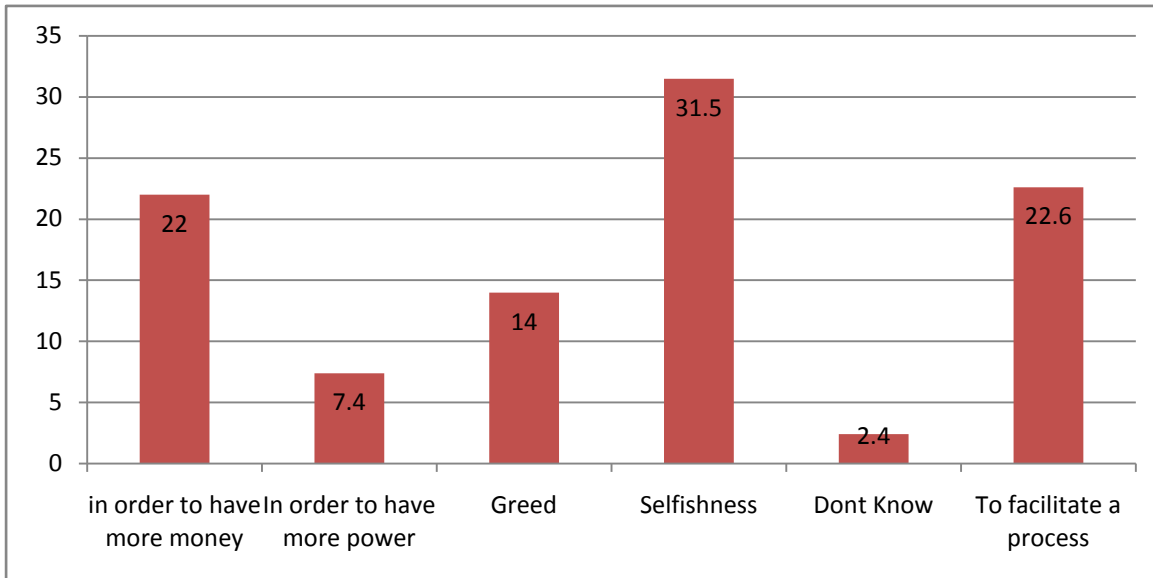


Figure 7 shows that selfishness is one of the key reasons respondents feel would make someone want to corrupt another person. This is followed by the need to facilitate a process, the need to have more money, greed and lastly in order to have more power.

This indicates that corrupt acts are largely done for selfish reasons that would make things work for a person and put them at a position of advantage to others.

**Figure 8. At a workplace power and money are more of an important:**

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Concern for men	121	24.2
	Concern for women	23	4.6
	A concern for both sexes	348	69.6
	Don't know	8	1.6
	Total	500	100.0

Figure 8 shows that respondents are of the opinion that power and money are of great importance for both sexes in a working environment (69.6%). 24.2% stated that power and money are of greater importance to men than women, while 4.6% said it is of great importance to women.

This indicates that though both men and women prioritize having power and money in a workplace. However, men are prone to be more concerned about power or money than women.



**Figure 9: In your experience with corruption, do you think gender makes a difference in the fight against corruption**

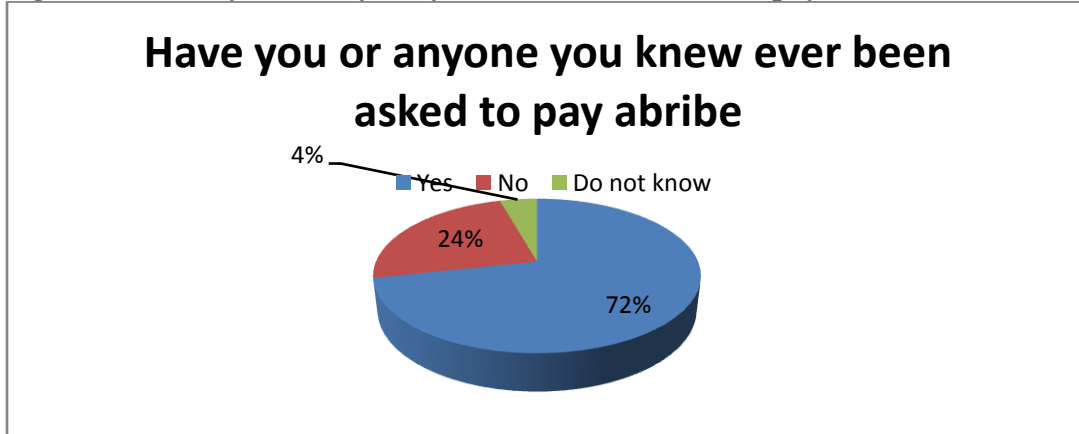
	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Yes	343	69.0
	No	108	21.7
	Not sure	40	8.0
	No response	5	1.0
	Total	497	100.0

Respondents largely believed that gender does make a difference in the fight against corruption. 69% agreed that gender makes a difference while 21.7% said otherwise. 8% are not sure whether gender does make a difference in the fight against corruption.

In addition, 60% of those surveyed stated that men are more likely to be corrupt while 13.5% opined that women are more likely to be corrupt.

This indicates that the effectiveness of the fight against corruption depends on the gender of those engaged in it. In essence women will make a great difference to the fight against corruption than men.

**Figure 10. Have you or anyone you know, been asked to pay a bribe?**



72% of those interviewed stated that either themselves or someone they know have been asked to pay a bribe. 24% said they have never paid a bribe.

This indicates that bribery is prevalent especially in terms of the demand side to access services in the society. It is only on a small scale do people pay no bribes and a few have not had any related experience.

**Figure 11** below shows the services they have been asked to pay a bribe for.

**Figure 11**

	<b>Bribe demanded for:</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Valid	Services related to health care	86	23.0
	Services related to education	127	34.0
	To access loan facilities	20	5.3
	To acquire a license or permit (eg driver's license)	21	5.6
	To acquire a permit to construct a house	11	2.9
	For birth/death certificate	15	4.0
	To facilitate distribution of Public food or other public goods	6	1.6
	To get pension and other retirement entitlements	10	2.7
	To avoid being arrested or to get out of police net	78	20.9
	Total	374	100.0

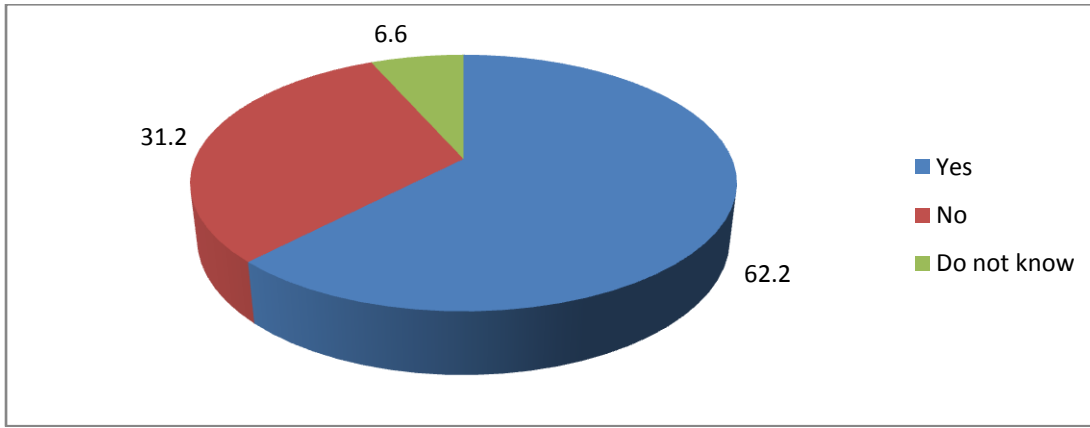
This indicates that corruption is prevalent in the public sector especially in the education, health, law enforcement and transportation sector.

**Figure12. From your personal experience, which institution have you had to pay a bribe to?**

	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Valid	Government	375	75.0
	Private sector	38	7.6
	NGOs/CSOs	7	1.4
	Religious organizations	4	.8
	Others	76	15.2
	Total	500	100.0

Respondents said that most of them have paid a bribe to a government institution than any other institution. In relation to the specific institutions, they said they have had to pay a bribe to the Education, Health and Law Enforcement institutions.

**Figure13. Have you ever refused to pay or received a bribe?**

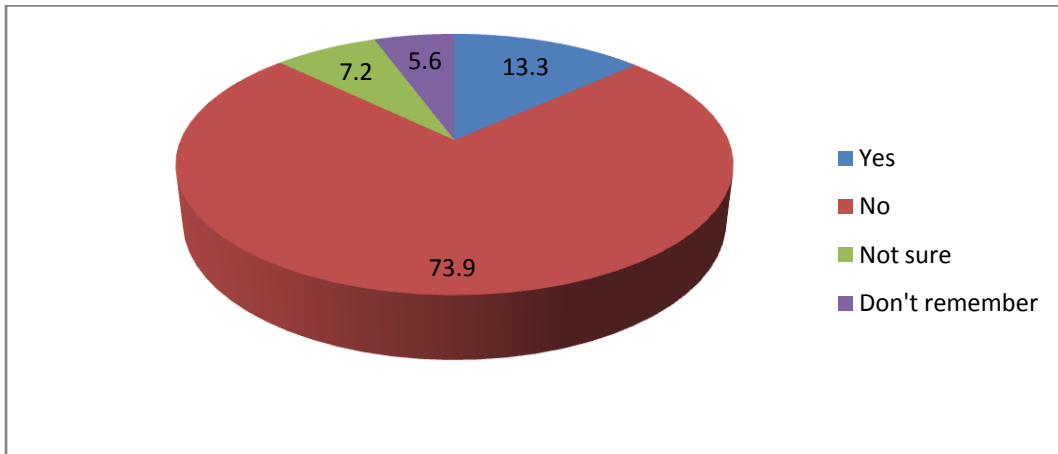


The figure above shows that 62.2% of respondents have refused to pay or take a bribe while 31.2% said they do pay or take a bribe. Of those that said yes, below are the most outstanding reasons for refusing to pay or take bribe. Of those who said ‘Yes’, majority stated that they did not want to be involved in corruption and also because it is illegal to take a bribe followed by the need to uphold their integrity.

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
I could not afford what I was asked to pay	10.6
I did not want to be involved in corruption	29.8
I am religious	6.2
I know is it illegal	29.8
I have integrity	23.6

This indicates that there is a considerable awareness and commitment to curb the paying of bribes and engaging in corrupt acts. People are conscious of the negative implication of engaging in such acts and would rather uphold their integrity.

**Figure 14: Have you ever used your position to extort money or other favour from people**



73.9% of the respondents said they have never used their positions to extort money or favour from people, while 13.3 said that they have used their office to extort money from people. 7.2% are not sure, while 5.6% don't remember.

This indicates that most women would use their position for personal gain, a pointer that women in position of authority are less likely to be corrupt.

Of those who said yes, 62.1% were expecting a gift in kind (produce or jewellery), 59.6 were expecting free labour (domestic or agriculture work), 17.4% were expecting sexual favour while 33.3% were expecting transfer of property.

**Figure 15: Favour Expected**

Response	Yes	No
Gifts in kind ( produce jewellery)	62.1	37.9
Sexual favour ( from you or your female relatives)	17.4	82.6
Free labour ( domestic work, agriculture work)	59.6	40.4
Transfer of property deeds	33.3	66.7

### C. Political Participation of Women and Corruption

**Figure16: As a woman, have you ever been offered gifts/cash/favours during elections**

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Yes	177	35.4
	No	294	58.8
	Do not know	29	5.8
	Total	500	100.0

58% of respondents stated that as women they have not been offered gifts/cash/favour during elections, while 35.4% said they have been offered gifts during elections.

This indicates that while some women may not have received gifts/cash/favour during elections thereby upholding their integrity, a considerable number have received such gifts which is a pointer that some women are vulnerable and at risk of being lured by aspirants to win their votes through corrupt acts.

**Figure 17: Is there a difference in the pattern of bribe paying among the sexes**

	<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Valid	Yes	500	100
	No	0	0
	Not sure	0	0
	Total	500	100.0

All respondents said that there is a difference in bribe paying among the sexes. This indicates that the nature and extent of bribe paying in politics vary by gender.

**Figure 18: Are Women more mindful of Integrity issues when in positions of responsibility?**

	<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Valid	Yes	480	98%
	No	20	2%
	Not sure	0	0
	Total	500	100.0

Respondents are of the opinion that a large percent of women are more mindful of integrity issues when in positions of authority.

This also serves to reinforce the belief that women are less likely to be corrupt when in position of authority.

**Figure 19: As a woman, do you think you can make a difference in the fight against corruption?**

	<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Valid	Yes	411	82.2
	No	32	6.4
	Not sure	21	4.2
	No response	36	7.2
	Total	500	100.0

82.2% of the respondents interviewed strongly believed that women can make a difference in the fight against corruption, while 6.4% said woman cannot make a difference. 4.2% stated they are not sure if women can make a difference in the fight against corruption.

This indicates that women’s involvement in the anti-corruption campaign can make a huge difference.

**Figure 20: What would you need to be encouraged to participate in the fight against Corruption?**

	<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Valid	Be a member of an activist group	380	76%
	Acknowledgement of my efforts and participation	40	8%
	Higher education	20	4%
	A Safe and protected environment for activism	36	7.2%
	The support and agreement of my partner	10	2%
	Nothing	14	2.8%
	Total	500	100.0

**Figure 21: In the following would you agree to pay a bribe?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Maybe</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
<b>In an incident where you are stopped by the police?</b>	26.1	55.3	16.8	1.8
<b>Asked to pay something to facilitate a process for you?</b>	41.3	43.1	14.4	1.2
<b>Pay an amount to secure a contract</b>	26.3	60.5	11.0	2.2
<b>Asked to have sex to secure an employment or admission to an institution?</b>	9.0	85.0	4.2	1.8
<b>To have access to services at a medical facility?</b>	34.7	50.3	13.4	1.6
<b>Pay for your child's admission without receiving a receipt?</b>	15.6	77.4	5.8	1.2
<b>Pay to secure a meter for electricity, water or telephone connection?</b>	25.3	59.3	13.6	1.8

A large percent of the respondents said they will not pay a bribe under the various circumstances above. Some out of despair said they would, especially if it was critical to their personal or family welfare. Some affirmed they may or may not depending on the circumstance.

This indicates that most people prefer to uphold their integrity rather than engage in corruption. Some said they would as that is the only way out which indicates that corruption is entrenched in the access of these services.

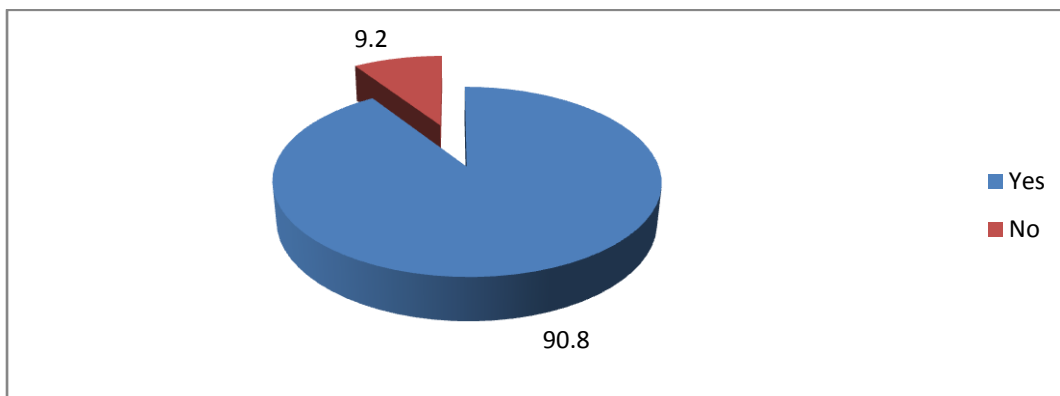
**Figure 22: Which of the following are consequences of corruption in the lives of women in Sierra Leone?**

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Corruption reduces women's access to and control over resources	172	34.9
	Lack of protection and advancement of women's rights under the law	95	19.3
	Under development	103	20.9
	Lack of access to quality social services like education and health	122	24.7
	Total	493	100.0

According to the respondents, access to and control over resources is the greatest consequence of corruption on the lives of women in Sierra Leone, followed by inadequate access to basic social services like education and health, under development of women's priority issues especially in terms of education and health.

This indicates that corruption negatively impact women's empowerment and developmental issues and is one of the main factors for the plight of women in Sierra Leone.

**Figure 23: Are you willing to be part of a movement to campaign against corruption in general and specifically corrupt acts against women?**



A large percentage of the respondents interviewed 90.8% are willing to be part of a movement to campaign against corruption in general and specifically against corrupt acts on women. Of those who said yes, majority stated that they would like to join such campaign to promote women's development, economic empowerment and rights. This indicates that women suffer most from corruption and feel there is the need to promote the anti-corruption campaign especially through a women's movement to curb the negative impact of corruption on women's welfare.

**Figure 24a: Why women should join the fight against corruption**

Response	Percentage
Women bear the greatest brunt of corruption	14.9
Women are highly vulnerable and marginalized	13.4
To promote women's development and economic empowerment	34.6
To eliminate corruption and promote women's right	33.7
Corruption is not good in the sight of God	3.4

Out of the 9.2% who said no, the table below shows their responses. It came out very clear that the campaign will make no difference (41.2%) followed by lack of sufficient time and their busy schedules (23.5%)

**Figure 24b: Reason not to be part of the movement**

Response	Percentage
It will not make any difference	41.2
Insufficient time due to busy schedules	23.5
Lack of adequate facilities	5.9
Being afraid to part of such a dangerous campaign	17.6
Being afraid of being convicted	11.8

**On Recommendations to improve transparency and accountability among elected public officials the following were suggested:**

Sensitization, Anti-Corruption Training, Monitoring Performance in terms of their demonstration of Integrity and anti-corruption values. Advocacy to strengthen the law enforcement and justice sectors to enforce anti-corruption laws and prosecute the corrupt. Advocacy to intensify punitive measures for the corrupt.

**Figure 25: Activities to minimize the impact of high level of corruption against women**

Response	Percentage
The movement should establish a monitoring group	3.3
Capacitate women in the fight against corruption	10.6
Advocate for women's empowerment	17.9
Massive sensitization and awareness raising campaign	48.4
Campaign for better conditions of service salary increment	4.3
Religious campaign against corruption	1.1
Advocate for high punishment and speedy trial	12.8
To preach love patriotism and support for one another	2.2
Transparent and accountable flow of top to bottom communication and to encourage whistle blowing	2.7

In relation to major activities the movement should undertake to minimize the high level of corruption against women, the above were recommended.

This indicates that there is the commitment of respondents towards the engagement in the anti-corruption campaign.



## **Key Survey Findings**

- Corruption cannot be clearly defined by most women and a large percent define it according to the different acts comprising it.
- Corruption is prevalent in the society and men are perceived as being more corrupt.
- Gender is a key determinant factor for the prevalence or reduction of corruption in the society.
- Though women are prone to be faced with corruption, some can resist it while some cannot out of despair especially where their personal and family welfare is at stake.
- Corruption affects women tremendously and is a major challenge to women's empowerment and development in the following ways: It reduces access to and control over resources (34.9%) and undermines access to quality social services like education and health (24.7%).
- A large number of respondents people interviewed 73.3% believe that there will be less corruption if more women occupy positions of authority and trust
- Government institutions demand and receive more bribes (75%), compared to other institutions
- More people pay bribes especially for education related services (34.0%), followed by health related services (23.0%) and law enforcement agencies (the Police 20.9%)
- Most of the respondents 90.8% are willing to take part in the fight against corruption
- 48.4% of the total number of people interviewed (which is the highest), said that embarking on a massive sensitization and awareness campaign will go a long way in reducing corruption in the country.

## **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

- There is the need for a massive awareness raising, sensitization and capacity building of women especially those in the rural areas on what corruption is about, its negative effects and how to effectively resist it.
- There is the need for the establishment of a women's movement at national and local level to campaign against corrupt acts that specifically undermine women's empowerment and development and national development in general.
- Advocacy Visits to be made to key stakeholder integrity and anti-corruption institutions to engage them on critical related issues affecting women.
- Identification, Sensitization and Capacity Building of a Core Group of Supportive men at local and national level to help advocate against corruption and its effect on women.
- Public Officials to be sensitized strengthened and effectively monitored on anti-corruption issues.
- Anti-Corruption and Law Enforcement institutions to be strengthened to effectively address corruption issues affecting women.

## **FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION**

As part of the data collection exercise of the research on Women and Corruption in Sierra Leone a One-Day Focus Group Discussion was organized by Transparency International Sierra Leone on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2014 at TI-SL office at 20 Dundas Street, Freetown. The 20 invited participants comprised housewives, Students from tertiary institutions and secondary schools, the Police, media practitioners,

Parliamentarians and the academia. Participants were strategically chosen to ensure a wider representation of views and perceptions on the issues to be discussed

The focus of the discussion was geared towards finding solution to Corruption as it affects Women. Some of the questions in the questionnaire were used to guide the issues to be discussed.

The discussions took place in the form of three sessions and a plenary for general discussion and observations.

In her Opening Statement on the purpose of the Focus Group Discussions, the facilitator Madam Isata Abdulai stated that the purpose of the discussions was to have further discussions on the causes, effects and impact of Corruption on women in Sierra Leone. She informed participants that a research had been conducted targeting 500 respondent in five districts: Bo, Kenema, Bombali and Western Area Urban and Rural Districts. The report has been compiled. Going further, she stated that Corruption has continued to be rife in the Sierra Leonean society and would not be stopped if every key stakeholder especially women, youth and children who have been hardly hit take a proactive stance to curb the menace. She stated that though women constitute more than half of the population of Sierra Leone, yet they have faced many challenges as result of the prevalence of corruption in the society. These challenges are eminent in various key sectors especially Education and Health.

### **Session One**

This session mainly focused on a gender perspective of corruption and its impact on women. During this discussion, specific emphasis was laid on the nature and extent of corruption on women.

The session was facilitated by Madam Patricia Macauley of the Network of Women Ministers and Parliamentarians, (NEWMAP) and Madam Isata Abdulai, a gender activist.

In their presentation, they informed participants that women constitute more than half of the population of Sierra Leone and are key stakeholder in the country's national development efforts. However, in spite of these facts, women have in the past till present being relegated to the sidelines and most often their voices are not heard in most quarters. This they say contributes to the numerous challenges facing women, corruption being one of them.

They expressed dismay at the prevalence of corruption in nearly every sector in the country, and that women are most often caught up in its quagmire.

In the discussions that followed this session, participants highlighted the following as the nature of extent of corruption as it affects women.

- Corruption is prevalent in the society and permeates every sector. It is mostly characterized by bribery, extortion, nepotism, and tribalism.
- From the access to basic services to award of jobs or contracts, corruption is involved. Women have very often had to face the challenge of engaging in corrupt practices if they have to compete equally with men.
- In most cases they have to pay the price both in cash and in kind (through the body currency).
- It is a common practice to show gratitude in exchange for favors/opportunities offered. In most case, there is a great deal of expectation from women than men, and most often women are expected to reciprocate in kind (through sexual favors)
- Corruption has had major consequences on Women's livelihood, status, recognition and respect.
- It has inadvertently led to women suffering from the abuse of their rights both in their homes and society, especially due to the patriarchal nature of the Sierra Leone society

### **Session Two**

This session focused on the effect and impacts of corruption on Women in Sierra Leone. The Session was introduced through a presentation delivered by Honorable Dr. Bernadette Lahai, the Minority Leader of Parliament. In her presentation Dr Lahai mentioned how studies have shown the correlation

between a country's level of corruption and their GDP, saying that corruption is an evil in society. She said that men and women are both corrupt, but in terms of the magnitude of corruption women are less corrupt than men.

Women she said are expected to carry the highest level of morality and to be an example to society. Therefore, if a woman is caught in corrupt acts, it will be shocking news for society. Hon. Lahai said Women care more about developing their families; men are the ones who involve in corrupt acts and spend the money on ostentatious houses and luxurious cars or latest fashion.

She said women are very careful when they are given positions of trust, and that they mind their character and how society is going to interpret their handling of that position. She continued that men are admired when they perform corrupt acts and get away with it, but for women, they are castigated and called all sorts of things because of their value in society. Although, she said women have the same urges as men to involve in corrupt acts, but they maintain their integrity..

Honorable Lahai concluded by thanking Transparency International- Sierra Leone for such a laudable venture and said she hopes to read the report in its entirety.

In the discussions that followed participants highlighted the following as some of the effect and impact of Corruption on women in Sierra Leone.

- Corruption continues to undermine women's rights and equality with men. It poses limitation to women's development and empowerment in terms of skills/capacity and Livelihood development.
- It undermines women's self esteem confidence, and ability to be innovative. It poses a major challenge to women's integrity especially as women are regarded as being less corrupt.

### **Session Three**

This session focused on the 'Way Forward' in addressing corruption issues that affects women in Sierra Leone. The session was facilitated by Madam Isatu Abdulai and Madam Patricia Macauley and it took the form of general discussions on the topic of focus.

During the discussion, participants identified the following as the Way Forward in addressing Corruption Issues as it affects women in Sierra Leone.

- The Research Report to be widely disseminated to women's group activists
- Government officials at local and national level.
- Women to form a movement and coordinating body to follow up on the findings and recommendations in the Research Report.
- A National Consultative Meeting be organized to further discuss the Report and related issues at National level.
- Advocacy visits and Interactive Session be held with key stakeholders to further discuss and address the issue.
- TI-SL to continue to facilitate all related activities and actions related to this women and corruption in Sierra Leone.

## **General Discussion/Observation**

### **The following issues were also discussed**

- What is the common trend of corruption in Sierra Leone that most affect women? Participants expressed that it was bribery
- What should be the penalties of corruption? Participants expressed that the following measures will prove to be effective: costly fines, seizure of property and jail terms.
- How rife is corruption in the Business Sector and how does this affects women as most women are engaged in private enterprises? The reaction was it undermines fairness and honest competition since bribes instead of credibility and track record of good work determines who got contracts. Women are either compelled to be corrupt or risk losing the contract. This undermines their chances to compete fairly and ultimately her chances to develop her livelihood.
- What are the main challenges in corruption control and what can women do about it? Participants observed that some of the key challenges are lack or ethics and the decline of moral standards and values. Poor enforcement of the laws, Political Patronage and clientelism. They noted that women can engage in advocacy and monitoring of corruption issues. Women should openly be discussing these issues especially when they are aware of where such corrupt practices have occurred.
- Has the Anti-Corruption Commission and other integrity institutions done enough in the fight against corruption? Participant responded in the affirmative but noted that corruption has become too rife in the society thereby making the campaign against it a difficult one. However they noted that women could support the work of the ACC through advocacy and monitoring, exposing every situation wherein they are faced with corruption.

**APPENDIX ONE**

**SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**

**TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL SIERRA LEONE**



**Women and Corruption Survey 2013**

Hello, my name is ....., a representative from Transparency International Sierra Leone (TISL). GII and Transparency International Sierra Leone TISL are conducting a survey to build evidence and knowledge around the impact of corruption on women and the role women play or could play in the fight against corruption and generally promote good governance in our society. TISL is a civil society anti-corruption organisation, which is the local chapter of Transparency International (TI). You and your household have been selected randomly to participate in the study, which means every person has an equal chance of being included in this study.

NO.....

CITY/TOWN.....

NAME .....

DATE OF INTERVIEW .....

START TIME: ..... STOP TIME: .....

COMMUNITY/ AREA: .....

SEX: 01. Male 02. Female

Age: 01. 15-25 02. 26-35 03. 36-45 04. 46-60

EMPLOYMENT STATUS/OCCUPATION:

- 01. Self Employed
- 02. Unemployed
- 03. Private Sector
- 04. Public sector
- 05. NGOs/CSOs
- 06. Student
- 07. Other (please specify).....

MARITAL STATUS:

- 01. Married
- 02. Single

- 03. Divorced
- 04. Separated
- 05. Widow
- 06. Widower

**A. Perspectives on Corruption**

1. In your opinion, what do you consider to be corruption?

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. In this survey we use the term “corruption” to mean the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. Therefore corruption includes a variety of issues, including bribery, conflicts of interest where a public official takes undue advantage of his/her position for personal benefit, diversion of public monies or fraud.

Based on our definition, What would you say are corrupt acts?

- a. Demands for and giving of bribes,
- b. Demands for and giving of sexual favours,
- c. Unnecessarily long bureaucratic processes
- d. Demands for and giving of other favours,
- e. Opacity or lack of transparency
- f. others

.....

.....

3. In your opinion, is there a link between corruption and the sex of a person in Sierra Leone?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Do not know

4. A person who wants to corrupt another person is generally? (Only one response possible)

- a. More likely to be a man
- b. More likely to be a woman
- c. Either of them
- d. Not sure

5. In your opinion, who is most difficult to corrupt? (Only one response possible)

- a. More likely to be a man
- b. More likely to be a woman
- c. *Just as much one as the other*
- d. *Don't know*

6. In your opinion, if there were more women in positions of responsibility, there would be: (Only one response possible)

- a. More likely less corruption
- b. More likely more corruption
- c. No difference in corruption levels
- d. Don't know

## **B. Personal experiences of corruption**

7. One form of corruption is bribery. Bribes can be asked in form of money, presents, fee services, sexual favours, others. Do you know any woman who has had to pay a bribe to anyone or have you also been faced with such a situation.
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Not sure
  - d. No response
8. If yes, which of the following reasons best describesher/your reason for paying the bribe?
- a. To facilitate a process
  - b. To get the service quicker than expected
  - c. To avoid the repercussion of wrong doing
  - d. To get a contract
  - e. To improve my chances of getting future services
  - f. To make things easy for me
  - g. To avoid being arrested/to get out of trouble with the law
  - h. To get employment
  - i. To be promoted
  - j. To get better grades at school or get an education certificate
9. In your opinion, what is the primary reason why someone may want to corrupt another person? (Only one response possible)
- a. In order to have more money
  - b. In order to have more power
  - c. Greed
  - d. Selfishness
  - e. Don't know
  - f. To Facilitate a process
10. At the workplace, would you say that power and money are more of a : (Only one response possible)
- a. Concern for men
  - b. Concern for women
  - c. A concern to both sexes
  - d. Don't know

11. In your experience with corruption, do you think gender makes a difference in the fight against corruption?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Not sure
  - d. No response
  
12. Who is more susceptible to corruption?
  - a. Women
  - b. Men
  - c. Both sexes
  - d. Don't know
  
13. Have you or any woman you know ever been asked to give a bribe?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Do not know
  
- 13a. If yes, what for?
  - a. To access services related to health care
  - b. To access services related to education
  - c. To enable access to credit, a job, land, promotion, legal service or basic services
  - d. To acquire a license or permit (e.g. a driver's license)
  - e. To acquire permits related to enterprise and housing
  - f. For birth/ death certificates
  - g. To facilitate access to public distribution of food or other public goods
  - h. To get pensions and other retirement entitlements
  - i. To avoid being arrested or to get out of trouble with the law
  
14. In your personal experience, which institutions have you had to pay a bribe to?
  - a. Government
  - b. Private sector
  - c. NGOs/CSOs
  - d. Religious organisation
  - e. Others (please specify).....
  
15. Can you mention specifically the institution you paid a bribe to?
  - a) Banking, Insurance, Finance
  - b) Constructions and public works
  - c) Real Estate
  - d) Health
  - e) Revenue agencies
  - f) Law enforcement
  - g) Education



- h) Food Industry
- i) The Media
- j) Don't know/no answer
- k) Others, please specify

16. Have you ever refused to pay or take a bribe?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Do not know

16a. If yes, why did you refuse to give/take the bribe?

.....

.....

.....

17. Do you Know of a woman who has used her position to extort money or other favours from others?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure
- d. Don't remember

17a.1 If yes, what favours did she expect or receive?

No	Favour	Yes/No
a	Gifts in kind (produce, jewellery)	
b	Sexual favours	
c	Free labour (domestic work, agricultural work)	
d	Transfer of property deeds	
e	Other (please state)	
f	Other (please state)	
g	Other (please state)	

### C. Political participation of women and corruption

18. As a woman, have you ever been offered gifts/cash/favours during elections?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Do not know

19. Is there a difference in the pattern of bribe paying among the sexes?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure

20. In your opinion, are women more mindful of integrity issues when in positions of responsibility?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure
- d. I don't know

21. As a woman, do you believe you can make a difference in the fight against corruption?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure
- d. No response

22. What would you need to be encouraged to participate in the fight against corruption?

- a. Be a member of an activist group
- b. Acknowledgement of my efforts and participation
- c. Higher education
- d. A Safe and protected environment for activism
- e. The support and agreement of my partner
- f. Nothing
- g. Other - please state

23. In the following instances would you agree to pay a bribe?

In a traffic incident where you are stopped by the police	Yes	No	May be	Don't know
Asked to pay something to facilitate a process for you				
Pay an amount for a contract				
Asked to have sex for employment, admission etc				
Pay a bribe for consultation at the clinic/hospital				
Pay for your child's admission without being given a receipt				
Pay extra for a meter (electricity, water, telephone)				

24. Identify which of the following are consequences of corruption in the lives of women in Sierra Leone.

- a. Corruption reduces women's access to and control over resources
- b. Lack of protection and advancement of rights under the law
- c. Under development
- d. Low/poor quality of services Inadequate or poor quality of education and health infrastructure

25. Are you willing to be part of a movement to campaign against Corruption in general and specifically corrupt acts against women? 01. Yes 02. No

If Yes, Explain

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

If No, What would you recommend to improve transparency and accountability among elected officials?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

26. What are the major activities do you think the movement should embark on to minimize the high level of corruption against women?

.....  
.....  
.....