

Research Article

Corruption a Bane to Achieving Human Security in West Africa: The Case of Ghana

Nyarko Daniel Ofori

Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Ghana

Email: danielkqwasi@gmail.com

Received: July 08, 2024

Accepted: July 27, 2024

Published: August 03, 2024

Abstract

Corruption is a major problem in West Africa. Corruption per global anti-corruption institutions is said to be very endemic in West African countries where Ghana is of no exception. Corruptions has led to the denial of the human rights and security of most citizens in West Africa including Ghanaians. The objectives of the researcher were to investigate the perception of Ghanaians about corruption, to ask participants about institutions they perceive to be corrupt and also what participants will use Ghana's resources and money siphoned through corruption to do when given the opportunity to do so. This study was carried out through the use of qualitative research methodology. By the use of qualitative research methodology, convenient sampling was employed by the researcher in eight out of the sixteen regions of Ghana to select participants for this research. The responses of the participants during the data collection process were analyzed based on the perception of the participants about corruption in Ghana through the seven thematic areas of the concept of human security. In this study, the researcher found that corruption has affected the human security of Ghanaians in so many ways but the danger of it is how corruption is now permeating the politics of Ghana through vote buying. Also, participants were of the views that the educational, transport, agricultural and health sectors are not properly developed due to corruption amongst Ghanaian officials. Participants also said when they are given the opportunity to use money or resources siphoned from Ghana through corruption, they will channel such money and resources into the development of the health, educational, transport and the agricultural sectors of the country. The researcher recommended that, the fight against corruption must not be tainted in political colours but rather should be a national clarion call.

Keywords: Corruption, Ghana, Human Security Concept, Perception, West Africa.

Introduction

Corruption has received extensive write ups throughout human history by the many codes and laws instituted as well as promulgated against it in many civilizations centuries ago. The Mesopotamian civilization, the Egyptian civilization, the Greek civilization, the Roman Empire, the Ottoman Empire and many others in the past promulgated codes such as the Hammurabi code, the Draco's constitution and many others to curtail or control corruption and corrupt practices in their administrations. Corruption as a social canker permeate almost every human society but the rate of corruption within emerging, developing and under developed economies are so endemic such that it has become a major canker obstructing development and also serving as a hindrance to achieving human security for the general citizenry (Lindner, 2014).

Corruption as a social canker and a word has been promiscuously used in many cultures due to its endemic and cancerous nature. The challenges of corruption to many cultures and societies could be seen in the writings of many generations across time such as classical, post classical, medieval, renaissance, post renaissance, modern, post modern and contemporary times from notable scholars such as Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Montesquieu, Ibn Khaldun, Harry Truman and many others (Arafa, 2012). These philosophers, scholars and statesmen mentioned, spent so much of their time in dealing with corruption and corrupt practices in their administrations, societies and eras. Corruption has been given many definitions by different authorities. The many definitions of corruption by different authorities indicate there is no single accepted definition of corruption by all countries and sometimes regions within the same continent (Vian, 2008). Corruption has been given subjective definitions by many countries in the areas of politics, health,

institutional, agricultural, economic, social and many other sectors such as private or public (Bhargava and Bolongaita, 2004; Hassan, 2024).

Per the numerous definitions of corruption and yet no single accepted one, corruption is still seen not to be globally arrested in any era soon. The endemic nature of corruption has led to many global bodies speaking against it and putting down measure to control or reduce it but most of these efforts by national institutions and global bodies have chalked little or no significant success. Corruption has been defined by many global bodies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Transparency International (TI) and many others. In all these definitions, corruption is seen as using entrusted public offices for the egocentric benefit(s) of individuals against public interest and for this matter the state or the larger public. Corruption has been defined to include bribery, rent seeking, nepotism, ethnocentrism, under dealings, vote buying, extortion and many ills which kick against the state on the right path of ensuring equity in the distribution of national resources and social justice. The Corruption Perception Index (CPI) has always ranked transition economies, developing and less developed countries very low in corruption indexes as these countries though have structures and institutions to fight and control or prevent corrupt practices but corruption is so rampant and endemic such that it has almost been institutionalized and entrenched in a de-facto manner. Many developing, emerging, transition and under developed countries due to the endemic nature of corruption, usually see corruption as a social and cultural canker or problem than institutional and political problem in nature. Due to this, countries in West and East Africa have adages which are used to support corruption as it has been with many societies for several centuries. For instance, in Ghana, there is a saying that “yemfa nsapan nko ahenfie” meaning you do not go to the chief’s palace with an empty hand(s). In parts of East Africa also, there is an adage that “goats eat at where they are tethered” meaning people should make money or gains where ever they have been placed to work. These two adages are a suggestion that kickbacks and acts of bribery and corruption are so entrenched and internalized in the public life of certain cultures and societies in Africa. Corruption in many countries with weak legal or institutional structures and the lack of political will to fight such canker has made several billions of dollars to end in the pockets of certain individuals for their selfish and egocentric interest. Corruption and corrupt practices negatively affect the larger community or nation state hence becoming a major obstacle for development (Gray and Kaufman, 1998). Corruption has denied many individuals and citizens of mainly global south countries their human rights and security in the areas of; health security, economic security, political security, environmental security, food security, personal security as well as community security (CPI, 2020 Report).

For corruption to deny certain people around the globe especially those in the global south of the components of their human rights and security basically means such nations have a long way to go in achieving any substantial level of development. According to a report released by the World Bank in 2002, the global community was losing \$1 trillion dollars annually through corruption which was a little above 3% of global income which the researcher also sees it to be higher than Africa’s share of global trade at that time in terms of percentage and monetary value. The denial of human rights and security through corruption in countries of the global south is an indication that, such countries in the global south will lag behind the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which was to be achieved in the year 2015 as well as not to be able to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the year 2030. These stem from the fact that both the MDGs and SDGs are to improve the plight of humanity around the globe which require substantial financial and resource commitment globally in a transparent and accountable manner towards the development of humanity around the globe. The main aim of the concept of human security is to promote the dignity of all men and also to promote all forms of freedom against want and fear wherever people are found. Promoting freedom against want and fear is an indication that the resources of all countries must be judiciously utilized to the benefit of all citizens but not the privileged few. The concept of human security was first introduced in the UNDP report of 1995 by Mahub Al Huq. The concept of human security became very eminent when the world realized that, there is the need for the security of all people around the world than military or defense security of the state. Human security became eminent as people around the world realized that, there was the need for other forms of security to the state than protecting the borders of the nation state (Thakur, 2002). The concept of security was incorporated into mainstream studies and became popular after the 1940s. By the early understanding of security, it was the ability of the state to deter and control all forms of threats through the use of the military for defense (Wolfers, 1962).

The concept of human security was conceived through human development as there can be insurrections which may threaten the security of the state within than what may threaten the territorial borders of the

state from external forces or agents. These forms of threats which may be internal of the state include hunger, pollution, climate change, terrorism, poverty, migration etcetera (Kermani, 2006). The concept of human security puts human beings at the centre of security that needs protection, care and empowerment to overcome all challenges including climate change, hunger, poverty, unemployment and others. Human security became an important way of safeguarding humanity as the era during the cold war especially from the 1960s to the late 1980s was so much concentrated on the proliferation of nuclear weapons to the detriment of alleviating human plights and dignity. The concept of human security concentrate on developing human capabilities to complement defense security of nation states (Commission on Human Security, 2003).

The concept of human security is to ensure that people will live in dignity everywhere, have access to quality food, education and all the good things that is enjoyed by people of the developed world where ever they are found. Members of the General Assembly of the United Nations in promoting human security agreed on the need for security which concentrates on multi-dimensional aspect of all people everywhere (UN Secretary-General, 2010). The concept of human security is related to human development, human rights, and national security but not the same as any of them (Sen, 2002). Through the conception of human security and its consideration by many international organizations, individuals and governments, the researcher will define human security as a systematic and procedural way of ensuring that the basic essentials of life are provided to all people everywhere around the globe. In achieving human security globally, it is behest on states to provide the enabling environment for their citizens to be successful without oppressing them and to manage national resources effectively and efficiently.

The Level of Corruption and Human Development in West Africa

The level of corruption in West Africa could be assessed from the performance of West African countries within the Mo Ibrahim Index report on Governance in Africa, Corruption Perception Index, Transparency International Report, OECD Report on Africa and Global Financial Reports from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development on Sub-Sahara Africa. These organizations and institutions mentioned have always scored Sub-Saharan countries especially very low in relation to controlling and minimizing corruption and corrupt practices such as vote buying, rent seeking, bribery, kickbacks, nepotism, financial appropriation, under hand dealings etcetera which leads to individual selfish maximization and satisfaction at the expense of the state and the masses. Transition countries in West Africa, post conflicts West African countries and developing West African countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, the Gambia, the La Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Niger, Burkina Faso, Togo etcetera have all been cited for corrupt practice. Corruption in West Africa stem from many factors such as military interventions to democracy involving vote buying. Corruption in West African countries which Ghana is of no exception has directly affected the development of human capabilities of the citizens within the sub region. This has made many nations in Sub-Sahara Africa and for this matter West African countries not to score high through the Human Development Index which considers the availability of certain amenities and infrastructure such as, access to education, access to basic health care, access to food and good nutrition, access to employment, access to good sanitation and many others.

The level of corruption amongst West African states cannot only be considered at the public levels but some private entities have become the vehicles through which corrupt practices within the local level thrives. Private entities partake in corrupt practices such as giving kickbacks to win government contracts or to influence government officials to assist them win contracts, avoid tax payment or even extort the masses at the expense of value for money. Corruption in West Africa has become so much cancerous such that politicians from Ghana such as John Agyekum Kufuor and John Dramani Mahama ex-presidents of Ghana, Olusegun Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan ex-presidents of Nigeria and many others came to office in their respective West African countries through their promises of reducing or eradicating corruption when voted to power as head of states and presidents in their respective countries. For instance, John Agyekum Kufour an ex-president of Ghana had the motto zero tolerance for corruption. In the build up to the 2016 presidential elections in Ghana, the perception of Ghanaians on corruption and corrupt practices about the incumbent government's officials led to the promise of the then opposition leader Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo Addo of establishing the office of special prosecutor to ensure corrupt political officials are brought to book. With the establishment of the office of the special prosecutor after Nana Addo Dankwah Akufo Addo won the presidential elections in Ghana, the perception of Ghanaians on corruption has not changed hence can be witnessed through Ghana's scores from the reports of many international, continental and national anti-corruption organizations. For instance, there is a pressure group in Ghana called Fix the country, which's main aim, is to put the government on it toes to fix the country as they perceive the country to be losing so

much resources and money from corruption and kickbacks that could rather be channeled into building the economy of Ghana.

In the immediate post-independence era and in the 1980s, most West African countries had military leaders such as Joseph Ankrah, Akwasi Amankwaa Afrifa, Ignatius Kutu Acheampong and Jerry John Rawlings all of Ghana, Murtala Muhammed, Sani Abacha, Olusegun Obasanjo, Buhari, Ojugu all of Nigeria, Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo and many others who promised to eradicate corruption and the corrupt practices of constitutionally mandated post-independence leaders. In the end of their reigns as military leaders, their administrations were found and perceived to be the same or the worse corrupt leaders of their respective countries. For instance, General Sani Abacha of Nigeria and Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo had many foreign accounts with money stashed in them at the expense of their states and citizens when both of them died while in office. In the end of these military administrations in West Africa in the late 1980s and early 1990s, through corruption, many state-owned enterprises were privatized to individuals and entities to reduce administrative and bureaucratic bottlenecks. These privatizations also came with the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) supervised by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. These state-owned enterprises were seen as other vehicles through which political and administrative leaders siphoned money and resources belonging to the state by under declaring profits, embezzling funds, over invoicing, under invoicing and many ill practices resulting into bankruptcy and financial losses in West Africa. After the demise of these military regimes and the private sector becoming the engine of development and growth in many West African states, the rate of corruption has been exacerbated and exasperated beyond control and in an incomparable measure per reports from the United Nations Organization and other global anti-corruption institutions.

Objectives of the Research

- 1) To investigate the general perception of corruption amongst Ghanaians.
- 2) To find out how corruption affect the human security of the Ghanaian populace.
- 3) To examine what the participant would use money and other resources lost by Ghana through corruption to do when given the opportunity.

The Research Location

The researcher chose Ghana as a case study to undertake the research on how corruption affects human security in West Africa. Interviews and focus group discussions were used as a means of data collection. The researcher interviewed participants and conducted one focus group discussion in each of the eight regions selected out of the 16 regions in Ghana for this research. The selected regions for the study are the Greater Accra, Central, Northern, Bono, Ashanti, Volta, Western and Upper East. The data collection took place in both rural and urban settings. These regions were selected due to their high population recorded in the 2021 population census in Ghana (GSS, 2021).

Sources of Research Information

This research work contains two main sources of information. The information is from both primary and secondary sources. The secondary sources of information are the type of information retrieved from published journals, articles and corruption report and information from international, regional and national institutions on corruption such as TI, CPI, OECD, IMF, World Bank and many others. The primary sources of information were obtained from the field as part of the researcher's data collection process.

Methodology of the Study

The researcher used qualitative research method comprising, focus group discussions and interviews in this research. By the use of this research method, the sample population was the Ghanaian population. Random interviews were conducted amongst the general Ghanaian populace in the selected regions on their perceptions of corruption in the country and how corruption in Ghana has denied the general populace or citizens of their basic life essentials (human rights and security) making their lives worse or difficult. A total of three hundred people were interviewed. Also, the questions on the interview guide included what the ordinary participant of this research will use money lost through corruption to do for the country when given the opportunity. Per life essentials (human rights and security), the researcher means all the things that will make the ordinary Ghanaian to live a dignifying life such as availability of health facilities, good roads, electricity, food, good drains, sanitation, employment access, availability of good schools and etcetera. The findings of this research work were analyzed through thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2019) under the seven thematic areas of the concept of human security (health, food, environmental, personal, community, economic and political security) in consonance with the human development index of the United

Nations Development Programme which takes into consideration access to education, access to good health care, access to employment, access to good food, protection and enjoyment of fundamental freedoms and rights, good sanitation, access to electricity, high life expectancy, reduction in poverty etcetera. After the interviews and focus group discussions, the data that was obtained from the research participants and the focus group discussants was transcribed and coded. After the coding, the information was later put into various themes for the discussion of findings.

Justification of the Methodology

Every academic work must be built on an explicit and solid methodology for the desired findings, analysis discussions and interpretations. The use of qualitative research methodology is very suitable for this research as it seeks to explore the lived experiences of the study participants. The use of qualitative research methodology makes the research natural (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). Qualitative research methodology is suitable for this study as this methodology deals with words including experiences, perceptions, emotions, feelings etcetera (Strauss and Corbin, 2008; Levitt *et al.*, 2017) and (Punch, 2013). Through the use of qualitative research methodology, researchers are able to interpret and describe their research findings from the perspectives of their research participants (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). The use of qualitative method in this study enabled the researcher to elicit information and responses that resonate with the lived experiences of the research participants as far as their perceptions of corruption are concerned (Tong *et al.*, 2012).

Challenges of the Research

There cannot be any serious academic work which is challenge free. This piece of academic study was not without a challenge. Some of the challenges of this academic work include the following:

This research work was without funding and this prevented the researcher from travelling to all the sixteen regions of Ghana to solicit for the perceptions, ideas and thoughts of Ghanaians in other regions about their perceptions of corruption in Ghana.

Getting information from certain individuals who were connected to the corridors of power to share their ideas, perceptions, experiences, thoughts and views on corruption was very difficult. This difficulty stemmed from the fact that, once the researcher approached such people on the research topic, it was assumed that the researcher perceives such people to be corrupt that is why they have been selected for the research.

The data collection took place in the year 2021 making the COVID-19 pandemic a major challenge to such important research which combines qualitative data collection techniques such as interviews and focus group discussions. The two qualitative research data collection techniques employed in this research entailed social gathering through focus group discussions and face to face interviews which were both against the Covid-19 control measures. Per the observance of social distancing as an important means of containing the Covid-19 global pandemic, it was not easy for the researcher to get people together for a focus group discussion or for the face-to-face interviews.

Finally researching on corruption amongst Ghanaians attract the furry and fire of the research participants and ordinary Ghanaians as most people are fed up on hearing issues of corruption amongst the general populace. This stem from the fact that corruption and its related activities have been overly researched in Ghana and most Ghanaians have a high perception of corruption and corrupt practices amongst the rank and file of the political leadership and ordinary business men hence to the research participants nothing good has been achieved in the fight against corruption. This makes the ordinary Ghanaian to suffer from research and information fatigue on corruption related issues. Most people pointed to the researcher that, they have declined to answer questions and to participate in any corruption related studies as many anti-corruption bodies approach them in their everyday lives on corruption related topics but have seen nothing good and no effort in fighting against the canker of corruption in Ghana.

Discussion of the Research Findings

The discussion of findings of this piece of academic work is done in relation to the three objectives. In relation to objective one, the research participants were very vociferous about their perception of corruption in Ghana. All the participants confirmed that the level of corruption in Ghana is very high. Their explanations were based on how certain individuals such as politicians, political party supporters and other few people in Ghana are buying expensive automobiles (big time cars), building many houses and living affluent life styles meanwhile do not owe any form of entrepreneurial entities or businesses. The participants confirmed that,

almost every week in Ghana one or two news item(s) on corruption are discussed on radio or on television. The participants also lamented how politicians in the build up to more than three past elections made corruption to be seen as a major national canker and an evil to be dealt with in the respective manifestoes of different political parties. Politicians in these past elections, made political campaign promises on eradicating or reducing corruption in Ghana but the situation on corruption is now worse.

With corruption being at the center stage of many past elections, the participants concluded that corruption is endemic in Ghana if not so; politicians will not use fighting corruption to deceive them during electioneering campaigns in the country. Participants also related how endemic corruption is in Ghana by citing the period of the lockdown during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. By this, the participants said prices of goods and services especially foods such as gari, rice, yam etcetera had their prices skyrocketed, meanwhile these foods are not imported but are locally produced. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) against the COVID-19 pandemic such as nose mask and face shields were sold to the public at the earlier stage at exorbitant prices (50 cedis for one face shield and 5 cedis or more for one nose mask) but later these exorbitant PPE prices were reduced drastically when the rate of Covid-19 infections came down. This was used by some participant as the justification for their perception of corruption in Ghana as one participant at the age of 75 said *"since Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana said forward ever backward no more, prices of goods in Ghana do not come down but always go up, is only COVID-19 PPE prices which has dropped drastically. This means that politicians and importers, decided to steal money from the masses during the difficult period of the Covid-19 pandemic"*.

In the expressions of participants and discussants of their perceptions about corruption, it came out that the following people or individuals in these areas are the most corrupt in Ghana; spare parts dealers, politicians, pastors especially those of one man and charismatic churches, workers of the judiciary, forestry commission officials, traditional rulers, custom officers and the police.

Findings on the second objective were classified under the seven thematic areas of the concept of human security. This was done to see how the various areas of the concept of human security have been affected through corruption and corrupt practices in Ghana. The discussion of the findings under the second objective is as follows:

Political Security: In terms of political security, it was found that corruption has dangerously affected the political environment of Ghana hence undermining proper checks and balances in the country. This stem from the fact that, political leaders in the three arms of government will always agree on issues or actions that benefit their members hence preventing any of the arms of government from challenging the other for any action that will be deemed unconstitutional, abuse of power or illegal.

For instance, the judiciary has not been able to challenge any arbitrary increment in the salaries of the two other arms of government neither has the executive been so vociferous against the four years ex-gratia given to members of the National Assembly or parliament. In an interview with one participant this is what he said *"the problem with Ghana is that the big men are thieves, when is good for them they will not talk in favour of the masses. They are all corrupt and do not represent our interest in government. All Ghanaian politicians come to office because of their bellies and families"*.

Another effect of corruption on political security found during this research was vote buying by politicians. Politicians during national and assembly elections such as presidential elections, parliamentary elections or at the local or district assembly levels are able to use money to turn the results or verdicts of elections. These acts continually have trickling effects on the development of Ghana as politicians after paying huge sums of money to win elections find avenues within the political system to siphon money meant for national development for their self-aggrandizement and to offset their financial cost incurred before winning such elections and coming into office.

The process of vote buying prevent people from making the best choices for political representation hence these elected political leaders in the end create, loot and share national treasures amongst themselves whiles in office. In one focus group discussions, the discussant retorted that *"look at the metropolitan, municipal and district assembly elections to elect Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives in year 2021, members of parliament and other government officials were alleged to have paid money to delegates to vote for or against certain candidates. This is all they do during elections; do you think those money is for free? They will come back and steal from us"*.

Economic Security: Corruption was found in this research to have detrimental effects on the economic security of Ghana. Per the responses of participants, corruption has negatively affected income distribution in the country. This is because only few people are benefiting from the country's resources at the expense of the majority of Ghanaians through illegal means. Through corrupt practices by government officials, government is not able to mobilize enough revenue to ensure that workers are paid deserving wages and salaries but rather most government revenue collectors are well off at the expense of the state. For instance, a participant in the Afram Plains, Eastern region had this to say *"look at me a farmer, I just need thousand Ghana cedis (\$100 in December, 2021) to put up five-acre farm but I do not have but a big man will go and sit somewhere to drink beer more than two thousand cedis with friends and family within hours. Is it how to share the country's money? Hmm one day one day"*.

Corruption has also led to high levels of unemployment in Ghana. This is due to the fact that there are many leakages in both the public and private sectors hence the state and private individuals are not in the capacity to create more jobs. Individual workers in public and private entities usually indulge in acts that do not positively increase productivity and revenue. Once this happens, investors are not prepared to commit more capital into investment projects. In the same way corruption by government officials also demoralizes prospective investors from committing their capital into the economy of Ghana. Sometimes government officials who are to grant permits and assist both foreign and local prospective investors to establish businesses extort money from these prospective investors. Once this happens, the investors lose interest in committing their capital into the economy of Ghana.

Community Security: Corruption has negatively affected the social fabric of the Ghanaian society as through corruption, there has been the emergence of social stratification through ethnicity and nepotism. This is because people use their positions to create avenues and chances for only their ethnic associates. For instance, in the data collection process, some participants spoke about what the researcher term as ethnic institutionalization. Per this concept of ethnic institutionalization, only a particular ethnic group members are found in certain institutions since the political heads or administrative heads are from a particular ethnic group. This act of nepotism and ethnicity (ethnic institutionalization) leads to inefficiency and low productivity as people are not employed based on merit hence putting round pegs in square holes. Corruption also affects the community security as it prevents patriotic citizen from representing the nation or their communities. This stem from the fact that sometimes certain individuals do not have money to pay their way through or do not have any relative in a big office. Once this happens, no matter how good the individual is, such a person will never be picked to fill a vacant administrative or political office. Participants cited several examples of such situations including enlistments into the security forces, local government elections, employment interviews, selection to national teams and etcetera.

Corruption in this study is also found to be a major factor pushing many young Ghanaians into drug business and robberies. Participants explained that, in recent years most youth born in the 1980s have experienced high levels of unemployment after the Structural Adjustment Programme introduced by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In spite of the high levels of unemployment the youth see most of the political leaders living affluent lifestyles hence the youth have also developed get rich quick attitudes getting themselves involved in armed robberies and illicit drug business or deals in Ghana so that they can also live affluent lifestyles like the politicians. Unregulated and lack of supervision of certain activities of the religious fraternity was also complained as constituting certain corrupt activities in the communities in which certain Ghanaians live. Sometimes individuals who profess to be pastors, priests and herbal medicine practitioners extort money illegally and promise people of giving them shortcuts of making money so fast and easy. When such promises are not able to yield any concrete results, these people who were promised of making easy and fast money or extorted by these pastors, priests and herbal practitioners always want to use whatever foul means to get rich.

Environmental Security: Corrupt practices from government officials, individual citizens and traditional leaders are a major bane to the development of the natural, physical and the social environment in Ghana. In this respect, corrupt practices from government officials in Ghana as well as traditional authorities have made both Ghanaians and foreigners to encroach on Ghana's forests for illegal activities such as galamsey (illegal mining), illegal logging and etcetera after taking kickbacks or extorting money from such operatives to legitimize their illegal operations in the country. Chiefs and government officials as found during the data collection sometimes sell lands or grant permits for people to carry out activities leading to deforestation, water pollution, flooding, illegal mining etcetera thereby destroying and hampering the natural and social environment. For instance, in terms of social environment a respondent in a village near Akropong in the

Eastern region said, king makers as part of the traditional authorities are the reason for the many chieftaincy disputes in Ghana, they take money from non-royals and promise giving them vacant stools hence leading to conflicts thereby affecting development in certain communities and its inhabitants.

Personal Security: Corruption has a strong influence on the personal security of individuals as people who engage in corrupt activities or practices are always living in abject fear of being apprehended. Most people who have committed one corrupt practice or the other confirmed to me that corruption reduces the respect people have for you. Also, once a corrupt official is arrested, the reputation and image of one's family (father, mother, wife, husband, children, niece, nephew etcetera) are dented. In instances where corrupt officials are also arrested and tried in the courts, such officials sometime per the conditions in the cells, public ridicule or guilt develop many ailments thereby affecting their personalities and sometimes also lose their lives immediately they are release from prison or whiles in prison.

On the other hand, individuals who are not beneficiaries of corruption or corrupt practices also suffer from loss of self-esteem, confidence and respect in their public lives. *One participant in Amasaman in the Greater Accra region complained that "when you are a non-corrupt person in the company of corrupt ones you are always judged by the perception people have about the corrupt people around you. Also, once you are in public and you are not able to live life as those corrupt officials you are looked down upon because people ask why you are poor but your corrupt friends are richer".*

Health Security: Corruption as a major impediment to human security in Ghana also has its detrimental effects on the health sector. In the health sector, due to corruption, government is not able to raise enough revenue through taxes to be capacitated financially in having the clearance to employ more nurses for the health sector. The poor financial standing of government usually makes most hospitals, health posts and CHP compounds to be under resourced in terms of personnel, medicines, logistics etcetera. In an interview with a participant in Kasoa in the Central region, he said *"there is nothing in the hospital so when am sick, I only go to the drug store to buy medication. If you do not have money, you will die as there are no or limited health workers to attend to us when sick".*

Certain activities of health personnel through corrupt practices such as pilfering, stealing and certain illegal charges prevent most people from visiting health centres as they see visiting health centres such as hospitals, health posts, polyclinics and certain CHP compounds as waste of time. In the face of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), some medical officers still do charge certain unapproved fees hence deterring most people from visiting medical facilities and centres when sick.

The act of corruption by certain medical officers against patients and their families also deny the government further revenue through the National Health Insurance Scheme contribution as people refuse to contribute towards the NHIS when they are ill-treated or not served well. In an interview in Agona Swedru in the Central region, one participant said *"since the government is giving certain medications for free through the NHIS, sometimes you go to a health facility and medical personnel will tell you certain drugs are finished so go to certain drug or pharmacy shops to acquire them in town. You sometimes get these medicines and it is embossed on them not for sale from the ministry of health. What does this tell you? It means workers of the health ministry are corrupt so they take these medications out and sell them to operators of drugs or pharmacy shops. Sometimes, such pharmacy or drug shops are for these medical personnel or their relatives and spouses".*

Political corruption amongst top health officials such as health administrators, accountants and auditors at the ministry of health also affect health security in the country. Through corrupt practices of officials within the health sector, sometimes the ordinary citizens lose trust in the health system hence resorting to certain unapproved forms of medical attention or self-medication. This stem from the fact that sometimes funds meant to build health facilities, train nurses or even purchase drugs for national health facilities are illegally siphoned into the individual accounts of certain senior health professionals or politicians.

Food Security: Food security is seriously hampered through corrupt practices of certain Ghanaian leaders. Corruption within the agricultural ministry usually affect the prices of farm implements and inputs such as fertilizers, cutlasses, seedlings, tractors, as well as the training of agricultural extension officers. Once prices of farm implements and inputs are beyond the reach of the ordinary farmer, farming activities are stifled hence negatively affecting food production and food security in Ghana. Sometimes officials from the state through corrupt practices take bribes from certain importers of agricultural products and allow them to flood the Ghanaian food market with imported cheap unwholesome food products. Once the market is

flooded with imported food products it thereby pushes most local food producers out of jobs and also negatively affects the health status of citizens who purchase such unwholesome agricultural imported products. According to one interviewee in Asante Akyem Konongo, in the Ashanti Region, he said *"the folks chicken imported into Ghana is not only pushing Ghanaian farmers out of jobs but also infesting many Ghanaians with many ailments. These imported foods are sometimes very old with no better nutritional value for the ordinary Ghanaian"*.

The discussion of findings in terms of the third objective is in line with what the respondents of the research would use the money lost through corruption by the Ghanaian economy to do, if they were in certain positions of the economy or given the nod to do so. The responses are in the discussion of findings below. Participants in this research mentioned some areas of the economy they would use money or capital lost through corruption to augment and also gave explanations to their reasons. The discussions on this are as follows:

Most of the participants retorted when given the nod to utilize money lost through corruption in Ghana, they would use such money to develop infrastructure. The first three infrastructures which featured most in this research were schools, hospitals and road networks.

Participants lamented that corruption has denied most citizenry education and for this matter, most people in the villages in the 21st century attend schools under trees without any proper educational infrastructure and facilities such as buildings, desks, tables, libraries etcetera. So, to them corruption once stamped out would ensure that expenditure on education is made a priority when such money lost through corruption are given to them, they will ensure the inadequacy of educational facilities and thereof to Ghanaians will be a thing of the past since massive investment will be channeled into the educational sector. Also, participants said, once they are given the nod to use money lost through corruption in terms of the educational sector, salaries and allowances of public teachers will be reviewed for the better especially teachers in villages and deprived communities.

Improvement in the health sector is also an important area where participants responded that when money lost through corruption by the Ghanaian state is given to them to provide solutions, this is one of the sectors they would spend the money. Participants concluded to use the money Ghana loses through corruption to develop the medical sector such as producing more doctors, paramedics, nurses, purchase medical logistics, train more health personnel, build more health facilities and etcetera to bring the health sector in Ghana to the global standard. More hospital logistics and materials such as beds, ventilators, ambulance, medication and many others would also be purchased.

Infrastructural development in the transport sector was also not left out; participants said the transport sector is an important economic facilitator that needs to be given critical attention and investment priority. In the transport sector, participant said the money lost through corruption when given to them would be expended on building more roads, rehabilitating old roads, putting the railway system back on track and running efficient transport system. Participants said the absence of road and rail networks are the major causes of the high prices of goods and services that are locally produced in Ghana. On the other side participants also recounted that, the nature of bad roads in Ghana and the absence of the rail networks are a major contributory factor towards the many accidents and unnecessary traffics in the country.

Finally, participants responded that, when all the money lost through corruption is given to them, majority of it will go into the development of the agricultural sector in the country. They will increase the manufacturing of fertilizers in Ghana and also establish plants to manufacture farm machinery, tools and implements. Participants said they will do this so that Ghana can increase the production of agricultural produce for the local economy and export as well. Since agriculture is the backbone of the economy, once the agricultural sector is given a boost the economy will be on its feet hence promoting development in Ghana and attracting foreign exchange and create more jobs for the teeming youth in the country.

Summary and Recommendations

Corruption is a major challenge to the socio-political and economic development of developing countries but the rate of corruption has negatively affected the entirety of human security in Ghana. The effects of corruption have many negative ramifications which need to be tackled as a national priority. During the field work, certain participants were able to cite chiefs and games and wildlife officials as the most corrupt individuals and organizations in the country. This perception by some the participants is a clear indication

that institutions and individuals who have been perceived as corrupt in Ghana depends on where they are found as communities which do not have offices of organizations and institutions of what the researchers may term as the usual suspects of corruption by many studies may also perceive other different bodies or institutions as being corrupt. For instance, in an interview in Nton-Aboma, Bono Afram Plains North District in the Eastern Region, participants recounted that to them game and wild life officials of the forestry commission and chiefs are the most corrupt people.

The church which is seen as a revered institution and for this matter can partner state institutions to fight against corruption was indicted by some participants of this study as the emerging corrupt institution in Ghana. Per this perception by these participants who also professed to be Christians, it means that, Ghana as a country might not be able to win the battle against corruption as people who claim to be men of God are perceived and cited to be corrupt by research participants.

Successive politicians under the fourth republic constitution of Ghana have made it a point to fight corruption but vote buying from the masses has been higher under this constitution than any other in Ghanaian history. This is an indication that the fight against corruption may look to be a lost battle as corruption has permeated most trusted institutions of power in the country.

Also, the ordinary Ghanaian citizen is these days aware of areas in the economy that are lacking and have plans about what they will do when money lost through corruption are given to them to address some of the developmental challenges in Ghana. For instance, some participants said when given the opportunity to manage money and resources lost through corruption, they will use such money and resources for developmental projects in the areas of education, health, transport and agriculture.

The researcher recommends Ghana as a state to treat all corrupt practices and corruption cases with iron hands so that it will serve as deterrent to others who have the intention to engage in corrupt practices. The politicization of corruption in the country must be stopped so that all matters of corruption are treated as crime against the country and the citizenry.

Also, religious institution such as the Christian Council of Ghana, the Ghana Pentecostal Council, the Ghana Charismatic Council, traditional religious leaders as well as the Catholic Bishop Conference must all come out and speak against corruption so that their members who are culpable are made to face the law.

Since corruption has denied many Ghanaians the enjoyment of basic services as part of their human security and rights through vote buying, extortion by pastors, poor medical facilities, high cost of food, unemployment, nepotism, ethnicity and etcetera, the office of the special prosecutor must be given the needed attention and resources to function independently from all political interference. Once the office of the special prosecutor is made to function well, it will be seen by all Ghanaians to be serving their interest to promote the enjoyment of their human security as equal citizens of the country but not as second fiddles to politicians and the business class.

There should be re-orientation of the entire Ghanaian citizenry towards a more patriotic lifestyle. Once this is done, people appointed or nominated to positions of authority will be considerate and think about the development of the entire country rather than their own selfish interests.

Finally, government should ensure that the fight against corruption is intensified as the participants of the study who are citizens of the country perceive the low development in the educational, health, transport and agricultural sectors as due to the national canker of corruption in Ghana.

Declarations

Acknowledgments: I write to thank all my research participants who assisted me in the various regions I visited as part of my data collection process.

Author Contribution: The author confirms sole responsibility for the following: study conception and design, data collection, analysis and interpretation of results, and manuscript preparation.

Conflict of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Consent to Publish: The author agrees to publish the paper in International Journal of Recent Innovations in Academic Research.

Data Availability Statement: Data are contained within the article.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in this study.

Research Content: The research content of manuscript is original and has not been published elsewhere.

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Citation: Nyarko Daniel Ofori. 2024. Corruption a Bane to Achieving Human Security in West Africa: The Case of Ghana. *International Journal of Recent Innovations in Academic Research*, 8(8): 1-12.

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