



The Impact of Corruption on the Socio- Economic Development of Sierra Leone, a Case Study Bo City

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Abstract

This work was carried out to examine the impacts of corruption on the Socio-economic Development of Sierra Leone, a case study Bo city. The findings revealed that corruption increases inequality, decreases popular accountability and political representativeness, and thus produces rising frustration and hardship among citizens. In addition to the rise of an underground economy and the high social costs associated with corruption, its adverse consequences on income distribution, corruption investment, the government budget and on economic reforms are highlighted in this paper. This study employs a cross sectional design with diverse methods of research approach containing questionnaire. A stratified sampling technique was used in the selection of the respondents. Eighty (80) questionnaires were administered to eighty respondents in the study community. A Purposive randomized sampling technique was used to select respondents in Bo District, Bo community due to the fact that, they have requisite information about the issues involved in the study. The data generated were collected and analyzed using descriptive statistics and results were presented in tables, frequency, graphs and charts. The major findings discovered as effects of corruption were: public sector dysfunctionality affects socio-economic development in Bo city, failure in infrastructure and community development and frustration and cynicism. A high number of respondents, according to the study revealed that, officials in Bo city faced so many challenges.

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Some of the challenges highlighted by the respondents were: funding or financial issues, poor leadership, corruption and administrative inefficiency and lack equipment to accomplish projects. The study further revealed that, majority of the respondents were dissatisfied on how the national stakeholders, detective agencies and state institutions handle reported cases of corruption in Sierra Leone, for which several recommendations were given, key among which included the need for Government to review of policies to improve the working condition of public officials in the community. Government and other partners in development should provide adequate resources and equal opportunities in the country. The administrative heads should fight corruption in government administration. Laws must be made more stringent so that corrupt administrators or perpetrators do not get away easily. This study will serve as an instrumental tool capable of enhancing the knowledge and understanding of Sierra Leoneans on the effects of corruption on the Socio-economic Development of Sierra Leone. Such information will be vital in creating the possibility for people to deviate from the act of corruption.

Keywords: corruption; Socio-economic development; Sierra Leone.

1. Introduction

The impact of corruption on the socio economic development of Sierra Leone is key to addressing the myriads of problem that the country is currently facing. Analyzing the phenomenon of governmental corruption in Sierra Leone, Kpundeh recently noted that nation has “endured a pattern of corruption remarkable in its depth and extent” [30, 39]. Conceptualizing governmental corruption in any society is a formidable task rendered complicated by its amorphous and complex nature. It seems to defy definition mainly because of the in exhaustiveness of its categories as can be deduced from a document jointly prepared by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the African Association for Public Administration and Management, defining “unethical behavior” at the governmental level as encompassing: bribery, corruption, abuse of office, patronage, nepotism, conflict of interest, influence peddling, using of official position for personal pleasure, favors to relatives and friends, divided loyalty, slowness, late-coming, partiality, partisanship, absenteeism, insubordination, misuse of government property, leaking or misusing government information and “engaging in any unsanctioned activity” [34,37]. Corruption can also be characterized as the intentional noncompliance with the principle that personal or family relationships ought not to play a role in economic decisions by private agents or government officials [37, 34].Corruption is a global problem that manifests in varying degrees in different parts of the world [31, 38]. The negative socio- economic effects of corruption have received increased attention over the past few decades in both advanced and developing countries. Major international organizations including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and Transparency International (TI) have shown keen interest on the consequences of corruption on economic wellbeing especially in developing countries. The World Bank identifies corruption as “the single greatest obstacle to economic and social development” [31, 38] because it subverts the rule of law and weakens the institutional framework needed for the acceleration of economic growth. In 1996, James D. Wolfensohn, president of The World Bank at the time publicly declared corruption as a “cancer” and called for a collective effort to fight it wherever it is found. This assertion was reechoed by Jim Yong Kim, president of the World Bank Group who described the costs of corruption as thus; “Every dollar that a corrupt official or a corrupt business person puts in their pocket is a dollar stolen from a pregnant woman who needs health care; or from a girl or a boy who deserves an education; or from communities that need water, roads, and schools. Every dollar

is critical if we are to reach our goals to end extreme poverty by 2030 and to boost shared prosperity.” [30, 39, 32]. Jim Yong Kim in his speech referred to corruption as “public enemy number one” in developing countries [30, 39, 32]. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) declared that; “Many of the causes of corruption are economic in nature, and so are its consequences...” [23, 40]. Similarly, Transparency international notes “nine out of ten developing countries urgently need practical support to fight corruption” [9]. Although it is consistently claimed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) and Transparency International (TI) that corruption negatively affects economic growth, these claims are yet to be agreed upon by economists. In other words, the claim that corruption hinders economic growth does not fully reflect the findings from the theoretical studies and empirical evidence from the field. Although common wisdom suggests corruption is an impediment to economic growth, some studies have discovered that corruption is not always bad for economic growth [29,41]. There is therefore an apparent gap between the perceived negative impact of corruption on economic growth and the evidence on the actual impact of corruption on economic growth. Analyzing the phenomenon of governmental corruption in Sierra Leone, Kpundeh recently noted that nation has “endured a pattern of corruption remarkable in its depth and extent” [30,29]. Conceptualizing governmental corruption in any society is a formidable task rendered complicated by its amorphous and complex nature. It seems to defy definition mainly because of the in exhaustiveness of its categories as can be deduced from a document jointly prepared by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the African Association for Public Administration and Management, defining “unethical behavior” at the governmental level as encompassing: bribery, corruption, abuse of office, patronage, nepotism, conflict of interest, influence peddling, using of official position for personal pleasure, favors to relatives and friends, divided loyalty, slowness, late-coming, partiality, partisanship, absenteeism, insubordination, misuse of government property, leaking or misusing government information and “engaging in any unsanctioned activity” [34,37]. Corruption can also be characterized as the intentional noncompliance with the principle that personal or family relationships ought not to play a role in economic decisions by private agents or government officials [37,34]. The study shows that there is a general relationship between corruption and development. The specific hypotheses included, the lesser the practice of corruption, the greater the stability of socio economic development in the study area whereas, the higher the level of corruption, the lower the socio economic development in the study area.

2. Materials and Methods

The study used the sample size of 80 respondents where by simple random sampling was used in areas where many people and the population are homogenous, while purposively sampling were used to select key informants such as community people and stakeholders. The sample size was determined by using non-statistical methods. In order to solicit first hand data for this study, questionnaires were prepared and administered among the various institutions and individuals that make up the sample frame for this study. The questionnaire were designed in accordance with the research objectives. These questionnaires were administered on the self-administered bases to ensure that respondents provide realistic answers to questions that are not influenced by the researcher’s presence. For the purpose of this study, in-depth interviews were also used. In-depth interviews in this study were personal and unstructured interviews, whose aim was, identify participant’s emotions, feelings, and opinions regarding this study. The purpose of this technique in this study was to involve personal and direct contact between the interviewer and the interviewees, and to also eliminate non-response rates. The analysis of data collected was

presented quantitatively by using computer software of SPSS 20 version to analyze data. The data analyzed were presented in tables, charts and graphs. The rationale to employ SPSS techniques is to simplify the interpretation, description and explaining findings related to individual opinions, viewpoints, and their attitudes toward corruption and its implications on Development. Qualitative data was done in a descriptive and comparative manner and all data collected from Interviews, and Focus Group Discussions were analyzed qualitatively

3. Results of the Research

- ❖ The causes of corruption in socio-economic development
- ❖ The effects of corruption on Socio-economic development in the study
- ❖ The role played by stakeholders and State institutions in addressing the problem of Corruption on socio-economic development in the study area.
- ❖ Proffer possible solutions and recommendations in addressing the problem of Corruption in the community.

3.1 The factors/causes of corruption in Sierra Leone, Bo city

- ❖ Responses to ascertain the causes of corruption in the community
- ❖ To what extent does the following factor affect the socio-economic development rural communities?
- ❖ If respondents are with the opinion that low wages and salaries with the inclusion of poverty is responsible for corruption in the study area.
- ❖ If yes, please indicate your responses?
- ❖ Responses as to if respondents agree with the researcher that lack of involvement of detective agencies and accountability are causes of corruption in the study area

Table

Table 1: Responses to ascertain the causes of corruption in the community

Causes	AF	RF [%]
Poverty	47	58.8
Lack of independent detective agencies	23	28.8
Lack of institutional accountability	10	12.5
Total	80	100.0

The results in **Table 1**, shows [58.8%] of the respondent ascertain poverty as one of the causes of corruption in the study area, [28.8%] of the respondents said lack of independent detective agencies and [12.5%] of the respondent lack of institutional accountability. Thus, majority of the respondents agreed poverty was the major causes of corruption in the study community.

Table 2: To what extent does the following factor affect socio-economic development in the study community?

Factors	AF	RF [%]
Very Great extent	37	46.3
Great extent	25	31.5
Some Extent	18	22.5
No extent		
Total	80	100.0

Table 2 shows that, (46.3%) stated very great extent affects socio-economic development, while (31.5%) stated great extent and (22.5%) say no extent. Thus, majority responded affirmed a great extent the factors affects socio-economic development in the study community.

Table 3: If yes, please indicate your responses?

Response	AF	RF [%]
Poverty increment	55	68.8
It increase food insecurity	14	17.5
Lack of accountability and economic crisis of the nation	11	13.8
Total	80	100.0

Table 3 shows that, (68.8%) of the respondents responded that corruption increase poverty, (17.5%) of the respondents stated that, corruption increased food insecurity and (13.8%) of the respondents responded that corruption leads to lack of accountability and economic crisis of the nation. Thus, majority of the respondents are aware that corruption increases poverty.

Table 4: Responses as to if respondents agree with the researcher that lack of involvement of detective agencies and accountability are causes of corruption in the study community?

Factors	AF	RF [%]
Strongly agree	38	47.5
Disagree	23	28.8
Agree	19	23.8
Total	80	100.0

Table 4 shows that, (47.5%) of the respondents stated that they strongly agreed that corruption affects the socio economic development of Sierra Leone, (28.8%) responded that they disagree, while 19 (23.8%) of the respondents agreed. Thus, majority of the respondents stated strongly agree lack of detectives and accountability responsible for corruption in the study community.

3.2 The effects of corruption on Socio-economic development in the study area

- ❖ Responses to ascertain some of the effects of corruption in the study area
- ❖ To what extent does the following factor affect socio-economic development in the study area?
- ❖ If respondents are with the opinion that failure in infrastructure and public frustration and derail socio-economic development in rural communities?
- ❖ If yes, please state your reasons?

Table 5: Responses to ascertain some of the effects of corruption in the study area

Effects	AF	RF [%]
Public sector dysfunctionality	37	46.3
Failure in infrastructure	23	28.8
Public frustration and cynicism	20	25
Total	80	100.0

Results in Table 5 shows that, (46.3%) responded that public sector dysfunctionality affects socio-economic development, (28.8%) responded that failure in infrastructure and community development and (25%) responded that public frustration and sarcasm. Thus, majority of respondents responded that public sector dysfunctionality affects socio-economic development.

Table 6: If yes, please state your reasons?

Response	AF	RF [%]
Poor service delivery	33	41.3
Lack of funds from state government	30	37.5
Poor utilization of state and foreign funded resources	17	21.3
Total	80	100.0

Table 6 shows that, (41.3%) of the respondents responded that poor service delivery by officials in the study community increases corruption, (37.5%) of the respondents stated that lack of funds from state government and (21.3%) of the respondents responded that poor utilization of state and foreign funded resources were all responsible for corruption in the study area. Thus, majority of the respondents responded that poor service delivery by development officials lead to corruption.

3.3 The roles played by stakeholders in addressing the problem of corruption on socio-economic development in Sierra Leone

- ❖ Responses to ascertain the opinions of respondents on how the stakeholders and state institutions should handle reported cases of corruption in Sierra Leone
- ❖ If unsatisfied, please indicate why?
- ❖ If respondents satisfied, please indicate why?
- ❖ If respondents agree, that empowering the detective agencies and media institutions can help combat corruption in the study area.
- ❖ If unsatisfied, please indicate why?
- ❖ If no, to what extent does the following stakeholders and state authorities help in combating corruption in the study area?

Table 7: Opinions of respondents on how stakeholders should handle reported cases of corruption in the study community

Incidences	AF	RF [%]
Unsatisfied	35	43.8
Satisfied	28	35
No opinion/Uncertain	17	21.3
Total	80	100.0

Table 7 specifies that, (43.8%) responded that they were unsatisfied on how the stakeholders, detective agencies and state institutions handle reported cases of corruption in the study community, (35%) of the respondents stated that they are satisfied on how the national stakeholders, detective agencies and state institutions handle reported cases of corruption in Sierra Leone, and (21.3%) of the respondents responded that they had no opinion or were uncertain on the stakeholders handle reported cases of corruption in the study community. Thus, majority of the respondents responded that they were unsatisfied on how the stakeholders and state institutions handle reported cases of corruption in the study area.

Table 8: If unsatisfied, please indicate why?

Incidences	AF	RF [%]
In action by detective agencies and state authorities	40	50
Wrong/ Unbiased actions	28	35
Failure to keep people inform of the outcomes	12	15
Total	80	100.0

Results in Table 8 shows, (50%) of the respondents responded that they were unsatisfied due to the action by the detective agencies and state authorities in handling corruption cases, (35%) of the respondents stated that they were unsatisfied because of wrong or unbiased actions taken by authorities, and (15%) of the respondents responded that they were unsatisfied due to failure to keep people inform on the outcomes on the side of the authorities. Thus, majority of respondents responded that they were unsatisfied due to the in action by the detective agencies and state authorities.

Table 9: If satisfied, please indicate why?

Incidences	AF	RF [%]
The detective agencies and state authorities take rigid actions	36	45
People are always informed on the outcome via radio, What Sapp and Facebook	30	37.5
Perpetrators are exposing for such criminal acts.	14	17.5
Total	80	100.0

Table 9 indicates that, (45%) responded that, the detective agencies and state authorities take rigid actions, (37.5%) of the respondents stated that, people are always informed on the outcome via radio, What Sapp and Facebook and (17.5%) of the respondents responded that, Perpetrators are expose for such criminal acts. Thus, majority of respondents responded that, the detective agencies and state authorities take rigid actions.

Table 10: If respondents agreed that empowering the stakeholders, detective agencies and media institutions can help combat corruption in the study area

Response	AF	RF [%]
Agree	36	45
Disagree	29	36.3
Strongly agree	15	18.9
Total	80	100.0

Table 10 indicates that, (45%) of the respondents agrees that stakeholders and detective agencies and media institutions can help in combating corruption, (36.3%) of the respondents stated that, it creates accountability and transparency among the staff and (18.8%) of the respondents responded that, it makes the detective agencies and media institutions to be more proactive.

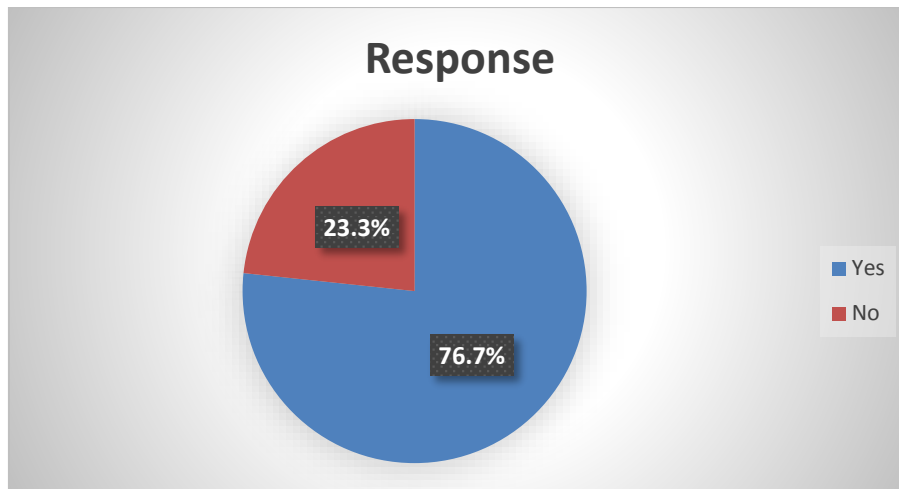


Figure 1: If, respondents are with the opinion that failure in infrastructure and public frustration and cynicism turtling development in rural communities

Figure 1 shows that, (76.7%) of the responded that failure in infrastructure and public frustration and cynicism affect the socio-economic development in the community, while (23.3%) of the responded stated that failure in infrastructure and public frustration and cynicism does not socio-economic development in the community.

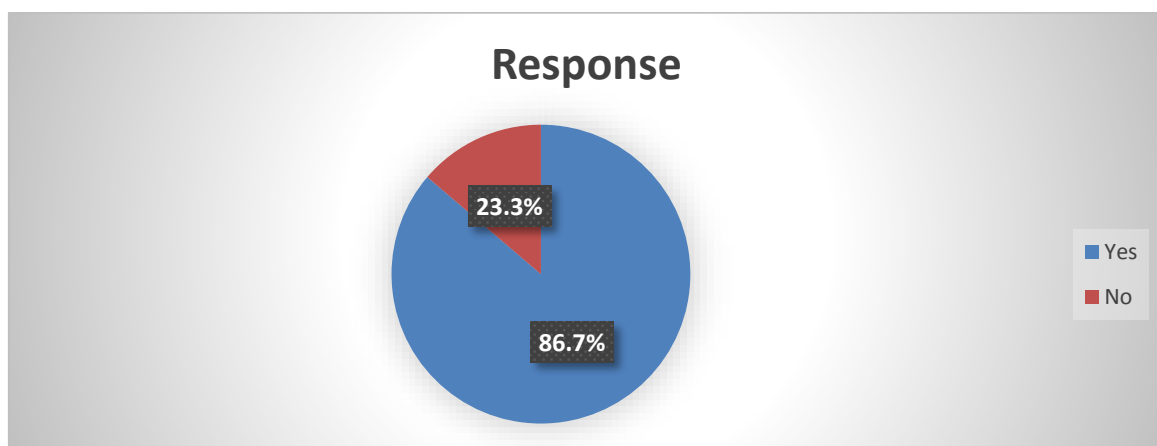


Figure 2: If respondents are with the opinion that low wages and salaries with the inclusion of poverty is responsible for corruption

Results in **Figure 2**, indicates that (86.7%) responded that, low wages and salaries with an inclusion of poverty are causes of corruption in the study area, while (23.3%) of the responded stated that low wages and salaries with an inclusion of poverty are no extent causes for corruption in the study area. Thus, majority responded that low wages and salaries with an inclusion of poverty are major causes for corruption in the study area.

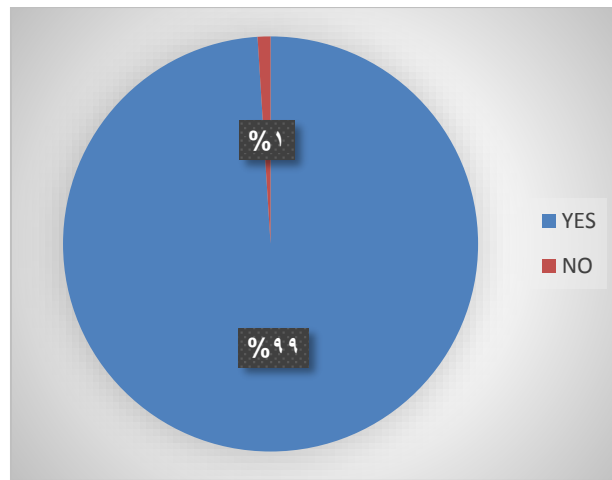


Figure 3: shows the distribution of the respondents aware of corruption

From **figure 3** (99%) of the targeted respondents in the study area explained that they were aware of corruption, whereas (1%) of the randomly selected respondents in the study area revealed that he was not aware of any corrupt practice in the study area.

Therefore, based on the findings, it was revealed that those who have heard of corruption were in majority than those who did not know about it. It is vividly described that more of the people living in this community knows about the existence of corruption.

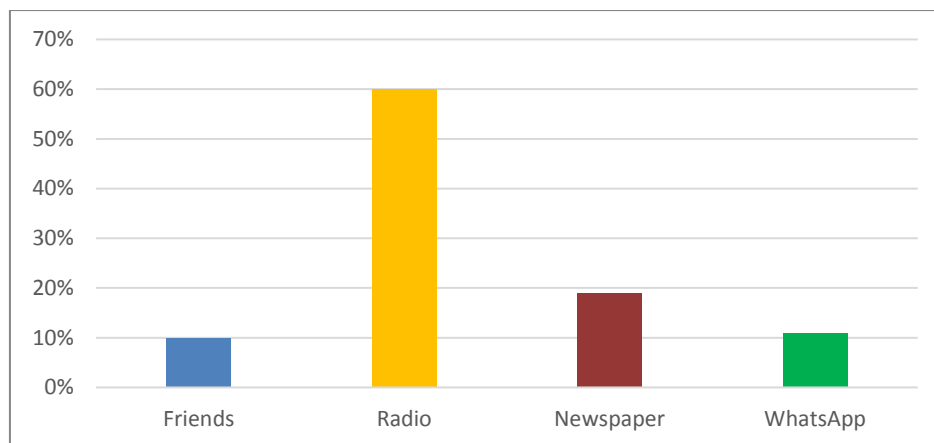


Figure 4: Indicates if the respondents have heard of corruption and from which source

According to the collected data, (60%) of the respondents interviewed suggested that they have heard of corruption through radio listening; whereas, (19%) of the targeted respondents in the study area revealed that they heard of corruption through by reading to News Papers; whilst, (11%) of the respondents indicated that they heard of corruption through What Sapp fora; also (10%) of the contacted respondents in the study area explained that they are aware of corruption from friends.

Therefore, from this findings, it was described that more of the interviewed respondents in the study area were

aware of corruption through listening radio. This shows that many of the people in this study area do listen radio programs.

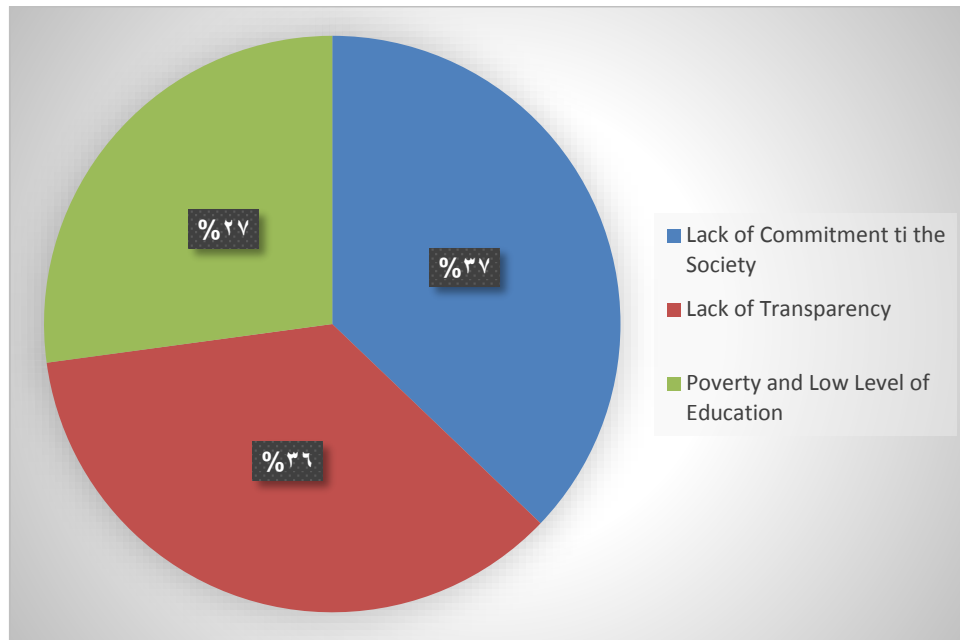


Figure 5 : Shows what do the respondents think is responsible for corruption

Based on the data collected, (37%) of the respondents interviewed said, what is responsible for corrupt practice in the study area is due to lack of commitment to the society and the country at large, whereas, (36%) of the interviewed respondents accounted that, what they think is responsible for corruption is lack of transparency while (27%) of respondents interviewed explained that greed of money, and desires among people in the study areas were also a cause of corruption.

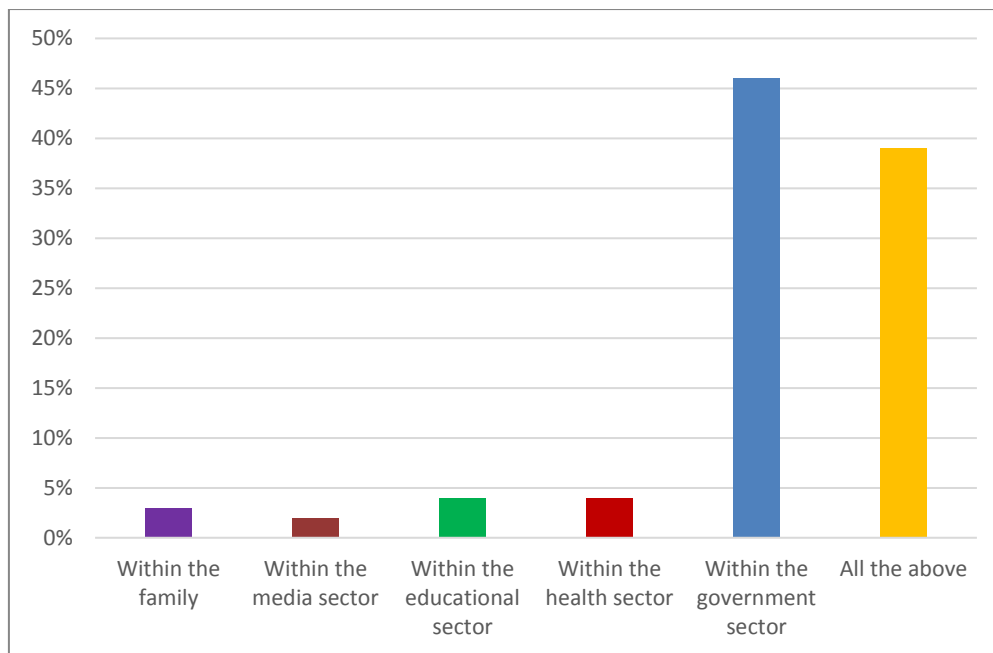


Figure 6: shows the institution do the respondents think corruption mostly occurred in the study area

From figure 6 above shows that, (46%) of the respondents interviewed in the study area explained that, the institution that involved in corruption the most were the governmental sector; whereas, (39%) of the respondents contacted suggested that, the institution that indulged into corrupt practices chooses all the other listed sector; while, (4.04%) of the targeted population within the study area revealed that the most corrupt institution is both the health and education sectors respectively; also (3%) of the selected respondents indicated that corruption mostly occurred within the family; whereas (2%) of the respondents suggested that the intuition that corrupt the most is within the media sectors.

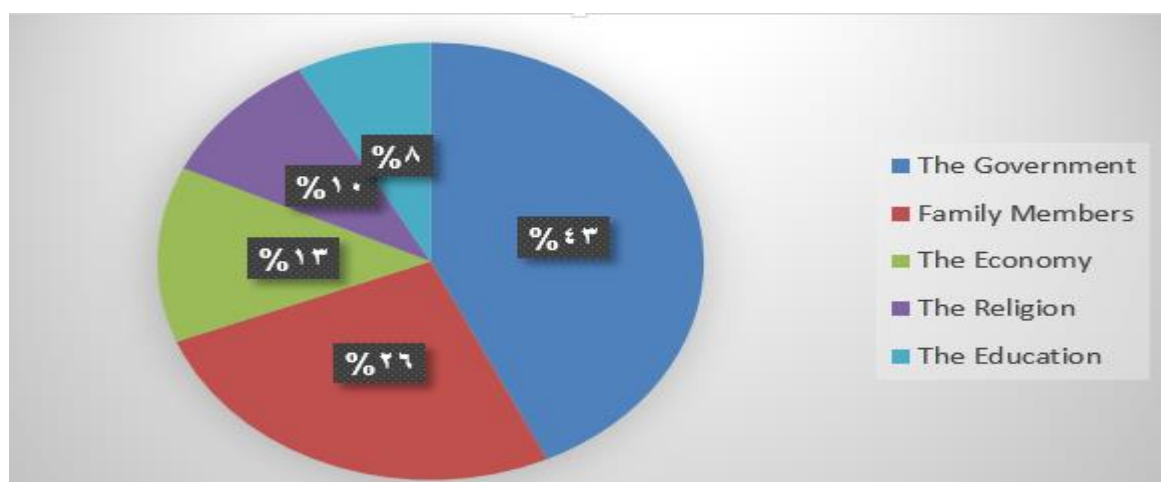


Figure 7: Indicates the institution do the respondents think is responsible for accusation of individuals of corruption

According to figure 7 shows that (43.43%) of the respondents interviewed accounted that the institution that is responsible for the accusation of individuals of corruption is the government. Also, (26%) of the respondents

interviewed explained that the institution that is responsible for accusation of corruption of individuals is the family; whereas, (13%) of the targeted respondents in the study area said, the institution that is responsible for the accusation of corrupt individuals is the economy; also (10%) of the interviewed respondents revealed that, the institution that is responsible for the accusation of corrupt individuals is the religion; while (8%) of respondents contacted in the study area described that the institution is responsible for the accusation of corrupt individuals is the education.

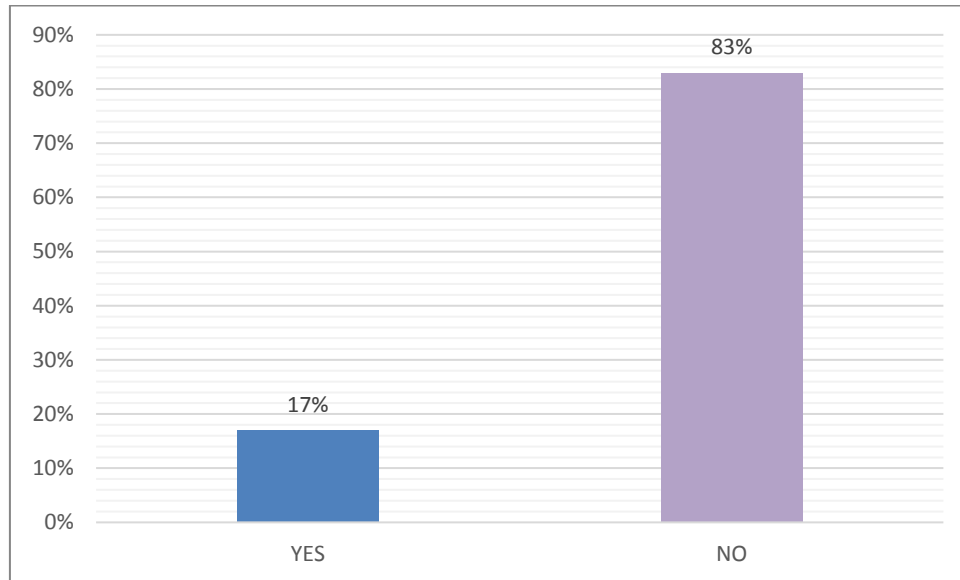


Figure 8: indicates the distribution if it is only men that are accused of corruption in the study area

Based on the collected data, it was accounted that, (83%) of the respondents interviewed in the study area explained that not only men are accused of corruption in the community rather there are others do accused of corrupt practice; whereas, (17%) of respondents contacted in the study area said it is only men that are always accused of corruption in the study area.

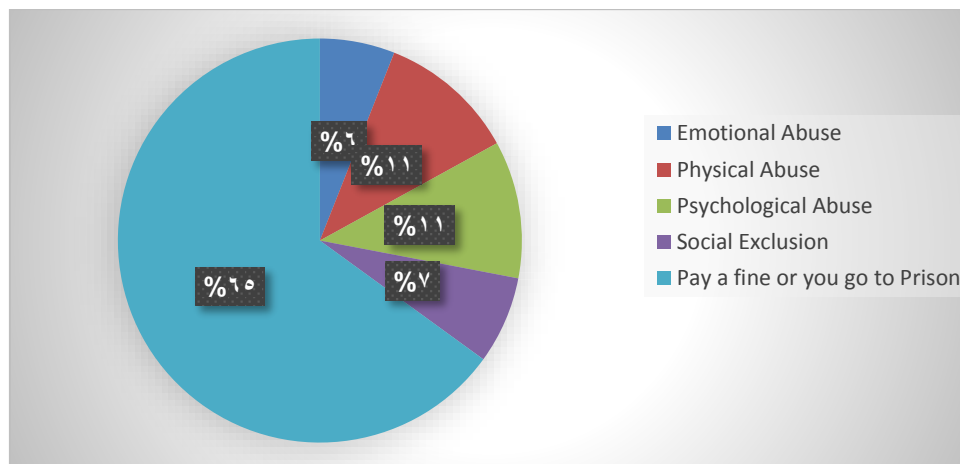


Figure 9: Shows the type of punishment does victims of corruption face in the study area

From the collected data, it was described that, (65%) of the contacted respondents in the study area explained that, the victims of corruption would be levied a fine on them or they sent them to prison base on the corrupt act they are accused of; whereas, (11%) of the respondents contacted in the study area explained that, the punishment most times levied against corrupt people is both physical and psychological abuse respectively; while (7%) of the respondents interviewed in the study area revealed that the punishment levied against the corrupt people is through by social exclusion; also (6%) of respondents selected in the study area accounted that the corrupt peoples punishment levied to them is by emotional abuse.

Therefore, majority of the interviewed respondents explained that the punishment or abuse levied against the corrupt people in the community is to pay a fine or sent to jail/prison base on the level of corrupt act.

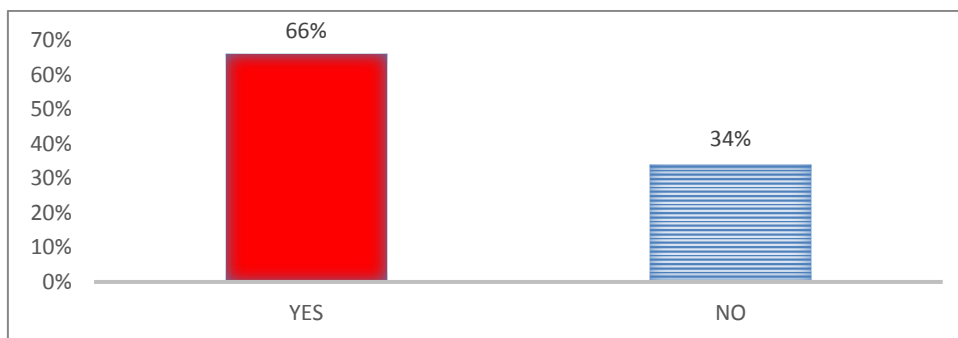


Figure 10: Distribution of the respondents in support of the commission of enquires and the setup of Anti-Corruption Commission

According to the data collected above, (66%) of the contacted respondents in the study area described that, they are in support of the commission of enquiries and the setup of the Anti-Corruption in the study area whereas, (34%) of the respondents indicated that they were not in support of the setting up of anti-corruption commission in the study area.

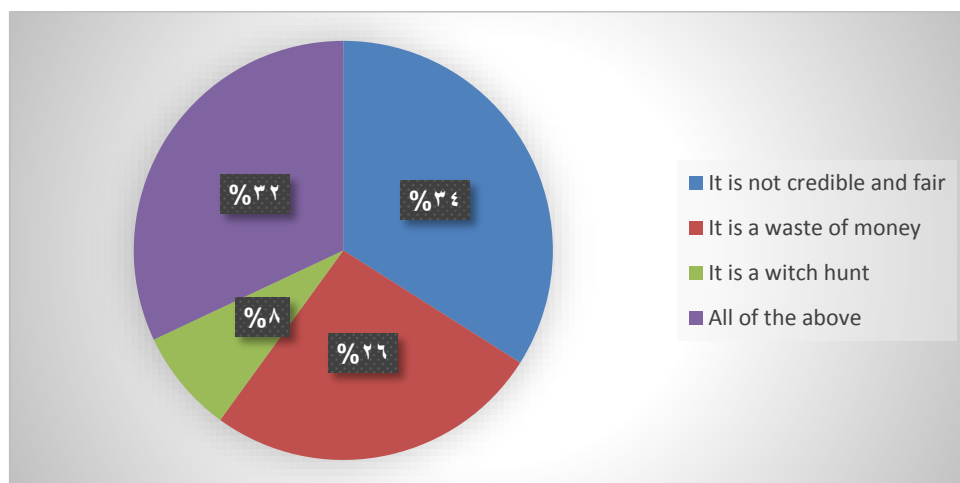


Figure 11: Distribution of the respondents who are not in support of the commission of enquiries and the setup of the Anti-Corruption Commission in the study area

Based on the data collected, it was clearly suggested that, (34%) of the respondents in the study area explained that, those who says they did not support the commission of enquiries and the setup of the Anti-Corruption Commission is because they see it as the process that is not credible and fair; also, (32%) of the contacted respondents in the study area revealed that, they did not support the system based on the related factors, such as it is a waste of time, it is a witch hunt, it is not credible and fair; while (26%) of the system has to waste a whole lot of money.

Therefore, it is clearly seen that majority of the respondents in the study areas accounted that, they are not in support of the commission of enquiries and the setup of the Anti-Corruption Commission in the study area due to the process doubt of its credibility and fair. That is to say among the time of interviewed in this community, if is revealed that majority of the respondents were not in support due to the system of it credibility and fair of the commission of enquiries and the setup of the Anti-Corruption Commission.

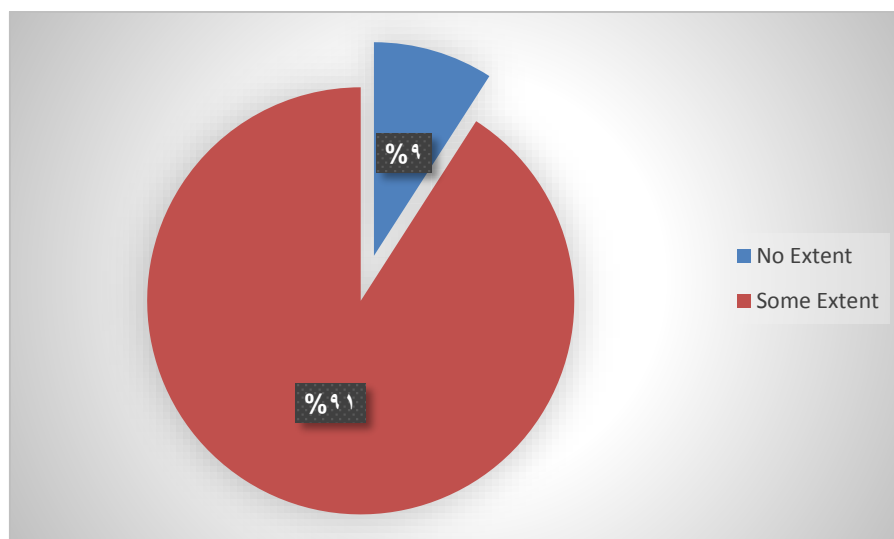


Figure 12: Respondents shows if corruption only limited within the study area

The collected data shows that, (91%) of the contacted respondents in the study area suggested that, corruption practice is not only limited in the study area but it is considered as a phenomenon that is eating on the fabrics of the society at large; whereas (9%) of the respondents interviewed in the study area revealed that, concept of corrupt and its practice is only limited in the study area.

4. Discussions: (Significance of the results in relation of doing the work)

According to the survey, it is vividly explained that majority of the people living in the study area knows about the existence of corruption. Based on the study, it is revealed that many of the people in this society do listening to radio programs. The study also shows that corruption is a major hindrance to sustainable development, with a disproportionate impact on poor communities and is corrosive on the very fabric of Sierra Leone.

From the findings, there were more respondents who said what they think is responsible for corruption is as a result of lack of commitment to the society and the country at large.

It was understood that the government is responsible for the accusation of those who indulged into corrupt acts than any other sector in the study area. Based on the survey majority of the respondents accounted that a part of men there were another categories of people who were also practicing corruption in this community.

According to the study, majority of the respondents confirmed that the punishment or abuse levied against the corrupt people in the study area is to pay a fine or sent to jail/prison based in the act committed. From the research, more of the respondents were in support of the commission of inquiries and the setup of the Anti-corruption commission in the study area. It was revealed that, many of the respondents were not in support of the commission due to the system doubtful of its credibility and fair of the commission of inquiries and the setup of the Anti-corruption commission.

Based on the survey, majority of the respondents interviewed, clearly explained that corruption is everywhere and not only limited in the study area.

The findings revealed that, most of the respondents targeted thought that corruption affected national development to very large extent. It is clearly revealed that, more of the respondents contacted that, they do not involved into corrupt act in the study area. Based on the survey, it is understudied that many of the respondents described the factors that influenced into corrupt acts is as a result of low economic freedom.

From the findings, most of the respondents said, they have not been caught being corrupt in the study area.

From the findings, it was indicated that the role of youths in the fight against corruption was never enough and therefore something must be done. Based on the survey, most of respondents indicated that the reason why the youths in the fight against corruption is never sufficient is due to social and political factors inhibiting their fights.

Government should adopt a community education program for monitoring and addressing the problem of corruption on socio-economic development in Bo district.

Laws must be made more stringent so that corrupt administrators or perpetrators do not get away easily

Increase participations of civil society institutions, media institutions, community stakeholders, in monitoring development projects in rural communities of Bo district,

5. Conclusion

The study dealt with investigating the impact of corruption on the socio-economic development of Sierra Leone. This was evident in the ways the people of the study area live. The results and discussions, in line with their interpretations that have unfolded in the preceding in the previous pages revealed a very important picture of investigating the role of youth in fighting corruption with its many problems to create viable and accurate facts findings in corrupt environment by working with government, NGOs and stakeholders to achieve it.

Based on the study, it can be concluded that poverty, low wages and other condition of services to administrative

worker in Bo District were the major causes of corruption. These effects among other include but not limited to: public sector dysfunctional, failure in infrastructure and public frustration and many more. However, most public officials have been found to be performing far below expectation due to corruption. In spite all the threats, the system is still relevant but requires a critical reform so as to enable it function like other regional governments.

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