

The General Perception of Corruption and Program's Methods of Dealing with It among the ACK Members in Western Kenya

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Abstract: Corruption still remains a global problem with several institutions suffering the consequences of the vice. In Africa, Kenya included, there has been a general push to deal with the vice collectively as it cuts across all sectors of development thus creating an unjust society in which addressing other pressing social issues become challenging. The church, previously perceived as holy ground, has not been spared either. In the Anglican Church of Kenya, there has been several programs initiated to curb the vice but the level of implementation and effects has not been established. Through a cross-sectional study targeting 384 respondents, the current study was carried out in ACK Maseno North Diocese with the aim of establishing the general perception of corruption among members of the church and to assess the established programs in place to deal with corruption in the institution. Results reveal that corruption is perceived to be high in the church, with some members indicating that they even had to bribe in order to be employed at the institution. One good thing that was noted however was that programmatic structures have been put in place to combat this vice as much as implementation is still wavering. It is recommended that effective follow-up on the programs implementation need to be enhanced in order to rid the church of this vice.

Keywords: Perceptions, corruption, ACK, western Kenya.

INTRODUCTION

Corruption is a Global problem which has affected many countries in the world and all continents [1]. To respond to issues of corruption, there is need for collective action emanating locally and spiraling nationally and internationally. Globally, corruption impedes economic development and increases poverty by making a few individuals richer and many poorer [2]. According to recent Transparency International reports, Kenya has been ranked 17th most corrupt country amongst 146 other corrupt countries in the world.

Corruption in Kenya cuts across all sectors of development thus creating an unjust society in which addressing other pressing social issues (such as health, environmental degradation, poor agricultural practices, gender disparities and advocacy) has been made difficult. From the Christian perspective, corruption is generally described as being dishonest or wicked behavior. The term is applied when someone is willing to act dishonestly or illegally in return for money or personal gain, and this is considered 'sin' [3]. In this context, those offering and taking bribes are sinners.

Due to the realization that corruption among the leadership of this nation is a just reflection of the entire society, and cultivating an effort of eradicating

corruption, Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) has set up an anti-corruption program to engage in the response against corruption at all levels in the church by creating awareness and advocacy through its Dioceses [4]. The ACK through its Diocese and through Justice and Peace Commission (ACK) and under the ACK Directorate of Social Services (DOSS), made efforts towards elimination of corruption in Kenya. However, it is anticipated that with the inclusion of Justice and Peace Commission (JPC) in the DOSS, the response against corruption through awareness in the church will be enhanced and expanded.

It is against this background that this study aimed at examining the anti-corruption program of the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) in Maseno North Diocese, Kenya. Our study focused on the general perception of corruption of the ACK members and how the ACK ACI program methods have dealt with corruption.

METHODS

Study Area

This study was carried out in Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK), Maseno North Diocese, and Kenya. Maseno North Diocese was purposively sampled because some of its leaders are members of the Directorate of Social Services (DOSS) which deals with

the question of corruption. The specific parishes reached under the current study were Esiandumba, Bunyore Parish, Luanda Parish, Christ the King Church-Kakamega, Chakaline Parish, Naitiri, Munjiti Parish, Moi's Bridge, Kimangeti Parish, and Webuye Parish.

STUDY DESIGN

This was a cross-sectional study in which data on perceptions and how the ACK program was dealing with corruption was collected from the respondents drawn from the parishes within the Maseno North Diocese ACK.

Study Population

The study population comprised of Six (6) Archdeaconries, twelve (12) Deaneries, forty two (42) Parishes and one hundred and seventy eight (178) Congregations with seventeen thousand five hundred (17,500) Christians.

Sampling Procedures

Three sampling procedures, simple random sampling, purposive sampling and systematic sampling were used in this study. Using simple random approach, a total of 10 parishes were sampled. Purposive sampling was applied to 10 Parish Clergy, 1 Bishop, 1 administrative secretary and 5 officials of the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) in the Directorate of Social Services (DOSS) with an expectation of getting information on a biblical view on corruption and how they respond to it. The same approach was used to target 7 heads of public institutions of the ACK Maseno North Diocese, 1 youth leader, 1 woman leader from mothers' union, 2 Parish council members, 2 men and 2 women (group of 8 people) from 10 Parishes. Systematic sampling was applied to the members of the ACK in Maseno North Diocese in ten Parishes whereby 28 people were sampled from every Parish as questionnaire respondents. The 3 sampling strategies yielded a total of 384 respondents.

The sources of data in the current study were classified into primary and secondary. The primary research was conducted through the oral interview, focus group discussions and questionnaires. The secondary sources of data were published and unpublished sources.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data generated from the study were analyzed in Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS version 20). Proportions were determined by Chi-square analyses. Qualitative data were thematically summarized and reported.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Perceptions about corruption in ACK

To examine the general perception of the ACK faithful towards corruption, the question raised sought

to know what immediately comes to the minds of the respondents when the word 'corruption' is mentioned. The responses were as follows: bribe, bribery, crime and sin, doing what is against the law, evil act, evil in society, evil, failure, getting services or goods through bribery, the government practices, it has become a culture, indiscipline, it is so embarrassing, misappropriation of resources, mismanagement of funds, misuse of funds and other resources, misuse of leadership, misuse of public funds/resources, money, no accountability, no transparency, non-leadership, police, poverty, selfish and ungodly, sin, social evil, theft cases, theft, tribalism, under-development, unlawful ways of enriching oneself and wealth.

This observation in the current study is consistent with previous studies, for example, Theobald states that: Corruption like any other form of behavior when placed under the scrutiny of social science lens proves to be an elusive and complex phenomenon. The more one examines it, the more difficult it becomes to separate corruption from other social exchange. The definition is, not made easier by the fact that corruption by its nature is inseparable from questions of public morality and mortality in general. This has sometimes-excited attendance to condemn, which has impelled analysis [5].

From the Christians' perspective, it indicates as follows:

The word corruption means moral decay, morally bad or something that changes from good to bad. Corruption follows the giving or taking of bribery in any form. In the majority cases, money or wealth is passed from one person to another for a favor. Corruption can also be defined as an abuse of the rules of the law and acting contrary to the legitimate and moral expectation of society... in other words, corruption is unfair means or process of accessing and controlling underserved goods, positions and services in the society [6].

Still focusing on perceptions, we further inquired from the ACK faithful how the church members feel about the problem of corruption. The findings were as follows: 81% of the respondents said corruption is very damaging, 16% were of the opinion that corruption is part and parcel of life, and 3% did not know (Table 1). According to the United Nations [8], corruption can be found in all walks of life. It hinders economic development, diverts investments in infrastructure, institutions and social services and also undermines efforts to achieve other country-specific targets. As a result, the UN notes that the international community has become increasingly concerned with the problem of corruption and its negative impact on economic growth and poverty alleviation [7]. According to Chabal and Daloz [1], corruption is a global issue and there is an enhanced need in the society to develop ways to mitigate this vice.

Table-1: Perception on corruption

	Respondents	Proportion
Very Damaging	311	81%
Part and parcel of life	60	16%
I do not know	13	3%
	384	100%

(Source: Field research data)

We further inquired from the respondents what they perceive to be the causes of corruption amongst the members of the church. The following were the responses: 2% indicated political leaders, sin 32%, poverty 30.4%, cannot tell 11.2%, all or more than one source stated already, 24.4% (Table 2). These observations in the current study concurs with what Nyukuri and Gathaka [3] observed in their study by demonstrating that there are many different causes of corruption as there are different types and dimensions. Tied to these observations were the narratives that there are many circumstances that encourage corruption, but mostly it takes place where opportunities and discretionary powers are prevalent and where individuals are accountable to the appointing authority rather than to the public. Though specific to the types, the causes of corruption may also be categorized as political, social, economic, religious, legal, psychological, cultural and administrative.

Hope [9] and Holmes [10] contend that there is a plethora of factors which can be classified as root causes of corruption in developing countries. Among these factors are, the emergence of a patrimonial state followed by centralized economic decision-making and

national economic insecurity. In addition to these, corruption is also fueled by the lack of rule of law, ethical leadership, and agreed loyalty to particular socio-cultural norms within a country. For example, Kodi [11] comments that President Mobutu and his allies in the former Zaire had taken advantage of the neo-patrimonial regime to loot the countries' treasures. In Mobutu's era, corruption was the lifestyle of every public servant fueled by impunity. Consequently, corruption has become institutionalized owing to the lack of rule of laws in the former Zaire.

In a similar vein, Bettcher & Melnikov [12] argues that corruption has multiple roots, but generally can be attributed to the poor design of institutions. According to the author, the roots can be associated to unclean, complex, and frequently changing laws and regulations riddled with lack of transparency and accountability. Moreover, the lack of competition, inadequate and inconsistent low-paid wages and unfair enforcement of laws and regulations are all triggers for corruption. Hence, the spread of cancerous corruption within different private and public institutions has caused so many hindrances to the development process of developing countries at large.

Table-2: Causes of corruption amongst members of ACK Church

	Respondents	Proportions
Political leaders	7	2%
Sin	123	32%
Poverty	117	30.4%
Cannot tell	43	11.2%
All/ more than one	94	24.4%
	384	100%

(Source: Field research data)

Further inquiry whether they perceive the church as corrupt by its nature yielded the following results: 28% said yes, 60% said no, while 12% did not respond to this question (Table 3). According to Heidenheimer and Michael [13], there is currently an increased recognition throughout the public and private

sector that corruption is a serious obstacle to effective government, economic growth and stability. According to their observations, the church is not exempted from the vice and there is likelihood that there are small pockets of individuals practicing corruption in churches.

Table-3: Church and presence of corruption

	Respondents	Proportions
Yes	108	28%
No	229	60%
Did not respond	47	12%
	384	100%

(Source: Field research data)

In terms of finding out the institutions where corruption is most practiced, the findings were: 6% of the respondents said that it is most practiced in the government institutions and schools. About 15% of the respondents said that it is practiced in the highest public offices, 3% of the respondents said that it is practiced in the financial departments, 6% said it is practiced most during church elections, 3% of the respondents said that it is most practiced during church events, 4% of the respondents said that is practiced by the leaders, 29% of the respondents said that it is practiced most in the church institutions, 1% said that it is practiced most at the provincial level, 3% of the respondents said that it is most practiced at the traffic checkpoints, 1% of the respondents said that it is practiced most in the administrative offices, and 1% said that it is practiced most in the police stations, and 32% said they do not know (Table 4). Thus, corruption being a vice which touches public office or public interest and private aspects of life has its effects or consequences. Some of the effects may be immediate (short term) or long term. Most of the social, economic and political problems in our society can be attributed to corruption. The abject

poverty, poor infrastructure, unemployment, high mortality rates, bad governance, insecurity, weak judicial system, moral decay and rampant human rights relocations, that characterize our way of life, are either directly or indirectly related to corruption.

According to Transparency International's Global on Corruption Report, US\$ 4 trillion is spent on government procurement annually worldwide. The funds are spent on the constructions of dams and schools, provision of medical equipment and pharmaceuticals for health sector, provision of text books and stationery in schools, construction of waste disposal services, public buildings and other infrastructure important for economic growth. Therefore, increasing the cost and decreasing the quality of these goods and services due to corruption in public procurement and contracting constitute extra tax on the poorest vulnerable citizens in developing countries and Kenya in particular [14]. This led to the conclusion by the Transparency International that anti-corruption policies and legislations are urgently required at the national and international level [15].

Table-4: Perceived Institutions where corruption is rampant

	Respondents	Proportions
Government institutions/schools	24	6%
Highest/public offices	60	15%
Finances	12	3%
Elections	24	6%
Church events	12	3%
Leadership	18	4%
Church institution	78	29%
Provincial level	6	1%
Traffic check points	12	3%
Administration offices	6	1%
Police stations	6	1%
I do not know	126	33%
	384	100%

(Source: Field research data)

When we prodded further on the perceived most corrupt institutions in the ACK Maseno North Diocese, the following were the responses: 41% of the respondents did not fill in the response, 7% said they do not know, 8% said there was none, 1% identified the ACK headquarters to be the most corrupt institution within the ACK, 1% indicated that corruption was most practiced when one wants to become an evangelist, 1% of the respondents said it is practiced most in the area of stewardship, 1% of the respondents felt insecure to mention, 1% said that it is practiced most at the archdeaconry level, another 1% felt that it is practiced most among the leaders, 1% said it is practiced in the bishops office, while 7% said that it is practiced among the departmental heads office (Table 5). Further analyses showed that 8% perceived it to be practiced most by all church officials, 1% said that it is practiced most in the finance office, 1% said that it is also

practiced most by individuals, while 8% said that it is practiced mostly in the institutions/such as schools, hospitals and college (Table 5).

These responses agree with an earlier observation [13] and reinforces the fact that corruption maybe rife throughout the public and private sector and that it perceived to be a serious obstacle to effective government, economic growth and stability.

The United Nations [7] also observed that corruption can be found in all walks of life. They noted that it hinders economic development, diverts investments in infrastructure, institutions and social services and also undermines efforts to achieve other country specific targets. As a result, the UN notes that the international community has become increasingly concerned with the problem of corruption and its

negative impact on economic growth and poverty alleviation [8]. As much as it is perceived to exist in ACK institutions, the church need to recognize that just

as the other institutions, there is a possibility of infiltration as opposed to the belief that churches are 'holy grounds'.

Table-5: Perceived most corrupt institutions in the ACK Maseno North Diocese

	Respondents	Proportions
Blank (Did not fill in)	158	41%
I do not know	27	7%
None	34	9%
Headquarters	7	2%
Evangelism	7	2%
Stewardship	7	2%
Money generating institutions	7	2%
Not mention due to security	7	2%
Archdeaconry level	7	2%
Leadership	7	2%
Bishop's office	7	2%
Departmental heads/office	27	7%
All church officials	34	9%
Finance	7	2%
Individuals	7	2%
Development institution/school/hospital/bible college	34	9%
	384	100%

(Source: Field research data)

The respondents were further asked whether or not they had to give a bribe to be employed in Maseno North Diocese. The findings were as follows: 62% said yes, 35% said no and 3% left it blank (chose not to respond). This trend seems to be quite worrying given that a majority of the individuals confirmed that they had to give out a bribe before being employed to serve

in the church. These were happening in church despite the highlights by the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission [17] who had made unprecedented efforts to raise awareness about corruption, its insidious nature and the damaging effects it has on the welfare of entire nations and their peoples.

Table-6: Possibility of Employment in Maseno North Diocese with a bribe

	Respondents	Proportions
Yes	236	62%
No	135	35%
Blank	13	3%
	384	100%

(Source: Field research data)

Since we established that there was some level of bribery and hence corruption, we wanted to know from the respondents who need to be blamed most on the spread of corruption in the church. Their responses were as follows: 13% of the respondents felt that it is driven by the church leaders, 41% said it is driven by church members, 3% said it is driven by the giver and the recipient, 11% said it is driven by individuals, 6% said it is driven by everyone, 2% said that it is driven by nobody, another 2% said it is propagated by politicians,

5% said that it is pushed by the environment, 2% said that it is driven by the government, 2% said it is driven by poverty while 14% left the question blank and declined to respond (Table 7). From these responses, it is evident that the respondents as much as they work in the church, blame the propagation of corruption within and outside the church systems. It remains to be determined how the corruption within the ACK church affects the people's faith and hinders church-related developments.

Table-7: Who is to be blamed most over the spread of corruption

	Respondents	Proportions
Church leaders	49	13%
Church members	158	41%
Those who pay/receive	12	3%
Individual	43	11%
Everyone	24	6%
Nobody	6	2%
Politicians	6	2%
Environment	18	5%
Government	6	2%
Poverty	6	2%
Blank	56	14%
	384	100%

(Source: Field research data)

The ACK church's program in dealing with corruption at the Maseno North Diocese

The data presented below, which were obtained from 21 Key Informants category were organized into the following themes: the formulation of the anti-corruption initiative, reasons for having this program in the Church, the church commitment in the fight against corruption, the mandate of the program, powers conferred to the program in the fight against corruption and sensitization, Public accountability, transparency and staff capability of the program.

Formulation in the context of Structure and membership of DOSS

Anglican Directorate of Social Services (ACK-DOSS) is the National Directorate of Social Services in the Anglican Church of Kenya. It was established with the mission of advocating for justice and being against injustice. Its specific mandate entails civic education against corruption. They have a committee from the diocesan level with representatives from various parishes. Its chairman becomes a member of the national board. The national office is appointed by the ACK in Kenya and then the officials at the diocesan level are appointed by the bishop of the respective diocese. It has a national advisory board comprising of eight members. ACK-DOSS differs from other anti-corruption agencies in Kenya in that its membership is drawn from church leaders from grassroots and its mandate is biblical. It is not related with any other commissions such as Ethics and Anti-corruption in Kenya. The major achievements of ACK-DOSS are in the areas of social justice, civic education on election and against corruption. It gets its reports from the members of the society and members of the church where their projects are implemented.

Reasons for having this program in the Church

The reasons as to why the church must have an anti-corruption initiative program is multi-faceted. The church as a central civil society stands in strategic position to address corruption, injustices, and social ills since it is able to work and interact directly with people at the lowest and highest levels. Therefore, the church

is the voice of the voiceless and must speak on behalf of them to fulfill the church's prophetic ministry. As such, the church must have their anti-corruption program so that it can be fought under Christian perspective. This is critical given the fact that a lot has been written on this subject but not under Christian perspective. The church program then can serve as whistle blower. As a whistle blower, it has to make available several ways of reporting corruption and economic crime to the citizens. Thus, the medium of corruption practices reported to the ACK may be in the format of e-mail, letter, hotline or telephone, fax or in person. Moreover, one is at liberty to be anonymous when making a report. These approaches collectively protect an informant in order to avoid any victimization that one might encounter.

The church commitment in the fight against corruption

With regard to the commitment of the Church to mitigate corruption, the interview demonstrated that the majority of respondents (43%) of the key informants felt that they were very satisfied, a third of them (29%) were somewhat satisfied and 28% of them were dissatisfied that the church is committed to fight corruption. This was confirmed by its former Archbishop, who is currently serving as the chairman of the National Anti-Corruption Steering Committee at the Anglican Church of Kenya Offices in Nairobi, Kenya. He noted that fewer efforts have been dedicated to the war against corruption by the government and appealed to the government and the President in the following words:

The President himself should take charge of the war against corruption so that Kenyans are not exploited by these thieves. It is unfortunate that bodies responsible for fighting corruption are now the ones engaging in the vice, the health sector in now on its death bed as Kenyans cannot access cancer treatment due to corruption. We call on the relevant authorities to take appropriate and decisive action against all those mentioned in corruption and ensure lost funds are recovered. Time has come when all must face the law. The culture of impunity has to end. Corruption is a

moral issue and must be fought from moral stand point of view. Kenyans must stop glorifying the vice by giving corrupt individuals positions of responsibility. Our team would establish a steering committee in all the 47 counties to boost the war on graft. It currently has presence 19 counties. Parliament, Judiciary and the Executive must work together to get Kenya back on the road to achieving zero-tolerance to corruption.”[17].

Even though the church leadership has good will in the fight against corruption the program has not been effective in many parishes of the ACK Maseno North Diocese.

The Mandate of DOSS

One of the mandates of ACK Anti-corruption program was to give education on corruption and to create awareness among the adherents of the church. The interview result demonstrated that out of all the respondents, the Public Education mandate was rated with 55% of the respondents reporting that it is the most unsuccessful endeavor as far as creating public awareness is concerned. When it comes to the area of investigation of corrupt members of the church, 15% of respondents reported that there is a lot being made to combat corruption while 30% of respondents believed that the program is not effective in this area.

In general, as much as attempts have been made to combat corruption through establishment of programs within the ACK Maseno North Diocese, members still feel that a lot need to be done in order to completely rid the ACK church of corruption.

CONCLUSION

Members of the ACK Maseno North Diocese still felt that the church, just like any other institutions in Kenya, is rife with corruption and corrupt individuals. As much as structures have been put in place to combat the vice, a lot still need to be done to ensure that the anti-corruption program is fully implemented to rid the institution of the vice.

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