

Assessing the Prevalence, Cause and Consequences of Corruption in Dagmawi Minilk Sub-City, Bahir Dar, Ethiopia

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to assess the prevalence, cause and consequences of corruption in Dagmawi Minilk Sub-City, Bahir Dar. Primary data were gathered from 103 employees using questionnaires and from 5 key informants through interviews. The results of the study confirmed that corruption forms such as bribery, nepotism and favoritism) are frequently occurring in the sub-city. Low payment scales, absence of exemplary leadership, lack of effective supervisions, ineffective institutional accountability were the major causes of corruption. Embezzlement of public resources, delaying in delivering services, lowering quality of service, worsening income inequality undermines the legitimacy of the government were also identified as the major adverse consequences of corruption. This study recommends that improving institutional accountability, increasing salary and selecting exemplary leaders is paramount important.

KEYWORDS

Corruption, Causes, Consequences, Dagmawi Minilk Sub-City, Prevalence

INTRODUCTION

Since corruption exists in various forms involving different participants, there is no single comprehensive universally accepted definition of it. Corruption is an act of malfeasance by government officials for personal enrichments while performing tasks entrusted to them by the general public (Bardhan, 1997). In the view of Hammed (2018), corruption can be defined as dishonest or illegal behavior of government officials. Public corruption can be defined as the misuse of public office for private gain. Misuse, of course, typically involves applying a legal standard. Corruption defined this way would capture, for example, the sale of government property by government officials, kickbacks in public procurement, bribery and embezzlement of government funds (Svensson, 2005). It is an act in which the power of public office is used for personal gain in a manner that contravenes the rules of the game (Jain, 2001). The most popular definition (World Bank, 1997) defined corruption as the abuse of public office for private gains. This takes into account that corruption exists in all different guises like e.g. bribery, trafficking, embezzlement and as well patronage.

In the contemporary world, corruption is not only occurring in developing nations but also in developed countries. Corruption affects almost all parts of society. Like a cancer, as argued by Benon (2009), corruption “eats into the cultural, political and economic fabric of society, and destroys the functioning of vital organs”. According to World Bank (2005), corruption is “the single greatest obstacle to economic and social development. It undermines development by distorting the role of law and weakening the institutional foundation on which economic growth depends”. Like terrorism,

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AIDS, and environmental degradation, corruption is one of those problems that have no respect for national boundaries (Manchin, 2000).

Corruption is neither culture specific nor system bound. However, the practice of corruption is more rampant in countries where the public institutions and the legal system are very weak and relatively underdeveloped. With these attributes, most of the developing nations are more prone to ills of corruption more than the advanced developed countries (Ogundiya, 2009). Furthermore, according to Kaufmann (2003), corruption is recognized as a major obstacle to sustained development and the creation of an enabling environment for good governance in Africa. In almost all African countries, corruption has become a common and routine element of the functioning of the administrative machinery (Oliver & de Saradan, 1999). According to Hammed (2018), the underdevelopment of Africa and the widespread political instability in the continent are connected with the high rate of corruption as its politicians, leaders, and public servants illegally collect wealth using public office for private gains. Ethiopia is of no exception.

By understanding the severity of corruption, many nations and leading international organizations such as the World Bank, International Monetary fund, the African Union, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and many other regional and sub-regional organizations have articulated anti-corruption laws, policies, action plans and strategies and all these have become the foundation for the international legal regime against corruption.

Following this, Ethiopian government established an independent Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (FEACC) on May 24, 2001 with the aim of combating corruption through investigation, prosecution and prevention (FEACC, Proclamation 235/2001). Besides to establishing a specialized anti-corruption agency, Ethiopia adopted laws, rules of procedures, revised penal law to incorporate different acts which constitute corruption, and ratified international anti-corruption conventions adopted by the United Nations and the African Union to mention some.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Corruption is a universal problem across the world. It is a threat to good governance, peace, political stability and socio-economic development of a nation. According to the World Bank Study conducted in Ethiopia found that corruption is the most challenging problem that all household face after poverty (WB, 2005). According to the Tesfaye (2007), during the preceding regimes (Imperial and Dergue) corruption is said to have resulted in undermining the legitimacy of the governments and weakening their structures, reducing productivity, hindering development, marginalizing poor, worsening poverty, create social unrest and finally, speed up their down fall. Even though, corruption is one of the burning issues and impediments to good governance and sustainable development worldwide, it is more common in developing countries than developed ones. Ethiopia is one of the developing countries where the prevalence of corruption has been uncontrolled (Selamu, 2010). Furthermore, corruption is rampant and a treat to the country's development and democratization process. Poor governance, lack of accountability and transparency, low level of democratic culture, lack of clear regulations and authorizations, low level of institutional control, and extreme poverty and inequality were identified as major causes of corruption in Ethiopia (Megiso, 2007).

After the current government, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) came into power different measures have been taken to control the persistence and further escalation of corruption. In this regard, the establishment of Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (FEACC) was one of the measures taken by the government that was established as an independent government body with the objective of combating corruption through investigation, prosecution and prevention. The FEACC opened branch offices in different parts of the country including in Bahir Dar city to serve the public near the ground of the problem. Despite of the establishments of FEACC and its efforts made so far towards combating corruption, Shimelis (2005) has identified the seriousness of the problem of corruption in the country.

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