CORRUPTION IS EATING US UP:

A Call To Action

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USAID — FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII)
Local Chapter of Transparency International

gacc — Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition

The Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII) Consortium was established in 2014, comprising GII, Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC) and SEND-GHANA to implement a 4-year USAID funded project titled "Accountable Democratic Institutions and Systems Strengthening (ADISS)" in 50 districts across the ten regions of Ghana.

ADISS seeks to renew and build upon on-going efforts and also increase the capacities of anti-corruption CSOs to motivate citizens to apply pressure on policy makers and institutions through a number of targeted and focused actions with the aim to reduce corruption in Ghana.

Compiled and Edited by ADISS Research Team

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1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 The State of Corruption in Ghana

Corruption is defined by Transparency International as the "abuse of entrusted power for private gain". In recent times, many Ghanaians have had cause to complain about the prevalence of corruption in the country. This position is further reinforced by major corruption scandals reported and extensively discussed in the media. Beyond the general observations on trends in corruption reported cases, Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI), a measure of the perceived levels of public sector corruption, scored Ghana 47 out of 100 (100 indicates corruption-free) in 2015. This score has dropped to 43 in 2016, indicating an increase in perception of corruption. Consequently, the prevalence of corruption has given cause for concern among stakeholders across a wider social spectrum. This is in view of the overwhelming evidence pointing to a positive correlation between corruption and poverty incidence, and development retardation.

1.2 Knowledge, Perceptions and Experiences of Corruption Survey

The GII Consortium (comprising the Ghana Integrity Initiative, Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition and SEND GHANA) conducted a survey on the knowledge, perceptions and experiences of corruption across the 10 regions of Ghana. Research on corruption in Ghana had, hitherto, focused mainly on citizens' perceptions, rather than actual experiences of corruption. This survey is novel in capturing people's actual experiences of corruption in, largely, public institutions. The survey also captured people's knowledge on corruption, particularly their understandings of the various manifestations of corruption. In capturing experiences of corruption within the district, the survey provides evidence for the engagement of stakeholders across the various levels of governance–national, regional and district, particularly the latter.

1.3 Research Objectives

The primary aim of the research was to assess citizens' knowledge, perception and actual experiences of corruption. The specific objectives were:
1. to assess citizens' understanding of corruption and its manifestations;
2. to assess citizens' perception of the level of corruption in key institutions in their districts;
3. to know how and where citizens experience corruption at the district level.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Scope and Sampling

The sample for the study was 17,996. For the sample size determination, the margin of error was +/-5% with 95% confidence level. Sample for the study was determined by means of stratified random sampling. Data was collected at the district level, and was stratified based on types of settlements; urban, peri-urban and rural.

2.2 Research Design and Tool

Data consistent with the objectives of the study was collected using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was categorized into four (4) sections. The sections sought information regarding:
I. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents
II. Knowledge on Corruption
III. Perceptions of Corruption
IV. Experiences of Corruption

2.3 Sources and Methods of Data Collection

The survey collected primary (quantitative and qualitative) data between April and May 2016. The data was collected at the household level through face-to-face interviews using structured questionnaire. Households were selected through random walk method. Trained citizen groups in all the districts administered the questionnaire via an electronic platform.

3.0 DATA ANALYSIS

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used in analysing the data. The demographic variables were analysed using descriptive statistics while other variables were tested for statistical significance using the Chi-Square test. Statistical tests of significance were performed on the data at 0.05 (5%) level of significance. The results are presented largely by means of info-graphics to make them easily comprehensible and appealing to a larger audience.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Sample

Figure 1: Demographic Characteristics of Sample
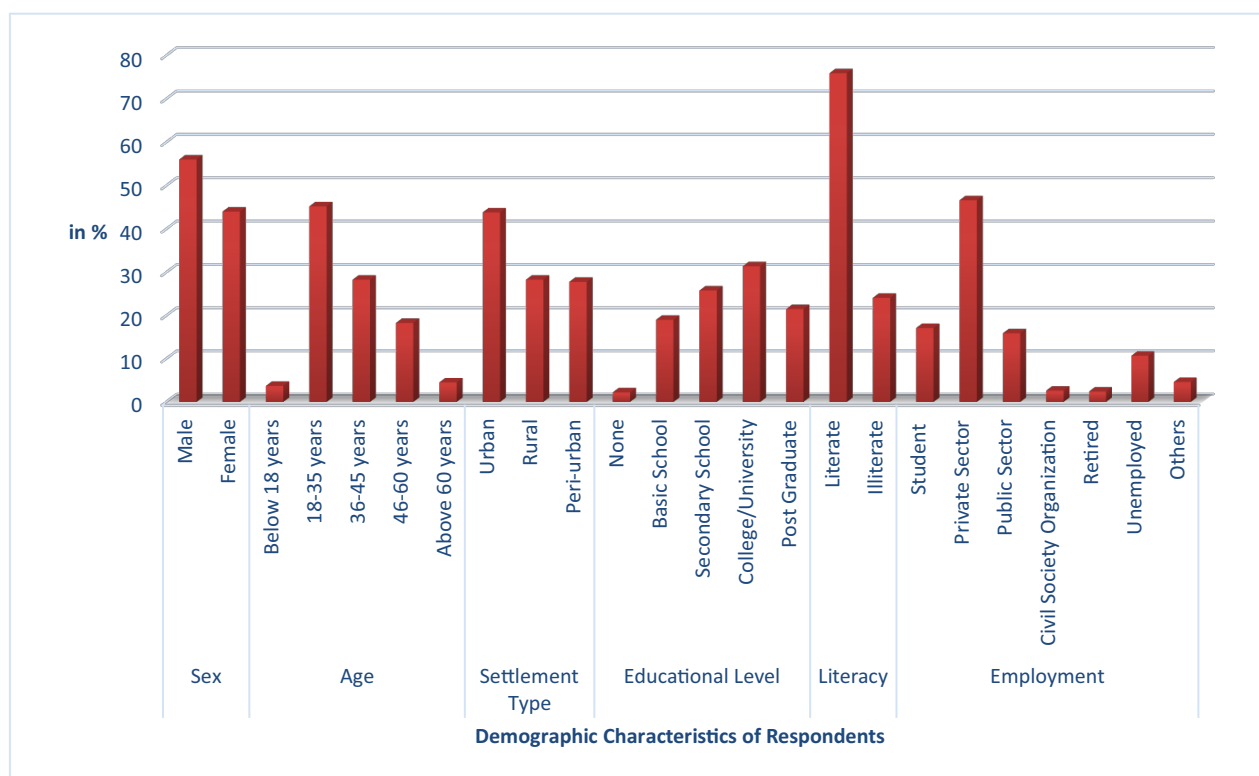
Source: Field survey, 2016

Figure 1 above depicts the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The males slightly outnumbered their female counterparts (56% to 44%). The age distribution is consistent with national trends, as the 18-35 year age group (the youth) constituted the most represented (45%) category. Most respondents (44%) live in urban settlements; and a greater size of the sample has completed at least second cycle education. This confirms why majority of respondents (74%) are literate.

4..2 Knowledge of Corruption

Figure 2: Citizens Knowledge on Forms of Corruption
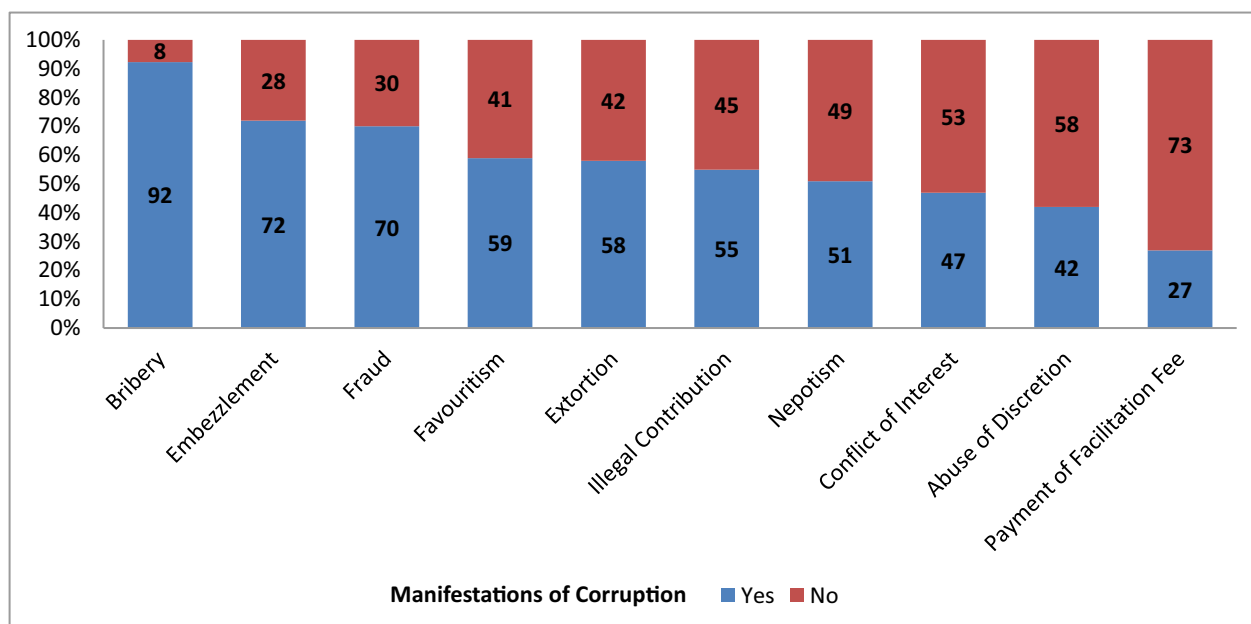
Source: Field survey, 2016

Figure 2 shows respondents' knowledge on the forms or ways in which corruption manifests. Respondents had to state whether they recognize each of the categories as an act of corruption. Respondents were able to recognize bribery, embezzlement, fraud, favouritism, extortion and illegal contribution as acts of corruption, albeit they demonstrated varying strengths of agreement. They were quite split on whether nepotism constitutes an act of corruption. Majority of the respondents believed that conflict of interest, abuse of discretion and payment of facilitation fees were not forms of corruption.

4.2.1 Ability to Identify Nepotism as an Act of Corruption Disaggregated by Level of Education

Figure 3: Knowledge on Nepotism Disaggregated by Level of Education
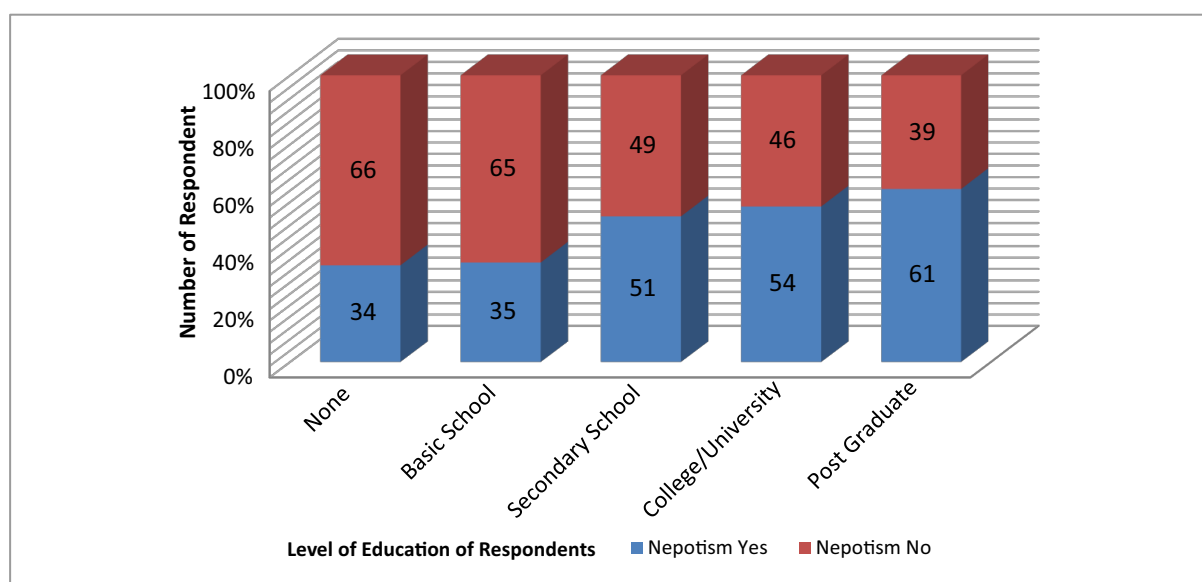
Source: Field survey, 2016

In figure 2, it was observed that citizens were quite split on whether nepotism constituted an act of corruption or not. In order to gain insights into how social background influences an individual's ability to identify different forms of corrupt acts, responses on the subject matter were further analysed and disaggregated by Level of Education. The result is presented in figure 3 above. Evidently, there was an apparent correlation between level of education and ability to recognise nepotism as a corrupt act. The number of respondents who agreed that nepotism was a corrupt act increases with higher level of education.

4.2.2 Ability to Identify Conflict of Interest as an Act of Corruption Disaggregated by Level of Education

Figure 4: Knowledge on Conflict of Interest Disaggregated by Level of Education
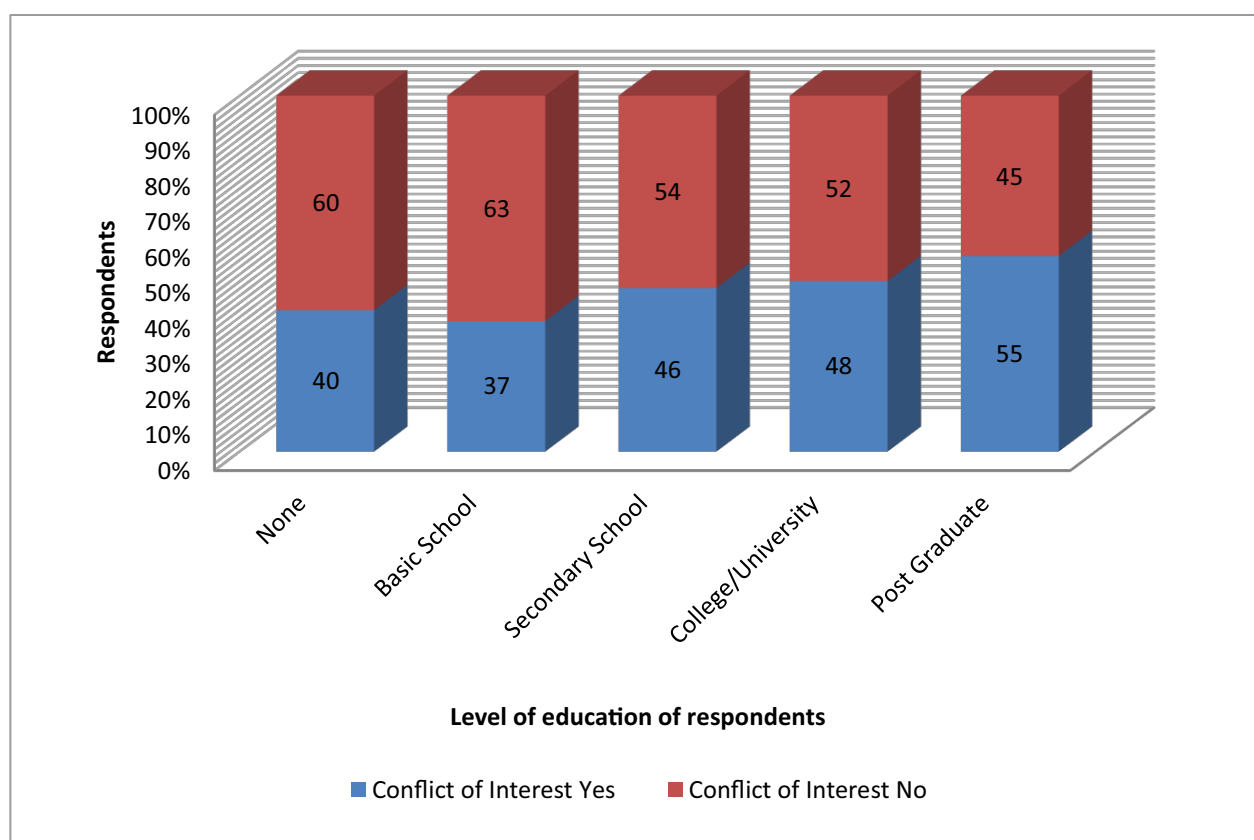
Source: Field survey, 2016

In figure 2, majority of sampled citizens (53%) do not consider conflict of interest as an act of corruption. Figure 4 probes further in disaggregating responses by level of education. As depicted in figure 4, there seems to be some correlation between attainment of higher education (specifically having some formal education) and the ability to recognize conflict of interest as an act of corruption. The number of respondents who are able to recognise conflict of interest as an act of corruption increases with higher level of educational attainment. However, between those who do not have formal education and those who have completed only basic schools, the former incredibly outperforms the latter.

4.2.3 Ability to Identify Abuse of Discretion Disaggregated by Level of Education

Figure 5: Knowledge on Abuse of Discretion Disaggregated by Level of Education
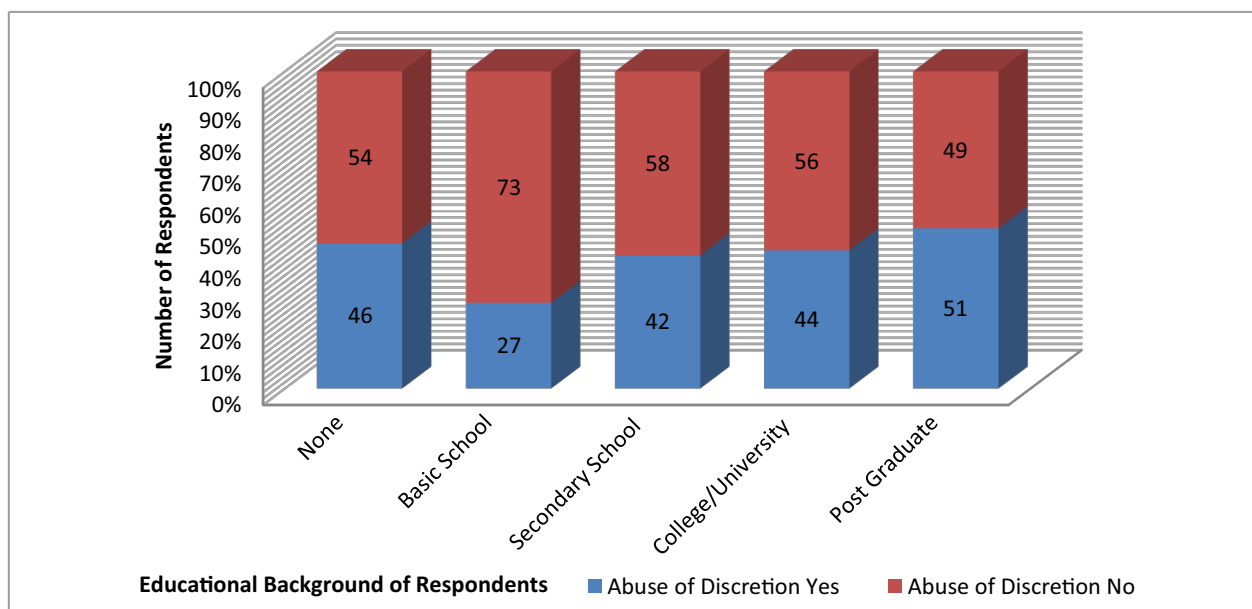
Source: Field survey, 2016

Figure 5 presents results of the analysis of respondents' ability to identify 'Abuse of Discretion' as a form of corruption disaggregated by level of education. The findings are similar to what was observed in figure 4. The propensity of respondents to identify abuse of discretion as an act of corruption is a function of level of education as is evidently presented above. Nonetheless, respondents with no formal education who were able to identify abuse of discretion as a form of corrupt act outnumbes those with basic education qualification.

4.2.4 Ability to Identify Payment of Facilitation Fee Disaggregated by Level of Education

Figure 6: Knowledge on Payment of Facilitation Fee Disaggregated by Level of Education
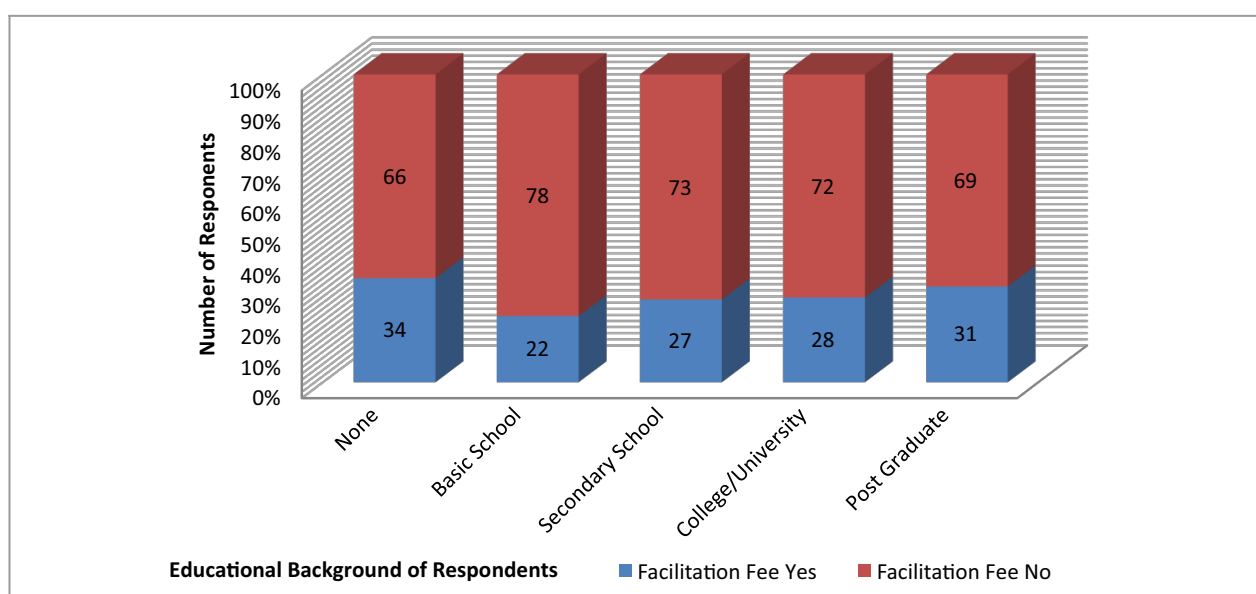
Source: Field survey, 2016

Figure 6 above confirms the trend observable from figures 4 and 5. Respondents with some formal education are better placed to recognize the payment of facilitation fee as an act of corruption. The number of respondents who stated that payment of facilitation fee was an act of corruption increases from 22% for citizens with basic school education qualification to 27% for those with secondary school education background. The percentage increases again slightly to 28% for respondents with college/university education and stands at 31% for those with postgraduate education.

4.3 Perception on Change in the Level of Corruption

Figure 7: Citizens' Assessment of the Change in the Level of Corruption
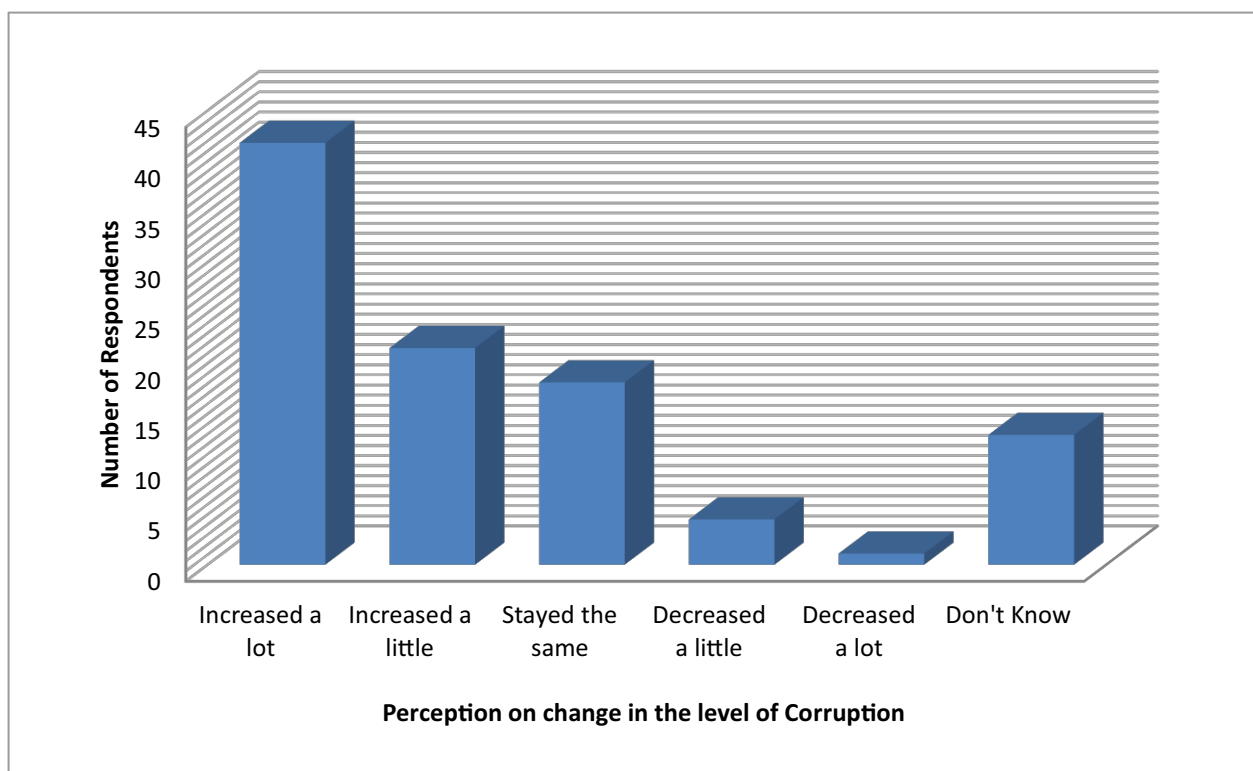
Source: Field survey, 2016

Figure 7 presents the result of citizens' assessment of the change in the level of corruption over the past 12 months. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of sampled citizens believe corruption in their districts has increased. A paltry 6% of respondents believe, however, that corruption in their districts has decreased. 18% do not perceive any change in the level of corruption in the course of the period under review.

4.4 Effort made by the District Assembly and District level Governance Institutions to Fight Corruption in the District

Figure 8: Citizens' Assessment of Effort by their District Assemblies and Other Governance Institutions to Fight Corruption
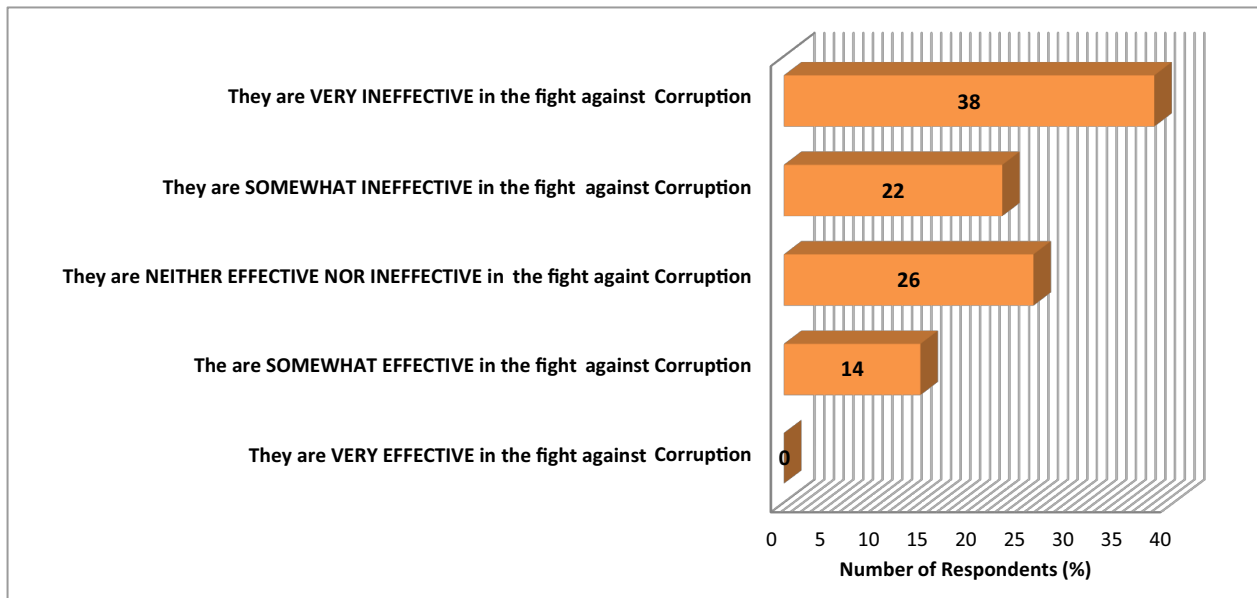
Source: Field survey, 2016

Having established that corruption level in the sampled districts had increased in the last 12 months from the perspective of citizens, we set out to assess efforts by the respective local governments and mandated anti-corruption institutions to arrest the canker. Figure 8 above presents the results of respondents' assessment of anti-corruption efforts by their respective Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) and district offices of government institutions. Six in every ten respondents were of the view that these institutions' efforts at arresting corruption were ineffective. 26% of them are quite neutral with their assessment, insisting that the institutions were neither effective nor ineffective in the fight against corruption.

4.5 Most Trusted Institution to Fight Corruption

Figure 9: Citizens' Confidence in Institutions to Fight Corruption.
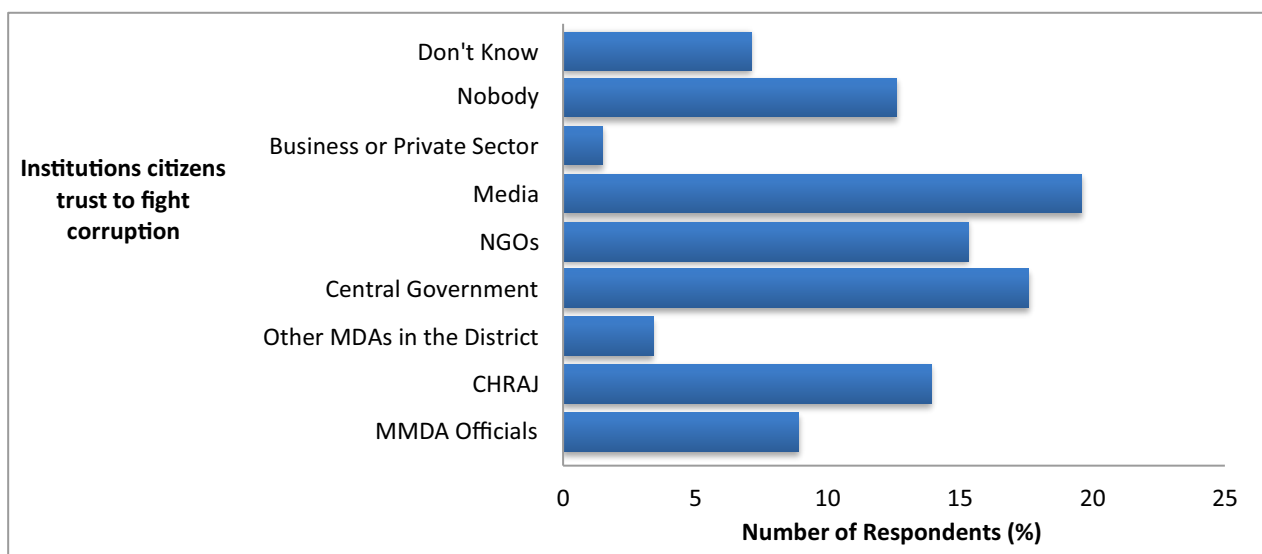
Source: Field survey, 2016

The observation from figure 9 above suggests a worrying trend in which citizens appear despondent about mandated institutions to fight corruption. What is noteworthy is that only 14% of respondents trusts the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) to fight corruption. This is worrying given the anti-corruption mandate of the Commission. Rather the top three institutions trusted by most citizens to fight corruption are the media (20%), central government (18%) and NGOs (15%). Interestingly the number of respondents who do not trust any institution (13%) to effectively fight corruption is almost equivalent to those who repose confidence in CHRAJ.

4.6 Citizens' Perception of Corruption in Institutions

Figure 10: Citizens Perception of Corruption in Institutions

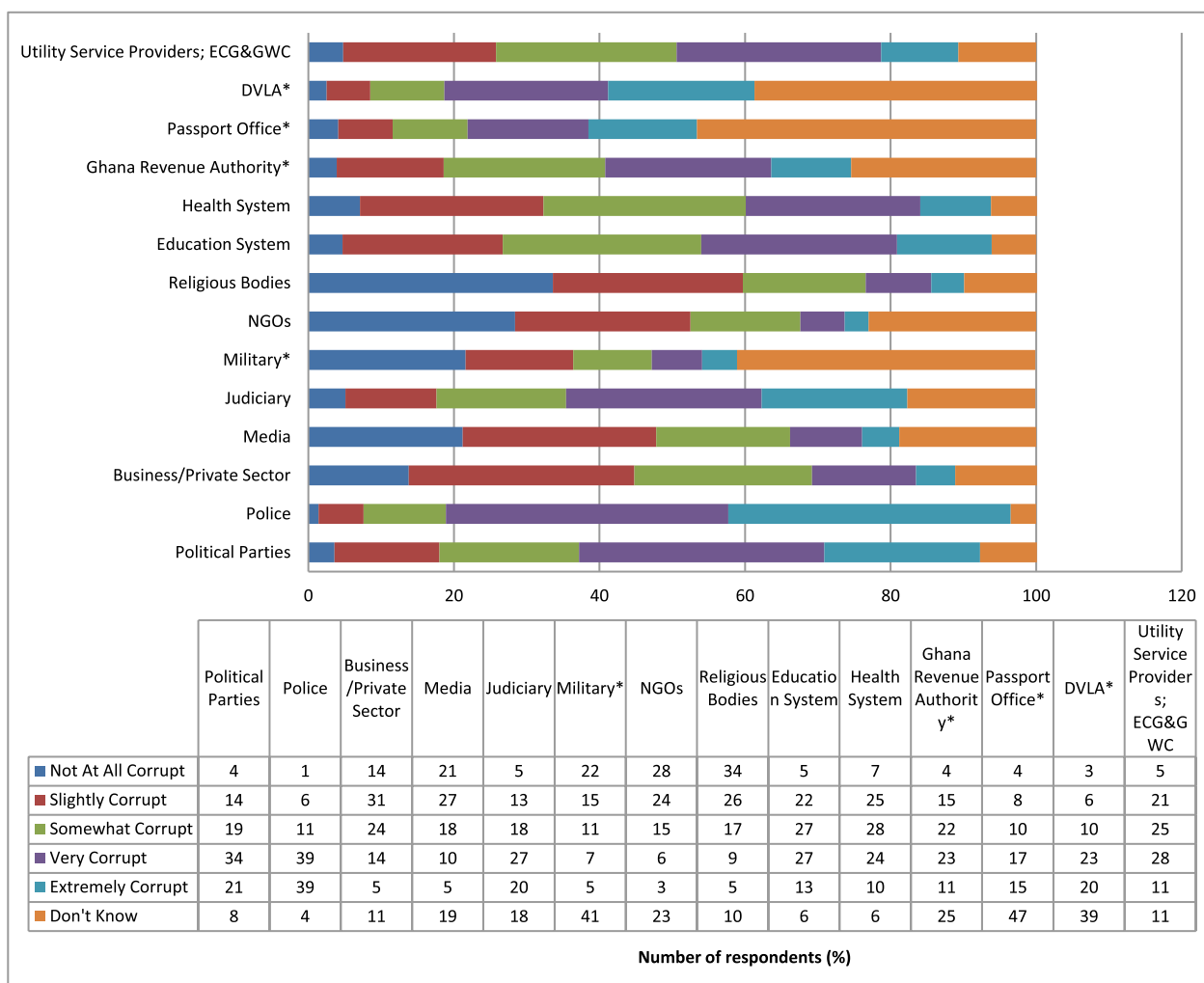|	Political Parties	Police	Business /Private Sector	Media	Judiciary	Military*	NGOs	Religious Bodies	Education System	Health System	Ghana Revenue Authority*	Passport Office*	DVLA*	Utility Service Providers; ECG&GWC
Not At All Corrupt	4	1	14	21	5	22	28	34	5	7	4	4	3	5
Slightly Corrupt	14	6	31	27	13	15	24	26	22	25	15	8	6	21
Somewhat Corrupt	19	11	24	18	18	11	15	17	27	28	22	10	10	25
Very Corrupt	34	39	14	10	27	7	6	9	27	24	23	17	23	28
Extremely Corrupt	21	39	5	5	20	5	3	5	13	10	11	15	20	11
Don't Know	8	4	11	19	18	41	23	10	6	6	25	47	39	11

Number of respondents (%)

*Source: Field Survey, 2016   *Institutions with presence in only certain districts*

The figure above (figure 10) shows the perceptions of citizens on the level of corruption in selected institutions. In order of descent the Ghana Police Service (according to 95%) came tops as the most perceived corrupt institution, followed by educational institutions (89%), political parties (88%), health institutions (87%), utility providers (84%), judiciary (77%), business (75%), Ghana Revenue Authority (71%), media (60%), DVLA (58%), religious bodies (56%), Passport Office (49%), NGOs (49%), and military (37%).

4.6.1 Citizens' Perception of Extreme Corruption in Institutions

Figure 11: Percentage of Citizens Who Perceive Institutions as Very or Extremely Corrupt
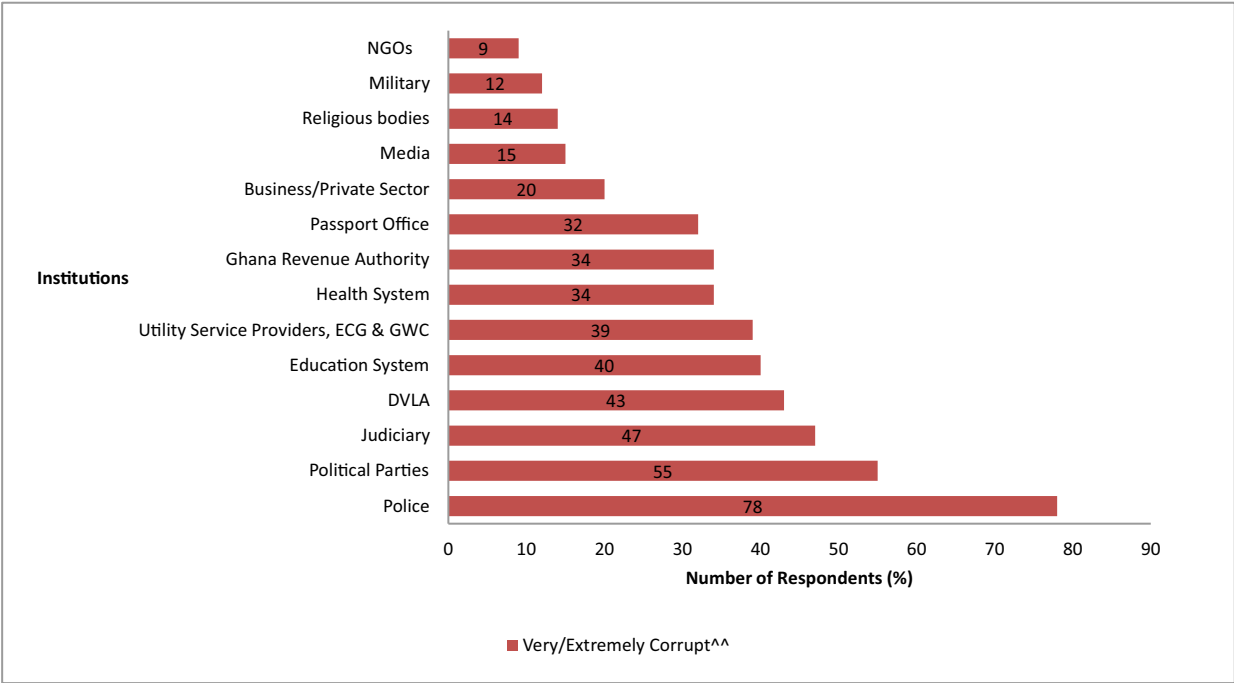
Source: Field survey, 2016

Further analysis of the degree to which citizens see corruption in the selected institutions was done. The pattern is almost repeated in terms of the general ratings as previously depicted in figure 10. From figure 11 the top three institutions perceived by citizens as very or extremely corrupt are the Ghana Police Service (78%), political parties (55%) and the judiciary (47%). The institutions perceived by the least number of citizens as very or extremely corrupt include religious bodies (14%), the military (12%) and NGOs (9%).

4.7: Perception of Corruption Disaggregated by Settlement Type

Figure 12. Perception of Corruption by Settlement Type
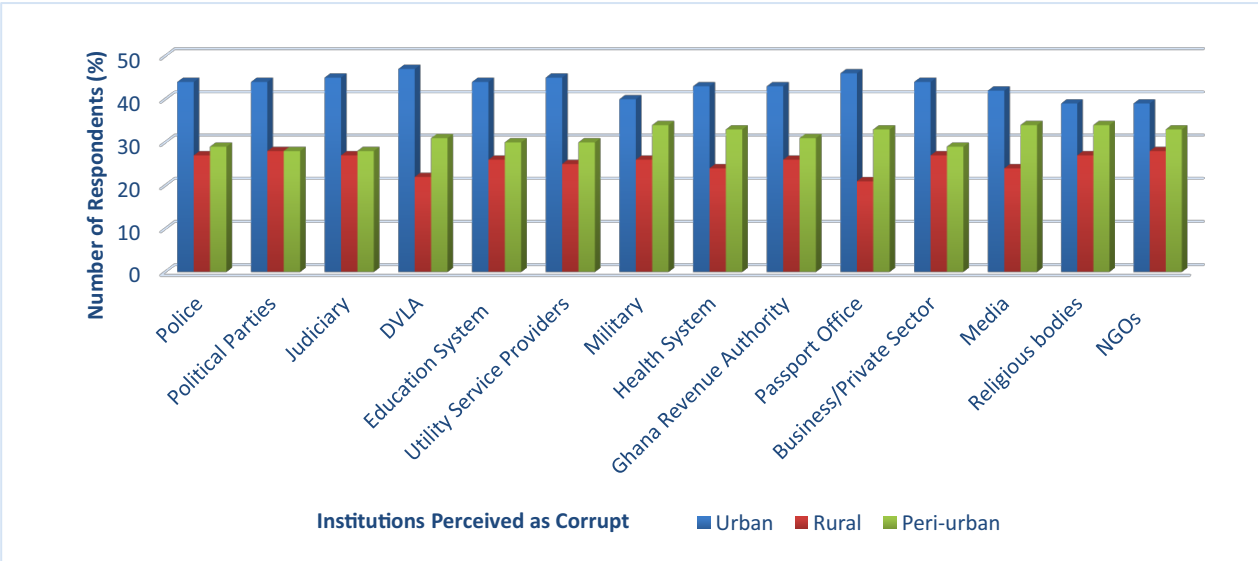
Source: Field survey, 2016

Evidently, urban dwellers constitute higher number of respondents who ranked selected public institutions as corrupt. An average of 43% of correspondents fall into this category. The implication is that citizens are more prone to the vagaries of corrupt institutions by virtue of living in an urban settlement. This is not surprising since the concentration of the affected institutions is higher in urban centres, hence frequency of interaction is higher. Peri-urban dwellers come next as can be seen from the above chart. This further confirms a correlation between size or type of settlement and the prevalence of corruption.

4.8 Citizens' Actual Experience with Corruption: Payment of Bribe

Figure 13: Citizens who made contact with the listed Institutions and paid a bribe
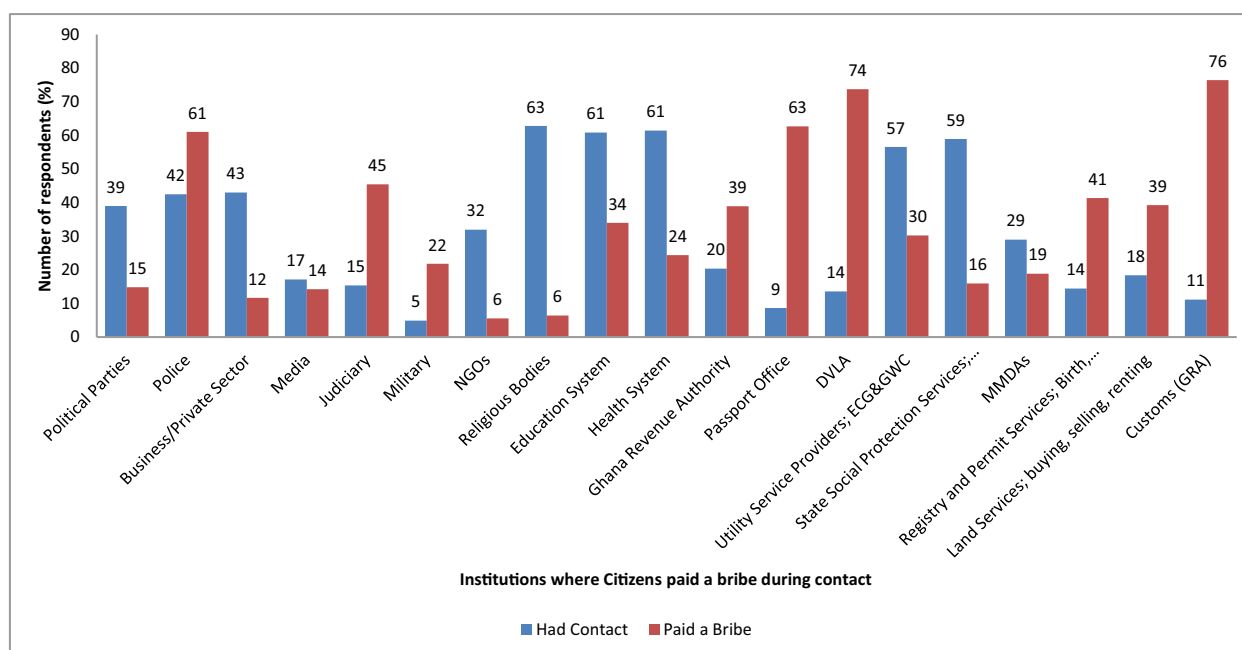
Source: Field survey, 2016

Figure 13 shows the number of sampled citizens who had contact with the listed institutions in the course of the period under review. The figure indicates the percentage of citizens who paid bribes in the course of dealing with the listed institutions. Customs division of the GRA (76%), the DVLA (74%), the Passport Office (63%) and the Ghana Police Service (61%) top the list of institutions where citizens paid bribes.

4.9 Comparison of Results on Perception of Corruption against Actual Experience of Corruption (Bribery)

Figure 14: Citizens' Perception of Corruption against Actual Experience of Corruption (Bribery)
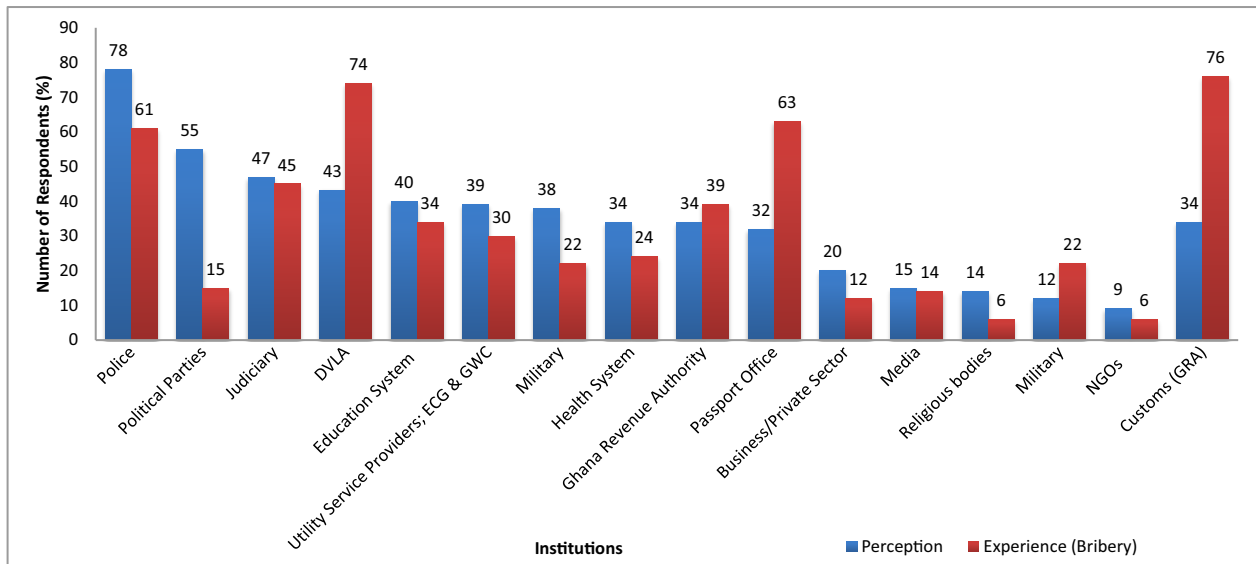
Source: Field survey, 2016

Juxtaposing responses on citizens' perception and actual experiences of corruption, figure 14 brings forth interesting revelations. Although there is high perception (as shown in figure 10) that the Ghana Police Service, political parties and the Judiciary are the most corrupt institutions, citizens' actual experiences with the most common form of corruption (bribery) shows that Customs division of the GRA, DVLA and the Passport Office are the most corrupt public institutions.

4.10 Citizens' Experience of Corruption (bribery) Disaggregated by Settlement Type

Figure 15: Experience of Corruption in Urban, Peri-urban and Rural Settlements
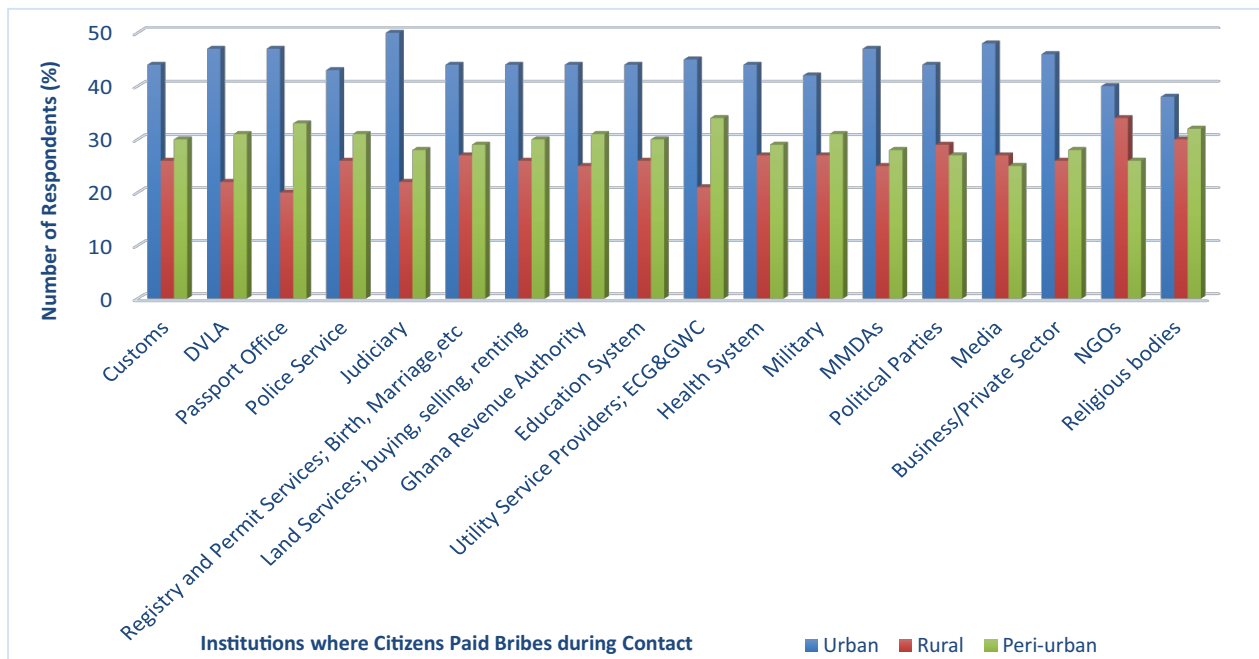
Source: Field survey, 2016

Figure 15 confirms information on respondents' perception of corruption disaggregated by settlement type (see figure 12). Majority of urban dwellers paid bribes than peri-urban and rural settlers. In specific terms, the judiciary emerged as the top institution most urban dwellers paid bribes to upon contact. The DVLA, Passport Office, MMDAs and the Media closely follow in order of descent. The implication of the findings as depicted above is that the number of citizens who pay bribes is a function of the type and size of settlement and that less citizens in rural settings pay bribes as opposed to urban and peri-urban areas.

4.11 Reasons for Paying Bribe

Figure 16: Reasons for Paying Bribe

Source: Field survey, 2016

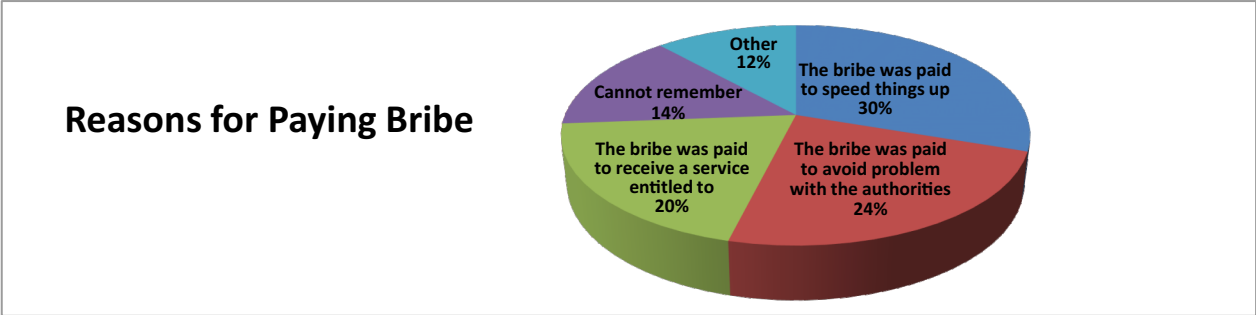Figure 16 depicts the reasons respondents cited for paying bribes. Every 3 in 10 of the respondents report that they paid bribes to speed things up as in facilitating processes. This may explain why payment of facilitation fees is the least recognized form of corruption. The need to avoid problems with authorities motivate 24% of the respondents to pay bribe; and 20% report paying bribes to receive services they are entitled to.

4.12 Citizens Willingness to Fight Corruption

Figure 17: Citizens' Willingness to Fight Corruption

	Ordinary people can make difference in the fight against corruption	I would support my colleague or friend, if they fought against corruption	I would get involved in fighting corruption	I would report an incident of corruption
■ Strongly Disagree	7	3	3	4
■ Disagree	16	9	12	14
■ Agree	57	62	53	53
■ Strongly Agree	20	26	33	30

Number of Respondents (%)
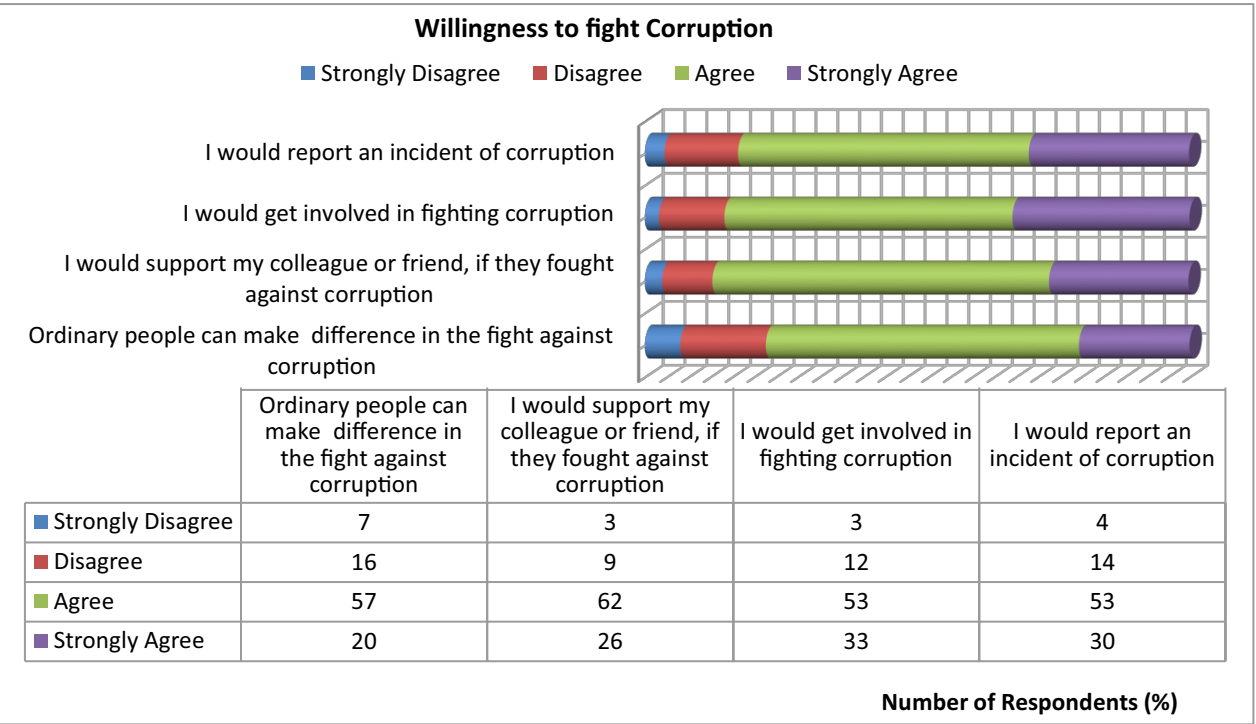
Source: Field survey, 2016

Figure 17 confirms citizens' agreement with four positive statements on fighting corruption. Majority of sampled citizens agree with the statements as captured above, indicating their overall willingness to fight corruption.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following actionable and targeted recommendations are made based on the findings for consideration and implementation by identified stakeholders responsible for promoting good governance and fighting corruption in Ghana.

To Central Government
- Provide adequate financial resources to the CHRAJ and the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) working in collaboration with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to significantly scale up public education on the types of corruption, its impact and ways for citizens to engage in denouncing the canker;
- Ensure the operationalization of a culture of zero tolerance for bribery;
- Duly and promptly investigate offences and administer appropriate sanctions in a timely and visible manner;
- Set up independent body to constitute a national reward system to recognize public institutions that demonstrate effective and rigorous initiatives to fight and sanction corruption from within.

To Local Government
- MMDAs and district level governance institutions must engage in confidence building to demonstrate visible, tangible and measurable results in tackling corruption. Effective investigations and sanctions of corruption offences is key in this regard.

To Ghana Education Service & Ministry of Education
- Given the positive correlation between higher levels of education and recognition of different types of corruption, the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service must systematically incorporate anti-corruption education as well as ethical norms and standards that influence perceptions of wrongdoing in the curriculum at all levels of education.

To Ghana Revenue Authority, Driver Vehicle and Licensing Authority, Passport Office and Ghana Police Service
- Scale up significantly and increase visibility of all measures instituted to address acts of corruption citizens encounter in their interactions with officials of the respective institutions;
- Sanction officials who engage in corrupt acts to serve as a deterrent to other officials to increase public trust in their institutions. Exemplary conduct must also be recognized and rewarded; Employ and deploy new technological innovation to reduce human contact.

To Development partners
- Support the implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Action Plan (NACAP);
- Play a role in exerting reasonable pressure on policy makers and public institutions in general to ensure that legal gaps *(eg: anti-corruption legislation gaps identified by the GII Consortium)* that impede the fight against corruption are promptly addressed and that corruption offences – from petty bribery to grand corruption are duly investigated, prosecuted and sanctioned;
- Provide support (technical and financial) to CSOs to engage in massive public education and sensitization on the types of corruption, effects of corruption on development and ways of fighting corruption at all levels; and more importantly corruption reporting mechanisms such as the Advocacy and Legal Advice Centres (ALAC).

- Support initiatives aimed at building the capacity of local level institutions particularly CHRAJ (District officers), NCCE (District officers)and District Assemblies.

To Civil Society Organizations including Media and Religious bodies
- CSOs including media must play a fundamental role in holding public office holders to account by informing and educating the general public on the ways in which public resources are managed. CSO and media must become even more vigilant and outspoken in exposing corruption and showcasing impactful ways of resisting corruption. Religious bodies should use their platform to educate and sensitize their members and followers on the negative effects of corruption on society.
- Support CSOs in collaboration with Academia to further investigate ways in which perceptions are formed and how such perceptions motivate citizens to accept and tolerate corruption.
- Further research and analytical assessment is needed to determine why CHRAJ in particular is not recognized and trusted to fulfill its anti-corruption mandate. Assessment should also be conducted to determine the performance of accountability institutions to enable them to be held accountable. Finally, more in-depth research is needed to document and assess how citizens experience other forms of corruption (moving beyond bribery).

In conclusion, the high prevalence of petty bribery, low trust in public institutions to fight corruption and high cultural acceptance of corrupt practices such as nepotism, favoritism, facilitation payments and illegal contributions call for a fundamental change in national and socio-cultural discourse on corruption. Corruption must come to be widely recognized as a deviation and not the norm, a zero sum, high-cost and low reward activity. Preventive measures alone are not sufficient. Independent investigations, strengthening legislations and rigorous sanctioning are essential. Finally, Ghanaians must come to embrace a new mindset where they feel both informed and empowered to say no to any type of corrupt behaviour.

The Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII) Consortium:
GII, Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC) & SEND GHANA

GII
Private Mail Bag CT 317. Hse No. 21
Abelenkpe Rd, Abelenkpe Accra, Ghana.
Tel:+233 302 760884
Fax:+233 302 782365
Email: info@tighana.org
Website: www.tighana.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/tighana.org
Twitter: www.twitter.com/GhanaIntegrity

- -

GACC
Pig-farm Junction
(Main Olusengun Obasanjo Way)
P. O. Box GP 17921, Accra-Ghana
Tel: +233 302 230483
Fax: +233 302 230490
E-mail: info@gaccgh.org
Website: www.gaccgh.org
Facebook: Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition
Twitter: @GACC_GHANA

- -

SEND GHANA
A28 Regimanuel Estates Nungua Barrier,
Sakumono Accra, Ghana.
Tel: +233 302 716860 / 716830
E-mail: info@sendwestafrica.org
Website: www.sendwestafrica.org
Facebook: sendghanaofficial
Twitter: @SEND_GHANA

kricyimage: 0277781332